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THE NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY LLR

Everyday racism in Malmö, Sweden

The experiences of Bosnians and Somalis

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Nottingham Trent University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

This thesis is about everyday racism in Malmö in the south of Sweden. It draws on the lived experiences of Bosnian and Somali refugees to examine the processes whereby migrants come to be disadvantaged and/or excluded through events and practices taking place in everyday life. The working definition of racism for the research is racism as social relations or relations of power in which minority ethnic groups are in a disadvantaged position. By using an inclusive notion of what counts as racist practices, the thesis identifies a number of processes whereby those relations are produced and maintained. The method used is biographical interviews. Furthermore, introducing a comparative dimension to lived experiences, and including two groups normally assumed to be differently exposed to racism, it goes beyond reductive analyses, to illustrate multiple racisms. Particularly it manages to get at the more subtle forms of racism, and the processes that function to disadvantage beyond the production of otherness.

Racism needs to be understood in relation to specific historical, social and political contexts. The experiences that emerge from biographical interviews are contextualized in terms of wider processes and relations, both presently and historically. Tracing how a specific version of national identity has developed through time, as well as looking at contemporary public discourse, we see how specific conceptions of 'us' and 'them' are produced and imagined. This in turn establishes a specific relation between the two, and as the lived experiences of Bosnians and Somalis illustrate, these conceptions and relations are not only imagined but lived in the everyday. However, we also see that the historically and selectively imagined Swedish 'self', by being centred around notions of democracy, equality and solidarity, means that structural inequalities and the lived experiences of these become difficult to grasp and conceptualise.

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I would like to thank the people that have shared their life stories with me in interviews. The stories have been the basis for this thesis, and their value for the research cannot be emphasized enough.

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Chapter one. Introduction: Theorising racism in a contemporary Swedish society

This thesis is about everyday racism in Malmö in the south of Sweden. It draws on the findings of biographical interviews with Somali and Bosnian refugees, in which interviewees talk about their experiences of Swedish society[1], to examine the processes whereby migrants come to be disadvantaged and/or excluded in Swedish society. The working definition of racism throughout the research has been racism as social relations and relations of power in which minority ethnic groups are in a disadvantaged position; or in the words of Philomena Essed, 'the unequal distribution of material and non-material resources' along ethnic or racial lines (Essed 1991).

Although the field of research into 'international migration and ethnic relations' (IMER) in Sweden has grown substantially in the past few years, compared to countries such as Britain or France, the amount of work that has gone into studying racism in a Swedish context is still small. The social and historical contexts in which the British or French literature on racism have developed are different from the Swedish (as well as different from each other; see Silverman and Yuval-Davis 1999), which means that some of the concepts and theories emerging out of these are not directly applicable to the Swedish version of racism. However, interestingly, it seems that instead of recognising the particularities and historical contingencies of the literature on racism, the fact of this impossible direct translation has often led to the conclusion that racism in Sweden is non-existent (Sawyer 2000).

Because of a dearth of Swedish or Scandinavian literature on the topic of racism, researchers in the IMER field there have mainly looked to other national contexts for concepts; but again, using theories developed in other social and historical contexts requires sensitivity to those contexts. For example, the 'race relation' paradigm is very specific to Britain, and cannot be

[1] In order to contextualise narratives of Sweden, however, I have also asked them to talk about their lives prior to migration as well as the migratory experience itself. The interviews are discussed in detail in chapter three.

simplistically used to account for racisms elsewhere. The context formative of that theoretical paradigm is a colonial history, flows of migrant labour from the ex-colonies, and the social structures emerging from that (Solomos and Back 1996). Importantly, this accounts for the focus on 'white' and 'black' people in the British literature on racism (which has been internally challenged, see e.g. Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992; Brah 1992; Brah, Hickman and Mac an Ghaill 1999; Miles 1989, 1993b opting to include more groups in studies of racism). Another example is France, where the 'racial' distinction central to the British race relations paradigm has been refuted (as racist), while instead the nation and nationality has been central. Importantly the French civic concept of the nation state, which in the celebratory version makes no distinctions between groups and is hence fundamentally inclusive, is in reality coupled with a strong push towards assimilation (which in turn the British multiculturalists would regard as racist; see Balibar 1988 for a discussion on assimilation as a specific French version of racism)[2].

Another important difference between the two countries regarding theories of racism relates to the occupation of France by the Nazis, which put anti-Semitism and scientific racism at the core of the issue of racism (Silverman and Yuval-Davis 1999). Although Sweden was not occupied during the Second World War but in dominant history remained a 'neutral' outsider[3], the fact that Sweden was an international pioneer in eugenics research and practice[4] has given scientific racism an equally central place in the Swedish dominant version of the notion of racism; the Holocaust being a central signifier.

Researchers in the IMER field have rightly tried to rectify this limited and incorrect understanding of racism in a contemporary Swedish context, and as mentioned above, the import of (primarily British) theories and concepts have become commonplace. However, it seems that in some cases (although

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[2] The centrality of secularism in French discourse on the nation further explains the focus on Jews and Arabs in French theories of racism (Brah, Hickman and Mac an Ghaill 1999).
[3] This history has been forcefully challenged more recently by pointing towards a strong support by Sweden for Germany in the war in both practical and ideological ways; see e.g. Boethius 1999 and Wechselmann 1995. This is discussed in chapter four.
[4] According to Pred (2000) Sweden came second to Germany in the number of people that were forced into sterilisation.

certainly not all) the urge to put racism 'even in Sweden' (Pred 2000) on the map has led writers to transfer contextually contingent theories without re-contextualising them. One example is a recent article in which Katarina Mattsson and Mekonnen Tesfahuney (2002) apply Philomena Essed's notion of everyday racism to the Swedish case, and where they fail to draw on sufficient empirical evidence as to how everyday racism in Sweden actually functions; and again, Essed's findings are indeed to some extent presented in her (1991) book as specific to the societies she studies (The Netherlands and the US). Although, as can be judged from the title of this thesis, I have indeed also found the notion of everyday racism useful for understanding the lives and position of migrants and minorities in Sweden, I would point out the importance of reaching this conclusion only after a thorough process of empirical grounding. As argued in the introduction to the CCCS (1982) book about racism in Britain, 'it is not possible to see racism as a unitary fixed principle which remains the same in different historical conjunctures'; hence 'it has to be located historically and in terms of the wider structures and relations' of the specific society of concern (1982: 11-2). Furthermore, I will argue, it needs to be empirically grounded in terms of lived realities (Johnson, Chambers, Raghuram and Tincknell 2004).

However, before setting out my aims and the structure of the thesis, some historical context (including contemporary history) is needed. In the following three sections, I give an overview of the history of immigration as well as policies surrounding immigration and the 'integration' of migrants, with a particular emphasis on recent trends and debates; furthermore, I include a brief discussion of the current state of affairs with regards to discrimination, segregation and social exclusion, particularly concerning the two groups I have looked at. These three contextualising sections taken together are quite lengthy; however, I have found it necessary to include all of it in this chapter.

1.1 Sweden, Europe

It has been suggested that Sweden up until 1945 could be characterised as an ethnically homogeneous country, incorporating only two small indigenous minorities: the Saamis and the Tornedal Finns, both mainly residing in rural areas of the north. From this point of view, a multicultural Sweden is regarded solely as a result of post-war immigration. However, critics point out that speaking of Sweden prior to that as ethnically homogenous is problematic. Firstly, leaves out pre-modern Swedish history, for example three hundred years ago when many of the now neighbouring countries were in fact within the Swedish borders (Westin 2000); this tends to be ignored, because as will be discussed in chapter four, the emergence of the 'People's Home' in the 1920s and 30s has to some extent come to be regarded as the 'founding myth' of Sweden (Ehn, Frykman and Löfgren 1993). Secondly, talk of an ethnically homogenous Sweden pre-mass immigration is problematic also because it marginalises the issue of what has been termed 'internal colonialism', through which minority cultures and languages – particularly those of the indigenous minorities – were forced to adapt to the majority version of a Swedish national identity (Westin 2000; see also Miles 1993)[5]. Importantly, the research and practice that took place at the National Institute for research in Racial Biology (first in the world!) played a significant part in the Swedish nationalisation process; forced sterilisations were central to the production of a modern population (Pred 2000, Geddes 2003).

However, in terms of immigration, Swedish history is indeed relatively short. Following a period of refugee resettlement after the Second World War, the final period of which refugees mainly from Finland and the Baltic countries had come to Sweden, the end of the forties and onwards saw a large influx of migrant labour[6]. Initially migrant workers came mainly from the other Nordic

[5] The story and life of the indigenous minorities to this day remain something of a dark spot on the Swedish acclaimed multicultural ethos (see e.g. Westin 2000).

[6] Swedish industry was at this point booming as other European countries were in the process of post-war reconstruction (while Sweden had not been occupied) and hence in need of importing industrial products (Westin 2000).

countries and notably Finland[7], later followed by Eastern and Southern Europeans (from Poland, Greece, Yugoslavia and Italy) as well as people from Turkey. Up until the later half of the sixties, immigration had been more or less unrestricted; however, in 1967 work permits were required, and shortly after that the National Board of Immigration (Invandrarverket) was established. From the early seventies onwards, refugees and asylum seekers superseded labour migrants as the main categories of migration into the country[8]. Refugees from the Middle East (notably Lebanese, Iranians and Iraqis), different parts of Africa (notably Ethiopians, Eritreans, Somalis), and Latin America (notably Chileans) hence became important parts of the migrant population. Following the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a large amount of Bosnian refugees also arrived in the early nineties.

Swedish immigration and asylum policy at the point of establishment (late sixties), and some time afterwards, was indeed rather liberal (or 'generous' as some choose to call it) compared to other European countries. Furthermore, in the mid seventies Sweden developed a (formally) rather inclusive immigrant and minority policy, which has contributed substantially to the country achieving a good international reputation (Soininen 1999: 693-5). Andrew Geddes (2003: 120-121) writes about the measures debated and proposed during the period preceding that policy that they 'were remarkably inclusive, particularly when it's remembered that other European countries were still struggling to recognise that the 'guests' had stayed'. The 1975 Immigrant and Minority Policy, based on the three principles of 'equality', 'freedom of choice' and 'partnership', established the 'Swedish model' of multiculturalism. 'Equality meant living conditions comparable with Swedes. Freedom of choice meant a genuine choice about retaining cultural identity. Partnership meant co-operation and solidarity between Swedes and newcomers' (ibid 121). An attempt to establish an inclusive attitude can also be seen in the country's

[7] The Nordic union of free movement between the five countries was established in 1954 and exists to this day.
[8] There was in fact a decision in 1972 to end labour immigration; this decision was made between the government and the trade union LO (blue collar), concerned with the welfare and wages of their members. The parliament was not consulted on this decision; it provides a good example of a corporatist decision-making style in Sweden, to be discussed later.

'generous' naturalization policy[9] along with favourable conditions for denizens, who generally enjoyed similar benefits to those of citizens; furthermore in 1976 denizens were also granted the right to vote in local elections.

Through adopting a multicultural approach, Sweden distinguished itself from on the one hand countries such as Germany that adopted what Castles and Miller (1998: 244-50) refer to as the 'differential exclusionary' model, where migrants are included in some areas of society but excluded from others, and on the other the assimilatory stance taken for example by France, the idea being that migrants should adapt to majority norms and customs. The initial formations of multicultural policies aimed to tolerate/respect/promote cultural difference, and to ensure equal rights and possibilities for all citizens in spite of that difference. The general idea behind this is that universal liberal rights are insufficient for ensuring equality and the inclusion of minorities (Kymlicka 1995, Taylor 1994), and that acknowledging, promoting and protecting cultural diversity is a way of getting around the obstacles minorities encounter on their way to full and equal participation in society. Furthermore, recognition of cultural difference in itself was regarded as a crucial means through which citizens would come to nurture a sense of belonging to society; the idea here was that only by being recognised as what they are could people achieve their full potential as citizens and human beings.

Taking a multicultural approach generally means endorsing the idea that society is composed of multiple cultural heritages; however what this implies in terms of actual policies employed by the receiving state differs[10]. Castles and Miller (1998: 248) distinguish between the laissez-faire approach exemplified by the

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[9] Migrants can apply for citizenship after five years of residence in Sweden (only two years residence is required of migrants from other Nordic countries); and there are no formal requirements on cultural or linguistic adaptation.

[10] Stuart Hall (2000: 209) makes a useful distinction between the multi-cultural and multiculturalism: while he uses the 'multi-cultural' to describe 'the social characteristics and problems of governance posed by any society in which different cultural communities live together and attempt to build a common life while retaining some of their 'original' identity ... 'multiculturalism' is substantive. It references the strategies and policies adopted to govern or manage problems of diversity and multiplicity which multi-cultural societies throw up'. Hall in turn goes on to suggest that there are several 'multiculturalisms'. Following his distinctions between different types, the Swedish model of multiculturalism as established in 1975 seems mostly like the pluralist (ibid 210).

US, where 'cultural difference and the existence of ethnic communities are accepted, but it is not seen as the role of the state to ensure social justice or to support the maintenance of ethnic cultures', and 'multiculturalism as government policy ... (which) implies both the willingness of the majority group to accept cultural difference, and state action to secure equal rights for minorities'. Sweden or the 'Swedish model' forms a prime example of this type of policy. The authors identify two forms of policies within the 'Swedish model': 'indirect policies' aiming to guarantee equal access and equal rights to the different spheres of society generally, exemplified by 'anti-discrimination regulations' as well as 'the provision of interpreter and translator services'; and 'direct policies, which relate to immigrants' special needs' (ibid 249). In summary, the idea of this kind of multicultural agenda is to ensure migrants equal rights not only in all the different areas of society, but also to retain, express, and 'live' whichever culture they choose; and furthermore, that that culture – and the people subscribing to it – should be represented in the public sphere.

Geddes (2003) rightly emphasises the importance of corporatist political structures and traditions as central to how multiculturalism took shape in the Swedish context (see also Soysal 1994). Corporatism implies that people are perceived of as collectives, whereby social identities are created largely through expressions of collective experiences (Ålund and Schierup 1991, 1993); and popular social movements, particularly the unions, have indeed been an important part of Swedish history. As Aleksandra Ålund and Carl-Ulrik Schierup (1993: 111) write, the movements have been 'the traditional vehicle(s) of political socialisation and moral supervision in Sweden ... (and) form the cornerstone(s) of social democratic strategies of popular mobilisation and national integration'. The corporate model is significant also in terms of political decision-making; it means that there is a second route besides voting in elections through which citizens can exercise political influence, namely through the organisations in which they are members.

Multiculturalism as it has been implemented in Western societies in the last few decades similarly conceives of people as part of collectives (Ålund and

Schierup 1991, Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992). However, where social movements are constructed around shared political interests, the multiculturalist idea is that a common culture is what binds a minority together as a group (although it should be noted that identities and interests are regarded as interrelated in both corporatism and multiculturalism). Karin Borevi (2004) suggests that the idea of an 'integrative potential of associational life' naturally granted it a place when Sweden developed its multicultural policies; she points out that state funding for migrant associations alongside state-funded mother tongue teaching were the two practical means by which the principle of 'freedom of choice' was proposed to be achieved (2004: 42). The idea was that through forming associations in which they could 'bond' with people of their own ethnic group, migrants would be able to nurture the 'culture' to which they were thought to belong.

Furthermore, following the corporate style of decision-making, the idea was also that migrants would be able at the same time to pursue political interest through associations; hence they were meant to play two roles: 'both to retain cultural heritages and as a channel for political influence' (ibid 31; my translation). Following the emphasis on the socialising role of associations, the political function was in turn divided into two parts: on the one hand the migrant associations would function as 'schools in democracy', that is, to socialise their members into 'the types of attitudes and skills that are needed for a successful political participation', and on the other they would help 'channel the citizens' interests upwards in the political power hierarchy' (ibid 31; my translations).

While the theory of the 'double vote' is attractive and indeed can be seen to enhance the democratic potential of society, there are some serious problems attached to it in practice. Firstly, judging from the Swedish history of corporate decision-making, those who have been given a voice in the political process have in fact been a small number of organisations; the tendency has been for the consensual decision-making process to be something of an exclusive interaction between political parties and the trade unions (Odmalm 2004). An important aspect here has to do with the assumed centrality of work, and while

recognising the important space granted to unions in political issues around class, we need also to ask what happens to the 'double vote' of people not employed in paid work. Those are more often women than men; they are also more often people of minority ethnic groups. Gender and ethnic divisions hence intersect with the class struggle, and amount to a problematic equation with regard to political rights and influence.

Secondly, we have the assumption of homogeneity of interests within the group, and following on from that the issue of representation: who is allowed to speak for the group as a whole, and which interests are taken into account? The issue of internal differences and unequal relations of power has been central to critiques of multiculturalism (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992, Saghal and Yuval-Davis 2000) and is important to emphasise in relation also to how the unions function. Maritta Soininen (1999) questions the 'internal democracy' of the unions, and points out that by being constructed around the idea of a common interest and identity (as workers), unions have tended to marginalise issues irreducible to class, such as racism and sexism[11] that seem to be relevant mainly for minority members of the union collective. Recent Swedish research (Mulinari 2001, 2003; Neergaard 2003) into ethnic minority peoples' experiences of unions indeed suggests that the 'white, male' bias continuously functions to marginalise both individuals and their specific concerns.

An issue rather illustrative of the problems surrounding the corporate 'traditional way of doing things' in Sweden with regards to migrants and/or minority ethnic groups concerns the late implementation of legislation against ethnic discrimination, only enforced in 1994. Maritta Soininen and Mark Graham (1998) suggest the delayed legislation was precisely a result of these traditional corporate structures that not only failed to push the agenda, but that through simply existing were thought to automatically prevent (any) inequalities. Indeed when the issue of legislation has previously come up, it has been dismissed because of a 'reluctance to interfere in the traditional responsibility of the labour market partners' (1998: 528; see also Westin 2000).

[11] Importantly, suggesting that these are irreducible to class is not to say that racism and sexism are not interlinked with processes of class.

When legislation finally was enforced, an important aspect was the wider social and political context of the early nineties (and importantly the increase in overt racist sentiment, see below), which seems to have forced the government to address a gap in legislation formerly justified partly through the usual displacement of racism onto other times and places (Graham and Soininen 1998: 529-30). Furthermore, pressure from outside (the UN as well as the European Union) played an important role here.

Funding for migrant associations, which has always been the main vehicle of control, was allocated primarily on an 'ethnic' basis. Hence people's political interests as well as identities were very much reduced to belonging to an ethnic group, conceived of on homogenous terms (Ålund and Schierup 1991, 1993; Borevi 2004). As Borevi (2004) puts it, 'the representation of interests was presumed to take place through ethnic or national lines'. The primary aim of the associations as well as the working definition of ethnicity is well summarized by the following words, emphasized in a government report preceding the 1975 policy in relation to the possibility of trans-ethnic associations: 'there is no identity as 'immigrant'' (SOU 1974: 69: 294; quoted in Borevi 2004: 45; my translation). This reduction of 'immigrants' to their respective cultural heritage and group belonging meant forgetting about and/or marginalizing[12] migrants that '*did not* share "the own" group's cultural identity or *did not* wish to retain their cultural heritage' (Borevi 2004: 45; my translation, author's emphasis).

While the principles of the initial policies on both immigration and multiculturalism are still to a great extent proclaimed in official rhetoric, and continue to be considered as central to a Swedish ('generous' and 'tolerant') national identity, it was in fact not long before they started to be eroded (see e.g. Appelqvist 2000). In the late eighties, the Social Democratic government started tightening up the asylum policy through a strict interpretation of the Geneva Convention, and excluding 'de facto' refugees (those who did not fall within the Convention definition but that up until then were nevertheless

[12] 'Forgetting' may indeed be the wrong word if the associations were also, as some have suggested (Ålund and Schierup 1991), a way of managing diversity, hence controlling difference. This issue is discussed further in chapter two in a section concerned with links between racism and multiculturalism.

granted asylum on humanitarian grounds) from the right to asylum. The decision indicated a less welcoming attitude on the part of the Swedish state, which according to Westin was picked up by the far right as a justification for expressing racist sentiment; and indeed shortly after the policy change there was a number of attacks on refugee camps and reception centres (Westin 2000: 6-7). Furthermore, the early nineties – a difficult time of recession and high levels of unemployment etc – saw the right wing movements gaining in numbers and visibility[13], as well as the entry into parliament of the Populist Party 'New Democracy'. While opinions vary on the topic of what is cause and what is effect, suffice it to say that at this point, despite open disagreements, the extreme right wing seems to have work in tandem with the government (as well as public opinion) to make life more difficult for migrants, both those with and without a residence permit (Ålund and Schierup 1993, Pred 2000, Tamas 2002, Westin 2000).

Mid-eighties saw a partial step back from the multiculturalism of the 1975 policy, and more particularly from the 'freedom of choice' principle[14]. The idea behind this change according to Borevi (2004) was that the sole emphasis on retaining minority culture and attachment was hampering migrants' integration into majority society. The wider context of this change is significant according to Pred (2000), who suggests that the beginning of a compromise of the freedom to choose one's cultural way of life and affiliations should be seen in relation to a changing character of immigration flows. Earlier, immigration had been mainly European migrant workers; now refugees and asylum seekers from non-European countries dominated, and the general perception seems to have been that the people now entering Sweden brought with them cultures and values not only different, but alien to, and possibly incompatible with, the Swedish way of life. It is important to note that the issue of religion has come to

[13] It is important to note here that Sweden has in some ways become an important location for extreme right wing or Neo-Nazi groups; for example 'Sweden is one of the major producers , distributors and exporters of … 'white power' or 'white noise' music … the sales of which have brought big money to the xenophobic movements' (Westin 2000: 40).

[14] According to Soininen (1999), the policy was compromised also through a mid eighties distinction between immigrant minorities and those regarded as national minorities, of whom the latter enjoyed more rights than the former. As Geddes (2003) points out, at this stage not only the indigenous minorities, but also Swedish Finns, Roma and Jews, had come to be included in the latter definition.

be a central component of this growing hostility to 'others'; the fact that more recent migrants are also largely from Muslim countries has been reflected significantly in popular discourses of 'otherness' (Pred 2000, Borevi 2004, Geddes 2003, Soininen 1999, Ålund and Schierup 1991).

Looking at historical developments in Swedish 'integration' policy, Borevi (2002, 2004) argues that a tension between integrating migrants on the one hand into majority society and on the other into the specific minority group, has been a continuous dilemma for the Swedish state. She suggests that since the first establishment of state funding for migrant associations, a main point of contention has been the question of whether or not these associations lead to isolation rather than integration of minorities. Drawing on the distinction made by Robert Putnam between 'bonding' and 'bridging' social capital (the 'bonding' working to strengthen ties within an 'ethnic' group, and possibly excluding other groups, while the 'bridging' capital works to build ties over group boundaries and hence within society as a whole), Borevi illustrates the risks involved in promoting 'bonding' within minorities, even when that 'bonding' is regarded as a means for achieving 'bridging'. One important way in which the 1975 policy argued for migrant association having wider integrative potentials was through an emphasis on the links provided between newcomers and members of national or ethnic groups already more or less established in Sweden; that is, how they could function like pools of knowledge, experiences and contacts that newcomers could tap into. However, while the investigation that formed the basis for the 1975 policy suggested that integration into the minority and to majority society should not be regarded as mutually exclusive – that 'bonding' could be a means for achieving 'bridging' – later reports and indeed the policy changes that have followed have been critical of this assumption, and in more recent times a segregated reality has been used as the evidence.

Hence it seems that the 'retreat of multiculturalism' (Joppke 2004) in the case of Sweden has been justified with the idea that promotion of difference hampers integration into majority society. However, as Geddes (2003) rightly points out, the cause and effect logic behind this move to some extent functions to veil

social dimensions to insufficient 'integration', by making the problem 'theirs' (or more specifically 'their culture') rather than 'ours'. Interestingly, while a partial acknowledgement of a failure to 'integrate immigrants' has been made, it seems that the Swedish government nevertheless manages to uphold the self-celebratory banner; by implicitly suggesting that through 'our' previous 'generous' and 'tolerant' approach that allowed 'them' all choose their own (read non-Swedish) ways of life, 'they' failed to integrate themselves into Swedish society. In other words, by proposing a retreat from multiculturalism as a solution to segregation and social exclusion, to some extent you come back to the idea that migrants and more specifically their 'difference' is itself the cause of their exclusion from majority society[15].

Ålund and Schierup (1991, 1993) argue that this logic has become increasingly common; they write, the 'dominant ideological trend has been towards culturalising the 'problematic' rather than problematising structural restraints' (1993: 107). From Ålund and Schierup's discussion of the 'new realism' it seems that the recent focus on the 'problems' surrounding the minority population has been combined with the tendency to homogenise and fix cultural differences to amount to a reduction of social problems to 'their' cultural predispositions[16].

Ålund and Schierup emphasise the need to regard changes in discourse and policy on migrants and minorities in relation to the general ideological shift that has taken place in the last two decades. That shift in turn goes hand in hand with a changing political-economic context in Sweden, part of wider global trends, and particularly their expression in the European context. A more neo-liberal direction had been adopted by the Swedish government by the late 80s, improving the position of the market while beginning to dismantle the welfare state; a process that was fuelled by the economic crisis that partly forced the state to reconsider the viability of the Swedish model and the extent of its

[15] It is interesting to note a certain continuity with regards to the relation between culture and the social: while multiculturalism was initially put forward to ensure equal rights and overcome disadvantages along ethnic lines (ignoring social aspects such as racism and discrimination), it seems the retreat from it is done for the same reason (again ignoring the social aspects).
[16] See also Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992 as well as Gilroy 1987 for discussions on the not unproblematic combination of multiculturalism and anti-racism.

public service responsibilities (Soininen 1999). By the early 90s, the 'employment line' had become the new integration strategy, as solidarity was to some extent replaced by the 'duty to work' (Ålund and Schierup 1991: 37-40). The aim of full employment has seen the creation of unskilled and low paid jobs, functioning to overcome welfare dependency while producing a new segment of the 'working poor' (Schierup 2003). Another important feature of the neo-liberal shift has been the decline of the corporate model, and the gradual loss of power and role of the trade unions, to the benefit of the market (Soininen 1999).

Although political-economic shifts began before Sweden joined the EU, trends have arguably exacerbated since then, through harmonization of social and labour market policy, facilitating the success of the common market while ensuring social stability. In a recent paper on EU policy trends with regards to citizenship and the question of social exclusion, Carl-Ulrik Schierup (2003) points towards the central tension between two dimensions of European integration: on the one hand the economic and on the other the political and social. The popularity of the concept of social exclusion for EU policy was initially, he suggests, related to the ability to accommodate both dominant welfare regimes existent in Europe: the social democratic and the more conservative Christian democratic. For the former, the concept of social exclusion was used to address central issues of equality and social participation; while for the latter the most pressing concerns were 'moral integration and social order' (2003: 214). For both, combating 'social exclusion' could be regarded as a central means of achieving their respective goals.

From the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam onwards, Schierup argues, 'we see an increasing confluence of social policy with labor market and employment policies taking place' (ibid 217); and 'an emphasis on *social inclusion* of disadvantaged groups through employment' (ibid 218). 'Social exclusion' at this point has come to focus more or less solely on the issue of (un)employment, while other dimensions to citizenship, and notably those of social and political participation, have become marginalized, along with the 'turn away from *redistribution'* (ibid 221). Schierup writes,

'The stress has been increasingly placed on labor market integration as a precondition for "social cohesion" with the wider implications of poverty and inequality moving into the background ... If the initial focus had been on efforts to reconcile the conservative primacy on "social order" with socialist worries concerning "equality," the core concern now becomes to reconcile "social cohesion" with "economic efficiency." An economic discussion is phrased in terms of efficiency, deregulation and the demand for economic growth, while a parallel social concern counterpoises "solidarity, integration and cohesion" to "unemployment, poverty and social exclusion." But in spite of a language of solidarity the emphasis is here one-sidedly on exclusion from paid work, or on the issue of "unemployment." The cure is, universally, inclusion through paid work' (ibid 220).

In turn we see the emergence of a 'moral underclass discourse' (ibid 222), where (racialized) individuals are problematised as 'scroungers' while structural inequalities are marginalized (i.e. culturalising the social; cf Ålund and Schierup 1991). The solution has become, Schierup argues, to transform 'poor "welfare clients" into different categories of "working poor", permanently trapped in enforced low-status, deregulated and under-remunerated work' (Schierup 2003: 222); and in turn the purpose of 'regulating the poor' seems to be for the benefit of the 'moral majority' and the stability of the social and economic system (ibid 222-4), rather than the welfare of the disadvantaged themselves.

Many of the general structural and ideological shifts taking place in Sweden in the last two decades have been regarded to a large extent as external and 'unavoidable' forces. Sweden's simultaneously harmonised and antagonistic relationship to the European Union is a case in point. The Swedish decision to join the EU was made only ten years ago, and the vote was very close indeed. Swedes remain amongst the most sceptical Europeans (Sydsvenskan 13 and 15 Sept 2003) and considering the arguments used by Swedish EU critics, it is clear that a main concern is the future of the Swedish welfare state. The social

security system is amongst the things where Swedes regard their own society as better than others; environmental policy is another area, and immigration and asylum yet another. Central to the rhetoric of the EU critics before the 1995 referendum was the idea that the best Sweden could do was to stay outside and remain a 'model' for other countries to aspire to. However, while the EU critics had up until then managed to avoid membership, at this point it had also become apparent that although formally 'outside' the union, Sweden had indeed gone a long way in harmonising its various policies in line with the European. An early nineties saying in Sweden was that ironically Sweden had become 'more EU-adapted than EU itself'; and indeed the government defended its adaptation with the idea of external forces and the inability to remain outside and unaffected (Ålund and Schierup 1991; Geddes 2003).

It seems important for my purposes to be slightly cautious when discussing European influences on Swedish policies, partly because the 'no' rhetoric surrounding the recent (2003) Swedish referendum on the monetary union included some worrying signs of nationalism: both in relation to the idealistic portrayal of the 'Swedish model' and the concern for the Swedish people particularly (e.g. Sydsvenskan 4 and 13 Sept 2003). The general discourse tended to celebrate anything Swedish while regarding any negative changes in Swedish society as the result from outside influences, or indeed 'pollution'. We begin to see here the links between self-celebration and the production of otherness (at times threatening the self); these links will emerge more clearly throughout the thesis as central to how racism functions in contemporary Swedish society.

Although the multicultural policy began to erode as early as the mid eighties, an important and explicit shift in emphasis took place a decade later, when the government proclaimed that they had made the mistake so far of 'pointing out immigrants as different' (Borevi 2004); and the future would instead be one of 'integration', no longer perceived to be achievable though difference. What concerns the immigrant associations, the state made efforts to promote activities regarded as working towards the 'integration' of minorities into majority society, and the structure of funding (again the main control vehicle) reflected

this.[17] Interestingly, following the retreat of the idea of promoting cultural heritage, the idea of representation of interests (the second previously central function of the migrant association) seems to have followed a similar path. In fact, the most recent government proposal explicitly states that the associations should not be involved in decision-making processes (ibid); this is arguably in line with the general decline of the corporate model (Soininen 1999).

It is important to note the significance of this point in time (late nineties) with regards to the actual term 'integration'. The former National Board of Immigration was split into two parts: one particularly concerned with asylum and immigration policy; and the other, concerned with anything to do with the lives of migrants after their Swedish residence permit has been given: the National Board of *Integration*.

A recent political debate that seems significant for the present discussion concerns the proposal made by the Liberal party (Folkpartiet) prior to the last General Election (September 2002) concerning language tests for people applying for Swedish citizenship. The proposal was to some extent presented as a solution to a pronounced social exclusion along ethnic lines, and the idea was that if migrants were forced to learn Swedish, they would be more easily 'integrated' into Swedish society. However, critics were quick to pick up on issues marginalised by the sole focus on insufficient language skills as the reason for exclusion. In a letter to the editor in the southern local newspaper Sydsvenskan, a migrant suggests that 'the language is not an obstacle for integration – but society is!'; he goes on to recount personal experiences of having learned fluent Swedish after six years in the country, while after another ten years seeing that his 'Swedish language is deteriorating every year' (21 Feb 2003; my translation).

In response to this letter a few days later, two of the Liberal party's representatives suggest that 'without a common language, multiculturalism will

[17] And indeed in an interview with a representative of the local authority in charge of funding and support for associations, I was corrected when asking about 'immigrant associations' with the words 'we don't have immigrant associations anymore, we just have associations'.

not work'. The two writers begin by countering the above critics' suggestion that the 'language test' proposal is a way of blaming immigrants and not society for their exclusion; they do so by emphasizing other features of the overall 'integration' proposal that propose to change also society and importantly the labour market. However, they then directly go on to emphasize the dimensions of individual responsibility and the importance of a 'common language'.

> 'But then every individual also has an own responsibility for his/her situation. To say that all problems are down to society is not sustainable. Today there are many who after ten years in Sweden are dependent on an interpreter. This impairs these people's possibility to get work and become self-sufficient ... So society and the individual have a mutual responsibility to promote integration. And if we cannot speak the same language and communicate with each other, we will probably also not have a functioning multicultural society' (Sydsvenskan 26 Feb 2003; my translation).

In addition to this, the two party representatives emphasize the fact that the proposal is not at all controversial, as 'in the EU eleven out of fifteen countries have language requirements for citizenship' (Sydsvenskan 26 Feb 2003; my translation); this is a good example of how similar trends elsewhere provides justification for the implementation of policies. This was strongly emphasized also by the Liberal party's leader Lars Leijonborg, who pointed towards the wide-spread 'common sense' of his proposals throughout the pre-election debate. Furthermore, in a slightly aloof manner he continuously referred to an 'immigrant friendly' stance of his party throughout history, which for him seems to have acted as a powerful defence for any proposals put forward; 'proudly presenting' his new integration agenda, Leijonborg suggested that the Liberal party was 'free from all suspicions about racism and xenophobia' (DN 9 Aug 2002).

Interestingly, Leijonborg specifically used the other central issue of their new 'integration agenda', namely to open up routes for labour migration on a contracting basis, using a simple logic that strangely seems to have gone largely

unchallenged in the pre-election debate: 'we are not racist, we want more immigrants, not less.' The fact that the 'immigrants' they 'want' are only certain kinds: only those that come to work, and importantly under conditions that cannot be described as anything but a guest-worker system. Entry would be granted on condition of an employment contract, and when that contract expires, the migrant would have three months to find new work, or otherwise would be sent back to wherever he/she came from; hence the migrant would be excluded from the general social security system others are able to enjoy (DN 3 Sept 2002; see also Geddes 2003; Joppke 2004 and Kofman forthcoming; the selective attitude to migrants is discussed in chapter seven).

The Social Democratic government was critical of both proposals, pointing firstly to the fact that citizenship is not primarily about language skills, and secondly to the fact that implementing a guest-worker system would mean the creation of a second class citizen (DN 3 Sept 2002). The party furthermore emphasised the need to focus on 'integrating' those already living in Sweden but without employment. The debate between the two parties (and others) developed into something of a slinging match of who was in fact 'the racist'. While the Social Democrats accused the Liberals using the above arguments, the Liberals accused the Social Democrats for portraying (potential labour) migrants as a threat to the jobs and welfare of the Swedish people and whipping up xenophobia by emphasising border controls (DN 23 Aug 2002). Mauricio Rojas is the Liberal party's expert on issues on immigration and 'integration', and regarded as the 'man behind' recent proposals. He says about the position of PM Göran Persson: 'No prime minister in Europe is pursuing that kind of campaign. It is unique in Europe. He is scaring the most exposed with future immigration, just like Le Pen and Pia Kjersgaard' (SvD 3 Sept 2002; my translation).

The pre-election was perceived by many migrants as 'degrading and insulting'; a woman of an Iranian women's group says after a meeting between the women and politicians: 'there is a tendency to put more demands on immigrants. The parties are fishing voters through a tougher attitude towards immigrants' (Östgöta Correspondenten 2 Sept 2002; my translation). The women

interviewed also emphasised, similarly to the letter to the editor quoted above, the fact that everyone wants to learn the language, but that is not the main problem; the main problem is discrimination (see also Knocke 2000).

The Social Democrats won the 2002 General Election, and neither 'language tests' nor a system for labour migration of the version proposed by the Liberal party was established in practice. However, while they may have failed to get into government, the Liberal party indeed won a great deal of public support, visible both through an increased acceptance of a more 'realist' stance: less tolerant and more demanding of migrants, and a relatively high increase in number of votes. Furthermore, while the Liberal party seemed determined to maintain an 'anti-racist' image throughout, a recent survey has shown that the 'new' voters for the Liberal party are in fact 'more critical towards immigration' (Sydsvenskan 23 Jan 2003). Furthermore, judging from everyday conversations as well as a substantial amount of newspaper articles and letters to the editor, the idea of 'language tests' seems indeed to have achieved 'common sense' status in the public opinion; and it represent a significant shift in the idea of citizenship. As Charles Westin (2000) points out, in the (by now slightly old) Swedish model, citizenship has been regarded 'as an important instrument for integration'. However, although the law has not (yet?) changed, more recently the idea of citizenship seems to be regarded less as a right and a way into integration, and more as a final reward for successful integration; importantly defined not in terms of employment or political participation, but in terms of the acquisition of Swedish language skills.

The Liberal party has continued to make 'integration' proposals since. The first comes out of the view that 'we have to put higher demands on people dependent on benefits', and the proposal amounts to forcing people into extremely low-paid jobs as a way of making them work for their benefits (DN 15 Feb 2005). The second is the implementation of a law that would increase the possibility of courts to deport migrants without Swedish citizenship who have committed crimes. Mauricio Rojas says in an interview, 'it should not be possible to abuse hospitality in Sweden ... this is an important marker. Most Swedes are happy to take in refugees. But they don't want criminal

foreigners ... to allow crooks and criminals stay in Sweden, that really nurtures xenophobia' (Rojas quoted in Sydsvenskan 2 March 2005). The crimes given as examples that would enable the judge to sentence the condemned to deportation are 'honour murder, violence against women, assisting in genital mutilation, child marriage or forced marriage' (Sydsvenskan 2 March 2005). It seems possible to suggest that the choice of examples is another 'important marker' made by the Liberal party, considering the collective stigmatization often taking place through debates about such forms of crimes (an issue further discussed in chapter five).

1.2 Malmö, Sweden.

While to some extent 'Sweden' is indeed the focus of my research, it seems important to give some background to the specific locality within Sweden where I have undertaken my research, as to some extent specific local processes seem to have had an impact on the issues of concern. Malmö is the third biggest city in Sweden with just over 260 000 inhabitants. There was a large influx into Malmö of both labour migrants from the fifties to the seventies, and refugees from the seventies onwards. Today 161 nationalities are represented in the city; 24% of the population are foreign born, while 32% fall into the category of 'foreign background', which means having both parents born abroad [18]. Compared to Stockholm and Gothenburg, the two bigger cities, Malmö's foreign-born population is the fastest growing. Since 1990, the proportion of foreign-born in Malmö's population has grown from 16 to 24 percent, compared for example to a growth from 15 to 19 percent in Stockholm. Furthermore, the current 24 percent can be compared to the 12 percent national average (Malmö stad, 2003).

[18] The definition of this has changed very recently, contributing greatly to a change in statistics. Up until 2003, the definition of a person 'with immigrant background' was a person with at least one parent born abroad. No doubt the change goes in line with the in the Swedish case extreme sensitivity to labelling people in terms of ethnic or national background; however, it also means we have something of a knowledge gap when it comes to statistics here, including that of segregation and/or exclusion in the labour market as well as housing, etc.

Migrants from Europe comprise the largest part of the migrant population in Malmö. 17 percent (of Malmö's foreign born population as a whole) are from the EU and other Nordic countries (7% from Denmark); the rest are from Southern and Eastern Europe, and the largest groups are from Yugoslavia (14%), Poland (8%) and Bosnia-Herzegovina (8%)[19]. Following that are a number of groups from Asia, notably Iraqis (9% of the foreign born population as a whole), Lebanese (4%) and Iranians (4%). Groups from South America and Africa are virtually equal numbers (around 4 percent of the foreign born population are from each of the two continents); the largest national groups within them are Chileans and Somalis respectively[20].

During this period under which the city's population has changed dramatically, other changes have also occurred, which in turn have had substantial effects on the lives of the population as a whole, and the immigrant part of it particularly. Malmö has traditionally been an important industrial city. Thirty years ago, 49% of the city's population were employed within the manufacture industry (above all in textile and the ship-making industry). Today, that number is 14%, which has meant that between 20 and 30 000 people have lost their jobs following this development. These structural changes, transforming Malmö from an industrial city to 'a regional centre for service production' (Beverlander, Carlson and Rojas 1997: 29; my translation), have had important consequences for the migrant population, today characterised by high unemployment levels (Interview with local politician, 2002).

The most recent overview of the 'integration' of migrants and minorities (Rapport Integration 2003) points towards a pronounced ethnic segregation in Swedish society; an even more recent monitoring of regional developments in the south of Sweden confirms this (Region Skåne 2004). Looking at Malmö specifically, we have on the one extreme the area of Rosengård, where 59% of the inhabitants are born abroad, as compared to the other extreme, the area of

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[19] The groups are distinguished as coming from 'Yugoslavia' and 'Bosnia-Herzegovina' in the statistics; hence specifying the time of arrival; the Bosnian group arrived mainly in the early nineties and as the result of ethnic cleansing.

[20] The Somali group is hence relatively small in numbers compared to other groups (1, 3 percent of the whole foreign born population) (Malmö stad, 2003).

Limhamn-Bunkeflo, with a 9% foreign-born population. Adding a further ethnic dimension to this, we see that the foreign-born population in Limhamn-Bunkeflo displays the highest proportion of Europeans, while Rosengård display one of the lowest (Malmö Stad 2003). It is important to point out that these ethnic divisions correspond strongly to socio-economic divisions. In fact, in relation to arguments about the Swedish 'integrative failures', the example of Rosengård frequently comes up.

The recognition of geographical lines falling along the lines of advantaged/disadvantaged or included/excluded forms part of the background to the government's 'metropolitan project' (storstadsprojektet) that begun in 1999. Another important aspect was the more recent reluctance to 'point the finger' at disadvantaged groups, now suggested to have stigmatizing effects; instead the government chose to point the finger at certain areas, which not incidentally were areas with high levels of immigrants or people with 'immigrant background'. The stigmatization of areas such as Rosengård alongside their 'problem' inhabitants is well documented (Molina, Eriksson and Ristilammi 2002; Ristilammi 1998)[21]. The metropolitan project designated 24 particularly exposed areas in four Swedish cities; four of these areas were in Malmö: Rosengård, Fosie, Hyllie and Södra Innerstan. These areas were then allocated funding for projects that would in different ways work towards improving the life conditions of the areas' inhabitants, and importantly promote 'integration' into all areas of society: the labour market, education, politics, and so on. Aside from those general aims of the overall project, it was to a great extent left up to the various local administrations how they would choose to use the funds appropriately following the specific conditions of their respective localities. Funds were allocated in the state budget between the years 1999 and 2003 (Andersson et al. 2003; Storstadsdelegationen 2005).

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[21] Most of the areas that in recent years have come to be signified by low socio-economic profile, high unemployment and social problems, as well as high proportions of minority inhabitants, are the areas of the 'One Million programme' from the mid eighties, when the government decided to address a severe shortage of housing by building flats in towns and cities throughout the country. The areas developed through the One Million Programme have been very stigmatized in the public discourse generally and mass media specifically; 'ethnic' Swedes as well as migrants who have achieved upwards mobility have gradually moved away from them, and been replaced by more recent groups of migrants.

The recent evaluation of the project (Storstadsdelegationen 2005) states that there has been a general positive development with regards to employment levels, social welfare dependency as well as levels of educational achievement. However, an overall difference remains when comparing the 24 areas to the rest of society; furthermore, there are also great differences between the 24 areas themselves. 'Of all the inner city areas included in the local development agreements, Rosengård in Malmö is the area that displays the worst conditions what concerns employment levels, need of long-term income support and educational levels' (ibid 8; my translation). The employment figures give a good indication of the general situation there: in the year 2002, the national level of employment was 75,9 percent; the average of the 24 inner city areas was 52,9 percent; while in Rosengård, the employment level was as low as 28,7 percent. The figures with regards to 'Swedish-born' as compared to 'foreign-born' was as follows: the 'Swedish-born' national level was 79,3 percent, compared to 56,4 percent for 'foreign-born'; in the 24 areas 66,6 percent of the 'Swedish born' inhabitants were employed, compared to 44,4 of the 'foreign born'. 'Even here, Rosengård was the worst area, where only 25, 2 percent of the foreign-born was in employment 2002' (ibid 12; my translation). Another significant set of figures relates to long-term welfare dependency: in Rosengård, 'every third person ... was in need of long-term income support 2003 (30, 3 percent). On average for the inner city areas was one of ten inhabitants (10, 3 percent) dependent on income support 2003. For the whole of Sweden, the corresponding number was 1, 5 percent' (ibid 12; my translation).

1.3 Somali and Bosnian refugees in Malmö, Sweden

The early nineties, the time during which most Somalis and Bosnians arrived, was a difficult time in Sweden generally, with poor economic prospects and high levels of unemployment; and for the newly arrived it meant it was difficult indeed to get a foot in. However, while this fact has become a somewhat dominant explanation to the failure to include newcomers into the labour market, it is important to note that the recent upturn of the economy and the

increased levels of employment generally has not corresponded to a proportional increase in levels of employment amongst the refugees that arrived during the difficult times (Knocke 2000; Westin 2000). Another dominant explanation to disproportional levels outside the labour market of some groups concerns differences in educational levels; this is argued to be of particular significance as the labour market has changed. However, the foreign born population is in fact, on average, not less educated than the Swedish born population. The case of Iranians is a case in point: their average level of education is higher than the Swedish average; however Iranians is one of the groups most exposed to exclusion from the labour market (Bevelander, Carlson and Rojas 1997; Westin 2000)[22]. Furthermore, as Wuokko Knocke (2000) and others have argued, culturalist arguments are commonly used to explain labour market exclusions.

The 2003 'Report Integration' indeed points towards the fact that large parts of the population stand outside the labour market, and it seems clear that the lines dividing inside/outside fall along ethnic lines. However, the reluctance on part of the Swedish (politically correct) state to conduct ethnic monitoring means the statistics say little, aside from establishing the fact that your life chances generally are better if you are born in Sweden by two Swedish parents than all other possible combinations. In official statistics, distinctions are usually made using categories such as 'foreign born' or 'foreign citizen'; while these indicate significant differences, they fail to illustrate differences between different groups of migrants; they also exclude in the latter case ('foreign citizen') migrants that have become naturalized but may nevertheless be disadvantaged because of their ethnic background, lack of social capital, limited language skills, 'foreign' name and/or accent, as well as in the former case ('foreign born') persons born in Sweden with one or two parents born abroad, that may be disadvantaged for similar reasons. However, a partial recognition of this has meant that it is increasingly common to see a distinction made between either

[22] By arguing this, I am not suggesting that racism is the only reason for the exclusion of some groups from the labour market; as Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992: 77-95) rightly point out; racist processes intersect with labour market processes. Furthermore, the authors emphasise that socio-economic positions are determined also to some extent by access to social and economic networks outside 'majority society' that may crucially affect that position. Hence, achieving upwards mobility does not preclude the experience of racism.

Nordic/non-Nordic migrants or European/non-European. The latter in both cases are normally found to be more disadvantaged than the former (Rapport Integration 2003).

Research into experiences of discrimination undertaken by Anders Lange (2000) at different points throughout the nineties has provided an important overview of both the nature of discrimination in Sweden as well as the groups particularly exposed. These findings are based primarily on questionnaires distributed amongst on the one hand minority groups believed to be exposed (African, Middle Eastern and South American) and on the other groups believed to be less exposed (such as Finns, Danes and Poles) that would provide a point of reference; and the findings indeed correspond largely to the initial hypothesis of who are more exposed than others. The category 'other Africans' (excluding Ethiopians, including Somalis) displays the overall highest levels of experienced discrimination, followed by Iranians, Ethiopians, Chileans, Iraqis, 'other South Americans', Turks, 'other Arabs', and so on. At the other end of the scale, we see Danes reporting the lowest levels of experienced discrimination, followed by Finns, Danes, and Yugoslavs. The fact that Lange has chosen to group together 'Yugoslavs' is somewhat problematic concerning my ability to use this as a reference point for the Bosnians that feature in my study. As some of my interviewees have pointed out, there are great differences between the Yugoslavs who came to Sweden in the sixties and seventies and the refugees who arrived more recently; the most significant difference with regards to the reporting of experienced discrimination has to do with class and educational background, and as will be seen from some of my interviews, this contributes greatly to both expectations and evaluation of experiences.

In terms of the arenas in which respondents in Lange's survey experienced discrimination, the labour market got a very high position, particularly amongst some groups found to be highly exposed (Africans and Iranians). Another finding was that people reported having very negative experiences of public authorities, and felt a lack of confidence in these as a result. Interestingly, in a comparison between Lange's studies on Sweden and a similar study in Denmark (Möller and Togeby 1999), it was pointed out that discrimination in

the two countries seems to occur in different arenas: while the Danish study pointed to a higher level of experienced discrimination in shops and in relation to credit than the Swedish, the Swedish displayed much higher levels in the area of employment as well as in the workplace. This is interesting firstly because it emphasizes the problems encountered by migrants in an area (work) that is regarded as central to Swedish identity and society (see the discussion about the role of the unions above). Secondly, although it is not possible to draw conclusions from singular findings, it seems significant to mention here a point made by a man who works with issues around racism in Denmark, and who has also lived in Sweden: comparing the two countries, he finds that hostility is often more open in Denmark than it is in Sweden, where he says things work more subtly[23]. In relation to this it is worth noting also Lange's finding that people in general found it very difficult to make Swedish friends.

Considering the immense ethnic diversity of the migrant population in Malmö, I found it important to include a comparative dimension to my study of everyday racism. Following the findings discussed above (Lange 2000) that indicate great differences in how different people within the group normally referred to on singular terms ('immigrants') experience life in Sweden, it seemed necessary to include people regarded as both more and less exposed to the processes of racism. Again, with the absence of sufficient group statistics in terms of employment, housing, welfare dependency and so on, I had to go by the rough categorizations provided by official statistics, as well as studies of particular minorities or differences between minorities (Lange 2000, Regeringens rapportserie 1999:4, Bevelander, Carlson and Rojas 1997, Ålund 1998). Following the seemingly significant distinction between Europeans and non-Europeans, I wanted to include one group from each; secondly, I found it interesting, considering the literature on racism in relation to which my research ideas were formed, to include one black and one non-black group (this would

[23] I interviewed this man at an early stage of my PhD research, when I intended to compare the everyday lives of migrants in the two countries. This was the point at which the Danish discourse on immigration and minorities had turned particularly and explicitly hostile, and the idea of an 'everyday life' comparison was to examine what occurs in the space between official discourse, policy and everyday life. Although I had later to lessen the scope of the research and focus on Sweden only, the aim of exploring the gap between formal positionings and lived realities still stands; see the aims outlined after this section.

enable me to some extent to explore the issue of colour in relation to racism in Sweden); finally, I found it important that the groups nevertheless shared some characteristics, without which any form of comparison would have been rather complex and complicated. The refugees from Somalia and Bosnia-Herzegovina all arrived mainly during the first half of the nineties and hence under the same social, economic and political conditions[24]. Furthermore, contrary to common perception about refugees in Sweden (and particularly those from countries designed as underdeveloped), both groups include many well-educated people[25]. However, although both groups have suffered severely from the difficult times during which they came to Sweden, they seem today to be rather differently positioned in Swedish society (overall). The Somalis have found it particularly difficult to recover from the period of arrival; employment rates are still extremely high (Integrationsverket 1999), and research suggests that they have indeed suffered from high levels of discrimination (Lange 2000, Westin 2000). Furthermore, Somalis tend to live in segregated areas where low numbers of Swedes live; they also have limited social contact with Swedes (Integrationsverket 1999).

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[24] It is worth mentioning here, particularly because of the general trends in immigration and asylum legislation discussed earlier, the decision made by the Swedish government to grant all refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina permanent resident permits. A difficult economic situation combined with the mass flight situation resulting from the war in former Yugoslavia brought on a debate throughout Europe on the possibility of establishing a policy of temporary resident permits; this would enable countries to manage mass flight situations while avoiding the long term financial strain it was suggested the granting of permanent permits would imply (the high commissioner of the UNHCR had agreed to the development of a temporary status regime). The idea was that the refugees would return to their country of origin as and when the things that had forced them to flee had settled down. While Norway and Denmark both gave the Bosnian refugees only temporary permits, the Swedish government, while also having established a clause for temporary permits, decided nevertheless to grant the entire large group of Bosnians permanent residence (Appelqvist 2000, Brochmann, 1997). In her analysis of the Swedish debate surrounding the issue, Maria Appelqvist (2000) argues that an important issue to be taken into account when trying to understand the Swedish (seemingly 'generous') decision was the fact that a new centre-right coalition had just taken over government. The coalition parties when in opposition had criticized the tightening up of immigration and asylum policy undertaken by the Social Democrats; it could hence be suggested that the decision was part of a wider political debate. However, it is also interesting to note the trajectory of the temporary clause: while it came onto the political arena in the first place in relation to the mass flight of the Bosnians – a group that was nevertheless granted permanent permits – it has since been used for other groups, notably Somalis. A report from 1999 claims that 800 (about five percent of) Somalis in Sweden at this point only had temporary permits (Integrationsverket 1999).

[25] I do not have statistics on the Bosnians, but it seems likely to assume that the Bosnians are generally better educated than the Somalis (see e.g. Ålund 1998). However, the Somalis in Sweden have much higher average levels of education than what is commonly assumed. The Integration Board's report on Somalis (1999: 7) states that '63 per cent of the adults have at least upper secondary qualifications. Of these, some 16 per cent are university trained'.

A final reason why the two groups seemed suitable for me to interview was that they had been in Sweden long enough to speak sufficient Swedish language to be able to do the biographical interview; furthermore, I believed I would (and indeed did) get narratives full of stories about different aspects of Swedish society: the point of entry into the new society; engaging (or not) with the Swedish population and with various authorities; contacts with the labour market, with employers as well as the workplace and colleagues, and so on.

1.4 Aims and contributions

As mentioned in the beginning of this introduction, it is common in Sweden to displace racism onto other times and places. The first and perhaps overall aim of this thesis is to challenge that displacement; by drawing on refugees' lived experiences of Swedish society, I aim to illustrate that racist structures of society are reproduced through different mechanisms (sometimes overt, sometimes subtle) taking place in everyday life. My wish is that this thesis will contribute to knowledge of the specific workings of racism in a contemporary Swedish context. The originality of my research lies firstly in my use of the biographies of migrants to understand racist processes in Swedish everyday life; through exploring people's different experiences as well as analysing the frameworks and narrative devices they use to make sense of and present themselves and the world around them, I aim to broaden the view of how racism works in Swedish society. Secondly, through the comparative dimension implied by researching two groups thought to be differently exposed to racism, I aim to identify a number of processes whereby racist structures are achieved. Apart from adding to the literature on racism in Sweden, I also believe that understanding the details of the processes whereby unequal structures are achieved is paramount to the ability of developing strategies for challenging them (Anthias and Lloyd 2002).

The second aim of my thesis is to explore the gap between on the one hand formal rights and possibilities, and on the other lived realities. If we let the

policies concerning migrants' rights and entitlements in Sweden speak alongside the numerous documents proclaiming the value of diversity and condemning ethnic discrimination, we could easily reach the conclusion that by and large, things seem fair and equal. However, looking at social reality, a different image appears. By considering the two in relation to each other, I wish to explore how and why that gap has come to exist (and seems to be growing). Furthermore, I will discuss the consequences of a failure to realise and/or accept the existence of the gap for speaking of, and dealing with, inequalities generally, and racism specifically. I will illustrate how a domestically and internationally celebrated history, in which inequalities such as racism have no place, is specific to racist processes in Sweden.

While my thesis could to some extent be regarded as an ethnography of racist processes in contemporary Sweden, I hope also to contribute to the literature on racism more generally. While maintaining the idea that social processes and phenomena need to be understood in specific contexts, my engagement with theoretical debates alongside empirical findings will add to those debates; particularly I aim to further develop the notion of everyday racism (Essed 1991).

1.5 Chapter outline

The overall thesis is divided into two main parts. The first part outlines the theoretical and methodological framework used (chapters two and three), as well as gives some further context relevant for the study of racism in Sweden (chapter four). The second part is composed of four chapters, constructed around my empirical findings: the different themes that have emerged alongside the arguments I have developed.

In the next chapter (chapter two), I begin by looking at some contemporary theoretical and conceptual debates surrounding the issue of racism. I try to capture some of the central arguments concerning racism and its definition, and position myself in relation to the existing literature. Firstly, I discuss the debates

surrounding the question of a 'cultural racism' and its proposed links to multiculturalism (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992, Balibar 1988, Gilroy 1987); secondly I assess the issue of the 'conceptual inflation' of the concept of racism (Miles 1989) as well as proposed solutions to this. I argue that although it is important not to inflate concepts to the extent that they can no longer be used effectively, it is important also not to let the boundaries drawn around a concept limit our understanding of the processes in focus, in this case racism.

Philomena Essed's theory of everyday racism emphasizes the importance of understanding overall structures through everyday 'routine' and sometimes 'mundane' (Billig 1995) situations. I draw on her theory alongside the concept of intersectionality (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992) as well as that of somatic normativity (Puwar 2001, 2004), to propose an inclusive definition of racism that manages to take into account the different mechanisms whereby racist structures are achieved and maintained. Furthermore, looking towards Gramsci (1971) and Foucault (1977, 1979), I discuss how racist structures are naturalized through the constitution of racist subjects as well as objects and more specifically through the 'microphysics' of racism (Foucault 1977).

In the third chapter I discuss the research methods I have used. However, because of my strong insistence on a close relation between theory and method, I prefer to regard the chapter as a logical continuation of the previous rather than separate. Like Essed (1991) I argue that researching lived experiences is vital for understanding the micro processes of racism. However, I then go on to distinguish my approach from Essed's in terms of both sample and method. I argue that in order to explore details and nuances more fully, we need to attend not only to experiences but also to differences in experiences, without which we risk yet again ending up with a generalised view of what racism is, how it works, and who suffers from it. By exploring, on the one hand, two different ethnic groups that are very differently positioned in Swedish society, and, on the other, attending to numerous intersections with social processes other than ethnicity, I have tried to gain access to a multiplicity of racist processes, some of which may go unnoticed in studies that lack comparative dimensions.

Furthermore, a comparative approach also highlights differences in degree of racism.

If the introduction of a comparative dimension to researching lived experiences of racism is the first way in which I develop Essed's model of everyday racism, the other has to do with the specific interviewing method I have used. Following the argument that racism functions in numerous, often subtle and even seemingly 'natural' ways, as well as the definitional limits to the concept itself, I found it important to not only ask my interviewees questions about experience of racism, but to try and find out as much as possible about their life experiences generally. Furthermore, asking people to talk about themselves and their lives more generally rather than limiting their narratives to a single aspect also provided me with access to not only their experiences but also to their understanding of those experiences, themselves, society and their place within it. This added an interesting dimension to my study of racist processes, namely exploring how migrants themselves (to different extents) buy into or internalise racist discourse and accept inferiority and/or exclusion, which in turn adds to the naturalisation of racist processes. Chapter three also includes a short presentation of my interviewees, a description of and reflection on the interviews and the analysis (along with my role within the research process); as well as a discussion about the other methods used in the research, and how they have been combined.

Chapter four gives some further context important for a study of racism in Sweden. It brings out some features that first of all make that study specific, and second, produce obstacles in the way for such a study. The chapter is about the fact that limited understandings of Swedish society on the one hand and of what racism is on the other means that it has been and continues to be difficult to talk about racism in a contemporary Swedish context (Pred 2000, Sawyer 2000). If 'Sweden' is defined according to a selected history of 'democracy', 'equality' and 'solidarity', 'racism' is defined through a series of 'otherwheres and otherwhens' (Pred 2000).

I present 'Sweden' and 'racism' as two sets of knowledge that are logically incompatible. This means we will not be able to speak about racism in Sweden as anything but occasional and exceptional until we simultaneously question our (limited) understanding of what binds Swedes together. In other words, a theory of racism in Sweden has to also be critically deconstructing the meaning of 'Sweden'.

In chapter five, I look at the 'imagined relations' set up between 'Swedes' and 'others' in both theory and practice. In the first part of the chapter, I discuss how otherness is produced in the 'popular imagination' (Pred 2000). Considering recent public debates, I discuss how 'the other' is imagined largely through gendered constructions (Puwar 2003, Yuval-Davis 1997), and how at the same time perceptions of a gender equal 'self' is thereby reinforced (de los Reyes, Molina and Mulinari 2003). Furthermore, I try to illustrate how these (gendered) constructions of 'us' and 'them' act also to produce and sustain a saviour-victim relation, epitomised through the image of the 'immigrant woman', to be saved from her 'patriarchal man'. However, inserting the notion of intersectionality (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992) into this discussion, I point towards a significant gap between rhetoric and practice. With reference to recent criticisms of how 'other' women are treated in Swedish society (de los Reyes 2003; Daragahi 2002) I consider how rhetoric aside, the idea of 'saving the immigrant woman' is undercut by discourses that simultaneously deems her in need of help and locates her in an 'other' sphere, fixed in time and untouchable (Saghal and Yuval-Davis 2000).

In the second part of the chapter, I move beyond the discursive production of otherness (and self-ness), to consider how saviour-victim relations are established and 'lived' in the everyday. I explore how the category of the 'refugee' has become institutionalised, and hence come to greatly affect the experiences of refugees, as well as limit the options available for them. I draw on the experiences of Somali and Bosnian refugees to discuss how they negotiate in everyday life the boundaries set by the 'refugee' in the Swedish popular imagination. This chapter includes a discussion of the role of the civil

servant in migrants' lives; I consider these in terms of both the structures in which they operate, and the agency they exercise.

Chapter six is about the different limits set to what migrants can be in Swedish society. Drawing on Mireille Rosello's (2001) notion of postcolonial hospitality in which the migrant is imagined as a 'guest' in the 'host' society, I discuss the different spaces available on the 'good' and 'bad' sides respectively. I explore first of all lived experiences of (gendered) stereotypes of migrants in everyday action and how they affect interactions between the migrant and public institutions, employers as well as the general public, and furthermore set limits as to what opportunities migrants are given and to which spaces in society they are allowed to enter. Secondly, I discuss ways of being a 'bad' migrant in the popular imagination, focussing on the distinction between migrants that can be used for economic purposes and those dependent on welfare, as well as the racialization of crime.

Thirdly, on the topic of the 'good migrant', I consider the conditions migrants have to fulfil as and when they enter various spaces. Introducing the idea of conditional inclusion, I argue that distinctions between inclusion and exclusion are insufficient for understanding racist processes: in order to grasp more fully ways in which migrants are disadvantaged, we need to attend to the range of requirements they need to live up to in order to be 'included' (Essed 1991, Puwar 2001, 2004). Furthermore, drawing on the experiences of my interviewees, I discuss how simultaneous processes of othering and assimilative pressures (Puwar 2004) intersect, and determine alternatives for different groups of migrants. Finally, I argue that the subtlety of the racisms experienced by Somali and Bosnian refugees means that they are difficult to pinpoint and challenge.

In chapter seven, I examine more explicitly the gap between official discourse and everyday practices and processes. I begin by discussing the aims and approach outlined in Malmö council's most recent (1999) 'Integration plan', in which the value of diversity and the importance of including minorities is strongly emphasised, in relation to a reality that looks very different. I discuss

the frustration expressed by many of my interviewees, who feel somewhat cheated, but also unable to confront the issue because of its invisibility or subtlety. Secondly, I continue the discussion about ideological shifts, which has begun already in this introductory chapter. I pick up at the point where 'integration' became an official stance of the Swedish government (Borevi 2004), hence the marking of a 'retreat of multiculturalism' (Joppke 2004, see also Geddes 2003). After a brief discussion of the notion of 'integration' and what it implies, I consider specifically the in Sweden popular 'project' format of 'integration', as discussed by interviewees. I argue that the idea of a (temporary) integration 'project' signifies a reluctance to transform traditional modes of operation, in turn related to a celebration of Swedish traditions and the Swedish model.

Thirdly, through the question of whether these trends are 'un-Swedish', I ask into the extent to which recent tendencies should be regarded as a break with the past. Questioning the celebrated Swedish stance on migration and minorities, By regarding both 'hospitality' (Rosello 2001) and 'tolerance' (Essed 1991) as discourses emerging from unequal relations of power, I argue that we need to avoid accepting them as 'generous' per se, but look towards the interests integral to them as well as the inequalities they encompass. Furthermore, taking migrant associations as a case in point, I discuss previous research (Ålund and Schierup 1991, Odmalm 2004) that has suggested that although the 'right to cultural difference' is the official rhetoric surrounding the associations, in reality there has always been a strong emphasis on 'Swedishisation', i.e. assimilation. Drawing on the experiences and views on associational life in Sweden discussed by my interviewees, I go onto suggest some alternative roles of migrant associations; from what I have found, it seems possible to suggest that rather than a choice in a plethora of 'cultural differences', the associations have come to act often as a survival strategy following social exclusion.

Chapter eight moves beyond people's experiences per se, to consider how these are made sense of and narrated. I argue that people understand and describe things differently depending on their expectations as well as the extent to which they buy into dominant discourses on hospitality, racism, and 'integration'.

These are in turn dependent on differential access to critical discourses. Having found a discrepancy between experiences of racism and narrations of racism, I emphasise on the one hand the role of subjectification, or the production of 'docile bodies' (Foucault 1977), in racist processes, and on the other the following importance of making available a critical language with which to make sense of subtle racisms.

Finally, in chapter nine, I conclude my findings of how racisms function in a contemporary Swedish context. I emphasise what Sweden share with other European societies and what is specific about racism in Sweden generally, as well as the internal differences: the different extents to which groups of people experience racism, and the specificities of that experience. Furthermore, I move beyond the specific Swedish case, and emphasise my general methodological and theoretical contributions, particularly with regards to the notion of everyday racism.

Chapter two. Understanding contemporary racisms

In this chapter, I will trace some of the contemporary debates surrounding the notion of racism, outline central arguments, and position myself within the literature. After noting briefly the emergence of the concept of 'racism' and some earlier usages of the word, I discuss the notion of 'cultural racism', and assess to what extent this is useful for understanding contemporary racisms. Considering amongst other things the essentialist conception of 'culture' inherent to much talk about 'cultural differences', I emphasise continuities with older ('scientific') forms of racism. I then discuss some proposed links between (cultural) racism and multiculturalism, and look at various critiques of multicultural policy, such as that adopted by the Swedish government in 1975.

In the second part of the chapter, I look at some of the (implicit or explicit) arguments surrounding the 'conceptual inflation' of 'racism', as proposed by Robert Miles (1989); and I opt for an inclusive notion of racism that is sensitive to specific contexts (CCCS 1982) and intersections between different structures, positions and processes (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992). Drawing on Philomena Essed's (1991) notion of everyday racism, I suggest we need to understand racism in terms of everyday events and practices that function to reproduce racist structures; and furthermore attend not only to racist discourse or ideology, but also processes of normativity/whiteness/Swedishness lived in the everyday (Puwar 2001, 2004).

In the third part, I introduce Gramsic's (1971) notions of 'common sense' and 'hegemony' as well as Foucault's (1977) theory of the 'micro-physics of power', in order to try and make sense of how racist structures are achieved through consent. Finally, I include a brief discussion about a number of concepts used in the thesis, in order to clarify my use of them and emphasise how they are interrelated.

2.1 Theories of racism: historical developments – from scientific racisms to 'cultural' racisms

Theories of racism have developed over time, with changing social, economic, political and cultural conditions, as well as with changes in theories (or sciences) about humans and differences between (groups of) humans. The word 'racism' first came to use in the late 1930s, and was used to refer to an idea about biological or genetic differences between groups of people that placed those groups in hierarchies of ability. One of the first definitions of racism is Ruth Benedict's, which describes racism as 'the dogma that one ethnic group is condemned by nature to congenital inferiority and another group to congenital superiority' (1943, quoted in Solomos and Back, 1996: 4). Early definitions, concerned with more or less explicit ideas about racial superiority, were most often exemplified by the ideologies underpinning National Socialism in Germany, forming the background to, and justifying, the party's actions: exclusion, sterilization and ultimately extermination of those of an 'inferior breed'.

As John Solomos and Les Back (1996: 31-37) illustrate, 'race' emerged as a concept in the late 18th and early 19th Century, reaching its peak in the late 19th and early 20th Century. Theories of distinct human races, 'defined as being culturally, psychologically and physically distinct' (ibid 34) became more and more scientific with time, leading the authors to suggest that 'ideologies of race are as much a product of modernity as are socialism and liberalism' (ibid 36). Ideas about 'superior' and 'inferior races', with reference to various 'characteristics' were central to the structuring of various social relations in different historical contexts, ranging from Nazi Germany to colonial and imperial relations, followed by racialized structures within Western societies. Solomos and Back in fact argue that in later times and with the influx of migrants into Western Europe, racializing discourse shifted from justifying colonial practices 'abroad' to include social structures and practices 'at home' (ibid 53-6). Authors such as David Goldberg (1993) and Charles Mills (2000) have drawn on this history to argue that racism must be regarded in Mills' words 'not as an anomaly' to liberal societies, but as a fundamental structuring

principle: Goldberg writes of a 'racist culture', and Mills of the 'racial contract' structuring Western liberal 'democracies'.

Notably, the 'race relations' paradigm that developed in the US in the 1920s did not include 'the study of racism as a doctrine'; '(t)he emphasis in sociological studies of the 'race problem' during these decades (1920s-50s) was on the origins of race prejudice, the interplay between prejudice and conflict, the impact of assimilation on the life of African Americans and the processes through which racial conflicts could be mediated and overcome' (Solomos and Back 1996: 3, 4). The word 'racism' hence emerged in the different context of Nazi Germany (see also Wieviorka 1995: 5). Similarly, in the somewhat later British version of 'race relations' (60s and 70s), events and structures were studied without necessarily questioning the concept of 'race' itself, and without relating them to ideological formations.

In the 80s, Robert Miles proposed the need to move from a sociological study of 'race' to one that takes 'racism' per se as its object of analysis. Coming from a Marxist perspective, Miles emphasised 'race' as a human construct functioning to veil power and economic relations, hence forming a central aspect of capital accumulation (Miles 1989). De-validating racism's central concept of 'race' was, according to Miles, a central move for challenging racisms, without which one would risk reproducing the very theories and justifications on which racist structures are built. Emphasising the ideological dimension to racism, Miles (1989, 1993a) uses the concept of racialization to illustrate how 'races' are constructed in the 'popular imagination'. He describes the process of racialization as the process whereby certain characteristics are attributed to a whole group of people, and come to be seen as inherent properties of that group. Furthermore, such properties are then used themselves as explanatory tools, to 'racialize' the social world; that is, to regard societal phenomena as the outcome of racial pre-dispositions.

Moreover, Miles (1993b) has emphasised the importance of attending to 'internal' as well as 'external' racisms. Discussing the 'internal colonialism' that pressed for assimilation while simultaneously 'othering' certain minority

groups (notably Jews), he argues that racism within Western societies cannot be reduced to a post mass-immigration phenomenon. The historical marginalisation of internal racisms in British theorisations of racism seems central to the focus on black and other so-called visible minorities (Silverman and Yuval-Davis 1999), as mentioned in the previous chapter.

A general trend with regard to changes in racializing discourses is that the scientific preoccupation with 'race'[26] has later been openly dismissed, whereby societies have gradually moved away from theories that more or less explicitly regard differences between (groups of) people as genetically determined. While such developments have (in theory) been important with regards to inequalities, no longer directly justifiable with reference to genetic hierarchies, at the same time they have not generally been accompanied by changes in the structures and processes that nevertheless disadvantage certain groups. That is, while it is no longer in most contexts accepted to speak of different 'races', inequalities regarding groups previously more or less overtly marked as 'racially different' persist more often than not. This fact has led some theorists to speak of a 'new' racism, or more specifically a 'cultural racism', suggesting that scientific racisms of the past have been replaced by racisms that justify inequalities with reference to 'cultural differences' (Gilroy 1987; Pred 2000).

Theoretically, replacing 'biological' with 'cultural' distinctions opens up for possibilities. Recognising that people are formed in and by history and 'culture' is a step away from the more or less eternal divisions suggested by previous racist theories. However, as Stuart Hall (1996a: 447) points out by saying that 'the point of contestation' now lies '*inside* the notion of ethnicity itself' (author's italics), the successful abandonment of eternal divisions and distinctions depends on how the words 'ethnicity' and 'culture' are actually understood: whether they are understood as heterogeneous and changing entities or as homogenous and fixed in time. If 'cultures' are thought or spoken of on essentialist terms, difference and boundaries are nevertheless cemented, and inequalities resulting from these continue to be justified. Furthermore, as

[26] It is important to point out the constant questioning of scientific racism throughout Europe (Miles 1993: 38-41).

Solomos and Back (1996: 19) suggest, the fact that the 'racial narrative' is increasingly 'coded' in the language of 'culture' or 'cultural difference' also makes possible a negation of racism. They write, '(c)ontemporary racisms have evolved and adapted to new circumstances. The crucial property of these elaborations is that they can produce racist effects while denying that this effect is the result of racism ... the champions of their racism can claim that they are by no means racist but merely interested in protecting their way of life and that the issue of colour or phenotype are irrelevant to their arguments' (ibid 27).

According to Balibar (1988), the idea of a 'new' racism is problematic on the one hand because there are continuities in terms of both structures and practices, and on the other because talk of 'cultural differences' was an important part also of 'old' racisms. He gives the example of culturalisation of Jews in anti-Semitic discourse. However, he nevertheless emphasises a significant shift in the theoretical bases underlying 'old' contra 'new' racisms – a shift I find particularly relevant for understanding not only contemporary racist practices and effects, but racism's place in politics, and how it has meant that, in Paul Gilroy's (1987: 40) words, 'radical and conservative, socialist and openly racist theories and explanations of 'race' have been able to converge dramatically'. Discussing this convergence, Balibar argues that the theoretical and political basis of 'old' *anti*-racism in many ways has become the starting point of 'new' racisms. He suggests that previously anti-racists were fighting 'against the hegemony of certain imperialisms and against the elimination of minority or dominated civilizations – 'ethnocide'', whereby 'anthropological culturalism' (emphasising the equality and permanence of different cultures) became a suitable tool, and hence formed the dominant theoretical basis (Balibar 1988: 21). He goes on to argue that the 'new' racism 'takes this argumentation at its word' (ibid 22).

In terms of the political convergence, Gilroy discusses how the 'right to cultural difference' is proposed and upheld throughout the political spectrum. It unites the left emphasising the importance of equality across ethnic boundaries and the 'politically correct' emphasising the importance of maintaining all the different 'cultures' (regarded as of equal value) with those who justify discrimination,

segregation and exclusion with reference to 'cultural differences' (and the nurturing effects isolation can have on the minority culture). The argument is usable also in anti-immigration rhetoric (Gilroy 1987, see also Ålund and Schierup 1993, Solomos and Back 1996: 98-101, 115-20). Indeed, a Swedish far right party (Nationaldemokraterna) recently presented itself as the ultimate representatives of 'multiculturalism' by wanting to limit mixtures and transgressions.

The multicultural policy adopted by the Swedish parliament in 1975 was based on the idea that promoting, protecting and nurturing 'cultural differences' was the best way to ensure the equal rights of the minority ethnic population. The set of minority rights implemented through that policy has been regarded as perfectly in line with a 'generous' and 'tolerant' Swedish national identity generally, and hence as an obvious response to the recognition of a de facto multi-cultural society resulting from immigration. However, critics have emphasised the importance of considering other aspects of the emergence of the 1975 multicultural policy of 'equality', 'freedom of choice' and 'partnership'. According to Charles Westin (2000), part of the background to the policy was a concern to avoid the 'race riots' observed in other European countries (such as Britain) at the time; it must hence be regarded as to some extent reactive. Furthermore, Ålund and Schierup (1991) remind us of the relative confidence at the time that the 'freedoms' given right to were not particularly threatening to the Swedish way of life; this has been partly confirmed by the step back from multiculturalism with time, and as the 'cultures' claiming the 'right to difference' were perceived as threatening (Pred 2000).

Critics have suggested some severe shortcomings with the multicultural approach, particularly with regards to the 'equality' promoted. A central concern is how the word 'culture' in multiculturalism is defined and perceived (Anthias 2001, 2002b; Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992; Hall 1996a). The problem seems to be that the 'minority cultures' we are urged to tolerate and live alongside are mainly perceived in singular, homogenous and static terms, giving little space for multiplicity, changes or transgression (Ålund 1997, Ålund and Schierup 1991, Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992; Appiah 1994; Brah 1992).

As Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis (1992: 158) put it, '(m)ulti-culturalism constructs society as composed of a hegemonic homogenous majority, and small unmeltable minorities with their own essentially different communities and cultures which have to be understood, accepted, and basically left alone'.

K Anthony Appiah (1994) similarly suggests that the discourse on the 'authenticity' of cultures, which he finds central to multiculturalism, is essentialist and disregards differences within ethnic groups. He argues that the protection of collectives threaten the autonomy of the individuals designed as members of the collective. It does so by disregarding internal relations of power that disadvantage many of those who cannot claim the right to define authenticity and speak for the collective as a whole; and furthermore, whose silence and oppression may even be part of what is defined as 'authentic' per se. The failure to acknowledge internal diversity and control is precisely what leads Susan Moller Okin (1997) to ask whether multiculturalism may be 'bad for women'[27].

Nira Yuval-Davis (1997a and 1997b; Saghal and Yuval-Davis 2000) suggests that the policy of protecting cultural difference has allowed for self-proclaimed leaders to speak for the 'ethnic' community as a whole, and impose their values and policies on all other members of the community. She argues that the definition of 'authenticity' indeed has often functioned to sustain or even promote gender inequalities within minority ethnic groups, as what is often seen to be characteristic of 'cultures' concern gender and family relations. She writes,

> 'This liberal construction of group voice ... can inadvertently collude with fundamentalist leaderships who claim to represent the true 'essence' of their collectivity's culture and religion, and have high on their agenda the control of women and their behaviour' (Yuval-Davis 1997a: 58).

Apart from gender, other internal power relations, such as class, sexuality, age and religion, are similarly forgotten or marginalised when a few persons are

[27] Note that Moller Okin has been criticised for idealising Western culture as gender equal, and reproducing stigmatising images of 'others' (Anthias 2002b: 276-9).

allowed to represent and speak for a community as a whole (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992).

If one problem with multiculturalism concerns internal power relations, another lies in the construction of relations between majority and minority populations, as well as the production and/or maintenance of boundaries between various minorities. In terms of the relations between majority and minorities, it seems possible to suggest that multiculturalism reproduces the majority's power over the various minorities and in society as a whole by ensuring that minorities will remain precisely that: minorities (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992, Gilroy 1987, Essed 1991, Ålund and Schierup 1991). Understanding and promoting these as static and bounded, one prohibits people from crossing boundaries, and actively work against transgression, and the possible influence minorities might otherwise have one society at large (Ålund 1997; Gilroy 1987).

In her critique of multicultural policies in the Netherlands, Philomena Essed (1991) emphasises need to consider the unequal power relation that underlies the (to multiculturalism central) notion of 'tolerance' itself. She writes,

> The dominant group is supposed to be tolerant. Therefore, the dominated must believe in the "goodwill" of the dominant group. Obviously the idea that both parties must be equally tolerant ignores the power relations involved ... one group has the power to tolerate, the others have to wait and see whether they are going to be rejected or tolerated. Therefore, cultural tolerance is a form of cultural control (ibid 210).

Discussing the boundaries produced between different minorities, Essed goes on to suggest that the establishment and/or maintenance of 'ethnic niches' as a result of the multicultural 'leaving them alone' policy makes it increasingly difficult for minorities to unite across 'ethnic boundaries' and pursue common political goals (ibid 212-3). This issue is central to Paul Gilroy's (1987) critique of multiculturalism, in which he emphasises that the sole emphasis on 'cultural rights' has meant that social and political aspects of minorities' lives are forgotten or marginalized (remember the Swedish government's response to

trans-ethnic associations: 'there is not identity as 'immigrant''). Rather than regarding multiculturalism as a form of anti-racism, he instead juxtaposes the two, and suggests that multiculturalism is not only insufficient, but that it even poses obstacles for the struggle against racism.

2.2 Contemporary theories of racism – how to use the concept?

Theorists have remained divided on the issue of whether or not it is appropriate to speak of contemporary racisms as particularly 'cultural'. On the one hand we have the argument that an essentialist view on what 'culture' actually is (Ålund 1997, 2003; Hall 1996a) means that abolishing the category of 'race' is more rhetorical than actual; and on the other, as Balibar (1988) points out, the cultural dimension to racism is not particularly 'new'. However, an acknowledgement of the importance of studying the cultural constructions of ethnicity and national identity as well as other forms of communal identity in relation to racism has become commonplace (Anthias 1995).

Cultural Studies scholars have challenged reductionist accounts of social relations, and argued for the importance of the specificity of social formations, of relating power to the 'culture' of a society, and paying detailed attention to that culture through which social (power) relations could be properly understood (CCCS 1982, Gilroy 1987). Taking a stance against 'grand theories' of culture and society, the idea is that the failure to contextualise social (or cultural) phenomena entails a failure to understand them properly (see also Brah 1992). The emphasis on context and the specificity of constructions of national identity and/or ethnicity, in which the narratives of belonging that condition racist structures are situated, have meant it has become commonplace to speak of racism on plural terms.

In the introduction to their anthology composed of studies of racism in different contexts, Avtar Brah, Mary Hickman and Mairtin Mac an Ghaill (1999) argue that the movement beyond 'grand theories of racism' and the accompanying emergence of 'the concept of multi-racisms' is crucial, because it enables

researchers to overcome the limits imposed by the strict and singular definition of racism in the past. Abandoning the 'black and white' perspective on racism they suggest means we can now include more groups in our studies, and fill the previous gap in which the obstacles and difficulties faced by groups of migrants and/or minorities excluded from the previous 'racism' paradigm can be accounted for. Furthermore, I would add, it means that we can add not only groups, but also a range of locations that have proved resistant to that paradigm by virtue of lacking a substantial 'black' population to which 'racism' was more or less reduced; speaking of racism on plural and context-specific terms means we are able to challenge such denials and displacements.

Concerned however with the expansion of the word 'racism', Robert Miles (1989) inserts a word of caution against a 'conceptual inflation', and urges for it to be used only in cases where references are made to biological differences – to 'races'. Picking up on Miles' narrower definition of racism and racialization, Jan Rath (1993) suggests we introduce new concepts to account for phenomena that fall beyond his more or less strict definition; and argues that concepts of 'minoritisation', 'immigrantisation' and 'culturalisation' (rather than racialization) are more suitable for the Dutch, Belgian and Swedish cases respectively.

While it is important not to water down conceptual tools to the extent that they can no longer be used efficiently, there are also problems with some of the boundaries drawn around concepts in order to avoid such 'inflations'. Referencing the earlier discussion about essentialist views of culture and ethnicity and the common collapse of those categories into the de facto category of 'race', I find Rath's argument rather problematic. Firstly, the proposed analytical separation of processes implies that the term 'racism' is not appropriate for discussing those three societies. Secondly, I would argue that what is important is not merely the discursive tools through which relations between the majority and minorities are established and/or maintained, but the actual nature of those relations.

As Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992) point out, one aspect of Miles' caution concerns the difficulty in pinning down the specific causes for exclusion and disadvantage: if these are related to relations and/or constructions of class, gender, 'race' or ethnicity, etc. While Miles' solution to this dilemma is to reserve the notion of racism for its ideological dimensions, Anthias and Yuval-Davis find such narrow conceptualisations unhelpful for understanding social relations and disadvantage. Instead, they urge for the need to be always attentive to intersections between different social positions, locations, constructions and relations. As Floya Anthias writes elsewhere (1999), 'ethnicity and racism are discursive, systemic and intersubjective practices and outcome of social relations which do not emanate exclusively from ethnic or racial categories ... but are linked to broader social processes such as those of class and gender'.

Intrinsic to the notion of intersectionality is the fact that we cannot consider the simultaneous effects of various forms of social stratification ('race', class or gender) by simply 'summing up' the processes that function to marginalise or disadvantage (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992; Brah 1992; de los Reyes 1998; de los Reyes, Molina and Mulinari 2003; Knocke 1986, 2001; Yuval-Davis 1997a). As Avtar Brah (1992: 144) puts it, 'it is imperative that we do not compartmentalize oppressions'. From this follows that in the same way that feminism needs to pay attention to how women are differently located following lines of ethnicity, class, sexuality and so on (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992, Brah 1992, Butler 1990), anti-racist strategies have to be equally sensitive to different (and multiple) locations (see Yuval-Davis 1999, 2002 on the notion of a multi-layered citizenship).

An important example of the complex scenario produced by intersections between gender and ethnicity are the differences in effects of multicultural policies just discussed, from which we see that groups being granted the 'right to cultural difference' (often portrayed as anti-racist; see Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992, Gilroy 1987) have very different effects on different individuals within those groups. Another issue is the importance of attending to the gendered (but also classed) nature of racialising processes (Anthias and Yuval-

Davis 1992, Essed 1991). As we shall see in the chapters that follow, the constructions of 'immigrant men' and 'immigrant women' that have greatly affected the people reduced to them in the popular imagination, have done so in sometimes very different ways[28].

Emphasising intersectionality leads Floya Anthias (1999) to argue that 'racisms are not limited to those discourses or practices that identify the population that is hailed in terms of race categorisations'. Instead, she defines a 'racist practice' as 'any practice that produces racist effects, and where ethnic markers correlate with differential treatment', and in this she includes both 'procedures' that 'disadvantage or exclude' minority people as well as '(f)ailure(s) to provide enabling opportunities where issues of language proficiencies and cultural insider knowledges may be aspects of inclusion'.

Concerned to find a common denominator to the different things we put under the headline of racism, Michel Wieviorka (1995) asks 'is there a unity to racism?', and if so, what is it, and how can we conceptualise that unity? His own proposed answer is that we can only find the common denominator when we 'consider the phenomenon as an action' (1995: xv) – in other (Anthias') words, as a 'racist practice': a practice that produces and/or maintains structures that 'disadvantage or exclude' people marked as racially, ethnically or culturally different. For Philomena Essed (1991), this (structural inequalities) is what constitutes 'the basic agenda of racism'.

In her theory of 'everyday racism', Essed suggests that terms such as 'institutional' or 'structural' racism on the one hand, and 'ideology' on the other, are insufficient explanatory categories. She writes, 'racism is more than structure and ideology. As a process it is routinely created and reinforced through everyday practices'. She emphasises, however, that those 'everyday practices' should not be regarded as phenomena in themselves, as distinct from structures, but rather as the day-to-day experiences, the practical applications

[28] This is not to be taken to mean that the end result is always different; however, my concern is largely with the processes through which an end result is attained, and here gender constructions are central.

and articulations, of (racist) structures. 'The concept of "everyday racism" ... connects structural forces of racism with routine situations in everyday life' (Essed 1991: 2). Similarly, in his discussion of institutional racism, Simon Holdaway (1999) emphasises the 'mundane' and everyday dimensions of racism as they are ingrained in occupational cultures.

Essed identifies three dimensions to everyday racism or, as she puts it, three areas of conflict, through which the everyday lives of 'Blacks'[29] are shaped. First of all, a conflict over norms and values, which she calls the 'cultural dimension'. Second, a conflict over resources, which is what she refers to as 'the basic agenda of racism': the power relations between different (ethnic) groups, and the structural inequalities that result from these. While the content and process of the first will differ between societies, depending on their, histories and specific social, political and economic contexts, Essed suggests that the result of specific cultural formations and expressions nevertheless point towards unity of racism at the second, structural, level. The third dimension is a conflict over perspectives, i.e. the overall framework through which various events in society are read and meanings made. Essed outlines this conflict as bipolar: 'white' versus 'black' understandings of society; while racism posits a central role in the 'black' perspective, it is absent and/or denied in the 'white'.

Attending to the ways in which 'society's material and non-material resources' (1991:186) are unequally distributed along racial/ethnic lines, Essed outlines a range of means by which this is attained, ranging from segregation, discrimination, harassment, underestimation, inflexibility (214-45), to various ways of 'undermining opposition to structural subordination' (245-70). Hereby, she tries to include in her definition of racism all the events and processes that affect the everyday lives of 'blacks' negatively and unequally in comparison with the 'white' majority, and similarly to Anthias (1999), she keeps an inclusive notion of what counts as 'racist practices'.

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[29] We see already a limit inherent to Essed's approach to everyday racism, i.e. the reproduction of a black-and-white understanding of racism. Robert Miles (1993b) has criticised Essed for failing to consider non-black groups.

Understanding racism in terms of 'the basic agenda' means being attentive to *all* the different ways in which racism functions (to maintain the structural inequalities at stake). This brings us to the relevance of issues of normativity and (the invisibility of) 'whiteness'. If the discourses that separate 'us' from 'them' on cultural or biological terms form one part of the story of racist structures and processes, the (ethnic, white, Western) norms that underlie everyday practices form another, alongside the common denial of the existence of such norms, or rather perhaps, their culturally specific nature. Hence, we need to consider the different ways in which racism is not only spoken, but practiced or 'lived': it's practical, institutional, and to most people (Essed would add to most 'white' people) invisible, dimensions.

The invisibility and the following subtlety of everyday lived whiteness comes out precisely from it being situated in supposedly 'neutral' discourses, such as 'professionalism' or 'politeness': scripted behaviour that is culturally specific, but expressed and understood in universal terms. Nirmal Puwar (2001, 2004) develops the notion of 'somatic normativity', defined as 'the corporeal imagination of power as naturalised in the body of white, male, upper/middle-class bodies' (2001: 652). She has researched the experiences of what she calls 'space invaders' (women and racialized minorities) amongst other places in the senior civil service. In her (2001: 652) article she suggests that the senior civil service is particularly interesting, 'as it is exemplary of all those professions which deny the existence of a historically located somatic norm, and insists on neutrality, impartiality and objectivity' (for further discussions about the unspoken and normative nature of 'whiteness', see e.g. Dyer, 1997; Fanon, 1967; Hall, 1997; Nayak, 1997; Said, 1978). Challenging this 'somataphobic representation of the body politic', Puwar brings out the experiences of Black people in senior civil service positions to illustrate the different ways in which they are made to feel misplaced (658-67).

Puwar talks of the 'assimilative pressure' of the 'soft things', referring to the 'subtle codes' through which social spaces are formed, and argues that you have to conform to these normative codes of behaviour in order to be accepted. The codes she suggests are rooted in a specific body (the somatic norm: white

and male), but that have lost their cultural specificity by becoming simply 'normal', 'common sense' behaviour in a particular social context, whereby behaving properly becomes equal to 'performing whiteness' (and simultaneously 'disavow(ing) Blackness') (2001: 662-664). Introducing Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital into this context, Puwar rids the notion of 'performance' of its' simplistic connotations, and emphasises that it is not a matter of 'simpl(y) picking up' a role, but rather of a role 'slowly acquired through time by moving through White 'civilising' spaces': a process in time, whereby 'whiteness' slowly becomes 'part of a person's habitus' (ibid 667). Puwar also refers to Franz Fanon's (1967) analysis of Black people in White (colonial) spaces, in which he illustrates how speaking 'the colonial master's language' could enable the colonized to move upwards from 'his jungle status' (Puwar 2001: 664-7). Both Fanon (1967) and Bourdieu (1986) connect specific cultural performances, or the possession of the right cultural capital, to career success, which brings us back to Essed's (1991) 'basic agenda of racism' – the unequal distribution of material and immaterial resources – here explicitly related to the extent to which people are able to conform to the somatic norm.

Central to this argument is the fact that speaking of inclusion and exclusion in 'either-or' terms is insufficient for understanding the mechanisms at work. Both Essed (1991) and Puwar (2001, 2004) draw on the experiences of racialized minorities in various situations and positions to illustrate that the issue (of racism) is not merely about the obstacles involved in actually 'getting in' to society, but also about the conditions under which access is given, and the everyday living conditions of those supposedly 'included'. They point towards the series of ways in which Black people in higher positions are made to feel inferior, not taken seriously, their opinions ignored; in a word, the different ways in which they are made to feel excluded from and/or inferior in the space in which they are formally included.

Throughout my interviewing, I have repeatedly been asked if my concern is only with 'Swedish racists', or if I will also consider racisms between different ethnic minorities. This point is often made by 'Swedes' who feel unjustly accused of racism and suggest that 'they are so much worse than us'. Pointing

towards for example animosities between Bosnian and Serbs or Croats, or between different groups of Africans, the argument is that if I want to see *real* racism, I should listen to what they say about each other.

> 'Well, I don't want to point the finger, but those who have immigrant background themselves can say horrible things about other immigrants ... The main racism today in society is amongst immigrants themselves. It's Yugoslavs who hate Somalis, and others hate Yugoslavs and Arabs, and everyone hates Gypsies. And then the first generation that come here, they don't even like their own fellow countrymen' (policeman, quoted in Larsson, Cederberg and Laczak, forthcoming; my translation).

Although I do not intend here to try and answer the question if 'racism' is the sole property of 'whites', suffice it to say that my study is concerned mainly with majority-minority relations, in which ideas, prejudices and sentiment felt and expressed amongst minorities, aimed either at other minority groups or the majority population, do not occupy a central position. So, yes, my concern is with 'Swedish racists', not because I think perhaps Swedes necessarily hold more racist ideas than other people, but because Swedes (in Sweden) generally have the power – culturally, socially, politically and economically – to allow those ideas to influence the everyday lives of minority peoples a lot more strongly than ideas held by minorities. As Essed (1991: 42) puts it, 'the racist practices of those who have power of position (authority) and power of property, as compared with those who do not have such power, are similar in nature but different in impact'. Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992: 12) similarly argue that power and effect is central to the issue of racism; in fact they suggest that '(x)enophobia ... becomes racism when there are power relations involved'.

Furthermore, indebted to the view that racist ideas and sentiment are products of social relations, my take on the issue of inter-minority racisms would be to consider these mainly as outcomes of a disadvantaged and/or 'outsider' social position. Discussing conflicts between some minority groups in Malmö over what they found to be unequal distribution of resources for cultural projects, one of my key informant interviewees suggested that more than anything, this

conflict should be regarded as something of 'a fight over the crumbs'. As a result of the council cutting down on funding for 'culture' and community work, various groups started blaming each other for abusing scarce resources, and arguing about which cause was more worthy than another. By speaking of this as 'a fight over crumbs', I do not intend to deny the actual existence of tensions between different 'ethnic' groups currently living under the same Swedish roof, or their historical dimensions. However, letting such tensions speak for themselves entails the risk of ignoring social and political dimensions to them (both previous and current), and reduce those to 'cultural properties' of the various groups Therefore, I would emphasise the fact that such conflicts between minorities have to be seen in relation to a context in which they are (all) already disadvantaged (see Ålund 1998, on how 'ethnic' conflicts may be exported from the country of origin as a result of exclusion from the host society and the following need to affirm belonging elsewhere).[30]

2.3 The cultural dimension: how racism is produced, maintained and justified

In her threefold model of everyday racism, Essed suggests that the structural dimension 'presupposes ... the working of culturalized racism' (1991: 186). That is, 'the basic agenda' as outlined in the previous section is dependent on a cultural dimension, through which it is produced, maintained, justified, and in

[30] As Gunnar Myrdal and others have shown, more overt and expressed forms of racist sentiment is more common amongst the lower classes in society – amongst groups that are disadvantaged themselves. Stephen Castles (1993: 25) argues that an increase in racism in recent decades must be related to changes in society: a 'change in living and work conditions, the dissolution of the cultural forms and organisational structures of the working class, and the weakness and ambivalence of the state'. Wieviorka (1993, 1995: 81-98) suggests that the decline of the labour movement opened up a space for racism: the communal identity previously provided by the movement (feelings of belonging to a tight-knit working class community and the safety and security that followed) had fragmented, and the search for a sense of belonging to fill the gap left enabled the growth of an identity based on racist identities and affiliations. Furthermore, Wieviorka suggests that the scapegoating of minority groups also becomes a way of dealing with the fear of downward social mobility or the fear of losing social status, or in other words, a way of escaping society's 'lowest' position. Finally, Balibar and Wallerstein (1988) emphasise the crucial social function the internal division of the working classes (through racism and sexism) has for maintaining the status quo of an unjust (capitalist) system.

the words of Solomos and Back 'made popular' (1996: 156). Floya Anthias rightly points out that for context-specific studies on racism, what is important is not merely to establish the groups that suffer more and less, but the processes by which racist structures are achieved (Anthias 1999; see also Anthias and Lloyd 2002).

As discussed earlier, the move away from the idea of racism as solely composed of 'ideas about racial inferiority' (Solomos and Back 1996: 18) has enabled researchers to study the interconnections between nation(alism), national identity, culture(s) and race/ethnicity to try and grasp ways in which racialized structures are produced and maintained. To these various constructions of common identity I would add also the importance of considering such constructions on both more local (in the case of my study the specificity of Southern Sweden and particularly 'malmöitiska' features) and global levels (such as European identity, or ideas about Western values and ways of life), and emphasise the part these play in explicit or implicit discourses on 'us' and 'them'.

For considering the making of a common identity on either of those levels, Benedict Anderson's (1983) notion of an 'imagined community' is useful. He uses it to describe how a group of people most of whom neither know nor know of each other come to think of themselves as a community, sharing spaces, values, ideas and 'ways of life'. Michael Billig (1995) emphasises the different routine, 'mundane' practices whereby people come to think of themselves on 'national' terms, and reproduce certain structures of society accordingly. By speaking of a 'banal' nationalism, Billig suggests that the idea of 'nationalism' needs to go beyond neo-fascist groups, and include those 'mundane' practices that may be invisible to most members of the nation, but the consequences of which can be severely felt by those imagined as outside of the national community. As Billig (1995: 6) emphasises through his account of the numerous ways in which 'the nation' is reproduced daily, 'banal does not imply benign'.

Importantly, imagined communities are imagined not only through narratives of common origin, culture, values (Anderson 1983) and future (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992), but also through the production of difference. In other words the imagined 'self' is constructed through an acknowledgement of otherness, or marking a distance to what one is not. In fact, some authors argue that by being the privileged and allegedly universal norm, the 'white' has managed to by and large remain undefined, while instead defining the 'non-white' as culturally particular (Dyer 1997; Fanon 1967; Hall 1997; Puwar 2001, 2004). Edward Said's (1978) classic theory of Orientalism discusses how the body of knowledge about the 'Orient' that has emerged out of imperial power relations between the East and the West functioned to define (Eastern) 'them' as well as (Western) 'us'. Both definitions play parts in the 'mundane' everyday practices of common identity, on the one hand through the marking of otherness (Fanon 1967) and on the other through the (largely invisible) processes of normativity (Puwar 2001, 2004).

Considering 'mundane' everyday practices in relation to racist processes and structures, we need to understand the processes whereby certain elements of a culture have come to be 'naturalised' or 'common sense' ways of thinking, acting and being. Antonio Gramsci (1971: 322) defines common sense as 'the uncritical and largely unconscious way of perceiving and understanding the world that has become "common" in any given epoch'. He emphasises the practical dimension to 'common sense', and suggests that certain understandings of the world are 'lived', in everyday activity, and in the relations that both form and arise out of it. He argues in fact that the success of a philosophy in becoming 'common sense' lies precisely in its achievement in becoming 'a conception of the world that is implicitly manifest in art, in law, in economic activity and in all manifestations of individual and collective life' (ibid 328). Furthermore, that success is dependent on managing to integrate and unite all parts of society and all social groups: 'to create an ideological unity between the bottom and the top, between the "simple" and the intellectuals' (ibid 329). This brings us onto another important concept in Gramsci's theory of society, namely 'hegemony'.

Hegemony is central to Gramsci's idea of power and the exercise of power in modern societies. He makes a distinction between 'wars of manoeuvre' and 'wars of position' according to which power is achieved, and suggests that in modern times the latter is the common route to gaining and reproducing power (ibid 57-8). Emphasising the need for both coercion and consent, Gramsci argues for the importance of 'leadership'. 'Leadership' is different from 'domination' in that it includes 'moral and intellectual' dimensions; that is, ways of producing and managing consent. While coercive forms of power exercise would function by forcing people to comply to the will of the rulers, consensual forms work by making the will of the dominant the will of society as a whole; that is, by making certain group interests 'popular'. Hegemony is achieved when the ruling class has managed to incorporate subordinate groups (ibid 228-39).

Stuart Hall (1996b) emphasises that 'hegemony' cannot be understood in terms of a single 'dominant ideology'. Instead he argues that in fact, its success in integrating the whole of society lies in its multi-facetted (but also invisible) character. In other words, a series of relations between rulers and ruled have to be established in order to ensure the emergence and maintenance of a 'collective will' (see also Howarth 2000). As Hall emphasises, Gramsci's hegemony must be understood as achieved through difference rather than similarity, without which it would not appeal to all the different groups it has to integrate (1996b: 435-440). He writes, the 'multi-dimensional, multi-arena character of hegemony ... represents a degree of mastery over a whole series of different 'positions' at once', making 'hegemony' 'a complex social composition' (ibid 424-425)[31]. Similarly, 'common sense' is intrinsically complex and contradictory (Gramsci 1971: 340-2).

Attending to the multiple relations through which power is established and exercised brings us to Michel Foucault's (1977) attempt to outline a modern paradigm of power exercise. Like Gramsci, Foucault (1977, 1979) argues that

[31] In fact this is partly why Hall (1996b) finds Gramsci particularly relevant for the study of race and ethnicity: his emphasis on complexity, contradictions and historical specificity of social formations.

the common conception of power as coercive (and repressive) is insufficient and incorrect. His study of the 'micro-physics' of power emphasises on the one hand multiplicities of power exercise and on the other the following invisibility of power. Furthermore, Foucault emphasises that contrary to traditional conceptions of power, which mainly regards power exercise in terms of repression, power is productive. In fact, he argues that its productive functions are what enables us to accept it.

> 'If power were never anything but repressive, do you really think one would be brought to obey it? What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse' (1980: 119).

Speaking of subjectification, Foucault (1977, 1979, 1980) suggests that subjects are produced in and by power relations through specific discourses, whereby they come to embody and 'live' the social relations of which they are products. He argues that the 'micro' nature of power exercise is aimed at the production of 'docile bodies', carefully achieved not by a 'wholesale' strategy, but precisely through working the bodies 'retail', i.e. specifically and individually (1977: 136-7). He talks of social spaces as disciplining spaces, and in turn suggests that '(d)iscipline is a political anatomy of detail' (1977: 139).

In his discussion of the Panopticon (1977: 195-228), Foucault suggests that a constant surveillance is in place in 'disciplining' societies. He writes, the 'major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power' (ibid 201). Importantly Foucault emphasizes the role of the individual in the production of 'docile bodies': through understanding the self in relation to the discourses available to make sense of the world, individuals govern themselves into the places designed for them specifically in the complex web of power relations. He suggests two mechanisms at work to control deviance through surveillance: 'branding' and 'altering' (marking otherness and processes of normativity); the role of shame is a central factor here. Furthermore, Foucault (like Gramsci)

argues that although consent is the major vehicle for the exercise of power; coercion and punishment of deviance is nevertheless retained.

David Howarth (2000) argues that although Foucault's theory of power is important, it does not sufficiently link the micro level to macro systems of domination, bringing us back to the usefulness of the notion of 'hegemony'. While 'hegemony' is a useful way of conceptualising overall power structures and relations, the complexities and specificities just discussed need also to be emphasised. For Gramsci (1971), the complex nature of hegemony (and the 'common sense' that sustains it) means that hegemonic moments should never be regarded as fixed. They are always at risk of being challenged or overthrown, whereby David Howarth suggests they are best regarded in Laclau and Mouffe's words, as 'partial fixtures' or 'partial closures' (Howarth 2000: 119-20). Similarly, Solomos and Back (1996: 199) emphasise the complexity and frequent incoherence of racism's cultural or popular dimensions, and remind us that popular culture always includes critical discourses, leading to constant 'ideological battles'.

By looking at the shortcomings of approaches to racism that over-emphasise either the 'racist individual' or 'racist structures', Michel Wieviorka (1995) argues for the importance of including notions of both structure and agency. While the individualised approach importantly emphasises 'what goes in the minds of whites', hence 'the consciousness or subjectivity of the actor' (ibid 20, 25), it also fails to sufficiently analyse the relationship between the individual and society. Wieviorka suggests that they are thereby 'running the risk of decontextualizing that consciousness or subjectivity, of disengaging racism from the relations within which it arises and develops' (ibid 25). On the other hand, he finds that the structural approach often fails to sufficiently account for the role of the actor and his/her relationship to and role within structures. Although he agrees with the importance of situating the problem within the body of society rather than its margins, Wieviorka points out the fact that such theories, without an active engagement with the actor, runs the risk of ending up with a view of racism that 'blames the system', and following on from that, functions to somewhat excuse individual behaviour (ibid 64-6).

While this leaves Wieviorka somewhat suspicious of notions such as 'institutional racism', following the above discussion, it seems possible to speak of institutional racism without losing notions of complexity, agency and accountability. As Gramsci emphasises, 'hegemony', and the 'common sense' that produces and sustains it, can only be regarded as successfully achieved when integrated in the whole of society; hence institutions in turn must play an important role in sustaining 'culture' and the power relations that underpin it. Therefore, I would argue that the notion of 'institutional racism' is not only valid but important for understanding racist processes and structures. However, with the reservations against generalising about 'common sense' and 'hegemony' just discussed, it seems we can also move beyond the more limited conceptualisations of the institutional, and introduce notions of change, contradictions and instability, without for that matter losing the critical edge central to the notion itself. As Floya Anthias (1999) argues, speaking of 'institutional racism … by no means allows us to treat it as monolithic nor to see its path as smooth. For institutions are neither uniform nor monolithic containing diversity within … and there are multiple sites of the operation or racism. Moreover, institutional resources are used by reflexive agents'.

Before moving onto discuss my methodological framework in the next chapter, I would like to briefly provide some further clarification of a number of concepts used in this thesis, and their interrelationships. The concept of racialization used in this thesis refers to the process whereby certain features are attributed to a whole group of people, and come to be seen as inherent properties of that group, as already recounted on page 39. The process of racialization is furthermore a process of categorization, in turn closely linked to the production of ethnic or racial hierarchies, where the question of who has the power to define/categorize is crucial. Racialization is a central part of racism, which in this thesis is taken to include both structural inequalities and the processes whereby these are achieved and reproduced.

A closely aligned term to racialization in this thesis is that of otherness; although Miles would reserve racialization for processes where a biological

element is discernable, as can be read from my discussion of the notion of cultural racism, everyday usage of and conceptual confusions between the words 'race', 'ethnicity', 'culture' or 'cultural differences' I would suggest casts doubt on the extent to which biological reductionism has disappeared with the absence of the word 'race'. However, as I have argued, processes of otherness are only one part of racism, and other processes must similarly be taken into account, and notably normativity.

The concept of normativity refers to the processes by which certain norms – ways of acting and/or thinking – are reproduced in everyday situations. These can be either specific to an institutional context, for example in the work place or in the classroom, or more widely appropriated 'ways of life'. In the sense that norms are by and large culturally specific and shared amongst people 'inside' the group to which they refer, processes of normativity are closely aligned to the processes whereby a sense of national identity is reproduced. This brings us to the other central characteristic of normativity, namely the fact that many of the 'subtle codes' that press for conformity while signifying intolerance to difference are unrecognized by those for whom conforming to the norm is 'second nature', by virtue of a life long socialization into them. Billig's (1995) notion of a banal nationalism usefully notes the 'mundane' or unnoticeable nature of the processes while at the same time emphasizing the effects they have on people for whom it is not 'second nature'.

The relationship between racism and nationalism is an important question, and although the terms are often used distinct from each other, studies that consider racist processes beyond the marking of otherness necessarily address the issue. Ethnologists Ehn et al. (1993: 14-5) propose a distinction between 'national rhetoric and practice', suggesting the former to be the selection of elements used to discursively articulate national identity and specificity; while the latter are the everyday cultural processes that can be regarded as nationally distinct[32]. Hence the latter refers to often unarticulated, 'mundane' (Billig 1995) practices, while the former refers to discourses that explicitly state that 'we' are distinct

[32] The authors note, importantly, that not all cultural processes in a country can be regarded as national in nature.

from 'them'. Billig's critique of most of the literature on nationalism is that it focuses disproportionately on the former, while paying limited attention to the latter. Furthermore, for many, nationalism also of the former kind needs to take a certain form in order to become 'bad' or 'racist'; note the common argument for the ability to be 'patriotic', to value, or be proud of, one's membership in a national collective without for that matter being racist. As can be understood from my discussion of the close relation between processes of otherness/racialization and racism, I find reason to, while perhaps not able to negate the possibility entirely, be sceptical of the idea that there can be nationalism that does not risk being or becoming racist in some sense (as the marking of differences is so closely intertwined with processes of inequalities). However, the argument made here is less about national rhetoric and more about everyday cultural processes – and also here I argue that these can function in racist ways: through excluding or disadvantaging those who do not conform to the national somatic norm, while at the same time denying its national and/or ethnic nature; hence failing to address its exclusive dimensions and racist effects – a form of 'banal racism'.

It is important to emphasise at this point that not all norms are nationally specific but often shared across (certain) national boundaries, to form a sense of shared values and/or behaviour amongst a wider group of people; Western and in some cases a Western European common identity are important formations or processes. By the same token, it is also important to note that normative processes are not internally democratic within national boundaries, but cut across and/or intertwine with processes of class, gender, and importantly for my purposes, ethnicity and racialization.

Normative spaces could arguably be regarded as racialized in the sense that the characteristics regarded as normative are closely aligned to a specific body that has historically occupied the normative space and hence holds power to define it. However normativity as an everyday process (of racism) functions differently from processes of racialization; and hence I find it important to make an analytical distinction between the two in order to avoid generalizations and promote clarity of argument. Processes of racialization function by pointing

to the victim's difference (or rather perceived difference) and saying that because you are this or that, you do not belong, or you do not have the right to equality, or to access certain spaces. Through processes of normativity, victims suffer not because they are necessarily marked as other, but because they fail to conform to the subtleties that signify 'us'. These in turn are, as argued, often unrecognized by those who 'naturally' occupy normative spaces (and who may hence 'unwittingly' or 'indirectly' discriminate). Alternatively, they are regarded not as culturally specific but universal; and in turn shortcomings become regarded not as ethnic/racial discrimination, but in terms of insufficient competence or ability of the person in question.

The difference in functionality in turn implies a difference in experience. Rohit Barot and John Bird (2001) argue that emphasis on the experiential dimension of racialization on the side of the person racialized is a central contribution of Fanon, while marginalized by theorists such as Miles (juxtaposed in their article in terms of theories of racialization from the periphery and centre). For Fanon, the consequences imply far more than structural inequality, to include psychological crisis, and what I discuss in terms of an internalization of inferiority[33].

The concept of identity creeps into discussions about racist processes in relation to both racialization and normativity, and it seems important here to briefly mention my use of the concept and the limits of the identity discussion. For the purpose of this thesis, I am less concerned with what has been referred to as 'thick' identities, i.e. that which goes beyond the discursive possibilities and constraints to consider identities in terms of complex and ever-changing formations. The word 'identity' in this thesis comes up mainly in discussions about, on the one hand, identity constructions and, on the other, what I refer to as 'identity spaces'. Identity spaces are the discursive regimes that set limits as to what people can be conceived as, and they play an important part in the racist processes I am concerned with in this thesis. They are part of a disciplining process (pressing for conformity) as well as an 'othering' process (in turn part

[33] Although I also go on to emphasise the part played by subjectification for racist structures.

of a process of exclusion). It is important to note that 'actual' (or 'thick') identities cannot be reduced to these, although their effects on identities are multiple and powerful, perhaps particularly in terms of how people are perceived by others, which is in turn formative of their trajectories: the opportunities they are given and the obstacles they face – both central parts of how racist structures are achieved.

Chapter three. Understanding contemporary racisms through migrant narratives

Referring back to what is regarded as one of the 'founding texts' of Cultural Studies, namely Hoggart's 'The Uses of Literacy', Richard Johnson et al. (2004) suggest that methods should follow the framing of questions, which means that research methods should be suited to fit specific research purposes. As put forward in the introduction, the overall aim of this thesis is to try and outline the specificities of racism in a contemporary Swedish context. As I will explore in detail in chapter four, one of those specific features is the fact that Swedes do not generally regard themselves or their society as racist; and furthermore, the (selected) history perceived as the cement that binds Swedes together seems to have succeeded rather well in supporting this view. However, at the same time as (I should say most) Swedes continue to recite the good old 'democracy, equality, solidarity' mantra (see chapter four), there is a growing discontentment and frustration amongst the migrant and/or minority population in Sweden for whom that mantra remains nothing but a rhetorical device used to hide the opposite reality. Because of their experiences of an aspect of Swedish society seemingly invisible to majority eye, I decided the appropriate method for understanding racism in contemporary Sweden would be to speak and listen to members of that population. As I was concerned not only to establish the fact of racism, but to outline the details of the processes whereby racist structures are produced and reproduced, researching the lived realities of racism became important.

In this chapter, I discuss the method of biographical interviews that I have used in order to explore the aims of my research. I begin by outlining the developments through which I came to employ this approach as well as the number of advantages I found it has brought. After that I introduce my interviewees, one by one, to give some necessary background to the persons and voices that feature in the thesis. I then move on to describe in more detail how the interviews were constructed and conducted, as well as emphasise the importance of the analytical, or 'reading', phase of the interviews, where they are scrutinised and analysed according to various social positionings as well as

by looking at the different narrative devices employed in interviews. I argue that taking a critical stance to the interview material is less about questioning the validity of the narratives, and more about making the most of them. I try to link my methods back to the overall theoretical and political commitments of my research, arguing that more than a range of tools chosen in an ad hoc manner in order to try and explore research questions, the methods of research are, or at least should be, intrinsically linked to the specific place from which the researcher always already speaks (Johnson et al. 2004). Finally, I summarise my methodological approach, and emphasise the importance of contextualising, intertextuality, and multiple methods.

3.1 Experiencing racism(s)

Following her critique of the abstract talk of 'structures', Philomena Essed (1991) emphasises the need to pay attention to the micro dimension to racism – that is, the actual day to day articulations of racist structures (the macro dimension). This is roughly what she defines as 'everyday racism'. Making 'experience' a central category of research, Essed emphasises the importance of the knowledge of racism provided by its victims, through which she suggests we can gain insight into the multiple (and often subtle) ways in which it functions. Indebted to an approach to racism for which detail is crucial, I agree with Essed's argument that 'Black people's knowledge about racism is socially relevant' (1991: 1); furthermore, I would add it is also theoretically relevant. However, our ways (mine and Essed's) of exploring that experience and/or knowledge differ substantially, in terms of both sample and method.

Essed's solution to intersecting processes that function to disadvantage is to try and isolate racist processes from class, which she proposes to achieve by interviewing only Black *women* from a certain social class (middle class); furthermore, this specific class position she suggests ensures a certain level of knowledge about racism with the interviewee, as well as the discursive tools with which to articulate that knowledge. On the contrary, in my sample I have made a point of including a broad spectrum of interviewees, and instead keep a

sensitive stance towards intersections between the different structures in which people are positioned, rather than trying to isolate these from each other, which, as Essed in fact acknowledges herself elsewhere through speaking of a 'gendered racism', is impossible. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, Essed has been criticised (see e.g. Miles, 1993) for not including non-Black populations in her study of racism. As outlined in the previous chapter, the need to go beyond the 'black and white' perspective of racism is crucial for understanding not only racisms in all its different guises and/or specific social and historical contexts, but also in order to include more groups, and importantly understand the different degrees of racism from which different groups suffer, as well as the different processes through which those degrees are achieved. In my sample, I have included two groups of migrants: Bosnian and Somali refugees, and the idea behind this was to try and further the nuances of the research findings by introducing a comparative dimension to experiences of racism.

The difference between Essed's and my approach when it comes to method, is that although she has not explicitly described her interview agenda, Essed seems to have worked mainly with questions that more or less directly address issues of racism. While I would be inclined to emphasise from the start that the method I have mainly used in my interviews with migrants have been a form of 'biographical interview', the fact of the matter is that this method gradually developed not prior to, but in and through the research process. In fact one of the reason why I would strongly argue for that type of interview has to do with limited success of the first few interviews I did. In those interviews, I was first of all rather open about my research aims to the person interviewed, and more or less said that my research was about racism; and second, I structured the interview accordingly, and asked them questions about their experiences of racism, discrimination, maltreatment, hostility, and so on. Following limited results, which I will mention shortly, I decided to modify the working title, presentation, as well as the interview agenda to make it focus around migrants' experiences of Swedish society in general.

Employing an open form of interview, I basically asked my interviewees to tell me about themselves and their lives, after which I emphasised certain periods

and picked up on events that seemed particularly relevant for my research purposes, which I would then ask them to explore further. In this way, the interviews came to be about their experiences in general, rather than exclusion or disadvantage solely. This proved fruitful in a series of ways, the positive results of which can be seen through a comparison between early and late approaches. What becomes clear from such a comparison is that one the one hand, you easily get the answers you are looking for; and on the other, that you miss out on a lot of information that you might not having been looking for, but that could nevertheless bring crucial insights. In the case of my research, posing narrow questions about racism gives you narrow answers about racism in some cases, and in other cases no answers at all. Not opening the interviews up means that you cannot go beyond limited understandings of the word, which in turn leaves out a lot of relevant information.

What is called the biographical approach within migration research is generally based on Giddens' structure-and-agency model, and more particularly his theory of discursive and practical consciousness, developed out of that model. While discursive consciousness is what an individual is able to reflect on and express about him/herself, the practical refers to the automatic, common sense activities of a person: that which cannot be expressed, but still has an important influence on decisions made or actions taken. The biographical approach emerged as a critical alternative to traditional theories of migration, that have tended to exaggerate either outside influences or individual autonomy in the history of migration. By attempting to access both the discursive and the practical, or, as Findlay and Li (1997: 35) put it 'to raise practical consciousness to the discursive realm', this interviewing strategy enables the researcher to acknowledge both structure and agency in answers given by interviewees, and to find pieces of information and detect links that are inaccessible on a superficial level (Findlay and Li 1997; Halfacree and Boyle 1993).

For Wengraf et al. (2002: 245) a 'biographical turn in the social sciences' has followed a concern with the fact that sciences have become increasingly 'detached from lived realities'. They outline the trajectories of methods that

draw on the (subjective) voices of real people, and suggest that in Britain, the biographical method has had three main influences: 'debates about memory, feminism, and postmodernism and identity' (ibid 248). Considering the feminist influences particularly, Wengraf et al. point towards the political potential of the biographical method. Giving space to formerly unheard voices from the margins they suggest may function 'against disempowerment' and more: '(o)pportunities to reveal, revise, and reclaim the past have led to individual life changes as well as collective challenges to established accounts and dominant narratives' (ibid 254, 255). Discussing the voices of migrants specifically, Vicky Lawson (1999) adds another 'theoretical (and may I add political) potential' to such voices, namely the extent to which they help challenge stereotypes of and generalisations about 'other cultures' (racist discourse), by bringing out individuals commonly reduced to those stereotypes, and giving space to their complexity, contingency, agency, and resistance.

Floya Anthias (2002a: 498) argues that (biographical) narratives are 'of particular interest to scholars of collective imaginations around belonging' because they are good ways of accessing 'the ways individuals understand and interpret their place in the world'. Following on from my theoretical approach to racism, as outlined in the previous chapter, the specificity of which I have suggested lies in the 'culture' of society, it seems reasonable to say that my study is to a large extent concerned precisely with 'collective imaginings around belonging', and furthermore, with the everyday lived reality of those imaginings.

Anthias (2002a, 2001) questions much of the use of the term 'identity' in social sciences. Although she emphasises the social relevance of the concept of identity, Anthias is critical of its use as an analytical tool, suggesting instead the notion of 'translocational positionality' to understand the processes normally referred to in terms of 'identity'. 'Translocational positionality', she argues, enables the researcher to move beyond the 'residual elements of essentialization retained even within the idea of fragmented and multiple identities so favoured by critics of unitary notions of identity … A concern with multiple and fragmented identities still suggests that identity might be a possessive property

of individuals rather than a process' (2002a: 495). Defining 'translocational positionality, she writes,

> (p)ositionality refers to placement within a set of relations and practices that implicate identification and 'performativity' or action. It combines a reference to social position (as a set of effectivities; as outcome) and social positioning (as a set of practices, actions and meanings; as process) ... (p)ositionality relates to the space at the intersection of structure (as social positions/social effects) and agency (as social positioning/meaning and practice) ... (t)ranslocational' ... references the complex nature of positionality faced by those who are at the interplay of a range of locations and dislocations in relation to gender, ethnicity, national belonging, class and racialization (Anthias, 2002a: 501-502).

The narratives of 'belonging' Anthias refers to are to a great extent 'located rather than being about explicitly positioning themselves' (ibid 510); that is, they relate various experiences from which location can be derived, but without necessarily explicitly positioning themselves within that experience.

The idea of listening to migrants' stories about themselves and their lives is to try and tap into the (micro) everyday events and practices through which larger (macro) processes of inclusion and exclusion take place and/or boundaries between 'us' and 'them' are expressed as well as produced/reproduced. Furthermore, the details of the stories enable us to go beyond the general and limited boundary of inside/outside, and understand the nuances of that boundary along with varieties in its thickness, as well as, importantly, the conditionality inclusions entail; that is, what people have to conform to in order to be 'included' on the one hand, and the limits to that inclusion on the other.

Anthias (2002a: 511) emphasises the fact that 'narratives are produced in relation to socially available and hegemonic discourses and practices'. Like the use of language generally, never neutral but always dependent on the words available (Foucault 1979, 1980), narratives are always necessarily set within the availability of discourses that can be used as narrative devices. Furthermore,

Anthias (2002a: 499) emphasises the performative element to narrations as well as its immediate context 'these stories have both a conventional and strong intersubjective component'.

3.2 'Person research' or 'meetings'

Discussing the immediate context of interviewing brings us to the question of the relationship between interviewer and interviewee: the relations of power and inequality of the situation, and the following effect of the presence of the researcher on the outcome of the interview, but also the wider issue of the relationship between the researcher and his or her topic of research. By choosing to speak of what is normally referred to as 'ethnography' or 'fieldwork', as 'meetings', Johnson et al. (2004: 201) emphasise the role of the researcher in the process of collecting data for research. They find the notion of 'meeting' useful (partly) because of the fact that 'it draws attention to the relational or dialogic aspect of this engagement'. Discussing the 'in-betweenness' commonly experienced by researchers for whose research 'meetings' is central, the authors suggest the need to understand the reality of the blurred boundary between autobiographical and ethnographic research, and instead of regarding it 'just as an incidental byproduct or difficulty of method', to accept the fact of what they call 'the auto/ethno continuum' (ibid 202).

Anthias' (2002 a and b) notion of translocational positionality is useful also for conceptualising the role of researcher, and more specifically when discussing the issue of how knowledges are situated (Haraway 1991). As Donna Haraway emphasises, 'situated' should not be understood in terms of a unified and 'finished' identity; rather the importance of multiple locations and investments in the object of research has to be considered. These shape approaches as well as methods, and necessarily influence the research findings. Hence my personal (social) history and political commitments play important parts in the research. While I agree with Johnson et al. in that reflection on the position or standpoint of the researcher needs to go beyond an 'initial confession' and run through the entire research process, I nevertheless find that a brief 'confession' is in place,

not least because it gives some information crucial to understanding part of the nature of my 'meetings'.

I come from a small town in the south of Sweden, about one hour north of Malmö, where my research was located. Although somewhat fragmented, my class background could be roughly defined as middle class. Throughout my teens, I was very involved in associational life; I have also always been politically interested and engaged. In my late teens, I moved to Britain, where I later begun my higher education. I have stayed in Britain since that time, although the past two or three years have involved a great deal of commuting between Britain and Sweden, living one month 'here' and one month 'there'. In terms of my choice of research, I would say that moving abroad had an important influence; furthermore, achieving a certain distance to 'Sweden' has possibly affected my approach. However, trying to pinpoint a specific cause and effect seems impossible, as migration has been accompanied not only by new geographical spaces, but a range of meetings and experiences that have changed me as a person; and the importance of gaining access to critical discourses and points of view through my studies cannot be emphasised enough.

However, at the same time as I have achieved a 'partial' distance to the place of research as well as developed a critical stance, my own historical (and contemporary) embeddedness in that place has become more and more clear to me throughout the research process. Many of the 'Swedishnesses' that I will be critiquing, implicitly or explicitly, in this thesis, are also part of who I am. Born and bred in the place I have now turned into the object of critical research for me has entailed a critical research also of myself. Concerning the role of 'me' in my research, I have come to think greatly about the frames of reference through which I make sense of things – where they come from and how I apply them – but also more widely about myself as a person in everyday life. Importantly critical reflection on the 'self' in research does not imply simple removal of unwanted elements, but rather the centrality of acknowledging complex and often ambivalent relations to the research object; maintaining a critical and self-reflexive attitude throughout has been important.

That reflection, however, is only one aspect of the presence of me in my research. Another important one, which seems particularly relevant to research (like mine) that involve face to face encounters with people, has to do not with what I am and what my investments are, but how I come across to the people I have met and interviewed. Here, the fact that I am a white Swedish woman is central, and more specifically what this means to the people I meet, and how it affects the relations constructed in the different meetings. Most importantly, a perceived lack of identification that may be experienced by some of my interviewees (like the fact that we do not share experiences of racism) will necessarily affect the accounts given; furthermore they may be unwilling or cautious about sharing negative experiences with me because I am Swedish. Finally, the fact that I am a researcher has implications for the relations of power developed as well as the perceived boundaries of the meeting.

Johnson et al. (2004) suggest that the ethical and political issues surrounding research become particularly clear in cases where face to face interactions with the people 'about' whom the research is takes place. Given access to their life stories implies a certain responsibility to those researched. '(G)rasping another's world always involves reading' (ibid 2004: 209), and readings are dependent on the translocational position of the researcher as well as his/her approach to or investments in the topic. However readings are nevertheless (or should be) multiple, through which the researcher can access the multi-layered nature of in this case biographical narratives. I have read the narratives for events and experiences that can be related to the topic of my research: racism. I have read them also for the ways in which interviewees themselves make sense of events, with regards to issues surrounding racism(s) specifically. I should point out that a psychological or psychoanalytical analysis of the 'identities' shaped in/through narratives is beyond the scope of my reading(s) and this thesis. My main concern is the everyday processes whereby racism is achieved, and my interest in narrativisation is – for the time being at least – limited to how the narratives bring out experiences on the one hand, and/or play a part in racist processes on the other, i.e. the role of subjectification in racist processes (ibid 153-169, 225-241).

A final point I would like to make regarding 'meetings' concerns the extent to which these have shaped the course of the research: dialogic moments (ibid 215-216). Since I started the fieldwork process, some of my initial 'hunches' have been transformed and/or questioned. Through various 'meetings', I have been alerted to issues that I had not anticipated, some of which even contradicted my assumptions and frames of reference formulated prior to the fieldwork. This has greatly affected my approach to researching everyday racism. Reading theoretical texts alongside the texts emerging through the fieldwork has come to be a continuous, dialogical process, and I have often had reason to re-visit previous texts for additional readings following more recent findings and developments.

3.3 Introducing interviewees

Before I go into more detail of the biographical interviews and my analysis of them, I would like to introduce the people I have interviewed. What follows is a number of brief individual introductions, including comments on the interview situation as well as how I accessed the interviewee in question. I did interviews with three Bosnian women, four Bosnian men, two Somali women, and three Somali men. They are introduced below in that order.

My first interview was with Nina, a Bosnian woman in her late thirties. I had read about Nina in the local newspaper, and decided to try and contact her via her work. Nina describes her background as rather privileged. Her father had a good job and provided well for her family; however, she says she felt she missed out on time with him as a child, as he was always away on work. Before she had to flee Bosnia, Nina lived with her husband and two young daughters in a rural area in the north. Her husband travelled a lot with work, while she took care of the house, garden, and the children. From her narrative it seems the family was rather wealthy; she says she never had to worry about money, and never had to work. Her life has changed radically following migration to Sweden. She did various temporary jobs until she got employed as part of a project to run a daycentre for children and teenagers in the area where she lives.

With stubbornness, she managed to retain the centre after the project finished; she now works there full-time in the day, while she studies a programme (upper secondary school equivalent) called 'children and leisure' in the evening. I interviewed Nina in her kitchen one afternoon, when she had taken time off work to talk to me. She was very open and friendly, and seemed to enjoy being interviewed. The interview took about three hours.

Selma is a woman in her mid-forties. Before fleeing Bosnia in the early nineties, she used to work in a bank. She is divorced as has a teenage son. She flew to Germany via Croatia, and lived in Germany for a few months. However, having found out that her son had gone with her ex-husband to Sweden, she decided to go to Sweden to try and find him. Her son now lives with her in a flat in Malmö. Selma found it difficult to find work in Sweden corresponding to what she did before migrating. Failure to find work in combination with maltreatment from Swedish authorities led her to embark on a degree in social work (she says she was curious to find out what they teach social workers there, to enable them to act so badly). At the time of the interview, she was doing work practice for Malmö's public administration, involved in a project concerned with regeneration of certain urban areas. I got in touch with Selma through her supervisor in this workplace, who suggested she would be an interesting person to talk to. The interview took place an evening in her flat, and took about two and a half hours. Selma was very talkative, and seemed exited about someone taking an interest in her experiences and views; furthermore I think she thought of it like something of a social evening.

At the time of the interview, Aida (ages 46) worked for Malmö council on a project aimed to increase diversity in the workplace. Before she came to Sweden, Aida used to work as a financial advisor, specialising in tourism. She describes her work as very interesting and challenging; it also seems from what she says that her job was well-respected. In Sweden she has struggled to get recognition for her qualifications and competence, and describes the road to her present job as long and hard. In spite of being highly educated in Bosnia, she has gone through the Swedish education system from secondary school upwards, and has achieved her Masters Degree in the area of IMER

(International Migration and Ethnic Relations) at Malmö polytechnic. Dissatisfied with accommodation in Malmö, Aida and her family (husband and two teenage daughters) decided a couple of years back to move to a town outside the city, where she says she is a lot happier. Aida was recommended to me by a friend, who described her as very interesting, knowledgeable and opinionated. The interview takes place in her office. Aida is talkative and rather open; she also comes across as very confident, and seems concerned to keep control over the interview. She also makes it clear in the beginning of the interview that she is a very busy woman, and will not have too long a time to talk to me. However, her concern to share her experiences as well as her strong opinions means she nevertheless manages to get a lot of information into the interview, which takes just over an hour.

Aida in turn recommended I would talk to Adil, who is also employed by Malmö council. I get the impression they know each other partly through work, but also they have done the same Degree at IMER. Adil is in his early thirties. He lives with his girlfriend and their two year old son. At the time when he left Bosnia, he had just finished the first year of his university studies. It seems he had plans of becoming something of a businessman; however when he tried to resume his studies and pursue a career in Sweden, he says he had to change his plans to fit the new context, where above all because of the language, he thought his former plans would not work out. Adil explored different options and applied for a number of jobs through the years, but says he found it very difficult to get a foot in anywhere. After his degree, he got a temporary job as a social worker for six months, but found himself unemployed again after the period expired. Following that, he did various short-term odd jobs, before he finally got the job his is doing now, which is administrative work for the local government. He seems to enjoy the work, and comes across as content with his current position. I interview Adil in his office one afternoon; he called me up just before to say I can come around, as he had nothing particular to do at that point. Adil is very relaxed and talkative; he also comes across as very aware and critical, and apart from sharing his life story, he seems concerned to put across his own analysis of Swedish society and the position of minority groups. The interview takes about two hours.

Emir is a close friend of Adil's, and of a similar age. It seems they knew each other before the war started and they came to Malmö. Emir lives with his Rumanian girlfriend and her daughter from a former relationship. He works as a truck-driver. In fact it seems he was under the impression that I wanted to talk to him precisely because of his occupation; when Adil asked him over the phone, he said, jokingly, 'so she needs someone to represent the working classes?' I interview Emir in his flat, which is in quite a nice and central area. He seems rather nervous at my arrival, but relaxes more and more throughout the interview, which takes just under two hours. He shares his life story rather openly; however, he is concerned about the relevance of his views and experiences, and generally comes across as slightly insecure.

Zlatko is in his mid-thirties, and is doing a law degree at a nearby university. Adil knows him through associational work, and thought he would be an interesting interviewee partly because of his wide experiences of Bosnian associations. Zlatko lives with his girlfriend in a high-rise building at the outskirts of Malmö, where I interviewed him. Before embarking on his degree, Zlatko worked full-time as an administrator for a large Bosnian association; hence when asked about difficulties in finding work, he says he had no great problems, but emphasises that this might have been because the 'ethnic' work available meant he did not have to turn to the mainstream labour market. Zlatko has always been interested in politics, and was actively involved with the left in Bosnia. He is also politically active in Sweden, as well as does a lot of work part-time for the association where he worked before. Zlatko comes across as a very calm and relaxed person. We talk for over two hours, until his girlfriend comes home from work. Apart from his life story, I asked Zlatko a few things specifically about Bosnians and associational life.

My final Bosnian interviewee is Naser. He is in his mid-forties, and has recently moved from Malmö to a village east of the city, which he finds has improved his quality of life a lot. He describes himself as something of a nature-person. Naser is married to a Bosnian woman, and they have two young children together. His wife is self-employed in a small scale catering business

(a so-called 'pasta-van'), while Naser himself at the time of the interview is employed on a short-term project for Malmö council. Naser has a degree in journalism and social sciences; before migrating, he used to work for an independent TV-station in the north of Bosnia, which was part of an 'alternative media' initiative set up by him and some friends. He describes this work very positively. He generally comes across as politically interested and engaged, and it seems his work at this TV-station enabled him to retain a critical stance. He is disappointed with the fact that he has not been able to pursue his career further in Sweden. Instead, he seems to work mainly on a project basis, in which the future is always insecure. I found Naser through the office of his workplace; having heard about the different projects they do, I called to ask about their employees, and was put through to Naser. He was very keen to talk to me, and was open and friendly throughout the interview. The interview took place in his workplace, and took about two and a half hours.

Leyla is a Somali woman in her mid-forties. I got in touch with her through one of my key informants, Dalmar. Leyla has a Degree in psychology from a university in India. She lives in a flat in the area next to Rosengard, together with her husband and their four children, two of whom are born in Sweden. In Sweden, Leyla has worked with mother tongue teaching, and at the time of the interview she is employed as a health advisor as part of the metropolitan project. Furthermore, she takes part in associational life, and is particularly involved in the struggle against female genital mutilation. I interview Leyla in her flat. We have made the contact over the phone, and she has invited me around. She is very friendly; however, she seems unsure about what the interview is for and what I want to know. She also says she feels limited by the language, and is concerned I may misunderstand her. The interview takes about an hour and a half.

As with Nina, I read about Fowsia in the newspaper; she was interviewed there about her experiences of a public service institution that helps people find work. I called her employer, who put me in touch with Fowsia, and she invited me to her flat in Rosengard. Fowsia is in her mid-thirties, and used to work as a teacher before migrating to Sweden. She is divorced from her ex-husband, and

now lives with her new partner. Her sister and the sister's three children also currently live in the flat with them; it is a one bedroom flat, and Fowsia says she is finding it very hard. However, her sister only came to Sweden last year, and has not yet got a residence permit, which means she has nowhere else to go. Fowsia has only had temporary jobs in Sweden so far: one for a Somali association for a few months, and another as a cleaner, also short term. At the time of the interview she is unemployed, and she seems very frustrated about this. She says she always tries very hard to find anything, but has not been successful recently. Fowsia is very talkative and seems keen to tell me about the hardships she is going through at the moment, with no work and lack of space in the flat. At the same time she is very positive about her experiences in Sweden, and is reluctant to criticise anything. Both her sister and a friend of hers (who do not speak any Swedish) are present in the room during the interview. Her young nephew is also running around in the room, and often interrupts the interview to try and get attention. Although I sometimes feel Fowsia gets side-tracked, it seems that the environment and the presence of the other people functions to make her and the interview situation more relaxed. The interview takes just under two hours.

I got in touch with Asad through one of my contacts in the public administration, who knew him through the project work in which he has previously been involved. Asad was employed as part of the metropolitan project at Rosengard. I interview him in the café of the local library. He comes across as a very opinionated and enterprising person, full of ideas and initiatives. However, at the time of the interview, his project employment has expired, and he works as a taxi driver. Asad is also very involved in associational life, and it is particularly important for him to work with and support the younger generation of Somalis. Asad's narrative is very analytical and critical; he seems concerned to share his experiences with me, and says he hopes I can do something with my interviews to improve the current situation in Malmö, which he views very negatively. The interview takes about two hours.

Ghedi is another Somali man, who is in his early forties. He is a friend of my key informant interviewee Dalmar, who put us in touch with each other. Ghedi

seemed very exited when I rang him, and asked me to come around to the premises of his associations, where he spends a lot of his time. At the time of the interview, his wife is in Somalia, taking care of her old mother; and Ghedi himself is on long-term sick-leave because of back injuries. He normally works as a nursing assistant in an old people's home, a career he embarked on after finding it difficult to find work. After a year's study he got employed on a temporary basis, but is now employed on a permanent contract. Before he came to Sweden, Ghedi did lots of different things. After finishing school, he made an attempt to pursue a university degree, but soon found that it was not for him. Instead he did building work on a contracting basis, and spent several years in Saudi Arabia, working for a Swedish company. In the interview, Ghedi is very open and relaxed. He is a good story-teller, and talks extensively about his different life experiences. We sit on a table outside the premises, drink coffee, talk, and see people walking in and out of the premises, coming by to say hello and so on. It is a very pleasant afternoon, and because Ghedi cannot work at the moment, and seems keen to find things to keep him busy, the interview goes on for nearly three hours.

My final biographical interview was with a young Somali man, Bilal (aged 16), who came to Sweden as late as 2000. I got in touch with Bilal through a friend of mine, who teaches Swedish For Immigrants (SFI); Bilal used to be a student of hers. Furthermore, he featured in a documentary she did about multi-cultural Malmö. When I told her about my research, she insisted that I interview this young man, who she finds 'amazing'. Indeed, when I meet him at the local library, he makes a very strong impression on me. His will and enthusiasm comes out throughout his narrative. At the time of the interview, however, Bilal's future is uncertain. He has not yet received a resident permit, and is also unsure of whether or not he will get a place on the upper secondary course he would prefer to do. He is living with his sister, her husband, and their children; the sister was in Sweden several years before Bilal and his mother migrated. The interview with Bilal takes about an hour and a half.

3.4 Doing biographical interviews… and analysing them

Although I have gone into most of these interviews with the same agenda, the interviews have panned out very differently depending on the person. For example, there are great differences in levels of openness, depending partly on language barriers, but also on interviewees' perceptions of me as a researcher (as discussed above), of my research, and furthermore, their understandings and evaluations of themselves and their experiences.

Although my main concern is with people's lives in Sweden, I would always begin the interviews by asking about their lives before they migrated to Sweden. Partly because of the need to set a person's experiences of today into the context of their lives as a whole – the importance of which I will explain further in the following section – but also partly because of my wish to understand more fully how their lives have changed through migrating, bringing out for example issues about class positions and downward mobility, and placing the issue of racism within. After questions about their lives before Sweden, I would ask them about the migration itself: how it happened, who they migrated with, where in Sweden they arrived, but also how they felt about leaving their country, and about arriving here, which in turn brought out various stories about how they were received. Also, I asked them about why they came to Sweden specifically and if they knew anything about the country, if they had any relations here, etc; issues that I would later come back to when I asked them to compare their image of Sweden before and now.

Having now arrived at the Swedish side of the story, I posed a series of questions about their lives in Sweden so far – questions ranging from education and work, to where they have lived, to whom they socialise with, if they are part of any organisations, politically interested or engaged. This gave me an overall view of their experiences in Sweden, and enabled me to pick up on events that seemed relevant for the topic of my concern. Other questions concerned their relationship to their country of origin today: do they have relatives left, have they been back to visit, would they consider moving back, where do they feel they belong – here, there or perhaps both? In the final part of

the interview, I would come back to their image of Sweden, and ask them to elaborate on the image they have of the country today, with regards to their own experiences. Furthermore, if the issue had not already been brought up and discussed, I would ask them some more direct questions about discrimination and/or racism (choosing my words carefully depending on the person and situation). In cases where people were reluctant to pick up on these issues in relation to themselves, I would sometimes ask if they thought there were any problems in Swedish society in general, and if they perhaps knew of anyone who had had bad experiences, and if so, for what reason.[34]

To move on to the analytical stage of the interviewing: again while I agree with Essed's emphasis on the knowledge of racism held by the people that suffer from it, I also find it important to keep a critical stance towards the accounts given. This does not mean questioning the validity of my interviewees' statements, but merely adding analytical dimensions that can further explore the narratives, in terms of both presences and silences. What people think about their situation, and what they tell you about their experiences, is a result of various processes, of different personal histories, personalities, opinions, positions, and expectations that all intersect. My aim is to try and contextualise statements according to the (to me known) history of the person interviewed.

While it is indeed important to emphasise the fact that narratives are necessarily limited to the language available, in turn to a great extent determined by wider relations of power (Foucault 1980) that set the limits as to what we can think, know and express about ourselves and others, it is important also to recognise the fact that language like culture is neither static nor homogenous, but always shifting and always including elements of resistance and challenge with (some) potential to rock the (hegemonic) boat (Foucault 1979; Gramsci 1971; Howarth 2000). Considering differences between ways in which different interviewees choose (for lack of a better word) to narrate their experiences to some extent highlights the existence of a plethora of narrative devices, including some more

[34] I should point out that this list of questions were more than a check-list than anything, as in most interviews, most answers would come out automatically from their life-stories.

critical devices; in turn this is related to the (translocational) position of the person speaking.

In a Danish study about experiences of discrimination, comparing different groups of migrants, Birgit Möller and Lise Togeby emphasise the difference between the subjective and objective (1999: 12-3). While I am slightly dubious about the theoretical implications involved in making such a distinction, it is nevertheless a useful way of drawing attention to differences in accounts that do not necessarily reflect differences in experiences. By introducing this distinction, Möller and Togeby highlight the fact that people have different expectations as well as different frameworks with which to analyse their experiences. Furthermore, different senses of entitlements play a role here (Sen 1981). What you think you are entitled to, and what you ask for and expect of society, will influence your perception of that society and your position in it.

Acknowledging different frameworks and points of reference seemed particularly important for my study, considering the histories of my interviewee groups. As Richard Johnson pointed out to me when I was preparing for my fieldwork – how do you ask someone who has experienced ethnic cleansing in their country of origin about racism in Sweden? Trying to develop an interview agenda that would successfully overcome the obstacle that such comparisons – 'here' and 'there' – inevitably involves, I hoped to still be able to explore the issue of racism; and it often helped to ignore the problematic word 'racism', and simply listening to people's life stories. Even then, however, the fact remains that for some (but not all), a relative improvement or worsening of quality of life through migration will necessarily affect stories told about life 'now'.

An interesting difference between the two groups interviewed emerged concerning their accounts of life in Sweden. While considering the statistics mentioned above, and quantitative studies of migrants' experiences (Möller and Togeby 1991, on Denmark; Lange 1999, 2000, on Sweden) could lead you to certain conclusions about the overall positions of the two groups, the stories that came out of my interviews could in fact in some ways make you reach the

opposite. Generally (with a few exceptions, as there always are), the Bosnians were more critical of society, and more likely to pick up on issues around discrimination and/or racism, while the Somalis by and large displayed the opposite attitude, and were more careful with using either of those two words.

In a discussion about how racism has been theorised (and displaced) in Sweden, Adil (Bosnian) says, 'sure, you can't kill me, but you should give me a bit more, respect me a bit more'; hence he points towards what he finds an unreasonable underlying logic, that he is better off 'here' than 'there'. Compare what Adil says with the following statement by Bilal (young Somali man). He says, 'I think you have, I think you feel safe (in Sweden) … you don't have that many problems, there's not that much you have to be scared of… that's why I think it's good'. Setting Somalia in relation to his life in Sweden, he says, 'I can't go back to Somalia, because I am afraid there. There is someone who can kill me straight away, because of the clan I belong to'.

The point is not to use these two statements as indicative of the lives of the groups overall; the point I want to make by setting them next to each other is merely that one needs to be sensitive to people's backgrounds and reference points in general when reading their accounts of Sweden. At the other extreme, compared to Bilal's narration above, is Aida, who narrates a radical downward mobility on entering Sweden. She says,

> 'Because I have had a paradise life before I became a refugee – it's a fairytale life I've had, I think. So it's a very heavy burden to be robbed of that part of life. It's very difficult. It's like a flower in the garden, and when you pick it, there's a change … (when migrating to Sweden) I thought I had just moved myself geographically. But it was actually a very long journey: it was a class journey, and a shocking experience also. From one day when you have your social network to the next – when you move closer and closer to outsidership.'

It seems plausible that people for whom socio-economic positions have shifted substantially are more critically inclined than those who possess a more similar

class position before and after they migrated. However, this trend is not necessarily clear cut. Comparing different interviews, it seems that downward mobility can affect people differently. While for some of my interviewees, it seems to produce more critical accounts of Sweden, this is not the case for everyone.

An interesting addition to a class analysis was highlighted to me by Nina. Rather than comparing her class position 'there' to 'here', she asks what class actually means. She raises issues around happiness, discusses what it actually means to be 'rich', and tells me about how these thoughts have arisen through experiences of war and forced migration. She says,

> 'So today I only have my family. All the material stuff is gone. And there, I learned a lesson. That I shall never again aim for the material, to just have and have. Now I only have the human side, to work with heart and soul, to help others as much as I can. And that I and my children and my husband should have a good life'.

Furthermore, she compares her life in Sweden, in her flat in a relatively segregated area, to that of rich people living in an upper class, white, suburb of Malmö.

> 'I believe they are really bored. We have a great time here. And we are aware of each other, much more so than people who live for example in Limhamn. And they have no idea how much fun we have here. People build walls, people isolate themselves. Only rich people. What are they rich of? That they have a house, and a garden. So did I ten years ago. And I've seen it, I know what it's really about. To show to your neighbour – "I live here". And who is rich now if I compare? I think people in Limhamn are really poor in their souls[35].'

[35] Importantly, Nina's approach here could also be a way of dealing with downwards mobility by refusing to accept her position as inferior to the 'people in Limhamn'; furthermore, it could simply be that she chooses to display a strong side in the interview.

Apart from considering the directions in which people have moved what concerns class etc, it is important also to consider differences in the (specific or general) expectations people have of the new country. As I will discuss further in chapter eight, several Bosnians expressed disappointment with the ways in which Swedish society has treated them, something they often explicitly relate to their expectations that Swedish people would regarded them as equals, largely because of a perceived cultural proximity.

To further explain their distinction between objective and subjective experiences, Möller and Togeby (1999: 12-13) refer to a 1970 study of Greeks and Turks in Denmark, where the two groups suffered from the same or similar 'objective' discrimination, but while Greeks found themselves discriminated against, Turks 'experienced the unequal treatment as legitimate' (my translation). Defining discrimination as unjustified or illegal unequal treatment, the authors emphasise that in order to even use the term one needs to agree to the definition. That is, both Greeks and Turks experienced unequal treatment because of their ethnic background – but only Greeks spoke of it in terms of discrimination.

The women I have interviewed have generally displayed a stronger 'do it yourself' attitude than the men, and have emphasised individual responsibility more; correspondingly, more men than women have been directly critical towards society and the way they have been treated. They generally complain more than women. In a series of quantitative studies of experienced discrimination, Anders Lange (2000) notes a similar trend: men generally reporting higher levels of discrimination than women.

Keeping a critical stance towards these accounts – as outlined above – is crucial, as failing to introduce a gender dimension to the analysis could mean we would reach the conclusion that women suffer from less racism than men do (Lange 2000 in fact suggests this may be the case), in the same way as uncritically accepting the accounts of Somalis and Bosnians would enable me to suggest that Bosnians are more excluded and discriminated against than Somalis. Again, the issue of expectations arises, in this case coming out of the gendered patterns

and identities into which we are socialised, and how these affect to what extent people make claims for various things, as well as where people find the causes of possible failure, limits or misfortune.

A final general difference seems to come out of education, occupation and politics, or perhaps rather, where these intersect. None of them can in fact be separated from class, but they can also not be reduced to class, whereby I believe a separate section is in place. Rather than giving a list of knowledges, experiences and ideologies that in different ways affect people's stories, suffice it to summarise by speaking of them as different discourses that people draw on – consciously or not – in their accounts and analyses. In order to articulate certain feelings and experiences, you need a language with which to do so, and the ways in which discussions about racism between me and my interviewees pan out (if they take place at all) is hence dependent on the discourses to which people have access. For example, two of my interviewees have studied IMER at a higher education level in Sweden, and I could clearly see the influence those studies had on their accounts of personal experiences. Also, several of the migrants I have interviewed are working or have worked in the area today broadly defined as 'integration work' – composed of work with refugees, introduction to newcomers, work against discrimination, or anti-racist organisations, community work, and a series of projects funded by the state or the council aimed at combating segregation and facilitate 'integration' in different ways – and similarly this means access to discourses that shape their stories about themselves and society as a whole. I will explore this further in chapter eight.

To their analytical distinction between objective and subjective experiences of discrimination, Möller and Togeby add a further distinction, namely between what is experienced and what is reported. They write,

> 'The subjective aspect of the reported, experienced discrimination makes itself valid in different ways. First of all, some people are more prone to understand experiences and events as discrimination, and second, there are some who chose to keep silent with regards to the discrimination they have

experienced, either because they do not want to offend the host country, or because they feel ashamed for having been discriminated against' (1999: 108, my translation).

Hence the presence of me at the moment of narration will necessarily affect the narrative. However, while a conscious decision not to share certain experiences with the researcher is indeed important to take into account when analysing people's narratives, I would also like to add to this the fact that this may not in all cases be a conscious decision; it could also come out of an implicit, conscious or unconscious assertion of belonging, or a way of coping with a difficult reality. A final tool used by Möller and Togeby to explain discrepancies between the objective and the subjective arises from 'social learning', the seemingly 'natural division of roles', through which differential treatment comes to be regarded as 'natural' (1999: 108, my translation). To some extent this refers to the internalisation of dominant images of superior/inferior, through which a naturalisation of an unequal social order is achieved (Fanon 1967).

As I have tried to emphasise, suggesting a need to be sensitive to personal accounts does not mean diminishing their importance. It merely means listening to what people say, what they share about their experiences, but at the same time considering the different reasons as to why people say what they do – why they mention certain things, and leave others out; why they emphasise something, and dismiss something else. While this on the one hand may in fact mean taking some accounts with a pinch of salt – it just as often, if not more often, means picking up on, and magnifying things that a person tries to hide or deny. That is, inserting these analytical dimensions is not intended to change the statements given, but is rather about trying to get at the full story behind them.

3.5 Combining methods; contextualizing biographies

In order to further set the parameters for the research, I undertook a number of key informant interviews with people thought to have valuable information and insights. The people I interviewed were among others a local politician particularly concerned with 'integration' issues; a number of civil servants concerned with various aspects of integration and discrimination; one person working with organisations – hence possessing insights into the various migrant associations and their activities; a couple of people working in the area broadly defined as 'community work' – in their cases particularly aimed at migrant communities and/or immigrant-dense residential areas; and finally, two people working with racism and discrimination in non-governmental organisations. I should add that many of my key informants were migrants themselves and shared with me both personal experiences and experiences related to their work and professional insights. In total, I did fifteen key informant interviews. Not all of these are individualised in the chapters that follow. I have chosen to pseudonym only those key informant interviewees that I have quoted or whose argument I have referred to. I would like to give a brief introduction here also to these people.

Jakub and Anita work with discrimination issues for a local non-governmental organisation. On the one hand they work with awareness-raising, and on the other they act as an authority to which people who feel they have suffered from discrimination can turn. Lena is a top civil servant who works with issues around discrimination and 'integration' closely to the local government. Bengt works for the public body that funds and supports associations. Azam, who is Albanian, works on a voluntary basis with different ethnic associations as well as cross-ethnic issues and concerns. Sadat is his friend, who works as an administrator for a network of ethnic associations at Rosengård. Sadat is from a North African country, and lived in France before moving to Sweden thirty years ago. Semira is a woman from an East African country who is very involved in the cultural scene in Malmö; she is also politically engaged. She came to Sweden more than twenty years ago. Semira used to be employed as part of the metropolitan project, working particularly with women living in

Rosengård. Karim and Irena are both civil servants, working particularly with issues surrounding minority ethnic groups. Karim is from Iran, and has lived in many other countries (including France and the UK, where he did his PhD) before he came to Sweden. Irena came to Sweden as a refugee from former Yugoslavia ten years ago.

Finally, Dalmar, who is also a civil servant, and who works particularly with minority groups excluded from the labour market; the institution he works for is an arrangement set up between the job centre and two other partners. Dalmar is himself Somali, and has particularly targeted the Somali community through his work. I should mention that the reason why Dalmar is not presented together with the biographical interviewees is because I did not know anything about Dalmar before I went to interview him (including the fact that he was Somali). The interview was set up as a key informant interview, and Dalmar was chosen particularly because of the interesting work he has done. After I had done the key informant interview, it seemed unnatural to ask him for a second, specifically biographical, interview. Furthermore, a lot of his personal experiences nevertheless emerged through his narrative.

While emphasising the value of the biographical accounts discussed above, I have also found it important to contextualise them thoroughly. Researching the specificities of racisms in a certain context also means exploring it both historically and in/of the present. I have looked at biographical narratives alongside a study of how Swedish identity, images of 'others' as well as the relationship between 'us' and 'them' has been shaped historically, but also in current public debates, the mass media and policy documents, on both local and national level.

Along with a venture into the literature on how a specific notion of 'Swedishness' has become formed and taken a dominant status in Swedish culture and society, I have followed closely political debates and policy developments in the area of migrants and minority ethnic groups during the time of my fieldwork (between 2001 and 2004), and analysed discursive consistencies and shifts, with reference to both primary and secondary sources. While

emphasizing certain trends, I have also tried to capture the complexities and frequent contradictions taking place in social, cultural and political spheres. I have also looked at how (categories of) migrants and minority ethnic groups are represented in the mass media, and notably newspapers. Undertaking a discourse analysis of a number of articles (some of which are presented in chapter 6 of the thesis), I have considered how these are constructed within certain discursive frameworks referring to both 'others' and 'us'. A further important element has been a series of interviews with 'ethnic Swedes' I undertook for a research project on institutional racism in the Swedish judicial system: interviews that were potent with discourses on 'us' and 'them', and a series of stereotypes of what 'they' are like[36].

Hereby, while the testimonies of migrants are central to my findings and this thesis, the contextual dimensions are crucial; which brings us to the analysis and use of the testimonies themselves. The testimonies are vital sources of experience, and the themes emerging from the narratives have helped form the structure of this thesis, and my different arguments about how racism functions in contemporary Sweden. However, by strongly emphasizing the cultural, social and political context in which the narratives are situated, I would like to emphasise that they are important not merely in terms of the experiences narrated, but also through the different levels at which they express the position of the narrator: going beyond the experiential 'content' and taking into account the experiential 'context'.

An intertextual analysis occurs on two main levels: in relation to the wider societal context and processes, on the one hand, and in within the narrative itself, on the other. In relation to the first, I have undertaken a discourse analysis of the narratives, set in relation to my discourse analysis of political debate, policy developments, mass media representations and interviews with 'ethnic Swedes'; and the task at hand has been to try and discern how the

[36] Interviewees working within the Swedish judicial system at different levels were at one point of the interview encouraged to ponder on and try and explain/qualify the common claim that immigrants or people of immigrant background are overrepresented in the Swedish crime register, and the aim was to try and capture common assumptions and stereotypes at work within that institution (Larsson, Cederberg and Laczak forthcoming).

discourses at play in Swedish society at large, particularly in relation to issues around racism and the situation of migrants and minority ethnic groups, have informed the ways in which migrants make sense of their own situation. In relation to the second, one could say that I have considered the different narrative elements in relation to each other, to try and find links between different parts and outline their internal explanatory values. Through the biographical narratives, I have been given access not only to experiences of racism, but also to the different structural and agentic factors shaping people's experiences and their understandings of these. Finding out about how people are (and/or have been) situated in terms of class, gender and ethnicity, but also through more specific personal events and trajectories, adds important analytical dimensions to the 'experiences of racism' parts of the narratives. In relation to both these levels of analysis, the task has been to try and get beyond the superficial levels of the narratives, and understanding how they are constructed, why they are constructed in particular ways, and importantly what this might say about narrative omissions – all related to the position from which the narrator speaks.

Chapter four. Sweden and racism: self-images and displacements.

This chapter sets the context for a study of racism in Sweden, and brings out the different features that first of all make that study specific, and second, produce obstacles in the way for such a study. In the case of Sweden the task is not merely one of finding and outlining the phenomenon of racism, and bringing it to the fore. It is also and perhaps to some extent more about puncturing the various myths about Sweden that negates and displaces the problem.

I will discuss the obstacles posed by on the one hand a definition and understanding of 'Sweden' as the epitome of equality and democracy; and on the other, a specific understanding of what 'racism' actually is, an understanding that to a great extent enables Swedish society – the 'elite' and the population at large alike – to deny and displace the problem.

In the first part of the chapter, I discuss how a general self-image has developed historically, focussing firstly on the idea of the 'People's Home' (Folkhemmet) emerging in the 1930s, through which equality and democracy somewhat became equated with 'Sweden' or 'Swedishness'; and secondly on Sweden's international relations historically: the country's allegedly neutral role in the Second World War, and its perception of itself as something of the world's saviour, loyal with and wanting to help people experiencing conflict and suffering around the world (Ehn et al. 1993). I will emphasise how these various elements are used as a defence against accusations of racism (Sawyer 2000).

In the second part of the chapter, I will try to illustrate how a specific understanding of racism has functioned in addition to the Swedish self-image to deny and/or displace racism. As Teun A van Dijk (1993: 182) suggests in an article about ways in which elite discourse deny accusations of racism, 'racism is usually elsewhere: in the past (during slavery or segregation), abroad (Apartheid in South Africa), politically on the far right (racist parties), and socially at the bottom (poor inner cities, skinheads)'. Allan Pred (1997, 2000) has discussed these denials in a Swedish context, and outlined what he calls a

spectrum of 'otherwheres and otherwhens', through which the Swedish state manages to remove 'racism' from its core. Importantly, these 'others' include elements within Swedish society, but are accompanied by processes of marginalisation that locate them at the fringes (Wigerfeldt and Wigerfeldt 2001). In this section, I will discuss how certain initiatives aimed at combating and/or preventing racism are illustrative of the limited (and 'othering') tendency by equating 'racism' with the opposite of what 'Sweden' claims to stand for. Particularly, I will consider the recent establishment of the 'Forum for Living History' to prevent the growth of racism and racist sentiment in Sweden through the use of the Holocaust as a point of departure, which I suggest is indicative of how the problem (of racism) is defined and proposed to be solved.

4.1 Theorising Sweden: the 'best in the world' – equal and democratic by definition

> 'well, friend, if it's equality and advancement you seek, try Sweden' (Michael Moore 2001: 78).

This quote from Michael Moore's book 'Stupid White Men' is a prime example of the world's perception of the country. One could easily dismiss his stereotypical view of Sweden by considering the fact that he probably does not know the country very well, and thereby accepts the dominant story. But rather than writing off his words as merely ill-informed, I want instead to consider the repercussions such (mis)understandings have on the state of affairs they claim to (re)present. Importantly, this flattering image of the nation as a whole is not the sole property of ill-informed outsiders – quite the opposite. The image of Sweden as the epitome of equality, solidarity, the theory of (social) democracy and the welfare state put into perfect practice, is produced and reproduced by people inside, people who in theory have access to a more complex image of Swedish society than those who only know the brochure five line summary version, but who nevertheless reiterate and affirm the historically (and selectively) produced celebratory version of what 'Sweden' and 'Swedes' are like.

The 1930s and 40s were formative of many elements that are still today regarded as central to 'Swedishness'. The idea of the People's Home (Folkhemmet) was integral to the Social Democratic project that begun in the 30s, through its aim to override class and regional differences, and mobilising the population as a whole for a common cause. 'The People's Home was based on a notion of a collective progress: a unified nation that resolutely marched into a common future' (Löfgren 1993: 54; my translation), a future of 'democracy, citizenship and modernity' (ibid 53; my translation). Interestingly, in order to make this project national, and to anchor it to the population at large, a lot of the history (and the heroes central to it) presented as the 'common' heritage up until then had to be re-written, so as to place modernity and the (common) citizen at the heart (and at the point of emergence) of 'our' history (ibid 55). Amongst other things, this meant a stepping down from the symbolism of glorious and powerful kings of the past to a more 'common man' rhetoric.

In a book about how 'Sweden became Swedish', Jonas Frykman (1993: 139-143) outlines two main stereotypes of the Swede. The first is the peasant, who emphasises the importance of doing (rather than feeling), rationality and hard work. 'Most characteristics that are ascribed to the Swede today, from shyness and longing for solitude, to pragmatism, sense of order, hard work and carefulness with both money and feelings, suits the character description of the traditional peasant' (ibid 141; my translation). The second is the 'social engineer': 'The Swede is rational, to the point, and has a good sense of organisation. He is modern, reasonable and prefers to find a middle way'. This 'pragmatic and coldly calculating' Swede who posed problems and came up with solutions to them was central to the People's Home project, and in a sense, '(t)he new average Swede be(came) an incarnation of the young democratic society' (ibid 144, my translation). This is the point at which the idea of *equality* together with willingness to *compromise* came to be seen as central Swedish personality traits. However, although perhaps epitomised and conceptualised largely in and through the People's Home project, Charles Westin points out that the idea of 'equality' has a longer history, and can be

traced to pre-modern times and the absence of a feudal system in Sweden and the 'strong position of free peasants' (Westin, 2000: 2).

Sweden's role (or rather the official version of this) in the Second World War added to the 'compromising' characteristic. Through regarding their own society in relation (or opposition) to a range of stereotypes of the 'other' countries fighting, 'the rational … and balanced Swede came out as a result of other peoples' war' (Frykman 1993: 145, my translation). Throughout the war years, a series of events (meetings, seminars, conferences, etc) took place in Sweden on the topic of how to organise the future. Seeing itself as an 'objective' and 'neutral' outsider, blessed with all the character traits needed to fulfil the modern, democratic and equal project, Sweden started to strongly engage in international work after the war, to try and spread the (ideal) Swedish way of living and solving problems. In another chapter about how 'Sweden became Swedish', Orvar Löfgren (1993) outlines how this 'Swedish internationalism' developed in post-war times, and how Sweden came to an extent to see itself as the world's saviour. 'The world conscience Sweden was portrayed not only as a neutral welfare state … but also as a modern societal formation that has liberated itself from tradition's ballast of patriotic properties and beating the nationalistic drum. Sweden was now ruled by sensibility, rationality and the future. Here was a real role model for other nations that had not got as far in their maturation processes' (1993: 29; my translation).

> 'It is "society" that provides the outmost feeling of security for this people, who supposedly is the only people in the world who has not made a clear distinction between "the state" and "society". The Swede is a textbook example of the … subject. Danish spectators often with heartless sarcasm point out the fact that Swedes would feel lost in a world where they no longer had their authorities. What then would they have to conform to or quietly oppose against? 6-8 prohibitions a day does the Swede good and strengthens his self-esteem, Danes joke about over a glass of beer' (Frykman 1993: 126, my translation)

This, what my key informant interviewee Anita calls the 'pronounced belief in authority' of Swedes, is another important element of national identity, and one which, I would argue, could to some extent be regarded as the outcome of all other "Swedish" elements outlined above: on the one hand of the confidence that the Swedish state is justice and equality embodied, and on the other of the allegedly 'democratic' nature of (this version of) national identity and common history – achieved by placing 'common man' at the centre of the meaning of 'Sweden'.

The reality of this confidence in Swedish ways is illustrated by for example lack of both research into, and legislation against, racism and discrimination. In a recent report examining institutional racism in the judicial system, authors have suggested that the previous gap in research (see e.g. de los Reyes and Wingborg 2002) in this area must be understood in relation to a widespread confidence in that system living up to its role in ensuring that justice is done (Larsson, Cederberg and Laczak forthcoming); in other words, a lack of awareness concerning the problem of discrimination. This is also identified by authors analysing the late implementation of laws against ethnic discrimination in the labour market (Soininen 1999; Graham and Soininen 1998).

In her doctoral thesis entitled 'Black and Swedish: Racialization and the Cultural Politics of Belonging in Stockholm, Sweden' (2000), Lena Sawyer draws on the narratives of people with African origin as well as people from the 'racially unmarked category', 'Swedes', to discuss contemporary practices and processes of racialization. Sawyer is herself part Afro-American and part Swedish, and coming over from the US to undertake this research in Sweden, she was indeed met with the response from some Swedish people that this type of research might be relevant in the US, but not here, where 'race' does not exist (2000: 40-1). Sawyer suggests there is a taboo in Sweden against talking of 'race'; but contrary to seemingly common perceptions, she finds processes of racialization central to many of the ways in which people narrate belonging, both on a personal and a collective level. Because of the tension between such processes and the specific (dominant) imagination of a 'Sweden' from which

they are absent, substantial parts of the narrations Sawyer analyses are devoted to ways of 'othering' racism.

Sawyer uses the word 'chronotope' to refer to historical segments or memories that people draw on in their narratives to affirm certain features (of an imagined common identity) and displace or marginalise others. The collective memories of the past such as those discussed above according to Sawyer are put forward as the basis of Swedish morality also in present times, and function to deny racism (2000: 132-6); in the narratives told to her, sixties and seventies solidarity as well as the Second World War 'are being strategically invoked in people's discussion about the present' (140-141). Furthermore, the lack of a colonial history is regarded as significant by some (Sawyer, 2000).

4.2 How racism has been theorised ... understood and displaced

According to van Dijk (1993), in order to understand racism in a society one also has to understand the ways in which it is denied. Looking specifically at the press and parliamentary discourse, van Dijk suggests that denials are generally composed on the one hand of a positive self-presentation, and on the other a strategy of defence. Before I move onto describe some of those defence strategies in a Swedish context, I want to emphasise van Dijk's argument that apart from forming a defence against accusations of racism, defences also in fact play a part precisely in those processes I have termed 'racist' – processes of inclusion and exclusion, and the production of ethnic hierarchies. As he puts it, they 'express ingroup allegiances and white group solidarity ... mark social boundaries and re-affirm social and ethnic identities, and self-attribute moral superiority to their own group' (ibid 181).

As van Dijk argues in the quote included earlier in this chapter, 'racism is usually elsewhere' – either in other times, other places, or at the margins of society. Sawyer finds that when asking people about race and racism, the chronotopes of the Second World War, the Holocaust and Nazism are common (2000: 127-32); other common more contemporary chronotopes of racialization

and racism are South Africa (until the end of Apartheid) and the US (228-229). I should add that a nearby racist 'other' has emerged on the scene more recently, namely Denmark. Sweden has been set on marking the distance, as can be seen for example from the open arguments between ministers of both countries (Politiken 21 May and 5 Sept 2002; Svd 5 April 2002; UNHCR 25 May 2002)[37].

In his book *Even in Sweden*, Allan Pred (2000) describes strategies of displacement in a contemporary Swedish context. Discussing the 'popular geographical imagination' with regards to racism, Pred's first example is how the municipality of Sjöbo (located about 30 miles north east of Malmö) was put on the map through a mid-eighties local referendum, in which its residents voted against the state's proposal to accommodate a (relatively low) number of refugees in the area. The rest of the country, fuelled by tons of stigmatising mass media coverage, condemned both the local politicians in favour of a negative decision, and the Sjöbo inhabitants, who have had to carry the burden of signifying racism ever since.

> 'Location in the popular geographical imagination: There! There is a place worthy of condemnation, if not loathing. Sjöbo is where racism is at. There is a center thoroughly permeated with intolerance and prejudice, with pompous agrarian conservatism. There is a place where Nazism has had a long history, where it had a foothold already in the 1920s. There is a total lack of humanitarianism, of solidarity, of generosity. There is a place where – to put it kindly – people must be odd, if not somewhat stupid' (Pred 2000: 192)

> 'Sjöbo (is) perceived as a disgrace for a country which, through the international engagement of Olof Palme, among others, has gone into the breach for universal human rights and boundary-transcending solidarity ...

[37] The 'war of words' began when the Swedish Minister for Integration, Mona Sahlin, together with a Belgian Minister wrote an open letter to the Danish government questioning the human rights implications of the recent Danish legislation. The leader of the extreme racist/nationalist party Danish People's Party, Pia Kjersgaard, replied by proposing a drawbridge on the recently opened bridge between Malmö and Copenhagen if the Swedish government would insist on transforming Swedish cities to 'Scandinavian Beirut with tribal wars, honour murders and group rapes' (DN 28 April 2002).

> Sjöbo will remain a moral scapegoat for the hostility toward foreigners we all bear with us – and that we avoid looking in the eye as long as we can blame, and blow up over, somebody else' (Gunnar Alsmark, 1990; quoted in Pred, 2000: 189)[38]

Another significant case of spatial displacement described by Pred is the municipality of Trollhättan, centre for a series of racist attacks on the local immigrant community throughout the nineties. While Sjöbo came to stand for a small-minded, somewhat backwards and less civilised 'farmers' racist attitude, Trollhättan represented the violent, extreme, skin-head type (ibid 189-221).

> 'Location in the popular geographical imagination: What a place! Time and time again. Things happen there. No doubt about it. Trollhättan is the most racist city in the country. The most unSwedish of Swedish cities. A center of incomprehensible violence. A cesspool of anti-immigrant and antirefugee sentiments' (ibid 214)

As Pred argues, 'the highlighting of the extraordinary and the spectacular ... has frequently enabled people to regard racism as typical of somewhere else, of some place or space other than their own, of some other community, urban center, or part of a metropolitan area other than their own' (96).

Strategies for more or less individualising racism have also been common. The scapegoating of extreme right-wing groups and networks, largely due to immense degrees of media attention, has turned these into signifiers for the word 'racism', whereby the faces of these groups have come to act as an important addition to the general othering of racism reproduced by the explicit principles of Swedish national identity (ibid 82-96; Wigerfeldt and Wigerfeldt 2001; see also Gilroy 1987: 114-135).

[38] As Pred also points out in his discussion, the background to the 'no' vote in Sjöbo was not as simple as the mass media portrayed it, but a much more complex combination of issues, such as a decline in agricultural employment (an important sector in the area) a difficult financial situation, but also, the anger at being told what to do by 'Stockholm' played an important part, whereby it could be regarded partially some form of 'grass root' response to centralised power (in difficult times) (2000: 196-9).

Alongside the making of racism into the property of 'other' places and people, we see a series of temporal displacements. At the same time as 'racism' is removed – through representations of racists as 'others' – from the heart of 'Sweden', it is placed, furthermore, in 'other' times. Considering this phenomenon in terms of theorisations of racism, we could say that the meaning of 'racism' in the 'popular (this time historical) imagination' is placed in the era of scientific racisms – in the more or less explicit belief in biological or genetic differences between groups of people – the logic being that because we have now moved forward and explicitly condemned the validity of those racisms, we cannot be racist. Following that definition of 'racism', in the case of Sweden, the Holocaust forms an obvious and central point of reference.

Concerned with the growth of racist groups and parties, the Swedish government recently (2002) established what is called the 'Forum for Living History', intended to encourage debates 'around questions about tolerance, democracy, consideration and everyone's equal worth', and around ideas and activities that contest those values (Regeringens Skrivelse 2000/01:59: 31-2)[39]. What is interesting about the establishment of this Forum for my present argument is its historical point of reference: the fact that it uses the Holocaust as a point of departure, the idea being that looking back at what happened during Nazi Germany will alert people to the risks posed by the growing power and influence of political fractions today subscribing to similar ideologies (Helene Lööw, the head of the Forum, interviewed in DN 1 July 2003). Apart from the continuing stigmatisation of, and displacement onto, those groups, what the Forum also does, I would argue, is to construct a dichotomy between on the one hand the Holocaust and on the other the values on which modern liberal nation states are built. That is, a dichotomy in which the Holocaust represents all the evil, and in which the modern, liberal and democratic nation state (by default) becomes the embodiment of all 'good' values.

Through this move, not only are the 'everyday' racist activities of the latter trivialised, marginalised or ignored, but also to some extent, such a relational

[39] Note this description refers to the *project* 'Living History' which has run since 1997.

definition means that those activities become impossible to conceptualise. Paul Gilroy (1987) argues this forcefully in his critique of anti-racist organisations that direct all their efforts mainly or solely at neo-fascist activity, efforts he suggests play a central role in re-producing the overall power relations (including racism) by diverging attention and supporting the status quo (1987: 122-34). In other words, the mutual scapegoating facilitates diversion from the social context (Balibar and Wallerstein 1988).

An extract from the government's document providing the background to the Forum to some extent illustrates this juxtaposition of 'evil' against the values of modern society.

> 'Racist and other attitudes and values that contradict the principle of all people's equal worth ultimately constitute a challenge to the whole basis of values that underpin democracy ... The more people that openly stand up in defence of the principle of all people's equal worth, the more difficult it will be for the enemies of democratic society' (Regeringens Skrivelse 2000/01: 59: 71; my translation)

This dichotomy is produced by, and further reproduces, an understanding of 'racism' as, in Charles Mills' words, 'an anomaly' to modern liberal societies; that is, it suggests that racism comes and attacks society from the outside. Countering the 'social contract tradition' in political theory, Mills (2000) argues that rather than being based on a consensual agreement between a number of equal individuals, society is based on relations of power and domination. Drawing on Carole Pateman's notion of a 'sexual contract' – which emphasises how gender relations are ingrained into the structures of (liberal) societies – Mills suggests that racial structures and power relations have been central to the development of liberal nation states. Hence contrary to the Swedish government's relational definition discussed here, he understands racism in liberal societies as an integral element – 'not anomalous ... but fundamental' (2000: 450).

To continue on the note of temporal displacements, I would like to move onto discuss a part of Sweden's own history. While other Western countries have (to various degrees) also used Nazi Germany as the definition of 'other' in the own celebratory account, Sweden's history differs substantially from most other countries in this aspect. While Sweden's 'neutral' role in the Second World War has, as discussed earlier, been used as a positive feature of 'Swedishness', the war fought against the Nazis by other countries, which has been central to some of those countries' definitions of themselves (notably Britain), is absent in Swedish history. Furthermore, in later years less flattering segments of Swedish history have been brought to the fore, suggesting that to a large extent Sweden's 'neutral' role is a myth, as the country in different ways in fact supported Germany in the war – both through arms trade, from which Sweden's economy greatly benefited, and by opening borders for German soldiers to access occupied territory, but also through a significant ideological support, partly by certain military fractions from Sweden that voluntarily fought on Germany's side, and partly by the existence and promotion of the scientific racisms on which the Nazis based and justified their actions (Boethius 1991; Wechselmann 1995; Broberg and Tydén 1991).

Swedish history has to some extent (had to) be re-written to include these less flattering elements, and for some writers the coming to light of this part of history has provided a great opportunity for challenging those selective historians that suggest that the development of modern Sweden was based solely on the values discussed throughout this chapter: the values outlined as the basis of modern nation states in general, in relation to which Sweden has come to regard itself not only as one amongst many, but in Pred's (ironic) words, 'the best in the world'. Critical historians have instead come to argue that the People's Home was built not only on 'equality', 'democracy' and 'solidarity' etc, but also on high levels of control of 'deviant' groups as well as direct, violent acts of purification, literally removing unwanted elements and individuals through 'a program of "reform eugenics"' put into practice through the Sterilization Acts of 1935 and 1941 (see Pred 2000: Sawyer, 2000). As Pred puts it,

> 'In the People's Home, where Father Social Engineer knew best, there was to be little if any room for the significantly different' (ibid 116)

The National Institute of Racial Biology, founded in 1921, was the first such research institute to be established in Europe, and it indeed perceived itself as an important factor in the building of the new Sweden; in other words, it would facilitate the production of a population fit for the aims proposed by the People's Home project.

> 'The mixing of people with high racial-biological standing (such as Scandinavians) with lowly qualified folk elements ... is decidedly abominable' (Herman Lundborg, director of the Institute, quoted in Pred 2000: 61)

> (The expanded Sterilization Act of 1941 will be) 'an important step in the direction of a purification of the Swedish stock, freeing it from the genetic material that would produce, in future generations, such individuals as are undesirable among a sound and healthy people' (Karl Gustav Westman, minister of justice at the time, quoted in Pred 2000: 112)

The existence of this history cannot be denied, and Sweden has had to face up to its guilt in past horrors. The government has made it an issue of great concern both to map the extent of forced sterilisations, and to compensate the persons that had to suffer from those previous policies aimed at 'purifying the Swedish stock'. It is however interesting to consider how history is again selectively imagined. Paul Gilroy (2000: 25) writes about the Holocaust and scientific racisms,

> 'The Nazi period constitutes the most profound moral and temporal rupture in the history of the twentieth century and the pretensions of its modern civilization. Remembering it has been integral to the politics of "race" for more than fifty years ... It aims to place this raciological catastrophe securely in an irrecoverable past, what Jean Améry called "the cold storage of history," designed more to be cited or passed en route to other happier destinations rather than a deliberately summoned up,

> inhabited, or mourned in an open-ended manner. Official restitution promotes a sense of closure...'

The idea of conceptual closure is crucial: by imagining a significant discontinuity with (certain parts of) the past, one is again able to use history selectively. Although a less flattering history is acknowledged, it is also not imagined in the same way as other (more flattering) parts of history. When Swedes speak of the thirties and forties eugenics, they do not speak of it in the same way as they speak of solidarity, equality and the 'People's Home': as part of 'our common history', as something that has formed 'us' as what 'we' are today. This is where the temporal aspect of 'racism' comes in handy: regarding 'racism' solely on scientific terms once again enables a displacement to take place.

When the horrors of genocide and sterilizations of the past, alongside physically violent acts of today (Neo-Nazi activities), are not only placed at the centre, but occupy the entire space of 'racism', horrors and violence perhaps less extreme and more subtle are left out of how people imagine 'racism'. Hence a series of very real and very difficult everyday experiences faced by large parts of the migrant or minority population in Sweden today have no space therein. To recount Adil's statement already cited,

> 'Ok, so we came here – so what? Sure, you can't kill me. But you should give me a bit more, respect me a bit more'

If the recognition of 'the worst' (even at times when one has to admit to participating in it) functioning to trivialise 'less bad' forms of racism experienced by the migrant population today is part of the problem, another comes out of how acknowledging 'racism' along whatever lines works to clear the own, contemporary conscience. Although an acknowledgment of 'racism' within Sweden's border on the one hand to some extent provides a possible space for critical reflection, on the other hand it simultaneously provides yet another defence mechanism.

Chapter five. Imagined relations between 'Swedes' and 'others' in theory and practice

In a recent book concerned with processes of gender and ethnicity in a contemporary Swedish context, Paulina de los Reyes and Irene Molina (2003) argue for the relevance of a postcolonial perspective. They do so by pointing towards the production of otherness following (ideological) lines established through colonialism (Fanon 1967). Considering internal 'ethnic hierarchies' in Sweden that place non-Europeans and particularly those of Muslim background at the bottom, and North Europeans at the top, they argue that colonialism ideologically was a pan-European phenomenon, and hence extended to Sweden as well.

This is not entirely uncontroversial in a context where the 'good self' to some extent has been affirmed precisely through the lack of a colonial history. As Sawyer (2000) suggests, this factual history is often used in selective history writing as part of the rhetoric of 'solidarity' largely regarded as the thread that runs through the entire history of (modern) Sweden. Contrary to this history that falls in line with the self-image previously discussed, some have argued that history turned out this way less due to a sympathetic stance on the part of the Swedish state, and more because of its failed colonial attempts (for a brief discussion, see Saywer, 2000: 15-6). Furthermore, as Sawyer points out, the (substantial amount of) missionary work 'carried out (by Sweden) in the 19th century in the name of religion', which itself was very much structured around the idea of 'civilizing' the less developed, brought 'home' significant images of the 'others' supposedly in need of civilising.

As already discussed in different places in this thesis, common identities are imagined largely through relational definitions of 'us' and 'them'. In this chapter, I look at how discourses of 'others' as well as the 'self' have established a particular relationship between 'us' and 'them'. I will argue that that relationship is constructed mainly around a saviour-victim binary; in turn dependent on the wider framework of binaries of superior-inferior as well as civilised-barbaric. Drawing on public discourse as well as lived experiences, I

discuss how relations between 'victims' and 'saviours' are set up and reproduced in everyday life.

The chapter is divided into two main parts. The first focuses on the production of otherness in public discourses, and the somewhat complex and contradictory implications these have for everyday lives. I discuss how otherness is constructed largely through discourses on gender and family relations (Yuval-Davis 1997a), and how the celebrated discourse of Swedish gender equality is affirmed simultaneously (Molina and de los Reyes 2003). I argue that a saviour discourse is central to the image of the 'victim immigrant woman' that emerges out of these constructions. However, I go on to consider how, rhetoric aside, the idea of 'saving the immigrant woman' is undercut by the discourses that simultaneously deems her in need of help and locates her in an 'other' sphere fixed in time and untouchable. I argue that the discourse on gender equality intersects both with the discourse of 'right to difference' that prohibits 'us' from interfering, and with the general production of difference that is regarded by and large as fixed and hence unchangeable.

The second part of the chapter is concerned with how saviour-victim relations are established in institutional everyday practices through the category of the 'refugee'. I begin by drawing on the experiences of Somali and Bosnian refugees to discuss how they negotiate in everyday life the boundaries set by the 'refugee' in the Swedish popular imagination. I look specifically at two periods of migrants' lives in Sweden: the initial 'introduction' to Swedish society, and the period that follows on from that, when migrants try to establish a normal life; the latter focuses particularly at people's experiences of applying for jobs. I argue that narratives of these periods indicate an underlying saviour-victim binary as well as an imagined superior-inferior hierarchy.

Included in this second part of the chapter is a discussion of the particular role of the civil servant in migrants' lives. They embody the meeting between the migrant and the structure; and I argue that their ways of thinking and acting are both indicative and reproductive of imagined relations between victims and saviours. However, I also emphasise agency and differences between different

civil servants, as, judging from my interviews, these seem to significantly affect meetings and their outcomes.

5.1 'Us' and 'them' in talk of gender and equality in different 'cultures'

A public debate that has strongly shaped perceptions of 'other cultures' in recent times concerns what is popularly termed 'honour culture'. The debate was sparked by two cases of 'honour murder' of Swedish citizens with Kurdish background: Pela Atroshi, murdered by her two uncles in Iraq in 1999, and Fadime Sahindal, murdered by her father in Uppsala, Sweden, in 2001.

> 'I think you exaggerate certain things in the Swedish media ... when it comes to a lot of things, I think you exaggerate things about "culture clashes" and so on, you make it a problem, a danger ... You make people stupid, kind of, you take away the normal, natural meeting, and create more anxiety around how you should meet and approach people ... Also, you accuse certain people, certain cultures – for example when it comes to "honour murder" and stuff like that. I mean, it's a catastrophe, a human catastrophe of course, to murder your sister or daughter ... The girl that was murdered, Fadime, I mean it's a catastrophe for her. But they make such a symbol, about immigrants murdering and so on, through her' (Adil).

In a paper about the debate that followed the murder of Fadime in 2001, Paula Mulinari looks at how images of patriarchal men came to stigmatise 'immigrants' collectively. Drawing on Miles' theory of racialization (1989), she discusses how the debate transformed from treating the individual case, to making the 'honour' tradition a characteristic of the 'ethnic' Kurdish group as a whole. However, considering the terminology used ('immigrant men' and 'immigrant women') and the commonplace conflation of culture, religion as well as a general 'otherness', mass media coverage indicates that generalisations in the Swedish popular imagination extended far beyond the single ethnic group. Furthermore, the debate was heavily polarised, with 'equal Sweden' on the on hand, and 'unequal and oppressive others' on the other,

whereby it seems appropriate to suggest that 'the story of what "they" are like is also an implicit story about "us"' (Molina and de los Reyes 2003: 308, my translation).

> 'The bodies of women from these 'Other' places have occupied a central place in the production of difference, between the barbaric and the civilised, the spiritual and the rational, the passive and the strong. All that is seen to be enticing as well as repulsive and in need of correction of these 'Other' places is projected on to these female figures' (Puwar, 2003: 24)

Puwar (2003) suggests here that images of 'other' women function to mark cultural differences. Similarly, as mentioned in relation to multiculturalism in chapter two, Nira Yuval-Davis (1997a) has argued that gender and family relations are often regarded as the 'authentic' core of an ethnic or national group. Referring to the culturalising tendency discussed earlier, she writes, '(i)n this culturalized discourse, gendered bodies and sexuality play pivotal roles as territories, markers and reproducers of the narratives of nations and other collectivities' (1997: 39).

The discourse on 'gender equality' is a central factor of the Swedish imagined community (de los Reyes, Molina and Mulinari 2003): another way in which Swedes tend to regard themselves as not merely as one amongst many civilised nations, but in fact the 'best in the world'.

> 'although it is not always lived up to, the societal norm that proclaims equal rights and obligations for women and men has come to compose an important part of the Swedish identity and as such a basis for drawing and marking borders not only towards other countries, but also towards the immigrant population in Sweden' (Molina and de los Reyes 2003: 306, my translation).

This cultural production of 'self' and 'otherness', juxtaposing 'us' against 'oppressive' or 'patriarchal' cultures includes making the feminist project the sole property of women designed as 'equal'; in other words, 'Swedish' women

have hence become the only women 'with the right to administer the heritage of the women's movement' (de los Reyes, Molina and Mulinari 2003: 15, my translation), while 'other' women are at best the objects at which contemporary struggles are aimed (Mohanty 1993).

Attention to the intersection between gender and ethnicity, the importance of which I argued for in chapter two, has in the public discourse not been concerned with the double or threefold structural disadvantages from which migrant women suffer (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992, Knocke 1986, 2001, de los Reyes 2000), but has had 'a clear "problem" focus, where questions about sexism, physical abuse, genital mutilation and teenage marriage are given highest priority' (Molina and de los Reyes 2003: 306, my translation); these debates are all different examples of the overall juxtapositioning of evil and/or backwards others versus good and civilized Swedes.

In the debates about female genital mutilation (FGM), mainly Somalis have featured as the opponents of Swedish gender equality. My interviewee Leyla works actively against FGM, amongst other things by informing people about the negative effects it has on the girls that have to go through it. She says about the images of Somalis that flourish in both political debates and the mass media:

> 'I think it creates discrimination, it just creates more prejudices against Somalis. They do that in Sweden. There was a report in September last year, it was a film where they talked a lot about how Somalis take their children to other countries and circumcise and so on. They took hidden cameras to Imams and so on, and that's not a problem... Everyone (including Somalis) is fighting, they want to stop this problem and save the girls. But I think that it is a bad way, that you show Somalis this way...'

A similar process of both stigmatisation and racialization has taken place in this debate, where the practice (FGM) is condemned alongside all members of communities where we 'know' the tradition is practiced (see Foucault 1980 and Said 1978 for discussions of the relation between power and knowledge). Anthropologist Sara Johnsdotter (2003) has done research into attitudes to

female circumcision amongst the Somali population in Malmö, and draws on her findings to counter this 'knowledge' and the stereotypes central to it produced in political and media discourse. She criticises claims about girls living in Sweden having to go through genital mutilation made by a Swedish government minister, by arguing that there is no actual evidence to support those claims. She writes,

> 'The truth is that we don't know much at all. But that you can claim practically anything in this issue, as exile Africans lack possibilities to defend themselves against the description' (Sydsvenskan, 19 June 2003; my translation).

Continuing her account of FGM and the stigmatising debate, Leyla continues,

> 'You started talking about it's not the same as before. In Sweden you talk like it never changes, and that it's the Swedish law that changes us and so on – but it's not. You learn through experiences. And if mothers had problems themselves, they don't want to do it. Many (Somalis) thought its Islam, but when they come here and meet other Muslims, who know nothing about this, they start to think, why do we do it? So they don't want to do it anymore.'

Here, Leyla goes on to emphasise the fact that cultures and traditions change with time and with new experiences. Similarly, Johnsdotter (2003) points towards the wide spread resistance to FGM amongst Somalis in Sweden, and argues that most people have come to re-evaluate such practices in exile, whereby many work actively, like Leyla, to prevent FGM. The point made about changes (through time, and through change in circumstances, such as migration and meetings with others) is a crucial point about all 'cultures', but mainly ignored in the representations that both generalise about 'others' and regard them as fixed in past times. Leyla also expresses frustration about the common assumption that when people do change, it is thanks to Swedish society that either teaches them or forces them to behave differently. At the same time as these images stigmatise (certain) 'others', they simultaneously

produce an image of the (Swedish) self as not only better and more developed, but also as the educator, who is to teach these people how to think and behave in a civilized society.

These images of both self and other emerge clearly in interviews I did recently for a research project examining institutional racism in the Swedish judicial system (Larsson, Cederberg and Lazcak forthcoming). Asking a number of 'Swedes' working in different parts of that system what they thought could be the reason why immigrants are overrepresented in Swedish crime statistics, a series of ideas about 'immigrant culture' emerged. Although they all (in a politically correct manner) refuted the thesis that immigrants are more criminal than Swedes, their accounts were tainted with perceptions about 'other cultures' that in fact amounted to the argument that it was after all more likely that migrants would go against Swedish law, in other words being more criminal. 'They have another way of thinking', 'it is something that is common in their culture', it is a 'shock like experience for them to come here and find out that this is not accepted in Sweden', etc. Following on from that, they also mainly refuted the opposite thesis of crime statistics, that which points towards a selective (in other words discriminatory) attitude amongst police officers and the rest of the judicial system. Interestingly, most of them regarded the problem more or less as of lack of information, well expressed by one lay-assessor saying in response to a question about the risk of injust practices, that if there is any injustice done by society on behalf of the migrant, then that injustice lies in the fact that the migrant has not been properly informed about what you can and cannot do in Sweden. She further supports this argument with a range of examples about what 'they' (immigrants) are currently not aware of when it comes to Swedish laws, and how 'we' see things. The most common example of 'cultural differences' given by interviewees concerned differences in family and gender relations, and importantly different occurrences of violence against women and children. The following quote from an interview with a female lay assessor is rather characteristic.

> 'I mean lots of them are Muslim, and I have gone on this evening course for several years where we have read about the Muslims, and Muslims and

Christians, they are so similar really if you look at it, but on the other hand it's that amongst Muslims, the man is, he is the ultimate head, he's a half god, that's just the way it is. I have sat now and judged ... a Muslim who has abused his five children ... and his ex-wife who he lived with, they were married for a few years and then divorced and then started living together again, and he had all the rights in the world, he told us, to have as many women as he liked; and his wife was jealous. But she shouldn't care about that, because he had the right, and to beat them with a belt, double belt, the children, he had right to beat his children under the feet and on the palms of the hands, that was nothing, you're allowed to do that. You're not at all allowed to do that in Sweden.'

Asking this woman what she thinks about the argument common amongst more extreme racist and anti-immigration parties and groups, that migrants who go against Swedish law should be sent back to their countries of origin[40], she refutes it, but adds,

> 'If we take this bit with these fathers, from Turkey and Iran and Iraq, who treat their daughters so badly ... honour murder and that. There, I can honestly say that just go back, I think I could say that. But then at the same time I take that back straight away and say that there's no point. Because it's us here in Sweden that should teach them that you don't do this to your daughters' (quoted in Larsson, Cederberg and Laczak, forthcoming; my translation).

Apart from illustrating the existence of ideas and generalisations about 'other' cultures, these statements are interesting also because of the ways in which they emphasise precisely the dichotomy between 'us' and 'them', and furthermore, the 'saviour' role Sweden is granted in this relation: 'we' are supposed to teach them how to behave like you do in a civilized country. Another example is the following extract from an interview with a male prosecutor.

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[40] As mentioned in the introduction, it seems this argument has more recently crept also into mainstream political discourse.

> 'There are those who do not want to adapt to our norm system and things that obviously comes into conflict with their norm system. It's kind of how to raise girls and, well this thing which is well-known with honour-related violence, and that is a kind of criminal behaviour that exists as far as we know amongst immigrants that have that cultural background. So some groups are more likely to get into conflict with our norm system, that's just a fact'
>
> MC: 'This thing about honour related violence, do you mean it's a general trend within the groups you refer to, or could it be single cases?'
>
> 'Well, that's no secret that those who come here with Islamic background, they have another view of how the family should live, and if they are newcomers, then they keep that patriarchal view.'
>
> MC: 'In your experience, is this a common occurrence?'
>
> 'Yes, it comes out quite often that fathers with Islamic beliefs have a fundamentally different view of what you can do with your wife and your children ... and that works in that country they come from, but it doesn't always work here' (extract from Larsson, Cederberg and Laczak, forthcoming; my translation).

Although the examples of 'immigrant culture' given by interviewees in this research relate mainly to those of 'Islamic' background and/or from 'patriarchal' societies, it is important to note the common conflations that take place. The polarisation of two and opposing 'cultures' are central to these accounts. A young male judge (otherwise comparatively non-judgemental in his account) even puts it like that; he says, 'because we are discussing Swedish culture contra immigrant culture...' (Larsson, Cederberg and Laczak forthcoming). This wording is significant: if use of the word 'culture' first of all transforms single events to a shared 'way of life' to which all individuals designed a particular 'ethnic' belonging are reduced, the word 'immigrant' or 'immigrant culture' means a move to an even higher level of generalisation. While the step from individual cases to 'ethnic' generalisation and stigmatisation is problematic enough, those generalisations and stigmatisations extend even further through intersections with other discourses of 'otherness'. A particularly important intersection concerns understandings of 'other' religions and religious practices, and notably Islam. As the boundary between

religion and tradition is blurred, reduction of specific traditions to 'Islam' in general is commonplace (Hussain 1997, O'Connor 1997; see also Hvitfelt 1998 about media images of 'Islam')[41].

While the blurred boundaries between different cultures, ethnicities and religions have great consequences for all those designed an 'outside' place in the popular imagination of belonging and cultural differences, it also means that some people that are in fact immigrants in the basic sense of having migrated to Sweden from another country are spared the designation 'immigrant'. As anthropologist Thomas Hylland Eriksen (2002) has said, 'it is not enough to be an immigrant to count as an immigrant. You have to be a whole range of other things too. And being Muslim helps'. Etienne Balibar (1988) makes a similar and important point when in relation to a discussion about shifting racialising practices, he argues that the word 'immigrant' today has achieved a somewhat racial status.

Another issue that has come up in my interviews regarding these 'us-versus-them' constructions in which the former half comes out the better concerns what is left out, forgotten, denied or marginalised about that 'us', about the

[41] It has been argued that Muslims are the main target of racist discourse in Western countries today (Islamophobia). As Tim O'Connor (1997: 139) writes in an article about media representation of Islam and Muslims, 'Islam is a religion, and its followers are called Muslims. But in the press, the word Islam is used to cover a great variety of political ideologies, traditions, cultures and histories. In the same way, the word Muslim is used to refer to a great variety of peoples, and is even used to signify nationality. Following on from that, it seems that the press – and some readers – come to use the word Muslim as a racial term'. In the same book, Mustafa Hussain argues that, following a series of stereotypes, Muslims are continuously generalised into a coherent and homogenous group, which means that expressions by one Muslim often becomes the property of all Muslims; that is, a limited number of self-proclaimed leaders are allowed to speak for Muslims across the world. Furthermore, the extent to which Islam has become politicised, both concerning cases where states have proclaimed themselves Islamic, and a series of ways in which international relations have been 'Islamized' in the Western popular imagination, has changed stereotypes about Muslims in the West. In the words of John Esposito, recent times have 'transformed old stereotypes and hostilities to new ones. Images and stereotypes of camels and harems from the past were replaced by modern impressions of violence and terrorism associated with the threat of militant 'Islamic fundamentalism'' (2002: 252-3). If old stereotypes came out of the 'Oriental' stereotypes discussed by Said (1978), new stereotypes arose out of the myth about an 'Islamic threat'. Through that myth, binaries were set up between the 'Islamic mind' (controlled by irrational and emotional forces, and completely submerged by religion) contra the 'Western mind' (portrayed as modern and rational) emphasising the incompatibility of the two, and furthermore, conceiving of Islam as a threat to Western ways of life.

'own culture', when 'others' are condemned. This feature of 'us-and-them' constructions is heavily criticised by many of my interviewees, who express frustration about the fact that, in Selma's words, 'no one looks for faults in themselves, it's just us'. Adil, who spoke earlier about the stigmatising effects of the 'honour murder' debates, continues by saying that he does not mean that we should keep silent about such phenomena – but that we need to bring out and speak also of other phenomena, such as other forms of violence within the family, which he says in Swedish society occurs to a much larger extent than 'honour murders', but that disappear in significance in relation to the latter. In other words, it seems that the explicit affirmation of the 'Swedish norm' functions not only to exclude those perceived to be different, but also to veil or marginalise practices that take place within the 'own' imagined community (de los Reyes, Molina and Mulinari 2003). Selma continues, 'when there is women abuse amongst Swedish families ... there are also lots of things that society keeps quiet, and don't want to discuss'. My key informant Anita says that she commonly hears things like 'well, but it is a fact that culture forms us, and we in Sweden have fought a long struggle for equality… and then these patriarchal men come in…' She continues to give her own view of the matter.

> 'I'm not saying that they don't exist, and there are more in some parts of the world than other. I have talked to women from different parts of the world that tell me things I can't even take in, because I can't understand that those things actually happen, so I do know that – but I have also talked to women from the same parts of the world that haven't experienced that oppression and that patriarchy or abuse, and I have talked to Swedish women that have also not experienced patriarchy, and that think that their society is so equal you can't even imagine, good for them, but I have also met Swedish women who have experienced the opposite ... the variation here is never ending…'

Confronted with the question of how to conceptualise Swedish men's violence towards women, the public prosecutor cited above continues to juxtapose 'our' and 'their' culture. An overall analysis of interviews with people working in the judicial system indicates a clear tendency to culturalise 'other' behaviour while

regarding similar behaviour within their own group as anomalous. Furthermore, in most interviews where the 'cultural' explanatory model to minority overrepresentation in crime statistics has been used, it is common to regard 'our' violence as socially determined, while putting 'their' violence down exclusively to cultural predispositions. Finally, the 'cultures' they speak of seem to have lives of their own and exist independently from the social context that surrounds them, as well as being fixed in time.

5.2 Beyond good and evil... images of victims and saviours, and the roles they play

Examining gendered dimensions of the racialising processes discussed above, we see that 'immigrant men' and 'immigrant women' are positioned very differently. While the overall distinction between the collectivities 'us' and 'them' indeed falls along the lines of a distinction between 'good' and 'bad', a gender sensitive approach means going beyond ideas about 'good and evil', and understanding in greater detail the processes functioning to exclude and interiorise (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992). After the murders of Pela and Fadime, talk about 'immigrant girls' flourished in political debates and the mass media. At the same time as the debates stigmatised 'immigrant men', it functioned to take side with those 'poor women' against their abusive and oppressive men, whereby something of a sympathetic and protective discourse was developed that explicitly aimed to ensure the welfare of the women, who were in a sense taken under the Swedish wing.

Although this 'sympathy' and 'wish to help' saved to an extent the 'immigrant women' from the rejected 'other' position produced for 'immigrant men', it also did not grant them an equal place within 'our' community. Instead, the protective dimension to this discourse was heavily formative of their position within society, because of the ways in which they were perceived less as individuals and more as victims (and in any case as 'others'). Hence, the debate, and the specific identity spaces constructed within it, in many ways ensured the exclusion of both 'immigrant men' and 'immigrant women' from majority

society. 'Immigrant men' through stereotypes according to which they all abuse and oppress women, and 'immigrant women' by disempowering them, contributing to a negative and 'helpless' self-image, and by making the rest of society see them as incapable, inferior, less developed, and hence equally unsuited for participating in majority society (Mohanty 1993, Puwar 2003). Furthermore, as Nira Yuval-Davis and Marcel Stoetzler (2002: 342) note, 'often images of women's position in society is used more to degrade the men of the 'other' side than as part of a comprehensive egalitarian gender perspective'.

My key informant Semira has worked with a female network in Rosengård; she told me that many of the female inhabitants in the area never engage with (majority) Swedish society. Many of the people she worked with had never in fact visited the city centre, which is five minutes on the bus or about twenty minutes walking distance. Asking her what she thinks could be the solution to their exclusion from society, she replies that one of the main problems is Swedes' 'helpful' attitude to these people – how they 'feel sorry for', or 'want to take care of'. Instead, she emphasised the need to make migrants and particularly women migrants feel as individuals with strength and qualities, instead of simply 'victims'.

The power dimensions of the saviour-victim binary is particularly well veiled when a discourse of 'helping' the victims is a central component of the receiving society's (positively evaluated) view of itself. Leyla, who several times in the interview expressed that she was grateful that Sweden took her in after having to flee Somalia, also shares some criticisms of the way she was met by Swedish people. She says,

> 'When I came to Sweden I thought it was good, a developed country, you felt that they knew something about Africans and so on. But after only a few months I thought, no, it's the wrong attitude to Africans. The questions I get sometimes tell me that people know nothing about Africa ... they wondered how could I speak English, and when I told them I had an education, in psychology, they wondered... Sometimes people asked how it could be that I was different from the others. I kind of felt

that they have this image that you show in the media, you always talk on TV about hungry people, and about war and so on...'

While the media image Leyla speaks of here has been an important part of an allegedly 'welcoming' attitude to migrants as reflected in a loyal stance generally, and a liberal refugee policy particularly, it has also shaped understandings of an entire continent and its' people in a very simplistic way. Lena Sawyer writes about the media images of Africa flourishing in the mid-nineties, 'filled with drought, famine, war and starvations' (2000: 165), whereby African people were reduced to the 'underdeveloped', 'passive', 'victim' stereotypes, while other parts of their histories, cultures and identities disappeared. Furthermore, the context of and background to the events portrayed in the mass media was not accounted for, which further helped reproduce the dichotomy between the underdeveloped and the civilized, and, importantly, the paternalistic relation and the (self)image of the saviour (ibid 166-7).

Leyla previously criticised Sweden for assuming that all positive cultural changes within migrant communities are down to the disciplining role of Sweden, and her own biography is in fact very challenging of stereotypes of passive and oppressed 'Somali women'.

> 'When I was little I fought with the boys, football, and I wanted to be good at school, best in the class and so on. And that was good. For example, when we finish school, then you are supposed to learn, to do national service, learn how you do with weapons and so on ... women also. So I was always, when we marched, it was always me holding, I was group leader, I was always first in line. Because I was tall also. And when I came here, I felt the same kind of ... and I still feel the same. I work with circumcision issues, and I go before everyone and say 'no, it's not like that, it's like this', you know, showing my thoughts and way ... (Sometimes) I think I'm Swedish, but it's not like that, also in Somalia I was like that. I feel that we are equal ... but we have different roles in life, men and women, but I never feel that he is better than me because he is a man, no. He can be better than me in some subject or something, because he has had

> his own experience and so on, I respect that, but we are worth the same … it's important with self-confidence.'

She continues by emphasising how she finds it important to spread her views on gender relations, and to get more women to stand up for themselves and seal their rights, both as women and as an ethnic minority.

> 'I said to the women also, that you have to educate yourselves, so you can get better wages, better status, you have to go through politics, I told them. When we go to Somalia, we have to lead something – why can't we dream of being president? Many said that was good, others said we are Muslims, women can't lead and so on, some said. So I said why not? Mohamed's wife led many, she was educated, many sought education through her, why not?'

Leyla's story, as well as some accounts from 'Swedes' about 'us' and 'them', is illustrative of the fact that the (selected) history of 'saving others' and 'solving the world's problem' Swedes like to refer to as a central aspect of their common heritage (as discussed in chapter four) is not only a celebrated memory of the past, but very much lived in the everyday present.

5.3 Intersectionality: women migrants getting the worst of both worlds?

The intense debate that followed the two cases of 'honour murder' that had come to public attention had important effects in the political area of 'integration' (Geddes 2003). Demands were made in public debates for the implementation of a certificate on 'Swedish values' to be completed by newcomers as well as the possibility of withdrawing citizenship from people that had committed such crimes (Sydsvenskan 21 Jan 2003). It seems appropriate indeed to speak of a 'moral panic' (de los Reyes 2003) following the 'honour murders', and the proposed solution to solve that panic was the adoption of more or less a straightforward assimilatory approach.

However, while this 'moral panic' was indeed overwhelming, it is interesting to note that a second and somewhat oppositional discourse quickly developed alongside and in relation to the first. The second discourse was in fact the government's official stance on the issue: while condemning the crime itself, it also condemned all 'cultural' explanations of the crime, and chose to point instead towards general relations of power between men and women (Minister for Integration Mona Sahlin and Minister for Equality Margareta Winberg, discussed in Daragahi 2002). Through this move, the government aspired to mark their general 'feminist' stance as well as display a 'non-racist' attitude. Furthermore, Swedish feminists took the opportunity at this point to open up a debate about a general 'patriarchy': oppression and violence against women is not the sole property of 'them', but is an important albeit more hidden part also of 'our' culture. Former leader of the left-wing party Gudrun Schyman gave her by now famous speech on the 'Swedish Talibans', comparing oppression of women in Afghanistan with Sweden, where she suggested men were not much better (DN 20 Jan 2003).

The 'honour murder' debate came hence to be polarised not only in terms of the 'good-and-evil' binary discussed above, but also in terms of the different positions and arguments available in the debate. Accusing each other of 'cultural relativism' and 'cultural racism' respectively, the only two apparent standpoints were as Haideh Daragahi (2002) rightly points out, limited by precisely the problematic definition of the word 'culture' discussed in earlier chapters. Her own argument was that we need to be able to speak of certain phenomena as culturally specific without for that matter reducing an entire group to them (see also Anthias 2002b). Gerd Baumann's (1997) distinction between 'dominant' and 'demotic' discourses provides a good way of explaining the position taken by Daragahi. Baumann emphasises that when speaking of 'minority culture' in debates such as that about 'honour', critiques cannot be reduced to true and false conceptions about minorities. Instead, we need to be attentive to the fact that it displays a certain version of the 'minority culture' concerned, and question how singular versions are allowed to speak for a group as a whole. Hence the issue is not one of mis-representation, but limited

representation, and of the importance of recognising the changing, multiple and contradictory nature of what is often reduced to single and fixed 'cultures'.

Recent research by Paulina de los Reyes (2003) attempted to monitor the situation of young women 'of immigrant background' in Sweden with regards to 'control through violence and threat of violence by families and relatives' (6) as well as the help and support available for them.

> 'The report shows that the girls' specific problem consists in the fact that they find themselves in an institutional no mans land where the parents' control through the practice of violence is neutralised by society's culturalising explanations and generally passive attitude to encroachment against women and children. An important dimension to the problem image is hence that both the girls and their parents are defined as culturally, ethnically and religiously deviant in the Swedish society' (2003: 6; my translation).

'Not being taken seriously' was a recurrent theme in interviews. Furthermore, '(t)he contacts with authorities are according to the informants in too many cases about a long story of failed meetings with school, the police and the social authorities, where the girls' situation is mis-judged and neglected' (2003: 8; my translation). De los Reyes argues that a general problem is that the girls are regarded as victims not of violence but of a generational conflict; the solution proposed in turn is commonly intra-family negotiations.

In her analysis of the problem, de los Reyes opts for integrating perspectives on gender and ethnicity (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992)[42]; and furthermore, understanding the situation of the girls in relation to the structures of society generally. She suggests that it is important to regard cultural expressions as dependent on the context in which they are formed, and argues that ethnic segregation, through which minorities are concentrated in certain locations, increases the tendency to adhere to certain cultural traditions, but also the

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[42] See also de los Reyes 2000.

ability of the (ethnic) collective to control the individual (see Anthias 2001, 2002b on the importance of attending to social structures and processes).

Haideh Daragahi argues that while for her political affiliates (left-wing, secular, feminist) in the late seventies Iran, critiquing cultural practices oppressive of women was an obvious thing to do, when she later came to Sweden and continued her political struggle, she was met by the equivalent political fractions (left-wing and feminist) calling her a 'cultural traitor'; that is, it was politically in-correct to question cultural specificities in whatever form (DN 23 Oct 2002). She writes about the paradox met by 'people like me who have become political refugees because they did not want to tolerate what they found unfair and inhuman in their home countries and who are amazed at the demand that they should stop thinking those thoughts when they have emigrated' (Daragahi 2002; my translation); in other words, the oppression from which she suffered was protected and promoted by the Swedish left (see also Yuval-Davis 1997a; Saghal and Yuval-Davis 2000). Questioning the 'anti-racist' rhetoric of the multicultural defenders, Daragahi suggests that it is in fact the Swedish tolerance of 'other' cultures that is racist, as 'it is based on the value that it is less serious that immigrant women are tormented than that Swedish women are tormented' (DN 23 Oct 2002; my translation).

Following the 'honour murder' debates, the Swedish government was fiercely criticised for 'doing too little' (Demirbag-Sten 2003) to improve the life conditions of women of minority ethnic background. While judging from the evidence just recounted, these criticisms were valid, they were nevertheless often problematic. Most of the time the argument was reduced to producing otherness while failing to acknowledge the social context in which those 'cultures' so-called are formed. By 'culturalising the problematic' (Ålund and Schierup 1991) the dominant tendency was to essentialise (and in turn stigmatise) 'others' while at the same time ignoring the social context of exclusion and stigmatisation. Furthermore, as we see from the (2003) research into (lack of) support for women suffering from violence within the family, although the official and open rhetoric takes a clear stance and proclaims 'saving' the 'immigrant girls', this does not translate into everyday practice,

where it seems the imagined cultural boundaries remain too great to be overstepped. The conclusion that could be drawn from this is that without being put into practice in terms of improving the life conditions of 'immigrant girls', the 'saving' rhetoric does more harm than good; it increases stigmatisation of 'others' generally, and produces an image of the 'immigrant girl/woman' as a passive victim, in turn likely to block her access to society (see further chapter six).

The 'Swedish Taliban' polemicist Gudrun Schyman together with a number of other well-known Swedish feminists have recently taken the struggle a step further and started a feminist party that calls itself 'Feminist Initiative' (Fi!). Frustrated with persistent gender inequality in the country proclaiming itself as the most equal of all, Schyman and her companions decided that the struggle against 'patriarchy' needed to take centre stage.

> 'Feminist Initiative has grown tired of insufficient measures. Nearly all Swedish political parties call themselves feminist, but women's lives remain unchanged, day in and day out, year after year' (Political Platform 2005).

> 'Feminist Initiative has a vision of a world in which all humans have the same potential and ability to live full and complete lives, this vision does not correspond to our lived reality. Women are systematically subordinated to men. This is something we want to change. Feminist Initiative continues the struggle and hard work undertaken by women throughout history to improve their lives; a tireless labour, which still takes place in homes, workplaces, streets, and schools, in literature, in music, at the theatre and in the media. Feminist Initiative puts feminist issues and concerns at the top of the political agenda' (Political Platform 2005).

Judging from the political platform generally, there is some recognition of the diversity composing the collective 'women' to which the initiative turns. However, after every acknowledgement of difference, there is a strong re-orientation to what women share. 'Women differ ... but beyond the differences lies one similarity: women's lives, choices, and opportunities are restricted by

the patriarchal power structure'; 'although women speak with different voices ... we are all confronted by the power structure that puts men in positions of superiority and women in positions of inferiority'.

So far, the platform of the Feminist Initiative sounds like a classic case of white Swedish women claiming to represent all women[43] (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992: 96-109; Brah 1992). However, the days of the party are still early, and possibly (hopefully) the recognition of difference, which is currently marginal, may develop in the future. The 'no mans land' discussed by de los Reyes (2003) must be related to the fact that the inequalities facing different parts of the Swedish population today are regarded as separate rather than intersecting (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992). The fact that the welfare of Swedish women is dealt with in the area of Equality, while the welfare of women designed as 'other' in the popular imagination is regarded as an issue of Integration must be regarded as a fundamental structural problem.

I would now like to move on from the gendered production of otherness in theory and practice, to the limits set by the institutionalisation of the category of the 'refugee' in the civil services and the labour market; this is another way in which victim-saviour/inferior-superior binaries are lived in the everyday.

5.4 Victimisation and undervaluation: experiences of introduction and attempts at entering the labour market

Several of the migrants I have interviewed have been frustrated about the time it took for them to get a chance to get into Swedish society. They felt powerless in a slow and heavily bureaucratic system, and suggest that there were too many formal obstacles that prohibited them from making the most of their situation. While some were lucky and had their asylum applications processed at an early stage, most had to wait a long time to achieve 'permanent resident' status, without which they found it difficult to start their new lives in Sweden

[43] This corresponds largely to the list of names of the leading group.

(Norström 2004); and for those who received only a temporary permit (such as Ghedi), this was even more difficult.

Furthermore, the fact that you have to complete the SFI (Swedish for Immigrants) course in order to be able to use the services of the public employment agency meant it is almost impossible to find work prior to this; this is particularly the case for migrants lacking social networks. The long time in which people stand still in the system before given a chance to do something is often more or less explicitly justified by authorities, suggesting that people who have fled from their countries of origin due to conflict and fear of persecution need some time to process their difficult experiences, whereby the time it takes to process their applications and get them through the system is regarded as recovery time. While refugees in most cases indeed have a lot to process, and need time for adjustment, many of my interviewees have argued that these experiences in themselves have added to the stress and trauma from which they were already suffering.

In other words, contrary to the idea of 'recovery time', people have suggested that being able to stay active during the first time in Sweden would in fact have helped them to cope with their experiences. Take the words of Zlatko for example: 'Of course, it would have been a lot better ... because if you are occupied with something, then you also lose some of the stresses, and this pressure you feel the whole time...'. Aida makes a similar argument in her account of the reception she experienced in Sweden. She says, 'the reception was very well organised, we were taken good care of and so on. As Swedes perhaps perceived was needed, and perhaps that's true – practical things: where to live, who organises with food and other practical things. But very soon you leave that stage, soon you want – you have your own power and initiative. That first time should be very short, and it should be well organised I think, for future newcomers. It shouldn't be 'taking care of' for too long a time'.

At the same time, discourses on refugees 'invading' Malmö/Sweden and becoming a burden on the welfare state flourished in the mass media at this point (Hussein 1997, Slavnic 1998; see also Brune 1998 on media

representations of ‘others’), alongside the general discursive shift from ‘immigrant as resource’ (dominant in labour migration periods), to ‘immigrant as problem’ (Alund and Schierup 1991). This is likely to have increased the frustration experienced by the refugees themselves, feeling both passified and a burden. Discussing the reception of Bosnian refugees in Malmö, Zoran Slavnic (1998) suggests that there was an underlying assumption amongst the public authorities of the refugee as a somewhat inferior creature. He writes, ‘(t)he refugees are hence defined as insufficiently competent people to be treated equally with other citizens. Such definitions are institutionalised and then become the basis of political, economic, cultural and other forms of exclusion of these people in the institutional practice’ (Slavnic 1998: 230; my translation). Slavnic gives an example of a questionnaire sent out to refugees in Malmö by the council; it included the following question, which embodies the ‘burden’ aspect as well as the assumption of ‘insufficient competency’ amongst refugees.

> ‘Do you know that if you cannot support yourselves after eighteen months, the Swedish state no longer pays compensation to Malmö. The costs of social benefits in Sweden are paid by the council and hence the inhabitants in the council through the tax’ (Arbetet 13 Jan 1994; quoted in Slavnic 1998; my translation).

Slavnic continues, ‘(t)he purpose of the questionnaire according to its originator was to gather information about the ‘unfair’ game on the side of the Immigration board and property owners against Malmö council. The questionnaire however clearly shows that the refugees implicitly are not accepted as equal people’ (Slavnic 1998: 229-30; my translation)[44].

Contrary to the stigmatising images, it seems from my sample that people want to work, and are feeling extremely frustrated about the obstacles that force them into welfare dependency; that is, it seems the system itself rather than the will of the refugees is what produces dependency. Most of the Bosnians interviewed have expressed frustrations with the long initial waiting period. Naser says, ‘to

[44] Note the discussion in chapter one on the adoption of ‘workfare’ policies as well as the emergence of the ‘moral underclass’ discourse.

spend one and a half year in a bloody refugee camp is not at all fun. I mean, it's wasted time. Both for us and for society'. Adil continues, 'in the beginning, I had no chance for work or anything. I remember that we went around and tried to find some job around where we lived – we wanted to make some money because we wanted to move around a little, but also we wanted to send some money to Bosnia, to family and so on. But then they said we had no work permit, and we didn't know the rules were so strict. So we couldn't get work, and we were very disappointed'.

Several of my interviewees have been critical of the SFI (Swedish for Immigrants) course, which according to most people who have attended it has been very poorly organised. Aida says,

> 'I was sent to some course where you were supposed to teach me Swedish. It was randomly chosen groups, everything from illiterates to people with higher education. And the process was too long for you to be able to accept it. So after a while with common sense I realised that I can't let myself be 'taken care of' in these different projects or courses, whether it was well meant or not'.

Instead, Aida decided to do things quickly, and in her own way.

> 'I did SFI in five months, I think I was too impatient to do things at such a slow speed. So I have worked independently, read newspapers and so on … I was present (at the classes) but always worked independently.'

Aida goes on to describe similar experiences during the period when she tried to get employment and start a proper new life in Sweden. Considering the fact that she was a financial adviser, and was in a good socioeconomic position before she was forced to migrate, she found it extremely frustrating to have to start from scratch. Also, she was angry about the fact that Swedish society never made use of the competences she already had. She says it is 'simply like you have to start from the beginning, like children being sent to nursery and so on … you were re-educated like that, and you didn't use the knowledge and

competences people have brought with them'. So, in spite of having a higher education degree and years of work experience, she had to first of all go and get a basic school certificate, then upper secondary school leaving certificate, and then do another university degree, after which she has finally found employment she finds satisfying, although it is completely different from what she did in Sarajevo before[45].

Another example of the failure to use migrants' competencies is Naser, who had worked as a journalist for several years in Bosnia. Naser is very interested in issues around society and politics, which were central to both his journalism degree and his earlier work. He is very critical of the fact that he has never been able to do that line of work in Sweden – not just as a journalist, but anything remotely close to his experiences and competencies. He felt badly received by Journalist association/union that did not seem interested at all to use his competence or help him find a job. He says about the general time before achieving his first (temporary) job, 'and when you're on social benefits, unemployed and all that, and don't get a job, you go to all these different courses, you are sent here and there, and it's difficult to get in'. Failing to get a job, he started applying for courses in both journalism and political science, but always got the reply that there would be no point in him studying, as he was already well qualified and needed no further education. In other words, his competence was recognised, but still no one would employ him. 'And I have translated, reassessed my old diplomas and so on, so that's not the problem...' He continues, 'I have really tried to do everything, and tried all kinds of ways to get into the job market with my background' – without success.

In a recent article series of the Nordic countries published in the Economist, Adam Roberts (2003) points out the fact that while Sweden has proportionally taken more migrants recently than any other European country, it is also one of

[45] Furthermore, Aida's employment at the time of the interview has subsequently expired; it turned out that her job was part of a project, which ended some months later. I have been told this later by someone else; Aida herself did not tell me that it was a project employment in the interview. One reason why could be related to an aim for a positive and successful self-presentation; another reason could be that she expected the project to become part of the permanent activity. Issues surrounding projects and project employments are discussed in chapter seven.

the worst countries when it comes to actually getting that population into employment. The failure to use migrants' competencies is an urgent problem (Rapport Integration 2003: 93-107), and as we have seen, it not only produces feelings of exclusion and failure amongst migrants, but also results in racist sentiments within the majority population through a series of discourses in which migrants feature as the scroungers, as people who bring nothing but only take advantage of the welfare state (Westin 2000: 48). Selma summarises: 'I'm angry, just angry, because we are used to work, that no one has taken and used our competencies, and that society has lost really, a lot'.

5.5 The agents in the structures: the civil servants

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the civil servant to a great extent embodies the meeting between the migrant and the structure. Although civil servants are trained into a certain mentality and way of work, Isabell Schierenbeck's (2004a) research[46] suggests a great deal of freedom of action. As their work is intended to adapt to individual circumstances, it is too complex to be controlled in detail by a central body, hence the agency and responsibility of the civil servant needs attention. Considering the role of the bureaucrat, Alison Mountz (2003) points towards everyday 'messy' and often incoherent enactment of the 'idealized versions' expressed in policy documents; she suggests that social relations are established on this micro, everyday level. Furthermore, emphasising the fact that bureaucrats embody personal and social histories and structures (Haraway 1991; Puwar 2001, 2004) leads her to the argument that state institutions are indeed complex and contradictory (see also chapter two; Anthias 1999; Gramsci 1971).

Schierenbeck (2004a and 2004b) suggests that the freedom of action is often filled by templates that the civil servants have developed through their work as well as in life generally; these are often generalised (classed, ethnified and gendered) images of the groups with which they work; my interviewees Lena,

[46] Schierenbeck has researched the role of the civil servant in the process of immigrant integration; she has focused on how stereotypes of certain groups play parts in the process.

Irena, Karim and Dalmar (all civil servants) confirm this (see also Mountz 2003 on 'scripting identities' as a means through which bureaucrats exercise power). Dalmar strongly emphasises this issue in his discussion about exclusion of some groups from the labour market. He calls the civil servants 'gate keepers', and argues that they hold great power to set life chances; however he finds that unfortunately they often work with the underlying assumption that (particularly some groups of) migrants are inferior, incapable and uncooperative. An inherent problem is the fact that the local authorities that deal with both 'introduction' programs and later migrants' 'integration' into Swedish society are in fact the social services; and social secretaries are trained more or less to deal with 'social cases' or 'social problems'. 'Clientisation' (as well as inferiorisation) is hence common practice; and this fact has significantly shaped the experience of refugees, as well as the common public perception of refugees (Schierenbeck 2004a; Slavnic 1998).

However at the same time as commonly used reductive templates of 'others' seem to some extent unite the majority of civil servants (Schierenbeck 2004a), it is important to note differences between them as well. We can see the role of the individual in the process by comparing and contrasting the different experiences migrants have of public authorities in Sweden. Both Selma and Asad generally seem to have had very negative experiences of civil servants[47]. Adil says he has come across both 'good' and 'bad' ones, and generally he emphasises the importance of the relationship set up between migrant and civil servant. He says, 'I mean, it depends a lot on the personality of the social secretary or the introduction secretary, on chemistry, whether you work with the person you meet…'

Ghedi tells me about being unlucky with the handling officer he got when first applying for asylum. While most other Somalis also had put forward similar claims, and had their applications processed and gained permanent residence rather quickly, Ghedi says he had to wait several months, after which he was only granted a temporary permit. This in theory meant his future was

[47] These experiences are discussed in chapter six.

nevertheless insecure, and in practice, he shortly (six months later) had to go through the application process once more. He puts these things down to being unfortunate and getting a bad handling officer, who kept his documents for a long time without doing anything. He says at some point he even told the officer it would be better to get a 'no' than to wait for this long not knowing what is going to happen to you. At the time of the interview, Ghedi is waiting to get the results of his application for naturalisation, and he says this process has been equally slow; while the decision should already have been made, when he spoke to the officer recently, he had not even started processing the case. From Ghedi's description of his own experiences and those of others, as well as from the stories of other interviewees recounted above and elsewhere, it seems that to some extent whether or not you will succeed in getting into society swiftly, or in fact at all, is something of a luck of the draw (Franzén 2004; Norström 2004).

Aida confirms the role of the individual civil servant with both negative and positive experiences. Having struggled for a long time without getting anywhere and having to completely 'start from scratch', she says that the first time she actually got a job after finishing her Masters Degree, this was in fact largely down to a handling officer who (finally) recognised Aida's enthusiasm and competence. It seems this officer more or less made it her mission to help Aida into employment. The importance of finding an individual somehow inside the Swedish system to take on board your future ambitions according to Aida's account seems crucial. Another person who seems to already have recognised the importance of allying yourself with an insider who has the power and resources to help you get somewhere in your Swedish life is Bilal; and in his case the person in question is the careers master at his school. In fact, some of his hopes in the future comes to centre around this figure and the good relationship he describes. His assertion that 'I think she likes me' plays a significant role in his high expectations. It is important to note that what is described by my interviewees as something of a lottery stands in stark contrast to the Swedish official view of equality for all.

My key informant Irena suggests that the civil servant also plays a crucial political function; she says that in most cases, while politicians make the formal

decisions, the opinions of the civil servants are in fact what 'goes'. The idea is that they have exclusive insights into how things work (and implicitly what different groups are like). Discussing this in relation to the templates they work with along with their 'gatekeeping' function, the general power of the civil servants emerges clearly in Irena's narrative.

Both Dalmar and Irena display a very concerned and critical view of the current state of affairs in Malmö with regard to the pronounced exclusion of certain groups from society, and they point towards an overwhelmingly negative and exclusive attitude amongst the public generally and civil servants in particular. However, they both also express a noteworthy amount of trust in the ability of individuals to make a change in society.

For example, Irena is rather enthusiastic about her own workplace, colleagues, and importantly her relationship to her line manager. She describes their relationship as very dialogical; her line manager takes a great interest in what she does, listens to, and engages with her. Irena juxtaposes this to more top-down scenarios where in some cases the line manager shows limited interest and hardly knows the people working below him or her. Interestingly, Irena mentions the importance of people's knowledge of working with different cultures, and again gives the example of her line manager. She says this woman, although Swedish herself, has a lot of personal experiences and hence understanding of other cultures, as well as knows the importance of communication and dialogue; Irena finds this has had a great effect on her attitude to the work, which makes for a productive relationship between her and the people working below her.

Irena was employed through the metropolitan project discussed in chapter one; and in the case of her inner-city district, things seem to have worked rather well. The wide range of projects initiated by her and her colleagues include solving problems between children in the school, helping children with homework, informing women about their rights, and arranging various forums for discussions between local women, providing an office for information and support (helping inhabitants as well as picking up on their own ideas),

encouraging and supporting people to start their own associations and networks (which has been particularly important when it comes to women and young people), helping people to get employment in line with their qualifications and experiences, mobilising people politically (encouraging people to exercise their right to vote as well as organising meetings between inhabitants and local politicians), and so on.

Irena suggests that one important reason why it has worked so well in the district has to do with a successful dialogue between civil servants and inhabitants, where the ideas, wishes and competencies of the people are strongly taken into account. However, at the same time as her own experiences produces a positive and hopeful account, she is also urgently aware of problems faced in other districts. Importantly, Rosengård repeatedly comes up as the opposite, and while she regards the success in her area as the outcome of successful dialogue between authorities and the inhabitants, the failure to achieve positive effects in Rosengård is put down to a failure to pursue that dialogue.

Chapter six. Good migrants and bad migrants, and the microphysics of racism

Mireille Rosello (2001) asks why it is that immigrants are often imagined as 'guests' of the receiving – or so-called 'host' – society. She suggests that the metaphor of 'hospitality' is dominant in understandings of migration, and argues that it translates into practice, and hence affects real relations between migrants and the society they live in. Being understood as 'a form of gift' (2001: viii), Rosello argues that 'hospitality as a metaphor blurs the distinction between a discourse of rights and a discourse of generosity, the language of social contracts and the language of excess and gift-giving' (ibid 9). That is, supposed to be grateful for being invited, it is implicitly assumed that the guest first of all will not expect anything that he/she is not given, and second, behave according to the host's expectations. This, Rosello suggests, leads to the establishment of a hierarchy of good and bad guests.

In this chapter I want to examine in greater detail some of the identity spaces provided for migrants in Sweden. I will begin by discussing different discourses on 'otherness' alive in the Swedish popular imagination, the processes whereby certain features come to be seen as 'characteristic' of an 'ethnic' group to which individuals are reduced, and furthermore, the role of these processes in excluding people from (different parts of) society. While some of these are either ethnic and/or gender specific, others seem to include more or less the 'immigrant' community as a whole ('immigrant', that is, as in Hylland Eriksen's definition, mentioned in the previous chapter). I then consider what it means to be a 'bad guest' in contemporary Swedish society; more specifically I discuss the distinction growing along economic lines (between migrants that contribute to the economy, and those who cost 'us' money) and the racialization of crime, violence and disorder, as well as the 'social problem' discourse through which those two ways of being 'bad' intersect.

Moving onto the 'good guest', I will try to emphasise the ways in which normativity intertwines with otherness to provide spaces in society that migrants can take up. Here, I go back to the argument made in chapter two

about the importance of qualifying the inclusion/exclusion boundary (Essed 1991; Puwar 2001, 2004). This means going beyond discourses of 'otherness' and considering the conditions under which migrants are included into society, both in terms of the difference between formal and actual inclusion (i.e. everyday living conditions), and of the (often subordinate) positions migrants are expected to take up in order to be accepted. Drawing on Nirmal Puwar's (2001, 2004) work on the 'somatic norm', I consider the different ways in which migrants are made to feel excluded when apparently included as well as the 'assimilative pressures' they have to conform to in order to achieve in 'white' social spaces. Finally, I emphasise the subtle nature of racist processes in Swedish society, and discuss the consequences their invisibility have for the ability to challenge them. Using Foucault's (1977) notion of the 'microphysics of power', which implies the management of difference and deviance through individualized and subtle mechanisms, I argue that racism in contemporary Sweden amounts to a 'microphysics of racism'.

6.1 'You have to be, you have to be what it says'

Similarly to de los Reyes et al. (2003), my key informant Karim suggests that although Sweden was not a colonial power as such, the contemporary expressions of ideologies and stereotypes central to colonial structures are present also in Sweden. Karim speaks of a Swedish orientalism, and defines orientalism as when you have a ready made image that people have to fit into. He says 'it's "you have be", "you have to be what it says".' Karim's own biography indeed speaks of a person by no means appropriate for the 'other' stereotype he finds Swedes always try to put him in. Hence, he finds extremely limited by the preconceptions of what people of his 'ethnic' background 'are', and which he finds that people always categorise him as. He says,

> 'I discovered that there is a ready made image, and they want to put you in that image ... "how can you drink if you're a Muslim?" ... so if you're not a white headed person, a European person, you can't be neutral, you surely have sympathies with that person or view ... God, I'm not, I don't feel

> Iraqi, I'm Kurdish, I don't feel like a Kurd, I don't belong to the shit generation of the sixties, I've been with students as when we burned at Sorbonne, with hippies in England, I feel like a cosmopolitan person who fights for human rights – why do you put me on this?'

According to Said (1978), the Orient as an object of discourse emerged out of imperial relations of power, at the same time as it functioned to justify these. The discourse on the Orient combines exotic and erotic images from the Muslim world, and describes that world as traditional and backwards, mainly with reference to gender and family relations. Speaking of discourse in a Foucauldian sense, David Howarth (2000: 8-10) notes, implies an understanding of meaning as dependent on the social conditions in which it emerges; and furthermore the production of meaning (or knowledge) as a form of power exercise (Foucault 1977, 1979, 1980). The discourses available then function to set the frameworks through which meaning is constructed.

Central to the object of the Orient and the specific (gendered) identities it incorporates are the limits as to what the 'oriental' individual can be (Said 1978). Writing on the experience of the colonized, Franz Fanon (1967) makes a similar argument, illustrating how colonial power was played out largely through the 'fixed concept' the colonizers had of the colonized. Fanon (ibid 112) describe how he discovered his blackness and his 'ethnic characteristics' through the eyes of the white man; he argues that 'the Negro has to be shown in a certain way', and hence 'has to wear the livery that the white man has sewed for him' (ibid 34). Discussing 'the look' of the white man, Fanon (ibid 109) writes, 'the movements, the attitudes, the glances of the other fixed me there, in the sense in which a chemical solution is fixed by a dye'. Furthermore, he illustrates how everyday interactions functioned to establish hierarchies of superiority and inferiority; for example through white people talking down to black people, and treating them as children.

Related to the production of otherness is the notion of the stereotype. Stuart Hall (1997: 257) defines stereotyping as a practice that 'reduces people to a few, simple, essential characteristics, which are represented as fixed by Nature'.

Hence, it could be regarded as the outcome of a process of racialization. Drawing on Walter Lippman's theory of the stereotype, Richard Dyer (2002: 11-12) picks up on four characteristics, and speaks of stereotyping as 'an ordering process'; 'a 'short cut''; 'referring to the world'; and 'expressing 'our' values and beliefs'. That is, it is a way of making sense of people and events in the world by emphasising a few characteristics and excluding others; a practice 'grounded in social power', which has consequences for processes of inclusion and exclusion. In his research on whiteness, Dyer (1997) suggests that stereotyping others is a way in which whites affirm and reproduce their perceived superiority. Exploring the cultural representation of whiteness, he argues that whiteness is generally not represented through stereotypes, but is 'given the illusion of ... infinite variety' (ibid 12). Hence stereotypes are reserved for 'others', while whiteness seems resistant to be reduced to a 'short cut'.

However, while 'short cut' indeed composes one characteristic of the stereotype, Dyer inserts a word of caution concerning this understanding. He suggests that 'the often observed 'simplicity' of stereotypes is deceptive' (2002: 12), which he emphasises through an example taken from Tessa Perkins's (1979) article 'Rethinking Stereotypes'. She writes, 'to refer 'correctly' to someone as a 'dumb blonde', and to understand what is meant by that, implies a great deal more than hair colour and intelligence. It refers immediately to *her* sex, which refers to her status in society, her relationship to men, her inability to behave or think rationally, and so on. In short, it implies knowledge of a complex social structure' (1979: 139, quoted in Dyer 2002: 13).

Another important issue expressed by Karim is the fact that as an 'oriental', he cannot claim universality. Both Dyer (1997) and Puwar (2004) argue that racialized individuals are expected to speak from their racialized spaces. They are forced in to a 'racial' representative place, and forced to speak only for their group's particularity. By being designed and perceived as the norm, however, white people imagine themselves and the position from which they speak as universal. Inherent to this is the failure to acknowledge the own cultural particularities (Puwar 2001, 2004).

An aspect of the Swedish ethnically segmented labour market is worth mentioning in this context, namely the employment of migrants and minority people in various projects designed to facilitate and improve the 'integration'[48] of certain groups into Swedish society. The projects, discussed more fully in chapter seven, have indeed provided important opportunities for migrants in a labour market from which they are largely excluded. Furthermore, their cultural knowledge and social experience is indeed an asset, and central to the good work many people employed in projects do. However, while the need for work as well as suitability for this work needs to be taken into account, the seemingly 'obvious' location of migrants and minority people in 'integration projects' needs also to be regarded in relation to the idea of people being able to speak only of particularities. This is especially urgent in cases where people's educational and occupational background qualifies them for jobs (better paid and secure) in the 'mainstream' labour market (Naser, Ajda, Leyla). It is worth reminding ourselves of Fanon's (1967: 8) words, 'the black is not a man ... (t)he black is a black man'.

Another aspect of such 'particularised' type of work is the extent to which you can come to be regarded as 'biased'. Dalmar's narrative emphasizes this. He describes how after he got appointed for the project to work with Somalis, he felt that the general (subtle) response was that 'ok, so here comes some Somali guy again to talk about the Somalis...'. Furthermore, Dalmar recounts having to negotiate a difficult 'middle' position between the Somalis and his colleagues; a dilemma he describes with the words 'too blue for the brothers and too black for the system'. I tried to get Dalmar to explore this feeling further in the interview. However, he was reluctant to do so; the reason why seems to be his wish to produce something of a success story of himself and his work, and he has an obvious stake in doing so.

'People treat you according to what they perceive of you'

[48] The notion of integration is discussed at length in chapter seven.

Summarising her experiences with those words, Selma tells me about how an already long and painful struggle for her son was made ever more difficult due to preconceptions held by the authorities she had turned to for help. Selma has been and still is very concerned about her son and his future. She talks a lot about the behaviour and attitudes he has developed through his teens: failing at school and getting involved with gangs, drugs and criminality. Feeling powerless in this situation, she has turned to the social services and other institutions for support. However, she found that there were a range of stereotypes of her and her relationship with her son that blocked the dialogue; this meant she failed to get help and support from the authorities supposed to provide it. Talking about the various conceptions about 'immigrant parents', 'single mothers', and 'immigrant women', Selma felt she was not taken seriously. She particularly felt that the idea that all 'immigrant parents' exercise unreasonably high levels of control, in combination with the discourse on the problematic 'double identities' of the younger generation (Brah 1996), blocked her access to support.

Asad similarly argues that ideas about 'cultural differences' influence meetings and relations between immigrants and Swedish society. He recounts a series of conversations that pan out according to a series of presumptions about him based on what people think they know about his culture, his religion, his background, and the general categories within which he is placed (Somali, Muslim, refugee). While Selma's experiences refers to more subtle practices, Asad's story includes direct attacks through patronising and supposedly educative statements, such as 'in this country we don't beat our women', 'in this country we don't beat our children', directly implying that where he comes from, that is what people do.

Both Somalis and Bosnians have spoken of such problems with public authorities. They feel that the preconceptions held by the civil servants shapes the meeting as well as the end result of the meeting. However, there is a certain difference between the two above accounts, which lies in the level up openness or subtlety. This is worth noting. While both Selma and Asad feel unfairly treated, and equally relate it to stereotypes, Asad recounts explicit expressions

of these stereotypes, while Selma speaks of these as underlying: it is something she feels is happening in the meeting, although it may not be directly spoken.

Continuing on from his discussion about the social services, Asad goes on to talk about the stereotypes that flourish within the public employment agency. He says that the idea that (certain groups of) 'people don't want to work' is common amongst the civil servants working there. My key informant Lena, who is herself a top civil servant confirms the existence of these stereotypes. She says that the civil servants 'have already decided what kind of person they have in front of them' (Fanon 1967). A recent evaluation of attitudes amongst civil servants working at Rosengård points precisely at these attitudes[49]. Arabic women had better stay at home and take care of all their children; in what concerns Somalis, Lena says, 'there is this attitude amongst many, that they are more interested in benefits than work'. These attitudes within public authorities are also reflected by Dalmar who works with getting people into work or education, and who has been involved in a project specifically aimed at the Somali population in Malmö. Asked about the obstacles faced by Somalis in Malmö on the way to (some form of) employment, Dalmar argues that although discrimination by employers is indeed a problem, the main obstacles in place are in fact the civil servants (see chapter five on 'gate-keepers'). According to Dalmar, the people employed to facilitate inclusion and participation are in fact the people that stand in the way for it.

> 'So I reach the conclusion that when it comes to for example social services, particularly the social welfare secretaries, they regard Somalis as unwilling to improve their own situation, and so on, I mean, they all agreed about this. When everyone has that view, and when it's negative... They also say that Somalis don't follow their action plan, they neglect. Here they were also unanimous. If you look at this, on the basis that exists in social services and employment services, then you can see that Somalis, they get nowhere. It's not so strange when there's a gatekeeper that thinks and works this way.'

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[49] The evaluation is not published, and I could not get access to it; hence my knowledge of it is what Lena told me in the interview.

As discussed in chapter five, it seems that to a large extent the freedom of movement of the civil servants are filled by (pre)conceptions about the different groups the civil servants meets in his/her work. In her research on civil servants and immigrant clients, Schierenbeck (2004a and 2004b) looks at attitudes to Bosnians and Somalis. She finds that the attitudes to Bosnians are more positive, while there is an overwhelmingly negative view of the Somalis. Her findings correspond largely to what Fredrik Miegel (1998) found in his study of the construction of 'the Bosnian refugee' amongst civil servants working with administering reception in the 1990s. He argues that characteristics were ascribed largely through comparison with other groups of refugees; and finds that in comparison with other large groups at the time – Iranians and Somalis – the Bosnians 'had the advantage'. He writes, 'the Bosnians were considered a 'strong' refugee group, relatively well educated, ambitious, motivated, easily adaptable and culturally close to Swedes' (1998: 197; my translation). One civil servant even described the Bosnians as a 'refugee aristocracy'. The positive characteristics ascribed to Bosnians refugees meant that they were regarded as relatively 'easy' to deal with: 'culturally close' as well as 'less aggressive'. Miegel suggests that the contrast was most often represented by constructions of 'Somalis', 'Arabs' as well as 'Albanians', groups regarded as 'heavier to work with' (ibid 198-9; my translation). One of the 'positive' characteristics ascribed to the Bosnian group is the idea that their work ethic is similar to the Swedish work ethic; they are regarded as 'competent, hard-working and enterprising' (ibid 199; my translation). The idea of Somalis, on the other hand, seems to be quite the opposite.

Analysing her material, Schierenbeck (2004a) makes an interesting distinction between two sets of factors that she suggests determine perceptions about 'others' amongst bureaucrats: one the one hand the 'immigrant' identity or situation generally, and on the other perceptions about 'cultural' identity or differences. She argues that while the former is perceived as things that can (and should) be changed with time (hence an ability to 'integrate'), the latter is understood on more or less static terms – as things that are ingrained in the person's identity, and hence difficult (possibly even wrong) to try and change. This amounts to an idea that some people are less able to 'integrate'.

Comparing constructions of Somalis and Bosnians, Schierenbeck suggests that most of the characteristics civil servants ascribe to Somalis are regarded as 'cultural' properties, while the Bosnian comes across as more adaptable. Notably, the fact that the 'cultural' equals static is not even questioned by Scheirenbeck herself.

Contrary to the stereotypes produced and reproduced by civil servants and others about people 'not wanting to work', all of my interviewees, Somalis as well as Bosnians, have emphasised a strong will to work and a great disappointment and frustration at times when they have not been able to. Furthermore, a number of interviewees have also referred to a strong work ethic within their respective groups. Ghedi works as a nursing assistant in an old people's home. Here, he describes dissatisfaction with how his colleagues work (or not).

> 'I have never complained, someone said about me, my colleagues, that because I work how I like, and have never, I mean, there are people who start working, and then when they don't see the person in charge or someone else they don't bother – 'I do it later' or something ... When you come from Somalia, you don't do that, you just do your job[50]. And you rest when you are finished, or when you get to your break ... we're not that kind of people who just don't bother when you have a job. And therefore, they liked me. I have never said 'no' to working with anyone. There are those who say 'no, I won't work with Maja, I won't work with Ghedi'. Everyone is worth the same, and everyone knows their job somehow. So why should you say that you don't want to work with someone? Maybe that person will then be upset (and think) 'I wonder why that person doesn't want to work with me.'

Apart from generally criticising his colleagues for being lazy and not doing their job properly, Ghedi takes a stance against attempts at interfering with the rota in order to change teams and to avoid having to work with certain people.

[50] Note that Dalmar here creates his own (positive) stereotype.

Another notable feature of the case of Ghedi is the fact that it challenges not only the idea that 'Somalis do not want to work', but also a lot of the 'cultural' or 'religious' stereotypes about Somalis. Considering the stereotypes about Somalis that point towards rigid and unequal gender relations and roles, I asked Ghedi what it felt like for him to have an occupation regarded as very 'feminine'. He says, 'there are men who work in care, but all the time women dominate, everywhere. Here in Malmö, in Stockholm, I know people who work there, and it's the same, mainly women. But it doesn't matter to work with girls, maybe it can be difficult in the beginning, but when you have worked with them for one or two months, you understand how they work.' From his answer, it seems that to Ghedi, going beyond what is traditionally regarded as 'male' or 'female' roles has not been a great problem. He does, however, mention the difficulties he had in the beginning doing work that he felt to some extent went against his religion and culture.

> 'And it was very different, I thought oh shit, how do I work with older people, and change nappies and so on, oh no ... that was difficult ... I'm from another culture, another religion, and we are not used to looking when people don't have any clothes. Especially women, if it's not your girlfriend or wife ... and it's against our religion and culture...'

But although he felt he had to somewhat compromise his 'religion and culture' to do the job, his will to work and his failure to get employment elsewhere meant he decided to do it nevertheless. He says,

> 'So I knew that you can work with people, older people, and because I didn't have a job, and you can get work, I thought I had no alternative but this. You can get work so easily ... And it took one year to study the care programme, and I was finished May 1999. A week later I got a job. So I worked first by the hour, one or two months, and then three months monthly paid. And after four months I got a nontenured appointment...'

Adding a gender dimension to stereotypes about Somalis 'not wanting to work' brings us to 'the discourse of cultural constraints on Muslim women' discussed

by Avtar Brah (1996: 136). This discourse suggests that the women are passive, under complete control of their men, and hence confined to the private sphere. Having done research into women's actual attitudes (particularly amongst Asians in Britain), Brah challenges these discourses and stereotypes by pointing towards a reality that contradicts them. Furthermore, her interviews with white British women have indicated either similar attitudes to gender relations, or even more conservative views amongst the latter group (ibid 67-83). Discussing Muslim women's limited participation in the public sphere, and particularly in the labour market, Brah's findings indicate strongly that rather than the outcome of 'cultural constraints', it has to do precisely with common perceptions about those constraints that channel their opportunities in particular ways.

In his accounts of 'gatekeepers', Dalmar continues by arguing that civil servants spread their negative views of Somalis to the rest of society, and notably to employers. With regards to common perceptions about Somalis, he says,

> 'It's an interesting combination that you have such a person, the main prejudices there are: black and Muslim. It's "difficult to understand blacks, they are this and that", and then they are Muslims as well – "women oppressors, women who do not want to work and that only wants to give birth" – this is the image. An employer who meets a Somali woman and has this image – how would he dare employ such a woman?'

Referring back to the 'poor immigrant girls' stereotype discussed in the previous chapter, Irena, who works with minority groups in Malmö, continues by emphasising the limits it entails.

> 'When I lecture – it's 99% Swedes – I usually ask what is the first thing they think about when they hear the word 'immigrant girl', what comes to their minds? And they choose 'oppressed', they choose honour related

violence ... but no one thinks like 'career' or 'educated', 'just like everyone else', and so on'[51].

The vicious circle set in place by these stereotypes seems to have produced a never-ending process of shaping exclusion: stereotypes that either say you do not want to work or that your husband and/or tradition will not let you come to work leaves certain groups of people outside the labour market; in turn, their place outside the labour market gives the stereotypes further 'evidence', and hence cements both stereotypes and exclusion.

Fowsia (Somali) has struggled very hard to find work, and continues to struggle. As mentioned in chapter three, before she came to Sweden she was a teacher. In Sweden, she has not only been unable to find work corresponding to her former position, but unable to find any work at all. For a limited period of time she worked for a Somali association; she was employed through the state's 'introduction job' scheme, where the state pays the salary for six months, in order to get people out of unemployment and a foot into the labour market. The idea is that the employer will henceforth continue the employment, or that the person will find work elsewhere after having become familiar with Swedish workplaces and hence is ready to enter the job market properly. However, the common procedure is that the person works for those few months and then find themselves unemployed[52].

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[51] It is worth noting that stereotypes of the 'immigrant woman' has a Swedish history prior to the moral panic surrounding the 'honour murder' debates. Ylva Brune's (2003) research into media representations of 'the immigrant woman' shows that since the mid-seventies she has been portrayed as passive, isolated, backwards and victimized, locked into cultural traditions. This image stands in stark contrast to the active work life of migrant women in Sweden from the mid-forties onwards, particularly in comparison with Swedish women (Knocke 1986, 2001; de los Reyes 2000). Furthermore, following Wuokke Knocke's (1986, 2001) research, we see that migrant women particularly have been designed the most monotonous, low paid and often isolated (!) jobs, often in spite of high levels of competence and qualifications (Knocke mentions Chilean women particularly). Also, excluded from internal courses that could lead to promotion etc, they have often been unable to move upwards with time. The difficult and straining work conditions have led to disproportionate levels of long-term sickness amongst this group. Furthermore, these results have at times in turn been culturalised, while the structural conditions have been a marginal explanation (Knocke 2001: 28).

[52] One important change however is that after six months of full-time paid work, people are entitled to something called 'unemployment compensation' (A-kassa); this is relative to your former salary, and hence higher than social benefits. Furthermore, through this you can lose some of the stigma attached to welfare dependency. However, at the same time as your monthly income increases, you also lose a number of entitlements, such as more generous housing

Indeed, after her 'introduction job', Fowsia found herself without a job. After some time and persistently searching for employment, she got a job as a cleaner as part of a project designed to facilitate inclusion into the labour market. Fowsia was very happy when she had this job, feeling that her financial situation improved, she engaged with other people, and, importantly, she felt both needed and valued. The project has now ended, and Fowsia is again unemployed. Refusing to become disillusioned and give up, Fowsia continues to try and try. When I meet her, she sounds rather positive. She says she has found a good civil servant, who keeps encouraging her. 'I'm active, I work and I apply for many jobs, but find nothing... my handling officer at the public employment agency said I'm very good, but that I just have to continue, try more...'

6.2 The bad migrant I: the expensive migrant

Recently, the local Social Democratic government of Malmö made a proposal to close the city's borders to unemployed immigrants for a period of five years; this provides a good (local) example of the trend towards 'new realism' discussed in chapter one (Ålund and Schierup 1991). The proposal was part of the local government's new welfare strategy – 'Welfare for everyone' – presented in January 2004; and indeed the five-year-stop proposal was presented as being for the welfare of Malmö's entire population, majority and minority populations alike. The local head councillor Illmar Reepalu wrote the following defence in the newspaper Sydsvenskan (23 Jan 2004; my translation).

> 'Malmö ... needs a breathing space. We need it in order to give all today's Malmö inhabitants, independently of their ethnic or cultural origin, a tolerable existence and an equal share of the welfare ... With the proposal

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benefits and reduced costs of healthcare facilities. One thing important to note is that while social benefits are paid by the local authorities, unemployment compensation is paid directly by the state. One critical argument hence points towards the possibility of strategic moves by local authorities (get people into jobs for six months) to relieve some of the strain on local welfare economies.

> we defend those immigrants we already have in Malmö. Furthermore, we defend all newcomers to Sweden, who can have a much better introduction in our country than residing in a Malmö that presently cannot offer them a reasonable living standard … if we do nothing, the situation for the immigrants and refugees that already have great problems in Malmö never improve in the way we would like them to. We will also not get on the right track with the segregation.'

The politicians behind the proposal were in fact praised by many for being brave enough to take the step away from the characteristic 'Swedish' feature of 'political correctness', a correctness that according to Reepalu's supporters has for too long acted as an obstacle for seeing things as they really are and tackling them head on. Reepalu continues,

> 'Malmö's situation demands measures beyond the usual. If we shut our eyes to the situation, we accept that people are badly treated and then people go under … But we refuse to shut our eyes. We invest in welfare for everyone in Malmö, and then we need amongst other things measures like these…'

The attempt at upholding an image of ideological continuity is noteworthy; Reepalu puts forward his proposal as merely a way of helping the people suffering from bad treatment and social exclusion. However, the 'realist' sequel that in this case follows the good old positive self-presentation nevertheless signifies an important ideological shift. A response to the proposal from a local councillor of the nationalist party 'The Sweden Democrats' (Sverigedemokraterna) is significant. He says,

> 'The proposal is good even though it is coming far too late, but anyway – welcome to reality!' (Sydsvenskan 15 Jan 2003; my translation)

It was suggested that the five-year-stop would in practice be achieved by the government throttling introduction compensations (a version of social benefits

currently given to newcomers[53]) for those who chose to settle in Malmö. This received a negative response from the government, and hence split the Social Democrats internally. While Malmö's local Social Democrats argued that the city had to carry a disproportionate part of the 'burden', the government, while acknowledging to some extent the 'heavy burden' on Malmö's welfare system, nevertheless opted for a positive rather than negative approach to working towards dispersal. The proposal was hence never put into practice; however although the government has to some extent refuted the new logic creeping into political debates from different angles, the fact that these are taking place is nevertheless significant. As we see clearly from the debates and media coverage surrounding the five-year-stop proposal, what goes on in the sphere of 'politics' extend and has effects far beyond the point of decision-making. As civil servant Lena puts it,

> 'The immigrants became a problem, not just, but a massive problem, that threatened the whole of Malmö, in that debate, in that rhetoric; that was the image you got, and that we have to keep them out.'

Furthermore it is perhaps worth comparing the stance of Malmö's Social Democrats to that of their party colleagues in Stockholm also in terms of intra-national differences with regards to attitudes and public opinion. This is in fact something also pointed out to me by a number of my interviewees: that Malmö often seems 'worse' than other places. However, problematically, a common response to this state of affairs is to relate high levels of hostility to the size of the immigrant population. Indeed a common response by people asking about my research has been that yes, racism is a great problem in Malmö, 'because there are so many of them there'. This suggests that racism is the result of high numbers of 'them' present, which in turn implies that keeping numbers down is the best way to ensure good 'community relations' (Miles 1993a, Solomos and Wrench 1993; see also Balibar 1988 for a discussion of the idea that racism is a natural reaction to inter-cultural encounters).

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[53] The fact that the structure of giving social benefits to immigrants has already changed is worth noting; benefits are now given on the condition that they fulfil the introduction programmes, hence the new term 'introduction compensation'.

Central to the five-year stop proposal for unemployed migrants is the distinction made between the wanted and unwanted along economic lines, as currently developing more clearly throughout Europe (Geddes 2003; Joppke 2004; Kofman forthcoming). It coincides not incidentally with ideas about cultural (read essential) differences and the perceived threat posed by some groups to liberal or 'European' values (Yuval-Davis, Anthias and Kofman 2005). Part of the 'problem' discourse that has taken over more recently from the previous 'resource' discourse on migrants (Ålund and Schierup 1991; Knocke 2000) is related to the idea that more recent migrants (those who have come due to forced migration rather than primarily work) are a financial 'burden' on the Swedish welfare state. The perceived economic gain/loss of immigration intersects with the 'degrees of difference' (Pred 2000) discussed earlier, and produces in combination a culturalist version of employment/unemployment and dependency/self-sufficiency. This is particularly clear in relation to discourses (or 'knowledge') that say that some groups of migrants (Somalis) 'do not want to work'. Relating their position outside the labour market to 'their' cultural preferences rather than 'our' discrimination is followed by the idea that they 'abuse' the welfare system (read 'our generosity').

Furthermore, the idea of some groups 'not wanting to work' puts them not only outside the labour market, but also outside of 'our' imagined community, in which the idea about the 'good worker' enjoys a privileged position. In her analysis of racialising processes in Sweden, Lena Sawyer emphasises 'the centrality of employment to Swedish normality', and looking back historically, she writes, 'the good citizen was an employed citizen, whose taxes paid for the smooth functioning society and cared for the weak' (2000: 118). As discussed in chapter one, the centrality of work to Swedish identity can also be found in the 'Swedish model' itself, in which the trade unions occupy a central position.

Discussing negative stereotypes of migrants, many of my interviewees point towards the importance of the mass media. It is argued that the mass media plays a significant role in shaping people's view of themselves as well as others.

Irena, asks 'How often does some newspaper write anything at all when some immigrant has done something good? You don't see that often, you only see when there has been a problem'. She is particularly angry about the recent 'five year stop' debate that she has found detrimental to minority populations in Malmö that are already struggling on several fronts.

In order to understand thoroughly the effects of stereotypes of 'ethnic others', we need to consider the ways in which they are able to spread and flourish. Drawing on a study of Danish people's attitudes to minorities, Mustafa Hussain (1997: 46) points out the fact that 'around 80% of the Danish population get their views and information from the mass media exclusively, as they do not meet members of ethnic minorities in their everyday lives'. In other words, representations in the mass media intersect with processes of segregation in housing and the labour market, and the power of those representations increases with the increase in distance between different groups of people in society. Having no personal experience of certain things or peoples, one is more likely to rely on stories told about them by others (see also Westin 2000).

> 'Sometimes I think I should have moved to an area where there are more Swedes, not only Swedes, but more Swedes. So that the children will have a natural contact, from their childhood, with Swedish children, and other children too ... it's those natural meetings that are important' (Adil)

What Adil speaks of as 'natural meetings' is reflected by many of the migrants I have interviewed. They feel that lack of direct, actual, contact between Swedish people and the immigrant population means that people accept and reproduce the stereotypes prominent in the mass media; and they express frustration about not having any means to challenge these in many cases well cemented views. Dalmar continues his discussion about stereotypes of Somalis he has outlined before, saying,

> 'It has to do with the image they have, and therefore they don't want them. It's not that they have experienced that Somalis have been ignorant or anything, it's that they've never met this person, so they know basically

> nothing. But they assume this slander, this negative image, things that they've heard elsewhere'.

Dalmar argues that the main problem is precisely the fact that the employer has never met the person; that he or she has no personal experience of Somalis, but thinks and works according to the stereotypes available.

6.3 The bad migrant II: the criminal migrant

Another significant part of the 'problem' discourse about migrants is their supposed inability to follow Swedish laws. Images of criminal and violent 'others' stand in stark contrast to the neutral, calm and consensual 'Swede' discussed in chapter four (Ehn et al. 1993). Although there are clear tendencies to regard institutional racism in the judicial system as the sole property of the US and possibly the UK, racialization of crime, violence and disorder (Gilroy 1987; van Loon 1999) is evident also in Sweden (Larsson et al. forthcoming).

If one explanation to migrants' apparently high crime rates given by interviewees working within the Swedish judicial system was found in the cultural differences in gender and family relations (discussed in chapter five), a second has to do with perceived differences in levels of respect for law, order, authority, society and fellow citizens (Larsson et al. forthcoming). What follows are three typical quotes from my interviews in the institutional racism study.

> 'And then I think that, in some countries you are socialised into a different view of humanity, that makes it easier to become criminal ... I can imagine, if we say like people from the Eastern European countries, they have been taught not to trust their neighbour, they can't express their opinions, they shouldn't trust anyone but themselves, and so on. And I think, when you've had generations that then have gone ahead, and know that to get ahead in society you have to keep silent and keep your face and maybe lie about your opinions and all sorts, I think it's a dangerous

upbringing that then in the long term maybe means the development of characteristics other than you would have if you grew up in a safe country' (female lay assessor 1).

'A lot in society is built on the fact that you should feel that you are a part of it, and you should feel a loyal responsibility. Are they perhaps from countries where you look maybe just to the own, and what is common you don't really care about? Damage to outdoor property, well, that's not regarded as damage there, whereas here we get very upset, because the public property you should protect as much as you protect your own (property) ... Then it's also a lot like that in some countries, they don't see this thing with the taxes as anything, whereas for us it is regarded as fun to pay tax, and everyone should join in and pay for the welfare and so on, but in those countries where there's none of this People's Home and that we take care of each other and so on ... where everyone just sees to themselves, they do that here as well, they haven't really understood how society is constructed, I think...' (female public prosecutor)

'My opinion about this is that us here in Sweden, in fact we are very lucky. And these people aren't, because there's most of the time a reason for leaving your own country, I don't believe that you just do so all of a sudden, 'Sweden's so much better', but I think you come from petty circumstances, maybe not have enough to eat for the day if you go to extremes, to coming here, and that's very difficult, and then I think they're very damaged from war. That's my opinion' (female lay assessor 2).

Here, as well as in relation to the issue of violence against women and children, virtually all interviewees strongly emphasise that this 'fact' is not down to genetic predispositions, but mere circumstances; however these circumstances nevertheless amount to the fact that 'they' are more criminal than 'us'. Socialised into a criminal identity, lacking a sense of communal solidarity and respect, coming from poverty and damaged by war: these things separately or taken together, according to the people working in the judicial system that I have interviewed, means that we can safely regard 'them' as more criminal than 'us'.

Apart from 'other' gender relations and lack of respect for law and order, a third explanatory model found when analysing those interviews was the 'underclass' hypothesis; it states that 'it has always been the lower classes of society that have committed most crimes, and today that is immigrants'. What is present is this model, as used by interviewees, is the link between social behaviour and social conditions; what is lacking however is an analysis of the social processes (racism) that have produced and 'ethnic underclass'. It is furthermore reinforced by the discourse about some migrants not wanting to work. Migrants hence become 'social problems' (Gilroy 1987; van Loon 1999); and the social in turn is culturalised (Ålund and Schierup 1991).

6.4 The good migrant

The idea of the migrant as a 'guest' central to Rosello's postcolonial hospitality idea furthermore carries with it a range of behavioural expectations. After covering the various ways of being a 'bad' guest, I would now like to discuss the 'opportunities' given to migrants; the identity spaces they can take up in order to be included, and to be conceived of as a member of society (note the absent word 'full'). In what follows, I will argue that the 'included' identity spaces provided are the result of three sets of discourses. One concerns (economic) capital, and more specifically the distinction between migrants who contribute to the economy, and migrants who cost society money; that is, a good migrant is one who does not 'scrounge off' the welfare system, but wants to contribute to the economy under any circumstances or conditions. A second involves the issue of racism and racist structures, or more specifically, it concerns the extent to which migrants keep quiet about and accept these. Thus a good migrant is one who does not claim equality with the majority population, but accepts the place he or she is given. The third and final aspect concerns 'Swedishization' processes – that is, the extent to which migrants manage to abandon their cultural background, and change according to the 'assimilation' required by Swedish society. While the first two have to do with different ways of accepting subordinate positions, the third differs slightly through its suggestion that 'climbing the social ladder' is possible. At first sight, these may

seem to be mutually exclusive discourses, however a following discussion about the requirements put on those who wish to climb will illustrate the compatibility of the three, precisely through an emphasis on the intersection between on the one hand processes of normativity, and on the other the discourse of hospitality.

To discuss these 'identity spaces' in greater detail, I will draw on three articles taken from the Malmö newspaper Sydsvenskan, which will illustrate the discourses and processes in question. The titles of these articles give a good summary of what is to follow. The first headline is 'Bosnian financial adviser became cleaner'; the second 'Prejudices were quickly swept away'; and the third 'Ethiopian shepherd boy became (medical) doctor'. I will translate the relevant parts of the articles, after which I will discuss them each in turn.

First of all, the Bosnian financial adviser who became a cleaner in Sweden:

> 'Fikrie Rexhepi had almost a finished Bachelor of Economic Science when she was forced to flee from Kosovo. After eleven years in Sweden, she has just gotten a permanent job as a cleaner. 'My Degree has no significance here. I am just grateful for getting a job' ... 'In my home country I would never have done cleaning, but when you move you can no longer decide for yourself. This has felt really good from the first day onwards. My colleagues respect me and I know I do a good job'. Spring cleaning is under way for the start of term. Proudly, Fikrie shows shining bright floors and wards. Her back aches after a long working day, but she says she is happy over the job that has finally taken her away from welfare dependency ... Fikrie no longer dreams about working in a bank or anything else that she has competence to do. She speaks fluent Swedish, but still finds that the language and the unemployment produce obstacles on the way. 'It's one thing what you want to do, and a completely different thing what you can do. I was lucky to get a job as a cleaner'.

While the article to some extent acknowledges the problem of not recognising migrants' qualifications and competencies, overall it takes a rather uncritical stance towards the issue, and emphasises instead the good things about the

situation Fikrie is in at the moment. Fikrie's general gratefulness on the one hand, for getting a job and being respected by her colleagues, and her happiness about no longer being dependent on welfare on the other, are both significant for the positive way in which she is represented in this article. Furthermore, her assertion about the difference between what you want and what you can do, along with the statement that migration inevitably makes a difference, as well as the fact that she has 'stopped dreaming' about something better, comes across as a strength of hers: she is realistic, powerful and brave. Nowhere does Fikrie herself point towards the unfairness of her situation – she comes across as thoroughly content with her situation. Finally, the way she is said to 'proudly' show the cleaning work she has done further emphasises the extent to which she has accepted her situation, which the journalist, perhaps particularly through the choice of that word – proudly – describes in a simultaneously lovable and patronising way.

Second, the Somali cleaner who has 'swept away' prejudices:

> 'Self employed Sahra Hassan knows all the bus drivers. Five days a week, she travels everywhere around Malmö ... (Sahra has) her own business. Together with six other women, she went through a course to become a 'home service consultant'. All of the women were unemployed, and had been so for several years. Sahra Hassan had had relief work for nine months since she moved to Sweden from Somalia in 1992. The rest of the time she had studied Swedish or been without work. In her home country she was a teacher ... The course was four weeks long. It was not only about cleaning techniques, but also about how to give professional service. 'It was about things like how to learn to be on time and about calling the customer if you are late', says Christin Lindbom from the company Personalservice AB, that administrates the home service consultant activity. With the help of a flyer sent out to some ... residential areas, Sahra Hassan and the other consultants got their first costumers. On the flyer there was a photo of Sahra Hassan, who is Muslim, with a head scarf. The response to the flyer was great, but some costumers pointed out that they would like a cleaner but rather one without a head scarf. Christin Lindbom received the calls. She brought Sahra Hassan along to those who didn't want a cleaner

> with a head scarf. 'It didn't take many minutes before all the prejudices had vanished into thin air', says Christin Lindbom ... Today Sahra Hassan has 33 costumers, most of them are not immigrants. She loves them all as much and she loves her job. 'I am so happy. And all costumers seem content', she says during a lunch break ... She is dressed in her uniform jacket with several pockets for various cleaning tools and a name badge. Generally, long trousers are part of the uniform. But Sahra Hassan doesn't have to wear them. Somali women prefer to wear a long skirt. She talks about all the evidence of appreciation she has received. Some costumers she doesn't meet often because they work when Sahra Hassan is in their homes. But around Christmas they still left envelopes with a bonus of 200-300 Skr. She received loads of boxes of chocolate ... For Sahra Hassan and her husband Abdullahi Ereg life has turned in the past year. 'He also has a permanent job as a personal assistant. We receive 20 000 Skr every month after tax. We have good economy now' ... Friends of Sahra Hassan have been inspired what she has done and started their own cleaning businesses. 'One of my friends has eight children and had been unemployed for eleven years. When she received her first pay check, she cried of joy', says Sahra Hassan.'

There are several points to be made about this article. Firstly, in a manner similar to the previous article, the joy of getting a cleaning job, in spite of further qualifications and competences, is emphasised. Perhaps more so than the case of Fikrie, where the failure to recognise those competencies is to some extent problematised, Sahra comes across as lucky for the opportunity (to clean) she has been given. Moreover, Sahra's insistence on being happy and 'loving all her customers' increases the reader's feeling that she is truly in a good situation, further supported by her enthusiasm about the couple's 'good economy'. Secondly, discourses about cultural difference creep in both at points where 'facts' about Muslims are given, and through the ways in which Lindbom emphasises the need for 'teaching' these women about how to behave properly towards customers; which is furthermore a great example of the civilizing image of the self[54].

[54] However, it is worth noting the fact that Sahra Hassan has the right to wear her 'long skirt' instead of the uniform: a mark of the 'tolerant' Swedish attitude to difference.

Thirdly is the way that the issue of 'racism' features in Sahra's story. Yes, it is recognised that some customers had prejudices and were not happy with letting a Somali woman into their home (to clean it!), but the problem (of prejudice) is solved simply and swiftly by introducing these suspicious individuals to Sahra, and letting her prove herself. In terms of the theory of racism behind these stories, it defines first of all 'racism' as the individual prejudices of a few people who do not wish to let Sahra in to their homes, rather than the social structures that prohibit her from pursuing her teaching career, and allow her only to clean. And it implies secondly that 'racism' could be easily solved by letting the 'racists' have a look at Sahra. Finally, the link between the work she does and the acceptance she is granted is emphasised throughout the article. The headline is significant: the joke about 'sweeping away' prejudices seems to suggest that being a good worker enables Sahra to overcome experiences of racism.

Finally, the shepherd boy who became a doctor:

> 'Fekadu Merdasa has made a long journey, from shepherd boy in the Ethiopian highlands to doctors on Skåne's plateau. The stay in Sweden was only going to be for a few years, but a revolution in Ethiopia stopped the journey back. Fekadu Merdasa used the time to become a medical doctor. 'I would go back tomorrow if I could', he says. Not because Fekadu Medusa is unhappy in Sweden. Quite the opposite. He has family here and is well established. 'I have reached a level in life where I am very content' ... (personal experiences) awoke a dream about becoming a doctor ... No such idea was there when Fekadu was six years old and tended cattle outside his village Bodje ... 'About two thousand people lived in the village, who made a living from simple farming. We were very poor and often had lack of food. I have experienced a period of starvation myself'. Fekadu had a good head for study, and got to continue until third class in a state school twelve kilometres away. He ran barefoot there and back, often without food in his stomach. Fekadu Merdasa loved the books ... 'It was a joy. I read in the moonlight or lit a candle or a fire to get light'

Not able to afford to continue his education, he sought himself to a nursing school run by missionaries. The principal was Swedish, and later, it was arranged for Fekadu to go to Malmö and continue his education.

> 'The year was 1971 and Fekadu Merdasa was 24 years old. He received residence permit the same week he arrived, and felt welcome everywhere. 'In Lund we were so few foreign students that we were treated like souvenirs' … Today the atmosphere is more tense and Fekadu Merdasa avoids certain places not to provoke xenophobic people, but he does not think racism is a big problem in Sweden. 'It is a lot worse in Ethiopia. Here I have an identity and I get respect. There I can be shot on the street anytime and no one cares' …' (He then went on to study medicine at Lund university).

As I have already suggested, this article is somewhat different from the other two, as it actually recounts the story of a 'successful' person in the sense of him climbing the social ladder. The significance of this article lies in the different ways in which it relates that success to Sweden. It does so first of all by juxtaposing Fekadu's life before and after he came to Sweden, a juxtaposition that in itself contains a range of stereotypes about people and life in 'other' places. Following those stereotypes, the story of his migration is in many ways a success story constructed precisely around the 'victim-saviour' discourse discussed in chapter five. In summary, the article compares life here with life there, and presents Fekadu as lucky to have been given the opportunity to come to live and study in Sweden. Hence, his success in life is related to how he has to an extent become part of Swedish society. At the same time, however, through extensive accounts of life 'there', Fekadu's difference is emphasised; that is, he is perhaps included and to some extent accepted, but remains different.

Like the previous article, this article brings up the issue of racism, albeit in a different manner. His experiences of feeling 'welcome everywhere' implicitly tells of a lack of racism in Swedish society at the point when he first arrived,

and the idea of being a 'souvenir' is nowhere discussed as anything but positive. The point about things having changed recognises the existence of racism today. However, followed by a comparison with the situation in Ethiopia, where things are a lot worse, that racism is to an extent marginalised, which is furthermore achieved through the use of the word 'xenophobia' rather than 'racism'. Finally, the emphasis on 'xenophobic people' signifies yet another displacement of racism from society as a whole, in a way similar to the 'prejudiced individuals' Sahra has come across.

To summarise, these three articles in different ways bring out ways in which 'spaces available' for migrants *in* society are constructed. As is illustrated by the differences between the articles and the personal stories they recount, there are different ways of being a 'good migrant'. What they share, is that the conditions for becoming a 'good migrant' are all set not through the dialogues or 'partnerships' endorsed by the Swedish state on paper, but through successfully living up to the implicit contract between the 'host' and the 'guest' (Rosello 2001). According to that contract, the guest should consider the invitation a gift, not question the (subordinate) position in which he/she is put, and accept the (living) conditions set by the host for all it implies in terms of norms, values, and assimilation to these.

6.5 Subtle racisms/invisible Swedishnesses

> 'It's like a rose ... it's so beautiful, and then when you pick it, you sting yourself on the thorns' (Azim)

Many of my interviewees have spoken of the difficulty in dealing with subtle forms of racism – of thinking that you are welcome and finding out through experience that you are in fact not. Some speak of this almost in terms of dishonesty, and although most people still emphasise the advantages of living in Sweden compared to the countries they have fled, because they feel safer and more secure, some also mention that they prefer to know where they stand.

'The problem here is hidden, I usually say that racism or discrimination wears a very nice suit, and talks so well ... and it doesn't look at all like the image in Britain' (Karim, who used to live in Britain before migrating to Sweden)

'And I think it's worse the hidden than the open. With the open, you see this, and I know, that person doesn't like me, and I'm prepared. That honesty at least. But the hidden, what you don't have the courage to say...' (Selma)

'There is an antagonism in society, and a subtle discrimination. And it's clear, to all immigrants ... there are these moments in society, I'm convinced, that people feel in their everyday contact with Swedes...' (Adil)

As I have suggested at different points in the thesis, Bosnians and Swedes alike emphasise their cultural proximity. While the Bosnians in my sample have done so in a sense to proclaim the right to equality, the Swedish accounts of Bosnians have been largely in the context of comparing them to other migrant groups. As discussed earlier, from comparisons between Somalis and Bosnians by civil servants, we see that the stereotypical 'Bosnian' is evaluated positively. However, while regarded on more positive terms in relation to other 'other' groups, it seems that this comparison has also not meant they have been ranked equally to Swedes. In other words, the perception of Bosnians as 'better' than some other others, has not mean they are regarded as 'us'.

In fact, this seems to some extent be what distinguishes Bosnians from Somalis in terms of experiences of racism: while the latter group is stigmatised and more forcefully excluded; the former group is seemingly regarded as 'us', but in practice by no means counts as 'us' on equal terms. Perhaps therefore, looking at the experiences of Bosnians specifically could help us understand some of those more subtle processes of inclusion and exclusion, and of 'ethnic' hierarchies mentioned earlier: that is, they could help us grasp and conceptualise the 'invisible Swedishnesses' that functions in and through everyday life.

As mentioned earlier, Billy Ehn et. al. (1993) propose a distinction between national practice and rhetoric, the former being the everyday behaviour into which we are socialised and take for granted, while the latter refers to the selection of that everyday that is used to *describe* what 'Swedish' is. The authors suggest that this is the point at which the national often transforms into a discourse about us-and-them, of who belongs and who does not, appealed to in different ways and at different times. As I have argued, this process is relational, and consists of ascribing cultural characteristics to both self and other. In fact, the self is more often than not a product of negating otherness, and to some extent this comes out of the fact that, as Ehn et al. (1993: 9) have suggested, 'we do not imagine ourselves to have any specific culture'; in other words universal and hence invisible (Dyer 1997; Puwar 2004). As we see from Puwar's (2001, 2004) research, however, what is normally regarded as simply 'the norm' is in fact located in a specific body – the white male body – and the presence of bodies that do not conform to the somatic norm confirms this.

Selma gives a good example of the cultural specificity of discourses regarded as 'neutral' or 'universal', and furthermore, how she is judged for failing to conform to the norm.

> 'We are used to speaking over the top of each other. But you see here, in schools for example, how teachers are careful with that, to finish talking, to put your hand up, and not talking at the same time. So that is something I have to reflect on – why I do that. But we are used to speaking over the top of each other – and I hear you, and you hear me, even though a third person might not get a thing. It's just that you want, I have to emphasise this, it feels so important, it's not because I want interrupt you or degrade you, that I don't show you respect – that's not it ... But things like that happen, and you cannot share it and discuss it if you don't work together'.

Using an inclusive notion of racism (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992; Essed 1991), as discussed in chapter two, means paying attention not only to the explicit constructions of otherness, but explore the role played by the everyday workings of the (well hidden) somatic norm (Puwar 2001, 2004) in the

production and maintenance of the 'basic agenda of racism': the unequal distribution of resources (Essed 1991). By defining the norm on universal rather than culturally specific terms, the extent to which people live up to the norm comes to be seen not in terms of cultural background, but in terms of capacities and competencies, whereby the distribution of resources both takes place and is justified. While, particularly in certain places and historical contexts (such as Sweden, following its image of itself as discussed), it is already difficult enough to suggest that racism occurs at the level of producing otherness, this scenario makes it even more complicated, as it is nowhere recognised that the norm that determines the distribution of resources and power has ethnic/cultural/national dimensions. In other words, how can we speak of ethnic discrimination when the ethnic dimension to the process is in itself not recognised?

In their interviews with Swedish politicians and civil servants, Beverlander et al. (1997: 127-128; my translation) bring up this issue. Alongside the various formal obstacles to inclusion as well as the more definable forms of discrimination, the authors speak of the influence of 'more subtle forms of cultural intolerance and exclusion': 'mechanisms of exclusion based on unreasonable demands on cultural sameness or becoming Swedish ... where there are no formal obstacles, but nevertheless ... a notable lack of representation and participation'. Puwar (2004: 32) takes the issue a step further and asks what can be detracted from representation? Questioning the assumption that 'the existence of more bodies of colour ... is evidence of diversity and equality', she emphasizes the need to go beyond 'counting heads', and consider the 'nuanced dynamics of subtle forms of exclusion as well as the basis of differential inclusion' (ibid 58). Through considering the simultaneous and intertwined processes of otherness and normativity, exclusion and assimilation, she emphasizes the complexities through which social spaces and the positions available within them are formed; hence the importance of qualifying the inclusion/exclusion boundary.

A good example of feeling outside while formally inside is found in one of Asad's stories about his personal experiences. He tells me about a time when he was waiting for a colleague he had set a meeting with. On the way between the

front door and that colleague's office he was asked by several people what he was doing there, who he was looking for, and when sitting down in the waiting room, he was asked to leave his seat, with the excuse 'we're having a coffee break here shortly…' His work at this point was mainly out on the field, and he tells me that virtually every time he came back to the office from which he was employed, he was asked by people what he was doing there, which led him in the end to start using the back door, to avoid meeting anyone, and to avoid being stared at and asked to leave. His avoidance of common spaces went on for some time, to the extent that when a highly positioned politician once came to see him after having arranged a meeting, he was told that there was no Asad there; in other words, his supposed colleagues did not know of his existence, or alternatively, denied it.

Another account of limited inclusion can be read from Aida's narrative; in the following segment she discusses the problems relating to feeling invisible in the workplace.

> 'What I find worst amongst racist opinions, is when you want to kill or harm anyone, everything you do to someone that goes against human rights. That's the worst thing. But what is very uncomfortable and very sad … is lack of interest. If you don't see me and I'm present, that is the worst thing, I think. And then we have much of this carefulness, you are careful and don't want to make yourself look stupid and so on, then you can even do more harm, so that the receiver doesn't think that there is any interest in me at all. People ask 'how was it in Bosnia and so on, can I ask questions?' It's better to ask questions and be curious. And if there is anything the receiver misunderstands, then you can sort that out. Instead of not showing any interest … I find that such a shame – no contact, no interest, no question, no nothing … So the worst is racism, when you break against human rights. And then after that is this thing, which is very difficult, that you are robbed of your human worth somehow. You're not recognised. And I think that happens to people with other background very much.'

Puwar (2004: 55-76) discusses the ambivalent position of visibility/invisibility of 'other' bodies: visible through being marked as 'other', while invisible in the sense that people show no interest in the person, his/her experiences, qualifications and opinions. Both processes must be regarded as important ways in which relations of power are managed; and as Puwar argues, they may often function simultaneously. However, I again find it important to make a point about the different levels of subtlety that can be read out of the above two narratives. We shall see in chapter seven that Asad's ideas to improve the workplace have been tried out but abandoned shortly afterwards despite success; this points towards the limits of his position at work and the power of his voice and opinions. However, if Asad and Aida hence to some extent share experiences of invisibility, Aida does not recount having to use the backdoor at work. Asad's marked otherness hence seems to weight heavier on him, while Aida's whiteness seems to enable her to pass the front door unnoticed.

Moving on from the extent that otherness determines everyday experiences in a normative space, to the 'assimilative pressures' of that space: Puwar (2004: 107-117) argues a 'legitimate language' (Bourdieu 1992) or what Fanon calls the 'white man's language' is central to the somatic norm. As Bourdieu (1992: 37) emphasises, the ability to speak the 'legitimate language' entails more than linguistic skills; he writes, it is 'a certain capacity to speak, which involves both the linguistic capacity to generate an infinite number of grammatically correct discourses, and the social capacity to use this competence adequately in a determinate situation'. This social capacity and competence is what Puwar refers to as the 'soft things': these are the things that govern interaction and behaviour in particular social spaces; and they are things you need to 'pick up' in order to be able to achieve. However, the notion of 'picking up' is not to be misread: following Bourdieu (1986) we know these are things that take time and effort to acquire; which accounts for the fact that the people socialized into the somatic norm are more likely to achieve than those who have are less familiar with the 'correct' ways of doing things. Hence,

> 'we need to think of it as being acquired slowly through time by moving through 'white' civilizing spaces ... Existence within and movements

> through these spaces facilitates the acquisition of the necessary competences for a successful, often unconscious performance of what Fanon ... has termed 'mimicry'' (Puwar 2004: 114).

What this amounts to is the fact that assimilation is required for achievement. In order to get ahead in society, those who are not the somatic norm need to abandon their cultural specificity and 'become white'. Fanon (1967: 18) writes, '(t)he colonized is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards. He becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness, his jungle'.

Ability to speak the 'legitimate language' is important in all social spaces, including the space in which 'diversity' is debated. A discussion between two of my key informants, Jakub and Azim, is notable. Jakub finds that in order to have a chance in Swedish society at all, you have to grab the opportunities as and when they pop up. He finds frustrating the fact that he is not able to pursue his ideas and initiatives, but has to constantly operate in a form of reactive mode. He says that with many years of practice, he has now developed the ability to see opportunities, and seal them in the 'correct' manner. Azim expresses a form of admiration of Jakub's ability to speak the 'legitimate language'. He says to him, 'you have worked a lot with that, me myself, I'm not that diplomatic, I find it difficult to play that game...' For Azim, this means he lacks the influence Jakub has to some extent gained. In the individual interview, it seems clear that Azim is very frustrated about the fact that no one seems to listen to him. His eagerness about being interviewed by me, and his enthusiastic behaviour in the interview itself is notable. Furthermore, listening to him talking about his opinions and work, it seems that this frustration, related to feeling invisible in spaces where things happen and decisions are made, have influenced his general feelings and attitudes towards Swedish society.

My key informant Irena argues that in order to get somewhere in Sweden she knows she 'has to be very Swedish': she has to 'think Swedish' and 'act Swedish'. She is very critical of claims for 'diversity' in Sweden, and suggests that social spaces are diverse only to the extent that the people that occupy them

conform to 'Swedishness'. Trying to test her argument, I mentioned Adil in the interview. To me, he seemed to have with time managed to overcome some of the disadvantages he recounts from his past, and achieved a 'decent' position; and furthermore, judging from his very critical narrative, I had up until this point to some extent regarded him as a form of (however singular) evidence of 'positive' trends. Irena's somewhat joking response to my comment, however, was that 'Adil, yea, but Adil is more Swedish than the Swedes themselves...'

After my interview with Irena, I then came to question my former analysis of the interview with Adil, and decided to have another close look. A thing worth noting in Adil's narrative is that although he is one of my most critical interviewees when recounting past times as well as on the topic of racism in society generally, he does not express any particular complaints about his current situation (notably he also does not recount having to ever use the back door). He now has a rather well-regarded administrative position in the building of Malmö's local government. Furthermore, there is a strong sense of achievement in Adil's narrative, and although he himself does not explore the issue of conformity (this is likely to go against his personal anti-racist rhetoric), Irena implies that Adil has had to learn the correct language (Bourdieu 1992, Fanon 1967) in order to get to where he is now. What is perhaps particular about the case of Adil is that his apparently critical jargon is also the general politically correct jargon in his workplace (this is discussed at length in chapter seven); finally his presence and critical outlook seems to fill an 'alibi' role in the workplace (discussed in chapter eight).

As will be discussed further in the next chapter, present times are pressing harder for cultural assimilation and conformity. At the same time, ideas about 'cultural differences' flourish in the popular (and institutional) imagination, particularly in relation to certain groups. Judging from my analysis of ways in which subtle pressures for assimilation intertwines with the production of otherness (Puwar 2001, 2004; see also Nayak 1997) in 'Swedish' social spaces, it seems that there are differences in the extent to which people can 'become white'. While the Bosnians are somewhat expected or at least given the chance to overcome their difference (note inclusion at the cost of assimilation), the

Somalis seem more 'locked' in their difference. The ultimate question hence becomes: can the Somalis perform whiteness? Or will they remain 'the other', perhaps in spite of assimilatory attempts and successes?

6.6 The microphysics of racism

> 'You can have hidden racism, and it can be open ... it's better with the open racism, so you know where you stand, instead of not knowing where it's difficult for people. (In other places) there are signs at discotheques, for example "no blacks, dogs or Arabs". But sure, they don't go there, but open their own discotheque, that's how it is' (Sadat)

Although I would not go so far as to agree with Sadat that if only signs of who is welcome and who is not would be clearly displayed, those excluded would simply shake their shoulders and happily go elsewhere, the point he makes is nevertheless important. If and when the line determining inclusion and exclusion is clearly marked, even spoken, the fact of the line can be more easily established. And following the establishment of that fact, it can also be more readily challenged.

Tracing the trajectory of power exercise in modern times, Foucault (1977) suggests that a general shift has taken place through which power has become less visible as well as less personified. Foucault (1977: 138, 139) writes about the modern era of power exercise, that '(t)he human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it'; 'a detailed political investment in the body, a 'new micro-physics' of power'.

Remembering the public execution as an important pre-modern symbolic manifestation of power, he argues that power in modern times functions in more subtle ways. Discussing the public execution, Foucault makes an important point about the vulnerability of power when most visible. He goes on to suggest that exercise of power in modern times is more resistant to challenges through the fact that the face of the powerful has become invisible.

Moments of the visibility of power, however violent its expressions may be, always also include the possibility of challenging those relations (ibid 57-69).

> 'If the crowd gathered round the scaffold, it was not simply to witness the sufferings of the condemned man or to excite the anger of the executioner: it was also to hear an individual who had nothing more to lose curse the judges, the laws, the government and religion' (ibid 60).

Applying this theory of power to the issue of racism, I would argue that the 'basic agenda of racism' (structural inequalities) is largely reproduced through a 'microphysics' of racism: the range of everyday practices through which the power and advantage of 'us' are ensured, while 'others' are designed to subordinate spaces and/or spaces outside. Furthermore, the invisibility as well as the face-less nature of those practices makes it difficult to speak of the (seemingly automatic) practices in terms of majority power over minorities; the ideology of superior/inferior, inside/outside is conveniently veiled.

As mentioned at the end of chapter one in relation to 'racist effect' or 'the basic agenda of racism', it is important to measure racism not only according to degrees to which racist sentiment can be discerned, but according to the amount of power held by perpetrators (Essed 1991; Anthias 1999). While the success of the far right throughout Europe (including Malmö) in recent years is indeed worrying, as I have emphasised, it would be a mistake to assume that the problems encountered by migrants and minorities can be reduced to the existence of those 'racists' onto which racism in general is often displaced (Pred 1997, 2000; Gilroy 1987).

The Somalis and Bosnians I have interviewed have recounted very few experiences of the extreme far right. Instead, most people speak precisely of the subtle processes that take place in everyday social spaces, in interaction with people and institutions that on no account would consider themselves racist. Not being recognised, as Aida speaks of, or at least not being recognised on equal terms with the majority population, can take place when applying for a

job, in an interview, at the workplace, or in any social situation: being denied entry to a nightclub, or not being invited to a colleague's Christmas party.

Speaking of the effects of racist actions as an issue of power means considering the extent to which actions have the power to affect people's lives. Although abuse by self-confessed racists on the street is extremely harmful and by no means easily overcome, it would be a mistake, I would argue, to regard these as simply 'worse' than the workings of a subtle racism that for example excludes people from the labour market for years, sometimes for a lifetime. Furthermore, as Tamas (2002) points out, in spite of open condemnations and marking of distances from the official side, the life cycles of the extreme right in Sweden seems to have followed the general political and public mood swings; hence it could be argued that they are dependent on a more general (albeit milder) public opinion.

In order to further explore the issue of power in relation to racist effects, I would like to look at a part of Ghedi's narrative, namely his account of the man next door to the association's premises. This older man regularly throws abuse out of his window. Ghedi laughs quite a lot when he talks about him and about the conversations and conflicts people have had with him.

> 'I heard that the others say that he said ugly things to them, as recently as yesterday, he told them that he 'hates black people, you have to go home', and 'bloody blacks, you live off our taxes'. And the people that sat here (the people he was addressing), everyone works, and they told him 'we all work, what the...?'

According to Ghedi's story, the man next door has become somewhat a figure of ridicule. Analysing his story, however, it is important to be attentive to ways in which Ghedi may be concerned to present himself. That is, saying that he does not care about what the man says does not necessarily means that it does not affect him, but perhaps again that he chooses not to discuss that with me. The point I would like to make about this account first of all concerns the power relations involved in the meeting between the Somalis and their old

racist neighbour. The fact that the Somalis are in a group position during the meeting means that they can draw strength and support from each other. It is likely that effects would have been different if the situation had been the opposite in terms of numbers: a single Somali man in town encountering a group of racists that say similarly abusive things to him is more likely to feel threatened and upset, as he has no immediate safety net from which he can gain security. Furthermore, the group situation to some extent gives power to the Somalis, as the common scenario is one racist against several people, who all agree that what this man thinks or does is wrong. Again, the opposite scenario could make it more difficult to laugh at racism, as one can no longer be sure that the person explicitly or implicitly expressing racist sentiment is on his/her own. In fact, setting a series of experiences of discrimination in relation to each other seems to have made many migrants feel alone against the rest of the world, against a system that through a multiplicity of subtle and 'everyday' practices successfully keeps them outside.

Chapter seven. Mixed messages: gaps between official rhetoric and lived realities

In this chapter, I address the gap between official rhetoric and everyday lived realities. The chapter begins with discussion of migrant (and other) voices speaking of this gap, and importantly the disappointment and frustration they feel about the fact that the positive rhetoric of politicians, civil servants, and the documents they have produced is not in fact reflected in reality.

Secondly, I consider the notion of 'integration' alongside the policy changes that have taken place more recently in the area of migrants and minorities on a European as well as a Swedish level. In this section is included a discussion of the (Swedish) idea that integration can be achieved through various projects. I look at the experiences and views of those of my interviewees who are or have been employed in different projects to explore what the 'project' idea actually signifies in terms of confidence in the traditional Swedish ways of 'doing things'.

Thirdly, I emphasise the need to not idealise the past by criticising the present. I draw on Rosello's (2001) argument about 'hospitality' and Essed's (1991) discussion of 'tolerance' to emphasise the multiple features of those two notions. Both Rosello and Essed urge us to consider the power relations and vested interest central to the discourses and appeals to them. Considering the Swedish case particularly, I emphasise elements of power, control and de facto assimilation as central to the practical implementation of the 1975 'multicultural' policy.

Finally, after having challenged some of the 'intended' functions of migrant associations (see chapter one), I discuss the roles they fill in Swedish society today, according to the views and experiences of my interviewees. Although they are less enthusiastic than the Swedish national and local governments about the 'cultural', 'integrative' and 'political' functions of migrant associations, they nevertheless point towards some important functions

associations play: importantly as a point from which support and strength can be gained when experiencing exclusion elsewhere.

7.1 Proudly presenting... Malmö's 1999 integration plan

Apart from the general image of 'Sweden' as the epitome of democracy, equality and solidarity (chapter four), Sweden has also been praised as well as praised itself on its comparatively 'generous' and 'inclusive' policy on immigration and minorities, outlined in the introductory chapter. Although some of the initial principles of the 1975 policy have indeed been compromised with time, it should be noted that these changes have not always been visible in official discourse. Importantly, the idea of 'partnership' proclaimed in the 1975 policy is by and large somehow still referred to in official discourse. 'Partnership' (in theory) means that Swedes and migrants and/or minority groups should co-operate and work together towards the best possible future society; furthermore, the embracing of diversity as a normative principle is still dominant in official discourse.

A good example is the principles and proposals outlined in Malmö's 'integration plan', signed by the local government in 1999. The consensus that led all political parties apart from an extreme right wing (and anti-immigration) party to agree on this future agenda has enabled politicians to express great hopes in the future concerning the situation for migrants and minorities in Malmö. Virtually everyone agreed that it was important to 'integrate immigrants' as well as to embrace the value of diversity in itself. The following quotes give a good indication of the message Malmö's politicians wanted to put across.

> 'Some people think that those who have immigrated to Sweden should adapt to the Swedish society, regarded as normative and unchangeable. We think that the population's ethnic diversity will affect our culture and affect Swedish society's development so that we all in different ways have to

adapt to new influences and identities, cross-cultural life styles and movements, where ethnic and social boundaries will be transgressed.'

'In Malmö today there are many different cultures and the entire population has to learn to live and socialise in the new society. Negative attitudes have to be made visible and active measures made to change them. It is a long-term job that demands active participation of society's all institutions. But it also demands that people with different background can meet around mutual and positive experiences, to promote respect for and knowledge of each other.'

'We want a city where *all people are granted equal value* and *diversity is considered a resource.* All the people in Malmö shall have the same rights and obligations but also the same possibilities disregarding ethnic and cultural origin, religion and social position. Everyone shall in relation to their capacities be able to participate and contribute to society's positive development. Diversity in itself creates an enriching dimension ... We want a city *without ... discrimination, xenophobia and racism.* The key word in the meeting between people should be *respect* (Malmö Kommunfullmaktiges Handlingar, 1999; my translations; author's italics).

Five years down the line, however, not much has changed. Some even suggest that things are getting worse. Emir summarises his view with the words,

'On paper, yes. On paper it looks perfect, but in real life...'

Anita, who works with issues around discrimination outside of the public administration, says,

'If we had somewhat gotten into reality with the laws and fancy documents we have, that is, if there had been a reflection in reality ... Malmö council, all parties, they have never been in such total agreement as they were a few years ago when they wrote their integration plan, that they are still very proud of. And there you talk so much about everyone's equal worth, and what an amazing resource immigrants are, and we have to have a society

> that reflects the population, and we really need to make sure of that. But reality has not at all turned out like this document.'

As civil servant Lena puts it, 'it's difficult to get some proper action ... It's difficult to get in this diversity that we say should enrich and develop the activity'. She says that while most parts of Malmö's public administration have diversity plans (mångfaldsplaner), 'they are not really in operation so to speak – it's lots of papers...'

In an interview survey about 'integration problems' undertaken by Bevelander et al. (1997: 118-144), politicians and civil servants alike display an overwhelmingly inclusive and pro-diversity attitude. They talk about the need to transform society to suit 'multicultural Sweden' better; about the problems relating to the 'powerlessness' of immigrants; and about slow and resilient institutional structures that manage to retain minorities in inferior positions. Furthermore, discourses common in the mass media, such as 'cultural differences' and 'the numbers issue' were virtually absent from accounts, overwhelmingly focussed on structural problems in Swedish institutions and society.

In more recent times it has become common amongst politicians to refute also the victimising tendency and opt for emphasising instead 'the potential strength' amongst the migrant population. A Social Democrat MP says about the situation in Malmö, that 'the most hopeful future is if we can break the barriers and meet as equals. It is a wealth of this city that there are so many different languages and heritages, it is a wealth currently not being used' (Bevelander et al. 1997: 144; my translation). Similarly the director of the National Board of Integration, Andres Carlgren, said in an interview recently, in response to the interviewer proposing to move parts of the population to overcome ethnic segregation, that the solution to the present situation is not to insert ethnic Swedes into 'immigrant' areas, but to emphasise the enormous resources that already exist in those areas.

Another relevant issue in this context concerns the value of attitude monitoring as indicators of xenophobia and racism. Andrew Geddes (2003: 120) writes, '(t)he long-standing commitment to equal rights, participation and anti-discrimination is reflected in Swedish attitudes towards immigrant minorities'. Referencing the 2001 EUMC attitude monitoring, he states that Swedes are 'amongst the most multiculturally optimistic Europeans' (ibid 119-120). However, according to Charles Westin (2000: 30-34), public attitudes seem to not always fall in line with political and/or ideological developments. He discusses the attitude monitoring with regards to refugees and immigrants that has taken place at different points in time (1969, 1981, 1987 and 1993), and suggests that for example the 1981 monitoring 'contrary to all expectations' indicated a generally more positive attitude towards immigrants than in 1969 (the expectations has been the opposite following the political and ideological shifts discussed in chapter one).

A recent survey undertaken by Marie Demker (2002) concerning public attitudes to the reception of refugees has shown that the resistance to refugees in Sweden has in fact decreased, even after September the 11th. The background to the survey was the increased success of the extreme right wing elsewhere in Europe. Following these results, Demker announces in a national daily newspaper that in Sweden, 'xenophobia is not increasing'.[55]

> '(I)s it not frequently the case that there is a contradiction between one's intellectual choice and one's mode of conduct? Which therefore would be the real conception of the world: that logically affirmed as an intellectual choice? or that which emerges from the real activity of each man, which is implicit in his mode of action? And since all action is political, can one not say that the real philosophy of each man is contained in its entirety in his political action?' (Gramsci 1971: 326).

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[55] It should be noted that Demker's own analysis is also based on a comparison of the political opportunity structures that either give space or not for the rise of the extreme right wing; however, the overall construction of the article and the message is again celebratory of Swedish people's hospitable, non-xenophobic attitudes, *even* after Sept 11th.

Gramsci's point about the disjuncture between 'one's intellectual choice and one's mode of conduct' helps illuminate some of the apparent paradoxes discussed above. Understanding hegemony as an ideology or a conception of the world that is manifest in various parts of society, Gramsci emphasises that it should be regarded as ideas and practices we adhere to in everyday life without necessarily explicitly affirm them intellectually.

Karim, who previously put forward an argument about Swedish orientalism, goes onto emphasise another way in which he has been disappointed with Sweden, namely the 'double standards' he finds overwhelming amongst Swedish politicians and civil servants. He tells me about a European conference he recently went to, where researchers and politicians alike spoke of 'gaining from migrations', about which there was a strong consensus amongst participants. But at the same time and by the same people, almost all policies put in place have been negative towards immigrants. He asks 'the conference and the research – was that wrong? Did they lie?' He shakes his head and tells me how disappointed he has been ever since. Implicitly referring to the recent 'five year stop' proposal, he asks, 'how can you speak of gaining from migrations, economically, socially, ethnically, and then just throw that away and blame everything on the immigrants?' He says,

> 'Sweden has always been a paradise for me, at least until now. I can say anything without anyone putting me in prison (Karim relates it to his previous experiences) ... it is good, but the double standards – that's something unbelievable ... great law and rules, no country like Sweden. But the double standards, the 'nice' attitude, the avoidance of conflict ... and an unequal world...'

7.2 What ever happened to 'partnership'? Integration as assimilation, and the seemingly static nature of the 'Swedish model'

Rather than equal members of the 'partnership', most of the migrants I have interviewed experience their relationship with Swedish society as one-

directional. While emphasising the things he likes about Swedish society, Zlatko criticises Swedes for being blind and/or reluctant to other possible alternatives, ways of thinking and being.

> 'Generally I think you can say that this is a society that works, I myself think Swedes are good at lots of things. And I think that the Swedish model is something that we also, Bosnians, can learn things from. But I don't want to say that there's nothing, I mean, there are also lots of things that Swedes could learn from the Bosnian side ... (About Swedish society:) This is good, and it's worth respecting. But that doesn't mean it's simply the best in the world in every way. And in that sense, you isolate yourself, you kind of don't want to know about other peoples' experiences, you don't want to try other tomatoes, but no, it's the Swedish tomatoes that go ... this becomes very annoying. The Swedish is not automatically the best. Sweden has to become more open, and receive others' values. Take for example what a common Svensson[56] believes 'integration' means. Integration is, according to me, a process, where we should meet each other half way. We should respect differences, respect other cultures and so on. You need to be flexible and meet. We ... should respect rules and laws ... but at the same time, you should not throw away everything that belongs to our cultures. Swedes don't always find it easy to accept and receive others' values and cultures. Swedes see the integration process as a one-way process. But it should be mutual, a process where two parts meet. You have also to take something. That is perhaps something that Swedes lack'.

Here Zlatko makes a point about the common usage of the word 'integration', today central to the Swedish debate about migrants and minorities. While the document recounted in the beginning of this chapter suggests that diversity should be embraced and that society should transform according to its current population, Zlatko thinks that for most people, it is matter of 'immigrants' being integrated into an already established 'Swedish' society.

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[56] This is the name for an average Swede.

As mentioned in chapter one, the 'retreat of multiculturalism' (Joppke 2004) in Sweden was to some extent marked by the establishment of the National Board of Integration: a result of the more recent argument that the 'right to cultural difference' has led to segregation and exclusion, alongside an emphasis on the importance of 'getting them in' to society. Although 'integration' has become the general term used to refer anything to do with migrants 'post-immigration', Adrian Favell (2001, 2003) asks us to think about what the word actually implies. He finds that the term is 'typically link(ed) ... to historical concerns with nation-building'; and suggests that it is difficult 'to make sense of the term integration in practical, applied terms, without bringing back in the nation-state' (2003: 16); hence 'the continued focus on integration as the central idea in post-immigration policy debates across Europe, is itself a choice of rhetoric designed explicitly to rescue the nation-state' (ibid 37).

Favell argues that what distinguishes the notion of integration from other terms sometimes used – such as 'inclusion' or 'participation' – is 'the technical "social engineering" quality of the term integration' (ibid 15). Hence, rather than accepting the distinction between integration and assimilation forcefully emphasised by policy makers (including the Malmö document cited above), it could be argued that the 'nation-building' implications of 'integration' renders it no less assimilatory (ibid). Looking back at the practices used by the Swedish state to 'nationalise' its population in previous times (as discussed in chapters one and four) helps us understand the less flattering dimensions of 'integration'.

> 'Across ... European countries, we can find numerous examples of countries converging similarly on integration as the widest frame for discussing post-immigration policies ... It has returned to the fore in the Netherlands and Sweden, after periods of flirtation with more cultural differentialist thinking, as they seek to reconnect the provision of welfare benefits and multicultural policy with conditions about the learning of the national language and culture' (Favell 2003: 17).

Recent literature suggests that the return to 'integration' could to some extent be regarded as a way of re-assuring the 'host' populations that immigration will

not threaten their society or identity; particularly this is important in relation to the plans of large scale labour immigration planned by many European countries. It is a way of re-asserting national sovereignty and control (Favell 2001, 2003; Joppke 2004; Kofman forthcoming).

Considering the more practical dimensions of the 'retreat of multiculturalism' and the 'return to civic integration', Christian Joppke (2004) emphasises that a significant feature of this shift is 'to expect more of migrants'. He gives the example of a recent Dutch law implementing compulsory 'language and civics lessons' for newcomers, which has since been implemented throughout Europe [57]. Obligations are being strengthened as states embrace 'neo-assimilationist' policies (Kofman forthcoming). Eleonore Kofman writes,'(m)ore than ever the state has stipulated that as host it allows migrants to enter and settle on condition they fulfil specific obligations and modes of belonging'. She argues that by reclaiming control over diversity, states are 'asserting (their) role(s) as protector of national identity and social cohesion'. The flourishing discourses on migrants as threatening (as discussed in chapter six) seems to have increased the urgency with which European states are now re-claiming power over territories as well as identities (Kofman forthcoming, Yuval-Davis, Anthias and Kofman 2005). Importantly, what unites these recent policy developments in different European countries is by and large indeed the 'culturalising' trend (Ålund and Schierup 1991), in which cultural differences are regarded as the cause of segregation as well as conflict; social cohesion is the proposed solution, while the issue of racism occupies a marginal position (Geddes 2003, Yuval-Davis 2004, Yuval-Davis, Anthias and Kofman 2005).

Although Sweden has not been as explicit in pursuing the policy of civic integration, the implicit messages to, and expectations of, migrants are I would

[57] Interestingly Joppke notes that Sweden is an exception to this trend; however he fails to consider the 1992 law that transformed social benefits for newcomers to an 'introduction compensation', according to which migrants would be given benefits only on the condition that they took part in introduction classes, including both language training and knowledge about Swedish society. Considering the fact that most newcomers are indeed dependent on these benefits (and particularly those from non-European countries, i.e. those regarded as 'culturally alien'), it seems possible to suggest that Sweden has also adopted a de facto similar policy – although notably without saying so!

argue similar. Furthermore, retaining a 'politically correct' stance on these issues, while implicitly transforming policy, must be regarded as to some extent specifically Swedish, where the gap between what is said and what is done hence becomes particularly overwhelming[58]. Only after having asserted equal rights and diversity as the normative principle does the 1999 Integration plan bring in the importance of the 'common'.

> 'We have to regard differences between us as natural and obvious, but also what we have in common. In order for that to be possible, we need more meetings between people of different background, cultures and religions in work life and residential areas, but also in cultural-, associational- and social life ... In order for us to function as members of the same social community, we need *a common language, common legal norms and common meeting places*. It is necessary that we can communicate with and understand each other. We have to emphasise the importance of the Swedish language and at the same time respect those who have another

[58] It is worth making a point here about the law on dual citizenship, implemented in Sweden in 2001. In an article discussing the debates preceding the decision to accept dual citizenship, Per Gustafson (2002) outlines the arguments for and against. He suggests that central to the promotion of dual citizenship were references to globalisation and internationalisation; the argument was that a nation-state conception of citizenship was archaic and the law needed to go with the flow. However, while some regarded dual citizenship as a normative principle, others regarded it as something of 'a regrettable but necessary adaptation' (2002: 471). Furthermore, the implementation of dual citizenship elsewhere and its acceptance by the European Union was referred to. Important to note in relation to dual citizenship is obviously the fact that it is not only about immigrants in Sweden wanting to retain their 'old' citizenship, but also expatriate Swedes wanting to retain their Swedish citizenship while wanting full access to their new country of living. In fact, a lot of expatriate Swedes engaged with the debate on dual citizenship. Interestingly, Gustafson somewhat summarises the arguments for and against dual citizenship by suggesting that overwhelmingly, the 'against' arguments were framed by a discourse that maintained the nation-state as central organising principle, while the 'for' arguments instead opted for a notion of citizenship beyond the nation state, emphasising on the one hand globalisation and on the other the rights of the individual. This leads him to conclude that Soysal's (1994) theory of a post-national citizenship is indeed the trend of European policy. Furthermore, referring to Castles and Miller's (1998) 'ideal-typical models' on state's approaches to migration and minorities, he suggests that while the 'against' arguments were situated in an 'assimilatory' approach to migrants, the 'for' arguments were 'multicultural'. In turn, this leads him to portray the decision to accept dual citizenship as perfectly in line with the Swedish traditional stance in this area. However, in doing so, Gustafson seemingly ignores the Swedish 'retreat of multiculturalism' discussed, whereby his argument indeed functions to portray Sweden as continuously generous, tolerant and multicultural. Furthermore, he fails to question the control dimensions that are according to Ålund and Schierup (1991) and others inherent to the Swedish model of multiculturalism, suggesting a stronger nationalist (and assimilatory) dimension than what is rhetorically promoted. Finally, although he acknowledges the gap between formal and actual rights, he fails to recognize the gap between rhetoric and open political debates on the one hand, and underlying logics behind policy as well as everyday practice on the other.

mother tongue. The country's laws and legislations give us great space to live and think in different ways. We have to show each other mutual respect and tolerance.'

Note the strong emphasis on 'common language' and 'common norms' (the vagueness is significant). Furthermore, note the language used in the account of 'differences'; these are not only 'cultural' but 'natural' differences, hence not historical but essential. This assertion is significant, particularly when set next to the importance of developing commonalities. It could be concluded that an implicit distinction here is made following the hierarchy according to 'degrees of difference', in which some groups are regarded as 'culturally close' while others remain 'alien' (Pred 2000); hence some are according to this logic likely to remain excluded. A final feature of the 1999 Integration plan worth noting is the emphasis on 'the mutual challenge in the integration process'; to be read as follows: demands also have to be put on 'them' to 'integrate themselves'.

A quote by Aida relates this discussion to the paternalistic attitude discussed before:

> 'And you always say immigrants so and so, what can we do for them, and so on. But you forget that when a so called 'immigrant' enters a workplace, something else happens as well. They come with their experiences, their knowledge, and that contributes in itself. It's not some tin that should stand at some shelf, or sit in some folder – it contributes: when that individual is in place, the environment also changes, at the same time as the person changes. And no one can just take the good things, but you take both parts, and you also give both parts. It's a process, and what is important is to participate in it'.

Several of the migrants I have interviewed are working or have worked in various project employments, and in fact, many of the 'integration' initiatives taken by the Swedish state have been project based. The idea(l) is that projects are initiated and funded by the government, and that if they are successful, they will later be incorporated by the different local administrations as part of their permanent activity. However, it seems to be the norm that after the project

period has expired along with state funding, both successful and unsuccessful projects end; the general explanation for this is simply that 'the money has run out'.

The projects have become a way in for migrants whose other experiences or competencies are not valued highly enough for them to get the 'normal' jobs, for which many of them are indeed qualified. Instead, they can get this form of employment by virtue of their 'ethnic' or 'immigrant' background. If one of the ways in which an ethnic pattern has emerged from such employments concerns the kinds of jobs migrants are employed to do, as discussed in chapter six, another concerns the actual conditions of the employment. At the time of the interview, Leyla was employed in a project aimed at improving health conditions amongst minority groups through information. She describes the work, saying,

> 'We are twelve different people, from different countries, and we speak different languages, and we have different backgrounds. There are doctors, nurses, psychologists, physiotherapists, dentists, and so on. We work with our different language groups, but we cooperate also, and help each other through our experiences and so on ... I like what I do, to work with healthcare, to work with immigrants, to break misunderstandings, and improve health in Malmö.'

As mentioned earlier, Leyla has a Degree in psychology. While she seems very positive about the work itself, she finds the conditions difficult. She was initially employed for one year, and then three months at a time. She continues,

> 'For me, it doesn't feel that good, to work in this way, that you know nothing about the future, as you would if you had a permanent job.'

Two months after the interview, the project ended, and Leyla was again unemployed. Naser, the journalist from Bosnia, has had several temporary employments in different projects. He is usually employed for six months at a time, and then finds himself unemployed again. At in-between periods, he has

had to find random work for shorter periods; for example he recently covered someone's summer holiday in a shop. At the time of the interview, he is working for a project, the future of which he is uncertain about. The council is looking for places to cut back on spending, and because the work he does is classed as 'cultural', and not as necessary as some others public sectors, he fears he will shortly be out of work again. He says,

> 'You always have to fight for existence and family and so on. On the one hand it can never feel good because you can never finish what you have started. And you can never show who you really are, and what you are worth. Of course it's second class citizens. And I'm not just talking about immigrants, but about all people that find themselves in such a situation, under all such projects. And no one sees you as the one you are, with the education and background you have, in my case as a journalist. And the whole time you have to give substantially more.'

Naser goes on to criticise the general strategy of integration in the form of projects, which he regards as short-term solutions to issues he suggests requires a more thorough re-thinking of society as a whole. His argument echoes in virtually all of the interviews I have done (including both biographical and key informant interviews). The feeling shared by most people is that projects are insufficient for solving the multiple problems faced by migrants in Sweden today concerning the ability to become part of society. And the main problem seems to be not the content of the projects, but simply the fact that they are and commonly regarded as just that: projects.

> 'You start projects, and you have the dates when it starts and when it finishes'; 'That's the negative thing ... lots of these projects should continue, and exist in all areas ... How many projects did we have in Fosie that were financed by the metropolitan project? And how many do we have now? Everything has been shut down...' (Nina)

Semira was employed as part of the 'big city' project to build and sustain a female network at Rosengård. That network consisted mainly of women from Afghanistan and Somalia, and Semira was very positive about the effects the

network had for the women involved, particularly as those groups generally suffer severely from exclusion and isolation. Therefore, she is obviously very disappointed about the fact that her employment ended with the project after only two years. She seems particularly frustrated with the fact that no one from the council was actually there to see how successful her work was, whereby there was no great interest in keeping it after the project money ran out. Hence, she concludes that 'money doesn't solve the problems', when the will to a functioning and continuous work seems to be missing. Semira describes project work as 'cosmetic', which apart from emphasising the fact that they fail to solve things in the long run also implicitly points towards another important aspect, namely the fact that they 'look good'.

Taking the step to implement integration projects on a permanent basis would necessarily have wider structural and institutional implications. It seems possible to suggest that the reluctance to do so illustrates the great confidence Swedes have in their 'model' (discussed in chapter four and elsewhere). Also, it clearly illustrates the limits to how far Swedish society is willing to compromise and live up to the explicit aims endorsed by its policies towards migrants and minorities. Naser continues,

> 'I feel that you in Sweden are not prepared to change forms and the structure. You are stuck in the old People's Home idea, and don't understand that when things change, you also have to adapt. That's the problem. I was really happy when I read the other day that the scouts for once have done something in Rosengård, that they have started education for leaders, and said that you should be a bit less strict when it comes to religion and those things. That's what I mean, you have to accept new people, and the fact that there are people with different religion and a different view on life. And the fact is that organisations now have to start to adapt, change after new people, who have different needs. And then I'm not just talking about immigrants, I'm also talking about lots of Swedes, about young people, who have completely different needs from what you had only ten years ago'.

Asad's narrative features several examples of the static nature of the Swedish administrative system, and the difficulty of getting changes through. Throughout his time in Sweden, he has found that, contrary to the official stance of the national and/or local government, claiming it wishes to find ways of 'integrating' the migrant population into Swedish society, it remains sceptical, even resistant to unfamiliar and/or uncomfortable ways of working.

After his own experiences of a defective Swedish for Immigrants system – where 700 hours of attendance was required of everyone independently of people's knowledge and background, and where everyone were grouped together in classes, also without regards to differences, which meant in practice that highly educated people sat in the same classroom as illiterates, obviously affecting the level, quality and speed of the education – Asad decided to write a proposal about how to change the system. The idea behind the project he proposed was that people should learn the language through interests other than just the language; it was accepted, and some groups were arranged accordingly. The project went on for three years, and according to Asad, it worked very well. However, after those three years, the council set a demand for 65% success, meaning leading to employment or education, and when this could not be shown as required, the project was abandoned. The demand seems unreasonable considering the obstacles existing beyond language skills, discussed throughout the thesis.

An important part of the work Asad did in his employment for the metropolitan project, was the development of what was called 'Open Forum', a meeting between the population of Rosengård (through the network of migrant associations he had helped building during the project employment) and Malmö's politicians, where future proposals for the area could be discussed before decisions were made. In that way the decisions would be better informed[59]. Differences between politicians' and the populations' views on

[59] By recounting the event I do not mean to uncritically support it; although Asad was reluctant to discuss any possible problems relating to the idea of the Open Forum, there are obviously issues relating to 'representation'; who speaks and who is silenced in such meetings, depending on intra as well as inter-group relations of power (see the discussion of multiculturalism in chapters one and two).

things were discussed, whereby proposals could be re-written and improved to better suit the people they concerned. No decisions were made at the meeting – its role was only advisory. The enthusiasm for 'Open Forum' decreased rapidly. The re-writing of proposals took time and effort, which was partly the reason why it became unpopular amongst the politicians. Furthermore, Asad believes that the other reason was their fear of the forum – a so far unfamiliar form of political debate and work. Also, the fact that the council refused to set dates for future meetings made it difficult for everyone involved to keep up work and enthusiasm.

Whatever the reasons were, the forum quickly disappeared in practice. When Asad turned to the organisers to ask what had gone wrong, he got the reply 'we can't have two local governments'. When he replied in turn that it was not about making decisions, but the idea was to mobilise debate, and to get more people involved in politics (hence improve democracy), he was told to 'join a political party'.

It seems possible to suggest that this (project) structure relates to an unwillingness to change the entire system and established ways of working. As Lena puts it,

> 'Ultimately, it is a matter of the public administration not prioritising it so high that they have put permanent money aside for it. Because if it is prioritised highly enough, then you could actually start to think about – well this is better than what we are already doing, so let us change it. But generally, you don't do this, but instead you want the old, and also the new … like an extra addition onto the old … working to change is the most difficult thing we have'.

While virtually all of my interviewees working with issues around 'integration' agree that the gap between theory and practice is a problem, they give very different accounts of the reason for that gap. While most people agree that it takes time before documents in Jakub's words 'trickle down' to everyday reality, some argue that the politicians could put more pressure on reality to

conform to existing documents. Anita emphasises the importance of power in the struggle against everyday racism. The organisation she works for has been repeatedly dismissed and/or belittled by people who brand them 'underground', something that need not be taken seriously; she puts this down largely to a lack of recognition by the 'power apparatus'. Sharing personal as well as other people's experiences, she says, 'these people out here that spit on my children, the tittle-tattle – I'm not talking about someone who has escaped a mental institution, I'm talking about forty, fifty years old normally gifted women who have a nice flat – they wouldn't dare, because the crucial signals "we will not tolerate this", it comes from above'. In other words, she argues that the reason why theory is not translated into practice is because the people behind the theory are not serious enough about making that translation. In the interview, she repeatedly comes back to her frustration about what is said and (not) done within 'the corridors of power'. Furthermore, Anita emphasises the fleeting terms used as indicative also of their actual potential for social change. Somewhat cynically she says,

> 'In Sweden it like this: you get hold of some formulation, and then it dances around in all corridors of power ... for some time it's been "dialogue", now it's "co-operation" with capital c ... or "cultural competence", which was fantastic – just like "love", everyone talks about it, but no one really knew what it meant...'

7.3 Un-Swedish trends?

The above discussion has been largely centred around recent developments. However, when questioning recent trends we need to be careful not to idealise the past. If the Swedish authorities manage today to embrace 'diversity' and simultaneously implement restrictive policies that function to limit that diversity, what is to say that things have been different in earlier times?

Mireille Rosello (2001) argues that a central feature of the discourse of hospitality is the fact that it often masks the fact that the reason for 'inviting'

migrants had nothing to do with being kind and/or generous; that is, it obscures all other reasons for the invitation along with the self-interests of the 'host'. Ålund and Schierup (1991) argue this in their critique of the Swedish self-image that emerges when the liberal refugee policies of the 60s and 70s are read as based only on feeling solidarity with people suffering and the wish for Sweden to solve the worlds problems (see chapter four). Contrary to this, the authors suggest that an important factor behind these liberal policies was to solve the issue of labour shortages. Killing two birds with one stone, the Swedish state managed hence to veil some actual background to its policies as well as to portray itself the epitome of solidarity and justice. As Rosello (2001: 168) points out, '(o)stentation and the desire to impress one's neighbors are also components of the hospitable contract'.

If 'hospitality' (commonly understood as 'generosity') forms one important aspect of how Sweden's has perceived its relation and approach to migrants, another it to be found in the notion of 'tolerance', generally as equally positively described. As van Dijk (1993) emphasises, conceiving and portraying oneself as 'tolerant' is an important strategy for denying the possibility of being racist. In her accounts of the specificities of Dutch racism, Essed (1991) challenges the positive connotations around the discourse of 'tolerance', and points towards the actual relations between 'host' and 'migrant' it assumes, equally unequal to Rosello's version of the 'hospitality' contract. Emphasising those relations as well as the denial of these assumed by positive evaluations of 'tolerance', Essed argues that '(t)he control element of tolerance is the most pervasive but least understood hidden point on the multicultural agenda' (210; see also chapter two).

This brings Essed to the conclusion that '(t)olerance is not contradictory to racism. It is in the Dutch imagination that one excludes the other' (ibid 291). This point is important to note in relation to Westin's (2000) 'surprise' at the 'tolerant attitude' displayed by Swedish people at a point when the climate and policies were hardening. It is also worth re-stating here that the 1975 policy was established at a time when the Swedish state could afford to be generous with giving rights to 'cultural differences', as the likelihood of great compromises

having to be made on the Swedish side were minimal. Hence later changes of that policy with regards to the entry of the 'culturally alien' (Pred 2000) could perhaps also be regarded less as changes per se and more as a case of the Swedish government having to own up to the reality of its 'multicultural' agenda (Westin 2000: 63).

Furthermore, Ålund and Schierup (1991, 1993) emphasise the 'critical disjunctures' between the theory and practice of Swedish multiculturalism. A central 'paradox' of multiculturalism according to Ålund and Schierup lies in the fact that the principle of 'freedom of choice' has always to some extent been undercut by an overwhelming 'Swedishization' process. The migrant association is a potent example: as discussed in chapter one, the association was meant to have two central functions: promoting and sustaining cultural difference on the one hand, and acting as a route towards political participation on the other. Importantly, the route towards political participation was proposed to be achieved not only through representation, but also socialisations into the Swedish 'democratic' sphere; and indeed funding (the main control vehicle) was dependent on conforming to certain (Swedish) rules and principles (Borevi 2002, 2004). Assessing Ålund and Schierup's argument over ten years later, Pontus Odmalm (2004: 114) concludes that the Swedishization process is still overwhelming. He writes,

> 'emphasis is put on becoming familiar with Swedish norms, values and the Swedish culture, which could be regarded as an interesting paradox that the Swedish multicultural politics has caused … in other words, associations may exercise their cultural specificity as long as this is done in a "Swedish" way.'

Considering the central role granted to migrant associations in the Swedish 'integration' policy through its different stages, it seems important to include in this discussion the views and experiences my interviewees have of associations. This is the topic of the next and final section of the chapter.

7.4 Migrant associations – what they do and do not do

Although the idea of what migrant associations should be doing has shifted gradually during the last two decades (from culture to integration, as reflected in funding practices), associational life is still granted a place at the heart of the Swedish approach to migrants and minority groups. Malmö's own Integration plan (1999) states that,

> 'Immigrant associations/cultural associations have a meaningful social function, and act as a meeting place where the own language and culture is kept alive. They can transmit information about the Swedish society and hence function as a bridge' (my translation).

As suggested in chapter one, the political role of the associations have been toned down (Borevi 2004), and in fact not many of my interviewees have commented explicitly on the association's political function. A notable exception however is Naser, who specifically attacks the idea of 'ethnic' representation. He points towards immense diversity within the Bosnian community, and says 'they're not at all representatives. If you look at how many people are in a Bosnian association – I don't think a fifth of the Bosnians can represent all of them' (see chapters one and two for discussion about internal diversity and relations of power, importantly Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992). After giving his critique of the idea of representation, Naser goes on to suggest that migrant associations lead to isolation rather than integration by promoting 'longing for the home country'. He says,

> 'I don't like those things, I think it's the worst mistake you've made here in Sweden when it comes to immigrants and integration into society. By promoting such associations you have done the opposite, you have done so that people close themselves in amongst their own. It's not the case that people really use their culture to enrich themselves, and get into Swedish society, but almost the opposite. You make the longing for the home country into such a lifestyle that you almost build up and 'us-and-them' relation … that our immigrant associations are interesting for society, you gladly show them up on the Malmö festival through different kinds of food

> and dance and so on. That's ok, but it should be a part of it, not the whole thing. And that's the problem. So I'm all for associational life, but not that it should be Bosnians only doing Bosnian culture. So I'm not in any associations.'

Talking of 'Bosnians only doing Bosnian culture', Naser emphasises that a result of migrant associations is a form of production of difference; his argument is particularly apparent at the point where he talks about 'gladly show(ing) them up on Malmö festival' as a from of evidence of society embracing diversity (see e.g. Anthias 2002b: 279-80 for a discussion of the difference between liberal and critical multiculturalism). Furthermore, apart from the production of difference and something of an exotification process, in this statement Naser points towards processes of isolation and segregation; the building of walls between different 'ethnic' groups in society (Ålund and Schierup 1991, Gilroy 1987). Another person critical of immigrant associations is Nina.

> 'I have never been in an immigrant association. I don't want to take part in or support an association where not everyone is welcome. If I could, I would close down all 'immigrant associations'. I think they lead to segregation. Segregation is a massive problem, and I think these associations are a part of that problem ... We see loads of isolated groups of people, even areas. I mean, now it starts to become cities within the city, Malmö is a very segregated city. And that's not at all strange, this is what we could expect. After all the possibilities people have got here. So of course everyone has taken advantage and closed themselves in. ... Sweden has given possibilities. And people have abused it in their own ways.'

Saying that migrants have abused the system to 'close themselves in', Nina seems to suggest that migrants have worked towards divisions themselves, which she emphasises further through speaking of majority society only in terms of the 'possibilities' it has given to migrants (see the discussion of the culturalisation of social structures above as well as in chapters one and two; Geddes 2003; Soininen 1999). Furthermore, moving from associations particularly to segregation in general without relocating the focus from migrants

to the structures of society, she implicitly buys into the common idea that segregation is caused by migrants' own wish to keep within the own. There is an implicit paradox in Nina's narrative: while she supports the argument that migrants' wish to keep to themselves is the problem, she is herself an excellent example of the fact that this is a generalisation; as we see from the above quote, she herself does not want to engage with the Bosnian associations. Naser continues on this note, to challenge the general assumption that migrants in fact wish to get involved with their fellow countrymen or co-ethnics. He says,

> 'There are quite a few people from my town who live in this area ... and I don't socialise with them, not because I don't like them, but because I didn't socialise with them in my town, so why should I socialise with them here? Just because they're from my town? For me, if someone should be my friend, lots of requirements need to be filled. Not that I put demands on people, not like that, but I want to have a good relationship with my friends, when you don't have to think about what you can and can't say, but it should simply work well between two people generally. Most people I socialise with, I have met here. You have to say that there are great differences – social and cultural differences – between people who came as refugees and those who came here under 50-60-70s as labour migrants. We don't have the same interests, and not the same cultural patterns either.'

Apart from generally challenging the idea of the wish to bond with one's 'own', Naser also emphasises the fact that there are great differences within the community generally regarded as a single 'Bosnian' group. Aida also criticises the idea that migrants want to keep to themselves by saying,

> 'That's an unexplored statement that we immigrants only want to be together with our fellow countrymen. That's also different, we are individuals. That question you ask me about what friends and so on – we are strong individualists, cosmopolitans and people of the world. So we aren't easily dragged in by group pressure – for me it doesn't make any difference. We had people from our country in the same area where we lived for four, five years. But more than 'hello' I haven't talked to them. And they have not taken any initiatives either ... But it's different

> experiences, some people and some cultures may perhaps be more pulled together, and sometimes this can be because of experiencing difficulties. And it's not negative to help each other, that's not what I'm saying either...'

What Aida says here about 'experiencing difficulties' seems significant when I listen to other people's stories about associations. Zlatko, who works a lot with Bosnian associations, points towards a negative trend in membership and activity in recent years. He says,

> 'The period between 1994 to 1998 Bosnians were very, very interested in organizational activities, and they wanted to join, they wanted to take part, they wanted to try and represent their own people in the best way possible. But that was also during that period when most people from Bosnia were unemployed, and you have to keep that in mind. And the more Bosnians got into employment, the less interest they had in organizational activities. So that's also a normal process, and now they are well integrated...'

Zlatko here emphasises that high levels of organizational activity might not always indicate simply a preference for intra-ethnic bonding, but could also reflect the need for a resort when other options are closed down. The need for migrants to seek company and support within their own national or ethnic group as a result of exclusion from majority society is emphasised strongly in Selma's narrative. Although she is equally disinterested in engaging with other Bosnians, or at least has no particular preference for doing so, emphasising the fact that their sharing 'ethnicity' says little about what else they share, she nevertheless points out that the 'ethnic' networks that have developed have for many people become a vital life line. She says, 'and then after SFI there is nothing, no jobs... and then people get stuck in that situation, and get stuck in their networks. But that's also important, about that network, people survive through it...'

The general social function fulfilled by associations is emphasised by many interviewees, for example Emir, who emphasises that they are important for older people who do not have jobs and often do not speak the Swedish language.

However, this problem seems to some extent be shared also by people who do speak the language, and even have jobs, as well as Swedish colleagues. Keeping in mind the argument made in the previous chapter considering the details of the conditions under which migrants are 'included' into particular spaces in society, many of my interviewees seem to have found it rather difficult to make Swedish friends. Selma describes this as a great problem for her; she tells me that only very recently has she made a Swedish friend through her studies, and this relationship has enriched her life so much she now asks herself how she in fact coped all those years before. Selma relates this to a lack of openness and suspicion amongst Swedish people, which she compares with her time in Germany, where she found people more inclusive. This corresponds with Lange's (2000) findings, which show that people find it difficult to make Swedish friends.

Aida's statement about feelings of invisibility and how people are worried about asking things is also relevant here. Emir says that most of his friends are Bosnians and adds, 'with Swedes, apart from work, I don't have much contact. It's work, but not that we socialise. We meet, we cooperate…' Naser similarly says, 'if you ask do I socialise with Swedes, it's only in the workplace. And I have good relations with my neighbours. But I have no Swedes that are home-friends, I mean that come home and visit and so on.'

> 'I only socialise with Somalis. I don't have a Swedish friend … I do have Swedish colleagues, and I sometimes call, and I talk to them when we work, and so on. But friend, no … It just turned out like that. I haven't decided not to have any Swedish friends, and I haven't decided to just have Somali friends…' (Ghedi)

Ghedi seems happy at his workplace, and finds that he gets on with his colleagues, but nevertheless all of his social life outside of work includes only Somalis, which he emphasises here has not been a choice. In other words, the fact that he only has Somali friends seems to just have happened without any intention of living like that. However, he is reluctant to speak of this state of affairs on critical terms; this is discussed further in the following chapter.

The idea of migrant associations as 'bridges' between the minority group and majority society has also been strongly emphasised since the implementation of a multicultural policy (see chapter one) and retains its value still today (see the quote in the beginning of this section). They are regarded as crucial 'pools' for newcomers, the idea being that people who come to Sweden, not knowing the language or the system, can benefit from the knowledge and contacts held by fellow country men that have already been in the country for some time.

In a paper assessing the idea of Refugee Community Organisations (RCOs) as pools of social capital, Zetter, Griffiths and Sigona (2004) however criticise 'romantic' accounts of ethnic or communal social capital (notably Putnam 1995, 2000), suggesting rather that 'the formation of social capital in refugee communities is a product of crisis and social breakdown' (Zetter et al., 2004: 9). They emphasise the need to consider the wider social framework when looking at ethnic organisations, and importantly stigmatisation of different groups of migrants and/or blocked access to equal rights in various parts of society. Authors argue that when contextualising RCOs, we see that they function largely in a defensive mode (see also Zetter and Pearl 2000). Judging from the above accounts from my interviews in Malmö, Sweden, it seems possible to suggest a similar structure to the roles of migrant associations there.

Importantly Zetter and Pearl (2000) emphasise the fact that different minorities have different resources and are to various degrees linked to majority society, and in the report about social capital, Zetter et al. (2004) suggest important differences between established organisations and those more recently formed. In Britain the Somalis are regarded as a well-established refugee group; contrary to Sweden, where virtually the entire Somali population has arrived during the past ten or fifteen years, in Britain Somalis have gradually arrived in the last fifty years, whereby the community has been established during a longer time-span (ibid 2). It seems likely hence that the Somali community in Britain is more established and therefore better equipped to help and support newcomers.

Evidence shows that Somalis in Sweden are also very active in associational life (Integrationsverket 1999). There is a large number of Somali associations currently existing in Malmö; this is normally understood in Swedish dominant discourse as a 'clan thing'; however reducing internal differences to 'clans' seems reductive, particularly since many organisations are also divided by gender; hence internal relations of power and different interests seem to play an important role.

> 'I think associational life makes a very big difference. The newly arrived who have difficulties with the language etc, they have help from their fellow countrymen with loads of different things ... That's very important. Then the social aspect – also very important. Bosnians are very good at helping their countrymen. Somalis also. What I think is a shame with Somalis, is that they build such walls, that they live on their own ... don't let anyone in ... they have their own cultures, I can understand, but I think it is a shame. And it makes even more of a difference here, because they differ even more from Swedes...' (Bengt)

Bengt, who works with support and funding for associations expressed the difficulty of 'reaching' the Somalis, and importantly discussed attempts at convincing them to unite as a group (this is notable considering it is no longer correct in this context to regard associations on 'ethnic' terms). He says their approach to convince the Somalis has been to say, 'if you are many you are strong'. However, authorities have been met with little enthusiasm from the various Somali associations; although this is not explored by Bengt, it is possible that a reason for this is a reluctance to become controlled (Zetter et al. 2004). Furthermore, a general suspicion amongst the Somalis must be related to the stigmatisation from which they suffer. This is equally ignored by Bengt, who seems to suggest that Somalis have produced their own exclusion; in his discourse, it is 'them', not 'we' that 'build such walls'.

Chapter eight. Speaking of racism… or not

In this final chapter, I explore in greater detail the differences in how people understand and narrate their experiences. Looking back at some of the discourses I have discussed in previous chapters as central to understanding how racism in Swedish society operates, I want now to examine the influence of those discourses on migrants' own narratives, and furthermore, discuss how these play a part in their evaluation of themselves and their positions.

In the first section, entitled 'expectations and experiences', I discuss firstly how people draw upon cultural difference and similarity to form a claim for belonging (Bosnians expecting equal treatment). Secondly, I consider how familiarity with the dominant narrative of Sweden has impacted upon (high) expectations amongst migrants generally. Finally, I explore differences in the extent to which people buy into the 'hospitality contract' previously outlined; that is, whether or not they accept the idea of being a 'guest' in terms of being grateful and accepting the 'host's' conditions (Rosello 2001).

In the second section I explore different reasons for why people keep quiet about racism. I begin by discussing how opposition is managed through trivialisation and individualisation of problems as well as the strategy of employing what my key informant interviewee Jakub calls 'the blackskull on call', acting as an alibi (Spivak 1990); I then move on to issues around shame and other reasons why some people suffering from racism may wish to deny it.

This takes us onto the question of the extent to which migrants buy into dominant definitions of racism and discrimination, as well as the extent to which they internalise a 'problem' image of migrants or (particularly certain) minority groups. The reproduction of dominant discourses on racism and 'integration' is the topic of section three, which ends with the narrative of Bosnian woman Nina, which is set almost entirely within the recent popular discourse about 'integration' that followed the debates surrounding the 2002 General Election.

Finally, I discuss the subtle nature of (some) racist processes in Swedish society, and more specifically address the consequences this has in terms of expectations; I construct an argument around the ability of acquiring knowledge of racism, and how and why this can be an important way for people to manage their experiences.

8.1 Expectations and experiences

As I argued in my methodological chapter, understanding expectations are crucial when analysing people's accounts of society, and perhaps particularly concerning the presence or absence of critical dimensions. In understanding the overall difference between Somalis and Bosnians when it comes to their criticisms and likelihood of picking up on issues around racism, the issue of expectations is central. Speaking directly of expectations, a number of my Bosnian interviewees (all male) have emphasised cultural similarities between Swedes and Bosnians – all Europeans, white, all affected by global cultural processes, and also sharing histories of socialism and communalism, as well as more recent tendencies away from these – that meant they expected to be treated as equals. However, contrary to their expectations, they found that Swedish society did not at all welcome them as equals. This negative surprise I would argue to some extent accounts for a higher level of critique in their stories. Expected to be treated on equal footing with the majority population naturally makes you react more strongly when realising that you are in fact not (see also Möller and Togeby 1999).

Another issue forming expectations is different levels of knowledge about Sweden. Knowing things about where you are going, or where you end up, necessarily brings with it expectations of what life there will be like. As personal experience was absent (none of my interviewees had been to Sweden before migrating) and inter-personal experience very limited (Naser and Bilal are the only two of my interviewees who had personal links to Sweden and knew people who had migrated to the country before), it seems that most knowledge of Sweden has been transmitted more or less via official channels.

Knowledge about Sweden pre-migration has varied substantially between my interviewees. Some knew nothing or very little, whereas others knew a lot about the country's history and politics. Generally the Bosnians I have interviewed knew more about Sweden than the Somalis, but there were ill-informed and well-informed migrants in both groups. Listing what they knew ranged from its geographical location and weather conditions (of which many from both countries were worried), to Social Democracy, social security, Olof Palme, and international images of Swedish neutrality and solidarity. Those interviewees that had more extensive knowledge of Swedish history and society seem to have been rather hopeful at arrival, and often say that they had expected a lot from what they knew about the country. The apparent absence of conflict, both internally and externally, the fact that Sweden had generous both refugee and foreign aid policies, the 'best in the world' welfare state and social security system outlined in earlier chapters, all contributed to people's expectations. In other words, many migrants seem to have bought into the positive image that Sweden has been concerned to uphold both domestically and internationally, as discussed at length in chapter four and to some extent also chapter five. The official information sources explain this.

Yet another way of comparing the discourses through which narratives are shaped has to do with (differences in) the extent to which people buy into the 'hospitality contract', and importantly the degree to which they accept being positioned as the 'guest' who is supposed to be grateful to the 'host' for inviting them, and furthermore accept the behavioural expectations set exclusively by the latter (as mentioned earlier the seemingly underlying logic being that they are after all better of 'here' than they would be 'there'). Looking at my interviews overall, I would suggest that the Somalis have generally displayed a much more 'grateful' attitude to Swedish society, and tend to marginalise and/or keep silent about inequalities; while the Bosnians, as argued above, often expecting to be treated on equal footing with the majority population, are much more critical of the idea of 'hospitality' and the idea that they should be grateful as well as keep silent when the 'host' treats them unfairly or behaves badly.

> 'Yes, well, generally, it was good, you can't really complain... It was, they haven't thrown us into prison or anything, you know, you have the war... But then I also think they haven't given us all the possibilities that we have...' (Emir)

There is a temporal issue related to the idea of 'hosts' and 'guests', namely the question of how long it takes to move out of the 'guest's' position and become regarded as part of the 'host's' collective (Rosello 2001). (Implicit) views on this also differ between interviewees. While some seem to have retained the 'grateful' position produced for them in and through the 'hospitality contract', others have turned against this contract with time, both as experiences have changed their initial image and attitude, and as they have gradually expected to move into normal life, which in itself brings with it expectations. I would like to recount two specific stories concerning the issue of expectation contra experiences: one, that of Bosnian woman Selma, and two, that of Somali man Asad.

Selma seems to have had a rather positive image of Sweden before she came to the country. She is committed to left wing political ideas, and liked what she knew about the Swedish welfare system, and also says she appreciated Sweden's international work. However, after several years of struggling to find a place in Sweden, and going through difficulties with the labour market as well as public authorities, she says she has had to re-evaluate her image of the country, a process she found difficult to undertake and accept. She says, 'and that humanism, that solidarity, that human rights, all this you say, but it's just a lie. And I really thought, and I can say that I'm an idealist, and I really believed in it, maybe for three years, before I had to change...'

Asking Asad what he knew about Sweden before moving, he tells me stories about Olof Palme, Sweden's role in the UN, the country's neutrality, and a loyal stance towards people suffering throughout the world. However, like Selma, his own personal experiences of Sweden, as well as those of friends and acquaintances, have changed his image of the country substantially. Now, he no

longer wants to stay in Sweden, but plans to move back to Somalia as soon as possible.

While the 'good migrant' Fikrie, whose story was recounted in chapter six (Sydsvenskan 12 Aug 2003), happily accepted as a 'fact' that migration has meant that she can no longer have the luxury of choices and preferences, my interviewee Aida is less inclined to buy into this idea. As mentioned earlier, Aida used to work as a financial advisor, and in her narrative, she expresses great critique of Swedish society for not valuing and taking advantage of the competencies she has acquired from her previous work. She found it very difficult to get any employment at all, and then she was finally offered a job as a cleaner. She talks about the derogatory feeling she got from this proposal.

> 'And then I was offered a job cleaning at the tax office and at the police office for a month ... But I find it beneath contempt, that I should get a job like that. I found that very difficult to process ... Sure, someone maybe said that it's a good merit, and that it's a great confidence you get, working for the police, with secret documents and so on[60]. But I still found it too low for my competence.'

Following her experiences, Aida decided not to accept such subordinate positions, but instead did things the hard way, and basically started from scratch to finally get a job she would be happy with. Her story of this was recounted in chapter five in relation to underlying assumptions about superiority and inferiority, forcing people to go through a Swedishization process to get ahead in society.

8.2 Keeping quiet about racism

As discussed in chapter six, it seems that a 'good migrant' amongst other things is one who does not complain about being treated badly and/or as inferior.

[60] It is worth noting the patronising tone of the suggestion that she was trusted with 'great confidence' to move in (Swedish) spaces with 'secret documents'.

Going back to Essed's (1991) discussion of the multiple ways in which everyday practices function to reproduce racism's 'basic agenda' (structural inequality), she emphasises the importance of a racist society to manage opposition. This is the third 'area of conflict' she speaks of in her model of everyday racism: 'ideological conflict over perspectives' or 'definitions of social reality' (1991: 187, 185). Essed suggests that at times when 'the dominated contest dominant definitions of structural and cultural power relations in society' (ibid 270), the dominant group resorts to ways of resisting that contestation.

Apart from being perceived as 'biased' and/or 'over-sensitive', migrants who contest racism are also frequently accused of blaming all their problems on other people and abusing the term racism. In other words, responses to those that contest racist structures more or less displace the problem onto the contesters themselves: they de-politicize opposition and 'question … (not only) the perspectives … (but also the) personalities of opponents of racism'. Talk of racism moves from being a concern for society as a whole to becoming more or less a personality trait of those who insist on its existence. Essed writes, 'tolerance of racism is legitimized by discrediting and *pathologizing* those who problematize racism'. Ultimately, she suggests, this 'ideological marginalization' or the 'failure to understand the world from the point of view of Blacks … symbolizes indifference to oppression' (ibid 271).

My key informant Jakub, who works against discrimination, describes how trivialisations and pathologizing are common strategies used by people or institutions accused of discrimination. He says that when people go and see their union representatives to try and find help, they often experience even further violation, mainly through a continuing questioning of the validity of their stories. People that have tried to report discrimination in that way he says often get replies such as 'maybe there's something wrong with you', 'surely it wasn't that serious', or 'well, we actually have freedom of speech in this

country'[61]. Both Jakub and his colleague Anita suggest that people who try to take ethnic discrimination seriously (like themselves) are continuously pushed to the margins, which is an important way in which opposition is managed. Another popular way in which institutions defend themselves, Jakub suggests, is by producing an alibi through recruiting a token migrant or minority ethnic person (Spivak 1990: 61-2). He calls these alibis 'blackskulls on call'[62].

> 'When you let someone in with a clear mission – to justify the majority's world, and at the same time act as a gatekeeper to everyone else ... it is often on such conditions that adaptable and harmless individuals are allowed to come in, and the greatest sin they can commit is to promote a different way of thinking about the area of integration – if so, they are pushed out, and the queue is long, so you can always pick out someone else who can do the job better, someone else who can legitimise that structural exclusion ... "but what do you mean? We have one of them here!"'

Interestingly, the head councillor in Malmö, Illmar Reepalu, who recently put forward the five-year-stop proposal discussed in chapter six, was himself used as a form of 'blackskull on call' as defence of the proposal. The local newspaper Sydsvenskan stated, 'to accuse Reepalu of racism is ludicrous. He himself came to Sweden from Estonia as a refugee child' (Sydsvenskan 15 Jan 2004).

According to Jakub, the fact that it is so difficult to 'get in' and find work above a cleaner or pot washer level[63] means that migrants are most of the time ready to adapt to whatever the employer expects them to adapt to. He suggests that

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[61] It is worth noting the fact that anti-discrimination legislation seems toothless. As Knocke (2000: 373) writes, '(a) scrutiny of 157 complaints of discrimination in working life, reported to the Ombudsman against Disrimination (DO) over a two-year period, shows that not a single complaint has led to legal action'.

[62] 'Blackskull', in Swedish 'svartskalle', is a common derogatory term used to denote an 'other' (black) person. However, the term has in more recent years been appropriated within minority communities to refer to themselves; by doing so, they construct an oppositional identity for themselves, based on the experience of racism.

[63] Jakub, who has a law degree from his country of origin, has himself worked as a pot washer in the local hospital in Malmö before he decided to take Aida's route and 'start from scratch'.

failing to do so means running a great risk of being not only marginalised at work, but ultimately replaced.

When I went to interview Jakub and Anita (NGO workers), I had hoped to get more to grips with which groups suffer from racism and discrimination. Finding out about who turns to them for help, I expected to find some 'ethnic' patterns to the issues at stake. However, it turned out to be very difficult to read such patterns out of the cases they have worked with. Just as with my own interviews with migrants about their lives and views, it seems there is a stark difference between experiences per se and people's feelings and evaluations of these; in this case, with the added step to actually reporting it.

> 'The people who come to us, they are not common people. It's still not common and normal to report discrimination. First of all, not many people know they can, and secondly, it requires a lot. So the people that come to us, they are superhuman, incredibly resourceful ... and most of the time extremely violated. And they usually come here as the last resort, they have not received any help anywhere else they have right to. Not from their employer ... and most of the time, they experience in front of our eyes an enormous transformation. Because, perhaps for the first time in this country, first of all we listen to their stories, and second we don't question their experiences, their stories, their violation, and we don't try to come up with excuses, but take them seriously ... And even though we make clear that the possibilities for redress are very limited, they still most of the time say "thank you for even trying, thank you for existing"...' (Jakub)

By describing discrimination as 'psychological rape', Jakub further emphasises the influence feelings of shame has, something that often makes people try and forget or hide their experiences away. Partly because it may be very traumatic to go through it all in detail once more, and partly because one is likely to feel embarrassed about what has happened, and also perhaps being reluctant to put oneself in a 'victim' position. Although the two interviewees hence do not want to draw any conclusions about degrees of racism from their work experience, Anita adds that readiness to accept certain forms of treatment does differ

between groups. For example, she says that 'people in the Western world have been more Jantelags raised than you have in other parts of the world'.

Jantelagen, or the law of Jante, was formulated by Danish author Axel Sandemose in his autobiographical book 'A refugee crosses his tracks', written in 1933. It is widely regarded as somewhat a summary of Scandinavian peoples' attitudes and life philosophies; and a guide to how you are meant to behave in Scandinavian societies. Jantelagen beings by saying that 'you shall not presume that you are someone special'; and continues to state that a person should never think that he/she is better than others, knows more than others, is good for anything, or that anyone cares about him/her. In other words, Jantelagen tells people not to make a fuss about themselves or anything else; you should accept what you are given, not complain, and if something bothers you, you brush it off your shoulders and get on with things. It seems likely indeed that the extent to which people have been brought up to not complain or make a fuss about things may influence the extent to which people go so far as to report experiences of discrimination. Furthermore, such an upbringing may also affect people's reactions to people that do complain, in this case 'Swedish' responses to migrants that have decided not to accept being treated as inferior or outsiders.

Another possible reason why people may deny their experiences of racism has to do with the wish to deny the existence of racism per se. While many migrants, like Asad and Selma, whose stories I recounted at the beginning of the chapter, say their positive image of Sweden has changed with experience, some seem reluctant to question that image, even though they may have experienced negative things. Marginalising the negative enables people to not only uphold that positive image, but also to maintain the imagination that they are – as the dominant story would have it – full and equal members of Swedish society. In other words, denying racism, or personal experiences of racism, could become a way of affirming belonging to majority society. Furthermore, admitting to the existence of a reality that to a greater or lesser extent excludes you from that society may for some be too difficult to process, whereby denials become something of a survival strategy. In an interview with one of the few policemen

with a 'foreign background'[64] in Malmö, I asked him about personal experiences of racism at work and elsewhere. He answers,

> 'You read a lot about this in the newspapers, this thing with some hidden racism ... (but) there were no tendencies at all, it was very good ... I have nothing to complain about, I'm very content ... you do have a certain jargon, it doesn't matter who it is ... but no one means anything by it, because if it would be, then I would have taken offence. We can joke between us. And we have another guy here with foreign background, and we call each other 'spaggar'[65] left right and centre, and joke. And of someone had come in here and heard it – but is this not racism? – but it's not like that. You still have, you try to make something funny of certain situations, and no one means anything by it.'

At the same time as he insists that whatever it sounds like, it's not racism, he also tells me stories from his past (before his career as a policeman), where for example the police used to stop him virtually every time he would drive around in his car, suspicious of people looking 'foreign' driving a fancy car, or the many times he crossed the border from Denmark to Sweden, when he would be stopped and searched. Asking him if this really did not make him angry or feel violated, and if he had no critical views of the Swedish police as a result, his answer is that 'sure, you were a bit like "oh no, not again", but I didn't care ... I mean, they do their job also, that's how you have to see it...'

8.3 Reproducing dominant definitions and understandings

Yet another reason why migrants could be hesitant to report has to do with buying into the limited 'common sense' definition of racism and discrimination. The uncertainty about what one is allowed to call 'racism' has repeatedly come up in my interviews with migrants. They might feel they have been unjustly

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[64] His parents came from former Yugoslavia as labour migrants in the seventies.

[65] 'Spaggar' a derogatory word used to speak derogatory of people who are seen as 'immigrants', 'non-Swedes', but who are relatively light-skinned, like southern Europeans or South Americans. It is slightly milder than 'blackskull'.

treated, but are unsure about whether or not they have the right to refer to their experiences as racism. Emir expressed this type of uncertainty when I ask him if he has ever felt discriminated against. He says,

> 'No, not discrimination, but you feel outside … but you know, I have experienced things, but it wasn't that bad anyway…'

We see here the common tendency to think that what was experienced maybe 'wasn't that bad', a tendency that can be related to feeling expected to 'brush things off' like everyone else seems to do. The issue of how to define racism repeatedly comes back in the narrative of Ghedi. However, while Emir more or less directly addresses the issue of definitional limits, Ghedi's does not address this issue as such. Instead, his narrative features a number of examples of definitional limits in action; that is, experiences that illustrate racist processes, but that he avoids naming as such.

Asked late in the interview directly about experiences of racism, Ghedi replies that while he has heard other people speaking about having experienced racism, he himself has very few experiences of it. The only thing he speaks of explicitly in terms of personal experiences of racism concerns the man next door to the Somali association's premises, discussed in chapter six. However, analysing his narrative, I find several hidden accounts of racism, both personal stories and stories about other people, that importantly Ghedi refuses to speak of in terms of 'racism'. The following quote is a case in point: here Ghedi talks about the Somali (men) that are active members of his association. He says,

> 'Most are unemployed … and there are those who work for example in care. There are those who drive taxis, several. Most people, you could say, that work (work as taxi drivers) … So they have different jobs. There are even highly educated people that come here, that have no job. So there are many types … most are unemployed actually. Most Somalis in Malmö are unemployed. But unfortunately, I can't do anything about that, it's difficult.'

While telling me that most Somalis in Malmö are unemployed and that some of those unemployed in fact are highly educated, he nevertheless fails to include a critical argument here; instead he chooses to simply say that it is unfortunate, but he 'can't do anything about it, it's difficult'[66]. In the following extract Ghedi describes his personal experiences from work. As mentioned earlier, he works as a nursing assistant in an old people's home; however, at the time of the interview, he is on sick leave because of back injuries.

> 'For example, where I work, we have three floors. And I started first at floor three, and worked there the whole time. And the people that worked there, I think they treated me like one of them. You can maybe feel that one or two don't like working with immigrants, or working with a non-Swede. But because most people liked me, they didn't want to say anything about, but you feel that they have conversations, for example when we have breakfast or coffee together. But I didn't feel that anything was against me. I heard some immigrants that complained at floor one or two. But because where I worked, I don't know, maybe half were Swedes and half were immigrants, and maybe you don't notice how they treat people. For example, where I worked, on floor three, half were immigrants. One was from Somalia, one from Bosnia, one from Poland, one from Rumania, or Iran, or Chile. Most immigrants there, on my floor, were from former Yugoslavia. On floor two, there were two Somalis, and Poles, they didn't have lots of Bosnians. Floor one, they had Bosnians and Albanians. When I started there were only three that had, I mean immigrants. But after we worked maybe a year, they left, the Swedish girls and boys who worked there. I don't know why, I never got an answer. But those who worked with me were young girls, so maybe they started studying … But we used to get new Swedish workers also, and most who worked when I started, they quit after a year, a year and a half. So those who came afterwards, I worked before them, so it was me who helped them when they started. When a new person starts, they have to work next to an ordinary staff the first week, or the first four days. And I helped most of them, so how can I notice how they are thinking about me, because I helped them and showed them everything, how you do things. So I can

[66] This may in fact be a case where the person interviewed is reluctant to share experiences of racism in Sweden because he thinks he could somehow offend me – being white and Swedish.

> actually say that I have, never that anyone said anything to me that didn't suit me. I can't remember. But one guy who comes from Gambia, he used to work with us in the summer, and he complained about two other Swedish girls who worked there. And I said to him 'what have they said to you?' And he didn't actually really say what they had said, but he didn't like how they treated him, or how they spoke to him.'

There are several points to be made about this story, concerning the gradual emptying of Swedish people in the workplace, Ghedi's emphasis on the lack of evidence for racism being the cause of anything taking place at work, and finally, internal power relations vis a vis experiences of racism. First of all, while Ghedi gave a few possible explanations to why the Swedish people he used to work with might have left – maybe they got a better job, maybe they started studying – there still seems to be a clear divisive process at work, which I find important to pick up on. The fact that all Swedes have left, meaning that his only colleagues were subsequently 'non-Swedes' gives a good example of ethnic segregation in the workplace, or even a so-called 'white flight'.

Second, while Ghedi is reluctant to speak of racism in his workplace, he also acknowledges that a Gambian colleague of his had complained about racism. However, he straight away goes on to question this colleague, because he could not actually prove what had happened: he could not say exactly what these girls had done to make him feel badly treated, hence Ghedi seems yet again likely to disregard this as 'evidence' of racism. Thirdly, as Ghedi explicitly emphasises, the fact that he might not have noticed racist sentiment in the workplace could be because of his position there. Having trained several of the Swedish employees puts him in a somewhat superior position in relation to them, and this could indeed mean that they would be less likely to express hostility towards him. Power relations at the workplace are likely to have an affect on how people are treated: whether or not people are shown respect, treated as 'one of them', and so on. However, it is important to note that there are two possible reasons for Ghedi's lack of personal experience of hostility in the workplace: one, he might not be the object of racism; two, he might not be in the position to notice racism. As Ghedi himself later suggests, while perhaps people think

certain things about him, they may be reluctant to show it to him because of these internal power relations.

Selma's narrative makes a direct reference to the role of position within the workplace when she discusses her experiences of racism. She recalls noting a stark difference between her summer-job as a cleaner and her work placement in an office after the summer. When she was cleaning hardly anyone said hello to her at work, or even seemed to acknowledge her existence. However, when only days later she stepped into one of the public administration offices to begin the work practice required for the completion of her degree, she was met in a completely different way. She concludes from this experience that symbols of status and authority (i.e. symbols of class) influence the degree of racism from which you suffer[67].

Having moved on from the issue of definitions per se, I would now like to discuss some ways in which interviewees have bought into some dominant discourses about the reasons for racism and social exclusion. Several of my interviewees have in their narratives to an extent excused racist behaviour through emphasising the problems caused by migrants, with reference to particular groups or individuals, and their attitudes and behaviours. This has been either concerning criminal behaviours (the most common accusation) or simply people not making an effort, not bringing anything to society, only living off the Swedish state, etc. After acknowledging 'bad' migrants, the interviewee in question then goes on to distances him/herself from them. The 'bad migrant' arguments resemble those used in racist discourse, as discussed earlier, and it could possibly be argued that the fact that they come up in these interviews points towards the common sense status some of those arguments have achieved.

Michelle Lamont et al. (2002) bring up this issue in an article about how North Africans in France analyse the phenomenon of racism. Pointing towards their interview findings, the authors suggest that the theories and arguments used in

[67] This is not to say that Selma's experiences in the office were only positive; the emphasis on subtle racisms runs through her entire narrative.

most (Western) anti-racist struggles are by no means prevalent in stories of racism told by the people that suffer from it. Rather than appealing to principles and discourses of equality of all humans, they employ a series of other strategies to explain and discuss racism. The most interesting aspect of these analyses for my purposes concerns accounts that blame racism on 'bad' migrants who misrepresent their community through their behaviour. Rather than denying or excusing 'badly behaved' people from their own communities, or 'bad migrants' in general, these people acknowledge that such people and behaviour exists, after which they move on to distance themselves from them, and emphasise the goodness of the self.

A particularly good example of the appeal to this discourse comes out of the story of Bilal, a young Somali man who seems to think that his future is largely determined by the company he keeps. After telling me about his long list of ambitions and plans for the future, he goes on to emphasise that keeping a distance from youngsters that are up to no good is crucial for enabling him to reach his goals in life. For a series of reasons to do with gratefulness and expectations, issues around racism or discrimination are absent from Bilal's narrative. Reluctant to blame Swedish society for problems or obstacles in his past or future in the country, he seems convinced that whatever happens is down to himself, and more specifically, who he surrounds himself with. The absence of an explanatory model that points towards society rather than individuals means there is a risk of this young man internalising whatever problems he may encounter in the future concerning the racist structures and processes described by other migrants who refuse to blame themselves for their exclusion (Fanon 1967).

Nina similarly reproduces a discourse of 'bad people', and in this case she directly points towards people of her own 'ethnic' group (Bosnians), whom she finds do not make enough effort to 'integrate themselves'. Interestingly, Nina's narrative very much echoes the debate on integration that took place before the

General Election a few months before I interviewed her[68]. Her discourse on the importance of learning the Swedish language is a case in point. She says,

> 'I was always after the language. The language for me was something that I just had to learn. Without the language I could not get anywhere. So that was the key for me, something I have to start with and proceed from. I have to know the language if I am to go into society. And that's something negative today – that immigrants don't invest as much into the language as they should.'

Her identification of cause and effects here very much resembles the defence put forward by the Liberal party for their proposal for language tests for migrants applying for citizenship: the language is the key to integration, and the problem of social exclusion today simply has to do with them not making the effort to learn the language. This discourse makes migrants responsible for their exclusion, and fails to identify obstacles elsewhere accordingly (Ålund and Schierup 1991; Geddes 2003; see chapters one and seven). Asked about experiences of obstacles on her way to becoming 'integrated', Nina replies,

> 'No, there were no obstacles at all. I think our handling officers at the jobcentre were the happiest, when we came and told them, that's enough, now we've found jobs. They could only congratulate. There were no obstacles at all. So there's no one that can tell me today that no, I can't find a job, I can't get a job, I'm black, or I wear a veil. It's up to everyone themselves.'

She adds to this that she is aware of having made efforts to get on with people and not end up in confrontational situations, and furthermore, she is very critical of people that approach public authorities with a critical and demanding attitude. She continues,

> 'No, never. I have never had a problem when it comes to this. And I'm very happy about that. But also I know deep inside that I haven't done

[68] I should point out that Nina has recently become a rather public figure, and seems rather used to being interviewed.

> anything to be suspicious or to feel bullied, or harassed because of my appearance or anything. I mean, I have worked on this myself. Only like when you come into the jobcentre, how you greet people. If you come in and are angry and start shouting 'what do you mean, work practice or course', my god, try to talk. Otherwise you won't be welcome anywhere.'

Again, she somewhat suggests that it is bad behaviour on the part of the migrant that produces hostility from the Swedish institutions: to her 'of course' if you do not behave properly 'you won't be welcome anywhere'. Nina levels a final criticism at people complaining about being referred by the Swedish authorities, about being sent to various courses and job introductions and never getting into a normal employment and a normal life; she says,

> 'Oh yes, you are referred. Oh my god, there's so much rubbish also today, people say 'they just send me from course to course, work practice to work practice' – but my god, pull yourself together! I mean, if you don't want to, if you have anything else going for you. If you want to do something else, no one tells you that you have to ... What annoys me is that grown ups are sometimes worse than children. What do you mean the send you from course to course, are you not an adult? Can you not think for yourself? What is it you want, what are you making yourself do? If there is something I have learned in Sweden, it's this: that you don't have to do anything. It's just strong will. If you want, if you have energy, there are no problems at all. But no one has said 'you have to'.'

8.4 Knowledge of racism, and being equipped to deal with it

Several of my interviewees have expressed concerns for their children or the younger generation of immigrants generally; and discussing the future of their children, interviewees often come back to the issue of expectations. Asad says he is very worried about the younger generation of Somalis currently growing up in Sweden. In fact, this concern makes him slightly ambivalent about his wish to leave Sweden and go back to Somalia. He believes that being hopeful about their futures in Sweden, young Somalis will need the support of their

community in order to deal with the possibility of that future not panning out the way they hope. Either being born or at least mainly growing up in Sweden, he says that these youngsters have come to see themselves as part of Sweden far more so than the older generation, while at the same time Sweden continues to regard and treat them as outsiders. In other words, he says that young Somalis are growing up with something of a false image of Swedish society. Finding out about the actual structures of that society later in life, when applying for jobs or trying to get a flat outside areas such as Rosengård, he thinks they will be less prepared for dealing with feelings surrounding exclusion than he was. Leyla makes a similar point when she says,

> 'I think about the future and for my children. They have Swedish, they are born here, but still you call them 'immigrant children' or 'with immigrant background' or something like that. So it becomes more difficult for them, I think. For me, I could accept that I'm an immigrant. But for them, no, they can't. Like once when my child who is ten years old, he played with a Swedish boy. So he asked 'where are you from?', and he answered 'I'm Swedish'. 'No, but I mean, where are you from?', and he said, 'I'm born in Sweden, I'm born in Lund, I'm Swedish'. He couldn't understand. So imagine, they are brought up here, and they are proud, and the whole time this question about that society doesn't accept them because they are black...'

Naser continues,

> 'I'm completely aware of the fact that I can never be Swedish, and that my children will never be Swedish. But they should live in a way that people do here ... The other day was midsummer, and my son wanted to buy flowers, and there's no question about it, he wanted the pole, and (Swedish) flags and everything. And that makes me happy, don't get me wrong, it's great. The only thing I ask for is that society should also accept him, as someone who wants to take a big part in Sweden. In the same way as me, ok, I can never melt in, because I'm a grown person and all that comes with that.'

High expectations for the future are indeed central to Bilal's story. Bilal is sixteen years old and came to Sweden in 2000. His sister had lived in Malmö for several years before he and his mother finally managed to leave Somalia. His sister is the only one of his eight siblings who is still alive, all others died at an early age. Bilal's father disappeared during the war, and he has not seen him or heard from him since. Most of his life, it has just been him and his mother, and they have always been struggling to make a living. Because of their financial situation he did not have the chance to go to school. At the time of the interview (September 2003), Bilal has still not got a Swedish resident permit. After his first claim he got a negative reply. After that, he went in hiding for nine or ten months, a terrible experience during which he completely lost perceptions of the world and even tried to commit suicide. After the woman in whose flat he was hiding found him asleep next to a box of sleeping tablets, she took him to the hospital, where he was admitted to the psychiatric ward for children and young people. After being there for four months, Bilal applied once more for asylum, which is what he is waiting for now. At the time of the interview he is living with his older sister and her family. When I meet him he has not seen his mother for some time. Her asylum application was also rejected, and she is now in hiding.

For the future, if he gets to stay in Sweden, he thinks he wants to work as a computer engineer, and maybe invent things. He seems hopeful about his residence permit. He says he thinks things will work out if you only have patience. But at the same time, he emphasises how important it is to be active, to fight, for example learn the language, and make an effort at school. He already speaks Swedish very well. Talking about his experiences in Sweden, Bilal is insistent that the country is a good place to be.

> 'I think there are really good people, that can help me and that, I haven't met anyone that was mean to me and that, nothing. I think everyone are nice in some way ... I feel that in Sweden that you are happy and that, if you have good friends, you have a good future. If you (are with) those who do bad things, the future disappears. You can end up in a completely different life. But I have my future here, if I'm allowed to stay, I think so. I

see my future already, even if I'm not adult yet, I try to shape my future. I feel it, I have my future here ... I said to myself when I came here, you have the chance now, you can go to school and learn more and more, you can't just go on with the little you know. You can learn more and more, I think I have a good life.'

As mentioned earlier, one of the ways in which Bilal emphasises how good Sweden is, is to compare it to his life in Somalia. He says,

'of course it's good for me, you know, I live here, and live in security and that, and no one hurts me and that ... it's good also when you have problems in your home country. If I didn't have so many problems there, then that would be good for me, that's my home country. But there, I'm scared that you should kill ... it became dangerous for us ... But (in Sweden) you feel safe, you don't have so many problems, there's not a lot to be scared of ... That's why I think it's good'[69].

Referring to the experiences of a wide range of people she has met in the last 25 years through personal contacts or work, Anita describes how many migrants have suffered from mental breakdowns after continuous hopeful attempts at becoming part of Swedish society, followed by continuous rejections. She also describes how for some people a way of avoiding this has been to face the fact that they are not welcome, and stop trying; she thinks this has enabled some people to regain their confidence and self-respect.

'And then I think it rather ends with, as I know from 25 years of close contact with people from the whole world – that you say "thanks for the coffee", that is, you continue to live in the country, but completely on your own conditions. You stop applying for jobs, you stop hoping that you will be considered a full member of society, you stop hoping that you will be a

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[69] Contrary to his expectations and relative certainty, Bilal's second application for a resident permit was equally rejected. This rejection came more than a year after our interview, at which point he had been in Sweden for nearly five years. After the rejection, Bilal once more attempted suicide. The last I heard (early spring 2005) was through a friend who knows him (and who mediated the contact); she told me that he was back in the young persons' psychiatric ward.

> part of that society, socially or whatever… somewhere along the line, the strong people don't break, but they say "thanks for the coffee", I've had enough, I'll no longer ask can I come and play? And somehow these are the happiest people … because if you continue to believe forever that you can become an equal member of society, then you will break in the end…'

Anita describes this as a form of survival strategy. The importance of the support of the ethnic network in such cases needs emphasis, as discussed in chapter seven. Finally, another important way of managing rejection is described to me by Selma: she has found that acquiring knowledge about the processes through which she is excluded, and hence understanding why people treat her badly, has helped her deal with that treatment.

> 'That's something I also research around, to adapt here – I don't want, I love people, and try to understand, and so many times I have been treated badly here, by common people, in shops, or amongst civil servants, different institutions … Because I had had such problems with the social services, I was so angry, I wanted to see what you learn at that bloody university, and who teaches these people to behave like this towards other people'

It is clear from her overall narrative that her studies (in social work) have given her access to critical discourses that she can draw on to make sense of her own situation and experiences; in fact in the interview she produced a rather comprehensive analysis of herself. Furthermore, she describes that this to her has become somewhat a survival strategy, and she talks a lot about how what she has read and learned has helped her overcome her personal experiences. Referring to her studies in Sweden, and how she has learned about the country, it's history and people, she says,

> 'that's something I collect, you know? I collect in order to get this overall understanding. Then you get less hurt, in the usual everyday life, if you know that Sweden is introduced to this ideology, and they believe this, and they learn … Those strange looks, that's also what I was after – why?

> Because I have learned so much, to get a historical perspective, and see the entirety…'

Acquiring knowledge about the subtle mechanisms, the bad treatments and the looks, has helped Selma to grasp the history and the power relations that lie behind them. This, I would argue, puts emphasis on the importance of making available a language with which people can make sense of their experiences; enabling them to go beyond the dominant frameworks through which the migrant may, as we have seen, internalise negative images and blame themselves for what society (and its reflexive agents) puts them through.

Chapter nine. Conclusion: racism in Sweden – a 'micro-physics' of racist processes

In this thesis I have examined everyday racism in contemporary Swedish society. By drawing on the biographical narratives of Somali and Bosnian refugees living in Sweden, I have explored the everyday processes whereby migrants and/or people of minority ethnic groups become disadvantaged. Having identified a gap in the existing literature, the thesis is designed to make a contribution to knowledge of the specific ways in which racism has accommodated itself in a contemporary Swedish context. I have found that the specificities and multiplicities of racist processes in Swedish society are shaped in the intersections between the production of otherness and normativity; multiculturalism and assimilation; and in the gap between public discourse and everyday life.

While narratives of experienced racism have been central to the structure and argument of this thesis, I have taken care to thoroughly contextualize them, in the past as well as the present. Emphasizing how racisms are shaped historically, I have discussed how a specific Swedish national identity and self-image has developed through time and through selective memory. I have also looked at how policies in the area of immigration, multiculturalism and 'integration' have evolved, and discussed how and why. Furthermore, I have tried to trace in contemporary public discourse ways in which the popular imagination is constructed around specific imaginings of 'us', 'them', as well as a certain relationship between the two.

By introducing a comparative dimension to the research, and including groups thought to be more as well as less exposed, I have tried to go beyond reductive analyses of racism. Analyzing similarities as well as differences in racism, as experienced by Somali and Bosnian refugees, has enabled me to illustrate not only who suffers more and why, but the specific processes whereby this is achieved. By comparing experiences, I have emphasized the fact that racist processes are multiple and to some extent group specific. Furthermore, through an inclusive working concept of racism and a correspondingly inclusive

interviewing method, I have managed to get at not only the more overt forms of racism and racist discourse, but also the subtle processes that I have found to be crucial.

In this concluding chapter, I begin by discussing how the experiences of Bosnians and Somalis in Malmö illustrate the presence of multiple racist processes. While some are specific to the respective groups, others are shared. What is shared then becomes the starting-point of the second part of the chapter, in which I try to evaluate what I have found to be specific about racism in Sweden. The third and final part of the concluding chapter goes beyond the Swedish case, to discuss the wider relevance of this thesis, and my empirical, methodological and theoretical contributions.

9.1 Bosnians and Somalis and multiple racist processes

By speaking of 'good' and 'bad' migrants (Rosello 2001), I have tried to outline how the production of otherness takes place alongside normative and assimilatory pressures. The racialization of family and gender relations as well as crime has produced heavily gendered categories of 'otherness'. 'Immigrant men' have come to be regarded as violent, barbaric, and patriarchal; while 'immigrant women' are seen as victims, passive and incapable. However, although the processes of racialization produce very different positions for women and men, what unites these 'other' positions is precisely their location outside the Swedish imagined community, and hence certain parts of society. Furthermore, the general production of difference that takes place through gendered images is also what ensures that minority women suffering from violence or oppression in the family are in practice excluded from the Swedish discourse of gender equality.

As discussed in chapters five and six, Somalis are more stigmatized than Bosnians in public discourse; the former are also perceived as more 'culturally distant' than the latter. In discourses on 'cultural differences', culture, religion and tradition is commonly collapsed into one and the same. The 'immigrant

men and women' discourse seems to fit more into the dominant image of Somalis than Bosnians. Stereotypes of Somalis are reflected in the everyday work of civil servants, which has radically affected their possibilities to get ahead in Swedish society. Hence Dalmar chooses to speak of civil servants as 'gate keepers'. However, the high levels of generalizations involved in stigmatizing discourses of 'otherness' also at times means that Bosnians are not spared the bad treatment that follows, as recounted by Selma's experiences of the social services.

In the distinction between good and bad migrants, there is a strong emphasis on work: a good migrant is a migrant who contributes to the net economy, while the bad migrant is a 'burden' on the welfare state. Furthermore, as we have seen, being employed in paid work is central also to being able to take part in the Swedish 'imagined community'. Hence, ideas about different groups' attitude to work become significant. The Bosnians are seen to have a strong 'work ethic', while a common perception about the Somalis is that they 'do not want to work'.

In view of this focus on work in the Swedish imagination and judgements about good and bad people, it is interesting to note that most stories about experiences of racism recounted by my interviewees have been related to the labour market and/or the work place. Judging from my research this seems greatly related to underlying assumptions about superiority and inferiority, and furthermore the saviour-victim binary constructed and reproduced in public discourse and everyday practice alike. In the case of my interviewees' experiences, this binary is centred largely on the image of the 'refugee'. It could perhaps be argued that refugees suit the Swedish 'caring' or 'saviour' attitude particularly well.

The category of the refugee, and the stereotype of the passive/incapable/victim that follows, is experienced by both Bosnians and Somalis. Although the Bosnians have escaped some of the stigmatisation from which Somalis have suffered, the institutionalisation of saviour/victim and inferior/superior binaries go beyond public discourse to be lived in everyday situations and institutional settings. They form the practices of the civil servants and employers, and may

hence block labour market entry. This underlying process is something that both Somalis and Bosnians seem to suffer from. Despite qualifications and work experience, people of 'other' ethnic background are unemployed or employed far beneath their level of competence.

Furthermore, when people have managed to find a 'decent' job and achieved upwards mobility, this has most often been related to the fact that they have gone through the Swedish education system. In Aida's account, ability to move upwards (or even into) Swedish society was dependent on 'starting from scratch'. Former competences and qualifications were disregarded, and although highly educated, she had to start with Swedish secondary school, and work her way upwards. Judging from my findings overall, it seems possible to suggest that a form of Swedishization process is required for inclusion and success, i.e. assimilation.

The question is, however, the level of inclusion into the assimilatory route; that is, does everyone have the possibility of becoming Swedish? Another way of conceptualising this issue with regards to the people I have interviewed is the following: if both Somalis and Bosnians have experienced the limits of the categorisation of people into 'refugees', we could ask who is able to move outside the limits of the 'refugee' category with time? It seems that Bosnians have a greater chance. They are regarded as 'culturally close' and hence more adaptable to Swedish society, given time, and importantly, proper training. The Somalis on the other hand are marked as 'culturally different'; and in turn 'culture' seems to be commonly regarded as an essential property, in other words something that cannot easily be changed with time, perhaps not even with proper training. 'Refugeeness' hence intersects with perceptions of cultural difference, whereby the discursive construction of the 'victim' refers to some more than others. The Somalis, and particularly the women, seem locked into the 'victim' role more permanently, as this is regarded as part of 'their culture'.

Another issue that has emerged from the narratives is to what extent achieving satisfactory employment involves moving beyond racism; in other words the need to consider exclusionary practices taking place within the 'inside' space.

These have been reported by both Bosnians and Somalis. However, while both groups emphasise the subtle practices taking place at work, the examples point towards some differences. While Aida (Bosnian) speaks of not being listened to at meetings or not being invited to social gatherings, Asad (Somali) recounts having to use the backdoor of his workplace to avoid people asking him what he was doing there. It hence seems there are different degrees also of subtlety.

Through using an inclusive definition of racism alongside a comparative perspective, I have managed to include the experiences of Bosnians on which there are limited 'othering' discourses, but that nevertheless experience exclusion through underlying assumptions about superiority and inferiority. Bosnians are seemingly and openly (and rhetorically) included, but nevertheless not on practical everyday terms. Furthermore, the experiences of Bosnians particularly have brought out the issue of the assimilation required to get ahead in Swedish society, and by considering normativity alongside the production of otherness it has been possible to suggest that perhaps not everyone is invited to take the assimilatory route. Finally, looking at the experiences of both Bosnians and Somalis has put further spotlight on the question of what formal inclusion actually means. Here again it seems that in spite of an open discourse that includes, Bosnians are somehow still not included into all spaces and on the same conditions as Swedes.

9.2 Racism in contemporary Sweden

By tracing the historical roots of a dominant version of Swedish national identity, I have emphasized that an important specificity of racist processes in contemporary Sweden is related to an inability to speak about them; or at least to speak of them *as racism* (Molina and de los Reyes 2003). It follows on from this that de facto inequalities in Sweden are not easily granted a conceptual place in the popular imaginary. Importantly, the word 'racism' is used only to refer to other places and times, and the (selected) Swedish history justifies this logical exemption. The dark periods of scientific racisms have been acknowledged, but they have also come to be regarded as safely stored in past

times. Furthermore, past evils can function implicitly or explicitly to trivialize the current experiences of migrants as 'not as bad'. This relativisation of experiences may, as we have seen, also function to compare the lives of migrants 'here' to 'there', where surely things are worse.

Many of my interviewees have emphasized that what is particularly difficult about racism in Sweden is the subtlety of it. They find the gap between rhetoric and public discourse on the one hand and everyday life experiences on the other overwhelming; and many speak of the celebrated image of Sweden as somewhat deceptive. The promotion of diversity and difference, through which the policy of multiculturalism has been presented, has functioned in the past as well as the present to veil de facto assimilatory practices and processes. Through elements of control, and a compulsory 'Swedishization' procedure, assimilation is built into the multicultural structure.

Importantly, the Swedish self-image plays several parts in the process whereby multicultural rhetoric equals everyday assimilation. On the one hand, the political correctness that follows on from the Swedish self-image prohibits the Swedish state from explicitly affirming assimilation, unlike countries such as France. On the other hand, the proclamation of the 'best in the world' through that same image seems to be what prohibits Sweden from pursuing multiculturalism in practice. As we have seen throughout the thesis, migrants continuously face, implicitly or explicitly, in everyday encounters with people (Zlatko) and/or institutions (Asad), the assumption that the Swedish way is the best way, whereby all other ways by default come to be regarded as less good. Linking this to the saviour-victim binary throws light on the underlying assumptions about the need to educate and/or civilize 'them'.

Following on from the subtlety of racist processes, or the 'micro-physics' through which racism is achieved, comes the question of how to deal with racism. The lack of language with which to articulate experiences of everyday racism leaves people incapable of mobilizing politically. The word 'racism' is reserved for other times and places as well as the ideas held by certain individuals and/or extreme groups, existing only at the margins of Swedish

society. However, while the state continues to condemn and fight against these, most of my interviewees, Somalis as well as Bosnians, recount limited experiences of the overtly proclaimed 'racists'; they speak instead of the difficulty of everyday processes they experience in meetings with 'common Svenssons'.

9.3 Racisms beyond Sweden

Finally, I want to go beyond the Swedish case specifically, and consider the wider contributions of my research: empirically, theoretically, and methodologically. Firstly, the findings presented in this thesis point towards both similarities with and differences from other European countries. From the political trends and social experiences as I have discussed, we see that Sweden's 'model' status is changing and conforming to wider social changes. Being part of the European Union as well as global political-economic shifts, the country is subject to similar kinds of policy developments, and societal and ideological trends. The empirical relevance of such findings lies on the one hand in how Sweden can be regarded as one of many European countries in which certain trends can be observed, and on the other in how the long-standing 'model' is changing, which in itself is, arguably, significant more widely for the future of Social Democracy and multiculturalism.

In terms of differences, I would like to make a point about the use of the word 'racism' in Sweden and elsewhere. I have suggested that 'racism' is spoken of in Sweden mainly in relation to the past or the margins. Fixing the meaning of 'racism' to the era of the National Institute for Racial Biology means that contemporary practices are more conveniently termed 'ethnic discrimination' or 'xenophobia', through which they become trivialised and/or individualised. It could perhaps be suggested that because Sweden has had 'the worst' (official implementation of forced sterilisations), the word 'racism' cannot be used for anything else. This corresponds to the German experience, where the Holocaust seems to occupy the entire space (and meaning) of racism; while it differs from

countries such as Britain, where the word 'racism' is more commonly used in relation to that of 'discrimination'.

Aside from a specific historical experience with regard to racism, the inability to speak of racism *as racism* in Sweden is greatly related to a wider and selective version of Swedish history, which renders contemporary racism more or less conceptually impossible. This feature is again distinct to Sweden; and we see it for example in the significant gap between rhetoric and practice. However, saying that is not meant to imply that the gap does not exist in other countries. While Sweden may regard itself as the 'best in the world' (Pred 2000), other European countries also commonly regard and portray themselves as 'tolerant' and 'hospitable', not to mention fair and gender equal (Essed 1991; van Dijk 1993); hence the 'logical' denial of racism I have found in Sweden is present also elsewhere in Europe. It would therefore perhaps be more appropriate to suggest that the Swedish case is a magnified version of the self-celebration of other European countries; and as I have argued, such denials are important to attend to, particularly when it comes to subtle forms of racism.

The subtlety of many of the racist processes discussed in this thesis brings us to the second point I want to make here, which is about my contributions to the notion of everyday racism, as developed by Essed (1991). By studying the experiences of two different groups – apparently differently exposed to racism – in relation to each other, I have been able to explore the specific and multiple ways in which racism functions in and through everyday practices. Going beyond stating the simultaneous presence of processes of otherness/racialization and normativity, I have illustrated how these function differently for different groups and/or individuals. The value of comparative studies of everyday racism lies precisely in the ability to identify a multiplicity of racist processes as well as outline and discuss their nuances. Furthermore, the inclusion of less 'visible minorities', such as the Bosnians, is important, as these question assumptions about who suffers from racism and who does not, and bring out further, more subtle, and often invisible and/or unacknowledged, aspects of how racism functions. Bringing Billig's (1995) notion of banal nationalism back into the

discussion, it seems appropriate to raise the question of whether we could perhaps speak here of a banal racism.

The other way in which I add to the study of everyday racism has to do with the method I have employed: the biographical interview. When trying to get at the subtle and multiple processes of racism, biographies are valuable assets. They enable the researcher to move beyond the limited definition of 'racism', but also to access the constitutive mechanisms of racism (Foucault 1977, 1979): the internalization of racist stereotypes and structures (Fanon 1967) as well as their discursive defence mechanisms. However, by contrast to a lot of the methodological debates on and uses of biographies currently taking place in the social sciences, I maintain a strong emphasis on context and intertextuality. I have found this crucial for making the most of biographical narratives and their stories about racism, and for understanding both narrative presences and absences. Combining methods has proven important for coming to grips with the variety of processes that function to exclude or disadvantage people of minority ethnic groups; processes that are often beyond the 'common sense' definition of 'racism'.

That definition has in itself been an explicit or implicit issue in several narratives, ranging from the subtlety of processes that leaves Ghedi unsure of the reasons behind the ethnicisation of his workplace, to Emir's uncertainty of whether or not he can use the word 'discrimination' to refer to certain experiences, or whether they were, after all, 'not that bad'. This points to the importance of gaining knowledge of racism, and furthermore, expanding the notion of what 'racism' means in order to include a wider range of experiences. Lacking that possibility has left many of my interviewees unsure about what it is they face in everyday life, and finding themselves unable to deal with it. Putting everyday experiences such as those discussed in this thesis into the language of racism is therefore crucial for beginning to tackle structural inequalities.

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