

PROBLEMATIZING MULTICULTURALISM: RACE AND THE INTEGRATION
EXPERIENCES OF SWEDISH WOMEN OF COLOR

By

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To my father, Dr. Asoka Mendis II, who inspired me to become Dr. Mendis III

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By

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This dissertation serves two purposes: it problematizes the claims made by multicultural political theorists and their critics that culture is the salient explanatory variable for immigrant integration and it introduces the voices of women who often figure centrally, but silently, in these debates. Because these multicultural debates are almost exclusively framed in a Western context, this study was conducted in Sweden, which is an example case for a recently-diversifying, high-immigration, high-capacity Western state.

This project is grounded in feminist standpoint theory and intersectionality to argue for the inclusion of minority voices and researcher identities. Based on this theoretical orientation, I conducted 25 unstructured interviews with Swedish women of color and additional interviews with parliamentarians and bureaucrats involved in the integration process. In applying a critical race lens to observations made during fieldwork and to discourse analysis of my interview data, I identify a common narrative of exclusion and discrimination on the basis of race and the presence of Whiteness, or White privilege, in Swedish society. Race, rather than culture, is the common category of belonging on which people experience unequal treatment and discrimination.

I conclude this work with the finding that, although my participants all faced race-based treatment that has led to frustration and setbacks, they consistently assert Swedish identity in the face of discrimination and exclusion and make claims to state resources and social belonging. This agency is also manifest in the way that most of my participants have pursued higher educational opportunities and have acquired gainful employment based on their educations. This finding has led me to conclude that although racism and Whiteness are present in contemporary Sweden and adversely affect social integration, the economic resources provided to immigrants by the welfare state counterbalance these social forces to encourage economic integration, which, over time, will lead to social integration. I conclude with a series of policy recommendations based on a comparison of American and Swedish integration discourses and policies and each country's social and economic contexts.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Preface

In the wake of the 2016 Brexit referendum, the growth of right-wing extremist parties in many European parliaments and the American presidential election, racial tension has entered the public consciousness throughout the Western world. In the United States, the discourse centers around racial and religious identities with President-elect Donald Trump's inflammatory statements targeting "Mexicans" as a proxy for undocumented immigrants, Muslims as the ephemeral, pervasive threat to the nation's security and on-going conflict between Black Americans demanding equal treatment and White Americans fearing a loss of racial supremacy. In Marie Le Pen's France, the Progress Party's Norway, the People's Party Denmark and the Leave Campaign's UK, public and political discourse centers on the threat of economic immigration from Central and Eastern EU countries and refugee immigration from Syria and Afghanistan. The discourse, while centered on the perceived threat of Islam and its practitioners, is couched in terms of cultural dissimilitude and incompatibility between "liberal Western values" and the "illiberal East." Although the rhetoric used across the Atlantic signals different political, historical conditions, the basic thematic content remains the same: the Other and their cultures pose a threat to contemporary and future White hegemony.

In examining whether and how women of color integrate into Swedish society within the context of Sweden's international reputation for tolerance and social progressivism, this dissertation tackles the question of the Other in contemporary European immigration politics. This dissertation is, first and foremost, a contribution of voice for minority women who figure centrally in contemporary discussions of multiculturalism, integration and immigration, but often do so with no direct representation. In these societies, women of color carry the prejudices,

assumptions and discomfort projected by others on their cultural groups, which are perceived as anti-woman, illiberal and regressive. In order to problematize the exclusion of their voices and consultation in theories and practices of multiculturalism and integration, I use two primary lenses, standpoint feminist theory and intersectionality, to argue that problems of integration cannot be addressed or solved without the inclusion of minority voices. Standpoint feminism advocates for the inclusion of researcher identity into a research project and privileges researcher identities that overlap, at least in part, with subject identities. Intersectionality argues that belonging to multiple categories of discrimination (i.e. minority religious, ethnic, racial, gender, etc. identities) compounds experiences of discrimination and exclusion and leads to a particularized understanding of reality. In combining standpoint feminism and intersectionality, I advocate for diverse researcher identities in pursuit of knowledge founded on the shared understanding and experience of being Other.

The second purpose of this dissertation is to problematize the multicultural framework and integration policies in net immigration countries using the lens of critical race theory. In this dissertation, I assert that the politics and policies of multicultural societies must include a focus on race and racism if they are to accurately represent societal tensions and provide ameliorating solutions. Although rising social tensions in high immigration countries are often portrayed as irreconcilable cultural differences between the host culture and immigrant cultures, this narrative misses the tensions and integration failures of first and second generation immigrants. The children of immigrants who grow up in the host culture experience a variety of forms of discrimination and exclusion despite having achieved economic and political integration. This discrimination in the absence of religious and cultural dissimilitude is due to racial prejudice rather than cultural or religious conflict. The inclusion of race in a socio-political context often

framed in terms of culture problematizes the existing discourse. This dissertation asks and answers the following questions: how does the public and official discourses on immigration and integration frame the representation of minority women and the societies in which they exist? And what are the consequences of this representation?

My primary lenses for exploring these questions are critical race theory and Whiteness. When applied to high immigration countries that were previously ethnically homogenous, critical race theory and Whiteness contribute an explanatory narrative for successive immigrant generations where multicultural political theory cannot. Critical race theory also provides a lens for comparing high immigration countries that have recently experienced ethnic and racial diversification (e.g., Sweden) to immigration countries that were founded and developed by successive generations of immigrants from varied countries of origin (e.g., USA). When we use these lenses, we see that countries with highly disparate histories of population origin and ethnic diversification have shared concerns due to racial tension and racial inequality. In my conclusion, I show that a country with a long history of ethnic diversity is actually ahead of a supposedly more tolerant nation like Sweden, which has only recently had to confront racial diversity. In identifying similarities through a critical race perspective, I conclude with a series of policy recommendations for both states based on my work on the experiences of minority women.

In Chapter 1, I outline the intellectual, public and political discourses framed in terms of multicultural political theory and practice, which provide the context for my project. Chapter 2 presents the political theory and methodology behind this project as I outline my epistemology based on standpoint feminist theory, intersectionality and the philosophical concept of subjectivity, which states that reality is understood and acted upon through the mediated lens of

the individual. I then trace my theoretical orientations to my methodological decision to use in-depth interviews and structural analysis to collect my data. In Chapter 3, I turn to my empirical case, Sweden, as the appropriate state-level case for the examination of these themes. I detail the political history, political culture and contemporary welfare state as they relate to the structural context of my research questions.

In Chapter 4, I identify Whiteness, the invisible privilege of white skin, as a pervasive component of Swedish politics and society. I underpin the existence of these norms of Whiteness through an analysis of the interviews I conducted with Swedish women of color, focusing, in this chapter, on their experiences of discrimination and exclusion on the basis of race. I also detail the racialized history of Sweden up to and including the present moment in which the state has declared itself “color-blind.” In Chapter 5, I highlight the ways in which my participants react to these adverse conditions through agency, resolve and advocacy and demonstrate the psychological and structural conditions that have led women of color to act as agents of change in a rapidly diversifying Sweden. In Chapter 6, I compare the results of my study in Sweden to racial discourse and discord in the United States in order to draw important policy implications that could be successfully implemented in both cases.

Multiculturalism

Beginning in the late 1990s and continuing into the first decade of the 2000s, multicultural political theory was the starting point for the discussion of non-Western immigrants in Western societies. This chapter begins by defining multiculturalism through the work of preeminent scholars of multiculturalism. Minority integration was viewed as a challenge of protecting and providing space for minority cultural practices and beliefs in Western societies. Within ten years, however, multiculturalism has largely fallen by the wayside with socio-cultural integration now touted as the best approach to ameliorating tensions in multi-ethnic societies.

Although multiculturalism is no longer the reigning policy ideal for the accommodation of minority and immigrant groups, the discourse surrounding issues of integration remains focused on culture as the salient explanation of tension and conflict. Through this chapter, I trace the way multiculturalism and culture frame the discussions and policies surrounding immigration and integration in Western societies.

In particular, I focus on the role that minority women play in both the multicultural discourse and in the critiques leveled against multiculturalism. One of the lynchpins in the arguments against multiculturalism is the effect of such policies on women in these minority cultural groups, a subset of the so-called “minorities within minorities.” This chapter continues with an overview of the blanket bans, or the repressive pieces of legislation, that grew out of these critical responses. I then conclude by introducing the argument that although these conversations and policies revolve around minority cultural groups, particularly Muslim minority groups, race is a more salient category for the critical analysis of questions of integration. So while this chapter focuses, in large part, on the role of Muslim women in Western societies, this dissertation broadens the focus to include all women of color in the Western world. The starting point for the dissertation is the central role that women of color play in discussions surrounding immigration, integration and multiculturalism and the simultaneous lack of voice and representation of this population in discussions and formulation of policies that directly affect them.

What is Multiculturalism?

Multiculturalism, as defined by theorist Will Kymlicka, is the body of political theory that refers to “a wide range of policies designed to provide some level of public recognition, support or accommodation to non-dominant ethnocultural groups” (2007, p. 16) Tariq Modood broadens this definition by adding to it the struggle and political mobilization that lead to the

policy and institutional outcomes (2007, p. 39). More poetically, he defines multiculturalism as “characterized by the challenging, the dismantling and the remaking of public identities” (2007: 43) Anne Phillips chooses to define multiculturalism in part by what it is not. According to her, multiculturalism is that “those who got there first or who currently constitute the numerical majority do *not* [emphasis added] automatically gain the right to impose their own cultural preferences on the others, and that if the laws and institutions turn out to be biased towards majority cultural groups, there needs to be some compelling noncultural reason to justify this” (2007, p. 71). In short, multiculturalism is the recognition of cultural difference and the policies designed to institutionalize the protection of cultural difference at the state level.

The contemporary multiculturalism debate is predominantly situated in the context of liberal democratic societies struggling to integrate the large wave of immigrants migrating from the developing world. The concern in liberal democratic societies driving the multiculturalist discourse is how to achieve the ideal of human equality without undermining the cultural integrity of groups and individuals within groups. The typical unit of analysis is predominantly that of cultural groups, rather than individuals, that reside in Western societies (Kymlicka 1995 & 2007, Kymlicka & Banting 2006, Parekh 2006). Public discourse on cultural identity is similarly oriented toward group, rather than individual, identities as cultures and those who practice them are more easily referred to as a single community. Although multicultural political theorists and policy makers focus on groups, the goal is to create equal access to culture for the individuals within those groups based on the liberal commitment to the fundamental equality of individuals.

Charles Taylor puts forth a conceptualization of individual equality that underpins much of the contemporary multiculturalist literature. He argues that honor based on social hierarchy,

which defined the individual in pre-liberal societies, has been replaced by the concept of equal dignity of all people simply by virtue of membership in the same species (Taylor, 1994, p. 60).

Modood reframes Taylor's concept of equal dignity to arrive at the concept of equal respect, which he argues illustrates the role of sameness and difference in equal dignity:

If equal dignity focuses on what people have in common and so is gender-blind, color-blind and so on, equal respect is based on an understanding that difference is also important in conceptualizing and institutionalizing equal relations between individuals.

The concept of equal respect and the individual as the unit of analysis are particularly apt lenses when considering the lack of voice and representation of minority women in a conversation that so often hinges on their existence. Because multiculturalism focuses on cultural groups but is based on a logic of individual equality, it is absolutely essential that the welfare and voice of all individual members of the group is factored into the discussion and application of these theories.

Backlash to Multiculturalism

Although the voice of minority women is missing in the multiculturalism literature, I came across the topic of the welfare of minority women and how they are impacted by multiculturalist policies in nearly all major works.¹ Minority women were consistently cited as the weakest aspect of multicultural policies by both the authors of multicultural literature and their critics. The intractable problem identified by multiculturalism theorists and their critics is that multiculturalism is applied within liberal societies that, by their very nature, uphold liberal values. When patriarchal cultural groups are embedded in these societies, some of their practices must be negotiated in order to prevent the violation of liberal values, as defined by legislation and cultural norms, from occurring in the liberal host society. Thus minority cultural groups cannot maintain all their cultural practices. Women in minority groups are the most cited cases

¹ Kymlicka 1995, 2007; Kymlicka & Banting 2006; Modood 2007; Parekh 2006; Phillips 2007; & Song 2007

for this intractable problem because they are seen to be most at risk from harmful illiberal practices that are protected through the tenets of multiculturalism by liberal states.

The criticism that Susan Okin sets forth in her edited volume, *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women*, is characteristic of the type of criticism that multicultural political theorists writing in the first decade of the 21st century often faced. Okin argues that the vast majority of cultures dictate gender norms and roles, and many of these cultural gender norms “aim to control women and render them, especially sexually and reproductively, servile to men’s desires and interests” (1999, p. 16). Thus protecting minority cultural practices in Western societies risks failing to protect the women in these cultural groups and leads to the perpetuation of violence and mistreatment of women in societies that claim to uphold at least a degree of gender equality and women’s rights.

Ayelet Shachar further strengthens this argument by demonstrating that women are not only susceptible to victimization and oppression by traditionalist cultural practices, but that the role that women play in the transmission of culture ensures that they are in fact the targets of repressive norms and practices. Because women are often viewed as the bearers of and early socializers of legitimate children, they are subjected to “strict and subordinating in-group controls, particularly when it comes to the regulation of marriage and procreation” as a means of protecting group survival (Shachar, 2001, p. 59). Thus, in the mind of group leaders, the minority status of a cultural group further necessitates the imposition of repressive gender roles if that cultural identity is to survive through multiple generations.

In recent years, the potential for terrorism is cited as another weakness of multiculturalist policies and has arguably grown in importance since the recent, large-scale terrorist attacks in Belgium and Paris in 2015. The argument is that because multicultural policies preclude the

integration of minority cultural groups, these minority groups do not see themselves as citizens in their European countries and are subject to the ‘radical,’ anti-west beliefs of their traditionalist cultures. The exploration of this topic and problematization of this argument is, in itself, a separate project, but as Anne Phillips points out, there is still an important gendered component to these two critiques of multiculturalism:

The fears of terrorism are, at their most basic, fears about the activities of young men. But as these feed into attacks on ‘misguided versions of multiculturalism,’ the critique of minority cultures and religions is played out largely on the bodies of young women. (Phillips, 2008, 292)

Phillips brackets this question of terrorism in order to highlight the implications of discussions surrounding multiculturalism, integration and immigration on the lives of the women figured in them. Terrorism and the threat of terrorism reflect deep societal tensions between actors with either justifiable or unjustifiable grievances and the state and majority society. Conversely, these gendered critiques of minority cultures reflect tensions between cultural practices and a discomfort with newness and difference in established societies. These critiques serve to frame small subsets of a society as Other, as backward, as unwanted.

Blanket Bans

In response to criticisms that multicultural policies fail to protect minority women, several pieces of legislation have been passed in Western European countries that are designed to address specific abuses of women’s rights. Unlike case-by-case deliberations that address specific cases of abuse, these laws aim to protect everyone who fall under a set of conditions and are thus referred to as blanket bans. The most well-known blanket ban is that of the French ban on “clothing designed to conceal the face,” which affects Muslim women who wear burqas (head-to-toe concealing robe) and niqabs (head and face covering) as part of their religious practice. In addition to the French legislation, similar legislation exists or has been enacted and

then overruled in Spain, Belgium and the Netherlands. These so-called burqa bans, like many blanket bans, fail to protect the women around whom they are constructed, while claiming to protect them:

The former commissioner for Human Rights, Thomas Hammarberg, the Belgian Human Rights League and Human Rights Watch stressed that ‘rather than help women who are coerced into wearing the veil, a ban would limit, if not eliminate, their ability to seek advice and support. Indeed, the primary impact of legislation of this kind would be to confine these women to their homes, rather than to liberate them. (Bribosia & Rorive)

Bribosia and Rorive are referring to the fact that many veiled women in France have said that they now avoid leaving their homes in order to avoid verbal and physical abuse and police harassment. And while the majority of women interviewed on the topic say they choose to veil, the minority who are forced to wear the veil by family and community members are less likely to seek help now from public authorities and friends outside their homes (Bribosia & Rorive, 2014, pp. 175-176).

While the so-called burqa bans were well-covered by international media and consequently well-known, other blanket bans exist that affect the daily lives of minority women and men in Western countries. One of the most problematic bans has been the marriage restrictions that exist in Denmark that were put into place to prevent forced marriages. According to the Danish immigration website *New to Denmark: The Official Portal for Foreigners* (nyidanmark.dk), Danes married to foreign partners can only reside in the country if they satisfy the following criteria:

Requirements relating to you and your spouse/partner

- You must both be at least 24. . .
- Your combined attachment to Denmark must be greater than your combined attachment to any other country. The attachment requirement does not apply if your spouse/partner in Denmark has held Danish citizenship *for over 26 years* [emphasis added]. The same applies if your spouse/partner in Denmark was

- born and raised in Denmark, or came to Denmark as a small child, and has been a legal resident for over 26 years. . .
- You must both sign a declaration that you will both contribute actively to the applicant (and any accompanying children) learning Danish and integrating into Danish society to the best of his/her ability. (nyidanmark.dk)

While the law was originally justified as a means of protecting the children of Danish immigrants from ending up in forced marriages arranged in their parents' countries of origin, the language of the restrictions indicate that the issue is actually that of integration. The age restriction (24 years) assumes that by the age of 24, people will have the ability to resist their parents and, presumably, also be above the desirable marriage age in traditionalist cultures. In an interview with a Public Radio International reporter, Alex Ahrendtsen, member of the Danish parliament for the Danish People's Party, reiterated this argument for the strict family reunification laws:

We have the issue of forced marriages and we don't want that. So if we stick to our strict legislation on family reunification, we also help young, female, especially Muslim immigrants in Denmark and make it possible for them to choose their own husbands instead of their fathers and mothers. (Boundaoui, 2012)

This attempt to protect "young, female, especially Muslim immigrants" from their parents, functionally also protects Denmark from having to contend with cultural diversity. This legislation also adversely affects couples who fail to satisfy the conditions cited above regardless of whether there was ever any question of forced marriage. The Øresund Bridge that connects Southern Sweden to Copenhagen has been nicknamed the "Love Bridge" as more than 90,000 Danes are estimated to live in Southern Sweden and commute to Denmark for work because these family reunification restrictions prevent them from being able to live with their partners in Denmark (Boundaoui, 2012).

Another less well-known blanket ban is the decision of Ontario premier Dalton McGuinty in 2005 to end all religious arbitration in the province after a Toronto lawyer announced that the

Islamic Institute of Civil Justice would begin arbitrating family matters on the basis of Sharia law. After fourteen years of religious arbitration by Jewish and Ismaili groups, the backlash of women's and liberal organizations to the idea of Sharia law in Ontario, even Sharia law practiced in strict adherence to Ontario law, prompted the premier to repeal the 1991 religious arbitration act. In an article written five years after the repeal of the act, Harvey Simmons points to the fact that, by removing religious arbitration from Ontario courts, "there is no way to tell whether women are being treated well or badly in informal religious arbitrations conducted by imams, rabbis or, indeed, any other arbitrator chosen by parties involved" (2010). Additionally, in a review of similar Sharia arbitration tribunals in the UK, Ashley Nickel's determines that, while some women are pressured by their family into using Sharia arbitration and are sometimes unaware that an alternative civil court system exists, Sharia arbitration is the only way women whose marriages are strictly religious can initiate the divorce process (Nickel, 2014, p. 109). This blanket ban on all religious arbitration and the subsequent lack of oversight by provincial powers on current arbitration practices again demonstrates the fallibility of blanket bans; this time to protect the women who figured centrally in the original issue of concern from abusive religious marriages and unregulated arbitration.

Public Discourse

Much like the blanket bans discussed above, women as vulnerable members of minority groups figure centrally in public discourse surrounding multiculturalism, integration and, for people on the political far right, the irreconcilable differences of immigrants from non-Western cultural groups:

Abuses of girls and women figure high in the daily chit-chat through which people represent or misrepresent minority cultures, as in accusations that 'they' don't encourage their girls to continue in education, that 'they' punish sexual transgressions in females while tolerating similar transgressive behaviour in males,

that ‘they’ expect their wives to be docile and submissive, or don’t allow women to work outside the home. (Phillips, 2008, 294)

While public discourse occasionally shifts its focus to minority women in, say, orthodox Jewish communities or in communities that practice traditional African religions, Muslim women, in particular, feature centrally in discussions surrounding minority women in the Western world. Thus the treatment of Muslim women by the Western media best exemplifies how minority women are portrayed by public discourse.

An overview of how Muslim women are depicted by the media, created by an organization of Muslim women and missrepresentation.org (an organization dedicated to identifying and rectifying the underrepresentation of women), identifies the three most common ways that Muslim women are depicted in media: as passive and oppressed victims, in terms of what they are wearing and as a homogenous group. They are the passive recipients of oppressive Islamic policies and beliefs, they are only interesting to the Western audience insofar as they are veiled and thus “visibly oppressed and traditionalist,” and they are all the same in terms of religious beliefs and practice, family circumstances, degree of oppression and cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, Muslim women generally only appear in Western media in relation to topics of Islam and culture, Islam and women, victimization in Islam, etc.; they do not appear as subjects of stories about women who, for example, lead organizations, create public projects, participate in social movements, are experts in their field, willingly and knowingly commit crimes, express controversial opinions, etc. (Martín-Muñoz, 2002).

Laura Navarro points to another missing narrative in public discourse surrounding Muslim women, that of the Muslim woman who chooses her faith and, often congruently, to veil (2010, p. 101). Recent surveys of Muslim women who veil in Western societies show a general pattern of voluntary veiling, with, of course, notable exceptions of oppression and abuse

(Bouteldja 2014; Ingber 2015; Wagner et al., 2012). Additionally, scholars have found that many women who choose to veil do not do so for religious reasons alone; some choose to do so in order to avoid judgment of their physical appearances, some to avoid unwanted attention from both Muslim and non-Muslim men, and others to assert their identities in a society that does not create any space for them (Martín-Muñoz 2002; Bouteldja 2014).

So if many women who veil do so voluntarily, why is this representative narrative missing from Western media? The Western discourse surrounding the veil is premised on two arguments, that the veil represents the need of Western society to save Muslim women from their oppressive cultures and that the veil is a security threat that not only obscures the face and body of potentially violent religious extremists, but actually signifies their extremist beliefs. The narrative of the voluntary veil contradicts the first argument by removing oppression and coercion as the cause of veiling and the accompanying fact that many women who veil do not do so out of religious reasoning alone calls into question the logic of the second argument. In fact, in France following the controversial *l'affaire du voile* (the veil affair), scholars have identified a pattern of Muslim women choosing to veil after the legislation passed as a means of protest and as a means of asserting their religious identities (Bouteldja, 2014, pp. 151). The lack of representation in media of the vastly different reasons why women choose to veil also demonstrates one way in which the heterogeneity of Muslim women fails to be part of the public discourse surrounding the presence of Muslim women in Western societies.

Multiculturalism without Culture

The creation of blanket bans and the introduction of Muslim women into public discourse have resulted from approximately two decades (the 1990s and 2000s) of multiculturalism and multicultural policies. Multiculturalism, premised on the argument that cultures have inherent value and minority groups have as much right to their cultural beliefs and practices as majority

groups, was initially viewed as the ideal way for Western states to effectively and fairly absorb immigrant groups from non-Western states. As minority women became central in the conversations surrounding multiculturalism as those who are most disadvantaged and harmed by its policies, Western entities stepped in to create legislation to protect these women from harmful cultural practices and the men (and women) who impose them. These so-called blanket bans and the societal discourse surrounding Muslim women focus nearly exclusively on the way that some minority cultural practices lead to the mistreatment of minority women. As a consequence of this historical trajectory, Muslim women in the West are consistently depicted and treated as if they have no agency, no autonomy; that rather than choosing to practice a culture, cultures are practiced on them. And as aforementioned, because there is no diversity in the depiction of Muslim women, particularly in the media, all Muslim women fall victim to this assumption of powerlessness and victimhood.

In her book *Multiculturalism without Culture*, Anne Phillips attempts to ameliorate the three tensions that I have outlined above: the need for minority cultural recognition, the need to ensure that minority women have access to the same legal protections as majority women and the need to recognize that minority women are diverse, are agentic and are active participants in their own cultural communities and in broader society. Phillips begins her project with a critique of how cultures have been framed in public discourse and early multiculturalist writings:

My own approach is closest to those who have noted the selective way culture is employed to explain behaviour in non-Western societies or among individuals from racialized minority groups, and the implied contrast with rational, autonomous (Western) individuals, whose actions are presumed to reflect moral judgements, and who can be held individually responsible for those actions and beliefs. This binary approach to cultural difference is neither helpful nor convincing. The basic contention throughout is that multiculturalism can be made compatible with the pursuit of gender equality and women's rights so long as it dispenses with an essentialist understanding of culture. I have somewhat polemically described my project as a multiculturalism without culture. (Phillips, 2007, p. 9).

By taking a nonessentialist view of culture, Phillips focuses on the individuals who comprise a culture and thus individuals, rather than cultural groups, are the unit of analysis she employs when examining multiculturalism. By honing in on individuals, Phillips is able to introduce autonomy into the discussion of how and why people choose to practice their cultures; culture may inform the decisions people make but it does not inherently make the decisions for them. It is also as individuals that people have the right to their own cultural beliefs and practices. Cultural groups, to Phillips, have no inherent value or right to exist, but individuals have a right to autonomy and self-determination. Thus the right of minority cultures to flourish is based on the individual rights of a culture's practitioners (Phillips, 2009, p. 162).

The concept of autonomy underpins Phillips' theory of multiculturalism without culture. She orients her argument as a critique of multiculturalist discourse as it approaches the issue of autonomy, particularly whether women in minority culture live autonomous lives. The blanket bans described above best exemplify this weakness in multiculturalist discourse:

It is sometimes offered as a partial justification of these prohibitions that the bans will protect young women from cultural pressures that force them to wear the hijab or coerce them into unwanted marriages. The implication is that none of the young women in question would have freely chosen to behave in this way, that they are all being coerced by their community or prevented by their culture from operating as autonomous beings.

Essentialist and determinist understandings of culture support this claim by failing to recognize minority women as agents and by treating cultures as homogenous and binding. Phillips also argues that in making these claims, multiculturalists and politicians conflate the autonomy of decision-making and the autonomy of outcome. The right to self-determination means that one has the right to autonomously decide how to live their life. The crux of Phillips argument is that if someone autonomously chooses to live their life in accordance to a belief system that leads to a non-autonomous life, they have a right to do so. A clear example of this apparent paradox is the

choice that some women make to cover their hair and bodies in observance of their religious beliefs. The choice to veil or dress ultra-conservatively may seem to indicate that these women have been coerced into dressing submissively but for many women, this choice is made so as to best adhere to their religious beliefs.

Voice and Representation

Continuing my project from Phillips' multiculturalism without culture, I turn to the question of how to address the public discourse and integration consequences of essentialist depictions of minority cultures and the women who practice them. In the four years that I have been immersed in this project, I have identified a thorough lack of voice for the women who feature so centrally in these discussions. In a 2008 special edition of the academic journal *Ethnicities* entitled "The Rights of Women and Crisis of Multiculturalism," twelve female academics addressed the central role that women have played in the academic formulation of multiculturalism and its criticism. In the opening piece, Phillips and her co-writer Sawitri Saharso acknowledge the lack of representation of minority women in the special edition of *Ethnicities*, which aims to problematize how these very women have been treated within this branch of academic discussion:

The contributors to this special issue of *Ethnicities* are overwhelmingly drawn from majority ethnocultural groups, and while we pay considerable attention to the work of minority women's NGOs, drawing, in some of the articles, directly on interview material, we can hardly claim to represent minority women's voices. (Phillips, 2008, 296)

While these authors recognize and draw attention to the diversity of minority women identities and experiences, they simultaneously recognize that they lack the epistemological standpoint to speak conclusively for minority women. Given the authors' extensive use of interviews with minority women and the claims they make about the agency of minority women, I argue that they reasonably accomplish the goal of elevating minority women in multiculturalist discussions

from passive recipients of culture and society to active participants in culture and society. I do, however, identify a further need for voice and representation in the field and the public discourse that has emerged around multicultural policies.

In a special edition of the *European Journal of Women's Studies*, Jin Haritaworn reinforces this need for more voice and representation by demonstrating that Western society has not moved beyond Gayatri Spivak's original assertion made in 1999, that Western imperialism in the postcolonial age has transformed from resource extraction and colonialization into a civilizing mission calling for "White men [to save] Brown women from Brown men" (Spivak, 1999, pp. 284-311). Haritaworn, Fatima El-Tayeb and Jennifer Petzen's articles in this special journal edition focus on the ways in which queer and feminist movements and intellectuals position themselves and their respective communities in opposition to Muslim Others, racializing Muslim identities and castigating them for failing to integrate. Petzen demonstrates how White queer and feminist activists "chime in" on the failure of 'Muslims' to conform to European values of sexual emancipation and gender equality:

Such strategies not only naturalize a modernist teleology of social evolution which is in a perfect (straight) line with the contemporary racist script of a Europe in which those racialized as 'Muslim' can only ever be late-comers. They also directly enact strategies that make 'Muslims' dispensable, and prepare them for further incarceration, displacement and deportation. (Petzen, 2012, p. 99)

And in this queer and feminist discourse, it is the 'Muslim' woman who features most heavily as the passive victim of her culture and her men. The veil of the Muslim woman also acts as an affront to the hard fought gender equality on which Western feminists pride themselves and thus Muslim women are positioned by these progressive groups as both victim and threat.

The example of how feminist and queer scholars and activists can contribute to the project of demonizing Islam and its practitioners is part of the reason why minority women, particularly Muslim minority women, need greater representation and voice in the

multiculturalist and integrationist discourse. Based on the theory of intersectionality, which I will explore in greater detail below, although feminists and queer activists are participating in the conversation from the standpoint of societal minorities, they fail to capture accurately the diversity of experience of those who are societal minorities in multiple ways. Minority racial, religious and gender status interact in compounding ways to create different, and often worse, experiences of discrimination and exclusion. As evidenced by the tendency of feminist and queer activists to participate in the broader discourse of liberal society versus illiberal culture (the White, liberal, progressive society as juxtaposed to illiberal, traditional cultural groups of non-Western minorities), these conversations require the presence of members of those so called illiberal cultures. For accurate and representative analysis to occur, these conversations need to include those who figure often so centrally in them. As I will explain more fully in *Chapter 2: Epistemology and Methodology*, I turn to standpoint feminist theory and intersectionality to rectify this lack of voice and representation.

Race Rather than Religion

Throughout my introduction, I have focused in large part on the presence of Muslim women in Western societies and immigration/integration discourse. A Muslim woman, particularly one who veils, is the archetypal visible minority in Western societies and represents the tensions between different cultural gender roles and rights. Although Muslim women figure centrally in the debate, I have chosen to broaden the focus of this dissertation to all women of color in Sweden due to the socio-political tensions I observed while in the field. As I will substantiate further in *Chapter 4: Discrimination and Whiteness in Sweden*, I believe that critical race theory and Whiteness are useful theoretical perspectives with which to shift the focus in Multicultural debates and immigration and integration discourse to the role that the host society plays in integration and in the failure of some populations to integrate. By orienting the

discussion of agency exemplified by women of color in majority White societies in the racial tensions of those societies, I aim to draw attention to the structural and social barriers that these women face and often overcome.

Multiculturalism identifies a need for specific policies to recognize and create space for the flourishing of minority cultures in our contemporary globalized world. Multiculturalism addresses the shortcoming of existing legislation and modes of governance to adapt to the existence of different belief and value systems. Multiculturalism and its critics problematize the ways in which minority cultures are framed as cultures while majority culture is framed as universal values. Critics of multiculturalism address the importance of protecting minorities within minority cultures (women, children, sexual minorities, etc.). But because multiculturalism and its critics approach the question of integration from the perspective of culture, they preclude the discussion of race as it affects these same questions.

Chapter Summary

In Chapter 1, I have presented an overview of multiculturalism, its major criticisms and the women who figure centrally in these debates. I conclude with the argument that multicultural discourse leads to a harmful public and academic discourse that frames Muslim women as devoid of agency and subject to pervasive religious oppression. In this introduction, I also draw attention to the fact that although minority women figure centrally in multiculturalism and multicultural policy, the voices of these women are largely absent in this discussions and debates. Finally, I broaden the scope of this inquiry to include all women of color in majority-White Western societies, an empirical claim based on the saliency of race in these societies, which I substantiate in Chapter 4.

Throughout this dissertation, by including the voices of minority women and detailing their individual narratives of struggle and success, I aim to correct the singular, patronizing

depiction of minority women in multicultural literature as victim of her culture and her men, as threat to liberal values, as fanatically religious, as in need of rescue by her liberal saviors from her illiberal oppressors, and as Other. I also address the societal level discrimination and exclusion on the basis of race that minority women in Western societies face but that do not figure in conversations about barriers to integration. This dissertation is both an intellectual query into a contemporary socio-political problem and a step towards undoing the intellectual violence done to minority women through these homogenous and stigmatized representations in public and academic discourse.

In order to address tensions between new and old communities, there needs to be a diversity of voices in the conversation and a plurality of lenses with which to analyze them. As global migration continues at the historically high rate at which it is occurring now, this need for diversity and plurality will become more and more salient for the Western world. In detailing the epistemology underpinning this dissertation, I present a subset of these lenses, standpoint feminist theory and intersectionality, in Chapter 2. I also detail the development of the philosophical concept of subjectivity, which provides the grounds for my empirical methodology and I conclude with an overview of the methods used in this project: in-depth interviews and structural analysis. In tracing the links between epistemology, theory and methodology, I show how using a plurality of lenses captures a fuller and more nuanced understanding of this particular political puzzle and the women who feature centrally in it.

CHAPTER 2: EPISTEMOLOGY AND METHODOLOGY

Who can know? Who can speak?: Standpoint Feminism and Intersectionality

In this chapter, I detail the epistemology, theory and methodology that comprise the structure of this dissertation and show how my epistemology leads to my theoretical choices, which lead to my methodological choices. I begin with the epistemological claim that socio-political problems that involve the identities and agency of minority groups cannot be adequately explored from the perspective of the neutral, objective researcher. I ground this claim in feminist standpoint theory, which argues for the inclusion of researcher identity and gives epistemic privilege to researchers who can identify, at least in part, with their subjects. I continue with the theoretical grounds of my research questions and chosen methodologies: intersectionality and critical race theory. Intersectionality posits that overlapping minority identities lead to compounding effects for individuals in society and provides the lens for examining race and gender together and critical race theory advocates for the critical examination of how race and power intersect within social and cultural forces, contexts and structures. Within critical race theory, I mainly employ a critique of Whiteness or the invisible privilege of white skin.

As aforementioned, I intend my dissertation to act as a normative critique of the prevalent discourse surrounding integration, immigration and multicultural politics that precludes the agency of minority women in Western societies. However, I also intend my dissertation to be an analysis of a relevant political puzzle in pursuit of useful and compelling knowledge. In making knowledge claims, I begin by problematizing the prevalent discourse within the field of political science and the social sciences more broadly that the ideal researcher in producing knowledge is the objective, neutral observer. First, I believe that it is impossible to examine questions surrounding minority populations and their experiences of reality from an objective perspective.

For example, in racialized interactions, how an individual understands, encodes and acts on that experience varies across cases and those reactions change the nature of the racialized interaction that preceded them. The subjective response changes the degree to which the racialized interaction was racialized.

The issue of Black hair represents this lack of objectivity in racialized interactions. For many Black women, questions about hair are perceived as Othering and exotifying whereas for many people who do not have Black African hair, these same questions are perceived as mere curiosity. The interaction, a question about hair, is objectively the same for both parties involved, but the feeling attached to the question change the quality of the question for each party. This distinction is particularly important for researcher-subject relationships because a researcher who can empathize with the feelings of Othering and exotification has more insight into how a benign question or interaction can be encoded as discriminatory. Furthermore, sensitivities to interactions like these, often referred to as micro aggressions, are often dismissed by wider society as “exaggerated, over sensitive, reverse racism, etc.” or met with disbelief that these interactions even occur on a daily basis. A researcher must be sure that she does not recreate these negative responses when dealing with sensitive subject matter like racial discrimination and is more likely to avoid these pitfalls if she can relate to having experienced those same diminishing responses of denial.

As I will discuss at length in Chapter 4: Discrimination and Whiteness in Sweden, Whiteness refers to an unmarked, unnamed set of privileges that have been institutionalized in Western societies. Because Whiteness is invisible to the majority of the population in Western states, its effects remain largely unexamined and unproblematized. When looking at problems that involve minority groups who see, feel and name Whiteness, a researcher for whom

Whiteness is invisible runs the risk of missing important structural and social disadvantages that weigh heavily on her subject population. In some cases, I would go so far as to say that reading critical race theory, particularly theories of Whiteness, is unlikely to enable a White researcher the kind of access to understanding afforded a non-White researcher who has experienced the negative repercussions of Whiteness in daily life. Similarly, gendered, patriarchal social realities and experiences operate in the same nuanced and often invisible ways as Whiteness. Arguably yes, in the exploration of problems that are race and gender neutral, objectivity may be possible, but when subjective experience based on racialized and gendered treatment factor into a socio-political puzzle, the identity of the researcher remains highly relevant to the data collected and conclusions drawn.

I root my authority to make this normative critique of social science objectivity and the prevalent integration, immigration and multicultural discourse in the claims of standpoint theory, which state that certain social orientations of the researcher beget better understanding and increased authority in the exploration of phenomena related to those social orientations. Feminist standpoint theory “claims an epistemic privilege over the character of gender relations, and of social and psychological phenomena in which gender is implicated, on behalf of the standpoint of women” (Anderson, 2015, § 2). It is particularly under the logic that because women are oppressed, they have an interest in representing the social truths of gender oppression.

The first iteration of the feminist critique of social science occurred in the early twentieth century when female academics noticed both an underrepresentation of female researchers and female subjects in social science disciplines. The original idea was that by increasing the number of female researchers, women would feature more prominently as subjects of study. By the mid-twentieth century, however, the increase in female researchers and corresponding increase in

female subjects still left something to be desired (Crasnow, 2014). Namely feminist scholars identified a disconnect between existing paradigms and the realities of women's experiences. Sharon Crasnow points to work as an example wherein the concept of work was originally located in the public sphere (2014). Prior to the inclusion of women, domestic labor remained invisible, located as it was in the private sphere. Even with the inclusion of women subjects in the discussion of work and labor, the concept of work itself needed to be recategorized as occurring in both the public and private sphere.

At this juncture, feminist standpoint theory might sound like an argument for the inclusion of the "female perspective," but standpoint theory goes beyond perspective in its inclusion of power. Feminist standpoint theory, in the subject of analysis, "intends to map the practices of power, the ways the dominant institutions and their conceptual frameworks create and maintain oppressive social relations" (Harding, 2004, p. 31). It is in this imbrication of power on knowledge claims and the examination of social relations that I locate the usefulness of feminist standpoint theory in the discussion of minority women's presence in multicultural political theory and practice. At a surface level, even the majority of multicultural political theorists who comprise the central cannon in the field: Will Kymlicka (White man), Bhiku Parekh, Tariq Modood (men of color), and Anne Phillips (White woman) are writing about the "plight" of minority women without being situated in a position to confront their own assumptions about the experiences and lives of minority women.

While I recognize the ability of social scientists to study people who are demographically dissimilar to themselves, when tarring a large, diverse population with the brush of oppression and powerlessness, I argue for the inclusion of voices from that population both as researchers and as subjects. In addition to including the voices of this population, as required by feminist

standpoint theory, I further situate these voices and their narratives in a critique of the broader system of social relations. As Sandra Harding argues, “this project of ‘studying up’ [focusing explanations on dominant social institutions and their ideologies] distinguished standpoint theory from ethnographic research,” which ‘studies down’ or focuses on the details of the lives of marginalized groups (Harding, 2004, 30). The lives of minority women in Western societies are contextualized by the hierarchies and institutions within those societies as well as the public discourse that frames their social identities. Feminist standpoint theory aims to address both the lives of marginalized groups and the social forces contributing to marginalization.

In order to address the lives of minority women featured in multicultural political theory and public discourse, I combine the epistemic claims of feminist standpoint theory with the political implications of intersectionality: another useful lens for problematizing this existing discourse. Much like feminist standpoint theory, the theory of intersectionality grew out of third wave feminism, which problematized the degree to which the first two iterations of feminist movements focused on the realities and needs of privileged upper and middle class White women. Specifically, it was Black¹ feminists who identified a lack of representation in both the feminist literature and activism. Kimberlé Crenshaw is often credited for introducing intersectionality into academic discourse through her analyses of the way in which American laws fail to recognize and address the hardships experienced by Black women. Rather than

¹ A New York Times opinion piece by Lori L. Tharps, best captures why I choose to capitalize Black throughout my dissertation when referring to people of African descent: “When speaking of a culture, ethnicity or group of people, the name should be capitalized. Black with a capital B refers to people of the African diaspora. Lowercase black is simply a color (Tharps 2014).” In her op-ed, Tharps demonstrates how Black writers and politicians throughout American history and continuing today, have called for a capital N in Negro and are calling for a capital B in Black as a sign of respect and recognition. If all other nationalities and ethnicities are capitalized, so too should be Black, an identity group that grew out of a history of slavery, oppression, violence and struggle.

reinvent the wheel, I turn to Nina Lykke's broad definition of intersectionality before applying the concept to the discussion of subjectivity and gender:

Intersectionality can, first of all, be considered as a theoretical and methodological tool to analyze how historically specific kinds of power differentials and/or constraining normativities, based on discursively, institutionally and/or structurally constructed sociocultural categorizations such as gender, ethnicity, race, class, sexuality, age/generation, dis/ability, nationality, mother tongue and so on, interact, and in so doing produce different kinds of societal inequalities and unjust social relations. (Lykke, 2010, p. 50)

Because intersectionality grew out of feminist thought, gender is the most common variable in intersectional scholarship with class and/or race as a close second. The appropriateness of intersectionality as a useful theory for the discussion of Swedish women of color is self-explanatory as Swedish women of color exist at the intersection of gender inequality, racism and, often, religious discrimination.

The application of intersectionality to the topic of subjectivity, or the philosophical concept that individuals have agency to act in a world of which they have their own understanding of reality, however, requires further substantiation. In a chapter entitled "Intersectional Identity and the Authentic Self? Opposites Attract!," Diana Tietjens Meyers problematizes the assumption that people with complicated, intersectional identities will, by virtue of "psychic fragmentation" live unautonomous lives hindered by external control and influence (2000). This assumption figures strongly in the existing multicultural and integration literature mentioned previously that tends to portray women in minority cultural groups as devoid of agency and autonomy. Meyers problematizes this assumption by stating that, contrary to intuitive thought, people who exist at multiple intersections of discrimination are perhaps "better positioned to exercise autonomous moral and political agency, than multiply privileged individuals are" (2000, p. 152). Because woman of color experience discrimination more than their White, male counterparts, they are given cause for reflection and concern. In reflecting on

these experiences, these women are likely to evaluate their own identities and to recognize their intersectional positionality, a claim well substantiated by the internal discourses of my participants. Meyers is careful to recognize that not all people who exist at the intersection of multiple categories of discrimination are likely to reflect on this reality and act on it. She argues that the development of personal autonomy requires a set of “autonomy skills”:

To define oneself intersectionally, one must activate competencies that mesh intellect and feeling in order to seek out and assimilate nonstandard interpretive frameworks. One must be introspectively vigilant, attuned to signs of frustration and dissatisfaction, attentive to baffling subjective anomalies, and willing to puzzle out gaps in one’s self-understanding. One must be equipped to tap into oppositional intellectual currents. Curiosity about other people and their cultures is invaluable, and so is a passion for ideas...one must command critical thinking skills...extracting what is worthwhile from newly encountered material is the key to enriching one’s self-knowledge and to redefining oneself. Thus, one must be able to identify such ideas, incorporate them into one’s own cognitive and emotional viewpoint, and apply them as one defines oneself. (Meyers, 2000, p. 167)

What Meyers calls for is not an easy task indeed, but her argument is not that intersectionality begets autonomy. Rather, she is arguing for the recognition of the effect of intersectional identity on autonomy competency. Autonomy competency is the capability to engage in self-discovery and self-definition. Intersectionality, as she argues it, contributes to an individual’s subjectivity, to an individual’s ability to construct an agentic narrative of self.

Intersectionality represents an academic *and* social undertaking that aims to connect theory to practice, to experience and to living, breathing individuals for whom intersectionality is more than an abstract, theoretical framework. Born out of Critical Legal Studies and the analysis of ways to ensure that future laws do not fail to protect entire swaths of the American population, intersectionality was born out of a practical endeavor embedded in social reality:

In the case of intersectionality, there is a close proximity between its original theoretical subjects and the embodied-sentient (living and breathing), multiply inscribed empirical subjects it sought to bring to visibility – black women and other women of color in the United States (Collin 1998, 2000), women with whom a

strong identification was evoked among women of the African, Asian and other diasporas in Europe. Intersectionality was greeted with hope and applause because of both its theoretical scope and its empirical inclusivity...Such a simultaneously emotional and analytic reception was aroused because it helped to erode the epistemological boundaries between those who “know” and those who “experience,” which had caused feminists so much strife and pain...As an approach to both feminist advocacy and academic inquiry, intersectionality welcomed the margins to the table of theory making by reconciling the split between theory and experience – or more precisely, by suggesting that experience could be the ground of theory making. (Lewis, 2013, p. 873)

The above quote from Gail Lewis’ article “Unsafe Travels: Experiencing Intersectionality and Feminist Displacements,” explains the power of intersectional theory on its ability to act as both insight and inclusion for scholars and the women of color whom they wish to write about. This orientation of intersectionality on the boundaries of the academic and the subject finds a useful corollary in the methodology of feminist standpoint theory, which in addition to being well suited to the exploration of questions of intersectionality, is also the justification for the methodological choices made in this dissertation.

My identity as a first generation immigrant woman of color gives me a privileged perspective when looking at the internal, agentic narrative of women of color in Sweden, the majority of whom are first or second generation immigrants as well. The epistemic privilege of being a woman of color gives me access and insight into the lived experiences of women of color in predominately White, Western societies as well as into the internal identity narratives of these women. Because I myself am constantly undergoing the process of subjective identity formation as a person at the intersection of multiple modes of discrimination, I have subjective insight into the process and the orientation in society best suited to a deep understanding. Furthermore, I have personal insight into perceived feelings of Otherness and explicit challenges to belonging. Due to the differences in the experiences of women of color in Sweden and women of color who are not Black in the United States and Canada, I do not have the direct experiences of

discrimination and hate speech that the women who I interviewed have had. I do however have experiential knowledge of feelings of Otherness and exclusion from my time spent doing my research in Sweden over several months. I am able to compare and contrast those experiences with my everyday lived experiences in the United States and in Canada, which allows me further insight. Furthermore, I believe that those differences in experiences in the United States and Canada and in Sweden give me some critical distance from the participants of this study, which allows me to analyze the situation from a more critical standpoint.

Because I begin my project from the epistemology of feminist standpoint theory and because I am addressing a literature that focuses exclusively on minority women as the limit case to multicultural policy, I focus entirely on women in this dissertation, rather than women, men, and individuals with a non-binary gender identity. Questions of race, multiculturalism and integration are absolutely relevant to all people of color in Western societies. The gendered differences, however, in competing cultural norms, expectations for social behavior and academic achievement, developmental psychology during adolescence (a period that is particularly important for identity-formation) and visible religious attire suggest that the experiences of all Swedes of color cannot be effectively studied within the same project, particularly one the size of a dissertation. Furthermore, because I argue that my own identity as a woman of color in a Western society allows me to make epistemic claims about similarly situated women in other societal contexts, I cannot make those same claims about men of color. Additionally, I do not want to speak for a population into which I do not have privileged insight while operating within the scope of feminist standpoint theory, intersectionality and critical race theory.

Subjectivity and Narrative: A Methodology

Feminist standpoint theory begins from a claim to epistemic privilege, that specific identities and personal experience increase understanding of a specific set of social and psychological phenomena. This personally-conditioned understanding allows one to create justified knowledge claims about those phenomena. Intersectionality explores how different identities map onto and interact with one another within a group or individual to produce specific personal experiences and understandings of the external world. Critical race theory, particularly the theory of Whiteness, posits that, in the Western world, justified beliefs and knowledge claims about the external world have historically been limited to those knowledge claims made by White, heterosexual, heteronormative, mostly male voices. In combining these three theoretical lenses, it is clear that, in order to fully understand our world, knowledge claims must first include voices from those outside the social majority, that the personal experiences and interpretations of individuals contribute to the production of knowledge and that the complex interactions of an individual's identity produce a complex set of personal interactions and interpretations.

Because these compounding effects are subjectively experienced, understood and acted upon by individuals of varied identities, I begin my methodological orientation with subjectivity, or the concept that reality is the concept that reality is understood and acted up through the mediated lens of the individual. Because subjectivity is internally experienced, like many intersectionality and critical race researchers (Prins 2006, Ludvig 2006, Lundström 2007, Buitelaar 2006), I turn to narrative as the form that subjectivity takes, particularly as the individual communicates to herself and to others how her identity, experiences, beliefs, feelings and knowledge interact and evolve over time. Alice Ludvig best captures this interplay between subjectivity, identity and narrative as it relates to intersectionality:

From the point of view of the individual subject, it is through narration that the axes of identity and subjectivity become explicit: when we acknowledge that subjectivity is the way people make sense of their relation to the world, it becomes the modality of identity. *How* a person perceives or conceives an event (and speaks about it) would therefore vary according to how she is culturally constructed, what she identifies herself with and/or differentiates herself from. (Ludvig, 2006, p. 249)

Not only does narrative provide insight into internal identity construction and agency, it provides insight into the social structures and institutions that contribute to identity and action. In particular, the detailing of everyday experiences and interactions provide concrete examples of the intersection of various categories of belonging and simultaneously allow the researcher to “ask about categories such as gender, class and ethnicity indirectly, and not as abstract categories” (Christensen and Qvotrup Jensen, 2012, p. 118).

Similarly, subjectivity and narrative are instrumental to the critical study of race. Because Whiteness has privileged the narratives, beliefs and knowledge claims of White researchers, critical race theorists see the individual narratives of people of color as access to new knowledge production. The lived experiences of people of color reveal the pervasiveness and insidiousness of racism. These lived experiences, ranging from hate speech and overt violence to pernicious microaggressions, “[help] us understand how and to what extent, race and racism mediate everyday life” (Malagon, Huber and Velez, 2009, p. 257). And because people of color are privy to these manifestations of race and racism, they are able to produce knowledge of the broader world based on this insight. And like the claim made by intersectional scholars, these narratives about subjective, everyday experiences provide information, not only on the internal thoughts and feelings of the interlocutor, but on the institutions in which these experiences occur.

Because my positionality as a woman of color in a Western society has given me additional access to the understanding of internal narratives of women of color living in Sweden, I chose to pursue the topic of the integration of women of color through unstructured, in-depth

interviews designed to draw out the personal narratives of my participants . Through these interviews, I was able to gain an understanding of their personal identity narratives as they applied to the socio-political realities of a quickly diversifying society. Furthermore, my identity as a female researcher of color aided in the process of cultivating interviewer-interviewee rapport. My participants viewed me as someone with inherent empathetic understanding who could not, by virtue of my own identity, view them as Other, and these intersubjective conditions allowed me access to the subject narrative of individuals with intersectional identities. The women I interviewed had coped with and adapted to a disadvantageous socio-economic context while simultaneously undergoing the process of subject-agent identity formation. Situated in the broader context of the “exceptional Sweden” and the pervasive societal level discourse on gender equality, I also witnessed what I believe to be the integration of societal, governmental and capitalist discourse into the individual subjective identity with equally positive implications for self-regard, a phenomenon captured in intersectionality and critical race theory’s identity narratives methodology.

Structural Analysis as Secondary Methodology

In order to contextualize the effect of structures and institutions on the narratives of individuals, I expanded my methodological scope to include an institutional and contextual analysis of the policies, agencies and political culture that are relevant to the issues of immigration and integration in contemporary Sweden. The Swedish welfare state, the foundation of Swedish exceptionalism, provides the governmental logic and the sizeable tax base for the creation and development of agencies designed to facilitate migration, refugee resettlement and integration. In addition to governmental agencies, the political culture with a strong emphasis on equality and consensus undergird the support for these agencies and is, in fact, partly responsible for their creation. These state agencies and this political culture provide the institutional context

for the integration of women of color in Swedish society and play a significant role in the lives of the women I interviewed for this project. While the impetus for success is internally derived, first and second generation women of color in Sweden live in one of the few societies on Earth where social and class mobility is not just an empty promise, but an achievable goal.

In this dissertation, I detail the various agencies as they function today and their institutional context in an attempt to capture political culture and policy as it relates to questions of migration, refugee resettlement and integration. This methodological focus is based on the assertion that structure plays an important role in the ability of first and second generation Swedish women to achieve socio-economic mobility. By examining these structures, I aim to identify the state context of integration in Sweden as a single, in-depth model for state-led integrationist policies that may be applied to other states in the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD states) facing high rates of refugee resettlement and integration. I use OECD as the salient category of country comparison with Sweden because all member states join under the premise that they are committed to democracy and the market economy. Thus, in today's global economic and political climate, the vast majority of the 34 member states are developed, high-income economy states and include the set of countries often referred to as belonging to the "Global North."

Why is Structure Important?

In exploring the success of integration in this case, I look at two factors, one structural and one psychological. The psychological factor is that of individual agency, identification and narrative, which I outlined above. The structural factor is that of intergenerational mobility and whether and to what degree it exists in Sweden. Intergenerational mobility, the aggregate change in socio-economic status between successive generations within families, tells us a lot about the prospects of immigrants and their families in host countries. The importance of this structural

analysis of the institutions and discourse that contribute to intergenerational mobility addresses the idea that agency and personal determination are not enough to overcome structural barriers to integration and socio-economic mobility.

In an OECD report on the intergenerational transmission of disadvantage, Anna Cristina d'Addio argues for the importance of intergenerational mobility based on three claims: 1. Resource allocation across generations may affect overall social welfare, 2. Intergenerational mobility may reduce economic inequality, promote social justice and lead to a more equitable allocation of resources and 3. Intergenerational mobility may reduce economic inefficiency by capitalizing on the productivity and skill of individuals at every level of society (d'Addio, 2007, p. 12). These three arguments for intergenerational mobility are immediately applicable to the discussion of integration in rapidly diversifying societies. Her first and second arguments address how intergenerational mobility can improve the economic prospects of first and second generation immigrants and thus the equity of society as a whole. Her third point is particularly poignant in reference to the demographic of recent immigrants to Sweden from Syria and from previous groups of immigrants from Iran and Chile. As an example, the Swedish state is currently experiencing a shortage of medical doctors. Yet with the recent immigration of well-educated Syrian refugees to Sweden and the immigration of well-educated Iranians over the past few decades, Sweden has a significant population of non-native medical doctors, who, due to the stresses of asylum-seeking and the difficulties of recertification, cannot currently fill the demand for more doctors. In this context, intergenerational mobility raises the question of whether the children of highly-educated refugees can eventually fill this need for educated professionals despite the poor labor market performance of their first-generation immigrant parents.

The Three Forms of Capital that Contribute to Socio-Economic Mobility

Intergenerational mobility can be conceived of as different forms of capital, which shape one's opportunities, abilities and resources to seek education, employment, wealth and power. In order to parse intergenerational mobility and examine its component parts, I turn to Pierre Bourdieu for his definition of the various forms of capital that contribute to changes in socio-economic status. Bourdieu rejects the classical economic theory of capital as material goods that can be immediately converted into money. He complicates this understanding of capital to include "priceless things [that] have their price" and that function as power in the economy in a less readily recognizable way than pure material capital. He divides capital into *economic capital*, or that which is directly convertible into money and thus can be institutionalized in the form of property rights; *cultural capital*, which can be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications; and *social capital*, which can be institutionalized in the form of nobility but also includes all forms of formal and informal social networks (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 47). All three forms of capital can eventually be converted into money. The process of conversion, however, is made difficult by the reluctance of those in power (the bourgeoisie) to acknowledge these different forms of capital that compete with economic capital even though as holders of economic capital, they themselves have more access to these secondary forms of capital. For example, cultural capital in the form of a high level of education can lead to economic gain, but a high level of education is more easily afforded to an individual whose parents have the economic capital to invest in their children's education.

For the purpose of this case study of first and second-generation immigrants, many of whose parents arrived in Sweden as refugees, I will focus primarily on cultural and social capital. Economic capital, that is material and financial capital transferred from one generation to the next through gifts and inheritance, was largely left in countries of origin as asylum-seekers fled

on very short notice without their material possessions, incomes, bank accounts and assets. In light of this initial absence of economic capital, social and cultural capital are most relevant to the discussion of intergenerational mobility for refugee families. In addition to treating social and cultural capital as it exists in the private sphere, I will also identify the ways in the state can create social and cultural capital for its citizens, particularly the ways in which Swedish state institutions are currently doing so.

Methodological Caveat

Before turning to my structural analysis and the data collected during my unstructured interviews with participants, I will acknowledge the epistemological and methodological weaknesses of my approach, especially in comparison with psychological approaches. Intersubjectivity, the social and psychological interaction between individuals, can be argued to be merely a way of couching researcher bias and lack of critical distance. Additionally, it can also be argued that my identity as a woman of color in a Western society, which I argue gives me an important standpoint for the analysis of this case, can very well lead me to project my own feelings and experiences on my participants. Conversely, in the field of psychology, psychologists are able to maintain a professional distance from their patients by preserving the roles of doctor and patient. While this professional separation between doctor and patient may prevent deeper intersubjective understanding, it does not prevent the development of rapport. Psychologists also employ a battery of testing and diagnostic material that controls for personal bias in interpretation and ensures a degree of standardization that my own method does not. Furthermore, by limiting the level of analysis to the thoughts, behaviors and experiences of the individual, psychologists do not run the risk of extrapolating their results to wider society without sufficient evidence.

Despite the weaknesses outlined above, my use of unstructured interviews, while similar to methodology used by psychologists, also differs in ways that I believe substantiate my choice of method. In my interviews with participants, I did not focus on the daily lived experiences of my participants alone. Throughout my interviews, I was able to prompt my participants to speak to the realities of Swedish society more broadly. While based on personal interpretation and viewpoint, many of my participants had clear and informed understandings of Swedish politics, culture, society and economics. For the purposes of this exposition, I substantiate their claims about the realities of Swedish society in data collected through scholarly, journalistic and governmental sources, as evidenced in Chapter 3: Why Sweden? The Political and Historical Context and Chapter 4: Discrimination and Whiteness in Sweden. Although in need of external substantiation, their understandings of their own society and political system provide insight into the internal narrative constructed around the external world. In addition to speaking of Sweden more broadly, because I was able to build rapport and trust through intersubjectivity, my participants often asked me about my own experiences as a woman of color living in the United States and the character of American politics, culture and society. The shared understanding that myself and my participants had similar epistemological standpoints as women of color in Western societies gave me access and insight that I do not believe would have been possible had I been a White and/or male interviewer or had I employed structured interviews. Finally, in lieu of standardization, I conducted my interviews until I was able to establish a clear, consistent and readily apparent pattern in the narratives of my participants. While I make no claims to speak for and about *all* women of color in Sweden, I believe that the robustness of my interview data, as based on the theories of standpoint feminism and intersectionality and the concept of

subjectivity, allows me to make a strong claim to a clear and consistent pattern and to the lived reality of many women.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, as a means of grounding my claims to knowledge production, I have addressed my epistemological belief that a study of this nature cannot be approached from the perspective of the neutral, objective researcher. I instead turn to feminist standpoint theory, which argues for the inclusion of research identity particularly in studies looking at minority populations, and intersectionality, which reminds us that individuals who belong to multiple categories of minority identities experience compounded effects of discrimination and exclusion. Both standpoint feminist theory and intersectionality are based, in part, on the role that an individual's internal dialogue, personal beliefs and subjective experience plays on their socio-political actions. Standpoint feminist theory makes the claim that researchers with identities similar to their subjects have greater insight into the thoughts and actions of their subjects. Intersectionality points to the internalized repercussions of discrimination and exclusion. Critical race theory calls for a critical analysis of the presence of race and racism in social structures that act on and are acted by people of color. These three theoretical lenses led me to approach this project through the philosophical concept of subjectivity, or the idea that reality is understood and acted upon through the mediated lens of the individual, and narrative. By orienting this project around the concept of subjectivity and the narratives of my participants, I substantiate my use of in-depth interview methodology, while also recognizing that the mediated lens of the individual is determined in part by the structural context in which they live.

In Chapter 3: Why Sweden? The Political and Historical Context, I explore the structural context of this dissertation through an overview of the political history, political culture and contemporary welfare state in this dissertation's country case: Sweden. I begin with the idea of

“exceptional Sweden” in terms of its recent rates of immigration, particularly refugee immigration, its international record as a model state and its unique political history and contemporary political system. I focus on political culture, particularly the societal-wide emphasis on equality, to identify the ideological roots of the policies that most affect recent immigrants, both for better and for worse. The goal of Chapter 3 is to provide both the context of immigration and integration for Sweden’s women of color and to detail the prevailing international and domestic understanding of the state, its politics and its values. As we will see in Chapter 4: Discrimination and Whiteness in Sweden, both the Swedish state and society present a very different experience for its non-White members than the exceptional state detailed in the Chapter 3 would lead one to expect.

CHAPTER 3 WHY SWEDEN? THE POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Case Selection

Having identified my epistemological orientation, theoretical frameworks and methodological approach, I now turn to the case in which I chose to apply my critical approaches. Although minority cultural groups and the women within those groups exist in all Western nations, I chose to focus on the case of Sweden as an example case for a recently-diversifying, high-immigration, high-capacity state, in which these issues are more acute, and, relative to older immigration states, very recent. In this chapter, I detail the exceptional qualities of the Swedish state, society and culture that make it the ideal case study for the application of my research questions. Sweden's high rate of immigration, rapid population growth, exceptional records in equality, secularization, economic growth, innovation, absence of corruption and human rights as well as the robustness of the welfare state and the resulting intergenerational mobility provide the structural conditions for the economic and political integration of immigrants. I evaluate these structural conditions in the context of the contemporary Swedish welfare state and its history in order to illustrate the context of integration for Sweden's women of color.

I came to the topic of immigrant integration in Sweden through the Scandinavian Crime Literature genre. Reading the novels as a hobby, I began to notice a consistent motif of the dark-haired, dark-skinned, foreign-tongued immigrant presence on the white, wintery Nordic landscape. Most Scandinavian Crime authors chose to use the immigrant, the 'Other,' as the red herring in a society that is quick to look outside its ethnic borders for the source of its problems and crimes.¹ Factually, these societies have seen an increase in crime with the increase in

¹ Edwardson 2010; Indridason 2010; Mankell 2003; Nesbø 2009; Adler-Olson 2015; Kepler 2015

immigrant population, stemming from the slow process of integration, nonexistent social ties and lack of economic prospects.² There has also been a rise in hate crimes committed in these countries by native Scandinavians who feel that immigrant presence represents a burden on their welfare state economies.³ While the reality of the situation is that crime in these countries are related to the recent influx of immigrants, the authors of these fictional works in large part chose to create White, native criminals situated in a context wherein the blame is often first directed at immigrants of color. This reappearing narrative suggested to me that the Scandinavian countries were experiencing a different kind of immigration than North America and that the tensions in society were mirrored by the fictional societies of these crime novels.

An analysis of immigration and immigrants in Scandinavian crime literature is worthy of a dissertation in its own right. Rather than progress further into this discussion, I merely aim to identify the origins of this intellectual puzzle and the identification of my specific country case, namely Sweden. Nordic crime authors write about Norway (Jo Nesbø, Anne Holt and Karin Fossum), Denmark (Jussi Adler-Olsen and Peter Høeg), Sweden (Henning Mankell, Håkan Nesser, Åke Edwardson, Lars Kepler, and Åsa Larsson), Finland (James Thompson, Matti Joensuu, and Leena Lehtolainen) and Iceland (Yrsa Sigurðardóttir). Arguably suitable additions to this group are the Scottish and Irish crime novels as exemplified by the works of Ian Rankin

² Beckley, Kardell & Sarnecki, 2014; Hallsten, Szulkin, & Sarnecki, 2013

³ According to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE ODIHR) and the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå), the number of hate crimes, or crimes defined as motivated by xenophobia and/or racism, has been increasing since 2010, with 3,786 hate crimes motivated by xenophobia reported in 2010 to 4,765 hate crimes motivated by xenophobia reported in 2015 (Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, 2014; The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå), 2016). In 2010, the Sweden Democrats entered parliament with 5.7% of the vote and in 2014, they increased their share of seats winning 12.9% of the vote. As of October 5th, 2016, the Sweden Democrats are polling at 18.8% (Tullgren, 2016).

and Tana French, respectively. Authors from this broader Northern European group all touch upon the motif of immigration and crime, so why did I set my sights on Sweden?

Immigration to Sweden: First and foremost, Sweden is distinct from the countries listed above due to the exceptionally high per-capita rate of immigration that the country has experienced beginning in the late 1970s, early 1980s. Based on comparative data collected from 2014, Sweden received the largest absolute number of refugees in Europe after Germany and was the first largest recipient of refugees per capita, accepting 316 refugees for every 100,000 people (“Europe’s migrant acceptance,” 2015). According to statistics kept by the Swedish Migration Bureau, the country took in 81,301 people in 2014 and 162,877 people in 2015, the highest rate of refugee/immigrant acceptance in Swedish history (“Statistik – Migrationsverket,” 2016).

Prior to World War II, Sweden was an emigration, not an immigration country, with over 1.3 million Swedes emigrating, predominantly to the United States, in search of economic opportunity and religious freedom. In the post-World War II era, Sweden became a net-immigration country as migrants from Germany, other Nordic countries and the Baltic countries migrated in search of job opportunities. This influx of migrant workers caused a housing shortage that led to tighter restrictions on immigration and the development of a large-scale housing plan, the Miljon Programme, to build 100,000 apartments per year between 1965 and 1974. This period of tighter immigration restrictions and the recovery of economies in other European states led to a short period of declining immigration.

Immigration picked up shortly thereafter, however, with the rise to power of Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet in 1973, the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and the subsequent Iran-Iraq war. Between 1973 and 1989, Sweden accepted 18,000 Chilean refugees and as of December

2015, there are 56,123 people of Chilean background living in Sweden, the third largest diaspora of Chileans after Argentina and the US (“Rise of Asylum Seekers,” 2016; “Befolkning efter”)⁴. Between 1980 to 1989, Sweden accepted approximately 27,000 Iranians and 7,000 Iraqis; as of December 2015, there are 103,313 people of Iranian descent in Sweden and 195,891 of Iraqi descent, together accounting for over 3% of the country’s total population (“Rise of Asylum Seekers,” 2016; “Befolkning efter,” 2015)⁵.

The next large-scale migration came with the Yugoslav wars, during which 115,900 people immigrated to Sweden as refugees from the former Yugoslavian states. As aforementioned, prior to the period of refugee immigration, Yugoslavs made up a substantial proportion of migrant labors already in Sweden; by 1980, there were already 37,982 Yugoslavs living in Sweden. This migrant labor population, the refugee population that entered the country within two decades later and the continued migration under the family unification policy has led to a considerable and steady increase in population of people of former Yugoslav descent. As of December 2015, there are 289,717 people who trace their roots to either Yugoslavia or one of the former Yugoslavian states (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia) (“Befolkning efter,” 2015). In addition to the groups described above, there are sizeable Somali (89,409 people in 2015), Lebanese (59,067), Afghani (38,614), Eritrean (37,622), Ethiopian (30,471) and Vietnamese (27,208) populations who have been steadily

⁴ Descent is based on the combined number of people born in that country plus the number of Swedes born to one or more parents of that descent.

⁵ Sweden does not keep records on its residents’ ethnicity, religion or race as census categories. The relevant census categories are place of birth, citizenship, parents’ citizenship and birthplace of parents. As a result of this system of categorization, it is impossible to know, for example, what percentage of the 7,000 Iraqis who entered Sweden in the 1980s were Muslim Kurds, Muslim Arabs or Christian Assyrians.

entering the country over the last three decades due to civil and inter-state wars and the family reunifications that follow (“Befolkning efter,” 2015).

When I first began my dissertation project, I identified the value in integration research for existing first and second generation immigrants in Sweden, those belonging to the groups described above. In my third year of studying immigration and integration in Sweden (2015), the Syrian Civil War had driven over 4.5 million people from the country’s borders. In 2015, hundreds of thousands of Syrians as well as thousands of people from Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo, Albania, Pakistan, Eritrea, Nigeria, Iran and Ukraine entered Europe in search of asylum (“Migrant crisis,” 2016). News sources estimated that over 1 million people entered Europe in search of asylum in 2015 alone. By the end of the year, Sweden had accepted over a 160,000 people, 51,338 of whom were asylum seekers from Syria (“Asylsökande till Sverige,” 2016). While the number of refugees entering the country have returned to a pre-2015 level, the state is currently struggling with finding adequate housing and resources for the new arrivals. The short term focus is on the basic material needs of these individuals, but in the long-term, Sweden will have to contend with the integration of historically high numbers of people who entered the country in a relatively short time frame.

Indigenous vs. Immigrant Ethnic Minorities in Sweden: Before continuing this discussion of integration as it relates to the immigrant groups described above, there is an important distinction that must be drawn between indigenous groups and immigrant populations that addresses why this dissertation does not include the Sami ethnic minority in Northern Sweden as part of the same study. Integration as a political project operates along two separate dimensions. In one direction, the individuals within minority cultural groups must, at minimum, economically and politically integrate into wider-society, regardless of whether they choose to

integrate culturally and socially. Simultaneously, the majority cultural group must recognize the members of minority cultural groups as members of the same society and as members of the shared national imagined community. Political recognition as afforded by special minority status and self-rule does not require that members of minority groups culturally and socially integrate into wider societies. Isolated, local economies in lands owned and occupied by indigenous minorities also precludes the need for economic integration into the larger state and international economy.

In Sweden, the Sami indigenous people of Northern Sweden, Finland and Norway have been granted a significant degree of self-determination, including self-governance through an independent, Sami legislature. The majority of the Sami who have remained in the far northern communities of these countries are not socially or politically integrated into the dominant Swedish, Finnish and Norwegian societies. In terms of economic integration, the Sami produce reindeer meat that is incorporated into the broader Swedish economy, but outside of agricultural production, Sami who remain on Sami controlled land are relatively unintegrated into the Swedish economy (Utsi et. al., 2005). Thus, although the Sami are now de jure recognized as equal citizens of these states, they are not de facto members of the dominant societies nor are they a part of the imagined community. Indigenous multiculturalism, that is the recognition of the cultural rights of indigenous minorities and the policies designed to institutionalize the protection of those rights at the state level, is a useful theoretical construct for groups like the Sami, but it acknowledges that there are separate sets of issues for indigenous minority groups than for immigrant minority groups.

Exceptional Sweden

As exemplified by the immigration trends described above, Sweden has shown itself to be an exceptional state when it comes to refugee resettlement; acknowledging that global

conflicts are global responsibilities and wealthy states must provide access and shelter to those driven from their home countries. Sweden has also been deemed by academics and international public discourse to be exceptional across an array of measures: championing human rights⁶, growing the economy⁷, providing a robust welfare safety net⁸, innovation⁹, lack of corruption¹⁰, rapid secularization¹¹, and, most significantly, gender equality¹². As an international role model,

⁶ See Brysk (2009), p. 42, “Sweden sets the gold standard for human rights foreign policy promotion: funding, sheltering, mediating, and advocating for a full spectrum of human rights, all over the world, for several generations.” See also Freedom House Ranking at freedomhouse.org/

⁷ See Carlgren (2015) “In the mid-1850s, Sweden was a poor agrarian country on the periphery of Europe. 120 years later, Sweden was one of the wealthiest nations in the world.” See also Knudsen & Johnson (2016) “Sweden’s economic boom will continue in 2016, allowing it to grow three to four times faster than those of Scandinavian peers Denmark and Norway, a Reuters poll showed on Wednesday, with economics raising their Swedish forecast;” Irwin, N. (2011, June 24). Five economic lessons from Sweden, the rock star of recovery. *Washington Post*.

⁸ See Kwan Chan and Bowpitt (2005), p. 125, “Sweden has always been regarded as ‘the archetype of a universal model’...after comparing a wide range of welfare states, Doyal and Gough (1991, p. 290) conclude that the Swedish welfare state ‘emerges as the global leader, the country most closely approximating optimum need-satisfaction at the present time.’ See also Swenson (2002), p. 3, “The Swedish government...is hardly surpassed in the generosity of its monetary benefits and supply of services for people needing them because of childbearing, child rearing, unemployment, sickness, disability, and old age.”

⁹ See European Union’s Innovation Union Scoreboard (2015), “Sweden has confirmed its innovation leadership...Compared to 2014, innovation performance has increased in 15 EU countries, while it declined in 13 others.” See also Pentland (2013), “all of Sweden’s three most populated cities are on the list of the top 15 most inventive cities, the smallest of those three cities is the highest on the list. The city of Malmö in southern Sweden ranks fourth on the list of cities with the most patent applications per 10,000 residents.”

¹⁰See Haynie (2016), “The Most Transparent Countries, including nations like Sweden and New Zealand, scored highest on a compilation of five country attributes: corrupt, transparent business practices, transparent government practices, trustworthy and well-distributed political power.” See also Ekman (2007), “A slew of alleged bribery scandals involving major Swedish companies has surfaced in recent months, challenging Sweden’s image – both at home and abroad – as virtually squeaky clean.”

¹¹ See Steinfels (2009), “Anyone who has paid attention knows that Denmark and Sweden are among the least religious nations in the world. Polls asking about belief in God, the importance of religion in people’s lives, belief in life after death or church attendance consistently bear this out.” See also Zuckerman (2009), “In general the Scandinavian countries are considered among the most secularized in the world... With regard to the belief in the central tenets of the Christian faith such as God, an afterlife, heaven, hell, and sin, both Danes and Swedes exhibited some of the lowest scores in Europe.”

¹² See Rothschild (2012), “By most people’s standards, Sweden is a paradise for liberated women. . . . In 2010, the World Economic Forum designated Sweden as the most gender-equal country in the world.” See also Numhauser-Henning (2015), “According to the latest EU gender equality index Sweden comes out as **number one in gender equality**, scoring 74.3% as compared to the EU average of 54%. . . . **Gender mainstreaming** has long been (1994) a central feature and a main strategy of Swedish gender policies, meaning that decisions in all policy areas and at all levels are to be permeated by a gender equality perspective.” (emphasis in original).

Sweden presents the opportunity to examine the process of immigration and integration for refugees in a context with a robust economy and democracy, substantial welfare programs and social safety net, respect for human rights, equality as a foundation of the political culture and a highly mobile socio-economic system.

Intergenerational Mobility: An important justification for my decision to study Sweden when looking at the integration of refugees and their children is that, relative to other OECD countries, Sweden has one of the highest rates of intergenerational mobility. Intergenerational mobility is a measurement of the effect of parents' socio-economic status on their children's socio-economic outcome as adults. The Nordic countries in general fair far better in evaluations of intergenerational mobility than their OECD counterparts (OECD, 2010, p. 198). While Sweden is often ranked fifth in a comparison between Denmark, Norway, Finland, and Iceland, as aforementioned, Sweden also accepts the largest number of refugees both in aggregate and per capita of these five countries. Thus data on intergenerational mobility in Sweden includes a significant percentage of data points collected from several generations of refugee families. Thus analysis of intergenerational mobility in Sweden is complicated by questions of structural racism and the effects of recent migration, questions which are not nearly as salient for Denmark, Norway, Finland and Iceland.

Relative to OECD countries *not* including its Nordic neighbors, Sweden is consistently higher on measures of intergenerational mobility including intergenerational persistence of educational level and intergenerational earnings elasticity, or how sons' earnings compare to their fathers' (OECD, 2010, pp. 187 and 190). For example, a father's income is correlated to his son's in Sweden at a lower rate (.27) than in the United States (.47). Another way of looking at earnings elasticity is by looking at where sons end up on the earnings ladder relative to their

fathers. In Sweden, 11 percent of sons whose fathers were in the bottom 20 percent of the earnings ladder ended up in the top 20 percent of the earnings ladder. In comparison, only 6 percent of sons in the United States whose fathers were in the bottom 20 percent ended up in the top 20 percent. In a society with perfect mobility, this figure would be 20 percent: 20 percent of sons whose fathers were in the bottom 20 percent of the earnings ladder would end up equally represented across all five earnings groups (Jäntti et al., 2006, p. 33).

Intergenerational mobility in Sweden as compared to the United States also tells us a little about the function of mobility in unequal societies. The argument presented in the ‘American Dream’ is that socio-economic inequality is acceptable as long as there is high mobility. In traditionalist, class societies where inequality exists simultaneously with immobility (i.e. the caste system in India, the pre-modern feudal states of Europe), an individual born into the lowest class, or any class, will remain there through the trajectory of her life. Conversely, the American Dream tells tale of a society in which anyone born into abject poverty can use access to the opportunities of free market capitalism to enrich herself and ascend to a higher socio-economic class. Thus socio-economic privilege is not reserved for accidents of birth alone, but is hypothetically open to any individual in a society who can ascend socio-economic classes through hard work and determination:

When the Economic Mobility Project (2009)...conducted a nationally representative poll that asked Americans what they understood [the “American Dream”] to mean, some typical answers included: “Being free to say or do what you want”; “Being free to accomplish almost anything you want with hard work”; and “Being able to succeed regardless of the economic circumstances in which you were born.” These meanings have historically not only made the American Dream a defining metaphor of the country, they are also likely a reason why Americans have been willing to tolerate a good deal more inequality of outcomes than citizens of many other rich countries (Corak, 2013, p. 79).

As Corak argues, the negative correlation between income inequality and intergenerational mobility, referred to as the “Great Gatsby Curve,” contradicts the logic of the “American Dream”

(Corak, 2013). The passivity and conservative economic policies encouraged by such a belief system has led to the development of extremely high inequality in the United States, which has now been shown to correlate with low social mobility.

Conversely, the Swedish state is characterized by both high social mobility and, simultaneously, relatively low inequality. Inequality that does exist is in large part between ethnic Swedes and recent refugee populations from Africa and the Middle East and these same immigrant populations experience different rates of social mobility compared to other immigrant groups. Immigrants from Africa and the Middle East experience the highest rates of intergenerational mobility, but in sharp contrast with the intergenerational mobility experienced by all other immigrant groups with the exception of Southern Europeans and Turks, intergenerational mobility between first and second generation is in a negative direction (Hammerstedt and Palme, 2006, p. 18). Thus the children of refugees from Africa and the Middle East on average earn considerably less than their parents.

It is important to note that these immigrant and refugee families from Africa and the Middle East are the most recent additions to the Swedish populace, have arrived in periods of global recession and in much greater numbers. These populations have also come to Sweden from further afield, with fewer material resources, lower educational backgrounds and from highly disparate cultures. Africans and Middle Easterners are thus subject to more pronounced discrimination and Othering and many, particularly from Afghanistan and sub-Saharan Africa do not have the resources to invest in the human capital of their children. I argue that this trend will also shift with the large influx of refugees from Syria. Syrian refugees, like their Iranian predecessors, achieved higher education in Syria before relocating to Sweden, are of middle class background and are thus more likely to invest in the human capital of their children

While the implications of this study in 2006 are grim for Swedes of African and Middle Eastern descent, as Hammerstedt and Palme discovered, however, immigrants from Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin and North America and the other Nordic states experience positive social mobility (intergenerational earnings increases) at a higher rate than ethnic Swedes (pp. 18-19). This increased social mobility for older, settled immigrant groups and for immigrants from other OECD states suggests that the Swedish welfare state has been relatively successful in the economic integration of immigrants and early waves of refugees (from Latin America and the Soviet bloc) in large part, as I will argue, due to the structure and policies of the welfare state and due to the categories of people who experience more or less discrimination in society than others.

Political History of Sweden: 1500 to 1900

So how did this relatively mobile society and advanced welfare state emerge? Before turning to a discussion of the ways in which the Swedish state creates the social and cultural capital necessary for positive social mobility, I will explain the evolution of Swedish politics and political culture as well as the contemporary structure of the Swedish welfare state. An overview of Sweden's political development will demonstrate how the underlying social democratic logic of the contemporary state has led to the creation of institutions that create the non-economic capital that is accessible to first and second generation Swedes.

The development of the Swedish Welfare State has its roots in the development of the early modern Swedish state beginning in the sixteenth century. Over a period of approximately three hundred years, the growth and institutionalization of the Swedish state coincided and correlated with the development of a political culture with strong emphases on political participation, trust and equality. A political culture of this nature was a precondition for the development of a robust, lasting welfare state.

In the state building literature, Sweden is often discussed as an exceptional case in the pattern of Western European state development. Thomas Ertman places a strong emphasis on the impressive roles of both Gustav Vasa and Gustavus Adolphus, two Swedish kings in the early sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries respectively, as influential state makers (Ertman, 1997, pp. 313-314). Gustav Vasa, considered to be the father of modern Sweden, established a hereditary monarchy and standing army and garnered the support of nobles and peasantry throughout the country's many provinces (Nordstrom, 2000, p. 30-33). While Vasa effectively united Sweden and maintained the longest period of peace that the Swedish region had experienced in its medieval and early modern period, he is most credited for breaking Sweden's ties with the Roman Catholic Church and advocating for the Protestant Reformation. Vasa was not motivated by religious belief to break with the Papacy, but recognized the threat that Papal power posed to Swedish sovereignty and the excessive property and material wealth belonging to the Church that could be taxed, seized and used to finance state expenditures. Stein Rokkan, makes note of Sweden's and its Scandinavian neighbors' generally high ethnic and linguistic homogeneity, in part due to the early integration of the Lutheran Church into the Swedish state under Gustav Vasa (Rokkan, 1999, p. 166). This early state-sanctioned and state-controlled Lutheranism led to wide-spread cultural homogeneity and expansive bureaucratic development. Lutheran churches throughout early modern Sweden acted as the locus of local governmental power and representation in communities of all size.

Gustav Vasa's nephew Gustavus Adolphus further contributed to the development of the Swedish bureaucracy during his war-making reign from 1611 to 1632. Gustavus Adolphus is credited with the development of the Swedish army, modernizing and expanding the force so it

could be used to conquer neighboring states, and with creating a constitutional structure for the operation of the Swedish state:

At home he contributed to the achievement of a stable constitutional balance between the crown and nobility, development of the structures of a reasonably efficient administrative system, definition of the parliament's organization and functions, judicial reform, regional government reform, education encouragement and reform, and the foundation of a postal system (Nordstrom, 2000, p. 62).

Gustavus Adolphus' reign ushered in the short period of Swedish empire from his accession to power in 1611 to the signing of the Treaty of Nystad with Russia in 1721. Brian M. Downing describes the Swedish absolutist period that follows the reign of Gustavus Adolphus as a curious mix of militarism and populism, which he argues prevented the complete collapse of constitutionalism during Sweden's more absolutist periods, which occurred within the broader context of wide-spread absolutism in surrounding states (Downing, 1993, p. 187). This persistent constitutionalism, Downing argues, demonstrates the robust, historical roots of contemporary Swedish democracy.

Both Gustav Vasa and Gustavus Adolphus are notable state builders for their commitment to governance, rather than power accumulation, and the broad public support they received during their reigns. A common narrative in contemporary Swedish nationalist folklore revolves around the peasantry's support of Gustav Vasa's rise to power. After his father was murdered by Danish king Christian II in the Stockholm bloodbath, Vasa is said to have fled his father's assassins through the forests of the Dalarna province in Central Sweden. The Dalarna peasants first sheltered Vasa and eventually formed an army to support his claim to the throne. During Vasa's rule, the Dalarna peasants who viewed themselves as essential to the King's ability to take the throne repeatedly challenged his decisions in a series of uprisings, which Vasa was only just able to suppress. Part of the influence of the Swedish peasantry in the early modern era is due to what Charles Tilly calls Sweden's "exceptional rural class structure" wherein

landownership was characterized by a prevalence of tenants and small landholders, rather than large, feudal estates (Tilly, 1992, p. 27). In addition to the early establishment of a relatively equal, emancipated economic system, non-noble and non-clergy social-economic classes were represented in the earliest Swedish representative bodies. The earliest *riksmöte* (kingdom meeting) held in 1319, which would eventually become the *riksdag* (parliament), included the king, clergy, nobility, representatives of landholding farmers from every province and merchants from each city. By the time a riksdag was held in 1435 in Arboga, it was mandatory that a representative group of bishops, prelates, knights, squires, merchants and commoners attended each riksdag (Scott, 1977, pp. 111-112). From 1435 until its dissolution in 1866, the Riksdag of the Estates included the four main socio-economic groups in early modern Swedish society: Nobility, Clergy, Burghers and Peasants.

The foundations laid during this three-hundred-year, early modern period of 1500 to 1800 determine the political trajectory of 20th century Sweden. Rokkan's following statement summarizes the Swedish case most succinctly, "the stronger the inherited traditions of representative rule, the slower, and the less likely to be reversed, the process of enfranchisement and equalisation" (Rokkan, 1999, p. 249). Like the authors discussed above who identify Sweden as an unusual case based on their specific variables of state development, Knudsen and Rothstein argue that Sweden's transition to mass politics was unlike any other in Europe:

In the rest of Scandinavia and Europe...either trade unions or employers' organizations established labor exchanges and the ensuing struggle for control over these agencies – which had a critical impact on industrial relations – caused bitterness between the two sides of industry. In Sweden, however, the background of the estate tradition made a joint corporatist system seem only natural. (Knudsen and Rothstein, 1994, p. 213)

Knudsen and Rothstein are careful to illustrate that working class representation in public administration was a facet of Swedish politics before the era of the Social Democratic Party's

dominance and the establishment of the welfare state. They attribute this “statist,” rather than liberal, path to democratization to the history of the independent peasantry and strong representative organs in Sweden.

The transition from representative autocracy to the constitutional monarchy of today occurred between the years 1809, with the creation of a modern constitution, and 1921, with the introduction of universal suffrage. The 1809 constitution, which remained in effect, albeit with extensive amendments, until 1974, stipulated that the King “alone” ruled Sweden but that the parliament could collect taxes, introduce legislation and convene every five years to evaluate and impeach the King’s ministers. Most importantly, the parliament had control over taxation and thus the creation of the budget. The King could introduce legislation along with the parliament and held an absolute veto on any legislation passed by parliament. He appointed his own council of ministers and directed foreign policy (Nordstrom, 2000, p. 177). This system of constitutional monarchy exists today, but constitutional amendments and a new constitution passed in 1975 have substantially limited the abilities of the King, introduced the Prime Minister as head of government and increase the powers of the parliament. Although a limited form of democracy in the form of constitutional monarchy arrived early in Sweden, the country did not achieve universal suffrage until 1921 (universal suffrage was passed into law in 1919, but a full suffrage election did not occur until 1921).

Political Parties: The Swedish political parties evolved in tandem with the development of democracy in the late 19th and early 20th century and in doing so, helped institutionalize the new political system. The centrist and right parties formed from election organizations and parliamentary working groups and the left parties grew out of the spread of Marxist-Socialist ideology in the late 19th century (Nordstrom, 2002, p. 68). By the early 1920s, there were six

political parties organized from left to right: the so-called Sweden's Social Democratic Communist Party (*Sveriges socialdemokratiska vänsterparti*), the Social Democrats (*Socialdemokratiska arbetarepartiet*), the Liberal Party (*Frisinnade Folkpartiet*), the centrist Farmer's Party (*Lantmannapartiet*), and the Conservatives (*Högerpartiet*). Universal suffrage in Sweden was passed in large part due to the electoral reform platforms of the early Liberal and Social Democrat parties, a combined struggle that united the parties for their early history.

Today the political parties in Sweden fall across the left-right political spectrum in a similar pattern to that described above, and many of these parties have evolved from the six earliest parties. The far left in Sweden is represented today by the Left Party (*Vänster Partiet*), the left of center by the Social Democrats and the Green Party (*Miljöpartiet de Gröna*), the center by the Liberals (*Liberalerna*, formerly *Folkpartiet*), and the Moderates (*Moderaterna*), the right of center by the Centre Party (*Centerpartiet*) and the Christian Democrats (*Kristdemokraterna*) and the far right by the Sweden Democrats (*Sverigedemokraterna*). With the exception of the creation and rise of the Sweden Democrats, the Swedish political parties have remained relatively stable over the 95 years of Swedish democracy. The parties generally form two coalitions, a left and a right coalition, except in the rare occasions that a party holds a majority of the seats in parliament.

The Sweden Democrats, established in 1988 and entered parliament in 2010, however, have thrown off the left-right balance in the parliament. With 12.9% of the vote and 49 seats in the Riksdag, the Sweden Democrats are not only the third largest party in the Swedish parliament but the only populist, far-right party to win seats in successive Riksdag elections.¹³ Due to their

¹³ The populist anti-immigrant party New Democracy won 6.7% of the votes in 1991 when Sweden's immigration pattern shifted from European labor migrants to African and Middle Eastern refugees but the party failed to be re-elected after 1991.

inflammatory, anti-immigrant political platform, all of the other seven parties in the Riksdag have made an unofficial pact to exclude the Sweden Democrats from power. Although the right coalition would have had a majority if they had allowed the Sweden Democrats to join the coalition, all parties in both the left and right coalitions agreed that it would be better for the Social Democrats to govern with a minority coalition than have a right coalition that includes the Sweden Democrats govern as a majority.

Political Culture

The development of the Swedish state and party system as described above highlights the structural preconditions for the Swedish welfare state. Another oft-cited causal argument for the creation of this specific political economic system is the robust political culture in Sweden that has held constant since the early modern period. Arguably the most established cultural and political norm in Sweden is that of equality. The high level of institutionalized equality that is characteristic of Swedish political culture is also perhaps the most profound legacy of Sweden's state building history. As Rokkan and Downing argue, the continuance of representative organs throughout Sweden's history, originating with a four-estate (nobility, clergy, burgher and peasant) parliament and the local participatory governments, has led to a strong ethos of equality in Swedish society, which continues to distinguish the country on the international stage to this day.

The history of explicit policies of equality, particularly gender equality, is thought to originate with a law of equal inheritance for male and female siblings passed in 1845 (Björklund, 2007, p. 4). Today, the most popular policy example of equality is the paid parental leave policy for new parents, first established in 1995. In its current iteration, both heterosexual and homosexual parents are allocated 480 days of paid parental leave at 80% of their salaries to be split between them after having or adopting a child. Sixty of those days are explicitly put aside

for fathers in heterosexual relationships. If the father does not take those two months off, the family loses two months of parental leave thereby disincentivizing maternal-only leave. As a further example, Sweden was the first country to prohibit the purchase of sexual services in 1999 and thus the first country to address prostitution by punishing clients rather than sex workers. This law was created in recognition that the criminalization of prostitution *in toto* leads to further victimization of women rather than equal punitive treatment of sex workers and johns. Homosexuality was decriminalized in 1944 and Sweden was the seventh country in the world to legalize same-sex marriage in 2009 in recognition of the need for equality in the institution of marriage.¹⁴

While gender equality legislation is the most demonstrative display of Swedish commitment to equality, *Allemansrätt* and the redistributive thrust of the socio-economic welfare programs illustrate that Swedish equality is not single-issue. *Allemansrätt*, which translates to every man's right, refers to the right of common access. Everyone in Sweden, including foreign tourists and visitors, has the right to pick wild flowers, berries and mushrooms; use, bathe and travel by natural bodies of water; camp overnight; light personal camping fires and travel through and on any land, regardless of whether it is publically or privately-owned. There are practical limitations on *Allemansrätt*, such as the exclusion of private grounds, parks, cropland and gardens from public use and the exclusion of acts that may be harmful to the environment like lighting fires during droughts. While *Allemansrätt* is not itself a piece of legislation, but rather a cultural norm passed down through Swedish history, it has been institutionalized in pieces of legislation that refer to *Allemansrätt* in laying out restrictions for other issues of land

¹⁴ The Netherlands (2000), Belgium (2003), Canada (2005), Spain (2005), South Africa (2006), Norway (2009)

and resource use and today the Environmental Protection Board (*Naturvårdsverket*) maintains a list of guidelines on how allemansrätt must be practically applied (Colby, 1988).

The most important manifestation, however, of the political norm of equality in Swedish society and politics is the redistributive logic that underpins the social welfare state and its policies as a whole. The contemporary Swedish welfare state was developed by the Social Democratic Party (SAP) during the majority of the 20th century. The policies and legislation that were written to create this welfare system were based on the SAP's party ideology that wedded Marxist political-economic policies to practical-minded capitalist tenets designed to ensure a degree of equal distribution of wealth in a rapidly industrializing society. The goal was to create a system that ensured a degree of equality within capitalism without slowing economic growth and competitiveness on the global market. To quote Göran Persson, former SAP Prime Minister from 1996 to 2006:

Jämlikhet och utveckling inte bara går att förena utan också är varandras förutsättningar. Vi socialdemokrater väljer både och. Vi gör inte som postkommunisterna som bara väljer jämlikheten. Det har aldrig varit socialdemokratins väg, för vi vet att det krävs utveckling för att skapa välfärd som i sin tur skapar växande resurser som kan fördelas rättvist och jämlikt. (Protokoll, 2000, p. 8)

(Equality and development are not only compatible; they are also preconditions for one another. We social democrats choose both. We will not do as the postcommunists, who only want equality, do. This has never been the social democratic way because we know that development is required to create social welfare, which in turn creates growing resources which can be shared fairly and equally).

Persson underlines the party commitment to recognizing that economic growth creates a larger pool of resources that can be used to improve the quality of life of all Swedish citizens. The social democratic way, as Persson calls it, is premised on the belief that economic capital can be fairly and equally redistributed to all members of society through taxation, rather than through the statist economic policies pursued by the former communist states.

This ethos of equality is not limited to the political sphere, but is also manifest in traditional cultural practices and is best represented through two tenants of Swedish cultural belief: *lagom* and *jantelagen*. *Lagom*, which has no direct translation in English, can be best understood as the concept of ‘everything in moderation.’ In daily life, *lagom* is applied to the way people acquire and consume goods, interact with colleagues and peers, and inculcate reason and moderate behavior in their children. Due to the saturation of *lagom* in Swedish society, however, the term also resonates on the political level:

Lagom is also related to the sense of “unemotional practicality” whereby the Swedes believe all problems can be solved through logical reasoning. *Lagom* makes sense because it is fair, balanced, and logical. *Lagom* ensures that everyone has enough and nobody goes without. By discussing an issue rationally, a *lagom* point can always be reached. (Robinowitz & Carr, 2011, p. 78).

Lagom has a connotation for both the behavior of the individual and behavior of society as a whole. While the term is generally used in reference to finding a balanced, middle point, it resonates with the idea of equality insofar as equality itself is a moderate goal for the distribution of resources and opportunities within a socio-economic system.

Similarly, the law of Jante, or *Jantelagen*, functions in such a way that Swedish social norms undergird a political commitment to equality. In order to understand *Jantelagen*, one must first read the ten commandments of the law, which originate in a work of fiction entitled *A Refugee Crosses His Tracks*, written by Danish-Norwegian author Aksel Sandemose in 1933:

Thou shalt not presume that thou art someone.
Thou shalt not presume that thou art as good as we.
Thou shalt not presume that thou art any wiser than we.
Thou shalt never indulge in the conceit of imagining that thou art better than we.
Thou shalt not presume that thou art more knowledgeable than we.
Thou shalt not presume that thou art more [important] than we.
Thou shalt not presume that thou art going to amount to anything.
Thou art not entitled to laugh at us.
Thou shalt never imagine that anyone cares about thee.
Thou shalt not suppose that thou can teach us anything.

(Robinowitz & Carr, 2011, p. 81).

Scholars have determined that Sandemose modeled the town of Jante and its law on his Danish hometown of Nykøbing. Although written about Danish small town mentality, Jantelagen was quickly embraced by Swedes to describe their own social norms that had existed long before Sandemose wrote his novel. The term today is used to remind people to engage in humility and self-restraint, to aspire only to what is possible and likely to occur and to view themselves as in no way better than others, a set of prescriptions completely foreign to the self-aggrandizement of American society.

Jantelagen, like lagom, is fundamentally based on the idea of equality and the idea of maintaining equality above all else. Unlike lagom, however, Jantelagen is less universal than the idea of moderation, and a more restrictive norm with negative implications for innovation, ambition and diversity. While globalization, particularly access to American culture via television, music and the internet, has led to a decline in acquiescence to these two Swedish norms, the sentiment of both remain a part of Swedish society today and are still oft-heard in common Swedish discourse. This staying power demonstrates the robustness of equality in the Swedish value system. Even today, although universally recognized as the global model for gender equality, the Swedish state and society continues to actively engage with ideas for better gender equality. For example, the most popular political party not represented in the Riksdag, FI - the Feminist Initiative (Feministiskt initiative), was established in 2005 to address the gap between Sweden's global reputation as a leader in gender equality and the reality on the ground. Although FI has not gained the 4% threshold percentage of the vote to enter the Riksdag (although coming close in 2014 with 3.1%), the party was able to gain enough votes to enter the European Parliament in 2014 and holds seats in 13 municipalities. It is only a matter of time

before a party established first and foremost for the achievement of gender equality is elected to the national parliament of one of the most gender equal societies in the world.

While equality is arguably the most important component of Swedish political culture for the establishment of the welfare state, consensus is also seen as a key component of Swedish society and Swedish governance. Consensus, similarly predicated on social norms like lagom and Jantelagen, and based on equality at the negotiating table is oft represented by the historical Saltsjöbaden Agreement settled in 1938. At the Saltsjöbaden resort outside of Stockholm, the Swedish Employers Confederation (SAF) and the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO) signed an agreement, at the behest of the Social Democratic government, to establish the rules of industrial action without depending on legislation passed by the government. These rules were designed explicitly to avoid open conflict and to establish a norm of peaceful labor relations. While the Saltsjöbaden Agreement characterizes consensus in labor market decision-making practice, it is an oft referred to example of the “Swedish Model” of consensus politics:

There is a tradition of trying to reach agreement between different interests in society and to avoid open conflict. The...transformation of Sweden from a backward, peasant-dominated, and poor society, to an industrialized parliamentary democracy took place without explosive conflicts...A further expression of the Swedish consensus culture is the tendency towards corporatism, that is, the direct involvement of interest organizations in political decision-making. In particular, the trade unions were able to exert influence through their close links with the Social Democrats. (Lidström, 2011, p. 5)

This consensus culture played an important role in Swedish politics as recently as December 2014 when the minority Social Democrat government failed to get its budget approved by the Riksdag (Parliament). Neither the ruling center-left coalition or the opposition center-right coalition hold a majority in parliament and the balance of power remains with the third largest party the Sweden Democrats, a far right, anti-immigrant party. Initially, Stefan Löfven, the Swedish Prime Minister, called for snap elections in March 2015 to create a new government,

but because the Sweden Democrats vowed to gain even greater electoral success in the snap election by framing the election as a referendum on refugee migration, the mainstream parties held a meeting to find an alternative solution. In order to exclude the Sweden Democrats from power, the Moderates (Moderaterna), the Liberal Party (Liberalerna), the Christian Democrats (Kristdemokraterna), the Green Party (Miljöpartiet) and the Social Democrats agreed that the ruling center-left coalition would use the center-right coalition's proposed and approved budget to govern in 2015. Six parties from across the political spectrum chose to amend the rules of Swedish democracy in order to prevent the far right from wielding power.

Interestingly and perhaps counter-intuitively, individualism is the third key component to Swedish political culture. American individualism, the individual responsibility for self-sufficiency manifest in the American Dream, operates independently of a large safety net provided by the state. Americans must either be born into relative comfort or “pull themselves up by the bootstraps” in order to have a decent quality of life. In Sweden, the state provides a safety net for the individual, who, like the individual American, is only responsible for herself and her immediate family. But in the process of achieving self-sufficiency, the state furnishes the individual with adequate resources to do so and a comprehensive set of welfare policies on the off chance that she is not able to achieve self-sufficiency. Tage Erlander, former Prime Minister was quoted as saying “it is a mistake to believe that people's freedom is diminished because they decide to carry out collectively what they are incapable of doing individually (Tilton, 1992, p. 419). Erlander and architects of the Swedish state designed a system wherein the state provides a greater freedom of choice by removing structural barriers and inequality. This component of the welfare ideology is particularly relevant to the children of refugees who benefit from the

collectivist resource and opportunity provisions of the state and the individualism that allows them to pursue their own definition of self.

Värdfärdspolitik: The Golden Era of Social Democracy

The modern welfare state, premised on the existing political culture of equality, consensus and individualism, was developed by the Social Democratic Party (*Socialdemokratiska Arbetarepartiet*: SAP) between 1932 and 2006. During this period, SAP governed in majority, in minority or in coalition for 63 of the 74 years and has been the largest party in the Riksdag since 1917. The rise of SAP is attributed to the effects of the Great Depression as it rippled into Northern Europe. In the late 1920s, Swedish businesses attempted to cut wages to compensate for the decline in international sales. In 1931 when a protest against wage cuts ended in the death of several workers at the hands of the Swedish military, SAP, the party of workers, was able to gain enough support to win the national election after six years spent in the opposition. Once an avowedly Marxist party, the Social Democrats proved themselves to be practical-minded when in power and set about creating a democratic social welfare state, distancing themselves from their founding ideology without losing their emphasis on equality and redistribution:

Equality and redistributive justice were the parts of the social democratic ideological arsenal that were to guarantee broad support among the population. The limits...however, were set by the “liberal” responsibility for the overall function and growth of the economy. A party that aimed to be *statsbärande*, i.e. carrier of the responsibility of the state, could not afford populist shortsightedness. (Olsson, 1999, p. 149)

This period of social welfare state development under the Social Democrats is also credited with the development of the “Swedish model” of governance wherein the ruling party or coalition pushes through an agenda that aims to satisfy party policy while accommodating and negotiating with opposition parties. This consensus model of governance and the balance between “growth

and fairness or efficiency and equality” remain the standard of Swedish governing politics today (Olsson, 1999, p. 149).

Beginning in 1932, the Social Democrats employed the term *värdfärdspolitik* (welfare politics) often and widely to capture the party’s political platform and the socio-economic policies that helped Sweden recover from the interwar depression (Edling, 2013, p. 138). A commitment to ‘welfare politics’ became the battle cry of the ruling Social Democrats and the locus of critique for the opposition parties:

’The Social Democrats have launched a slogan and they want to base their entire election campaign on this slogan welfare politics’, noted [Moderate] party leader [Gösta] Bagge in 1936 well aware of the stakes involved. He attacked the socialist welfare myth and warned about the long-term dangers involved: that of a socialist planned economy. But the imminent threat was equally grave because the Social Democrats were about to conquer ‘welfare’ and they did this by portraying themselves as the only positive force in the history of Swedish social policy. (Edling, 2013, p. 141).

Attacks like Bagge’s ensured that the concept of welfare politics remained the intellectual and political property of the Social Democrat Party. Through the next 50 years of rule, the Social Democrats defined the policies of the Swedish welfare state while redefining itself from a party of workers to a party of the people. Today, welfare politics in popular global political discourse is strongly associated with Sweden and its Scandinavian neighbors who underwent similar political trajectories in the inter and post-war periods.

In the post-WWII era, the Swedish economy boomed as Swedish industry filled the vacuum of industries in war-ravaged Central and Western Europe and provided these states with the materials to rebuild their cities. As a result, the post-war period was characterized by a flood of economic migrants from the Swedish countryside and from war-torn continental Europe looking to participate in Sweden’s growing urban industries. This rapid demographic shift resulted in a serious housing shortage; the housing that did already exist in the cities was also in

desperate need of modernization. In response, the Social Democratic government instituted an ambitious plan in 1965 to build one million new residences in the cities, a program referred to then and today as the *Miljonprogram* (Million Homes Program). Apartment buildings under the Miljonprogram sprung up on the outskirts of nearly every Swedish city in less than a decade (Lindqvist, 2000). The Miljonprogram, like many Swedish welfare policies, was founded on the fundamental commitment to equality

A large majority of these new units were constructed in brand new suburbs designed as part of the program. Planners envisioned idyllic suburban neighborhoods with green spaces and new schools for the cities' workers and their families. Within a decade of the start of the program, however, the economic prosperity of the post-WWII period slowed and soon the housing shortage shifted to a housing surplus. Many of these Miljonprogram apartments stood empty until the first waves of migrant laborers began arriving from Southern Europe. And from the late 1970s and onwards, these apartment buildings have served as housing for Sweden's economic migrants and asylum seekers. These suburban neighborhoods, once intended to provide a place of refuge from busy city life, have become isolated ethnic enclaves with extremely high rates of unemployment and little access to the city centers.

This urban/suburban segregation is also related to the negative rate of intergenerational mobility experienced by African and Middle Eastern immigrants in Sweden as mentioned above:

This tendency towards increasing socio-economic segregation is intertwined with the emergence of a rather distinct pattern of ethnic residential segregation where almost all poor neighborhoods are immigrant dense, although not all of the country's 1.2 million foreigners (13 per cent of the total population) live in poor neighbourhoods. There is a distinct ethnic hierarchy...where labour market positions and residential segregation differ a great deal according to country of birth...Immigrant groups from neighbouring countries are generally found at the top of the hierarchy, with high unemployment rates and low indices of dissimilarity in relation to the Swedish majority population, while refugee immigrants from Western Asia and Africa are found at the bottom. (Andersson et. al, 2010, p. 242)

Lack of access to employment, lack of exposure to the native culture and shortage of resources, including higher quality education, compounds the disadvantage of groups from more disparate cultures who arrived in Sweden with fewer material and educational resources. I mention the Miljonprogram as both an important and oft discussed outcome of the period of welfare state development and as an important structural reality for recent immigrants and asylum-seekers to Sweden. While many of the welfare policies developed in the mid-20th century now represent equality of opportunity and access to resources for Sweden's newest citizens, the Miljonprogram is the most segregating and adverse structural policy that continues to have profound socio-economic consequences to this day.

The Contemporary Swedish Welfare State

The Miljonprogram and its contemporary association with segregation and inequality is an exception to the longevity of welfare statist ideals and policies set in place during the mid 20th Century. The Swedish welfare system, even in this contemporary context of globalized capitalism, migration and communication, remains relatively intact. The Swedish state today is characterized by a high state capacity and a large administrative bureaucracy developed during the reign of Gustav Vasa and the short period of Swedish empire (1611-1721) and institutionalized during the värdfärdspolitik period (1932-2006), both of which support the continued implementation of expansive welfare policies.

This sizeable welfare state is largely funded through taxation of production, labor and capital; and taxation of labor is equal to roughly 60% of the total taxes collected by the Swedish state or 25.6% of GDP (Årsredovisning Skatteverket, 2015, table 23). According to the Tax Statistical Yearbook of 2015 released by the Swedish Tax Agency (*Skatteverket*), individuals making SEK 400,000 (Swedish kronor) a year (approximately \$47,000 USD) pay 26.2% of their income in direct taxes. As a comparison, in California, the US state with the highest income tax,

individuals making USD \$47,000 pay 21.98% of their income in direct taxes (State of California Franchise Tax Board). This disparity exists even in light of the fact that this rate of 26.2% is a record low after eight years (2006-2014) under a center-right, liberal party coalition led by the Moderate Party (*Moderaterna*). As a contrast, that same individual making SEK 400,000 a year in 2006 paid approximately 33% of her income in direct taxes (Årsredovisning Skatteverket, 2015). This 2006 rate is much more characteristic of the high rate of household taxation throughout the 20th century Social Democratic era.

With relatively high rates of taxation, the welfare state in Sweden is well-funded and able to provide numerous services to its citizens. The rate of taxation and the willingness of Swedes to continue to pay high taxes is indicative of the state capacity and citizens' trust of a large state apparatus (Årsredovisning Skatteverket, 2015, pp. 12-26). For example, Knudsen and Rothstein point to Sweden's active labor market policy and administration, which they argue is the flagship of the social democratic welfare state, as indicative of the penetration of the Swedish state in the private lives of its citizens (Knudsen and Rothstein, 1994, p. 217). The Swedish Public Employment Service (*Arbetsförmedlingen*) is able to keep unemployment rates low by asking people to move to different parts of the country in exchange for continuing to receive unemployment benefits, but this system is dependent on citizens' willingness to accept the legitimacy of a corporatist state imposing comparatively stringent conditions on them. Knudsen and Rothstein term this form of governance paternalistic corporatism: "it is paternalistic in the sense that it supervises and guides; it is most benevolent, moreover, as long as one stays within the established norms" (Knudsen and Rothstein, 1994, p. 217).

Although the Swedish welfare state and welfare states in general are often discussed in terms of high state capacity, what is often overlooked is that this high state capacity is manifest in the control and taxation of citizens by their municipal, rather than central, government:

Swedish municipalities have a very strong independence in relation to the state and on average they tax their citizens 20.7 per cent of their wage income (SCB, 2009). However, to avoid the effects of large differences in tax bases there are several [centrally-implemented] systems effectively transferring money from rich to poor municipalities. (Andersson et al., 2010, p. 244)

This decentralization originates with the aforementioned premodern period in which Lutheran churches throughout Sweden operated as local governments that were responsible to the overarching national church office. When Gustav Vasa nationalized the church in 1536, those local governing bodies were then responsible to the state and allowed for effective control of the periphery by the center.

During the Väldfärspolitik period, the unitary nature of the state allowed the Social Democrats to develop the welfare state with little interference from other political bodies (the Parliament is the only body that decides the policies that are then implemented on the local level), but the decentralized model has then been instrumental in the efficient and particularized implementation of welfare policies in vastly dissimilar communities. The ability of the municipalities to implement policies based on the structure and needs of their own communities has allowed the state to engage in paternalistic corporatist government throughout the Swedish countryside and at every level of society. This decentralization of control has also had important repercussions for policy implementation in terms of recent immigration concerns. Returning to the Miljonprogram described above, because immigrants are largely concentrated in urban areas, the municipalities for Stockholm, Malmö and Gothenburg are disproportionately responsible for integration despite different dispersal policies created by the state (Andersson, 2007, p. 66).

As Andersson et al. contend, this decentralization has allowed municipalities to effectively implement policies of desegregation within single urban areas.

Geographic Fieldwork Context

During my first trips to Sweden, I stayed for the most part in Uppsala, a relatively small city of 186,000 people, and on the island of Tjörn outside of Gothenburg. I stayed in Uppsala and Tjörn in order to attend Swedish language immersion schools, but these forays into smaller urban and rural communities in Sweden have given me a more nuanced understanding of the country than if I had spent all my time in the three largest cities: Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö. Although Uppsala's proximity to Stockholm (45 minutes away by train) allowed me to spend a significant amount of time during those four months in the capital city, in both its central areas as well as in some of its 'notorious' immigrant suburbs. Finally, during my main research trip to Sweden during spring of 2015, I spent two months living in Sweden's third largest city, Malmö, located in the far south of the country followed by a month in Stockholm. In addition to living in Uppsala, Malmö and Stockholm, I have also traveled throughout the central and southern parts of the country, visiting smaller cities and towns as well as visiting the second largest city of Gothenburg.

My time spent in numerous parts of Southern and Central Sweden allowed me to identify shared characteristics of the urban, suburban and rural spaces. Due to the number of immigrants who have entered Sweden in the past three decades and the housing shortages in the major urban areas, there are immigrant families distributed throughout the country, including in rural areas. In the rural communities, there is a lower degree of residential segregation due in part to the lower densities and number of neighborhoods. There are also more employment opportunities for refugees settled in rural areas. Although some of the structural limitations afforded by the urban context are absent in the rural, the tensions between ethnic Swedes and non-ethnic Swedes,

exemplified in the urban centers, exist in these rural communities as well (Tamásy & Diez, 2016, p. 88).

Although each municipality is responsible for housing and employment for its city's refugees, Sweden's urban centers are characterized by a specific and consistent demographic pattern wherein there are distinct neighborhoods that are de facto segregated into different categories of Swedish citizens: "[the] tendency towards increasing socio-economic segregation is intertwined with the emergence of a rather distinct pattern of ethnic residential segregation where almost all poor neighborhoods are immigrant dense (Andersson, Bråmås and Holmqvist, 2009). Each urban center also has at least one heavily-immigrant neighborhood that is both notorious within the city and well known outside the city, and in the case of Stockholm suburb Rinkeby, outside the country. These neighborhoods have unintentionally developed out of the Miljonprogram, discussed above.

Not only do these notorious neighborhoods illustrate the consistency with which Swedish cities are segregated but the association made between these neighborhoods, their immigrant residents and notoriety illustrates the character of the contemporary Swedish immigration and integration discourse. In order to understand and communicate the phenomenological position of Swedes of color who feature so heavily in the immigration and integration discourse, I chose to conduct my interviews in the country's urban centers, sampling from women who live or have lived in the notorious neighborhoods as well as those who live in the city centers. I conducted all but one of my interviews in Malmö and Stockholm; the one outlier I conducted in Uppsala when the opportunity to do so presented itself.

The exceptional traits, intergenerational mobility rates, political history, parties, culture and the welfare values that undergird the modern Swedish state are not specific to the urban

areas of Sweden. Due to the distribution of immigrants to all Swedish cities and towns, the same conditions that make the country case of Sweden particularly amenable to the type of analysis put forth in this dissertation would be observable, I believe, throughout the country. I chose to focus on the country's major cities in order to explore experiences of segregation and as a microcosm for countrywide dynamics. In large part, urban anonymity ensures that personal ties do not distort and diminish broader societal tensions between groups; the discourse of cultural incompatibility and foreignness is not disrupted by interpersonal interactions and friendships. Due to the urban segregation mentioned above, immigrants and their children retain their Otherness and indistinguishability in the eyes of native Swedes. The high population density of immigrants in cities also intensifies the perception that immigration is occurring at an exceptionally high rate, masking the relatively low percentage of foreign born Swedes country-wide (~10%).

In this chapter, I presented an overview of the structural context in which immigrant integration is embedded. I focused on the long political history and political culture that have ensured a high rate of intergenerational mobility and a robust commitment to political and economic equality. Although the brunt of this chapter focuses on the equality created by the contemporary Swedish welfare state, I have also detailed the development of urban segregation, which occurred, in large part, as a result of the development of the Miljonprogram (Million Homes Program). The Miljonprogram and urban segregation, which defines much of the contemporary urban immigrant experience, are representative of a counter-narrative to Sweden as the exceptional state. While the structural conditions are undoubtedly in place for economic and political integration, segregation, in part, ensures that that social integration remains a barrier for immigrants to Sweden.

As revealed in Chapter 4, my fieldwork in these segregated cities yielded interesting results as racism appeared as an even larger barrier to social integration. Having described my choice of country case and the structural context of integration in this chapter, I now turn to a discussion of critical race theory and Whiteness as the appropriate critical lenses with which to problematize “exceptional Sweden.” As we will see from data I collected through in-depth interviews with Swedish women of color, race becomes the most salient point of discussion for the examination of integration in Sweden and the most compelling evidence that life in Sweden isn’t as ideal as it is often depicted to be.

CHAPTER 4 DISCRIMINATION AND WHITENESS IN SWEDEN

In this chapter, I identify Whiteness, the invisible privilege of white skin, as a pervasive component of Swedish politics and society, which counters the narrative of Sweden as the ideal state and society. I explore the theory of Whiteness and how it applies to the Swedish case, tracing the historical evolution of Whiteness in Sweden from a period of state-sponsored eugenics to today's state-sponsored "color-blindness" or denial of racially-based societal tensions. I substantiate my society-level analysis of the existence of these norms of Whiteness through an analysis of the interviews I conducted with individual Swedish women of color, focusing on their experiences of discrimination and exclusion on the basis of race. By highlighting the narratives of individual women of color, I demonstrate the range of ways that Whiteness manifests in their daily lives and provide a counter-narrative to the idea that religious and cultural identity alone act as barriers to social integration.

The Cultural Context

Before discovering the centrality of race, I began the original iteration of my dissertation project with Anne Phillips' *Multiculturalism without Culture*, in which she argues that the idea that women in minority cultural groups are prone to oppression and isolation rests on the assumption that members of minority cultural groups are wholly bound by the precepts of their cultures. This line of thinking also assumes that the cultures in which these women reside are static and homogenous. Thus to create legislation to protect these women risks depriving them of agency while professing to do just the opposite. In pursuit of cultural group identity as the salient category of belonging in this multicultural discourse, I began my fieldwork in Sweden with the express goal of capturing the interaction between agency and identity in the narratives of lived experience of these women in minority ethnic groups. Due to the growing presence of refugees

and immigrants from the Middle East, North Africa and Turkey in Western European states, Muslims in the West are the zeitgeist of contemporary migration research and central to popular discourse on migration and gender politics in Western Europe. Due to the centrality of Islam in these conversations, I had intended to interview Muslim Swedish women for my fieldwork to examine these claims of oppression and isolation.

Throughout the first several months of my initial fieldwork and language training, I noticed, however, that Muslim women appear to be integrated, at least into the Swedish economy, and enjoy a relatively high degree of independence and mobility within Swedish society. While it is erroneous to assume that this is true of all Muslim women in Sweden, many Muslim women, as identified by their head coverings (mostly chadors and hijabs), are active participants in the Swedish public sphere. In Malmö, which has the highest per capita immigrant population in Sweden, women in chadors and hijabs operate the public buses, work in retail stores and are visible members of Malmö's large and diverse urban population. As will be further substantiated in Chapter 5, which focuses on the results of my fieldwork, first and second generation immigrant women who have grown up in Sweden maintain their Muslim religious identities while simultaneously pursuing the same opportunities and resources as their native Swedish counterparts.

The concern in academic and popular discourse that Muslim women are at risk of oppression by members of their traditionalist cultural groups if isolated from Western liberal society appeared to be less of a pressing issue in Sweden than I had first imagined. I do not claim to know that all Muslim women in Sweden are afforded all the protections of western liberal human rights, and in fact, a few of my participants provided evidence to the contrary. I do know, however, that the perceived and oft-pointed to isolation from the public sphere is occurring at a

much smaller rate of incidence than public discourse would suggest. An important demographic component of refugee immigration to Sweden is the fact that many refugees who have arrived in Sweden fled their home countries as political refugees. Many of these political refugees, particularly those from Chile, Iran, Syria, and the former Yugoslavian states, came in search of religious tolerance, pluralism and democracy. By their very nature, many of these refugee families are not fundamentalist practitioners of their religion and arrived in the country with an understanding and desire for the protections afforded by Western liberal human rights. And is the trend for all demographic shifts, successive generations, the children of refugees raised and educated in Sweden, have grown up with and been educated in a Swedish understanding of social norms and human rights.

In addition to finding greater public presence of women of color than I had expected, I had also expected to find a common practice of discrimination against Muslims in Swedish society, as oft reported on in academic publications and the media. I found, however, a different pattern wherein the segregation that I witnessed was not one of secular and Christian Swedes as the majority and Muslims as the minority, but rather a clear socio-economic status divide between native Swedes and Swedes of color. Thus, at least for the Scandinavian cases, I reject the claim of multicultural political theory that the primary issue of Western European politics is that of Muslim integration into Western societies. From my observations while in Sweden and Denmark and confirmed by recent publications in critical race and Whiteness Studies that focus on the Whiteness of Swedish identity, I have concluded that the primary issue for contemporary Swedish, and more broadly Scandinavian, integration politics is that of Scandinavian national identities and their inexorable inseparability from *Whiteness*.

Whiteness in Sweden

By orienting my study in the framework of race and Whiteness, I am not making the claim that religion is not central to the tensions between Europeans and recent migrants. Nor am I making the claim that Sweden is immune to this conversation and that Swedes are uninterested in the presence of Islam within their country's borders. I am instead looking at a different issue within changing European demographics, one that will have lasting implications for those living on the continent. The idea that social and economic exclusion breeds contempt and discourages nationalist loyalty was one discussion that arose in popular media immediately following the 2015 Paris attacks. The systematic exclusion of Muslim Europeans from the national imaginations of their countries provides the necessary environment for recruitment to organizations like the Islamic State. And as I have posited above, in the Scandinavian countries, exclusionary socio-cultural behavior is not limited to Muslim Swedes. Rather than address the issue in terms of one disadvantaged group, I identify a need to address the larger problem of racial stratification through the analytic lens of Whiteness.

What is Whiteness?

Whiteness is the theoretical starting point for the analysis of racial inequality in the West and is a particularly adept lens for the analysis of the integration of non-Western immigrants in the Northern European countries. The term Whiteness is the problematizing designation of existing structural inequalities based on the hierarchy of racial categorization. In her seminal book, *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness*, Ruth Frankenburg defines Whiteness as having three separate components:

First, Whiteness is a location of structural advantage, of race privilege. Second, it is a "standpoint," a place from which White people look at ourselves, at others, and at society. Third, "Whiteness" refers to a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed. (1993, p. 1)

Through this tripartite definition, Frankenburg captures the scope and breadth of Whiteness and the way in which Whiteness acts along numerous dimensions: material, epistemological, and phenomenological.

Whiteness theory provides a useful analytical scope with which to examine race relations because it identifies a largely unproblematized structural system that determines the allocation of privilege, access and resources. Although Whiteness refers in large part to a socio-political structure, the term Whiteness also refers to the socially constructed nature of that structure. Omi and Winant (1986) identify the two nodal points of the understanding of race that were held at the time they were writing their influential work *Racial Formation in the United States*. At the time, the popular understandings of race were either of race as essentialist, fixed categories (as biology, for example) or of race as mere illusions of social categories capable of being forgotten or destroyed (1986: 68.) Rather than existing at one of these two nodal points, Omi and Winant encourage the reader to break with these habits of thought; “The effort must be made to understand race as *an unstable and “decentered” complex of social meanings constantly being transformed by political struggle*” (1986: 68; emphasis in original). Whiteness Studies and Critical Race Theory, under which Whiteness Studies is housed, are academic projects that seek to problematize the role of race and racial identity by examining how power and privilege are distributed in contemporary societies. As Omi and Winant assert, “today as in the past racial minorities pay a heavy price in human suffering as a result of their categorization as Other by the dominant racial ideology; this is true not only in the United States, but across the world” (1986, 68). Nearly thirty years later, Omi and Winant’s assertion still holds true in all Western societies and has become even more relevant to the political status quo in Sweden, a country that, as will be illustrated below, believes itself to be “post-racial.”

As Frankenburg highlighted, Whiteness is not just the location of structural advantage. It is also the standpoint from which the majority populations in Western nations examine the material realities around them. David S. Owen (2007) illustrates how Whiteness as a standpoint has, in fact, acted to misrepresent the appearance of Whiteness in much of the literature of Whiteness Studies. Frankenburg's third definition of Whiteness as usually unmarked and unnamed, which is often referred to as the invisibility of Whiteness, is only true from the standpoint of Whiteness. Whiteness is invisible to Whites for whom Whiteness has become a personal, institutional and societal habit (Ahmed, 2007). Whiteness to people of color is, however, highly visible as a constant reminder of the lack of privilege, access and resources of those who occupy the space of the Other (Owen, 2007: 206). That the standpoint of Whiteness has led scholars of Whiteness to so fundamentally misattribute the invisibility of Whiteness illustrates the degree to which the standpoint of Whiteness is rooted in the epistemological orientation of Western societies.

Whiteness has added theoretical value for the implications of racialized hierarchies on understandings of national identity. The standpoint of Whiteness once applied to Benedict Anderson's definition of nationalism as "an imagined political community – imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" illustrates how this imagined community comes to have a racial component (Anderson, 1983: 15). The community must be imagined because even in the smallest nations, it is impossible for every individual citizen to know every other citizen. The community is limited because it must have delimited borders to distinguish itself from other communities and these limits are based on a commonly shared set of identifying characteristics. Without a delimiting set of identifying characteristics, there would be no rubric with which to distinguish one community from the next nor would there be a preformed mental image with

which to picture other imagined community members. In Sweden, a predominantly White country that has only recently (within the last few decades) experienced non-White immigration, Whiteness is an implicit component of the imagined community (Lundström, 2007; Mattsson & Pettersson, 2007; Garner, 2015).

Comparatively, immigrant multiculturalism, for example, is another theoretical lens for the examination of minority groups in majority cultural spaces. Immigrant multiculturalism is a useful theoretical construct for the equal and representative treatment of minority cultural group members who live in smaller, ethnic communities embedded in the majority society and who continue to practice minority cultures. Where multiculturalism loses its usefulness as a theoretical construct, however, is in the recognition of individuals who may not practice minority cultural values but visibly appear to be members of minority cultural groups. Superficially based on appearance (phenotypic race), these individuals do not seem to conform to the majority society and so they are not recognized as members of the national imagined community. Multiculturalism, as is implied in the name, focuses on the coexistence of multiple cultures, whereas critical race theory addresses the coexistence of multiple races. Thus, critical race theory encapsulates the experiences of not only recent immigrants and Swedes rooted in other cultural traditions, but also first and second generation immigrants who, while culturally Swedish, are still denied belonging in Swedish national identity.

Nomenclature for Discussing Race

In formulating a vocabulary with which to discuss Whiteness and identity in Sweden, I chose to frame the ethnically Swedish, White privileged majority as *native* Swedes and the ethnically non-Swedish, non-White adoptees, immigrants and the children of immigrants and adoptees as Swedes *of color*. (This category of Swedes of color does not include the indigenous Sami people of Northern Sweden, who are phenotypically White and experience discrimination

on cultural, rather than racial grounds.) While the manifestation of racial discrimination and privilege in Sweden is as simple as the dichotomous White/non-White racial categories, these categories occlude the different experiences of immigrants based on their countries of origin and, in turn, race. Rather than categorize White immigrants to Sweden (predominantly from Northern Europe and the United States) as belonging to the same category as White, native Swedes, I have chosen to create a dichotomy between native Swedes and Swedes of color, purposefully bracketing the question of White immigration as one not immediately relevant to this project.

People of color is a useful theoretical construct for the discussion of different racial and ethnic minorities who experience disadvantage but for different reasons. For example, people of color in Sweden may refer to first generation refugee immigrants who are placed in segregated housing, do not speak the language and have limited access to employment. The term also refers to second or third generation immigrants, non-White adoptees and biracial Swedes who have all the same material resources of native Swedes but still experience exclusion and discrimination in the social sphere. In the *Encyclopedia of Race, Ethnicity and Society*, Salvator Vidal-Ortiz demonstrates the usefulness of the term for political organizing: “where country of origin, region, or language commonalities are put aside for more political economic issues that affect these groups similarly...intraethnic relations are more easily visibility among the panethnic impositions of the state (Shaefer, 2008, p. 1038). Vidal-Ortiz also speaks to the fact that *people of color* is more commonly used in activism and popular discourse, but that the same functionality for political organizing applies to the use of the term in academia. *People of color* refers to all those in a society who experience discrimination based, at least in part, on phenotypic appearance.

This distinction between *native* and *of color* is also important in relation to the public discourse surrounding immigration, integration and discrimination in Sweden. Rather than point to the presence of racial discrimination and privilege, the Swedish public discourse centers around the experiences of *invandrare* (immigrants) and the discrimination they face. This discourse fails to recognize that *invandrare* from majority White countries like Denmark or the United States have drastically different integration experiences. By employing the term Swede of color, as opposed to immigrants and as opposed to people of color, I am careful to recognize the central claim made by many of my participants that regardless of theirs or their parents' country of origin, they are Swedes. They have Swedish citizenship, are Swedish educated, speak Swedish as a first language and thus have a claim to the identity of Swedishness.

The use of *native*, rather than *White*, *Swede* also identifies the population from which the right wing, anti-immigrant populist voters hail. While many native Swedes explicitly support immigration and the evolution of Swedish society to accommodate people of different origins, it is native Swedes, not naturalized White Swedes of foreign origin, who have a stake in maintaining a nativist, traditionalist view of Swedish identity. The discourse and lived material reality in Sweden revolves around this racialized White/non-White dichotomy and yet discussions about social, political and economic inequality in Sweden remain 'color-blind.' This is a dissertation that reinserts color into conversations about the lives of people of color as acknowledgement that to be "color-blind" (i.e. unconcerned with skin tone and phenotypic identity) is a privilege to which Swedes of color do not have access.

The History of Whiteness in Sweden

Hübinette and Lundström (2014) situate the evolution of Swedish color-blindness in the state's response to a long history of racialized politics. While Sweden was not an influential colonial power like many of its European neighbors, Swedes were instrumental in the creation of

a pseudo-scientifically derived racial hierarchy with which to justify the domination and enslavement of other people. One of the founders of early scientific racism is the renowned Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus, who compared *Homo Europeus* and *Homo Afer*, two of his four racial categories, in this way:

European. White, Sanguine, Brawny. Hair abundantly flowing. Eyes blue. Gentle, acute, inventive. Covered with close vestments. Governed by customs.
African. Black, Phlegmatic, Relaxed. Hair black, frizzled. Skin silky. Nose flat. Lips tumid. Women's bosom a matter of modesty. Breasts give milk abundantly. Crafty, indolent. Negligent. Anoints himself with grease. Governed by caprice.
(West, 2000, p. 78, emphasis mine)

Cornel West highlights the above excerpt from Linnaeus as a counter to the claim that Linnaeus never created an explicit hierarchy of his racial types. West adds further telling details, mentioning that Linnaeus never discusses European, American or Asiatic women but includes numerous remarks about African women, including identifying African women and male apes as the probable candidates for the hybridization of species (West, 2000, p. 78). Linnaeus continues to be a revered figure in Swedish history and yet his formidable role in the early development of scientific racism is often goes unmentioned (“Carl Linnaeus.” 2014; “Who Was Linnaeus?” 2015).

More recently in Swedish history, Hübinette and Lundström identify a commitment to ‘White purity’ in the “almost mythical nationalist *and* socialist concept of *folkhemmet*, or the people’s home” that represents the period of Swedish welfare state development from 1930 to 1976 (201, p. 427). *Folkhemmet* is the romantic yet achievable ideal of the Swedish welfare state, in which every Swede has a comfortable, clean and well-equipped living space in exchange for contributing their labor to the economy and their wages to the state. As Hübinette and Lundström argue, *folkhemmet* is “a powerful nostalgic legend in contemporary Sweden” (2015, p. 428). During the last period of my fieldwork, I visited the Nordiska Museet (Nordic Museum)

in Stockholm where I wandered through the people's home apartment (*folkhemslägenheten*), a permanent exhibit featuring a full size recreation of a state-subsidized apartment built in 1947 during this period of *folkhemmet*. *Folkhemmet* and the development of the welfare state from 1930 to 1976 were based on the ideal that all Swedes deserved an equal quality of life. But as Hübinette and Lundström argue, this idealistic, expensive, infrastructure-heavy political goal had to be reserved for the ideal Swede, not for the “gypsy” interlopers, the non-Swedish migrant laborers or the most impoverished Swedes who were seen as criminal and weak and thus failing to contribute to the Swedish economy in exchange for access to the welfare state.

The *folkhemmet* apartment exhibit captures the relatively high quality of residential life provided to the Swedes deemed deserving at the apex of the Swedish welfare state as well as the lasting significance of the *folkhemmet* period to contemporary Swedes. The Swedish population has expanded under the last three and a half decades due to increased immigration and property prices have risen due to the rise in cost of living in Sweden and the robust strength of the Swedish economy since the 1990s. As a result, these *folkhemmet* apartments that were once state-subsidized low income housing are now the exclusive apartments of the major urban metropolises of Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö. These *folkhemmet* apartments continue to represent the ideal, aspirational Swedish life style, but are no longer feasibly achievable for the Swedish, and particularly immigrant, working class, who have been, instead, pushed out to the suburbs.

As a corollary to *folkhemmet*, scientific racism and eugenics became robust state policies during this period of welfare state development. The State Institute for Racial Biology (Statens Institut för Rasbiologi) was established as a governmental agency in 1922 as a research institute for the study of eugenics and human genetics (Spektorowski & Mizrachi, 2004). One outcome of

this state-sanctioned institute was the development and implementation of a four decade-long compulsory sterilization program from 1935 to 1975 under which an estimated 63,000 Swedes, the majority of whom were women, were forcibly sterilized by the Swedish state. The majority of those who were forcibly sterilized were classified as weak and underprivileged (“feeble-minded, backward or mentally-handicapped”), although these classifications were open to interpretation by those in charge of identifying candidates for sterilization (Steriliseringsfragan, 2000, p. 17).¹ By the 1960s, based on the principles of race biology, a large proportion of those chosen for sterilization were women migrant laborers who were sterilized to prevent interracial reproduction. Although the majority of those sterilized between 1935-1975 were ethnic Swedes, a minority of sterilization victims were classified as Romani “gypsies” who were sterilized at a proportionally higher rate to cull a population seen as invasive and unwanted (Steriliseringsfragan, 2000, p. 17).

Following the *folkhemmet* period, Sweden began the construction of what Hübinette and Lundström refer to as “good Sweden.” During the 1960s under the leadership of revered Prime Minister Olaf Palme, Whiteness in Sweden shifted from a tool of nation-building, wherein native Swedes were cast as equals deserving of a political system based on equality, to a tool of international superiority, wherein native Swedes were cast as champions of international human rights and acting in solidarity with non-White third world Others (2015, p. 429). Because this development of Whiteness as “White solidarity” occurred during the process of decolonization, Hübinette and Lundström argue that “Sweden...contributed to preserving Whiteness in the new postcolonial order, and in a new society characterised by increased diversity due to postcolonial migration, as still being fit to continue to rule the planet, in spite of the fact that the colonies are

¹ “sinnesslöa, efterblivna eller psykiskt utvecklingsstörda” (translation mine)

now politically independent” (2015, p. 430). This argument aligns well with Derrick Bell’s interest convergence theory, contained within critical race theory, which argues that Whites will support minority rights only when the interest of Whites converge with those of the minority group in the same moment. He substantiates his theory with the US Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, wherein White American elites saw fit to desegregate American schools as a means of appearing supportive of people of color and appealing to Third World countries during the Cold War (Delgado & Stefancic, 2010, p. 24-25). Thus “White solidarity” in the US during the Cold War operates on the same desire to maintain power as “White solidarity” in Sweden operates during the period of decolonization.

Many of the policies of “good Sweden” have led to the significant change in Swedish racial demographics that are problematizing the status quo of Whiteness today. In the past few decades, Sweden has become the leading humanitarian power, followed closely by its Nordic neighbors. Transnational adoption and refugee asylum were first institutionalized during this period of “White solidarity” beginning in the late 1960s and continuing to the 2000s. Today Sweden is proportionally the global leader in foreign adoptions with as many as 50,000 foreign-born adoptees in a country of 9 million (Hübinette & Tigervall, 2009, pp. 335-6). As a component of Sweden’s commitment to global human rights and humanitarian aid, Sweden also accepts the highest number of refugees per capita of all OECD countries (Arnett, 2014).² Thus, two of the mechanisms for demonstrating “White solidarity,” adoption and the granting of asylum, have drastically changed the racial demographics of contemporary Swedish society and

² The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an organization of the developed or First World countries

yet, due to the ‘color-blindness’ of Swedish society, it has become increasingly difficult to discuss these demographic changes as they are occurring.

Social and Political “Color-blindness” in Sweden

In 2001, the parties of the Swedish parliament (the *Riksdag*) unanimously agreed on a decision to abolish the word race (*ras*) from all new law texts and official parliamentary documents, a symbolic decision signifying the official policy of color-blind antiracism and a commitment to removing race as a relevant category in Swedish society (Jensen & Loftsdóttir, 2014; Hübinette & Hyltén-Cavallius, 2014). In 2014, the Swedish government took a further step and issued a press release stating that the concept of race used to describe people would be removed from all existing laws. In the press release, the former minister of Integration, Erik Ullenhag, is quoted as saying “The concept of race is obsolete and built on the idea that there are different human races. There are no scientific grounds for speaking of them. Swedish laws should reflect contemporary values and beliefs³” (trans. Riksdagkansliet, 2014). With these two acts, the Swedish parliament, a majority White institution, has abolished the word and concept of race from all government language, taking the official doctrine of color-blind antiracism to its logical conclusion.

In conjunction with the state level discourse of antiracism, popular Swedish society is cast in the same antiracist, color-blind light. Swedes believe themselves to be unaware of race as a social category and committed to the idea that all people are equal and deserve equal treatment, a social consequence of the government policies of “good Sweden” as discussed above (Hübinette and Lundström, 2015, p. 430). The Swedish public prides itself on leading the world

³ “Begreppet ras är förlegat och bygger på idén att det finns olika människoraser. Det finns ingen vetenskaplig grund för att tala om detta. Svenska lagar ska spegla nutida värderingar och synsätt” (translation mine).

in ideals such as gender equality, humanitarian aid and political asylum, but HübINETTE and Lundström argue that the most significant achievement in the eyes of the Swedish public is the achievement of antiracism:

Perhaps the most significant legacy of this second hegemonic Whiteness period in Sweden [“good Sweden”] is the strong adherence to a willful colour-blindness, in the sense that race as a concept and as a category was completely abolished on a governmental and official level, as well as in academia, and is today considered to be completely irrelevant and obsolete in the contemporary Swedish context – since human rights, democracy, social justice, gender equality and antiracism seem to be already achieved. (2015, p. 431)

Jensen and Loftsdóttir add that not only do Swedes view themselves in this exceptional way, they also expect the outside world to view Sweden as “good Sweden” (2014, p. 72).

‘Invandrare’ as the Catch-All Category of Other: So if Swedes and the Swedish state cannot talk about race, how do they contend with and discuss the discrimination and economic inequalities that map onto this White/non-White racial dichotomy? Instead of talking about White and non-White races as relevant social categories that relate to privilege, access and inclusion, Swedes often use immigration status, ethnicity, culture or socio-economic status in place of race (HübINETTE & Tigervall, 2009; Roth and Hertzberg, 2010). Of these categories that map onto racial inequality but do not confront the issue of race directly, immigration status is the most common signifier of the Other in Swedish society.

The population of Swedes of color in Sweden belongs to a single, socially constructed category of ‘*invandrare*’ or ‘immigrant.’ Even Swedish adoptees experience discrimination on the grounds of initially being perceived as belonging to this group of *invandrare*: “The consequences of being visibly ‘non-White’ are recurrent themes in many accounts by transnational adoptees. It is because of this aspect of their appearance that their Swedishness is often challenged” (Lind, 2012, p. 94) HübINETTE and Tigervall further substantiate this claim with evidence from interviews with foreign-born adoptees in Sweden:

The negative treatment which adoptees are subjected to in everyday life does not seem to differ substantially from the one that migrant's experience, in spite of the fact that these two groups radically differ from each other both ethno-culturally and socio-economically. (2009, p. 341)

As evidenced by Hübnette and Tigervall's and Lind's interview data, once a transnational adoptee makes her status as an adoptee known, she is recategorized as more Swedish than *invandrare*, but the need to make her status known is a daily occurrence (Lind, 2012: 92).

Based on my participant observation and on scholarly examinations of the term *invandrare*, belonging to this category of *invandrare* is based on a number of factors. The first and foremost factor is that of physical appearance, and thus Whiteness becomes the language with which to discuss this phenomenon. Secondary factors include the practicing of non-Swedish cultures, the lack of economic integration and social imbeddedness and the inability to speak fluent, un-accented Swedish (Myberg, 2010; Lind, 2012; Williams & Graham, 2013). In popular discourse *invandrare* are treated as a large, amorphous, homogenous group encompassing everyone from the Balkan refugees of the 1980s to the Syrian refugees entering Sweden today. The term *invandrare* has numerous connotations, the most important being that of non-Swedish or contested Swedish identity.

Gunnar Myrberg raises this question of who is encompassed by the Swedish term *invandrare* in his chapter "Who is an Immigrant?" in *Diversity, Inclusion and Citizenship in Scandinavia* (2010). Myberg establishes a correlation between groups ranked by degree of residential segregation in Sweden's three largest cities and the frequency with which respondents to a Swedish Citizen Study survey think about a group of people when they hear the word *invandrare*. His findings point to both the broad range of ethnic identities that the term *invandrare* encapsulates as well as to the pervasiveness of *invandrare* as a way to conceptualize people in Sweden seen as distinctly not Swedish:

The overall impression is thus that there is a structured ethnic hierarchy in the Swedish society, in terms of the relative positions of different ethnic minority groups, and that this hierarchy is nearly precisely mirrored by how people from different parts of the world are positioned, and position themselves, in relation to the word *invandrare*. People from the Nordic countries, Western Europe, Canada, the US, Australia and New Zealand are generally not perceived as *invandrare*, while the opposite is true for people from the Middle East and Africa. Somewhere in between, but rather clearly distinguished from people from the Western countries as well as from people from Middle East and Africa, we find people from Southern and Eastern Europe including the Balkans, people from South and Central America, and finally, people from Asia except the Middle East. (Myberg, 2010, p. 66)

Although Myberg does not make this conceptual leap, the ranking of people viewed most predominately as *invandrare* ranges from the least “Swedish-looking” Africans and Middle Easterners to the most “Swedish-looking” Nordic, North Americans, Western European and Australasian immigrants.

As further evidence in the form of personal testimony, scholars Koobak and Thapar-Björkert compare their personal experiences as immigrant women with different signifiers of Otherness (Koobak and Thapar-Björkert, 2012). Koobak, an Estonian woman, and Thapar-Björkert, an Indian woman, experience Othering in Swedish society in different ways yet can both speak to the experience of being the Other. For Koobak, her Swedish appearance allows her to ‘pass’ in situations where she never has to speak Swedish, but when she must speak, her inability to speak Swedish immediately marks her as non-Swedish. The period before speaking in which Koobak ‘passes’ as a Swede confers the temporary privilege of being “unmarked” thus Koobak’s privilege is derived from her appearance. Thapar-Björkert external appearance always marks her as non-Swedish and so it is only through her job as an academic in a Swedish university that she is able to derive any privilege in Swedish society.

In comparing their experiences, Thapar-Björkert and Koobak identify the concepts of marked/unmarked in relationship to the concepts of visibility/invisibility, as used in the field of Identity Studies. Visibility allows particular populations, typically majority populations, to make

claims on rights and resources to which invisible, typically minority, populations do not have access. Visibility in this context can be equated to voice. A marked population on the other hand has a very different connotation wherein that population is marked as Other, as different, as classifiable:

‘Unmarked’ signifies the anonymity of privilege rather than social and political marginalisation. In its technical usages within feminist and cultural theories, the apparatus ‘marked’/‘unmarked’ designates how minority identities are constructed as ‘marked’ while dominant identities are positioned as ‘the unmarked generic’ – most usually White, male and heterosexual. (Koobak & Thapar-Björkert, 2012, p. 127)

To be marked is to walk into a public space and recognize that people have noticed you are there, have marked your presence and remain aware of your company. To be unmarked is to have the privilege of privacy and anonymous movement in the public sphere. No one marks your presence, attempts to anticipate your next movement, wonders at your attendance. The unmarked have the privilege of an unproblematic presence in society.

Myberg’s research in conversation with this dichotomy of ‘marked’/‘unmarked’ social presence indicates how the term and concept *invandrare* is used to describe a large and varied population of Swedes. As Myberg concludes, “there is a popular meaning of the word *invandrare* (immigrant) in the Swedish, not to say Scandinavian, discourse that differs in important ways from the lexical meaning of the word” (Myberg, 2010, p. 68) The lexical meaning of immigrant is a person not born in their country of residence. The popular meaning implies that an immigrant is any member of Swedish society who, regardless of place of birth, is identified as non-Swedish primarily based on her physical appearance. Thus, being identified as an *invandrare* marks a person as ‘the Other’ and this demarcation brings with it the exclusion and discrimination symptomatic of marginalization.

The most compelling evidence for the role of race in the category of *invandrare* and in discrimination/inequality is the oft-repeated narrative of Swedish foreign-born adoptees mentioned in the studies above who cite daily experiences of discrimination until they are able to make their status of adoptee known. As quoted above, HübINETTE and Tigervall found that adoptees report daily negative treatment similar or identical to that experienced by immigrants, although the adoptees “are not just completely Swedish and Western according to all existing definitions of nationality and ethnicity; they also normally belong to the upper socio-economic strata of Swedish society” (2009, p. 337). This overlap in experience between immigrants and adoptees provides compelling evidence that the only commonality between the two groups, their visible appearance as non-ethnically Swedish, collapses the argument that discrimination occurs due to factors of culture, religion, ethnicity or socio-economic status. In light of this evidence, race becomes the most salient category for examining the context of discrimination and inequality in contemporary Sweden.

Race as Identity

If race and Whiteness define the most insurmountable barrier to social cohesion and the inclusion in the imagined Swedish community, what does this mean for the more than 20% of the Swedish population born outside of Sweden or born to non-ethnically Swedish parents, the vast majority of whom are considered non-White? (“Födda i Sverige...,” 2010). For one thing, the term *invandrare* as a category of belonging for all Swedes of color is a problematic nomenclature. In the United States, Americans of color are often referred to using hyphenated racial or ethnic identifiers like Black-American, African-American, Asian-American, Hispanic-American, Mexican-American, etc. Beyond *people of color*, a term that does not refer to place of origin or ethnicity, there is not a single category of belonging for all Americans of color that encompasses all the groups listed above. The term immigrant is reserved for first generation

Americans almost exclusively. Once the children of immigrants speak American-accented English and are socially and economically integrated into American communities, they are not referred to as immigrants regardless of where they may have been born.

While I do not make any claims about the presence of racism in American society, the terms with which race is discussed in the United States carry a resonance of permanence. An Asian American, while defined by race, is still an *American*. A Hispanic American, while defined by linguistic heritage, is still a Spanish-speaking *American*. From my own personal experience, even though I am a woman of color who was born in Canada to Sri Lankan/British immigrant parents, and who, up until recently, held only Canadian citizenship, I was still socially considered an American because I speak American English, am culturally American and grew up and was educated in the United States. Acquiring American citizenship after living in the country for 20 years has given me formal access to American identity, but prior to undergoing the process, I still considered myself and was considered by my peers to be an American.

An *invandrare* in Sweden, regardless of place of birth, culture or spoken language, is an intruder in Swedish society. The children of Swedish immigrants remain immigrants and so they are, although born and raised in that society, barred from a permanent Swedish identity. The use of *invandrare* instead of *svart-svensk*, *afrikansk-svensk*, *asiatisk-svensk*, etc. (black-Swedish, African-Swedish, Asian-Swedish) precludes permanence. The denial of race as existing socially-constructed categories of belonging that have real, material consequences has led all Swedes of color to be marked by this term *invandrare* or 'immigrant,' which has meaningful temporal dimensions of recentness and unrootedness.

White Mourning and Melancholia: Hübnette and Lundström identify a third period of hegemonic Whiteness, following the “old Sweden” of the *folkhemmet* period and the “good

Sweden” of the postcolonial era: the current period of White melancholia. They attribute this national period of melancholia to perceived coinciding threats to the racially homogenous, idyllic nation of “old Sweden” and the politically progressive nation of “good Sweden.” The presence of the rapidly growing population of Swedes of color “is being blamed for both destroying the nation’s homogeneity and for making the Sweden Democrats the third biggest party in the opinion polls” (2015: 433). Hübinette and Lundström argue that this contemporary state of perceived crisis has led both progressive and reactionary Swedes to long for and mourn the previous periods in Swedish history that are remembered as simultaneously ethnically pure and morally superior. It is this mournful longing that “makes it almost impossible to deconstruct Swedish Whiteness and ultimately to transform Swedishness into something else, within which which people of colour will also be accepted and treated as Swedes” (Hübinette and Lundström, 2015, 434). It is within this context of White melancholia that many first and second generation immigrant Swedes are entering adulthood. It is within this context of intractably White Swedish national identity that I aim to parse what it means to be a Swede of color in Sweden.

Ethnographic Fieldwork: Interviewing Swedish Women of Color

In order to understand what it means to be a Swede of color, I conducted a series of interviews with first and second generation immigrants who were either born in Sweden or arrived in early childhood. This is the population that has been in Sweden long enough to undergo the process of integration. This is also the population that has all the claims to Swedish identity: place of birth, place of upbringing, language, education, culture, social norms, etc. Because my dissertation is in response to the claim that women in minority groups are those most at risk of failing to integrate and I approach that claim from the standpoint of intersectionality, I chose to interview women of color exclusively.

I randomly approached about half of the women I interviewed in public: on the street, in grocery stores, in art museums and in retail shops. The other half of the women I interviewed were introduced to me by former participants. They were introduced to me as childhood friends, colleagues, fellow political party members and, in one case, sisters. The only criteria for selection was being a woman, having an non-White or partially-non-White background, having grown up in Sweden and belonging to an age range of about 20 to 40. The women I interviewed had a range of ethnic, immigrant backgrounds, the majority of whom arrived as or have parents who arrived as refugees. The women I interviewed were political leaders, parliamentarians, activists, university students, scholars, community organizers, bureaucrats, and engineers. And as I will discuss further in Chapter 5, these women were not the exception to the rule in their economic and social integration success but the norm.

As discussed in *Chapter 2: Epistemology and Methodology*, my interview methodology was relatively unstructured so that I could allow the participant to follow her own narrative without being hemmed in by my questions. I began each interview with basic demographic information as to each woman's age, ethnicity, location of birth (to determine 'immigrant status') and occupation. I began nearly all of my interviews with the question "have you had life experiences that you would consider to be racial experiences?" On occasion, the question of ethnicity would begin the substantive portion of the interview (those participants immediately brought up their racialized experiences), in which case I would not need to begin with my first question. Although the official discourse in Sweden precludes the use of race and racial categories, each woman responded immediately with a story from their lives that they associate with racial identity.

Beyond my first question, I did not ask any question consistently across cases, although as I explain below, the narrative of each interview progressed in roughly the same way. In addition to the first question on race, I asked a third of my participants what they considered to be their cultural and national identities, which, with the exception of one participant, led to the assertion of Swedish identity. I only asked this question explicitly in interviews where my participants did not define their cultural and national identities unprompted by me. In capturing each woman's self-identification, I felt it important to determine whether these women viewed themselves as Swedish in addition to their ethnic/racial identities, which all but one women did.

The majority of all my interviews occurred in English. Due to the quality of the Swedish education system, the early emphasis placed on learning English as a second language, and the pervasiveness of English-language television and film programming (the vast majority of which is not dubbed), my participants all spoke extremely good English. Although I have made a concerted effort to learn Swedish in my four years in graduate school, my Swedish language abilities did not compare to my participants' English language abilities. While the interviews occurred in English, several of my participants defaulted to Swedish when they could not find the appropriate or accurate English words with which to describe certain concepts or experiences. During these brief Swedish interludes, I was able to use my language abilities to provide my participants with English language translations. We would then go back and forth a couple times until we both agreed upon the correct English translation based on what the participant was trying to express. While conducting interviews in Sweden, particularly with younger Swedes, does not necessarily require knowledge of the Swedish language, I found that having the ability to communicate in both languages led to more efficient and precise

communication and also allowed me to make my participants feel more comfortable in the knowledge that I understood them.

Daily Experiences of Discrimination from Childhood to Present

As I conducted my interviews, I noticed a consistent narrative that presented itself in nearly all my participants' life stories. The first, nearly unanimous, component was a strong feeling of discrimination based on social interactions that ranged from subtler experiences like being subjected to staring to incidences of overt hostility and aggression. Several women reported that they have been told an innumerable amount of times that they should "go back to where they came from," a statement that is not only hostile and xenophobic but also explicitly designed to deprive the target of his or her Swedish identity. One woman, Mediha⁴, told of a recent experience very much in the theme of this kind of statement: "I was in Stockholm just a couple weeks ago, and I was like 'excuse me, is this Central Station?' and this Swedish girl looked at me and said 'welcome to Sweden' [in a hostile tone], but I was speaking fluent Swedish!" Stockholm Central Station is the hub of the city and the country's vast transportation systems. All the underground train lines run through the station as well as all of the train lines connecting Stockholm to the other Swedish cities. Thus the native Swedish woman assumed that by not being able to identify Central Station and because of her non-White appearance, Mediha

⁴ **Note about Participant Identities:** In order to contextualize my interviews with details about the personalities of each participant, I will include a lengthy footnote at the first mention of each participant. I will refer to these footnotes at each subsequent mention so the reader may refer back to the description if a reminder is needed.

Mediha: Born in Östersund, Sweden to one Iraqi and one Iranian parent, Mediha moved to Malmö at the age of 2, where she has resided since. At the age of 25, Mediha lists her occupation first and foremost as a singer and secondly as leader in the Social Democrats Youth Association. I found Mediha to be very open and warm. She balanced a friendly, happy tone with the force of her convictions. She was very prepared to discuss the issue of race, discrimination and agency because she has thought a lot about these issues in the context of her role in the Social Democrats Youth Association. She had also recently published an opinion piece on the topic in the newspaper *Sydsvenskan*, published in the Skåne province, entitled "Jag är trött på att alltid känna mig hatad på grund av min tro" ("I am tired of always feeling hated on account of my faith," translation mine).

must be a recent ‘interloper’ into Swedish society, regardless of the fact that she asked the question in fluent Swedish. Furthermore, “*är det centralstationen?*” is a relatively simple question and could easily be asked by a tourist brushing up on the language before visiting a new place, but would that same woman have reacted as antagonistically to a White tourist asking the same question?

While incidences like these are not overtly threatening or virulent, this treatment breeds feelings of exclusion and Othering. Furthermore, the frequency at which these experiences occur reinforces the idea that it is not just individuals expressing their own prejudices but that broader society as a whole is antagonistic to the presence of non-ethnic Swedes in Sweden. These smaller interactions also demonstrate one of the most common experiences of being non-White in predominately White societies, that of being subjected to ‘microaggressions’ (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, pp. 1-3). Perhaps the woman who responded rudely to Mediha was having a bad day and would have said the same thing to anyone who asked such a seemingly obvious question. The microaggression occurring in this scenario is due to the fact that Mediha cannot ever know why that woman spoke so rudely to her, but if she was White, she would never even have to consider the possibility that it was because of her race. These types of microaggressions lead people of color to constantly question negative social interactions and in so doing, question their place in society.

These experiences begin early in life too; many of the women I interviewed initially pointed to experiences of racial discrimination in their childhoods. Mariam⁵, whose parents are

⁵ **Mariam:** Born in Harar, Ethiopia to an Ethiopian mother and Somali father, Mariam identifies as Ethiopian and Swedish. Her parents moved with her to Sweden before she reached grade school age. At the age of 30, Mariam was pursuing a university degree at Malmö Högskola in Diversity and Labour Relations. Like Mediha, Mariam has also published opinion pieces on gender equality, integration and diversity for various news outlets including Nyheter24 (News25) and SVT Nyheter: Opinion (SVT News: Opinion). During our interview, Mariam teared up a few times when discussing the discrimination she has experienced. She was particularly upset when discussing the unfair treatment she has received during her education. Discrimination and disadvantaged experienced in the institutional

of Ethiopian and Somali origin and immigrated to Sweden when she was a young child, felt that she was often reminded of her “Otherness.” During her childhood, the other children in her classes would touch her hair and refer often to her black skin. She also felt that her teachers were condescending and resentful of any success she achieved in her subjects. Mariam attributes this behavior to a desire on the teachers’ parts to see ethnic Swedes perform better in school than immigrant children. Marwa⁶, a woman born of Tunisian refugee parents in Northern Sweden, had similar experiences of condescension from her teachers: “me and my older brother, early in our primary school, they had this thought that we couldn’t speak the language, so they put us in this special lecture class with a teacher that was supposed to go through the alphabet with us. So we always had to work a little bit harder to show that we could speak the language and so on.” Marwa and her brother were born in Sweden, grew up speaking Swedish as a first language but were often treated as if they were not Swedish children.

Victoria⁷, a 23-year-old woman of Chilean and Bolivian descent born in Southern Sweden, described a particularly traumatic event from her childhood:

settings of the public school and university were more upsetting to her than explicit racial epithets experienced on the street. Although Mariam expressed anger and hurt, her experiences had given her a cause for which to fight. I found her interview to be motivating and inspiring.

⁶ **Marwa:** Born in Skellefteå, Northern Sweden to Tunisian parents, Marwa, at the age of 30, is a Diversity Consultant for Fritidsforum, a public community and sports center for people of all ages. She holds a Master’s degree from Uppsala University in International Law and Diversity Studies. Given her educational and professional background, Marwa was extremely adept at describing her personal experiences with discrimination and disadvantage. She was very open about her critical view of Swedish society and the difficulty of pursuing a successful career as a woman of color. Physiologically, Marwa would be considered White in American society, but she had as many discriminatory experiences to share as Mariam, who has dark skin and Eastern African features.

⁷ **Victoria:** Born in Växjö, Sweden to a Chilean father and Bolivian mother, 23-year-old Victoria trained as an engineer in university and works as a computer technician in an Apple computers store. She was very open and analytical about her racialized experiences growing up and working in Sweden; for example, she introduced me to the concept of the one-minute rule, which I return to later in this chapter. I found Victoria’s experiences to be very interesting in regards to how variable her self-identification has been through the course of her life. She has wavered between identifying only as Swedish, only as Chilean and now as a hyphenated identity based on her social and educational context. She also shared with me the details of her experiences living in Rosengård, the ‘notorious’ immigrant neighborhood built as part of the Miljon Program.

I have one strong memory when I was about 9 years. I took violin classes and I think we had a concert or something because I was in town...My dad went to get the car and said you can wait here, so I start walking. And this guy, this big Swedish guy comes up to me and starts to scream and I was so little that it took me several years to understand what he was saying. He said you are a blatte fitta [English translation: "mixed race cunt"], and I started to cry because he was drunk and frightening...And I didn't dare to tell my parents because I was so ashamed because I didn't understand what I had done wrong. I didn't know what he had said. That's one of the worst things I've been through.

Minas⁸, a 28-year-old woman of Iraqi descent whose parents moved to Sweden as political refugees when she was four months old, shared a similar experience. When Minas was a young child of around five or six years old, she encountered a group of 'skinheads' in their late teens who spat in her face and subjected her to racial epithets. Minas cites this experience as the first time she realized that she was considered an outsider in her own society. These experiences described in detail by several women and in abstract by several more illustrate the degree to which Othering and exclusion have been a facet of these women's lives for, quite literally, as long as they can remember.

Roza⁹, a 32-year-old parliamentarian of Turkish and Kurdish descent experienced severe emotional upheaval for a five-year period in which her family relocated to a predominately

⁸ **Minas:** Minas arrived in Sweden at the age of 4 months with her Iraqi parents, having been born in the process of refugee travel. Today Minas is a doctoral candidate at Uppsala University in Neuroscience. Of all my participants, Minas was the most scarred by her childhood and early adult experiences. She expressed herself very angrily and cried several times during our interview. In addition to the discrimination and Othering that all my participants had experienced, Minas was also still dealing with the emotional upheavals experienced at the hands of her religious, traditionalist parents who attempted to prevent her from attending school after the last mandatory year, disapprove of her higher education, tattoos, uncovered hair and atheism. Minas has cut off contact with her parents, who have been both physically and verbally abusive to her in the past and who continue to berate her for not conforming to traditionalist, Iraqi Muslim practices. With her confrontational, angry demeanor, Minas has had a difficult time maintaining close relationships. She has feelings of loneliness, isolation and resentment towards her lot in life. Although she resents the racism and discrimination that she experiences in Swedish society, Minas has a very positive understanding of the state's role in her life and the lives of other refugees. She credits free education and a high functioning welfare system as the means of her escape from her parents and the life they wanted for her (that of a stay-at-home wife and mother).

⁹ **Roza:** Born in Uppsala, Sweden to a Turkish father and a Kurdish mother, Roza is a current member of parliament for the Social Democrat Party. That she agreed to meet with me was in itself a coup, and, in our interview, Roza was very open and forthcoming. She spoke honestly and thoughtfully about the state of Swedish society and the presence of racial discrimination for Swedes of color. Surprisingly to me, Roza had a rather pessimistic view of Swedish

ethnic Swedish town in the countryside from a more diverse neighborhood outside of the city of Uppsala. During our interview, Roza stated that she often had a difficult time remembering the details of that period. While she had not analyzed her inability to remember her life between the ages of nine and fourteen prior to our interview, she now attributes this haziness to the feelings of trauma that she still associates with that time period:

You see yourself as an individual but then you come to a school where you actually are. Everyone sees that you're not from there. I had problems. I usually say that I lived there [Hedemora, Dalarna] for five years, but I don't remember so much of those five years. I don't know why, I haven't analyzed it. But I think it was traumatic for me. I hated it. I didn't want to be. I was angry with my parents: 'why do we have to be different? Why can't you be like my friends' moms and dads? And why aren't you making those kinds of sandwiches?' ...Always comparing. I wanted to be a Swede. So I had difficulties with my identification those first years.

Roza's narrative of wanting to fit in early in life and experiencing the feeling of being Other was a common narrative among the women I interviewed. While identity-related anxiety is not uncommon for many people during adolescence, the added effect of ethnic and racial Otherness only serves to compound this anxiety. One participant said that for several years of her childhood, she went to bed wishing and hoping she would wake up blond and blue-eyed.

At the beginning of each interview, I asked each participant whether she had experienced racialized interactions living in Sweden, without identifying a specific definition for "racialized" in order to allow each woman to make her own associations with the question. Although I did not specify a time period for which I was interested, many of my participants spoke at length of early

society and integration. She expressed frustration at the different forms of discrimination that she and her friends have experienced and at the way that public discourse is shaped around the immigrant/native dichotomy. She identified a lack of representation in both parliament and her own party. She, like many of my participants, also pointed to the rise of the Sweden Democrats as a causal factor in the increase in openly anti-immigrant discourse. Although Roza had a rather negative take on the status quo in Swedish society, she was extremely warm and friendly. She expressed herself in a tone of concern and slight frustration, rather than anger or disgust. She also identified the role that she plays as a role model for people of color, particularly women of color in Sweden who feel underrepresented. Her attitude of concern and her awareness of the different levels of discrimination and exclusion has led her to parliament where she believes she can affect some change, no matter how small it may be.

childhood experiences. One woman in particular shared a personal anecdote that I feel best exemplifies why these early experiences are so important. Caroline¹⁰, a 35-year-old woman born in Sweden to Nigerian and Swedish parents, recalled a conversation with one of her ethnically Swedish aunts about the relative experiences of children who grow up as members of minority ethnic groups. In this conversation, Caroline's aunt was describing with great pride how her young son reached the advanced age of ten before he realized that one of his aunts, a woman of Indian ethnicity, was adopted. Caroline used this story to illustrate the privilege in being able to grow up 'colorblind,' as her aunt phrased it. Caroline's own seven-year-old son whose father is Nigerian was never allowed to grow up unaware of racial and ethnic difference because he has, from a young age, been made very aware of how he is of a different ethnic background from his peers and from broader Swedish society. Having been the target of racial slurs, particularly the use of the word '*neger*' (a more malicious version of the English word 'negro'), her child has already experienced Othering on account of his skin color and is, at the age of seven, already attune to racial discrimination.

¹⁰ **Caroline:** Born in Lund, Sweden to a half Swedish/half Nigerian father and Swedish mother, today Caroline works for the Open Skåne foundation in Malmö, an organization dedicated to facilitating diversity and integration in Sweden's most multicultural, multiracial city. During our interview, Caroline was exuberant and expressive. She spoke quickly and decidedly about her impressions of Swedish society. Because Caroline had attended a historically Black college in the American South and lived in Memphis afterwards for a few years, her observations, particularly about exclusion in Sweden, were based on comparisons with her experiences outside the country. In particular, Caroline felt most at ease in her American college where she had joined a Black sorority and felt a sense of belonging in the African American community. Interestingly, Caroline defines herself in large part by her one-quarter Nigerian heritage, having had her son with a Nigerian man, spent considerable time in Nigeria and often cooking Nigerian food. Although Caroline is three quarters ethnic Swedish, her life experiences of discrimination and exclusion have led her to define herself more by her visible Black identity, in part because people have always treated her as a Nigerian interloper in Swedish society. Caroline expressed herself angrily as she described the experiences that she and her son have had. The sense of belonging that she experienced in the United States makes her lack of belonging in Swedish society all the more poignant. In addition to working for Open Skåne, Caroline also leads an afterschool program for Swedish children of African descent to teach them about African cultures. Her goal is to give the children the knowledge to be proud of their heritage and to defend themselves against ignorant comments in the future.

Although the women I interviewed tended to describe their most traumatic experiences as having occurred in childhood; Othering, exotification and discrimination continued to be a fact of everyday life for many of these women. In particular, for women of African or partially African ethnic background, violations of personal space were an everyday occurrence in the form of people, often complete strangers, touching their hair without seeking permission to do so. Matilda¹¹, a 25-year-old woman born in Sweden to Ghanaian and Swedish parents, says that people often try to touch her hair and ask her to perform her ethnicity as other people perceive it, for example by asking her to ‘twerk’ (twerking refers to a sexually provocative, contemporary dance move associated with African-American women). Similarly, Maxime¹², a 21-year-old woman born in Sweden to Gambian and Polish parents, interprets people touching her hair as a form of objectification, as if these people are treating her like a pet. Both Matilda and Maxime react to people touching their hair with polite, but firm disallowance. Matilda attributes strangers violating her personal space to an ignorant curiosity. When she first mentioned that this type of

¹¹ **Matilda:** Born in Småland, Sweden to a Ghanaian father and a Swedish mother, Matilda grew up in a very diverse family. Although she did not grow up with her father, Matilda has two half-sisters who are Sudanese-Swedish. She also has two adopted Ethiopian uncles, who were the first Black people in Matilda’s grandparents’ town. One of her White, maternal aunts adopted Latin American children and another aunt is married to a Latin American man and has a half Swedish-half Latin child. Due to her diverse family makeup, Matilda did not have early childhood experiences of otherness and discrimination. She also felt very immersed in native Swedish culture during her childhood as she grew up with her native Swedish mother’s family, her culturally Swedish cousins, and in predominately native Swedish neighborhoods and schools. It was not until she entered college, that Matilda began to feel different and excluded. In her university program at the time that I interviewed her, Matilda was the only Black person and person of color in a class of 60 people. Matilda was exceptionally nice, open and forthcoming. She expressed herself very calmly but said that she does feel anger towards her situation. Because Matilda was so calm, she viewed the issues of race and discrimination in Sweden from a removed perspective. She had a lot of insight and attributed many of the problems in Swedish society to structure rather than the beliefs and actions of individuals.

¹² **Maxime:** Born in Stockholm to a Gambian father and Polish mother, Maxime grew up in central Stockholm on the island of Södermalm. Her neighborhood was mostly comprised of native Swedes and she remembers that there were only three other ‘mixed’ kids in her class. She became more aware of her race when she got to high school, which was predominately White, because in a large student body, Maxime was one of two non-White students. Now that she lives in Malmö, she feels much more comfortable in public with other people of color. As a gay woman of color, Maxime is very aware of her intersectional identity and reads about intersectionality, gender and critical race frequently. Although Maxime is passionate about these issues and was very passionate during our interview, she does not feel that she is driven by anger. Her racialized experiences serve to frustrate and irritate, more than anger, her.

interaction is a relatively frequent occurrence, I expected that she and other women who were treated in this way might act with anger and indignation. As I will discuss later in this chapter, the common reaction was not one of strong negative emotions, but a measured, almost resigned acceptance that these types of interactions are just another part of a larger problematic social environment, rather than instances of personal suffering.

Feelings of Unwanted Visibility

There is always someone who sees you, someone who looks twice.

A reoccurring theme across nearly all my interviews was one of experiencing a feeling of unwanted visibility. As discussed above, the dichotomy between being visible and invisible in society plays a different role than that of visibility in identity politics. In political discourse, visibility often means representation and voice but for these women, visibility means being marked and seen as Other. Being visible refers to the impossibility of “passing” in Swedish society: existing in public space without calling attention. Being visible is being conspicuous for being Other. In part because my participants used the words visible and seen, rather than marked, and in part because being visible is more generalized than being marked, I use visible/invisible in the ways that Koobak and Thapar-Björkert use marked/unmarked as described above.

During the several months I spent in Sweden studying the language and engaging in preliminary participant observation, I, myself, experienced this feeling of unwanted visibility as a woman of color living, albeit temporarily, in Sweden. In her interview, Mariam¹³ pointed to this phenomenon often: “The problem is that you always get too much attention whether it’s good or bad... There are always eyes on you, how you dress, how you look and it doesn’t matter

¹³ Refer to page 107, footnote 7 for a description of Mariam

even if it's good or bad. They will always see you. . . You are always being looked [at], you are always standing out.” Maxime¹⁴ expressed a similar feeling, saying, “It's a divide because you want to be able to go outside and not feel that you're very visible. You don't want to stick out... Maybe it would be easier in some places in the United States... although the structural problems still are the same.” Interestingly, both Maxime and Mariam contrasted their experiences in Sweden with perceived and experienced reality in the United States and Scotland respectively. The feeling of unwanted visibility is so common an occurrence in Sweden that Mariam actually noticed the absence of that feeling while she was living in Scotland and described the absence as feeling distinctly ‘weird.’

On the presence of unwanted visibility, Sara¹⁵, a 23-year-old who moved to Sweden at the age of one with her Kurdish Iranian parents, attributed her heightened feeling of unwanted visibility to the recent electoral successes of the Sweden Democrats: “It's a shame because in Sweden these past couple of years, racism and stuff has become a problem. So sometimes after the election, you'd see people, White Swedish people, on the bus and think they're looking at me because I'm an immigrant.” In an interview with Sara and her friend Jasmin¹⁶ (a 20-year-old who

¹⁴ Refer to page 112, footnote 12 for a description of Maxime

¹⁵ **Sara:** Born in Ankara, Turkey to Kurdish Iranian parents, Sara moved with her parents to Luleå, Sweden at the age of one as a refugee. She feels very culturally Swedish, stating that her parents also integrated into Swedish culture. However, because of her appearance, she experienced a lot of racism and Othering during her early childhood in Luleå. It was not until her parents moved her to Alby, an immigrant neighborhood in Stockholm, that she felt like she was truly accepted and belonged. She speaks fondly of Alby and its cultural diversity. Sara wants to remain in Sweden when she's older. She wants to live in a mixed neighborhood, perhaps with more ethnic Swedes than Alby, so that her children will grow up in the best possible cultural context. Today Sara is a student at Malmö Högskola in International Relations.

¹⁶ **Jasmin:** Born in Nairobi, Kenya to a half Kenyan/half Swedish mother and a half Kenyan/half Indian father, Jasmin moved with her parents to Hövda, Sweden at the age of 7 to be closer to her maternal family. She feels like she is culturally Swedish and does not feel like she has another cultural background, because she doesn't have a lot of knowledge of other non-Swedish cultures or the specific cultural norms of the Swedish immigrant community. Although Jasmin identifies as culturally Swedish, she has found herself identifying with people of immigrant backgrounds more recently because the way she has been treated in Swedish society. She also feels the need to leave Sweden in adulthood so that she can live in a better integrated society, somewhere she will feel less questioned, less torn by her internal and externally-imposed identities. I interviewed Sara and Jasmin together because they were

moved to Sweden when she was seven with her Kenyan-Swedish mother and her Kenyan-Indian father), both women felt that the Sweden Democrats' win in 2010 has made them more aware of how they are viewed in Swedish society. They have found themselves looking at older Swedish people and thinking that that person must be racist because they fit the demographic makeup of the Sweden Democrats' voter base (as older and ethnically Swedish). They both agreed that this thought process makes them sad and embarrassed that they think this way about people they do not know. Sara and Jasmin also stated that they feel that they are not at fault for having these kinds of thoughts. Their suspicions occur as a result of a perceived increase in overt racism and a growing realization that a sizeable percentage of the Swedish population resent their presence in Swedish society.¹⁷

Proving Oneself: The One-Minute Rule

When I was little, I would go to bed and wish that I would wake up a Swede.

wary of meeting with a stranger alone. Jasmin, like Sara, is studying International Relations at Malmö Högskola. In interviewing them together, I was able to compare their experiences and perspectives during the interview and clarify on their differences in understanding. Although Sara moved to Sweden at an earlier age, she felt more comfortable among other children of foreign descent growing up than Jasmin did. Sara also identified a specific immigrant culture in Sweden that she attributes to the shared experiences of immigrants to Sweden regardless of their ethnic backgrounds. Jasmin, unlike Sara, did not feel like she understood this culture because she did not grow up in a heavily immigrant neighborhood like Sara. Both Sara and Jasmin began the interview a little shyly but soon warmed up to the discussion and began responding enthusiastically to each other's answers to my questions. In their interview, they stated that they often had these types of discussions about race and discrimination in private so they were eager to discuss these issues and experiences with a researcher.

¹⁷ According to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE ODIHR) and the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå), the number of hate crimes, or crimes defined as motivated by xenophobia and/or racism, has been increasing since 2010, with 3,786 hate crimes motivated by xenophobia reported in 2010 to 4,765 hate crimes motivated by xenophobia reported in 2015 (Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, 2014; The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå), 2016). In 2010, the Sweden Democrats entered parliament with 5.7% of the vote and in 2014, they increased their share of seats winning 12.9% of the vote. As of October 5th, 2016, the Sweden Democrats are polling at 18.8% (Tullgren, 2016).

In response to childhood discrimination and continuing feelings of Otherness, many of the women I interviewed feel that they constantly need to prove their Swedish culture, their Swedish language abilities and, ultimately, their worth as members of Swedish society. As I mentioned previously, Victoria¹⁸ termed this feeling the “one-minute-rule,” which I believe aptly captures how pervasive this feeling is. She defines the one-minute-rule as the feeling that she has about one minute to convince whomever she is meeting for the first time that she is culturally Swedish, speaks Swedish fluently and as a first language, is socially, culturally and economically integrated and conforms to social norms. Sara clarified how this feeling of having to prove oneself differs between interacting with ethnic Swedes and interacting with other Swedes of immigrant background: “If I talk to a Swede who’s originally from Sweden, I will automatically think about how I behave or talk. More with older people or professionally or with teachers. . . so I don’t bring shame over people with different backgrounds. But when I’m with people with different backgrounds, I’ll relax more.” These women feel that they have to be very aware of the impression they are giving in the initial stages of meeting someone based on the assumption that other people have strong preconceived notions of how women of immigrant background behave and integrate.

During my interview with Marwa¹⁹, which was one of the last interviews I conducted, I felt like I finally understood just how burdensome it is to constantly feel the need to perform for others: “When I’m standing here before people and when I speak, they [are] looking at me like I’m a young girl but with another ethnic background. But, as I said before, I always have to show them who I am. And that’s a thing that I think a lot of girls feel.” While I heard similar

¹⁸ Refer to page 108, footnote 7 for a description of Victoria

¹⁹ Refer to page 108, footnote 6 for a description of Marwa

statements from other women I interviewed, Marwa returned to this theme frequently throughout her interview; “I think that all the time. It’s not a special thing that occurs; it feels like that it’s always been in the back of my head. I feel that I always have to be better than everybody else. I always have to show everyone that I’m good at what I’m doing.” The most poignant quote from Marwa was in reference to her impending birthday, “I’m about to turn 30 but I feel like I’m turning 60. I’m so tired from having had to work so hard. I feel like I’ve been working 200% rather than a 100%.” The feeling of exhaustion, while succinctly captured by Marwa, was a reoccurring theme across all my interviews.

The Intersectional Burden: *Dubbelbestraffning* or Double Punishment

You don’t feel you should [have to] represent all black Swedish women but sometimes you feel like you should.

The reality that women of immigrant background have to present themselves more carefully than their peers is part of a larger problem that the women I interviewed referred to as *dubbelbestraffning*, which translates to ‘double punishment’ in English. The concept of *dubbelbestraffning* refers to the reality that women of immigrant background not only have to deal with the structural and social discrimination in Swedish society but also have to perform better and produce more than their ethnically Swedish peers in order to be treated as equals in society. Again, Marwa’s interview was one of the most enlightening on this account because she discussed this phenomenon in the context of what she called “the good girl syndrome.” The “good girl syndrome” as Marwa explained it might be familiar to readers from other Western and non-Western societies as it is not limited to Swedish culture alone. The “good girl syndrome” occurs in societies where women are expected to behave a certain way to qualify as a “good girl.” In the United States, for example, the “good girl syndrome” includes unwritten norms

regarding women's sexual purity and social acquiescence. In Sweden, the "good girl syndrome" implies that women, and especially girls, are agreeable, polite and unobtrusive. On this theme, Marwa feels like she has to behave "20 times" better than an ethnically Swedish woman to satisfy the same "good girl" requirement.

In addition to having to work harder to 'prove themselves,' the women I interviewed also feel like their behavior reflects on, quite literally, the entirety of Sweden's immigrant population or at least all of Sweden's female immigrants. This sense of profound responsibility to a large and diverse population further contributes to a feeling of *dubbelbestraffning*. Not only do these women feel as if they need to overcome socio-cultural expectations and structural restraints, they also feel they need to do so not only for their own well-being but for the wellbeing of all women of immigrant background. Maxime first explained this concept of *dubbelbestraffning* to me, saying: "You don't feel you should [have to] represent all black Swedish women but sometimes you feel like you should." Marwa also pointed out an irony in representing all Swedish immigrants through her own behavior:

It feels like you're always jumping in for everyone, and you have to defend everyone. So you're not Swedish, but you're everyone else... I wish that it weren't like that. I wish I didn't have to stand up for it. I wish that I didn't have to say I'm not a terrorist just because I'm a Muslim. Even though I don't want to say that, I still feel like I have to say that... I hate that but I have to. Because I am the way I am.

Thus, although these women have integrated into Swedish society, conform to Swedish social norms and feel themselves to be Swedish, they are still excluded from Swedish identity and instead made responsible for representing a vast and diverse group of immigrants and the children of immigrants. As aforementioned, immigrants in Sweden are generally treated as a large and relatively homogenous group in the public discourse, which fully ignores the different

ethnicities, cultural identities, languages, religions, family history and integration experiences of Sweden's immigrants.

The feeling of needing to 'prove oneself' does not occur in a vacuum. Many of the women I interviewed feel as if they are often confronted with the stereotype or assumption that they are oppressed, deprived of agency and, thus, deserving of pity. Sara stated that she thinks people look at her and assume certain things "like your father acts in a certain way, that you're not allowed to wear certain things, or educate yourselves." Marwa²⁰ identified an interesting gender component of this assumption that she contrasts to the effects of media coverage of the youth riots that occur from time to time in Sweden's 'immigrant' suburbs. She identifies a problem wherein genderless "youngsters" are blamed for these riots, like the recent riots in Husby, and so all youths of non-Swedish background are implicated in this kind of behavior. She believes that this lack of context in reporting leads to women of immigrant background being subjected to the same societal scorn that is directed at the young men who participate in the riots. Simultaneously and paradoxically, these same immigrant women are portrayed in popular discourse as having no agency, no rights within their own communities:

One thing that's interesting about that is in the media it was youngsters [*ungdomer*] attacking with stones. It was never young men; it was always youngsters. If you look at young girls in that place, they are in university, have great jobs, supporting their families...Muslim women don't have any rights or whatever, but at the same time you can see that Muslim women in these places like Husby, they're supporting their families. They're investing in their futures...We're always talking about women who don't have any rights...As a Muslim girl, it feels like I'm making something of myself, but no one is really talking about that.

²⁰ Refer to page 108, footnote 6 for a description of Marwa

For Marwa, these condescending assumptions about both unlawful behavior and lack of agency are not only incorrect, but also fail to recognize the successes that Marwa and many women like her have achieved.

In further evidence of this type of interaction, Caroline²¹ shared with me the details of when she visited a Swedish doctor's office as a single, pregnant woman of color. The nurses and doctor inquired as to whether Caroline intended to marry the father of her unborn child. When Caroline answered that she didn't really want to, she believed that she was conveying that she was still in the process of deciding whether or not to do so and felt that she had used a tone of voice that conveyed that she did not feel it was necessary but was instead a personal choice. Without consulting her further or asking any clarifying questions about her private life, the medical staff brought in a social worker under the assumption that Caroline's parents must be forcing her to marry against her will: "So many assumptions of who I am, what my background is, who my family is." Although somewhat wary of the classist implications of the following statement, Caroline was appalled that anyone would make that assumption about her and felt that as the educated daughter of educated parents she was above such assumptions of oppression and lack of agency. This assumption of oppression was mentioned in several of the interviews I conducted.

Emina,²² a Serbian Muslim woman who arrived at the age of 13 in Sweden with her parents fleeing the Yugoslav wars, described how this assumption of lack of agency is often a

²¹ Refer to page 111, footnote 10 for a description of Caroline

²² **Emina:** Emina arrived in Ystad, Sweden in 1992 at the age of 13 with her Serbian Muslim parents fleeing the ethnic violence of the Yugoslav wars. Having grown up in Malmö, today she is an ombudsman for the city's Social Democrat Party branch. Emina was extremely helpful to me throughout my time in Sweden. She introduced me to several interviewees, took me to the Social Democrat official offices in the Riksdag (Parliament), secured an interview for me with two of Malmö's members of parliament Hillevi Larsson and Leif Jakobsson, and introduced me to Roza, whose profile is located in footnote 17. During our interview, she was very analytical; evaluating Swedish politics from a more neutral position than other participants. Although she has experienced discrimination,

consequence of people trying to empower women of immigrant background. While these kinds of attempts are well-meaning, they perpetuate stereotypes of lack of agency and are ultimately offensive to the women they are directed at:

As a woman of ethnic background, people want to empower you. Which can be pretty stupid sometimes because you already feel empowered. Many people who are talking about immigration are very persistent of empowering women of immigrant backgrounds. Which I feel is very demeaning and you don't see why you should change or that you need to change. To me it means that you're not enough of a woman, you're not the best woman you can be. I am satisfied with myself and I have high self-esteem.

In the above quote, Emina was referring to an ongoing discussion between people responsible for implementing social policies surrounding the schedules of women in the care industry, the majority of whom are of immigrant background. The gist of the conversation revolved around whether or not these care providers' schedules should be adjusted, regardless of what the women in these positions actually wanted; the assumption being that they were unlikely to make the best decision for their own well-being. Emina illustrates how this desire to empower implies that women of immigrant background require external empowerment and the paternal guidance of strangers. While that may be true of a minority of women of immigrant background, this assumption is often applied wholesale to all women of immigrant background.

In researching racialized interactions in a cultural context different from my own, I was immersed in an entirely new set of racial tropes, stereotypes and epithets, some of which focused on this perceived lack of agency. One such Swedish epithet was that of people of immigrant background being *hudhandikappade*, which translates more or less to skin-handicapped.

Emina was quite comfortable with her identity and felt that there is space for her in Swedish society. She recognized many of the issues with the integration process, particularly the desire of native Swedes to empower immigrant women without knowing whether or not these women are disempowered to begin with, but she had a general sense that integration efforts in Sweden were admirable and part of a slow, fraught process that not be anything but.

Victoria²³ detailed a disturbing exchange with a long-time friend who, while complaining about ‘Arabs’ taking Swedish jobs, was quick to defend himself from Victoria’s objection by saying, “I don’t mean you. It’s not your fault that you’re ‘skin-handicapped.’” At the time of this exchange, Victoria was not only the man’s employer but had also spent years emotionally supporting him through crippling alcoholism:

This incidence was so horrible because I knew him for so many years and we had been friends for such a long time. For him that thought that he had always seen me as handicapped, knowing how strong I am, like being his boss at the moment. How can you look at me...I have been dragging you out of the gutter for so many years, so how can you look down at me for my skin color?

This form of exchange was common among the women I interviewed. Several of them mentioned that when they confront their ethnically Swedish friends about offensive statements they may make in reference to Swedish immigrants, they are often told, “I don’t mean you. You don’t count. You’re not *one of them*.” Again, these women simultaneously feel as if they are representing the interests of all Swedish immigrants, while trying to negotiate their own identities.

Another common theme continues this negotiation between group and individual identity as several women mentioned feeling as if they confuse people who expect them to conform to racial and ‘immigrant’ stereotypes. Because the women I interviewed were culturally Swedish and economically and socially integrated into Swedish society, they did not conform to people’s prejudiced expectations. Mariam²⁴ experienced this form of discrimination throughout her education in Sweden. She believes that her teachers did not treat her well, both as a child and throughout her university education, because she did not fit their stereotypes; she was much

²³ Refer to page 108, footnote 7 for a description of Victoria

²⁴ Refer to page 107, footnote 5 for a description of Mariam

more integrated than they had expected. She points to this phenomenon as a paradox because on the one hand, Swedes want newcomers to integrate, but when they do, they no longer have an easy category for that newcomer and react to this confusion with hostility. In Mariam's words, "But never forget your color, your gender and your status. There's always a hierarchy and if you're trying to overstep your class and if you're trying to be something, people don't like that." Matilda discussed these experiences in terms of fitting into defined social categories or 'boxes.' She feels that she often confuses people because she does not fit into the 'girls from the hood' box and thus, because she does not fit into an easy mental heuristic, people do not know how to treat her or respond to her.

These reoccurring interactions, discussed above, constantly serve to remind these women that they occupy the position of the Other in Swedish society. In conjunction with these daily experiences, many of the women I interviewed also mentioned that these experiences are often discounted, discredited or diminished by the people with whom they discuss these issues. The week before I interviewed her, Mediha wrote an article for *Sydsvenskan*, a newspaper published in the Southern province of Skåne, entitled "Jag är trött på att alltid känna mig hatad på grund av min tro" ("I am tired of always feeling hated on account of my faith," *translation mine*). Mediha felt compelled to write this piece in response to being told again and again by friends and acquaintances who do not experience racial discrimination that she is only imagining that she is discriminated against, that she is hyper sensitive and quick to jump to conclusions. Her mother wears hijab so people spit on her and tell her to go home: "It's so disturbing to see someone doing that to your mom...it's fucked up as it is...so I wrote about it. We can't just pretend that we don't see it. You can see that it's a fact. It's not just how I feel." In my interview with

Caroline²⁵, she coined the phrase “the denying of racism is the new racism,” which she explained in the following way: “to say that all of us, that we’re that delusional, that our intellectual capacity is that low, that we don’t know what our reality is, it’s extremely offensive and extremely racist.” Not only do these women experience discrimination on a daily basis, they are then told that they are misinterpreting their own realities, that their experiences are imagined. In Marwa’s²⁶ words: “When I feel like I try to talk about this, everyone is like ‘no no no, that’s not what’s happening...we think of you as Swedish. You’re not an immigrant.’” Her Swedish friends discredit her experiences and deny her own interpretations of her own reality.

The Assertion of Swedish Identity in the Face of Exclusion

The goal of my interviews was not to prove that racism exists in Sweden, although I believe that aggregating and publishing the experiences detailed above, much like Mediha’s article in *Sydsvenskan*, is one way to prevent others from diminishing these women’s experiences. The goal of my interviews is to understand how these women identify themselves as individuals in Swedish society and then choose to perform these identities. As developed further in Chapter 2, subjective understanding of oneself is a key component to how individuals constitute themselves as agents and can thus act by their own agency. In the context of immigration, social and cultural identities are important factors in determining the presence of integration. Social and cultural integration counter the argument that women of immigrant background have no agency because they are being prevented from integrating into Swedish society.

²⁵ Refer to page 111, footnote 10 for a description of Caroline

²⁶ Refer to page 108, footnote 6 for a description of Marwa

One of the most consistent elements that I heard in nearly all my interviews was the assertion of Swedish identity. One of the most frustrating things for Minas²⁷ was that she and her parents arrived in Sweden a few short months after she was born. She deeply resents that she cannot use the fact that she is Swedish-born to substantiate her claim to Swedish identity. Multiple times, Minas angrily asserted that “I. AM. Swedish.” In fact, when I asked Marwa to self-identify, she incorporated her birthplace in her personal narrative:

The thing is that I would say that I am Swedish, but originally I’m from Tunisia. I’m not ashamed to say that I’m a Muslim and an Arab. But I like to say that I’m Swedish too, because I’m born in Sweden...But I always said to myself that I always will tell people that I’m from Skellefteå...One day I decided ‘You should stand up for yourself and say, I’m really from Skellefteå.’ I was born there and grew up there.

For Minas, Swedish cultural and social belonging is how she defines herself as a Swede. For Marwa, her birthplace in Skellefteå is how she asserts her Swedish identity. For Victoria, she is Swedish because she thinks, feels and acts like a Swede:

Like my way of being, the way I am, the way I think, is the most Swedish way you can imagine. I’m very much a Swede; I’m from Småland, there’s nothing there...I don’t think about it so much as I did before. I really feel like a world citizen because it’s so hard to identify yourself. Who is a Swede these days, who is a Latin American, who is a Chilean, who can say that? It’s difficult but my way of thinking is very Swedish.

Although these women identify as Swedes in different ways along several different dimensions, that sense of belonging is consistent between them. Maxime²⁸, for instance, defines herself as culturally Swedish but in doing so, she feels the tension between her self-identification and how people treat her. These women not only have to assert their contested Swedish identities, many

²⁷ Refer to page 109, footnote 9 for a description of Minas

²⁸ Refer to page 112, footnote 12 for a description of Maxime

of the women I interviewed described this external contestation of identity as a near-daily experience.

Matilda²⁹ expressed the two parts of her identity quite clearly as a personal, internally derived sense of self and a social, externally derived sense of self. She feels Swedish because of her place of birth, her mother tongue, her cultural belonging and her upbringing, and further identifies herself as Swedish because she has very little contact with her African ‘side.’ As far as she is concerned, her Swedish identity is an uncomplicated identity. Due to how other people perceive her, however, she has a second, social sense of self that is Black-Swedish, African-Swedish or sometimes, as she expressed it, African. She even stated numerous times that she wished she had more knowledge of her African heritage because people define her as African, not Swedish. Rather than rejecting this external identification, she wishes to learn more about Ghana and travel to Ghana in order to have a stronger claim to this externally derived *and* ethnically derived identification. Interestingly, she stated several times that her adoption of her African identity feels disingenuous due to her lack of Ghanaian culture. She said that this lack of connection makes her ‘feel false’ when she claims an African identity.

The way I understand Matilda’s predicament is that she is forced to accept an African identity because people externally assign her one, but in accepting this forced identity, she feels false. In order to feel like she has a genuine externally recognized identity, she would either need to be recognized as uncomplicatedly Swedish or obtain a better understanding and emotional closeness to Ghanaian culture. Like Matilda, Maxime has a similar dichotomous experience with her identity: “I have felt more in line with the White identity and the Swedish identity and that

²⁹ Refer to page 111, footnote 12 for a description of Matilda

the Black identity was forced on me.” Both women feel themselves to be Swedish but are forced to incorporate another racially derived identity due to how people treat them.

For Mariam³⁰, her identity is further complicated by her relationship with her devout parents: “It’s always a struggle, because I’m a woman, because I’m a Black woman, because I’m not a Muslim.” As she explains it, Mariam has numerous layers of identities: an innermost, personal identity, a social identity with her family and a social identity in public. She adjusts her identity, how she behaves and views herself as an actor, in order to retain some integrity but to also ameliorate social tensions: “It’s like schizophrenia... You always struggle with your role because you are the second generation... You have to accept that you are different. Fine. Make good of it.” For Minas³¹, her affirmation of atheism, similar to Mariam’s lack of religiosity, is a component of her identity as Swedish and a way of distancing herself from her religious family. She sees her lack of faith as a conclusive argument for why she is culturally Swedish, rather than culturally Iraqi. But although these women have a strong, personal attachment to and identification with Swedish culture, social interactions constantly call this identity into question.

During my interview with Emina³², she asserted a confidence in her identity and a lack of internal debate, but she also stated that, “I have been aware of my background and I have been *made* aware of my background.” Emina, like many of the women I interviewed, did not have the luxury of a socially recognized, uncomplicated Swedish identity. In some cases, this lack of social recognition takes the form of outright exclusion from Swedish identity: as Caroline argues, “I think the Swedish community is sending mixed signals. We’re not accepting you because

³⁰ Refer to page 107, footnote 5 for a description of Mariam

³¹ Refer to page 109, footnote 8 for a description of Minas

³² Refer to page 120, footnote 22 for a description of Emina

you're not Swedish enough but you can't be Swedish because you're not White. It's like a catch

22. How do you win?" Linda³³, a 22-year-old woman born in Sweden to Iranian parents,

identifies as Swedish but believes that this identity will never fully be externally recognized:

Jag definierar mig själv som svensk med persisk bakgrund. Men jag är svensk. Och på något sätt har det blivit så viktigt för mig att vara svensk när så många försöker ta ifrån mig min identitet. När jag får frågor som "vart kommer du ifrån på riktigt" är det som att de försöker ta ifrån vem jag är. Jag är svensk. Jag älskar Sverige. Detta är stället jag vuxit upp på, blivit kär, gått i skolan. Landet som format mig till den jag är... Men det är klart att jag vet att i deras ögen kommer jag aldrig vara svensk. Spelar ingen roll hur bra svenska jag pratar eller vad jag jobbar med. Jag kommer aldrig vara svensk för dom.

(I define myself as Swedish with a Persian background. But I am Swedish. And somehow, it has been important for me to be Swedish when so many try to take my identity away from me. When I get the question "where do you really come from," it is as if they are trying to take who I am from me. I am Swedish. I love Sweden. It is the place where I grew up, fell in love, went to school. The country that has shaped me into who I am... But it is clear that, I know that in their eyes, I will never be Swedish. It does not matter how well I speak Swedish or what I do. I will never be Swedish for them. Translation mine).

In this form of exclusion, Mediha³⁴ recognizes the added danger of forsaking belonging to her parents' culture: "Especially when you're born here and I don't speak very good Arabic... You feel like 'Oh my god, I've lost my parents' identity and I am still excluded.'" Several of the women I interviewed have actually experienced this exclusion from both Swedish culture and

³³ **Linda:** Born in Linköping, Sweden to Iranian parents, 22-year-old Linda works in Human Resources, is active in the feminist political organization Interfem, works as a writer and is an activist. Like some of my other participants, Linda became aware of her racial difference with age. As a child, she lived in a White, middle class neighborhood and viewed herself as such. As she got older, people ask her why she speaks such good Swedish or if she is adopted or if she is going to have an arranged marriage, which has made her complicate her identity. Although she has been made aware of her difference, Linda is careful and clear in her assertion of Swedish identity. Interestingly and unlike my other participants, Linda also formulated her self-identity based on her political views, which she believes is an important part of her identity. She also sees her political struggles for gender and racial equality as a struggle for her own survival. Linda spoke like an activist, clearly and using the terminology of critical race and intersectionality. And while my other participants spoke about Whiteness without identifying it as such, Linda also explicitly identified Whiteness (*vithetsnorm*) as a major problem in Swedish society.

³⁴ Refer to page 106, footnote 4 for a description of Mediha

from the culture(s) of their parents. For Maxime³⁵, it's ironic that people tell her to 'go home,' but when she actually had a chance to visit the Gambia, the country of her father's birth, she was also treated as and felt like an outsider there.

Every woman I interviewed mentioned being asked the question "where are you *really* from?" on a nearly daily basis. Several of my interviewees acknowledged why this question is so problematic. As Linda explains it, "När jag får frågor som "vart kommer du ifrån på riktigt" är det som att de försöker ta ifrån vem jag är." ("When I am asked, "where do you really come from," they are trying to take who I am away from me." *Translation mine*). In order to avoid being asked this question, "where are you *really* from," Mediha, for instance, says, "I'm Swedish, but my parents are from Iraq." Marwa continues to resist having to identify her ethnic background when asked where she is from. She asserts that she was born in Skellefteå and thus she is Swedish. While Marwa, unlike Mediha, does not avoid the inevitable, invasive follow up question, she takes pride in owning and asserting her Swedish identity.

Popular Terms to Define Exclusion: This lack of externally recognized, and subsequently internalized, belonging is best described by the Swedish words *utanförskap* and *mellanförskap*, both of which came up frequently in my interviews with these women. *Utanförskap* roughly translates to "exclusion from society (*förskap* means "from society, *utan* means without). Several women used the word to capture the degree to which they feel excluded from Swedish society as members of a large, opaque immigrant population. Marwa³⁶ shared with me how she and her friends conceptualize this feeling of *utanförskap*: "Me and one of my friends said that it feels like we're on borrowed time. Sometimes it feels like that. Am I only here for a

³⁵ Refer to page 112, footnote 12 for a description of Maxime

³⁶ Refer to page 108, footnote 6 for a description of Marwa

visit and then I should go back to Tunisia? It feels like I'm here on borrowed time, even if I'm born here." Marwa, born and raised in Sweden, feels as if her time in Sweden is temporary because her acceptance into Swedish society is inconsistent and unpredictable. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the neighborhoods with the largest concentrations of people of color lie outside of the natural bounds of Swedish cities and are isolated by large, traffic-heavy roads and sprawling, quiet neighborhoods. Just as the geographical spaces associated with immigrants are excluded from society, so too are the people associated with immigrant origin.

Rather than use the term *utanförskap*, two women I interviewed referred to the word *mellanförskap* to describe their position in society. *Mellanförskap* roughly translates to "inbetweenness" and captures the sense that women of color in Sweden feel themselves to be Swedish, feel socially, culturally and economically integrated in Swedish society, yet are not recognized by that same society as a full member. *Mellanförskap* is a relatively new word in Swedish as a large population of first and second generation immigrants is now reaching middle adulthood, having been raised and educated in Sweden as Swedish citizens. The feeling of *mellanförskap* is one that best captures the tensions discussed above between identifying personally as Swedish without having the external validation as such from wider society.

In my interviews, I noticed a common coping strategy of emphasizing and developing non-Swedish ethnic and cultural identities in order to deal with these feelings of *utanförskap* and *mellanförskap*. Matilda³⁷ explained this concept of *utanförskap* in terms of physical space. She feels like she is often in "White rooms," where everyone else occupying the same space is ethnically Swedish. Because people perceive her as Black-Swedish, African-Swedish or just African, she has noticed that she has become hyper aware of when other people of African or

³⁷ Refer to page 112, footnote 11 for a description of Matilda

partially African background are in the same rooms as her. Although she is unlikely to approach these people, she finds herself thinking, “there are five of us in here.” For Matilda, this has been a recent development as she has only just started to incorporate her father’s African heritage in her identity; identifying with other African-Swedes on the basis of a nebulous, emergent shared identity is a new and interesting experience for her. In her internal narrative, Matilda constructs an intersubjective understanding between herself and other Swedes of color in White rooms based on a shared recognition of Otherness. For Matilda, that she and these few strangers share a non-White identity allows her to depend on these mutually-recognizable bodies for a shared identity. The mere presence of other non-White bodies allows Matilda the comfort of knowing that there are at least some people in that room who share intersubjective understanding of being of color in a White world.

Conversely, Caroline³⁸ has long taken refuge from *utanförskap* and *mellanförskap* in her paternal family’s Nigerian culture and community. While several of the women I interviewed stated that they often wished they were ‘White’ or more ethnically Swedish when they were growing up, Caroline always wished she were more black, more visibly of African descent. One factor in this desire was that Caroline felt if she was going to suffer discrimination and feelings of exclusion for being Black-Swedish, then she might as well enjoy the rich culture of her African heritage: “I love my father’s family, I love Nigeria, I love Nigerians, I love Nigerian food, I love Nigerian music...there’s so much good coming from that so the hardship I face is worth it.” While she was living and studying in the United States for a short time, she attended a historically Black college and joined a Black sorority. Now that she has returned to Sweden, she remains close with her Nigerian relatives and Nigerian culture, both for herself and for her young

³⁸ Refer to page 111, footnote 10 for a description of Caroline

son who is now also experiencing *mellanförskap* and *utanförskap*: “Sometimes color isn’t enough, I think you need a culture behind it.” For Caroline, her African identity is not so much an escape or punishment but a source of pleasure and belonging.

Reactions to Discrimination

As I mentioned briefly, I had expected to encounter feelings of resentment and anger when interviewing women who experience *utanförskap* and *mellanförskap*, but the reactions that I heard were reactions of frustration and irritation instead. Of course, the women I interviewed were angry about certain aspects of their lived realities, for example, about the structural racism and poorer material conditions of people of immigrant background in Sweden. But when dealing with discrimination and ignorance in face-to-face interactions with ethnic Swedes, these women express frustration, dismay and irritation, rather than react with antagonism. Marwa³⁹ related this feeling of frustration to feeling as if she always has to prove herself:

Irritation is one way of putting it and frustration. But frustration is the first word that comes up in my head. I get so frustrated...I love hearing stories about women who have the same background as me, because this frustration disappears. But frustration feels like you’re all alone. That you always have to work harder than everyone else.

Similarly, although Matilda did express some anger over how she is sometimes treated, she generally views these interactions as socio-political opportunities to act responsibly, in part by attempting to change people’s preconceived notions of how people of immigrant background behave: “If I don’t do it, then why should anyone else?” While she feels anger, she does not see the social value of reacting in anger. Jasmin⁴⁰ also identified social value in these types of interaction. She feels as if her personal story is “baffling” to people who ask her things like “why

³⁹ Refer to page 108, footnote 6 for a description of Marwa

⁴⁰ Refer to page 114, footnote 16 for a description of Jasmin

is she Swedish?” Rather than take offense, she says “I don’t mind it because I like opening people’s minds to things...I think it’s nice to open their minds to something new in a positive view.” She, like Matilda, acts on that added sense of responsibility that is an important component of *dubbelbestraffning* as discussed above.

Although my participants did not themselves identify Swedish social norms as the reason why they do not react with anger to racialized experiences, it is important to point out that public displays of anger, or any strong emotions, does not conform to the values of *lagom* and *Jantelagen* as described above. Anger, for example, is understood as an ineffective reaction to a problem that can be dealt with logically and calmly:

Although Swedes insist on truthfulness, they typically dislike heated confrontations, preferring to avoid conflict when possible. They often interpret excessive emotion as a lack of control or immaturity and, when faced with it, will retreat into silence, if not into another room. (Robinowitz & Carr, 2011, p. 135)

Unlike public displays of anger, which fail to conform to Swedish social norms, the logical, calm reactions of my participants when faced with ignorance and hate are a very culturally Swedish way of responding to potential conflict and tension. The fact that so many women I spoke with see *dubbelbestraffning* as an inherent burden that requires them to represent so many others in their daily interactions also satisfies the Swedish sense of social responsibility that undergirds the welfare state. The responses of my participants to these racialized experiences is both culturally Swedish and indicative of internal fortitude. The sheer resiliency and determination exemplified by these women in the face of near constant discrimination and alienation demonstrates a strong will only possible in agentic individuals.

Through the personal experiences of my participants, I have demonstrated the wide range of ways that they encounter and respond to Whiteness through daily interactions with native Swedes: from feelings of unwanted visibility to the added pressure of having to represent an

entire racial group to the constant need to assert belonging and Swedish identity. In this chapter, I have used these personal narratives to exemplify how wider societal moods like White melancholia affect the daily lives and identities of women of color, who are viewed as the cause of the tensions in Swedish society. I have also outlined Sweden's long history with race despite the contemporary assertion that Sweden is and has been race-neutral. Race and racism play important roles in the lived experiences of Swedish women of color. The pervasiveness of race and racism in their lives demonstrate how critical race theory and Whiteness provide a counter narrative to the cultural explanations for integration failures that dominate multicultural political theory and political practice.

Having detailed the racially charged encounters of Swedish women of color and how these interactions can be viewed as the lived experience of Swedish Whiteness, in Chapter 5, I examine the ways that these women react to these encounters and assert themselves as Swedish citizens and social agents. Rather than turning away from society and engaging in self-segregation, many of the women I interviewed choose to engage in social discourse, assert belonging and occupy the public sphere. In addition to the internal fortitude of my participants, I will also highlight the state structures that exist in Sweden to "level the playing field" and ensure that those who want to be active members of Swedish society have the means to do so.

CHAPTER 5: WOMEN OF COLOR AS AGENTS OF CHANGE

As a woman of ethnic background, people want to empower you. Which can be pretty stupid sometimes because you already feel empowered.

In this chapter, I detail both the non-structural psychological factors and the structural, institutional context that contribute to the integration successes of first and second generation women of color. I present the narratives of first and second generation women of color as evidence of a will to succeed which works in concert with the institutional context. I will also explain how this institutional context is designed in such a way to facilitate integration by using social and cultural capital and intergenerational mobility as the means of measuring integration. I present this overview as an argument for the successes of integration in Sweden despite a prevalence of Whiteness, or the structural and ideological discrimination throughout society, that is deeply engrained in contemporary Swedish culture.

Agency

As a response to Swedish Whiteness, the women I interviewed consistently linked their personal narratives of frustration, rejection and resistance to a broader narrative of socio-political norms and contemporary reality. These women's resiliency demonstrated in the face of social injustice and inequality and their awareness of their socio-structural context exemplifies Meyer's argument that people who exist at multiple intersections of discrimination are perhaps "better positioned to exercise autonomous moral and political agency, then multiply privileged individuals are" (Meyers, 2000, p. 152). This idea of political agency is particularly relevant to my participants, the majority of whom were politically active either in party politics or in community organizations at the time of our interviews. My participants included a

parliamentarian, a party ombudsman, a leader of a party youth organization, a political activist and journalist, a diversity consultant for the State's community youth centers, a founder of a support organization for teenage girls between 13 and 18 years old, a community organizer for an institute devoted to facilitating diversity and a bureaucrat in the Migration Bureau (*Migrationsverket*) who works with incoming refugees.

These participants, as well as those not directly politically engaged, indicated that their personal experiences of discrimination in large part motivate their political consciousness and community organizing: in Linda's¹ words, "jag är aktivist. Antirasist och feminist för att kämpar för mitt liv som rasifierad kvinna" (I am an activist: anti-racist and feminist to fight for my life as a racialized woman, *translation mine*). Mariam², the woman who established a support organization for teenage girls sees her own life as a necessary step towards a more positive future for the next generation of women of color: "my dream is to see more women in higher positions and if I struggle and have to be [an] experimental bunny (*canin*) than at least it can be better for women after me." Maxime³, a university student, attributes her politicization to her race and her experiences of racial discrimination even though she initially grew interested in politics as a woman and as an advocate for gender equality. Maxime's intersectional identity and her interest in racial politics was particularly interesting given that she is also a homosexual woman. For Maxime living in contemporary Sweden, race is a more compelling identity for her political interest than either her gender or sexual identity. The women I interviewed exemplified Meyers' argument that it is awareness of intersectional identity that allows individuals to assert moral and

¹ Refer to page 128, footnote 33 for a description of Linda

² Refer to page 107, footnote 5 for a description of Mariam

³ Refer to page 112, footnote 12 for a description of Maxime

political agency. The women I interviewed were very aware of their identities, their backgrounds and the modes of discrimination they face: “I have been aware of my background and I have been made aware of my background.”⁴

Additionally, because many of my participants are the children of political refugees from Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Africa, the lives of their parents play a part in their own political identities. Emina, who now works as an official party ombudsman (public advocate), attributes her politicization to both her personal experiences and to her family history:

My family, we were a minority in Serbia and we felt that the government was directing their policies towards us. There was a lot of political discussion in our home... So when we came to Sweden, I had that background. And when you come somewhere, your background is questioned and people are asking about your background actively. You're aware of yourself as an individual and a citizen... My family has one way of talking. We [talk] all about solidarity, about living in a society that has equal opportunities. Because of our background, we've felt that we don't have equal opportunities. There's something lacking, not in our citizenship, but in our everyday life. That we could have something more if we were equal.

The religious and political persecution stories that the children of refugees grow up hearing shape their political and social upbringing. Roza⁵, a parliamentarian for the Social Democratic Party, grew up listening to stories about her parents fighting for Kurdish human rights in Turkey and their flight from Turkey as political refugees. She also highlighted the fact that her parents arrived in Sweden in October with no possessions, not even coats to face the harsh Swedish autumn: “They started a life here with nothing. They didn't get any jobs. They have suffered a lot to come where they are today. And I am a result of their struggle... They came to Sweden to save me.” The importance of their parents' flights from their countries of birth on their own personal narratives of achievement was an oft-repeated sentiment by my participants.

⁴ Interview with Emina; refer to page 120, footnote 22 for a description of Emina

⁵ Refer to page 109, footnote 9 for a description of Roza

Beyond the construction of political identity, my participants expressed personal identities that underpin their social and economic success as well as their political activeness. The first commonality exhibited by all the women I interviewed was an asserted Swedish identity based on claims to birthplace, culture, language, education and values as illustrated above. This asserted Swedish identity allows these women to make claims for access to public spaces, to representation, to state provided benefits and services and to national belonging. A strong, internalized Swedish identity also counters the challenges to belonging that often characterize verbal discrimination: the calls to “go back to where you came from,” the question “but where are you really from?” This Swedish identity, however, is almost entirely internally derived as the public discourse and national culture presents a very homogenous image of who a Swede is and what a Swede looks like. To name just a few characteristic traits of the public discourse: any Swede of non-ethnically Swedish descent is an *invandrare* (immigrant), the Sweden Democrats’ explicitly anti-immigrant platform has been steadily gaining support since 1995, and White Swedes are almost exclusively depicted on all domestically produced products and in national television programming.

Returning to Giddens’ theory of self-identity in modernity, this asserted Swedish identity forms a central component of these women’s biographical narrative of self. The use of biographical details like places of birth, upbringing and education underpins the assertion of belonging. Interestingly, however, Giddens’ biographic narrative also allows for a continuity of identity when the biographical story may change:

A stable sense of self-identity presupposes the other elements of ontological security – an acceptance of the reality of things and of others – but it is not directly derivable from them... Feelings of self-identity are both robust and fragile. Fragile, because the biography of the individual reflexively holds in mind is only one ‘story’ among many other potential stories that could be told about her development as a self; robust, because a sense of self-identity is often securely

enough held to weather major tensions or transitions in the social environments within which the person moves. (Giddens, 54-55)

One such alternative story that emerged in the narratives of some of my participants was the story of belonging to cultural, ethnic and/or racial groups other than Swedish. Rather than refuse or deny these alternative belongings outright, many of my participants actively integrate other categories of belonging into their self-identity and alongside their Swedish identities. These participants whose parents immigrated to Sweden as adults grew up with Persian, Iraqi, Kurdish, Ethiopian, Somali identities that shaped many of their experiences in their private lives. Due to the familiarity with the languages and cultural practices from their parents' ethnic groups, these identities are naturally integrated into hyphenated Swedish-Iranian, etc. identities that do not cause internal debate and deliberation. The intersubjective struggle related to these hyphenated identities revolves around the contested Swedish component rather than the non-Swedish component.

Two of my participants, however, have African fathers and White mothers, but had been raised primarily by the later. Matilda⁶, whose struggle with her African identity I detail above, was raised by a Swedish single mother and thus grew up immersed in Swedish culture among native Swedish family and with very little knowledge of and exposure to her non-Swedish ethnic inheritance. In fact, she first acknowledged her part African background as a component of her identity around the ages of 18-19. Until that point, she viewed herself as Swedish with no complications. Similarly, Maxime⁷ was raised by a Polish single mother in Stockholm and, although she was raised with another non-Swedish cultural identity (Polish) with which she is

⁶ Refer to page 112, footnote 11 for a description of Matilda

⁷ Refer to page 112, footnote 12 for a description of Maxime

very familiar, as for Matilda, it is her African ethnicity that raises questions and is externally imposed upon her. Like Matilda, Maxime has only recently embraced the non-White part of her identity: “I don’t want to be White; I want to be who I am. I’m happy with myself.” As I mentioned above, both Matilda and Maxime have been exploring their African heritages, in part in order to claim for themselves the identities that others impose on them.

For all my participants, identification with and ownership of the ethnic background that results in daily experiences of discrimination and exclusion is a means of asserting self-worth and the value of their cultural heritages. Caroline⁸, a woman of one-quarter Nigerian ethnicity, married a Nigerian man and has been actively raising her son with a Nigerian-Swedish cultural identity. In her personal experiences, she identified the value in her familiarity with Nigerian culture during times of discrimination; an understanding derived in part from conversations with adopted Swedes: “Sometimes color isn’t enough, I think you need a culture behind it.” As I illustrated above, the richness of Nigerian culture, particularly the food and the music, outweighed much of the discrimination Caroline faced as a result of her skin color. Caroline has put her belief in cultural familiarity into practice; she runs an afterschool program for Swedish children of African descent between the ages of 3-10 years old to teach them about modern Africa. Having encountered endless ignorant questions about Nigeria and Africa more broadly, Caroline sees a value in educating children who will have facts and information to help them correct this ignorance that they will undoubtedly encounter.

In conjunction with the assertion and practice of non-Swedish identities, many of my participants addressed the concept of *invandrare* or immigrant, as mentioned previously, and its normative implications. All Swedes of non-Swedish ethnic descent are considered *invandrare* in

⁸ Refer to page 111, footnote 10 for a description of Caroline

national discourse and this term has direct consequences for those living under the designation. The concept of *invandrare* has an important temporal connotation suggesting recentness or recent settlement, Otherness, foreignness and a lack of claim to the country and its culture. In her interview, Maxime asserted that she would prefer that Swedes of African or partial-African descent were referred to as *svart* or black similar to the American discourse. Hyphenated racial or ethnic categories like African-American or *svart-svensk*, while premised on socially constructed phenotypical categories imply a permanence and belonging that ‘immigrant’ precludes. The avoidance of racial and ethnic categories in the Swedish discourse has instead led to the creation of a single, heterogeneous category of the Other: *invandrare*. It is through the assertion of non-Swedish ethnic identities and the creation of racial and/or hyphenated ethnic or religious identities that my participants establish their own sense of permanence and belonging (*svart*, Ghanaian-Swedish, Muslim-Swedish). And as Caroline stressed in our interview, “If you have pride in your background, you have a different starting point for facing discrimination.”

In addition to creating a personal identity, the hyphenated identity also serves as a means of intersubjective identification with other Swedes of color, which creates feelings of belonging and solidarity. Several of my participants expressed feeling more comfortable with other Swedes of non-ethnically Swedish background and, interestingly, often embodied the all-encompassing category of *invandrare* by referring to friends of very different cultural and ethnic backgrounds as belonging to the same Swedish sub-culture. For example, two friends Sara and Jasmin⁹, who are ethnically Kurdish-Iranian and Kenyan-Indian-Swedish, refer to themselves and their group of non-White friends jokingly as “Team Happy Africans.” This “team” identity resulted from daily conversations about experiences of discrimination that is a frequent topic of discussion

⁹ Refer to page 114, footnotes 15 and 16 for descriptions of Sara and Jasmin

within the group of friends. For these friends, joking about being “happy Africans” is a coping strategy for living with daily discrimination. Similarly, Roza¹⁰, of Turkish and Kurdish descent, and her Somali best friend enjoy referring to their own culture and part of this enjoyment is derived from making fun of it. Even without the cultural background, Matilda has begun to experience a recent phenomenon wherein she now enters rooms, takes stock of its occupants and notes that “there are five of us in here,” the us referring to other Swedes of color. And although Matilda’s friends and peers are mostly White Swedes, identifying with other Swedes of color has become an automatic impulse for Matilda.

Nearly all of my participants mentioned having friends who are of non-ethnic Swedish descent with whom they share experiences of exclusion and discrimination. Swapping stories of discrimination with one another helps validate these experiences, particularly in the face of disbelief and denial that these women often encounter from native Swedes. As mentioned above, many of the women I interviewed spoke about how often they hear that they are being too sensitive or that they are misinterpreting their interactions with others. Through intersubjective exchanges with other people of color, these women are able to validate and aggregate their experiences in a way that makes the denial of racism in Sweden very difficult to maintain.

Societal and Governmental Discourse: The External Is Internalized

The goal of achieving gender equality is and has been a cornerstone of Swedish politics since the mid-twentieth century. As aforementioned, the Swedish state has come further than any other Western state in achieving parity between genders, although this process is not yet complete and remains an active part of the political discourse. Because the discourse of achieving gender equality has been a mainstay in Swedish society for at least two generations,

¹⁰ Refer to page 109, footnote 9 for a description of Roza

for many young Swedes, the idea that men and women should be afforded the same opportunities and resources is the norm. Mariam¹¹, who runs a youth organization for young girls, identified both the accomplishments of Swedish gender policies and the need for further improvement: “I’m very proud of [our gender equality]... You can be grateful but it doesn’t mean that you are satisfied and even though we are grateful, we are not equal so we have to fight more.” Caroline had a more positive take, saying “there are a lot of things about Sweden that I like that are good; we’ve come a long way on the rights of women, of children, of mothers.” But Maxime problematized the way people often employ Sweden’s gender equality as an argument for why the country is more advanced or innocent of other sins. She pointed to existing problems with violence against women and the mortality rate of women, but emphasized that “it’s also how we treat our kids from a very small age.” When I asked my participants about women’s rights in Sweden, this was most often the answer that I received: an acknowledgement that the status quo in Sweden is far more advanced than in other states but that real gender equality, rather than relative gender equality, is the ultimate goal.

Mediha¹², a leader in a political party youth organization, used her own rise to power as an example of insufficient gender equality: “I think that I only got [this position] because they need young women and women who speak other languages... It’s kind of hard being in the party when you know all this stuff [are aware of attempts to fill demographic quotas] and you have it in the back of your head.” Mediha’s criticism of surface level representation is an oft expressed criticism of the state. Women are still underrepresented as leaders of industry and, to date, there has never been a female prime minister. Many of the women I interviewed were careful to say

¹¹ Refer to page 107, footnote 5 for a description of Mariam

¹² Refer to page 106, footnote 4 for a description of Mediha

that complacency is counterproductive. As Matilda put it, “I know that Sweden is a good country in some ways, but we also live in that reputation. We’re a good country but we have a lot of problems.” The women I interviewed agreed: Swedish women have to continue the fight if the Swedish state and society are to live up to its international reputation.

In addition to explicit evaluations of Swedish gender equality, my participants demonstrated a commitment to women’s rights in their actions and career paths. As mentioned above, several of my participants are actively involved in non-profit organizations for women and/or girls. In developing a support group for girls, Mariam aims to prevent women and girls from feeling bad for themselves on account of their gender, declaring that “even if I’m a woman, I can stand on my feet. I don’t take shit.” The support group is based on the model that young girls between the ages of 13 and 18 can speak with older women about their insecurities, fears and aspirations. The encouragement from these role models will encourage these girls to grow up secure in their gender identity and confident about their abilities. She also aims to prevent young girls from experiencing the same kinds of exclusion and derision that she experienced in her youth by ensuring that this organization is in large part comprised of women and girls of color. Similarly, Marwa¹³ was instrumental in developing youth community organizations and mentioned one organization in particular called *Brightful*, an organization devoted to helping young girls of color backgrounds to achieve their goals:

This project that I’m managing too is that it’s a lot of young girls with another ethnic background who are not doing sports to the same degree that Swedish girls are. We have these youth organization that’s connected to [Marwa’s place of work]. If you look at what kind of organizations they are, you can see that 50% are for young girls with ethnic backgrounds. The reason we’re doing these organizations is so that they can show their parents that they’re doing things. It’s so interesting because they want to change the world. You can see that... When I look at this and

¹³ Refer to page 108, footnote 6 for a description of Marwa

when I look at the youth organizations, I feel that the future can't be anything other than bright.

Marwa later explained to me that young girls who participate in sports have a much higher self-esteem from an early age than those that do not. Consequently, they are more likely to seize opportunities that arise and pursue independent goals. She wants young girls of color to benefit from playing sports in the same way as native Swedish girls so that they can change the world if they so wish to.

Interestingly, one of my participants benefitted from one of these organizations designed to support women of non-Swedish ethnicity. After graduating university, Belhira¹⁴ attributed her difficulty securing employment in Sweden to her non-Swedish name, a prejudicial hiring practice that remains a problem today (Carlsson and Rooth, 2008). She attributes the establishment of her career to an internship in Geneva, which she points to as evidence of discrimination in Sweden: "When I was really trying to establish myself in the Swedish labor market, I understood that my name was not to my benefit...and I think that was why I was

¹⁴ **Belhira:** Born in Serbia, Belhira came with her Serbian Muslim parents in 1992 to Southern Sweden to escape the violence of the Yugoslav wars. Today she works for Migrationsverket, the state Migration Agency, as an administrator. Because she has fair skin and speaks good Swedish, Belhira had fewer instances of direct, in-person discrimination to relate than my other participants. She did, however, speak extensively of her struggle to obtain interviews during several job searches, although she was university educated and qualified for the positions for which she applied, which she contributes to her Muslim-sounding name. After graduating from university and failing to obtain employment in Sweden, Belhira decided to take an internship in Geneva. Upon returning from her internship, Belhira secured employment with a woman's organization that only employed women of foreign origin. She left Sweden again after working at the woman's organization to work with the UNHCR, where she met her Jordanian husband. Belhira and her husband returned to Sweden and she began working at Migrationsverket. Her experiences of discrimination since returning to Sweden were related to the discrimination experienced by her husband, who many people assume is a recent refugee rather than the spouse of a Swede and who has also experienced frustrating applying for jobs most likely because of his Middle Eastern name. Belhira shared a lot of insight into the immigration process based on her experiences working both in Migrationsverket and at the UNHCR. For example, she stated that Migrationsverket and Arbetsförmedlingen, the Public Employment Service responsible for refugee resettlement, need to do a better job managing the expectations of refugees when they enter Sweden. Refugees arrive assuming that employment and integration will be easy processes and are disappointed, frustrated and angry when they realize that that is not the case. She also viewed Migrationsverket as an organization with two contradictory functions: to welcome and protect international refugees and to act as border control for the Swedish state. Her interview was very insightful and her demeanor throughout was friendly, open and confident.

seeking the international community.” Upon returning from Geneva, she secured a job with a women’s organization that only employed women of foreign origin: “It was a very active activist organization, it was an organization that was trying to push for change but was also rather limited in view. It was not the most balanced, objective analysis of the society, but I was given that chance there.” Although Belhira had established herself on the labor market, she still struggled to secure employment, which she attributes in large part to her Muslim Serbian name and to her higher education at a *högskola* (college) rather than at one of the universities.

Returning to the idea that self-identity is inextricably tied to and shaped by external norms, in my interviews with my participants, I noticed a consistent theme wherein all of my participants understood gender equality as a given. Every woman I spoke with described their own life experiences with the expectation that men and women should be equal, have equal access to resources and play equal roles in the private and public spheres. This Foucauldian subsummation of external norms is an important counter narrative to claims that first and second generation women of color in Western societies are oppressed, in part because they are “brain-washed,” or so deeply enculturated in their parents’ traditionalist cultural values that they are not aware of the liberal alternatives. To grow up in Swedish society, to hear the near constant discussions in politics about how to improve gender equality, to see foreign news publications with titles like “Is Sweden the best place to be a woman?¹⁵” and to attend public schools with educators and peers who are themselves immersed in Swedish cultural and sociopolitical norms,

¹⁵ Almqvist, H. (2010, October 17). **Is Sweden the best place to be a woman?** Retrieved October 13, 2016, from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-11525804>; Foster, L. (2015, June 24). **Is Sweden the equality capital of the world? Meet the stay-at-home 'latte papas'** Retrieved October 13, 2016, from <http://www.stylist.co.uk/life/the-rise-of-the-latte-dads-paternity-equality-feminism-gender-women-men-children-family>; Langlois, S. (2015, November 12). **Here's why Sweden just might be the best country for women.** Retrieved October 13, 2016, from <http://www.marketwatch.com/story/heres-why-sweden-just-might-be-the-best-country-for-women-2015-11-12>; **Sweden, a Model for Gender Equality, Aims to Make Its Record Even Stronger.** (2016, September 12). Retrieved October 13, 2016, from <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/trend-lines/19884/sweden-a-model-for-gender-equality-aims-to-make-its-record-even-stronger>

girls in minority ethnic groups are well-aware of their cultural and sociopolitical context. In then choosing to identify as Swedish, these girls and women consider themselves a part of this gender equal society and these gender norms are as much a part of their identity as other facets of Swedish culture, for example style of dress, language, food, etc.

Like gender equality norms, the education background of my participants also implicitly reflect and simultaneously shape their expectations for society and the actions that they take. Of the twenty women I interviewed, 80% (16 participants) had attended or were currently attending an institution of higher education, be it college or university. This figure is high relative to the percentage of women between the ages of 20 and 45 who attend higher education in Sweden, which, for 2013, was 47.8% (Utbildningsstatistik årsbok 2015). I attribute the disparity between the national percentage and the percentage of my participants to two factors: one is sampling bias and the other is demographic. There was distinct sampling bias in my methodology in so far as the women who were more likely to agree to conduct an interview with me were those who understood the process and value of higher education, particularly of doctoral research, and were in major urban areas. Furthermore, the majority of my participants fell into the category of native-born Swedes, who attend college or university at a higher rate than foreign-born Swedes. For 2013, 56.3% of native-born women between the ages of 25-35 attend an institute of higher education compared to 47.1% of foreign-born women in the same age range (Utbildningsstatistik årsbok 2015).

While not explicitly touched upon by the majority of my participants, their educational opportunities and accomplishments shaped their current careers and their critical analysis of the state and society. Education was also cited by a few of my participants as an example of their achievement in the face of discrimination and as a counter to challenges of belonging. Along the

topic of the one-minute rule and the need to prove oneself, Caroline¹⁶ identified education as an important component in doing so: “It’s important to look at what kind of education that they have, because I think it gives you some sort of added value. You can legitimate yourself by speaking the language properly, and having an education.” Education is one more way to demonstrate Swedish identity and to demonstrate a right to belong to a society.

For one of my participants, the pursuit of education played a particularly profound role in her life. When I met Minas¹⁷, she was a doctoral candidate in neuroscience at one of the top universities in the country, and her path to candidacy demonstrated her immense determination and willful agency. Minas’ family life, contrary to that of any of my other participants, is a case that supports the claim that young women of minority ethnic groups are at risk of oppression from their traditionalist cultures. Her Iraqi-born parents moved Minas and her older siblings to Sweden when Minas was four months old. She was raised with traditional gender roles wherein she and her sisters were responsible for housework and kept in the home while her brother was given freedom of movement and the same privileges afforded to native Swedish children. When she was sixteen years old, Minas’ parents decided that she would end her schooling (education is only compulsory until the age of sixteen) and instead improve her domestic skills in preparation for marriage. Minas, however, loved school and was highly resistant to leaving. She argued with her parents, but was unable to change their minds. At one point in her sixteenth year during a trip to Syria, her mother threatened physical violence and vowed to lock Minas in her room when they returned to Sweden to prevent her from trying to attend *gymnasium* (non-compulsory secondary school for children between the ages of 16-18 and a necessary step before applying to

¹⁶ Refer to page 111, footnote 10 for a description of Caroline

¹⁷ Refer to page 109, footnote 8 for a description of Minas

university). Out of fear for her physical safety and education, Minas sought help from the Swedish state.

Minas described this period as one of deep frustration because she had a difficult time convincing state social workers that she was in danger. She spent six months arguing her case, until finally the state moved her from her home to a battered women and children's shelter so that an investigation could be conducted. During the investigation, her parents arrived at the mandated interviews dressed in Western clothing and did not fit the stereotypes of religious fundamentalists or overbearing, oppressive parents. Her parents and her siblings lied about the ongoing situation and Minas' case was very nearly dismissed. After several weeks, however, a social worker who knew Minas from the local community center finally testified on her behalf, having witnessed the change in Minas' behavior in the last few years, and consequently won Minas her case. As this point, she was old enough to live in boarding at a *gymnasium* (advanced high school), then progress to college and then to university, all of which are tuition-free for Swedish students. Free, state-funded education enabled Minas to progress from a child removed by social services from her home to a PhD candidate at a prestigious university. While Minas' story is one of immense struggle, her case supports the argument that while the risk of oppression may exist, young women are rarely hapless victims with no understanding of their rights and no idea that these traditionalist gender norms do not align with those of their country of residence. With appropriate state infrastructure and awareness of existing infrastructure, these women can and will often extricate themselves from oppressive home lives.

The goal in detailing the stories of these women is to illustrate both the conditions of their daily lives in a state with a very recent history of racial diversity and mass immigration and to demonstrate the resiliency and agency of a subset of the population often framed as helpless

victims of their circumstances. Conducting interviews with these women was a powerful and moving experience. I left Sweden feeling optimistic for the future of Swedish integration with women such as these actively engaging with their society. As Matilda¹⁸ put it, the anger she feels towards how she and other Swedes of color are often treated is a useful motivating force to engage in socio-political action. She, like many of my other participants, sees socio-political engagement as a personal responsibility: “If I don’t do it, then why should anyone else?”

Welfare State Policies (integration and education)

The ability of the women described above to successfully integrate both socially and economically cannot occur in a vacuum. The will to overcome and succeed is a necessary component in the process of integration and positive social mobility, but so too are economic, social and cultural capital. The purpose of this next section is to detail the structural context of integration in Sweden, namely the institutional factors that play a role in the integration successes of first and second generation women of color. These institutions work in such a way to facilitate integration by creating opportunities for the accumulation of social and cultural capital as a means of achieving social mobility.

Governing Bodies and Agencies: Sweden is divided into two forms of local government, the municipalities (*kommun*) and county councils (*landsting*). While the counties are primarily responsible for health care provision, the municipalities are responsible for infrastructure, housing, education, refugee resettlement, unemployment services, cultural institutions and community activities like sports leagues. And although welfare provision occurs on a local level, the so called “Robin Hood tax” was introduced in 1960 to ensure that access to welfare services and inclusion in the welfare state remained a country-wide commitment. The

¹⁸ Refer to page 112, footnote 11 for a description of Matilda

“Robin Hood tax” refers to the way in which resources from wealthier municipalities and counties are redistributed to poorer municipalities and counties by the central government to ensure that location of residency does not affect one’s access to welfare services and that the quality of welfare services is not determined by where one lives (Elander & Montin, 1990, p. 368).

While many of the processes of integration are implemented by the local governments, they are overseen by four state-level agencies responsible for the processes of migration and integration. The Migration Agency (*Migrationsverket*) is responsible for processing people as they enter the country, granting visas, asylum-status, residency and naturalization, and deportation. Once an individual has been granted the right to stay in the country by the Migration Agency, the responsibility for that person is then transferred to the Public Employment Service (*Arbetsförmedlingen*), which is now responsible for integration for the first two years of the person’s stay in Sweden. Once an individual has been approved for stay by the Migration Agency and has reported to the Employment Service to begin the process of searching for employment, she is now eligible to apply for monthly monetary assistance from the Social Insurance Agency (*Försäkringskassan*). During the first two years in Sweden, the Employment Service and Insurance Agency coordinate with the 21 county governments (*länsstyrelserna*) to find permanent housing. After the first two years, the county governments become solely responsible for recent immigrants to the same degree that the counties are responsible for established citizens (for ensuring access to resources and adequate housing, etc.). Interestingly, although the Employment Service is technically responsible for integration and oversees the county and municipal governments, the county governments provide housing and healthcare and the municipalities provide Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) language courses, civil orientation,

daycare, and education (Sjödín, personal interview, Arbetsförmedlingen press contact. March 16, 2015).

In conducting my fieldwork and institutional analyses, I was surprised to learn that the sole responsibility for immigrants in their first two years lies with the Employment Service, although the agencies described above are delegated some of the actual processes of integration. In an interview with Hillevi Larsson and Leif Jakobsson, two current Social Democrat parliamentarians representing the Malmö municipality, both politicians explained the party logic behind this division of responsibility. Returning to D'Addio's point that high intergenerational mobility ensures that all individuals' skills and talents contribute to the economy, Leif referred to the high level of education and professionalism of recent immigrants to Sweden and the numerous job vacancies that they could theoretically fill if it were not for the process of degree recertification and structural discrimination. Leif explained that there is job growth in Sweden today, but it is mainly in the "creative" sectors, a trend in post-industrial economies. The people filling these jobs are Swedes who live in the smaller suburban towns outside of the cities. There is, simultaneously, a shortage of doctors, dentists, civil engineers, auto mechanics, nurses, midwives, floor layers and cooks. Living in segregated, urban neighborhoods, there are thousands of recent immigrants who, with re-certification and Swedish language training, could fill this demand, much of which exists in those same urban centers (L. Jakobsson & H. Larsson, personal interview, February 28, 2015).

In the context of integration, Leif also pointed to employment as the key to integration. Rather than create policies and state-sanctioned discourse to expand the definition of Swedish identity and belonging, he argued that "it has to be changes on the ground, in the reality for people. Once you see that people are taking part in the workforce and contributing to the welfare

state,” then notions of inclusion and belonging will change (H. Larsson & L. Jakobsson, personal interview, February 28, 2015) This argument for employment reducing integration is similar to that of the argument that employment can reduce segregation:

The Swedish programmes...focus more on increasing jobs in specific neighbourhoods and developing the level of human capital among residents, thus changing the social composition without changing the housing mix. The American dispersal programs aim to affect the composition of neighborhoods simply by moving households. (Andersson et al., 2010, p. 240)

This argument for desegregation, however, means that while the incomes in segregated neighborhoods will become more diverse, without moving people around, ethnic segregation will remain. Immigrants who find employment and have more success integrating into Swedish society will certainly diversify the socio-economic status of these neighborhoods, but their ethnic and racial identities will stay constant. Thus, employment as a means of desegregation fails to acknowledge the high correlation between ethnicity and socio-economic status or race and class in Swedish suburban neighborhoods and the effects of structural racism that I outline in Chapter 4: Discrimination and Whiteness in Sweden.

The final institutional component of the welfare state that provides relevant structural context for integration is the education system, which I argue is also the most important component in the generation of cultural capital, which I will return to in the next section. In Sweden, school is compulsory and free between the ages of 7 and 16. Pre-school for children between the ages of one and five is provided by municipalities with need-based subsidies that makes it essentially free for many families. Additionally, all children are guaranteed a place in a one-year pre-school program for six year olds designed to prepare them for compulsory schooling. This one pre-school year is guaranteed but high demand and limited resources has led to a waiting list system for the first four years of pre-school, particularly in densely populated municipalities (Education in Sweden, 2015).

In addition to the standard curriculum, the state provides free mother tongue education for “all pupils/students who speak a language other than Swedish at home” and adoptees, who speak Swedish at home, but who are still entitled to partial education in their original mother tongue as long as there are educators available in that municipality who speak those languages (Mother Tongue Education, 2007). The principle of mother tongue education is based on research that demonstrates that even partial education in a child’s mother tongue (the language spoken at home and/or in early life) improves performance in the dominant language of study across all subjects (UNESCO, 2016). Throughout primary and secondary school, Swedish students are guaranteed formal education in reading and writing in their mother tongue that accompanies their core Swedish curriculum. For students who do not yet speak Swedish at the level of their coursework, mother tongue education can also act as study guidance wherein the students are taught the same content in their mother tongue that they learn in their Swedish language courses.

Following the 9 years of compulsory schooling, the Swedish state provides free upper secondary school from ages 16 to 18 with both pre-collegiate and vocational programs. Following upper secondary school, students can then apply for university. All university and college programs in Sweden up to and including the doctoral level are paid for by the state for all students from the European Union and European Economic Area countries plus Switzerland. In addition to free tuition, the Swedish state funds the majority of PhD students with full employment contracts that include full health and retirement benefits. Thus pre-school through doctorates are funded by the state and free to all students (with the exception of the first four years of pre-school, which is funded based on need). As I will argue in the next section, this

access to education is perhaps the most effective way that the Swedish state is able to provide human capital for first and second generation immigrant children.

Cultural and Social Capital through State Programs: The institutions detailed above and the policies and political culture of the welfare state, as detailed in Chapter 3: Why Sweden? The Political and Historical Context, frame the institutional context wherein the process of integration is occurring. I return to the discussion of Bourdieu's three forms of capital to demonstrate how this institutional context provides cultural and social capital in the absence of economic capital. As Leif, Member of Parliament for the Social Democrats, argued, "[although] there is structural discrimination in Sweden...what we're facing now is that the average level of education of refugees in Sweden is higher than the average Swede's" (H. Larsson & L. Jakobsson, personal interview, February 28, 2015). In addition to encouraging employment as a means of overcoming discrimination (which would cause immigrants and their children to be seen as equal participants in the Swedish economy), Leif argues for employment as a means of generating both the necessary economic capital to thrive and the social capital needed to allow immigrants to socially integrate. Workforce participation in Sweden demonstrates participation in the welfare economy through the taxation of labor. Thus participants in the economy are seen as members of a group who are entitled to the credit afforded by the collectively-owned capital of a social welfare state (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 51).

This form of social capital (welfare state membership) or the perceived lack thereof for immigrant populations is highly characteristic of the debate surrounding immigration in Sweden today. The Sweden Democrats, the far right party whose platform is largely based on the single issue of immigration, has garnered approximately 20% of the support of Swedish voters and is now the third largest party in the Parliament. The Sweden Democrats often frame their

xenophobia in terms of concern that immigrants, particularly refugees, are a drain on state resources and do not contribute to the taxation base from which they draw their social services checks. In 2010, the party released a campaign commercial depicting an elderly Swedish woman using a walker slowly pushing towards a desk marked “national budget” (*statsbudget*) who is quickly overtaken by a group of women in full burqas pushing baby strollers (BulletproofCourier, 2010). The message is unmistakable, Muslim women are moving to Sweden, taking money from the state that could be spent on Swedish parishioners and reproducing at unsustainable rates. Sweden, however, has comprehensive hate speech legislation, which the private television channel TV4 cited when it refused to air the video in 2010 (Freedom House, 2011). Sweden’s hate speech legislation and the 2009 Discrimination Act are two state-led responses to the structural barriers to integration caused by discrimination.

In addition to encouraging the creation of social networks through work force participation and creating legislation to fight discrimination through the justice system, the Swedish state under the Social Democrats encourages social network building through the funding of anti-discrimination and civil society organizations designed to address integration. In our interview, Hillevi, Member of Parliament for the Social Democrats, pointed to the organization *Malmö Against Discrimination*, as an example of civil society groups that are necessary for fighting structural discrimination (H. Larsson & L. Jakobsson, personal interview, February 28, 2015). The Malmö municipality also works actively with and subsidizes funding of many other prominent anti-discrimination and/or pro-diversity organizations like Open Skåne, Coexist Malmö, and Young Muslims Against Antisemitism and Xenophobia (UMAF). The organizations listed above operate in conjunction with local government and private businesses to ensure that the measures set out in the 2009 Discrimination Act are upheld in court and that

those who have experienced discrimination have recourse to action in the form of state and NGO subsidized representation.

While anti-discrimination work aims to create a more inclusive Swedish society, the creation and support of civil society groups by the state is also intended as a form of social capital investment. Today the Swedish Sports Confederation (*Riksidrottsförbundet*) is considered one of the most successful civil society organizations for the integration of immigrant youth and the children of immigrant parents (Malm, 2005, p. 31). In addition to funding the Sports Confederation, the state has dedicated funding in its annual budget for support of faith communities, religious communities, public meeting places, and women's organizations as a means of encouraging a wider array of civil society organizations with diverse member groups (Civil society, 2015). The mainstream political parties have also been very active in recruiting Swedes of immigrant background into the party organizations in order to improve representation. These activities designed to encourage civil society also increase access to formal and informal networks that immigrants can join as a means of gaining social capital.

Similar to social capital, the issue of employment in Sweden is also related to the need for greater cultural capital for those still needing to integrate into Swedish society. Returning to Leif's quote at the beginning of this section, the issue of employment for immigrants, particularly refugees, with advanced degrees from their home country is one of the biggest barriers to immigration facing the country today. The state has created a reaccreditation system (*validation*) to address this issue, and in 2015, the Swedish Council for Higher Education (UHR) received 22,874 requests for reaccreditation from immigrants, a 27% increase from the previous year (UHR Årsredovisning, 2015, p. 18). The UHR predicts an even higher number of

applications next year with the influx of highly educated Syrians who have begun arriving in Sweden since late 2015.

For the children of immigrants and their native Swedish peers, the Swedish education system detailed above is perhaps the largest source of cultural capital and is available to anyone regardless of their family's socio-economic status. Bourdieu defines the institutionalized state of cultural capital as educational qualification, "a certificate of cultural competence which confers on its holder a conventional, constant, legally guaranteed value with respect to culture" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 50). For Bourdieu, it is the qualification rather than the process of knowledge accumulation that is important in cultural capital because qualification allows for conversion (which occurs in the process of reaccreditation), comparison and translation into economic capital (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 51).

As previously stated, all educational qualifications: completion of secondary school, vocational training certificates, bachelor's degrees, master's degrees and doctorates are fully funded by the state. Progression through the Swedish education system is also dictated by personal choice rather than selection on the basis of academic performance. Studies have shown that choice-driven educational systems are advantageous for ambitious first and second generation immigrant children who are more likely than their native peers to choose academic upper secondary education rather than vocation education and that "this pattern is accentuated when we take the (typically disadvantaged) socioeconomic position of their parents into account" (Jackson et. al., 2012, p. 172). Finally, research on educational attainment for intergenerational mobility demonstrates that education of parents is one of the most important factors for predicting the earnings of their children and that state investment in public education can offset educational immobility (d'Addio, 2007; OECD 2010; Blanden, 2013).

In Chapter 5, I have shown how the Swedish welfare state, through its education and redistributive policies, has created the necessary access for Swedes of color to pursue economic and social advancement. As evidenced by the personal narratives of my participants, the belief in and assertion of Swedish identity and social responsibility motivate a generation of Swedish women of color who have the desire and wherewithal to tap into these resources provided by the state. The combination of these psychological and structural conditions has contributed to the creation of a generation of women whose lives actively combat the prevalent narrative that women of color are deprived of agency and victims of their situation. This generation of women also represent the slow development of an ethnically and religiously diverse Swedish population that will one day comprise the national imagined community for all Swedes.

While I present a particularly positive picture of the integration of women of color in this chapter, I highlight, in Chapter 6, the aspects of Swedish integration that could still use marked improvement. I identify the weaknesses of Swedish integration policies by using a comparison of the Swedish case with the American case and conclude with policy recommendations for both states based on this comparison. I will also address those women who are still in need of protection from the state because to assume and characterize all Swedish women as powerful, agentic and integrated would be to do the same intellectual violence that I claim to be challenging.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

In this final chapter, I begin with an overview of this dissertation and its central arguments. I contribute the final piece of the argument by giving representation to those women who do not have access to the public sphere, are not free to make their own choices and cannot take full advantage of the state's resources. If I did not address this population, I would be remiss in ensuring that these women have a place in this dissertation as their voices are still largely missing from this discourse. I would also be reproducing the intellectual violence of representing minority women in the West as a single, homogenous group.

I continue with a comparison of Swedish and American integration and racial discourse as a means of identifying weaknesses in the Swedish case. In comparing these two states with highly disparate political and social histories, I demonstrate how the American immigration discourse and model functions better than the Swedish model in specific ways despite the fact that Sweden has a much stronger international reputation for its progressive politics, equality and moral superiority. In particular, the American model succeeds at providing much more space for a multi-racial understanding of American identity and allows first and second generation immigrants to identify, uncontested, as Americans. Although the American system is more successful in terms of social integration, the Swedish case presents a good model for how educational and redistributive policies benefit economic integration and thus I conclude with a set of policy recommendations for each state.

The goal of this project was to provide voice to a population that, while well-represented in the fields of multiculturalism, integration and immigration, is often spoken *about*, rather than *to*. I began with an overview of both the academic and public discourse that called into question the efficacy of multiculturalism in ensuring that minority cultures coexist with majority cultures

without violating principles of liberal human rights. As I illustrated above, minority women, or the minorities within minorities, are often used as the lynchpin of the argument against multicultural policies. The argument states that the protection of minority cultures wholesale leads to the flourishing or continuation of minority cultural practices that infringe on the human rights of individuals within those communities. Although cultural diversity and a right to freedom of belief and practice are valued in Western societies (or professed to be valued), fundamental human rights related to equality and sanctity of body must be prioritized over cultural rights.

I do not, in authoring this piece, aim to dismantle the above argument. Many of the practices often cited in the course of this argument (female genital mutilation, forced marriage, domestic violence) are practices that I abhor and advocate against. The point of this piece, however, is to bring to light an unintended consequence of this discourse for the women who figure most prominently in it. This narrative of minorities within minorities portrays minority women, who are also in many Western countries women of color, as lacking in agency and active participation in their own minority cultures. The discourse suggests that these women do not practice these cultures but that these cultures are practiced on them. As I mention in my introduction, discourse surrounding the veil (hijab, burqa, niqab, etc.) across several Western societies is perhaps the best evidence for the cultural bias of assumed lack of agency. Proponents of the veil ban in France, the Netherlands and Belgium often cite the protection of minority women as motivation for enacting the ban with no acknowledgment that many women assert their right to religious freedom by wearing the veil.

In addition to this pervasive, international discourse, minority women, existing at the intersection of minority racial, gender and religious identities, frequently experience

discrimination and Othering during the course of their lives. Before turning to the agentic narrative of Sweden's women of color, I first sought to capture the context in which identity formation occurs. In conducting my fieldwork, I noticed that this harmful public discourse of lack of agency was occurring within a broader societal context of Whiteness: "the location of structural advantage, of race privilege. . . a place from which White people look at ourselves, at others, and at society. . . a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed" (Frankenburg, 1993:1). Given Sweden's international reputation for equality and progressive liberal values, Whiteness helps explain how the discrimination, described at length by my interviewees and substantiated by academic scholarship, could occur in such a society. It is important to reinforce that the reason I chose to introduce race into a conversation often framed in terms of culture is because women from different minority cultural groups as well as women from majority Swedish society who are only marked as different due to their racial identity experience similar kinds of discrimination and are often assumed to be powerless and oppressed in their private lives. Thus cultural tensions alone could not accurately capture the scope of living in Sweden as a minority woman. This project also demonstrates the degree to which race is missing from multicultural political theory and from the critiques levied at this body of thought by its critics. Conversations about immigration and integration cannot be solely framed by culture and cultural tension. As critical race theory and Whiteness studies assert, *race matters*. As I observed in the field and learned in the course of my research, *race matters*.

Having identified the scope of race relations in Sweden and the consequences of such relations on the lived experience of minority women, I then turn to the ways in which these women overcome societal narratives to create internal narratives of worth, of strength and of belonging. Despite shared experiences of discrimination and exclusion, Swedish women of color

consistently viewed themselves as Swedish, both culturally and nationally. Although their belonging is often contested by interactions with native Swedes, they asserted their right to Swedish identity and to inclusion in Swedish society. These women also consistently viewed themselves as highly capable: capable of achieving higher education, capable of being active participants in the economy and capable of acting as community leaders for other discriminated minorities. As is argued in intersectional literature, the contested identities of my participants had led them to consider their place in life more so than if their presence in society was not problematized by wider social discourse and conflictual, interpersonal moments.

I had arrived in Sweden expecting to find overt discrimination and exclusion levied on religious grounds and a society rife with multicultural tensions. What I discovered instead was a society embroiled in racial tensions and contending with racial diversity for the first time in a long national history. Skin color and hair texture, not religious identity, were the targets of derision and objects of exclusion. Although the application of Critical Race Theory to the Swedish, and broader Western European, context is nascent, framing social tensions in the region in terms of race holds majority cultural and racial societies partially responsible for the process of integration. Race as the salient category of analysis also helps make sense of discrimination and exclusion experienced by those who do not differ in cultural practice and economic integration. But my discoveries were not wholly negative. I also discovered an amazing community of agentic women of color who are helping Sweden redefine Swedish identity and belonging. These women exemplified fortitude in the face of rejection and derision. They also demonstrated very clearly to me the consequences of having a robust welfare state for the process of integration. Although many of these women arrived or their parents arrived as capital-poor refugees, they have been able to obtain higher education and employment due to the

equalizing policies of the state. Within one to two generations, Sweden has gained a population of ethnically, religiously and racially diverse educated women who are ready to see, and help implement, change.

Those Still in Need of Protection

This project requires one very important caveat that I would be remiss to ignore: some women in minority cultures are the victim of some cultural practices that deprive them of essential human rights, threatens or eradicates their bodily sovereignty and cause them to have a significantly lower quality of life than other women in the same society. Some of these women do not choose to participate in these cultural practices, do not subscribe to these cultural norms and are forced into or have been raised to accept a submissive role to which they might not otherwise conform. Minas¹, one of my participants, is a prime example of a woman who has struggled against her culture and her parents' wills. Had certain elements of her life and personality been slightly different, she may not have extricated herself from a terrible situation in which she was held prisoner by her parents, isolated from the outside world and prevented from obtaining the education she so desperately wanted. Minas, unlike many women of color in Sweden, had extensive exposure to Western cultural values during her public school years that caused her to question her parents' values and their proscribed life for her. Women who do not necessarily have access to information about their rights and have not been exposed to those rights their entire lives may not know that there are alternatives ways of life and alternative understandings of female power and agency. There are women who, like Minas, knew very well what they were entitled to according to Swedish law and familiar with the gender norms of a relatively gender equal society who still could not escape the fate of their families' expectations

¹ Refer to page 109, footnote 8 for a description of Minas

and restrictions. In the course of this dissertation, I do not wish to undermine the experiences of women who do experience parental and societal oppression, a phenomenon that occurs across all cultural and religious orientations. But I maintain that this assumption when applied without discrimination or sensitivity to all women of minority ethnicity is in itself oppressive and debasing.

In Sweden, Fadime Şahindal's short lived life represents the darker reality that some women in minority cultures face. Poignantly, she also represents the astounding degree of agency and ability to resist at all costs threats to life and liberty that many of these women have. Fadime moved with her family to Sweden from Turkey at the age of seven as a member of the Kurdish minority group. In 2001 she spoke before the Swedish parliament on the topic of violence against women and on the experience of being an immigrant girl in Swedish society. She used the details of her own story to describe how tensions within families and between generations arise. She was, however, very careful in her speech to remind her listeners that violence against women was not specific to certain regions (the Middle East) or cultures, but occurred in all cultures the world over (Sahindal, 2001).

During her speech, Fadime described how her father discovered her with her Swedish boyfriend one day and realized that she would never be able to marry a Kurdish cousin in Turkey as planned. She fled Uppsala, the city in which she had grown up, but her family soon found her and began calling with threats. Her younger brother was assigned the task of killing his sister in order to preserve the family's standing in the local Kurdish community. Initially, in 1998, Fadime pressed charges against her father and brother and both were found guilty of assault against her and her partner. As the threats continued, however, she approached Swedish police for their protection. Initially the police dismissed her concern. When she was finally able to find

an officer who understood the danger she was in, he was able to offer her a personal alarm that she could trigger and witness protection services. Fadime, however, refused to hide and in her speech questions the idea that she, the innocent victim, should hide when she had not done anything wrong. She chose to act by becoming a highly visible public figure who spoke often about the trials and tribulations of being caught between two cultures on various media outlets. In 2002, Fadime attempted to secretly visit her mother and sisters, but her father surprised her and shot her in the head in front of her family. He was convicted of murder and sentenced to life imprisonment. Although Fadime died as a result of being trapped between two cultures with vastly different proscribed gender roles, she also exemplifies agency and resistance in the face of oppression and violence.

Unfortunately, these extreme cases of gender violence and oppression continue to occur on occasion in contemporary Swedish society, although more protections have been added since Fadime Şahindal was killed. It is also important to remember that not all women in these situations resist or speak out against family oppression or traditionalist gender roles. Some women attempt to navigate two cultures simultaneously to prevent alienating their family members and to avoid having to withdraw from either cultural space. One of my participants Mariam has created a balancing act between her parents' Ethiopian and Somali cultures and her own Swedish culture. Mariam values her relationship with her family as well as her Swedish cultural identity and beliefs. Her ability to live separate from her parents allows her more space to navigate two separate identities, and while she experiences anxiety and stress in doing so, she prefers to continue to do so than lose her family altogether. Other women, unlike Minas, Fadime or Mariam, do not outwardly resist at all to traditionalist cultural practices and are thus some of the least visible people in society. So how do we ensure that there are adequate protections for

women in highly disparate situations without subjecting them to a single treatment and declaring them utterly powerless?

Exit, Voice and Loyalty: In parsing the options for minority women under multiculturalist policy regimes, Anne Phillips turns to Albert Hirschman's treatise on exit, voice and loyalty that presents a tri-partite system of registering satisfaction or dissatisfaction through economic and/or political action. Exit, or leaving an arrangement or organization to seek a replacement, clearly and directly signals dissatisfaction, but does not provide feedback as to why dissatisfaction is occurring. Voice, or registering dissatisfaction, provides more information and signals a desire to improve rather than leave an arrangement or organization. At the same time, voice also requires a communicatory process that may be confrontational, making exit a preferable option to conflict (Hirschman, 1970). Loyalty typically registers satisfaction, but I will return to this concept of loyalty as it applies to the case of minority women below.

As Phillips demonstrates, exit is often the first suggestion for helping minorities within minority groups obtain access to their liberal rights and freedoms. She identifies this strategy in strong multicultural societies that are characterized by a maximum toleration for cultural practices, but that oddly enough "is a [form of] multiculturalism that depends on a rather cavalier attitude towards the capacity of individuals to leave their cultural group, and to that extent, on a weak representation of culture" (Phillips, 2007, p. 138). Phillips' first critique of exit-based approaches to protecting minority women is that it does not attach enough significance to cultural identity and belonging. Exit requires leaving one's family and minority cultural group in pursuit of a different quality of life and exit suggests that leaving one's cultural group can be done relatively easily. A culture, however, that is costless to exit cannot by definition have a

strong cultural identity; the requirements of membership would have to be relatively lax to allow for easy exit.

These costs of exit are, in part, best understood by the psychological costs of exit: the fear and uncertainty of losing one's social support network and the important cultural component of one's identity. Women who have no choice but to follow this route often feel isolated and alone. Exit often precludes seeing all family members, not just those who are impinging on personal freedoms. My participant Minas, while cognizant of her father's role in proscribing an Iraqi way of life, felt that much of the conflict occurred with her mother. But in leaving her family in order to pursue her education, Minas has lost access to her entire family including two of her siblings and her father, with whom she had good relationships. As aforementioned, my participant Mariam chooses to navigate two different sets of cultural norms (Swedish and Somali/Ethiopian) in order to remain close with her parents. Fadime Şahindal, unable to forswear her relationship with her mother and sisters for her own personal safety, died as a result of returning to visit them. In the speech she gave to the Swedish Parliament in 2001, Fadime broached this idea that a woman should not have to choose between her idea of the good life and her family:

Jag har valt att berätta min historia här för er i dag i förhoppning om att det kan hjälpa andra invandrantjejer, så att inte fler behöver gå igenom det jag har fått göra. Om alla drar sitt strå till stacken behöver sånt här inte upprepas. Oavsett vilken kulturell bakgrund man har bör det vara en självklarhet för varje ung kvinna att både få ha sin familj och det liv man önskar sig. (Sahindal, 2001)

I have chosen to tell my story to you today in the hope that it can help other immigrant girls so that no more have to go through what I've experienced. If everyone does their part, this situation will not be repeated. No matter what cultural background one has, it should be a matter of course for every young woman to have both her family and the life that she wants. (Translation mine)

Those who point to exit as a means of emancipation often fail to acknowledge the psychological and social costs of doing so.

Phillips further problematizes strategies of exit as implying that if exit is how cultural members register a dissatisfaction for certain cultural practices than remaining in one's cultural group registers acquiescence and approval. Exit creates a false dichotomy where the drastic choice of leaving one's entire social and cultural context is the only way to prove oppression and unhappiness.

[Multicultural states] misrepresent exit as easier than it is, and staying as more of an expression of acceptance. Because they make exit the main way to address oppression, they also reduce the pressure on cultural groups to engage in internal change... an infatuation with exit can discourage internally generated change. (Phillips, 2007, pp. 138-139)

While some women have made the choice to exit, the high price of losing one's family and ethnic group has acted as a barrier to other women looking for a higher quality of life. Where exit requires a steep tradeoff of rights for family, voice provides an opportunity for dialogue, change and greater integration. Voice also allows for those not willing to sacrifice cultural identity and social belonging for liberal rights to register dissatisfaction in the pursuit of internal change.

In a special edition of *Ethnicities* (a scholarly journal) focused on women in multiculturalism, the authors of this series of articles often point to minority women's organizations as examples of using voice rather than exit as a means of addressing illiberal practices. In an article by Moira Dustin and Anne Phillips, the authors argue that in the case of forced marriages in the UK, consultation of women's NGOs by the state has led to the formulation of effective, but nuanced, policies:

Potentially, at least, the greater involvement of women's NGOs in formulating strategies and initiatives helps secure better ways to tackle abuses of women without inadvertently promoting abuses of 'culture'. . . The task, in Britain as elsewhere, is to act effectively against abuses of women without encouraging cultural stereotypes. The evidence, so far, is that this balance is best achieved where there is substantial and sustained engagement with those organizations, mostly in

the voluntary sector, that can most legitimately claim to represent the experiences of minority women. (Dustin and Phillips, 2008, p. 420)

This inclusion of minority women's organizations ensures that minority women are speaking for and about themselves, which is both a demonstration of agency as well as a guarantee of some degree of representation. As mentioned in the quote above, Britain has become the example case for the inclusion of minority women in policy making. The Muslim Women's Network UK (MWNUK), the only national Muslim women's organization in the UK, was established in 2003 with the explicit goal to provide independent advice to governmental actors engaging in public policy formulation. In the past year (2015-2016), MWNUK representatives have served on government roundtables exploring issues from gendered online abuse to tackling hate crimes and have served as consultants to the Departments of Education and Health, the Home Office and the Office of the Prime Minister on issues ranging from female genital mutilation to mental healthcare provision to child sexual exploitation. Since its founding in 2003, MWNUK has been actively involved in helping shape British legislation and public service provision that affect Muslim women, even when Muslim women are a small subset of the population affected.

In the case of Sweden, the country currently has a nation-wide, umbrella organization for Swedish Muslim mosques, schools and associations, the Muslim Council of Sweden (Sveriges Muslimska Råd or SMR). SMR interacts with the Swedish government in a similar way to but not to the same degree as MWNUK. In the UK, MWNUK's activities and influence represent only one part of Muslim involvement in British governance. A larger umbrella organization the Muslim Council of Britain, established in 1997, actively participates in British politics through consultation and submissions made to the government. Not only does Sweden need to consider increasing the consultancy role of organizations like SMR, but the country does not yet have a dedicated Muslim women's organization like MWNUK. MWNUK presents a cohesive and

practical model for how women's minority organizations can engage in policy-making and governance, but as evidenced by the organization's access to policy-makers, this level of involvement also requires state sanction and a commitment of the government to involve these types of organizations.

Although Sweden does not have a designated organization for minority women, which acts as a civil society partner for the state, as aforementioned in *Chapter 5: Women of Color as Agents for Change*, many of the women I interviewed for this project had taken it upon themselves to act as representatives of and voices for their communities. Despite the fact that many of my participants often experienced frustration at having this representative role unwillingly thrust upon them as a member of a minority population, they accept the responsibility of representation and strive to exceed expectations. Their experiences of discrimination and their parents' struggles to leave their home countries in search of a better life for their children fuel a political desire in these women to ensure that life is better for the next generation of Swedish women of color. Several of my participants mentioned in our interviews that they were very cognizant of the sacrifices of their parents and the conditions in their parents' home countries that forced them to relocate to Sweden. These personal narratives of political struggle and uprooting have further intensified the responsibility that these women feel to represent their interests and the interests of other people of color through political and community building channels.

As a final note on exit, voice and loyalty, although Phillips brackets loyalty in her discussion of how Hirschman's treatise applies to minority women and multiculturalism, many women demonstrate agency in the form of loyalty to their families and cultural practices. This commitment to family and a minority cultural group might preclude or supersede feelings of

oppression and dissatisfaction. My participant Minas² is the youngest of four siblings; her older sisters Lahib and Lamis arrived in Sweden at the ages of 10 and 3 respectively. Lahib in particular has maintained her family's Iraqi culture, embraced her domestic and maternal roles and continues to live in close contact with her parents. Lamis has occupied a middle ground, following her parents' wishes in terms of education and employment but choosing to remain single. In Minas' struggle to leave her parents control, her sisters' loyalty to her parents and failure to acknowledge Minas' unhappiness effectively severed the sisters' sibling bonds. Yet it is vitally important to recognize the agency in choosing a non-autonomous life. Ensuring that all members of a society have autonomy cannot simply mean ensuring that all members of a society have autonomy to choose an autonomous life. As Jürgen Habermas so eloquently argues:

Liberalism recommends itself through the elegant interrelation of two powerful normative intuitions. On the one hand, the idea of equal individual liberties for all satisfies the *moral* standard of egalitarian universalism, which demands equal respect for and consideration of everyone. On the other hand, it meets the *ethical* standard of individualism, according to which each person must have the right to conduct her life according to her own preferences and convictions. (Habermas, 2005, p. 1; emphasis in original)

Thus liberal Western states must satisfy both the ethical and moral standard of liberalisms, the later requiring greater sensitivity and precision than the former. While ameliorating these two goals is an ongoing struggle and topic of debate in Western societies, I will address a few ways in which the Swedish state can improve their protections of minority women without impinging on these women's autonomy to choose their way of life.

Protections: State-Provided Narratives and Resources

The increased representation of women's groups will ensure that those most qualified will be key actors in the process of creating policies designed to root out oppressive cultural

² Refer to page 109, footnote 8 for a description of Minas

practices without suffocating agency and casting aspersion on whole cultural groups. The increased representation of women's groups will also create an active space for political participation on issues that directly affect these actors; providing access to public spaces and public conversations is the first method that the state can use to protect those in need of state-level resources. As mentioned throughout, the purpose of this dissertation is not to say that all minority women are agentic, self-sufficient actors who choose to participate in the cultural practices of their groups. There needs to be a continued conversation about providing resources and methods of exit to those who are in dire need of support. To a certain extent, the discourse that arose in the late 1990s and early 2000s about minority women under multiculturalism, although detrimental to religious tolerance, coexistence and the accurate representation of many minority women, has led to an increased focus on some women and children who do in fact benefit from some state-resources that have been designed to protect them. The question has become one of how to continue to provide such resources that are nuanced and address voice and exit simultaneously.

Before turning to concrete tools like internet and phone hotlines, culturally-attuned task forces and explicit pieces of legislation, I will first broach the topic of how the state can begin by ensuring that minority women feel they have access to public resources: the increased representation of people, and particularly women, of color in state agencies and democratic bodies and in the physical materials (websites, publications, ad-campaigns) of both the state and the domestic capitalist economy. There are two examples of this kind of representation that I often turn to when formulating this argument: the first is an American commercial for the fast food company McDonald's wherein a small group of young people are depicted spending time together in a nondescript room while indulging in McDonald's food items. Every one of the

young people in the commercial represent a particular racial identity that comprise most of the American populace: East Asian, South Asian, Latinx, Black, White and mixed-race. Although the phenotypical appearance of each person noticeably differs, they are all dressed in the clothes of middle class urban and suburban American young adults and are implied to share a single cultural identity: that is, American.

In the United States, it behooves global and domestic capitalists to appeal to a broad demographic of Americans because the consumer base in the United States includes consumers from a whole host of racial categories. Capitalists in Sweden, conversely, have greater incentive to limit their consumer base to native Swedes in terms of consumers depicted in televised commercials and on print material. Non-native and foreign born Swedes still comprise less than 30% of the total population and, in general, have less disposable income than native Swedes (Hammarstedt, 2001). Additionally, with increased tensions over migration following the most recent wave of incoming Syrian refugees, fear of demographic and cultural change underpins the political beliefs of many Swedish voters, as exemplified by the recent polling successes of the far right extremist party, the Sweden Democrats³. Thus capitalist forces in Sweden will not lead to publically available images of a diverse Swedish population and thus that responsibility falls to the state.

In state-produced depictions of diversity, I turn to the second example that I often use: that of the Swedish Parliament offices in Stockholm, located at the northern end of Västerlånggatan, a street located just south of the Riksdag (parliament building). In the window

³ Based on the mean polling percentage of several polls conducted monthly in Sweden, the Sweden Democrats (Sverigesdemokraterna) are currently polling at 18.8%, down from a high of just over 20% at the end of 2015 (when Syrian refugee migration to Sweden was at an all-time high and the state was forced to limit incoming refugee populations by country of origin) and up from their 12.9% won in the 2014 general election. (Tullgren, 2016)

of these Parliament offices, there is a picture of two Swedish men kissing, dressed in suit jackets and ties. Västerlånggatan is a busy street located just behind the Royal Palace and millions of tourists and Stockholm residents walk by this image, located just about head height, every year. The picture is accompanied by an image of people in a café and an image of cars on the road with the message “Riksdagen angär dig” (The Parliament is pertinent to you) written below. The message is clear, the Swedish Parliament has a bearing on all aspects of Swedish life from social issues to business interests to transportation and infrastructure. Another message is also clear, homosexual Swedes are equal citizens of the state and are representative of the Swedish citizenry.⁴

This photograph in the window demonstrates one method in which the state can actively participate in the inculcation of a broader and more inclusive understanding of Swedish identity. Public service advertisements, depictions of Swedish citizens in government publications, television and radio programming on public channels are all avenues for the state to provide a public narrative of an inclusive, multiethnic/multiracial society. Some of these methods are already employed by the state and guaranteed by existing legislation; the broadcasting charter issued to SVT (*Sveriges Television*; Sweden’s Television) stipulates the following:

SVT shall offer a diversity of culture programs, of high quality. It shall cover, reflect and examine cultural activities in Sweden and other countries of the world. . . SVT shall independently or in co-operation with outside producers and performers produce an extensive production of culture programs. . . here it is important to

⁴ Before mentioning this image in my dissertation, I attempted to double check that it does in fact exist as I had remembered from walking by it so many times. Yet I discovered that I could not find any mention or photograph of the image no matter how much internet searching I conducted in English and in Swedish. Eventually it occurred to me to use the streetview function in Google Maps, which clearly showed the image in the windows of the Västerlånggatan Parliament offices. In my early failed attempts to search for the image online, I realized to what degree that image is an uncomplicated part of Swedish society. It is not hard to imagine that if a prominent and highly visible US government building had an image of two men kissing in Washington, D.C., some Americans would be sure to express disapproval and distaste online. Although I am well aware that sexuality is much less politicized in Swedish politics than in US politics, I was surprised that even tourists to Stockholm and the rare Swedish social conservative did not register disapproval for this photo on internet forums.

reflect the many different cultures and cultural manifestations in Sweden. In co-operation with other cultural institutions and producers, SVT, through its programming, shall offer the general public events, concerts and other cultural activities from different cultural spheres, taking place throughout the nation. (The broadcasting charter, 2012)

As is common place in Swedish diversity legislation, the emphasis is on culture. The broadcasting charter, by nature of the racial makeup of those who practice alternative cultures in Sweden, will ensure that people of color are represented on some of the most watched television channels in the country. What this charter does not guarantee, however, is that SVT will prioritize the depiction of cultural Swedes of color; that is Swedes, similar to several of my participants, who were raised in Sweden by Swedish families but have a non or partial Swedish ethnic and racial identity.

Returning to the McDonald's commercial described above, the value that the commercial has in reproducing a multiracial understanding of American identity is in the set of assumptions made by the viewer. The viewer watching this diverse group of friends interact assumes that they communicate in the same cultural idioms, refer to the same set of cultural references, attended American schools with national and state curricula and feel similarly tied to their American national and cultural identities. There is, of course, the knowledge that when the East Asian American in the commercial feels like cooking comfort food, that food may be vastly different to the comfort food of the Latinx or the holidays that hold sentimental value for the Black American may not be the same as those for the White American. A majority of Americans have a second cultural belonging to their families' countries of origin or to a minority American culture but these dual identities do not preclude belonging to a shared American identity.⁵ As my

⁵ In referring to a minority American culture, I aim to include Black American, Native American and regional American (Southern, New England, Pacific Northwest) cultures in this category of secondary cultural identity (secondary where national identity is primary).

research shows, there is a whole generation of young Swedes of color who would benefit from these same set of assumptions and until Swedish capitalism catches up, the state is most able to present this narrative for public consumption.

In my interview with Hillevi Larsson and Leif Jakobsson, two current Social Democrat ministers of parliament, I broached the topic of whether government policies and programs could be used to expand the definition of what it means to be Swedish and who is Swedish. As mentioned above, Leif very adamantly responded that this change in national identity has to begin on the ground; people of color need to become visible members of the workforce and be seen contributing to the welfare state's tax base before a wider conception of national belonging can form (H. Larsson & L. Jakobsson, interview, February 28, 2015). To contest his point, however, I argue for a dual approach to integration, in which the state and majority cultural group make adjustments to their own understanding of national identity and belonging and in which immigrants and minority cultural groups actively participate in the public sphere and economy. Integration is a mutual process that requires participation by all members of a society. The responsibilities of the majority cultural group and state are what distinguish integration from assimilation, as assimilation places the onus for integration on the ability of immigrants to adopt the majority culture.

The creation of a new national identity is an important step in the direction of creating a space in society for women of color in Swedish society to access state resources and social networks and norms. An inclusive national identity will develop as successive generations of Swedish immigrants and their children define new, hybrid/hyphenated Swedish identities. In the meantime, the state must continue to provide resources to help women extricate themselves from violent and oppressive situations. There are several existing telephone helplines and websites

devoted to connecting women and children to state and nonprofit resources and shelters. The national association of Swedish shelters, Unizon, represents more than 130 women's and children's shelters and estimates that at least another 70 shelters operate within the country. There are domestic violence organizations run by state entities and by nonprofit organizations, including organizations run exclusively by women of immigrant origin. All the websites I visited included, at the very least, a brief description of the services they provide in all the major languages spoken by Sweden's significant immigrant groups; Arabic, Turkish, numerous Slavic languages, Somali, Amharic, etc. And while "honor crimes," are represented in the list of situations warranting aid, these websites are focused on domestic violence, more broadly. Those who work in domestic violence know better than anyone else that these kinds of crimes span cultural groups; domestic violence is and has been a part of European society since the beginning of Western civilization (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000).

Due to the organization and capacity of the Swedish welfare state and the avowed commitment to gender equality espoused by all political actors across party lines, these state provided resources like shelters and helplines are well-established and well-distributed throughout the country. And while this existing infrastructure will provide an important safety net for women and children in oppressive situations, some of which results from cultural tensions that will be ameliorated by better cultural integration, it is also important to note that these resources are likely to remain an important safety net for all Swedes. Given that, as aforementioned, domestic violence is not specific to any single ethnic or cultural group, cultural integration alone will not result in the eradication of domestic violence.

Public Discourse Addressing Racism: One of the thoughts I returned to often during my time in Sweden was the idea that the lack of public conversation around race contributed to

the failure of the majority society to acknowledge the differences in life experiences for people of color. As aforementioned, Swedish political history, political culture and social norms revolve around a very strong, well-defined prioritizing of equality. Equal access and equal treatment underpin the Swedish welfare state and the cultural norms surrounding public behavior and public discourse (*Jantelagen* and *lagom*). Bracketing the political and social views of the far right, Swedish culture, by nature of its focus on equality, is inherently well-suited towards attempts to create a flat society devoid of class, race and ethnic hierarchies. The robust welfare institutions described above were implemented in the knowledge that individuals begin and progress through life with different access to resources and different levels of ability. To some extent, these programs, as exemplified by the experiences of my participants, correct for the disadvantage of immigrant families; access to higher education and subsequent opportunities for employment is much more equal across class in Sweden than in most other Western states.

Where the Swedish model is in need of improvement, however, is in the acknowledgement and tackling of systemic structural inequalities not resulting from class difference. The most oft-cited example of structural racial inequality in Sweden is that of hiring biases based on the names of applicants. An experiment conducted in 2008 demonstrated that the odds of receiving an invitation to interview for a job were 17% higher for résumés with Swedish names than identical résumés with non-Swedish, specifically Middle-Eastern, sounding names (Carlsson & Rooth, 2007). A subsequent study conducted by Carlsson (2010) further demonstrated that employers do not, on average, distinguish between first and second generation immigrants in extending invitations to interview. Thus the cultural and educational context of applicants matters significantly less than that applicants are or are not native Swedes. A further study by Aslund & Nordström Skans (2012) also found that while anonymous applications

eliminated bias in securing interviews, applicants belonging to ethnic minorities remained disadvantaged in receiving job offers following the interviews, indicating a disadvantage at the interview stage as well as during the initial résumé screening. The single demographic trait of not having a Swedish-sounding name directly translates into less access to employment.

Structural inequality is not limited to hiring discrimination; it continues to affect immigrant access to housing, cultural capital and employment. Due to structural inequalities in housing, such as segregation in predominately immigrant and lower income neighborhoods and schools that are located on the peripheries of Swedish cities, immigrants and their children have less access to social networks that can help them create lifelong connections to potential employers, competitive urban housing markets and other forms of cultural capital. These social networks ensure that intangible resources, for example, information, advanced news, important introductions, etc. are distributed throughout a known community. Internships, training positions and apprenticeships for individuals entering an industry are often distributed based on these informal networks. And while these social networks exist within immigrant communities, the influx of prestige, power and capital in these networks is considerably less than in the social networks of middle and upper income native Swedes.

Because structural inequality is more difficult to see than explicit messages in policy, party rhetoric, and public discourse, conversations about racism and Whiteness help call attention to the status quo of people of color in predominantly White societies. The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement occurring right now in the United States (October 2016), while addressing a much longer history and greater degree of structural inequality, oppression and violence, is representative of the effects of conversations surrounding socially-constructed, biologically-specious racial categories. Although the conversation began in response to police

brutality that has been disproportionality experienced by young Black Americans throughout the United States, the examination of how race determines an individual's experience with law enforcement raises questions about other differences in experience based on racial identity.

Conversations about race and racism do occur in Sweden on a regular basis, but those conversations occur between members of communities of color and in the media. This conversation is not mirrored by the state in an attempt to address race as a sore point in contemporary Swedish society and the conversation is not mirrored by the majority cultural group: native Swedes. Timed with a Black presidency under Barack Obama, BLM has gained traction and has arguably prompted a second, much needed civil rights movement. As a result, race has been a defining conversation in the 2016 presidential election cycle, the president has spoken about race and racism numerous times and the state, through its elected officials, has an official narrative on racial issues. The presence of BLM on social media and in the public sphere has led many White Americans and Americans of other non-White and non-Black racial identities to either engage in, support or contest the movement. As a consequence of discussions surrounding BLM in contemporary American society, race is a topic of discussion country-wide; one, which has led other racial groups (predominantly Asian-Americans and Hispanic Americans) to speak publically about discrimination faced within other communities.

To imagine the Black Lives Matter movement in the context of Swedes of color, one could begin with a conversation about verbal abuse based on race, a relatively common happenstance, that occurs often in the public sphere. This conversation would need to arise from a central movement representing different ethnic and religious communities in Sweden. This diversity is necessary so that racial treatment would not be misconstrued as religious intolerance or discrimination only experienced by select non-White ethnic groups. There is already an

appropriate term available for such a conversation: *rasifierade* (racialized), which Swedes of color commonly use when discussing instances of discrimination and exclusion. Any individual whose ethnic background originates outside of Europe, North America and Australasia qualifies as *rasifierade* as the term signals the shared experiences of Swedes of color. *Rasifierade* also applies to first generation immigrants as much as it does to adopted Swedes of color and multi-racial Swedes and thus acts as an umbrella term for all non-White Swedes. Unlike “of color” or “non-White,” the term *rasifierade* itself identifies the disadvantage inherently tied to a broad set of phenotypical appearances. To be racialized is to be placed in a socially-constructed category of belonging and then mistreated based on that categorical identity. A movement of *rasifierade* Swedes would be able to focus on unequal treatment ranging from assumptions of “backwards” cultural practices, verbal and physical abuse, discrimination on the job market, to unequal access to social and economic networks. A successful *rasifierade* movement would confront state actors with the realities of racialized Swedish society and hopefully prompt a reconsideration of the removal of race from Swedish legislation and official governmental discourse.

As a final point in the discussion of how to improve conditions for Swedes of color, I turn to the issue of time and generational change. As exemplified by the American case as waves of immigrant groups integrated into American society and, over successive generations, came to define American national and cultural identity, generational change and, quite simply, time are the most effective tools of integration. While there are ways that I outlined above that would ameliorate conditions for Swedes of color living in Sweden today, change will occur naturally as successive generations of native and non-native Swedes grow up together, attend public schools together, watch television programs featuring people of diverse ethnic backgrounds and lose the memory of pre-migration Sweden. As a researcher of questions of integration, race and

multiculturalism, I recognize the irony in detailing the natural progression of integration that occurs over time. My only defense is that contemporary generations of non-White Swedes, and more broadly, minority racial groups in all societies, already carry the burden of temporal change. It is the responsibility of the state and its institutions to reduce this burden as part of the broader mandate of representative governments to improve the quality of life of its citizens. A proactive approach to integration also benefits the state and majority society by reducing existing societal tensions, inequality and preventing the ghettoization and potential radicalization of immigrant communities. While time decreases the poignancy of these tensions, *successful* integration is *proactive* integration.

The US and Sweden: A Comparison

Much like the McDonald's commercial described above, when discussing my project with others, I found myself frequently turning to comparisons between the Swedish case and the American case. Because the cases are so different, the comparison was a clear way to emphasize how the Swedish immigration and integration system functions, why it is an important societal and state context for the examination of integration and how the trajectory for Swedish integration compares to the United States' long and ongoing history with migration and integration. In addition to using the comparison of the US and Sweden for explanatory purposes, I often found myself thinking about my personal experiences as a woman of color living in a majority White society. As a Canadian - American woman of color conducting interviews in Sweden, many, if not all, my participants asked whether I had experienced similar instances of discrimination and exclusion as they had described throughout our interviews. I often found myself saying that no, I had not had those kinds of experiences. As a *Brown* woman of color, particularly as a culturally-White, educated woman of color, I had experienced very little in the form of overt discrimination and exclusion. I have been made aware of my difference and

Othering in many interactions with other people and have experienced occasional instances of exoticification, but I have never encountered the acts of hostility or the ignorant assumptions that my participants described living in Sweden.

While delving into Critical Race Theory and through my extracurricular interest in American race relations, I discovered arguably useful parallels between the lives of women of color in the US and women of color in Sweden; particularly the ways in which American racial categories determine different experiences of discrimination within the broader category of “of color.” One of my participants identified the difference in definitions of minority status and “of color” when she pointed out that Kim Kardashian, a well-known American celebrity of partial Armenian descent, would not be considered White in Sweden, when she is very much considered a White celebrity in the US. Simultaneously, although Kim Kardashian has an uncomplicated White identity, she is married to a Black man, Kanye West, and engages in the coproduction of Black American culture through collaborations with her husband. In fact, much of the culture reproduced by members of the Kardashian family and many of the people affiliated with the family belong to Black American culture. Thus, a highly visible American family that is racially coded as White rejects much of majority White culture for the cultural products and people in an often-maligned minority culture. Kim Kardashian, Kanye West and the Kardashian family represent the nuances of American racial identities and cultural spaces.

Migration History

The stark differences between the US and Swedish cases begin with each country’s earliest state development. Each country’s histories of migration and trends in integration have created vastly different racial tensions and categories. Beginning with the establishment of each state, Sweden traces its modern history to the 12th century as provincial kings began competing for political power. Conversely, the United States traces its modern history to the 16th century,

400 years later, with the arrival of the first European immigrants to the continent. Where Swedish state development involved the political organization of a settled population sharing ethnic and linguistic roots, the American state development process begins with immigration.

As a consequence of the way in which the American state developed, immigration has been inherently tied to American nation-building from the very start. Following the earliest migration of protestants and traders from England, France and Spain to North America, West African immigrants who were brought to the continent as slaves and indentured servants were some of the earliest immigrant groups to arrive in what is now the United States. By 1680, it is estimated that there were upwards of 7,000 Africans living in North America. Although West Europeans continued to trickle into North America throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, the next substantial wave of migration occurred with the arrival of Western and Northern Europeans in the first few decades of the 19th century, predominantly due to famine and widespread poverty in Ireland, Germany and Scandinavia.

That each successive national group that arrived on the continent was treated as maligned, second class citizens is a well-known fact of the US' immigration history. What distinguishes the American history of migration from the rise of anti-immigrant sentiment in contemporary Europe is the globalized context of this mistreatment of immigrants. Because the brunt of American immigration occurred prior to our contemporary moment of global communication, international oversight and established international humanitarian norms, the established American population did not have to contemporaneously confront its mistreatment of immigrants. While there were some political advocates for immigrants' rights and humanitarian assistance, much of the work and process of integration occurred over time with generational change. As time separated American immigrants from their ethnics roots and a broader White

American culture developed among people who originated from across the European continent, the natural process of integration occurred, and continues to occur, over a period of more than four hundred years.

As detailed above, the Swedish history of immigration is exceedingly dissimilar to the American case. Migration from non-Scandinavian countries began in earnest in the mid-20th century with the arrival of laborers from Central Europe and the Baltic States looking for employment in the post-WWII era; Sweden's immigration history begins over three hundred years after American immigrant. Within three decades of the beginning of non-Scandinavian immigration, Swedish immigrant demographics quickly shifted from Central European laborers to Chilean and Yugoslavian refugees. Today, the history of Swedish immigration is characterized by refugee migration and resettlement, a fairly unique situation for Western states. Swedish immigration is also characterized by a history of almost exclusively non-White immigrants from three continents: Africa, Latin America and Asia (specifically, the Middle East).

Indigenous Minorities

Among the many dissimilarities in the Swedish and American cases, both countries have long histories contending with the historical oppression of indigenous populations and contemporary attempts to confront those histories. The Swedish state from its earliest history has had a contentious relationship with the Sami, the indigenous, nomadic ethnic group that resides in the north of Sweden, Norway, Russia and Finland. Alternating between attempts to recognize the Sami and carve a separate space for them in the Swedish countryside to state-sponsored theories of racial inferiority to unfettered land grabs and forced resettlement, the Swedish state has spent the last three decades trying to make amends for hundreds of years of mistreatment (Usti, et.al., 2005). Today the Sami have the right to raise and herd reindeer in approximately a

third of Sweden's land area. The Sami language is an officially recognized language, the Sami have a legal right to mother tongue education, and the state has established an independent Sami Parliament that has the authority to decide on matters relating to Sami culture, language and schools. The Sami Parliament also allocates the predator compensation, compensation for reindeer felled by predators, paid by the Swedish state to the Sami people each year (Utsi, et. al., 2005, p. 63).

While the Swedish state is still contending with questions of land use, cultural access and recognition of a history of oppression, the status quo for members of the Sami minority today is, relative to the American case, quite good for a historically disenfranchised indigenous group. The same cannot be said of the majority of Native Americans today and the continuously fraught relationship between the state, the majority society and the continent's indigenous communities. Beginning in early American history with the mass slaughter and strategic use of disease to cull the Native American population, European settlers and their ancestors engaged in over 400 years of oppression and violence.

Today the quality of life for many Native Americans, particularly those residing on reservations, is lower than the average non-Native American. Native Americans fare worse than White Americans and worse than many other ethnic minority groups across the board in issues of physical and mental health/healthcare, education, economic opportunity, and gender violence (Blakeley & Park, 2004; Gentry & Fugate, 2014; Austin 2013; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Even at the level of basic recognition, Native Americans live in a country where the National Football League team in the nation's capital is still called the Washington Redskins to this day.⁶ So

⁶ Redskins is a derogatory term for Native Americans that originated during the period of violent colonization of Native Americans by European settlers. The origin of the term is unknown but by the late 17th century, the term

although Sweden and the United States share a similar history in the mistreatment of indigenous populations, the scale and magnitude of mistreatment in the US and the lack of progress made in ameliorating a history of oppression further emphasizes the deep contrasts between these two cases.

Black Americans: A Domestic Minority

The final distinction between Sweden and the United States that bears further consideration is in the presence of Black Americans as a distinct racial group and domestic minority, the likes of which do not exist in Sweden. I use the term “domestic minority” to draw a distinction between three types of minority populations: indigenous, immigrant and domestic. Domestic minorities were originally immigrant groups but their long history in the country has removed this population from its cultural and ethnic roots. In addition to Black Americans, some Mexican Americans also qualify as domestic minorities because they reside on land that was once considered part of Mexico; this population of Mexicans did not immigrate to the United States, the American borders were redrawn to include them. What distinguishes Black Americans from these Mexican American populations is the lack of a single cultural identity that can be tied to a country other than the United States. Due to the history of slavery in the US and the fact that African slaves were brought to the North American continent beginning in the early 17th century, Black Americans, like White Americans, have developed a domestic culture that is uniquely American. While Sweden does not have domestic minorities, this phenomenon is not specific to the United States. The French Canadians in French Canada and the Africans and

‘redskins’ was associated with the practice of scalp hunting, in which European settlers were paid bounties for each Native American scalp they presented to the colonial state governments (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014).

Spaniards of Latin America have experienced a similar trajectory as Black Americans and, I would argue, qualify as domestic minorities.

Although the absence of a domestic minority in Sweden is not relevant to the question of representation and voice of women of color in multicultural literature and policy, I bring up this distinction in part because discrimination faced by Black Americans came up in nearly every interview I conducted. Many of my participants, as aforementioned, asked whether I experienced discrimination to the same degree in the US that they do in Sweden, and most who asked were surprised when I answered in the negative. Due to poor race relations throughout American history, as exemplified right now with the Black Lives Matter movement and its backlash, the US has an international reputation for racism. In part because American media is consumed at a uniquely high rate by much of the Western world, there is a strong perception internationally that Americans are racist. Thus, in order to explain the disconnect between that reputation and my own experiences as an American woman of color, I explained that the brunt of overt racism in the US is experienced by Black Americans, not Asian Americans like myself.

Again, the vast differences between the forms of racism experienced by different non-White racial groups in the US as compared to the relatively consistent form of racism experienced by different non-White racial groups in Sweden indicates that the categories of race are constructed differently in these two societies. Black Americans occupy a distinct social position to Latinx Americans and both Black and Latinx Americans occupy a distinct social position to Asian Americans, etc. The social and economic hierarchy of different racial groups indicates the degree to which the American case is arguably more complex than the Swedish case. This racial complexity and national history of immigration, however, have led to the development of a civic, as opposed to ethnic, nationalism in the US. American civic nationalism,

although sometimes contested by claims to a White ethnic nationalism in some communities, create space in the national imagination for people of all phenotypic appearances. As exemplified by the McDonald's commercial described above, there is no single ethnic identity that signals American identity.

Given the numerous differences between the Swedish and American states, particularly the differences in types of minorities, variations in racial categories, and ethnic vs. civic nationalisms, are integration strategies transferrable from one case to the other? Particularly when you add to this fact that the US has a much larger population than Sweden (more than 32 times larger), a government with a proportionately smaller tax base and lower, relative to the population, capacity for policy implementation, it seems as if very little from each case can be applied to the other. Can either state learn from the way the other approaches questions of race, ethnicity, integration and immigration?

Integration Strategies Between Cases

In considering the question of whether there are approaches from either country that could be applied to the other, I have reached the conclusion that, yes, there is a potential for each case to learn from the other. In applying lessons learned from the Swedish case to the American case, robust welfare programs, particularly tuition-free higher education, correct for inequalities in socioeconomic status at birth and consequently increase socioeconomic mobility. This increase in socioeconomic mobility decreases correlation between race and class over time, which ensures that people of diverse ethnic backgrounds, including that of the majority, are present in the same workplaces, schools and neighborhoods. This economic integration leads to successive generations of citizens growing up with a multi-ethnic understanding of community and, ultimately, national identity.

Although increased government spending and redistributive policies can be very difficult to implement in American democracy, I argue that attempting the near Sisyphean task of reorganizing the American public school system would lead to better socioeconomic mobility within a generation. Currently American public schools are funded through a combination of federal, state and local funding with approximately 10% coming from the federal government, 45% from the state and 45% from the local district ("Public Education Finances: 2014", 2016). Funding on the local level means that within a state, nearly half of the budget for that state's schools is directly determined by the value of property and the corresponding amount of property tax revenue collected within each specific district. Thus lower income, property-poor districts have considerably less funding per child than wealthier, property-rich districts. This system ensures two things: the quality of public education varies drastically throughout the US and those born into poorer communities are likely to receive a lower quality of education. When you factor in the correlation between minority racial identity and socioeconomic status in the US, it is not a difficult leap to imagine that minority students are more likely to receive a lower quality of education than their White peers.

This public schooling gap continues as the college and university level as well. Students who were educated with fewer resources, in larger class sizes and by underpaid, over-worked teachers are less likely to have the same academic record and access to résumé-strengthening extracurricular activities as students in well-funded districts. Consequently, these students are less likely to have competitive college and merit scholarship applications. Once you factor in the financial burden for parents sending their children to universities, access to higher education is directly proportional to socioeconomic status. As evidenced by the Swedish case and, in particular, my participants, most of whom are college-educated children of first generation

immigrants and refugees, access to higher education is a key component to socioeconomic mobility and integration in Sweden. While I recognize the structural limitations of the American political system that makes large-scale, federal-level change nearly impossible, a reorganization of public education financing would benefit all American children who partake in the public school system (approximately 87%) and simultaneously address serious structural barriers to integration.

In order to restructure public education financing for primary and secondary education, I argue that the percentage of local financing should be transferred to the state. Within a state, each school district could transfer a percentage of its property tax revenue, proportionally based on the number of students in that district, to the state level. From the state level, 90% instead of 45% of school financing could be distributed equally across the state, although half of that 90% could be still come from local taxation. This equal redistribution of local wealth throughout the state would address educational inequality within states. While this may not correct for educational inequality between states, it would at least increase socioeconomic mobility within states.⁷ This kind of policy shift would require that all 50 states propose and pass legislation to restructure education financing, which remains an unlikely prospect. The only way that I could see this kind of change occur would be if the federal government can use the promise of more federal funding in either education or other essential expenditures as a motivator for states to pass this legislation.

⁷ To my mind, the ideal reorganization of public financing of education would include a so-called “Robin Hood tax,” like the one I described in the Swedish context. In Sweden, resources from wealthier municipalities and counties are redistributed to poorer municipalities and counties by the central government to ensure that location of residency does not affect one’s access to welfare services. This same organizational logic could be applied to public education funding in the United States to ensure that the state in which one resides does not determine the quality of education relative to that in other states. As of right now, the tax base in wealthier states ensures that the quality of public goods is higher relative to the quality in poorer states.

The next step of restructuring education financing would be to address unequal access to higher education. This legislation can be passed and implemented at the federal level, which is more likely to pass than legislation at the state level across all states. Some issues of access have been addressed through the creation of affirmative action policies, which aim to address systemic racism and historical disadvantage by increasing admission rates of minority students. These policies, however, come under constant attack by those who see them as either unnecessary or inherently discriminatory towards majority White applicants. Similarly, municipalities in Sweden had also passed affirmative action legislation in the early 2000s, which were overturned a few years later based on the argument that they violate existing antidiscrimination legislation. But although Sweden does not have any remaining explicit affirmative action policies in place, the tuition-free higher education system ensures that all Swedish students who are eligible for acceptance into the higher education system can afford to attend college or university regardless of their financial background.

This model is possible in the US and has been under consideration for many years. In July 2015, President Barack Obama proposed introducing a federal bill to make community college level education free to American students and as of October 2016, sixteen states have either introduced or passed legislation to provide free community college on their own initiative (Hultin and Weeden, 2016). Hillary Clinton, in her 2016 presidential election campaign, has made so-called “debt-free” college and university part of her platform, promising that by 2021, students whose families make less than \$125,000 per year will be able to attend college or university tuition-free. Whether this legislation will come to fruition remains to be seen but it is possible that a higher education funding system could be implemented in the US in the near

future, ensuring that qualified students from minority and/or low socioeconomic status backgrounds will have fewer barriers to attending an institution of higher education.

Like tuition-free higher education, the robust Swedish welfare state already has many of the institutions and social programs that ameliorate inequality and increase social mobility. Where the Swedes can learn from the Americans is from social movements that have helped diversify the American national identity. Many of these social movements do not originate from the state, but are representative, more broadly, of American culture and the country's long history of immigrant integration. The first adaptable model that I would like to see implemented in Sweden is that of the contemporary "Black Girls Rock" movement. Shortly after I returned from the field, I stumbled upon the Black Girls Rock award show. Black Girls Rock began in 2006, was first televised in 2010, featured First Lady Michelle Obama in 2015 and presidential candidate and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in 2016. The premise of the awards show is to recognize Black girls' and Black women's achievement in science, entertainment, humanitarian work, etc. The award show is also very much about celebrating Black culture and Blackness. While Black Girls Rock is organized by private actors, the presence of the First Lady and Secretary of State signal state support and encouragement. Additionally, during this period of the Black Lives Matter movement and increased scrutiny on the plight of Black Americans in contemporary society, the Black Girls Rock movement is also avowedly, explicitly political.

Although as aforementioned, the Black population in the US is a historically unique and well-established population, the model of minority populations asserting importance, significance and strength in the face of widespread racism and structural discrimination is one that could be successfully applied to the Swedish case. Having detailed Swedish culture above, I would be remiss to acknowledge that the Black Girls Rock model would fail to conform to

Jantelagen and its emphasis on humility, conformity and quietude.⁸ I argue, however, that Jantelagen does not work in a diversifying society particularly when there is already a tendency within the majority culture to privilege Whiteness and pre-immigration Swedish culture. Until these supremacist ideas are dealt with on a societal and government level, the majority society cannot make claims to following Jantelagen in any meaningful way. Consequently, minority Swedes can take advantage of this historical moment to assert new forms of Swedish identity and to demand recognition for contributions to Swedish culture and for their accomplishments. As I have demonstrated above, the women I interviewed are powerful examples of agentic women of color who have triumphed despite discrimination and exclusion. If their achievements were celebrated publically and in aggregate, young girls of color growing up in Sweden would have a direct example of their own worth and potential. As is argued by minorities in the US, examples of minority success and achievement are hard to come by in the majority cultural sphere. Events like Black Girls Rock serve to provide those examples for the next generation of minority citizens.

In comparing the US and Sweden, I aim to show that the state has two roles to play in integration: the creation and implementation of policies that substantively improve equality through access to state resources and the dissemination of a more inclusive national identity. The majority ethnic/racial group also plays a role in the dissemination of a more inclusive national

⁸ Thou shalt not presume that thou art someone.
Thou shalt not presume that thou art as good as we.
Thou shalt not presume that thou art any wiser than we.
Thou shalt never indulge in the conceit of imagining that thou art better than we.
Thou shalt not presume that thou art more knowledgeable than we.
Thou shalt not presume that thou art more [important] than we.
Thou shalt not presume that thou art going to amount to anything.
Thou art not entitled to laugh at us.
Thou shalt never imagine that anyone cares about thee.
Thou shalt not suppose that thou can teach us anything.
(Robinowitz & Carr, 2011, p. 81).

identity by adjusting to the realities of migration and ethnic diversification and recognizing the rich contributions of minority citizens to their society. I believe that Sweden has accomplished the first of these goals, somewhat fortuitously through their existing social welfare institutions and culture. The second of these goals, the dissemination of a more inclusive national identity, has yet to be adequately addressed.

This dissertation illustrates two important truths about Swedish integration: that Whiteness and racism severally undermine Swedish integration and that women of color are not passive victims of their minority cultures but active resisters of the status quo. Existing narratives of cultural and religious incompatibility serve to mask Swedish Whiteness and its pernicious effects. That many women of color experience more harm from societal racism than their own families' actions is an important realization that must factor into conversations and policies addressing integration. Integration takes time and many, if not all, multiracial societies contend with deeply rooted racism. The first step to addressing societal racism and integration is including minorities in the conversation about their experiences in the majority society. Rather than use women of color as rhetorical pawns in claims to the irreconcilable nature of non-Western cultures in Western states, include women of color as agents of change and as voices of their generation.

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Kokila completed her doctorate in the political science subfields of comparative politics and political theory with an attention to European studies. While completing her dissertation, she also worked full-time for two years in the UF Center for European Studies as Outreach & Internship Coordinator, planning Center events, co-writing grants and leading the Center's internship. She received her Doctor of Philosophy in the summer of 2017.