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## A Challenge to Multiculturalism : Everyday Racism and Hate Crime in a Small Swedish Town

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### Abstract

At times of economic decline, such as the deep economic crisis experienced in many European countries today, vulnerable groups can clash with other vulnerable groups. These clashes can be exploited by different political movements and individuals, who point to the Other and the multicultural society as the cause of society's problems. This can result in intensified everyday racial violations, and an increase in violent hate crimes. A case study, from a small Swedish town in which an asylum seeker from The Ivory Coast was stabbed to death by extreme right-wing youths, illustrates how racist hate crime relates to discrimination and everyday harassment. The murder became a test case for what in Sweden later became known as hate crime.

■ **Key words** : multicultural society, economic crisis, everyday racist harassment, racial violence, hate crimes

### Introduction

Today, many countries in Europe and other parts of the world are facing the worst economic crisis since the 1930s. As the economic downturn has deepened and unemployment has risen, the long-standing idea of the inherent value of migration has been challenged. There is thus a danger that migrants will be increasingly singled out as scapegoats by extreme right-wing organizations and also be exposed to general discrimination and everyday racism. So far Sweden has remained relatively

unscathed, although in the early 1990s the country was severely affected by a deep economic crisis. This crisis was accompanied by an increase in violent racist attacks against foreigners and the multicultural society. The danger is that a similar development will take place in the European countries that are most affected by today's economic crisis. The lessons learned in Sweden can therefore be of great importance, especially as all the signs indicate that in several countries the crisis has resulted in a demonization of asylum-seekers and foreigners (Bevelander & Taras, 2013; Bevelander & Petersson, 2014; Fekete, 2012).

In 1995, Gerard Gbeyo, a young asylum seeker from The Ivory Coast, was stabbed to death in Klippan, a small rural town of about 16,000 inhabitants in southern Sweden. Gbeyo, who did not live in the town, had travelled there by bus with a view to staying overnight with a friend. When he got off the bus, late at night, he was spotted by a group of extreme right-wing youths. Two of the young men in the group, a 16-year-old and an 18-year-old, followed him. They talked about "whipping a nigger." As they followed him the 16-year-old donned an armband decorated with a swastika. He also carried a knife, with which he stabbed Gbeyo in the chest when the two youths caught up with him (Verdict of the District Court in Klippan, 960322 Nr DB 57).

The young men had attacked Gerard Gbeyo because he was black and for the reason that the perpetrators thought that he did not belong in Klippan or in Sweden. This was something that the judicial system took particular note of when passing a more severe sentence than normal due to the racist motive. The verdict in the so-called Klippan affair became a test case for what later became known in Sweden as "hate crime" (Borgeke & Sterzel, 2009).

The murder, and the subsequent violent events, such as stabbings and shootings, was carried out in an atmosphere in which hostility towards those who represented foreigners was widespread among the youths. But even the prejudices, attitudes and actions of adults played an important role in this environment, especially the xenophobic, racist politicians with seats on the local council (Karapin, 1999). Just as

Koopmanns (1996) contends, many hate crimes are committed within a political structure of possibilities, where perceived acceptance from the majority society is important. Green et al (2001) argue that more empirical research is needed on factors that lead to prejudice and everyday racism developing into violent hate crimes in certain situations. Our aim is therefore to discuss the factors that contribute to an increase in everyday racism and the manifestation of hate crimes in a local context. Based on interviews with perpetrators and victims, we show how hate crime and racism can be framed in brutal acts of violence and in everyday racist harassment and analyze the relationship between them. Even though the local context is in focus, we also briefly discuss how the hate crime legislation originated in Sweden and in which context.

In the article we present an empirical example of how racial violence relates to prejudices, discrimination, and everyday harassment in a local context and discuss if structural instabilities such as economic crisis can intensify everyday racism and hate crime. In addition, theories relating to hate crime and racism are discussed, together with their relevance in explaining the reasons for manifested racial hate crime. Klippan has been chosen as a case because the murder of Gbeyo became precedential for the then relatively new hate crime legislation in Sweden and because in the media Klippan became synonymous with racism and right-wing extremism. However, as in other case studies, there are limitations to just how much can be generalized. Despite this, the lessons learned from the Klippan case regarding the connection between everyday harassment and physical racist violence can also be used in other contexts. This is especially relevant today, with many countries experiencing economic crises and growing extreme right-wing movements.

The context for hate crime as a legal term is thus linked to social development (Ray & Smith, 2001). Hate crime is not a modern phenomenon, although the concept itself and the legislation that is associated with what in recent years has been classed as hate crime are relatively new. The concept of hate crime can be traced back to the USA and the 1970s, when social movements, interest groups, and other activists

attracted the attention of the media and influenced politicians in Congress to legislate against hate crime (Hall, 2005; Jacobs & Potter, 1998; Jenness & Grattet, 2001). Sweden was then influenced by the American debate and the legislation around hate crime. But the domestic spirit of the times, political changes, and the rise of extreme right-wing groups also affected the development of Swedish hate crime legislation. During the late 1980s and at the beginning of the 1990s, a wave of violence developed in Sweden that included everything from arsonists attacking refugee camps to the murder of asylum seekers, homosexuals, and political opponents. Synonymous with the increase in hate crimes during the 1990s, Sweden experienced a deep economic crisis and an influx of refugees from the former Yugoslavia. Experiences of or notions about greater “threats” from those categorized as “the Other” are often associated with processes of change. During this period, racism became all the more obvious and manifest. In Stockholm, a man with a laser rifle fired at people with dark hair as a protest against multiculturalism. At the same time, a militant racist movement spread throughout the country and refugee camps were attacked. Nazi groups mushroomed in different parts of the country and in a number of municipalities xenophobic parties gained seats. This growing Nazi and racist movement, which mainly attracted young people, became known as the White Power Movement – a movement that had international offshoots (Bunar, 2007; Granström, 2010; Hamm, 2009; Tamas, 2003; Wigerfelt & Wigerfelt, 2001).

During the 1990s, an increased focus on so-called White Power groups and their actions towards minority groups coincided with changes in the criminal law, which included stiffer penalties for certain crimes. During the 1980s laws had been passed that emphasized the victims and their rights, and in 1994 the Criminal Victim Compensation and Support Authority was established in order to safeguard victim’s rights (Bowling, 1998; Tham, 2011). There were also changes in criminal and social policy and in the way that criminals were viewed, which resulted in harsher sentences (Tiby, 2011). All in all, these changes and emphases contributed to what later became stiffer penalties for hate crimes. Stiffer sentences

for racist crimes were proposed in 1991 in a Government Report. The investigators in the Report claim that racism cannot be stopped by legislation alone. “Basic changes in people’s attitudes towards others can only be achieved through education, information or personal experience and acquiring more knowledge, insights and understanding. When legislation is resorted to it is only as a complement to other and more important measures, although legislation is sometimes necessary in order to indicate society’s dissociation and in order to prevent expressions of racism” (SOU, 1991, pp. 75, 113-114). However, it was not until 1994 that the proposal for stiffer penalties became a reality (Prop, 1993/94:101). Swedish legislation relating to hate crime and stiffer penalties is based on the motives of the perpetrator in a criminal action. The ruling about harsher sentences was introduced in Sweden for crimes committed against a person, ethnic group, or other groups of people on the grounds of race, skin color, national or ethnic origin, faith, sexual orientation, or other similar circumstances (The Swedish Penal Code, Ch.29 2 §7 p).

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. 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 (Brottsförebyggande rådet, 2013). White Power groups are still active in Sweden today and many racist hate crimes are committed by their members. However, one difference between the situation now and that of the 1990s is that the right-wing Populist Party, the Swedish Democrats (Sverigedemokraterna), which was a very small party in the 1990s with strong connections to the White Power Movement, is now an important actor in the Swedish Parliament. The party has eight percent of the votes and a political manifesto that prioritizes reduced immigration and resistance to multiculturalism, which resembles the agendas of similar popular parties in Europe (Borevi, 2013). A xenophobic and anti-cultural discourse has now become more attractive to large groups of voters (Hatton, 2014).

## Analytical Framework and Method

As we understand it, there is not just one form of racism, but that different historical events and processes have led to different interpretations of the concept. Racism occurs at different social levels and in different contexts (see e.g., Brah, 1993). One form is what Philomena Essed (1990, 1991) calls everyday racism. Essed says that everyday racism activates underlying power relations in a subtle way on an everyday basis. Even if it is an individual who expresses or practices racism, it is related to group power and to social structures. The concept of everyday racism unites structural, institutional racism with the routine situations of everyday life, i.e. structures are linked together by everyday attitudes, such as prejudices and behavior (Essed, 1991, p. 2). Since everyday racism permeates everyday practices, it includes the behavior and attitudes that the majority population is socialized into and seldom reflects on. There is often an underlying message in everyday racism, which is usually based on notions of difference, that some, the Others, do not belong in the community and the geographical space.

The concept of everyday racism can be combined with criminologist James Messerschmidt's theory of Structured Action. According to this theory, actions do not take place in a vacuum, but are influenced by social structures. Drawing inspiration from Giddens (1984), Messerschmidt (1997) claims that social actions require structures as prerequisites. However, structural theories have been subject to criticism because they do not always properly explain why certain hate crimes and not others are committed in the same structural context (see e.g., Gadd & Dixon, 2009, p. 80 and Iganski, 2008, p. 118). Phyllis Gerstenfeld argues that hate crime should therefore be seen as a result of a complex relation of individual and social/structural factors (2004).

Several of the studies conducted by Iganski (2008) on the different categories of people singled out for hate crime show that the crimes often take place in everyday, routine situations. The structures are there in society – in the local community – and the perpetrator is one of us.

Every hate crime becomes a kind of building block in the hate structure, which in turn supports an individual's actions. We therefore consider that it is important to not only examine everyday violations, but also the connection between the everyday and more physically violent hate crime (with a focus on racist motives).

In view of this, it is important to study structures, group processes, and individuals in a local context in order to deepen one's knowledge about events and developments that consolidate everyday racism and trigger violent hate crimes. We maintain that by conducting empirical studies at a local level we can learn more about how social positions and categorizations are created and reformulated. People's everyday practices, their ways of talking and acting, contribute to the creation of the social reality and thereby also to influencing and changing structures (Giddens, 1984).

Europe's hate crime laws are much more recent than America's, which also reflects research in the field, where the U.S.A. takes the lead. But despite the U.S.A.'s advantage, Iganski maintains that the theory construction within hate crime research is also weak in the U.S.A. Hate crime scholar Barbara Perry (Iganski, 2008, p. 116) is an exception, however. Even though Perry bases her analyses on U.S. relations, some of her theories can also be applied to the Swedish context.

Perry draws inspiration from theories, concepts, ideas, and representations of the Other and doing difference. Difference is constructed socially in constant change through time and space and is often about setting boundaries (Perry, 2001; 2003). Perry points out that boundary is threatened when oppressed groups try to redefine their positions, i.e. when they make difference inappropriate. The tension between hegemonic and anti-hegemonic actors can culminate in violent efforts to restore the dominance of the former. Historical notions of race and affinity are integrated with modern ideas about the right to a certain area or place (Gadd & Dixon, 2009, p. 80). Some perpetrators regard themselves as victims, or targets, and consider that they are defending themselves against the changes that are taking place in society and in the local context, which they perceive as their territory (Green, et al., 1998; McDevitt

et al., 2003; Ray & Smith, 2001). The perpetrator tries to patrol the boundaries between the groups by reminding the victim, the Other, of his or her place. By meting out this punishment he/she also recreates his/her own supremacy, with regard to, for examples, masculinity or whiteness (Perry, 2003; Tiby, 2010, p. 189).

Diverse explanations are given in the literature as to why racial violence and violent “boundary conflicts” are manifested in a local context. Some of the individual-centered psychological interpretations relate to authoritarian personalities (Adorno, et al., 1950; Altmeyer, 1981), and others are connected to The Big Five personality traits (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism) (Ekehammar & Akrami, 2003). Together with socio-psychological interpretations that not only try to pinpoint both the individual’s potential risk of becoming a perpetrator but also the environments/situations that can give rise to hate crime, these can be seen as necessary, but inadequate, factors (see, e.g., Hamm, 1994; Wahl, 2002). Social learning theories focus on prejudice by looking at how attitudes and behavior are learned in childhood (Miller & Glass, 1989; Miller & Sears, 1986). As has often been the case in Sweden, there is also a danger of hate crime and racism being regarded as individually-based and not as part of the political and structural environment (Bunar, 2007, p. 169).

Many of those who belong to the majority society often associate industrial decline and social (negative) change with the presence of “aliens” in society. Foreigners receive a lot of help, while pensioners and other “natives” experience that they receive less and less. Those who feel that they have been unjustly treated are often ashamed of their own “failings,” are afraid of losing their sense of security, and feel scorned for their values and their erroneous lifestyles (Gadd & Dixon, 2009, p. 83). At times of economic decline, some vulnerable groups can come into conflict with other vulnerable groups (Bobo, 1988; Green et al, 2001; Iganski, 2008; Olzak, 1992; Scheepers et al, 2002). Group threat theory, i.e., that the size of the minority group in an area that is shared with the majority affects xenophobic attitudes, is discussed by Blalock (1957),

Blumer (1958), and Dixon (2006). There are scholars that claim that the threat must be real (e.g., Bobo, 1983), while others (e.g., Sniderman & Hagendoorn, 2007) emphasize notions (regardless of whether they are real or not) about the minority group. The threats can also be of a more symbolic or cultural nature (Fetzer, 2000; Hjerm & Nagayoshi, 2011; McLaren & Johnsson, 2007) and can be reinforced by racist/populist politicians (Bohman, 2011).

This article is primarily based on semi-structured interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) with 43 people from southern Sweden, including Nazis, former Nazis, and members of the so-called “racist gang” in Klippan Municipality. This category is designed to highlight the perpetrator’s view and construction of immigration, race, and aliens, and especially the processes that led to the murder of Gerard Gbeyo. In an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of these processes, we interviewed a number of adults, e.g., perpetrators’ parents and politicians in Klippan, in order to show the connection between adults’ discourses on “foreigners” and young people’s actions. We also interviewed the category of youths with an immigrant background, who talked about the processes from “the other side.” These young people also helped us to understand the vulnerabilities that can lead to being perceived as “different” in Sweden today and the harassment and humiliation they experience in everyday situations. In order to understand the processes surrounding the events in Klippan, we felt that it was essential to interview the different actors. The interviews were originally conducted in the late 1990s in the context of a research project concerned with racism and criminality in smaller Swedish towns, but have now been placed into a new conceptual and theoretical context of hate crime and today’s economic crisis in Europe, partly to see which lessons can now be learned from the growth of racism during the economic crisis of the 1990s in Sweden.

All the interviews were conducted in Swedish and were tape-recorded as well as transcribed. All the informants were promised anonymity. 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. Theoretical concepts were then applied in order to analyze the interpretations. In addition to interviews and literature, we also used primary sources such as government bills, public inquiries, and legal documents.

## **Refugees as Scapegoats**

Klippan is often described as an old mill town in a rural environment. In its heyday the paper mill – the area’s largest employer – dominated the town. It is possible that in a small town in a rural setting, representations of aliens, the Others, are both preserved and reconstructed to a much greater extent than is the case in large cities (Chakraborti & Garland, 2004; 2009). Mentality and class composition can also foster a discourse that is openly racist, especially in a mill town (Björge, 1997). However, when the paper industry declined during the 1990s the importance of the mill also diminished. The structural changes that resulted from de-industrialization and the economic crisis of the 1990s led to high unemployment, lower incomes, a lower standard of living, and more social insecurity for many groups and individuals in Sweden. This was especially so in Klippan, which was severely affected by the demise of the paper mill. The economic crisis and the increase in unemployment also resulted in more people claiming social security benefits in Klippan in the early and mid-1990s. This led to some people feeling extremely exposed and terrified that society’s safety net would vanish (cf. Gadd & Dixon, 2009, p. 83).

The first half of the 1990s saw a dramatic increase in the number of asylum seekers in Sweden. This was also the case in Klippan. The opening of a reception unit for asylum seekers offering around 350 places resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of foreign-born citizens in central Klippan during the 1990s. The mass media, local politicians, and government officials often pointed to this as the cause of the tense relations between Swedes and immigrants. One local politician expressed it like this: “When the refugee camp was set up in Klippan it was regarded

as something significant. People had seen the war on TV and what people had to put up with. There was a certain degree of sympathy.”

However, according to one government official, rumors slowly began to spread in Klippan about refugees taking jobs from the local inhabitants and/or draining the municipality’s resources in terms of social security benefits:

*These refugees from ex-Yugoslavia arrived right in the middle of a depression, which naturally made everything worse. It just added insult to injury. More to the point they didn’t behave as we expected them to, in the laundry room and in other places. All this added fuel to the fire....*

Some politicians took advantage of this suspicion of “aliens” to promote stereotyped thinking and reinforced prejudices about the Others (see, e.g., Bohman, 2011). In the first half of the 1990s three openly xenophobic parties were active in the local council in Klippan. Another leading politician said in an interview that:

*I think that everyone has a collective culpability for what has happened. Some of the politicians in Klippan have paved the way for xenophobia. We have had parties that have pushed xenophobic prejudices and attitudes forward. And they paved the way for such young hotheads, who felt that they were on the right track. But then, on the other hand, those of us who were more positive to the reception of refugees were perhaps not sufficiently sensitive....*

In other words, the political structure of possibilities in Klippan at the beginning of the 1990s was such that it facilitated a racist discourse and helped to create the breeding ground for violent racist actions.

### **Manifested Racism – Perpetrators**

An obvious and open racism could thus be observed in Klippan at the beginning of the 1990s, even though many people did not hear or see the warning signals. For example, a number of youths burned crosses

as a protest against immigrants. Windows were smashed at the Immigration Office and youths with racist views tried to drive the refugees away, strengthen the boundaries, and prevent aliens from encroaching on “Swedish/white” areas. When interviewed, one youth recounted: “With hatchets, saws and anything you could lay your hands on. Road signs and signposts, windows smashed, hurled in bikes, satellite dishes. The aim was to sabotage, ruin things for the immigrants. Hunt them down and beat them up as often as possible.”

These openly racist actions against refugees and immigrants were often dismissed as youth protests and something that would pass. This tendency to ignore the extent of the problem was not unique to Klippan. In Sweden as a whole, people seemed at a loss to do anything about the racist actions that were being played out in different parts of the country (Löow, 1993; 1995). At the time of the murder of Gbeyo, the so-called racist gang had developed into a loose group of about 30-40 young people of different ages and with openly racist views. This group had a hard core of Nazi sympathizers. The young men who were convicted of the murder of Gbeyo belonged to this core group, a part of the White Power Movement (see also Hamm, 2009). Most of those involved in the racist gang were boys with different class backgrounds, although the majority of the activists were students from a vocational program at an upper secondary school. Their life scripts point towards a subordinate future class position, where lower education (vocational training), living in a small town in a rural environment, and conservative and traditional ideas about gender clash with the dominant middle-class norm of Swedish society, with higher education and urban living (Bettie, 2003; Skeggs, 2004). Some girls were also involved in the group. They rarely performed openly racist actions, were normally subordinate to the boys, but nevertheless expressed strongly racist attitudes. In 2000 one of the girls, the sister of the 16-year-old who murdered Gbeyo, stabbed a young man with a refugee background. The girl’s sentence was increased (hate crime) in court due to its racist motive.

The 16-year-old who committed the murder had a notoriously crimi-

nal father and was obliged to leave school prematurely because he had assaulted his classmates. He was drawn to “the racist gang” and tried to make himself popular by violently assaulting “niggers.” After being sentenced, the 16-year-old spent some years in prison, where he came into contact with different extreme right-wing groups. After being released from prison he became involved with the Blood and Honour movement in Sweden, and then served another prison sentence for threatening a leading politician in Klippan. He later committed suicide.

When the 18-year-old who was convicted of complicity to murder was interrogated, he said that he did not like black people living in Sweden. He also said that black and white people should not mix and that too few white people were born. The 18-year-old did not like Jews either, because he thought that they had too much power. During the interrogation he also questioned whether concentration camps had actually existed during World War II. He said that he was racist, but had nothing against foreigners who were “white” (Preliminary investigation report, Ängelholm Police District, Crime K 7567-95). When the 18-year-old was released from prison he joined a Nazi organization, where he was hailed as a hero, a martyr who had sacrificed himself for the Aryan race.

### **Adults Just Talk, but We Do Something**

Several of the young people’s narratives related to their parents’ and relatives’ feelings of discontent at the influx of refugees. For example, friends and relatives who had found life difficult during the crisis of the 1990s thought it unfair that “foreigners” could come here and reap the benefits of the Swedish welfare state when they themselves had to struggle (cf. Hewitt, 2005). Injustices like this were often discussed in the homes of several of the young people: “My stepfather said that even if he doesn’t mean it, it just comes out: ‘immigrants, now they have taken all the jobs here and why should they have social security benefits?’”

Another adult who worked in a shop was annoyed about the refugees: "... I see them going back and forth every day, why the hell don't they do something else?"

The idea of "foreigners" having something that they themselves had been denied was a recurring theme in many of the explanations that these young assailants gave to the police and the media (cf. Gadd & Dixon, 2009). Several researchers point out that young people are more mobile, sensitive and open to different social phenomena. In their culture, the antagonisms, conflicts and trends that sizzle below the social surface are made visible (Ziehe 1989). Several of the activists claimed that they had the support of the adult community. One of them said that: "It's great that a Swede battered a nigger to death. Niggers shouldn't be here in the first place.' You hear that a lot. Many actually think that we are right, but daren't say that out loud, because you're not bloody well supposed to think badly of immigrants today."

Many of those who called themselves national-socialists were aware that "the majority don't like us. That's just how it is." This attitude was thought to be linked to the propaganda that was disseminated by the Zionist Occupation Government (ZOG) about concentration camps and the Holocaust. This was a big problem for the activists. On the other hand, they thought that many sympathized with their ideas concerning anti-immigration. An organized Nazi in Klippan said: "I have talked to loads of cops and they think that we are on the right track on this."

A conclusion that these young Nazis came to was they did something to address the problems that adults only talked about. They did not regard themselves as extremists, but as preservers of the nation and "the white race" and thought that they had the solution to society's problems.

As a former activist expressed: "Nazism is nothing other than an extreme variation of everyday racism. So at the same time as parents and others in the adult world vent their own racism, they get upset about their children doing the same thing, albeit in a more extreme way."

A parents' group was set up in Klippan at the end of the 1990s for parents whose children were involved in the White Power Movement.

In interviews with some of these parents, it was clear that while the parents distanced themselves from their children's "Nazism," they always added a "but." For example: "I don't think that you should use violence against immigrants, but they steal like magpies" and "Being a Nazi is not good, but it's impossible to use the laundry room because the refugees steal our laundry times and our clothes."

The parents themselves did not see any connection between their own attitudes or points of view and their children's openly racist actions. On the contrary, counter-narratives were spread as a kind of justification for the openly racist violence among adults and among the young people, many of which were about "niggers" picking quarrels and being generally criminal and violent (cf. Hewitt, 2005). This is how one youth expressed it: "A murder was committed in Bjuv (a neighboring town to Klippan) in the middle of the 1990s, when two "foreigners" murdered a Swede. This murder was not classed as a racist killing. Why not? Why do the media always focus on murders where Swedes murder immigrants?"

### **The Exposed – Victims**

A young man who had come to Klippan as a refugee said in an interview that he remembered how he and others were branded as inferior due to their immigrant background: "They can't talk, they use their fists instead." Of course, there is a cultural explanation behind this statement; refugees come from cultures where fighting is normal. There is also a hierarchical element in this – refugees are depicted as coming from primitive and less developed cultures than the Swedish. The kind of racism that the young man talked about was both an allusion to race through insults like "wog" and cultural in nature, for example, that refugees were considered to be noisy, which was regarded as primitive. There was also a biological and cultural belittlement of the Others, which was then stereotyped. These stereotypes serve to exclude and reject by dividing the world up into normal and abnormal phenomena and people and thereby reinforce boundaries (Bhabha, 1994; Petersson, 2003; Sibley, 1995).

Being young and having “dark” skin or “non-Swedish” appearance meant that one was often categorized as an alien and thereby subjected to various forms of abuse. The youths we interviewed often talked about special places in which they experienced that they were exposed to discrimination and everyday racism (Essed, 1990; 1991). Shops were places where the informants repeatedly felt that they were violated as a result of their appearance. The narratives were often about shop assistants keeping watch all the time: “If you stand beside one rack they’ll come to a rack close by. If you are in a clothes shop they’ll start to fold clothes up and pretend to be busy so that they can keep an eye on you. Some customers stare intensively at you and treat you with the utmost suspicion.”

Another typical place in which people who were categorized as aliens often felt violated was pubs and other places of entertainment. One informant said that when he was out with “Swedish” friends they were often able to go into clubs and pubs without any problem, whereas he, as a black, was either asked to show his identity card or was refused entry. Sometimes he was manhandled by the doorkeepers. As a result, the informant, who had come to Sweden as a refugee, considered that living in Sweden was difficult: “It’s very draining...you really feel devastated...and in my case...you are actually forced to live here, even if you want to move away...you don’t have any choice, you are obliged to stay, you are not welcome in your own homeland.”

For this man, trying to deal with the everyday abuse was wearing. He described that sometimes he just felt indifferent, at other times he tried to reason with people who behaved disparagingly, and sometimes he was downright angry and wanted to hit back.

Some of the informants said that it was often easier to put up with open and obvious racism as opposed to stares and disassociation, the subtleties made defense and redress impossible. Being taunted and jostled by explicit racists was one thing, but being exposed to suspicion and abuse from “ordinary” adults and youths slowly wore down a person’s self-esteem (cf. Essed, 1990).

## Discussion

When stricter penalties were introduced into Swedish legislation at the beginning of the 1990s, in those cases where the incentive was to harass someone due to their race or ethnic origin, the background was mostly the white power groups' violations of minorities, general changes in criminal policy in the direction of longer sentences and an authoritative focus on the victims of crime. The legislators realized that stiffer penalties alone would not suppress racism, but believed that legislation was a way of indicating society's norms. However, the danger is that simply using the concept of hate crime can be misleading, because hate has a psychological connotation and it is therefore easy to miss the structural and discursive elements in the use of power (Goldberg, 1997). There is also a danger of only focusing on violent racist hate crime and forgetting the everyday and the routine that is associated with hate crime (Iganski, 2008; Tiby, 2010). In an attempt to acquire a deeper understanding of the different expressions of racism – both the violent and the more everyday manifestations – in this article we have tried to combine different theories at individual and structural levels. In order to understand the relation between everyday violations and racist violence we have used Essed's (1990) concept of everyday racism.

For a long time, violence and everyday abuse towards those who are regarded as different – aliens – have been used to strengthen positions of social and political supremacy. For example, hate crime is a way of preserving whiteness/Swedishness as a sign of privilege. Correspondingly, hate crime is also a way of reminding the Other about his or her place. If someone steps outside the geographically and politically constructed boundaries of permitted behavior, they will be met with an unfriendly reminder of their subordinate status. Regardless of whether these reminders take the form of everyday insults or brutal violence, the message is the same: adapt to the standards that are determined by the majority or risk its wrath (Perry, 2001).

Having to constantly live with the knowledge that one is a potential

victim of everything from subtle humiliations to physical violence for being categorized as belonging to a certain group is part of the actual oppression. The constant presence of imagined threats limits life's possibilities and self-esteem (see also Young, 1990).

The youths of Klippan who followed Gyebo in order to “whip a nigger” made use of a radicalized language that was not only common in extreme right-wing youth circles, but was also more widespread. 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 towards those whom the majority society considers to be transgressors of boundaries.

We can talk about a variant of a racist discourse which, according to Van Dijk (1993), can be seen as an underlying collection of systematized notions about phenotypes, distinguishing features and power hierarchies. Racism as a discourse creates and preserves notions of skin color and phenotypical features have connections with 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 represented by nature. According to Hall (1997), stereotyping is a signifying practice that is central to the representation of racial difference. Another feature that characterizes the stereotyping is that it divides the normal and the acceptable from the abnormal and the unacceptable. It symbolically fixes boundaries, and excludes everything that does not belong. A third point is that stereotyping tends to occur where there are gross inequalities of power. Power is usually directed against the subordinate or excluded group (Hall, 1997, pp. 257-259).

The murder of Gerard Gbeye can be seen as a symbolic indication of the “racially different” and of a changeable multicultural Sweden. In conformity with other hate crimes, the murder was not primarily directed at Gbeye as a person (the victims are replaceable). Rather, he represented the racially/culturally different (cf. Perry, 2001). The two perpetrators

sent a clear signal to “the Others” that they did not belong in Sweden (cf. Iganski, 2001). It was also a signal to the Swedish society that too many foreigners had been allowed into Sweden. The perpetrators saw themselves as heroes who defended their country against intruders and multiculturalism (cf. Perry, 2001). At a time when Sweden had become increasingly multicultural due to immigration and the clear boundaries between us the Others were being dismantled, the hegemonic cultural identity, Swedishness, was challenged - as was the racial order, whiteness, which caused concern (cf. Perry, 2001; Winant, 1997 p. 41).

Jack Levin, Jack McDevitt and Susan Bennett (2003) have suggested that hate crime offenders could be grouped in different major categories according to the motivation of the offenders involved. One of the major groups was offenders who saw themselves as defending their turf. This category dovetails well with the open racist groupings in Klippan. These defensive attacks were designed to protect the neighborhood from those considered as outsiders. The objective of these crimes was to convince the outsiders to relocate elsewhere and also tell other members of the victim’s group that they were not welcome either (cf. Iganski, 2008). However, the most common type of hate crime perpetrator that, McDevitt, Levin and Bennett identified was thrill-seekers - people who carried out attacks because they were looking for excitement, felt important and wanted to show off to their friends (McDevitt, Levin & Bennett, 2003, p. 111). Some of the youths in the racist gang, and especially the 16-year-old who murdered Gbeye, can be regarded as belonging to this category. But the reasons for frightening away/injuring foreigners are often mixed, which makes it difficult to clearly define and discern different categories of perpetrator.

Unlike the situation in Sweden during the 1990s, when the White Power Movement and Nazi groups were openly active in society and regarded as a threat to democracy, these movements are now less visible on the street and more visible on the Internet. The Swedish Democrats, a party that was previously closely connected to the White Power Movement, has now tried to erase the racist label in order to increase

its legitimacy. Since 2010 the party has also had a mandate in the Swedish Parliament. Another difference is that in the 1990s Jews were regarded as the main enemy by extreme right-wing movements, whereas today Muslims are often seen as the greater threat to Sweden and the world.

The economic crisis in Sweden in the 1990s coincided with a substantial increase in the number of asylum seekers, especially due to the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the resulting conflicts. Struggles for access to and the distribution of scarce resources like money, work, housing, social services, and recreational activities can help to explain the violence towards “aliens.” Experiences of or notions about “threats” from categories that are defined as “the Other” are often associated with processes of change, e.g., structural transformation and/or economic crisis (Petersson, 2003). With the aid of various politicians, the deteriorating living conditions were linked to immigration and the reception of refugees. At the beginning of the 1990s, parties that were opposed to the influx of refugees (aliens) were represented on the local council in Klippan. These parties both captured and strengthened people’s negative attitudes towards “aliens,” who were turned into scapegoats. Many of the young extreme right-wing activists understood that they had the support of adults and of the political parties. The refugee policy adopted by the established parties, where the reception of refugees was portrayed as a burden, may also have contributed to a xenophobic discourse. “The adults just talk but we do something about it,” as one of the right-wing extremists expressed it. In other words, there is a way of talking about refugees/immigrants that includes everything from “they receive enormous social security benefits” to “they behave strangely” and they are “criminals.” When adults talk disparagingly about “immigrants” they are also sowing the seeds of negativism and prejudice in children and young people, even though the adults we interviewed did not see any connection between their own attitudes, points of view, and openly racist actions. Some of the young people understood the adults’ discourse as legitimizing racial acts against “immigrants.” Groups and individuals who commit hate crime sometimes do it within a “political structure of possibilities,”

where acceptance from the local society and the dominating discourses play a major role (see also Koopmans, 1996). In short, no single factor can explain why racism became so strong in Klippan. Instead, several different factors seem to have interacted with each other. In addition to things like structural change, a deep economic crisis, discourses on foreigners as scapegoats, and low levels of education, individual actors and group dynamics have also had important roles to play in the process. An important lesson is thus that the measures that are deemed necessary to reduce racist manifestations also have to take several other factors into consideration. In other words, a broader spectrum of efforts and measures are required.

During the 21st century there has been increased segregation between ethnic Swedes and people with a migration history in Sweden's larger cities. Among other things, segregation and outsiderhood have led to riots in segregated suburbs, where young people have burned cars and attacked the police. These riots are exploited by e.g., the Swedish Democrats in order to attack multiculturalism. They are also made use of by "traditional" parties, where calls for assimilation and stiffer requirements for immigrants have become more common (Bevelander & Taras, 2013). We can also see similar tendencies in different parts of the crisis-ridden world where many parties and movements make use of biased discourses in which the Other and multiculturalism are pointed out as the problem in society. The result is both an increase in everyday harassment and the danger of an escalation of violent hate crimes. It is also feared that this will contribute to increased tensions in society.

The lessons that can be learned from the events in Klippan are thus that we should not only try to stop obvious racist violence but also work to combat everyday racism, because the different expressions are connected and strengthen each other. They also have important consequences for the victims and widen the gap between "insiders and outsiders," especially in times of crisis.

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