Ra(ce)ising Questions About School

Analyzing Social Structures in a Swedish High School

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Abstract

This thesis is based in a Swedish high school and scrutinizes social interaction among students. The material was gathered in semi-structured interviews and observations made outside of classrooms, but inside the school grounds. The study strives to analyze power dynamics that the students adhere to in their social relationships at the school. It uses intersectionality as an analytical tool to understand the gendered and racialized ways in which students understand themselves in the social complex as social beings within a system. Based on three months of ethnographic fieldwork conducted at this Stockholm-region high school during the spring of 2016, this essay also seeks to address the narrow ways in which Swedishness and non-Swedishness are constructed as dichotomous, as well as the power relations attached to acknowledgement of national belonging. Furthermore, the study analyzes ways in which students reinforce and communicate group belonging through attire, body language and speech. The thesis also considers how power dynamics stipulated by homosociality become an important factor in determining agency.

Keywords:

Swedishness, Critical Race, Racialization, Intersectionality, School as Social Platforms, Postraciality, Homosociality
Preface

“The paradox of education is precisely this – that as one begins to become conscious, one begins to examine the society in which he is being educated.”

James Baldwin (1963: 42)

I have always been fascinated with how well this quote by James Baldwin fits my years in academia. My first university course was at the History department, and as the course progressed, my interests shifted. I became less interested in details concerning which king won which battles, and more interest in knowing the underlying power dynamics that allowed for the triumphant and violence glorifying manner in which the events were described. Did the society in which the author was living in affect the tone in which the events were described? Was the Swedish reportage in any way conflicting with that of the “losing side”? Furthermore: How do power dynamics determine what is to be considered as historical facts or not? I became very critical of some of the things that I had been taught during my youth and started digging in some of the left-out parts of Swedish history. I realized the immense power that lay in the privilege of getting to write your own history, a luxury accredited to very few.

By the time I left the history department and moved on to Anthropology, I was already fueled by a critical mindset, ready to examine “the society in which [I] was being educated” (ibid). However, I grew frustrated that the magnifying glass seemed to almost always be directed outwards rather than inwards. While being an important task, it seemed that Anthropologists were merely striving to make sense of everyday habits of societies far away, much at the expense of studying what was going on in their own backyards. Grand theories were used to describe matters going on elsewhere, while events occurring around the block appeared to be deemed uninteresting.

Sitting in the living room at my parents’ house during the summer before I started my master’s program in Anthropology, I discussed some of my ideas for thesis writing with my father. I told him that my main interest was in the social life of students and how groups form. I talked about the social segregation of nonwhite and white students that I stumbled upon during my years in Swedish schools and that I was particularly interested in hearing nonwhite
student perspectives on segregation, given that those voices are rarely heard in Sweden. After my explanation, he replied: “But don’t you think that could seem a bit biased for you to write about this?”

I understood what he meant right away. It is probably not a stretch to assume that somewhere in my subconscious, that thought was already waiting to be taken into account. I understood exactly where he was coming from. He understood as well as I do that a young nonwhite Swede, writing about young nonwhite Swedish experiences was definitely running the risk of coming across as biased. He knew that the credibility of my thesis had better chances if my magnifying glass would be directed outwards instead of inwards, especially being that I was to write about something as controversial as social segregation in a country that frequently prides itself of being egalitarian. It was in that moment that I knew that I absolutely had to pursue this project.

I was born to a mother from the outer regions of Uppsala, Sweden, and a father from the Mayombe region of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Therefore, belonging and identity have always been topics at the back of my mind. My belonging in the middle-class Swedish neighborhood where I attended school and spent a large portion of my youth was perhaps not as clear as it was for other kids around me. For some reason, my belonging was routinely challenged by classmates who were perplexed by my differing appearance. It is strange that by the age of seven “the society in which [we were] educated” (ibid) had somehow already taught my classmates profanity in the form of racial slurs and with that, an understanding of my inferiority. Somehow, by the age of seven they had already understood that this hierarchy could be used to their advantage in the schoolyard.

I attended school in Sweden up to seventh grade when our family moved to Kinshasa where my siblings and I attended The American School of Kinshasa (TASOK) for three years. The school was internationally diverse. The student body consisted of students from all around the world. My siblings and I were, however, the only Swedish students at the school and therefore became representatives of Sweden and Swedishness. Although this was not by any means a formal position, our position as Swedes was not routinely challenged by any of the other students. When we returned to Sweden, I was reminded of the fact that the social ambassadorship that I was granted at TASOK had no place in Sweden, because back in Sweden, I was no longer considered Swedish.
This project has been one that has taken a lot of effort, physically as well as emotionally. It has been an experience in which I have had to ask myself some truly difficult questions about my subconscious utopian ideas and how they come across in my fieldwork. Writing about a subject I can so clearly relate to has been both challenging and therapeutic at the same time. Challenging, because it has been a struggle finding the right mix of how much of myself I could and should involve in the text to still have my stories operating as a helpful tool for the reader in understanding the material. Therapeutic, because it has been a way of revisiting some of my own past experiences and understanding myself though both conversations with the students that I spoke to, as well as through the vast amount of literature that I have consumed.

I would like to give the biggest of thanks to you, René, for supporting me, guiding me and being honest on the many occasions when I started to derail. You have been immensely patient with my many questions and sometimes far-fetched analytical stretches and ambitious theories. I also thank you for encouraging me to take on difficult concepts and try to refine my thinking about these.

I also have to give a big thank you to the school staff for your patience in letting me use a corner of the staff room as a base for my note writing. I realize that the sound of my endless typing might not have been the most relaxing of settings to take coffee breaks in and therefore I am very glad to have been received with such friendly attitudes. Of the staff, I naturally want to thank the two school hosts for welcoming me and giving me a smooth ride into the field. I would also like to thank all students who were willing to share their experiences with me. You were patient with my piercing questions and always challenged me to new insights about the social reality of the school.

Lastly, I would like to thank Ellen for all the support and guidance that you have given me throughout this project. You, too have been an immensely patient listener listening to my findings from fieldwork and the next grand theory. I am so glad to be able to come home to someone who understands the process of ethnography and therefore your guidance was essential. Thank you for being a therapeutic reliance every time I have come home and crashed.
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Introduction

Can a person’s national identity vary depending on that person’s current geographical position? If so, to whom and by whom is national identity granted? Swedish rapper Jason “Timbuktu” Diakité, addresses the phenomenon in his 2014 song *Misstänkt*¹ as he talks of how his Swedishness regularly being questioned when he is in Sweden, while this questioning never occurs abroad. “In Norway, I’m Swedish, at home I’m foreign”². It is solely in the presence of non-Swedes that his Swedishness is acknowledged, suggesting that national identity, while theoretically a fixed category declaring a person’s national citizenship, might in some cases be situational (Hylland Eriksen 1993). Daphne Arbouz (in Hübinette, 2012: 38-40) describes this position with the term *Mellanförskap*³ illustrating a dissonant position of not fully belonging anywhere.

Political immigration debates in Sweden have recently shifted to give more attention to far-right, nationalist movements. These movements speak of Sweden as being a country that has had an ethnically and racially homogeneous past. This is, however, a debatable standpoint as Maja Hagerman argues in her book *Det Rena Landet: Om Konsten att Uppfinna Sina Förfäder*, which translates: *The Pure Country: About the Art of Inventing Ones Ancestors*, 2006. The territory that we presently call Sweden has had a diverse population ever since the middle ages, providing a home for groups such as Sámi, Romany and Jewish people apart from the majority Swedish ethnic population (Hagerman 2006). From the middle ages, up until the 20th century, large groups of Germans, Dutch, Scots, Walloons and Finns migrated to Sweden and integrated into the majority population (von Brömssen and Risenfors in EERJ 2014: 634). So, what is it that constitutes this narrowness in which Swedishness is spoken of in public discourse? Why is it possible to resort to the romanticized idea of a homogeneous nation where any person that visibly interferes with this utopia will be rhetorically placed outside of Swedishness?

¹ “Suspected
² “I Norge är jag svensk, hemma är jag utländsk”
³ Literally in-between-ship. Not being part of any group, but being stuck just in between both.
Million-Housing-Program and Residential Segregation

Following World War II, a new boom in immigrations started in Sweden, causing a much-needed broadening of the welfare state. Having not taken part in the war, Sweden became a haven for refugees to resort to after the war (Andersson, Turner and Holmqvist 2010). This called for a new housing reform, and the so called million-Housing-Program was created, with the first buildings being built in the 1960’s. As the name suggests, it sought to provide one million new units of housing, completed in ten years’ time. For a long time, the project effectively took care of housing shortages and did away with “inner city problems”, but the project is now seen as the measure that created residential segregation in Sweden (Andersson in Schönwälder 2007).

Most Swedish segregation research produced during the years following the million-housing project’s start focused on the socioeconomic class dimension of segregation (Andersson in Schönwälder 2007). Brännström (2006) concludes that almost exclusively all of these studies point to residential segregation leading to a decrease in social participation and neighborhood commitment. These exclusory mechanisms did, however not get much attention until the 1980’s when the class issue became “colored” by a racial dimension, given that the residential segregation had become racialized (Andersson in Schönwälder 2007). Andersson goes on to state that:

The pronounced ethnic/racial hierarchy that exists both on the labour market and in housing is one striking feature of the Swedish case, which is furthermore characterised by the distinct multi-ethnic character of all immigrant-dense neighbourhoods.” (ibid 2007)

Discrimination in labor market is one that has proven hard to measure since many exclusory practices have a very implicit nature. In numbers, however, a 2015 OECD\(^4\)-report shows that Sweden is among the countries in the very bottom when it comes to providing the foreign-born part of the population with occupation (Edling 2015). This has of course heavily influenced the racialized dimension of residential segregation in the million housing program areas, since racialized immigrant groups have found housing in these working-class areas.

\(^4\) OECD-Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.
In the housing market, research in the 1980’s and 90’s suggested that residential segregation was due to a voluntary clustering of ethnic groups (Andersson in Schönwälder 2007). This has, however, been challenged by research that wants to move away from cultural explanation to explanations that strongly state the importance of social exclusion (ibid 2007). Sustainable development research center called Formas (2011: 24) discusses the notion of white flight. Rather than ethnic minorities seeking to find housing in common areas, the phenomenon of white flight suggests that the Majority-White population frequently moves away from areas with high ethnic diversity, creating the demographic residential segregation seen in Sweden today. Andersson (in Schönwälder 2007; Molina 1997) argues that white avoidance might be a suitable term for what happened in Sweden during the 1980’s and 1990’s showing how high rates of residents within the million-housing-project were vacated by people from the group registered as “of Swedish background” and filled by people in the group “of foreign background” during this period.

A national agency report made by ESO discusses residential segregations by looking at expected and actual exposure of neighbors from the same social category (Aldén and Hammarstedt 2015). What expected exposure means is that ESO collect data on the number of immigrants from a specific ethnic group that reside in Sweden and then calculate the expected frequency that said ethnic group would encounter others from the same ethnic group, while actual exposure is the frequency at which people from the same ethnic group encounter one another based on geographical residential status within Sweden. This survey found that without exception, people from all major immigrant groups in Sweden actually encountered people from the same ethnic group at a higher frequency than the expected exposure rate showed. The two groups in which people met at the highest frequency were Iraqis and Somalians where 10% of Iraqi population in Sweden’s neighbors were of Iraqi descent as well, and for Somalians, the figure was at 5% (ibid: 44).

The same agency also collected data concerning the group of foreign background which is people that live in Sweden and are either born in a foreign country, or have at least one parent who is born abroad (ibid: 39). They also examined the same categories of exposure in 2000 and in 2012 to see how the exposure rates have changed over time. From 2000 to 2012, the exposure rate for the group of foreign background had risen from 30- to 40% (ibid: 49). For

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5 Med svensk bakgrund
6 Med utländsk bakgrund
the group registered as born in Sweden, the exposure rates of people from the foreign-born
group had instead seen a slight drop from 0.86 in 2000 to 0.82 in 2012 (ibid: 49).

This, however does not fully paint the picture of the racialized dimension that is present in
present day residential segregation. Björn Gustafsson, Katarina Katz, and Torun Österberg
(2016), in a paper concerning integrational association in socio-spatial contexts, use the term
visible minorities in addressing the ways in which such residential segregation takes form.
Along the lines with what Anderson among other researchers defined as white flight, they too
argue that it is the Majority-White Swedish population that moves away from residentially
racialized communities to areas where the most people are white Swedes. They discuss how
the phenomenon of residential segregation is not one that is necessarily due to a high rate of
immigration since both newly arrived immigrants, as well as second and third generation
immigrants, seem to settle down in immigrant-dense neighborhoods (ibid).

Research Questions and Aim

As the introduction shows, ethnic and racial segregation in Sweden is a well-documented
phenomenon that has been addressed in both statistical research as well as in popular culture.
What is not as well-document, is the social effects that such segregation has, given that
residential socioeconomic segregation now has a racialized dimension. This sparked my
interest and got me thinking about how ethnography could be used to illustrate this social
phenomenon.

In order to study this, my field site had to be one where interactions between a large diversity
of people, from a variety of neighborhoods would meet on a regular basis. I needed to find a
field site that worked as a micro scale model for the macro scale issue. Returning to my
introductory example of having realized that upon returning to Sweden my Swedishness was
questioned in schools, I decided that school and preferably a high school located in a
geographical area that attracts a student body from a wide range of socioeconomic
background would best suit the study.

Deciding on doing research at the school that I henceforth will be referring to as Tuvaskolan
in this thesis, got me thinking about how the school as a social platform would work in
relation to residential segregation. What effects has racial residential segregation had on social
segregation within Tuvaskolan? What role does socioeconomic status play? What role does
intersectional position play in how social groupings occur? How will my intersectional position influence the ways in which I come across as a researcher in the field? This has led to the aim of this thesis being to scrutinize Tuvaskolan as a social platform and consider ways in which intersectional position affect the students’ social lives at the school. In addition, it aims to explore how variations of the terms “Swede” and “immigrant” operate as synonymous to white and nonwhite, thus influencing social hierarchical groupings within the social matrix.

**Earlier Research**

In this section, I will present some previous Swedish ethnographic research in which schools, students and staff have been analyzed that I have taken inspiration from in my project. Many of these have been multi-sited, where the researchers have been conducting fieldwork both in the classrooms as well as outside of them. Among these, anthropologist Fanny Ambjörnsson, in her 2003 dissertation *I en klass för sig*, analyzed “how gender becomes materialized in the intersections of class, gender and sexuality.” (Ambjörnsson 2003:305). Her work is mainly focused on how femininity is performed within a Swedish high school and how girls position and understand themselves according to gender and sexuality. She also takes class and ethnicity into consideration in her analytical work.

Sabine Gruber is another researcher that has used participant observation in a Swedish school. Much like Ambjörnsson, her book *När skolan gör skillnad* from 2007 takes place both in and outside of classrooms. Her main focus is on ethnicity and how different ethnic groups are met in the school. Similar to this thesis, the field site is one that is located in an area that attracts a student composition of mixed socioeconomic background. Unlike this thesis, however, her focus is on how teachers interact with students, whereas this thesis focuses on the interactions among students.

In Rickard Jonsson’s book *Blatte betyder kompis* he focuses on young masculinities and particularly young men of immigrant background at a school in the outer regions of Stockholm. He puts emphasis on the importance of understanding the language and vocabulary not for the literal meanings that some of the expressions have, but for the function that some of these terms have in a wider spectrum.

Kerstin Von Brömssen’s article *The ‘Immigrant Corner’: A Place of Identification and Resistance* is perhaps the one that lies closest to my research in that her research also focuses

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7 Intersectionality will be defined and discussed at length in the theory chapter.
on social groupings and bonding outside of classrooms. In particular, she focuses on this immigrant corner where students of immigrant background hang out. She looks to gain a broader understanding of the narrowness in which Swedishness and non-Swedishness is regarded at the school by mainly following male students that hang out in the immigrant corner.

René León Rosales conducted the fieldwork for his dissertation *Vid Framtidens hitersta gräns: Maskulina elevpositioner i en multietnisk skola* at the pseudonym named Kärboskolan in the outskirts of Stockholm. Like Jonsson, he too focuses on young men of immigrant background, but places them in relation to the state and the city. He examines the terms that enable as well as limit the positions that the students can take and the dreams that they have.

In all of these school-related, ethnographic research projects, there, intersections of class, race and ethnicity are present. Many of them, such as Von Brömssen’s *The Immigrant Corner* focus on social segregation by interacting with one set of students, showing how intersectional position comes across and affects social lives from one perspective. What this thesis intends to bring to the table is perhaps the phenomenon of social segregation from multiple angles. It intends at uncovering ways in which social segregation is spoken of differently depending on situation and perspective.

**Fieldwork at Tuvaskolan**

In this section, I will begin by presenting how and why I picked Tuvaskolan as my field site. I will then move on to describe the methodological approaches that I took while conducting my research and the type of data gathered. I will then present my ethical considerations before lastly engaging in a short discussion about my subjectivity in the field, how I saw the field, and how the field saw me.

**Picking the Field**

As explained in the introduction, my aim was to see what sort of effects residential segregation might have on a school’s social segregation. I browsed the website of the Swedish National Agency for Education (skolverket.se), finding that the statistics of the students were divided into four different categories: Male, female, of Swedish background and lastly of foreign background. The first two groups base their statistics on the gender assigned at birth, while the latter groups need further explanation. The group of foreign background consist of
all students that are either born in, or have two parents that are born in a foreign country (Öberg 2002: 3), meaning that I for instance, being born in Sweden, having one parent that is also born in Sweden and one outside of Sweden, would count as Swedish rather than of foreign background.

This posed a problem for me, since the main thing that had gotten me thinking about the exclusive way in which Swedishness is spoken of in Swedish dominant discourse was myself returning to Sweden and no longer being acknowledged as Swedish due to my body not corresponding with ideas of Swedish bodies. The school that I ended up at consists of approximately 30% students from the foreign background group. While these statistics don’t explicitly prove that the school was diverse and therefore fit my research, it was as close to an indicator that I would get. When I googled the school to find out more about it, the website stated that the school is “proud of, and cherishes its diverse composition of students”, which was enough to make up my mind.

Methodological Approach

Most of the material gathered in this thesis was retrieved through observation and semi-structured interviews with students at Tuvaskolan in the ages sixteen to nineteen. While my initial aim was to conduct fieldwork sessions all over the school, my work ended up being quite concentrated in and around the school cafeteria. Inspired by George Marcus’s (1995) *Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography*, I decided to look at the school as just that, multi-sited with a vast number of different arenas. Due to the fact that the fieldwork was for such a short amount of time, however I needed to make strategic choices to be able to get in-depth material from at least one of the venues.

Being that the cafeteria turned out to be the main spot for socialization and one where interactions between different groups happen on a regular basis, I decided to “follow the thing” and spend most of my time in the field there (Marcus 1995: 106-107). The thing in this case would be the cafeteria. There, I would find people and stories to follow. In a way, this compromise meant that my field of research became more single-sited than multi-sited. By spending a lot of time in the cafeteria, I was however able to distinguish hierarchies concerning which parts of the cafeteria were more desirable than others.

My first trip to the school was in February 2016 for a meeting with the school principal. We met in his office and I got the chance to elaborate my plans for fieldwork in person before we
agreed on the ethical terms under which my research would be conducted. After this he gave me a quick tour around the school and I got to meet some of the staff members. As we came back to the front desk, I was provided with a name tag and a pass to the staff room.

The coffee room was an important room for me during the fieldwork. The coffee room served as a safe hideout where I could resort to when I needed a quiet place to scribble down my findings between my sessions with the students. I spent hours in the coffee room behind my computer, and while there was normally a calm atmosphere in the coffee room, I was occasionally disturbed in my writing by teachers and staff who stopped by for a coffee break. Of course, in this scenario I would generally be considered the intruder seen as they, as employees, are considerably more entitled to the coffee room than me. It was, however difficult not to take part in the conversations and incorporate what I heard in my thesis, but I knew that I had to stay firm on leaving teachers outside of my analysis and solely focus on students and the school hosts.

As stated earlier, most of my material was gathered in the form of semi-structured group interviews. I would generally just sit down and socialize with students who were already hanging out in groups. To record my material, I used a notebook small enough that I could fit it in my back pocket to intrude as little as possible on the students’ recess. My thought was that I would seem more intimidating had I been sitting with a laptop or an iPad, but as I later learned, my note pad may ironically have been even more intimidating.

For the first couple of weeks, my aim was to get the students accustomed to my presence. I tried to become invisible to the bigger lot hoping to be able to engage in more thorough discussions as people got more comfortable around me later on during the fieldwork. I wanted to become invisible in the sense that I would blend into the surroundings and be a natural part of conversations. Therefore, my first move was to get in close contact with the two school hosts given that they would be able to provide me with a smooth transition into the field.

My sole purpose was to gain a better understanding of the social realities of Tuvaskolan, and in the long run communicate my understandings to a wider audience. Once I had gained some more interviewing experience, I realized that one of the keys in getting the students to open up was to show them that I was not an expert on their social realities. They were undeniably

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8 Skolvärdar” – The school had two school hosts. They were hired to maintain a friendly atmosphere at the school and to make all the students feel safe. They provided the adult link between students and teachers and were to just hang out with the students creating a rare situation for students of being in the presence of an adult at a school without any pressure of performing. The school hosts will be discussed at length in the first ethnographical chapter.
experts on this topic and should hence feel free to on the topic. I tried to maintain a non-knowing position trying to get students to express their realities without my interfering or influencing their stories. On the occasions that I succeeded in communicating this message and instill this feeling, the answers became a lot more thorough.

One of the toughest issues for me to deal with being in the field was biting my tongue and just trying to record the activities around me without imposing my own views. While my role many times seemed similar to roles that I have had working with youth before in how I formed social relationships with the students, it was quite different in how I had to be the recorder of empirics and not the pedagogic. I felt like I had to balance when I could and should speak up against some of the destructive discourses that teenagers sometimes become part of. This was even more frustrating in my contact with parts of the staff, as some of them notoriously made sexist and racist jokes without considering the effects of these jokes.

Material

While my initial aim was to get as broad of a representation as possible during this thesis project, this proved hard to achieve as the empirical chapters of this thesis will show. In addition to me being a nonwhite male student, the two school hosts who were my main aid into the field, were also nonwhite males. Given that they were the ones who introduced me to a lot of the students, I may have been further positioned in the nonwhite group. Therefore, most of my gathered material is from conversations with nonwhite students.

As I would sit down with these groups and chat, one of the first questions that were asked was where I was from. I usually answered “Uppsala”, but that was not the answer they were looking for. What they wanted to know was which country I had origins from. Me having one Swedish parent was, however, not of any real importance either, but rather my other line of origin deriving from The Democratic Republic of Congo. This was used as an icebreaker when starting up conversations with a lot of the nonwhite students. A verification to our common ground being that none of us were “fully Swedish”. I made sure to verify my assumptions by answering that in most cases

Regarding the material that I have gathered during this fieldwork, my biggest concern is how much I was able to gather and hence, how little of it I was able to fit into the finished product of this thesis. It has been a real challenge deciding on what should be included and not. I kept thinking to myself “Who am I to dismiss these people’s perspectives and keep others?” At the
end of the day, all of the conversations and documented interviews that I have in my thesis have helped shape how this thesis has turned out and hopefully I will have an opportunity to use some of the left-out material in later projects.

**Ethical Consideration**

In the weeks leading up to my fieldwork, I was in contact with the principal of Tuvaskolan. We emailed back and forth, and I described what the intentions of my fieldwork was. In the emails, I told him that my aim was to conduct research scrutinizing the school as a social platform by documenting the students’ social interactions outside of the classrooms using participant observation and semi-structured interviews. I told him that I wanted to look at how social groups were formed and how these groupings affected the students’ identity forming processes.

The *Research Ethical Principles Within the Humanities and Social Sciences*⁹ states that in case where research is conducted at a school, the terms of consent will be agreed upon through a dialogue between the principal and the researcher (Vetenskapsrådet 2014: 9). A requirement for this is that the research is conducted solely within the school grounds and during school hours. We decided that that the school name as well as the names of informants would remain anonymous in my writing for maximum protection. Therefore, I am using pseudonyms for the school name, the names of all informants, as well as the names of the neighborhoods that are mentioned in the thesis to further protect the School’s identity.

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⁹ Forskningsetiska Principer Inom Humanistisk och Samhällsvetenskaplig Forskning
Image 1.1 Certificate of permission to conduct fieldwork at Tuvaskolan

The principal promised to send out a message to the whole school staff and give them a briefing of what I was doing at the school. They, in turn, would make sure to inform their students about my intentions prior to my arrival for the first session of fieldwork. To further assure myself of the students’ informed consent, I introduced myself to new students as a researcher from Uppsala University and let them know that their participation in the research was optional. I was also provided with a name tag that showed that I was a guest of the staff and a researcher that I wore at all times when I was at the school.

**Subject in the Field**

Anthropology as a discipline has always dealt with issues concerning how we are positioned in the field in relation to the informants. Most writings concern how researchers need to be aware of the privileges and dominant power position that the researcher takes when entering the field. One has to always be cautious about how one’s subjectivity affects the field and

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10 “Permission to be in Tuvaskolan’s facilities. Patrick Konde has been given permission to move about the school’s facilities to interview the school’s students during the period February to April 2016. The work is part of Patrick’s master project. Patrick may move in the school’s social hang out spots/corridors and Canteen. Patrick may also use the staff room.”
hence also the data that is being gathered. As anthropologist Lisa Anderson-Levy (2010) writes, “The stereotype (steeped in colonial relations of power) is of the anthropologist as White, Western, sometimes male but increasingly female, and in a position of power in relation to those among whom she or he will work.”

I am a Swedish, cisgender\textsuperscript{11}, able bodied, heterosexual, biracial male academic in my mid-twenties. As will become more evident both in the terminology and theory chapter, as well as in the empirical chapters, my belief is that all of these intersecting characteristics hold different meaning depending on who the onlooker might be. Students that talked to me during the fieldwork projected implicit bias influencing if they chose to interact with me, or not (Holroyd 2012). Of course, this is as true for how the informants perceive me, as for how I perceive them. It is also true for how they perceive one another (see also Ahmed 2006). Nevertheless, these factors heavily affected which conversation I gained access to.

But what happens if such power relations are not as straightforward as they have been in the past? What happens when the researcher is of a semi-emic position having quite recently been a student in the same school system in an adjacent location? Anderson-Levy (2010) continues “Suppose for a moment that we step through the anthropological looking glass to a place that inverts these power relations such that the anthropologist is in the subordinate position?”.

Now, I am not saying that I by any means was in an inferior position most of the time, but it is certainly something that I felt like I needed to be aware of in the field. Ultimately, I was around six to nine years older than most of the informants.

\textbf{Disposition}

After this introductory section, you will be walked through theoretical frameworks and important terminology in the chapter \textit{Terminology and Theory} aiming to facilitate your understanding of the empirics and analysis. After this, we move on to the first ethnographic chapter, \textit{The Scenery of Tuvaskolan}, in which we will take a walk around the school with the aim of setting the stage and position the school. In the next empirical chapter, \textit{Entering the Matrix}, you will get to meet the students for the first time. The third empirical chapter, \textit{Trespassers and the Communication of Belonging}, is about codes and gadgets that students used to navigate in between segregated spaces. The fourth chapter, \textit{Homsocial “Safe Zones” and Obligatory Actions}, concerns masculinities and the norms and conditions that students adhere to. In the fifth and final empirical chapter, \textit{Conversations Concerning

\textsuperscript{11} Cisgender-Gender identity matches the gender assigned at birth.
Belonging, we meet the two students Oscar and Bilal. Most of the chapter is a chronological conversation between the two of them with myself being a rather passive passenger. Finally, the thesis ends with Concluding Words and a list of Literature.
Terminology and Theory

Before we dig into the empirical part of this thesis, there are a few concepts and theories that need further clarification. In this section, I will take you on a guided tour of some of the concepts, theories and theorists that have helped deepen my understanding of the empirics and serve as the foundation upon which my analysis lay. Many of the concepts that we will stumble upon in this section are intertwined with one another making it difficult to find a smooth and chronological path for the reader. I will attempt to walk you through the concept in stride and make references back to terms and theories that have already been touched upon in this section to make it as clear as possible.

Race, Racism and Racialization - relational socially constructed categories

In anthropology, context is of vital importance to understand empirics and analysis. As stated in the title of this section, Race, Racism and Racialization are relational categories and they respond to the histories of the context that they operate in (Garvey and Ignatiev 1996: 9; Motsieloa 2003: 11). In her brilliant work *Queer phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*, Sara Ahmed (2006: 111) discusses the effects that colonialism has had on the way that different bodies are perceived in different societies today. Speaking about colonialism, she suggests that: “bodies remember such histories even when we forget them. Such histories, we might say, surface on the body, or even, shape how bodies surface” (ibid). What she means by this is that bodies are seen and treated according to the historical baggage they are associated with.

This suggests that we have to examine where we have been before we can understand the present context. Therefore, we need to begin by taking a trip back in time and gain an understand of the historical baggage that bodies carry within the Swedish context before we can understand how and why these bodies are met the way they are in Sweden today. Hence, it is crucial to understand the role that race, and racism have played in the Swedish context, but perhaps even more important to understand the role that Sweden has played in the development of race and racism on a global scale. We will begin by historically positioning Sweden in a global, economic, and academic place.
Swedish East-India Company

While most of Swedish textbooks seem reluctant to mention this, Sweden was quite involved in the colonial processes of the 17th, 18th and 19th Century. The only reason why Swedish involvement was not as big as it was for many other Pan-European countries, is because Sweden was lagging economically (Afrofobirapporten 2014: 19). Sweden did not have the funds to make the costly conquests across the Atlantic which was a troublesome time for Swedish rulers (Afrofobirapporten 2014: 19; Fur in Naum and Nordin 2013). It was embarrassing trying to compete with other countries with no colonies to show for.

Sweden did, however, acquire three colonies although the two first ones were not particularly profitable. Initially, The Swedish East-India Company was aiming to buy a colony in the Caribbean with Tobago looking very likely for a long time. The purchase never took place, but instead Sweden got its first colony in Delaware, United States in what was called New Sweden. Being that Sweden’s acquisition of colonies was quite late comparing with other Pan-European nations, the ones that Sweden got were not very profitable. The Swedish rule in the colony did, however, not last for very long being that it turned out not to have been as profitable as the leaders of the East-India Company would have liked. Instead, the Swedish Africa Company acquired a colony in present day Ghana called Cabo Corso. Like in the case with the first colony, this one proved to cost a lot as well, given that Sweden had to send troops to defend its boarders from Danish and Dutch settlers who were threatening to take over (Afrofobirapporten 2014: 19).

It was not until 1784 that Sweden got a stable colony in St: Barthélemy (ibid). Much like the other two colonies, St: Barthélemy was not very rich on any sort of natural resources and therefore was not a very good trading venue. This was, however solved by making it a tax-free zone for slave trade (ibid: 19-20). Together, Sweden and Denmark are thought to have exported approximately 100,000 Africans from West Africa to the Caribbean during the 1600-1800’s (ibid 20). In addition to the active part-taking in slave trade, Swedish iron was one of Sweden’s key products of exportation at the time. Sweden manufactured the chains that bound slaves to the ships that crossed the Atlantic Ocean, as well as in the plantations in both South-, and North America (ibid).

12 Det svenska ostindiska kompaniet
13 Technically in England being that the United States of America was not established as of yet.
14 Nya Sverige
The Invention of Race

The human race is undoubtedly the one and only biological race of humanity, and to scientifically argue that there might exist subcategories to the human race, could of course have horrendous consequences. If one were to argue for the addition of hierarchies to said subcategories and receive widespread recognition for these arguments, the consequences would be a scientifically proven dominance of some subgroups of humanity and hence the subordination of other subgroups. Sadly, this is exactly what happened.

The Pan-European conquests for expansion was at its height during the 1700’s and while the killing and selling of human beings in the colonies was very profitable for the countries involved, it lacked scientific and moral support. It was therefore necessary to find a loophole to maintain this remarkably beneficial trade system for Pan-European economies. Being that Pan-European economies were already in such advantaged positions, they could influence what people were to be taught. Therefore, scientific racism spread rapidly across the world, legitimizing the domination of any racial subcategory placed beneath whiteness in the hierarchical ladder. The colonization of resources, bodies and minds has its roots within this hierarchic ranking system and is an ongoing project yet today (Fanon 1963: 37; Wa Thiong'o 1986: 28; Clammer 2008: 157-158).

“But where did these ideas derive from?” you might ask. In a small village, just outside of Uppsala, Swedish florist Carl Linneaus spent a big portion of his life working on his vast project of categorizing all of Sweden’s vegetation. His contributions to botanical knowledge is quite deservingly celebrated across the world today. Having reached such international fame for his contribution to the flora and his fine categorization skills, he was tempted to use his methods for other areas of categorization (Hübinette, Hörnfeldt, Farahani and León Rosales, 2012: 30).

In 1735, he released Systema Nature in which Homo Sapiens was subcategorized into four races white, red, yellow and black (Wasniowski in Hübinette 2017: 33). These races were geographically linked and were also assigned characteristics. For instance, the black race was described as lazy and childlike, whereas the white was intelligent and athletic. Scholars

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15 Frantz Fanon among many scholars firmly believed/believe that perhaps the most devastating effects of colonialism is not the loss of resources and bodies, but the internalized inferiority of colonized populations minds. The effects of colonialism have given colonized a numbness in the eyes of their oppressors and a self-hatred that keeps them from resistance. This is not least expressed in Bob Marley’s famous Redemption Song in which the line “Emancipate yourself from mental slavery. None but ourselves can free our minds” starts off the second verse.
believe these sketches to be the foundation for the eugenics research that followed in the coming centuries (Afrofobirapporten 2014: 21).

**Swedish Society of Eugenics**

The interest in eugenics in Swedish research facilities was always present during the coming years although countries like Denmark and Germany might have been the leading nations within the discipline. In the 1910’s and 1920’s, however, a group of doctors – most of them employed at the Karolinska institute in Stockholm – advocated for an increase in sexual reproduction among people of desirable racial groups and a decrease and even sterilization of groups from “undesirable groups” (Lundmark 2007: 5). They called themselves *Svenska Sällskapet för Rashygien*\(^{16}\). They could, however, not rely on the existing scientific works to pursue their plans. They needed better proof to continue this project. Hence, they filed a motion to the parliament in 1920 requesting funding to create a research center for eugenics.

The decision did not take long. It was an almost unanimous “Yes” from people of the parliament. Both the leader of the right-wing, coalition Arvid Lindman and the left-wing Hjalmar Branting agreed to the terms as did the liberals Jacob Petterson, Raoul Hamilton and Knut Kjellberg. This meant that the question was passed on to the state committee who declared that an institution was “of immense importance from a scientific as well as a social perspective”\(^{17}\) (ibid: 18-19). In 1922 *The Swedish institute for Eugenics*\(^{18}\) was started making Sweden the first country in the world to have a research center solely devoted to providing scientific proof of white superiority and a hierarchical system of subordination of other groups (ibid: 5).

The main figure of the institution was Herman Lundborg, a doctor who had spent most of his time researching the “Swedish-Germanic race”\(^{19}\) by examining Swedish and Sámi peoples’ sculls (see also Laskar in Hübinette 2017). His conclusions were that Sámi people were brachycephalic whereas the “Swedish-Germanic-race” were dolichocephalic\(^{20}\) (Hagerman 2015; Laskar in Hübinette 2017: 74-75). He was a strong opponent to miscegenation\(^{21}\) which was his motivation for conducting the research. He was a well-known anti-Semite and a

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\(^{16}\) *The Swedish Association for Eugenic Hygiene*
\(^{17}\) “Av synnerlig vikt från såväl vetenskplig som social synpunkt”
\(^{18}\) *Det Svenska Rasbiologiska institutet*
\(^{19}\) ”Svensk-germanska rasen”
\(^{20}\) Kortskallar and långskallar
\(^{21}\) Racemixing/rasblandning
believer that Jews had too much power over Economics, media and certain professions (H: 33).

During the time that the research center was active, Sweden instated a few laws based on the centers findings. Together with the other Scandinavian countries and Estonia, Sweden became the only democratic country that instated forced sterilization laws assigned to “undesirable races” to prevent the pollution of the “Swedish-Germanic race” (Hübinette, Hörfeldt, Farahani and León Rosales, 2012, 227).

Understanding Race and Racialization

The word ras22 is one that has become a taboo of the word in Sweden. The word has gradually slipped out of Swedish vocabular and has almost been replaced by the word ethnicity. This can be explained by how Sweden was struck with shame following World War II, given that The Swedish Society of Eugenics had a hand in creating the propaganda for the Germanic-race (Wasniowski in Hübinette 2017: 34; Gruber 2007: 35). This taboo becomes evident looking at the fact that Sweden removed race as a category of discrimination in 2009 which has been met by heavy critique from the European Commission against racism and intolerance ECRI (Afrofobirapporten 2014: 35). In this section, I will elaborate on the reasons as to why I deem it necessary to use race instead of ethnicity, as well as discuss how racialization works.

In the book 2014, Blond and blue-eyed: Whiteness, Swedishness, and visual culture, Jeff Werner discusses artistic representations of Swedishness and that the tendency of linking nationality with appearance in Sweden can be traced back to the 19th century. He further argues for his usage of the term race as opposed to ethnicity and the problems of using ethnicity as equivalent to race.

“Race, in the sense in which it is used in whiteness studies, does not describe a set of phenotypical traits, but rather how appearance and culture become part of society’s power structures. Race operates parallel to, say, gender and class to create and maintain hierarchical structures. It can do so because it appears to be a given, much like the differences between men and women, rich and poor. Race should thus be thought of as a relational and not static category.” (Werner 2014: 49)

22 Swedish translation of the word race
As stated earlier, history affects the way bodies are perceived today. Sara Ahmed (2006: 111) claims that bodies remember historical events of oppression such as colonialism. By this she means that regardless of if people perceive themselves as having done away with the likes of misogyny and racism, bodies that conflict the norm within the society that they are in will always cause controversy and that this controversy is based on the historical understanding of such bodies. They carry historical meanings that are embedded into the minds of the beholder as well as its inhabitant and cause the onlooker to project meanings onto them.

Racialization has the power to zoom bodies through time and space and place them in settings where they are perceived to belong. Racialization is hence not just the understanding of race as a social construct, but racialization gives agency to the process of race construction. It specifies that race does not exist in and of itself, but need an actor of some sort for it to be interpreted as a category. It is in interactions between human beings that racialized ideas about bodies are formed. Racialization is constructed based on the historical, allegations that exist in the context and is an underlying consciousness that might or might not affect agencies of the present actors.

One of the first to elaborate these views was Frantz (Fanon 2008) who in his 1952 book *Black skin, white masks* wrote about the interaction between a white man and a black man. In his example, the two men are seated in a room and the black man desires a pack of cigarettes that lay on the other side of the table. In addition to having to reach across the table for the cigarettes, he would also have to reach backwards to a drawer in which the matches lay. All of these movements would inevitably draw the attention of the white man. He is in this instance made aware of his skin color and the signals that it sends out in this context (Fanon 2008).

When discussing race, racialization and racism, it is important not to fall into some common traps. When discussing sexism, Sara Ahmed (2015: 5) says that a big problem is that too often focus around sexism is redirected: either to the past tense, as something that has been dealt with and is now in the past; or as elsewhere, as something that other cultures have to deal with. I suggest that this works just as well for racism.

One of these traps are the common myth about racism being something that only people in lower socioeconomic class are agents of. While overt actions of racism might be more common place in working class environment, we must be very careful with such explanations. Believing that working-class people due to lower levels of education are more frequently represented in racist actions is a quite classist way of moving blame from the colonial,
capitalistic past to present day working-class people. Looking at the capitalistic system, it is fair to say that the people that have by far benefited most of the racism is not working-class people, but quite opposite wealthy elite (see also Hage 2008).

National Forgetting and Selective Remembrance

"In the rise of the West, the achievement of superiority has been accomplished not only by sword and cross, but also by a philosophy of history that has used time and place as conceptual tools for dividing the world according to the interests of imperialism. (Willinsky 1998:134)"

As the quote shows, educator John Willinsky believes that history, and the writing of history have played important roles in giving the West its superior position. Related to this, Swedish historians have been reluctant to address Swedish part-taking in colonial practices (Dahl in Ahmed 2011: 18; Habel in Hübinette 2012: 67; Afrofobirapporten 2014: 12).

Rapper, poet and researcher Kingsley James Daley, or Akala as he is better known, recently wrote a piece in which he offered an extremely precise, yet still concise phrasing of issues concerning history writing and teaching while discussing the history of immigration in the United Kingdom. “The project of national forgetting and selective remembrance.” (Daley 2017). What he means by this is that the United Kingdom, together with a few other countries, have had the luxury of writing their own history. This luxury has meant that these nations have had the possibility to meticulously pick out historical events that fit the image that they want to convey about themselves.

Akala suggests that this potpourri of historical events serves to strengthen nationalistic self-flattering narratives and give the few nations and societies granted with this luxury an image of exceptionality in relation to nations that don’t possess the same luxuries when it comes to narrative (ibid). Hence, the education in these countries have been subject to national forgetting, and selective remembrance. Cultural Imperialism has meant that these exceptional views have been able to spread not only within these countries, but to other countries as well (see also Said 1978).
While this is as true for Sweden as it is for other countries that have also enjoyed the privilege of tailoring its own image, the Swedish exceptionality differs from other countries in some key ways (Habel in Hübinette 2012: 68). Swedish exceptionality is tricky because it is not exceptional in any grand or robust, military manner. Rather Swedish exceptionalism is one of moral grandeur and egalitarian values. Sweden is thought to be a neutral, non-conflicting, pragmatic nation that is the epitome of progressive work for equal rights (ibid: 67-68).

This quite flattering position has been obtained by the tampering of historical events such as the ones mentioned earlier. The most important aspects that aid Sweden in getting this position are: the false belief that while other countries took part in the Pan-European projects of racialized colonialism and transatlantic slavery, Swedish ships remained at the shores; and secondly, the belief that while other countries participated in the I and II world wars, Sweden remained neutral (Erlandsson 2015: 2; Fur 2013 in Naum and Nordin 2013: 14-15).

Postraciality, Colorblindness and Racism Today

In his book Are We All Postracial Yet?: Debating race, professor of comparative literature and anthropology David Theo Goldberg explores what enables racisms to persist. His main argument, as the title suggests is that Postraciality is the main factor. Postraciality is the belief that the socially and “scientifically” constructed concept of race, that was created as part of the Pan-European project of racialized enslavement and colonization is now a thing of the past and that its effects are obsolete in societies today (Ahmed 2015; Goldberg 2015: 1-3; Hübinette, Hörfeldt, Farahani and León Rosales 2012: 32-34; Ikuenobe 2013: 447-448).

This is quite similar to the notion of racelessness which is the understanding that the world has no races, once more making effects of such categories obsolete (Goldberg 2015: 62-63). Colorblindness is the belief that race is invisible and the refusal to acknowledge the existence of differences in appearance (Goldberg 2015: 33-34; Hübinette, Hörfeldt, Farahani and León Rosales 2012: 32). We can understand postraciality and colorblindness as methods for evading discussions about social inequities in societies today. The two of them work as a form of “hush-hushing” discussions which makes it hard for people who are actually experiencing racially motivated discriminatory behaviors to speak up. Goldberg (2015: 34) argues that:

“[p]ostraciality seems to avoid completely the questions of structural differentiation. The postracial is the racial condition in denial of the structural. It
avoids the fact that the structural forms and fashions the racial, and so too the social advantages, losses, and limits racially ordered.”

“The racial condition” in this quote suggests that it is the racial position at the top of the hierarchical system that benefits most from this method. In the Swedish context, postraciality and colorblindness are further helped by the notion of national forgetting and selective remembrance, enabling an essence of Swedish exceptionality. What is masked in not seeing color, are the structural inequalities that Goldberg discusses. Racelessness also limits possibilities for people who face racial discrimination to adequately articulate these issues, which serves to keep up dominant structures (Goldberg 2015: 33).

In conclusion, the effects of postraciality are rarely ones that will strike you instantly, but they become a lot more visible when you do a bit of an economic background-check. Sweden choosing to forget about the Swedish industrial revolution only sparking to life as Sweden started selling the iron that chained Africans to boats in the transatlantic slave trade, or Sweden being in the forefront of international eugenics research is necessary for racism to persist in this subtle form. For Swedes, it allows Swedes to believe that the relative financial advantage of average Swedes in comparison to average world citizens is meritocratic rather than based on these historical events of colonialism.

Along these lines, people subconsciously, attach understandings of inferiority to bodies that have origin in parts of the world that historically did not benefit from colonial practices. Hence, one could say that there is a perceived historically attached class hierarchy between white and nonwhite bodies. While I agree that a raceless, or postracial world would ideally be something to strive for, Goldberg (2015) believes that this is a utopia that many people falsely believe to have been met. It is easy to be lured into thinking that the effects of colonial practices have no meaning today. I, however, agree with what Hübinette, Hörfeldt, Farahani and León Rosales say in that a postracial world might be desirable, but it will take very long if ever to get there (Hübinette, Hörfeldt, Farahani and León Rosales, 2012: 35-38; See also Goldberg 2015: 152-154).

**Intersectionality, Homosociality and Narrow Swedishness**

“That man over there says women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into
carriages, and lifted over ditches, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And aint I a woman?”

Sojourner Truth,
Woman’s Rights Convention, Akron, Ohio 1851

(Loewenberg and Bogen 1978: 235 in Carby 1997: 112)

Intersectionality

As the quote shows, the whole idea was perhaps first publicly formulated as early as 1851. In her ‘Aint I a woman’ speech, Sojourner Truth pointed out the denial of her womanhood in the presence of white women (Carby 1997: 112). By illustrating the big differences in treatment, her speech makes it irrefutably evident that male attitudes towards women as a group were by no means fixed, but depended on supplementary variables apart from gender. By comparing the way that her life had panned out in contrast to the women described by the man that she refers to as “that man over there”, she manages to show the sever inequities that exists within the gendered group of women (Carby 1997).

In a few sentences, Sojourner Truth pinpoints how variables such as race, class and perhaps even ability are forgotten by “that man over there” when arguing for the continued denial of female voting rights. In his speech, it becomes evident that the man was referring only to white women, and particularly white women in socioeconomically privileged positions. While Sojourner Truth’s speech did not spark the much-needed academic theorizing about intersectionality at the time, it has been vital in the developments of the theories used now.

The first one to actually use the term intersectionality in academic writing was Kimberle Crenshaw. In her 1991 Mapping Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics and Violence Against Women of Color, she engages in a discussion about how violence against women of color is a topic that has fallen through the cracks. It is an issue that needed new theories to properly be able to deal with more than one dimension of domination. She suggests that:

“Contemporary feminist and antiracist discourses have failed to consider intersectional identities such as women of color. Focusing on two dimensions of male violence against women – battering and rape – I consider how the experiences of women of color are frequently the product of intersecting
patterns of racism and sexism, and how these experiences tend not to be represented within the discourses of either feminism or antiracism. Because of their intersectional identity as both women and of color within discourses that are shaped to respond to one or the other, women of color are marginalized within both (Crenshaw 1991: 1242-1244).”

The basis of intersectionality, hence lay in the discipline of law, but has had most influence in the field of gender studies. Intersectionality as a concept is one that many researchers have struggled with fining a definition for over time. Neither what it really is, what it does, or what it is supposed to do has been unanimously established in the field of gender research, where it is most frequently used. Etymologically, of course it derives from intersections and what happens when paths cross. In her text Intersectionality’s Definitional Dilemmas, Patricia Hill Collins (2015: 2) provides a definition that I adhere to namely that the:

“term intersectionality references the critical insight that race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, ability, and age operate not as unitary, mutually exclusive entities, but as reciprocally constructing phenomena that in turn shape complex social inequalities.”

Much like what I described in the previous section around race and racialization, all of these categories are affected by historical events and have baggage based on these events. As the quote shows, these sets of baggage should not be seen as “unitary, mutually exclusive entities”. We have to consider what sort of effects the combinations of these might have in shaping social realities. In this thesis, I will be using intersectionality as a tool to illustrate how these categories affect choices and behaviors of students at Tuvaskolan as well as consider how I am perceived in different situations.

Homosociality and Masculinity

In her 1976 article Toward a Homosocial Theory of Sex Roles: An Explanation of the Sex Segregation of Social Institutions, Lipman-Bluemen “define[s] ‘homosocial’ as the seeking, enjoyment, and/or preference for the company of the same sex” (1976: 16). It is hence, intersectionally homogenous situations in which men find themselves with only other men present. She continues declaring that “The dominance order among men is based upon control of resources, including land, money, education, occupations, political connections, and family” (ibid).
Homosocial spaces, hence become a means of retaining resources between men, or as Thurnell-Read (2012: 251) puts it: “serves a wider purpose of perpetuating exclusionary practices which retain resources within the control of men rather than women.” Thurnell-Read (ibid) adds that these friendship groups are instances in which masculinities are negotiated and collectively defined. It is a set of obligations that dictate the way social contact between men proceed and what is rendered “acceptable masculine behaviors and not. Among these are policing of heterosexuality, violence and the ever-present domination of women. Domination of women is commonly achieved by what Thurnell-Read (2012: 52) calls “men’s talk”. Along the lines with the argument of obligations, Michael Kimmel (2008: 47) means that: “masculinity is largely a 'homosocial' experience: performed for and judged by, other men”

In her book *Masculinities*, Raewyn Connell (2008: 138) addresses the notion of compulsory heterosexuality in a study around men and their attitudes towards men that hung out in the gay district of Kings cross in Sydney. They would occasionally go and beat up some of the people at Kings cross because they “did not like” homosexuals”. Their violent attitudes towards gay men is an act of domination, thought to strengthen their own air of masculinity (ibid: 138-139).

The dichotomy *Svensk/Invandrare*

“In Sweden, to pass as white is generally to be unnoticed; unmarked; to be seen without being either visible or made visible. The purpose of using white is to spell out a normative position. White is thus a concept that focuses on race as a social construct” (Werner 2014: 48).

In general terms, the dichotomy *svensk/invandrare*\(^{23}\), which translates Swede/immigrant, is used in public discourse to describe people in the Swedish context. People that don’t fit the normative image of Swedishness are hence positioned in the vast category, *invandrare*. Ylva Habel (in Hübinette 2012: 54) argues that this term is used to describe nonwhite swedes regardless on whether the person has immigrated, or not. People that live in Sweden should of course by definition be thought of as Swedes. Much like in Werner’s quote, white becomes equivalent to Swedish. It is rendered invisible, hence making it the invisible norm in Sweden. This dichotomous way of subconsciously viewing Swedishness creates a hierarchy in that one

\[^{23}\] Invandrare translates immigrant although the usage of this term generally differs in public discourse. The usage of the term invandrare was almost synonymous with nonwhite by many informants at the school, hence defining anyone outside of what would be considered as Svenne or Swede.
group is seen as the norm whereas people that don’t fully qualify to be part of the norm is perceived as a deviation (Habel in Hübinette 2012: 51).

During my fieldwork, the word svensk\textsuperscript{24} came in many different variations. Svensk, svenne\textsuperscript{25} and sueidi are a few examples of these. At Tuvaskolan as well as in Sweden as a whole, Swedishness is heavily linked to what is considered racially Swedish (Von Brömssen and Risenfors 2014). This label is only granted to people who qualify the phenotypical test of Swedishness and levels are determined based on the proximity to whiteness (Bäckman 2009: 23). At Tuvaskolan, nonwhite people are spoken of as invandrare, blattar\textsuperscript{26}, svartskallar\textsuperscript{27} and babbar. These terms are however, predominantly used by nonwhite students themselves. Jonsson (2007: 270-273) addresses this notion of reclaiming words that have a racist past by showing how being categorized or labeled as invandrare is passive, whereas calling yourself blatte is active.

Although most students that I spoke to would probably say that appearance is the only thing that determines your status as either invandrare or svensk, the last ethnographical chapter, Conversation Concerning Trespassing and Belonging, will show how class can also be an important mediating factor. While appearance may be the key factor, both attire and speech have influence, as will become apparent in the third ethnographic chapter (Miliani and Jonsson 2011; Miliani and Jonsson 2012).

\textsuperscript{24} svensk, svenne, and sueidi are a few of these and they will be reoccurring throughout this thesis.
\textsuperscript{25} Svenne is a slang variation of the term Swede (Svennar – slang for Swedes) (Svennarna – slang for the Swedes). It is commonly used in slang to point out people perceived of having particularly typical Swedish racial, as well as social traits. The term is often seen as slur by the white Swedish population because it challenges the colorblind utopia and generalizes about Swedish whiteness. It forces white people to acknowledge their own whiteness. Due to an exclusive usage of the term Swede at the school, the term svenne has come to be used almost synonymously with Swedish whites by many of the nonwhite informants.

\textsuperscript{26} blattar blatte blattarna is slang and is used almost dichotomously to Svennar or svenskar at the school. I say almost because it contains both a racialized as well as a class distinction (Jonsson 2007: 281). It’s a manner of describing non-svennar, or nonwhite Swedes, which makes its usage closely related to that of the term invandrare. Blattar would by many be considered slur, especially if it would be uttered by a white Swede. However, between people that belong to the nonwhite group, it is rather used as a reclaiming word and find cohesiveness within the nonwhite group.

\textsuperscript{27} Svartskalle, svartskallar, svartskallarna is used synonymously to blattar. It literally means black head, referring to black hair. Its documented usage can be traced back to 1977 and was used at racial slur to describe black-haired immigrants, but like the term blattar, it has been reclaimed and is now used to find cohesiveness within the nonwhite group.
The Scenery of Tuvaskolan

While Tuvaskolan is of course primarily an educational facility, I argue that one of its most important functions of the school is serving as a social meeting spot. The main goal of the educational system is to produce new citizens that will find a good function in society. However, the time in the classrooms only makes up about two thirds of the time that students spend in the school building. The rest of the time is mainly devoted to socializing. It is in this unsupervised third that my fieldwork was carried out.

This chapter attempts at giving you an overview of some of the important places and spaces in which the fieldwork for this thesis was conducted. I will give an overview of the physical conditions in which the conversations of the thesis took place. My focus will be on the cafeteria given that that is where the vast majority of my fieldwork was conducted. You will also get to meet the two school hosts at length before we head on to meet the students.

After my first two weeks of fieldwork, the students had a week off for what is called sports break\textsuperscript{28}. This meant that the facilities were vacated for a couple of days. As I spent most of this time refining and analyzing the notes that I had made thus far, I had some extra time before the students came back. Therefore, I seized the opportunity to go there and photograph the areas so that I would have an easier task of describing the scenery later. I have, however, been given permission by the school board to display modified versions of some of the photos in this thesis so they will also feature at the end of the section.

The Cafeteria – The Intersection

In the center of the school building was the cafeteria. This is not to be mistaken with the canteen where students had lunch. Located in the center of the school, the Cafeteria was by far the most important meeting spot for students. It had, around 15 tales and couches, and a kiosk where students could by candy and soft drinks. Along the walls and windows, there were benches and small stools to sit on. While there were benches in all the corridors for students to sit on in between classes, no other place around the school provided better circumstances for a good conversation, or as the third-year student Anna put it: “There are no other places where you can talk eye to eye.”\textsuperscript{29} Its central location made it so that most of the

\textsuperscript{28} sportlov

\textsuperscript{29} “Det finns inga andra ställen där man kan prata öga mot öga”
students passed the cafeteria at some point during the school day and the students that ended up staying in the cafeteria were there to hang out and talk to people. Given that all the corridors were in some way connected to the cafeteria, one might even call it an intersection.

The cafeteria is a stage. As soon as you enter you are in the spotlight and need to be prepared. All body movements and actions bear meaning. It is a venue where status is displayed. Given that the cafeteria was already a spot where people were students came when they were in the mood for a chat, it was the easiest place for me to engage in conversations. I made sure to always be in the cafeteria at quarter past ten every day. That’s when the students got out of their morning classes and the cafeteria filled up with students. My goal was to make seeing me in the cafeteria a habit.

Views on the quality of the cafeteria as a hangout-spot were quite heterogeneous. The first time I talked to Victor he told me that he absolutely hated coming there and couldn’t understand why his friends insisted on spending their breaks there. I asked him why he felt such hatred for the place and he said that it was too noisy. He added: “lots of annoying people here!”

First time I talked to Hebba she told me that she spends time there even when she has finished school as she felt too lazy to go home. At the same time though she felt like hanging around with friends was a more valuable pastime than being stuck behind the TV-screen at home.

So where did people sit? The seating arrangements varied all though they always followed structures and norms. Unlike in the case of Von Brömmens and Risenfors’s (2014) article *Immigrant Corner*, there were no fixed spots that always consisted of the same groups of students. They were neither gendered nor racialized according to any cemented lines, however the constellations seemed to reemerge in different settings every day. I will return to this at length in the upcoming chapter.

A couple of weeks into the fieldwork, Anna let me in on one of the ways in which she and her friends had systematized their arrivals so that people would not have to come there alone. She showed me her phone and on the screen, were five different chat-groups where people would communicate their whereabouts in the cafeteria. That way, you would know with whom and where you needed to go before you even arrived. “I mean, you don’t wanna get here and just stand and look for your friends!”

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30 “Fett mycket osköna människor här!”
31 “Jag menar, man vill ju inte komma fram hit och bad stå och leta efter sina vänner!”
Image 2.1 Cafeteria from staff room entrance

Image 2.2 Bar-tables in the cafeteria
Image 2.3 Cafeteria from the L-corridor entrance

Image 2.4 Cafeteria from the M-corridor entrance
The School Hosts

Before we meet the students, I would like for you to get acquainted with the school’s two school hosts, Francisco and Javad. A few years before I got to Tuvaskolan, the school had been struggling with fighting. The fights were both between students that attended the school, as well as with students of the school and people that came to the school to fight. The cafeteria seemed to have been a space in which many of these fights had taken place. Most of the people that were in fights were described by Javad as “invandrarkillar”. The school needed to find a solution to this problem and the lot fell on hiring school hosts that would keep the students from fighting.

Javad and Francisco were two men in their early forties. Javad was of Afghani background and Francisco of Chilean. Francisco migrated from Chile as a three-year-old and grew up in the outskirts of Stockholm, whereas Javad had moved around to different countries before settling in Sweden as an adult. I figured that it could be helpful for my project to get to know what the functions of the school hosts were meant to be, so I asked the principal if it were possible for me to get to see Javad and Francisco’s job descriptions. He redirected my attention to his colleague Jan who was Javad and Francisco’s boss. When I asked Jan for the same thing, he said that he would email me the job descriptions. This process stalled for a couple of weeks before I decided to drop by his office to retrieve them. He gave me a word document that lacked a headline, but had five sentences in bullets typed in the middle of the paper.

In summary, the school hosts were meant to keep casual contact with all of the school’s students. They were to provide the adult link between students and teachers. Through this casual, social approach, they would also achieve a non-violent atmosphere within the school building, as well as smoothen conversations between students and the rest of the staff. They were also expected to keep unauthorized people from entering the premises. This seems to have been the main reason as to why it was important for the school hosts to know all the students. That way, they would easily be able to identify and dismiss people who did not attend the school. I only witnessed such a dismissal on two occasions during my stay at the school.

32 Literarily “Immigrant boys” but commonly used to describe nonwhite boys. I believe that “nonwhite boys” is how Javad was using it in this occasion.
Being that my aim was to gain quick access to casual conversations with students, my relationship with the school hosts proved to be of vital importance. On my first trip to the school, I met with the principal and some of the staff. Out of the brief acquaintances, he told me that Francisco and Javad would be able to help me during my fieldwork. Later that they, Francisco and I were chatting about their work in the staff room. He proudly told me that he and Javad knew all the school’s two thousand students and could start conversations with anyone of them at any time. He further explained that the students generally dismissed the teachers’ authorities and that their casual contact with the students allowed great influence.

Naturally, I found this very interesting but at the same time I was a bit skeptical towards the veracity of the claim. What is it that allows him to find common grounds with such a diverse student composition in such short time? Looking back, I can testify to the fact that Francisco’s claim might have been a slight exaggeration seen as his and Javad’s contact was a lot stronger with the male students and particularly nonwhite male students. They used homosocial male bonding to address the issue of fighting that had been taking place at the school before their arrival. This will be discussed at length in the chapter *Homosocial “safe zones” and Obligatory Actions.*

Being that their ambitious job descriptions were to maintain casual contact with all of the school’s two thousand students, they had to rely on easily relatable conversation-starters and punchlines. Therefore, they would sometimes lazily rely on sexist and racist jargons since everyone were aware of these stereotypes. Sadly, they did not seem to realize the damaging effect that such jargons had, especially given the relative power positions that they were in in relation to the students.
Entering the Matrix

This chapter will introduce you to the school as a social platform. Most of the material used in this chapter is from the two first weeks of my fieldwork. You will meet some of the students and hear how they describe their social realities. In this chapter, I will also begin to elaborate on some of the ways in which social segregation operates at the school, as well as showing how I had to position myself within that segregation. I will try to describe why it was necessary for me to adhere to and find means to navigate my way within the socially coded matrix of Tuvaskolan in order to pursue my fieldwork.

Early Perspectives on the Social Reality of Tuvaskolan

As I entered the coffee room on my first day of fieldwork, I met Francisco. By then, we were already acquainted given that I had met him during my visit a week earlier. He greeted me enthusiastically and we stayed in the coffee room for a while chatting. After a while he asked me to remind him of what my research was about, and I reminded him that my research was about the school as a social platform and that my main interest was in social groupings. After this brief explanation, he replied: “Well, you’ve come to the right school! Here, svennarna hang out with svennarna and blattarna with blattarna.”

There are a few things that we need to understand here. Firstly, us both being nonwhite Swedes, positions us both within the same group in his dichotomous description of the social segregation. Therefore, there is nothing hostile about him calling the dichotomy out in my presence. On the contrary, it is used as an attempt at strengthening our cohesiveness and speed up our bonding process. Secondly, the term blatte would generally be considered racial slur had it been uttered by a white Swede, but as we are both considered blattar, he allows himself to be blunt in calling out his perception of the social segregation. I doubt that he would have been this daring had I been a white researcher.

When discussing masculinity and group cohesion, Thurnell-Read talks about in-group validations and in-group jokes as frequently used tools in establishing group identity. Certain acts or behavior are labeled as group behavior therefore leading to a feeling of belonging (Thurnell-Read, 2012). As stated earlier, the term blatte would generally be considered racial slur had it been uttered by a white Swede, but since we are both included in the group blattar,
he uses it as an in-group validation tool to further point to our common ground (See also Miliani and Jonsson 2012).

Later that first day of fieldwork, Francisco and I left the staff room and went out into the cafeteria where Francisco had promised to introduce me to some students. “See for yourself!” he said, referring to his earlier comment concerning the social segregation at the school. I looked around and was surprised at the extent of veracity in his earlier claim. We walked up to the bar table and I was introduced to the students standing there. The place consisted of five nonwhite guys and one nonwhite girl. I introduced myself and my reason for being at the school and as I told them that I was interested in looking at how students socialize and form groups outside classrooms. They all laughed and looked at each other. One of them looks back at me and says: “It’s gonna take about ten minutes to get it: Orten here, svennarna there.” He points to the sofas a few meters away where unmistakably only white students sit.

Despite the simplicity of his analysis, the core of what he said was to become central in my next three months of fieldwork. My feeling was that most people at the school were aware of this division, yet seemed reluctant to address it head on. There seemed to be a mixture of fear and colorblind postraciality that kept, specifically, the white students and the teachers from addressing the segregation (Goldberg 2015: 69-71). There was always a slight diversion in the way it was presented when I spoke to white groups of students. I sometimes felt like there was an element of shame in calling the segregation out. Hence, it was masked behind things such as culture and values.

Anna described the reasons for why she generally hung out with the group of people that she was sitting with by saying that it was mostly down to wanting to be surrounded by people that in some way or another were like yourself: “Well, it probably has a lot to do with being the same way and looking the same. Share the same values and stuff like that you know. Same

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33 “Du ser ju själv!”

34 Orten – Slang for the word “förorten” which translates “suburb” and describes outer districts that are adjacent to any major municipality in Sweden. The term “orten”, in which the prefix “för” has been removed, is generally used by people from stigmatized, racialized suburbs to describe their districts and in doing so, also manifest a cohesiveness with other racialized suburbs. René León Rosales (2016) address the symbolic reasons for the removal of the prefix meaning that this is done to move focus from the majority society to the own reality within the racially segregated suburbs. A Pan-suburb cohesiveness. In this instance, it is used to describe people from orten rather than the geographical space itself.

35 “Det kommer ta typ tio minuter att fatta. Orten här, svennarna där!”
I was sitting with a group of 10-12 white students in the middle of the cafeteria when she gave me this description.

As a follow up question, I asked if there was anywhere apart from the group that she was seated in that she would feel comfortable sitting with. She peered around for a minute or so, struggling to find one other group that felt comfortable enough to go to if no one from any of her five chat-groups were in the cafeteria, which she added is a highly unlikely scenario. Unsurprisingly, the group that she pointed to was a composition of all white students. She thinks for another few seconds before she gives me her conclusion of social life at Tuvaskolan: “So this is how it is! Tuvaskolan is all about finding a friend to have lunch with!” We both laugh at the simplified summary that three years at the school had led her to.

Returning to Francisco’s blunt analysis of the division might help understand why so few white students described the division as bluntly as he did. Calling the dichotomy out in my presence would place us in separate groups. It would point to our very conversation being an anomaly and perhaps also suggest that there might be racial hierarchies at the school and hence also between me and whomever I was talking to. No one wants to take that kind of a risk.

At the end of my first day of fieldwork, I met Emma for the first time. She was a first-year student at Tuvaskolan, attending the social science program. In this occasion, she was sitting with a group of nonwhite students. I grab a seat and the discussion this afternoon turned into a conversation concerning heritage. It all started with one of the students, Remmy, asking me where I was from. Although I felt quite certain that he was not looking for the answer “Uppsala”, I replied this to test my hypothesis. As I suspected, the answer did not prove sufficient, so I replied that my father is from the Democratic Republic of Congo and my mother is from Sweden. “We’re neighbors then!” he replied and added that his parents are from Uganda.

We went around the table and in turn, everyone got the chance to tell the group “where they come from”. It was undoubtedly a quite diverse group of people given that we, apart from Sweden, all had at least one different country of origin. Emma told the group that she was half Indian and half Swedish, although it was quite complicated to explain. Her father did not

36 “Asså det handlar nog rätt mycket om att man ska vara på samma sätt och se likadan ut. Ha samma värderingar och så, liksom. Samma kultur.”
37 “Så här är det! Tuvaskolan handlar om att hitta en kompis att äta lunch med!”
consider himself Indian being that he was adopted from a young age and had grown up in Sweden.

**Definitional Dilemmas**

I sat with a group of five nonwhite female students in the cafeteria who wanted to help me sort out the social matrix. One of the students, Sarah, professed that blattar and svennar hang out separately! I couldn’t just walk into a group of svennar and be like ’Hey, hey!’ The group laughed as she pitched her voice up, sat up straight and mimicked Swedish whiteness for a second. She too laughs as she steps out of character and back to her ordinary self. I asked her to define what blattar means and she provided me with a full glossary of how she perceives the social division. I summarize her terminology like this:

*Blatte* = nonwhite Swede  
*Babbe* = nonwhite people from Orten  
*Svensk* = white Swede  
*Import* = nonwhite, newly arrived immigrant.

While she began by stating the same dichotomous definition of svensk and blatte that I had already come across a few times by then, she also provided two new subcategories to the nonwhite group: Babbe and import. She further explained the term babbe as being nonwhite people that had violent and criminal tendencies. They were “not to be messed with” and she explained how they take pride in defending their ort.

I asked her if she considered herself to be part of this categorical schema and she replied that she would generally be considered blatte. So too did the rest of the girls at the table where we were sitting, although they started debating whether Mathilda could be considered Babbe seen as she was from orten. They however laughed and decided that she probably would not fit in that category despite her upbringing in orten.

In the last one of her categories, import, was one that I felt like I needed to get to know more about. Seen as this was during my second day of fieldwork, I had not yet gotten acquainted with the group that she referred to as import. When I asked Sarah to elaborate who would be considered import, she simply said “invandrare” at first but stopped herself midway through

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38 ”Blattar och svennar hänger för sig. Jag kan inte ba gå fram till en grupp svennar och ba: ’Hej Hej!’”  
39 ”Inte å leka med”
the sentence, remembering that she had just defined the group *blattar* using the same word. She was puzzled but went on saying that the people labeled as *import* “have actually come to Sweden”\(^{40}\), whereas many of the people she considered as *blattar* have never actually migrated themselves, although their parents might have. “Like me, I was born here!”\(^{41}\)

The emergence of a new social group that “have actually immigrated” recently raises the question of Swedishness and its link to whiteness. Sarah struggles with the *invandrare/svensk* dichotomy that she has grown accustomed to positioning herself in. She is made aware of a possible heterogeneity within the group. She is equally made aware of how the group *invandrare*, unlike what the term suggests, is not solely based on if the people that the group consists of have migrated or not, but rather the category is more based on being placed outside of Swedishness. She can’t say that she is an immigrant since the people in the group *import* are undoubtedly “more” immigrant than she is, while she would not consider herself Swedish being that her physical features don’t match the normative understanding of Swedishness.

**Odd Match-Ups**

My getting to know a wide range of students made for some interesting situations in which sets of students that normally would not hang out together ended up talking. Some of these encounters were like “cultural clashes” in which the big differences in customs became extremely evident. One of these occurred when I was sitting with Niklas in the cafeteria.

It was a Friday afternoon, and I was walking through the cafeteria trying to think of who to sit with. I saw Niklas and made sure to make eye contact when I passed by. Niklas looked back at me and greeted me in his ordinarily goofy manner. I take the seat across from him and once again start talking about his working situation at Arlanda. He tells me that he has work both Saturday and Sunday. It seems a bit stressful for an eighteen-year-old to be working full weekends plus weeknights on top of his finishing months of high school. He says that he needs the money though.

Hebba, Lala and Miremba come by and greet me and Hebba smiles goofily and says: “We want to see what you do when you analyze people!”\(^{42}\) I laugh as they sit down. I introduce them to Niklas whose stress levels seem to have amounted quite a lot since the arrival of three

\(^{40}\) “Har faktiskt kommit till Sverige”
\(^{41}\) “Som jag, jag föddes här!”
\(^{42}\) “Vi vill kolla hur du gör när du analyserar folk!”
strangers that have the ambition of observing as I analyze his every word. My guess is that Hebba, Lala and Miremba found it particularly interesting seeing me with a white student and therefore felt like they wanted to get in on the action. They establish which grades and classes they are in before Hebba asks “So, what were you talking about?” We both have trouble remembering what had been talking about before the sudden interruption.

I ask: “Why do you think it is that you have never met before? You have attended the same school for two years and I’ve seen that both of you hang out in this cafeteria almost every break.” It is quiet for a while and none of them are looking at each other. The racial tension is palpable, and my feeling is that they are both thinking about the division of blattar and svennar but seem intent on not saying it. Miremba eventually breaks the silence by professing that it is probably because they don’t “attend any classes together”. Provocatively I say that that is the case for a lot of people in their normal circle of friends. No friends in common is the next solution and I decide that I have pressured the situation enough.

The topic changes to how the weather is. It is Miremba who asks, given that she had been thinking about sitting outside in the sun if it was warm enough. I let her in on the news that the weather forecast said that it is going to be snowing again this weekend. Hebba stomps the floor in frustration of this and blurts out “I CAN’T STAND THIS FUCKING COUNTRY SOMETIMES!” Like always she is laughing while doing all of this. Niklas’s stress levels seem to reach yet another level of unease. By the looks of it, he has not been able to distinguish the humorous intent in Hebba’s sudden outburst. It is either that this kind of vocabulary is new to him or the harsh slash on Sweden that makes him so very surprised by the situation (See also Von Brömssen and Risenfors 2014). The three of them stand up and gather their things. Hebba lets out a quick “Bye guys!” which is also said in a bit of a mocking tone. They all laugh and disappear down the hallway.

Reincarnation of Segregation

For the up and coming weeks, I strolled around the school and tried to get in contact with as many students as possible. My aim was to “become invisible”. I tried to blend in and become a natural part of the surroundings in the social hang out spots by just hanging around talking

43 “Vad pratade ni om?”
44 ”Vad tror ni att det beror på att ni aldrig har träffats förut? Ni har ju gått på samma skola i två år och hänger i den här kafeterian nästan varje rast.”
45 ”Har några lektioner tillsammans”
46 “JAG PALLAR INTE DET HÄR FUCKING LANDET IBLAND ASSÅ!”
47 ”Tjarrå Grabbar!”
with a wide variety of students. I figured that the more comfortable students got with me hanging around, the closer my ethnography would be to the school’s “status quo”. I realized that the dichotomy provided for me by Francisco on my opening day applied for me as well. A couple of days into my fieldwork I had undoubtedly been racialized into the nonwhite group, making access to conversations with white students all the more sporadic.

On one occasion, I had sat down on the oval benches in the far corner of the cafeteria. I had sat there before and realized that this position was great for observation since it not only allowed me to observe the cafeteria from afar, but my geographical positioning also allowed me to see how people walked in from the corridors and observe their thought process as they decided where to sit. I got there just before ten o’clock. This was a conscious decision knowing that the first major break was at quarter past ten, which would mean that that the many empty seats would be filled with students in only a few minutes’ time. From this position, I would be able to witness the racial segregation of the cafeteria as it was reincarnated.

It was very quiet as there were nearly no students present in the cafeteria yet, and the few that were, were wearing headphones, probably listening to music or watching clips on their tablets or phones. They were sitting very scattered and the mixture was quite diverse. The silence made me aware of my own body and the signals that I was sending out as a subject in the field. I felt old as I realized that my deciding to only use a notebook when in the field was a very dated tactic. I had decided upon only using a notebook solely because I anticipated that I would come across as invasive had I been using some sort of electronic device. Ironically, it was precisely my lack of electronic device that made me stand out in this instance. Typing my notes on a phone or tablet would have seem a lot less intrusive.

As the clock draws closer to quarter past, the invasion of students begins. I follow students coming from the five different entrances. I realized that the few students that were seated before the break begun could be viewed as markers, indicating the pattern of how that area would look as the cafeteria filled up. While this was true both looking at gender as well as race, race was by far the most evident of the two patterns. By ten thirty the break is in full motion and the social segregation, with few exceptions, has reappeared over the course of just a few minutes. I realize however that some of the spaces have shifted from how they were on precious occasions. The tables at which white students sat on this occasion were not necessarily tables where white students sat yesterday or even would sit during the next break.
This suggested that while the geographical sociospatial segregation within the cafeteria was by no means fixed, the patterns of how the segregations would turn out were.

The first time that I met Ronni he illustrated this very phenomenon by saying: “It’s like this! If you look around, you’ll notice it! All svartskallar hang out with each other and all svennar with each other. Svennarna can’t stand us svartskallar because we are so loud, and take up space and stud like that, so they hang out for themselves. Look there!”

He pointed to a corner of the cafeteria where undeniably only white students were sitting. “Only svennar! And here, only svartskallar, but it’s not always like this. If there are svartskallar sitting with two of the sofas, svennarna will never sit down, but otherwise, they can! Let’s see how it goes now!”

Out of the three main tables in the cafeteria, we are sitting at the one that is closest to the bar tables. The middle table is empty, but the furthest table has nonwhite students around it. We wait for a few minutes and after a while a white group of students walk right by the table and grab an empty table under the staircase instead. After another few minutes, the table is instead seized by a group of nonwhite students. It turns out that he was right in this occasion.

Problem or not?

Although I felt the division quite troublesome, I kept asking myself if this really was an issue, or if it was just my utopian ideas of racial bonding that was causing my unease. Most students seemed unfazed by the segregation. Why then should I point to it being an issue and that it is something that needs to be resolved? Trying not to let my utopian bias affect my work too much, I started asking students about what their thoughts were on the segregation itself.

One of them was Nihar with whom I had spoken a few times already. “I swear to god! If you look around, you’ll see svartskallar for themselves, and svennar for themselves. It’s always completely divided! Same thing! I’ve never been in a relationship with a Swedish girl and I don’t think I ever could be.”

I asked him why he couldn’t see himself in a relationship with a “Swedish girl” to which he replied that it’s mostly culture but also an

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48 "Det är så här! Om du kollar runt, du kommer att se det! Alla svartskallar hänger med varandra och alla svennar med varandra. Svennarna pallar inte oss svartskallar för vi är fett högljudda och tar plats å så, så dom hänger för sig själva. Kolla där!"  
49 "Bara Svennar! Och här, bara svartskallar, men det är inte alltid så. Om det sitter svartskallar vid två av sofforna kommer aldrig svennarna sätta sig, men annars, det går! Vi ser hur det går nu!"  
50 "Asså, på gud! Om du kollar omkring, du ser det är svartskallar för sig och svennar för sig. Asså det är alltid så, helt uppdelat! Det är samma! Jag har aldrig varit tillsammans med en svensk tjejer och jag tror inte jag skulle kunna vara det heller."
unidentifiable feeling. He says that he disagrees with how much they drink and party and that he would not be comfortable with her hanging around with other “Swedish guys”.

In the end of David Theo Goldberg’s (2015: 172) Postraciality: Debating Race, he discusses living without racial determinations. He suggests that a truly postracial lifestyle means “being unbound by its holds and repetitive of its historical inequities and injustices without at once reinstating, or renewing them.” Agreed to it being a difficult task, he goes on to say that most attempts at this lifestyle has been in racial homogeneity. He suggests that this, fails to acknowledge the value of heterogeneity and diversity which runs the risk of falling into the old traps of polarization (2015: 172-173).

Student Proms and Postracial Microaggressions

During my first week of fieldwork, Javad showed me a poster that was hung up right next to the kiosk. The poster was advertisement for a student prom. He explained that there are generally around six student proms each year, all arranged by students. They all had different themes and this one, “whiteskivan”51, had been the most popular of all for the past couple of years.

As scary as the name may sound in a chapter that revolves around racial segregation, the theme of the party was not a reenactment of apartheid-South Africa, but rather the theme was for all attendees to be dressed all in white clothing. Interestingly, Javad told me that whiteskivan had had almost only white attendees previous years, since it had been arranged by groups of white students. This year, the composition of organizers had switched to a group of exclusively nonwhite students which caused controversy.

“Look at this! Do you see any svenskar here?”52 Javad says while pointing at the poster. The picture consists of eight nonwhite students posing in white clothes and apparently, this had reflected the composition of students that had bought tickets. Previous years, the tickets would be almost sold out this long after the release date, but this year sales were haltered. Almost all the tickets were sold to nonwhite students and the white students that had bought tickets were desperately trying to resell their tickets. On the same topic, Francisco later told me that some white students had come by his office and complained that the prom was not

51 “White prom”
52 “Kolla här! Ser du några svenskar eller?”
being organized “as it’s supposed to be”\textsuperscript{53} this year. When he had asked them to elaborate their concern, he felt that they failed to address what really was bothering them.

When I was sitting in the cafeteria a week later, I was struck with the level of commotion going on to the right of me where a group of almost exclusively white students were standing. Two of them were setting up tables and chairs. I asked a group of students next to me what the tables were for and was told that they were about to release tickets for “\textit{rockskivan}”\textsuperscript{54}. I had not heard of \textit{rockskivan} before, so I stayed put to see how the situation would pan out. After a while posters were taped on the tables and walls adjacent to the vending station.

In contrast to the poster for \textit{whiteskivan}, this picture consists of only white students and it becomes apparent that this also influences the clientele. As the clock struck twelve and the ticket release is finally official, a line forms that extends through major parts of the cafeteria. At this point my notebook is practically catching fire as I violently try to catch every aspect of what is happening. The line consists of a clear majority of white students, with some exceptions. My interest naturally falls on the exceptions as they challenge the socially constructed racial binary that has been elaborated in many cases.

Weeks later I talked to Fatema, a nonwhite girl who was in the last year in the humanities program at the school. We had talked on a few previous occasions and she had told me that the humanities program was one that almost only had white students. Hence, she was one of few nonwhites who hung out in white groups and she laughingly explained that she sometimes felt like a spy when she walked in between the groups. She went on sharing the latest gossip concerning \textit{whiteskivan}. Apparently, what had happened shortly after the ticket release was that some of the “\textit{populars}”\textsuperscript{55} at the school had started spreading rumors about the organizers of \textit{whiteskivan} causing people to start reselling their tickets. This happened just days after tickets to \textit{rockskivan} were released and people started buying tickets to that instead.

I asked her who the people in this \textit{populars} group were and she said that they are mainly in the economics program or the natural science one. She picks up her phone and shows me pictures of them and I remember having talked to a few of them. I was however very surprised at this since I had neither seen or heard much of these people during my weeks at the school and, yet they were hierarchical perceived as the \textit{populars}.

\textsuperscript{53} “Som den ska”
\textsuperscript{54} “the rock prom”
\textsuperscript{55} “poppisar”
Returning to my own high school years, I remembered how the popular group were unmissable considering how loud they were. She explained Tuvaskolan’s *populars’* invisibility by stating that social status is not created in the cafeteria or in the school for that matter, but whatever status is created within the school building is secondary to status connected to the weekend parties. The people that have access to the *populars’* weekend parties are natural and unmistakably of high social rank at the school.

On the day of *whiteskivan*, the mood is tense. I have talked to a few people about it and a lot of the student seem ambivalent on whether they should go or not. There has already been so much controversy concerning it, which has sparked different reactions. Some students feel like it is not worth going because of all the tension, while others want to go simply because of the tension. Robin thinks that the discussions have gotten out of hand and that some people need to “chill out some more”\(^{56}\). He would however never forgive himself if he ended up not going and missed it if there was “beef”\(^{57}\). At the same time, there is a risk that the pressured situation makes it so that no one can relax and have a good time. I ask if they think that the occasion will see a similar segregation to the one they have at the school. They think for a while before Armin answers” well, then people will be drunk, so everyone will dance with everyone, but tomorrow, they won’t see each other again.”\(^{58}\)

I remember that Emma had said something similar talking about parties and who was invited to them. Apparently, the senior guys had a habit of inviting first-year girls to parties. She added that it would never be that a senior girl would invite first-year guys to parties and that it is generally done because there is a belief that the younger girls are “easier to get”\(^{59}\). Much like in the scenario that Armin was talking about, she means that the older guys and younger girls would attend parties together but would never hang out in school.

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\(^{56}\) “*Chilla lite mer*”

\(^{57}\) “*gabb*”

\(^{58}\) “Asså då, folk kommer vara fulla så alla kommer dansa med alla, men sen imorgon, dom kommer inte se varandra igen.”

\(^{59}\) “lättfotade”
Trespassers and the Communication of Belonging

As stated previously, the segregation was perhaps not as cemented as many students would argue, which furthered made me interested in the people that challenged the dichotomy. While there were quite few of them, there were undoubtedly students who managed, or at least tried to walk in between the groups. What were they doing that allowed them to navigate between groups and transcend these norms? How were their dual memberships met?

**Social Codes**

While group belonging was heavily influenced by race, racial belonging could be reinforced. This chapter will look to examine a few of the gadgets and tools used by students to communicate belonging to certain groups. Since the dichotomy svensk/blatte was chiefly understood as a racial division, people that were in the middle in this division could influence and reinforce their perceived belonging through both speech and attire. A big portion of this chapter will therefore be devoted to Emma who had mastered the skills of communicating the “right things”, which gave her a very rare dual membership.

**Coded accessories**

When sitting at a table in the cafeteria with Victor, Lovisa, Maria and Linus, I started thinking about what people were wearing. The two guys wore their blonde hair in back slick and the two girls wore sunglasses on top of their heads. They all wore tight, light blue jeans that were rolled up at the edges. I realized that these things were generally white-coded, or svensk-coded. They were deliberately communicating their group belonging. I looked around to test my hypothesis and was met only by one exception. Ronni who was sitting a few meters away from me was also wearing sunglasses on top of his head. There was, however, a clear distinction between how Ronni wore his glasses and the other four. His belonging in the nonwhite group was demonstrated by placing his shades on top of a cap that in turn was turned with the rear forwards.

The first time that I met Ronni, we were sitting in the middle of the cafeteria. The group that I had been sitting with earlier had gone off to class, so I was left with a lot of space to myself and gladly, Ronni came and grabbed a seat. We talk for a while and he gave me an explanation of the social segregation (see page 44). He looks me up and down and thinks for a
minute before he asks: “You are one of those Swedeified\(^{60}\) who can go order a latte at a café and just study, right?”\(^{61}\) I laugh because this was by no means what I was expecting. I tell him that I doubt that I have ever done that and ask in return what makes him think so. He looks me up and down again and stops at my shoes. He points at them saying “Typical latte-boots!”\(^{62}\). I laugh again and realize something that I had not given much thought to before, namely my own clothing. While I had initially thought that my attire would generally follow closer to the codes of the nonwhite group than the white group, he pinpointed the fact that none of the nonwhite male students would ever wear winter boots. Sneakers was the only passable piece of clothing. He did however decide that I am not completely ruined given that I play both music and boll\(^{63}\).

Master of Disguise

One of the students that really helped distinguishing these codes was Emma. She had a funny habit of just giving the most insightful thoughts around codes in a matter of fact manner. We were once talking about clothing and ways in which people can reinforce belonging by strategically choosing certain pieces of clothing. She tells me about tre streck and when I asked her what she meant by tre streck she replied: “You know Adidas. All blattar wear tre streck”\(^{64}\). I looked around I realized that she was right. It was not the first time I had heard of tre streck or its coded usage, but it was the first time that I had considered it for this field site. It was a formal way of stating your belonging to the blattar group. As I looked back at her I saw that she was pointing at her shoes and of course, they too had the striped patterns. Very strategic, I must say given that most people had either a shirt or a cap with the pattern. She had however found a discreet place to put hers so that she could decide when it was in her advantage or not to display this coded pattern.

As you may or may not remember, we’ve met Emma once before. On that occasion, we were discussing heritage in a group of nonwhite students at the end of my first day of fieldwork. Emma told me that she had a mother from Sweden and father that was adopted from India. Although I first met her in a group of nonwhite students, I kept finding Emma in different situations and groups. She was one of the few students that seemed able to pass as both

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\(^{60}\) Made up word to mean made more Swedish over time. In this case it would rather be made more svenne than Swedish.

\(^{61}\) “Du är en sån där försvenskad som kan gå och beställa en latte på ett fik och bara sitta och plugga å så, va?”

\(^{62}\) “Riktiga lattekängor!”

\(^{63}\) Much like in the American slang expression to “play ball”, to play boll is equivalent of playing soccer (European football).

\(^{64}\) “Du vet Adidas. Alla blattar har det.”
nonwhite and white. Apart from her strategic choice of shoes, she had also dyed her hair blond. Conscious or not, this definitely worked in her advantage as it made her more white-passing.

Emma lived in an upper-class neighborhood that was located about 8-minutes traveling distance by bus from the school. I learned during an afternoon session, as she introduced me to her friends Lina and Rebecca, with whom she had grown up with in that very same neighborhood. It was a particularly sunny day, so we were sitting outside enjoying the sun. The three of them had already gathered their things and were ready to head to the bus stop that was right by the school.

As they made their way over to the bus stop, I noticed that they were heading towards the other side of the street from where I usually would take the bus. Looking closer, I realized an almost total racial segregation between the people that stood on either side of the street. When I got home that night I google mapped the neighborhood that she was talking about to find that all of the adjacent upper-class neighborhoods were southwest of the school whereas all the lower-class neighborhoods were north east of the school. Therefore, the bus stops outside the school became a visual example of Stockholm’s residential segregation.

Another thing that I had noticed about Emma was how she would switch the way she talked in different groups. Depending on the group that she is sitting with for the moment, she would either use slang in the form of “Rinkebysvenska”65, or posh upper class Stockholm slang with extended i:s (See also Miliani and Jonsson 2012). She was very talented in these switches and it was as if they happened automatically.

A couple of weeks into my fieldwork, when it was just her and I sitting by the windows in the cafeteria, I asked if she was aware of her rare talent of being able to pass between the white and nonwhite groups at the school. She hesitated for a second, but answered that she was. I got the feeling that her hesitation was one of shame and that her not fully choosing a group made her feel “fake” being that she had not declared her “true self”. She, however, ended up laughing when I told her that I too was strategic in my choices of words and slang. Shit, maybe I do that too?66 she said laughingly before she added that she realized the truth in what I was saying.

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65 Rinkebysvenska is the most commonly used term for a type of slang used in pan-suburban orten. The name derives from an area in the northern regions of Stockholm that is a part of orten.
66 “Shit, det kanske jag också gör?”
Emma was one of the most outgoing students of the school and she spent enormous amounts of time in the cafeteria. The cafeteria was the stage where she showed off these talents. Given that I had told her quite early on during my fieldwork that I had problems getting in contact with white students, she always made sure to be my link into conversations. Being that she was aware of some of my questions, she would sometimes be the instigator of some conversation topics and try to get people to start talking about groupings without having it come from me.

On one occasion, Emma was sitting with her two friends Emilia and Nathalie by the windows in the cafeteria. I sat down and introduced myself to her friends. I had met Nathalie before, but not Emilia. Like me, Emilia was by the looks of it also mixed-race. Unlike me, however she had straight blond hair which I found particularly interesting being that she was generally hanging out in white groups. In the book Om Ras och Vithet i det Samtida Sverige the authors suggest two groups that challenge the dichotomy of white and nonwhite in Sweden: adopted; and mixed-raced people (Hübintettte, Hörnfeldt, Farahni and León Rosales, 2012: 30). Emilia qualifies for one of these groups as do Emma and I. Emma has a particularly interesting position being that she is mixedraced with a parent who is in turn adopted. Consciously or not, Emilia has used one of the gadgets of dyeing her hair blond to further place herself in the white group.

Using the Gadgets

When I expressed my concerns about finding it harder to get in contact with white students than nonwhite students to Francisco, he was not surprised. He had faced similar problems many times as I had been witnessed during my first day of fieldwork as I was taking a stroll around the school. As we passed a group of white students who were walking and chatting amongst themselves Francisco said “Hi!” once, twice and then nearly yelled it a third time to get a reaction. He got his “Hi!” back and as they turned a corner he turned to me and said “It’s harder with the Swedes. It’s as if they don’t even get that you’re talking to them!” 67

With the nonwhite students, I generally did not need a reason to talk. I could just go up to most of them and introduce myself. I was usually just seen as a slightly older blatte among other blattar and my age advantage, perhaps combined with being there as a researcher,

67 ”Det är svårare med svenskarna. Det är som att dom inte fattar att man pratar med dom!”
seemed to if anything only make me more interesting. Me being nonwhite was enough to suggest that we would get along despite my being a researcher. With the white groups that I had successfully gotten in contact with, there was no doubt that my age and occupation as a student at Uppsala University were big pluses more than anything else.

On the same note, Francisco told me some of his tricks and advised me to use my status as a university student more actively to my advantage in trying to get in contact with groups of white students. His main ice-breaker had been his residency. Despite him having grown up in an area that would generally be considered as orten, he now lived in a wealthy part of Stockholm which he would strategically make sure to slide into conversation. Talking about him living in a wealthy area gave them a common ground from which to start a discussion since a lot of the students either lived in the area and others had aspirations of living there at some point. Similarly, he advised me to talk about Uppsala University since a lot of the white students had ambitions of going to the university after they graduated from Tuvaskolan and would therefore be interested in hearing from a student from Uppsala University.

Having been at the school for a while and analyzed some of the ways in which whiteness and nonwhiteness was communicated, I decided to take Francisco’s advice and “act on my whiteness”. Of course, this was more of an “act on my class-position” than whiteness, but the hypothetical effects of getting more acquainted with white students would be the same. I had generally not been very concerned with the way I dressed when doing fieldwork which, when I thought about it, seemed careless. Most days, I had been wearing a pair of dark jeans and a hoodie of some sort, which would in the division of svennar and blattar rather put me leaning towards the blattar group, attire-wise. The students were very conscious with the way they dressed and what they wanted to communicate with their different outfits. Why shouldn’t I do the same thing?

As I was still struggling to get in contact with white students, one morning decided that I was going to pick attire that could potentially aid my interactions with that part of the student composition. Looking through my wardrobe on the morning before my departure, I ended up picking a blue checked shirt and a pair of light blue jeans. Having noticed that rolled up jeans was a distinction that white students did more often than nonwhite students, I decided to try that too. Unfortunately, today wasn’t as sunny so I could not do the Sunglasses on top of my head-thing that I had noticed was also white-coded.
Getting to the school, I took a thorough stroll around the building. Being that I am someone that normally don’t spend a lot of time deciding on an outfit, this felt like a disguise having made such conscious decisions. I became paranoid and started thinking about ethics and whether this could be considered as trying to lure students into talking to me. Thankfully, I regained my senses and realized that wearing a blue checked shirt can hardly be judged as a crime.

Walking through one of the corridors that led up to the cafeteria I am stopped in my tracks. “Hey! You! Ehm… what…who…what are you doing here at the school? I’ve seen you interviewing students and stuff like that!” Although he has already figured on two occasions in this thesis, this is the first time that I met Niklas. I had noticed him around the school before but never gotten the chance to speak to yet. His tone is friendly, yet confused. He seems genuinely interested in knowing who I am. His friends burst out laughing at the hesitancy in his voice and the sheepish yet bold manner in which the question had been asked.

I reply that I am doing research on social groupings and interactions at the school and that this is the reason why he has seen me talking to a bunch of students. “Oh, now I get it! Do you want to talk to us then?” I gladly accepted his offer.

The moment that the question is asked, some of the students scatter clearly fearing that they would have to take part in our discussion. Suddenly, they become super busy with whatever is happening on their iPads and stroll off. Noticing this and wanting to keep as many of the students around, I strategically sit down in between the guy who asked me to sit with them and another guy who was now intensely focused on his iPad.

We are sitting on a bench facing one of the corridors that leads up to the cafeteria. It is a group of white male students that are now sitting a few meters away from one another. My presence is noticeably awkward for most of them. I am wondering why this is. Is it because I am an adult and therefore perceived as part of the staff? If so, I am definitely intruding on their social pastime. Or, maybe they are just not used to meeting new people? Have there been rumors going around about what I am doing at the school? It could of course be that I am both adult, stranger and a nonwhite researcher who has just told them that I am researching social groupings.

68 "Hej! Du! Eh…vad…vem…vad gör du här på skolan egentligen? Jag har sett att du intervjuar elever och så!"
69 "Ah! Då fattar jag! Vill du snacka med oss då?"
I extend my right hand in a greeting manner to the conversation instigator. He shakes my hand and tells me his name is Niklas. I force the other guy out of his comfort zone by extending my hand in his direction as well. He grabs it as well and tells me his name is Markus. They are both in their senior year, but not in the same program. Niklas is in the natural science program and Markus in the economics program. This gives me a smooth way into a conversation asking them how it is that they know each other despite not being in the same class.

Niklas, who seems to be used to being in the center of conversations replies that they took a class together during their first year and have remained friends ever since. Being that this is their last semester of high school I ask what their plans for life after high school are. “I’m gonna be a business economist!” He has definitely been asked the question before and seems to take pride in how fixed his ambitions are. Markus is not as sure as Niklas, but is also looking at a possible future in economics. He is a bit too tired of school to continue in the fall though.

Markus’s iPad is playing music that is very nostalgic to me. I’m surprised at this being that most of the songs that have been played so far came out in the late 90’s and early 2000’s, meaning that they probably not born yet, or would have been too young to remember the songs. I ask Markus about the playlist and Niklas replies laughingly. “It’s called ‘Hola!’ It’s the best playlist!” The song “Adrenalina” by DJ Mendez starts to play. Niklas jumps up and starts dancing waving his arms around while laughing. As a nonwhite friend of his walks by, Niklas’s excitement reaches its very peak. “THIS IS YOUR SONG! THIS IS YOUR COUNTRY!” He bellows out, absolutely beaming at the coincidence created by his friends timely entrance. He, on the other hand seems far less amused and protests: “I’m not even from the same country as he is!” Totally disregarding this, Niklas swings his right arm around him and the two of them make a swirl before he is able to tangle himself free from the grip shaking his head and sighing as he progresses down the corridor. Niklas laughs and continues dancing.

We continue talking about the playlist and how they have come across these songs. They seem to question why I would question it being that “it’s the best music!” as Niklas put it. They don’t, however, solely seem to enjoy it as being good music. There is also a mocking

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70 "Jag ska bli företagsekonom!"
71 "Den heter ‘Hola!’ Bästa spellistan!"
72 "DET HÄR ÄR JU DIN LÅT! DET ÄR DITT LAND JU!"
73 "Det är ju bästa musiken!"
essence in the way that they listen to the songs. I realize that I have come across the same phenomenon when working with youth of a similar age during the past summers. A lot of the hipster cool kids listen to the likes of Spice Girls and S club 7, which was startling to me, given that the songs came out prior to their birth. I once more feel old as I realize that Spice Girls are the new retro.

Markus is still the one with the iPad and he scrolls up and down trying to decide on the next song. He keeps peering up at me every now and then trying to decide which song would fit. At last he finds what he was looking for and the melody to Bob Marley’s “could you be loved” starts playing from the speakers. I can’t blame him. I love a bit of Bob Marley in the morning.

We switch topics, and Niklas starts telling me about his job at Arlanda international airport. His job is from what I understand some sort of janitor job where he strolls around and fixes whatever needs fixing. He enlightens us about an ongoing discussion at Arlanda right now concerning how pilots earn considerably more working for Middle Eastern companies being that no one dares working for them because of the high hijacking risk. I tell him that this might be a simplified explanation and wonder whether there is statistics on the likelihood of hijacking actually being greater in the Middle eastern companies. He agrees but still continues to argue his point. I realize the danger of such narratives reaching homogeneous groups like the one I am currently seated with.

My help comes from the left of me when a guy slides in a comment. He must have sat down as I was turned towards Niklas because I hadn’t yet noticed his presence. Judging on his appearance, he might be of Middle Eastern descent. He argues that the higher wages for pilots at Middle Eastern companies is probably due to there being a lot of oil and money in the region rather than Niklas’s idea of it being due to the risk of hijacking. After his short remark, his eyes turn straight back to his iPad and he plugs his earphones back in as a clear indicator of him not being open for any sort of retort.

As a last question, I ask Markus and Niklas about the social groupings at the school and why and how they occur. Niklas says that “It’s mostly based on the people that you have classes with and have lockers close to.”74 The two of them become quiet. They look at each other for a second and they seem to sense the insufficiency of their answer. They seem to know that there are other variables that may have influence concerning the group of friends that you

74 ”Det handlar mest om vilka man har lektioner med och har skåp bredvid.”

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hang out with apart from the two reasons they’ve provided me with. However, these reasons simply seem too difficult to address. At this moment, Niklas looks down at his watch and realizes that they are already late for their next class. They race towards their lockers which are apparently right in front of us and then turn to me in a rush. “See you!” he says before hurrying down the hall.

**Tuning into color-TV**

Being asked to define social groupings sparked thought process for some students. On a rainy Wednesday morning, I was sitting by myself at a table under the main staircase in the cafeteria. My note pad was up and I tried to jot down reoccurring patterns around me. I had just started thinking about switching the days method to more active participation rather than observation by going over to one of the tables and sit down with some of the students when Niklas walked by and said. “May I intrude?” I gladly offer him a seat in front of me and he takes it in his stride. It’s been a while since we have talked and most of our discussions have revolved around his work at Arlanda. I have felt no need to rush him into talking about the social situation at the school given that he may be the only white student at the school that has the habit of seeking my attention rather than the other way around.

Unsurprisingly, we start talking about Arlanda and that he has been able to take more shifts there since he barely has any classes at the moment. He remembers that I had recently flown to the US and asks if I received any discriminatory treatment. It’s hard to know if he meant discriminatory treatment in the US or in the airport, however it becomes evident that he does not mean Arlanda, or Sweden. I tell him that my flight experience was undoubtedly anything but smooth, but that it hardly had anything to do with discriminatory treatment directed towards me specifically, but rather a lacking arrival system at the airport in Chicago. I go on telling him that I have seldom felt like I have been treated worse than anyone else in US airports and that I have received a lot worse treatment in Sweden and particularly Arlanda.

He looks quite surprised at this and only replies with a short “Oh” He seems uneasy knowing that I have received discriminatory treatment at Arlanda and looks to want to defend his workplace. I spare him the responsibility by asking him how the working situation is at Arlanda now. He replies that they are understaffed and that a lot of people have been fired

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75 “Vi ses!”
76 “Får jag stör?”
77 “Jaha”
despite their shortage in personal. It all seems to be manageable by his account, but his main issue is that the working environment is less friendly than it should be, being that people don’t greet each other. It’s especially the passport control personnel that seem reluctant to greeting people from other departments. When he started working there he greeted anyone he passed, but he realized that he never got a “hi!”78 back and therefore decided that it was pointless. He had, however, noticed that when he passed people while walking with a female colleague, the greetings were more frequent which he found annoying.

I ask him if the patterns for the people that greet each other and hang out at Arlanda resembles the situation at Tuvaskolan. “Yeah, maybe. Well… It’s almost only people with immigrant background that work at Arlanda.”79 Interesting twist given that we have never spoken of a possible social segregation where people with immigrant background have a bigger tendency of greeting each other at Tuvaskolan, yet this statement points to this being a commonly accepted pattern and one that resembles his workplace situation. “The only people that aren’t invandrare at Arlanda work in the shops. It’s as if the people with immigrant background think the jobs in the shops are a little too posh for them so they don’t want to work in the shops.”80 I turn this around saying that it might also be that the employers of the shops may think that the shops are “a little too posh”81 to hire people with immigrant background. He looks a bit taken aback but agrees that this could also be a possible reason for the division of labor.

We both become quiet for a while. It seems like Niklas is trying to think of something to say that is related to what we were talking about, but that puts himself a fair distance away from being the main subject of discussion. He seems to be curious and wants to ask questions on the topic and I feel no need in rushing him. “Yeah, when I worked at the fish-truck82, a lot of people had racist comments. On my first day, I sat in the truck with a man who had worked at the company for quite long. From nowhere he starts telling me about there being a lot of invandrare in the neighborhood and starts swearing about them.”83 I reply that I am sadly not surprised and that many such discussions probably take place in Sweden without my

78 “hej!”
79 “Ja, kanske. Eller asså… det är nästan bara folk med invandrarbakgrund som jobbar på Arlanda.”
80 ”Dom enda som inte är invandrare på Arlanda jobbar i butikerna. Det är som att dom med invandrarbakgrund ser jobbet i butikerna som lite för fint för dom och att dom och att dom därför inte vill jobba där.”
81 ”Lite för fina”
82 Fiskbilen – a company that sells fish and has home delivery.
83 ”Ja, när jag jobbade på fiskbilen var det många som hade ganska rasistiska kommentarer. På min första dag satt jag i bilen med en man som hade jobbat där ganska länge. Från ingenstans börjar han berätta om att det finns många invandrare i området och börjar svära om dom.”
knowing. I also give him the challenging thought that he probably has a higher probability of coming across such discussions than I have.

He seems relieved knowing that we are on the same side. I feel like many of my thoughts are quite challenging, yet he seems eager to hear about them despite this. During our discussion, the cafeteria has started filling up with students. Being that I was sitting alone with Niklas at a big table, my hope had been that we would be able to attract some of Niklas’s usual crew, but all seem to have eluded us. I can’t recall having noticed any of his friends actively changing direction being that I had been focused on our conversation and writing down important notes in my notebook. Regardless, Niklas is off to class and he thanks me for the discussion before he strides off towards the G-corridor.

It seems that Niklas is taking steps away from racelessness in that he articulates a difference in occupation at his workplace (Goldberg 2015: 64). I notice that it is much easier for him to talk about potential social segregation at an arms-length. What I mean by that is that it is easier to sit in the cafeteria and talk about how the situation is at Arlanda than it would be to address what was going on around us. My guess is that had my fieldwork been carried out at Arlanda, we would rather have been talking about the segregation at Tuvaskolan.

Similarly, I think that him derailing the conversation to being about his job at the fish truck rather than potential discrimination in the recruitment of personnel for the Arlanda shops was interesting. Considering that racism could actually be part of what was going on at Arlanda is scary. and therefore, he felt the need to distance himself. When talking about sexism, Sara Ahmed (2015) talks about a common mode of conduct being to either put racism in the past or geographically away from oneself to not have to deal with it. In this case, I believe that Niklas’s change of topic is a means of distancing himself by talking about what Polycarp Ikuenobe (2013:453) calls *racism proper*, or the believe that something can only be called racism when it is in the form of overt, harmful, discriminatory practices. Being that the man in the fish-truck was overtly racist, Niklas is now back on safe ground.

**Homosocial “safe zones” and Obligatory Actions**

During my fieldwork, I normally tried to blend in as much as possible when sitting with groups of students, hoping that this would get the conversations to continue flowing as smoothly as they were before my arrival. This, however, proved a lot harder to pull off in
some cases rather than others. My presence not only affected how relaxed the students were to express themselves, but also affected the directions in which conversations progressed without my verbal interruption.

Taking notice of the fact that conversations seemed to flow extra smoothly in situation where I found myself amongst other men, and particularly other nonwhite men, I decided to redirect my methodological approach for a while and further explore these intersectionally homogenous social circles. This chapter looks to explore *hotosociality* as a social phenomenon, as well as illustrate power dynamics that influence the shape of these homosocial spaces.

**To Play “Boll”**

For as long as I can remember, I have been a massive fan of football[^84]. I must have spent the majority of my life either playing, watching or just talking about the sport. I always wondered what good knowing remote details such as name, age and birth place of such a vast number of players in the world would do. As I started the fieldwork for this thesis, I finally found a usage for all of the hours that I have put in. I had not even met the students during my first day of fieldwork, before Francisco and I had started talking about football. It became an easy ice-breaker and almost a part of our greeting habit to exchange a few words about the weekend’s footballing experiences.

It was not just us two talking about football though. Everywhere I went, men seemed to be talking about football which was both fun and distracting at the same time. I specifically remember one afternoon when I was sitting behind my laptop in the staff room trying to refine my notes while teachers were discussing the up and coming weekend’s Premier League games and placing their bets. It was difficult not getting drawn in, especially since they were placing all the wrong bets.

I was even sitting in the library one time just to see who the people that generally sat in there where. People were sitting quite scattered and most of them were either reading something, or looking for something to read, except for one group. Five white guys were sitting by one of the tables almost yelling and laughing. Their topic of discussion was naturally football, debating how the season would end in the major European leagues. They were showing each

[^84]: While the rest of the thesis is written with the USA standard of writing, I have decided to use the word football for what in the United states is usually referred to as soccer. This is simply because it feels too unnatural for me to call it soccer.
other clips with highlights from recent games. They were very loud, and I could tell that a lot of students around them were getting annoyed. It was an odd situation, given that the two librarians were standing not too far from the noise without intervening, despite the fact that the boys so obviously were not in the library either to read or do school work. Somehow, football seemed to be playing by other rules. It was as if it was deemed as something that men simply must get to do.

As far as masculinity and football went, football was almost mandatory. This was especially true for nonwhite students that I talked to. Much like how Ronni asked me in a previous chapter, it was a test not only of your masculinity, but as a decent enough nonwhite male. Out of the students that I would generally talk about football with, Robin was by far the most eager. He made sure to find me and talk anytime he could, even if it was just to pass by saying something like “Things are going well now!”

These remarks had two main functions: Firstly, they worked as verifications of me. He needed to make sure that I too was aware of Manchester United having beaten Everton 1-0 in last night’s game. Had I failed these tests, he would have been disappointed in me. Secondly, these remarks operated as quick demonstration of masculinity. It was a way of showing the people that I was sitting with at the moment that the two of us had a masculine connection through our common knowledge of football and that these remarks were to be prioritized over whatever topic was being discussed there.

As stated in the section about the two school hosts, masculine bonds are often established through what Thurnell-Read (2012: 260) calls in-group validations and in-group jokes. These are tools used to establish feelings of group identity and cohesion in relation to other men. Certain acts or behaviors lead to feelings of belonging. In the case of Tuvaskolan, football can definitely be seen as an in-group validation, since it is something that Robin as well as many others used to ensure that everyone were on the same page. It was a verification to our common masculine stance.

After a couple of weeks though, I was pushed against the wall. Robin came by on a sunny day and told me that I had been all talk about my footballing skills and that I had nothing to show for it. It was time for me to put words into practice. Later that same day, Francisco, who like Robin agreed that I had been all talk brought me out to the schoolyard with a football. Robin and a few other nonwhite male students tagged along as we walked out. I realized as I was

85 ”Det går bra nu!”
walking that my heart was racing. I am hardly ever nervous when playing football, but this time the stakes were higher. I started thinking that a failure to impress could mean that I would be rejected in the nonwhite group of male students (Thurnell-Read 2012: 251). Fortunately, the session went well, and I felt as though my position within the male nonwhite group was strengthened, rather than weakened.

Office Sanctuary

During my first day, Francisco invited me to come see his office. His office was strategically situated right next to or even in the cafeteria with a window facing the students so that he could “keep track of them” as he put it. He told me about his policy of either leaving the door open or closed and that the open door was an indicator that students were welcome to stop by and have a chat, which of course meant that a closed door indicated that he was busy working on something.

The office was rather small. It had a desk, three chairs placed in the corners of the room and one that faced the computer on the desk. Right next to the door was a shelf that had board games such as the ever so popular backgammon. Interestingly, however, these board games were heavily gender coded given that I, in the almost three months spent at the school, never once saw female students playing. Francisco tells me that they used to have ordinary playing cards but that the place had turned into a casino. This had caused a lot of frustration where some thought they had been cheated. Therefore, they had forbidden any decks of cards and he added “If you see anyone with cards, take them and give them to me!”  

We sat down and, as was about to become usual protocol, started talking about football. In a short while, a student named Nihar utilizes the “open-door-indicator” and walked in. He greeted Francisco enthusiastically with one of those handshakes that go into a sideway shoulder hug. They interchanged a quick “What’s up, bro?” and smiled broadly. He greeted me as well and as he sat down he asked what I’m doing at the school. After having explained that I am a student from Uppsala University he told me that his goal was to become a doctor and that he was aiming to get into Uppsala University after next fall (seen as this was during his senior year). Francisco, who had been quiet for a while intervened saying “Yeah, that’ll be

86 “Hålla koll på dom!”
87 ”Om du ser någon med kort, ta dom och ge dom till mig!”
88 “Vad händer, bror?”
nice having lots of nurses in short skirts around you all day.” They both laughed and shared another handshake in a triumphant, celebratory manor.

Francisco’s office is transformed into a *homosocial* “safe zone” where *hegemonic masculinity* dictates the conditions under which the conversation progresses. Thurnell-Read talks about *homosociality* creating boundaries between acceptable masculinity and unacceptable masculinity. “Through homosocial bonding, acceptable masculinity is established while alternatives to it are forcibly rejected.” Michael Kimmel means that: “masculinity is largely a 'homosocial' experience: performed for and judged by, other men” pointing to examples in which men’s collective pursuit of casual heterosexual relations as a *homosocial* bonding tool. [...] “the practice of *girl watching* can also act to buttress the masculine and heterosexual identity of men, whereby the gaze of male sexual desire is used to actively display heterosexual masculinity for the benefit of a complicit male audience” (Queen in Thurnell Read 2012).

*Hegemonic masculinity* is not described as a natural position that all men can easily adapt to, but rather an aspirational goal. Men generally relate to it in terms of alliance, dominance or subordination (Hanlon 2012) and all three of these can be seen in Francisco’s remark. Connell means that *hegemonic masculinity* must be understood as situated and that it generally is defined in accordance with hierarchies of age, physical strength, wealth and sexual orientation (Carrigan, Connell and Lee 1985). While the concept of *hegemonic masculinity* acknowledges the coexistence of different masculinities within any culture, it has received critique for its disregard of intersectional importance (Hanlon 2012). Beasley means that an intersectional analysis is needed to see the complexity of how different variables such as race, religion and class dictate the levels in which different people benefit from patriarchal structures (Beasley in Hanlon 2012).

Since the racial differentiation at the school is generally articulated in binary terms, all three of us belong to the homogeneous intersectional group of nonwhite men making it a perceived “safe zone”. Apart from the age category, we are equal players in the game of *hegemonic masculinity*. Francisco’s age advantage gives him the opportunity to dictate the terms in which hegemonic masculinity takes form. He therefore seeks to address our common intersectional position to form a sense of alliance and does so by proclaiming, male dominance and female subordination in what he assumes as our shared strive for female

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89 ”A, det blir nice med massa undersköterskor i korta kjolar runt dig hela dagarna”
sexual companionship, or as Hanlon might put it, Francisco is encouraged “to identify with dominant practices that ward off any association with femininity including homophobia, heterosexuality and misogyny” (Hanlon 2012).

While these zones might seem relaxed and untense, they could also be spoken of as coming with certain obligations. The “safe zones” come with requirements. Some points need to be dealt with before we can move on and be fully engaged in the cohesiveness of homosociality. Taking Beasly’s perspective of the importance of understanding that intersectionality defines the levels in which different actors benefit from the patriarchal system, one might argue that Francisco wanted to test the intersectional common grounds of the group by addressing what he hoped to be our shared strive for female sexual companionship. He felt obliged to test whether or not heterosexuality is something that we all share being that the remained silence around this question would open up the slightest of possibility of us seeming “less masculine” or could lead to an “association with femininity” as Hanlon (2012) might put it.

Semi-Homosocial Zones

For a situation to be truly homosocial at Tuvaskolan, both gender and race had to tally. Hence, situations where I found myself sitting with white male students were only semi-homosocial being that gender, but not race corresponded. Interestingly, I started realizing that in many such situations, men around me seemed to feel the need to distance themselves and declare domination in differences by asserting class superiority.

The conversations always turned strikingly stereotypical. I would sit with a group of upper-class guys wearing their hair in a back slick and right away the discussions were about champagne, parting at the right night clubs and “chicks”90 On one occasion, Francisco had just introduced me to Carl, Victor and Rickard and we were talking about night life when Carl says that he has grown tired of clubbing. I thought to myself that it is a rather odd thing for someone who only just turned eighteen to say, but he added that he had been able to sneak in to clubs since he was sixteen since he “knew the right people”91. He went on to say that the only way he can have fun is if he buys something expensive. “For me to have fun I have to like buy something big. Like getting a few helrör92 or some bubbly or something.”93

90 “Brudar”
91 “kände rätt folk.”
92 Helrör – translates whole pipe. This is a term for 10 centiliters of any strong spirit.
93 “För att jag ska ha kul måste jag liksom köpa in något stort. Asså typ några helrör eller skumpa eller nåt.”
It was as if Carl felt the need to assert his status over me and Francisco. While all of us had masculine practices, Carl needed to declare that his practices differed from ours and that his corresponded with a class position. Thurnell-Read (2012: 251) describes this as “jostling for status”. What he means by this is that while homosocial situations work as bonding situations, they sometimes become arenas of competition. Much like what Lipman-Bluemen said about the dominance order of men being about the control of resources, my feeling is that Carl feels the need to control his status by elevating his own in relation to mine and Francisco’s.

On a similar occasion, I was sitting in the cafeteria with Emma and a few of her white friends, our initial discussion was her English paper and which topic she was going to write about. To be fair, she had already decided what she was going to write about, but being that she was quite proud of her topic, she made it look like she was still not quite sure. I shift my focus to start observing what is going on at the table next to us. A homosocial gathering is taking place, which has raised the noise level quite a lot. I focus back to the conversation at my table and realize that there are two new people. As I extend my hand and introduce myself the two of them look quite surprised given that they probably had not realized that I was “part of the group”.

Their names are Fredrik and Rasmus and the conversation has switched from being about Emma’s English paper to now being about partying and night life. After a while She, Nathalie and Lina have to leave for class and I am left with Fredrik and Rasmus. Strangely, as the other three leave, they stop talking to me and instead their discussion progresses between the two of them. It is however clear that they know that I am listening. Their vocabulary is what Thurnell-Read would describe as Men’s talk (Thurnell-Read 2012: 52). “All in all, it is still fun to party. Some bubbly and a few chicks!”94 They both laugh triumphantly and smile at their recognition.

**Lunch Break Perks**

These homosocial gatherings seemed to be quite frequently reoccurring. I realized that Francisco and Javad would intentionally or unintentionally, not only find themselves in such homosocial settings on a regular basis, but seemed to actively seek such contexts. A reoccurring setting of this kind took place during their lunch breaks. Generally, Javad and Francisco would have lunch around 10.15 before the canteen opened for students so that they

94 ”Det är ändå nice att gå ut å festa. Lite skumpa å några brudar!”

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could return to the cafeteria in time for the students to get out of their pre-lunch classes around 10:45.

On some occasions, Francisco and Javad would bring a few students along to these exclusive, early lunchbreaks. This was a perk handed only to the students that stood closest to Javad and Francisco. This proved to be an opportunity for the school hosts to create *homosocial* safe zones. Even if they never problematized their position, they used these opportunities to boost their masculinity by surrounding themselves with young nonwhite men, creating a forum in which their dominant manners would be celebrated.

**Gas Station Heroics**

On this particular Monday, I had tagged along to the canteen to see what these sessions looked like. We were a group of seven nonwhite men. The two school hosts, myself and four students. It was clear that the four students were aware of the high status of getting to be part of the “early lunch group” as they peered around at each other smiling after being asked to come along. We got our food and I followed Javad to a table in the furthest most corner of the canteen to sit down.

It was made obvious to me that this forum was not just your ordinary lunch break, but a ritual with a complex set of rules and regulations. Since I arrived at the table second first, I naturally tried to sit down farthest in the corner so that the people coming afterwards wouldn’t have to squeeze past me to get a seat. I was, however, stopped in my tracks as Javad said “No, no, no!” while shaking his head and smiling paternalistically. Apparently, the two seats furthest in belonged to Javad and Francisco. I moved over and sat down next to him instead.

One of the students, Rebin, goes for his first bite, but he too is stopped before the food leaves the fork. “Hey! You know that’s not how we do it?” Francisco calls out and I anxiously look around trying to find out “how we do it”. The last one of the students, Sam, comes walking and as he sits down everyone picks up their silverware and dig in.

The setting is one that is very similar to a family at the table. Everyone is expected to know the customs, which are regulated by the two eldest. Javad and Francisco are the two Eldest brothers and I end up being some sort of cousin that has come to visit. There are smiles all around and my feeling is that everyone seems to enjoy this sense of familiarity, despite the quite harsh tone used by Francisco. Thurnell-Read (2012: 52) suggests that emotive

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95 "Ehy! Du vet att det inte är så vi gör?"
expressions are generally seen as feminine meaning that acts of interpersonal connection and intimacy are generally “indirect”. In this instance, cohesiveness is achieved by showing that we all have shared customs which gives the whole setting an air of familiarity.

As we eat Javad and Rebin do most of the talking. Rebin’s right hand is patched up and looks to be in quite poor condition. Javad asks about it and Rebin triumphantly explains that he had been in fights during the weekend which messed his hand up quite badly. He went into detail about the fight and how his opponent stood no chance. Javad asks why they were fighting and Rebin replies that they were newly arrived immigrants from Afghanistan and that they don’t know their place yet. “They think they can just hang out anywhere!” 96 He goes on about how they need to be “put in place” 97 so that they learn where they can and cannot hang out.

I am deeply troubled by this, but still cannot see that it is my place to moralistically steer these students in different directions. Knowing that Javad is Afghan himself, I was certain that it was in his interest to redirect Rebin’s violent behavior. Javad, however starts to tell us an anecdote about an incident that had happened to him two weeks earlier when he was at a gas station. As he drove in to the gas station, he had accelerated to get in front of another car that was also stopping for gas. He parked his car by one of the pumps and got out when the driver from the other car got out as well. Apparently, the man was Russian and by Javad’s description huge in size. Javad who is fluent in Russian had stated firing profanities at him and invited him on to fight as another person got out from the passenger seat of the Russian man’s car. This guy was as big as the first guy and Javad explained how he had his car key readied between his middle and index finger in a fist ready to fight. After a staring contest, the two Russians had driven off to another gas station.

The group listens enthusiastically as Javad theatrically depicts his bravery in the gas station incident. I am left perplexed wondering what purpose Javad had for sharing this anecdote with Rebin and the group. It turns out that I am not the only one who was left wondering as Rebin, while noticeably impressed by Javad’s courage asks “And?” 98 at which Javad triumphantly replies “Afghans never back down!” 99

Cohesiveness in this example is achieved by what Thurnell-Read (2012) talks of as in-group validations. The group members are made aware of the customs under which this exclusive

96 “Dom tror dom ba kan hänga varsomhelst!”
97 “sättas på plats”
98 “Och?”
99 “Afghaner backar aldrig!”
early lunch hang out will be carried out. The common knowledge of the group behaving according to these standards is what makes us a unified entity, and solidifies the group identity. The shared customs make us an “us” rather than a group of individuals. This becomes clear as Francisco says: “You know that’s not how we do it!” By saying “you know” he both gives Rebin the opportunity to feel part of the group that is already aware of the customs as well as rearticulating that there are in fact rules and regulations that make this group a cohesive one.

Even before Rebin started talking I could tell that he took pride in his smashed hand. It proved of courage and violence which are traits that seem to be reoccurring during these homosocial gatherings. Hearn and Pringle (2006) talk about there being a great amount of research on men’s violence against women, children and other men, but that the latter one, namely the discussion about male on male violence is generally less focused on the sociality or the Hegemony of masculinity. They also discuss how male violence, while being overrepresented in all areas of violence is age-based.

Me seeing Javad as older caused me to believe that he would intervene and redirect Rebin’s violent ways, but rather he replied with an assertion of his and his countrymen’s unmistakable bravery. Carrigan, Connell and Lee (1985) claim that violence is not necessarily a way of expressing a difference in subjective values, but can in many cases be understood as a means of promoting one’s masculinity. It is hence a constructive practice that elevates one’s own power relation (Carrigan, Connell & Lee 1985). This applies to both Rebin’s and Javad’s anecdotes and explains the necessity of providing such stories in a homosocial setting.

All or nothing

During the weeks that followed, I focused a lot of my attention on these early lunch breaks. It was interesting to see how the school hosts thrived from the admiration received from their disciples. I, however, encountered many students who wanted to challenge the authority of the school hosts by questioning the logic of their customs. On one occasion, a second-year student called Hatar challenges the authority by taking his first bites as Javad joins the table. Javad of course tells him off and as Hatar protests asking why he must abide by these rules, Javad replies “That’s how humans act!” making it seem that this is a universally known code of custom and that Hatar is out of line for questioning it. Hatar replicates that him

100 “så gör människor”
starting to eat does not affect the amount of food that anyone else gets. Javad stares at him with a finality in his piercing glare clearly indicating that the discussion has reached its end.

The table discussion continues in the macho themed manner, as a last-night football game provides the next topic. Michel describes the most controversial moment of the game in which a player received a red card for pushing another player. He is outraged at the referee’s decision which in his opinion ruined the game. Javad interjects at this, and he too is outraged hearing about the situation. “Why push?” He says, and I am surprised at his uncommon pacifistic stance in a discussion around violence. It turns out, however, that I have once more been mistaken, as he goes on to say. “I don’t understand why you would push someone. Either you don’t push, or you go full out!” He elaborates by throwing his right and then left fist in the air in quick succession as if punching someone in the face. He looks around to see how his remark has landed and he is met by a couple of beaming faces.

The lunch continues and Erdal, one of the boys says that he has to leave because he needs to prepare for class. Francisco intervenes saying that their customs are that no one leaves before everyone has finished eating. After protesting that it is solely due to school work that he has to leave he is, however, excused. He returns a minute later, and it turns out that he has left his iPad, which is sitting on the windowsill next to Javad. He asks Javad to pass it to him and as it is returned, Javad says: “What a manly color you’ve picked!” in a taunting manner, once again peering out for people to join his laughter. Javad passes the purple iPad and Erdal strides off once more.

These homosocial spaces required a constant policing of what is considered as less masculine (Thurnell-Read 2012). I had a hard time believing that Javad was as pro-violence as his rhetoric suggested, yet he felt obligated to always develop a “more masculine” manner. If a football player has used violence, his deed could have been further masculinized by being more violent and causing more damage.

I started thinking that this was not a relaxed behavior at all. The “safe zones” were absolutely filled with obligations that directed behaviors and demanded certain actions. Kimmel’s quote about masculinity is very fitting in this scenario “masculinity is largely a ‘homosocial' experience: performed for and judged by, other men” Javad felt like he needed to perform for the surrounding men in this instance. He had no option but letting Erdal know that his iPad

101 "Varför putta?"
102 "Jag förstår inte varför han puttar. Antingen man puttar inte, eller man kör fullt!"
103 "Vilken manlig färg du har valt!"
was of a lesser color. Letting a clear sign of femininity such as a purple iPad go unnoticed was quite unthinkable and therefore needed to be brought to light.

Throughout my fieldwork, I never once saw any physical fighting going on at the school. This, of course, meant that the school hosts had achieved what they were set out to do, namely to keep the school a fighting-free zone. However, Rebin’s hand testifies to the issue of fighting not being what was being combated by the school hosts, but rather the locations in which fights took place. While fighting had ceased at the school, they had been redirected to other venues. Hence, the strong bonds that Javad and Francisco had with these boys in the early lunch group undoubtedly kept them from fighting there, but the violent attitudes remained.
Conversation Concerning Belonging and Trespassing

This section differs from the rest of the thesis in that it will solely focus on two students. A couple of weeks into my fieldwork, I found myself in a setting where the two students Oscar and Bilal, who had grown up as friends but drifted apart during recent years, spoke to each other about their concerns with one another. I hope to be able to bring light to some of the issues that the two of them struggle to fully express in this conversation.

Given the profound emotions in this conversation, I have decided to devote a full chapter of this thesis, in which we will move chronologically with the discussion. I will begin by giving a bit of background by walking you through my first encounters with the two of them. We will then get an introduction to who they were and what their social positions at the school were. Most of the chapter will, however, be of the fantastic conversation that I have the immense privilege of having witnessed.

Oscar

My first meeting with Oscar came during my second week at the school. It was almost like meeting a celebrity being that I had heard his name mentioned on so many occasions in the past week. “Why all this fuss about Oscar?”, you might ask. As stated previously, most of the students that I had spoken to at that point experienced the social segregation of Tuvaskolan to be quite inflexibly divided in that blattar hung out with blattar and svennar with svennar. However, a fair number of the nonwhite students that I talked to had laughingly given me one exception. “Haha, Except for Oscar!”104 Since hearing this, I had naturally been very eager to meet him.

Oscar is a white second-year student of the economics program. He says that he is an atypical presence in his class being that he is the only one from orten. His attire fits the description that Emma had given me. He is wearing tre streck from top to bottom. His shoes, pants, hoodie and cap are all Adidas; not a coincidence. It is essential for him to be wearing these symbols of belonging. By wearing these, he declares his belonging to orten and manages to

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104 "Haha, förutom Oscar!"
blend in quite successfully in the otherwise almost exclusively nonwhite group (Bäckman 2009: 17-19).

It became clear how much I had been influenced by all of these coded pieces of clothing being that I could not find him in the yearbook when I went looking for him. He had given me the exact year and class that he was in, but I still could not find him. When I went back and asked him if he was sick during picture day his friend Hatar laughed and said. “No, man! He is wearing a shirt!” Next time I went to the staff room I went back and looked for him and there he was, in a blue shirt with his hair in a back slick.

Oscar is talkative. He likes his attention and, generally receives quite an extensive audience when he speaks. “Wallah, he’s the school Politian!” was how Samiya described him as when we were standing by one of the tables in the cafeteria. He was apparently one to fancy debating which was something that would happen occasionally. On one occasion, I walked into the cafeteria as he and Jelyan who was a third-year-student of the natural science program were debating racism. She does not seem to be a stranger to the subject and is putting quite some pressure on Oscar who is arguing for the phenomenon of reversed racism. It is a very interesting discussion and I have to really bite my tongue not to interject. The debate draws a lot of attention and by the end of it most of the people around the table seem to have shifted towards Jelyan’s views although some, and particularly the male spectators, seem to root for team-Oscar.

Oscar almost exclusively hangs out with nonwhite students. He is a natural part of those surroundings. His position, as part of the nonwhite community, is of course mostly a product of his socioeconomic status, yet it is reinforced by the usage of both attire and language (see also Jonsson and Miliani 2011; Jonsson and Miliani 2012). This became very evident on a Wednesday morning when we were sitting in the cafeteria and Oscar was complaining about his Spanish homework. Francisco who is Chilean, thus fluent in Spanish, took his paper and after a moment of him looking the paper up and down said: “You fuck my brain up when you start talking about conjugations and past tense and those things! You just talk! I don’t understand stuff like that!” Since Francisco’s aid is insufficient, Miguel is brought in for

105 “Nej mannen! Han har skjorta!”
106 Wallah is a shortened Arabic phrase for “Waheyat Allah” which means “I Swear to God”. The term is frequently used in Swedish slang and is hence a calque from Arabic.
107 “Wallah, han är skolans politiker!”
108 ”Du fuckar min hjärna när du börjar snacka om böjningar och imperfekt å grejer! Man bara snackar liksom! Jag fattar inte sånt där!”
more guidance. Miguel is a Janitor who moved to Sweden from Nicaragua where he worked as a Spanish teacher. He took a quick glance and fixed the errors on the homework sheet. When the homework was finished Oscar strides off to class. After a few steps, he turned around with a smirk and said: “You should never trust Chileans!” All laugh as he extends his middle finger and continues up the stairs towards Spanish class. I think he is the only white student at Tuvaskolan who could get away with such a remark.

Bilal

It took me a few weeks to take notice of Bilal. Since I only observed him from afar for the first couple of days before I was introduced to him, my first fieldnotes of him are with the name AIK-killen because he was wearing an AIK cap. It was during one of my observation sessions that I first saw him. I was sitting in the center of the cafeteria and had previously been talking to Hebba and a few others before they went on to their first afternoon class. Around the table in front of me, a group of six white students are sitting and chatting. I’ve met with a few of them before but can’t remember all the names. Not all of them are active participants in the conversation, since a lot of them have iPads and phones up. It’s mainly Matilda who is driving the conversation with the others occasionally giving responses. Three are sitting on each side of the table with Erik and Victor sitting on the edges. They both have their phones up and seem to occasionally be interchanging a comment on what was happening on the screen and showing each other videos.

Right next to them stands Bilal. He is wearing rolled up jeans, a blue Ralph Lauren jacket, a Henry Lloyd sports bag, and his AIK-cap. He has black hair and a bushy black beard. It is of course hard to tell, but by the looks of it he could be of west-Asian descent. He looks to be in distress and it doesn’t take me long to figure out why: he desperately wants a seat at the table which the two guys on the edge of the sofa seem quite intent on preventing him from. There is plenty of room for him by the table if just one of them would either scoot over or let him past, but none of them seem willing to. Searching through my memory, I remembered that I had seen him standing just outside a tight group of people this morning as well.

109 ”Man ska aldrig lita på Chilienare!”
110 Allmänna Idrottsklubben, AIK is one of Sweden’s most famous sport clubs
111 The AIK-Guy
112 While my utopia would mean that these things would be unimportant, I need to elaborate on these things because I deem them very essential in understanding my analysis of the situation.
Bilal finally makes a hesitant advance and asks one of them to let him pass. Unfortunately, I am a bit too far away to fully be able to hear the conversation, but the body language is as clear as anything. At first there is no reply and both of the guys seem intent on letting their focus remain on the telephone screens. Bilal makes a second attempt and Erik must have answered that it was too crowded already because Bilal raises his voice and says: “But there are acres of space!?" He stretches his arms out to the sides as to show how illogical he finds the answer while laughing nervously. This time there is no reply, so Bilal strides off towards the staircase.

I follow his movements and see that he stops halfway up the stairs. He stands for a minute and looks back at the table where he still wants a seat. He gets his phone out and scrolls for another minute or so before he heads back down again. This time he tries to squeeze himself on to the sofa. He is now balancing on one buttock with the guy next to him neither acknowledging Bilal’s struggle or making any attempt at simplifying Bilal’s life by scooting over. After a few moments of this choreography Erik puts his headphones in to fully elaborate the neglect. Bilal gets up and makes another stroll towards the staircase. It’s a good spot to stand in, given that it provides a complete overview of the cafeteria. He seems to be scanning for other possible places to sit, but somehow his options seem scarce.

I keep watching him as he alternates between looking at his phone and looking for places to sit. Nihar and Ronni come walking down the stairs and Bilal advances to greet them. The response is lukewarm from the two of them. He seems not to have been accepted from them either as the two of them continue past him with just a quick nod while it is clear that Bilal was going for at least a handshake and possibly even a casual conversation.

He appears to still be in distress and makes a third attempt. This time he goes to Victor instead, but he seems to not be getting any response this time either. Instead he makes his way over to the windows where a group of nonwhite guys are playing Backgammon. He ends up standing right behind the group and tries to laugh at the right moments. He doesn’t really greet any of them. He stays by the Backgammon table for a few minutes before he makes a fourth effort at getting a seat by the “white” table. This one fails too. He makes his way up the stairs and is not seen again.

I made my way to the staff room to refine my notes. Did all of that really happen? Was I exaggerating? My analysis thus far was that Bilal, by trying to hang out with both *svannarna*

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113 ”Men det finns hur mycket plats som helst!”
and blattarna, had ended up in no-man’s-land. He had become a social outcast in both groups. It’s hard to pinpoint it, but my feeling was that even the people that did greet him back might not have done so wholeheartedly (See also Motiseloa 2003)

Later that week, I was sitting in the cafeteria talking to Hebba, Lala and Miremba again when I took notice of Bilal. I switch focus from the conversation that I was somewhat part of and start observing Bilal. He is standing with Sarah. By the looks of it, she might also be of West-Asian descent. She has however dyed her hair blonde and much like Emma, she too achieves a quite white-passing look by this. They are standing right by a group of white students that are sitting by the windows. Most of them were the ones that refused him a seat a few days earlier.

Erik is one of them and on this occasion, as well as the one a couple of days ago, he seems intent on not having Bilal or Sarah have a seat. This is achieved by placing his feet up on one of the stools which prevents either of them from sitting down. Bilal seems to be the one in the most distress concerning this situation. She has her phone out and is scrolling while talking to Bilal. Bilal seems to be half eavesdropping on the conversation and much like when he was standing at the Backgammon table. At times, he exaggerates laughs with the seated group.

Bilal makes one of his strolls over to the staircase and greets a few people that are walking by, but again the replies seem lukewarm at best. He gets a few of them to stop but again his laughs seem exaggerated and he tries to exchange a few playful punches on the shoulders of some of the people passing but no real response is given here either. He makes his way back to the people by the window to find that the Sarah has now been given the seat that had Erik’s feet on it before. He stands by the group for another minute or so before the group stands up and he walks with them to class.

The Conversation

It’s a Wednesday morning and I have just taken a stroll around the M-corridor where I talked to Arlette for a while. As I pass the cafeteria, I see Bilal sitting with his head bowed down over his bag. He is seated with Nihar and Kevin and Oscar. I seize the opportunity since I’ve been meaning to get to know him for a while. I greet Oscar and the other two and then I sit down opposite of Bilal. Nihar and Kevin are discussing the point of having taxes as Bilal and Oscar are just sitting in solitude a short distance away from one another. It is a bit strange, since Nihar and Kevin’s conversation is precisely the kind of discussion that Oscar would
normally be in the center of, yet today he remains quiet. I greet Bilal too who sits up, apparently surprised to look up and find an adult rather than another student.

I introduce myself and give him my ordinary explanation of my purpose for being at the school. He looks up and says in a matter of fact tone “Well there are tons of groupings here!” I ask what sorts of groups as I withdraw my note book and he replies “blattar and svennar!” I nod and note what was said as I wait for one of them to address him as being a norm-breaker in this respect. Oscar is the one who breaks the silence “But what about you?” he says with a scornful smile. “This is the problem!” Bilal says with a raised voice. He turns towards me while saying it, but gestures at Oscar who still has that mocking smile on his face. “They’re always complaining saying that I should go back to my status friends or svenne friends every time I come over and try to just hang out.” Oscar laughs at this but doesn’t look at any of us. Apparently, this topic of discussion, and particularly Bilal’s stance in the discussion, is ridiculous to Oscar who is looking around for supporters. Bilal on the other hand lets out a pressured laugh although his head is still bowed down. “

Who are the status friends?” I ask, and he replies “The Swedes! Or maybe not just Swedes. Eh, Finns too!” Oscar gives out another contemptuous laugh. Now it is Bilal’s turn to put Oscar on the spot. “But what about you?” he says this laughingly but with a hint of sincerity in his voice. I get the feeling that Bilal knows that his question is out of bounds but still feels the need to ask. “But I have always hung out with blattarna!” he goes on to say that Swedes are “boring and dry” and that he has the right to talk of them in such blunt terms as he is part of that group. I try to provoke a conversation around Swedishness by asking if I, being a Swedish citizen am as entitled to speak of Swedes in as blunt terms as Oscar is. My attempt, however, seems to have failed as none of them seem willing to pick up the ball. Too soon!

The mood is tense. None of the two are looking in the direction of the other, but are rather facing away in the opposite direction. With my note pad in hand, I am sitting in front of the

114 ”Det finns fett mycket grupperingar här asså?”
115 ”blattar å svennar!”
116 ”Men du då?”
117 ”Det är det här som är problemet!”
118 ”Dom här ba klagar och säger åt mig att gå tillbaka till mina statusvänner, eller svennevänner så fort jag kommer och försöker hänga.”
119 ”Vilka är statusvännerna?”
120 ”Svenskarna! Eller kanske inte bara svenskar. Typ finnar också!”
121 ”Men du då?”
122 ”Men jag har alltid hängt med blattarna”
123 ”Träkiga och torra”
two of them looking much like a therapist trying to get them to talk about this piercing issue. I am sure that they both have spent a lot of time jostling with all of this in their heads and are quite eager to talk about these things. They also seem to want to make the topic seem less stressful than it is. While being something that they seem to want to talk about, meddling in these matters seems quite dangerous, given that they are scared to give up the status quo. The two others that were discussing taxes earlier have taken notice of the tense situation and therefore shifted their attention towards us to get in on the action.

They remain quiet for a few minutes and I get some time to refine my notes. I address the palpable tension between them and encourage them to engage in a resolving conversation. Once again Oscar is the one who breaks the silence as he can’t hold himself back anymore. “The thing is, I know him as a brother, so if he says something mean I won’t be offended and I expect the same from him if I say something back.”124 This was not at all what I was expecting. He goes on to say that he is tired of Bilal’s martyr complex when it comes to this situation. “This is about his old friends wanting to be with him, but he has chosen new ones.”

I can’t help but notice that Oscar keeps looking at me and addressing Bilal as “him” and “he”. He won’t talk to Bilal head on, making my position all the more important. Of course, my aim is just to get them to express their thoughts on the topic, so whether it is done using me as a mediator or not is of no real importance to me.

To lighten the tension, I ask how long they’ve known each other and they agree that they’ve known each other “for ages!”126 Apparently, they used to hang out in the neighborhood Vikersberg127 growing up, which is described as a place where there is “only blattar!”128 Bilal, unlike the rest of his friends, attended seventh to ninth grade in Vikersholmskolan129, situated in the neighborhood Vikersholm130. Vikersholm is described as an upper middle-class area with a predominantly white population, and the same goes for the students of the school. While at Vikersholmskolan, Bilal kept hanging out with his Vikersberg friends despite them not attending the same school. Their contact, however proved difficult to maintain in the long run and their hangouts became infrequent. Oscar says that one of the girls at the school had at

124 “Grejen är att jag känner honom som en bror så om han säger något taskigt till mig så kommer jag inte ta illa upp och jag förväntar mig samma sak från honom om jag säger något tillbaka.
125 ”Det handlar om hans gamla vänner som vill vara med honom, men han har valt nya.”
126 “Fett länge!”
127 Pseudonym for a working-class predominantly nonwhite neighborhood located adjacent to Tuvanskolan
128 ”Bara blattar!”
129 Pseudonym for a school located in a middle-class predominantly white neighborhood located adjacent to Tuvaskolan
130 Pseudonym for a middle-class predominantly white neighborhood located adjacent to Tuvaskolan

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one point told Bilal that he should revise his circle of friends and that they didn’t stop hanging out at that exact moment, but that their contact gradually faded from that point on.

Bilal, while showing symptoms of shame, does not deny that what Oscar is saying. Uneasy with the suspense of the moment, he changes the topic to an anecdote about how he had been confronted by some person for wearing converse all-star shoes. According to the confronter, converse was an unmistakable white-coded piece of attire and he was therefore aggravated over Bilal’s inconsiderate choice of shoes. “It’s the same when I go to AIK. People say that no blattar care about Swedish teams.” Oscar laughs, shakes his head and hides his face in his palms to illustrate how ridiculous he considers Bilal’s perspective to be.

Disregarding Oscar, I ask Bilal if it annoys him when people make such remarks about him. “If it comes from the wrong person!” I wondered who would be considered the wrong person for a second and then I see a quick, yet meaningful glance from Bilal at the annoyed Oscar who was still shaking his head. The mood is still very tense and the two of them fall into silence once more awaiting the other’s retort. Bilal pulls out his phone as he says “Wait! Let me show you proof.” I expected him to show me an example of when someone had made remarks about his trespassing, but instead he showed me his most recent post on Instagram. It was an old picture of Oscar and Bilal that by the looks of it was probably taken before he started Vikersholmskolan. Bilal says that the picture is a token of his never-fading friendly attitudes towards Oscar and that he hasn’t forgotten about any of the people that they used to hang out with at Vikersberg. There is silence once more, and they are facing away from each other.

“The same thing happens when I go play hockey with the boys!” Bilal has once again broken the silence, clearly still frustrated about his situation, yet happy to have finally found a forum in which he can express his unease. Oscar snorts. It is fascinating how so many of these things are almost like ethics. Some people are just not meant to do certain things. Apparently, such racial trespassing is frowned upon. Nonwhites don’t play hockey with the boys and that’s just how it is.

I ask who “the boys” are and he replies that it is the people that he is normally hanging out with at school. “I’ve known them for as long as I’ve known Oscar,” Bilal says in an attempt

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131 "Det är samma när jag går på AIK. Folk säger att inga blattar bryr sig om svenska lag.”
132 "Om det kommer från fel person!"
133 "Samma grej händer när jag ska dra och spela hockey med boysen!"
134 "boysen"
at legitimizing his hanging out with them. Oscar testifies to the story, but is still not convinced of how legitimate he considers Bilal’s actions. The quiet resumes, but now it’s mainly Oscar who is hunched while Bilal seems to have found new energy from having gotten a few tough things off his chest.

“Should I say something negative too?” I’m perplexed, and my face seems to have reflected my emotions as he ads “I mean about the svenskarna!” I’m still confused. I cannot recall him saying anything either positive or negative about the svenskarna, but has rather spoken of himself and his relationship with Oscar and the rest of his old friends from Vikersberg. Glad to hear what his thoughts on how svenskarna are, I naturally say yes to his request. “It can be difficult for new people to get in”. I ask him to elaborate and he says that they are not very willing to “give space” to new people who want to join the group. I ask if he has experienced similar difficulties, which he firmly denies.

Once more I am surprised seen as I have spent the last weeks seeing how he has in fact experienced the exact same problems that he is expressing. Maybe he just does not want Oscar to know that he is an outsider in both circles. “They act posher than they are.” he laughs as he says this and seems to get a reaction from Oscar as well. I ask what he means, and he says that they act like they have more money than they do.

I tell him that I have experienced some of the problems that he expressed about having hard times getting in contact with big parts of the white student composition. I ask if he would be willing to help me “get in”. “Sure! You just need to stop by when I am sitting with them.” He demonstrates how he would introduce me: “This is Putte!” as he says this he pitches his voice up and embodies how I would be introduced in white customs by placing his hand on my shoulder. He further creates a suitable nickname that would further aid my smooth transition into the new surroundings. We all laugh at this quick humorous art piece and its relatability.

Bullying is cruel. It is, of course, hard to know the exact reasons as to why Bilal had to endure this harsh treatment from his school colleagues, but I deem it safe to say that his intersectional position plays quite a big role. The main intersections that seem to be causing this collective

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135 “Jag har känt dom lika länge som jag har känt Oscar”
136 “Ska jag säga något negativt också?”
137 “Om svenskarna, asså!”
138 “Ge plats!”
139 “Dom leker finare än vad dom är!”
140 “Visst! Det är bara att du kommer förbi när jag sitter med dom.”
141 “Det här är Putte!”
dismissal of Bilal is class, race and gender. It seems that Bilal, spending time with white students from upper-class backgrounds, threatens nonwhite cohesiveness at Tuvaskolan, or perhaps even the idea of orten. His position is therefore frowned upon given the dissonance between his nonwhite appearance and the class position of his white friends.

Bilal’s white friends are described as *status friends* by Oscar. Whether this is due to their class status or race is uncertain but it is clear that Oscar believes them to be of a higher status. There is a “you think you are better than us”-kind of feeling present when he expresses his concerns about Bilal hanging out with *svennarna*. According to Bilal, they don’t seem to be as rich as they like to come across, pointing to how class can either be seen as less visible, or more easily masked than race. There seems to be an expected class position already attached to white as well as nonwhite bodies, regardless of actual socioeconomic status.

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142 statusvänner
Concluding Words

Three months of fieldwork has told me that Tuvaskolan as a social platform is heavily influenced by intersectionality and power relations connected to such positions. As students enter the cafeteria to find a seat, their decision-making is influenced by numerous factors. Weighing on their bodies and minds are a mixture of historically founded stereotypes based on class, race and gender, according to which the students adhere in order to function within the social matrix of the school. These factors dictate a large extent of the patterns in which students socialize at the school.

At the beginning of this thesis, I set out to answer the research questions: What effects has racial residential segregation had on social segregation within Tuvaskolan? What role does socioeconomic status play? What role does intersectional position play in how social groupings occur? How will my intersectional position influence the ways in which I come across as a researcher in the field? In combination with these questions, my aim was: to scrutinize Tuvaskolan as a social platform and consider ways in which intersectional position affect the students’ social lives at the school. In addition, it aims to explore how variations of the terms “Swede” and “immigrant” operate as synonymous to white and nonwhite, thus influencing social hierarchical groupings within the social matrix.

In my very first encounter with students, Ronni proclaimed that: “It’s gonna take about ten minutes to get it: Orten here, Svennarna there.” In this quote, the Pan-suburban cohesion of orten is described as the main defining category for the constellations in which students socialize. The other group, svennarna, is perhaps one that has not been thoroughly defined in this thesis. In this example, however, svennarna are positioned in contrast to people from orten. Hence, it is an indicator of the racialized dimension that socioeconomic status is thought to poses.

It is a bit of a chicken-egg-situation concerning racialized residential segregation and historically founded stereotypes providing the basis for the segregation at Tuvaskolan. As explained in the introduction, the phenomenon of white flight has heavily influenced how the Swedish residential situation has developed during the last thirty years. White flight is, of course, based on historical stereotypes of certain bodies, in turn making these stereotypes the basis for the segregation. Therefore, it is hard to fully distinguish the ends of what is

143 ”Det kommer ta typ tio minuter att fatta. Orten här, svennarna där!”
perceived as a class position and a racial position at Tuvaskolan, since even nonwhite students that are not from areas considered as part of orten are many times incorporated in the nonwhite group. However, most students seemed to have to choose one or the other rather than moving in between groups.

I think that the example of Emma and Bilal makes for an interesting comparative examination. Their respective strives for dual membership were met with quite different attitudes. I spent quite a lot of time with Emma, and not once did I see anyone give her stick for her dual membership, whereas Bilal almost became a social outcast for trying the same thing. It is hard to tell whether the gendered dimension allowed Emma more freedom to explore the dual positions, or if it was due to her being of mixed-race origin. It may of course be that stern attitudes towards Emma were present in other forms than they were towards Bilal. For instance, at some point Emma spoke about social medias and how people seemed to be less filtered when posting hurtful comments there. Of course, this is a venue that was not investigated in this thesis, so I can’t know if this was the case.

The main function of schooling is to create new members of society and shape their thinking into the liking of the state (see also León Rosales 2010: 52-54). Since the time within classrooms only makes up about two thirds of the time that students spend in school, the rest is devoted to learning how to socialize. Herein lies a great opportunity. I think that more time and effort needs to be devoted to understanding the immense possibility that the school as a social platform is. As is the case with Tuvaskolan, it is a quite unique meeting spot from people form a range of socioeconomic backgrounds and therefore, it could be used for integrational purposes.

Tuvaskolan is quite a rare example of Swedish high schools that have taken measures to shape this otherwise unsupervised third of life at school by their hiring of Javad and Francisco. However, the task of two staff members keeping casual contact with two thousand teenagers is quite an ambitious one. As they articulated themselves, they had better contacts with many of the students than any of the other adults at the school. Therefore, their function at the school was of grave importance and they helped many students feel better about themselves on a daily basis. With better instructions and a more measured job description, the work of school hosts at schools like Tuvaskolan could have an even more successful function.
The discipline of critical race has an important part to play in Sweden and could have a beneficial effect in understanding some of the attitudes that Sweden struggles with today. There is a false belief that racism is a natural phenomenon and one that hence is in evitable being that people are likely to always see difference. The fact that we see difference is however not the real issue. Having implicit bias is a natural thing, but what we fill our biases with is a whole different matter. This thesis demonstrates the importance in separating implicit bias from racism, making it evident that the hierarchical system of race relation is something that we have been taught to believe, rather than innate. To return to the James Baldwin quote from the preface of this thesis it is the “society in which [we are] being educated” that has taught us these interpretations. My belief is that moving away from some of the false narratives presented in this thesis would influence less prejudicial interpretations of bodies.
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