PARADOXES OF MULTICULTURALISM

ALEKSANDRA ÅLUND
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Paradoxes of Multiculturalism
Essays on Swedish Society

Sweden is reputed to have the most avant-garde welfare and immigration policies in Europe. But behind this image lies a more complex reality. Recent changes are turning an explicit commitment to multiculturalism into a kind of cultural repression that conceals the structure of power underlying racial, ethnic, gender and class inequalities. Drawing fruitfully on comparisons with Britain and other European countries, Aleksandra Ålund and Carl-Ulrik Schierup examine some of the paradoxes of multiculturalism that have come to light during the course of public debates about Sweden's 'over-programmed' society. They critically reassess the dominant political, institutional and academic discourses: they look at changes in refugee policy, at how immigrant women and youth are represented and at the limited voice given to immigrant communities and contemporary social movements. In discussing the dilemmas faced by a welfare state under the twin threats of globalization and localization, the book focuses on the emerging notion of 'trans-ethnicity' and, in so doing, exposes the need for more comprehensive definitions of 'politics', 'class', 'state', 'civil society' and 'everyday life'.

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The aim of the series is to publish books based on research carried out at the Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations, University of Warwick. It will also publish works from external authors, and the editor welcomes manuscripts from other writers and researchers working in the field of race and ethnic relations. The main emphasis of the series will be on books based on original research, although theoretical and policy discussions will also be included when they provide a practical understanding of issues of social and political relevance for students of race and ethnic relations and for those implementing equal opportunity and anti-racist policies.

Editor: Dr John Wrench
Senior Research Fellow

The Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations at the University of Warwick is supported by the Economic and Social Research Council.

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Essays on Swedish society

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Avebury

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To Simon, Anna, Jakob and Martin for their patience with terrible parents

Preface and acknowledgements

Instead of contributing yet more empirical work to the Swedish academic ethnic relations industry, it was suggested that we should rethink established research perspectives within the field. This has resulted in a somewhat kaleidoscopic collection of essays in which reviews of Swedish academic discourses and ideological cum political perspectives merge with often wide-ranging attempts to search for new vistas.

This search may have resulted in us somewhat indiscriminately importing rather 'un-Swedish' perspectives from alternative academic settings, most notably from the well-equipped British 'supermarket' of discourses on 'race' and 'ethnic relations'. We thus tend to discuss European multiculturalism mainly from a comparative Swedish-British perspective. Given the importance of British research, it seemed a good idea to criticize the limitations of multiculturalism on the one hand and a number of international similarities in the 'vertical mosaic' of political-economic relationships on the other. Nevertheless, in a period characterized by considerable population movements and by a crucial rewriting of our world-scheme, it is important to emphasize that each and every contemporary European state has its own unique visions, in-

tentions and preconditions for their realization. Sweden is unique in Europe, both in the development of its general welfare policies and in the ideology and praxis of its avant-garde immigrant policy aims. This uniqueness, which tends to be taken for granted by those who live here, is difficult to convey to others, though we - coming respectively from Yugo-slavia and Denmark - enjoy the personal privilege of being able to accommodate the dual perspectives of both the insider and the outsider.

This country's historically derived forms of organization may best be explained as having produced a rather 'ennobled' form of 'programmed society'. Grandiose visions of a radically democratic and egalitarian society have become embodied in deliberate social engineering and genuine popular efforts which deserve recognition. Much of this achievement is now in jeopardy and the welfare state is increasingly often being described as a 'Paradise lost'. This conveys much of the inner sense of meaning we wish to communicate by characterizing the contemporary Swedish multiculturalist reality as an am-biguous venture embodying a series of paradoxes and over-shadowed by anxiety about European 'harmonization', which is seen to threaten what has not yet been achieved but is worth struggling for, but which has also in many ways become cor-rupted. This is what we acknowledge and what we criticize. 'Partnership', which we see as the most central slogan of Swedish immigrant policy, is one such paradox. It conveys an impressive ambition for participation and for a democratic trans-ethnic interchange which has hardly come onto the agenda anywhere else in Europe. But, given that its realization was left to the initiative of Sweden's institutions and to an enlightened technocracy, rather than to a communicative public interchange, it was undermined as it was being for-mulated. It is against this background that the book ends by focusing on the problems of 'agency' and 'communicative action', pointing out obstacles to as well as opportunities for a form of communication that still lies ahead of us if Swedish immigrant policy is ever to become the European challenge originally intended.

Even within social research, 'partnership' still seems to be delayed, with 'immigrant research' relegated to the mar-ginalized category of 'separate development'. The way in which

the Swedish *Study on Power and Democracy* was set up presented us with both a dilemma and a challenge. From the generally segregated position of academic research on ethnic relations in this country we suspected (and rightly as it turned out) that subjects related to migration, ethnic relations and race would be almost completely set apart from any other of the numerous studies making up the larger project, even though the opposite ought to have prevailed, i.e. these subjects ought to have comprised an integral and essential part of each part-study. This placed before us the choice of concentrating on some limited aspect of 'power in the multicultural society' and ignoring or forgetting about the others, or, alternatively, of producing a series of essays on a wider selection of what we found the most interesting and important subjects. That we chose the latter strategy does not, however, mean that the essays in this volume have nothing to do with one another. On the contrary, from different angles they all reflect one central theme: aspects of power in academic, political and institutional discourses on 'culture' and 'ethnicity'. We attempt to challenge what we have identified as a dominant 'culturalist discourse' in Swedish research, administration and public or political debates and to explore the consequences of the articulation of this discourse within a variety of social fields.

Though our ambitions have been principally academic, we hope that our work will also be relevant to the general public debate and for reconsidering political strategies. The latter ambition has brought us into close communication with a number of colleagues. As so many times before, Lars-Göran Karlsson has been a seemingly inexhaustible fountain of inspiration and criticism, adroitly moving between politics and sociological theory, 'structure' and 'everyday life', moral imperatives and down-to-earth pragmatic considerations. While untiringly stressing the political urgency of 'trans-ethnic partnership' for the future of a democratic Swedish society, by voluntarily agreeing to be our invaluable sparring partner he bears a heavy responsibility for the conclusions of this study. With his thought-provoking comments on an earlier version of the manuscript, John Rex has exposed us to the exigency of seeing Sweden from a perspective that acknowledges that others still have to struggle for achievements that are here taken for granted. We hope we have, at least provisionally,

been able to satisfy this justified critique. With their profes-
sional competence and comprehensive knowledge of Swedish
society and immigrant research, Tomas Hammar, Wuokko
Knocke and Birgitta Ornbrant have provided important cri-
tiques and constructive comments. We also wish to thank
Erland Bergman, Olof Petterson, Gabriele Winai Ström and
many other people for their sympathetic moral support during
the drudgery of rowing ashore this enterprise, which so often
threatened to undermine our personal and family life. Finally,
our most warmly felt regards to Selina Cohen whose enormous
ability to transcribe inarticulate Barbarian utterances into
sophisticated academic English we greatly admire.

Umeå, 25, February 1990
Aleksandra Ålund and Carl-Ulrik Schierup

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Prescribed multiculturalism in crisis

Multiculturalism is now an integral part of contemporary European politics. In some places it has become the legitimate official political ideology, acknowledging the cultural heritage and permanence of ethnic groups. Elsewhere multiculturalism has become an oppositional position claiming the immigrants' and ethnic minorities' rights to cultural autonomy. A variety of European conceptions are coming into being which appear to echo Horace Kallen's legendary vision of the United States as a democratic, cultural pluralist 'orchestration of mankind'. According to this view, just as every instrument 'has its appropriate theme and melody in the whole symphony, so in society, each ethnic group may be the natural instrument, its temper and culture may be its theme and melody, and the harmony and dissonances and discords of them all make the symphony of civilization' (Kallen 1924: 124-5). Not everyone, however, subscribes to contemporary versions of a multicultural utopia, even though they may agree that freedom of cultural expression is an essential precondition for a democratic society. Far from an overall harmonious orchestration of mankind, a number of contemporary studies of the relationship between multicultural theory and practice seem to reflect 'culture' as having become a central 'ideological battleground' (Wallerstein 1990) articulating the deep and increasingly complex structurally grounded disjunctures and conflicts

characteristic of modern capitalist society. Seen from this perspective, 'multiculturalism' signifies a social condition in which, together with the politicization of the cultural, a general culturalization of the political language has taken place. Here, strategies of dominance as well as of rebellion become increasingly phrased in the culturalized terms of ethnic particularity in manners that often act to displace the articulation of more general cleavages contained in the constitution of modern society.

The essays in this book discuss a number of disjunctures and paradoxes which have arisen in Sweden through the imposition of a 'prescribed multiculturalism' on the political and social order.

In 1975 multiculturalism became an important element in the famous Swedish model of welfare-state politics. Sweden's multicultural immigrant policy is known throughout Europe for its consistent rejection of a 'guest worker' strategy for labour import, its ambitious quest to create social equality among ethnic groups, its respect for immigrant culture, and its emphasis on providing immigrants and ethnic minorities with resources with which to exercise political influence. An emphasis on international solidarity forms the basis of an ambitious programme to accept and integrate refugees. In the official oratory of Swedish multiculturalism, welfare ideology objectives centred on 'equality' (*jämlikhet*) occupy a central position. Other policy objectives include 'freedom of choice' (*valfrihet*) and 'partnership' (*samverkan*). Tomas Hammar (1985: 33) summarizes the original intent of these three overarching principles (boldly paraphrasing the French revolution's *liberté, égalité, et fraternité*), in the following way:

> The goal of *equality* implies the continued efforts to give immigrants the same living standard as the rest of the population. The goal of *freedom of choice* implies that public initiatives are to be taken to assure members of ethnic and linguistic minorities domiciled in Sweden a genuine choice between retaining and developing their cultural identity and assuming a Swedish cultural identity. The goal of *partnership* implies that the different immigrant and minority groups on the one hand and the native population on the other both benefit from working together.

Contained within these goals, which were formulated in the mid-1970s, was the implication that not only would foreigners enjoy the same legal privileges as Swedish citizens, but also that the general public would accept multicultural aims. The proclaimed egalitarian and multicultural ideology has considerable legal backing; formal equality before the law holds true in almost all important matters, including equal access to unemployment contributions and a large number of other social welfare benefits.[1] One of the most important legal achievements of Swedish immigrant policy has been the granting to foreign citizens of the right to vote in local elections; this right was first exercised in the local elections of 1976.[2] The voting rights amendment to the Swedish constitution was conceived of as a way of giving immigrants access to the advantages of the welfare state, while simultaneously safeguarding their right to autonomous cultural development. A number of state-sponsored research commissions have been busy formulating policies to control and combat racism and discrimination. Under the heading 'knowledge on immigrants' (*invandrarkunskap*) the state has encouraged the growth of a plethora of educational courses aimed at engendering a spirit of ethnic tolerance and an antiracist morality into local administrations and the general public. Thus a legal and moral foundation was provided to support 'freedom of choice', to encourage 'partnership', to give 'equality' a social basis, and to prevent uncontrolled ethnic conflicts and the development of a segregated society. A general moral and political consensus was inaugurated, which embraced government and state institutions, political parties (right across the traditional left-right spectrum) and important socio-political organizations and movements like, for example, the trade unions and the national association of local municipal administrations (*Kommunförbundet*).

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1. One exception to legal equality, however, is that in the case of a criminal offence, in addition to paying their regular penalty in Sweden, foreign citizens risk the additional penalty of being deported from the country.
2. During the 1980s attempts were made to extend the voting rights of foreign citizens in Sweden to national elections. The main proponents of this prospective reform were the Social Democratic Party and the Swedish Communist Party. However, the necessary support for the required amendment to the Swedish constitution has never existed in parliament. In consequence, providing easy access to double citizenship has been discussed as an alternative to giving foreign citizens actual access to voting rights at the national level.

This broad and stable consensus on the importance of multi-cultural rights and of an anti-racist morality is probably unique to Sweden. It has relied on a generally 'tolerant public opinion' (Westin 1987) and a sober and respectful treatment of 'immigrant questions' by the media. Today, however, along with the multicultural ideology as a whole, these premises are being jeopardized. Critical disjunctures between ideology and practice have taken the form of proscribed 'equality' versus discrimination and a hierarchic ethnic division of labour, 'freedom of choice' versus exclusiveness and segregation, 'partnership' versus bureaucratic control and techno-scientific monitoring. This demonstrates how the explicit meanings, as well as the actual and latent effects, of any multicultural ide-ology and any legislation depend on society's power structure and the terms of trade between different social groupings. But, if in the encounter of proclaimed political visions with everyday reality, 'equality', 'freedom of choice' and 'partnership' are continuously interpreted in terms of an exclusive ethnic parti-cularity which relegates social conflicts to the domain of a culturalized iconography, it even suggests that a series of disjunctures are endemically present in the discursive construc-tion of the multicultural ideology itself.

Such disjunctures, as they become articulated in the every-day lives of individuals, ethnic communities, state institutions and social movements, represent the central theme of the present study. We set out critically to reassess euphemistic ideological paradigms and the conventional wisdom of social research as they are reflected within a number of fields: a changing Swedish refugee policy, the representation of immi-grant women and youth in dominant political, institutional and academic discourses, the public space of immigrant communi-ties and contemporary social movements in the context of a restructuring of the Swedish welfare state. We indicate that obvious disjunctures between liberal and egalitarian ambitions and actual social development tend to be increasingly ration-alized through the language and institutional practices of a pragmatic 'new realism'. The aims of tolerance and 'freedom of choice' appear to give way to pragmatism and an insistence on conformity. A liberal multicultural ideology's construction of cultures and ethnic groups as ready-made objects for public consumption in order to direct a harmonious 'cultural multi-

tude' is imperceptibly drifting towards a more and more ex-
plicit labelling of 'foreign cultures as a problem' for the
administration and as incompatible with a 'modern society'.
Under the impact of drifting definitions at the level of everyday
encounters and practices and confronted with the objective
reality and increasing structural discrepancies of an 'organized
capitalism' (Lash and Urry 1987) in rapid transformation, both
the overall politico-moral consensus and the policy aims have
come under serious pressure.

These tensions from within articulate with growing tensions
at the international level to bring Swedish government policies
and administrative practices into harmony with the sinister
ideologico-political scenario of Fortress Europe. At the same
time, in the context of practical politics and affected by a
dominant 'culturalist' perspective in the public debate, the
'freedom of choice' and 'partnership' propounded by the multi-
cultural ideology has evolved into a situation in which immi-
grant culture attains the status of a preserved and controlled
'reservation'. We are at a crucial juncture at which we need
new, more sensitive cultural politics, new definitions of
'partnership' and a reconsidered and reworked moral consen-
sus, as well as new popular movements to transcend ethnic and
national boundaries. In this situation it is important to develop
new approaches to help us understand an increasingly cul-
turally mixed society, the structural conditions under which it
develops and the immense variety of future possibilities and
opportunities it offers.

In the shadow of Fortress Europe

It is possible, as Lars Göran Karlsson (1990) discusses, to
discern a somewhat contradictory feedback into the language
through which the manifest intentions of immigrant policy are
expressed, even at the highest political level. A 'more realistic',
less ambitious tone has sneaked into official policy declarations
and government reports. For a start, the goal of 'freedom of
choice' has become a subject for debate. From a recent
government bill we learn 'that ethnic conflicts can arise along-
side that line which marks the border between the immigrants'
freedom of choice and basic Swedish moral and legal concep-

tions' *(Regeringens Proposition 1989/90/86:* 7). Though the overall goals of immigrant policy remain the same and the policy is to be further developed along these ambitious lines, there is still felt to be a need to 'specify and reformulate the goal of freedom of choice' (ibid.).[3] The notion of 'freedom of choice' has come to be perceived as problematic. Hence, this government motion suggests reinterpreting 'freedom of choice' to include 'respect for the identity and integrity of the individual as well as opportunities to develop one's own cultural heritage within the framework of those basic norms which in Swedish society apply to human coexistence' (ibid.). But rather more problematic than these reformulations of the content of 'freedom of choice', Karlsson (1990: 13) maintains, is the question of to what extent goals as ambitious as 'partnership' and cooperation should be upheld. The same government motion tells us that 'the multitude which immigration has brought about can never be void of problems and risks of conflicts... it is not possible to construct a society without conflicts, ethnic or other' *(Regeringens Proposition 1989/90/86:* 5-6). Against this background it is now held that 'peaceful coexistence based on mutual respect between individuals and groups of individuals will do well as a goal' (ibid.: 6). Karlsson (1990: 12) argues that, in relation to the very ambitious goal expressed by 'partnership', this seems to signify a retreat. 'Peaceful coexistence' suggests a defensive rather than a forward-looking attitude.

It is highly significant that these subtle reformulations of official policy are taking place at a historical moment when openly expressed racism is growing within the country. With the increased immigration of Third World refugees during the 1980s, the ideological climate has gradually changed in ways that seem to bring Sweden into line with the sombre face of Fortress Europe, i.e. with the new scenario emerging from the restructuring of the international migratory system which was begun in the 1980s. While Western Europe is reorienting itself towards the selective import of labour from a 'second Europe' on the verge of economic and social collapse, attitudes and policies towards Third World refugees are becoming more and more brutal. The European Community's frontiers are being

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3. This reformulation had already started in 1986.

more intensely policed. Internationally coordinated control policies are reducing refugee immigration to a trickle; the Mediterranean has been turned into a new Rio Grande (Tunander 1990), with navy patrols confronting millions of prospective labour migrants from the south. As the Berlin wall is being torn down the old ideological wall between the 'European Christian' and the 'Muslim' world is being reconstructed.

The current reconstruction of Orientalist stereotypes can be seen to legitimate the further dominance of European economic and political interests in a rapidly changing 'Muslim world', as well as the rejection of a historical and moral responsibility for the consequences of proletarianization, impoverishment and warfare. It is replicated in changing images of what Blaschke and Greussing (1980) call 'the Third World in Europe', namely labour migrants and refugees. Those who manage to cross the borders of Fortress Europe are subjected to an ethnically segmented and discriminatory labour regime and strong forces of political marginalization. Similar forces act to reproduce a repressed labour force among the young descendants of foreign immigrants (Castles et al. 1984). In France, Britain, Germany, Italy and other EC countries, Muslim communities and other minorities of Third World descent tend to be conceived of as a fifth column, an inner enemy. As in the 1950s, this inner enemy is used to foment a cold war and cement a political wall (Tunander 1990). New racist populist parties (such as the *Front National* in France and the so-called 'Progress' parties in Denmark and Norway) find support among disillusioned working-class and petty-bourgeois people and are given ideological respectability and legitimacy by new right-wing intellectuals writing about 'European civilization'. 'Christian believers' (in the east as well as the west, from the Urals to Gibraltar) unite, as in earlier times, against the external threat from the Muslim world and from the new 'enemy within'. The 'Turkish peril' is revived and turned into the ideological glue with which to stick a fragmented Europe together (ibid.): a new European fundamentalism.

It is probably only a question of time before Sweden becomes part of this 'new Europe'. The issue of political neutrality has become less important with the fall of the Berlin wall. The argument being put forward by employers and the

political right that an accelerating flight of capital and pro-
spective economic decline can only be stopped through full
membership of the European Community is gaining ground.
The political left is also preparing to enter the Community.
Sweden, we are told, has an ethical and moral responsibility to
help develop a common democratic Europe. As Stefan Edman
(1990), a left-wing member of the social-democratic movement
puts it, 'Swedish social democracy must urgently work out a
vision, according to which the whole of Europe becomes an
arena for its ideals of solidarity, internationalism and environ-
mental struggle'.

   If this traditional Swedish ambition to represent the avant-
garde of the international community is to be taken seriously in
the 'new Europe', then it is necessary to reconsider Sweden's
own changing position in the world community. It is important
to ask *where* and *how* Sweden actually leads the league of soli-
darity and internationalism. Sweden's changing immigration
policy is as good a place as any to start the self-criticism. While
a refugee policy characterized by 'solidarity and generosity' is
still the order of the day, official proclamations and actual
developments since the beginning of the 1990s suggest (as we
discuss further in Chapter 2) that Sweden is moving closer to
the exclusiveness, selectivity and increasing brutality of Fortress
Europe. This trend in Swedish refugee policy is criticized most
emphatically by Peter Nobel (1990), head of the anti-discri-
mination board (*diskrimineringsombudsman*): '[It] is stupid,
inhumane and void of any solidarity. Moreover, quite per-
sonally, I am unwilling to live in a society which is a glossy
supermarket for some nationalities and a rigid police state for
others.' The situation has thus developed into one in which the
government, with support from the administrations concerned,
is constantly pulling in one direction, while the country's
humanitarian forces (churches, Red Cross, Amnesty, etc.) and
warm-hearted well-intentioned individuals are pulling in
another' (ibid.). And, as we describe in Chapter 2, a restrictive
and selective refugee policy tends to accompany a selective
import of labour from Eastern Europe. Selection, in turn, tends
to be determined by immediate labour-market trends -
Sweden's so-called 'employment line'. A third element in this
new migratory scenario is the continued reliance being placed
on an insulated form of 'guest worker system' in which inter-

national subcontractors exploit a growing labour force of 'new helots' (Cohen 1987), who are unprotected by civil law and the labour regulations of the national state.

In an article in Sweden's largest morning newspaper, Sverker Åström (1990, our italics), a now retired senior member of the politico-administrative state élite proposed that:

> As a matter of principle we must argue that Sweden has the right and duty to consider and weigh a number of social, economic, cultural and political factors in relation to one another. It is neither amoral nor against the law to investigate whether an applicant has a criminal past, maybe as a terrorist; nor to ask oneself whether the individual in question appears to be willing or is capable of becoming a loyal member of Swedish society and whether he has what it takes to thrive; nor to try to judge *whether he or she comes from a country or culture whose customs and usages are so extremely different that a reasonably harmonious adaptation is difficult or impossible*; nor to consider whether extra labour at a certain time is desirable and whether the applicant has enough competence to allow him or her to make a useful contribution to Swedish working life.

This intervention in the debate is an example of how discourses on 'culture' have become both discriminatory and increasingly important in legitimating selective immigration and refugee policies. Even more alarming than this statement by a retired government official is the fact that the minister responsible for immigrant matters was enthusiastic about Åström's comments. She referred to the article as 'a brilliant problem-description, very interesting to read', even though, as a matter of principle and existing legal regulations, she had to reject the proposal to introduce new criteria for judging applications for asylum based on an applicant's perceived ability to adapt to Swedish customs (*Dagens Nyheter* 1990b). The question is, however, whether or not this kind of practice has already become established. If so, Åström's argument is merely a convenient rationalization and legitimation of the restructuring inherent in a pragmatic policy of selection according to 'cultural' and labour-market considerations. A polarized climate has been created when certain categories of people are considered undesirable and when extreme measures are taken to get rid of them; a logical corollary to this, Nobel (in an interview with Albons 1990) argues, is the belief that those who are undesirable are also less worthy of respect. Following this argument, a

discriminatory programme at the borders will legitimate racism *within* the country, including the adoption of discriminatory practices in the municipalities. This would authorize situationally determined 'positive discrimination' in favour of certain educational profiles, which in turn would depend on shifting labour-market needs and would justify the reproduction and development of a labour market segmented by ethnic and cultural stereotypes.

Orientals *ad portas*!
'New racism', 'new realism' and the multicultural ideology

The mere fact that such overtly discriminatory statements appear at all in the language of the state élite (which would have been impossible a few years ago) can be taken to signify that the moral compact on which Swedish immigrant policy is built is gradually disintegrating, giving way to a culturalist construction of new discriminatory boundaries. There are many examples. The hidden logic of a new commonsense cultural racism (demarcating, in terms of a fixed cultural essence, 'other cultures' as different from 'our culture' and disturbing to the normal order) finds, as we discuss further in Chapter 4, its way into the language and practices of public servants, professionals and into the everyday commonsense discourses of ordinary people.

Deliberately or accidentally through Freudian slips, this kind of stigmatizing Orientalist thinking unwittingly enters speeches, television programmes and newspaper articles dealing with 'immigrant questions'. Through hidden insinuations, decay, pathology and threats to public order become associated with 'the foreign presence'. The following pastiche (Jerkert 1990), depicting decay and social problems in the residential neighbourhood of Biskopsgården in Gothenburg, may serve as an illustration:

> Here the outsides of many houses look terrible, the colour around the windows has gone, rainwater has run down the walls, roofing materials and plaster have come loose, metal plate and concrete have slipped down from the balconies. The holes in the walls look like

bullet holes, plywood has been placed in front of empty windows, not a single entrance door has its lock left, and during our visit Arab music echoed through the housing blocks.

While the public starts to regard immigrants and refugees as social problems, individual solutions increasingly come to dominate government schemes. This is reflected in the emphasis on the refugees' and immigrants' individual resources. When Sweden decides to hand-pick immigrants at the borders, pressure to assimilate tends to increase within the country and the conditions under which immigrants can act as organized collectivities fundamentally change. The dominant ideological trend has been towards culturalizing the 'problematic' rather than problematizing the structural restraints. Ethnocentrism seems to go hand in hand with cultural determinism and an emerging new cultural racism. The fact that a proposal for culturally-defined selection at the borders could even be considered for serious debate articulates in complex ways with a deterioration in the level of public opinion. A gradual change occurred in the character of public discourses during the 1980s, especially after 1988 when there was an intense debate about 'refugees as a problem' (Chapter 2). Public discourses have become increasingly preoccupied with problems, with immigrants' alleged criminal behaviour (see, for example, Baldo 1989; Naumann 1989) and with drawing boundaries between 'cultures'. Racist populist organizations have mushroomed, though, unlike in Denmark and Norway, they are still weak and fragmented and (at least in spring 1991) as yet have no parliamentary basis.

Hence, at many different levels, a general shift in ideological orientation and institutional practices seems to be taking place at the beginning of the 1990s. Complex processes of reorientation range from the heavy-handed symbolic manifestations of new (ideologically and politically marginal) racist groups at the street level (the burning of crosses, numerous violent assaults on refugee camps in 1990) to the discreet, almost imperceptible 'new realist' reformulations in government reports. The trend towards a 'new realism' seems also to be reflected in a current centralization of finance for research on immigrants and ethnic minorities into a state research fund which is, in general, oriented towards a focus on 'social problems'.

It is important to ask where these trends may lead. Will we come to see the cementing of a future 'cultural multitude' of segregated unequals: a society in political and ideological crisis in which growing sections of the general public, confronting anxiety and fragmentation, are confirmed in their distrust of a transcultural 'partnership', gathering instead around the symbols of national or ethnic identity and purity? As Arne Ruth (1986) explains in the *Dagens Nyheter*, such a development could result from 'an alliance between two varieties of populism, two ways of demonstrating truths ostensibly produced from the sanctuary of the nation', two parallel tracks in a process of culturalization, leading 'a footstep in the ultimate direction of cultural apartheid'. He describes Swedish society in the 1980s as representing a juncture at which the 'new realism' of a disillusioned left is turning cynical in its attempts to embrace 'rosy stereotypes of immigrants' and is aligning 'with the great movement away from the optimistic view of human nature marking the 1960s: men and women are totally unlike one another, criminals cannot be rehabilitated, immigrants should be regarded with suspicion'. Another strand of culturalism, a pessimistic 'new racist' romanticism, continues to mystify and draw stereotyped images of the 'alien' against a background of traditional nationalist symbolism: Swedish identity and customs should be conserved and at all costs protected against those foreigners who deviate too much.

In analysing 'multiculturalism adrift', at this point in a state of ideological crisis and reorientation, it is essential to discuss critically the social realities and ideological configurations in which a prescribed, allegedly 'tolerant' multiculturalism is embedded. The crux of the matter is that a discussion about tendencies towards a 'new realism', or different forms of a 'new racism', legitimated in cultural terms, is not residual to the analysis of multiculturalism as an official political ideology and institutional practice.[4] On the contrary, such a discussion could be seen to represent ever-present latent possibilities in the ideological construction of multiculturalism, even in the social-democratic version stressing egalitarianism and social justice.[5]

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4. For detailed discussions about 'cultural racism' or 'the new racism' see, for example, Barker (1981), Duffield (1984) Lawrence (1986), Gilroy (1987), Essed (1987), Solomos (1990) and Feuchtwang (1990).

5. See, for example, the argument of Castles et al. (1988: 45).

We are presented with a type of situation in which all social agents - tolerant 'multiculturalists' and 'anti-racists' as well as intolerant 'racists' and 'new realists' - tend to speak in terms of the same discursive formation (cf. Feuchtwang 1990: 4) and through the same basic categories. Following on from the premise that a culture is a community of deep-seated values of a fixed and exclusive almost organic or 'genetic' quality, populations are, in terms of the dominant culturalist orientation of the public debate, sorted by ethnic origins according to a presumed cultural essence. 'Culture' has become a universal scientific platitude, a central ideological category in the political struggle, an indispensable tool for a techno-scientific administration and a general commonsense popular cliché which, depending on the situation, appears alternately as a 'panacea' and a 'problem'.

A hidden economy of power: the panacea and the problem of 'culture'

Immigrants and ethnic minorities in Sweden enjoy a relatively high level of economic and social security. Because the general Swedish public has been widely informed, enlightened and morally fostered, until recently immigrants have largely been protected from open forms of populist racism. In this sense their situation has probably been better than in any other European country. At the same time, however, the society's 'cultural multitude' has developed a hierarchical cultural division of labour: the Swedish counterpart to the familiar phenomenon of the 'vertical mosaic' (Porter 1968). This hierarchy is reflected in, structured by and reproduced through a culturalistic symbolism of ethnic relations in manners similar to those observed and criticized in a number of other European countries. Hence, avant-garde endeavours to achieve 'equality' have tended to be subordinated to pragmatic labour-market policies, while 'partnership' has been reduced to administrative monitoring. This process demonstrates how needs other than expressed multicultural ones usually articulate situational definitions of 'culture'.

Through conspicuous political declarations, immigrants and refugees are marketed as economic, social and cultural

'resources', especially when there are shortages of manpower on the Swedish labour market. In day-to-day political and administrative practice, immigrants have (as we discuss in Chapters 2, 3 and 4) too often become 'social problems' explained in terms of 'cultural heritage', 'cultural distance', 'cultural conflicts', 'cultural confrontations', or 'cultural collisions'. Social discrepancies and conflicts tend to be culturalized and defined according to the standards of normality set by the ordering practices of institutional ideologies.

In Swedish administrative practice the focus is usually on the immigrants' 'functional integration'. 'Functional integration' has been defined in terms of the immigrants' adaptation to the institutions, norms and culture of the 'majority society' to the extent 'necessary for the group's members to function in the society while at the same time keeping in tact its own ethnic identity' (Widgren 1980: 75). This kind of assimilation 'is pursued no further than is necessary for the immigrant group and the "host people" to function together in an integrated and effective way' (Swedner 1971: 143). In its practical understanding and administrative implementation, 'functional integration' is conventionally taken to mean adaptation to the already defined functional demands of established institutions and organizations. When such adaptation proves difficult, the immigrants in question are typically defined as a 'problem' or as 'poorly integrated into society'.[6] Their problems are then traced back to their deviant culture. Thus, immigrant culture tends to take on a Janus-faced appearance in practical interpretations of society's multicultural ideology: on the one hand, it is 'cultural baggage', to be examined, preserved and used positively in public ethnic-awareness training, identity management and social work; while on the other hand it is a 'social problem', to be managed with care and discipline. Immigrants and ethnic minorities belong to those marginal groups that find themselves at the centre of the authorities' focus of attention. They experience power really close at hand as they become important 'cases' in public files. The more repressed an individual, the more reports, registers, testimonies and records there are on his or her case. These cases have an

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6. Hannerz (1983: 126ff.) points out the need to study assimilationist attitudes and 'structural racism' in Swedish 'cultures of institutions'. See also Grillo's (1985) analysis of institutions' own definitions of 'immigrants as a problem' in France.

important function in society's 'economy of power'. Surveillance and control of marginal groups and their designation in terms of 'negative fame' may function to keep 'ordinary people' within the boundaries of the law and to evade the spread of general and political civil disobedience (Heede 1989).

In the commonsense ideologies of state institutions, 'culture' functions as the loom of a delicate fabric of social control and management of social conflicts. After fifteen years of officially-sanctioned 'multiculturalism', every professional corps has now learnt the lesson. The stress on 'culture' corresponds to a situation in which the mechanisms of control and institutional power have become highly sophisticated, highly psychological and highly dependent on sociological and anthropological knowledge. Thus, the ideologies of immigrant policy and their institutional praxis typically refer to and build their strategies on the basis of scientific truths. Dominant orientations in immigrant research have conventionally found the locus of the problems they study within the immigrants' own culture. Thus, social science 'joins in the game' and becomes part of the reproduction of 'the immigrant problem' (Grillo 1985). In Sweden immigrant research has traditionally been closely intertwined with state-policies (Peura 1983) aimed at 'discovering' and 'categorizing', but at the same time 'organizing' and controlling the process of 'multiculturalism' (Fred 1983). As the mechanisms of control become still more indirect, invisible and unconscious, insight into the ideological systems of dominant institutions and organizations is increasingly essential (Grillo 1985; Mullard 1985. See also Hannerz 1983). It is principally within these ideological systems that immigrants and their culture are articulated as 'problems'. How the problems are produced and perceived is determined by the character of these ideological systems and is dependent on how these systems are reproduced and articulated.

As Foucault (for example, 1972) demonstrates, different forms of social phenomena defined as 'deviations' are turned into general 'truths'. Different times and different social conditions create their own definite 'truths'. These 'truths' and their meanings can change, but they always express situational, historical constructions (Foucault 1980). They are never neutral or general. The 'truths' about every single historical

moment are part of a specific policy for social order and their function is safeguarded not least by concealing their own basis or *raison d'être*. In this sense scientific discourses on 'culture' have become one of the important techniques for constructing the 'truths' of our time. By apportioning 'negative fame' to marginal population groups these truths play a strategic role in institutionalizing the hidden 'economy of power' of our modern culturally-mixed society.

But the constant labelling of immigrants (in terms of 'culture') as 'problems' or 'victims' of their backward traditions can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. At a subjective level, stigmatizing definitions can pacify and 'clientify' members of social groups categorized by 'negative fame'. As we argue in Chapters 3 to 5, this becomes a serious problem for immigrant women and youth accorded 'negative fame' for their passivity, feeble health, violence and crime respectively - ailments conventionally discussed and rationalized in terms of 'culture'. As discussed in Chapter 2, through subjecting immigrants to a huge and ramified welfare bureaucracy (see Westin 1986; Gaunt and Olsson 1990; Kebrome 1990), Swedish refugee policy has also often been criticized for pacifying, disciplining, clientilizing and exposing them to culturalized problem/victim discourses. The political élite's answer to the charge of 'clientism' (in the context of full employment and an economic boom) is to emphasize 'the duty to work' and to represent refugees as an important economic 'resource'. In the context of a generally worsening ideological climate and increasingly selective refugee policy, however, there is a real danger that, if scrupulously practised, this switch from a 'welfare line' to an 'employment line' will add new facets to established practices of discrimination and segmentation in the Swedish labour market.

The cognitive ordering system embedded in the culturalist problem/victim couplet has even penetrated the theories and practices of important popular movements, such as the trade union movement, the youth movement, or the feminist movement. In Chapter 3 we discuss ethnocentric and Eurocentric discourses on immigrant culture, family and life forms from the point of view of a feminist perspective. In several respects, these discourses produce an ideology that suppresses immigrant women's subjectivity and invalidates their 'politics of

solidarity' (cf. Harding 1986: 196); this turns ethnocentrism into a political rather than a merely academic issue. The dichotomization of 'the other' in terms of Eurocentric conceptions of 'traditional' and 'modern', points towards the importance of discussing the 'power of definitions' of normality, not only as reflected in feminist research and political practice, but in social analysis and society at large.

Culture, agency and social movements

Sweden is probably alone in Western Europe in the *extent* to which its public life is controlled, tamed and regulated. Probably no other Western European state has been as successful in controlling and transforming radical claims and spontaneous organization by disciplining and institutionalizing them through incorporation and co-optation - a fact which, we argue in Chapter 6, has been closely linked with Sweden's elaborate corporate structure. But the organization and exchange of experience is a social and political resource. The constitution of social identity is essentially the constitution of certain forms of communication resting on the organization and expression of collective experience. A central question in understanding the position of immigrants in Sweden therefore hinges around what possibilities exist, in what von Kreitor (1980: 105) calls a Swedish 'sanctioned public', for the organization and expression of their authentic experience.

Throughout the book we discuss alternative cultural and political possibilities in immigrants' everyday experiences, in local community networks among immigrant women, in the 'bricolage' of modern syncretic youth cultures and in the potentials of social movements. The framework for the growth of new alternatives is the development of 'the global village' and of a 'world culture': i.e. the world becomes 'one network of social relationships' with a 'flow of meanings as well as of people and goods', characterized by an 'organization of diversity rather than by a replication of uniformity' (Hannerz 1987: 1; see also Hannerz 1990 and Ehn 1990). New cosmopolitan local communities, in Stockholm's multi-ethnic suburbs as well as in other European cities, harbour the preconditions for transcending narrow social and cultural boundaries. Here, we

argue in Chapter 5, in a dynamic interplay and articulation of 'tradition' and 'modernity', the antagonisms and struggles of the past are linked to the present dilemmas and ordeals of the immigrant experience, producing new amalgamated forms of cultural expression and political alternatives. These authentic forms of plurality still, however, mainly have the character of informal life rhythms hidden behind a legitimated 'cultural multitude' criss-crossed by constructed ethnic boundaries. This dominant culturalist construction of ethnicity is replicated in projects for 'partnership in society activities' (Chapter 4) which, centred around institutionalized cooperation between Swedish 'folk movements' and immigrant associations, have become a privileged strategy for the organized socialization of immigrants in Sweden. Here, in the context of disciplinary institutional learning processes, the informal potentials of 'immigrant culture' tend to become adversely categorized as an 'obstacle to cooperation'.

Popular social movements, or so-called 'folk movements' *(folkrörelser)*, are the traditional vehicle of political socialization and moral supervision in Sweden. Also, today they form the cornerstone of social-democratic strategies of popular mobilization and national integration. Swedish folk movements can be defined as highly institutionalized popular movements in a symbiotic relationship with an enlightened and reforming state-bearing élite. Folk movements have functioned as effective vehicles for ideological integration and popular mobilization in the construction of the Swedish social-democratic welfare state in general (see, for example, Hirdman 1989) and, more recently and more specifically, as a tool for integrating multiculturalism into the welfare edifice on genuine Swedish terms. The Swedish folk movement *par excellence* is the trade union movement. It still represents a broad and, compared with other European countries, unusually unitary organizational framework which embraces over 80 per cent of Sweden's working population. But there are many other folk movements: the women's movement, the youth movement, the movement for workers' education, to mention just a few. New folk movements related to popular mobilization around specific issues spring up continuously. A couple of the more recent examples are the ecology movement and the anti-racist movement. But characteristically such movements are very quickly wooed by

the state, which tries to co-opt their leadership, translate their claims, transform and adapt their strategies and integrate them into the *praxis* of state institutions. On the one hand, this may open up communication with centres of political and administrative power. But excess institutionalization and close integration may, on the other hand, become the movement's bureaucratic kiss of death. We discuss the ramifications of this theme in Chapters 6 and 7.

A Swedish 'ethnic pluralism' has been constructed as an integrated, albeit peripheral, part of a centrist, corporate political system. 'Ethnicity' has been established as an authorized and standardized collective ordering principle, largely internalized by immigrants themselves, but in principle purified of 'polluting' political or religious affiliations. 'Grey zones' of 'blurred' or 'inconsistent' ethnic loyalties have largely been treated as 'weeds' by a selective system of state subsidies, which is the most powerful instrument for structuring the Swedish 'cultural multitude'. These culturalist political and administrative practices have helped create a fragmented political stage populated by many parallel 'national organizations' (*riksorganisationer*) of separate (or separated) ethnicities with close ties to the state apparatus, but with very little communication and cooperation between themselves. At the same time a polarization has taken place between the grassroots and centres of each single ethnic organization. The scenario of state-sponsored multiculturalism hence appears to have turned into a tower of Babel, with immigrant organizations configuring the particular and the particularizing 'cultural' at the expense of the culturally amalgamating and structurally common. This tends to draw immigrants into a politically paralysing separateness and disconnectedness *vis-à-vis* one another as well as in relation to society in general. Caught in between structurally-grounded discriminatory practices embedded in the formal political system, on the one hand, and imprisoned in the culturalist tower of Babel of state-sponsored ethnic organizations on the other, immigrants (and especially immigrants of Third World origin) tend to end up in a political backwater. Faced with a credibility gap between incipient ethnic élites and their grassroots, the agency of immigrants and ethnic minorities becomes relegated to various evasive or subversive grassroots strategies of a more or less clandestine, 'pre-political' nature.

To escape from the ethnic tower of Babel, we argue in the final chapter of the book, it is necessary to transcend the static character of the conception of culture, which has so far come to represent the conventional wisdom for the production of 'knowledge on immigrants' in Sweden. It is essential to question the definition of 'ethnicity' as a hegemonic ordering principle structuring the multicultural scene and for immigrants and ethnics themselves to reconsider the 'ethnic absolutism' (cf. Gilroy 1987) which has been instrumental in fragmenting their political agency. This implies transcending the kinds of culturalist discourses that have dominated the conception and implementation of multicultural policies by reconceptualizing notions of 'culture' and 'agency'. A reformed discourse is needed (as expressed by Gilroy 1987: 16), that understands 'the cultural not as an intrinsic property of ethnic particularity but as a mediating space between agents and structures'.

Multiculturalism has been described as a euphemistic ideology containing a form of cultural determinism in which cultural permissiveness has masked the real structure of power underlying racial, ethnic and class inequalities. Critics on the left, however, often fail to appreciate any dynamic liaison of 'culture' and 'agency', rendering the argument to a position still within the political horizons of a managerial technocracy. We need to discuss the complex interconnections between societal change, cultural production and forms of trans-ethnic agency. Such questions have been raised by proponents of the so-called 'new social movements' theory. Their discourses nevertheless suffer from a number of indeterminate theoretical and analytical problems. A composite strategy for democratization under culturally mixed and spuriously post-modern conditions needs more thoroughly reflected notions of 'politics', 'class', 'state', 'civil society' and 'everyday life' to be conceived of within a wider analytical framework that includes the complex processes of globalization-localization circumscribing an ongoing restructuring of the national state. This could help us reformulate increasingly difficult struggles against the dismantling of the Swedish welfare state into struggles for a *welfare society* which could better actuate the potentials embodied in a genuinely trans-ethnic 'partnership'.

2

'The duty to work'

The theory and practice of Swedish refugee policy

CARL-ULRIK SCHIERUP

Post-war immigration has contributed substantially to Sweden's population. Almost 5 per cent of the total population of 8.5 million are foreign citizens; more than 12 per cent are foreign born, or have one or both parents born abroad. The largest single group of foreign citizens, the Finns, constitute more than one-third of the total.

Post-war migration to Sweden has followed an overall pattern similar to that of several other important receiving Western European countries. The period after the war was marked by the immigration of refuges. In the Swedish case a large proportion of these came from the Soviet occupied Baltic nations, most notably Estonia. After the uprising in Hungary in 1956, Sweden also received a fair contingent of Hungarian refugees. At the same time the influx of Finnish migrant labour was substantial and becoming increasingly important. It was facilitated by the establishment of the common Nordic labour market in 1954. During the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s Sweden recruited foreign labour directly (and extensively) to satisfy the manpower needs of the economy and to regulate fluctuations in the labour market. Immigration was essential to

Swedish economic planning and labour-market politics. Finnish labour migrants were joined by considerable numbers of immigrants from the Mediterranean, among whom Yugoslavs (today numbering around 50,000) figured most prominently.[1]

The import of labour reached a peak in 1970 when a total of more than 75,000 persons immigrated to Sweden. From then on labour migration started to decrease against a backdrop of economic crisis, rising unemployment and increasing resistance from Swedish trade unions (see, for example Knocke 1988; Kyle 1979; Nelhans 1973). From 1972, all applications for employment permits were subjected to stringent scrutiny and evaluated in relation to the availability of unemployed labour in Sweden. This resulted in the almost total termination of economically motivated immigration from outside the common Nordic labour market. Except for certain categories of highly qualified individuals, labour immigration was almost wholly confined to family unification and refugee entries. The total number of yearly immigrants decreased substantially.

Though, historically, immigration to Sweden mainly came from other Nordic and European countries, the 1970s and 1980s were accompanied by a large proportional increase in immigrants from Asia, Latin America and Africa who, in 1986, for the first time exceeded the number of immigrants from the rest of the world. A liberal refugee policy is mainly responsible for this development. Until recently, Swedish legislation relating to the granting of asylum was amongst the most permissive in the world, and included the right to asylum for so-called *de facto* refugees and conscientious objectors.[2] Important refugee groups have been the Chileans during the early 1970s, the Syrians from the mid-1970s and the Poles and Iranians during the 1980s. During the 1980s the number of asylum seekers grew markedly, as did the number of accepted refugees. Total immigration (refugees, family unification, etc.) grew to proportions approaching those of the early 1970s, culminating in over 65,000 in 1989. Today the Iranians (of whom there are approximately 40,000) constitute the largest immigrant group in Sweden of predominantly refugee origin.

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1. Including about 10,000 naturalized Swedish nationals.
2. *De facto* refugees are persons who are not personally persecuted, but who have nevertheless fled because conditions in their home countries are so dangerous and inhumane that it is unreasonable to expect them to return.

Unlike West Germany, Austria or neighbouring Denmark, Sweden has never had a guest-worker policy as such. Instead, an elaborate immigrant policy was set up during the early 1970s with a view to integrating labour migrants and their families - what Hammar (1985: 18-19) describes as 'a desire to treat resident foreigners and their families as immigrants rather than simply as manpower'. Immigration policy conformed to the principle that the right to work should not be separated from the right of residence. Developments over the last few years have, however, revealed the opposite principle, i.e. that the right to residence entails the right, or maybe even the duty, to work. This so-called 'employment line' is new to refugee policy; in the past, at least in principle, refugee policy functioned independently of labour-market needs. By openly stressing tight coordination between refugee policy, labour-market integration and education, the 'employment line' opened the way for a debate on the relationship between refugee and labour-market policy, and between humanitarian declarations and pragmatic goals.

Refugee policy as labour-market policy?

Consecutive waves of refugee immigration to Sweden can be traced to major political upheavals in the world (such as the Hungarian uprising, the Chilean *coup d'état*, the Iranian Islamic revolution, the Polish military coup, or the Eritrean War of Liberation). However, even fluctuations in the yearly numbers of refugee entries are somehow or other related to fluctuations in labour-market conditions. More or less obvious interconnections of this kind regularly lead to the criticism that the official humanitarian rhetoric surrounding Swedish refugee policy is but a veil concealing economic interests.

Such critics argue that allowing entry to dependent family members and accepting refugees from Third World countries are both disguised forms of economically-motivated labour importation. In similar vein, refugee policy is often seen as a structural continuation, first of the early post-war Nordic immigration and later of the Southern European immigration after these labour reserves became exhausted in the 1960s and early 1970s. Some critics on the left argue that migration is not

in fact a 'boom-slump cycle' phenomenon dependent on fluctuations in the unemployment rate, but rather should be understood as a late capitalist society's fundamental structural need for a continuous supply of unskilled labour. This line of argument reflects actual trends towards a dual labour market, in Sweden as well as elsewhere in the Western world, and is, on the surface, plausible (Sassen 1988). Its assumption of conspiracy is, however, problematic.

With few exceptions (for example, Winai Ström 1986), no effort has been made to identify and analyse the specific social and political interests behind changing attitudes to labour migration and refugee policy, and the way they are transformed into actual policy. Such analysis would seem to be important for making sense of a number of seemingly contradictory political decisions and administrative measures. There are no direct links of transmission between 'the needs of capital', or the 'interests of the ruling class', and actual policies. At certain times important decisions and government acts may reflect universal symbolic and moral values, rather than mere economic or narrow social interests. Though the full analysis of the interplay of interests and claims influencing Swedish immigration and refugee policy is beyond the scope of this essay, I will present a tentative scenario of the shifting positions on the political stage, which have coincided with several sudden and seemingly mysterious reorientations of refugee policy during the 1980s.

These, I argue, are related to the difficulties a social-democratic government faces in trying to balance the conflicting claims of employers, unions, humanely-orientated pressure groups and public opinion in general. This is one reason why there are contradictions between the various administrative policy measures on integrating refugees. For example, regarding immigrants as 'a resource for the labour market' ill fits the excessive bureaucracy and institutional routines established for their integration. I also outline some possible scenarios for Swedish immigration and refugee policy in the 1990s. A stated 'policy of multiple doors' could become the equivalent of renewing direct and selective labour import from Eastern Europe. At the same time, bringing Swedish refugee policy into harmony with the current restrictive measures of the European Community towards Third World refugees might find expres-

sion in new selection procedures for the granting of asylum: a racial policy in which criteria of 'cultural background' may increasingly overrule more universal ambitions of humanitarianism and international solidarity.

The pragmatic art of compromise

The general point of the following discussion is that in order to analyse concrete policy measures, it is essential to evaluate the specific political role and actual potential for action of the ruling Social Democratic Party. Its double bind - a Janus faced appearance as the administrator of a capitalist economy and as the exponent of popular interests - materializes in a continuous process of compromise between structurally juxtaposed 'right' and 'left' factions of the party.

On one hand, the social-democratic political élite acts as the guardian of Sweden's international economic competitiveness, i.e. as responsible for preventing the flight of capital. This role entails guaranteeing the private labour market a differentiated and 'not too costly' labour force. As the foremost architect and guarantor of a huge and ramified Swedish welfare edifice, the ruling party will also have to care for a supply of adequate and 'not too costly' labour for the public sector.

On the other hand, the Social Democratic Party is extremely sensitive to reactions from its traditional social base, 'the movement' (party and union grassroots), as it is idiomatically known. The industrially-based working class and the less well paid (mainly women) of the public sector employees remain essential elements of this support. These are the categories of the population most likely to experience immigration as a potential or immediate threat to hard won historical compromises with their private or public employers and, accordingly, to their very working and living conditions.

The attitudes of these categories of the population are not unequivocal, just as their material interest in immigration control is variable. First, acute shortages of labour in the private industrial sector during an economic boom can offset accumulation and, in the longer term, jeopardize industrial workers' chances of taking advantage of actual or potential increases in profit rates (Marshall 1973). Second, workers in

the private and public sectors are not only producers of goods and services; they are also consumers of public services. On-going processes of disintegration and transformation, inherent in the present general crisis of the welfare state (Lash and Urry 1987), largely affected the working class in its role as con-sumers of public welfare services. The simultaneous 'privatization' of increasing numbers of services also tends to benefit the most privileged sectors of the population. A con-tinuous shortage of (mainly unskilled) labour and rapidly increasing labour costs in certain sectors may serve to ac-celerate the disintegration of public provision (health care, child care, unemployment benefits and so forth) and may lead to further depreciation in the quantity and quality of the ser-vices provided. This is exactly what seemed to have happened in Sweden by the end of the 1980s.

The working class could conceivably be convinced that its own material interests could best be served through the controlled import of labour. It would, however, be wrong to reduce refugee policy to a game of covert, pragmatic interests. While any kind of philanthropy or idealism deserves to be treated with a certain amount of scepticism and placed in its historical context, explanations that are limited to this type of sceptical perspective are prone to the same kind of critique that could, for example, be applied to the classic attempts to explain the ban on the nineteenth century British slave trade exclusively in terms of changing colonial economic interests (see, for example, Williams 1944). In much the same way as the abolitionist movement could not be willed away, it cannot be denied that Sweden harbours a genuine popular movement, which has long acted as a powerful autonomous political force in support of a liberal refugee policy. From the left it confronts the social-democratic political and administrative élite mainly in the name of international solidarity; from the conservative right and the middle of the political spectrum it is more often in the name of humanitarianism or liberal Christianity. It acts as a powerful force even in the midst of the social-democratic movement itself. It is represented both as a traditional com-ponent of working class ideology and as a movement founded on Christian conviction. Popular religious currents have been a component of the Swedish social-democratic movement since its beginnings and still influence party politics from within.

Analysis of the development of Swedish refugee policy during the 1980s clearly shows that a number of important policy measures cannot be explained in terms of 'labour-market policy' alone. Closer scrutiny reveals that measures motivated by genuine humanitarian intentions may come into conflict with those bearing a definite labour-market stamp. The result is an apparent bureaucratic mish-mash, unintelligible without detailed analysis of the complex interplay of the diverse and often juxtaposed material, social, symbolic and moral interests involved.

The 'age shock'

In the early 1970s it was fashionable among certain academics to bode the collapse of Western European capitalism in the absence of a constant stream of underprivileged industrial labour from the less economically-developed parts of the world. Gorz (1970) argues that the moral and economic survival of bourgeois society depends on paying a growing immigrant proletariat wages substantially below the historical reproduction costs of the northern European working classes. One decade later the same author (Gorz 1980), in saying 'Farewell to the Proletariat', predicts the moral disintegration of capitalism from within as a result of the impact of new technology and constantly growing structurally conditioned unemployment. Having been made largely economically superfluous to capital by the technological revolution, proletarian labour had come simply to legitimate the existing power and class structure. Others predicted permanent structural unemployment in the Old Industrial Centres (OICs) of Europe through the development of a New International Division of Labour (NIDL) involving the transfer of industrial jobs to the free trade zones of the periphery (cf. Fröbel et al. 1980). However, as Cohen (1987: 220) points out, despite a high rate of unemployment among immigrant workers in most northern European countries during the 1970s and 1980s, there has hardly been any great net loss of jobs.

NIDL theorists thus tend to overstate the current impact of Third World industrialization and to neglect the important spin-off effects of a changing international division of labour in

the OICs. The decrease in the number of industrial jobs resulting from technological changes and the transfer of labour-intensive industries to the periphery has partly been compensated for by an increase in menial jobs in the expanding private service-sector catering for the discerning consumer market represented by an expanding class of urban professionals in new sophisticated urban agglomerations (Sassen 1988). These new jobs are largely occupied by immigrants. At the same time, opportunities have arisen in a variety of new and more prestigious jobs associated with the expansion of research and development and a booming information industry (Cohen 1987). So far these new opportunities have mainly provided channels of social mobility to members of the majority populations.

Popular doomsday prophecies about the future of wage labour and employment in the OICs were thus challenged by a scenario of industrial and economic restructuring and renewed expansion during the 1980s. In North America and Australia, this development was manifested in increased net employment and continuous large-scale immigration throughout the 1980s. In Europe, corresponding technological developments did not yet have the same effects - at least not in any general sense. In general net employment continued to stagnate and most western European countries are now preparing to withstand the growing pressure from refugees and presumptive labour migrants from the south and from the east.

As unemployment began to decrease during the late 1980s, however, bottle-necks in the labour market became an acute problem in a number of Europe's most economically advanced regions. New theories were then formulated which, in contrast both to 'end of wage labour' theses and to immediate European mainstream labour-market trends, argued that the scenario for Europe in the year 2000 would be a fierce scramble for labour among different fractions of capital. The enthusiasm with which West German private and public employers welcomed the flood of refugees of German descent during the late 1980s from beyond an increasingly corroded iron curtain can hardly be attributed to patriotic solidarity alone. Similarly, Finland's recent invitation to its diaspora in the Soviet Union (in the name of genetics and national community) is hardly devoid of its pragmatic aspects, especially given that the coun-

try for years experienced an acute shortage of manpower, but was prevented by public opinion from introducing any kind of immigration policy. Italy (despite considerable domestic unemployment in the south) would envisage a continual need for a large-scale import of labour throughout the 1990s.[3] Sweden is a fourth example.

From 'unemployment' to 'overheating'

In discussing the future of industrial work in Sweden, Ohlsson (1988) concluded that it will become extremely difficult for Swedish firms to recruit young people in Europe (see also Ohlsson and Broome 1988). With the dramatically decreasing birth rates in virtually all European countries since the mid-1960s, in the near future young people could well become an extremely scarce resource, he argues. There are already no longer any readily available large reserves of migrant labour, for Finland, Sweden's traditional economic fringe and labour reserve, has itself started to experience the same acute labour shortage. This dilemma has been termed 'age-shock', i.e. a situation in which an ever growing, non-productive and aging population becomes dependent on the support of a decreasing number of young people.

The argument sounds, in fact, like an echo from a much earlier debate which took place in Sweden in the 1940s anticipating the huge labour import of the post-war period (see, for example, Ahlberg and Svennilsson 1946). These 'long waves' in scientific and public discourse, appear symptomatic for the highly conjunctural types of paradigmatic shift that tend to dominate the debate on labour-market issues. The revived 'age shock' thesis of the late 1980s applies to a situation in which officially acknowledged unemployment was approaching zero, in which there was growing unrest in the labour market and in which wage claims were rising rapidly. It became one of the media's favourite topics and the tone of the public debate changed almost overnight. The terrifying vision of the incubus

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3. Italy has taken over from the FRG as the country with the lowest natality in the world (Pittau 1988 quoted by Mesić and Heršak 1989: 18). An anticipated reduction in the number of employed was projected to cause decreasing contributions to the social funds which are essential for the Italian model of the 'welfare state' (Mesić and Heršak 1989: 18).

of unemployment hanging as a constant threat over the welfare edifice gave way to reports of industrial standstill and collapse of the public sector brought about by an 'overheated' labour market. In contrast with the growing unemployment of the first half of the 1980s, the general public was now being told that Sweden was facing its most acute and general shortage of labour ever (Stenberg 1988). Serious shortages of labour were shown to exist in the highly mechanized and automated industries, as well as in most parts of the service sector. Newspapers started to carry numerous pictures and reports of untended patients in the hospitals, of elderly people being sent away untreated, of public old-age homes facing an insecure future, and of children queueing for public day care. The difficulty of recruiting labour was depicted as a severe threat to the ongoing industrial boom (Brodda 1988). Desperate cries for labour were heard even in Sweden's peripheral regions, where unemployment is traditionally far higher than average (Engman 1988).

At the same time the media was full of reports about new forms of labour importation circumventing the ban on labour immigration that had been in existence since the early 1970s. This new 'hidden' import of labour took place through contracting arrangements between Swedish and foreign firms. For example, the British firm, Technicon International Management Ltd, arranged temporary contracts between British skilled industrial workers and Swedish firms (Engman 1988). Vivid descriptions were given of how Swedish employers - public as well as private - were forced to exploit alternative labour reserves and to use any conceivable means to get around the official embargo on the import of labour. For example, in 1989 it was reported that some local municipalities had begun to recruit nurses from Poland and Estonia on short-term guest-worker contracts.

More obscure cases, reminiscent of the illegal traffic in labour to other Western European countries, were also reported (cf. Miller 1987). There were even some reports of abysmal conditions, similar to those endured by clandestine Turkish workers in the Federal Republic of Germany, which the German journalist, Günther Walraff (1985) had described so vividly. One case, involving a complex 'double' subcontracting agreement, provided an illuminating example of how a

hierarchical, highly complex and segmented global transna-
tional division of labour articulates itself in the OICs. The coal
works of a state-owned company in northern Sweden, SSAB,
had contracted the German company, Krupp-Kopers, to re-
build four damaged furnaces (Norén 1988). As well as
employing a small group of its own qualified German em-
ployees, Krupp-Kopers had hired the manual labour to do the
dangerous work inside the furnaces from a Hungarian
company. Several of these Hungarian workers had been se-
riously injured and were in danger of losing their lives after
working inside the furnaces and being exposed to a heat of 70
degrees (Celsius) without appropriate safety equipment or
adequate instructions. Most of the wages agreed upon with the
Swedish company were never seen by the Hungarian workers,
for they had been directly appropriated for other purposes by
their mother-company in Hungary.

Another case of extreme exploitation of foreign labour was
that of a group of workers from Thailand, who, through an
agreement between a Swedish and a Thai firm, were hired to
dismantle a factory producing wooden boards (Westmar 1988).
Until local unions finally intervened, the Thai workers had for
months been dismantling machines twelve hours a day under
appalling conditions and for a starvation wage of 2.5 Swedish
crowns an hour - approximately US 30 cents, or about 5 per
cent of the minimum Swedish wage at the time.

Refugees as a 'resource'

From the spring of 1988, changing labour-market conditions
led to ever louder cries for a new large-scale import of foreign
labour (*Dagens Nyheter* 1988a; 1988b; 1988c). Local municipali-
ties and the central trade-union association joined employers in
urging the government to open the doors to economically
motivated immigration.

This apparent accord did not last long, for the social-demo-
cratic movement's grassroots did not share a vision of economic
development based on imported labour. Rank and file trade
unionists stepped in to state that the workers did not wish to
see the welcome prospect of a new economic boom threatened
by fresh migration, unemployment and increased labour-

market competition. At a moment when business profit margins were apparently as wide as the labour market was tight, the time had come for the labour force to take the upper hand in redressing more than a decade of disciplined abstinence on the wages front. The long awaited opportunity to press employers for improved working conditions had arrived (*Dagens Nyheter* 1988d). This was the unique historical moment at which generous, but so far unfulfilled, promises about worker participation in management could become a reality. In the name of international solidarity, poor and deserving refugees deserved a sanctuary in Sweden, but no labour migrants should be permitted.

Faced with the task of mediating between conflicting interests within the labour market, the government came up with a solution that reflected the Swedish art of consensus management. The appropriate state agencies set out to market a policy that would combine a humanitarian and liberal refugee policy with the pragmatic demands of the labour market (Rogerstam 1988a; Norrman 1988 and Hörnquist 1988). Refugees were proclaimed 'Sweden's new labour reserve' (see Rogerstam 1988b; Sahlberg 1988a and b). By rejecting the import of labour and stressing the refugee issue, the political élite could take the labour movement at its word with respect to international solidarity.

The government also had to face the dissatisfaction of those who found the refugee policy of the 1980s too liberal. By stressing the economic value of refugees, however, the government was able to squash mounting petty-bourgeois criticism of a bureaucratically-monitored 'integration policy' that kept refugees dependent on costly welfare benefits for years. Finally, by increasing moral pressure on employers' unions and other labour-market agencies and by reinforcing and adapting educational measures, the emphasis on employment was meant to come to terms with a major paradox in the Swedish labour market: at the same time as general unemployment was approaching zero and employers were crying out for labour, a comparatively large number of refugees with longstanding residence in Sweden were more or less permanently unemployed, or being circulated around various language-training programmes and labour-market schemes.

A large emergency professional-requalification programme was launched and measures introduced to help integrate refugees into the labour market. Such measures were accompanied by determined efforts to mobilize all available workers within the country. Labour exchange practices were amended to reflect this goal and existing retraining schemes were reoriented (Tryman 1987, 1988). Proposals were also made to raise the retirement age.

Refugees as a 'problem'

Partly because of the changing global situation and partly through liberal interpretation of the criteria for granting asylum, immigration rose to the kinds of levels reached in the late 1960s, the years of labour immigration. Sweden had become known internationally for its liberal policy and large new groups of refugees were queuing for entry and waiting for increasingly prolonged periods to have their applications processed. In an effort to solve the temporary administrative chaos, the general liberalization of the control system culminated during the winter of 1988/9 in the considerable easing of entry for all longstanding applicants.

It soon became clear that the goals of the new policy were unrealistic. The administration of refugee integration had grown into an unwieldy, overweight bureaucracy. Providing housing had become almost impossible; large-scale labour-market integration had proved extremely complex because of the problems involved in qualifying poorly educated refugees; language training programmes were criticized for being ineffective and poorly administered. Swedish employers and workers alike were reluctant to accept Third World refugees on the shopfloor. Well-educated refugees resented being discriminated against at work and were reluctant to take on the kinds of routine industrial tasks usually offered to them.

During 1989 the optimism encapsulated in the slogan, 'refugees as a resource', increasingly gave way in public debates to the alternative leitmotif of 'refugees as a problem'. Discussions started to focus on problems of getting refugees into jobs and, in particular, on the 'costs of the refugee policy'. The prolonged dependence of refugees on costly welfare benefits

became a topic for discussion, echoing the concerns of a growing number of populist-nationalist grassroots movements determined to put an end to the 'misuse' of hard-working Swedish tax-payers' money and pensions (*Dagens Nyheter* 1989a, 1989b; Sverigedemokraterna 1989). It was as if the right-wing anti-refugee populist movements which had started to manifest themselves openly in 1987 (see, for example, Fryklund and Peterson's analysis), had succeeded in changing the whole tone of the public discourse. Heated debates arose over a number of other issues, among them the 'criminal behaviour' of immigrant youth and 'the limits of what should be tolerated in Swedish society' by way of deviant cultural behaviour (Gür 1990). The almost logical complement to the shift of the public debate in the direction of 'cultural racism' became a sporadic grassroots racism culminating in a wave of violent attacks on refugee camps and a number of fascist-like manifestations reminiscent of the Ku-Klux-Klan.

'Enforced clientism': critique from the left

During the late 1980s Swedish refugee administration became the object of intense criticism, not only from right-wing populists, but from within the ruling party itself, from the media, from humanitarian organizations and from left-wing intellectuals.

The critical, left wing, social-democratic politician, Hans Göran Franck, argues (*Kommun Aktuellt* 1990) that Swedish refugee and immigrant policy has developed into a repressive machinery. 'The bureaucracy had produced its own refugee problem', he asserts; by the late 1980s the government and the administration of the refugee policy had become the enemy of the refugees 'with different racist groupings as eager cheerleaders'. Franck points to the acute need for increased political organization among the refugees themselves.

In a critical study about the experiences of refugees in northern Sweden at the end of the 1980s, Fezume Kebrome (1990: 8), who is himself from a refugee background, writes of how the refugee 'meets an immense system, a huge social apparatus of institutions, rules, public employees'. To pass through this apparatus the refugee has to pass through

learning, subordination and fostering processes which fundamentally mould his or her personality, mentality, attitudes and life strategies. Through 'mental structuration and clientization', Kebrome argues, the system produces powerlessness and distress. The process starts with the refugee's complete economic and social dependence upon the apparatus and upon the whims of a single employee. This forces individual refugees to adopt strategies of subservience. The route through the institutional system contains a range of situations, including having to answer intimate questions about personal and cultural matters. During this questioning, the boundaries between the 'personal' and the 'formal', between the employee as a 'friend' and as an 'authority', between 'help', 'control', and 'psychiatric treatment' are never made clear (ibid.). A blurred definition of the actual role of the public employee acts to undermine the refugee's personality. Refugees experience the authorities as dominant, as not giving them any chance to communicate their genuine experiences. Should they do so they are afraid of being thought of as 'loud-mouthed', 'disorderly', or suffering from 'adaptation problems' (ibid.). Thus, as another intellectual with an immigrant background, Tony Mendes (1990) argues, during an all too long waiting period asylum seekers are socialized into deep psychological and social dependence on a huge 'immigration bureaucracy'. In this way, he concludes, discriminatory social-democratic immigrant and refugee policies succeed in turning immigrants into 'controllable' subjects, while Sweden manages to reduce the unemployment figure by some marginal decimal point.

Bureaucratic 'mishmash' - and the underlying policy measures

Depending on the view of the speaker, the failure 'to get refugees into jobs' has alternatively been blamed on the refugees themselves, on the incompetence of an excessive welfare bureaucracy, and on discrimination from employers. It is important to stress, however, that there is a fundamental structural incongruity between the established Swedish system of refugee integration and the new 'refugees as a resource' or 'labour reserve' perspective which was launched in 1988.

A more elaborate system of refugee integration was gradually introduced from the beginning of the 1980s, when the flow of applications for asylum became continuous and seemingly permanent. Until 1985 overall responsibility for the initial integration was in the hands of a central labour bureau, which organized direct institutional links between language classes, labour-market training and entry into the labour market. In 1985, when responsibility for language training and other introductory programmes was transferred to the municipalities, these links were broken. The reform, which was implemented for political and social reasons, had become necessary because a situation had arisen in which the objectives of a liberal and humane refugee policy conflicted with growing anxieties about 'ghettoization' and *überfremdung* on the part of local urban areas with insufficient housing and welfare facilities. It was also a response to the protests of municipalities in the larger urban centres which had taken in large numbers of immigrants and which were now balking at the idea of having to receive new contingents of refugees (see, for example, Yttrande 1984). At the time nobody expected another labour shortage and the 1985 reform paid no special attention to any possible economic consequences for the people involved. The reform was based on the principle of providing welfare benefits for long periods of time.

'Sharing the burden'

Previously, the authorities concerned had channelled refugees into large population centres with expanding labour markets that offered a wide range of jobs and opportunities. The 1985 reform was intended to spread refugees over a larger number of receiving municipalities. The integration policy was thus subjected to profound territorial decentralization. When pressure from an increasing number of asylum seekers grew this objective developed during 1987/8 into an 'all of Sweden strategy' (*hela Sverige strategin*) aimed at spreading the 'burden of international solidarity' evenly and justly over the entire nation.

Every municipality was expected to receive a fair amount of refugees. At first there were a number of protests and the central state had to exert continuous moral pressure on local

administrations and public opinion. This persuasion was backed by generous welfare payments. Individual municipalities received social welfare contributions for each refugee's first year in Sweden and for three consecutive years thereafter, along with a range of administrative and overhead costs. An elaborate set of bureaucratic rules regulated the system and, among other things, tied the refugee's right to welfare to the municipality that provided for his or her introductory period. The refugees themselves were not asked to give their own preferences and, even though most preferred to be near relatives or fellow countrymen, they were not allowed to choose where to live. The situation was reproduced through a system of economic sanctions bound up with the administration of welfare. The distribution of refugees over the country was determined by the principle of least (administrative) resistance and the notion that every local community and every local administration should shoulder its share of 'the burden'. This has created absurd situations, such as when refugees (caught up in clientism and economic dependency) have been forced to live for years in outlying communities with high unemployment and few chances of ever finding a job. It has isolated individuals or refugee families in often hostile local communities, thus eventually forcing them to re-migrate from the communities in which they have been put by the administration towards urban areas which offer a variety of opportunities and the company of their fellow countrymen.

The 'employment line': between clientism and labour-enforcement

Faced with having to answer growing criticisms of refugee policy (from the right as well as the left) and with having to solve the riddles of the increasing disjunctions between proclaimed intentions and actual developments, in 1990 the central administration put forward and marketed its so-called 'employment line' as the guiding principle for Swedish refugee integration. It contained measures that had often been advocated by liberal commentators, but long resisted by the labour movement and the government. All the relevant institutions (refugee camp, employment service, job-requalification centre,

teachers and police) were to work towards introducing every refugee into working life as soon as possible. It was stressed that even refugees with higher educations from their countries of origin were expected to accept menial jobs. Even though this might not comply with their expectations, it was for their own good and would prevent them ending up on welfare.

An emphasis on labour enforcement is fundamental to Swedish welfare policy as a whole (Marklund and Svalfors 1986); now it was to be implemented even within the realm of refugee policy. Effective integration of refugees into the labour market would ideally start as soon as they entered the country. The 'employment line' was supposed to guarantee that they actually became a labour-market 'resource'. At the same time, their complete integration into the Swedish labour market and work ethic would prevent them being turned into scapegoats by the general public and incipient populist-racist movements. It could also soften the left's critique of clientism.

Several administrative reforms have attempted, in the name of the 'employment line', to attack the excesses of 'enforced clientism'. New administrative regulations give the individual municipality a financial incentive to place refugees in jobs as quickly as possible. Instead of obligatory welfare benefits being tied to the single refugee for several years, in 1990 the municipalities became free to dispose of an aggregate amount towards ensuring the fast and efficient economic and productive integration of its refugee quotas. If the individual refugee becomes 'fully integrated' into working life in a short time, the municipality will have made a net economic gain. There have also been initiatives to create intra-regional cooperation between single municipalities in order to make labour-market integration more flexible.

The 'employment line' is thus intended to solve the disjunction between the 'all of Sweden' strategy initiated in 1985 and the later 'refugees as a resource' perspective introduced in 1988 with a view to easing the acute shortage of labour. As a general strategy for refugee integration, however, the 'employment line' has itself introduced new problems and its own inherent traps. Should 'welfare enforcement' become over-zealous bureaucratically-administered 'labour enforcement', then we will find ourselves in a situation in which selectivity, discrimination and segregation at the level of the local

authority also starts to dominate the lives of those few refugees who actually manage to cross the borders and become eligible for asylum. Within the context of a worsening general ideological climate (see Chapter 1), the declared official objectives of humanitarianism, generosity and a feeling of solidarity with uprooted, persecuted and tortured people could, in actual social and institutional practice, be progressively overruled by rigid interpretations of the 'duty to work'.

Such a development would coincide with the general tendency towards 'labour enforcement' which characterized changes in the Swedish welfare state of the 1980s. As social-democratic political strategies veered in an ever more 'neo-corporatist' direction (as defined by Keane 1984: 22ff.) during the 1980s and the main economic strategy gradually moved from 'Keynesianism' to 'monetarism' (Marklund 1988) there was a transfer of capital from the citizen and the state to expanding export-oriented industries under the banners of 'decentralization', 'privatization' and 'cooperativization'.[4] As a corollary to neo-corporatism, the 'solidarity' aspect of social welfare policies has been played down and the 'control' aspect emphasized. Principles of labour enforcement even penetrate the sectors of a 'dual Swedish welfare system' (Marklund and Svalfors 1986) which lie outside the domain of unemployment benefits. In the Swedish suburbs, where the large concentrations of ethnic minorities are found, local welfare bureaucracies have developed special techniques, involving blatant labour enforcement, for managing 'the problems' of immigrants. It was hardly by chance that the new liberal 'beggar thy neighbour' social work model (conceived by the American professor, Tony Manocchio) was first introduced in the municipality with the most dense immigrant population in the country (see Nordström 1985; Creutzer 1985; Yttrande 1985). Though this infamous 'Alby case' was vigorously condemned by the central welfare authorities in 1985 (Tillsynspromemoria 1985), it was nevertheless adopted (in modified form) by a larger number of local administrations during the late 1980s. Variously referred to as the 'responsibility model' and 'networking in social work', the 'Alby model' was first authorized by left-wing academics. Though effective in slimming down the municipality's welfare

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4. For a discussion of decentralization in Swedish public administration see Czarniawska-Joerges (1987).

budget, it provided an extremely discriminatory form of labour enforcement. 'Rebuilding self reliance' and 'settling with clientism' proved to be ways of generating fear through psychic terror and creating negative identities among immigrants and other marginal welfare clients. 'Networking' became synonymous with administratively controlling the clients' intimate lives and forcing them to take any job available, rather than building up local autonomy and community responsibility (Tillsynspromemoria 1985; Sunesson 1985; Om ansvar och respekt 1985).[5]

Some researchers (for example, Kebrome 1990) observed that the refugee bureaucracy was adopting similar principles at a more general level during the late 1980s. Because most of the public debate tended to focus on refugees as individual problems for the welfare system and the labour market, refugees have been made extremely vulnerable. With the public eye focused on 'the refugee problem', racist activities have moved out into the open and moral pressure to take 'any job at any price' has grown. In the absence of proper scrutiny and self-examination of attitudes and administrative practices, 'the employment line' may, in many concrete cases, aggravate discrimination against skilled and highly educated refugees. Rigorous enforcement may also serve to keep the presently unskilled - or those with skills thought of as irrelevant to the labour market - locked into its least enviable occupational ghettos.

This should, however, be discussed within the context of changing conditions on the Swedish labour market which, despite the 'age shock scenario' of 1988, was by 1990 already showing signs of rising unemployment. We seem to have arrived at a juncture at which new forms of discrimination in the Swedish labour market could come to echo increasingly discriminatory practices on the borders, i.e. a selective immigration and refugee policy cast in the spirit of Sweden's present 'harmonization' with the European Community (see discussion in Chapter 1). This happens against the background of a

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5. See also the discussion in Eriksson (1977). Here it is argued that forms of 'networking' in local Swedish neighbourhoods, which were originally conceived of as elements of an 'anti-bureaucratic active social welfare policy', have been turned into instruments of control because state institutions have assimilated and changed the original ideas and linked up their activities with those of the local government authority.

changing global scenario in which the polarization between 'north' and 'south', 'Christian' and 'Muslim' is increasing at the same time as Eastern Europe is becoming an integral part of the European migratory system.

Crisis and reorientation

A policy of 'multiple doors'

It was the anticipated shortage of labour that led to the marketing of the 'immigrants as a resource' perspective in 1988. But the Swedish *wirtschaftswunder* of the 1980s was already, by 1989, unexpectedly showing signs of grinding to a halt. With a weakening economy and popular dissatisfaction with refugee policy, by the end of 1989 the time had come for a new and sudden rethink. A highly restrictive refugee policy, comparable to those already practiced for years in other Nordic countries, was initiated. This serious setback for Swedish internationalism and humanitarianism was neatly synchronized with increasingly loud appeals from the political élite for increased responsibility and 'crisis consciousness' on the part of the Swedish population. The basic principles of Sweden's liberal refugee policy were sacrificed along the way, at least in effect if not in principle, namely the right to asylum for *de facto* refugees and conscientious objectors.

It would be too conspiratorial an interpretation to regard the new Swedish volte-face as a deliberate attempt to move into harmony with a common European standard; it is more likely to be just another of a long series of *ad hoc* emergency measures. But, given the changing global situation and obviously deteriorating ideological climate in the country, fears about Sweden joining Fortress Europe (see Karlander 1989) are probably well founded. *Festung Europa* is seen to be at the very heart of EC integration: a small group of countries abolishing passport controls amongst themselves while erecting new discriminatory walls against the outside world.

This does not, however, imply the end of immigration; rather it signals a new and differently oriented immigration policy: a 'policy of multiple doors', as a senior representative of the Ministry of Labour put it. But this eloquent and seemingly

open-minded phrase actually describes a far more restrictive refugee policy, which contains new selective strategies for importing labour and introduces the notion of guest workers into Swedish immigration policy. This reorientation needs to be viewed within the context of the changing general political situation.

The introduction of the guest-worker concept

At the end of the 1980s the Swedish economy was showing a marked tendency towards stagnation, indicated by symptoms such as high inflation, low growth rates and an increased flight of capital. The media broadcasted innumerable government appeals to show greater consideration for the collective well-being of the nation by cutting down on consumption. At the same time, one union after another called its members out on strike in demand of higher wages. The traditional corporate social compact between capital, the central labour unions and the ruling Social Democratic Party seemed to have been put completely aside. In a determined effort to bring home to the Swedish people the seriousness of the economic crisis, in February 1990 a tough 'package solution' was introduced; this included price restraint, an embargo on wage levels, a fixed limit to profits on stocks and a total ban on strikes. While the top echelons of the labour movement managed to swallow the whole package, including the ban on strikes, the more rebellious union grassroots rallied up and down the country, holding numerous spontaneous workplace meetings, organizing wildcat (politically motivated) strikes and offering collective resignation from the Social Democratic Party. It also proved impossible to carry the measures through Parliament, for they were blocked by protests from the left as well as from the right. The government retaliated by resigning. The ensuing political chaos ended with the installation of a social-democratic government, now presenting the Swedish people and the labour movement with fresh ideas for 'cooling down' the so-called 'overheated economy' and 'overheated labour market'.

In public debate, the slow down in growth was most commonly ascribed to shortages of labour, too high a level of employment and, as a consequence, wage rates growing too fast. It was in keeping with this logic that the resuscitated

social-democratic government proposed a new 'softer' package, which included as one of its elements a long-avoided proposal to import labour. Importing labour was presented more or less as an alternative to increasing unemployment, in the hope of cooling down the labour market and disciplining the labour force. With a shrewd backhand twist, the theme of labour importation had thus been returned to the political agenda from which it had been so determinedly banished by the labour movement in 1988.

One morning towards the end of February 1990, the *Dagens Nyheter* announced in an article headed 'Balts to Boost Sweden' that the government proposed recruiting labour from the Baltic states (*Dagens Nyheter* 1990a: A6). Battered by increasingly insistent appeals to 'crisis consciousness', by one disciplinary 'economic package' after the other and the threat of being punished by rising unemployment figures, by premature elections and the likelihood of a new right-wing government, there was now a fair chance that the Swedish working class would finally accept another labour-recruitment exercise. This was especially likely if the alternative was perceived as continued labour importation veiled as a refugee policy, with its threat of 'Third Worldization', which in popular lore was often conceived of as a foreign 'Muslim invasion' into peaceful local communities and Swedish work places. Judging from interviews with Swedish workers and from media reports from different parts of the country, it seems evident that Swedes - when caught between the devil and the deep blue sea - prefer to work with immigrants of European descent (including Eastern Europeans), than with people from the Third World, whose deviant political traditions and strange languages are seen as complications in the established procedures of the Swedish labour movement (Öjersson 1990).

Drang nach Osten: scenarios for the 1990s

Migration as 'development aid'?

The way in which the new political package attempted to legitimate the proposed labour-recruitment policy carried echoes of the well-worn 'migration as development aid' slogan used in

Western Europe in the 1960s and 1970s (Schierup 1990). An influx of Baltic people into the Swedish labour market would stimulate supply in industries crying out for labour. But the proposal was marketed as an offer to help educate the Baltic states through their present economic transformation. It would take the form of education in business leadership, as well as in the less-advanced skills in which 'Balts lack any tradition associated with the introduction of a more market-oriented economy' (*Dagens Nyheter* 1990). A covert *gastarbeiterpolitik* was, in fact, being formulated. Baltic migrants would work 18-month contracts as 'trainees' in agriculture, industry, public services and office work. After this they were expected to return home to speed up the economic development of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, while these republics progressively secured for themselves 'a freer position in relation to the Soviet Union'. From an international perspective this new strategy could be seen as Sweden's answer to a dynamic German *Ostpolitik* and the injection of cheap, educated and industrially trained labour from Eastern Europe into the German economy. It represents but one instance of the reorientation of Western European capitalism towards new fields of expansion (Schierup 1990). The import of Eastern European labour has become an increasingly attractive alternative to the 'Third Worldization' of immigration, which during the 1980s fed the racism of growing nationalist-populist movements. At the historical moment when Eastern Europe probably became the most attractive site for the increased globalization of Western European capital, it seems logical that Sweden should seek a comparable advantage by looking towards the Baltic 'fringe states'. The eastern Baltic region has for centuries been a strategic target for Swedish imperialism's *drang nach Osten*, which was initially blocked by its attachment to tsarist Russia and later by the annexation of the Baltic states by the Soviet Union after the Second World War. The Swedes have a generally sympathetic attitude towards the Baltic people and there are close cultural ties between Sweden and the three Baltic republics. There is a long established and well assimilated Baltic minority in Sweden, which is known to be modest in its demands and non-radical politically. For the Baltic republics, Sweden may seem an attractive alternative to the potentially dominant German economic and political influence.

The 'Finlandization' of the Baltic republics would provide Sweden with a new 'white' reservoir of flexible and readily employable industrially trained labour 'at home'. Drawing a parallel with Western European 'migration as development' policies in relation to the Mediterranean in the 1970s, the Swedish government's move would appear to be strategically designed to help Swedish transnational capital penetrate part of the rapidly disintegrating world of 'actually existing socialism'. As in the case of Western Germany's 'education for return' policy in relation to Turkey from the early 1970s (Dietzel 1971), a prospective return of Swedish-educated Baltic workers could facilitate the connection with Sweden. Baltic workers returning from Sweden might become cultural and economic brokers for the continued supply of labour to Swedish transnational firms. Returning qualified workers with Swedish industrial skills could then become one element of a modernized human infrastructure propelling a closer integration of the Baltic republics into a rapidly changing international division of labour.

A racial refugee policy?

In view of the neo-authoritarian developments in the Soviet Union and the armed repression of the nationalist movements in the Baltic republics, the parameters of a new Swedish *Ostpolitik* may well become increasingly blurred. Instead of renewed labour migration and 'development aid' to the east, now, in early 1991, a historical reversal to the immediate postwar situation and its immigration of Baltic political refugees seems rather more likely.

In contrast to the continuing restrictions on Third World asylum seekers (dating from 1989) and despite growing unemployment (since 1990), a colossal prospective wave of refugees has now (January 1991), in advance, been unconditionally welcomed by the Swedish authorities in the name of humanitarianism, solidarity and good neighbourship. At the local level, municipalities that consistently refused refugees in the late 1980s on the grounds that 'people from Muslim countries have a cultural background foreign to Swedish ways and mentality', or that they would 'never be able to integrate into Swedish society', warmly welcomed the expected arrival of refugees

from the Baltic 'brother nations' with a background 'similar to ours'. With a huge new international refugee catastrophe building up in the wake of the Gulf War, we may soon discover whether or not the discriminatory scenario various cynics have predicted will reflect the true state of Swedish refugee policy at the beginning of the 1990s actually materializes (see further, Chapter 1). Will we come to witness racial selectivity? Will 'nationality' and ethnocentric notions of 'cultural background' openly come to overrule ambitions for a broader international solidarity and a more universal humanitarianism? Will discriminatory selection become attached to the pragmatic considerations of Swedish labour-market politics?

3

The power of definitions
Immigrant women and problem ideologies

ALEKSANDRA ÅLUND

Over the past few years in Sweden, there has been growing public interest in the position of immigrant women, with various meetings, conferences and symposia being held on the topic. Researchers and the public sector have been paying increasing attention to immigrant women's various problems, especially to the alarming reports about their failing health (see 1985 reports of the Regional Planning Office, Stockholm County Council). Education and requalification programmes, plus a more active interest on the part of trade unions, are discussed as suitable ways of helping immigrant women cope with the danger of being squeezed out of the labour market by changes in production processes (DEIFO 1987; Knocke 1986). The need for urgent intervention by the public sector and its agencies has often been emphasized.

   Immigrant women certainly experience problems because of their adverse location in the Swedish 'vertical mosaic' (Ålund 1987) of economic, political and cultural power relations, in which 'culture' has become an idiom for social ranking structured along the segregationist lines of gender and ethnicity. Their unfavourable position is perhaps most evident in that part of the labour market in which there is high overall partici-

pation by immigrant women. Through their poor health and early burn-out they pay a high price for working in physically taxing, stressful, monotonous or dirty jobs with anti-social working hours, poor work environments and high risks of occupational injury (see Jonung 1982; Regional Planning Office, Stockholm County Council 1985; Leiniö 1986).

Debates on immigrant women's problems, however, contain ideological undertones which do not benefit the women themselves. Immigrant women are gradually being lulled into picturing themselves as vulnerable, in need of help, as undermined by their inferior position in the labour market, by their outmoded traditions, cultural heritage, husbands, large families, life-styles and values. In short, they are developing a negative self-image. A wall of problem-centred ideologies has been erected which prevents them from seeing themselves clearly, from recognizing not only their genuine limitations but also their opportunities and resources. Alternative perspectives that focus on resistance, resources and revolt have only recently begun to attract attention in Sweden.[1]

Researchers have unwittingly helped construct or reinforce various problem-centred ideologies. The image of a many-faceted subordination on the basis of class, gender, ethnicity and submission to the fate of womanhood has come to dominate our understanding of the position of immigrant women.

A research tradition focusing on the triple oppression of ethnicity, class and gender, based on Kosack's (1976) discussion of migrant women in Western Europe, has been continued and developed by, among others, Mirjana Morokvašić (1983). She adds a fourth dimension, fate, to the heavy weight of the immigrant woman's subordination. Though Morokvašić (ibid.: 20) is critical of studies based on stereotypes that place migrant women on the conventional tradition/modernity continuum, her own notion of fourfold oppression stresses immigrant women's acceptance of fate as an essential condition of their oppression, which is accordingly seen as rooted within themselves (ibid.: 26-7). These ideas have become influential in Swedish migration research (Knocke 1986; Matović 1986). But, despite Morokvašić emphasizing that this is far from a given

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1. Especially evident in the work of migration researchers with immigrant backgrounds. See for example Ålund (1984); Skutnabb-Kangas and Leporanta-Morley (1986); Knocke (1986).

element in the oppression of migrant women, her notion of fate has sometimes been used as a more general explanation. In certain feminist circles it has been linked into a unidimensional model in which patriarchal oppression is seen to govern the immigrant woman's whole life, producing defeatist attitudes on the job as well in the home (Matović 1986: 94).

One-sided explanations of immigrant women as subjected to oppression could become self-fulfilling prophecies if immigrant women start to define themselves as others define them, i.e. as victims of their fate, structure or culture. The force of an oppressive traditional patriarchal culture has, on the whole, been a dominant theme in conceptions of Swedish migrant women (for example, Sachs 1983; Davies and Esseveld 1988), who are otherwise still largely invisible in Swedish feminist research. Their gradual entry into the feminist debate, however, raises the need for a general analytical shift from ethnocentric or stereotyped culturalist interpretations of subordination towards a more comprehensive recognition of their own historical experience and present situation (Ålund 1991). The meaning of a 'cultural background' as a history and as 'a culture of rebellion' ought to be included in Scandinavian feminist analyses.

Ethnocentrism scrutinized: controversies within feminism

An important critique of the 'invisibility' of black and ethnic women in the writings of white feminists, and of ethnocentricity in mainstream feminist theory initiated by black feminists in the United States and Britain, has exposed the need to reform research orientations. Negative comparisons with white middle-class women as the norm have brought growing criticism of the intrinsically ethnocentric character of feminist analyses. A one-sided focus on subordination with patriarchy as a central analytical concept, together with the implied universal primacy of sexism and gender divisions over racism and racial divisions, have come to be questioned, as has the tendency to totalize and create permanent hierarchies of explanatory categories. Hence, in claiming that race is the primary source of their oppression, black feminists throw 'into doubt the univer-

sality of the central categories and assumptions of mainstream feminist analyses' (Stasiulis 1987: 5).

The most conspicuous issue, regarded as highly problematic among black feminists, concerns the role of the contemporary nuclear family as a site for women's oppression. Debates on this question centre 'on the theorised construction of women's oppression in the nexus formed by relations among the state, the private family household, and the wage labour system' (ibid.). While both socialists and radical feminists stress the oppressive character of the contemporary nuclear family (structured around the private household with a male bread-winner and his female dependent), black feminists question the universality of this assumption. They stress the impact of racism in structuring gender relations, the family and the di-vision of labour. Black women are more likely to play an economically independent and supporting role in the family. The strains on a black family are primarily due to racist restric-tions and practices. Racially specific gender ideologies relegate black women to the lowest stratum of an already gender segmented labour market.

This type of argument and its problematization of mainstream feminist theory, Stasiulis (ibid.) argues, is a critique of 'Eurocentric reasoning, built upon common misperceptions' of the economic roles of Third World migrant women in both historical and contemporary contexts. These assumptions are articulated in the 'double standard implicit in white feminist writings', according to which the entry into waged labour is regarded as emancipatory for migrant women but subjugating for white, non-migrant women. Thus, Eurocentric cultural stereotypes in mainstream feminism act, together with a variety of state practices, to uphold the image of passive migrant women 'completely dominated by the dictates of menfolk' (ibid.). Simultaneously they forge an uncritical view on immi-gration as unilaterally emancipatory (Ålund 1991). This type of reasoning could, for example, be illustrated by Matović's (1986: 102-3) description of the emancipation of (Yugoslav) immi-grant women entering the Swedish labour market:

> They have come from an environment in which a woman was expected always to obey, never to argue, never to complain, never to have her own opinion and of course never to pose any demands. Within the family sphere there was a sort of in-built serfdom, which

more or less implied the life-long status of a child; a woman was never supposed to do anything without asking permission. In comparison with this environment and background the Swedish workplace can seem a sort of liberation. Here, the personal control to which she is exposed at home has ceased, the woman has been entrusted with an independent task to carry out. The job raises her self esteem and her self confidence. Not only does she receive a salary, but also recognition for her work effort. She is expected to give her opinion, take initiatives and make her own decisions *vis-à-vis* her social environment and work mates. She has opportunities to speak without being silenced or interrupted: no discriminating rebukes that she does not understand anything.

The alleged emancipatory impact of wage labour and an uncritical representation of the meaning of immigration as a seeming passage to paradise, can 'naturalise' the notion that migrant women are suitable for jobs at the bottom of the labour market (Stasiulis 1987; Ålund 1991). In a critique of similar assumptions about the emancipatory impact of migration, Morokvašić (1983: 21) writes: '"Change" in this type of research is conceptualized as a passage (an evolution) from tradition to modernity, modernity being always synonymous with promotion, betterment and freedom for women. Work is envisaged as an element of modernity, non-existent as a norm or as a behaviour before emigration took place.' Considering the consequences of migration, she argues that 'the focus remains rather on gender only and the changes concern primarily, if not exclusively, gender relationships in isolation from other relationships within the social structure' (ibid.: 24). Thus, Morokvašić concludes, 'migration is not an open door to emancipation, whatever may be understood by this term' (ibid.: 28).

An awareness project that came off

The Swedish political scientist Gabriele Winai Ström's (1987) discussion of a programme organized by a group of Swedish women social workers in the city of Uppsala during 1984 is a good illustration of how problem-centred ideologies are articulated in the practices of Swedish institutions. The purpose of the programme was to trigger 'gender-relation reforms among immigrant women from Eastern Mediterranean countries, including also Iranian, Palestinian and Lebanese women' (ibid.: 4). The results of the programme, which were reported in the

local media, were summarized by Winai Ström (ibid.: 4-5) as follows: 'A high proportion of violence by men against women was found among these families. Its cause was sought in the value system prevailing in their "Islamic countries" of origin. The cure was seen in bringing immigrant women into women's groups. In severe cases, assistance in filing for divorce was recommended.'

Though clearly well-intentioned, the project aroused considerable anger among some of the women it was supposed to be assisting. They resented being singled out as powerless immigrant women and the objects of violence. Most of them were not, in fact, experiencing direct violence at all. They were oblivious of the scale of violence perceived by the social workers and interpreted their attitudes as the prejudices of urban against rural women, or of Swedish against foreign women. The women felt greater solidarity with their husbands and fellow workers than with women from an urban Swedish background. The social workers' attempt to raise the status of the women was considered an expression of unwarranted intervention and control. Some of them had had negative experiences in earlier attempts to organize immigrant women (ibid.).

Two years later, when Winai Ström decided to interview 'protesting immigrant women', it seemed as if they themselves and the Swedish social workers viewed their problems very differently. Rather than singling out their husbands, their family structure or the 'Islamic value system', they mentioned child care, unemployment and housing as their main difficulties - provided they had been asked what kind of assistance they needed (ibid.: 6).

Even those who had lived in Sweden for more than 20 years had been affected by declining salaries and by unemployment. The private labour market (which employs most immigrant workers in Sweden) stagnated during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Heavy industry and cleaning firms had been severely hit by stagnation in the labour market. Instead of social advancement, many immigrants experienced economic and labour market problems. The advancement achieved by those who immigrated during the 1960s and early 1970s had not continued. Refugees who arrived later from Iran, Lebanon etc. had difficulty finding a job. Competition for jobs increased, and this was also felt by Swedish women.

Winai Ström (ibid.) points out that at the time the project was being implemented, attempts to show solidarity with foreign women were somewhat hampered by the prevailing competition in the labour market.

> In 1984, when the study and action programme in Uppsala was undertaken, the crisis had also extended to central and local government employment, where most Swedish women had found jobs during the 1970s. Some of these women might have feared the possible loss of their jobs. The mobilization of women's solidarity during this period has to be evaluated against this backdrop. Some Swedish women were mobilizing women's solidarity in order to keep their new position in the labour market. Thus the sometimes aggressive attempt to organize immigrants was taking place in a situation where competition for jobs was increasing.

This is a familiar picture in present-day Scandinavia, yet the problem of ethnocentric definitions has barely been recognized within mainstream research. Critical contemporary British and American feminist debates are clearly relevant to the Swedish context; they apply to the conspicuous 'invisibility' of immigrant women in Swedish feminist debates, as well as to the general criticism of Eurocentric discourses in mainstream research and in society at large.

Migration, culture and gender

A new perspective on immigrant women would require a more critical and complex approach, an approach that transcends the simplistic conceptions of culture, as more or less permanent 'baggage', that underlie the reductionist culturalist approach to the study of the social conflicts involved in migration. Culture should be regarded as something that is formed rather than imported.

To move away from conceiving of immigrant cultures as graded categories of 'backward' and 'traditional' imported 'baggage' means recognizing that cultures are formed within the framework of both pre- and post-migratory antagonisms (Ålund 1991). It is possible to analyse ethnic and race relations as complex struggles generating social strategies in the pre-political contexts of everyday life, as well as in wider public arenas (Ålund 1985; Schierup and Ålund 1987). Rather than

being passive victims, immigrants actively employ the complex cultural symbolism of their histories to challenge contemporary forms of subordination and, in the process, they create new solidarities. In the Swedish context the role of women in the development of culture and local urban communities is often essential in that they act as the main bearers of informal networks integrating local public life (Ålund 1991). Centred around the family, the household and local community life, such female networks may nurture boundary-crossing cultural dispositions and give birth to new forms of social organization. Within the locus of the local neighbourhood and of everyday life, a subtle and complex identity work anchors new forms of consciousness and alternative definitions.

In a similar vein Hazel Carby (1982) points to the need for a dynamic perspective on cultural background and the family. She claims that black women are active and not particularly dependent on men, while men and women share a common racial oppression that gives gender and family relationships their specific importance and culturally shared meanings. Women in black and migrant communities often argue that the family provides opportunities for egalitarian relations between women and men and functions as a shelter and locus for resistance against racism and discrimination (Carby 1982; Stasiulis 1987; Ålund 1991).

The power of definitions

Though immigration and wage labour have given women new opportunities to achieve economic independence, their lingering subordination in an ethnically and gender divided Swedish labour market has perpetuated their dependence on the sense of unity and aid they give each other in female networks. These include women friends, relatives, neighbours and co-workers. They have developed into an informal public sphere at the periphery of the official institutional system, mediating moral support, information and assistance in such things as finding better jobs and housing.

While conducting fieldwork among Yugoslav women in the suburbs of Stockholm (Ålund 1991), I witnessed the importance of such social networks to these women's everyday lives. Apart from being marginalized in the labour market,

these women are also culturally excluded from the majority society's private sphere. They are thus placed in a position of 'social exile' which forces them to rely on each other's mutual aid and support, both in the public and private realms. From their women friends they get the support and information they need about how best to negotiate with the Swedish authorities, as well as with prominent people in local ethnic, social and business circles. They help each other over illnesses and with child care; they become involved in their children's activities in an often hostile world and check their husbands' tendency to take out their loss of social status in the new country on their family members.

Sustained by the mediating space of female social networks, new solidarities and complex cultural identities can emerge from struggles centred around the power of definitions.[2] Collectively experienced social injuries affect the generation of shared values in such a way that, instead of the 'personal' representing the 'political', the political (or communal) position becomes personalized. Dynamic communication linking an individual experience with the reason for an intimate social circle generates a critical awareness. Creative resistance to stigmatizing institutional labelling is articulated through their own culturally derived discourse.

When they object to their children being stripped naked to play with coloured paints (*fingerfärgslek*) in Swedish kindergartens, immigrant women are defined as 'traditional' and 'backward'. The Yugoslav women respond to this situation by ridiculing the delusive symbolism in Swedish culture which associates nudity with 'openness' and 'emancipation' while it, at the same time, relegates straightforward references to intimate parts of the human body from ordinary everyday language to the insolent vocabulary of popular slang. This leads to such absurdities (in the eyes of the Yugoslavs) as the female vagina being euphemistically referred to as *stjärt* ('undermost part of the body'). In such situations the immigrant women use the openness towards the body inherent in their own language as a weapon in their everyday communication with Sweden.[3] Internally, a sort of collective joking developed around this cultural

2. As discussed by Foucault (1980).
3. Arguing, for example, that: 'So long as you do not know that a vagina is a vagina and a behind is a behind - do not try to teach us emancipation.'

conflict; a group of Yugoslav mothers started to address each other as *piki* ('little vagina' in Serbo-Croatian). Hence, they undress reality and expose the interrelationship between power and 'truth', while simultaneously underpinning their own sense of community.

Veiled relationships between power and knowledge - in which power means and is expressed through knowledge and vice versa (cf. Foucault 1984) - are manifested in a number of different situations in communications between Yugoslav immigrants and Swedish institutions.[4] The everyday struggle for definitions creates opportunities to resist cultural subordination. Knowledge is power and power is exercised through social relationships. In the process of relating to oneself and to others knowledge is captured, bonds of community are forged and a collective immigrant ethic takes shape. Extending this argument, power may be understood as access to shared knowledge associated with the growth of new collective identities and solidarity among immigrant women (see Ålund 1991).

In that they deal with current immigrant dilemmas of discrimination and are often expressed in broader forms of solidarity transgressing narrow ethnic boundaries, emerging forms of consciousness are definitely 'modern'. At the same time they are connected with 'tradition' and a socio-cultural 'heritage' in the country of origin. This tradition cannot, however, be reduced to the bipolar couplet of 'patriarchal oppression' and progressive 'socialist values' (Morokvašić 1983). Just as there was a strong element of patriarchal oppression in 'actually existing socialism' (Schierup 1990) there has always, as Dunja Rihtman-Auguštin (1984) argues, been an element of rebellion imbedded in concealed 'female subcultures' flourishing in the interstices of the patriarchal system. In *The Structure of Traditional Thought* Rihtman-Auguštin rejects the static, unidimensional, normative approach to what is conventionally described as 'traditional society'. Instead she draws attention to the existence of a complex and dynamic duality between the prescribed norms of an ideal order and an everyday reality marked by conflicting definitions and resistance. She regards the 'structure of traditional thought' as 'a continuous dilemma... between the underestimation of women and their

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4. See the examples given by Ålund (1991).

hidden power' which might contain important future resources (Rihtman-Auguštin 1984: 188).

Among the Yugoslav immigrant women of today experiences of solidarity, cooperation and rebellion against oppression seem to have their historical roots in female practices in spheres such as the household, the fields, handicrafts, or trading (ibid.). Embedded in the values and types of social relations found in the rural societies most of them emigrated from, informal subcultures have developed and been transformed into networks of immigrant women trying to cope with new dilemmas and conflicts. It could be argued that being rooted in a distinct and resistant female subculture in one sense makes these women socially and culturally better equipped to cope with the crises of morality and identity emerging from the decline of the family and of local social networks in modern Scandinavian society (Ålund 1991).

Rihtman-Auguštin's discussion about cooperation in rural Yugoslavia and the importance of female subculture fits in well with the global approach of Linda Nicholson's (1979) *Gender and History*. Nicholson argues that women's participation in exchange transactions, informal women's communities, and kin networks have always been important public activities which have united individual household units into larger social units. ' Many women in different cultures travel widely in their effort to find wage employment or to trade' (ibid.: 79) and they develop contacts and networks with other women and between different households. Nicholson claims that 'ignored facts' (ibid.: 205), such as cultural experiences from 'non-Western countries and family forms', retroactively forced them to adopt the Western concept of history, which became 'the norm to which others have been taught to aspire' (ibid.: 208). This type of emerging criticism focuses on totalizing tendencies in contemporary feminist research. As Nicholson puts it, tendencies not only to take Western norms and forms of the separation between private and public as 'given by nature', but also as 'superior'.

The living room and beyond: the potential of the private sphere

Immigrant women are normally regarded as being at a cultural disadvantage. As Rita Liljeström (1979a: 12) explains: 'In

Sweden, women from the Mediterranean countries learn how oppressed they are, how steeped in unacceptable traditions'. Liljeström also points out how immigrant women are 'lumped together' and declared backward. The anonymity of their lived experiences, ambivalences and arguments, forges a generalized conception of 'immigrant women' and blocks any compre-hending recognition of distinct historical experiences as a complex interplay between culture, race, class and gender in contemporary immigrant Sweden.

Pre-migratory forms of livelihood, household and family structure and gender divisions of labour influence variations in the formation of social relationships between women and men. As I point out in an earlier work (Ålund 1984), there is a risk of specific historical experiences and forms of cultural expression being glossed over by stereotypical understandings of 'the immigrant family' in Sweden. In Schierup and Ålund (1987) we show how concrete historical experience acts to differentiate the development of the social and gender relationships that shape a wide range of gender conflicts among Yugoslav migrants. In a comparative study of two groups of Yugoslav immigrants in Scandinavia we observed contrasting tendencies towards 'patriarchalization' among certain groups and 'equalization' of gender relations among others. Thus, despite a general tendency towards the subordination of women gender relations vary historically and in different cultures (cf. Rosaldo and Lamphere 1974). This is because they are socially deter-mined and, as such, influenced by changes in social conditions, among which migration provides illuminating examples (Ålund 1978).

Generally speaking, before emigration the Yugoslav husband usually bore the main responsibility for supporting his family (Ålund 1978 and 1991). The woman's unpaid household labour, or any income from farm work or employment, was usually regarded as supplementary or auxiliary to her husband's income. Traditionally, prescribed norms for the social and cultural subordination of women persist despite the existence of complex conflicts with the realities of a daily life in which a new ideology of equal status between men and women is emerging. The formal norm collides with the informal reality of actual life (cf. Rihtman-Auguštin 1984) in ways that continually reflect new antagonisms and socio-economic conditions.

Everyday life evolves as a series of conflicts and compromises, in which old and emerging ideologies exist alongside one another: the former in symbolic shapes, the latter as expressing an implicit reality. The meeting point between the prescribed and the actual articulates a range of variations in opportunities and constraints expressed through the differentiation of gender relationships.

In Sweden, in most Yugoslav immigrant families, the husband and wife both work outside the home. Despite continuing gender-based wage differences, the move to a new country has clearly created a shift in male-female relationships, which are now rooted in new working and living experiences. Though differences remain they are now more likely to enjoy equal status as family breadwinners and, in their shared inferior status as immigrants, to find one another more approachable (cf. Carby 1982). This is also related to shifts in the participation of men and women in public life: the household sphere and the public sphere are moving closer together. Men and women are exhibiting a growing tendency to join forces in undertaking cooperative ventures both inside and outside the household. This is linked to a weakening of the immigrant man's traditionally strong role and social standing in the public sphere. Instead of being a farmer, worker, or official, he has now become an immigrant, 'wog' and second-class citizen. Immigrant men are more likely than women both to be subjected to racist harassment and to have lost their social position. The men still frequent cafes and immigrant associations more often than the women. But immigrant associations (to date the main arenas for immigrant public life) are peripheral institutions in relation to the larger society. In comparison with Yugoslavia, the public social sphere of immigrant men is both smaller and more marginalized (Ålund 1985).

At the same time women have gained new opportunities. Not only has their employment made them (potentially) financially independent, but their traditional role as a unifying link in the private sphere has become more important, extending beyond their own circles and networks. They now both gather their family and relatives around them and build important new networks of social relationships in their neighbourhoods. And, with rising collective insecurity in the face of hostile social currents and a shared socio-cultural vulnerability, women

centred networks have grown increasingly important in the immigrant neighbourhoods of Stockholm's suburbs (Ålund 1991).

Mediated through such networks women have an important integrating role in the family and in local clusters in which solidarity is expressed through kinship, friendship and the neighbourhood. While the public sphere has shrunk the importance of the home as a gathering place has increased. The social function of the living room has grown into a new form of public life in which women are more in control. The living room has become a meeting place within and among different households, a place where old and new ways of life are brought together, where ties of family and kinship are mixed with friendship, camaraderie and business partnerships. Women's and men's worlds move closer to each other in time and space, but also in social terms. The living room becomes a shared social space, a planning and negotiating platform from which children's futures are discussed, business deals made and a new cultural awareness and critical consciousness developed.

This type of 'culture of daily life' (Dahlström 1985) has thus become an important laboratory for the creation of personal and socio-cultural identity, community and informal local public space (Ålund 1991; Schierup and Ålund 1987). To find their political voice, however, women have socially to go beyond the living room.

But this takes them down a difficult road on which they have to encounter the marginalizing character of Swedish mainstream public and political life (see Chapter 6). Immigrant associations at least offer a mediating link or network of pressure groups through which to relate to wider public and political spheres. Though the immigrant association offers a wider social environment than living-room public life, the social space it offers women is narrow and (through its organizational structure, leadership system and practical division of labour) regulated in a manner that tends to reproduce gender hierarchies. Women continue to provide domestic back-up services. The ranking of traditionally prescribed and separated worlds of men and women tends to be formalized in the hierarchy of the association's different sections. Those organized by women, such as handiwork and children's activities, usually occupy a marginal place in comparison with the prestigious male do-

minated sports sections which swallow up most of the somewhat meagre annual budgets. Boards of directors are still heavily dominated by men. The meeting ground for men and women in the associations tends to be confined to the social space of the folklore sections and to occasional celebrations.

I am not arguing that immigrant women should leave the associations. I merely want to point out that the current dominant order of formally organized social life includes sexist trends. Immigrant associations are showing signs of (re)patriarchalizing gender relations in formally organized public life. Thus the solution does not lie in a one-way ticket to public organizational life. We should keep away from explanations anchored in the obscure ethnocentric assumptions of traditional/modern, private/public dichotomies. We should be critical of unilinear conceptions of 'integration' conceived of as socializing members of 'backward' cultures into a higher, more 'civilized' order of gender and public life. Rather than confirming conventional traditional/modern dichotomies, patriarchal relations in immigrant associations seem fairly closely to parallel gender relations in modern Swedish associations and folk-movements in general.

The problem of problem ideologies

Scandinavia contains a wide range of immigrant policy ideologies and objectives (Schierup 1989), but of these Sweden's are the most formal and the most multicultural. Ideas about integrating immigrants are still hazy and a certain amount of confusion exists between the egalitarian multicultural visions of official immigrant policy and the actual practices which act to adapt immigrants to the dominant majority culture's system of norms. As we mention earlier, immigrants develop a range of socio-cultural strategies in the course of the interplay between their historical and contemporary experiences. Despite a variety of strategies developing among ethnic-minority groups, the lived experiences of the majority of non-Nordic immigrants in Sweden are characterized by subordination to dominant cultural standards and to a segregating ethnic division of labour. In a discussion about cultural conflict, Rita Liljeström

(1979: 47-53) draws attention to the hegemony of Western culture (ibid. 53):

> Today an extensive communications network disseminates Western market culture. In the debate on the problems of developing countries [from which most immigrants come], it is implicit that 'modernization' is synonymous with 'Westernization'. Immigrants face a conflict: on the one hand to defend their ethnic identity, and on the other hand to 'earn their qualifications' in school and in the labour market in accordance with the collective patterns of interpretation that signify 'modernizing themselves' in order to gain access to the expansive Scandinavian market culture.

Thus, by virtue of its dominance, this collective culture or model life-style shapes the norm, while 'that which is different becomes deformed and threatening' (ibid.: 47). In this way, the 'cultural backwardness' of immigrants can come to be perceived of as a menace from inferior cultures that should be changed and adapted to the norms of the modern world. Immigrant women are adversely compared with Swedish women, who serve as a model and as the norm. Immigrant families are adversely compared with Swedish families and problems usually described in terms of social conflicts are conceived of as cultural conflicts. The ideological construction of deviance is thus regarded as a cultural rationalization of social tensions regulated and controlled through definitions of normality, i.e. problematizing different, culturally-backward immigrant women and their families as in conflict with the stipulated normality.

The question of racism

These types of themes are not unique to Sweden. They are also significant in the international feminist debate. There are, however, still important obscurities surrounding the issue of racism in discussions of ethnocentricity and cultural dominance. 'We need a more robust politics of solidarity than most of us have embraced. White feminists must actively struggle to eliminate structural racism from which we benefit,' writes Sandra Harding (1986: 196). Referring to the situation in the United States, she notes that 'black women are beginning to be encouraged to speak about their own lives, but only white women about "women's" lives' (ibid.: 178). This type of vi-

carious representation may act as a totalizing reason, leading to simplifications and ideological distortions in the understanding of history and to a reduction in the factual complexity of contemporary social antagonisms. Gloria Hull et al. (1982) express a succinct programmatic critique in the title of their book, *All the Women are White, All the Men are Black, but Some of Us are Brave*. We find a similar point in Helma Lutz's (1986) discussion of the representation of Turkish immigrant women in West Germany. She argues that the 'problemization' of immigrant culture filters into the ideological systems of social movements in Western Europe which are conventionally regarded as 'alternative' or 'progressive', in this case especially the new feminist movements of the 'majority'. The 'new feminism' tends uncritically to apply the traditional 'modernization' paradigm of Western perceptions of the Third World - an essentially ethnocentric and neocolonialist ideology - to its theoretical understanding of, and practical relations with, its immigrant sisters in Europe. In Holland the Dutch-Surinamese anthropologist, Philomena Essed (1982), likewise brings out the association between imperialism, racism and mainstream feminist values. Following this line of thought it could be argued that ethnocentric feminist approaches to black and immigrant women reflect the European colonialist heritage and become part of the legitimatization of a contemporary global order in which the 'immigrant problem' or the 'Third World in Europe' (Blaschke and Greussing 1980) is becoming an increasingly important aspect.

In Britain, too, white feminism has come under criticism. Ethnocentricity implies a lack of attention to immigrant women's own historical experiences, to the diversity of women's experiences in the complex contingency of race, ethnicity and class and to a failure to recognize that power relations between black and white women are historically structured in patterns of racial dominance. These criticisms are forcefully articulated in Hazel Carby's 'White Women, Listen' (1982), which triggered a debate among black feminists in which the priority of gender over race came to be challenged and a common political interest among black men and women was claimed. In other words, racism became the central issue. If black and white women are to breach the gaps of this dispute, Carby (ibid.: 232) writes, 'instead of taking black women as the

object of their research' white feminist researchers should set out 'to uncover the gender-specific mechanisms of racism amongst white women'.

In a reply to black women's criticisms, Michèle Barrett and Mary McIntosh (1985) argue that white women should learn from their own ideas and their critique of men and society when they find themselves in the uncomfortable situation of being on the 'other side', exposed to political criticism by black women. Black women argue, they write, that white women have reproduced rather than challenged dominant racist ideologies by maintaining stereotypes of blacks and making invisible their social reality and their voices - the other truth that has evolved from black women's own historical experience in the shadow of racism (ibid.: 24). This critique, as Barrett and McIntosh see it, must be viewed in the light of the fact that, historically, white femininity has been constructed ideologically as a symbolic antithesis to black sexuality and black femininity through negative and offensive stereotypes and myths pitting 'European' and 'civilized' against 'non-European' and 'non-civilized' (ibid.: 40).

This much publicized white self-criticism, however, was viewed with scepticism. Caroline Ramazanoglu (1986: 83), for example, characterized it as a merely academic and defensive apology, a 'deep disappointment', for this 'reasoned self-criticism could come to no more than a vehicle for defensive arguments pitched at a level of academic debate which is so far removed from the daily reality of racism, and which can be intimidating in its impact'.

Totalizing theories, dichotomizing categories, divided sisterhood

Though it is necessary to acknowledge black women's good reasons for emphasizing the importance of 'the daily reality of racism', I still believe we should recognize that academic arguments are not by definition irrelevant for daily struggles. Barrett and McIntosh's argument can alternatively be understood as actually pointing towards dimensions in feminist theory of crucial relevance for the construction of a broader and more realistic anti-racist feminism. Their critique of ethnocentricity, however, goes beyond this issue and can even be seen as representing a broader critique of Western feminist

political language, indicating a general need to debate totalizing paradigms and simple binary polarizations (cf. Harding 1986; Nicholson 1986; Elshtain 1986).

Each time 'other truths', other cultures, other forms of identity (connected with class, nation, family, race, time and place) are made invisible, mutilated, concealed or neglected, the potential for change is reduced and the preconditions for a political struggle for an alternative order are simultaneously eliminated (see also Karlsson 1989). When ethnocentric preassumptions become obstacles to a subtle understanding of a complex reality, 'the other truths' are veiled - not only for immigrant women - but for women in general. Hence, 'these other truths' are still a challenge to feminist theory.

Defining the issue as heterogeneous in no sense diminishes its seriousness (Nicholson 1986: 206). Jean Bethke Elshtain (1986) argues that the feminist world-view operates with a series of opposites, which tend to be formulated too simplistically. Accordingly, the conclusions it reaches are established in too universal a manner. Nature is posed against culture, female against male, oppression and powerlessness against the oppressors and the powerful. Culture is identified through its 'sex-gender system'. All such known systems have been male-dominated. They have dictated social roles, purposes and norms, limited as well as punished and debased women, encouraged, rewarded and valued men. In a universally conceived series of premises we encounter a set of premises that together form a simple model of oppression. This intellectual exercise, Karlsson (1989) comments in a reappraisal of Elshtain's writings, runs the risk of becoming a vicious circle: instead of helping to transform the prevailing conditions, it contributes to adaptation. Women are not a uniform political category. They are characterized by many different aspects of their identity and their existence is thus also characterized by particular interests, experiences and loyalties. Conjuring up an image of universal oppression and victimization between men and women and between white and black (rather than emphasizing opportunities) has had and still has devastating consequences. The victim also becomes a victim by virtue of his or her self-image, just as a slave was a slave under his or her more or less internalized image of how the world is and must be. This type of critique

contributes to the development of a more sensitive approach to feminist issues.

One essential task would be a continued and more subtle discussion of the ideological couplet 'civilized' contra 'primitive' which might be a precondition for the transgression of crucial ethnocentric limitations. The point is that in what is often conceived of as the immigrants' 'cultural conflict' with a higher developed civilization, there is a real conflict, but one that embodies a critique of civilization (Ålund 1991). Unfortunately, however, the ground does not yet seem to have been sufficiently cleared for a constructive dialogue (Spivak 1987: 42). Women who put the association between imperialism, racism and feminism on the agenda risk becoming 'actually marginalized and stigmatized within the mainstream of feminism' (ibid.). Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, an American woman with ethnic roots in India, goes on to argue that, in relation to social conditions and urban institutions, feminism resembles the cultural struggle for individualism in the upwardly mobile 19th century European bourgeoisie (ibid.: 29).

The separation of private and public has played an important role in structuring gender in the modern West, while the specific meaning of this separation has been continuously in flux (Nicholson 1986: 206). The permanent location of female oppression in the private sphere is problematic given the evidence of historical change and of complex interrelationships between public and private (ibid.). But, the significant extent to which 'modern feminism speaks for those attempting to become public beings' (ibid.: 204-5) can still be working for an apparent tendency in feminist analyses to lose sight of the historical context necessary to 'make clear which women under what circumstance'. This may act to perpetuate an ignorance of the heterogeneousness of the problem of gender, to ignore class, race and sheer changes in history as variables in the analysis - which have led to 'certain false generalizations' (ibid.).

Hence, the private is not automatically 'oppressive' and is surely no more 'separate' from creative political potential than the formal public space, which seems to have no automatic association with freedom. The problem that still persists is an ethnocentric interpretation of history in which culturally specific definitions of femininity conceal a disciplining social order

and sustain the power inherent in a complex interplay of race, class, age and gender. It paves the way for the ideological construction of problematic 'problem definitions'. The conception of 'earlier' (i.e. 'primitive') as inferior, the labelling and categorizing of immigrant culture, family and life forms implies the production of an ideology that suppresses immigrant women and invalidates 'politics of solidarity' (Harding 1986: 196).

In feminist theory totalizing tendencies are still strong and still act within conceptual schemes rooted in predominantly white middle class intellectual feminism. The switch still has to be made from a unidimensional focus on women, in which the vast differences between women's historical and present experiences are obscured, to a focus on complex realities and heterogeneity. The dichotomization of the world into Eurocentric categories of 'traditional' and 'modern' suggests there is a need to dispute the power of normality definitions not only in feminist theory and research but in society at large.

4

Immigrant culture as an obstacle to 'partnership'

ALEKSANDRA ÅLUND

Culture as problem and solution

A report on a youth project carried out by the Swedish National Board of Immigration (Kärnekull 1984: 26) describes the development of preventive measures for dealing with immigrant youth. The purpose of the project was to prevent problems arising among young immigrants by strengthening their own cultural identity. The report looks at young immigrants and tries to correlate their various problems with their particular group's status in Swedish society (ibid.: 28). Yet, the problem is 'culturalized' and discussed in a subjective way. The groups most in need of support are said to be the Turks and Finns, for both 'contain young people who are "ashamed" of their culture' (ibid.). The stigma associated with certain cultural traits is said to create numerous problems among young people and specific measures are being implemented to make them proud rather than ashamed of their culture. The youths are purported to have been 'suspended... too much between... cultures' (ibid.: 27), which makes culture both the problem and the means to its solution. The solutions suggested, however, are divorced from social power and status hierarchies;

they are merely aimed at strengthening the ethnic conscious-
ness of the youths and, through this, affecting their identity.

This is but one among many examples in Swedish institu-
tional ideology and practice of the focus being predominantly
on cultural differences. Problems to do with social tensions are
habitually presented in ethnic or cultural terms, i.e.
'culturalized'. In a similar vein, Gilroy (1987: 66ff.) asserts that,
among both white and black social workers in Britain, there
can be found an ideology and affiliated practice that expresses
a kind of 'ethnic absolutism'. He goes on to argue how
'emphasizing ethnic specificity has become an important means
to rationalize the practice of these departments. It organizes
their clients into discrete groups with separate needs and
problems which have been identified as expressive of the
various cultures they inhabit.' Culturalism is incorporated into
the occupational ideology and the professional practice, contri-
buting toward the creation and reproduction of ethnic boun-
daries. By delimiting and defending specific occupational
niches through which the profession assures its position in the
bureaucratic system, ethnic separateness can become a goal in
itself. (See Fred's 1983 analysis of how occupational niches are
established among Swedish family practitioners.) From a wider
perspective, the fact that cultural distinctions are emphasized
and institutionalized can contribute toward creating or recre-
ating social hierarchies and separate status groups. Canonized
cultural distinctions easily conceal real social problems and
contradictions.

The culturalization of social relations and problems is one
side of the Janus-face of the cultural-political ideology. Moni-
toring and control is the other. 'Foreign cultures' are, despite
conciliatory declarations, a permanent source of 'problems'. As
'different', the immigrant is thought to be suspect from the
beginning. In an investigation of youth and club activities,
Dahlgren and Dahlgren (1989: 102) write: 'As concerns immi-
grant youth, one is prepared for cultural differences. Therefore,
one proceeds cautiously from the very beginning.'

From a content analysis of some reports on so-called
'partnership activities' between immigrants and Swedish youth
associations, in the following pages we discuss the tight integra-
tion of science with institutional practice in the processes of
culturalization of the immigrant presence in Sweden. In club

activities it appears that in practice there occurs an impercep-
tible movement from statements of 'tolerance' to demands for
'adaptation'. In a project to advance 'mutual cultural aware-
ness' one can identify this movement toward what Duffield
(1984), remarking on the British situation, refers to as a 'new
realism' in the representation and administration of immigrant
matters, i.e. a marked retreat from 'the right to one's own
culture' to a focus on 'integration problems' phrased in terms
of cultural differences. The spontaneous and natural 'foreign'
cultures are corrected, organized and standardized via a kind of
'civilizing' educational process. An ethnocentric idea of the
majority culture's superiority easily helps create a path toward
the exclusion of the 'maladaptive'. Between the 'new realism'
and what is here called 'the new racism' exists a complex
interaction. Immigrants as a 'problem' and the culturalization
of this problem can lead to new forms of racism legitimated in
cultural terms.

A planned diversity

State administrative measures often function to integrate the
theoretical practice of research with institutional ideologies
and practice. This is especially true of Swedish society, which is
strongly characterized by scientific rationality (Fred 1983;
Hirdman 1989) and administrative 'programming' (cf. Touraine
1969). Research is, as a rule, bound tightly with institutional
praxis and pragmatic ideologies. Scientific notions are trans-
posed into commonsense knowledge through which one can
'decode/interpret the world' to reach an organized under-
standing of and an organized relationship to reality (Grillo
1985). Research does not just constitute an integrated part of
institutional practices. Through the agency of a large number
of 'experts on immigrants' it even produces the meaning of
immigrants' 'presence' in wider public and political fields as an
ethnocentric and problem-related indirect representation
(ibid.: 299).

Most Swedish immigrant research has been of an applied
nature, with close connections with state 'programmes of
action'. The authorities' have become increasingly interested in
'applied research, social technology which seeks to regulate

and control immigrant and immigrants' conditions' (Peura 1983: 7). The production of knowledge has thus been closely bound up with the ideological and practical administration of society's 'immigrant problem'. The dominating research has both 'discovered' and 'organized' reality (cf. Essed 1987, 1988, discussing the Netherlands).

A growing overlap between the 'vocabularies' of the general public and of the research community shows how effective scientific ideas can contribute to general discourses and everyday practice. In his study of the 'immigrant image' in the ideological frame of reference of French society and institutions', Grillo (1985) asserts that the way in which administrative and political institutions represent immigrants as a 'problem' in a research context engenders a larger 'collective consumption' of ethnocentrically-oriented images. This collective consumption is based on and supports an ethnocentric and hierarchical 'traditional/modern' dichotomy in the commonsense understanding of immigrants' culture (ibid.: 161). The concept of 'integration' is associated with 'evolution' and integration involves 'the production of Frenchness' (ibid.: 211).

A similar problem has been raised in relation to the 'production of Swedishness'. In a discussion of bureaucratic institutions and of institutional ideologies and practices in Swedish welfare society, Fred (1983: 64) echoes Grillo in viewing the concept of 'culture' as modelled 'into concrete forms acceptable for Swedish consumption'. Here, too, the 'immigrant as a problem' is the central category of understanding. In a further perspective this expresses a conflict built into the pseudo-pluralist immigrant policy. Democratic political goals accentuate 'culture' as a diversity that is desired. But the actual social and cultural diversity within the framework of the institutional practice of integration is defined as deviant and, in its extreme, as a threat to the established order.

Having rejected the concept of 'adjustment', which is associated with an earlier manifest assimilationist policy implying a manipulative relation between the individual's adaptation to society and 'Swedishness', current policy is articulated in terms of 'integration of immigrants into a pluralist society' (Fred 1983: 37). Yet behind this rhetoric of 'equality, freedom of choice and partnership' lies a complex and contradictory immigrant policy which, simply stated, continually 'adapts' to planned

pluralism, i.e. to technocratic, efficient, rational and scientifically controlled forms of integration. Integration as controlled incorporation of immigrants into the welfare state's system is based on a general and fundamental idea of a 'a life of reason' in Sweden. This faith involves bureaucratic institutions, their practice and their definitions of 'problems'.

Fred asserts that Swedish pluralism is organized via a polarization of two basic types of contrasting 'ethnicities'. The Swedish institutional (administrative/organizational) 'ethnicity' confronts and homogenizes the immigrants' ethnic diversity with a system of regulations and rules which must be learned by participants in an ordered society (ibid.: 64). But in the mutual ordering the scope for diversity and 'the own culture' will become minimal and problematic. The double message and contradictions divide and standardize at one and the same time.

'Fiery spirits': challenge or threat?

According to Dahlgren and Dahlgren (1989: 100), immigrant youth are unwelcome in sports clubs and serious attempts to attract them into this type of association are rare. Swedish sports-club leaders regard immigrants as unruly or rabble-rousers who do not fit culturally into the Swedish model of associations. The cultural differences are exemplified by saying that immigrant boys are 'more individualistic competition oriented' than is thought suitable and that they deviate from 'the informal system of sports rules'. The view of immigrant boys as culturally 'maladaptive' and unruly has resulted in some sports clubs refusing to play against immigrant teams. They have also appealed to the Immigration Minister to have separate leagues (ibid.: 102). Dahlgren and Dahlgren imply that the explanation lies in a 'cultural conflict'. The offending individualism among young immigrant males is used to explain aggression and fights during football matches. The problem here is that one does not also see these young men, these 'black heads' (or in Swedish, *svartsskallar*), within the wider context of power, violation, discrimination and social barriers.

Sports clubs have supported the idea of teaching young immigrant men Swedish norms through sport. The category of

'immigrant' contains both those who have adapted themselves to the Swedish model of formal associations and those who have not; this division has resulted in the more 'Swedishized' group no longer seeing any reason to remain in separate clubs, as has occurred with the Finns and Italians (ibid.: 103) The 'non-Swedishized' groups, however, risk being segregated into separate leagues. At the same time they constitute a challenge. Dahlgren and Dahlgren are puzzled by the 'non-adapted' sports leaders, called 'fiery souls', who are often thought of as individualists who have difficulty subordinating themselves to the formal rules of play in normal associational activity. Their initiative is, in principle, desirable and justifies nonconformist attitudes, for 'too rigid forms can kill the enthusiasm' (ibid.: 75). One 'fiery soul' among the immigrant sports leaders succeeded in recruiting Muslim girls to a sports club, which was a remarkable feat (ibid.: 75). But the local municipality felt uneasy because 'there was something un-Swedish about his methods of work'; the 'bureaucratic stability was missing' (ibid.: 75). Dahlgren and Dahlgren seem to share this kind of scepticism and note that the enthusiastic activity of 'the fiery spirits' is viewed almost as a threat by the commune's other sports clubs. No one can dispute the youth's athletic record (ibid.: 103), but it seems upsetting that 'they make out on such meagre resources compared with what other clubs believe they need'. It is also seen as a problem that individualists tend to regard themselves as irreplaceable, for a lack of interest in structure and continuity is an unspoken threat against the Swedish.

'Spontaneity' as a theme is associated not only with young individual sports-oriented immigrants but also with immigrant associations. The authors point out that there are similarities between the activities of immigrant clubs and conditions during the early years of Swedish associational culture. The way in which immigrant associations work 'reminds us of how our own popular movements used to function in the past, before they became institutionalized and bureaucratized' (ibid.: 103). This finding is considered both inspiring and challenging, but, as with the 'fiery souls', it creates uncertainty and insecurity - cultural, political and administrative.

Subordination to 'the normal order'

Another report (Bjürström 1988: 7) describes and evaluates a pilot project designed to improve cooperation between Swedish and immigrant youth clubs. The project was motivated by a wish to overcome the difficulties in reaching out and involving immigrant youth in club activities. According to the report, these difficulties were presumed to be associated with 'differences in intentions and life-styles linked to cultural and religious cleavages', with the result 'that the groups had difficulty communicating with one another' (ibid.: 8). With a view to increasing cooperation the pilot project called on the community to mobilize against 'intolerance' among people. Inasmuch as the 'folk movements' played a 'large part in helping to prevent social and societal problems', it was seen as essential 'that children and youths with different backgrounds and nationalities meet and work together under equal conditions'. This could contribute to 'creating tolerance and respect for other people' and in this way would 'build walls against racial hatred and discrimination' (ibid.: 9).

'Partnership' may, however, operate so as to slip over into onesidedly 'monotoring' immigrant youths. It is said that they need to 'become acquainted with Swedish norms and values and Swedish cultural life in a positive way' (ibid.), while they also need to be proud of their own origins, language and cultural legacy. The 'old' culture must be able to survive and develop and find new forms in the 'new' environment. But, in reality, immigrant youths found it difficult to maintain a pride in their own culture and regarded 'partnership' as a demand for adaptation. The desired intercultural communication was subordinated into a reality of pseudo-pluralism. 'Foreign cultures' appear as problems. The representatives of Swedish associations seem to lack any understanding of what really goes on in immigrant associations. Spontaneity is pitched against knowledge of the association (*föreningskunskap*) and adaptation and subordination are deemed necessary to achieve rational organization. The following remarks by a representative of a Swedish association (quoted in Bjürström 1988: 90) capture something of the perceived barriers to cooperation. 'Their leaders and ours worked in entirely different ways at the camp.

Our leaders made sure that everything functioned, while they just had fun with the kids. We functioned as "mothers", whereas they were "pals" for them or sometimes it seemed as if we took care of the practical things, while they indulged in their spontaneity, or whatever you want to call it.'

The encounter is of an asymmetrical character, between what one might call 'Culture' and different 'cultures', or between Culture and Nature. A Swedish club leader reiterates this distinction more clearly: 'They have a natural contact which we do not have...', yet 'certain things do not work among them. They need better education. A bit more association knowledge' (ibid.: 88). The 'natural contact' implies a 'nature' which must be tamed and organized. It is said that they do not have anything going on, no activities, 'just talking and playing cards in the clubhouse.... We sat and talked with them, but didn't learn much about how their club operated' (ibid.: 87). Immigrants, by contrast, see the Swedish model of associational activity as a threat to their natural community. 'Most of the project is formalized, as it is in Swedish associations. Protocols must be kept, everything must be planned in writing, and meetings should take place as planned.... It becomes more effective, but that is not all. It becomes difficult to maintain a natural community. Everything follows the clock.... Things don't function that way with us' (ibid.: 91).

Immigrants frequently comment on how Swedish clubs only meet for a special occasion, on how everything is prepared, organized and planned (ibid.: 85). Immigrants, by contrast, meet daily, with their entire families, and spontaneously. The clubhouse is a general meeting place which keeps people together, whereas the more specialized Swedish associations are fragmentary (ibid.: 84-5). One immigrant expressed this fragmentation as an immaturity on the part of the Swedes in relation to the wholeness and complexity of life. 'The authorities and others are not mature enough for the range we have in the club. We occupy ourselves with all kinds of things: culture, theatre, music, sports, cafe activity, and what is that? An activity? It is something that does not fit in. We adapt ourselves to the rules which are found in Sweden. We have to and we must learn. But it does not mean that we eliminate our culture, that we level ourselves out. We must hold onto it, emphasize it.

Therefore, our associations must conduct themselves in another way' (ibid.: 91).

The immigrants' critique of actual 'partnership' in the project reveals a lack of dialogue and exchange. One 'feels that one's authority is taken away' (ibid.: 67). Cooperation is viewed as forced organization, as 'following their model'. Immigrants normally characterize the Swedish association models as planned, well organized, specialized, rational and formal and it is precisely these characteristics that the Swedish representatives tend to search for in the immigrant associations (ibid.: 98). The immigrants' own descriptions of their own ways, with labels like wholeness and spontaneity, articulate in relation to formal Swedish ways, a reflective, argumentative, active and critical attitude towards cultural encounters, which has a more profound meaning.

Bjürström seems to be aware of this cultural conflict (with its critical edge) being played out in the pilot project, for he cites a number of quotations in the report which draw the reader's attention to it. He reports scrupulously, as do Dahlgren and Dahlgren (1989), about the limitations of the immigrants' cultural behaviour. At the same time, however, there is a hint of self criticism in relation to the Swedes - their lack of spontaneity, the way in which they divide their lives into distinct life spheres such as work and leisure, the isolation of different generations, the individualization and formalization of everyday life. Yet his discussion is somewhat hackneyed and to a certain degree ethnocentric. The immigrants' descriptions of Sweden are viewed solely as an expression of the differences between their own and the Swedish model (ibid.: 84). A neutral pluralism of opinion does not really articulate the problematic.

In commenting on the above-mentioned report, Hollander (1988) argues that Bjürström tones down the cultural distinctions between the associations and gives the impression that most of the problems encountered were of a general character and would have arisen even had they concerned purely Swedish clubs (ibid.: 50). But even Hollander's position is too abrupt. Neither he nor Bjürström discuss how the immigrants' inferiority or subordination in the 'partnership project' affected the way in which they articulated their own alternatives. As a representative of an immigrant association put it, 'We have got along well and worked well together, but that is what we have

done: worked together. For the Swedes it is natural, but not for us. It is something in their culture, but not in ours. Therefore one party must adapt itself - we or they. And when one cooperates as in this project, it is us: they can do this kind of thing better than we can' (ibid.: 45).

In short, the Swedes are simply better at it, i.e. they are better at seeing culture as work. Knowledge of the association is part of an institutional socialization process of subordination to the given order of things. Those who are different have to give in. The original objective, to learn the Swedish way while protecting their own culture, ends up as a sort of state examination in Swedishness. At the same time, the immigrants acted as if they had understood the formal rules of the examination and, so to speak, functionally adjusted themselves to them. Their own cultural language continues to be used and to develop in their everyday and associational lives.

> When one cooperates in this way, it becomes much like the Swedish clubs. In the project group we have worked 'Swedish', we could say. But we are used to this. When we speak with the authorities or with other associations, we speak a language which is adapted to them. This is the way it has been in the project, too. Therefore it is not exactly the way we conceived it, if I should be honest about it. We also wanted to build up a natural cooperation between clubs. A partnership which was not just limited to organizational life. (ibid.: 94)

Perhaps this is the concrete constructive and actual content of 'partnership'.

System and 'ratio'

Implicit in the report is the need for discipline. Immigrants' associational lives deviate from the norm. They are spontaneous (i.e. unbureaucratic) and need to learn 'association knowledge'. Their 'natural' forms of togetherness call the given order into question. The discussion of barriers to partnership points to contradictions linked to the underlying power relations in the cultural interaction. The expressed goal of freedom of choice has nothing to do with everyday realities. These in fact reflect authoritarian and culturalizing practices and it is these that establish the real framework for partnership.

Swedish cultural pluralism is burdened with contradictory messages. Variations tend to be integrated into a uniform diversity. Research and analysis legitimate institutional ideologies and practices.

Fred's (1983) analysis of Sweden's organized preparation for planned cultural contact makes a similar point. A flourishing business in continuing education and retraining, and numerous conferences on cultural pluralism and ethnicity for public-sector servants have provided him with a challenging field of study. Fred asserts that the participants' interventions at these meetings revealed the existence of an underlying hidden agenda, a guiding plan, a 'heuristic device', for approaching foreign cultures. Immigrants basically present a normative challenge to Swedish society, with its impressive institutional mobilization for the production of consensus: an inveterate seed for the spread of the uncontrollable. Ethnicity is introduced as a dimension of social interaction and this helps mediate 'face-to-face confrontation' (ibid.: 63). If, however, the Swede participates actively in this type of communication and exchange - in which unknown, private and public spontaneity threaten regulated behaviour - then the basic behavioural norms of Swedish culture are called into question. In practice, therefore, 'culture contact' obtains another kind of content. If immigrants, as articulated in Swedish immigration policy, are permitted to play their role, then 'the related norms and articulated identity must be made explicit and predictable' (ibid.: 64). In other words, there is a need for 'association knowledge', calendars that regulate meetings and times, detailed activity reports, and the like. Or, in Fred's (ibid.: 64) words: 'The process of immigrant policy implementation may then be viewed as one in which Swedes are learning to be ethnics on their own cultural terms with the bureaucracy's leading role derived from its combined capacity to represent and protect public norms and values (thus keeping the socio-cultural ordering system intact).'

Fred views the particularity of 'that which is foreign' as a potential threat to the Swedish social order. But one ought to add that it is not just the maintenance of the Swedish order we are talking about. The organized subordination also operates to protect immigrants from the disorderliness of their own cultures. The planned society 'directs life' for both the immi-

grant and the Swede. With the metaphor 'to put life in order', Yvonne Hirdman (1989) examines superstitions associated with regulation, planning and information. It is here one finds the Swedish welfare society's inherent *ratio*.

In her exposé of the growth of modern Swedish society, Hirdman (1989) describes an ongoing process of rationalization (cf. Habermas's understanding of the system-world's penetration into the life-world). Life is regulated by scientific reason. The requirements for the cultural content of everyday life, habits and social interaction, are converted by scientific method. Planning replaces spontaneity and improvisation. Existence is generalized and stereotyped. Hirdman finds the roots of this ideology in the original goals of social democracy, as formulated at the turn of the century. In a well-ordered society, human beings must voluntarily subordinate themselves to an upbringing based on scientific reason in order to be civilized and to become mature for freedom (ibid.: 73). 'Well ordered was the same as the planned, the planned the same as the efficient. Behind democracy as the stated, final goal, stood efficiency as the unstated, spiritually higher goal. In order for people to become efficient, upbringing was necessary' (ibid.: 212).

This view of man transforms people into children, clients or 'users' (ibid.: 17). Hirdman asserts that this transformation, which is associated with the advance of 'rational reason', has certainly provided the ideological basis for necessary social reforms, but, on the reverse side of the coin, has also carried with it a process of infringement. It is the infringement of 'the modern' on the uniqueness of the human being itself (ibid.: 234). Conversely, immigrants experience 'their lives put into order' through the technocratic, scientifically-oriented, control of integration. The controlled incorporation of immigrants into the complex system of the welfare state is artfully illustrated by an involved civil servant saying, 'our aim is to help these individuals maintain their own culture' (Fred 1983: 50). The public administration's basic role, 'to control the impact of challenges to the world view and norms on which Swedish social life is grounded' (ibid.: 62) is fundamental, but not always noticed.

Learning to be Swedish

Uncontrolled shows of spontaneity are especially threatening to a society based on organized mutual understanding and conflict avoidance. By being subjected to an obviously conflict-laden socialization process, the youth and immigrants find themselves in a similar situation.

In discussing the Swedish notion of 'order', Hans Magnus Enzenberger (1988) describes how repression effectively destroyed and subsequently institutionalized a 'social innovation'. Some clever youth had discovered an interesting technical fault in the general telephone network: several people who dialled a certain number which did not have a subscriber could speak with each other free of charge. The number spread like wildfire through Stockholm's schools and an enormous, spontaneous telephone meeting took place. A new mass medium had been born: the 'hot line'. This collective experience culminated in the summoning of a spontaneous meeting via the 'hot line'.

> On a beautiful autumn evening in September 1982 a dozen or so motley-dressed young people gathered at Fridhems Square: completely ordinary school kids, no organized MC-gangs. Neither were any of the few punks or anarchists of the city represented, apart from a few scattered individuals. Newcomers continued to arrive from the depths of the subway. Nobody knew from where they came and what intentions they had. They were simply there, standing in loosely clustered groups, talking. When the gathering had swallowed close to a thousand people it started to move without any marching orders, without paroles, without any predetermined plan, approaching the Rålambshovs park. The police were on the spot after half an hour, with more than 50 men with cars, batons and dogs. In a minute the peaceful scenario was split.... After three hours the nightly park was, as usual, still and void of people.

Hence, the peaceful, entirely non-political gathering was perceived of as a threat to public order and instantly and violently squashed. Immediately afterwards, the 'hot line' became the object of intense public debate. It was institutionalized as an integral part of the national telephone company's service to the public, charged for and its use subjected to certain rules. There was also a debate on the need to provide young people with acceptable meeting places.

'One can hardly use modern communications technology more intelligently than this', was Enzenberger's (1988: 14) comment on the 'hot line'. But, he continued, 'the young people's social fantasy, their attempt at self-organization, had to be crushed by a kind of pincer movement: on the one hand by being suppressed, on the other by being forced to succumb to state control' (ibid. 1988: 16). With a multitude of social workers, authorities and recreational experts, the youth had to be helped towards socially acceptable forms of communication. They had to be made to behave in an organized, orderly and quiet way. Writing about this kind of impersonal reason and its power, Enzenberger remarks that it expands irresistibly, controls and regulates all expression, encompassing each workshop, club and farmstead, moulding the meaning of the word 'society' into the equivalent of 'the organization I represent' (ibid.: 17-18). With the improvement of mankind as an objective, the Swede is organized, regulated and disciplined, supposedly voluntarily, through a service sector and system of care without parallel. It is, Enzenberger concludes, terrifying.

This type of characterization of the Swedish model is also taken up in Billy Ehn's (1985) discussion of day-care (crèche) culture. Here there is both ambiguity over ways and means of bringing up children, and a striving for order in the world of work and social relations. On the one hand, there is a lack of explicit direction in the reports, commissions, programmes and handbooks, on the other, a continuous striving for a culturally uniform pedagogy. The adults are caught between letting the children do as they please and adapting them to institutional life (ibid.: 55-6). The desired result is an orderly and refined group of children and a persistent battle is waged against uncontrolled wildness (ibid.: 56). From a multicultural perspective, peaceful mutual understanding implies that 'it is practical both to underplay the cultural confrontation and to reinforce the majority view over that of the minority by defining the strongest ideas and habits as natural' (ibid.: 57-8). This situation cultivates uniformity in what Ehn calls 'the ambiguous cultural encounter'. Deviations from the norm are met with a generalized aversion to differences between individuals (ibid.: 1985: 64). This kind of false cultural pluralism subordinates, makes more precise and restricts cultural exchange to a one-way communication from above going down, in which the

majority labels what is foreign and what has to be adapted to what. In the final analysis, it is the labeller's power that counts (Olsson 1989: 139).

Under these conditions, how can one be proud of a culture which is being degraded? One possibility is to adopt a self-aggrandizing view along the lines of 'we are not equal but better', or 'black is beautiful'. Revanchist or ethnic-reactive identity forms can be seen as expressions of actually existing cultural conflicts, as manifestations of resistance by the subordinated group. The rhetoric of cultural pluralism's encounter with reality's hierarchically ordered cultural system gives rise to contradictory socialization processes. In the dynamics of the cultural encounter it is at the intersection between possibilities and limitations, freedom and control, that the balance between open integration and assimilation is determined.

The popular and scientific debate in the 1980s about immigrants, culture clashes, or the defence of our (Swedish) culture against 'turbans' and 'wife batterers', is but an undercurrent of disciplining. In practically-oriented commissions, in the content of the media and in everyday opinion, immigrants are becoming enshrouded in an aura of 'negative fame'. Without denying that political orientations and the realities of everyday life also provide scope for emancipatory cultural attitudes, there none the less operates, as a constant of administrative practice and commonsense thought, an ideology of cultural homogeneity.

In the cross-draught of cultural pluralism

There exists an inherent paradox in the ideology of cultural pluralism. The paradox is related to the fact that pluralism is culturalized into a diversity of cultural differences and at the same time is ethnocentrically related to the majority culture's prescribed normality. It can thus be brought to bear not only on imported foreign cultures, but also on cultural deviancy at home, as illustrated by the issue of the 'hot line' meeting.

Swedish cultural pluralism thus contains a contradictory message. On the one hand, the multicultural ideology praises the coexistence of different cultures canonized by the principles of 'equality, freedom of choice and partnership'. On the other

hand, cultural differentiation is itself problematic. Those who succeed in retaining their cultural particularities in the real world, risk seeing them becoming problematic and finding themselves downgraded in status and occupational hierarchies (Dahlström 1969; Ehn 1985; Ålund 1985). Injustices and inequalities along ethnic lines are explained and rationalized in cultural terms. An ethnic group's relationship to the segmented, hierarchical, class and status aspects of society, thus becomes hidden under the mask of constructed cultural differences (Ålund 1985). In phrases such as cultural differences, clashes between cultures, or cultural distance, 'culture' becomes the general medium through which social differentiation and inequalities are understood. The social dynamic is represented as a structure of cultural fossils. Societal contradictions are stereotyped. Culturalization helps mask underlying tensions in the social construction of ethnicity and consolidates a hierarchical status system.

In the cross-draught of cultural pluralism, cultural diversity is alternately represented as a resource and a problem. Cultures interact, but they do so in a hierarchical order. Beyond cultural pluralism's utopian rhetoric one meets a uni-dimensional freedom of choice. Partnership tends toward the forced adaptation of deviants and foreigners. Equality is savagely amputated by actually existing inequalities. In its extreme form, cultural pluralism serves as an ideological frame of reference which conceals a real process of exclusion based on a dominant form of cultural absolutism (Gilroy 1987).

'The new realism': between culturalism and the new racism

Culturalism has been critically discussed in the USA, Australia and Europe. In the United States, Gorelich (1989) characterizes cultural pluralism as habitually appearing like a kind of pseudo-pluralism. The ideology of cultural pluralism has been petrified into a deterministic view of culture with a programme for cultural maintenance as a goal in itself. Social differences are conceived of primarily as cultural deviations. Yet the resolution of social problems places priority on individual measures, such as positive discrimination favouring individual

members of minority groups, instead of broad social political strategies. The liberal measures for social levelling leave the social structure untouched (ibid.). An alternative view of ethnicity should adopt as its point of departure a position that sees ethnicity as a social construct expressing tensions connected with racism, patriarchy and class conflict.

A similar critique has been presented in England, where it has been pointed out that the culturalization of social inequalities carries the risk of generating a new form of racism. The new racism is cultural and focuses on complex differences between cultures rather than on the simple biological distinctions of vulgar racism. As Gilroy (1987: 40) asserts: 'The evolution of racism from vulgar to the cultural forms described by Fanon has introduced a new variety which stresses complex differences rather than simple hierarchy.' The new racism has a flexibility which conceals its genuine content. It articulates the need for stability, the need to have a foundation and security in a climate of social anxiety and identity conflicts. It appeals to populist expressions of dissatisfaction. These appeals link foreign cultures and cultural differences to moral degradation and societal destabilization. The cultural racism fishes in muddy waters by distancing itself from primitive forms of biological racism (Duffield 1984: 29; Gilroy 1987). In sum, it is but the expression of a racism in the form of 'cultural apartheid' (Ruth 1986).

There is a similar discussion in Castles et al. (1988: 45), in which multiculturalism is characterized as an intellectual 'construction of community through a celebration and fossilization of differences, which are then subsumed into an imagined community of national cohesion.' In this 'fabrication of nationality' immigrants come to symbolize a threat against those who comprise 'us', our nation, those whom 'we' believe to be 'genuine' and 'ours'. Consequently, there is no need to depict 'us' as superior. One does not need to express dislike of, or to accuse, 'the others'. Nevertheless, the presence of others constitutes a threat to 'our' way of life (Barker 1982 in Duffield 1984: 29). Calls for the repatriation of immigrants belongs to precisely this kind of attitude (cf. Duffield 1984; Gilroy 1987).

Duffield (1984) considers the new racism dangerously close to the kind of 'realism' that interprets disparities in the educational system or labour market in primarily cultural terms. This

new realism has been extended into the sociological domain, as well as into administrative and political spheres associated with the integration problem. Duffield (ibid.: 31) relates this attitude to 'the ethos of the liberal establishment in confronting the failure of assimilation with the realities of cultural pluralism'. The ideological foundation of the new realism, like that of the new racism, is a culturalism which Duffield characterizes as 'the shared terrain which links the new realism of integration with the new racism of repatriation' (ibid.). Castles et al. (1988: 45) direct a similar critique against the social-democratic variant of the Australian policy which, 'despite its generalist policy aims... cannot manage without recourse to culturalism in the final analysis'.

A critique has also appeared in Sweden which stresses that behind the rhetoric of culturalism lies a hidden agenda for discourses on a given 'natural order' (for example, Hannerz 1983; Fred 1983). Yet the Swedish public debate tends to rationalize the disparities on the labour market and in the educational system in terms of cultural differences. Later generations of immigrant youths have, as the newly arrived refugees, 'cultural handicaps' which are used to explain their integration problems.

Institutional disciplining versus open integration

The rationalist language of the Swedish model strives towards a common basis for mutual cultural understanding. At the same time, however, the common, planned and sanctioned culture threatens to eliminate culture as a vital, creative social activity. The living culture is formalized and moulded into concrete forms ready for Swedish consumption (Fred 1983: 64). The underside of the regulated society's caring is its passivity, clientelism and marginalization. In this ordered society, segregation can obtain the upper hand and foreign immigrants can find themselves, like noisy disturbed teenagers, homeless in the closed-up city (Berman 1987), or in an order that is 'empty of people and still' (Enzenberger 1988: 15).

Immigrant cultures are depicted, planned and integrated into a corporatist system which makes them available for established structures of regulation and mutual understanding. But

the programme of integration ought not to be understood solely as an expression of conspiratorial control from above and subordination to a bureaucratic system. There are also opportunities for new learning processes which, if the rhetoric of equality, freedom of choice and partnership is taken seriously, can extend the scope of a more genuine multiculturalism. This means establishing inter-ethnic companionship, unplanned cultural encounters and spontaneity in everyday life as phenomena in 'the open society's free space' (Pettersson 1989: 178).

While Fortress Europe gets ready to impose new border controls and the ascending European Community comes up with new forms of intolerance and racism, new ways of transcending the borderlines are beginning to manifest themselves in everyday life. Along the path of societal conflicts and antagonisms new meanings and new links are being created. Creativity and mutual communication, dialogue and exchange, new ways of thinking and new life-styles are emerging and evolving into complex and dynamic patterns of integration. The youth, especially, are being moulded into new transcultural communities by the conditions and realities of contemporary society. 'Western Europe's young immigrants have established an organization to create a network across national borders,' announced the April 1990 issue of the Danish immigrant journal, *Samspil*. After all, the word *samspil* means both 'cooperation' and 'interplay'.

5

Wrestling with ghosts

Transcultural bricolage and new communities

ALEKSANDRA ÅLUND

Fragmentation of social ties, the relativism of values, and cultural insecurity seem to be an integral part of modernity. The modern world appears to be a disintegrating 'aggregation of private material and spiritual interests groups, living in windowless monads' (Berman 1983: 34). This 'windowless social darkness' is said to indicate a civilization in crisis. Social fragmentation, legitimation crises and ambiguous identities have come to be associated with reactive discontent, self-isolation, 'a process of fraternity by exclusion of "outsiders"' (Sennett 1977: 266), authoritarian populism, nationalism and racism; that is by reactive communities which have fragmentation as their underlying logic, 'as the units of people who are considered to belong become smaller and smaller' (ibid.). It is a form of fraternity which leads to fratricide (ibid.). The emergence of modernity has also, however, come to be connected with 'cultural flows in space' (Hannerz 1990: 1), with the loosening up of social and cultural boundaries, with migration, with the expansion of 'world culture', with the cultural melting pots known as 'global cities', a cultural variety, movement, transformation and coming together which have inspired visions of a future with new possibilities (cf. Berman 1983; Hannerz 1990).

New boundary-transcending cultures and life-styles are emerging in the inner cities of Britain, in Berlin's Kreuzberg neighbourhood, in Paris, as well as in Sweden's multiethnic suburbs. These areas pulsate with a completely different historical dynamic than the fragmented disorder celebrated by postmodernism (Røgild 1988: 187). These life rhythms penetrate society discreetly from below, as Stuart Hall argues. Hence, in a cultural sense, Britain (even the young white Britain) is turning 'black'. The multi-cultural Britain predicted ten years ago already exists (Hall interviewed in Røgild 1988: 183), though the significance of black society and culture (and their inspiration) have been overlooked - in Britain as well as the rest of Europe. New cultural dispositions have difficulty penetrating the power of hegemonic cultural definitions to decide what appears to be in that what is.

The 'invisibility' Hall discusses is hardly accidental. It seems to reflect a lack of societal legitimacy for an actually existing plurality. In Sweden, as Ludvig Rasmusson (1990: 6-7) puts it, 'the cultural establishment tends towards a uniformity and intolerance... which through a combination of provincialism with obsession with things American hinders those immigrants who are trying to create something new.' This problematic has institutional, ideological and social scientific dimensions. The role of research, in Sweden as well as Britain, is important in connection with this 'epistemological problem'. As an integral part of society's ideological and institutional practices, research produces labels, concepts and images of reality, through which symbolic and social hierarchies are maintained or recreated. This 'power of definition' is an essential, but not always acknowledged, aspect of the exercise of power.

Below we discuss instances of how inventive, border-transcending cultural creativity among immigrants embodies resistance to paralysing and segregating definitions. Transethnic social relations, new 'syncretic' cultural forms and bridge-building cultural systems of meaning appear to express a common, collective confirmation through which there emerges an alternative, authentic, performance on the public stage (cf. Gilroy 1987). This intercultural ordeal in time and space goes beyond style-bound expressions and time-adapted signals. At a more profound level, in a hidden dialectical unity of continuity and discontinuity, numerous encounters with the past are

taking place. In the condensed interplay between tradition and modernity, a more profound emancipatory potential is submerged. The symbolic 'wrestling with ghosts' embedded in syncretic identity work and transcultural bricolage represents one constructive answer to the crisis of modern consciousness.

Ethnic youth and boundaries

Exaggerating the differences between immigrants and Swedes may create and reinforce false boundaries between human beings. Christian Catomeris criticizes the way in which the Swedish National Association of Psychologists conceptualizes immigrant needs: 'Immigrants also need psychologists. The difference is that they need to communicate in their own language and with someone who understands their culture. Why express it as a "difference"?' he asks. 'This is exactly what is similar; that one communicates best (Swede as non-Swede) in one's own language' (Catomeris 1987: 4).

Language appears to play a decisive role in creating boundaries and reinforcing separateness between ethnic groups, in research as well as in the public debate (Stroud and Wingstedt 1989: 8). The notion of Rinkeby Swedish (*rinkebysvenska* or *rinkebyska*) has in recent years come to public attention. It refers to a Creole type of language which has evolved among ethnically-mixed groups of immigrant youth living in Stockholm suburbs like Tensta or Rinkeby. These newly created Stockholm dialects have been described as having 'linguistic traits which deviate strongly from standard Swedish and [are] as inherently irritating for individuals with strongly normative linguistic sentiments' (ibid.). Rinkeby Swedish has acquired a stigma similar to that of the 'double semi-lingualism' of the immigrant youth who are presumed to lack linguistic competence in both their native language and in Swedish. Research has conventionally viewed Rinkeby Swedish with a cool disinterest. Its negative ideological content can be understood as part of a 'boundary-repairing' strategy intended to reconstitute vague or destroyed ethnic boundaries (ibid.: 8). Yet, pointing out 'that which is different' while at the same time 'emphasizing that which is risk-filled in non-normative conduct' serves to segregate and marginalize groups that deviate (ibid.).

The 'loaded' content thereby contributes to constructing a reality of separateness, organizing and formulating attitudes to others while simultaneously reflecting an ethnocentric view of Swedishness. Behaviour that can be linked to immigrants is labelled, problematic and symbolically loaded with anxiety. The fear arises that linguistic deviations, like an infection, can sneak their way into and pollute standard Swedish with un-Swedish characteristics (ibid.: 8). Rinkeby Swedish is thus viewed as a cultural and social problem, as a threat to the prescribed order.

More positively, however, Rinkeby Swedish may indicate a double cultural competence, as a second language, or group dialect, which 'serves to identify the members in the group as simply "immigrant youth"' (Kotsinas 1985: 283). In other words, for the youth it is not something negative but is, rather, a secret language, a vehicle for the production of consciousness and resistance (see Jones 1988). In this sense, Rinkeby Swedish consolidates a composite local identity and sense of belonging to a mixed community, which ethnically even includes Swedishness. *I Hjärtat av Tensta (In the Heart of Tensta)* is a collection of poems, narratives and images from a multiethnic Tensta high school. It tells of the need for love, for openness and for the need to belong. 'To live in Sweden demands... that one opens up, experiences a great friendship', writes Mary Marin de Vidal (1989: 117). Of young people in Tensta, it could be said, as of the Rinkeby youth, that they 'are absolutely not so fixated about where people come from. A buddy is a buddy. One does not concentrate on and powwow about where one comes from' (Tengvall 1986: 34). A school teacher, in describing her class as a place in which the 'whole world has "beamed" together', speaks of how 'the young people are worth admiring. They move like fish in the water out there. Sometimes I am green with envy when I think of them. They have friends from so many different countries. From these friends they learn things that I myself at that age could only read about in books' (ibid.).

During my own research in Stockholm I came into close contact with a group of high school girls from one of the suburbs. These young people's ethnically and sexually mixed 'company', as they called it, included Yugoslavs, Turks, Greeks, Hungarians, Italians, Swedes and others. The common language was Swedish loaded with numerous words from a variety of ethnic arsenals. This group of young people seemed to have

created a new way of relating to the Swedish cultural scene, which was similar to the Rinkeby Swedish phenomenon. We are seeing the emergence not only of a new language or dialect but also of an extensive transcultural identity. This contrasts with the dominant Swedish stereotypes of rootlessness, mala-daptation and ethnic conflict in the 'concrete ghettos' of the suburb. These young men and women seem to share a cultural way of life which resembles what British researchers call 'syncretic culture' (Gilroy 1987; Jones 1988), i.e. a situation in which 'culture does not develop along ethnically absolute lines but in complex, dynamic patterns of syncreticism' (Gilroy 1987: 13).

Whether similar forms of socio-cultural life are developing in Sweden has not been researched. Immigrant youth achieve a kind of negative fame for being 'culturally schizophrenic', 'bad boys', or the like; and public debates, immigrant research and government public commissions all tend to focus on cultural differences, ethnic boundary maintainance, conflicts and problems. 'Culture' is squeezed into static and narrowly de-fined stereotypes, glossing over amalgamated cultural forms which, especially among the youth, are already both a fact and a genuine alternative.

The cultural dimension

Though the importance of a dynamic view of cultural variety is frequently stressed in Sweden (Ålund 1985; Bjurström 1985; Westerberg 1987; Schierup and Ålund 1987; Arnstberg 1989; Daun and Ehn 1988), from the public debate it would seem as if the immigrants were the only ones who differed from one another, or who deviated from a homogenous 'Swedish' culture. Contrasted with 'normality', immigrant youth and immigrant women tend to become 'cases', to be the objects of negative fame. Research has described immigrant youth iden-tity in terms of stereotypical notions like 'between two cultures' and 'split identities'. But this problem-oriented image is full of contradictions and lacks sufficient empirical evidence.

Immigrant cultures are thought of as being burdened by the weight of traditionalism, whereas the detraditionalized Swedish culture is represented as more uniform and homogenous than

it actually is. 'Modern' and 'traditional' are polarized and the individual's identity crises are related to difficulties in maintaining the integrity of 'cultures'. In an ethnocentric way the integration process is described as a uniform adaptation of the deviant/foreign to the normal, the modern, the Swedish. Various measures of proximity to or distance from Swedishness (Similä 1987; Lange 1987; Westin 1987) have been employed as indicators of how far immigrants have progressed towards integration. Comparisons within and between ethnic grups (for example, Ouvinen-Birgerstam 1984; Lithman 1987) are used to indicate where each group is located on the scale of integration and how much its own culture has been 'diluted' (Bäck 1989; Similä 1987).

While Swedish immigrant research has focused on cultural differences, research on youth issues has tended to question assumptions about the uniformity of Swedish culture. Simple representations of 'Swedish' and 'immigrant' culture are questioned (Westerberg 1987). Here we meet a tendency to draw attention to conflicts connected with class-related contradictions. Hermansson (1988: 117), for example, identifies 'worker culture' as an important dimension in the explanation of the immigrant youth's life-world, which, together with elements from diverse youth cultures, determines the cultural frame of reference. While this contributes to important insights, there is also a risk that a unilaterally class-based approach may underestimate the productive potential of culture in the immigrant context. There is a tendency to de-emphasize culture because its potentially 'difficult' or 'troublesome' content is presumed to inhibit communication between Swedish and immigrant youth (Westerberg 1987: 187). Culture is instead seen as a separate pathway into a common discourse on general life questions.

In her study of multicultural relations in the school, Westerberg notes that one way of dealing with ethnic conflicts and problems is to de-emphasize culture and emphasize the significance of social (class) structure, so that pupils are better able to put their experiences into a holistic perspective. It is argued that if young people can raise their consciousness, then the problems will disappear. The 'troublesome' culture is, however, grounded in a structured process of exclusion which follows ethnic lines. Yet, even though the processes of ex-

clusion are embedded in society's class-structure (Ålund 1985; Bjurström 1985; Hermansson 1988), if we take away and neutralize culture as an integral part of everyday life (even with the best of intentions in order to avoid culturalization and stigma formation), we run the risk of unintentionally creating an idealized enlightenment project. We risk muddling the essential cultural features of those status hierarchies that generate the trouble in the first place. In this there is considerable risk of the immigrant youth being robbed of both a symbolic and a social foundation in culture and in everyday life. Acknowledging the cultural is a necessary precondition for seeking that which is new and different, for carrying out meaningful identity work.

Too marked a de-emphasis on culture is therefore just as problematic as ethnocentric polarization of cultures or culturalist ranking. 'Split or diffused in a dozen directions', new generations of ethnic youth show considerable daring and fantasy when it comes to 'transforming disintegration into a new form of order' (to paraphrase Berman 1983: 322; see also Schierup and Ålund 1987). Nevertheless, without involvement in their own roots, they risk 'a freedom from culture' (Ziehe and Stubenrauch 1983), or, in other words, the expropriation of the 'liberated' individual by structures of domination (Schierup and Ålund 1987).

This kind of outcome is depicted in Bjurström's (1985) discussion about options available to Swedish immigrant youth 'for choosing their culture'. He seems to operate on the assumption that there is a kind of cultural cross-pressure between Swedish culture and an immigrant's own ethnic identity. Through being exposed to an ongoing rupture of norms and loss of traditions, immigrant youth risks discarding both traditional Swedish and immigrant cultures and, instead, orienting itself towards commercial life-style packages, either passively or by creating new mixes of styles derived from the media (ibid.: 38-9).

The fact that creative coping with cultural antagonisms can play an essential role in helping to forge new identities is, however, ignored. 'Liberated' from their own cultural backgrounds, young people are excluded from authentic alternatives and, indeed, run the risk of being expropriated by the structures of domination. Detachment from the past may also

lead to detachment from the future, a feeling of 'no future', as Cashmore (1985) expresses it in reference to British working-class youth. When the 'cultural multitude' consolidates into a contrast between Swedish and immigrant, and when new life-styles are seen as being related solely to the shelves of commercial supermarkets, there is a risk of fabricating (in theory and real life) an 'identity chaos' (or 'in-between' cultural conflict) and an either/or choice between cultures. Boundary-transcending and amalgamating cultural bricolage remains unnoticed or suppressed.

Comparing the situation in Britain and Sweden, Bjurström (1985: 37) argues that young Swedes do not grow up in ethni-cally and linguistically mixed environments. Yet there is evidence that Sweden, too, is becoming black (or blackheaded, as the Swedish word *svartskalle* would have it). This is most clearly articulated in music, in what the British call the 'Nordic beat', the new Swedish rock being promoted by a new genera-tion of black and ethnic Swedes, which includes well-known names such as Titiyo, Papa Dee, Leyla K and DaYeene. Within Europe, mixed cultures are not an exclusively British pheno-menon. In suburban Stockholm we meet ethnically mixed youth groups every day. In summary: despite the complexities and contradictions of reality and irrespective of declarations about the need for a more dynamic view of modern culture, the construction of cultural separateness via simplified polariza-tions continues to be the dominant discourse in Sweden.

From subculture to bricolage

Subculture as 'substandard-culture'

In studies of ethnic relations, concepts like 'subculture' and 'ethnic boundaries' often express separateness by highlighting cultural contact in terms of cultural clash. The concept of subculture was traditionally used as a 'convenient label for descriptions of odd ways of life one finds here and there in society's nooks and crannies' (Hannerz 1982: 54). The concept has its origins in research on American society. In the late 1950s it came to be linked to the sociology of deviance and social problems and it therefore easily lent itself to a notion of

'substandard culture' (ibid.: 55). But during the 1960s the perspective on society's various 'sub' or 'part' cultures began to change. Emphasis was placed on a 'cultural multitude' represented in positive terms. When ethnic minorities began to assert their right to their own culture, researchers began to show more understanding for those who placed themselves 'on the outside of whatever side there was' (Dylan). Sub-cultures came to be conceptualized as more or less idealized 'counter-cultures'. Now 'conventions themselves and social structures... became the targets of criticism' (ibid.). New youth cultures emerged as protest movements from the ranks of the white middle class. The concept of a counter-culture spread to Europe and engendered various intellectual debates about identity and legitimation crises, and structurally conditioned conflicts.

Yet, in a search for the authentic and exotic (Hannerz 1982), superficial comments about the styles and images of the time became fashionable. The mass media portrayed youth in terms of its subcultural styles and, consequently, helped mould new stereotypes: judges, police and social workers then started to use these stereotypes based on appearance and clothing to 'identify and, hopefully, isolate groups dominantly regarded as "anti-social"' (Clarke 1975: 185). The outward appearance, captured as a petrified mosaic of clichés, also came to be reflected in research. Youth styles and subcultures came again to function as markers for separating and demarcating the deviant.

In Swedish research on immigrant youth, subculture has in the main maintained its original connotation of deviance. Even though this understanding goes counter to the notion of integration, in which (sub)cultures are supposed to interact in a spirit of equal worth and mutual cooperation, the impression persists that 'a culture that is common for the entire society is quite simply presupposed' (Hannerz 1982: 62). Integration implies a uniform path towards equality and harmony in the societal whole. The societal whole, however, is conventionally represented as comprising culturally subordinate parts in conflict with the larger cultural whole. In practice, integration has come to mean the process of eliminating conflict associated with cultural differences. The less a subculture deviates from the whole, the fewer conflicts there are seen to be, the more

integrated it is and the less problematic for the society at large
- and from the researcher's point of view, one might add, the
less interesting (i.e. exotic) the culture becomes. Apart from
the work certain linguists have carried out on immigrant youth
(Kotsinas 1985), and some anthropologists on creolization and
transnationalism in the dynamics of Stockholm's cultural life
(Hannerz 1990), the notion of culture as a composite and chal-
lenging force in a common process of transformation has not
yet attained a prominent place in Swedish research and debate.

Culture as resistance

In Britain in the 1970s and 1980s 'subculture' aquired a new
meaning for studies on the working class, class culture and
ethnic minorities. The more critical and politically radical
research began to focus on the formation of ethnic culture,
instead of seeing it as simply imported as a kind of 'cultural
baggage'. The social construction of ethnicity came to be rela-
ted to the ethnic minorities' position in society, to the division
of labour, to racism and to new forms of resistance (Hall and
Jefferson 1975; Mullard 1985; Gilroy 1987). Ethnic movements
came to be seen as a complex kaleidoscope, a plurality of
subcultures related to society's class structure. Here, as Brake
(1980: vii) writes, the collectively experienced social problems
were worked out and evolved into forms of collective identity
from which an individual identity could be obtained 'outside
that ascribed by class, education and occupation'.

Culture was seen as the stratified multiplicity beneath the
hegemony of a dominant majority culture. Within the frame-
work of this complex subcultural scenario, youth culture was
linked to class culture to generational conflicts and identity
issues. Youth culture was understood as a reaction to a moral
crisis engendered by general cultural detachment, changes in
family relations and the development of the consumer
economy, in which youth's affluence was offset by its insecure
position in the labour market. Notions like hedonism were
used to indicate a preference for leisure over the drudgery of
wage labour. The identity crisis was expressed through searc-
hing for new forms of community, creating youth groups and
setting new styles, which served both as anchoring points and as
signals to the outside world. Society's cultural complexity, an

increasingly differentiated market and a larger repertoire of possibilities encouraged the search for new forms of living. 'Free time' became 'free choice' and (albeit a relative one) 'freedom'.

In this context black culture aquires a symbolic connotation of general importance. In their attempts to identify and reestablish continuity with past forms of community even young white Britons are seen as orienting themselves to the cultural expressions of black youth and ethnic minorities. This provisional and not completely unproblematic, but (for youth culture) significant, interaction has featured in discussions about 'white skin, black masks' (Hebdige 1983) or 'black culture, white youth' (Jones 1988). As Hebdige (1983: 57) writes:

> Ironically, those values conventionally associated with white working-class culture... which had been eroded by time by relative affluence and by the disruption of the physical environment in which they had been rooted were rediscovered, embedded in black West Indian culture. Here was a culture armoured against contaminating influences, protected against the more frontal assaults of the dominant ideology, denied acess to the 'good life' by the colour of its skin. Its rituals, language and style provided models for those white youths alienated from the parent culture by the imagined compromises of the post-war years.

The Black Man and his Culture soon came to be mythologized. Socially at the bottom of and outside the established society, but in the midst of a culturally sparkling ethnic community, he came to represent a cultural challenge and source of inspiration for youth culture and revolt. Despite being 'trapped inside a cruel environment of mean streets and tenements', he emerged, by a curious inversion, as the ultimate victor, who 'escaped emasculation and bounded existential possibilities which middle class life offered' (Hebdige 1983: 47); Hebdige certainly recognized the importance of black and immigrant culture for youth culture. The new life-styles that have developed out of this process of diffusion use new meanings, constituted through adaptation and change, to express their own initiatives and patterns (Clarke 1975: 178). Hebdige (1983: 56) understands the subcultural response as a synthesis at the level of style of 'those forms of adaptation, negotiation and resistance elaborated by the parent culture and others, [that are] more immediate, conjunctural, [and] specific to youth and its

situation and activities.' He points out how the cultural reper-
toire of everyday life and youth's fantasy interact to transform
the available market supply into more desirable types of style-
based attitudes and social acting.

The dialectics of the trip 'home'

Much of the research on youth has been criticized on the
grounds that it focuses mainly on young *men* and their alterna-
tive cultural forms.[1] With reference to research on immigrant
women (Ålund 1991) I discuss cultural identity in terms of
cultural bricolage, i.e. a transcending of cultural boundaries in
time and space amalgamating a variety of experiences, life
forms and idioms in ways which perfectly well 'equip their users
to think their own world' (Hebdige 1983: 103). These current
forms of social communication through networking and brico-
lage draw attention to the past in the present (Ålund 1991). By
continuously relating back to their own mothers' mythological
or archetypically female pursuits, Yugoslav immigrant women
illustrate the importance of ethnic memory for identity. Rebel-
lions and communities from the past, as well as the traditional
female subculture of the Yugoslav village, live on in immigrant
communities through new forms of resistance. By intersecting
time and space as a source of recognition, by networking and
by cultivating consciousness concerned with both old and new
antagonisms, the past makes itself felt in the present.

The recognition of a common history is passed from mother
to daughter. Girls often have a strong desire to rediscover their

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1. In her critique of youth culture research, Angela McRobbie (1984: 111) notes the
dominance of a masculine perspective in which girls' problems with sexual relation-
ships and femininity are normally overlooked, neutralized or marginalized into the
ghetto of 'Women's Studies'. Girls are relegated to 'bedroom culture' and the world
of the family. The boys are out on the streets; 'youth' usually connotes teenage boys
(Holland 1988). Girls are viewed as less problematic: forgotten and relegated to the
private, hidden sphere, they also disappear from research, which is preoccupied with
the social problems or descriptions of boys and street life (ibid.). By focusing largely
on working-class boys (for example, Hermansson 1988), Swedish youth research also
reflects this tendency. Immigrants and especially immigrant girls are often 'hidden in
the class' or behind statistical averages. Several authors now question these simple
gender and cultural stereotypes. For example, Holland (1988) draws our attention to
current research in Britain revealing 'an active self-assertive and conscious attitude
toward school and society among ethnic and black girls.' Wulff (1988) makes them
visible as an integral part of street life and of new youth cultures.

origins. For most Yugoslav immigrant youth this entails a journey back home. One young girl, Lisa, travels to Yugoslavia to find her 'real' homeland. Yugoslavia, often referred to as the homeland, is perceived of in terms of challenges associated with the search for belonging and identity, for one's own home. For immigrant youth, 'home' is a multifaceted metaphor. Lisa travels back home every year with her parents. In Sweden, through collective memories, she daily revisits her living relatives and the burial places of her dead grandmothers. The journey home thus takes place (geographically and symbolically) both in Yugoslavia and in Sweden.

One year, when Lisa spent a prolonged period in the homeland (Yugoslavia) on her own, she found herself only partly at home. She identified homelessness there with similar forms of homelessness in Sweden. Eventually she found her path crossed by and resembling that of fellow travellers in her multicultural circle of friends in the Stockholm suburbs from where the trip home had begun. This circle of friends consisted of an ethnically mixed group of girls and boys with shared ongoing journeys 'home'. Among Serbian Lisa's best friends were a Turkish boy, an Italian-Swedish girl and a wholly Swedish girl. The rest of her circle included about a dozen youth, mostly boys from the Muslim Mediteranean area. To retain their identities in the multi-ethnic suburban tenements they actively had to create a cultural consciousness that was more comprehensive than that of their parents. Through its ethnic mix, this circle of friends not only represented most of what could be found in the local community, but also constituted a new kind of community, one which questioned and reworked both the traditional values of the new (Swedish) world, and the established attitudes about masculinity/femininity, friendship/emnity, etc. of the 'old' world. But the pathways of mythological ancestors and the experiences of living kinsmen still remained as benchmarks informing Lisa's own life. The transgenerational female network, which continues to constitute one of Lisa's important frames of reference, tends consciously to orient itself outwards, which assists and historically anchors her own, more extensive, experience of transcultural community and networking. It is in this context that her mother's identity and social networks gain their special

meaning.[2] In the struggle to belong to a common, modern, shared home, the presence of tradition (as historical experiences of community and resistance embedded and reworked in the Swedish context of local female networks) is essential if Lisa is not to get lost on her journey (Ålund 1991).

The communal home is a timely metaphor which, linked with concepts such as diaspora and syncretic culture (Gilroy 1987; Björklund 1989), relates ethnicity to cultural bricolage, to youth identity and to new social movements in the modern city. As youth, young immigrants act as the brokers of information and experiences anchored in several social and cultural worlds. Through a flow of meanings and messages which circulate within and between different cultural groups (cultural bricolage) people transform themselves and their mutual relations; this is especially true of the socially and culturally open context of youth. New cultural styles may express emerging transethnic interests and orientations. We can observe a new variety of expressive cultures, a differentiation of meaning and a ramification of the message structure. But to conceive of the syncretic result of intercultural encounters in time and space simply as mixtures of style, would, in the above context, be too shallow an approach. The modern ethnic consciousness does not harvest its composite symbolic décor solely from the field of the modern cultural supermarket. New cultural forms express a creative and constructive connection with the past. They reflect struggles with the past's symbolic ghosts and roots, which may simultaneously lead to both reconciliation and emancipation. These struggles may clear a path for new forms of community.

Wrestling with ghosts

In a previous work (Schierup and Ålund 1987) we discuss how active grounding in a local residential milieu effects opportunities for developing new forms of cultural and social life among young Yugoslav immigrants in Scandinavia. But new forms of participation and organization around communal interests are also grounded in ethnic memory. Among Wallachians from

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2. In the book *Lilla Juga* (Little Yugoslavia) this is illustrated with a series of concrete examples; see Ålund (1991).

north-east Serbia now living in Denmark and Sweden, symbols of a traditional order operate in new ways. The ghosts of deceased kinsmen, 'vampires', represent the authority of the elders and sanction intergenerational interdependency. In Scandinavia, the vampires become a symbolic guard against social fragmentation and new forms of bloodsucking: discrimination, marginalization, and social and work-related degradation.

Vampires usually appear during intergenerational conflicts, when the order of the elder generation is threatened by traditional forms of rebellion and new forms of rebellion associated with the cultural reorientation and economic independence of young people. The ghosts usually come at night, in fantasies and dreams. For example, a deceased mother had accused her only son, Milorad, of having abandoned her, of having married against her will and, therefore, of having renounced his responsibility for the household. Milorad did not believe in ghosts, but the vampires none the less believed in Milorad and his mother continued to reappear. We can interpret these recurrent visits as an expression of Milorad's ambivalence towards Scandinavian society, which he tried to make his own by casting off tradition. Milorad then found himself isolated and stigmatized. Eventually (like Saladin in *Satanic Verses*) he recognized his need to find his way back to his countrymen and, at least provisionally, to come to terms with tradition, kith and kin. Milorad then followed established custom: he conducted a public memorial ceremony and begged his mother's forgiveness. In other words, he forced her to rest in peace, but also strengthened his position and the respect of others for him within the local immigrant community he had sought to change. By means of a reconciliation with tradition, by 'returning home' while still looking ahead, Milorad became accepted as an influential cultural middleman. His original experience of crossing ethnic boundaries was now continued with a greater sense of security. This time he was not just an isolated individual but part of an outwardly-directed, organized collective. By actively orienting himself towards other immigrant groups and towards Scandinavian society at large, Milorad continued to cultivate (both for himself and as a leading figure in the immigrant association) a conscious rediscovery of his own traditions and his ethnic

group's history. Milorad no longer whispered about his meeting with his mother's ghost.

Though the vampire reappears during ongoing community conflicts and when there is need for reconciliation between generations, it also signifies communal resistance to domination. In transformed gestalt, these old ghosts, the symbolic presence of tradition in the present, bear a new message. In the specific intersection between old and new antagonisms faced by immigrants, novel insights are released. These become transmuted or even amalgamated into new forms of social community, in which the symbols of kinship and village community attain their place next to that of modern solidarity. These new insights are maintained by subsequent generations of young Yugoslavs; for them, the old vampires are the symbolic blood givers in the construction of new contexts of meaning and ways of life (ibid.). The dynamics of ethnic memory, the ability to connect the present with the past and its antagonism to the present, become actualized as a creative power in the stormy existence of being an immigrant.

Modern ethnic literature

Emerging forms of ethnic consciousness reveal a challenging potential, which should be central to any discussion of modernity. Contemporary ethnic literature is full of examples of a genuine vigour signalling the presence of the past in the present, a condition often depicted with aesthetic uniqueness and vibrant creativity. The narratives seem to be based on rebellion against both traditional and modern forms of violation. Here an oft appearing self inquiry, which speaks through heavily laden metaphors, both confirms and challenges the insecurity that is the hallmark of modernity.

Zoe Wicomb (1987), a South African living in Glasgow, provides an interesting example of the significance of ethnic memory for identity. On a visit home to South Africa, Frieda Shenton undergoes a kind of self-scrutiny, from which she gains new insights into the state of being an outsider. In acknowledging her own sense of exile in Britain and her alienation from the new forms of rebellion belonging to the younger South African generation, she realizes on looking back that she had 'got lost' in a racist society. Despite having received a good

education, being black she had never attained either freedom or security, in either South Africa or Britain. On returning to South Africa, she is aided in finding her identity by her mother's ghost. Frieda engages in a conversation with her mother about how wild bushes defy the power of a fence (around the whites' gardens) by sprouting their stalks on the other side. Frieda realizes that the bushes are part of the ethnic legacy she had cast off. The bush's longing for freedom does not disappear because of a fence. To find one's place in the world and in history it is necessary to cast off the delusions of one's own adolescence and to acknowledge the spectres of the past, which are not always as articulate as Frieda's mother.

This becomes obvious in *The Woman Warrior: Memory of a Girlhood among Ghosts* by the American author, Maxine Hong Kingston (1975). In her encounter with ethnic memories she calls herself a 'woman warrior among ghosts'. The book starts with a rejected, dishonoured, 'nameless' paternal aunt being sent back to her parents from the home of her in-laws because of her infidelity and subsequent pregnancy with a man whose name she refuses to divulge. Through her actions she had threatened the traditional sexual and societal order among her own kin group and in the village, where, with its fatalistic view of the world, opinion held that her actions would bring unforeseen results in the form of accident and death. The aunt, who had brought shame to her kin, was accused of having (socially) murdered her own family and it, in turn, had retaliated by labelling her a 'dead spirit' or ghost. She was eventually driven to suicide and, through a sense of mercy, for he too was 'without family', took her infant son with her. The son of a living ghost had no link with the family and could neither honour nor find the grave of a nameless and condemned mother. Fifty years later the aunt reappeared to 'pursue' her niece (the author), who wanted to know her real name. This was because, should the niece fail to see the ramifications of her aunt's life in her own, she would be unable to derive help from her paternal legacy in solving her own personal crises. The niece had allowed her present ego to affect the past (cf. Berman 1983). She had compared her own evaluations with those of her aunt's, her sense of unease that she herself, like her aunt before her, could be driven away from home. She was searching for her own 'name' while testing her limits. Did she

herself have the right to her own private life, or would she, too, become nameless in the family's sitting room? The aunt had broken the tradition stipulating that women should hold onto the past against the tide of change. In the changes of her own time, the niece tried to find her way home in a way reminiscent of Milorad. She came to inherit a green address book containing the names of family members in China to whom she, like her mother, would probably continue to send money. She needed contact with the old home in order to anchor herself in time and in essential communities. Thus in trying to reconcile herself with her background, she had tried to 'name' or rather 'rename' her aunt, to retell the story, to find her own truths. She had endeavoured to choose her own heroines - be they gods or ghosts - and to bring them out into the daylight.

Instead of remaining silent about shame, or living with lies separate from other people as her parents had done, the author lets a vicarious gestalt, a woman from the world of Chinese legends, represent an alternative ramification of her cultural patrimony. Kingston goes on to relate the story of a woman who learns to cherish the other and, despite seemingly irreconcilable barriers, to make that which is different a force for liaison and inventive change. This woman, the daughter of a learned and famous man, was kidnapped by a barbarian chieftian. She discovers a common language with the primitive barbarians and comes to appreciate their music. They come to understand the sorrow and anger in her songs, which blend with the music of their flutes. They learn to approach each other. When she is subsequently exchanged and returned to her people, she takes the new music with her, her song to the barbarians' flutes. It comes to be sung by the Chinese who accompany it with their own instruments and, concludes Maxine Hong Kingston, it is also successfully culturally translated. It is here in the translation and merging of experiences that ethnic literature has its power.

Identity work

Being compounded by many volatile elements and full of inner tensions, the modern identity is difficult to grasp. As modernization spreads to practically the whole world, as the emerging

'world culture of modernism achieves spectacular triumphs in art and thought, as the modern public expands, it shatters into a multitude of fragments, speaking incommensurable, private languages' (Berman 1983: 17). 'The idea of modernity, conceived in numerous fragmentary ways... loses its capacity to organize and give meaning to people's lives' (ibid.). A result of this can be 'that we stand today in the midst of a modern age which has lost touch with the roots of its own modernity' (ibid.). In an essay on Goethe's Faust about the breakthrough of modernism and the breakup of the traditional 'little world', Berman describes this world as a 'closed town' which, through lack of will or an incapacity to develop at pace with its own children, becomes a town of ghosts, a world in which 'its victims' ghosts will be left with the last laugh' (ibid.: 59).

The ghosts represent a symbolic drama in the rootlessness of modernity, a contemporary metaphor which, in the midst of the whirl of emerging transnational communities and global cultural processes, exposes the problem of culturelessness, or rather, a tendency of culture to free itself from its social context and from history. On the one hand, there is an expansive globalization of culture which outshines or tones down particular cultures and traditions. On the other hand, there is a remaining dominance of cultural truths connected with a worship of the West and a belief in the superiority of its technological triumphs. Taken together, these contribute to the dissolution of the 'little world', which is raped by highways penetrating local neighbourhoods and fragmented into groups of insecure, introverted, detached and solitary communities and families speaking mutually incompatible languages. Today's closed cities, occupied by modern forms of conservative (or uniformly ethnocentric) mythical creations, may resemble the closure of traditional society; their crisis is the breakdown of the old world. Cracks in traditional societies of former times, according to Berman, appear mainly because of contact with deviant patterns from the outside and because of the inner development occasioned by their own children's search for the freedom to think, love and expand. Today's closed cities are also marked by a multitude of escape attempts, journeys inwards as well as restless roamings around the world. At the same time, however, modern attempts to escape seem to reflect a condition of homelessness and an urge to take one's own place in a

local little world, exposed to a peripheral position in the larger world's monitoring, disciplining, segregating and programming of life. Placed in segregated age-specific niches, or pushed out onto the streets, youth form new communities which disturb public order in the closed city.

They seek a place of their own, the unique and particular within the communal, the universal. The yearning to label their own culture and social life can take different forms: enclaves, introverted encapsulation and reactive, authoritarian forms of social and cultural assertion. The ever present competition for social and cultural control of space frequently leads to a focus on youth violence, ethnic conflicts and their connection with each other. But this longing can also be expressed in journeys across the boundaries of time, space and culture, in the search for new forms of grounded presence, both personally and collectively. It is on these journeys that the modern world shows its potential for transcendence and renewal. This is especially true of the young generation of immigrants, whose rediscovered ethnic consciousness constitutes an ever more comprehensive form of modern existence. While modern society creates insecurity, breaks down close social ties and destroys the fixed world, it also offers possiblities of loosening and transcending social and cultural boundaries. This potential is especially strong in a modern global city in which there is ethnic variety. In a climate of cultural tumult and social fragmentation, the interaction between ethnicity and modernity offers new pathways towards this kind of transcendence.

The current debate on Western civilization,[3] which emphasizes the disintegration of public life, the loss of tradition and the general identity crisis, has certain features in common with classical discussions about society's disintegration and the need for new frames of reference (Durkheim, Weber, Tönnies). In a contribution to this debate, Cohen and Taylor (1978) point to important changes in everyday existential conditions (see also Dahl 1984). People are becoming preoccupied with identity to avoid being passively swallowed up by an endless stream of pre-manufactured images, meanings and life-styles. The centrality of identity is, so to say, a modern phenomenon.

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3. For example, Riesman, Fromm, Coser, Marcuse, Sennett, Lasch.

We orient ourselves in everyday life by means of a variety of constructions of meaning and behaviour. These constructions form a sort of paramount reality, the totality of strategies with which we are forced to live in order to manage the realities of everyday life. Cohen and Taylor call this 'reality work'. We live in what we conceive of as several realities, or life-worlds. While these life-worlds and contexts are constantly shifting, there seems to be something we always bear with us - our identities. These identities are not, however, immediately given. There is a risk that we just float around in a growing variety of different life worlds, that we unconsciously adapt behaviour to the rules of the life-world within which we find ourselves at the moment. Hence, there is a need not just for reality work but for identity work. In identity work we attempt to escape from paramount reality. Such attempts might take the form of extreme preoccupation with one's own body or health, or other escape valves like travelling, hobbies, gambling, risk-taking, overwork, drugs, sexual experiments, alternative life-styles, or participation in social movements. Within Cohen and Taylor's framework, identity work amounts to no more than attempts to escape. This is because identity work occurs in a historical context marked by pervasive detraditionalisation and by the predominance of pre-packaged styles which are bought and sold on the market place. For Cohen and Taylor the 'escape' becomes the expression of a particular dialectic between real needs and the culture industry's simultaneous articulation and distortion of these needs.

In contrast to Cohen and Taylor, Ziehe and Stubenrauch (1983) argue that modern youth has a boundary transcending potential which emerges out of spiritual visits into historical, past cultures or contemporary, alternative cultures. This reservoir of alternative knowledge can be activated in new, experimental ways, and can find expression in several contemporary social movements. The identity work of immigrant youth reflects their access to alternative cultural frames of reference and social networks. In this sense, identity work among immigrant youth may constitute a long-term survival strategy, rather than a fortuitous escape attempt (Schierup and Ålund 1987). New interethnic urban social movements can help integrate the individual's identity work with struggles for concrete material benefits, needs and political influence.

Syncretic culture and new communities

In his exposé of the emergence of syncretic cultural forms in British urban environments, Gilroy (1987) calls attention to the potential contained in the identity work of black and ethnic youth. An important example is the emergence of new composite languages (based for example on mixtures of cockney and Creole), which point to complex forms of transcultural communication. The identity-creating foundation embedded in the cultural variety of the local milieu, along with the shared language, signifies a struggle for control over one's own existence against authority, dominant cultural norms, racism and discriminating control. Shared social and cultural experiences in local communties can unite black and white youth, especially from working-class backgrounds. An amalgamation of cultural expressions (language, music and other forms of interaction) symbolizes mutuality in a common struggle to reconstitute a 'collective historical presence' beyond the divisive, fragmented forms of existence in the inner cities of Great Britian, as more generally in the diaspora of migration (Gilroy 1987: 236). From a historical perspective, it is a question of long-term ethno-cultural amalgamation, which includes a dynamic merging of the legacy of anti-colonial resistance with new forms of struggle rooted in modern urban contexts.

Modern multicultural societies generate new forms of social movements which, following Melluci (1980), can be described as movements oriented towards achieving a measure of autonomy *vis-à-vis* the system. The corporate structures of formal political life and their forms of monitoring from above push groups of people on to the outside; they segregate and threaten to paralyse the local community's own rhythms of life. It is from this perspective that we should understand Stuart Hall's description of the pulsating 'rhythms of life from below'. As rhythms of life these new social movements represent 'symptoms of resistance to domination' rather than 'ready made agents for structural change' (Gilroy 1987: 321). The new consciousness and the forms of community they generate are related to major structural tensions in society, a common inequality and a shared outsider identity. A feeling of community and belonging in local contexts is an important precondition to these groups of

ethnic strangers - whites, ethnics and blacks - finding their way to a common home. In this sense, informal forms of revolt, such as alternative theatre (for example, *Under the Hawk's Wings*, in Swedish *Örebro*), Rock Against Racism, music, or community work may represent more forceful strategies against racism than an often damaging moral appeal from above.

This type of emerging urban cultural amalgamation can embody the potential for a generally significant 'modern ethnic consciousness' (cf. Berman 1983), probably most clearly articulated within the growing ethnic literature. One of the ethnic genre's prominent and challenging representatives is Salmon Rushdie who, in *Satanic Verses* elucidates the contradictions and the creativity in a global dialogue. The novel questions the absolute truths and proposes a way of possibly transcending them (Edmundson 1990). Cultural amalgamation in the multitude of symbolic messages can stimulate new forms of understanding which can extend the limits of the universally human. Homelessness is another central metaphor, with immigrants as the main actors. Beyond nostalgia homelessness allows for change and for the creation of a multicultural self. 'Rushdie's immigrants are pluralistic beings, and this pluralism seems to release unexpected sources of energy and wit among them' (ibid.). In contrast to the mainstream post-modern cultivation of unconstructive fragmentation, an emancipatory constructive amalgamation here stands out as a positive alternative to the crisis of modern consciousness.

To sum up then, 'the way home' can be found after dialogue and exchange over time and space, culture and identity. The discourse of modernism, which leads Berman deeper into modernism, enriches us with its recurring confrontation. Yet it also carries with it a uni-dimensional focus on change as dissolution, which risks leading us astray. The dialectic of coming back and reforming (as in the experience of Milorad) expresses a constructive outcome to young immigrants' identity work. Experiments and journeys across boundaries are only likely to be successful if there is something fairly stable to which to return (Dahl 1984). New social movements need local ties and obligations which, while they may constrain the development of a cosmopolitan world consciousness, enable people to think about the future in constructive ways instead of giving themselves over to narcissistic despair or cosmic panic (to para-

phraze Lasch 1984: 14ff.). Autonomous local organization and face-to-face attachment to a community are preconditions for constructing a public personality and meaningful political organization. Local attachments and personal links must exist if they are to be transcended. Ghosts have to be named if they are to be renamed.

6

The ethnic tower of Babel
Political marginality and beyond

CARL-ULRIK SCHIERUP

The so-called Swedish model has acquired an almost symbolic connotation in discussions of the welfare state and its future. In that it is characterized by political pragmatism and permeated by a rational managerial/technocratic ideology, in fact the ideology of the welfare state (Björklund 1986: 295), Sweden has been called 'the prototype of modern society' (Tomasson 1970).

A pragmatic managerial approach to decision making has been identified with the outspoken corporate character (Rothstein 1988) of a society that combines a capitalist economy with widespread state intervention and economic plannning. It has also been identified with elaborate educational and social security systems being closely integrated into economic and labour-market policies that stress efficiency, rationalization and an educated and mobile labour force. During the 1970s and 1980s the coordination of a differentiated and tightly regulated educational system with an equally re-gulated labour market, skillful social-democratic political rule and technocratic management successfully kept unemployment considerably lower than in most other European countries. Ideologies of progress and modernization thus largely survived

the collapse of the work ethic, which had tended to undermine socio-political integration elsewhere in Europe.

In no country has the political consensus on welfare policies been as stable, or penetrated the social consciousness of the ordinary citizen as universally, as in Sweden and nowhere have corporate forms of negotiation, management and control been as important.[1] Since the 1930s the Swedish model has rested on a remarkably steady social compact (or great compromise) between capital and labour, representing two broad class blocs. Compared with the situation in most other European countries the impact of this great compromise on the nation's political life and social development has been unusually strong.

The development of a stable consensus around the Swedish model may well demonstrate a level of faith in the state among the general public that is neither replicated in other Scandinavian countries nor, probably, in any other country. The common Swede's faith in the state is deeply rooted in history and traditional social structures and is reproduced through the particular character of both past and present class compromises and alliances (Schmid 1982; Berendt 1983). In modern times this consensus has rested on the virtually unparalleled stability of a social democratic government.[2] Unlike its Scandinavian sister parties, the Swedish Social Democratic Party has been able to base its rule on a broad and stable alliance of classes and strata and on support from a broad unitarian and disciplined trade unionism which includes white collar as well as blue collar workers (Marklund 1988). Its party bureaucracy is widely ramified and deeply entrenched in state institutions. To a large degree it and the élites of these institutions are identical.

In becoming incorporated into the bureaucratic process, the trade unions themselves became centralized and developed elaborate bureaucracies which were interlinked with various state institutions, committees, councils and boards. A similar model of incorporation characterizes a range of other social movements in Sweden, including immigrant organizations, though these are obviously marginalized from the 'iron

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1. For a discussion of Swedish corporatism, see Rothstein (1988).
2. Social democracy has achieved the remarkable feat of forging stable alliances even with important sections of the traditional petty bourgeoisie, notably in the agrarian sector.

triangle', or core power relationships that represent the political infrastructure of the corporate state.

In this process of incorporation and co-optation, the wish for self-determination (embodied in Sweden's official multicultural policy aims) comes into conflict with the dominant corporate political relationships circumscribing the political process. A declared liberal 'multicultural' ideology appears to be superimposed on a social reality which, in the names of 'ethnic diversity' and 'cultural multiplicity', demonstrates a markedly unitarian structuring of immigrant organizations 'from above'. The implication is control and depoliticization through the promotion of ethnicity rather than self-determination. The chapter discusses the ramifications of this apparent disjuncture between theory and practice.

A stable corporate structure and the country's active and closely-regulated labour-market policies have guaranteed immigrants a minimum of social and economic security. The broad ideological and political consensus on immigrant policy has more or less protected them from open outbursts of populist racism. An anti-racist ideology has been incorporated and institutionalized as part of general corporate consensus policies and public morality. However, immigrants have very little political influence. They are generally only indirectly represented in the political process; and the bureaucratic structures of their organizations and their marginal place in the political process tend to stand in the way of their formulation and articulation of public claims. Immigrants have not become genuine partners in the political process. In other words, they lack the essential precondition for any successful struggle to change the discriminatory practices embedded in what (despite efforts to curtail their economic marginalization) has become a hierarchical cultural division of labour. With the national economy and labour market entering the 1990s in a state of crisis and reconstruction, and with the apparent erosion of the moral consensus politics of the Swedish model (SOU 1990/44), there is an acute need to organize broad trans-ethnic movements to combat racism, discrimination and forced segregation. This would mean carefully examining the pitfalls and opportunities contained in what could be considered a crucial juncture for both the state immigrant policy and for immigrant associations in Sweden.

Corporatist multiculturalism: the dialogue that came off

Sweden probably has the largest proportion of organized immigrants in Europe. An impressive network of organized immigrant associations has come into being and considerable public funds are set aside for the activities of these bodies. The immigrants' central organizations are closely tied to the corporate system and function as parallel bureaucratic structures in miniature, providing the government, administrative agencies and socio-political organizations with information on ethnic issues. Through them important information and policy decisions can be communicated down to the grassroots (Fred 1983; Bäck 1983).

While building up their own system of bureaucratically-structured ethnic associations, the ethnic minorities have to varying degrees been incorporated into other institutions and organizations, especially trade unions and political parties, most notably the Social Democratic Party. In this way they are socialized into the general Swedish model of concordance, or consensus, built up around the corporate welfare state. By 'co-opting ethnic leaders into councils, commissions and offices within state-run programmes, and by incorporating ethnic associations into existing systems of state-sponsored organizations, the political centre shows its goodwill, and, at the same time, makes ethnic leaders co-responsible for the administration of state policies' (Björklund 1986: 302). The incorporation of various broker institutions, like immigrant associations, family counsellors and local immigrant advisory bodies (*invandrarbyråer*), into the instrumental forms of bureaucratic organization has been used to control the range of what is acceptable in Swedish society (Fred 1983). There are, however, considerable differences in the ways individual minorities are incorporated into the political, organizational and administrative structure. For example, Finns are more likely to join political parties and corporate bodies like trade unions (see Jaakkola 1987 and 1989), while the smaller immigrant groups from southern Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America tend to become incorporated indirectly, via their cultural associations and through the mediation of 'brokers' translating their

'culture' and interpreting their needs in the language of accepted rational discourse (Fred 1979 and 1983).

Bureaucratic structuring and vicarious representation

The co-optation and integration of immigrant organizations and ethnic leadership, and the rational transformation of their forms of cultural expression, are not peculiar to Sweden, but represent general strategies in the management of ethnicity by Western European bureaucracies (see, for example, the argument by Björklund 1986). Sweden is, however, probably unique in the extent to which it structures and monitors immigrant organizations 'from above'. The welfare bureaucracy has undertaken to construct an organized multicultural society, in which the true ingenuity of Swedish social engineering is used to give multiculturalism a consistent and predictable form.

Swedish immigrants are organized in a number of parallel organizations corresponding to their narrowly defined national or ethnic identities as Finns, Yugoslavs, Croats, Turks, Greeks, Kurds, or Syrians. These various central organizations, or national alliances (*riksförbund*), are closely bound to the central state bureaucracy, with the state as their almost sole source of finance (Bäck 1983). The Swedish National Board of Immigration, or SIV (*Statens Invandrarverk*) keeps in constant touch with all the national/ethnic central organizations and exercises tight economic control over their activities. Its support is not without conditions. For example, its guidelines influence the content of the immigrant press and govern the forms of organization of both central and local immigrant associations (*Invandrare och Minoriteter* 1985).

The SIV acts as a buffer between immigrant organizations and central and local government institutions, and coordinates relationships between immigrant and Swedish organizations (including cultural and educational institutions, youth and women's organizations, and the trade union movement). Caught as they are in a sort of patron-client relationship, the immigrant organizations have become used to channelling their claims through the SIV and having it mediate between the organizations and influential individuals in the relevant administrative and political bodies.

At the national level single ethnic organizations usually communicate and cooperate through the SIV, whereas at the local level immigrant bureaux tend to be the main coordinating bodies. Conferences and meetings embracing all immigrant organizations, or those of immigrant organizations in conjunction with Swedish organizations, are usually sponsored and organized by the SIV or other state agency. One disadvantage of the SIV taking on this rather patronizing role is that immigrant organizations have never really developed their capacity to communicate directly or to coordinate activities. For example, the activities of SIOS, a cooperative council for ten groups of Swedish immigrants, are sporadic and ill-coordinated and the organization has no public image whatsoever.

At the local level, immigrant associations ideally operate under an umbrella of 'national alliances'. They are defined essentially as receivers of information and as recreational associations for preserving the immigrants' traditions and cultural identity. In special, local-level middleman organizations, known as immigrant bureaux, trained personnel coordinate immigrant matters and make arrangements on behalf of immigrants with a variety of social agencies (see, for example, Fred 1979, 1983). Before 1985 immigrant bureaux were associated with the SIV; they exercised considerable influence over local immigrant policy and the practices of the social welfare system (ibid.). Until 1985, immigrant bureaux were also important coordinators of communication and cooperation between local immigrant associations.

In a major reorganization of the administration in 1985, the bureaux were placed directly under the authority of the municipalities, which were given full responsibility for coordinating local immigrant affairs. Since then, most bureaux have been turned into 'units for the integration of refugees'. The complex responsibilities and services they had formerly undertaken for already integrated immigrants and ethnic minorities were decentralized, i.e. distributed to a wide range of municipal agencies. Since 1985 there has also been a reorientation at the central (national) level. While the SIV has increasingly concentrated its resources on building up a system of refugee integration, its role as middleman organization between immigrant organizations and various corporate bodies in the Swedish administrative and political system has diminished. We shall

touch on the possible implications of these changes in the last section of this chapter.

Cultural pluralism as political control

Cooperation between the SIV and the associations is managed mainly through the SIV's 'development' and 'cooperation' sections, as is the SIV's middleman role in liaising between the associations and corporate Swedish political and administrative structures. Ultimate control over the formation and activities of the national organizations, however, rests with the SIV's so-called 'subsidy' section. Apart from various stipulations about the formal administrative way in which it is run and what types of activities it must be able to perform, an association wishing to attain the privileged position of a (central) 'national alliance' must be prepared to prove that it has no connection with vested religious or political interests, in Sweden or in the country of origin. In other words, it is formed on a purely 'ethnic' principle, in the simple, formal, cultural sense of the word. Thus, established administrative practice is, in principle, founded on the presupposition of an imagined common 'cultural' identity and a common corporate 'ethnicity', separate from religious affiliation or political interests. The ideal ethnic 'national alliance' is as inclusive as possible, ideally embracing all the members of a (pre-)defined ethnic group.

This system of categorization evidently has the advantage of establishing a cognitive standardization of reality, while at the same time rationalizing management and simplifying communication and information procedures. Seen from the point of view of its prescribed constituencies, however, the 'pure' ethnic community of interest is more the constructed product of social engineering than an actual social reality. But the crux of the matter is that the formation of a comprehensive 'national alliance' provides access to guaranteed, stable and comparatively generous, long-term state grants. All other types of associations are at best eligible for short-term, temporary 'project subsidies'. This type of management of the ethnic process can give rise to administratively produced mergers between competing groups, as, for example, when the SIV persuaded several Kurdish associations to join forces so that they would be eligible for the status of a 'national alliance' and, with it, a regular

annual subsidy.[3] The alternative is the continued marginaliza-
tion of associations from the funding system, as happened in
the case of the Chileans. Ever since the beginning of the 1970s
the Chileans have been affiliated to several parallel associa-
tions of varying orientations. Partly through their lack of politi-
cal or religious neutrality and partly because they have failed to
comply with the call for ethnic representativeness, the SIV did
not find these organizations eligible for the status of a 'national
alliance of Chileans'. Only in 1990 did the SIV finally decide to
make a recommendation to the government to acknowledge
one of the seven existing associations.[4]

Though responsibility for acknowledging 'national alliances'
and distributing grants formally rests with the government,
through its coordinating and control functions the SIV inevita-
bly performs an important political role. The subsidy system is
a form of political socialization in that it provides a means of
curbing the immigrants' potential for developing forms of
consciousness and organization that might break the norms and
frameworks of the established political consensus. Vested in
the authority to decide what is and what is not 'political' and in
the economic power to sanction these definitions, is a measure
of political control. The following quotation from an interview
with a senior official in the SIV indicates the situational and
pragmatic character of actual definitions: 'Of course we are
aware that the borderline between what is political and what is
not is problematic. And faced with reality we will often be
forced to compromise. For example, most of the Finnish asso-
ciations are in reality of a social democratic orientation.'

Ethnization and depoliticization

The fragmented character of migrant organization in Sweden
may partly be due to the pursuit of particular issues by single
minority groups in a spirit of 'ethnic absolutism' (Gilroy 1987;
cf. Koot and Rath 1987). The strategies of each single group
are transformed and get their concrete meaning through their
articulation with state politics and corporate agencies struc-
turing the political process (cf. Rath 1990). As processed
through the corporate state, Swedish multiculturalism can be

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3. According to interviews with activists in Kurdish associations.
4. According to interviews with SIV officials.

described as giving rise to a dual policy of standardization/assimilation on the one hand and of 'ethnization' on the other.

On the one hand, immigrant culture and forms of political expression are processed, transformed, assimilated and standardized so as to become fit for Swedish public consumption. On the other hand, single ethnic cultural groups are defined as culturally unique and organizationally separate and are set apart from each other in well contained ethnic reserves. This process of 'ethnization' blocks the conscious formulation of those common interests that transgress ethnic-cultural divisions. It hampers the generation of trans-ethnic forms of organization and of the immigrants' development into genuine political subjects in their own right. A constructed multiculturalism becomes an ethnic tower of Babel, a victim to non-communication and political restraint. At the centre of the bureaucratic embrace, a monological monitoring turns the multicultural dialogue into rhethoric.

The depoliticization built into the bureaucratically ordered structuring and monitoring of immigrant organization seems to be becoming an increasingly serious problem, for immigrants are still, despite important political reforms, occupying a marginal place in the political system as a whole. Fractured and depoliticized by the cultural structuring of their associations and marginalized within political parties, trade unions and other mainstream 'folk movements', they tend to end up in a power vacuum - a political backwater.

Aspects of political marginality

Claims that immigrants' political interests should and could be served through the ordinary institutions of mainstream political life are unconvincing. Amendments to the formal legal system have proven insufficient as a means of creating 'political participation' and adequate channels of influence.

In 1976 residents with foreign citizenship were allowed to participate in local elections for the first time. Though great expectations followed this electoral reform (Hammar 1990), since the mid-1970s there has been a marked decrease in voting by immigrants in local elections. Whereas the turnout in the

first local election in 1976 was 60 per cent, by 1982 it had decreased to 52 per cent and, in 1988, it was down to 44 per cent. Figures for the voting population at large were 90 per cent in 1976 and 88 per cent in 1988.[5] Another important trend in the elections is that proportionately fewer immigrant nominees than Swedes are actually elected.[6]

Hammar (1990: 155ff) discusses why the Swedish electoral system should discourage immigrants from participating in elections. His analysis suggests that the immigrants' sociocultural background and the mere fact of being a migrant also act as obstacles. He finds that 'a series of hindrances... cannot be firmly removed inasmuch as they follow from the composition of the immigrant groups from their situation as temporary migrants'. But Hammar's analysis has no suggestions to make about why immigrant participation is not only very low, but actually *decreasing*.

What has *not* been discussed in the Swedish context is the impact of discrimination which, as Rex (1979) argues, may discourage immigrants from taking part in the receiving country's political institutions. But, without a proper analysis of structural factors and power relationships in Swedish society and in individual local communities, one could, as Layton-Henry (1990) maintains, easily end up in an 'integrationist' circular argument. Here the low participation of immigrants is explained with reference 'to a low level of integration; those who cling to their own traditions and take little interest in the host country's institutions participate less in host country politics'. This implies that 'the most one can do is to foster the interest of immigrants in host country affairs - for example, by publicity and information about political institutions and the political process', in the expectation that full electoral participation will follow when immigrants are sufficiently 'integrated'.[7] From the Swedish experience, however, information campaigns have proved a rather inefficient way of en-

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5. For documentation and discussion of the elections see SOU 1984:12; Layton-Henry 1990; Hammar 1990.
6. It could be tempting to try and explain the decrease in electoral participation among immigrants in terms of increased immigration from Third World countries without a tradition of parliamentary democracy. This would not, however, explain why the Finns, traditionally the largest and most well established immigrant group in Sweden, have the very lowest participation rates.
7. Layton-Henry (1990: 148) criticizing a liberal research tradition.

couraging participation (Hammar 1977; Layton-Henry 1990: 148).

Hence, in the absence of any comprehensive study of local power relationships or institutional discrimination in Swedish political life, we are left with the option of conjuring up a tentative scenario on the basis of a limited number of interviews with politically involved immigrants about their participation and influence in different spheres of Swedish political life. The interviewees frequently complained that the road to influence ran almost exclusively through conventional career channels. Circumscribed by complex and fixed power relations in Swedish associations, parties and institutions, key immigrant questions continue to be given marginal priority and are subjected to a purifying filter of general party priorities. It has also been shown that it is difficult for politicians from an immigrant background to obtain their parties' support for secure nominations in elections. In the context of the Swedish electoral system, which offers no possibilities of voting for individual candidates, this means that it is virtually impossible for local minority interest groups to place their own claims and alternatives on the agenda of the local municipality or district board through established political channels. Those who actually reach positions in mainstream political life invariably lose contact with their own grassroots, for they are exposed to strong disciplinary pressure from their parties as well as from the many forceful corporate agents involved in the political process. Since the immigrants' own associations have merely been assigned the status of 'cultural' by a fairly generous, though strongly disciplinarian, Swedish subsidy system, they are usually not allowed to develop into genuine political pressure groups, or to provide efficient support for parliamentary politicians wishing to take a stand on 'immigrant questions'. This means that, at the same time as they have become closely integrated into and 'tamed' by the corporate state, immigrant organizations have, because of the very nature of this incorporation, been kept on the margins of the nation's political life.

One possible compensation for this might be to exercise influence within established interest groups in Sweden, most notably the labour unions. But here too immigrants seem to have been largely marginalized (see, for example, Knocke 1982, 1986, and 1988). If individual union activists are from an immi-

grant background they tend to be regarded as 'hostages' (Schierup and Ålund 1987) because their opportunities for arguing for specific immigrant claims seem to be residual. In the case of Yugoslav immigrants, this led to a demand to allow immigrant associations to acquire some influence in union politics, but the unions insisted that immigrant issues be handled through the 'usual channels'. During the 1980s, however, they gradually found themselves receiving less and less attention.[8]

The Finns are the one partial exception to the scenario of political marginalization among Sweden's immigrants. They form a numerically strong, comparatively well organized, long-established group in Sweden (see Jaakkola 1989) which carries far less racial or cultural stigma than minorities from the Mediterranean or, especially, from what is conventionally referred to as the Third World. Their political traditions are also close to Sweden's. Though with considerable local variation, they seem to have had some success in influencing local politics. One strategy has been to establish special Finnish sections within the unions as well as within the Social Democratic Party. At the same time, however, in the context of the general ethnicized character of immigrant policy in Sweden, this may be more likely to intensify the fragmentation of the political process than give other immigrant groups access to increased influence. No organized research has been undertaken on this subject. But the Finns may often find themselves placed in a sort of 'hostage' or buffer position - on the shopfloor and in the unions, in the political parties and in local municipal politics, in municipal housing committees administering a segretationist residential policy, and in local administrations. They may be used to controlling the claims of other immigrant groups. The implications of this prolematic should be seen from the more general perspective of the immigrants' insertion into a cultural division of labour structured along lines of ethnic dominance.

A cultural division of labour

A tolerant multiculturalist ethos has been disseminated down the bureacratic structure and through the mass media to

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8. According to discussions with leaders in the Yugoslav national organization and activists in local Yugoslav ethnic associations.

become part of the general public morality. Multiculturalist legitimation (with structuring and monitoring) of the immigrant's culture and forms of organization is, however, only one aspect of the larger project of fostering immigrants, as well as the general Swedish public, into a spirit of tolerance and partnership. Along with the 'immigrant's right to preserve [his or] her culture', anti-racism was to be incorporated into the structure of the general ideological consensus. Anti-racist movements have increasingly tended to become state sponsored and institutionalized. Official policy was intended to shield the immigrant from traditional forms of open racism by imposing moral pressure from above on public institutions, trade unions, employers, political parties and individual citizens. It also ensured that immigrants expressed their 'traditional culture' under controlled forms. Racism and discrimination, however, have predominantly been associated with values, attitudes and prejudices and not with power relations in society. Thus, it is believed that they can be 'informed away'. Discrimination and racism tend to become reduced to a problem of blurred personal and cultural identities (see Chapter 1).[9]

A unilateral emphasis on culture and identity may, however, help rationalize real inequalities, a segmented cultural division of labour and the political and social marginalization of immigrants. Despite enjoying lower levels of unemployment, an assured minimum standard of living and a higher level of social security provision than probably anywhere else in Europe, an unequal cultural division of labour is a reality. At the same time, state-sponsored ethnization of the immigrants' organizational representation in society has tended to block their opportunities, as autonomous political subjects, to lead an active, integrated and effective trans-ethnic struggle against racism and discrimination, or to produce coherent strategies for dealing with the causes and effects of the unequal cultural division of labour.

A Swedish 'vertical mosaic'

Ålund (1987) argues that the most conspicuous example of the 'Swedish vertical mosaic', structured by cultural, political and

9. See, for example, the conclusions of the platform for a policy against racism and xenophobia which was prepared (1986-9) by a special government commission against racism (SOU 1989/13). See also Chapter 7.

economic dominance, is found in the labour market. This subject is rather under-researched (Bergman 1987), but we can at least discern a general scenario. Immigrants are concentrated in menial jobs in industry and the services, where they mainly perform physically taxing, stressful, monotonous or dirty jobs (Widgren 1980; Leiniö 1986) in occupations with anti-social working hours, poor working environments and high risks of occupational injury (Knocke 1982: 71; Ålund 1985). The occupational 'pyramid' also contains a gender and age factor, placing immigrant girls at the very bottom. This is most clearly expressed through statistics on the distribution of unemployment, but differences between the occupations of individual immigrant groups are also substantial and reflect the existence of more or less distinct ethnic niches. While immigrants from Finland and Yugoslavia are relatively over-represented in industry, immigrants from Greece and Third World countries are over-represented in cleaning and other menial occupations in the service sector. This should be seen within the context of a highly gender-segregated Swedish labour market. A narrow occupational range for women in general is even more limited for immigrant women who, according to Leiniö (1986), are concentrated within 12 main occupations with cleaning as the most usual.

Despite the presence of ethnic segmentation and inequalities structured along ethnic lines, the position for immigrants and ethnics in the Swedish labour market is markedly different from that in most other European countries. Though unemployment is higher than average among Sweden's ethnics, total unemployment is low compared with Europe as a whole. Also, in contrast to a country like Denmark, which operates a system of cash unemployment benefits, the Swedish labour movement has historically adopted an active 'employment line' (Jensen 1988), with comparatively restrictive unemployment insurance and a high degree of 'labour enforcement' (cf. Marklund and Svalfors 1986; Marklund 1988). Through elaborate corporate arrangements and a well-developed institutional system, Sweden has managed, even during periods of recession, to absorb the majority of the unemployed in extensive requalification schemes or other means of putting workers back into the

labour market.[10] Immigrant representation in requalification schemes is disproportionately high (Ekberg 1984),[11] but - according to available statistics and discussions with staff members of labour-market requalification centres - this has had hardly any effect on the relative position of immigrants in the Swedish occupational pyramid. It seems reasonable to presume that unemployed immigrants who do not throw themselves into an expanding sector of small ethnic business tend to find themselves locked into the lowest occupations in industry and the services, where they often work in isolated 'occupational ghettos' where Swedish workers are increasingly rare (cf. Schierup and Ålund 1987).[12]

The iron triangle

Ethnic discrimination, especially against immigrants from Third World countries, is an important factor in the persistence of the ethnic occupational hierarchy and its probable reproduction over subsequent generations. In several reports (for example, SOU 1983/18 and 1984/55; see also the discussion in Bergman and Swedin 1986), independent government-sponsored researchers have indicated the existence of grave discrimination, not least on the Swedish labour market.[13] Discrimination against highly skilled, highly educated immigrants has from time to time been picked up by the mass media as a very serious problem and one that questions the very meaning of the objective of equality in Swedish immigrant policy. This holds true not only for immigrants with skills or academic degrees from abroad, but also for those who have acquired their education and skills in Sweden.

Prospects of social mobility for second-generation immigrants are poor in comparison with young Swedes with parents in the same occupations (Knocke 1982: 66; Ekberg 1982; Ålund 1985, 1987). Our knowledge on this subject is, however, fairly scant, for this information is only sporadically documented in

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10. For a comparative analysis of Swedish labour market policy and labour market policies of other OECD-countries, see Therborn (1986).
11. Four to seven times that of Swedes in 1983, depending on the method of calculation (Ekberg 1984).
12. See definitions in Feuchtwang 1982.
13. See Bergman (1987), arguing that the issue of discrimination is far from clarified and that this subject ought, even in the future, to be treated as an important area of research.

official statistical sources and research (Myrberg 1988). Though it cannot be demonstrated that foreigners and second-generation ethnics actually fail in the public educational system at primary and secondary levels, there do seem to be considerable discrepances between their results and those of the average Swedish child (ibid.). There is very little documentation on the presence and performance of young foreigners and ethnics in higher education (ibid.). There should be more discussion on these topics which ought to be researched within a wider frame of reference, including analyses of the dynamics of discrimination on the labour market and of the development of an expanding sector of small 'ethnic business'.

Though discrimination has been an important subject in Swedish social research, in the mass media and in the political arena (Ålund 1985), it has proved impossible to pass any effective legislation against ethnic/racial labour-market discrimination. Here, discrimination is still treated predominantly as a matter of individual attitudes which can best be informed or 'reasoned' away through government consultations with employers' organizations and unions.[14] The absence of legislation should, we believe, be linked to the nature of the corporate political process itself. Before becoming a serious object of discourse for the parliamentary political process, any major policy issue has to pass through the 'iron triangle' of the central unions, the central association of employers and concerned state agencies. And neither the unions nor the employers' central association have shown any interest in anti-discrimination legislation.

Forced segregation

Discrimination is also common in the housing market. Through the selective and discriminatory practices of centralized building societies, immigrants have become concentrated into newly-built large concrete suburbs with poor services (Hjarnø 1987) and high taxes on the outskirts of big cities (Sangregorio 1984; Schierup 1985; Holgersson 1986; Kuusela 1988 and 1990). Stratification in the labour market is thus replicated in a class- and ethnically-based regional distribution of the popula-

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14. See, for example, the critique of government attitudes in Bergman and Swedin (1986).

tion, with immigrants lumped together with low-income Swedish groups and multi-problem families (Kuusela 1988 and 1990). This in turn creates class and ethnic segregation within a very locally based school system.[15]

Discrimination in housing often tends to be rationalized in culturalist terms in the public debate and in social science discourse; one such example from social research is Lillemor Andersson-Brolin's (1984) dissertation on ethnic housing segregation in Stockholm. On the basis of a formidable statistical analysis of public registers (while simultaneously evading any serious analysis of the institutional setups, power relationships and major structural developments on the regional housing market) she reaches the conclusion that, in explaining *'the degree* to which the residential pattern of an ethnic group deviates from the rest of the population, the concepts of ethnic difference and ethnic distance seem to be fruitful' (ibid.). Thus 'it is fairly safe to assume that the need and desire to live close to one's own countrymen... are especially strong among those groups whose cultural patterns most sharply deviate from Swedish patterns'. Ethnic discrimination and relative lack of resources are accredited relatively minor importance.

For a number of different reasons certain people of Mediterranean or Third World origin may well favour particular 'cultural institutions' and actually prefer to live together (ibid). But in *what parts* of the housing market this 'living together' occurs is by no means random. As Sangregorio (1984: 19) found out through interviews, the choice for an immigrant family (which on the immediate, visible level exposes a deeper parameter of forced segregation) may be as simple as this: 'Our friends could choose between Botkyrka and Rinkeby (two low status localities of the Stockholm region with high concentrations of immigrants). Then they chose Rinkeby, because they knew us'.

A new juncture

At the beginning of this essay we describe some of the ways in which immigrant organizations in Sweden have been structured

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15. For a general discussion of segregation in the Swedish school system see Arnman and Jönsson (1985).

and monitored in the name of cultural pluralism. These practices were established as an attempt to integrate the large wave of labour migrants who came to Sweden during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

For the immigrants themselves the associations served as an important link with the old country and smoothed the often painful passage into the new society. From the perspective of the state, they offered forums for recreation and provided important integrative and socializing functions. They were a cheap way of keeping immigrant youth off the streets.

The associations were meant to socialize immigrants into the established Swedish system of institutionalized 'folk movements', which are on a par with workers educational associations, the youth movement, the trade union movement and so on. But this kind of socialization had more of a ritual than a substantial content: it was a sort of cultural kindergarten in which immigrants learned to become Swedes. In a sanctioned and regulated public space apart, they could learn how to arrange meetings, structure an appropriate agenda and respect timetables. At a later more mature stage they would, as fully-fledged fellow citizens, be ready to pass into established Swedish folk movements and mainstream political life. And this has actually happened. Some immigrants have aquired competence in applying the formal rules of Swedish public political culture. Many have gained experience in Swedish folk movements and political parties. Yet immigrants have still remained politically marginalized.

Today there are even more problems associated with 'organization from above', which are evident in the truly schlerotic state of many immigrant organizations (see Bäck 1989).

By preserving relations with the countries of origin and conserving a traditional cultural identity, the narrow ethnic focus of the established associations cannot offer new ethnically-mixed youth cultures a local public space. In their traditional form, the associations cannot provide a satisfactory forum for the increasing number of individuals who have a differentiated double or multiple cultural competence and who possess political experience and the motivation and capacity for self-organization. The depoliticization built into the bureaucratically ordered structuring and monitoring of immigrant organization appears as an increasingly serious problem, for

immigrants still, despite important political reforms, occupy a marginalized position within the political system as a whole.

In the long run institutionalization, zealous regulation and the associations' prevailing character of static cultural reserves leads to estrangement of ethnic élites from their own grassroots. The dilemma of 'organization from above' was emphatically brought out through the words of Sven Alur Reinans: 'The immigrants' central organizations are nowadays dependent upon their own constituencies: they subsist on state funds and do not need to give a damn about what their members think' (*Invandrare och Minoriteter* 1984). A widening gap between ethnic leaders and grassroots may even appear a problem for the state itself and for corporate strategies of ideological and social integration; it definitely diminishes their value to strategies of local community work. Stagnating contributions for the activities of immigrants' national organizations may well be a symptom of a growing scepticism about their usefulness as instruments of social integration. For immigrants the present organizational scheme has, accordingly, become more and more of a straightjacket, and for the state an inflexible and ineffective instrument for social and politico-ideological integration.

A change in corporate strategies of integration in relation to the immigrant organization would match a gradual 'withering away' (Schmid 1982) of the traditional type of bureaucratic welfare-state organization in general; this is one of the most striking features of contemporary political life in Sweden (see, for example, SOU 1990/44). This growing decentralization of the political and administrative system may offer new perspectives for the organizations of immigrants and ethnics. A trend paralleling the general transformation of the administrative system is, as I mention earlier in this essay, the weakening of the control functions and the status of corporate middleman organizations which have been held by agencies like the SIV (centrally) and immigrant bureaux (locally). As a result, both central and local organizations have increasingly been left to make contact with politico-administrative bodies and Swedish interest organizations on their own behalf and according to their own capacity. For many organizations this may present a major problem - a sudden awakening so to speak. They have become accustomed to being only indirectly represented in the

political process and, as single national or ethnic organizations, they quite evidently do not have the necessary resources to cope individually with the myriad of agencies of a ramified politico-administrative system. Changes in the system involving a gradual dismantling of its patriarchal features of indirect representation may, given the absence of new strategies, further marginalize the associations and turn them into increasingly isolated folkloric, sectarian or fundamentalist bodies turning their backs on the mainstream political process. But the current changes may also present new opportunities.

So far the situation is one of uncertainty and flux. We are at a crossroads where, given a consciousness of the need to develop alternative public forums and political pressure groups, new kinds of agencies may develop. In this situation of change and restructuring it might be useful to study the experiences of other European countries. An obvious example is neighbouring Denmark. The Danish experience points to the importance of developing autonomous, trans-ethnic political organization and community work. Despite their relatively small numbers and the constant threat of marginalization, Danish immigrants have been able to make themselves heard in local politics and to organize around important cultural, educational and information issues (see Schierup 1989). Their organizations have on several occasions amalgamated the immigrant community's unique cultural and social resources with the Danish tradition of autonomous social movements, which, though closely involved with state institutions, have always endeavoured to keep the state at arm's length. Unlike the Swedish situation, there is considerable cooperation among the various ethnic-minority groups represented in Denmark. The most efficient forms of organization have been trans-ethnic in character, involving a number of immigrant groups as well as Danes, but without the immigrants losing their identity or space for action. Successful organization has been closely associated with grassroots involvement. Finally, there are a number of examples of immigrant associations becoming involved in mainstream parliamentary politics in various complex and interdependent ways. Comparing the immigrant press in Denmark and Sweden it is striking that only Denmark has a trans-ethnic newspaper which, though funded by the state, is managed and edited by the immigrants themselves.

Today (in the early 1990s), Sweden is at a similar political juncture to that which Denmark experienced in the mid-1980s (see Schierup 1989). The heated debate depicting 'refugees as a problem' has encouraged Sweden's affiliation to Fortress Europe (see chapters 1 and 2) and has made it increasingly closed and discriminatory with respect to Third World immigration. It has brought hidden racism into the open (the mushrooming of right-wing populist protest movements), to the point of recurrent and grave physical violence exercised by extremist groups (bombs at refugee camps). The corporate 'anti-racist' social contract is under severe pressure.

This is happening, moreover, at a time when essential elements of the Swedish model of the welfare state are being questioned. As we argue, this may present new political opportunities, but it also sets free new forces of social marginalization and creates a climate of ideological confrontation. Since the social-democratic political élite now seems to subscribe to liberal calls for a structural need for higher levels of unemployment, the traditional policy of 'full employment' is on the decline. At the beginning of the 1990s unemployment is rising and, as always, far more rapidly among 'ethnic' than 'majority' Swedes. Industry and the services are facing a new period of rationalization and restructuring, which will supposedly have a discriminatory effect on the already highly segmented labour market. As the 'great compromise' between capital and labour, on which the Swedish corporate welfare state has been built, is itself being restructured, the traditional working class may well lose its ideological and political foothold; and a general identity crisis may result. This is the dark side to restructuring the established corporate system and the social compromises and moral compact on which it rests. It has created the type of situation that has fomented racism among the 'majority' and marginalized immigrants, ethnics and racially-defined minorities in Denmark (see Schierup 1989), Britain (Gilroy 1987) and several other European countries.

In this situation, with the moral protection of a paternalist corporate state apparently fading, there is a pressing need for new forms of social, political and moral integration and for new forceful alliances to combat racism, discrimination and involuntary segregation. Greater trans-ethnic solidarity could generate frameworks within which to influence local politics and

community work and to enter broad alliances with other political subjects. To develop genuine political influence through autonomous organizations may, because of the more discriminating and less flexible character of Sweden's political and electoral system, be even more salient for ethnics in Sweden than in Denmark. The critical question is, of course, to what extent immigrant minorities really are able to overcome the fragmentation and political culture of 'silence' (to use the expression of von Kreitor 1980) to which a paternalist administration has exposed them. But to achieve genuine political pluralism in Sweden would mean transcending the 'ethnic absolutism', which has been the minorities' own dominant ideological discourse and the basic infrastructure for their ways of organizing.

We are now seeing some of the old immigrant associations endeavouring to reorientate themselves towards a more active and involved political style. They are trying, albeit tentatively, to transgress the narrow borders of the conventional organizational setup. This is evident, for example, in the reorientation of SIOS, the coordinating body for ten nationality groups among immigrants, which is currently trying to consolidate itself as a trans-ethnic political forum and pressure group and as an umbrella for politically involved grassroots organizations (SIOS 1989). It is also reflected in the coming into being of numerous local trans-ethnic boards and committees which are increasingly involved in confrontations or bargaining with local authorities and political agencies.

But the scenario is far from unambiguous. In fact we could say there is increasing pluralism. While we might see tendencies towards a more trans-ethnic orientation among some of the older associations, other associations are actually accentuating their stress on ethnic particularism. In some cases this may take the shape of a fundamentalist search for identity combined with a strong sense of vindictiveness. In other cases an association's activity may recede into mere folklore, thus actually fulfilling the dominant culturalist logic of its institutional incorporation into Swedish society. Composite 'national associations' may fracture into smaller units, as for example the Yugoslavs did into Croatians, Serbians and Slovenians. Each seem decided to follow a course of ethnic particularism and ethnic fundamentalism. They thus, as Jovičić (1991) writes

about the present state of Yugoslav associations in Sweden, tend to see their continued *raison d'être* in a 'renovation of their basis, above all, realized through the cultivation and free reign of the particular national cultures'.[16] We are also, however, seeing the emergence of completely new social movements at the grassroots level. These cover a wide spectrum, ranging from the various spontaneously formed socially and politically involved self-help organizations and committees in local communities to the new 'mixed' youth movements and other cultural groups which, through the dynamics of their constitution and nature of their expression, represent an important anti-racist tendency (see Chapter 5). This increasing pluralism provides a challenge to the established system of 'prescribed multiculturalism', out of which a new genuinely trans-ethnic society may develop.

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16. A fragmentation which, Jovičić argues, should be explained rather with reference to the predominantly culturalist, folklorist focus of the existing Yugoslav associations in Sweden, than as a reflection of current national conflicts in Yugoslavia.

7

The puzzle of trans-ethnic society

Culture, agency and social movements under post-modern conditions

CARL-ULRIK SCHIERUP

Today modernity is invariably associated with a culturally mixed society and spuriously post-modern social conditions and dynamics. The question being posed here (which we would like to add to Serge Moscovici's (1990) essential 'questions for the 21st century') is what conditions are necessary to achieve a democratic trans-ethnic society in which, on equal terms, a multitude of cultural and political traditions blend into complex and inventive forms of modern agency, transcending narrowly defined ethnic boundaries? Having asked this, it then becomes necessary to examine the 'trans-ethnic agency' in relation to one of the important ideologies or models of society to have evolved over the course of this century, i.e. 'multiculturalism' as an increasingly widespread formula for understanding and managing 'ethnic relations'.

During the 1970s a multicultural rhetoric gradually emerged in Sweden and in several other European countries. This closely resembled and gave public recognition to the mosaic of subcultures and subgroups (Crispino 1980: 153) characteristic of an earlier historical experience, namely that of an American-style society in which a pluralist cultural ideology supports the

maintenance of the communal life, identity and values of ethnic groups.

Glazer and Moynihan's *Beyond the Melting Pot* (1970), which had an enormous influence on research and was widely cited in the media and in popular discourse, was a landmark in the canonization of cultural pluralism as an official ideology in the Unites States. While Glazer and Moynihan maintain that new phenomena need new concepts, their central categories of 'ethnicity' and 'ethnic identity', Dittrich and Radtke (1990) argue, merely reintroduce, via American sociology, 19th century German national-romantic ideological categories like *Volk* and *Völkergeist*. In that Glazer and Moynihan epistemologically fail to scrutinize and clarify the premises for and the implications of the new/old terms they lay out, the importance of their work is more ideological than analytical in character. As before, with the use of the term *Volk*, the widespread but uncritical use of the term 'ethnicity' in social science and its subsequent integration into political, administrative and popular commonsense discourses, has been far more effective in *creating reality* than it has in actually describing it. Through the emotionally loaded 'ethnization' of social conflicts in Western welfare states, as well as in the Third World, it has opened the gates to uncontrolled and irrational outlets (ibid.).

In a somewhat similar vein, Gorelich (1989: 111) argues that the American research tradition following in the footsteps of Glazer and Moynihan merely 'elaborated racial, ethnic and gender stereotypes and called them science'. Multicultural ideology was a 'pseudo-pluralism' which, 'although it celebrated American democracy for including diverse groups', set up 'an ethnic derby which pitted one group against another and evaluated them on the degree to which their cultures permitted absorption into the "mainstream", that is, dominant culture' (ibid.). It hides the inherent discriminatory dynamics of American society behind a programmatic facade of democracy and pluralism.

A basic problem with Glazer and Moynihan's legacy is that 'it lacks an understanding of structure, history and processes of change of capitalism, patriarchy and racism as systems' (ibid.). Without a historical perspective on the role of racism in the social construction of ethnicity, Gorelich argues, structurally grounded ethnic/racial inequalities tend to be reduced to

cultural stereotypes, to 'blame the victim' theories and, at the outmost, rationalized as individual misfortune. Here 'culture' has tended to be conceptualized as self-contained, homogeneous and static. The more substantial content of cultural pluralism as a dominant ideology is thus a *cultural determinism* in which 'culture' masks 'the structure of power underlying racial, ethnic and class inequalities' in a capitalist society (ibid.: 112). The officially-sanctioned stereotypes produced by the researchers become the basis of popular commonsense, used as major categories rationalizing ethnic inequality and racism. But when ethnic stereotypes are rationalized by science and turned into ideological instruments for structuring political and economic inequality, there is an ever present danger that 'multiculturalism' will come to coalesce with the idea of the 'plural society', historically associated with 'a tight-knit communal morality within groups and a world of total exploitation between groups' in colonial situations (Rex 1985: 4). And, as John Rex reminds us, the South African apartheid system is the ultimate example of a modern 'plural society'. In so far as an individual employs the category of 'ethnicity' to construct his or her 'self', this may lead to regressive 'self-ethnization' (Dittrich and Radtke 1990: 31), i.e. an inadvertent 'roots radicalism' (Gilroy 1990) which may block a balanced position and action in relation to a constantly changing modern reality.

Several writers see 'actual multiculturalism', in both Europe and America, as representing a form of integration of cultural diversity into a system of structural inequalities. The ethnic or cultural mosaic in North American societies overlaps with a 'vertical mosaic', as expressed by John Porter's (1968) study of power and social class in Canada. By 'vertical mosaic' is meant the stratification of different ethnic groups in society's economic and political hierarchies. Similar ideas are put forward by Milton Gordon (1964, 1970), who discusses immigrant integration in the US, and by Aleksandra Ålund (1985), who builds on a comparative discussion of ethnicity and class divisions in North America and Sweden. Here, unequal ranking through a societal division of labour structured along ethnic/cultural lines and in terms of political power relationships is called 'structural pluralism'. This is seen both as the more substantive content of North American 'ethnic systems' and as an emerging 'multiculturalism' in contemporary Europe and Scandinavia.

'Cultural pluralism' thus tends to overlap an economic and political hierarchy of power (Ålund 1985, 1987).

Similar critiques of multicultural ideologies and their effects have become commonplace among leftist researchers. While stressing the importance of class loyalties, Marxist and other research traditions on the left often, however, tend to suffer from reductionist and simplified perceptions of 'agency' when analysing cleavages and disjunctures in modern societal settings. Many substantial forms of agency articulate themselves through cultural expressions that are submerged into the 'pre-political' terrains of everyday life. But in case these manifestations and their inherent claims are represented as merely redundant to mainstream political issues, leftist research may come to support a rationalist administration of 'culture' by an enlightened technocracy rather than the development of genuinely democratic and trans-ethnic forms of political action. This is well illustrated by the Swedish experience of 'prescribed multiculturalism', whereby immigrant and ethnic organizations are co-opted into the corporatist state where they end up politically marginalized.

From this perspective it is essential to discuss the intricate interconnections between 'societal change' and 'agency' in the complex contingencies of class, culture, gender and age. In earlier works (for example, Schierup and Ålund 1987) we point out the need to reconceptualize our notions of 'the political' in studies of trans-ethnic society. Along with establishing alternative forms of organization, a basic aim of any radical theory or politics should be to appreciate and extend public space for the articulation of immigrants' and ethnic/racial minorities' genuine agency in the political process. On similar lines, an important critique of Marxist discourses has come from protagonists of 'new social movements' theory originating from, among others, the writings of Alain Touraine.

These theories are of considerable importance in attempts to redefine the meaning of 'culture' by locating it in a dialectical relationship with a strategic notion of 'agency', which focuses on the everyday life-world's potential for 'democratizing the field of reproduction'. To pose the crucial issues of a prospective trans-ethnic society in the dynamic terms of 'agency' rather than in the fixed categories of 'culture' could help us transcend the political 'culture of silence' (Freire 1970) in which domi-

nant multiculturalist discourses have tended to bury the expe-
rience and struggles of immigrants, blacks and 'ethnics'.[1] It
could also help us redefine struggles against the dismantling of
the welfare *state* into struggles *for* a welfare *society* based on a
strong civil society and the integration of everyday experience
and everyday culture as an important dimension of the politi-
cal. We are, however, critical of certain tendencies in some
versions of modern social movements theory. For example, the
structural-functionalist configuration (represented here by
Alberto Melucci 1980, 1989) tends to lead to a questionable
overall modernization paradigm from which any problematic of
'class' has been eliminated. The inverted left radical form of
'new social movements' theory (represented by Paul Gilroy
1987, 1989, 1990) tends to entrench itself in the partial func-
tionalism of an idealized 'local community' and conjures up an
unhelpful polarization of 'state' and 'civil society'. We feel
there is a need to reconsider culture and agency from a broad
trans-ethnic and trans-European perspective which would link
a differentiated class analysis to a more complex democratiza-
tion perspective. In other words, the democratization of the
field of reproduction would be visualized as contingent with a
democratization of the state (Peterson 1987) and at the same
time an emphasis would be placed on a necessary dialogue
between the experiences of 'new' and 'old' social movements.
This kind of rethinking should take as its point of departure an
understanding of the complex processes of centraliza-
tion/decentralization and globalization/localization involved in
the contemporary restructuring of the national state under
'post-modern' conditions.

What 'culture' could we be pleasantly 'multi' about'? A Marxist critique on 'mistaken identity'

On observing structured inequalities in Australia similar to
those Porter refers to as 'the vertical mosaic' in Canada and
Ålund (1987) as the 'Swedish pyramid', a group of Australian
authors (Castles et al. 1988: 121) asked the rhetorical question:

1. Freire's (1970) notion of a 'culture of silence' has been elaborated and adapted by
von Kreitor (1980) in his critical analysis of the position of immigrants in a
'sanctioned' Swedish public.

'What "culture" in Australia can we be pleasantly "multi" about'? In *Mistaken Identity* they distinguish between definitions of culture at three different levels of abstraction (ibid.: 122ff.). The *first*, the basically anthropological definition of culture, represents 'a theoretical quest to distinguish humans from animals' (ibid: 123). The *second* follows the conventional Marxist logic of 'base' and 'superstructure', in which 'cultures' are seen as 'integrated wholes' and very little cultural diversity is allowed within one and the same economic cum material setting. Phrased in functionalist terms this level is equal to a typology of broad class-bound cultures essentially corresponding to a scheme of different modes or forms of production. Accordingly, the only genuine pluralism in Australia is represented by the Aborigines, whose 'fundamental everyday hunter-gathering culture' has unfortunately 'been all but destroyed by a history of non-pluralism' (ibid.: 124).

But Australia is a modern industrial state, subject to a 'homogenization of world culture', which implies a 'shift of cultural production from the household or the local community to the world factory' (ibid.: 141). This homogenization makes:

> differentiation both possible and meaningless: we can all get everything everywhere, but it has ceased to have any real cultural significance. Whatever we do is a celebration of the cultural dominance of the great international industrial structure, but we can kid ourselves on the basis of appearances that our culture or subculture is different. As difference loses its meaning, our need for it as a focus of identity becomes ever greater, as do our acts of self-deception. The attempt to preserve static, pre-industrial forms of ethnic culture is an obvious example of this (ibid.).

The logical conclusion is that a functional assimilation of foreign immigrants is inevitable in the face of the objective demands of a modern industrial-capitalist consumer society. The authors of *Mistaken Identity* therefore feel justified in reasoning that Australia is not a multicultural society at the second level:

> Where in our so-called multicultural society do we find the human geography of a Greek, Lebanese of Laotian village? What happens to the extended family in the face of the demands of occupational mobility? Do migrants from village-agricultural cultures resist consumerism and its structural implications? (ibid.: 125)

A capitalist-industrial society demands the immigrants' cultural adaptation within quite definite functional limits, from dealing with the boss or the trade union at work, to the way they behave as consumers in the family unit.[2] Various traditional cultural traits may of course survive, but they survive mainly as tools for adapting to the systems or institutional structures of industrial-capitalism, or to the established ways of working-class struggles. They become the symbolic means of expressing essentially the same content as, for example, when 'the celebrations of sacred name days in traditional Christian societies... become part of a new structure of symbols and practices in which the party expresses success and consumerism' (ibid.: 125).

But such forms of expression belong on the third and most superficial *cultural level*, among an odd selection of disparate symbolic manifestations connected with 'food, clothing, celebrations, music, dance, language, and so on'. It is exclusively from this level that an Australian multiculturalist ideology is extracted. But its skilful manipulation of a superficial definition of culture becomes a smoke-screen legitimating a system of structured inequalities, as well as it functions as an ideological basis for the legitimation of the particular claims of various 'ethnic' interest groups. It functions as a 'handy and inexpensive solution to the problem of ethnic politics' (ibid.: 122). As part of a fragmented collection of odd 'counter-cultures' and single issue 'new social movements', which have replaced the 'universalist party' (ibid.: 141), the ethnic pressure groups become an easy prey for 'new right ideologies of family, individuality and competition' (ibid.: 147). In a world void of universalism and structurally grounded broad solidarity, protests are becoming reduced to 'life styles and sub-cultural pressure groups' which can 'easily be co-opted by the leisure industries' (ibid.). At best cultural pluralism, by offering 'retreat into culture narrowly defined' can help 'overcome or prevent the insecurity, homogenization and loss of personal identity characteristic of mass society' (ibid.: 122). But in the same instance

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2. This very much echoes Max Gluckman's (1961: 69) famous dictum: 'an African townsman is a townsman, an African miner is a miner'. Gluckman warns against exaggerating and misinterpreting the significance of rural labour migrants' 'cultural legacy' in the context of immigration.

'the core cultural game' itself remains fundamentally unquestioned (ibid.).

Despite their critique of multiculturalism, the authors of *Mistaken Identity* feel that Australia should still be a 'multicultural society'. But the kind of culture one should be 'multi' about should be conceived of and find its expression at the proper level, i.e. it should provide identity and all the various foods, festivals and folklores that have made Australia a more pleasant place in which to live. But 'culture' or 'ethnicity' should not be confused with political strategy. In so far as political agency draws its legitimacy from culturally justified claims, a 'mistaken identity' would merely further fragment the political scene and thus accentuate the reproduction of society's stratification along the lines of ethnic/cultural ascription. Since the 'core game' is about structural subordination and class-based dominance and has its roots in increasingly transnational relationships of production, the political struggle must also become increasingly international in orientation while particular ethnic claims should be subordinated to the need for structurally grounded unity.

Robbed of a legacy

We certainly agree with the argument put forward in *Mistaken Identity* that official dominant conceptions of 'culture' tend to represent a dubious culturalist discourse (by governments and ethnic pressure groups alike) which acts to *construct* ethnicity for various political purposes; and that this is often in a destructive manner in that it counteracts any effective trans-ethnic struggle against racism, discrimination and social injustice.

In the name of internationalism and a unified struggle against structurally-based subordination, Castles et al. (1988) reject ethnic politics as an expression of 'mistaken identity', i.e. they see it as an ideology of 'imagined community' based on a set of deep-seated values, conceptualized as fixed characteristics within the individuals concerned, which then become categorized in exclusively ethnic terms. Although Castles et al. attempt to renounce the cultural essentialism, which is generally so characteristic of multicultural ideologies, they none

the less fail to transcend a static conception of culture. While polarizing 'culture' between its embodiment as a fixed segment of social formations (exposed to the determinism of historical materialism's social transformation scheme) and as more or less random 'survivals', they miss the dynamic liaison between 'culture' and 'agency'. This type of recognition is a fundamental precondition for any radical political strategy that wishes to go beyond the framework of a discredited techno-scientific enlightenment project.

It would acknowledge the importance of the 'communicative action' (Habermas 1985) of a life-world never completely colonized by a dominant techno-bureaucratic 'system'. Such a perspective, however, seems foreign to the authors of *Mistaken Identity*. When squeezed between 'culture' at the second level of reductionist-functionalist materialism and 'culture' at the third level, which seems almost as superficial as the liberal 'multicultural' connotations they are supposed to be criticizing, important potentials for definition and consciousness are put into analytical brackets. Thus, the adverse consequences of a theoretical 'hyper intentionalism' (Shanin 1978) contained in one-sided class and structurally-oriented discourses tend to exclude the critical potentials of the social actors' specific cultural prerequisites. In this way, Theodor Shanin (1978) argues in his critique of Marxist migration research of the 1970s,[3] 'desk-bound' Marxist theoreticians rob the immigrants of their specific ethnic and historical legacy and their special cultural prerequisites of action as soon as they cross the threshold to Western Europe. As Shanin points out, a narrowly defined concept of class seriously limits the perspectives of Marxist research. The immigrants' special social and cultural legacy ought to form an inseparable part of any Marxist analysis. He emphasizes the importance of avoiding 'structural determinism' by combining insights into the society's general power structure with detailed studies of the immigrants' unique cultural experiences and the articulation of these experiences in everyday life. It is necessary, he concludes (ibid.: 286), 'to

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3. Shanin (1978) was the first academic to set out a systematic critique of dominant trends in Marxist migration research. Since then a number of other critical reviews of Marxist discourses and ideological propositions of leftist political movements have followed. Among these are Horst (1983), Safran (1984), Grillo (1985), Dench (1986), Gilroy (1987), Schierup (1987) and Feuchtwang (1990), to mention just a few.

advance Marxist analysis by bringing the desks of those who write closer to the human experience and struggles which matter'.

Power in everyday life

While focusing on the general features of capitalism, Marxist theory tends to conceptualize power as coming from without. In a reevaluation of Foucault, Biddy Martin (1982) argues that this occurs in a way that ultimately makes all local and specific manifestations of power reflect the prohibitions of a system exterior to us. Conceptualizing power in this way makes us unable to understand our own part in the reproduction of the social order or how we can change it. Power is demystified when it is anchored in everyday life, localities and institutional settings. As Ålund's (1991) study of immigrant women in Stockholm shows, analysing power in this way, i.e. as articulated in the repression of women and the discrimination of immigrants, localizes the exercise of power in immediate concrete struggles which people can recognize and see themselves as participating in. This recognition can have a productive content. One can come to 'possess' oneself as a thinking and acting subject and a struggle over definitions can start (see discussion in Chapter 3).

Such an approach 'offers us a means for understanding the strategic implications of socio-political struggle at the micro-level of the local and the everyday' (Peterson 1987: 51). This type of 'analytic of power is a plural one, entrenched within the plurality of our experiences of the local and everyday.' (ibid.) We should be able to conceptualize a plethora of new forms of agency coming into being among immigrants in local residential communities, in work-places and ramifying into a range of institutional networks (i-Azaam 1979; Municio 1990). These are mediated by cultural forms that amalgamate past and present experiences into complex processes of identity work and social strategies (Schierup and Ålund 1987; Gilroy 1987). A multitude of alternative social and political strategies are transmitted through cultural forms of expression (Horst 1980; Loona 1985; Ålund 1991). Embedded in a complex collective historical experience these forms may express a 'tradition' which is both a past and a dynamic force in the present

(Schierup and Ålund 1987). 'The institutions they create: temples, churches, clubs, cafés and blues dances confound any Eurocentric idea of where the line dividing politics and culture should fall. The distinction between public and private spheres cuts through the life of their households and communities in a similar manner' (Gilroy 1987: 37).

Different immigrant and ethnic cultures represent reservoirs of alternative knowledge; their communities produce forms of communicative action which often become relevant in new experimental ways. In this sense, as Ålund (1991) argues, the modern elaboration of alternative cultural themes and historical memories of oppression may imply an important critique of Western civilization. This should not be confused with attempts to cultivate romantic and absolutist 'traditions', 'ethnic identities' and 'roots'. It would be naive to argue that 'ethnic culture' is *per se* 'liberating' or 'democratic'. An increasing number of contemporary cases - in the 'East', 'West', 'North' and 'South' - bear testimony to the very opposite: to 'ethnicity' or 'tradition' as the vehicles of authoritarian populism, repression, absolutist exclusivity, paralysing sectarianism, intolerant fundamentalism, fascism, fratricide and genocide. Thus, 'tradition' and 'ethnicity' are Janus-faced 'ghosts' (Schierup and Ålund 1987). Their concrete expressions depend on the nature and direction of the overall political discourses and strategies with or within which they are articulated.

The contradictory construction of Swedish multiculturalism

Bearing in mind the preceding argument, it is important to develop a qualified understanding of capitalism in which the changing class structure of a transitional modern state is elucidated through the use of a conception of power that provides us with a point of departure in understanding 'micro-political structures' of domination. This is especially important when state and economic power are being framed in more and more ideological terms, exercised through the increasingly intricate ritualized symbolism presented by the leisure industry and thus becoming more ramified and integrated into local community work. In other words, the more power becomes exercised

through modern forms of ideological control and the more these forms of control become opaque to the 'surveyed' as well as to the 'surveyor', the more important such a perspective becomes (see Beronius 1986).

This endeavour should not, however, stop at an analysis of power in this disciplinary sense, but should include an understanding of new forms of agency which act to extend the limits of the social 'life-world' understood, according to Habermas (1985), as a public space for communicative action.[4] If agency, expressed through a multitude of cultural forms at the local level and in everyday practice, is found to be residual in relation to claims for loyalty to 'the universal party', 'the worker movement' or abstract 'international solidarity', the objects of repression are, to use Peterson's expression (1987: 47), 'robbed of a strategy'. They easily become treated simply as victims in power relations and placed outside (and as non-participants in) their own oppression. A crisis mentality develops whereby the needs of the victims become translated into terms such as 'suffering', 'sickness' or 'problem', with a network of left-wing technocrats at the top to deal with the social injuries (ibid.).

The Swedish experience could be depicted as one in which, as the result of specific forms of articulation between radical ethnic claims and the institutional practices of an enlightened leftist technocracy, authentic forms of agency have become blocked. Radical demands for 'cultural autonomy' were formulated among Finns during the 1970s. A moral prerogative was claimed to ethnic-minority rights that corresponded to the historical rights of the established Swedish minority in Finland. Building up a parallel school sub-system (within the Swedish public school system) was conceived of as a basic prerequisite for constructing a stable and equitable Finnish linguistic and ethnic community in Sweden. The political support for these claims came from the well organized Finnish diaspora and energetic official backing from neighbouring Finland.

The expression of Finnish ethnicity became an important 'raw material' in the production of the official Swedish multi-culturalism proclaimed in 1975 (Chapter 1). The specific way in

4. Compare the argument of Clegg (1989: 17) who pleads for the conceptualization of a composite 'framework within which both "obedience" and "resistence" can be located'.

which the Finnish diaspora's claims were acknowledged by an enlightened left-wing Swedish bureaucracy, integrated into the state administration, processed by the bureaucracy and then transformed into a predictable and contained framework, formed the basis of a general system of ordering which could also be applied to other 'ethnic groups'.[5] The organizing of the Finns along ethnic lines was adopted as a general model, according to which other groups could (or rather *should*) become integrated into the elaborate Swedish corporatist structure in standard ways that would secure a predictable and orderly unfolding of the 'ethnic process' without interfering with the basic set-up of the 'core cultural game'. The objective materialization of the proclaimed multicultural goal of 'freedom of choice' (see Chapter 1) was turned into the state-sponsored containment of immigrant organizational life on the prescribed basis of narrow ethnic particularity, closely monitored within a bureaucratic corporatist framework (as described in Chapter 6). Enlightened social engineers constructed an 'ethnic tower of Babel' held together through an elaborate system of subsidies and minority services, but marked by the conspicuous absence of trans-ethnic communication and the active formulation of political claims. Hence, in both intent and practice, what probably became the most generous public subsidy system in any Western European immigration country did not combine the material assistance it granted and the alleged right it allocated to 'conserve', 'choose' or 'develop' one's own 'ethnic identity' with a license to extend political pluralism or to constitute effective political pressure groups.

'Partnership', another ideological cornerstone of Swedish immigrant policy, was in practice to be realized through restricted forms of 'consultation' between governmental commissions, administrative agencies and officially-acknowledged and state-sponsored ethnic organizations. Partnership has also found expression in cooperative projects between immigrant associations and Swedish 'folk-movements'. Within these the ethnic associations have, however, generally played a sort of junior 'apprenticeship' role (see Chapter 4). In the main, political participation was expected to take place in 'the normal way'

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5. For analyses (from different angles) of the constitution of the Swedish administration of immigration issues and ethnic relations see, for example, Fred (1983) and Jacobsson (1984).

through immigrant involvement in established political parties and corporate interest groups (Chapter 6). But provisions were not made to neutralize potential or actual forces of institutional discrimination in the existing political system.

Swedish immigrant policy's third political slogan, 'equality', tended to be interpreted within the framework of a 'therapeutic' welfare ideology. The welfare bureaucracy acquired 'knowledge about immigrants' to enable it to compensate for what were believed to be the immigrants' culturally related problems in adapting to a modern society. A limited number of middlemen with a designated 'ethnic' background were brought into various corporate agencies to help adapt institutional practices to particular culturally classified needs. But no anti-discrimination legislation was formulated and no positive action taken to counteract discrimination in an ethnically stratified labour market.

In conclusion, within the framework of a corporatist political process dominated by institutionalized interest monopolies and an administrative structure controlled by technocratic rationality and therapeutic treatment, 'equality', 'freedom of choice' and 'partnership' have forged the intersecting wires of an 'iron cage', restricting the agency of ethnically or racially defined minorities to one of 'counselling' or acting as 'middlemen' between the administration and immigrant grassroots. Through this a multitude of corporate ethnic bureaucracies (in miniature) did indeed gain some marginal and restricted access to the political process and certain groups of ethnic professionals have been able to find for themselves restricted niches in administration, education and the social welfare sector. But caught between their own marginal position in the state structure and the needs and claims of their fellow 'ethnics' among the grassroots, a variety of incipient élites have, to paraphrase Dench (1986), remained 'prisoners of ambivalence'.

A 'pragmatic shift'

Fragmentation of the political space along particular ethnic lines could be related to the dominance of a public discourse that regards 'ethnicity' as constituted around an exclusive and fixed cultural identity. This basic discourse is shared by a multi-

tude of political and institutional actors on the 'right' as well as on the 'left' (including 'the scientific community').

Broadening such a discourse on 'ethnicity' and 'culture' could be dangerous in a historical situation in which tolerant 'multiculturalism', characterized by the cultural relativist doctrine that 'each culture is as good as any other' (Feuchtwang 1990: 4), increasingly, albeit often imperceptibly, starts to blend with an intolerant new racism that believes that any 'other culture is incompatible with our culture and should therefore be kept separate' (ibid.). In Chapters 1 and 2 we argue that this is an adverse tendency which, in Sweden in particular, has been articulated in public discourses since the mid-1980s. This is connected with the increased import of unstandardized human raw material from, what a Swedish government report (Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet 1990: 49) endows with the technically sounding neologism of, 'the refugee-producing countries'. Changing public discourses articulate with general socio-economic restructuring, cultural change and the establishment of new and more sophisticated forms of public agency under 'post-modern' conditions.

Gaunt and Olsson (1990) speak of a major 'paradigmatic shift' - maybe we should rather call it a 'pragmatic shift' - in Swedish public institutional practices, which started in the mid-1970s and continued throughout the 1980s, in which the mass production of bulky goods characteristic of the industrial boom of the 1960s gave way to the differentiated production of increasingly handy vacuum-packed 'delicacies' (ibid.: 44). Public institutions are increasingly 'living their own lives' and refining their goods to meet discerning consumer needs. To the extent that immigration has made the composition of the population more heterogeneous, these differences have to be rationalized through public discourse and the population 'integrated' and controlled by the institutional umbrella. Novel experiences associated with immigration have to be institutionalized by new professional bodies. The most striking example of this process is the creation of a ramified refugee bureaucracy, especially during the late 1980s (see Chapter 2). Here, refugees are not only turned into helpless 'clients' who, during a complex process of socialization to Sweden, become exposed to blatant forms of psychological stress and therapeutic restructuring of their personalities to deal with their social isolation and segre-

gation (ibid. referring to Olsson 1989; Westin 1990; see also Kebrome 1990; Mendes 1990): they are also 'raw-material, a vacuum packed raw-material which must be belaboured and "sold" to the Swedish People's Home' (Gaunt and Olsson 1990: 44) and to the labour market through the creation of 'an ordered life'. The 'right skin colour' is essential for the success of this production and marketing process (ibid.).

One might qualify Gaunt and Olsson's statement about modern Swedish institutional practices by adding that the central issue could become the inert competence to structure a complex production and distribution process that effectuates the assignment of articles with *different colours* (phrased in the idiom of the 'relevant cultures') at convenient points in time to the appropriate supermarket shelves. A less metaphorical conceptualization of this problematic may present it as the ramification of institutional practices through a setting in which an ethnization of the public discourse comes to contribute to a realisation of immediate needs and to the continued reproduction of an increasingly differentiated and stratified 'cultural division of labour' (see Chapter 6). Thus, in this sense the 'categorization of human populations by culture or ethnic origin is no different from racial categorisation when the ascription of origin assumes a fixed cultural essence in the individuals categorized. It just sorts people into cultures and cultures into places. "Place" may be a division of labour or of territory or both' (Feuchtwang 1990: 4). These procedures represent a terrain for the formation of institutional ideologies and practices where 'multiculturalism' may imperceptibly, but hereby also more effectively, merge with cultural racism under conditions of 'post-modern' differentiation, political fragmentation and administrative sophistication. In the process, the Swedish multicultural variant's programmatic welfare-ideological emphasis on social 'equality' tends to recede more and more into the background.

Configurations of 'representation'

In his case study of 'ideologies and institutions' in the French urban conglomeration of Lyon, Ralph Grillo (1985) scrutinizes what he calls 'the problem of representation'. By

'representation' he refers to the ways in which the interests of immigrated minorities are represented in the political process. This representation, however, is seldom direct. Grillo shows how the 'immigrant culture' is 'translated' into 'ideological systems' by social workers, teachers, psychologists, nurses, trade union activists and sociologists, and how it is represented as a 'problem' before pertinent issues become at all accessible to the political process. Through this, he argues ironically, 'the problem of representation' is transposed into a 'representation of problems'. Despite different vocabularies, Grillo notes, the ideological systems of the right and of the left of the French political spectrum harbour an actual discursive affinity: immigrants and their 'problems' must be 'represented' by professionals who translate them into an officially sanctioned discourse and articulate them using established procedures in the administrative hierarchy and the political process. Grillo also shows how politically active immigrants are absorbed into these same ideological veins, so that the categorization of the problems does not change. Hence, Grillo argues, immigrants can only indirectly - if at all - influence the political processes that affect their lives.

This kind of 'vicarious representation' may, as we argue above, result in the containment of the immigrants' political agency, in France, in Sweden and in Western Europe in general. Agency that is not contained within the logic of a technocratically ordered 'system' becomes more or less entrenched in a variety of forms of 'resistance' in local and everyday contexts: from the traditionalist symbolism of religiously phrased 'fundamentalism' to those forms of trans-ethnic grassroots community which Gilroy (1987) calls 'syncretic culture' (see also Chapter 5).

There appear, however, to be considerable differences between Sweden and France in the development of 'ethnic politics': differences that may have specific historical causes, but which none the less may be of considerable theoretical interest. What immediately springs to mind are the important *trans-ethnic political movements* in France, such as *France Plus*, *Mémoire Fertile*, *EMAF* (*Expressions Maghrebines au Feminin*) and *SOS-Racisme*, to mention just some of the better known ones. Although, with varying degrees of success, state agencies do attempt to co-opt, incorporate and control these move-

ments, they are nevertheless vigorous actors in the French political arena and have a solid image among the general public. After having discussed the importance of trans-ethnic political agency in Denmark (see Schierup 1989 and Chapter 6), one might argue that such forms of political mobilization could merely represent a forced political radicalization and polarization reflecting a lack of cultural legitimacy and authorized channels of expression, i.e. a reactive form of political consciousness and agency characteristic of societies with assimilationist policies and in which populist-racist movements have considerable political influence (the *Front National* in France and the Progress Party in Denmark). In the French case one might add the importance of continued neo-colonial relations of dominance in creating reactive trans-ethnic solidarities among culturally close groups with roots in the Mahgreb.

But we believe there is more to the contrasts between the Swedish and the French and Danish political situations than can be explained by a forced reaction to authoritarian state policies and post-colonial strategies of domination. We would argue that, as a dominant ideology for structuring ethnic relations, multiculturalism contains a fragmentary dynamic which, when its discourse is internalized by 'ethnic élites', may lead to political impotence. This may even go some way towards providing an explanation for the transformation from a 'tolerant' multiculturalism into its reflected image of an authoritarian and intolerant new cultural racism. From this perspective it might be helpful to compare the development of Swedish multiculturalism with that of Britain.

In Sweden 'equality' is largely believed to have come about through the agency of popular enlightenment and high moral standards among the national community, i.e. 'a tolerant public opinion' (see Westin 1987), in combination with a just construction of the ramified social-democratic welfare edifice *per se*. This has rationalized the conspicuous absence of any legislation that could possibly hamper powerful corporate interest groups, such as unions and employers' associations (see Chapter 6). Britain, by contrast, has the most extensive anti-racist and anti-discrimination legislation in Europe.

That actual policy measures in Sweden have tended to disregard matters of racism and discrimination could probably also be related to the fact that the large Finnish group has been one

of the prime moving forces behind the construction of Swedish multiculturalism. Its political claims have centred around language, separate educational facilities for ethnics and a more narrow definition of 'culture'. The importance in Britain of anti-racist and anti-discrimination measures (no matter how much their actual forms have been criticized by black and left-wing radicals) cannot, however, be understood without reference to the presence of a large black population (including Asians) with an immediate background in the former British colonies being exposed to blatant exploitation, discrimination and racism within Britain. This meant, at least during the 1970s, that 'race' and not 'culture' was predestined to dominate public discourses; actual legislation cannot be comprehended without referring to the formation of broader forms of black consciousness and black political struggle, articulated 'outside' as well as 'inside' the institutional sphere of society.

The canonization of 'multiculturalism' as a dominant discourse in the British context appears, however, in the name of tolerance to have contributed to the production of a particularism which, during the 1980s, may have tended to undermine broad forms of political consciousness and trans-ethnic struggles. Lamenting what he currently sees as a fragmentation of the political scene in Britain, Gilroy (1990) discusses 'roots radicalism' as a type of leftist variant of multiculturalism which, by forging radical demands into inverted reflections of authoritarian populist ideologies (such as those of Powell and Le Pen) which contain àn exclusivist imagined national community, create a fragmented multitude of separate 'ethnic cultures'. In other words, it produces a movement towards a conception of 'cultural differences as fixed, solid almost biological properties' which has been 'amplified and reflected politically in special state policy and provisions for "ethnic minorities"' (Gilroy 1987: 39). In the spirit of this type of radical roots ideology, 'a variety of pseudo-pluralism has been fostered in which a culturally defined ethnic particularity has become the basis of political association' (ibid.).

In this type of situation (which exists in both Sweden and Britain) in which, in the name of 'multiculturalism', 'culture' becomes an increasingly important ideological battleground (Wallerstein 1990) and minorities themselves tend to argue in the static terms of 'ethnic absolutism' or 'roots radicalist'

nostalgia, a reconsideration of fixed positions is essential. We must understand and present the cultural 'not as an intrinsic property of ethnic particularity but as a mediating space between agents and structures in which their reciprocal dependency is created and secured' (Gilroy 1987: 16). The attention must be displaced from today's predominant focus on what narrowly defined cultural elements or particular ethnic identities should be allowed and cultivated to the question of what kind of *agency* we should be 'multi' about in a trans-ethnic society.[6]

What 'agency' should we be 'multi' about?

The kind of 'pragmatic shift' in Swedish institutional practice we refer to above is connected with restructured relationships between state, market and organizations. We discuss this problematic in terms of the type of change in which day-to-day matters of 'service-production', cultural monitoring and social control are successively transferred from the central state to more flexible free-floating corporations and to the agency of the invisible hand of the 'market'. But, as the concluding report of the large government-sponsored study on power and democracy in Sweden (SOU 1990/44) argues,[7] the present decomposition of the corporatist 'Swedish model' also embodies important general processes of individualization, the growth of new social networks and spontaneous local initiatives. It represents a tremendous individual and collective competence to deal with local matters through channels other than large corporate bodies (ibid.).

This is almost an assertion of a 'self-production of society', i.e. the kind of perspective associated with the so-called 'new social movements' theory as developed, for example, by Alain Touraine (1977) and Alberto Melucci (1980, 1989). However, very different political conclusions can be drawn from these basic premises depending on the overall theoretical orientation of the discourse within which they are articulated.

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6. See also Ornbrant's (1990) critical reassesment of the public debate in Sweden on the multicultural political objective of 'freedom of choice'.
7. The wider more comprehensive research project of which the present work is also a part.

Nomads of the present

What is new and different about 'contemporary social movements' (such as the peace movement, the ecology movement, the contemporary feminist movement, the youth movement, anti-racist movements, and contemporary regional and ethnic movements) is, according to Melucci (1989), that they are not directly involved in struggles focused on production and distribution of material goods and resources. Instead they are concerned with debates about symbolic resources. Moreover, participation in movements is no longer simply a means to an end; it is considered a goal in itself, in that the participants practice in the present the social changes they seek for the future. They are concerned with the immediate issues of the present and are no longer driven by a comprehensive vision of some future order. Neither are these movements concerned with building up powerful organizations. Instead of harbouring ambitions to take over political or administrative control, they are oriented towards 'control of a field of autonomy or independence *vis-à-vis* the system' (Melucci 1980: 220). Contemporary social movements are submerged into the 'prepolitical' terrains of everyday life. These, in the contingency of a stress on individual needs, collective identity and part-time membership, constitute the invisible laboratories within which new experiences are invented. In these laboratories elements of everyday life are mixed, developed and tested, reality is given new names and people can develop alternative experiences of time, space and inter-personal relations.

When understood in this sense, contemporary social movements represent 'strategies directed towards the self-defence and democratization of the field of reproduction regarded as an end in itself' (Peterson 1987: 118). They are understood as representing 'alternative ways of interpreting the norms and institutionalizing the cultural model of the present' (ibid.). They are directed towards 'the reappropriation of identity and the creation of new collective identities'. This does not mean, however, that they are without effects on the larger social system. On the contrary, as Peterson (1989: 426) argues, Melucci tends to represent contemporary social movements as providing an extensive and functional democratic modernization process. Social movement activists are 'nomads of the

present'. 'Without a vision for an alternative societal order they wander the terrain of the existing societal order offering tentative alternatives within its framework. Rather than being subversive, their alternatives oil the machinery of the existing societal order, liberating the state from its incapabilities in dealing with the inherent dilemmas of "complex society"' (ibid.).

Ultimately, according to Melucci (ibid.), the social changes generated by contemporary social movements are functionally necessary for the continued existence of our present-day society, in which the state, in its capacity as a unitary agent of intervention and action, has dissolved. 'It has been replaced, from above, by a tightly interdependent system of transnational relationships, as well as subdivided, from below, into a multiplicity of partial governments, which are defined both by their own systems of representation and decision-making, and by an ensemble of interwoven organizations which combine inextricably the public and private' (ibid.: 171). Within the framework of this complex system, contemporary social movements play an irreplaceable role in mobilizing individual action resources. These are necessary to make the system's highly differentiated, organizational, informational and decision-making networks function. Collective action 'affects the dominant institutions by modernizing their cultural outlook and procedures, as well as by selecting new élites; but it also raises questions that transcend the logic of instrumental effectiveness and decision-making by anonymous and impersonal organizations of power' (ibid.: 12). Contemporary social movements, Melucci (ibid.) asserts, 'stimulate radical questions about the ends of personal and social life and, in so doing, they warn of the crucial problems facing complex societies'.

Melucci refuses to incorporate any notion of social class into his overtly optimistic modernization framework; he regards 'class' (Melucci 1989: 187) as somewhat redundant to an analysis of contemporary popular struggles in 'complex societies'. His position seems to fit in rather neatly with his commitment to the intellectual heritage of Touraine's (1969) 'post-industrial society' and to Parsons's conception of 'system', both of which do without a structurally grounded critique of capitalism or understanding of differentiated class interests and complex antagonisms based on a societal division of labour and its

contingent power structures. He pays practically no attention to the pervasive social marginalization embodied in contemporary centralization-decentralization processes in the world-system, of which the decomposition of the corporatist welfare state is a central structural contingency. This tends to affiliate his intellectual project with current new liberal and conservative ideologies that emphasize 'informal networks', local 'self help' and 'the little community'. In line with this logic, his rather idealizing discourse on contemporary ethnic movements (see Melucci 1989: 89ff.) is at the forefront of a new and growing liberal enthusiasm for a strong, self-contained and proud ethnic community (cf. Gilroy 1990: 79). This is not entirely negative, but may serve the sorts of multicultural discourses and guiding institutional practices that create cheap, self-reproducing but highly monitored labour reserves in Western Europe's urban conglomerations (including Sweden) and which function to legitimate the continued structuring and reproduction of a stratified cultural division of labour under post-modern conditions.

Rebellious mini-politics

Paul Gilroy (1987) is one of the few people who have explicitly endeavoured to carry Melucci's perspective on contemporary social movements into the academic terrain of 'race' or 'ethnic relations'. Like Melucci, Gilroy's concern with contemporary movements is directed primarily towards the democratization of the field of reproduction as an end in itself. But, as conceptualized in Gilroy's focus on the experiences of marginalized black youth in Britain's inner cities, the wider political implications of his project suggest a kind of anarcho-leftist reflection of Melucci's liberal modernization scheme. In place of Melucci's overall functionalist Parsonian system, we end up with a fragmentary 'life-world' functionalism restricted to the framework of an idealized black local community.

With black 'expressive culture' as the pivotal point and the trans-continental 'black diaspora' as the wider frame of reference, Gilroy argues that collective memories of historical repression and forms of resistance represent a shared knowledge which can be mobilized in modern urban social movements.

Central to Gilroy's concern is the notion of 'community'. Referring to Calhoun's (1982) study of the complex meaning of class during the first industrial revolution, he stresses the importance of community and territoriality in giving the early working-class movement an inherently radical character based on local identification and multi-stranded relationships. This contrasts markedly with the later phase of Fordist industrialism and the formation of large-scale labour movements which, in losing their sense of community, became dominated by reformist single purpose trade unions which were far more institutionalized and integrated into corporate state politics.

In an increasingly differentiated post-industrial class structure, Gilroy (1987) argues, the popular basis for contemporary urban social movements is first and foremost the urban un- or underemployed black population. From their marginalized position in the class structure and using raw material from populations elsewhere in the black diaspora, they produce 'new definitions of what it means to be black' (ibid.: 13) which become articulated in complex, dynamic patterns of 'syncretism' (see Chapter 5). These are seen as fusing 'traditional Punjabi and Bengali music with Hip Hop, Soul and House' (like Soul and, before it, Ethiopian Reggae), in ways that circulate a 'new sense of what it means to be British' (Gilroy 1989: 125). Like the early working class their identity becomes a composite one of 'community' and shared territory, rather than of simply 'class' (Gilroy 1987). This sense of 'community' is constituted in and articulated through a shared resistance to the intrusion and claims of a modern capitalist state to manage the sphere of reproduction. It challenges profoundly the logic of capitalist wage labour. It may even, on the basis of a common locally based experience of the urban underclass, override major enforced ethnic/national identifications. Through shared rituals of 'white' and 'black' (like, for example, the early Rock against Racism movement) wider trans-racial/trans-ethnic loyalties may be constituted.[8]

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8. In this aspect Gilroy's notion of 'syncretic culture' draws on the approach to interracial cultural studies represented by, for example, Dick Hebdige (1983), Simon Jones (1988) and Roger Hewitt 1988). See also Aleksandra Ålund's discussion in Chapter 5. Gilroy's concern is, however, primarily with 'syncretism' as reflected in the transnational black diaspora and only more marginally with black-white relations in Britain.

These complex processes of creating a local identity contrast sharply with Gilroy's (1987, 1990) depiction of Britain's mainstream political life. In the context of what has also become a general identity crisis among the white British working class, the Labour Party has conceded to the persuasive and vote bearing cult of 'the nation', from which any positive notion of black identity is excluded. The tendency shown by the new racism and the political right to regard cultures as fixed and exclusive entities with impermeable boundaries between them has blended with the obsession of left-wing multiculturalism with 'ethnic identity' to such an extent that what was once a broad anti-racist 'movement' is now completely fragmented (Gilroy 1990). Entrenched in their neat and warm local administration offices, professional left-wing protagonists of anti-racist policies have isolated themselves from the everyday alternatives of urban social movements; their actual administrative practices in the name of 'anti-racism' tend to reinforce the very ideologies they seek to challenge (Gilroy 1987: 25, 114ff., 1990). Official leftist discourses mainly regard racism as an expression of individual attitudes and of more spectacular, but marginal, forms of street level proto-fascist violence. This glosses over a pervasive racism becoming a basic structural feature of British society, one that permeates the societal division of labour as well as mainstream political discourses. Black professionals who find their way into the administration invariably fall victim to the fragmenting and depoliticizing logic of dominant discourses.

Contemporary urban social movements in Britain's inner cities are represented here as the concrete manifestations of the anti-racism of everyday life. But, Gilroy argues, the new syncretic cultures of the black diaspora are more than simply 'anti-racist'; they are the genuine and concrete anti-capitalist seeds of a new urban order. Depicting a scene reminiscent of André Gorz's (1980) vision of a post-industrial era without a proletariat, Gilroy seems ultimately to envisage a kind of international league of autonomous communities turning their backs on capital and the capitalist state. In a situation in which any attempt to bring a broader anti-racist movement onto the terrain of state institutions is seen to be blocked by the co-optation of left-wing professionals, and in which official 'multiculturalism' faces the fragmenting effects of its articula-

tion with a new populist-authoritarian cultural racism and a narcissistic 'roots radicalism', Gilroy (1987, 1989, 1990) puts his political faith entirely in the new hybrid forms of expressive youth culture. These he sees as contingent on the formation of 'a social movement of urban youth which already has a distinct political ideology'. Gilroy (1989: 125) describes this as 'a utopian extension of the boundaries of politics', a 'powerful cultural formation' and an alternative public sphere which may offer a 'significant alternative to the misery of hard drugs and the radical powerlessness of inner urban life'. These processes (according to Gilroy 1990: 83) will rest on a decentralized and essentially defensive strategy of local communities which will probably be 'unable to make the transition to more stable totalizing forms of politics'. But, Gilroy (ibid.) concludes, we still face the challenge of linking immediate 'local concerns together across the international division of labour, transcending national boundaries, turning our back on the state and using all the means at our disposal to build a radical, democratic movement of civil society'.

Gilroy's analysis of the overall British political scene represents an informed deconstruction of a complex discursive formation, which might even (as the references above suggest) inspire a more penetrating and critical analysis of the paradoxes of 'multi-culturalism' in Sweden than is usually seen in this country. His conception of 'syncretic culture' represents an unusually exciting attempt to visualize concrete everyday forms of anti-racist and trans-ethnic agency. The strategic horizon of his political discourse appears, however, to be limited to that of a 'rebellious mini-politics' (Cohen 1980) constantly in danger of being marginalized and sectarianized. We are thus confronted with the type of radical left culturalist perspective of the research tradition that developed in Britain in the footsteps of Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall (Karlsson 1990). 'It cultivates in a vivid way the well-known dual message that human beings create their reality themselves, but not always under conditions which we have ourselves chosen or which we can control' (Karlsson 1990). 'But this perspective easily runs amok', Karlsson (ibid.) warns us, 'if the former, the creative self-production, is over-accentuated to the cost of the latter, i.e. structural conditions'.

While Gilroy definitely transcends the unidimensional and overtly conspiratorial perception of the state characteristic of much of the CCCS's (the former Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham) approach to race relations (see, for example, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies 1986), in the last instance his analysis (despite its obvious sophistication) nevertheless ends up by reifying the state as apart from or external to 'civil society'. And though Gilroy (1990: 72) stresses the need to wage a 'war of position... inside the institutions of the state', the absence of a proper structural perspective prevents him from strategically analysing the actual contradictory and differentiated character of the modern state. His discourse also confirms rather than transcends the lack of communication between allegedly 'progressive' agents 'inside' the state-institutions and the everyday agency of local communities, which he sees as the real cause behind the absence of any pervasive and broadly anti-racist policy of democratization in Britain. His retreat into the culturalist position of an autonomous black public sphere turning its back on the state may be symptomatic of the tough political climate of a Thatcherite and post-Thatcherite 'multi-racist' Britain (Cohen 1987). But as an overall political strategy it is in reality defeatist and marginalizing; it can hardly be recommended as a recipe for restructuring contemporary 'ethnic politics' in Sweden. Following such lines would make us prone to Habermas's (1981: 14) critique of the 'young conservatives' who 'remove into the sphere of the far-away and the archaic the spontaneous powers of imagination, self-experience and emotion'.

The complexity of democratization

In discussing the strategic options of social movements from a wider structural perspective, it might be productive to reconsider Nicos Poulantzas's (1980) warning that any movement that limits itself entirely to struggle 'from without' is doomed to marginality. As it has always been for the labour movement in gaining and safeguarding the results of battles in 'the sphere of production', systemic changes in the structure and practices of state apparatuses are indispensable if the cultural, social and political claims of popular social movements are to be achieved and consolidated and if 'civil society' is to succeed in democra-

tizing the sphere of reproduction. Hence, the state should neither be abolished nor ignored, but continuously changed and restructured to maximize the effects of a plurality of democratic grassroots agency, 'outside', 'within' and through its institutions. This change requires social movements to occupy the terrain of the state's institutions. It demands the ability (based on a complex deconstructive understanding of the multifarious web of power articulating the strategies of classes, strata, composite social movements and other social agents) to enter the alliances that cross the increasingly blurred boundaries between 'state' and 'civil' society which characterize the modern capitalist state. Poulantzas's argument still contains significant insights. Yet, in view of the processes of centralization-decentralization, globalization-localization currently pervading the world system, these insights ought to be both reconsidered *and* transcended.

Seen from our rather northern Swedish position of a 'world system' under profound restructuration, the end of the 1980s represented a crucial juncture. The most conspicuous manifestation of this was the fact that Sweden's capital investments in the European Community rose so high that they challenged the importance of economic giants like Japan and the United States. When seen from a Swedish national perspective, however, this enormous expansionism represents a major economic backlash. Through the agency of this so-called 'economic crisis' Swedish capital is now (in the beginning of the 1990s) rapidly propelling the country into the 'new Europe without borders' of which it will, without much doubt, shortly become a fully integrated part (see also Lindquist 1990). Inundated with repetitive appeals to its 'crisis consciousness' from employers and the right wing of the social democratic political élite, the working class has become iron-fistedly disciplined. Faced with rising unemployment rates from mid-1990 and humiliated by having had to swallow one bitter 'packet' of 'crisis measures' after the other, the trade union movement has been forced onto the defensive.

This development has brought inherent cleavages in the labour movement and in the social democratic party out into the open: between 'the party' and 'the movement', between 'right' and 'left' within the party, between union bureaucracy and union grassroots, and between more or less privileged

sections of a formerly disciplined and united trade union movement with a once unusual degree of solidarity between its different constituent parts. The so-called 'war of the roses' (the symbol of the Swedish labour movement is a red rose) between the party élite and the central unions, which ritualistically continued throughout the 1980s, more or less petered out in the winter of 1991. At this moment, while social democracy was taking stock of its worst electoral ratings in the polls for more than 30 years, the central association of Swedish employers officially confirmed 'the end of organized capitalism' by withdrawing its representation from a wide range of state committees.

The fragmenting of a formerly united trade unionism and the 'great compromise' between capital and labour and the corporate structures of decision-making upon which the social-democratic welfare state was built are resulting from the increasing obstacles met by conventional strategies to 'defend the welfare state'. This is being manifested, step by step, in the ramification of new processes of social and economic marginalization.[9] However, important processes of offensive redefinition are also at present being articulated. These may give birth to new trans-ethnic alliances (locally as well as nationally) and to a deliberate reorientation in the direction of an active struggle for a democratic *welfare society* based on local democracy and a strong civil society. We would phrase this problematic in the language of a utopian proposition of the concrete and the pragmatic. We would argue that the options for a reconstructed left to lead 'pre-political' trans-ethnic strategies (criss-crossing the boundaries between 'civil society' and 'the state') for the democratization of local and everyday contexts of reproduction *and* production (of which reality already abounds with concrete examples) will be contingent on a plurality of explicitly political and organized trans-ethnic *and* trans-national struggles ('outside', 'within' and 'through' the state) for the democratization of the state (of which the examples are not as abundant or conspicuous, but nevertheless incipient).[10]

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9. For a complex analysis of current problems of Swedish welfare state policies, see Åberg (1991).
10. Associated with Peterson's (1987: 119) discussion of strategies for 'the democratization of the field of reproduction as a means towards the democratization of the state'.

Processes of fragmentation and reorientation have now also been articulated in the more peripheral realms of the state. In Chapter 6 we argue that this implies that the bars of the 'iron-cage' of the corporatist ordering process- within which the agency of Swedish immigrant organizations have tended to be contained in the name of 'multiculturalism' - have become increasingly corroded. From 1985 an ongoing restructuring of the Swedish administration of ethnic relations increasingly set immigrants and ethnics 'free' to develop alternative forms of agency (Chapter 6). The new 'freedom' may be in jeopardy, however, for it is situated within the complex emerging plurality of decentralized ethnicizing discourses on 'culture' and is contingent on the current tendency to merge 'multiculturalism' with cultural racism and, not least, the fragmenting dynamics of 'ethnic absolutism' and 'roots radicalism' presently being articulated as a dominant political discourse among the minorities themselves.

It is thus pertinent for ethnic minorities to scrutinize the nature of their discourses and political practice. This is especially important in a situation where 'culture' has become a central ideological battleground for the political struggle, not only in the contexts of restructuring national states, but on a global level. It is essential to reconsider fixed positions in a situation in which we, especially in the wake of the war in the Gulf, see the contours of a new ethnic political order coming into being in Europe. We refer to the sombre scenario of a Fortress Europe stuck together with the glue of a new European fundamentalism, i.e. a more comprehensive ideology of an 'imagined community' and a more inclusive 'nationalism' articulated on a European level. This tends to decompose preconditions for bringing about influential forms of democratic trans-ethnic agency. It bolsters the divisive impact of discriminatory and ethnicizing political and administrative practices, both exploiting and propelling reactive and regressive 'new racist' social movements which on the level of the old national states become vehicles for controlling new minorities with immigrant backgrounds (see Chapter 1). In this situation, lest matters of 'European integration' are to be left to the initiative of a new transnational technocracy, broad transnational as well as trans-ethnic interests need to be defined and to find expression in inclusive loyalties, alliances and political movements.

Here a dialogue between the experiences of 'new' popular social movements and those of the 'old' is essential for democratic advances. But the outlook of this dialogue must be more than just European. It must be truly international and global, extending its visions beyond the walls of a self-sufficient Fortress Europe to find new practices dealing with the frightening perspectives of a new permanent 'cold war' between 'north' and 'south': the Pax Americana (cf. Chomsky 1991) rising from the ashes of a 'real socialism' in collapse.

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