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**WHEN COLOUR MATTERS:
RACIAL HATE CRIME AND
EVERYDAY VIOLATIONS IN
SWEDEN**

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to give examples of, explore and discuss how people who belong to the group categorised as “non-white”, with an emphasis on Afroswedens, and depicted as racially different, experience hate crime and everyday harassment. The links of prejudices, stereotypes, colonial notions, everyday racism and violent hate crime is discussed from a Swedish perspective. Theories relating to colonial stereotypes, different kinds of racism, cross-border conflicts, the geography of hate and the consequences of hate crime are used to analyse the material. One key conclusion is that racial categorisations are still important for explaining people’s life possibilities and their vulnerability to hate crime, despite the fact that in present-day Sweden the significance of race is often denied. This denial can lead to hate crime and other forms of racial harassment being neglected by the authorities.

Keywords: hate crime, racist violence, everyday racism, victims, Afroswedens.

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Introduction

And all this about Peter Mangs shooting people in Malmö, you didn't dare go out when it got dark. I didn't go out. I was afraid of being shot. It was awful. Incidents like this make you realise that racism is a reality here. Not to mention what happened in Norway [alluding to mass-murderer Anders Breivik]. I was really scared about what was going on here in Malmö, the fact that this man [Mangs] has been going around shooting people with different backgrounds. How many more people in this town think like him? Who might do the same? Or think that what he did was great? (26-04-2012)

Autumn 2010 saw the culmination of events that had already begun with the new millennium. Since 2003 a number of murders and attempted murders have taken place in Malmö, Sweden's third largest city with some 300,000 inhabitants, mainly directed at people with dark skin, dark hair and some form of migration history. At first the incidents were regarded as separate, isolated attacks. In October 2010 the police issued a press release to the effect that there was a possible connection between several of the inexplicable shootings. The police indicated that they were looking for a suspected serial shooter who fired his gun at night at dark-skinned people in various places in Malmö. In a city in which about 40 per cent of the population have some kind of migration history, this communiqué caused considerable fear among "non-whites". This is illustrated in the above quotation, in which Anna expresses her fear. Finally, in November 2010, the police arrested 39-year-old Peter Mangs, who was later sentenced to life imprisonment.

Despite their brutality, the murders and attempted murders that Mangs was condemned for are not unique, neither in Sweden nor in other countries. In many places open racist violence has been directed towards migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. People with dark phenotypical markers have often been targets for serious, racist violence (e.g. Turpin–Petrosino 2009). The serial shootings in Malmö can also be seen as part of a Swedish historical continuity where racism at different periods has assumed differing expressions and intensity. During the 1990s, a period strongly characterised by a deep depression and social changes, racism became all the more obvious and manifest in Sweden.

The signs at the time were many and varied. One man, John Ausonius, decided in 1991 to "protest" against a demographic change that he could not accept. Like Mangs in

Malmö, Ausonius moved around Stockholm's streets at night and, armed with a laser-sight rifle, shot people with dark phenotypical features. He became known by the general public as "the Laser Man" – referring to the red laser beam that many of his victims said that they saw just before he fired the gun. Stockholm was described as a city in fear during the period that Ausonius wreaked havoc. Ausonius was later arrested and prosecuted for several of the serious racial crimes he had committed. He was sentenced to life imprisonment for one murder and nine attempted murders.

There were also many other indications that the previously slumbering racism had begun to wake up and make itself felt in the public space. A militant racist movement developed, neo-Nazi groups expanded locally in various places in the country, and refugee camps were attacked. This growing Nazi and racist movement, which mainly attracted young people, was known as the White Power Movement – a movement that also had international offshoots (Tamas 2003; Bunar 2007; Hamm 2009; Wigerfelt & Wigerfelt 2013).

Gerard Gbeyo, a young asylum-seeker from the Ivory Coast, was murdered in the autumn of 1995 in Klippan, a small town in southern Sweden. The perpetrators were a 16-year-old and an 18-year-old, neither of whom had any prior connections with Gbeyo. A relatively large group of young people associated with the White Power Movement in the town had for some time openly demonstrated hostility to asylum-seekers and refugees (Wigerfelt & Wigerfelt 2013). The two youths had attacked Gbeyo with a view to harass him due to his black skin. In their view he didn't belong in Klippan or in Sweden. The racist nature of the crime was something that the judges made special reference to when sentencing the two perpetrators to a more severe punishment than normal. The verdict in the so-called Klippan Case became precedential for what came later to be known in Sweden as hate crime (NJA 1996:509; Borgeke & Sterzel 2009). The Swedish legislation on hate crime and the increase in the severity of a sentence is based on the offender's motives for the crime committed. A ruling about increased sentencing was introduced in 1994 for crimes relating to the violation of a person, ethnic group or other group of people on the grounds of race, skin colour, national or ethnic origin, faith or sexual orientation or other similar circumstances (The Penal Code, Chapter 29 2§ p.7).

The above three illustrations of racism in Sweden testify to a racist continuum, a process, that forms a backdrop against which other racist expressions can be discussed and analysed. The cases are examples of violent and extreme expressions of racist hate crime directed against “non-whites” in present-day Sweden, but in this paper we focus on events and expressions that belong to the opposite end of the category spectrum than the illustrations above, namely commonplace, often subtle, expressions of racism and discrimination. Previous research has shown that many hate crime incidents¹, such as vandalism, verbal insults and harassment, are a result of normal daily friction and take place when the perpetrators grasp the opportunities that arise in everyday life (Iganski 2008a; Tiby 2010). Paul Iganski, a British hate crime scholar, argues that these acts are normally not carried out by extremists, are seldom planned and only in exceptional cases involve physical violence. It is not primarily about hate from the perpetrator’s side, but more often to do with bigotry, prejudice and preconceived ideas.

Barbara Perry, an American hate crime scholar, maintains that the concept of hate crime is unsatisfactory and unserviceable from a social science perspective. She points out that acts are carried out that are harmful and based on prejudice, but that are still regarded as legal. Perry claims that there is actually a continuity that stretches from verbal harassment to extreme actions like murder. Even though some of the actions might not be counted as crimes in a judicial sense, they nevertheless constitute serious social problems. In interviews with Native American Indians, Perry realised that the frequency and ubiquity of prejudicial actions like name calling and verbal harassment had long-time damaging effects (Perry 2009a:402). A study of everyday racism and hate crime in a small Swedish town shows similar results. The connection between everyday harassment and physical violence was also obvious in this inquiry (Wigerfelt & Wigerfelt 2013). This insight helped us to see that it was important to not only highlight hate crime, but also what leads up to it.

Listening to victims’ stories is vital in order to access these more subtle expressions of racial prejudice and stereotypes. This has led us to focus on the victim’s experiences as

¹ By hate crime incidents we mean incidents that are reported to the police and/or are experienced by the victims as a hate crime. However, this does not mean that the incidents themselves are crimes in the legal sense (see also the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention, 11:16:2013).

the foreground for the following discussion. Paul Iganski (2008b) is one of several scholars who pleads for a victim-centred perspective in hate crime research, because this acknowledges the significance of the special injury inflicted on the victim through the committed hate crime compared to other crimes. Helen Ahn Lin (2009) draws attention to the fact that researchers seldom ask how racial minorities define, experience and deal with the exposure that follows in the wake of hate crime. Ahn Lin therefore calls for empirical studies of the distinct experiences that the different groups of hate crime victims have. This call is also supported by Perry (2009b), who says that there is a special need for studies that highlight the experiences of people who are categorised as “non-white”, especially those with an African background and exposed to racial hate crime. According to Phyllis Gerstenfeld (2004), there is a lack of knowledge about the subjective experiences of African American victims of hate crimes. This also applies to Afroswedens in Sweden, and is an important reason as to why this study focuses on people belonging to this specific group. Against this background, the purpose of the study is to:

Give examples of, explore and discuss how people belonging to the group that is categorised as “non-white”, with an emphasis on Afroswedens and depicted as racially different, experience being the targets of hate crime and everyday harassment.

According to statistics about 100,000 people in Sweden – the equivalent of one per cent of Sweden’s total population of around 10 million – have been exposed to racial hate crime in Sweden in recent years (The Swedish Crime Survey 2012). In 2012 some 4,000 racial hate crimes were reported to the police, which amounted to about 72 per cent of the total number of hate crime notifications. Of these, one in four hate crimes (approx. 1,000) had an Afrophobic motive. People with an African background, here referred to as Afroswedens, constitute around one per cent (100,000 people) of Sweden’s total population, which means that this group can be regarded as a comparatively vulnerable group. A tendency in the last five years is that the number of reported Afrophobic hate crimes has increased (Brå 2013).

The remaining sections of this paper are arranged as follows. The introduction is followed by a review of the research design and the empirical material on which this study is based. The study’s theoretical points of departure are then presented. One important starting point is that analytical concepts such as race and race categorisations are still essential for explaining people’s life possibilities and people’s vulnerability to hate

crime, despite the common denial of the significance of race in present-day Sweden. The links of prejudice, stereotypes, colonial perceptions, everyday harassment and violent hate crime are discussed from a Swedish perspective. Another important point of departure is the significance of the victims' own experiences, including the consequences of racial hate crime for the targeted individual. However, hate crime does not only affect the individual, but also groups with similar identity positions. In the literature this group influence is described in terms of a ripple effect. The theoretical discussion is followed by a longer account of the results of the study. The paper ends with the conclusions that can be drawn from this study.

Method and material

In this paper we have chosen to study hate crime as an on-going process – as Bowling (1999:158) calls for – rather than as a series of isolated, distinct and separate incidents. Nathan Hall concurs with this (2005:65) and underlines that qualitative research is the best way of studying hate crime as a process because it offers a deeper understanding of hate crime victimisation.

With the aid of semi-structured interviews, the focus is on those who are perceived as “non-white”, with an emphasis on Afroswedens' experiences of racism, discrimination, hate crime and everyday harassment. A total of eight people – four women and four men with an African Swedish background – are in focus and have been interviewed in depth for this paper. The study is also based on interviews with other people who are perceived as having dark skin/dark phenotypical markers.² As the authors have researched racist movements in Sweden in the past, and conducted interviews and had discussions with people who have been targeted due to their phenotypical markers, it can be ascertained that the earlier material largely corresponds with the in-depth interviews undertaken in this study. The informants mainly live in southern Sweden and have been given fictitious names in the text. We have come into contact with these people via the The Pan African Movement for Justice, anti-discrimination offices and personal contacts that have led to other contacts through the snowball method. The

² In the paper we have also made use of legal records and transcripts and have observed a number of court cases.

informants are not representative for all Afroswedens but most certainly for those who have been targets of everyday racism and hate crime incidents.

All the interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. Data was collected and analyses were conducted throughout the research process. The interview guide was revised regularly to suit the varying circumstances; questions were added and some were omitted. The analysis began by listening to the taped interviews and reading the transcriptions and documentation. The interviews were coded according to the central themes that had been identified during the above process, and comparisons of the authors' various interpretations were made. The coding was revised in the light of the researchers' interpretations. Theoretical concepts were then applied in order to analyse the interpretations. This led to new questions, which were addressed by returning to the empirical material – an abductive process that was enhanced by alternating between theory and empirical material (Alvesson & Sköldberg 1994).

Theory and previous research

An important theoretical point of departure in this paper is that different ethnic/racial groups have different prerequisites in Swedish society, with structurally different positions towards the majority population and towards each other. Afroswedens, often referred to as “blacks” in Sweden, is a category that is often exposed to different kinds of everyday harassment and hate crimes.

Ideas about blacks have deep historical roots, both in Sweden and in the western world. Africans have been portrayed as less worthy than whites and, like animals, something that could be bought and sold. Even though it is a long time since Sweden was actually involved in the slave trade, there are many indications that ideas and discourses about blacks being inferior to whites continue to dominate. The western and Swedish colonial legacy lives on and is transferred by adults to young people. It is embedded in representations and structures and expresses itself in the form of everyday insults, harassment and racial violence (Berg 1997; Granqvist 2001; Catomeris 2004). However, during the 20th century Swedes largely regarded themselves as far-sighted, tolerant and non-racial – a self-image that was based on a narrative of a country asso-

ciated with Social Democracy, the Welfare State, neutrality during World War II and solidarity with the so-called Third World (Pred 2000; Sawyer 2000).

This self-image can result in a denial of the existence of racist structures in present-day Swedish society and the significance of racial categorisations (Pred 2000; Hübinette, Hörnfeldt, Farahani & Rosales 2012). Ideas about Swedishness are closely connected to appearance. Despite this, using the word race in Sweden is almost taboo, which have led to difficulties addressing problems such as racism and hate crime. As Goldberg (2006) states, there is an unwillingness in most countries in Europe to recognise that race matters – a form of colour-blindness that assumes that appearance is irrelevant (Bonilla-Silvia 2010). But as we will show in this paper, phenotypical attributes, or visible differences, are still important for explaining people's different life possibilities and circumstances in Swedish society, and also their exposure to hate crime. However, perceptions of difference are a relational process, in that differences are negotiated in society and are therefore not static (see also Osanami Törngren 2011).

As far as we understand it, there is not just one form of racism, but different historical events and processes that have led to different interpretations of the concept. Racism occurs at different social levels and in different contexts (e.g. Brah 1993). Harassment and violence are expressed differently depending on how individuals are categorised. The expressions differ in terms of the practices and discourses that legitimise them. We can talk about a variant of a racist discourse which, according to van Dijk (1993), can be seen as an underlying collection of systematised notions about phenotypes, distinguishing features and power hierarchies. Racism as a discourse creates and preserves notions about skin colour, and that phenotypical features are linked to cultivation, intellectual development and national and cultural affiliation.

Representations of people who are perceived as aliens build on stereotypes that reduce people to a few simple, essential characteristics that are seen as decided by nature. According to Hall (1997), stereotyping is a signifying practice that is central to the representation of racial difference. Another feature that characterises stereotyping is that it symbolically fixes boundaries, and excludes everything which does not belong. As Goldberg (2006:358) writes, "...borders are often constituted through race...".

When boundaries are threatened, when subordinated groups seek to re-define their positions and manifest difference in a way that the perpetrators find unacceptable, the threat must be suppressed by the perpetrators in order to confirm the hegemonic group's supremacy. The tensions between hegemonic and anti-hegemonic actors can culminate in violent exertions to restore the dominance of the former (Perry 2003). It is in this context that hate crime becomes a resource for doing difference and punishing those who test the boundaries. Even though hate crime is vague and difficult to define, which Jacobs and Potter (1998) suggest is reflected in the fact that hate crime lacks any obvious definition, the prejudices towards a certain identifiable group constitute a central element of the criminal act.

Against this background, it can be ascertained that hate crime is not a modern phenomenon, but rather that phenomena that are today counted as hate crime have a long and gloomy history.³ According to Perry (2003), the big difference now is that many of today's hate crimes were previously regarded as social norms. Perry maintains that centuries of structural, institutional discrimination against minorities with regard to race, religion or sexuality have laid the foundation for individual hate crime offences as a continuation of structural and institutional attacks (Perry 2001). In a report Lappalainen (2005) portrays the structural racism that is evident in the Swedish judicial system. His report shows that people with a foreign background run a greater risk of being stopped by the police, searched, arrested, detained and sentenced to prison than native Swedes in a similar situation. The report also shows that people with roots outside Europe have less confidence in the police and courts than native Swedes.

Iganski suggests that a key to the understanding of the hate crime concept is the frequency of the committed act. Understanding the situational context of the event is not only important for an understanding of how and why incidents occur, but also shows the structural context that explains the perpetrators' actions. This connects the macro-level, society's ideological structure, with a micro-level that is constituted by the perpetrators' actions (Iganski 2008a).

³ On the other hand, the concept itself is fairly recent, as is the legislation that in sections of the Act are linked to what is generally known as hate crime. It is therefore only in recent years that this type of crime has been given more attention in research circles (Hall 2005, Chakraborti & Garland 2009).

In this context, the concept of everyday racism becomes analytically serviceable. The concept connects the structural, institutional racism with everyday, routine situations, i.e. structures are linked with everyday attitudes, such as prejudices and behaviour (Essed 1991:2). As everyday racism permeates everyday practices, it embraces the conduct and attitudes that the majority population are socialised in and therefore seldom think about. Everyday racism often has an underlying message – one that emanates from hegemonic ideas about differences and disparities. This can be about some, the Others, not belonging in the community or the geographic space.

Paradoxically, some perpetrators have construed themselves as victims in the processes of demarcation between “Us” and “Them”, which can result in hate crime offences. From the perpetrators’ perspective, violence is legitimate because they are only protecting themselves and “their” territory from the threat of outsiders (Green, Strolovitch & Wong 1998; Ray & Smith 2001; McDevitt, Levin & Bennett 2003). Hate crime can be a way of defending “whiteness” and punishing the Others who have overstepped the boundaries (Perry 2001: 60f). This is why hate crime by definition is an act of exclusion that is partly motivated by the perpetrator wanting to exert power over a given place, such as a neighbourhood or street. The effect of the committed hate crime is that the perpetrator, via the victim, sends a message to members of the target group that they are not welcome (Sumartojo 2004).

Historical notions of race and belonging can thus be integrated with present-day apprehensions about the right to a certain territory (Gadd & Dixon 2009:80). A similar perspective is called “the geography of hate”. This perspective directs special attention to the way in which hate crime can be used to protect social and physical spaces. In contexts like these, hate crime becomes a resource with which to keep the in-group in and the out-group out. Such an analysis is based on the general idea of the social construction of difference (Perry 2009b:67).

Many researchers claim that hate crime does more harm than crimes that are not motivated by hate, not least because it also signals that the group to which the victim belongs should “know its place”. Hate crime can thus be said to have a “ripple effect”,

which means that the crime is transmitted as fear and spatial restrictions within the group. Research shows that compared to victims of a similar crime but without the hate crime motive, some hate crime victims experience long-term psychological damage such as fear, depression, anxiety, panic attacks, a loss of self-confidence and difficulties in sleeping (Levin & McDevitt 1993; Herek, Cogan & Gillis 2002; Lawrence 2003; Hall 2005; Iganski 2008b, 2009). When McDevitt, Balboni, Garcia & Gu (2003) surveyed and compared different victims' experiences and ailments after the crime, it emerged that those who had been subjected to hate crime had more health problems than those who had not been exposed to such crime, and that they found it more difficult to deal with the hate crime offences. Other studies show that victims of hate crime/racial crime display a higher indication of stress (psychological trauma, physical symptoms, fear) compared to other victims of crime (Ehrlich, Larcom & Purvis 1994).

Results and analysis

Does race matter in Sweden today?

As the reported hate crime statistics show, one of the groups that frequently are exposed to racism and hate crime on the basis of their phenotypical markers is that of Afroswedes – people with the identity position black. In an interview study with young blacks living in Sweden (Kalonaityte et al. 2007), the informants said that they were often confronted with stereotyped ideas and prejudices. All those interviewed said that they had experienced racism and hate crime incidents. Other studies (Pred 2000; Sawyer 2000; Motsieola 2003; Schmauch 2006) have also shown that people with black skin in Sweden are subjected to everyday racial harassment and discrimination.

There is a gender dimension in different types of experiences of harassment and racism. One tendency is for boys and young men to experience that they are more often suspected of crime, dangerous or violent behaviour, whereas girls and young women experience that they are often regarded from a sexual perspective as sexually available and/or have no right to refuse sexual invitations (Kalonaityte et al. 2007).

Claiming that race has a role to play in Sweden today is both taboo and normal (e.g. Hübinette et al. 2012). Despite this, there is considerable evidence to suggest that phenotypical markers are important in many people's daily lives in Sweden today. People

with a skin colour other than white feel that these markers distinguish them from the white majority population in a negative way in certain situations. Thomas, who is originally from Gambia and has lived in Sweden for over 30 years, responds to the question of whether race/skin colour means anything in present-day Sweden:

Yes, it does. I inwardly feel that it is an obstacle. Very much so. As black in Sweden. Just because one is black people think that this black person cannot do much or know much. The same applies to the job market. It means that certain things pass you by and go to someone with a lighter skin – white or whatever. This is also evident at work. Even if you are qualified you have to struggle all the more to demonstrate it and have to accept new challenges. You have to show what you can do and what you know. I think that this is something that we have to do more than others (20-03-2013).

Thomas says that he is branded on the basis of the colour of his skin and his cultural background, and that there are perceptions about him coming from a low-status culture. He thinks that this has not changed very much during his 30 years in Sweden. It is not just about feeling vulnerable, but also that Thomas is emotionally affected by others with an African background being harassed; something that he shares with others who have been targeted as a result of belonging to a certain group. It is even more painful to encounter friends' and relatives' stereotypes of Africans that can emerge in some critical situations. He gives an example of a dispute he had with his ex-wife about the upbringing of children in which she made use of stereotypes of Africans:

“You come from Africa, what do you know about bringing up children? You know nothing about how we bring up our children in Sweden”. In unpleasant situations like this these stereotypes about black Africa emerge. Would the same thing have happened if I had been a white African? Would she have said that then? It is not the first time. I have met others who have experienced this when married to or living with someone. These personal and emotional things are really hard to bear mentally. Especially when they come from a close relative. We laugh and live together, and sometimes quarrel, but all of a sudden these kinds of expressions come out (13-03-2013).

The representations and stereotypes/prejudices surrounding race and culture can, especially in difficult situations, form the basis of hate crime and hate crime incidents (e.g. Wigerfelt & Wigerfelt 2013). As Perry argues (2009a), it is much more difficult to distinguish between different kinds of hate crime even though in judicial terms only some of them lead to increased penalties. Even repeated “low-key” hate crime incidents can often lead to serious psychological damage.

Everyday racism and hate crime

As Thomas' story shows, colonial and stereotyped ideas about people with dark skins live on. They are embedded in representations and structures and can be expressed in the form of everyday insults, as well as in forms of racial violence. Colonial notions and racism form the basis, but can sometimes be combined with religious preconceptions, for example about Muslims. Different identities interact intersectionally. Being black, a woman and a Muslim can mean several kinds of stigma. This is what Anna said in an interview:

If I am walking down the street and meet a skinhead, I don't want to have any eye contact with them and just keep on walking. I feel that I just need to be careful and not do anything unexpected. So that I don't make them angry, or do anything that might upset them. But my mother is always vulnerable. She wears a veil and when we are together, talking ... we both have strong personalities and talk in loud voices and she doesn't care what anyone thinks and I sometimes think that she ought to calm down and not draw attention to herself. She often wears trousers and ordinary clothes with her veil, but when she can't be bothered to dress up she wears her abaya, the black cloak, and people spit in front of her and comment on her clothing (22-03-2013).

Being black in an environment in which the majority are white is something that several of the informants find unpleasant, especially when people stare at them. For example, going to a restaurant and being the only black person there made them feel questioned. Tina was born in Somalia but came to Sweden when she was one and a half years of age. She feels safe in Malmö and points to the advantages of being a woman, but says that when travelling in Sweden hotels are places where she can feel vulnerable and questioned: "What is she doing here?"

As a child Tina did not really think about being black. It was only at secondary school and upper secondary school that some of her friends started to joke and call her "negro". Although this "hurt", she decided to try to ignore it, or pretend that she hadn't heard them.

Like Tina, Sara was sometimes called "bloody negro" at school. However, she thought that the nastiest comments were about her hair - comments that became part of her everyday life in school:

"Afrohair. Have you put your fingers in an electric socket?" And "Jackson Five, ha ha ha". All this gave me a complex, because I wanted to have straight hair that you could swing. Like everyone else had. I grew up in a fairly white area, so to speak (26-04-2012).

Now, as adults, Tina and Sara are not personally attacked on the grounds of appearance. Today it is more a question of anger about colleagues and others using disparaging and racist terms or allusions to blacks. They can for example call a chocolate ball a “negro ball” – a name for chocolate balls that was once common in Sweden. When Sara protested against this degrading expression she was told by her colleagues that: “We’ve always said this and it’s in the Pippi (Longstocking) books”.

The word “negro” has strong negative connotations for many Afroswedens, who associate it with whites’ colonial notions about blacks. The word is used frequently in extreme right-wing circles, but is also a common expression in many “ordinary” people’s vocabulary in Sweden today. When confronted about this language, “ordinary” people claim that it only means that a person is black. Even though many blacks point out that this expression is racist, people from the white majority society still insist of their right to use it (Berg 1997; Granqvist 2001; Catomeris 2004). Being continuously exposed to this kind of low-key racism has a very damaging effect on many people. As one person said in an interview: “It’s very draining...you really feel devastated...”

Hate crime as punishment

The people we interviewed did not accept their inferior position, their vulnerability, but in different ways wanted to change the views towards and treatment of people with dark skin. This can take different expressions, such as not remaining silent in the face of verbal abuse and by reporting incidents to the police or the Equality Ombudsman. Other ways include demonstrations and political struggle.

According to Barbara Perry, it is in situations in which subordinated groups seek to redefine their placing in the hierarchy and carry out actions that no longer confirm the hegemonic group’s supremacy that hate crime becomes a resource with which to punish those who test the boundaries (Perry 2003). Patric comes from an African country, but has lived in Malmö for several decades. He is a person who does not think of himself as inferior and is active in associations that are trying to combat racism. An avalanche of hate was released when Patric reported a student association at Lund University – the largest university in southern Sweden. Some students had dressed up as slaves at a party. They had blacked their faces, put ropes around their necks and were sold as

slaves to a white “slave dealer” in an auction. Patric, who got to know about this, reported the incident to the police as “incitement to racial hatred” and condemned the action in the media. After reporting the incident to the police he was subjected to racist comments on various websites, where it was said that he couldn’t take a joke and that there would be reprisals against his family.

One person who “joked” about Patric in a racist way was Stan, aged 45 years and generally known in Malmö as a provocateur who claimed his artistic right to provoke. Stan made a poster containing the words “Our Negro slave has escaped” and a picture of Patric, and displayed it in various public places. The picture was created as a montage, with Patric’s face mounted on the naked torso of Kunta Kinte, with a big chain and leash around his neck. Stan was caught pasting up some of the posters and was later prosecuted for slander and incitement to racial hatred. Stan claimed that the posters should be regarded as works of art. He has a blog where he displays his posters for further dissemination. Stan dismisses criticism of the pictures, among other things as a manifestation of political correctness; a popular concept that right-wing extremist sites also use to dismiss their critics.

Patric says that it is “terrible” to see oneself in chains and has shivers of discomfort and sleeping difficulties. Another problematic dimension is that his children can access the Internet sites and see all the offensive comments and pictures. The entire family has suffered as a result of the threats that Patric has received. The police have not provided any support in this case, although his employer has taken the threats seriously and offered help. “I am perceived as an enslaved African. It is a disparaging and offensive picture and I am depicted as an animal.”

When Patric first contacted the police the threats to his family were not taken seriously, and he does not consider that the police took any action to make him and his family feel safe. Patric feels that he as an African Swede has not been taken as seriously as a white Swede would have been if they had contacted the police. Patric has lost all confidence in the police:

I don’t think that they give a toss about me and my family. They just don’t. The police are way down on my list when it comes to confidence. They have done nothing to make me feel

safe. I am anxious for myself and my family. They [the net haters] know where I live and have said that they will kill me. I have no confidence in the system – the politicians, the police authorities. When they see me as an African Swede I think that they do not regard me in the same way as they would a white Swede. It's just like the comments one often hears: "Go home to Africa", regardless of how long me and my children have lived here, we are not seen as part of Swedish society (20-03-2012).

The District Court in Lund and then later the Court of Appeal in Malmö found Stan guilty of slander and incitement to racial hatred and gave him a suspended sentence and a fine as a result of his posters (District Court in Lund Verdict 26-01-2012, Case no. B 3156-11; Skåne and Blekinge Appeal Court Verdict 25-04-2013, Case no. 3468-12). Stan said in the District Court that he did not know why people did not understand the irony and that he had made humorous comments that would make people laugh. Despite the verdicts, Stan has continued his provocations in a variety of contexts.

Even though a couple of years have passed since this incident, Patric still receives hate mail from people he does not know. In one of the emails he received he is depicted as a "slaughterable sub-human". The person also writes that Patric is "Sweden's and the Swedish nation's mortal enemy" who when "the day of reckoning comes the process will be short". On racist Internet sites Patric is still taunted by numerous "jokes" that associate blacks with slavery, criminality and apes. Other racist comments include: "he is part of the reason why in Malmö there is an extensive ethnic cleansing of Swedes". He is called "Negro trickster" and "Negro parasite that should be sent back to Africa on a banana-boat". He is subjected to direct threats: "We will shoot you and your little chimps. We know where you live." The net-haters are anonymous and are difficult to get at. The possibility of being anonymous on the Internet has broken a previously common taboo against extreme views and initiated a normalisation process (Bjurwald 2013:12).

Patric can be regarded as a person who does not accept insults, but who reports them to the police; something that makes him a target of hate crime. Violence and everyday offences against those considered as different, aliens, have long been part of a repertoire that has been used to strengthen positions of social and political superiority. Hate crime becomes a way of highlighting for example whiteness as a sign of privilege. Correspondingly, hate crime is one way in which the Others are reminded of their place. If

they step outside the geographically and politically constructed boundaries of permitted behaviour, they are confronted with reminders of their subordinate status. Whether this is in the form of everyday harassments or brutal violence the message is the same: adapt to the standard determined by the white majority, or risk its wrath (Perry 2001:5).

The crossing of geographical boundaries

The boundaries that are “crossed” can be social and/or racial, as has been described above, or geographical. For many with phenotypically dark features it often means being challenged when crossing the border into Sweden. Several of the informants expressed great discomfort at the prospect of the border crossing. Malmö and Helsingborg are both coastal towns that many arrive at when crossing the border from Denmark. Thomas points to such frontiers as places and situations that he has experienced as most unpleasant:

It is very delicate. One of the most sensitive moments. When you come back from Denmark or from abroad. How you are treated at the border. I have experienced this several times. I arrive with my [white] colleagues after having been in Denmark and I am singled out from the rest. My colleagues get angry and I feel belittled and sad. They ask me to produce identification. “Do you live here?” “Do you speak Swedish?” Lots of people experience the same thing. It’s awful. You are stopped almost every time. It is humiliating (20-03-2013).

Sara also had negative experiences of crossing borders when she travelled with her father as a teenager and they were always stopped:

And my father’s reaction was always to begin shouting, throw down his mobile phone and get really angry. It happened every time. Every time we planned to travel abroad we had to prepare ourselves mentally for it. He was always stopped. Always. And you saw lots of others, Swedes and others, who were not stopped. Who just walked through. But he was stopped because he was black (26-04-2012).

The border in question here is between the two EU countries of Sweden and Denmark, where the idea is that EU citizens should have free mobility. Researchers Sophie Hydén and Anna Lundberg point out that as it is not possible to separate Swedish citizens from people regarded as “unauthorised” in a factual, objective or definite way there is a great danger of people being subjected to intervention as a result of their appearance or ethnic background. For example, this so-called profiling practice can often have discriminatory and hurtful consequences (Hydén & Lundberg 2004).

On Peter's first encounter with Sweden twenty years ago, something happened that he experienced as deeply insulting:

I landed at Arlanda, I arrived there and all the others were white. Everybody went through security control. Three police officers stood there. They said to me: "Stop, wait there". No-one else was stopped, only me. They took me to a room. I asked: "What's wrong? I've got my passport, I have all that is required." So they said: "We have to search you". And I said: "Why?" So they said: "Well, we just have to." And they were really determined. I was very young, I was nervous and I was afraid. Then they said: "Open your bag." I opened my bag, they took out all the clothes and threw them on the floor, and then said to me: "Put them back". So I said: "But it wasn't me who did it." And they said: "Do it anyway." So I did it. Then they said: "Take your clothes off". So I said: "Why?" "Just do it." One of the police officers was a woman, and a man stood there with his pistol. I was really, really frightened. I took off all my clothes and felt so humiliated! And they told me to bend down and open my mouth and put a pen in my mouth and checked my tongue. And I was so humiliated and thought: Is this how they treat people? They didn't do this to anyone else. And it might have been a criminal who walked through, but they didn't think like that, but rather, a black, he must be a criminal, he must be carrying drugs. My first day in Sweden. I was there for an hour before they let me go (20-03-2012).

Michael was involved in an incident at the bridge border crossing between Denmark and Sweden that he experienced as so offensive that he reported the police to the Parliamentary Ombudsman. Michael was stopped by the police and breathalysed. The test was negative but the police asked Michael to get out of the car because they suspected drug- and unlawful driving. All Michael's documentation was in order, however. Michael stumbled when he was pulled out of the car by a policeman and the policeman tripped over him, which made four more policemen rush over and push Michael down to the ground. He was sprayed with a pepper spray and handcuffed. Thrown into the police van, he wasn't allowed to sit down on the seat. Instead he was kept laying on the floor in the van. He was driven off to hospital where he had to undergo two blood tests. One of the tests was a HIV-test. Why they found it necessary to take a HIV-test was never explained to Michael. Instead he thinks that prejudice about blacks and HIV was the underlying motive.

Michael was held in custody overnight without any possibility of phoning his family. According to Michael, from the moment he was arrested and until he was remanded in custody the police acted violently and aggressively, which caused pain and was experienced by him as very abusive. This incident has resulted in Michael now feeling afraid

and stressed whenever he sees a police officer. Michael is convinced that all this happened because he was black: “People just judge a person by his colour” (18-12-2012).

Hate crime and the police

Experiencing that people in responsible positions, such as the police, violate and discriminate in a negative way on the basis of being identified as black leads the victims to doubt the state. A film sequence attracted a lot of attention in 2008 when some policemen, sitting in a police van in Malmö during riots and surrounded by burning cars, swore at the inflamed situation and used expressions like “bloody apes” and “goddam blacks” to describe the rioting youth.

Some research shows the police’s use of derogatory terms about the public (Holdaway 1996; Granér 2004). Holdaway writes that blacks are described in terms of “coon”, “nig-nog” and “nigger” by the British police, and interprets these expressions as attitudes of racial prejudice (Holdaway 1996:78). Other scholars claim that there is a difference between what the police say to the public and what they say about them in their patrol cars (Smith & Gray 1985; Reiner 2000). In an article, Ragnhild Sollund discusses the Norwegian police’s use of derogatory racist comments about ethnic minorities. Her conclusions are that the police’s use of racist expressions can be regarded as an institutional weakness that contributes to police officers being called racists. This in turn means that the police are met with hostility (Sollund 2007).

The concept race profiling is used in Anglo-American research and means that the police use race as a decisive factor to stop and interrogate citizens (Weitzer & Tuch 2002:435). American research shows that racial differences are made in for example police traffic controls. The studies indicate that minorities are stopped, searched and given fines to a greater extent than white people (Petrocelli, Piquero & Smith 2003).

As already mentioned, there is a gender dimension in the experiences one has as black; something that is evident in the above example and substantiated by other studies (Pred 2000; Sawyer 2000; Motsieola 2003; Schmauch 2006; Kalonaityte et al. 2007). Men are more vulnerable in violent situations than women and appear to be more open to being challenged. A classic situation that is often referred to by our male informants,

and where phenotypical markers play an important part, is pubs and restaurants. Peter describes an incident outside a club in Malmö when he approached a guard to ask which kind of music was being played in the club, but was brusquely dismissed:

He pushed me and said “go away”. I said: “Wait a minute, I just asked a simple question so you could give me an answer rather than push me.” He produced his baton and said: “Get out of here, otherwise.” So I said: “Otherwise what?” He then started to hit me. Pang on the arm. Two other guards appeared and hit me all over my body. I started to bleed and then fell down. There were about 100 people there. Not one of them reacted! But two other black guys came running over. And one of them was a guard. I got up and they stopped. They left and I had blood all over me and I phoned the police. And I said: “You must come because I’ve been assaulted.” They said: “No, go away from there. The guards are right. If they say that you can’t go in then you mustn’t go in.” I said: “I don’t want to go in, I’ve been assaulted, can you come?” “No, we don’t have a car, we’re not able to. Just leave.” (20-03-2012).

Peter was beaten by the guards because he had challenged them and thereby tested the boundaries. But it was very rare for the people we interviewed and their friends to report hate crime incidents to the police because they assumed that the police would not do anything about the problem. Some people also witnessed about situations where they had made an attempt to file a complaint to the police, but were met with resistance from the police officer to register the complaint. The general understanding among many blacks in Sweden is that the police do not prioritise this kind of crime. On the contrary, many claim that the police are the ones who single out people as suspects depending on their different phenotypical markers; something that we have also seen in the above examples.

The serial shooter – hate crime as a ripple effect

When serial shooter Peter Mangs, who introduced this paper, was arrested in 2010 suspected of three murders and 15 attempted murders, he denied in interrogations and in court that he was xenophobic or racist. However, the crimes were almost totally directed towards people with a migration background and there were clear elements of racism in his verbal and written statements. Mangs had also sought material from anti-Semitic and conspiratorial environments and was active on racist websites. He was sentenced by both the District Court and the Court of Appeal to life imprisonment. In the Court of Appeal Mangs was convicted for two murders and eight attempted murders. The prosecutors tried to prove that there were racist motives behind Peter Mangs’ crimes, but this was not indicated in the verdict. The court said that it “was clearly no”

coincidence that Peter Mangs' crimes had only been directed towards people with a foreign background. In the Court of Appeal it was established that "more or less all the crimes of which he has been proved guilty are directed towards plaintiffs with a foreign background", although as the motives were not clear enough for Mangs to be convicted of racist hate crime, stricter sentencing was not invoked (Court of Appeal for Skåne and Blekinge Verdict 2013-0425, Case No: B3468-12).

It was in the autumn of 2010 that the police in Malmö publicly announced that a serial shooter was on the loose who appeared to select his victims on the basis of race. This warning created panic in Malmö and there are many narratives about caution and fear. Anna said in an interview that before Peter Mangs was arrested the fear about what the serial shooter might do next was almost the only thing that her friends and family talked about:

One day when I was out with my mother and we were going to collect a friend we waited in the car outside her door. We saw a man who reached for his mobile phone in his jacket pocket and we all screamed. Everyone was on guard and on the lookout and suspected everyone who ... most of all white men. It was awful (22-11-2012).

Going to the cinema required careful consideration and a discussion with parents who did not want her to go. When Anna caught the bus home on an evening she was on her guard, trying to work out where to hide if anything should happen. When she was on the bus she wondered where best to sit to avoid being hit by gunshot. In various newspaper reports many other Malmö inhabitants talked about similar fears during Peter Mangs' shootings.

Mangs' extreme hate crime-like expression clearly signalled to non-whites that they were not welcome in Sweden. In a city like Malmö, where the population composition has changed dramatically in a very short time, and with an increasing population with some kind of migration background, these changes can be perceived as menacing by the majority population. The consequences for Mangs' victims were devastating, but they were also of symbolic significance and impacted a large number of Malmö's inhabitants in a negative way (e.g. Perry 2001, 2003; Sumartojo 2004).

Conclusions

The three Swedish cases used to introduce this paper are extreme examples of hate crime that had dramatic consequences for the victims and were also condemned by the majority. In a rapidly changing society, with a large population mix due to migration, the perpetrators send clear signals to others in the same group that they are not welcome in Sweden. These three cases of hate crime can be interpreted as “geographical hate”. In all three cases the victims were punished for geographically being in the “wrong” territory (Perry 2001, 2003). They had crossed borders and “threatened” the Swedish nation. The perpetrators punish those who cross borders, those who have dark skin and are regarded as culturally and religiously different. Many scholars refer to hate crimes as message crimes that send out clear warnings to all members of the victim’s group to not cross boundaries so that they too end up as victims (Ahn Lin 2009). In order to access the victims’ experiences of the different expressions of racism we have primarily chosen to conduct in-depth interviews. The interviews revealed the entire spectrum of messages – from Peter Mangs who terrorised people he regarded as racially different in an entire city, to Stan who fights his fight using posters and the Internet and hides behind “humour”. In his case it is a “humour” that also sends messages to people with a dark skin colour that they should put up with being portrayed as colonial stereotypes and that they should not report incidents to the police. The individual fear that a person who has been victimised can feel is followed by a collective fear for the entire group or other minority groups (Iganski 2009; Perry 2009b). The spatial influence of hate crime also expresses itself in that people perhaps refuse to go to specific places because they are afraid of being exposed to hate crime (Iganski & Spiridoula Lagou 2009). In connection with for example Peter Mangs’ shootings, many with dark phenotypical attributes were afraid to go out and thereby had their lives curtailed. But such deeds also warn the majority society about the consequences that will result from a multicultural society. Extreme perpetrators play a significant role in terms of the fear that is spread by terror and threats. These deeds have a ripple effect, in that many people are affected and their movements limited, which we tried to illustrate in the introductory cases.

The majority of hate crime incidents that take place are of a more commonplace nature and are on a completely different scale, even if the extreme cases are those that attract

more attention. Many perpetrators are people who react to different situations in normal life, and act out values and attitudes that permeate the social structure (Iganski 2008b). Chance also plays a role in everyday events when a crime is committed. The perpetrator often has to make a quick decision in a certain situation (Iganski 2008b:3ff; Felson & Boba 2010). Hate crime incidents can sometimes be triggered by some kind of conflict, which can then turn into hate crimes (Iganski 2008b:5). As our interviews show prejudices and stereotypes, often based on colonial notions, can lead to verbal harassment and physical violence where power relations are of great importance. Racist expressions and harassment are not always counted as hate crime in a legal sense; although the lines can sometimes be very thin. Nevertheless, these racist expressions can be extremely offensive and painful for those who have been targeted, and can erode the victims' self-confidence and reduce their possibilities of living a good life. This is why it has been important for the people we have interviewed in this study to talk about their experiences of racism regardless of whether they are judicially classed as hate crime or not.

Racist harassment can hit hard, even if this is not the prime motive of the offender. In our study we have given examples of how people make use of stereotypes of Africans or dark-skinned people that are activated in situations of stress. Everyday racist violations are also part of the hate crime spectrum. Violence does not just include physical violence, but can also be symbolic and systemic. Symbolic violence is embedded in the language, whereas systemic violence is part of the social structures (Zizek 2008). Everything from verbal harassment, symbolic violence, to physical violence can be included as hate crime and ought to be regarded as part of that chain. As the interview with Anna shows, prejudices about "non-whites" are sometimes combined with religious and gender-based fallacies. In these cases, different identity positions work intersectionally.

We support the argument that in general hate crimes do more damage than other crimes of a similar nature. This is clear when it comes to psychological and emotional effects. Peter Lawrence (2006) contends that victims of racial hate crime experience the attacks as a kind of racial stigmatisation and that an incident has a clear message for the victim's group that they are of marginal worth. It is the expressed values of the perpetrator that hurt and damage. It is thus the perpetrators' values that are made evi-

dent by their actions that attack the victim's identity and do the most damage (Iganski & Spiradoula Lagou 2009).

Peter Mangs' actions have caused death, but have also terrorised and in some cases changed the lives of the victims by a fear that never disappears. We have also seen how Patric was fearful about how he could protect himself and his children against people who expressed their hate via the Internet. Fear becomes a constant and unavoidable part of life – a form of victimisation. This fear can also mean that one is prevented from reporting incidents and from receiving support. A fear of not being believed, or of being subjected to reprisals. Anger that the police and the judicial system did not help, but instead sometimes acted in the opposite way (e.g. Dunn 2009). Our results are in line with earlier research (Levin & McDevitt 1993; Ehrlich, Larcom & Purvis 1994; Herek, Cogan & Gillis 2002; Lawrence 2003; McDevitt, Balboni, Garcia & Gu 2003; Hall 2005; Iganski 2008b, 2009), but have an emphasis on how fear limits lives.

To summarise, we suggest that four distinct types of consequences are associated with hate crime: damage to the initial victim, damage to the victim's group, damage to other targeted groups and damage to social norms and values. Hate crime can also be seen in terms of crimes against human rights, in that such actions systematically erode human dignity (e.g. Iganski 2009; Perry & Olsson 2009).

In the study the group “non-white”, especially Afroswedens, is in the foreground. According to Craig-Henderson & Sloan (2003), victims of racist hate crimes, like Afroswedens, are often characterised as belonging to extremely negative stereotype groups and as part of a visible minority. Even though the Swedish self-image often leads to the denial of racist structures in society, and the fact that race is important, our material shows that these standpoints are incorrect. Race is done and reproduced by for example using an abundance of words and expressions in more or less denigrating ways, such as when a “white” calls a “non-white” person a “negro”. The “non-white” person is racialised and is thereby placed in a subordinate position to the “white” person, who assumes a superior position. The language creates the subordination. The word “negro” is used in Sweden to denote black people – a term that many of them regard as insulting and racist – while too many white Swedes assert their rights to speak as they

have “always done” (Hübinette et al. 2012). Ideas about race influence the exposure to hate crime as well as social position. In other words, race cannot be disregarded in today’s Swedish society. However, perceptions of difference, such as visible differences, are part of a relational process, in that differences are negotiated in society and are in no way static. This is also why prevailing situations and relations can be changed.

The denial of racist structures and the importance of notions about race can also lead to hate crime and other forms of racial harassment not being attended to in an appropriate way by the authorities. The different empirical examples in our study deal with black people’s experiences of abusive and offensive encounters with the police. They have all understood that they are singled out and treated harshly due to their phenotypical markers; an action that has led them to doubt the state’s ability to deal with them in a just and equitable way. Such actions also have a gender dimension. In the interviews it emerged that young “non-white” men experience that they are often suspected of criminal, dangerous or violent behaviour. Our informants expressed a lack of trust in the police. The people we interviewed seldom report hate crime incidents to the police because they assume beforehand that the police will not do anything about them. Rather, many of them said that the police are those who single out people as suspects due to their phenotypical markers, which suggests that in many cases racist discourses and structural/institutional racism affect police work. This is a serious problem, because both the reporting and investigation of hate crime is based on victims having confidence in the police. It is most probable that a large number of cases of Afrophobic hate crimes are not reported at all, even though the number of reported cases has increased in recent years. It can also indicate that the number of hate crimes against the group Afroswedens has increased.

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