

Cultural immersion and production. The meaning of musicking for social trust and inclusion

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ABSTRACT The aim of this article is to investigate participants' engagement in music activities in ethnic-based associations today, in the light of 1) the Swedish integration and cultural policies from the 1970s and 2) general conditions for social and political inclusion through association engagement.

As a starting point, we discuss the ideas behind the cultural and integration policies launched in Sweden in the 1970s, and how they have changed due to societal changes and shifting discourses during the recent decades up until today. In our previous research, we have found that engagement in music activities in ethnic-based associations has played an important role for both individuals, groups and on a societal level. Bonding musical activities within the associations have been intertwined with bridging contacts with others, and inclusion in other activities outside the associations, in line with the basic ideologies and assumptions of the policies from the 1970s. However, such synergy processes only seem to have been valid under some general conditions of inclusion and exclusion. These conditions are signified by: 1) The quality of, and the extensions of social networks, 2) The inner structure and organization of the associations, and 3) The social climate and the political governance of the local community. In the end of the article, we add a discussion on how the ideas of the early policies comprehended these general conditions of inclusion, even if they were not implemented fully in practice.

INTRODUCTION

Sweden has a long history of citizen participation in social movements and associations. This unique tradition has strongly contributed to the formation of the welfare state and the Swedish model of the "home of the people" (Folkhemmet) that symbolizes the idea of society operating as a "household" where each one contributes as active citizens (Khayati & Dahlstedt 2014; Nordvall 2005). Due to the large labor immigration to Sweden, during the 1960s and 1970s, ethnic minority groups were expected to incorporate themselves in society by organizing their own associations. The idea was that life within the associations would be a forum for immigrants' "democratic education", political and social participation, and not least, opportunities to preserve their cultural and ethnic identities. A political decision was made in 1975 that immigrant and minority organizations would receive government grants (Ds 2015:38). The subsidies were intended to encourage activities, which would contribute to the members' integration processes as well as to the preservation of their ethnic identities (Khayati & Dahlstedt 2014:59). In line with these thoughts, cultural activities were supported by national and local authorities, and had a strong position in the migrant associations during the 1970s and 1980s.

There was a unique combination of state governance and a tradition of popular education that formed

the basis for a specific "immigrant policy" with an "integrative potential" in the 1970s (Borevi 2004:31). The policy followed a generative model, how immigrants would strengthen their integration by popular education, based on an assumption of their need to learn "Swedish democracy" and democratic processes (Dahlstedt et al. 2011; Nordvall 2005; Eriksson and Osman 2003). Establishing an ethnic minority affiliation was considered a means of gaining a collective voice in Swedish society (Eriksson & Osman 2003; Bengtsson 2004).

The political line in the immigrant policy contained principles of both *ethnos* and *demos*, since the members of the associations were expected to maintain their "culture of origin" and be integrated into Swedish society as equal citizens (Borevi 2002:97). In the article we use the *ethnos* concept to describe an order in society where ethnic minority or majority groups have – or are given – room to consolidate and develop their own ethnic identities and communities. *Demos* applies to an order where all citizens of a country are categorized and treated as one people due to their joint citizenship (Borevi 2002).

During the 1970s, the *ethnos* aspect was strongly emphasized in Sweden. The importance of "internal solidarity" – or bonding (Putnam 2000) – within the ethnic groups was stressed from a political perspective. Over the next two decades, the focus on internal group

solidarity shifted in favor of the citizenship perspective, which grew stronger. Consequently, as the demos aspects became more central, the "immigration politics" transformed into "integration politics". The interconnecting qualities of the associations came into focus, and the directives to them were now to work for integration and bridging activities from a more general societal perspective, rather than consolidating a specific ethnic affiliation. It is this view that dominates politics and the public debate today.

The aim of this article is to investigate participants' engagement in music activities in ethnic-based associations today, in the light of 1) the Swedish integration and cultural policies from the 1970s and 2) general conditions for social and political inclusion through association engagement.

As a starting point, we discuss the ideas behind the cultural and integration policies launched in Sweden in the 1970s. We focus on the ambitions of social and political inclusion of immigrants through popular education, membership in ethnic associations and cultural activities. The cultural and integration policies in Sweden have changed several times during the recent decades up until today, due to shifting discourses and societal changes. In the following part, we present the research project *Music, identity, and multiculturalism: A study of the role of music in ethnic-based associations* (Westvall, Lidskog & Pripp 2018).¹ The project's results show how engagement in music activities in ethnic-based associations has played an important role for both individuals, groups and on a societal level. In the third and last part, we identify general conditions under which engagement in music and dance in ethnic associations increase, or counteract, social inclusion and political commitment among its members. We discuss these general conditions in relation to the findings of the research project. As an ending, we also discuss the connection between the general conditions of inclusion and the ideas and implementation of the early integration and cultural policies.

MUSIC AND THE CULTURE POLICIES

In the 1970s' policies, musical activities were considered as cultural expressions of bonding, as ways for immi-

grants to maintain and develop traditions and sonic expressions with references to their "homelands". So why did the musical activities of the associations become so important? Was it merely a sonic way of defining diversity, or a categorization of immigrants by highlighting traditional cultural expressions? In order to find out more about this approach, we need to take a closer look at the general cultural policies of Sweden during this era.

In the Cultural Bill of 1974, there was a conceptual focus on changing social policies, rather than on humanistic and artistic traditions (Kungl. Maj:ts prop. 1974:28). The focus on music and other expressive forms of culture had a relational focus in the policy rather than a categorical one; the collective participation was emphasized over individual artistic dimensions, representing a broad view of music with active participation in a social context. The opposite of this view would have been an aesthetic – normative – ideal, focusing on skill and professional practitioners and their audience, where traditional aesthetic criteria set the norms for how music is practiced and assessed. But in the first case, music was defined as a significant part of life, functioning as a social glue between people. As such, it was understood as an inter-human activity where members of the ethnic communities were likely to access musical interaction within their groups (Wallin 2002; Westvall 2007).

According to the Cultural Policy Bill of 1974 (p. 295), the goals of cultural politics were to:

- contribute to the protection of freedom of expression and create real conditions for the utilization of that freedom;
- provide opportunities for creative activities and promote contact between people;
- counteract the negative effects of commercialism in the cultural field;
- promote decentralization of activities and decision-making functions within the cultural field;
- take into account the experiences and needs of disadvantaged groups to a greater extent;
- enable artistic and cultural renewal;
- ensure that the culture of old times is utilized and brought to life;
- promote an exchange of experiences and ideas in the cultural field across language and national borders (Kungl. Maj:ts prop. 1974:28) (freely translated into English).

In relation to the points presented above, the encouragement of musical activities in ethnic-based associations intended to be a way of implementing the

¹ The multidisciplinary research project study *Music, identity, and multiculturalism: A study of the role of music in ethnic-based associations* was funded by The Swedish Foundation for Humanities and Social Sciences (Riksbankens Jubileumsfond). The researchers were Maria Westvall (project leader), Rolf Lidskog and Ulrik Volgsten, from Örebro University, Ove Sernhede and Johan Söderman from Gothenburg University and Oscar Pripp from Uppsala University.

general cultural policy goals in Sweden at the time. However, the political discourse and the integration system have changed over the last 50 years, which has affected the activities in and the role of the associations. The assumption that the engagement in ethnic associations and cultural activities generate social inclusion is no longer a ruling principle (cf. Dahlstedt 2005; Dahlstedt & Neergard 2019). Nevertheless, the ethnic associations still exist and new ones are established. While research on ethnic-based cultural associations in Sweden has increased recently, the role of musical activities in them has remained rather unmapped (cf. Lidskog 2016). Though many of these associations focus on music, dance and other cultural activities, little is known about their current role in society and what the cultural activities mean to their members, particularly with respect to social inclusion.

STUDYING COMMUNITIES OF MUSICAL PRACTICES AND THE MEANING OF MUSICKING

The multi-disciplinary research project *Music, identity, and multiculturalism: A study of the role of music in ethnic-based associations* was comprised of six researchers who examined the function and meaning of music for participants in a number of ethnic-based associations, located in the three largest cities in Sweden: Stockholm, Göteborg and Malmö (Westvall, Lidskog & Pripp 2018). A central point was to investigate how music may influence cultural identity formation and at the same time constitute means of social change among minority groups. The methods of collecting empirical data were participatory observation, individual semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews. The fieldwork was conducted among musicians, dancers and other members in a number of different association contexts in the three cities. Among the results, it was obvious that the ethnic-based associations still are a vital part of the cultural variety of the cities, and serve as platforms for social engagement and inclusion. The practices of cultural expressions, such as playing and dancing, seemed to serve a crucial role for generating social effects, a subject we want to further develop and investigate in this article.

While planning the fieldwork, we aimed to visit ethnic-based associations, which focused particularly on musical activities. We investigated the members' actions and interactions, understanding the associations as "communities of practice" (Lidskog, Pripp & Westvall

2018a:24-27; Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner 2015). First of all, the members of a community of practice share a concern for a particular *domain of knowledge*, which creates a common ground for the community's existence. In our case, this domain was music. The domain of knowledge may be affected by the attendants' improvement of skills and competences, and when generations shift and the society changes. A second characteristic of a community of practice is of course the *practices*, what the members actually do when they meet. The community exists because of the practices, which in our study cover the notion of *musicking*. Musicking concerns all actions where music is involved, like listening, singing, playing, composing, improvising, dancing, talking about music, reading about music, etc. (Lidskog, Pripp & Westvall 2018a:16, cf. Lilliestam 2006, Small 1998). The notion of musicking makes the empirical field wider by rendering all kinds of music related practices. A third characteristic of a community of practice is the *community*, understood as a social collective, created and maintained by the members' practices (musicking) (Shelemay 2011:364-365). In this case, the communities are defined by the members of the associations.

As mentioned, the study took place in Sweden's three largest cities. In Göteborg, members of the research team conducted fieldwork in Bosnian, Croatian, Romani and Gambian associations. In Malmö, we focused on the Finnish and Chilean contexts and in Stockholm, one association engaged in Kurdish culture and one in Swedish folk dance. In the project, we empirically chose to call them "association contexts", giving attention not only to activities within each association, but also considering their social networks and people loosely connected to the communities. By that, we wanted to be attentive to social and cultural complexity and to minimize the risk of defining the associations as cultural homogenous collectives (Pripp 2019; Ruskin & Rice 2012:16-17).

We often combined the focus on the associations' activities with life-stories of individual musicians and dancers. This was the case e.g. in the study of the Gambian association in Gothenburg, which also comprises interviews with the Gambian-Swedish percussionist Dembo Jatta and the rapper Ibrahima Erik Lundin-Banda, a second generation Gambian in Sweden (Sernhede 2018:63-82). Another example was the fieldwork concerning the Kurdish artist Hejar Duhoki, who now and then joined activities organized by the Kurdish culture association Komciwan in Stockholm. Duhoki was touring in Sweden and abroad, wrote and produced

music and music videos, based in his studio in the town of Norrköping, 130 kilometers south of Stockholm (Pripp 2018a).

The association contexts differed regarding their approach and attitudes to ethnic or national engagement. In the Chilean context in Malmö, the music in the 1970s served for the political struggle against the military regime and dictator Pinochet. Today the performance of music aims to enhance solidarity between groups of people in Sweden as well as in other parts of the world (Söderman 2018:101–116). In the Kurdish case, the ethnic symbolism of the music was explicitly expressed. The members of the Swedish folk dance association were comparatively more unaware of the ethno-national dimensions in their expressions. This unawareness was probably due to the majority position of Swedish folk music and dance, as an established national canon (Pripp 2018b).

As an overall result of the project, we found at least seven recurrent outcomes of what engagement in music and ethnic associations meant to their members, that we would define as various forms of cultural immersion or production (Lidskog, Pripp & Westvall 2018b:231–239). The first outcome we label *Being in Music*, which alludes to the flow and positive feelings augmenting when playing and dancing together. The interviewees described this as a “kick” or the satisfaction of just “being there”, when working on a repertoire, learning new songs or dances, synchronizing bodies and instruments in the musicking processes. Being in music was explained as a kind of free space where the mood was affected in positive ways, like a process of healing, a way of easing the mind without explicitly having to think about problems.

The second outcome we call *Producing Culture*, which alludes on how the members described learning skills, marketing, organizing and carrying out musical productions and events. To produce culture also means to develop technical skills such as sound, light and recordings, or how to write music, lyrics and make arrangements. Musicians and dancers in the Romani, Croatian, Bosnian, Kurdish and Swedish associations generally considered the younger generations as “apprentices”. By being immersed in the associations’ activities, they learnt how to master and develop the traditions. This was also a way of guaranteeing “regrowth” in the associations as individuals of different age groups and levels of skills were integrated with each other and regularly practiced and performed together.

A third outcome we describe as *Diasporic Pro-*

duction of Culture, with reference to diasporic contacts and cooperation with people in other countries. The diasporic culture production was common in association contexts representing groups like Kurds, Romani people, etcetera. In some associations we found diasporic-like traits like contacts and interchange with institutions and places in “the other homeland”, from where the group had migrated originally, like Finland for the Finnish immigrants (Lidskog, Pripp & Westvall 2018b:231–236; cf. Olsson 2007:56–57). In the Bosnian and Romani cases, the contacts within the diasporas were explicitly physical, when travelling and visiting, playing/touring with different musicians and constellations in the Balkan countries and other parts of Europe. In the Kurdish diaspora the musical contacts and the production of culture relied to greater extent on internet and social media, but also on travelling and touring.

The fourth outcome is *Contributing to the Cities’ Cultural Dynamics*. We realized how several association contexts served as hubs for culture practitioners of different backgrounds, were nexus in musical networks and co-organizers in local culture life. The associations’ activities often took place in local community halls and cultural centres. They were parts of cultural hubs, organizing clubs, theme nights and fundraisers aimed to support voluntary organizations helping people in vulnerable situations. The Gambian association had for years run a celebrated open live music club in the Old Bath House in central Göteborg. Dembo the Rootsman, and other West African musicians, were music profiles in the same city, performing in all kinds of constellations and musical activities, for example spreading West African drumming and music among the schoolchildren. The musical hub Balkan Blues Company, in the quarters of Gamlestaden in central Göteborg, was an activity centre and well-known scene for traditional folk, fusion and rock music, gathering musicians of different ethnic backgrounds. The Romani music community Svarta Saffirerna (Black Sapphires) were, beside their ordinary co-operation and performances, engaged in social projects, promoting Romani culture and Romani people’s integration. The Kurdish culture association Komciwan for youth had for decades run activities and public events open to all in a community hall in central Stockholm. The Chilean association context in Malmö was both part of the city’s music scene and a force supporting the fight for solidarity and justice, against oppression of various kinds. The Finnish association in the same city organized Finnish dance nights.

The fifth outcome we identify as *Creating Alter-*

native Representations and Contrasting Pictures, which alludes to how the members' engagement also aimed to counteract stigmatization and nuance depreciative stereotypes of the groups. Such strategies could for instance include how to display skillful and professional performances on a high level. Many members of the associations had experiences of being categorized by negative stereotypes and doubts of their capacities. However, most of them had chosen not to react explicitly to such attitudes. They countered with "silence", avoiding nationalistic debates and attacks, as a kind of resistance, and they kept the space free for nuanced and practically oriented integration work. In that way, they relied on the associations' activities and engagements in civil society to speak for themselves. This also provided reinforcement for the members of the associations to play "good" music and perform dance in a skillful manner without being interpreted through a lens of vulnerability and marginalization.

The sixth outcome we designate *Promoting Equality, Inclusion and Swedish Citizenship*. The general goals of the associations were to promote equality and their members' inclusion as adequate Swedish citizens. Many members of the associations claimed though that they were labelled second rate Swedes because of not being ethnic majority Swedes. The members often had a clear picture of the differences and the relationship between their own ethnicities (ethnos), on the one side, and being Swedish citizens and a part of the Swedish society, on the other (demos). For example, no one claimed exclusive rights on cultural or religious grounds. Quite the opposite, their aim was to be accepted as equal Swedes from a citizenship perspective, and to contribute to civil society.

The seventh and last outcome is the creation of *Trans-minority Collaborative Networks and Convivial Diversity*. Many activities took place in trans-minority contexts. Cultural initiatives and centres were sometimes run as collaborations between various associations. The musicians played regularly within different genres and musical constellations, where they met other musicians and hence engaged in yet other musical contexts and networks. Many members also had memberships in more than one association. Accordingly, one of our most striking results in the project was the existence of socially, culturally and ethnically transcending tissues, created on musical collaborations and by the co-work within and between minority groups (Lidskog, Pripp & Westvall 2018b:237).

MULTI-MODAL AND MULTIVALENT QUALITIES

Along with our results, the association members' practicing of music and dance were intimately linked to different kinds of driving forces and meaning making processes. There was no doubt that the musical activities supported the emergence of strong community ties and feelings of ethnic or national belonging (Shelemay 2011; Kiwan & Meinhof 2011; Westvall, Lidskog & Pripp 2018; Pripp 2019; Volgsten & Pripp 2016). One of the strengths of musicking is its multi-modal capacities that bring and keep people together, by using their sight, touch and hearing as well as their bodies and moods (Bull & Back 2016, Moore 2016; Pripp 2019). A further explanation of the coalescent strength of musicking is its multivalent and key symbolic capacities, to gather members of loosely knitted and scattered groups under one and the same umbrella, for example to consolidate positions and mobilize resistance (Erol 2012; Murthy 2009; Moore 2016, Pripp 2018b; 2019).

A logical deduction of such strong conjunctive effects of musicking could be that ethnic associations may build walls against "the world around", which would strengthen ethnic segregation and disunite local civil societies. Assumptions like that, how ethnic associations counteract integration, are common in public debates, for example in the Nordic countries (Dahlstedt, Ålund & Ålund 2010; Hertting 2011, Togeby 2004). However, research does not support such causalities. The common experience from studies of integration is that engagement in ethnic associations does not discourage social and political integration (Dixon, Bessaha & Post 2018; Fennema & Tillie 2001; Hertting 2011; Togeby 2004, Lidskog, Westvall & Pripp 2018b). In the next section, we will mention a range of decisive conditions that are valid if association engagement is to have the potential for social and political inclusion.

SOCIAL NETWORKS, BONDING AND BRIDGING SOCIAL CAPITAL AND TRUST

Strong ties between members of majority groups obstruct minority groups' social inclusion in society (Granovetter 1973). A basic prerequisite for a transcending social tissue in local communities is the existence of *widespread weak ties or networks* (Granovetter 1973; Gil de Zúñega & Valenzuela 2011). The strength of weak ties is that they reach beyond inner circles or strong communities. Weak ties emerge through contacts and ongoing interaction between people of different social categories.

Those involved bring their individual networks in, and at the same time get access to wider contacts.

The (1) *character of social networks* is, in other words, decisive for bonding-bridging connections and social inclusion. In our study, a common characteristic of association members' social networks was the presence of both weak and widespread ties. The musicking activities were conditioned on collaborations with others outside each musical community. Musicians and dancers often had broad interests and skills and many individuals were engaged in other associations, groups and activities, and across genres and social categories. The associations' performances, organized as joint events and festivities, required networks of loosely-knit contacts for collaborations, recruitment of competences and collecting of resources. For an ensemble, the collaborations also served as a prerequisite to be recognized and invited to public events. The associations in our study functioned as hubs where contacts were transmitted through the members' joint musicking activities (cf. Granovetter 1973; Gil de Zúñega & Valenzuela 2011). In that way, weak ties supported the transformation of bonding social capital into bridging capital (Murthy 2009; Putnam 2000).

Another set of prerequisites for functioning bonding/bridging processes has to do with (2) *the inner organization of an association*. The membership must be *voluntary*, something which is valid for all associations in the study. Good bridging conditions develop if the relationships between its members are *horizontal* and of *cooperative* kind (Hertting 2011:139); information and favours do not have to be "repaid" to those who share their knowledge and skills with others (as in asymmetric and reciprocal relationships). The receivers are instead expected to share their increased skills and forward their knowledge to new members (Newton 2001:31-32). The relations between the members of the associations in our study were generally of the cooperative and horizontal kind, as far as we could detect.

What also promotes bridging effects is the *size* of an association and to what extent it offers the members *diverse activities* (Strömblad & Bengtsson 2009). It has to be big enough for hosting different activities, which most of the associations in our study were. In the Swedish folk dance association, the members were also interested in wood- and metalwork, textile handicraft, and historical and regional folk costumes, besides dancing and playing. The members of the Kurdish association attended, in addition to the dance, instrument classes, study circles in organizational and societal issues,

and a range of activities shifting from year to year depending on available leaders' competences. The domain of knowledge and the number of activities shifted in the associations due to changing times and generational differences. Some of them had decreased because of the aging of members, and the younger members' other interests and requirements. They had run a multitude of different activities and organized magnificent performances during their heydays in the 1970s and 1980s. Today they have downsized their cultural engagement to occasional dance or instrument groups.

Another set of factors, which seems to be decisive for association members' inclusion, are related to (3) *the social and political climate of the surrounding society*. This contextual connection is dependent on abilities and attitudes among local authorities and the political establishment (Hertting 2011:141; Hertting & Kugelberg 2018; Statham & Tillie 2016; Togeby 2004:511). The local governance needs to be understood by the members/community as possessing *perceptiveness and political efficiency* in relation to the associations' experiences, conditions and needs. The efficiency could for example be the public representatives' ability of coordinating the dialogue between local associations and transforming their wishes and needs into concrete action (Danielsson, Hertting & Klijn 2018; Dixon, Bessaha & Post 2018; Hertting 2011:138; jfr Fennema & Tillie 2001:31, Newton 2001:206, Togeby 2004:522).

The associations in our study often had contradictory relationships to their local authorities. They were dependent on them for the access to premises and for their collaboration with other parts of the civil society. They were also dependent on subsidies and different forms of support from the public. The attention from local authorities was, in other words, decisive for the associations' legitimacy and recognition as fully adequate parts of their local civil societies. Interviewees told us how it was difficult to be taken seriously; how folk music and folk dance sometimes were neglected by civil servants distributing resources. There were also good relations and collaborations between the associations and the local authorities, for example when organizing local festivities and events.

In these kinds of relationships between the ethnic associations and the public, these attitudes are critical for establishing *trustworthy social bonds*. Political scientist Kenneth Newton writes how "trust is a – probably *the* – main component of social capital and social capital is a necessary component of social integration" (Newton

2001:201). He defines trust “as the actor’s belief that, at worst, others will not knowingly or willingly do him harm, and at the best, that they will act in his interests” (Newton 2001:201-202, cf. Hertting 2011). In other words, social trust is a kind of measurement of how people in their surroundings are met and treated, which individuals continually read and interpret. (Hertting 2011; Newton 2001:202, Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner 2015:7). It means that relations of trust, such as those established within the musical communities, cannot automatically be moved to other social contexts and transformed into bridging social capital. The bonding social capital can only be converted to bridging capital if the prerequisites for social trust are there, if those involved conceive that people around them wish the best for them, and will act in their interests. That makes the social and political climate central for promoting inclusion.

In our study, it varied according to what degree trust was established or not between the associations and the authorities. One reason for the absence of trust could be that individuals did not feel that the representatives of the society understood the associations’ interests and needs in trying situations. Another reason for distrust came up when the associations experienced asymmetric connections to other parts of the civil society. This imbalance existed for example in relation to educational organizations, upon which they were often highly dependent.

DYNAMICS IN THE PRESENT AND RETROSPECTIVE REFLECTIONS

The ambitions, articulated in the 1970s’ cultural and immigrant policies, had both disciplinarian and inclusionary aims, to form safe and secure active citizens in Swedish society. Engagement in associations and cultural activities, encouraged by the state, was regarded as a form of democratic schooling and active participation in the integration processes and political decision-making. It was a uniquely Swedish model, a combination of state governance and the tradition of popular education, which formed the basis for the organization of diversity. These early cultural political efforts struck a balance between ethnos and demos as organizing principles of the society. The identification processes and the internal solidarity within the minority groups were expected to be strengthened by joint cultural activities and association engagement. Moreover, this kind of engagement was supposed to be generative and contribute to inclusion in civil society and the identification with Swedish society as a whole, the demos aspect. In this model, there

was no sharp demarcation line between ethnos and demos; they were presumed to work in harmony, not as contradictions (Borevi 2002:97).

The ethnos-demos model changed during the following two decades into what could be defined as “integration politics”, stressing the demos aspect by encouraging the minority associations’ bridging social activities. In accordance with this bridging logic, inner bonding cultural activities became increasingly looked upon as something cementing the members’ exclusion from the surrounding society. Ethnos and demos were defined as two contradictory principles (SOU 1997 & Proposition 1997/98 in Borevi 2002:124-133).

Looking back to the integration and culture politics of the 1970s, the ambition was that the principles ethnos and demos should strengthen each other and harmonize. This double-barreled view of integration is still prominent today among the associations, even if it is abolished in the integration policy.

For the interviewees it was quite evident that their activities entailed aspects such as joy, solidarity, mobilization and cultivation of traditions for their members. At the same time, the associations were striving for visibility in Swedish society, for the development of collaborations, and for their members’ integration. On a societal and integrative level, they all supported the demos aspect, resting on Swedish citizenship as ruling political and organizational principle.

Some of the associations were maybe too small to offer their members a variety of activities. Perhaps some of them built on asymmetric and reciprocal relations and too strong excluding networks. However, this was not prominent during our fieldwork. The musical practices were in themselves dependent on, and contributed to, voluntariness, cooperative relations, trust and good contacts with the surrounding society. Some of the identified prerequisites were of course beyond the associations’ own control, like the local authorities’ governance, the local political and social climate and the presence of excluding networks.

In retrospect we can see that the set of preconditions for social and political inclusion, the implementation of the integration and culture policy of the 1970s and 1980s, fell short partly because of the fixation on culturalizing the immigrants as the “cultural others” (cf. Dahlstedt 2005; Pripp 2005; 2006; 2007). Ethnic-labeled folklore became the national canon for credible artistic immigrant representations. This organizational and ideological premise rested on a binary opposition

between Swedes and the immigrants, which became the basis of asymmetric relationships between the “immigrants’ associations” and what became known as “the surrounding society”. This disappointed artists and intellectuals from immigrant backgrounds, who felt locked-in by a discourse that emphasized the articulation of cultural group characteristics within immigrant communities. They realized how their art was first and foremost understood as means of social inclusion. Many of them wished to be recognized as artists in their own right, and as equal participants in the professional networks of cultural life and artistic communities of Sweden.

In the 1970s and 1980s, a hegemonic ethnic ideology was established in Sweden, where the ethnic majority Swedes were understood as not belonging to what many would consider Sweden’s more “diverse” population. They were rather understood as “role models” for generations of immigrants. This dominant discourse with its ethnicizing ideology supported an asymmetric ethnos-model on the national level, where “the Swedes” became synonymous with the majority group of ethnic Swedes. The demos principle, where “Swedes” first and foremost is understood as Swedish citizens, never became fully accepted and implemented in the discourse

or in people’s minds, even if the integration policies increasingly stressed how all citizens were equal parts of the Swedish society’s diversity, regardless of ethnic and national descent (Borevi 2002). In other words, big efforts, high ambitions and expectations on integration were counteracted by ethnic nationalism, asymmetric relations and strong ties.

Our aim with this article was to examine under which conditions engagement in musical practices in ethnic associations increase social inclusion and promote political commitment among its members. We have discussed the cultural political model of the 1970s and its shifts over the last five decades. According to our above discussion on the preconditions for social and political inclusion, we did not find any clear lines of demarcation between association activities generating bonding or bridging capital. Instead, the two aspects seemed to be intertwined in activities concerning culture production and musicking. However, this synergy process was valid only under the conditions mentioned above: the quality and extensions of social networks, the inner structure and organization of the associations, and the social climate and the political governance of the local community.

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