The Partisan Reporter

A study of the news reporting on the American race issue by Sven Öste, 1963-71

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Abstract

This thesis presents how the American race issue was depicted in Sweden during the 1960s until the early 1970s by studying the work of Sven Öste in Dagens Nyheter. Sven Öste was Dagens Nyheter’s Washington correspondent between 1963-1966 and 1968-1971, where he did prize winning reporting on the Vietnam war and covered the American race issue. Previous research has shown that the race issue was one of the key factors that changed Sweden’s perception of America. Despite this, there is a lack of research on how the American race issue was depicted or discussed in Sweden. This is important to remedy. Providing an understanding of how the American race issue was depicted will improve our knowledge of the Swedish image of America at this time. I will explore how Öste wrote about the Black liberation movement, the white resistance and how we are to understand his reporting. The results show that Öste contributed to a negative image of America through his reporting on the race issue. Öste supported the Black liberation movement, as shown through his emotional and moral writings. Furthermore, Öste compared the race issue to the struggles in the Third World, which contributed to the negative image of America. In doing this, Öste became a transnational actor. With these results, new insight is provided into how the American race issue was depicted in Sweden.

Keywords: Transnational history, Swedish-American relations, Swedish-American history, Civil Rights history, American race issue.
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Index of abbreviations

BPP – Black Panther Party
CORE – Congress of Racial Equality
COINTELPRO – Counter Intelligence Program
DN – Dagens Nyheter
FLN – The National Liberation Front (Algeria)
FNLP – Front National pour la Libération du Sud Viêt Nam
KKK – Ku Klux Klan
LCFO – Lowndes County Freedom Organization
MIA – Montgomery Improvement Association
NAACP – National Association for the Advancement of Black People
RAM – Revolutionary Action Movement
SCLC – Southern Christian Leadership Conference
SNCC – Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee
USIS – United States Information Service
Chapter 1. Introduction

Swedish journalists have been stationed in America since World War I, becoming transnational actors and playing a significant role in how America was to be perceived at home. At no point did they play a larger role than during the 1960s, when Swedish opinion of America deteriorated. This was in part because of the Vietnam War, which provoked a backlash in Sweden towards America. Another important factor was the American race issue, which received increased attention because of the Civil rights movement. While there has been previous research on Sweden and the Vietnam War, there lacks research on Sweden and the American race issue.

Among the few Swedish foreign correspondents in America during the 1960s, there is one that stands out, Sven Öste. By some called the greatest Swedish journalist of the 1960s in foreign matters¹, Öste made tremendous contributions to the Swedish picture of America. Sven Öste is most well known for his reporting during the Vietnam War, but he also wrote a substantial amount about the race issue. Despite this, there has been no research on Sven Öste or his work.

There has been research on Swedish perceptions of America during this period, including newspapers. Though these often apply an overarching approach, missing the finer details. The present thesis aims to fill the two gaps mentioned above through a micro-study approach on Sven Öste’s writings on the American race issue. This will include writings on the Civil rights movement and the Black liberation movement. This is an important distinction as it is commonly considered that the Civil rights movement ended in 1965. Since this study will focus on the period of 1963–1971, the broader term of Black liberation movement is used as to include the Black Power movement which gained traction after 1965. This broader time frame includes Öste’s reporting on the Black Panther Party.

I will in this thesis through a close examination of Sven Öste’s work on the American race issue establish a comprehensive understanding of Sven Öste’s work to better grasp how he contributed to the Swedish image of America. Furthermore, this will provide an understanding of how the race issue was depicted in Sweden. By studying how Öste wrote about the different actors and exploring why he wrote in the way that he did, I will achieve two things. First is that it will result in the first study on Sven Öste, one of Sweden’s leading journalists during the 1960s. Second is that it will for the first time show what Swedes could read about the American race issue in Dagens Nyheter in detail.

1.1. Purpose and research questions

The purpose of this thesis is to understand how the American race issue was depicted in Sweden in the 1960s and early 1970s. I will achieve this by studying the work of Sweden’s most accomplished journalist on the issue, Sven Öste. Previous research has showed that the 1960s was a turning point in Sweden for how America was perceived and that there were two key events for this. These events were The Vietnam War and the race issue. In this thesis, I explore reporting on the race issue that contributed to this change of heart. Providing this insight into news reporting will yield an understanding of how news contributed to Sweden’s changing perception. This is also why I have chosen not to include more actors, as it will then be much harder to show what the reporting looked like. To best remedy this micro approach, I have worked with the largest daily newspaper in Sweden, Dagens Nyheter, and the most engaged journalist on the topic, Sven Öste. With the choice of Sven Öste, I also aim to show how his professional background influenced how he reported on this issue.

Since the study is focused on Sven Öste’s reporting on the race issue, I have constructed questions on his writings and on how he depicted different aspects of it. To better understand Öste’s writings, I have composed five categories based on the source material; the Civil rights movement, the state, race riots, the white resistance and the Black Panther Party. These will allow for a better insight into Öste’s reporting and what his writings contributed to the Swedish picture of America. To understand how the race issue was depicted and what it contributed to the Swedish picture of America, it is not enough to show the articles. But to analyse them and understanding Öste’s overarching reporting.

My research questions are:
- How did Sven Öste write about the Black liberation movement and the white resistance?
- What does this contribute to the Swedish picture of America?
- How are we to understand Sven Öste’s reporting?
Chapter 2. Previous research

This thesis builds on two fields, transnational history and Swedish-American relations, which will be handled separately. First, I will discuss the transnational background of the study. This includes Sven Öste as a travelling foreign correspondent and the transnational aspects of the movement he was writing about. Second, there is the background of Swedish-American studies. It includes works that look at how America has been perceived and constructed within Sweden.

2.1. Transnational history

The leading historian on transnational history is Ian Tyrrell and in introducing his book *Transnational Nation: United States history in Global Perspective since 1789* he summarizes transnational history succinctly. “It is the movement of peoples, ideas, technologies and institutions across national boundaries.” Instead of focusing purely on nation-states, it takes a global approach to history and puts ideas in their global context. The transnational context is crucial to understand Sven Öste’s work and the American race issue. While the events occurred on a national stage, it had international repercussions. Since these events took place during the 1960s, the international context meant that the race issue was connected to the Cold War which Tyrell brings up in his book. Tyrrell stresses how Black Americans fight for rights cannot purely be understood in its national context. He argues that “…the international context vitally shaped issues” Subsequently he states that to understand the Civil rights movement one should not weigh the national and international factors against one another, but to see how they interacted. We can find similar arguments in Richard Pells *Not like Us*, where he argues that the counterculture and radical movements that were prevailing in the 1960s were a transatlantic phenomenon. A key in this was mass communication, including newspapers, which allowed these ideas to cross national barriers and become international. One result of this was that Europe became increasingly apprehensive about America’s role in the world, following the murder of President Kennedy and because of the racial divisions that existed in America, Pells claims. As Tyrrell argues for the international context, I make the argument in this thesis that Öste understood the movement within a similar context. For this reason, Öste’s writings on these issues ought to be understood within a transnational historical context. What Tyrrell and Pells argue for is something that Öste understood, and since he was a foreign correspondent, he also contributed to internationalising these issues.

Mary I. Dudziak writes more on this in her book *Cold War Civil Rights: race and the image of American democracy* in where she discusses the international aspects of the Civil rights movement, the

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2 Tyrrell 2015, p. 3.
3 Tyrrell 2015, p. 215.
4 Tyrrell 2015, p. 215.
importance of the Cold War politics for Black peoples struggles and the role of journalism within this. Dudziak argues that while civil rights might be a national problem, it affected the international perception of America during the Cold War years which harmed America's role as the leaders of the free world. Because of this, civil rights became a part of the Cold War, Dudziak claims. Dudziak highlights the interplay between the national and international aspects of the movement for civil rights and how it relates to the Cold War. In a way then, one could see this thesis as a micro-study on one of these aspects that Dudziak writes about, considering that Öste contributed to the internationalising of the movement.

Furthermore, Dudziak brings up US Secretary of State Dean Rusk who was part of President John F Kennedy’s administration. According to Dudziak, Rusk said the following concerning the importance of race relations during the 1960s. That it “had a profound impact on the world’s view of the United States and, therefore, on our foreign relations.” This quote came after the civil rights confrontations in Birmingham, Alabama. This shows that the connection between the treatment of African Americans and foreign policy is not only an argument by Dudziak, but that it was clear for the Secretary of State. She later adds that most Americans shared this view by August 1963. Finally, in her conclusion, Dudziak returns to stress that race in America, after World War II until the mid-1960s had a considerable impact on America’s international image. She claims that the international attention that the race issue got worldwide helped the Civil rights movement since it gave them leverage in their fight. With the help of journalists, the struggle of Black Americans was taken from the streets into newspapers all over the world. Finally, Dudziak brings up the importance of transnational history. “There is something to be gained by setting American history within an international context, by telling American stories with attention to the world’s influence upon them and their influence upon the world.”

Dudziak’s concluding remarks can act as an argument for this thesis. Since Dudziak argues that there were international aspects of the Civil rights movement and part of this was the international attention it got because of journalists. How American stories influenced the world is precisely the purpose of this thesis, through studying Sven Öste’s work. Öste set American history in an international context by comparing the race issue to similar conflicts around the world. Moreover, Öste contributed to having American stories influence the world, specifically Sweden.

Historian Kevin Gaines have a chapter in *America on the World Stage: A Global Approach to U.S. History*. Gaines echoes some of the same points brought up by Dudziak in his article The Civil Rights Movement in World Perspective. Writing how the Civil rights movement was more than

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6 Dudziak 2000, p. 6.
7 Dudziak 2000, p. 12.
8 Dudziak 2000, p. 184.
11 Dudziak 2000, p. 252.
simply a domestic movement and how it had global dimensions. Adding that the global and local should complement each other.\textsuperscript{12} This combination of global and local perspective is something Öste engaged in, by recognising the similarities to international movements while also seeing the particularities within America. As Dudziak, Gaines also brings up how the situation of Black people mattered to American foreign affairs, the importance of the Cold War and the benefits of studying the Civil Rights movement in a global perspective.\textsuperscript{13} Gaines adds that the fact that the world was watching this made sure that politicians in America, who otherwise was reluctant, actually did something in response to the movement.\textsuperscript{14} Gaines then writes “The persistence of racism was America’s Achilles’ heel in its competition with the Soviet Union for the allegiance of new nations having recently emerged from European colonial empires.”\textsuperscript{15} These sentiments basically add to or reaffirm what Dudziak claimed. Again this shows the importance of journalists like Sven Öste, as they spread the news of the race issue. To use previous research to argue for my own, Gaines writes how the news of incidents of racism that was broadcast to a foreign audience was “…a chronic headache for U.S. foreign-policy makers.”\textsuperscript{16} This emphasises the benefits of studying the reporting on the movements through a transnational perspective. Gaines also argues that one ought to look at the movement as a form of decolonisation, which is something I will return to.\textsuperscript{17} Decolonisation and the Third World are important contexts for Öste’s writings.

These texts show that employing a transnational approach to research the Black liberation movement is essential to get a complete picture. While this should not diminish the work of local activists that were the driving forces behind the movement, it is important to see how international pressure played a role in legislative success. For this thesis, I will employ the transnational approach to better understand Sven Öste’s reporting. As Öste wrote from a transnational perspective, it is important to recognize to understand why he wrote as he did. Coming with a Swedish background and the experience from the Third World, Öste had an international perspective and took part in internationalising the matters further.

2.2. Swedish perceptions of America

For the image of America in Sweden, there is a variety of scholarship to build on. Before I go into that, I need to clarify my use of the word image. I draw from the definition by Amanda Lagerkvist in *Amerikafantasier*. Lagerkvist defines images as the Swedish notions that existed, how Swedes perceived and thought about America and this makes up what is called images of America.\textsuperscript{18} While

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{12} Gaines 2008, p. 191.
\item \textsuperscript{13} Gaines 2008, pp. 192–194.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Gaines 2008, p. 195.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Gaines 2008, p. 195.
\item \textsuperscript{16} Gaines 2008, p. 195.
\item \textsuperscript{17} Gaines 2008, p. 192.
\item \textsuperscript{18} Lagerkvist 2005, p. 17.
\end{itemize}
there is plenty of research on Swedish perceptions of America, not as much has been written on the race issue. Primarily, the research does not have the race issue as a focus, instead it mentions it during a larger discussion on perceptions during the 1960s. Eva Block has studied Swedish perceptions in her dissertation *Amerikabilden i svensk dagspress 1948–1968*. Block writes how the common view has been that the image of America deteriorated in modern times because of the Vietnam war.\(^{19}\)

Block’s study is in two parts, a long-term perspective and a short one. In her long-term approach she studies the period 1948–1968. Because of the long period and including several newspapers, she only looks at editorials 20 days around the presidential elections.\(^{20}\) For the short-term approach she studies 1960–1965 since in the long-term approach she saw that the image changed between 1960–1964 and then rapidly after 1964. Because of the shorter period, she includes more texts than only the editorials and now looks at reports from correspondent’s etcetera.\(^{21}\) Despite our different approaches, Block’s dissertation is an important resource as she briefly writes on the race issue. Block writes that all the major newspapers showed sympathy towards the status of Black Americans. However, *Dagens Nyheter* stands out as the newspaper with the largest amount of material on the subject and showed the largest amount of interest.\(^{22}\) On top of this Block writes how it was primarily the foreign correspondents that were responsible for how the view of America changed.\(^{23}\) Block writes about how *DN* wrote on the race issue in an overview. She brings up that starting from January 1964, a month after Öste arrived in America, *DN* wrote positively about Black organisations that had made militant statements.\(^{24}\) Block ends her discussion on *DN* by writing that they accepted the militant organisations and violent actions as this was deemed the only way to get attention for the problems that plagued Black Americans.\(^{25}\)

I will delve deeper than Block in that I will analyse the writing more closely, specifically looking at the writings by Sven Öste who was the one primarily writing on these issues and to explain why it took this shape. While it is understandable that Block does not go into much detail because of the nature of her study, it is lacking as the reader is not provided with the information or rhetoric that was distributed to the Swedish readers. I argue that her chosen period leaves out interesting material that exists post-1965. It is my intention then to fill that gap and to show where the reporting in *DN* continued after the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Then there is the fact that her dissertation was written in 1976, which warrants a new perspective on the topic.

Birgitta Steene’s article *The Swedish Image of America in Images of America in Scandinavia* is another broad account of Swedish perceptions of America. Steene begins at first contact in 1638

\(^{19}\) Block 1976, p. 9.
\(^{20}\) Block 1976, p. 32.
\(^{21}\) Block 1976, pp. 64–66.
\(^{22}\) Block 1976, pp. 112–113.
\(^{23}\) Block 1976, p. 65.
\(^{24}\) Block 1976, p. 107.
\(^{25}\) Block 1976, p. 108.
and ends towards the end of the 20th century. In her introduction, Steene writes about the dream of America and the trials and tribulations it went through during the centuries. How it was resurrected during the two world wars and then again faced hardships during the Vietnam War and of course, the Civil rights period. Writing on the Vietnam War, Steene brings up Block’s dissertation and the anti-American views that increased during Block’s period of study, because of such things as crime, racism, and fanatical groups. One bit of information that she briefly brings up, is how former Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme, by his own admission, marched with the North Vietnam ambassador in 1968 due to “…the radicalized views of Sweden’s largest newspaper, the liberal Dagens Nyheter…” This indicates the reach and potential power of newspapers in general, and DN in particular.

On race, Steene writes how it made an entire generation of Swedes lash out at America, that it shifted the focus from the dreams of America to the victims of their system. It made that generation deeply disenchanted with the American way of life. She goes on by claiming that the death of Dr King almost hit the Swedes harder than the death of President Kennedy. Steene’s research indicates that there was solidarity among Swedes with Black Americans for the struggles they faced.

Finally, there are two texts by Dag Blanck on Swedish perceptions of America. First is Blanck’s chapter Svenska uppfattningar om USA under två århundraden in Det blågula stjärnbaneret. In this chapter Blanck writes how America has figured in Swedish perceptions for the last two hundred years. For this thesis, I am most interested in the section on the 1960s and the race issue. Blanck introduces the 1960s by bringing up Block’s dissertation and summarising her findings and writing that it was the race issue and the Vietnam War that had the largest impact on the American image. Blanck then writes how the race issue had a considerable role in the latter half of the 20th century and that the situation of Black Americans clashed with the commonly held ideas Swedes had about America. After a discussion on Gunnar Myrdal and his ground-breaking book An American Dilemma, Blanck brings up the radical turn in the discussion about Black Americans, mentioning the Black Panthers. That the position of non-violence held by Dr. King no longer stood unchallenged. He then gives examples of how Swedes were open to these rather radical ideas. One example is when Stokely Carmichael, co-founder of SNCC and honorary Black Panther, visited Sweden in 1967 to thundering applause and outsold venues. Another example is how a book of translated texts from Black nationalists called Black Power – svart makt were published in Sweden in 1968. Take these examples as a preview of the radicalised view that became more common in

26 Steene 1998, pp. 146,188.
32 Blanck 2016, p. 62.
33 Blanck 2016, pp. 67–68.
Sweden after 1965 and to connect back to a critique of Block I had above. That with her stopping at 1965, it leaves out the radical turn that occurred in Sweden post-1965 and especially around the turn on the decade. Blanck finishes his part on the race issue by writing that the discussion on race in America stuck around during the post-war years and that there was a shift in how the problem would be solved. From Myrdal’s analysis that democracy would end racism to a more radical view as held by Black Power movements. 34 Both Blanck and Steene refer to Block when writing about the race issue in America, which indicates that the topic ought to be revisited.

In the second text by Blanck called Television, Education, and the Vietnam War: Sweden and the United States during the Post-war Era in The Americanization of Europe, he looks at American influences in Sweden and Swedish reactions to America, such as anti-Americanism. In this article Blanck brings up Sven Öste and his book Skuggor över USA. It is brought up as an example of the attention that racial and social problems gathered during the post-war years. 35 While Blanck does not really go into more depth on race in this article, it is still valuable in its discussion on Swedish perceptions and the discussion surrounding anti-Americanism. Towards the end Blanck writes “The process through which cultural impulses and influences are transferred between different countries are complex and at time quite slippery. One way of better understanding them is to combine theoretical discussions with case studies.” 36 What Blanck describes here has been influential to this thesis. Though culture was the focus for Blanck, I argue that the transfer of Black liberation ideas could be categorized as a political culture that was mediated through, in this case, Sven Öste. It is my intention then to better understand this process by zoning in on the articles written by Öste.

Mikael Nilsson has also written on the Swedish-American relations during the 1960s, focusing on Cold War propaganda aspects. Focusing on the United States Information Agency and their foreign branch, United States Information Service, Nilsson looks at the propaganda activities in Sweden by these agencies. Most importantly for this thesis, Nilsson looks at the propaganda efforts made towards Swedish newspapers. One of these efforts consisted of spreading news bulletins, for example Ur USA-Krönikan. 37 If American propaganda tried to influence Swedish newspapers, that is of concern since it could impact the results of this thesis. Though Nilsson brings up the race issue in America, where he claims the USIS could not work against all the bad press surrounding segregation. Furthermore, Nilsson later adds that Dagens Nyheter used little USIS material. 38 While this would secure the source material of this thesis as it seems it was untouched by propaganda, there is still contention between Nilsson’s work and the thesis at hand. Nilsson argues that DN included little USIS material because they were already friendly towards America, with propaganda

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34 Blanck 2016, p. 70.
35 Blanck 2006, p. 104.
36 Blanck 2006, p. 110.
37 Nilsson 2016, p. 6,17,109–111.
already present in the newspaper. Then he has a comment on DN’s foreign correspondents. “These newspapers’ own reporters on location in the U.S. still did not choose different topics, or add any more critical thinking to their articles, than did the articles taken from Ur USA-Kronikan that were published in other newspapers.” I find it puzzling that Nilsson makes the argument that the foreign correspondents did not add any critical thinking. Especially, since Nilsson knew about Sven Öste as he had written on Öste’s critical stance on the Vietnam War, I will make a counter-argument towards this in my thesis, by showing that this does not apply to Sven Öste’s writings.

The research presented here highlights the importance of the race issue and that it affected the Swedish image of America, but it lacks depth. As previously mentioned, much of the research also refers to the dissertation by Block. Revealing how scarce the research on this topic is and the need to expand upon it. Which I will do in this thesis by contributing an in-depth view on the writings by Sven Öste.

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Chapter 3. Historical background

There are four contexts that are important to understand for this thesis; the situation covered by Öste and Öste’s background. Before that, however, it is worthwhile reminding the reader of the broader historical context of this thesis. As mentioned in previous research, the Cold War was relevant to the Black liberation movement. However, I will not explore the history of the Cold War. Rudimentary knowledge of the Cold War is enough and to be aware of the tension between America and the Soviet Union. This tension, seen in proxy wars like the Vietnam War, meant that the international image of America was of considerable importance.

The four contexts I want to discuss are the following. First, is to recount Black Americans fight for civil rights within the bounds of the Civil rights movement. Second, I will provide a brief account of the history of the Black Panther Party. The primary reason I use the term Black liberation movement in this thesis is that I have included the Black Panther Party in my study. Since they are not generally included within the Civil rights movement, a broader term is needed. With their inclusion, some background of their founding is necessary. Third, I will provide background on the Swedish political climate at the time. As in many parts of the world, it was a time of youth revolts against many of the injustices of the world. Forth, I will detail some of Sven Öste’s professional history as it is important for his work in America and a brief background about Swedish foreign correspondents in America.

3.1. The Civil rights movement

For this background on the Civil rights movement, only certain key events will be brought up. To understand what Black Americans fought against during the 20th century, one must first be aware of Jim Crow laws. Jim Crow encapsulates the laws and practices that came after the Reconstruction period in America which put racial segregation into legislation. Perhaps the most important component of Jim Crow came with the Supreme Court case Plessy v. Ferguson in 1896, which put the separate but equal doctrine into practice, making racial segregation legal.41 The separate but equal doctrine remained until 1954, when the Supreme Court ruled on Brown v Board of Education, formally ending racial segregation in schools. Brown v. Board of Education was based on five lawsuits that highlighted the disparities of Black and white schools. Earl Warren, who wrote the decision, deemed segregation inherently unequal.42 Warren wrote in the decision, “To separate [black children] from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in

41 Dierenfield 2008, pp. 10–11.
a way unlikely ever to be undone…”43 This is the barebones of the history leading up to what Bruce J. Dierenfield calls the beginning of the modern civil rights movement, the Montgomery bus boycott.44

The Montgomery bus boycott in 1955–1956, Dierenfield writes, was the first protest on a large scale by the modern movement. It attacked the segregation on buses which forced Black people to sit in the back of the bus with white people in the front. These boycotts were sparked by Rosa Parks, when she one day refused to give up her seat to a white person which led to her arrest. This led to the creation of the Montgomery Improvement Association, which coordinated the boycott after the NAACP had been hesitant to get involved. The MIA then chose Dr Martin Luther King Jr. as their leader, which was the start of Dr King’s legacy. A year after Parks arrest, a year of boycotts, the Supreme Court ruled bus segregation unconstitutional.45 It took four years until the next considerable event for the movement, the Greensboro sit-ins in North Carolina.46

The sit-in protests of 1960 started after four Black students sat down by a lunch counter that did not serve Black people, refusing to leave. This, according to Dierenfield, was also the start of student presence in the movement. Next day there were 31 young Black people at the counter. After that the sit-in protests spread throughout the South, with the sit-ins in Nashville having the largest protests. Nashville eventually became the first major city to desegregate lunch counters. The sit-ins proved important for several reasons. It became a valuable tool to show America and the world what was going on as it was broadcast on television. After the sit-ins the SNCC formed which proved to be an important organisation for Civil rights in the South. Lastly, the sit-ins became indicative of a shift in the movement. Dierenfield argues that for the first half of the 20th century, NAACP and the Urban League largely led the movement. But this would be the shift to a movement led by students which had a massive impact on the Civil rights movement.47

In 1961, the Civil rights organisation CORE organised the Freedom Rides, which was a protest to test out the Supreme Court decision on desegregation on interstate travel. James Farmer, one co-founder of CORE, planned the Freedom Rides intending to create a crisis that led to international headlines which forced the government to act.48 To ensure some safety for the volunteers, Farmer sent the itinerary of the trip to the government, which might have had some detrimental effects. The attorney general, Robert Kennedy, ignored the itinerary but the FBI director J. Edgar Hoover did not. Hoover sent the itinerary to Alabama officials, which according to Dierenfield, “…some of whom were known to be violent klansmen.”49 The activists on the

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43 Dierenfield 2008, p. 140.
44 Dierenfield 2008, p. 121.
45 Dierenfield 2008, pp. 43–51.
46 In 1957, the year after Montgomery, the Little Rock incident occurred when nine black children were enrolled into a high school in Little Rock, Arkansas. While an important event it is not explicitly tied to the Civil rights movement.
48 Dierenfield 2008, p. 64.
49 Dierenfield 2008, p. 64.
Freedom Rides faced extreme resistance, which left them scarred and in one case in a wheelchair. But, as Farmer had planned, it forced the Kennedy administration to face the race issue. Despite that, the governments’ response, as written by Dierenfield, was weak.\textsuperscript{50}

The next target for the movement was Birmingham in 1963, under the name of Project Confrontation. The plan was to desegregate Birmingham which was the largest industrial city in the South and had a long history of race issue. It was during these protests that they jailed Dr King and he wrote the famous letter from Birmingham Jail. After some difficulties in the protests, and the eventual aid from hundreds of children, the Kennedy administration once again was forced to act.\textsuperscript{51} Dierenfield writes “The unrest in Birmingham prodded the Kennedy administration to act, lest third-world nations tilt toward Moscow and the Republicans regain the White House.”\textsuperscript{52} At least two important results came from the demonstrations in Birmingham. The first was when Robert Kennedy sat down with Black activists such as James Baldwin and Harry Belafonte after Baldwin had been vocal in his critique of how white people dehumanised Black people. After hours of confrontation, they eventually got to Kennedy which led to the government for the first time taking an active role such as nominating Black people for important positions and endorsing the 25\textsuperscript{th} amendment. The second thing was when President Kennedy put his power behind the movement, labelling segregation as a moral crisis and proposing a new Civil rights bill.\textsuperscript{53}

Finally, also in 1963, was the March on Washington. All the Civil rights leaders came together in a demonstration in Washington, demanding freedom and jobs for Black Americans.\textsuperscript{54} Dierenfield writes how the March on Washington gathered 250,000 people which “…compromised the largest and best-remembered demonstration in American history.”\textsuperscript{55} Which one has to agree with, since it was here that Martin Luther King held his famous speech, I Have a Dream in which he said: “I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: We hold these truths to be self evident; that all men are created equal.”\textsuperscript{56}

3.2. The Black Panther Party

In October 1966, college students Huey Newton and Bobby Seale together founded the Black Panther Party for Self Defense. In 1967 they discarded “for Self Defense” from the name, making it the more commonly known Black Panther Party.\textsuperscript{57} Newton and Seale met in 1962, whilst protesting the US blockade of Cuba. Together they joined another Black organisation, the

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{50} Dierenfield 2008, pp. 63–70.
  \item \textsuperscript{51} Dierenfield 2008, pp. 78–82.
  \item \textsuperscript{52} Dierenfield 2008, p. 83.
  \item \textsuperscript{53} Dierenfield 2008, pp. 84–86.
  \item \textsuperscript{54} Dierenfield 2008, pp. 87–88.
  \item \textsuperscript{55} Dierenfield 2008, p. 90.
  \item \textsuperscript{56} Dierenfield 2008, p. 147.
  \item \textsuperscript{57} Bloom & Martin 2013, pp. 2, 114.
\end{itemize}
Revolutionary Action Movement. A revolutionary socialist organisation with strong anti-imperialist tendencies. It was in the RAM that Newton and Seale got the idea that became central to the BPP, which was that Black America was a colony and the police were the occupying force. Though RAM had a powerful influence on Huey and Seale, it frustrated Huey that RAM concentrated on students and not everyday Black people on the streets.\textsuperscript{58} While the anti-imperialist ideas from the RAM were important, it was not the only inspiration for Seale and Newton. They were also heavily inspired by the Black nationalist ideas of Malcolm X\textsuperscript{59} and other revolutionary thinkers like Frantz Fanon, Chairman Mao, and Che Guevara.\textsuperscript{60} “The last spark that was needed came from Stokely Carmichael and the Lowndes County Freedom Organization.

Carmichael was an important part of the LCFO, which was an organisation started by SNCC to get Black people registered to vote in Lowndes, Alabama. LCFO was the first ones that used a black panther as their mascot to mark their ballots, as many Black Americans were illiterate. Carmichael spoke during a conference called Black Power and Its Challenges in Berkeley, in October 1966. While Bloom and Martin write it is unclear if Newton and Seale attended this conference, Newton does not mention it in his autobiography \textit{Revolutionary Suicide}. What is clear is that before the conference activists handed out pamphlets about the LCFO.\textsuperscript{61} In his autobiography Newton writes “From all of these things—the books, Malcolm’s writings and spirit, our analysis of the local situation—the idea of an organization was forming.”\textsuperscript{62} Newton then describes how he read this pamphlet by the LCFO and later suggested using the symbol to Seale to which Seale agreed.\textsuperscript{63} Thus the Black Panther Party for Self Defense was born.

In the beginning the BPP did armed patrols of police, following them when they drove around in Black neighbourhoods; and once they acted as security for Betty Shabazz, the widow of Malcolm X, when she visited a memorial for Malcolm in the Bay Area.\textsuperscript{64} But what really brought attention to the BPP was their armed demonstration of the Mulford act at the Sacramento capitol building. On May 2, 1967, a bill called the Mulford Act was put on the floor for a vote. The Mulford Act sought to make it illegal to publicly carry a loaded firearm and was a response to the strategies used by the BPP. On that day, 30 armed and uniformed members of the BPP rode to Sacramento to demonstrate the bill. This demonstration garnered media attention and gave Seale free access to the press. While the demonstration probably helped to get the Mulford Act passed, it brought many new members to the BPP and the attention later helped them gain national influence.\textsuperscript{65} National influence came after April 1968, when Dr Martin Luther King was murdered, according to Bloom

\textsuperscript{58} Bloom & Martin 2013, p. 2,21,31–34.  
\textsuperscript{59} Bloom & Martin 2013, p. 12.  
\textsuperscript{60} Newton & Blake 2009, p. 116.  
\textsuperscript{61} Bloom & Martin 2013, pp. 41–43.  
\textsuperscript{62} Newton & Blake 2009, p. 118.  
\textsuperscript{63} Newton & Blake 2009, p. 119.  
\textsuperscript{64} Bloom & Martin 2013, pp. 45–49.  
\textsuperscript{65} Bloom & Martin 2013, pp. 57–61,91.
and Martin and in December of that year the BPP was the leading Black organisation in America, with 20 new offices around the country that year alone.\textsuperscript{66}

### 3.3. The Swedish political climate

Since the transnational aspects of Sven Öste’s writings are crucial for this thesis, which includes his Swedish background, the political climate in Sweden during the 1960s needs to be explored. 1968 is the year that usually stands out, as it does worldwide. But as Ulf Bjereld and Marie Demker along with Kjell Östberg argues, 1968 is not only one year but a longer period spanning from the late 1950s until the 1970s.\textsuperscript{67}

At the core of what happened during the 1960s was the rise of new social movements. Bjereld and Demker write how it was a dissolution of authority that was at the core of these movements.\textsuperscript{68} While Tore Frängsmyr writes about a political liberation being the heart of these movements, calling it the time of protests. These protests were levelled towards multiple aspects of society, be it religion, the view of culture or gender roles.\textsuperscript{69} But what linked them together was the political radicalisation, and the general left turn of politics. Among the Swedish left, Maoism gained a significant foothold as explored by Thomas Ekman Jørgensen.\textsuperscript{70}

While the left turn during the 1960s is undeniable, Östberg argues for three different phases of radicalisation that took place during this period. This radicalisation began as liberal and turned left by 1965 before diversifying during the 1970s. Issues illuminated by liberals and social democrats included “…gender roles, sexual issues, drug addiction and prison care, aid to developing countries, and apartheid.”\textsuperscript{71} What stood out during this face, according to Östberg, was the importance of moral issues. This was witnessed in the increased attention to the Third World, as newspapers granted more room for articles about the situation in Algeria and the situation of Black people in America. Frängsmyr also brings up Algeria as an example of a foreign policy issue that was deemed a moral issue. In Sweden, Bjereld and Demker identified a small group of journalists who were the principal actors for reporting on the Algerian War. One of these was Sven Öste.\textsuperscript{72}

The Algerian War was far from the only international cause that gained attention in Sweden. Östberg posits that one probable explanation for Swedish student focusing on international issues was because compared to other student movements abroad, most of the demands were already on their way in Sweden. For that reason, movements turned outwards.

\textsuperscript{66} Bloom & Martin 2013, pp. 2, 159–160.
\textsuperscript{68} Bjereld & Demker 2005, p. 27.
\textsuperscript{69} Frängsmyr 2000, pp. 317, 322–331.
\textsuperscript{70} Bjereld & Demker 2005, p. 147; Jørgensen 2008, p. 329.
\textsuperscript{71} Östberg 2008, p. 341.
The Vietnam movement, DFFG, assumed a unique position as the largest, most well-organized and influential, but was far from the only one. ...the Latin American Bulletin, the Palestine Bulletin, the Palestinian Front, The Indonesian Bulletin, A Free Spain, The Greece Bulletin, and Black Power/Scan-SNCC. Also MPLA in Angola, Frelimo in Mozambique and Biafra had separate bulletins and solidarity with South Africa was again mounting.73

Swedish activists concerns reached far and wide, but as Östberg points out the Vietnam movement was by far the largest one, which got off the ground in 1965.74 Frängsmyr argues Vietnam was a key point in a more generalised radicalisation in the political debate and Sweden at large. Eventually it became the largest protest movement in Sweden.75

It is worth mentioning that opposition to the war in Vietnam was expressed on a governmental level as well, as Fredrik Logevall explores. Logevall makes the argument that Swedish criticisms stood out, since it was more consistent over a longer period compared to others. The official criticisms began in 1965, when Olof Palme held a speech criticising the war. These comments received a considerable amount of attention. Though Palme was more vocal than others, Logevall argues that Palme’s opinions were not much different from the rest of the government. Despite Sweden being a minor actor on the world scene, America was worried about how Sweden could affect international opinion. Undeterred by the consequences, the government stood by their position which had a detrimental impact on Swedish-American relations.76 The 1960s saw a younger generation rebel against the old ways. Sweden experienced revolution on many fronts, a political left turn and an increased awareness of the decolonisation progress in the Third World.

3.4. The history of the correspondent

Swedish foreign correspondents arrived in America around World War I, according to Steene. Primarily they belonged to the largest newspapers in Sweden and were sent with the goal to get better material first-hand rather than to rely on other sources.77 By the 1960s, some 50 years later, it was still a rather small group of Swedish foreign correspondents in America, as Blanck writes. Being a small group responsible for delivering news of America to Sweden, he argues they played a considerable role in constructing an image of America in Sweden.78 Among this small group of Swedish foreign correspondents was, of course, Sven Öste.

Sven Öste worked at Dagens Nyheter between 1950–1990, arriving at the newspaper as a 25-year-old in 1950, he joined the editorial staff four years later in 1954. While on the editorial staff, Öste conducted foreign reporting where he visited the Soviet border and the Algerian War. Stig

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74 Ibid.
75 Frängsmyr 2000, p. 317,331.
76 Logevall 1993, pp. 421–433.
78 Blanck 2016, p. 55.
Hadenius writes how Sven Öste was the one Swedish journalist who got closest to the FNL rebels during the war. This experience led to Öste writing *Rebellerna*. Hadenius subsequently writes how Öste’s experience from the Algerian War played a role when Öste later critically reported on the Vietnam War. In Öste’s book *Rebellerna*, he provides a close account of different people connected to the FNL. What is most remarkable about this book is not only the in-depth view of the FNL, but Öste’s confession in the preface. He writes how he has abandoned the endeavour to be impersonal and nonpartisan. Rather, the book is an attempt to, as Öste describes it, critically accept one side of the conflict. How Öste’s experience from not only the Algerian War but also the Vietnam War will be one of the focal points of this thesis.

In 1963, Öste became DN’s Washington correspondent until 1971. Joining Sven Åhman, who was the New York correspondent at DN since 1945. However, in 1967 Öste spent a year in Hong Kong to set up a new office for DN there and returned as the Washington correspondent in 1968. During his years as a foreign correspondent in Washington, Öste became, as written by Hadenius, one of the foremost international foreign correspondents of his time. This was not an opinion exclusive to Hadenius. In *Den svenska pressens historia*, Öste is labelled as “…perhaps the leading journalist in Sweden during the 1960s when it came to depicting the developments beyond our borders.” Furthermore, Öste is credited for the increased attention given to the Third World in Swedish newspaper; and they note how he wrote engagingly on the Civil rights movement. On the Vietnam War, Öste became vocal in criticising the American warfare and was subsequently labelled as taking sides in the conflict. Gunnar Åselius in his book *Vietnamkriget och de svenska diplomaterna 1954–1975* also claims that Öste took the side of North Vietnam. In response to taking sides in the Vietnam War, Öste said “there were situations when it was morally necessary for a reporter to take a stand and give up the aspirations for objectivity.” This falls in line with the earlier claim, that Öste as a reporter combined the analysis and the ability to change the public opinion of an editor together with eye for detail of a reporter.

We can find similar opinions of Öste in texts following his death. Lars Rumar wrote how Öste’s writings were emotionally engaging, adding that “Few journalists in our time have had such a large role in public opinion as Sven Öste and one important explanation for this was surely his way of

80 Öste 1958, p. preface.
85 Åselius 2019, p. 452.
86 Engblom & Jonsson 2002, p. 163. Translation by the author: "att det fans lägen då det var moraliskt nödvändigt för en reporter att ta ställning och göra avkall på strävandena mot objektivitet.”.
depicting what he saw.” Arne Ruth wrote how he is “missing Sven Öste’s constrained wrath.”

That unlike most journalists whose work disappears with time, Öste’s reporting on the Algerian War, the Vietnam War and the race issue in America stand the test of time. This was reporting that changed peoples outlook, Ruth argues. He goes on by claiming that Öste rebelled against non-partisanship and that he was honest in his writing about the fact that he at times was conflicted.

Moralism, Ruth writes, was how Öste labelled his own work. But what really made Öste stand out is that he went down from the principle of moralism to the individual, reporting on everyday people. These accounts on Sven Öste show the significant role he had during the 1960s and explain the importance of carrying out more research on his work.

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88 Rumar 1999, pp. 26–27. Translation by the author: “Få journalister i vår tid har haft så stor opinionsbildande betydelse som Sven Öste och en viktig förklaring till detta var säkert hans sätt att skildra det han såg.”.

89 Ruth 1998, p. 19 Translation by the author: “... saknar Sven Östes tyglande vrede”.

Chapter 4. Research design

4.1. Sources

The sources for this thesis are Sven Öste’s writings in *Dagens Nyheter* between the years 1963–1966 and 1968–1971. These are the years Öste was working in America as the Washington correspondent for *DN*. 1967 is exempt because Öste spent a year in Hong Kong and therefore did not act as the Washington correspondent. More specifically however, the source material is what Öste wrote on the race issue in America during his time as a correspondent. This includes articles on major legislation, Dr Martin Luther King as well as the Ku Klux Klan and the Black Panthers. A wide approach has been used to achieve a multifaceted view of the race issue and how Öste wrote about the different aspects.

To access the material, I used *DN*’s own digital archive, which is available to their subscribers online.91 This archive stores all newspapers between 1864 and 1992; and it allows the user to search within a date range and with keywords. Having access to the digital archive made it possible to each article as a PDF, which allowed for unlimited access and a thorough treatment of the material. Since I wanted to gather all of Öste’s writings during his time as the Washington correspondent, I searched for “Sven Öste” between December 1963 to December 1971. I went through all the articles and saved the ones connected to the race issue. For this first stage of processing, all articles that could deal with the issue were included. Ranging from articles on presidential nominees to any article in which Öste mentioned Black Americans. This resulted in around 450 articles, including when part of the article was on the first page of the newspaper. Having gathered these, the second stage of processing began where the articles were read thoroughly. After this the number of articles were reduced to around 350, having discarded articles that upon further inspection did not mention the race issue. These 350 articles were then put into five different categories based on their content, a process which I will explain further in the section on method.

Why *Dagens Nyheter* and Sven Öste was chosen was briefly introduced when presenting the purpose for this thesis. In short, *DN* was the largest daily newspaper in Sweden and Sven Öste was the journalist in Sweden that was most engaged with the topic. Though the reasoning is worthy to explore further. In the 1960s *DN* was the largest newspaper in Sweden, as Eva Block explains in her dissertation. Beyond this, Block also demonstrates that *DN* showed the largest interest for the race issue which can be seen in that *DN* had the largest amount of material on the race issue. This, Block explains, was because of an unnamed foreign correspondent working at *DN*.92 Öste is not mentioned by name, but he is the correspondent in question. Block mentions this correspondent

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91 Their digital archive is accessible through https://arkivet.dn.se.
wrote an article about the leader of the KKK and how Northern freedom students helped Southern Black Americans register to vote. I have identified these articles, and both were written by Sven Öste. The reasons mentioned make DN an obvious choice.

Öste’s engagement with the topic and his merits as a journalist was discussed in the chapter on historical background. In that chapter, I showed that several writers have written on Öste’s unique position. Furthermore, is the reason given above, that Öste was the journalist at DN responsible for the extensive amount of material on the American race issue. All things considered, Öste was the one journalist in Sweden that wrote more than any other journalist on the issue and he did it in the largest newspaper. Despite this, there was one other America correspondent at DN which I have mentioned previously, Sven Åhman. Though through my research I have found that he did not write as much on the issue. This is explained by Öste, in answering a letter sent to DN about his reporting. In this answer, Öste writes how the two correspondents had different fields of interest which meant that it was Öste who primarily wrote on the Vietnam War and the race issue in America.

A discussion on potential criticisms of the sources and the chosen approach is necessary. The chosen period has been largely determined in connection with the source material, as it coincides with Öste’s time in Washington. However, the study would regardless focus on the 1960s since it was during this decade that Swedish opinion changed, as previous research has shown. Therefore, it is not warranted to include the first three years of the decade which would bring plenty of additional problems. On the topic of scope, the choice of one newspaper and journalist could also be questioned as including more actors could improve how representative the results are. Including more newspapers or journalists however, would not improve the thesis. Block looks at several large newspapers in Sweden for her analysis on the Swedish image of America and concludes that for the question of race, all newspapers were sympathetic to the Black people’s cause and all newspapers showed some sympathy for using violence. It seems then that including more newspapers would not have resulted in a more diverse image of America. This would also be the case for including more journalists. Since the purpose of the thesis is to attain an understanding of what the depiction of the race issue looked like, including more actors would have limited the scope. This would have left out necessary parts of the Black liberation movement. Furthermore, since I have explained Öste’s remarkable position, his work warrants an in-depth study.

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93 Block 1976, p. 112.
95 Block 1976, pp. 112–113.
4.2. Theory and method

This thesis provides an historical analysis of the writings of journalist Sven Öste. With that in mind I have divided this section on theory in two. First, I will describe the methodological approach used when I gathered, structured and analysed the source material; qualitative content analysis. Second, I explain the theoretical perspective that focus on the role of the foreign correspondent as the gatekeeper.

4.2.1. On method

In the previous section on sources I briefly discussed my approach in gathering and structuring the source material. Here I will discuss it further and explain the approach that was used, inductive content analysis. Philipp Mayring defines qualitative content analysis as “…a bundle of techniques for systematic text analysis…”96 Satu Elo and Helvi Kyngäs writes that it was first used to analyse newspapers with the goal to achieve new insights. Elo and Kyngäs describe two different approaches to content analysis, deductive and inductive where I have used the latter. Since they suggest it is more appropriate for studies where there is not enough former knowledge.97 Which is appropriate for this study, since not much research has been done on Sven Öste. With the inductive approach Elo and Kyngäs explain that the next step is the construction of categories to organize the data.98 When constructing these categories I followed what Mayring writes, to construct these categories in close connection with the source material.99 Mayring describes the process as following.

The main idea of the procedure is, to formulate a criterion of definition, derived from theoretical background and research question, which determines the aspects of the textual material taken into account. Following this criterion the material is worked through and categories are tentative and step by step deduced. Within a feedback loop those categories are revised, eventually reduced to main categories and checked in respect to their reliability.100

This process consisted of collecting the articles by Sven Öste in DN about the race issue in America. The race issue was the overarching tentative category, based on my research questions and previous research. For this, I collected all the articles by Öste which touched on the American race issue. This could be a mention of race, police violence or the Civil rights movement, which resulted in about 450 articles. After processing the material a second time this tentative category was revised into five main categories with their own subcategories. The categories have been

96 Mayring 2000, para. 1.
99 Mayring 2000, para. 10.
100 Mayring 2000, para. 12.
constructed in close relationship with the source material, with the purpose of closely representing what Öste wrote about the most and to provide a multifaceted view of the race issue in America. These categories were the Civil rights movement, the state, the white resistance, the race riots and the Black Panther Party. Since these categories contained different themes, subcategories were constructed to ease the process of interpretation. In this second stage of process the 450 articles were reduced to around 350, which were put into one or several of the categories mentioned above.

After collecting and constructing categories in the material, the analysis remained. Mariette Bengtsson writes of two different approaches to analysis, manifest or latent. A manifest analysis focuses on what is written by using “the words themselves, and describes the visible and obvious in the text.”¹⁰¹ In a manifest analysis, Bengtsson describes how the researchers goes through each category that has been constructed, identifying themes within the text and when necessary referring to the source material. Through this approach, it is possible to accurately showcase what was originally intended with the material.¹⁰² As Bengtsson describes, after constructing the categories previously mentioned I read through the articles in each category to understand how Öste wrote about each category. Adopting the method of inductive content analysis gave me the tools to systematically work with the source material in a way that will aid me in analysing what and how Öste wrote about the different aspects of the race issue in America.

4.2.2. On foreign correspondents

Since I analyse the work of a single foreign correspondent I have worked with gatekeeping theory, as presented by Pamela J. Shoemaker and Timothy Vos in *Gatekeeping Theory*. While Shoemaker and Vos go into great depth on how gatekeeper theory can be used, there are a few key concepts they bring up that have been valuable for my thesis. But first, this is how Shoemaker and Vos define gatekeeping.

Gatekeeping is the process of culling and crafting countless bits of information into the limited number of messages that reach people each day, and it is the center of the media’s role in modern public life. People rely on mediators to transform information about billions of events into a manageable subsets of media messages.¹⁰³

Crudely put, gatekeeping is the process where journalists and editors decide what tomorrow’s news will be. This process is not random dependent on what happens but is a direct product of gatekeeping. One way in which this is shown, as Shoemaker and Vos explain it, is that while we expect some amount of accuracy and truth from news, different newspapers portray slightly distinct realities. The example they give, accidentally, concerns the Civil rights movement. The coverage of

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¹⁰¹ Bengtsson 2016, p. 10.
¹⁰² Bengtsson 2016, pp. 11–12.
the Civil rights movement resulted in what they call “...different pictures of reality.” In turn, then, Shoemaker and Vos argue gatekeeping has a direct impact on people’s social realities. What information the gatekeepers choose to let through to the audience affects their life thus the process of gatekeeping directly define the lives of readers and the world around them.

In this theory of gatekeeping, the journalists are not the only ones considered gatekeepers. Editors and executives can also be gatekeepers; which means that a piece of information has to travel through several gates before it becomes headlines in the newspaper. This means that gatekeeping theory will be used to supplement my analysis rather than to guide it. Gatekeeping theory as a tool helps us understand why Öste chose to report on certain matters.

One approach within this theory, that Shoemaker and Vos brings up, is called second guessing. The process of second guessing is when a journalist doubts the information they have received. As an approach, it seeks to explain this process of how journalists assess information and then how they choose to assess this information. The journalist may, based on their knowledge or experience, have reason to doubt the information. They then engage in reinterpretation. That is when the journalist chooses to explain the information in a certain way or add context as to give a more accurate picture to the reader. Öste engages with this frequently, which can be used as an example of how it can work in practice. When he reported on race riots or shootouts involving the Black Panther Party, Öste had a habit of writing that the information came from the police and is therefore only one side of the story. Sometimes adding that police information often had been misconstrued or blatant lies.

These two approaches in conjunction will allow me to analyse the material and to answer the questions I have posed. Inductive analysis will be used to analyse how Öste wrote and gatekeeper theory is used to understand what Öste chose to report on. It is with this approach I will highlight the importance of Öste’s focus on Black Americans struggle for human rights.

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105 Shoemaker & Vos 2009, p. 3.
Empirical Analysis

Chapter 5. The Civil rights movement

The American race issue cannot be discussed without including the Civil rights movement. Analysing how Öste wrote about the movement provides an initial insight into how Öste portrayed the Black liberation movement. Though talked about as one movement, it consisted of several organisations and approaches to achieve civil rights. For this reason, this chapter will focus on leaders like Dr Martin Luther King, James Farmer and John Lewis, their organisations like the SCLC, CORE and SNCC. As well as events like the Freedom Summer and other protests. This chapter has been structured based on Öste’s article and the different aspects of the movement, to get a comprehensive understanding of Öste’s writings on the movement.

5.1. Dr. King and other leaders

Dr. King is the most recognised leader from the Civil rights movement, thus it comes to no surprise that he is the one leader who appears the most in Sven Öste’s reporting. But the reason for the focus on Dr King might go beyond the fact that he was the front figure of the movement. During Öste’s years as a correspondent, he came in contact with Dr King on several occasions. This includes when Öste reported on events where Dr King spoke and when Öste interviewed Dr King on several occasions. It should also be noted that Öste alludes to there being a relationship between Öste and Dr King, which I will expand on at the end of this section.

The first time Öste wrote about Dr King was the same month Öste started working in America. Öste covered a speech by Dr King in Atlanta, Georgia, about a month after the murder of President Kennedy. After the assassination, Dr King received an increasing amount of death threats according to Öste. The theme of the article is the constant danger that Dr King was in, from death threats to the counter-protesters at the rally. These counter-protesters reminded Öste of Hitlers SS. They were clad in uniforms, carrying signs with hatred towards Black people and Jews.

Less than a year later, in October 1964, Öste interviewed Dr King for the first time. Given the format, the article is more in depth and provides a brief history of Dr King, how Dr King rose to fame after the Birmingham demonstrations the previous year. Öste then recount the three times he had seen Dr King. Every time there had been the threat of white violence against him. In contrast with the white violence against Dr King is his non-violence approach. For this, Öste calls Dr King the Gandhi of the American race struggle. Öste praised Dr King for the strategy of non-violence, arguing that it was the reason behind the success of Birmingham which led to the Civil

Rights Act of 1964. There is no denying the admiration Öste held for Dr King, praising his eloquence and presence.¹⁰⁹

There is a contrast here that is important for the story. Öste presents the reader with this religious, articulate man who is making the choice to fight violence with non-violence. It was a vile situation, yet they chose to not stoop to the level of the white racists. This includes people like Bull Conner, former police chief in Birmingham. With this contrast, we see Dr King as morally superior to the people he and the movement were fighting against.¹¹⁰

In May 1964, Öste wrote a summary of the five most famous leaders of the Civil rights movement. These were John Lewis, Whitney Young Jr, Roy Wilkins, James Farmer and Dr Martin Luther King. Part of this summary is a small biography, but it also contains characterisations by Öste which is helpful to understand his point of view. How he portrayed each leader can act as an early indicator of his opinions. Furthermore, it is interesting to see if he wrote about the other leaders in the same manner he wrote about Dr King.

John Lewis, leader of the SNCC, the organisation Öste labels as the smallest and most aggressive out of the five. Öste writes how Lewis is only 26 years old and grew up in Tennessee, has a university education in philosophy and took part in the Birmingham campaign. Lewis had attacked both Republicans and Democrats, calling them traitors and saying that the proposed Civil Rights Act of 1964 was not enough. With a strong support from students, Öste thinks that it is SNCC that will be strongest force in the coming summer campaign.¹¹¹ This campaign is now known as the Freedom Summer.¹¹²

Whitney Young Jr, leader of the National Urban League, is characterized as the moderate leader. Young also has a background in academia, having been the principal of a Black university in Atlanta. The Urban League is primarily concerned over segregation on the labour market. While called optimistic and moderate by Öste, Young does not shy away from being on the offensive against white businessmen's treatment of Black people looking for work.¹¹³

Roy Wilkins, leader of the NAACP. Seen by Öste as the most respectable out of the five, probably because he was the leader of the largest Black organisation at the time. Wilkins went to college in Minnesota, where Öste adds that he studied together with Swedish descendants. Although the NAACP was created back in 1909 and has gathered plenty of support, Öste writes that they had started be seen as tame by other Black people. Despite this Öste commends Wilkins and the NAACP.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁹ "DN:s Sven Öste skildrar möte med King", Dagens Nyheter, 15/10 1964.
¹¹⁰ Ibid.
¹¹⁴ Ibid.
James Farmer, leader of CORE. An organisation which, according to Öste, had lately been the strongest voice in the North. As the previous leaders, Farmer had a background in university as he studied to be a minister in Washington. On top of focusing on the North, CORE’s strategy relies on demonstrations that leads to arrests, as that creates tension and engagement in the movement. Öste finally adds that it was CORE that was behind the Freedom Rides, where activists tried the legal system by crossing state lines with public traffic.\footnote{"USA väntar nya rasoroligheter. Fem leder negremas offensiv", Dagens Nyheter, 11/5 1964.}

Öste ends the article by writing on Dr Martin Luther King, leader of the SCLC. The SCLC, an alliance between hundreds of church organisations, were the dominant force in the South. While Öste writes that Dr King has garnered the most attention, for example being featured in Time magazine, he had yet to win over Black Americans in the North. They perceived him as a self-appointed Christ figure. Although Dr King was a minister as his father before him, Öste writes how Gandhi’s teachings of non-violence acted as a second Bible for Dr King. These teachings influenced Dr King’s approach when he led the Montgomery Bus Boycott and later the campaign in Birmingham. However, since Birmingham Dr King’s position had weakened due to allegations of communist influences within the SCLC.\footnote{Ibid.}

How Öste wrote about the Black leadership provides an insight into what Öste thought of the leaders and what message he tried to get across. For all the leaders except Young, Öste ended their section by writing about how many times they had been arrested. Lewis is the clear outlier here, having been arrested around 30 times. There are two ways we can read this, where I argue for the latter. The first reading is that Öste wanted to show these men as criminals by highlighting their arrests, putting them in an unpleasant light. But this is highly out of character for Öste. The second reading is that Öste wanted to show that despite these men’s backgrounds and overall being moderate, they still get arrested. In their brief backgrounds, Öste writes that each of them has a university background. The men introduced are well respected, educated men who tried to change a racist system, for which they were incarcerated. Öste does not clearly align himself with any leader but puts all of them in a more or less positive light.

The next interview with Dr King took place in 1966, but until that point Dr King still appeared in other ways in Öste’s articles. During this time, Öste saw a change in how the Black community viewed Dr King. An ever growing part of the community was turning their back on Dr King, as seen in articles about race murders in the South and when Dr King visited Los Angeles during the Watts riots.\footnote{"Rasmord hårt slag mot frihetskampen", Dagens Nyheter, 2/6 1965; ”King till Los Angeles trots kravalledares kritik”, Dagens Nyheter, 18/6 1965.} Before discussing the next interview, it is worth noting that between 1964 and 1966 Dr King turned from the South and started attacking the situation in the North. Specifically regarding the situations in Northern ghettos. Some of these problems are laid out in an article by
Öste, discussing such things as the investment in Black children is lower than for white children, about the difficulties in getting a mortgage and how the rent is higher in the Black ghettos than elsewhere.\(^{118}\)

In March 1966, Öste met with Dr King in his makeshift office in Chicago for an interview. Despite it being an interview with Dr King, a majority of the article is not centred on Dr King. Though Öste provides an insight into the Northern struggle, how the fight is more difficult because racial segregation works differently than it does in the South. But Öste dedicated most of the article to what Dr King is fighting in the Northern ghettos.\(^{119}\) While at first it might seem odd that in an article that is highlighted as an interview, the reader mostly is getting an insight into what a Northern ghetto entails.\(^{120}\) In the first half of the article we follow the issues that can plague a Black woman in the ghetto, it is unclear if this part is fiction or not. It is about having her having to sell her body to feed her children, how landlords do not have to repair housing because Black people has nowhere else to move. The list goes on. But there is a reason the reader is provided with this information.

I argue it is to better connect with Dr King and his new battle towards the racism in the North. Most readers for years had read about the race issue in the South, but they were less knowledgeable about what racism looked like in the North. The interview gets a twofold purpose, to educate Swedish readers about the situation in the North and to spread Dr King’s message. Dr King continued to appear for the rest of the year in connection with the activism in Chicago. In these articles Öste wrote that there had been violent clashes, with white people instigating the violence. We get a quote from Dr King saying that the hostility in the North has been worse than what they have met in the South.\(^{121}\) Dr King eventually settled with Chicago, the settlement being that Dr King would end the marches and the leaders in Chicago agreed on Dr King’s terms. A settlement that garnered critique towards Dr King from other Black leaders.

As I have mentioned, Öste was absent from America in 1967, which puts us in 1968 which marks the end of this section as this was the year that Dr King was assassinated. A week before the murder of Dr King, Öste reported on a race riot that had erupted out of a demonstration held by Dr King in Memphis, Tennessee.\(^{122}\) But the first substantial article came a few days later.

The news of Dr King’s assassination covered the front page of *Dagens Nyheter* and several pages within. The reader got to read about a nation in flames following the murder of Dr King. Several writers weigh in on what is happening in America, but Öste’s piece differs from all others. His is a personal story, that begins with Dr King’s appearance in Stockholm together with Harry Belafonte

\(^{118}\) "Dr King inleder nästa offensiv", *Dagens Nyheter*, 26/2 1966.
\(^{119}\) "Martin Luther King kämpar mot en ny explosion", *Dagens Nyheter*, 30/3 1966.
\(^{120}\) "Frihetskampen inriktas på negergetton. DN-intervju med bevakad Luther King", *Dagens Nyheter*, 30/3 1966.
\(^{121}\) "Rashetsare vill se King ”med en kniv i ryggen”, *Dagens Nyheter*, 7/8 1966.
\(^{122}\) "King: Jag är förrådd”, *Dagens Nyheter*, 30/3 1968.
where Öste writes that “We were going to gather money at home for him and the campaign.”

He goes on by giving some personal recollections of meetings they had, where he calls Dr King by his first name. According to Öste, they had met a month prior to the murder. One reason for this meeting was for Öste to tell the leaders of SCLC about Vietnam, to convince them to engage with the war. The last bit of interesting information is that Öste brings up a phone call with Andy Young, member of SCLC and Dr King’s right-hand man, where they had planned for Young and Dr King to come and visit Öste at home in Washington to meet his daughter. But, because of traffic they postponed it to when the Poor People’s March on Washington was going to happen.

If we take Öste for his word, there seem to have been some relationship between Dr King and Sven Öste. It seems unlikely that someone like Dr King made house calls to foreign correspondents in America, especially from a small country like Sweden. For them to make plans to meet at Öste’s home surely then shows a relationship, albeit minor. On top of this, we have Öste referring to Dr King as Martin for the first time for this article which indicates a relationship beyond what commonly exists between a journalist and public figure, especially when writing about them directly after their murder. Regardless if it is true or not, what matters here is what picture Öste is trying to draw up. This picture, I argue, is that there was some relationship between Sven Öste and Dr King. With this information, we can look at how Öste approach the Black liberation movement in a new light. It can reinforce the assertion that Öste had a particular interest in the movement. It can help us understand why Öste chose to write about the movement in the way that he did, trying to build an understanding within Sweden through his reporting. But also, we can use this point in history to see if there is a change of heart in how Öste thinks about the race issue in America after April 1968. The icon of non-violence was assassinated. Perhaps non-violence was not the way forward.

5.2. Freedom Schools

One of the first deep dives Öste did after arriving in America was to visit the South, specifically a small town in Georgia called Americus. The reasoning was that throughout 1963, news came of demonstrations and riots from the American South. But they never provided insight into the situation behind the riots. To remedy this, Öste went to Americus to spend a week in a generic small town to understand what went on in a series called Diary from the American South. From the onset, Öste’s goal was to provide a better understanding of the race issue in America.

125 ”USA:s Raskamp i DN-Dagbok”, Dagens Nyheter, 17/12 1963; ”Polisen de vitas riddarvakt.”, Dagens Nyheter, 17/12 1963.
A significant part of Öste covered in Americus concerns what he calls citizen schools.\textsuperscript{126} The purpose of these was to help Black people to register to vote and to do this, older people had to be taught to read and write. This is because literacy tests were used to keep Black people from voting.\textsuperscript{127} The practice of citizen schools was recent and became most known in the summer of 1964, when Civil rights organisations launched a campaign in Mississippi to get Black people to register to vote under the name Freedom Summer.\textsuperscript{128} These schools are more commonly known as Freedom Schools.

In the first article from Americus Öste provides a general overview of the situation, specifically for Americus but it rings true for the South at large. He writes how one becomes scared of the police, with their brutal violence. While there is a constant threat of the KKK and Citizens' Council, in the Black neighbourhoods the people are most afraid of the cops and the abuse one might suffer from the police.\textsuperscript{129} The situation portrayed is distressing, with police being the main perpetrator of violence against Black people. Moving on to the Freedom Schools, the same situation persists. Öste writes of a woman who was shot at in her own house and when she got to the hospital, white terrorists had blown up the house. The woman was a part of the Freedom Schools. He writes that this is how Southern whites protect their elections. To keep white people in power through violence and intimidation.\textsuperscript{130} In the following articles Öste provides the reader with some insight into the process, what goes on at the Freedom schools and how it is Northern students that have gone to the South to help with the campaign. Not only do children have to teach their elders to read and write, but there are other tests that the white people in charge can employ to restrict Black people from voting. One such example is a test with 30 questions about the constitution of Georgia. It goes without saying that they have not used all these tests on the white population of Americus, at least what anyone has heard writes Öste.\textsuperscript{131}

Writing on the Northern students who belonged to the SNCC, Öste mentions the abuse they have faced, how they have been put in prison during their time in Americus etcetera. But one aspect that is highly interesting is that Öste writes how he discussed with them the parallels between liberation movements in Africa and the Black organisations in the South. While the white people of Americus might see them as agitators, Öste does not.

For me they are youths that I have met many times before; among Algeria's rebels a few years ago, among young nationalists – black and white – that comes from Rhodesia, Angola or South

\textsuperscript{126} "I "medborgarskolan" är barnen lärare", \textit{Dagens Nyheter}, 19/12 1963. Translation by the author: "medborgarskolan".
\textsuperscript{127} Dierenfield 2008, p. xxxi.
\textsuperscript{128} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{129} "Polisen de vitas riddarvakt..", \textit{Dagens Nyheter}, 17/12 1963.
\textsuperscript{130} "Kampen går vidare – trots bomben i går", \textit{Dagens Nyheter}, 18/12 1963.
\textsuperscript{131} "I "medborgarskolan" är barnen lärare", \textit{Dagens Nyheter}, 19/12 1963; "Studenter från norr leder de svartas kamp", \textit{Dagens Nyheter}, 20/12 1963.
After this Öste adds that these Northern students do more to end the racial hatred in the South than the men running Americus. Taking consideration to the context this was written in and looking at the rest of Öste’s reporting, this comparison between Black activists in the South and rebels in Africa becomes quite interesting. Coming from Öste, this must be quite the praise to compare these two freedom struggles. We will revisit this topic at a later stage in the thesis.

Next time Öste covered Freedom Schools was during Freedom Summer the following year. The 26th of July 1964, Swedes could read on the front page of *Dagens Nyheter* that Sven Öste had been arrested during a tour of the South. Öste visited the town of McComb in Mississippi to report on the Freedom Summer campaign and the resistance it was facing, a resistance that had been fatal. At the time of Öste’s article, three Freedom students in Mississippi had been murdered because of their involvement in the campaign. Apart from the murders, KKK had been burning crosses, four Black churches had been burned down and there had been countless assaults. Despite this, the Freedom Students carried on. This was clearly a dangerous situation, and according to Öste, the most dangerous part was the door-to-door canvassing to register Black people to vote. Encouraging voting is what Öste claims ignited the hatred amongst white people. Another thing Öste brought up is that he rode along on a journey with some Freedom Student to deliver radios, the safety precautions they had to take; such as reporting their route to the FBI in case they went missing. It was during this trip that Öste was arrested. They got pulled over by a police officer which had been tailing them for a while, for a minor driving offence, which they had to post bail for.

Öste’s reporting on the Freedom Students is part of a dichotomy that will become increasingly clear throughout this thesis. We have activists and volunteers who sacrifice their safety, and sometimes lives, for the simple act of trying to get Black people to vote. On the other side, is the white racists and the police officers. While there are more to these articles than I have written about here, it mostly entails the work of the Freedom Student. How they are teaching people to read, history and more. As well as the campaign at large that is ongoing throughout Mississippi. But for the most part, the reader gets the story of how these students are facing immense danger and how white racism is manifested. There are no two sides Öste’s story. Only that of the people who were fighting for their constitutional right to vote against despicable hatred.

132 "Studenter från norr leder de svartas kamp", *Dagens Nyheter*, 20/12 1963. Translation by the author: " För mig är de ynglingar som jag tycker mig ha mött många, många gånger tidigare; bland Algeriets stridande rebeller för några år sedan, bland unga nationalister - svarta eller vita - med hemvist i Rhodesia, Angola eller Sydafrika. Ungdomar som inom sig bär äkta idealism och medkänsla, äventyrslust, kanske längtan efter martyriets gemenskap och ryktbarhet. Och naturligtvis en god portion fysiskt mod.”.

133 "Studenter från norr leder de svartas kamp", *Dagens Nyheter*, 20/12 1963.


135 "Ungdomar i sommarinvasion där hatet tänder eldkorsen", *Dagens Nyheter*, 26/7 1964.
What this section has shown is some initial results on how Öste reported on the two sides of the conflict, which display a clear preference for one side. Öste’s partisanship became increasingly apparent throughout his years in America. We also see an early example of Öste comparing the movement to movements abroad, which is suggestive of the transnational character of Öste’s reporting.

5.3. Civil Rights Actions

As the heading suggests this section will be dedicated to the Civil rights actions that might otherwise get overlooked. The purpose of this part is to show both how broad Öste’s reporting could be, and how the race issue touched all kinds of people. Clarifying that the news did not exclusively surround icons like Dr King or student activists.

One example of this is when Öste wrote about Mary Elizabeth Peabody, a 72-year-old white woman that had been arrested in Florida after going into a motel with Black friends in an act of protest. This led to her and her friends arrest, when it was discovered that Peabody happened to be the mother of the Governor of Massachusetts. Because of her status, she was offered bail but refused. Though two days after her arrest she was released on bail regardless.136 Another example was when the Swedish opera singer Birgit Nilsson faced a dilemma that had her take a stand in the question of racial segregation. She was booked to perform in Jackson, Mississippi, but was urged by the NAACP to cancel as the venue practised racial segregation. If she would not, there would be demonstrations that would inevitably end in violence. This left Nilsson in a personal conflict as she did not want to perform before a segregated audience which would lead to violence, but at the same time she did not want to breach contract. In the end, however, she cancelled her performance because she felt avoiding violence was more important than breaching her contract. She also reiterated that she will never perform for a segregated audience.137

Another protest occurred during the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico. Öste was there and interviewed some of the Black athletes about the race issue in America. One of those he talked to was John Carlos, who talked about his upbringing in Harlem. John Carlos later, together with Tommie Smith, protested on the podium after receiving medals. Raising their leather gloved fists and lowered their heads during the American National Anthem. Because of their protest, they were sent home.138

These are some examples that show that the race issue in America engaged different kinds of people. Of course, not all engagement was positive to the movement and I will discuss the opposition in a later chapter. While these articles might seem trivial, they indicate some hopefulness for the situation. They show that support for the Black liberation movement was multifaceted. What is also clear is that any hope from Öste’s reporting diminished over time, which is most clearly shown when he returns to Americus in 1969, five years after his first visit there.

After reminding the readers what occurred in Americus five years ago, how they succeeded in their struggle, the Black people in Americus “…now stand with fool’s gold in their hands.”139 The movement has died out in the small town in Georgia. After attention went from the South to the North around 1965, the South has largely been forgotten. While Öste concedes things changed in the South, he questions how the reality of Black people changed. Öste questions how much has changed when this group of people has made no economic progress. Öste then writes “They are grateful for the crumbs of the table: for decades they received nothing.”140 In response to the fact that it had given hundreds of Black people jobs at a local shirt factory. Öste continues to bring up how certain things have changed, but that Americus still considered Black people to be a second-class citizen. It is quite a gloomy picture that Öste describes in Americus, where the young are seen as the only source of hope. Although 99 out of 100 Black children go to all-Black schools, it is in these schools that the children are gaining thoughts about the revolution. They learn about African American history and are able to read Eldridge Cleaver, Öste writes hopefully. Sure the old people have grown tired, but there is a new generation coming.141 While there is some hope in the new generation as Öste describes, the contemporary situation in Americus is one Öste seemed distraught about. Despite legal victories and three new bills to ensure Civil rights, things have not changed all that much in America.

This chapter has revealed some initial answers to some of the questions posed in this thesis. For one, it has indicated that Öste clearly sided with the cause of African Americans and their efforts. While brief we can also discern what Öste thought about the white resistance the Black liberation movement faced, though this will be expanded upon on the chapter of white resistance. I will go into Öste’s reporting on these judicial advances in the next chapter. When it comes to Öste’s hopelessness about the situation described above, that will be explored later in the chapter on race riots and the Black Panthers.

139 ”USA-södern efter fem års ’framsteg’”, Dagens Nyheter, 20/7 1969. Translation by the author: ”…och står nu med kattguld i handen.”.
140 ”USA-södern efter fem års ’framsteg’”, Dagens Nyheter, 20/7 1969. Translation by the author: ”De är tacksamma för smulorna från bordet; under decennier fick de ju ingenting.”
141 ”USA-södern efter fem års ’framsteg’”, Dagens Nyheter, 20/7 1969.
Chapter 6. The State

We often associate the Civil rights movement with the activism that on the streets of America; sit-ins, bus boycotts and voter registration. While this is the case, the goal of these activists was to ensure that Black Americans would attain equal rights under the law. For this reason, it is important to look at how Öste reported on the judicial matters both in regard to passing legislation and the role of the Supreme Court. Especially, since Öste at one-point writes that the Supreme Court was one of the most powerful tools in ensuring racial equality in America.\footnote{“USA:s HD raskampens mäktigaste kraft”, Dagens Nyheter 15/6 1964.} Hence this section will analyse how the Supreme Court appears in Öste’s writings as well as how he reported on the relevant legislative battles concerning the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and 1968, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

6.1. The Supreme Court

While the Supreme Court is mentioned from time to time in Öste’s reporting there are two dominant stories worth discussing. The first is centred on school integration, mainly in the South. Though Brown v Board transpired in 1954, school integration had not come a long way in the 1960s. The second is President Richard Nixon’s attempts to get a Southern judge appointed to the Supreme Court in 1969 and 1970. But before these stories, I want to discuss to the article in which Öste claims that the Supreme Court is the most powerful tool in the strife for racial justice.

The article in question serves the purpose of teaching the reader about the role of the Supreme Court and how it can change depending on what judges are currently appointed. At the time of writing and for most of Öste’s time in America, the Supreme Court Chief Justice was Earl Warren, who was appointed in 1953. It was Warren who wrote the historical decision of Brown V Board of Education. Öste explains how Warren’s introduction into the Supreme Court meant it went from a conservative majority to a liberal majority. What this means, Öste continues, is that since Warren the court has ruled for what is morally right and not according to what the founding fathers might have meant. It is because of this liberal majority that the court has generally voted against the Souths attempts to keep segregation going. To highlight this, Öste brings up a recent case between the court of Alabama and the NAACP where the Supreme Court voted in favour of the NAACP. Öste described the ruling as following. “It was a verdict and it was an execution, a brilliant execution. The air felt clear and pure that morning, it was a great day.”\footnote{“USA:s HD raskampens mäktigaste kraft”, Dagens Nyheter 15/6 1964. Translation by author: Det var dömd och det var avrättning, en lysande avrättning. Luften kändes klar och ren den morgonen, det var en härlig dag.}

To move onto the story on school segregation, it is curious how in the article previously discussed Öste still holds high regard for the ruling of the Supreme Court whilst two weeks earlier
writing an article about how integration in the South is taking too long. But then again, it was the Supreme Court that had said that the integration had taken too long and that it was unconstitutional to close schools. The court ruling specifically dealt with Prince Edwards County in Virginia, but as Supreme Court rulings go it applies to the entire South. This was after the county closed all state-run schools and started using private ones, which led to 1700 Black children without education for four years. In effect, the ruling made it illegal to close schools. But as I will show, this was far from the last attempt to prevent integration. I will explore this in a later chapter on George Wallace, who was one of the most vocal proponents of segregation. The next time Öste wrote about school segregation and the Supreme Court was in 1969, which itself means that during these 5 years integration had yet been achieved. This time the Supreme Court reprimanded Nixon on the topic. Öste clarifies that it has been a clash between the Nixon administration in Washington and the Supreme Court, since Nixon has been evasive on the question to woo the Southern states. Öste goes as far as to write that Nixon and the South agree on segregation. The decision to reprimand Nixon, Öste argues, is to be seen as an attack on the Nixon administration. It was no longer acceptable to delay integration, the Supreme Court demanded immediate action. This left the South in rage, with many still claiming they will fight against integration.

Öste delved deeper into Nixon’s strategy in a later piece, that Nixon’s approach to the question of school integration is all a part of Nixon’s Southern strategy. This term is not coined by Öste, but refers to a strategy employed by Nixon and the Republican party to cultivate votes in the South. It was inspired by Goldwaters platform in 1964, leaning heavily on a racial and states rights message. They employed the strategy to capitalize on the split between the North and South within the Democratic party.

The strategy became increasingly important since Wallace intended a comeback for the 1972 election, which had the risk of Nixon losing important votes in the South. Öste writes how Nixon allied himself with segregationists in congress, which Öste claims could lead to the loss of the progress that has been made the last couple of years. Another thing that has changed over the years is how the topic is discussed, where Öste makes some brazen remarks. The South had changed the discourse from segregation to freedom to choose. But Öste makes a potential controversial remark is regarding the organisations behind these. Öste wrote how the organisations might have new names, but still carry old intentions. The “Concerned parents” of 1970 were equivalent to the KKK and the White Citizens’ Council. Lastly Öste was concerned over the fact that segregationists have succeeded in erasing the difference between the South and the North, which according to Öste was their

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greatest victory. In the South, segregationists actively opposed the law that established integration by keeping the schools segregated. But in the North, school segregation occurs because of living patterns. Since numerous Black people live in the ghetto, the consequence was that many schools remained entirely Black.148

Despite that the Nixon administration was told in 1969 to resolve school segregation immediately, they continued to fight it. Nixon came out and oppose busing149 and while he said that the Supreme Court rulings would be followed, he continued to question it to keep the South on his good side.150 This reached its peak when the Nixon administration claimed that integration was not necessary under the law. They argued that there was nothing claiming that every school had to be mixed. The issue of integration had resurfaced after there had been several cases regarding busing. Öste once again brings up that this is part of Nixon’s Southern strategy, that their arguments align with those by segregationists. Öste thought that the fact that busing had reached the Supreme Court was not an accident. It was another attempt by the Nixon government to move in a conservative direction, since the Supreme Court was no longer majority liberal.151

A recurring theme here is the Southern strategy by Nixon, which Öste points out frequently. However it is meaningful that Öste consistently wants to show Nixon’s alignment with the South. It is especially apparent in the second story where Nixon tried to appoint a Southern judge to the Supreme Court, unsuccessfully, two times in a row. In late 1969 Nixon tried to appoint Clement Haynsworth to fill the last seat of the Supreme Court. By this time, Nixon had already filled the vacancy of Earl Warren with a new Chief Justice, Warren Burger. This meant that the strong liberal majority in the Supreme Court was waning. Although Chief Justice Burger was not a Southern man, he was a Republican. Going back to Haynsworth, who was Nixon’s first attempt in getting a Southern man on the Supreme Court, Haynsworth faced backlash on three points that Öste explains. Most importantly, he was a segregationist. This, Öste ensures the reader, is not only an opinion held by radicals but by moderate voices such as the NAACP. Labour unions had also critiqued Haynsworth for being hostile to workers and on the last point he faced criticisms for owning shares in a company he had dealt with in court a month prior.152 Over the coming weeks Öste continued to update on how the nomination progressed, reminding the reader of the three points of criticisms.153 Though in the end Haynsworth did not pass through the senate.154

Once Haynsworth had been eliminated, Nixon was quick to come up with a new nominee. This time it was a judge from Florida called Harrold Carswell. When the news was first presented, Öste

148 Ibid.
149 A strategy to fix segregation by transporting Black and white children between schools. See Dierenfield, p.xxix.
wrote how it was not surprising that Nixon once again had nominated a Southern man for the position. Öste also points out the fact that Carswell had granted deferral to several states regarding school integration. Though Öste was not yet as antagonistic to the new nominee. This however, was only a matter of time as about a week later Öste wrote about the Senate Committees review of Carswell. Here Carswell’s past was brought up, where he in 1956 had donated money for the purchase of a white’s only golf club. Before that, in 1948, Carswell had talked about the superiority of the white race. After this Öste no longer held his punches in describing Carswell in the coming months, as he started treating Carswell as he had Haynsworth. In every new article, where Carswell made it forward in the nomination progress Öste brought up his racist past. In March 1970, Öste brought up Carswell’s remarks from 1948 and writing that he acted like a “full blood racist” Though Öste feared Carswell would succeed in the nomination, this did not go through as the Senate barely rejected Carswell.

As mentioned previously, Öste early on wrote how the Supreme Court was one of the best tools the Civil rights movement had. While his claim is understandable to an extent, as it was the Supreme Court who ended the “separate but equal” doctrine with Brown v Board of Education and as I have shown, ruled in favour of integration on many occasions. But as demonstrated through these two stories written by Öste, the efficiency of the Supreme Court can be questioned. The court ruling of Brown v Board of Education was in 1954, despite that, in 1970 Öste was still writing about how school segregation was alive and how President Nixon was trying to work against it. With the appointment of Southern judges, not only does that show President Nixon was appealing to a certain voter base, it also shows how volatile the court can be. The Supreme Court would only be positive for the Black liberation movement as long as it had a liberal majority. When the majority shifted, it was unclear how it would rule on civil rights issues.

As for how President Nixon was portrayed by Öste in these instances, we can see that Öste consistently shows President Nixon aligning with the South. Swedish audiences got to read how the American President appointed racist judges and tried to work against school integration. While Öste does not write about President Nixon in the same way as George Wallace, it is clear what Öste thinks of the President. If there still were any doubts on the matter, Öste makes himself clear at the end of the year in an opinion piece where he writes that the only positive thing in America during 1970 is that President Nixon has received critique. Öste clearly loathed President Nixon.

155 "Ännu en sydstatsman Nixons förslag i HD", Dagens Nyheter, 20/1 1970.
6.2. Legislative battles

The legislative battles that were fought during the 1960s concerns three different pieces of legislation over a four-year period. When the Civil Rights Act of 1964 passed, it was the final nail in the coffin for the ‘separate but equal’ doctrine that had started Jim Crow and should have been defeated through the Brown v Board ruling by the Supreme Court. This did not mean that the discrimination of Black Americans was over. Which is why the fight kept going, eventually ensuring the passing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, making racial discrimination in voting illegal. Finally, the Civil Rights Act of 1968 which was an extension of previous legislation focusing on racial discrimination in housing. Though the effectiveness of these laws is up for debate, they are still important landmarks in the struggle for equal rights in the eyes of the law. While each legislation has its own merits, they will be dealt with in conjunction since they faced similar problems trying to pass through the House and the Senate.

Resistance to these laws is most clear on two occasions, for the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and for the Civil Rights Act of 1966, which did not pass. For the Civil Rights Act of 1964 it was primarily Southern Democrats who opposed it and since they were in minority, they used filibustering in their attempts to stop the legislation. But Civil rights activists were prepared. When it was announced that the legislation was to be put on the floor of the house, Dr King put on pressure. Dr King was going to allow one month of debate, if it exceeded this they would consider it a filibuster and the Civil rights organisations would act. Though Öste writes that there was no word on what this action would look like. While it was the Southern Democrats who were the principal opponents, Republicans would not let the bill pass without some modifications regarding the federal governments capacity to intervene when it comes to discrimination in the workplace. Öste added it was these points that the Southern Democrats were most strongly opposed, since laws that sought to end ‘separate but equal’ practices in restaurants and other public amenities could be circumvented more easily.

Öste wrote a long article on how legislation gets passed in the Senate and how filibustering works in this process. He writes how there will be a proper debate at first, but if it continues beyond April, then it will go from being the Grand Debate to the Grand Filibuster. It becomes clear that Öste resents filibustering, as he writes it is the tool of a desperate minority that brings shame over the noble institution that is the Senate. Especially since the law has the majority it needs, but the Southern senators delay it. What is interesting to note here is that Öste writes nothing more on the legislation while it was up for debate or when it passed. He only mentioned it in passing in

161 "Bakslag för Sydstaterna i kamp om medborgarlagar", Dagens Nyheter, 29/3 1964.
162 "Telefon från Vita huset kan rädda medborgarlag från nederlag i senaten", Dagens Nyheter, 31/3 1964.
other articles that it had passed. Öste obviously thought the bill was important but for whatever reason do not deem it worth covering closely.

The proposed Civil Rights Act of 1966 is an interesting case because in contrast with the other proposed bills, it did not pass. What is intriguing here is Öste’s reasoning behind why it did not pass. To provide some context, this bill primarily sought to remedy things from previous bills. First, it sought to end racial discrimination in the courts which especially targeted the South. Second, it wanted to end the problems caused by the housing market in the North by eliminating racial segregation there as well. This two-pronged approach could be why the bill failed, as it met resistance across America. In his first article, Öste alludes to this creating an “unholy” alliance between Northern liberals and Southern reactionaries, since the liberals did not want to pass a compromise. But generally, Öste saw the major opponents to the law being Northern Republicans and Southern Democrats. Especially if the bill reached the Senate, which Öste argues is where bills for Black liberation met tough resistance.164 This reasoning was carried forward when the bill eventually passed the House into the Senate and when it was dropped. The alliance was explained by including the housing laws, which Northern whites were against. Despite this, Öste singles out the Southern Democrats in his last article. That although it was the alliance that stopped the bill, Öste puts additional blame on the Southern Democrats as they can destroy any attempts to get the law passed through filibustering.165 While it is possible that Southern Democrats used filibusters more than all the others, it is noteworthy that Öste singled them out. I argue that this illustrates Öste’s dislike towards the South.

Though Öste writes sparingly about these laws, it is not because he thinks it is unimportant. When he writes about the Voting Rights Act of 1965, he calls it one of the most important steps in liberating Black Americans.166 One explanation for all of this is that it was simply not exciting or engaging news to report on every step of the legislative process. While it is important to bring up because of the meaningful consequences of the legislation along with the fact that it shows another side of the fight in Black liberation, it is not engaging news. What is engaging and shows how relentless the struggle for Black liberation can be, is to highlight the opposition. Something that Öste spends much time doing and which will be explored in-depth in the following section.

In the articles brought up in this chapter, we can see how Öste is contributing to the Swedish image of America by educating the readers of the American political system. When he wrote about filibustering and the Supreme Court, Öste not only pointed out the faults but educated Swedish readers how they worked and highlighted their importance. This chapter provides partial answers to all the questions posed in this thesis. By discussing how Nixon tried to change the Supreme

165 "Ny bostadslag för färgade fälls efter senatsförhalning", Dagens Nyheter, 14/9 1966; "Bostadslag ”fälld” i USA trots majoritet", Dagens Nyheter, 15/9 1966.
166 "Rösträtten i USA blir federal sak", Dagens Nyheter, 6/8 1965.
Court and the resistance to legislation, Öste tells the Swedish readers of how white resistance can work on a governmental level. As previously mentioned, it also educates the Swedish readers of the American political system, which contributes to the Swedish image of America. When writing on the Supreme Court nominees, we can also see Öste’s moralistic writing in how he chose to represent these nominees. However, this is only a small part of Öste’s reporting on white resistance. I will expand on how Öste wrote about the white resistance in the next chapter.
Chapter 7. The White Resistance

Since the focus in this thesis lies on how Sven Öste wrote on the American race issue, both sides of the conflicts needs to be discussed. That means looking at how Öste wrote about the system and the white resistance that the Black liberation movement fought against. By looking at how he wrote about the white resistance, a deeper understanding of Öste’s reporting will be achieved. Especially, since one recurring theme is Öste’s opinionated and polarising writings. Nowhere is that more discernible than in his writings on the white resistance. This can be seen in how Öste called people “race lunatics”¹⁶⁷ and how he referred to Governor George Wallace as a “mini-Hitler”¹⁶⁸ As the white resistance existed in several levels of American society, I have divided this chapter into two. In the first section I focus on politicians like Barry Goldwater, George Wallace, and President Nixon. In the second section I focus on the institutional and systemic racism with themes such as the treatment of African Americans in court and the murder of African Americans and Black liberation activists by police. My purpose here is to show that the white resistance existed throughout American society and how Sven Öste portrayed this resistance to a Swedish audience.

7.1. Men in Power

While there were men in power throughout the South that stood against integration and fought for segregation, the men dealt with here gained the most attention from Öste and with good reason. Barry Goldwater was the Republican nominee for President in the 1964 election.¹⁶⁹ George Wallace is perhaps the most well-known segregationist of this period; during his inauguration as the Governor of Alabama he notoriously said “…I say, segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever!”¹⁷⁰ President Nixon will also be discussed here, while he was not of the same calibre as George Wallace, he tried to win the support of Southern segregationists. Since all these men in power was a part of the white resistance to Black liberation, the purpose is to focus on how Öste characterised them, their actions, and their supporters regarding their position to Black liberation.

In an article on the Republican primary elections, Öste is crystal clear when it comes to his thoughts on Goldwater. He writes how after the primary election in New Hampshire, there is no way to the White House for Goldwater. Specifically, Öste writes that there is a chance that the New Hampshire election will end any speculation that Goldwater is a man suitable for the White House. Following this, Öste writes that using the word chance is preferable to using a neutral word like possibility. For someone like Goldwater, Öste has no intention of being neutral. “… in front

¹⁶⁷ “DEN VITA RASENS RIDDARE”, Dagens Nyheter, 5/12 1965. Translation by the author. ”rasgalningar”
¹⁶⁹ “Goldwaters stöttrupper I talkörer på läktarna: "BARRY BARRY BARRY””, Dagens Nyheter, 16/7 1964.
¹⁷⁰ Dierenfield 2008, p. 78.
of a character like Barry Goldwater it is unthinkable to be neutral – or write neutrally. Why try to suppress or hide that one experience this man as one of the most sickening phenomena that the USA has produced since… yes, since senator Joseph McCarthy.\(^{171}\) Going on to characterising him as a symbol of “arch-conservatism”\(^{172}\) It is Goldwater’s opinion, in Öste’s words, that it is up to the states to grant equal rights to their people without the federal government interfering. This is echoed in an article the next day, where Öste writes how Goldwater has no interest of challenging the whites in the South.\(^{173}\) Goldwater’s stance on the race question is upheld by Öste as a cornerstone of Goldwater’s platform\(^{174}\), and Goldwater was supposedly supported by the extremists in Ku Klux Klan if one was to believe the demonstrators outside the Republican convention.\(^{175}\) For the Republican convention Öste called the people that celebrated Goldwater, and booed his opponent Rockefeller, extremists. In the same article, he writes how Goldwater defended extremism when it is about protecting freedom.\(^{176}\) The recurrent message in Öste’s reporting on Goldwater was that he was playing on the hatred from white racists and on white backlash.\(^{177}\) Öste repeatedly portrayed Goldwater as a bigot and as he wrote, has no reason to hide this. If anything, Öste feels he might not be blunt enough. While reviewing a book by Björn Kumm called Goldwaters USA, he brings up the harsh tone the book has which is telling for Öste’s view on the contemporary situation in America and his role in reporting on it.

If any readers are shocked by Kumms dark outlook on the brutal warning signals, then it is not he who should be accused of exaggerating the depiction of negro ghettos. It is we – the working journalists in the US – that has not succeeded in mediating a sufficiently realistic view of the situation.\(^{178}\)

If Öste was concerned that he and his colleagues had failed in portraying an accurate picture of how grim the situation really was, he remedied that throughout his years in America as he became increasingly expressive in his views on the situation. Nowhere is that more explicit than his reporting on Governor George Wallace.

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\(^{172}\) Ibid. Translation by author: “ärkekonservativ”.


\(^{174}\) ”Goldwater dominerar ’plattformen’”, Dagens Nyheter, 12/7 1964.

\(^{175}\) ”Varför stöds han? Varför hänförelsen?”, Dagens Nyheter, 15/7 1964.

\(^{176}\) ”McCarthy hjälte i extremistbok med miljonupplaga”, Dagens Nyheter, 18/7 1964.


\(^{178}\) ”MÖRK BILD AV USA”, Dagens Nyheter, 22/10 1964. Translation by author: ”Om några läsare blir chockerade av Kumms mörka bild om brutala varningssignaler, ja då är det inte han som skall lastas för överdrifter i skildringen av negernas getton. Då är det vi – de i USA verksamma journalisterna - som inte lyckats förmedla en tillräckligt realistisk bild av läget.”.
Race fanatic crusader, the Southern demagogues raid, the South's preacher of hate, Mini-Hitler and writing how he walks in the footsteps of Hitler and using similar propaganda techniques as Joseph Goebbels. These are some examples of how Sven Öste portrayed Wallace. To claim that Öste was highly critical when he wrote about Wallace is an understatement. Throughout Öste’s years in America, there is no better example of white resistance by a man in power. While Wallace started out as a progressive candidate who championed the cause of the poor, Wallace did a rapid change in messaging after he lost his first attempt at the Governor seat to the KKK supported state attorney, John Patterson. After this defeat, Wallace said that “I will never be out-niggered again”. Which Öste at a later date framed as a promise from Wallace that he would be more racist than any other candidate. This strategy seemed to have worked, as he was inaugurated as Governor in 1963, the same year that Öste arrived in America.

Öste first covered Wallace as he ran for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1964 against President Lyndon B. Johnson. While Öste did not see Wallace as a genuine threat to the sitting President, Öste was surprised over the amount of support Wallace successfully amassed in the North. Wallace’s support in the North was in some sense Öste’s first experience that racial prejudices existed outside the South, though he wrote how this was something Black organisations have said for a while. While Wallace would not win the 1964 election, he continued to appear in Öste’s articles, predominantly when Wallace ran for Governor and President again in 1968 but more interesting Öste started to use Wallace as a personification of racism. When there were topics that did not directly focus on Wallace, Öste brought up his name as the personification of racism in the South. For example, when writing about how the Black liberation movement has moved from the South to the North in 1966, Öste writes that there has been progress with school integration despite attempts from segregationists like George Wallace. After that, Öste wrote nothing else on Wallace in the article. His name was only used to evoke the arch segregationist.

This is a good time to expand on the change in discourse by Wallace over time, a topic I brought up in a previous chapter concerning the “Concerned Parents”. Despite Öste characterising Wallace as a racist hatemonger, Wallace had to adapt to the changing political landscape. That said, this is purely a surface level change as Öste pointed out as well. It is also worth noting that Öste remarked on this 1966 and onwards, which means that the change in discourse occurred after the legislative wins of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Öste puts it as follows.

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180 Dierenfield 2008, p. 78.
181 Dierenfield 2008, p. 78.
182 Ibid.
183 Dierenfield 2008, p. 78.
Now George Wallace doesn’t use the word “nigger” in his speeches, he glides past it and rewrites; but when he swears that he will protect “state rights” everybody knows that he means segregation, when he attacks communist agitators the audience smiles and thinks black. In the meetings I witnessed there was only one negro in the audience; an old man that eventually sneeked away and disappeared.\footnote{“Nu försöker guvernörskan bli guvernör”, \textit{Dagens Nyheter}, 30/4 1966. Translation by the author: “Nu använder inte George Wallace ordet “nigger” i sina tal, han glider förbi och skriver om; men när han svär att värna ”delstatens rättigheter” vet alla att han menar segregationen, när han stormar mot kommunistiska agitatorer ler åhörarna och ser svart. Vid de möten jag bevittnade fanns i publiken summa summarum en enda neger; en gammal man som så småningom smet undan och försvann.”.}

This coded language is something that Öste remarked upon several times. Although Wallace did not use the hateful words, or mention people like Dr King and Stokely Carmichael, the same message is still delivered. Wallace still used race hatred to his advantage; with the promise to his voters that he will bring that into the White House.\footnote{“Wallace siktar på Vita huset”, \textit{Dagens Nyheter}, 6/11 1966.} However, Wallace never got to the White House. When he ran in 1968 he did not have a real shot of winning, but as Öste wrote on the day before the election, there was a risk that Wallace would get enough votes thereby granting him a swing role in the election. This, Öste writes, was the nightmare scenario.\footnote{“Mardröm i USA: Wallace avgör”, \textit{Dagens Nyheter}, 1/11 1968.}

From the words Öste used to characterise Wallace to how he framed him is undoubtedly moralising and is an obvious example of how Öste spreads his opinion in his news reporting. While it might seem obvious that a journalist from Sweden would condemn the acts of a segregationist like Wallace, it was possible for Öste to condemn Wallace without portraying him in the way that I have shown here. But as I have demonstrated, Öste had no intention to be unbiased when faced with oppression and this is a recurring theme.

To show how the white resistance went to the highest level, it is appropriate to discuss some actions by President Nixon. I have in a previous chapter already gone through how he tried to garner votes in the white South by attempting to appoint Southern judges and being lenient on school integration. These examples fit in here as well, as they show how President Nixon did not shy away from supporting the white resistance. But there are other examples worth highlighting that support the argument that President Nixon can be considered a part of the white resistance to the Black liberation movement. It is worth clarifying that the way Öste wrote about President Nixon did not come close to that of Governor Wallace. Despite this, I argue Öste’s moralising can be seen in how he framed President Nixon.

One substantial part of Nixon’s platform for the 1968 election was law and order. While law and order is closely linked to Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan, it became popularised by Republican candidate Barry Goldwater in 1964. Four years later, it became the most important domestic issue for that presidential election and President Nixon’s use of it, according to Michael W. Flamm, won him the 1968 election. Flamm argues that the success of law and order can be attributed to the fact that it was amorphous. Seen as both a social ideal and political slogan, it
addressed concerns from a diverse set of people.\textsuperscript{188} Because it is amorphous, it can be hard to define but Flamm describes the concept as following.

Law and order identified a clear cast of violent villains (protesters, rioters, and criminals), explained the causes for their actions (above all the doctrine of civil disobedience and the paternalism of the welfare state), and implied a ready response (limited government, moral leadership, and judicial firmness).\textsuperscript{189}

But what is left out is that law and order had an inherent racial character, as explained by Naomi Murakawa. Prior to President Nixon adopting it, law and order can be seen as a response to Black liberation.\textsuperscript{190}

Law and order was brought up by Öste when he wrote about Nixon after his nomination in August 1968. In the article, Öste provides information on Nixon’s stance on a range of topics, but what stands out is the title of the article. An explicit reference to Nixon’s program. “An end to the war. Clean, white streets.”\textsuperscript{191} That Öste puts emphasis on white streets is of importance, especially put it into the wider context of Öste’s writings on President Nixon and white resistance, it is suggestive of Öste’s opinions. Those being his strong animosity towards the President. President Nixon’s strategy of law and order was used towards groups such as the Black Panther Party, something that he faced criticism for.\textsuperscript{192} A deeper insight into President Nixon’s war on the BPP will be provided in the chapter on the BPP.

Öste went on with the argument that President Nixon did not have African Americans best intentions in mind. For example when he wrote about the amendment President Nixon proposed to the Voting Rights Act, which would weaken it significantly by making it harder for the federal government to step in when states discriminate based on race.\textsuperscript{193} Or when Öste wrote a piece based on an article from Times, where he brought up that only three per cent of Black Americans thought the President was trying to improve their situation. Öste continues by writing that despite what President Nixon might say, during his 15 months in the White House he had done nothing but show indifference to the plights and demands of Black Americans.\textsuperscript{194} After the Nixon administration changed course following Governor Wallace’s reelection\textsuperscript{195}, Öste stood his ground. In an article after President Nixon’s supposed change, Öste critiqued his law and order again. Writing how it was loaded with hypocrisy and only intended to enkindle prejudice and racism. He ironically puts forward President Nixon’s law and order when telling the story of police in

\textsuperscript{188} Flamm 2005, p. 2,162.
\textsuperscript{189} Flamm 2005, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{190} Murakawa 2008, pp. 234–253.
\textsuperscript{191} “Ett slut på kriget. Rena, vita gator.”, Dagens Nyheter, 9/8 1968. Translation by the author. :”Ett slut på kriget. Rena, vita gator”.
\textsuperscript{192} “Nixon attackeras för angreppet mot Pantrarna”, Dagens Nyheter, 11/12 1969.
\textsuperscript{193} “Ny rösträttslag hotar minska svartas inflytande”. Dagens Nyheter, 13/12 1969.
\textsuperscript{194} “Svart misstroende ger Nixon vita röster?” Dagens Nyheter, 2/4 1970.
\textsuperscript{195} “Början på ny kurs för Nixon i Södern”, Dagens Nyheter, 12/7 1970.
Mississippi murdering two Black students earlier that spring and proceeded to lose the evidence. Despite that it is the responsibility of the federal government to resolve these issues, they did nothing.\(^1\) These examples show what Öste thinks of President Nixon’s law and order and how he portrayed it.

Ranging from calling politicians mini-Hitler to highlighting their inactions, Öste was consistent in how he treated politicians that worked against civil rights. While his approach to them might vary, he never wavered in his condemnation of their actions. His unwavering stance on white resistance to Black liberation reveals better than anything how Öste throughout his reporting was moralising. With one of the foremost Swedish journalists in America at the time being consistently moralising, this contributed to the Swedish picture of America. However it does not stop at highlighting the faults by politicians. During his years in America, Öste demonstrated that white resistance existed throughout American society.

### 7.2. Institutional and systemic racism

Öste’s depiction of the reality of Black Americans is something that is bound to arouse emotions in the reader, and I argue that this is no mere accident. One straightforward example of this was when Öste wrote on the trial of Collie Leroy Wilkins, a KKK member charged with the murder of Civil rights activist Viola Liuzzo. Öste chose this opportunity to contrast how a white supremacy murderer was treated in contrast with Black Americans. In the first paragraph Öste writes “The iron cage with bars painted green down in the corner of the courtroom stood empty on Monday. It is only used for criminals with black skin.”\(^2\) The cage stands unused because although it is a murder trial, it is a white man on trial. Selecting a jury is a process of choosing 12 people out of 100. Out of these 100, only one was Black for this trial. It becomes clear here that despite being an article on a murder trial, the topic Öste wanted to address was racial inequality. Öste wrote how the trial took place in a courthouse built by Black slaves 130 years prior, and that in Lowndes county 80% of the population was Black, yet the voting records only showed two Black people and 2 300 white people. What is especially noteworthy is the fact that Lowndes only had 1 900 white people of voting age. Öste did not stop here. He went on writing how the small town in which the trial took place had tried to cover up the segregation that usually occurred. They had closed the restaurant in town to avoid turning away Black people and they had taped over the toilet signs in the courthouse to hide that it said “colored men”.\(^3\) Thereby hiding that racial segregation was a common practice in town. While some of this information might be of value to the trial, it is more

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reasonable that the explanation is that Öste was trying to confer yet again the plight of Black Americans. For how Black people were treated in courtrooms, there is another example that shows how grave the disparity can be. This was in 1969 during the trial of the Chicago Eight, later the Chicago Seven. In late October, the BPP leader Bobby Seale was bound and gagged in the courtroom for repeatedly demanding legal representation. While the article is brief, it is joined by a drawing of Seale gagged and taped to his chair. Not reported is that Seale stayed bound and gagged in the courtroom for several days. Some weeks later his case was severed from the other defendants, but not before being sentenced with four years of prison on contempt of court. These examples display how encompassing racial discrimination was, when Black Americans were treated horribly in court. It is unmistakable that Öste wanted to show this disparity with the case of Seale, by showing a picture of how Seale was bound and gagged.

During Öste’s first year he wrote an article on the Freedom students, but where the focus lies on how Black people in the South truly fear the white man. In the preface he outlines some of the everyday oppressions that Black people faced because of their involvement in civil rights activism. This includes no longer being able to buy on credit at the grocers, a sudden increase in rent, getting their name published in the newspaper because they registered to vote and getting fired from their jobs. All of this is possible, Öste writes, because the white man has the weapons to achieve this. They control the courts, the police, the banks and they are the property owners; all of which gives them ample opportunity to oppress Black people. Öste calls these kinds of acts the small terror, how it is a pattern of oppression and extortion made possible because the white man controls both the economy and the administration. These are problems that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 would not fix. Then there is the large terror, which are the murders and physical abuse, which only happens to a relatively few people. While the large terror is worse, the small terror targets many more, including children. Öste writes how Black children are taught that their brains are smaller than that of a white person. We are told that the fact that these people can face this takes tremendous courage. What Öste was describing is nothing less than a society crippled by racism and the activists are the ones who can defeat it.

While what Öste labels as the large terror occurs more rarely than the small one, Öste wrote a fair bit on race murders that occurred in America. For an article he wrote on the KKK, Öste wrote on the first page in April 1965 that since September 1964, there had been 16 racial murders in the South. At least that were known. Though it is unknown how many the police may have silenced or how many drownings and disappearances were lynchings. For most of the known cases, the murderers was members of the KKK. But it is not only KKK members who were committing

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these murders. Öste wrote on at least two occasions when it was the police that had been charged with murder. In October 1964, five police officers were arrested for assault and suspects of three murders. One of these was the Sherriff Lawrence Rainey, which according to Öste had been charged with shooting and murdering Black people twice before, but both times he was exempted on self-defence. Writing on the possibility that the men would be convicted Öste writes the following.

But the federal police have not been able to get the absolute convicting evidence that binds the men to the murder; to “prove” that white men murdered a negro in Mississippi and get a local jury to accept these “evidence” is a tremendous task – so far a white man has never been sentenced as guilty for a crime like that in this state.

Police being exonerated of their murders is not unique to Mississippi, as Öste showed when he wrote on yet another Sheriff that got released on bail after a race murder in Alabama. While Öste labelled this as a race murder, the victim Jonathan Daniels was white. Reason for this was that Daniels and the other victim, a priest named Richard Morrisroe, had attended a civil rights demonstration earlier where they had been arrested. Here, the Sherriff admitted to having fired the shots. A last example of Öste’s hopelessness with convicting these men can be found when he writes about the trail of the accomplices to Wilkins whom I mentioned previously, the KKK member who murdered Viola Liuzzo. Öste wrote after the accomplices had been acquitted, but how the prosecutor would try to get a new trial. According to Öste, another trial cannot convict these two men and that it will be yet another fully white jury. There is an undeniable tone of resignation from Öste in his reaction to how these men escape from justice.

Öste’s portrayal of the white resistance is undoubtedly an unfavorable one. From defaming famous politicians, including the President of the United States, to emphasising how deep the white resistance goes in America. However, it is not merely a case of a journalist condemning heinous acts, I argue it is more than that. It would have been possible for Öste to show the Swedish audience how racism in America took shape without writing as he did. It is not merely calling a politician mini-Hitler but writing in an emotionally evocative way which is bound to elicit a powerful reaction. Öste does not shy away from giving his own analysis of the situation and his own feelings of discouragement of the system. The white resistance, in Öste’s reporting, exists throughout America. It is politicians, it is the police and the justice system not to mention organisation like the KKK. Returning to look at the larger picture Öste was mediating, it becomes unmistakable what


204 ”USA-poliser gripna för negermissbrand. Misstanke om tre mord”, Dagens Nyheter, 4/10 1964. Translation by the author: ”Men den federala polisen har inte kunnat få fram de absolut fallande bevisen som binder männen vid mordet; att ”bevisa” att vita män mördat en neger i Mississippi och förmå en lokal jury att acceptera de ”bevisen” är en oerhörd uppgift – hittills har aldrig en vit man dömts som skyldig för ett sådant brott i denna stat.”.


message Öste was trying to get across. On the one side, there is the corrupted white resistance. Built on hatred with the purpose of keeping people from their civil rights. On the other, there are students and other activists, sacrificing their safety and their lives hoping to secure equal rights.

Combining these findings with Sven Öste’s clearly emotional and moralising writings, it becomes clear that Öste sided with the Black liberation movement. While Öste’s support for the movement started to be established in the chapter on the Civil rights movement, this chapter reinforces that assertion. Furthermore, it establishes Öste’s disdain for the opposition that is the white resistance. Thus far in this thesis I have shown Öste’s support for the Civil rights movement and disdain for the white resistance which can be found in demagogues like George Wallace or in the core of the American system. But as the focus is on race issue at large in America, I turn to the race riots of the 1960s to see how Öste covered these events.
Chapter 8. The Race Riots

Though not tied to any Black liberation movement, race riots are important in understanding the race issue of the 1960s. While they might erupt out of civil rights protests, it would be wrong to categorise them as part of the movement. Most of the time, as Öste made it clear, they arose from police violence. This chapter on race riots have two purposes. The first purpose is to see how Öste wrote about Black and white confrontations. While the second purpose is to identify what Öste thought of the use of violence for the goal of racial equality. It is one thing to support the non-violent tactics by Dr King, but another to stand with violent race riots. Since Öste reported on at least eight riots over the years, this chapter has been structured after themes that can be found in most if not all the events.

8.1. Police violence

One of the early riots Öste wrote about occurred in Chester, Pennsylvania in 1964 and it is an excellent example of Öste portraying police violence. On the first page the reader faces police in Black helmets wielding clubs. Öste writes how two police officers beat a Black pregnant woman for several minutes, despite the fact that she had not done anything. But the police swung their clubs at any Black face they saw. Öste notes the following.

Chester – the latest bloodstain on the US map of race riots. And the first place where I have been a direct eyewitness to the police brutality that is described in jazz rhythms in so many of the negroes freedom songs all over the US and that so many of my friends in the South told me about during nights in the negro neighbourhoods.207

Öste continued to bring up examples of police brutality, as when he writes how a young Black man was assaulted whilst laying on the ground by a group of 20 police officers or how a journalist urged the police to stop only to get a broken nose followed by an arrest. Öste explains that one may doubt news like these when they come from second-hand sources. But that it is impossible to doubt when it is you that gets wound up in the middle of the event and personally witnessed the systemic police violence. When chronicling the events of the day, Öste writes that towards the end of the day the police were no longer arresting people. All they did were swinging their clubs.208

207 “Rasbråk i “svensk-stad”, BRUTAL POLISJAKT, Havande kvinna slogs medvetslös”, Dagens Nyheter, 26/4 1964. Translation by the author: “Chester - den senaste blodiga fläcken på USA:s karta över raskravaller. Och den första plats där jag varit direkt ögonvittne till den polisbrutalitet som i jazzrytmer skildras i så många av negernas frihetssånger över hela USA och som så många av mina vänner i Södern berättat om under kvällar i negerkvarteren.”.  
This was from the first day Öste spent in Chester, the police brutality continued to have a presence throughout his stay there. While people originally protested segregated schools, two days later Öste writes how the focus had shifted to police brutality after the violence that occurred. Öste writes in several articles during the Chester riots that it serves as an example of how police brutality and white ignorance is not exclusive to the South.

Another example of police violence outside the South was during the Watts riots in Los Angeles, California. When writing about the Watts neighbourhood, Öste described how its residents viewed the police. “…the police, that symbolises a white authority and the arm of the law, that often beats but rarely protects people with black skin.” In an article writing about the 29 dead thus far during the riots, Öste brought to light the murder of two Black men.

These quotes show how Öste can justify and explain the reasons behind the violence from demonstrators during riots, but how there were no excuse for the violence and murders caused by police.

Some years later Öste discussed police brutality more in-depth in the wake of the murder of Elijah Bennett, a 22-year-old Black man. Bennett had jaywalked, which caught the attention of a nearby police officer who after an altercation shot Bennett in the heart. This sparked a riot in Washington. Öste writes how it is often a police action that is the spark of riots, which is experienced as police brutality and race hatred by the ghetto community. Note here that it is the police that is the active part, it is their actions that lead to riots according to Öste. Furthermore, Öste writes that everyone in the ghetto has experienced personal abuse by police. This, Öste argues, makes it easy to understand the bitterness that people in the ghetto have towards the police. While Öste did include the police report mentioning that the incident with Bennett was a case of self-defence, he was quick to bring up that there are doubts to be had about this report. Partially because it is the police version of the story and eyewitnesses have supported a conflicting story. But also, because the report mentioned that the police referred to the victim as “Sir” when stopping him.

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212 “Nationalgardet in mot raskravaller”, Dagens Nyheter, 14/8 1965. Translation by the author: ”…polisen, som symboliserar en vit auktoritet och en lagens arm, som ofta slår men sällan skyddar människor med svart hudfärg.”
213 “29 DÖDA I LOS ANGELES”, Dagens Nyheter, 16/8 1965. Translation by the author: ”I morse träffades och dödades vid två tillfällen neger, som i polisens officiella rapporter betecknas som "inbrottsjävlar"; de sköts ned i utkanten av stridsområdet – och ingenstans i rapporterna sägs det att de öppnade eld mot polisen eller ens var bevapnade. När straffet för inbrott blir döden….”.
That a white police officer called a Black man sir was extremely unlikely according to Öste, writing how that claim would induce laughter throughout the ghetto.214

In 1971, during Öste’s last year as a foreign correspondent, he went to the small town of Cairo, Illinois. Öste did not label this as a race riot, but as a race war; and a civil war that had been going on for almost two years.215 While Öste reports he contrasts two stories of what is happening. One from the police and the mayor, the white side. The other, from the Black organisation United Front. Despite that both stories are presented, Öste clearly is more sympathetic to the side of the Black Americans.216 This is increasingly obvious when the following day, Öste brought up how the police were trying to arrest as many as possible from the United Front with the purpose of bankrupting them with bail.217

The police situation in Cairo was peculiar. Öste writes that a year prior there had been a dozen white police but only four Black ones, but at the time of writing the police had become exclusively white. To make matters worse, Öste explained how they had received help from “support-troops”218 These troops are described as twenty white civilians with their own guns who were recruited by the police. Öste added.

Out of these “deputy sheriffs” there are five six trigger-happy race haters, sick people who yearn for a chance to kill. That judgement does not come from any of the black leaders but from one of the few – two three – white who has lived their entire life in Cairo, know them all and see the white madness.219

While not directly depicting police violence, Öste brought up how the police have recruited racists with a longing for murder. Although they were not technically police, they were acting under the police. Writing about race hating deputies, Öste is portraying the police negatively to the Swedish readers.

What I have brought up tells a clear story and is suggestive of how Öste perceived police brutality in America. At several points when Öste was reporting on race riots in America he pointed out the unjustifiable police brutality. Not only is it unjustifiable, Öste never entertained the idea that the police violence could be provoked. Furthermore, Öste considered the police partially responsible for the riots. Öste argument was that the riots often started because of police actions. Not only were the riots started by police actions, but the police also responded to the riots with 214 “Det blev “bara” några brander”, Dagens Nyheter, 10/10 1968.
215 "Raskrig härjar i USA-stad", Dagens Nyheter, 4/1 1971.
218 "Begriper ni inte att de vill ha krig?”, Dagens Nyheter, 5/1 1971.
brutal force. While police violence might be the spark for the riots, the problem went deeper than that.

8.2. Underlying reasons

Throughout the articles on riots, Öste not only reported on the riots and what occurred. He consistently explains why riots happen and guides the reader to certain conclusions. This indicates that Öste understands it is a complicated situation, but that he wanted to highlight the underlying reasons for people rioting and clarify that the riots were not without cause.

The explanatory narrative goes back to Chester, the first large riots Öste reported on. I mentioned previously how the demonstrations in Chester were against school segregation, but Öste goes deeper to explain how detrimental school segregation was. It is also worth noting, as Öste did, that this is school segregation in the Northern form. This means that there was no legal segregation but a consequence of Black people living in certain areas because of social barriers, essentially ghettos. Öste argued that the process is circular. He writes how bad schools lead to worse education, which leads to poor jobs and lower salary which keeps Black people in poverty and stuck in the ghetto. Öste is correct in this analysis but he forgets to explain how and why schools in Black neighbourhoods are worse than white schools. The problem, as explained by Pamela Barnhouse Walters, lies in the fact that public schools get much of their funding from local taxes. In this period, the state only provided around 40% of the funding with the rest coming from local taxes. These secondary educational systems, as Walters call them, results from residential segregation and neighbourhood schools.

Since people in the ghetto were poorer, fewer tax dollars went to the schools. This helps us better understand Öste’s argument of how the situation is circular. It is also these circumstances that Öste repeatedly used as an explanation to the Swedish readers why riots occur. In a later piece Öste is expanding on the de facto segregation, but again does not explain why the Black schools get less money. He explains how de facto segregation results from the Great Migration, with the number of Black people increasing in cities and the white population fleeing out to the suburbs. This causes racially distinct residential areas which means schools districts become exclusively Black or exclusively white.

During the Watts riots, which was possibly one of the most violent riots of the 1960s, Öste once again explains the reasons behind the riots. He begins by explaining that in Los Angeles Black people make out about 13% of the population, but because of segregation, in certain neighbourhoods they make out 97%. One of these neighbourhoods with a high population of

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Black people was Watts, which Öste argues had all the ingredients for riots. “… overpopulation, neighbourhoods with low housing standards, large unemployment among young people and a tough relationship with the police…” Notice how Öste portrays the neighbourhood in the position as the victim. We can blame riots on many unfounded reasons, but Öste actively makes the decision to explain that this is not because of any violent nature but because of the terrible conditions people have to live in. It is not the rioters who are the problem, but the conditions they live under. This explanation is something Öste held on to, which we can see in his explanation of a riot in New Jersey in 1970, writing how the underlying conditions were the same ones that caused the riots back in 1967 and 1968.

But there is an exception to be found in Öste’s reporting, where the riot is not explained in the same way as the other ones. This was the riots following the assassination of Dr King, riots that erupted all over America. After writing how it was the white violence that killed Dr King, with a white bullet, he explains the eruption. “And the reaction came from his people, a reaction he himself would have rejected and experienced as a damming defeat. When the smoke pillars rose over Washington centre and the looters stormed through the streets it happened in the name of sorrow.” While Öste brings up that Dr King would not have condoned this violence, he expressed some understanding that this was a reaction of sorrow of what had happened. Dr King was the icon of non-violence and he was greeted with a bullet. It might not be that difficult to understand then that this reaction could be understood.

To end this section on race riots, there is a part of Öste’s article on the Washington riots that exhibits themes of both police violence and the underlying reasons for riots. I think this definitely showcases Öste’s opinion on the situation of racism in America. He writes how it is up to white leaders to stop the white racists counter-reaction, following that with:

And mainly to stop all provocations by the police, to discipline the forces where – in all the cities in the US, even far up in the North – there are many men who are the Ku Klux Klans spiritual brothers. And now wants nothing more than to use violence against black people, gladly lethal violence. That this atmosphere and threat exist have been illustrated by previous race riots; all the negroes who have been shot down by police bullets in their backs in Watts, Newark and Detroit during the “hot summers”. That violence, the white police violence, that carry out death penalties against a looter, a thief, was illustrated some month ago in the ghetto commissions extensive report.

223 “Nationalgardet in mot raskravaller”, Dagens Nyheter, 14/8 1965. Translation by the author: “… överbefolkning, kvarter med ytterligt låg bostadsstandard, stor arbetslöshet bland ungdomen och ett hårt motsatsförhållande till polisen…”
Öste’s remarks are a scathing attack on the American police and systemic racism. Again it is important to remember that Öste wrote this in the context of race riots, mainly perpetrated by Black Americans. Öste had every opportunity to express understanding but still condemn the violence that occurred. Instead, he took this opportunity to discuss white violence and how it is systematically used against Black Americans. This can be taken a step further, because Öste does not purely bring to light the fact that the causes of riots have their roots in white violence. He explicitly connected white police officers to the KKK. Though Öste had a factual basis for this claim, as he witnessed this in the South, it is a highly moralistic claim to make.

At the beginning of the chapter, I wrote it would serve two purposes. Highlighting how Öste wrote on Black and white confrontation and an indicator for where Öste thought of the use of violence. This was to understand to what extent Öste supported the cause of Black liberation. When there was Black and white confrontation Öste did not condone the rioters, but he did not condemn them either. He expressed understanding and tried to explain to his readers why this was happening. But Öste was deeply critical about the white police violence. When it comes to the use of violence, there is some evidence that by the later years of Öste’s time in America, he to some extent supported Black violence. Some weeks after his Cairo reporting, Dagens Nyheter received a letter to the editor complaining about Öste’s reporting from Cairo. I will discuss this letter and Öste’s response more thoroughly in a later chapter, but a part of Öste’s response is worthwhile bringing up here. He writes how the Black people in Cairo have faced humiliation and discrimination without reaction until now. “Now there is a wonderful defiance, an armed defiance – with the conviction that in the country of gun mania it takes a rifle to defend one’s home and dignity.”

Öste describing the armed resistance as wonderful indicates that he did support the use of violence. While his position might have been uncertain earlier, by 1971 he expressed it explicitly. Again this shows us Öste’s distinct moral character which cannot be disregarded. Öste openly supported the use of violence, considering it to be what was morally necessary. Furthermore, it shows once again that Öste was on the side of Black Americans.

dödande våld. Att de stämningarna och det hotet finns har många tidigare raskravaller illustrerat; alla de neger som fällts av poliskolor i ryggen i Watts, Newark och Detroit under ”heta somrar”. Det våldet, den vita polisens våld, som utmäter dödsstraff mot en plundrare, en tjuv, illustrerades också för någon månad sedan i gettokommissionens stora rapport.”.

Chapter 9. The Black Panther Party

After the murder of Dr King in April 1968, Black America changed, which is also visible through Sven Öste’s reporting. The mainstream movement had already seen a decline after the judicial victories from the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act, coupled with the fact that Dr King had not been as successful in the North. Bloom and Martin explores this line of argument, they claim that towards the end of the 1960s, moderate organisations like SNCC and CORE imploded since there was not much legal segregation left to fight. Thus, a vacuum arose, filled by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale with their Black Panther Party.228

Öste did his first major piece on the BPP at the end of June in 1968, an article that in part is an interview with Bobby Seale; which was quite early in their rise to international recognition that happened over to course of 1968.229 After the murder of Dr King, the BPP became one of the major topics in Öste’s reporting on the Black liberation movement in America. Öste’s significant reporting on the BPP is one reason I have dedicated a chapter to them, the other reason is that they were far more radical than any Black organisation that Öste previously had reported on. Because of this, it becomes an interesting research subject to examine how Öste depicted them and their struggles.

9.1. Bobby Seale & Huey Newton

Since The Black Panther Party was a relatively new organisation to the scene, it is necessary to assess Öste’s initial reactions to the movement. For that reason the first part of this chapter will focus on the founding fathers of the BPP, Bobby Seale and Huey Newton. This includes Öste’s interview with Seale and articles surrounding the trial of Newton, which allows us to examine the writings on the leaders in two different contexts.

In the first article that includes the interview on Seale, Öste provided plenty of additional information as well; with several pictures of the BPP leader and a translated article from the BPP’s own newspaper. What is apparent is that Öste is ambiguous in his portrayal of the BPP, describing negative and positive aspects. For the positive aspects, Öste paints a vivid picture of the BPP headquarter he visited. Seale gets a call notifying him there is a car of armed white men driving around a Black neighbourhood. Seale urged them to stay calm, call the newspapers and only fire in self-defence. Then Seale tells Öste that the police is following BPP members and keeps arresting them with false accusations with the goal of exhaust their finances through bails.230 This tells of a disciplined organisation, hunted by the police and that is not out to seek or cause violence but

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228 Bloom & Martin 2013, pp. 11–12.
229 “DE SVARTA PANTRARN”, Dagens Nyheter, 30/6 1968.
230 Ibid.
won't shy away from defending themselves. It is a contrast to the mainstream depictions of the BPP. But then there are the negative aspects.

In the headquarters, Öste writes how there are hateful caricatures of police officers, depicting them as bleeding pigs. There are also posters urging people to arm themselves quickly. When writing on how they got their name from the Lowndes organisation, Öste makes the argument that there is no confusing the two since the BPP is an armed Black task force. Öste describes the two as following. "It is not just the contrast between the South and the ghetto. It is the gap between the old – almost idyllic – revolt and the new, the weapons and the violence." While this depicts a more violent organisation Öste is clear that it is a matter of self-defence and not starting attacks.

Although one could see this as Öste simply giving two sides of the story, there is more to it. A good way to describe Öste’s approach to the BPP, I argue, is to look back on his earlier work. Specifically, his book on the Algerian War Rebellerna where he writes about his stand on the conflict in the preface. There he explains how the book and his stance are not trying to be impartial but it will critically accept one side of the story. I argue we can see the same approach here from Öste since his depiction is not entirely neutral. He is also not vilifying the BPP, but most accurately he critically accepts their story.

Some months later on the Huey Newton trial, there are similarities in the portrayal although there were some things written by Öste which suggest that he had warmed up towards the BPP. The now classic topics make an appearance, how the police and the BPP have two different stories of how the event happened, how there is only one Black man on the jury and how Newton has long suffered harassment from the police. But as in the previous article, there is ambiguity. Öste writes how men of the BPP said that there would be bloodshed if Newton was not released, and white police would be murdered if he was sentenced to death. These are clearly quite harsh depictions and show the BPP in a violent manner. However, there is sympathy to be found. Öste writes how the BPP has become the meeting point for the bitterness found among Black Americans and how their primary goal is to take control inside the ghetto. On another note, Öste explains how underground newspapers argue that if Newton is convicted, it will prove that the peaceful protests were vain in its fight against the system.

While brief this provides a look at Öste’s initial opinions on the BPP which I summarise as critically accepting. There is still some apprehension towards the violence that can be found, but as he wrote multiple times, this violence was only for self-defence. It is not too hard to understand the position that Öste was writing from, since it had only been a few months since the assassination.

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232 Öste 1958, p. preface.

of Dr King. During his first five years in America, Öste covered the Black liberation movement as a peaceful one; with the attacks coming from the white racists. Now suddenly he faced an organisation that would defend itself against these attacks. But Öste did not stay apprehensive for long; one of the important events in developing an understanding for the Black Panther Party was the murder of Chairman Fred Hampton.

9.2. The murder of Fred Hampton

Perhaps one of the most interesting stories Öste reported on was the murder of Fred Hampton. Hampton has become one of the most famous Panthers, apart from the founders, largely because of his assassination. While the assassination is a substantial part of his post-mortem fame, as Craig McPherson argues, we should not forget what he accomplished in his short 21-year-old life.234 Before joining the BPP, Hampton was a member of the NAACP in Chicago where he became the president of the youth council in 1967. In 1968, Hampton joined the BPP chapter in Chicago and he soon thereafter became its Chairman. Two of his major accomplishments as Chairman, as highlighted by McPherson, was the Free Breakfast program for disadvantaged children along with establishing peace among the local gangs which turned into cooperation between the gangs.235 Hampton and the Chicago chapter of the BPP must have received a great deal of attention because on the early morning of December 4, 1969, fourteen police officers raided Hampton’s apartment and murdered Hampton in his bed. Two things made this possible; the first was that the FBI had an informer in the Chicago BPP by the name of William O’Neal who provided a detailed floor plan of Hamptons apartment. The second was the fact that a blood test during autopsy showed that Hampton was heavily drugged with a strong sleeping medication. Bobby Rush of the BPP claimed the FBI infiltrator drugged Hampton. One last piece of information is that the police claimed the Panthers opened fire during the raid, but this was not the case. All the shots fired had come from the police, something the BPP showed by inviting journalists for a tour of the apartment.236 These tours for journalists was something Öste reported on. Finally it is worth to keep in mind that not all of this information was available at the time when Öste covered it.

Öste first reported on the Hampton murder on December 6 1969. Writing how the murders in Chicago was the latest attack on the BPP. While the West Coast and Oakland had been the key battlegrounds for a while, it had now moved to Chicago where there had been several shootouts sparked by police storming BPP headquarters. Writing on the event of December 4, Öste writes how the police stormed a BPP headquarter at dawn, with a 10-minute firefight killing two leaders, Mark Clark, and Fred Hampton. Some women were also injured, but according to the police the

women had taken part in the shootout. After the raid, the police showcased how they had found illegal weapons, which was the stated reason for the raid. While Öste reported some misinformation initially, he ended the article by writing that the Panthers claim Hampton was murdered in his sleep.237

But Öste’s understanding of the case slowly evolved. A few days later, reporting on a shootout between BPP members and the police in Los Angeles, Öste brought up the event in Chicago. Öste again discusses that there are reasons to doubt the story told by police, but more in-depth than in the previous article. Last time he mentioned that the BPP contested the story, but now the objections were coming not only from the party but from others; Black people and white people. By this time Öste also mentioned that there had been an autopsy confirming this new story. On top of this, the BPP had now invited journalists into the apartment and then reported that based on the bullet holes in the walls, the story of the police does not add up.238 At this point there had only been brief mentions of what happened on December 4th, but already Öste’s story was bit by bit aligning itself to the one we know today.

A few weeks later, it is again apparent that Öste has moved on the subject. In the two previous articles, he first wrote how the shootout left two dead and then that two were killed in the shootout.239 Now, Öste writes how Fred Hampton and another leader was killed by the police. The change in language is slight, but impactful. Earlier, the murders were described in a passive voice, that Hampton and Clark died because of the shootout. But the passive changed to the active, with the police actively murdering the two men. However this was only the beginning, since Öste spent the entire article discussing the doubts of the official story. The reason for the article was that a BPP lawyer had been arrested for taking away a doorpost at the headquarters of the Chicago shootout. In fact, the lawyer argued that the doorpost was evidence of the fact that the Panthers did not engage in the shootout which would disprove the police story. Furthermore, Öste continued to provide information that questioned the official story. For example, police showed pictures of bullets holes in the apartment that turned out to be rusty nails, how the police did not gather evidence at the scene like fingerprints and how they did not seal off the apartment; in order to blame the BPP for eliminating evidence.240

Yet Öste was not entirely in disbelief over the police story as he still put quotations that Hampton was “murdered” and that a reason for the police not closing off the apartment could be a lapsus, an involuntary mistake.241 Next time Öste brought up the murder of Hampton was months later, in October, in an article on yet another shootout between the BPP and police in Detroit.

241 Ibid.
During these months, some cynicism had got into Öste. When giving a description of the events in Detroit, he writes that thus far there was only the police version of the story which is always one-sided, and often misleading. Then he writes the following.

Bitter experience has taught the lesson, both personal experience and the harsh debates around the clashes where the police version have been exposed as fundamentally false, such as in the Fred Hampton drama in Chicago about a year ago.\textsuperscript{242}

It seems as by this point, the truth about what happened on December 4 1969 had reached Öste. He subsequently writes how the police had “executed the truth” about what occurred that night.\textsuperscript{243} Beyond this he brought up the fact that the police fired about 100 shots during the Chicago shootout, while the BPP might have fired one bullet. Despite this, Öste writes, no one had been held accountable.\textsuperscript{244} If Öste had any qualms about the story told by the BPP, that surely had gone away. In fact, this together with other attacks on the BPP fostered deep scepticism in Öste about the police and how they consistently skewed stories. I will explore this further in the next part of this chapter.

Öste’s final thoughts on the matter came a year later, towards the end of his time as a foreign correspondent in August 1971. This time the news was brought up because fourteen government officials was put on trial for obstruction of justice regarding the murder of Fred Hampton and Mark Clark. Öste compares the case to that of the movie Z, in which the government and the police are behind the murder of a politician. This, Öste claims, is what occurred on the streets of Chicago for two years. When recollecting the events, Öste now writes how the police stormed in shooting with automatic rifles. The story has come a long way from the one Öste first reported on. Öste then retells some of the evidence we have read about previously but with some additional context. The previously mentioned bullet holes that turned out to be nails, the police gave that photo to a conservative newspaper in an attempt to stop the scepticism about the police story. However, there was new evidence as well, such as the testimony given by another Panther. After the shots had seized, police officers had walked into Hamptons bedroom and discovered that he was still alive. Then they started shooting once more.\textsuperscript{245}

Over the course of about two years, the story of the assassination on Fred Hampton had gone from a shootout casualty to the victim of a police murder. While the story told by Öste was initially heavily based on facts as given by the police, this changed over time. At first this might not seem that noteworthy; that a journalist over time changed his story according to new evidence coming

\textsuperscript{242}"Efter eldstriden bara polisens version", Dagens Nyheter, 27/10 1970. Translation by the author: "Bitter erfarenhet har givit lärdomen, både personliga upplevelser och de hårda debatterna kring sammanstötningarna där polisens version avslöjats som grundfalsk, som t ex i Fred Hampton-dramat i Chicago för snart ett år sedan.”.
\textsuperscript{243}"Efter eldstriden bara polisens version", Dagens Nyheter, 27/10 1970. Translation by the author: “Men det blev mycket snabbt klart att man också arkebuserat sanningen.”.
\textsuperscript{244}"Efter eldstriden bara polisens version", Dagens Nyheter, 27/10 1970.
\textsuperscript{245} “Ett steg mot rättvisa i Chicago”, Dagens Nyheter, 26/8 1971.
to light. Although that is true, there is more to this story. The murder of Fred Hampton had a significant impact in how Öste viewed the attacks on the BPP by authorities. Öste went as far as comparing this murder to a massacre by the US Army in Vietnam. “So the USA:s second war has got its Song My.”246 For this reason, it is crucial to bring up the Chicago event before the next part of the chapter where the hunt for Black Panthers will be discussed.

9.3. The hunt for Black Panthers

While the murder of Fred Hampton might be one of the most memorable events in the history of the Black Panther Party, it was only one occurrence in a long line of attacks on the BPP. Being an influential Black Power organisation, it comes to little surprise that they were under the watch of the FBI; especially with their increasing recognition during 1968. They were targeted by the FBI’s counterintelligence program; better known as COINTELPRO. Bloom and Martin discuss this. In an internal FBI memo they bring up, Bloom and Martin discuss how the FBI attempted to disrupt and neutralise the BPP. It was the stated goal by J. Edgar Hoover to bring down any Black nationalist group to prevent the rise of a “messiah” figure that could unify the Black nationalist movement. Hoover pointed out Dr King, Carmichael, and Malcolm X as potential messiahs.247 While COINTELPRO was not uncovered until later, Öste followed the attacks on the BPP closely. Especially during December 1969, where he wrote nine articles about the attacks.

Öste’s coverage began in January 1969, writing on the murder of BPP students; one of which, Alprentice Carter, was the friend of Eldridge Cleaver.248 Öste described how this was followed by the classic controversy where police first quickly release damning information about the victims, then they arrest BPP member to prevent retaliation. BPP in response claimed that they knew that the police was behind the murders. Öste was not clearly aligning himself with either party; but points out that although the police let it be known that the victim had been arrested many times, the victim had never been convicted. I argue that this is not only a factual distinction made by Öste. As it also serves the purpose of showing how the police were attempting to defame an innocent man.249

However, that was only the beginning. In December, Seale was charged with ordering the murder of the BPP member Alex Rackley. Other members of the BPP had tortured and murdered Rackley for allegedly being a spy for the police. But the defence argued that it was Seale who passed the death sentence on Rackley. Though there is one problem with this as Öste brings up, Seale was on the other side of the country when these events took place. Or as Öste puts it. “…if the

246 “Det gäller alla svarta”, Dagens Nyheter, 15/12 1969; Song My is the Swedish name for the Mỹ Lai Massacre.
248 Black Panther leader.
prosecutor gets his will through then it will be the small New Haven that becomes the town where Panther-leader Bobby Seale was sentenced to death for a murder that was committed when he was hundreds of miles from the scene of the crime.” What comes across is that this was an example of how the police were trying to frame Seale for a murder he possibly cannot have committed. When the trial later took place, Öste reported how the jury was skewed with nine white people and three Black. But as Öste reported, the jury did not reach a verdict on Seale. Eventually all the charges against Seale were dropped.

This led to Öste writing an article titled, “FBI tries to break the Black Panthers” Öste made his case by giving plenty of examples of attacks on the BPP, from the arrest of Huey Newton and the murder of Bobby Hutton to numerous raids on BPP headquarters in Chicago and the murder of Fred Hampton. These, according to Öste, are simply the events that have got the most attention when it comes to the police and FBI’s attacks on the Black Panther Party. Put together, 28 BPP member had been killed in confrontations with the police. Members were also arrested en masse in an endeavour to break the party. Another thing is that these attacks often came as raids on BPP headquarters, based on fraudulent reasons. In these raids, Öste explained how the police systematically destroyed the interior; for example their archives. Öste went as far as calling these raids military activity. These kinds of comparisons lived on, as seen when Öste writes on yet another raid on BPP in Los Angeles. This attack was a joint effort, according to Öste, between the FBI and the California Governor Ronald Reagan, which used the police to execute the attack. Öste frames the raid as “Three police and some panthers were injured in the battle, that’s probably so far the most warlike in the long line of police attacks on panther headquarters across the country.” Comparing the attacks on the BPP with warfare might seem dramatic, but had not yet reached its climax.

This came about a week later, when Öste began an article with the following.

The white, superiorly armed, forces storms into enemies’ nest with violent firepower. Above the battlefield a helicopter is buzzing. A “seek and destroy mission” aimed towards “communists” and “terrorists” with another skin colour – in a world where everyone has a different skin colour, feeling indifference, distrust and hostility towards the intruders. When the battle is over there are reports coming from the white headquarter – on the number of killed opponents, number of prisoners, number of seized firearms. But through the ravaged area the opponent’s message is

250 “’Ett enkelt fall’ Pantrar i envig med systemet”, Dagens Nyheter, 5/12 1969.
251 “Panterprocesserna blir en prövosten för alla radikaler”, Dagens Nyheter, 15/7 1970.
253 Bloom & Martin 2013, p. 250.
Öste argued that this could describe an American attack towards an FNL village in Southern Vietnam. Or it might as well describe a police raid towards a BPP headquarters. It is not only Öste that makes this comparison but the BPP and people outside of the conflict saw the similarities. In fact, how the police and the FBI talked about the conflict, Öste notes, is reminiscent of how the Pentagon looks at the war in Vietnam.

Here it is essential to take a moment to discuss the quote above and the impact that it has. It should also be remembered, for the sake of context, that while Öste was the foreign correspondent in Washington, he did extensive reporting on the Vietnam War. As I have mentioned previously, it is his covering of the Vietnam War that earned him the most recognition and the first Stora Journalistpriset, the most prestigious award for journalists in Sweden. For this reason, it is safe to claim that Öste was an authority on the Vietnam War and had a better understanding than most of the realities of the war. This makes the quote especially impactful. It is one thing for Öste to report on these attacks on the BPP; another for him to compare it to the Vietnam War. This if anything ought to definitely show how Öste viewed the hunt for Black Panthers.

Beyond this, the article brings up several things Öste had written on earlier, that the BPP and police have different stories on how the shootouts begin and how the police systematically destroy BPP property. This included stealing money from their headquarters and destroying the food that was meant for their Free Breakfast programs. Another thing that is brought up which I have yet to discuss is the support from moderate leaders.

Some days prior to the Vietnam article, Öste had written twice on the support that had come from moderate leaders in response to the attacks on BPP, in which they criticised Nixon for the attacks. The moderate support and Öste’s reporting on it is important for two reasons. First, it shows, as Öste points out, that the situation was severe enough that moderate and conservative leaders have expressed support for the radical BPP. Second, on another level it reinforces the narrative that Öste reported on. If there were any doubts about the attacks on the BPP, the support from moderate leaders who were more widely accepted surely shows that the situation really is...
serious. SCLC was reportedly worried about the FBI’s attempts to crush the BPP, thinking other Black organisations would be next.\textsuperscript{260} 

There are some additional examples among Öste’s articles when it comes to attacks on the BPP. Such as the police raid in New Orleans when the police used automatic firearms and helicopters\textsuperscript{261} or the article on BPP members that were incarcerated for nine months without a trial and an unusually high bail.\textsuperscript{262} While there might have been some caution in how Öste reported on the violence initially; that dissipated with time. From the recurring articles on the subject and how it alerted the moderate leaders to comparing the attacks to the Vietnam War, it is clear how Öste viewed these attacks and the BPP. Having experienced the murder of Dr King and the downfall of moderate organisations, Öste started to doubt the non-violent approach and saw the need for an organisation like BPP to improve the situation for Black Americans. It is also worth considering that Öste had first-hand experience with the Vietnam War and the Algerian revolution. This experience influenced how he perceived the BPP, therefore seeing the similarities in the treatment of the BPP and Vietnamese revolutionaries.

That Öste was influenced by his Third world experience has come up previously; for example, when Öste compared the spirits of the Freedom Students to that of Algerian revolutionaries. This shows that Öste’s experience from the Third World had a remarkable impact on how Öste came to view the Black liberation movement. If it were not because Öste had made these comparisons during his first month in America, the anti-imperialist sentiments could have been adopted from the BPP. But, since the comparisons were made before BPP ever existed, it was Öste’s own experience that made him regard the Black liberation movement as a part of the international anti-imperialist struggle. In this chapter I have shown again that Öste consistently sided with the Black liberation movement and how he wrote about the BPP is essential to gain a deeper understanding of his writings. Getting an overview of Öste’s reporting on not only the BPP, but the Black liberation movement at large there is one thing that stands out. Öste did Third World reporting in a First World nation, which will be explored further in the next chapter.

\textsuperscript{261} “Rasoro i södern Slagsmål”, \textit{Dagens Nyheter}, 16/9 1970.
\textsuperscript{262} “Fängelse tre kvarts år – utan dom”, \textit{Dagens Nyheter}, 29/12 1969.
Chapter 10. Understanding Öste

In this penultimate part of the thesis, I will expand on themes brought up throughout the analysis to provide a deeper understanding of Öste and his work. Throughout the thesis I have returned to two aspects that I argue are crucial in understanding Öste’s work. It has been both explicit and implicit that Öste was highly influenced by covering decolonisation conflicts in Algeria and Vietnam. Öste’s coverage of the Third World is perhaps the most significant part of his legacy, especially on Vietnam. I argue one ought to look at Öste’s reporting on the American race issue through the same lens. Essentially, I argue, that he conducted Third World reporting in a First World nation. In conjunction with this, Öste’s work needs to be understood within a transnational context. In addition, I have repeatedly shown the strong moralistic and partisan nature of Öste’s reporting and writing. This is important not only for how he portrayed the Black liberation movement and its white resistance, but for how he contributed to the image of America in Sweden.

10.1. Third world reporting in a first world nation

More than once Öste made a direct connection between the Black liberation movement and revolutionary movements abroad, as already discussed. Early examples of this was within weeks of Öste arriving in America when he spent a week in Americus, Georgia. There he made the connection twice, comparing the Freedom Students to the revolutionaries in places like Algeria and Rhodesia and when writing on the Black boycott of white businesses. In the latter he writes how it is enough for a minority to keep on fighting to put the white society in motion, which he has learned from his time in Africa. Not only are these explicit comparisons, but it is also worth noting who it is Öste compares to the revolutionaries abroad. Freedom students and other non-violent activists. What this shows is that it is not merely the approach of the activists that brings the comparison to Öste, as one could argue. But also the fight they were up against. Both the Algerian revolutionaries and the Black Americans were fighting an oppressive white state hoping to improve their lives.

Another time Öste made an explicit comparison between the BPP and the FNL. I discussed this article in the section on the BPP, but not in the context of the Third World. Whilst comparing them, Öste notes how “The parallel is becoming increasingly noticeable…” What is noteworthy is that the comparison is not only because the BPP arms themselves like the revolutionaries in Vietnam, but that there are similarities on several levels. Some of these levels include how America attacked these groups using similar strategies and how both could be considered guerrilla troops

fighting for their people against the occupational army. This comparison is therefore not only significant because Öste compares the pursuing of the BPP to American warfare in Vietnam but also because it puts the BPP and the Black liberation movement in the context of the Third World and decolonisation. A likely answer to this connection could have been that Öste had read and was influenced by the BPP’s own rhetoric, since they themselves talked about their struggles in these terms with the police acting as an occupational force in the ghettos. While this is possible for some of the specific rhetoric used in this later piece, it cannot explain Öste putting the Black liberation movement in a Third World context. Since he already made that connection for the Freedom Students, years before the foundation of the BPP. Instead, I argue the answer can be found by extrapolating on an idea from Stig Hadenius.

Hadenius mentions that many of the reporters that were critical of the Vietnam War at an early stage had experience from the war in Algeria, including Öste. This is a reasonable argument, as there are similarities in those two conflicts. What has not been explored before, is that this idea can be extrapolated to the Black liberation movement. First Öste built on his experience in Algeria and over the years when he went on several journeys to Vietnam included that into his experience as well, which we can see in the examples previously discussed. There are at least two reasons this has not been explored. First, as I have already explained, is that there are no significant works on Sven Öste. Previous research has primarily mentioned him in passing and is remembered by contemporaries for his work on Vietnam. While some mention his work on the Black liberation movement, it lacks depth and has been overshadowed by the Vietnam reporting. Second, is that the Black liberation movement was different enough from these other conflicts that have resulted in it being overlooked in this context. It was not always an armed conflict nor was it an independent nation that an external force invaded or occupied. But it was an oppressed group that fought against a larger power hoping they would achieve human rights. Since conflicts on several continents influenced the reporting, it has a crucial transnational character. Öste and his reporting is based on not only his experience as a Swede, but as a travelling Swedish journalist reporting from Algeria and Vietnam. In all these places Öste took with him ideas that together with him travelled continents and collectively they influenced how he viewed the American race issue and how he wrote about it.

We can witness the transnational aspect on two different levels. First is that of Öste’s reporting from these different revolutionary conflicts. To understand his reporting, it becomes important to consider his personal transnational context. Second is that of the Black liberation movement. Öste’s understanding of the struggle is influenced by his own transnational context, which puts the movement itself in a transnational context. Among African Americans at the time and especially in recent years this itself is nothing new, as I have shown with the article by Kevin Gaines. What is

remarkable is that Öste at the time thought in these terms coming with an outsider’s perspective. Whether it is called a Third World context or transnational, these aspects are integral to Sven Öste’s reporting to understand why his reporting was constructed in the way that it was.

Finally, is one of the most consistent aspects in Öste’s reporting that show the Third World context of the reporting. This is that Sven Öste consistently sided with the Black liberation movement, whether it was led by Dr King or the BPP which has been shown throughout the study. While this at first might not seem related to these other conflicts, like with the Black liberation movement Öste sided with the revolutionaries in Algeria and Vietnam. Öste admits taking the side of the Algerian revolutionaries in his own book, despite that he called it critically accepting their side.267 And as mentioned previously, Åselius writes that Öste was committed to North Vietnam’s cause.268 The fact that Öste consistently sided with the revolutionaries cannot be explained through political alignment, since there was no consistent ideological background between the three movements concerned. What they did have in common was, as Öste viewed it, that they were all fighting an oppressive state. This was a consequential stand that Öste was taking, which indicates the partisan nature of his reporting.

10.2. The partisan reporter

I have shown in this thesis that there is an intrinsic partisan nature to Sven Öste’s writings, this was especially clear in the chapter on white resistance. While it has been brought up it has not been discussed at length, which is important to do if we are to understand how and why Öste wrote the way that he did about the different actors; and the consequences this had for the picture of America he was mediating to the Swedish audience. Öste’s partisanship was expressed in several ways, from the words he picked to describe the different sides to how he explained what was going on. This section will focus on examples where there is a clear bias in Öste’s writings that could not properly fit in an earlier segment.

Sometimes Öste was explicit when taking a stance, for example in the article I brought up whilst discussing President Nixon; where Öste thought that the only positive outcome from 1970 was that President Nixon started to receive critique.269 Another example was when Öste wrote some personal reflections on the Watts riots some months after. Then he expressed how uncomfortable he was having to share a connection with racists and subsequently that he should not have tried to understand the police but the Black youths that were on the rooftops with rifles.270 There is expressed concern here from Öste with how he dealt with the situation, that he had not done a better job in trying to understand the side of the oppressed. At no point does Öste wish to further

267 Öste 1958, p. preface.
268 Åselius 2019, p. 452.
270 “Nul”, Dagens Nyheter, 30/12 1965.
understand the situation of the police, because in his views there was nothing to understand. Öste had a clear moral view on the matter, which told him that one side had not been properly understood. Similar ideas were expressed when Öste, together with other foreign correspondents, were asked to summarise the 1960s.

For this Öste focused on the race issue in America where he writes that this could be the decade where people would realise that the conflict cannot be solved by inviting African Americans on the conditions of white people. He continues that this was an illusion that had existed in America for many years, expressed through the non-violence by people such as Dr King and Medgar Evers. Both of which were murdered. In its place something new arose. “The Black people in the ghetto with different voices, a resentment within the slums, with black brother-violence and white excessive violence. But also the new – the pride, the will to assert their distinctive character, “black is beautiful”, guns, a revolutionary idea.”

This expands on the idea that the solution to the problem was not to bring African Americans into a white world, but that the world needed to open up to them. It is also worth noting that Öste focused on the race situation in America for his article, and not Vietnam. Though he brings Vietnam up briefly. It shows how much of an important issue this was to Öste.

But Öste’s approach was not limited to thinking that President Nixon was bad or visibly taking a side. We can also discern it in how he tackles certain issues. The first example is when Öste writes about the movie The Pawnbroker by Sidney Lumet before it premiered in Sweden. His text is not a review of the movie, but “…some of the nuances in the movies complicated social background.”

The movie tells the story of a Holocaust survivor by the name of Sol Nazerman, who owns a pawn shop in Harlem. It is within this context Öste tried to explain the prejudices that could be found in American ghettos towards Jews. What is intriguing is how Öste chose to approach this. While he admit these prejudices exist, Öste argued that the topic is complicated. One reason for the prejudices, as explained by Öste, is that white store owner exploit Black people in the ghetto. He explains that acts as the contemporary plantation. The problem is that most of the stores in the ghetto are owned by white people who take the profits back with them to their white suburbs. Many of these store owners are Jews; for this reason, the Jew, as Öste puts it, becomes the symbol for white oppression in the ghetto. They are therefore not against the Jew because he is a Jew, but because he is white.

But this was only the first half of the article, the latter part Öste let Black author James Baldwin explain the situation by taking quotes from Baldwin’s book Notes of a Native Son in which Baldwin

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272 “HARLEMS DUBBLA RASFÖRDOMAR i film av ”Harriet Anderssons regissör”, Dagens Nyheter, 21/3 1966. Translation by the author: ”…några av nyanserna i filmens komplicerade sociala bakgrund.”

explores this issue. What Öste presents here is an argument he has already presented but in the words of Baldwin, which shows that Öste got his stance from reading Baldwin. One passage that Öste has translated is the following.

The Negro, facing a Jew, hates, at bottom, not his Jewishness but the color of his skin. It is not the Jewish tradition by which he has been betrayed but the tradition of his native land. But just as a society needs a scapegoat, so hatred must have a symbol. Georgia has the Negro and Harlem has the Jew.274

Remarkably, Öste wholly accepted this line of reasoning and translated long quotes by Baldwin explaining why these prejudices exist, almost as to excuse them. At the beginning of the article, Öste writes how terms like Mr Goldberg are used in the ghetto which is a hateful term in his own words. Öste after that writes how the same word can be heard in the South by Nazis and KKK members when they exert their antisemitism.275 What Öste is arguing for is when the word is used by white extremists in the South it is antisemitism, but prejudice when spoken in the North. Because the articles’ purpose is to explain why the prejudices exist, this cannot be that Öste equates the Northern ghetto with the South. This shows the lengths Öste were willing to go when presenting African Americans to Swedish readers, in spite of the fact that there were justifiable criticisms.

While writing on the BPP I explained how Öste had a habit of clarifying when the article was based on information by police. This is something that Öste did consistently and is a practice that Shoemaker and Vos call second guessing. This is when Öste doubts some information and attempts to contextualise it for his readers, which is good journalistic practice. Especially when the police had a habit of being misleading. Öste consistently second guessed information, but it is obvious in an article where police stormed a church in Detroit. A group called The Republic of New Africa was in the church when police claimed they were fired upon, which resulted in a huge raid costing one persons life. What stands out is that although this is a brief article, Öste writes seven times that the information available is coming from the police which means the reader is only receiving one side of the story. This is more than simply journalistic integrity, Öste must report on this story but is determined to do his utmost to prevent readers from misinterpreting the story.276

In 1971, Öste’s last year as a foreign correspondent in America, Dagens Nyheter received a letter from a reader about Sven Öste’s articles on the race conflict in Cairo; which Öste responded to. His response is possibly the best source there is on his own thoughts about his work in America. First, however, the critique needs to be brought up.

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274 “HARLEMS DUBBLA RASFÖRDOMAR i film av ”Harriet Anderssons regissör”, Dagens Nyheter, 21/3 1966; Baldwin 2017, p. 73.
The reader is concerned about Öste’s reporting after having read his loaded articles from Cairo, Illinois. He thought it was bizarre that with Öste being one of Sweden foremost experts on American relations after his years in America, he always writes in a one-sided fashion by always writing about negative events. In contrast, the reader brings up Gunnar Myrdal that had said that the South had improved a great deal since Myrdal last visited 30 years ago. He finish by suggesting that perhaps Öste could write something positive occasionally.277

Öste’s retort was that he agreed that white racism is despicable, but he argues that he, in fact, writes about positive things. These things include the Black resistance in Cairo with the United Front and Black resistance all over America. Öste clarify that he considered Black resistance to white racism to be something positive in America. Then Öste respond to what he has learned during his years in America. “The “experience” that Staffan Bodemar talks about has brought me away, from what I now consider, naïve belief in progress and idolisation – my own that is – of this country about fifteen, twenty years ago, to a deep pessimism.” Öste admits here to having a change of heart during his years in America, now doubting there can be any progress. He also recognises that he is pessimistic about America, which is something that has been highlighted in this thesis. Öste continued his argument by claiming that the reader is only tired of being reminded of the darkness that exist in America, and if he wanted more nuance, he could read articles on America from others than Öste. However, towards the end of the article Öste accepted some criticisms, like how he can go too far by using his platform for outbursts of anger.

Those critics who find a “negativism” that seeps into pure news telegrams, that in contrast with the “columns” should be referential, straightforward and without opinion, have sadly enough often right. And gets supported by colleagues at home who sends friendly jabs. It is not entirely uncomplicated to “objectively” – this impossible term – to summarise a speech by Nixon about the Vietnam drama with all the falsehoods and cynicism without letting once own reactions get across.279

If his own words through the years were not evidence enough of the moralistic and partisan-driven nature of his writing, his own recognition of the fact should be the last bit of evidence needed for the claim. Öste admits that he let his own opinions come through in his writings to the extent that it had been commented on by his colleagues.

There is also a connection between Öste’s transnational Third World context and the moralistic writings. That Öste puts the Black liberation movement within a Third World context is inherently

277 “Ensidig, negativ bild av USA”, Dagens Nyheter, 21/1 1971.
a moralistic act. By drawing comparisons between what occurred to Black people in America to the revolutionary struggles in Algeria and Vietnam, Öste brings the race issue to a new level. When Öste compares the hunt for the BPP to America's war in Vietnam, it is important to remember that large parts of Sweden were against the Vietnam war. With Öste drawing the comparison, he is showing the Swedish readers that America treated its Black citizens similarly to how they treated the Vietnamese. Thus, showing that American colonial efforts were not only a Third World problem, but something that they exercised on their own citizens. With that, Öste shows that if Swedes were morally against the war in Vietnam, they should equally oppose the treatment of Black Americans.
Chapter 11. Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to get an understanding for how the race issue was depicted in Sweden through analysing Sven Öste’s work in Dagens Nyheter. Throughout this research I have explained and exhibited how we can understand Sven Öste’s writings and what it contributed to the Swedish image of America. By doing this, I have revealed the importance of studying the journalists and their background. As Öste’s moralistic personality and his experience from Algeria and Vietnam heavily shaped how he wrote about the American race issue. Previous research has claimed that the race issue played a major role in shifting how Sweden perceived America. Through this study on Sven Öste’s work, I have provided some insight into writings that contributed to this. With the engaging and emotionally driven nature of the reporting that this study has brought to light, it has provided previously unknown insight into the Swedish image of America that dominated the 1960s.

To understand why perceptions changed, I sought to answer how the different actors were portrayed; how we are to understand Sven Öste’s work and finally what he contributed to the Swedish image of America. All the chapters to some extent shows that Öste was noticeably partisan towards the cause of the Black liberation movement. This partisanship was apparent in many ways. For example, how Öste compared the Black activists in America to revolutionaries in Vietnam and Algeria. This is partisan because Öste was sympathetic towards these other revolutionaries. It is also discernible in how he portrayed different parts of the movement, from Dr King to the Black Panther Party. By characterising them in a positive light, Öste was open with where he stood on the issue. Through analysing what Öste wrote during his time as Washington correspondent, it is evident that Öste thought the moral stance was to support the Black liberation movement.

His opinion on the Black liberation movement becomes unmistakable in contrast with how he wrote about the white resistance. This is partially displayed in the chapters on the state and the white resistance. It is obvious in how Öste wrote about the resistance that he had no sympathies for their cause. This can be seen in how he called their front figures, like George Wallace, mini-Hitler. Since it has been demonstrated that Öste was guided by his morals to influence the opinion of Swedish readers, it becomes apparent that Öste wanted the readers to get a negative opinion of the white resistance.

There are two key aspects one must understand, I argue, to accurately grasp Sven Öste’s reporting. Both in terms of his writing and why he was a revered journalist. One is that Öste’s perhaps most important quality was his moralistic nature. As it had been suggested by earlier research, this study has undoubtedly established that this was the case by close examination of his articles. Since Öste let his opinions show in his reporting, it is understandable that he was a polarising figure. When reading Öste, one must know that the boundary between news and views gets muddled. For this reason, we must take this aspect of his writings into consideration when
conducting any study on his work. Connected with this is Öste’s role as a Third World correspondent and how this influenced his reporting on the Black liberation movement. Öste is largely remembered for his work reporting from the Algerian War but especially from the Vietnam War. What I argue is that not only did this influence Öste and how he wrote about the Black liberation movement, but that Öste’s reporting on the Black liberation movement can be considered a part of that context. Whilst not spatially taking place in the Third World, it did in a theoretical sense. This has been shown by explicit comparisons made by Öste, but also in how he framed the conflict at large. Following this, to understand why Öste portrayed the conflict as he did one ought to see it as I argue he saw it, as a colonial conflict.

In addition, this shows that there are clear transnational aspects to be found within Öste’s work. Concisely these aspects can be found on two different levels. First is that Öste’s own experience as a journalist that has reported on conflicts around the world. Öste’s experience is a transnational matter, as we cannot understand him solely as a Swedish correspondent in America. The ideas that he gathered while reporting from places as Algeria and Vietnam shaped him, and he took this with him to America and this transnational experience affected his work. Second is how he, inadvertently or not, placed the Black liberation movement in a transnational context. The Black liberation movement cannot be confined to taking place solely in America, as it has taken ideas that existed internationally. When Öste compared the conflict in America to that of Vietnam and Algeria, it became more than only an American conflict but one shaped by international factors.

By understanding Sven Öste in the context of transnational history, we can better understand how his experience from the Third World conflicts influenced his reporting.

These results contribute to the fields of Civil rights history, transnational history and Swedish-American history. For Civil rights history and transnational history, I have exhibited how the movement was discussed abroad, specifically in Sweden. Previous research, as I have discussed, argue that the Black liberation movement was a global phenomenon. With this essay I have contributed to this assertion with Sven Öste’s reporting. Since the focus has been on Öste’s work, my thesis can be considered adjacent to the book by Dudziak but with a smaller scope, by focusing on Sweden. Moreover, I have demonstrated how transnational history can be utilised to understand foreign reporting. This thesis is not only an example of how the Black liberation movement was mediated to Sweden, but how we can understand the process of mediation through a transnational history approach on the messenger.

For Swedish-American studies I have contributed a deeper insight into the Swedish picture of America, with regard to the race issue. Earlier research has indicated the importance, but I have shown what some of the discussion around the issue looked like in the Swedish press. Öste’s depiction of America was both moralistic and educational. By writing on the struggle of Black Americans, whether it was young people trying to get people to vote or activists in the Black Panther Party, Öste shows the readers the oppression Black Americans faced. Since Öste often
used emotional language in the depiction of these plights, he paints up an image of a nation in peril. It was a negative view of America that Öste contributed. Moreover, when Öste wrote about these issues it was also educational. It taught readers of how the American political system, the violent police and the situation of Black Americans. This contributed a broader understanding of American culture and day to day life. This, then, has increased the knowledge of how the race issue was discussed in Sweden and what the Swedish image of America looked like. In the section of Swedish-American research, I quoted Dag Blanck that it is difficult to grasp the process that transfers cultural impulses and influences. Blanck suggests that one way to understand the process is to combine theoretical discussions with case studies. I argue that I have done this here. Through studying Sven Öste’s work through gatekeeper theory, I have shown some of the ideas and influences that were transferred to Sweden. While Öste was not alone in this process, he certainly contributed to the transmitting of these ideas.

In chapter two I brought up an argument from Nilsson, who claims that the foreign correspondents of DN did not add much critical thinking beyond what was in the propaganda bulletins that were spread to newspapers in Sweden. Since DN only had two foreign correspondents at the time, this includes Sven Öste. With this thesis I have shown that Nilssons claim is misleading, as the writings by Öste cannot be charged with a lack of critical thinking. Not only did Öste become increasingly critical towards America throughout his years there, he consistently used critical thinking. One consistent example of this is Öste’s questioning of police information, which he always doubted and urged the reader to be aware that they only told one side of the story. Indirectly claiming that Öste lacked critical thinking in his writing is inaccurate and indicative of an oversight of Öste’s work.

The thesis also raises the question of studying news reporting in search of opinions. These kinds of questions are usually researched by looking at editorials in newspapers to find common opinions for the newspapers or the country at large. As I have documented, opinions do not necessarily stay within the bounds of editorials but can be expressed through journalists articles that have the intention of being value-free; which I have shown with Sven Öste’s work.

While this thesis offers a comprehensive insight into Sven Öste’s reporting on the American race issue, there still exists plenty of material by Öste left to be discovered as he continued to work until the 1990s. Not only that, but there are still much to be understood about Sweden’s connection to the Black liberation movement, a field that is currently lacking research. Black activists in America operated on an international battleground, with several Civil rights leaders visiting Sweden such as Dr King, Harry Belafonte, and James Baldwin. Since Swedish American relations is a rich field, it could highly benefit from more research on the Black liberation movement.
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