Pride, Prejudice and Pigeonholing

- a study of multiculturalism in a Swedish setting
Abstract

The following essay deals with the issue of immigration. Within the field of immigration the focus concerns demos, multiculturalism and identity. Moreover, Sweden acts as the focal point due to its state proclaimed positive multicultural attitude, and more specifically Rosengård, a suburb to the city of Malmö. Due to the state's positive attitude towards multiculturalism, the implications in implementation are multifaceted. The questions derive from the problem of how to institutionally design a society with room for multiple cultures within one demos. The answer is contingent upon the factors of how these different cultures collectively identify themselves, and what components induce a certain pattern of identification. It is all dependent on the normatively set aim to produce trust and an effective society with multiculturalism as a positive factor. With the ongoing debate of the situation in segregated areas, the primary interest lies in identifying why some, especially youths, in immigrant dense areas, according to the general discourse, demonstrate a deviating behaviour. The results show that the process of individual identification takes a toll through especially media’s stereotyping of, in this case, a specific suburb.

*Key words:* demos, identity, immigration, media, multiculturalism, social norms
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1 Introduction

The term positive consolidation\textsuperscript{1} is used when referring to improvements in an already existing and consolidated democracy. With this concept as a point of departure we choose the area of immigration, as we are convinced that it is and will continue to be a debated issue, not only in Sweden, as globalization and mobility increase. Thus, the focus of this research project is to examine the concepts multiculturalism, demos, and identity and thereafter apply this reasoning on a smaller field study of a Swedish suburb consisting of 85 percent immigrants. Our primary interest is to examine why some, especially youths, in immigrant dense suburban areas show, according to the generally held opinion, a deviating behavior\textsuperscript{2}.

Benhabib emphasizes the necessity to question our views upon cultures (Benhabib 2002: 25). There is a continued increase in global interdependence both at a nation state-level, as well as on a regional, local or individual level (Nye and Keohane 2001). This increased interdependence gives further weight to the problems that arise as certain views of certain cultures are being expressed in a way with varying degree of correctness (Benhabib 2002: 24f).

Yet, as this categorization of cultures might help people to understand the world around them, it simultaneously creates problems since focus becomes centered upon dissimilarities rather than similarities, with alienation as a consequence. Together with the already stated increased interdependence and mobility, and as the diversity of different demos becomes apparent, the problems that follow alienation towards other cultures demand increased attention.

Therefore, as different cultures strive to take part in a common demos, what consequences might that result in, what happens to the identity of different minorities if they are continuously misinterpreted according to themselves, and does the notion of a collective identity carry any gains? These are all questions which we claim to be closely interconnected, and questions that will be put on focus in this particular study.

In order to credible display this, and especially in search of the answer to our main question why some, especially youths, in immigrant dense suburban areas show, according to the general held opinion, a deviating behavior, we performed interviews with adolescents with a different cultural background. The recipients experience hardship when taking part in the Swedish demos in the respect of

\textsuperscript{1} The concept is used in for example Linde, Jonas, & Ekman, Joa’s \textit{Demokratiseringsprocesser} (Linde & Ekman 2006).

\textsuperscript{2} What especially sparked our interest was the past years' medial coverage of the throwing of stones at fire trucks, arson fires, riots et cetera. in the suburb Rosengård, outside of Malmö.
being able to express opinions, feel trust towards the greater society and thus experienced exclusion. Hence, the collective identity of those adolescents, and the common experienced hardship to execute any real influence over their surroundings, might have its fundament in the majority’s expectations of them to behave in a certain way.

With the concepts of multiculturalism, demos and identity as our point of departure, and moreover the results of the interviews working as a foundation for our theoretical background, social norms, stereotyping and media will be included in our theoretical discussion. Barker formulates identity as something which is “constructed through the descriptions of ourselves with which we identify” (Barker cited in Petersson 2003: 9). We thereby, methodologically and scientifically, stand on a relativistic ground as we believe that identities are formed upon an individual perception of society’s workings and that these perceptions indeed have an actual influence over the way society works (Svedberg & Kronsell cited in Petersson 2003: 140).

As for the disposition we will initially theoretically discuss immigration and what forms identity and from that derive the connection between cultural interceptions and the influence these interceptions have on a culturally scattered demos. In addition, social norms, the impact of media and stereotyping will be taken into consideration. Thereafter we will clarify our methodological standpoint, followed by an analysis of our findings.
2 Theory

Within the field of societies’ ability to effectively house different cultures there are several aspects which necessarily should be taken into consideration. The theoretical background of this study will focus on the way immigration can induce different collective identities based partly on the cultural origin of the immigrants, but more heavily on the new identity minorities in specific geographically limited areas adopt. Furthermore, this also requires insights into how multiculturalism as a state proclaimed goal is practiced and how the main theoretical arguments pro e contra take form. In the continuation therefore, this chapter will focus on how the research concerned with immigration and identity is presented, and how scholars argue for different solutions to the situation of several cultures within one demos. As earlier stated, our conducted interviews comprise the point of departure for our theoretical basis. Hence, in addition to the above and partly due to the results achieved in the interviews, social norms, stereotyping and media are depicted as major components in the formation of collective identities.

2.1 Immigration and identity

Firstly the issue of immigration policies is presented where the different state policies of “assimilation”, “integration” and “multiculturalism” are mentioned. Secondly, the concept of multiculturalism is discussed. Multiculturalism appears to be heavily debated, as different researchers view the effects and influences of it differently. In addition, some critique is brought forth regarding the success or failure of the Swedish immigration policies. Finally, the concept of identity is examined as it inevitably connects with immigration and multiculturalism.

2.1.1 Immigration policies

It is common to diversify between three types of immigration policies: assimilation, integration and multiculturalism. Fundamentally one can find different perceptions of the national identity and the dominating citizenships ideal when differencing between the three concepts.

Assimilation entails that the immigrants are expected to put aside their former national identities, norms, values and ways of living in favour for the values system of the new host county. The majority society has its form and the minorities and new comers are expected to adapt. Behind this is the notion that the
society’s national identity is based on ethnicity. It is inherited and has to be nurtured.

Concerning integration society’s majority norms are still dominating, however immigrants are not expected to give up their national identity in the same way. It is however required that they express a will to adjust to the county’s norms and values.

The third type, multiculturalism, nurtures the differences of the immigrating group’s collective identities. Immigrants are expected to adapt to the country’s constitutional framework, however the norms of the majority are not in the same way seen as unquestionably governing in society. Multiculturalism entails that the immigrating groups should contribute with their cultural ways of thinking and living ways and hence promote coexistence and prevent conflict (Petersson 2006:13).

2.1.2 Multiculturalism

Sweden officially confesses to a multicultural ideal since the 1970’s, even if is has been and still is questioned (Petersson 2006:14). During the past 20 years multiculturalism has been saluted as well as criticised. Sweden has in contrast to many other countries proclaimed multiculturalism as a state ideology and incorporated it into political action. Other countries that have a self-proclaimed multicultural attitude are Canada, Australia and Colombia (Friedman – Ekholm Friedman 2006: 67).

Some scientists, such as J. S. Furnvall, one of the first in opposition of multiculturalism, claim that equality and democracy can only work within societal conditions that are based on common values and common goals. In contrast, others such as Randolf Bourne, argue that the preservation of separate immigrant cultures could enrich the county and, much similar to the discourse in Sweden today, immigrant should be viewed as carries of new values (Bourne cited in Friedman – Ekholm Friedman 2006: 68). Friedman and Friedman argue that this is true for Sweden today as well; at least the political elite share the belief that all ethnic groups should be recognized by the state. Immigrants should all be integrated into something new, thus the “national nation” should be replaced by, or have been replaced by, cultural pluralism. Hence, differences should be imported to Sweden and maintained there. According to Freidman and Freidman this is what has/is about to happen and statements by for example Westin and Kamali, which both have influence in this area, are also based on this logic (Friedman – Ekholm Friedman 2006: 91).

In contrast some maintain that segregation is the only thing that can flourish with the help of Swedish integration politics at present. The integration politics of today was formulated and agreed upon with broad majority in the parliament in 1996 with the hope that it would lead to an integrated society by making it possible for “the Others”, i.e. the immigrants, to integrate successfully in the Swedish society. Kamali claims that the only thing that grew stronger was the segregation, thus proving the new integration politics as inefficient. He believes
that this is due to what he calls structural discrimination, something which occurs through two processes; marginalization and stigmatization and demonizing of people with immigrant background (Kamali 2006:11). The solution presented is that the government must represent groups that are not “traditionally Swedish” and that all groups should be recognized as Swedes (Kamali 2006:21).

Today one can notice some successes of political parties who build their election platforms on the issue of immigration, as the subject of immigration is assuming an ever greater significance within the public debate. Gradually, a concern is being expressed relating to the integration of culturally different groups and the practicability of multicultural concepts of society (Sackmann 2003: 1). Anniken Hagelund understands this debate in light of what the British anthropologist Ralph Grillo calls a “backlash against diversity”. Fundamentally one can find dissatisfaction with multiculturalism, concerns about social cohesion and, not least, about Islam. She argues that the question being asked with increasing intensity is whether diversity threatens the unity of European societies (Hagelund 2006:120).

2.1.3 Collective identity and multiculturalism

To categorize and construct the own identity as being what we consider ourselves not being can be seen as an inherited human trait. The own identity varies according to which collective the individual at that moment chooses to identify with; the family, the region, the nation or something else. It is however a fact that people tend to categorizes, stereotype and moreover act according to these divisions. The own group is favoured above “the Other”, a process in which prejudice and negative images are easily reaffirmed. According to Petersson it can be practical and efficient to be guided by these prejudices in our everyday life however when individuals and groups of individuals are affected negatively by these mechanisms it becomes hazardous and thus important to be watchful (Petersson 2006: 9).

Bernhard Peters argues that ‘collective identity’ has become a very popular term in recent years, partly in debates and research about ‘national identities’, but also with respect to minority groups, such as immigrants. Peters argues that the external definitions often play a part in the process of creation and recreation of collective identities. Groups have experiences and perceptions of the ways they in turn are perceived, described and otherwise treated by the outside world, and this influences their self-perception (Peters 2003: 19).

Furthermore, Peters argues that collective identities might be nesting or overlapping. The relationship between overlapping identities may be competing, as for example the case of regional and national identities. However they might as well be indifferent or even mutually supportive. Sachmann et al demonstrates that identification with the host society can indeed come about whilst maintaining identification relations to the group of origin. It is pointed out that it is quite
conceivable that contact to the group of origin may even facilitate assimilation in the country of immigration (Sackmann 2003: 237f).

Incompatible or conflicting relations between collective identities may emerge in several ways. There may be all kinds of conflict between collectives with mutually exclusive memberships. Sub national or transnational collective identities, based on ethnicity, class, religion, have been seen as dangerous for the national unity. On the other hand, national identity has often been described as the winner in most of these conflicts. National identities have trumped both international class solidarity and more pluralistic group attachments (Peters 2003: 27ff).

Similarly, Sachmann points out “[s]ymbolic boundaries, cultural differences and ethnic conflicts have gained significance and new meanings in a global situation characterized by dissolution of traditional political and societal structures” (Sackmann 2003B: 237). Even though political and economic interactions as well as communications, increasingly cross state borders, nations and ethnic communities, symbolic borders and separate group identities are affirmed. Thus, perceived efforts of immigrants to maintain their cultural and ethnic identities are often blamed as a cause of conflict within nation states.

However, others such as Petersson, instead concur with the analysis that the influence of the nation states is overall on the wane as globalization means one thing above all else: denationalization. On the other hand, Petersson sees this as a long term trend, a process that might take several decades to complete (Petersson 2003: 99).

2.1.4 What are the relations between individual and collective identity?

Identity is somehow based on cultural difference. While we might suppose that some kind of consistent and coherent individual identity is necessary for a normally functioning personality it is not obvious that this applies to the collective case, i.e. a coherent and consensual identity is necessary for the stability and proper functioning of all kinds of social units. Individual identity is partly developed by group identification or by the acquisition of membership roles in such groups. The question of “what kind of person I am” is partly answered by reporting relevant membership affiliations: I am Swedish, European, protestant, etc. Bernhard Peters argues that questions about collective identities are distinguishable from questions about individual identity. Questions concerning “who are we” and “what binds us together” are different from that question “who am I” as the former can only be asked in a meaningful way in the context of some real or imagined group. Thus, a collective identity is a social phenomenon, not an attribute of individuals. While it is true that collective identities need carriers i.e. persons who hold the collective beliefs, it is nevertheless very useful the think of collative identity as the sum of individual beliefs, attitudes and activities, as collective identities have properties of their own. Collective identities are created and recreated in social processes of communication, cultural transmission and
contestation, and their existence and character cannot be separated from these processes. The concept of collective identity should be neutral in the sense that it should leave open if all kinds of social units should be expected to have a collective identity which unites them on the basis of some consistent and shared self-image (Peters 2003: 15).

Regarding the relationship between individual and collective identity, individual identity is in part formed by participation in collective identities, by collective identifications. Loyalty to a group (by other members or by non-members), seeing oneself involved in the life of a group, being proud of ones group etc. may all be important parts of individual self-understanding, a basis for self-esteem, a source of meaning in ones life. How important collective identifications are for various individuals, and what the relative importance of different collective identifications may be, are open empirical questions (Sackmann 2003B: 237f).

However it should be pointed out that collective identity might also be the understandings of collective identity with focus on difference, distinction or otherness. Collective identity, in this meaning, is primarily produced by the construction of boundaries, by the maintenance of distinctions between in-groups and out-groups, by the exclusion of the other, or by focusing on the difference between members and non-members. Groups create their self-image by drawing contrast to their social environment, to images of the other. One might safely assume that the confrontation with cultural otherness, with very dissimilar cultural environments will strengthen collective identities (Peters 2003: 19).

### 2.2 Demos and cultures

Benhabib points out, in her book *The Claims of Culture*, the continuing challenge of acceptance towards new cultures into societies (Benhabib 2002: 25). In order to create democratic equity and at the same time keep cultural diversity, which is her goal, she claims the necessity of further development of the democratic institutions and a continued iteration of the notion of democracy (Benhabib 2004 230; Benhabib 2002: 25). Yet, at the same time as democracy will have to adjust, as well as the dialectic dialogue of cultural similarities and new workings in new contexts will have to proceed, there are also voices which question the development of democracy’s ability to do so prerequisite demos’ inability to

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3 Culture in this study is defined by religious, linguistic, historical, and other commonly experienced value based conditions. As this is not unproblematic the discussion will be ongoing throughout the study.

4 The definition of demos which will be used is with reference to “those who have the formal privilege of democratic citizenship” (Benhabib 2006: 68). Even though other scholars claim that demos can also exist of more culturally identified, or otherwise specified groups (compare Gidlund 1994:187), we will use Benhabib’s definition unless otherwise stated.
embrace new cultures into existing orders. Inglehart, among others, states that as for the political trust\(^5\) and the consequences immigration have on demos there is a problem as “the newcomers speak different languages and have different religions and lifestyles from those of the native population” (Inglehart 1997: 251). There is not necessarily a contradiction between the two statements, as Inglehart states a problem, and Benhabib tries to solve it. Yet, there is a difference in the way they approach the solution as either demanding demos and institutions to evolve and take on new forms, or to create trust through demanding immigrants to, in varying degrees, adapt the cultural setting. Furthermore, a number of scientists have established a positive correlation between political trust and willingness to participate in the political life, both actively as running for different posts and participate in different associations, or be voluntarily active in some way, as well as just voting, makes the ability to manage the different problems which arise as demos takes new forms interesting (Inglehart 1997; Putnam 2003 B; Letki 2004; Rahn – Transue 1998).

2.2.1 Different cultures – common demos

In this part of the study, the theoretical ability of demos to accommodate new cultures, and the existing demos’ separate alternatives of doing so will be discussed. It will take the form of a discussion regarding differences and similarities between Benhabib with some support from Habermas on one side, and Putnam, Ostrom and to some extent Skocpol, on the other. In order to do so, the view upon the public sphere will be regarded, institutions’ role in creating a more efficient and at the same time democratically defendable society will be discussed, as well as the different scholars initial view upon a culturally scattered demos. Finally there will be a brief review of the settings and the theories’ applicability in this particular case.

Gidlund adapts a similar approach as Benhabib when promoting the fact of new formations of demos. He points out that the nation state, with a homogenous demos, has been the main fundament for a collective identity, however the pattern is somewhat different today. Collective identities, he claims, can form within these earlier existing demos, and can be based on similarities such as language, religion or a collectively experienced exclusion, between individuals in the same demos (Gidlund 1994: 189). It is mainly the experienced exclusion which constitutes the focal point of this study. Yet, as can be read in the chapter more directly concerned with identity, even this experienced exclusion can be divided into sub-parts in order to correctly describe and explain it. What Gidlund contributes with, and gets support for by Benhabib, is mainly the questioning of

\(^5\) With political trust we import the meaning of trust in the political institutions as well as in the institutions which in some way may represent the state.
the nation state as the necessary geographical ethno-based outer limits of a demos (Ibid; Benhabib 2006: 68).

Still, among the scientists concerned with the relations within a demos there are also Putnam and Skocpol who advocate a more problematic view upon a scattered demos. Common is the concern with interpersonal trust as normatively attractive and the institutional abilities to reach a more effective common institutional system (Putnam 1993: 165; Skocpol cited in Edwards 2004). As opposed to Benhabib though, Putnam and Skocpol focus more directly on the institutional design and its consequences for the civic society design in order to overcome lack of social capital\(^6\), whereas Benhabib and Habermas claim that the important part is an open public sphere\(^7\). Putnam and Skocpol do this by dividing civic activities into “bridging” and “bonding” between and within different minorities in a certain society (Putnam 2003 A: 279-282; Skocpol, cited in Edwards 2004: 77f).

2.3 Trust and institutional design

The solution to the question at hand, why do some societies enjoy greater levels of social capital and thereby more effective institutions, differs slightly between Benhabib and Habermas on one hand, and Putnam, Skocpol and Ostrom on the other. To begin with, the focus upon the civil society and its ability to create interpersonal trust is of importance. As Benhabib and Habermas derives their theories from a somewhat dialectic deliberative democracy with universal egalitarian rights for all citizens (Benhabib 2002: 106; Habermas 1995: 849-851), Putnam and Skocpol focus on similar democratic conditions but with a further emphasis on the institutional settings for creating “bridging”\(^8\) activities (Putnam 2003 A: 279-282; Skocpol, cited in Edwards 2004: 77f). Putnam further explains the emphasis put on the, as he calls them, “weak” ties prior to “strong” hitherto, as strong ties more often is found in small groups, while weak ties are more important “in sustaining community cohesion and collective action” (Putnam 2003 A: 232).

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6 With social capital we adapt Putnam’s and Coleman’s definition from Making Democracy Work, and will continuously refer to social capital as “norms of reciprocity and networks of civic engagement” and “trust, norms, and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions” (Putnam 1993: 167; Coleman, referred to in Putnam 1993: 167).

7 This can also be seen as a kind of institutional design; to design an open, culturally unbiased public sphere. Yet, the difference becomes more apparent if the ongoing involvement of institutions is considered, something that will be further discussed.

8 We are aware of the different views held upon the difference between bridging and bonding, as has earlier been made clear, but interpret Putnam’s positive notion of bonding activities as making bridging activities possible.
Furthermore, although the democratic fundament is similar there is also a difference in how the public process should proceed in order to create more effective institutions. Benhabib puts this difference on display by comparing Rawls model of public reason, which “proceeds from a restricted agenda” (italic in original), with her version of deliberative democracy with an open agenda (Benhabib 2002: 108). Also Habermas makes the connection to Rawls as he states the necessity of the public to also adopt the private, and that the public sphere should be a filter of reason for the opinions which are held by the citizens (Habermas 1995: 851). Benhabib then claims that with a restricted agenda, both regarding which topics, as well as with concern taken to which forums should foster the debate, the culture of the majority, or the cultural fundaments forming a certain state, will set the agenda (Benhabib 2002: 109). In one way does this, somewhat partial difference in expectancies on the formation of the public sphere, also represent the different view upon public sphere held by Benhabib and Putnam. Putnam promotes a similar view as Benhabib, yet with an obvious attraction towards Rawls. As Benhabib claims that a totally open sphere will lead to a more tolerant society, Putnam puts on certain conditions in order to create a civic society. Among those are institutions which better promote activities which involve different groups in society and advocate some topics in the public room prior to others (Putnam 1993: 88f). Putnam claims that certain institutional conditions can create “[v]irtuous citizens [that] are helpful, respectful, and trustful toward one another, even when they differ on matters of substance” (Ibid.), and even though that will not lead to a conflict-free society, it will further promote understanding between different groups.

The difference between Putnam and Benhabib again thereby becomes somewhat diffuse, as Benhaib also suppose understanding between different groups in society, yet it can be made clearer using Skocpol as a representative for Putnam in this case. Skocpol sets limits on what can be seen as amiable for the civic society by regarding “bonding” activities as potentially concretizing dissimilarities between minorities and thereby eventually further strengthen the existing antagonism between the minorities (Skocpol, cited in Edwards 2004: 77f). By doing so she also puts on display the difference in view upon the civic society and its necessary formation. Still, the difference between Putnam and Skocpol as they advocate different forms of civic society is somewhat weakened as Putnam, in Ostrom and Ahn’s anthology Foundations of Social Capital, agrees with Skocpol as he refers to her and claim that association that involve citizens of different ethno-cultural, socio-economic background are preferable prior to those associations promoting a homogenous group of participants (Putnam 2003 B: 535; Putnam 2003 A: 279). Thereby the difference between Putnam and Skocpol on the one hand, and Benhabib on the other, again becomes a bit clearer.

In addition, Ostrom joins Putnam and Skocpol by advocating a conditioned civil society in order to create interpersonal trust and social capital. In her chapter Institutions as Rules-in-Us, in the same anthology as earlier mentioned, she adapts a rather similar view as Putnam and Skocpol by claiming that institutions or common projects, in her case irrigation of water, does not automatically create social capital. She claims that there must be institutional arrangements which are
aimed specifically at creating social capital, “[s]ocial capital is not automatically or spontaneously produced. It must be crafted” (Ostrom 203: 270). Yet before any further investigation of the implications these two streams have on our particular subject of study, there are additional conditions presupposed that differs and which are of importance for the understanding of different cultures that take part in a common demos.

2.4 Recognition of the other

One other area, which is explicitly put on display by Benhabib, is how to adopt new cultures into existing demos. By focusing on “recognition of the radical hybridity and polyvocality of all cultures”, and asking for a further recognition of similarities between cultures, she promotes a somewhat different solution to the problem of distrust between members of a society (Benhabib 2002: 25). Furthermore she questions the critics of universalism, as, she claims, they focus on incapability and untranslatability between cultures, and that their shortcomings in creating a common framework is due to their conviction that the framework inevitably will be relativistic in some sense (Benhabib 2002: 30ff). What correlates with the earlier discussed abilities of the public sphere and the civic life, is the progress in intercultural understanding which the non-regulated dialogue in society leads to. By, as most significantly Skocpol does, setting limits on the public dialogue and its forms, the relativistic framework is presupposed as being tied to a certain culture regarding language and values. As the question at hand interrogates demos’ ability to function effectively with multiple cultures that claim to be part of society, it is also necessary to understand how Putnam and Ostrom deal with the differences between different cultures within a common demos.

Putnam approaches the problem similarly but not entirely in the same way as Benhabib does. In *Making Democracy Work*, Putnam investigates social capital and its foundation as well as its workings in the Italian regions. In the study, as earlier stated, he appreciates the difficulties, as well as the benefits, of having working bridging social activities (Putnam 1993; 2003 A: 279). Not least is this the case in order to overbuild conflicts between different cultural groups or minorities, and create *social capital* as a normatively desirable value. Yet, the further evident difference between Putnam and Benhabib is not only the difference in conditions put on the civil society, but also the fact that while Putnam supposes contradictions between different cultures, Benhabib claims that cultures have such extended similarities between them that failure to cooperate is due to too falsely presupposed stereotypes (Benhabib 2002:25). Ostrom’s view is rather similar to Putnam’s, yet with even further emphasis on the institutional design. She promotes a concept of rational incentives to act in a certain way, and that these sources of incentives, to different extents, might be designed in different ways to help build interpersonal trust and social capital (Ostrom 2003: 256f). By adapting this more economic oriented theory of individuals’ rationality, she also
distances herself from Benhabib’s view that in an open public sphere, different cultures will discover the common factors rather than their dissimilarities and in that way build trust.

2.5 Social norms and deviance

Social norms unite individuals to groups and groups to societies and states (Rolfson 1994: 26). There are different ways to relate to the world and to people’s deviance. Moreover, that a certain behaviour is considered deviant means that it is associated with a norm related behaviour. It is the social norm and the recognition of it that makes the deviation visible (Rolfson 1994: 1).

All humans are norm receivers; however the “senders” of norms vary in time. The younger we are the more our immediate environment, such as our family, are an important influence on social norms. As we get older friends, music, movies, newspapers and so on begin to play a greater part in affecting our social norms. (Rolfsson 1994: 18). In the following the term norm will be further discussed and secondly the question of deviation from the social norm will be penetrated.

2.5.1 Definition of the term norm

Gerd Spittler identifies three meanings of the word norm, norm in the sense of uniformity, in the meaning of behavioural demands and in the meaning of value standard (Spittler cited in Rolfson 1994: 20). In the meaning of behavioural demands which is what we will focus on, R Williams defines norms as “rules of conduct; they specify what should and should not be done by various kind of social actors in various kinds of situations” (Rolfson, 1994: 22). However, Rolfson specifies this even more by concluding that it fundamentally is the physical and the social structure that originates a conformed behaviour, which can bring a good understanding towards a social phenomenon such as youth’s deviant behaviour. Spittler identifies seven characteristics that he means operationalizes the social norm empirically

(1) There are norm senders
(2) There are norm receivers
(3) There is a possible third party which benefits from the norm and
(4) a special situation, where
(5) a specific behaviour is expected
Through the operationalization of the term thus far, two additional elements become apparent to determine the status of the term as a social norm;

(6) a sanction when there is an aberration from the norm and a

(7) sanction subject which expresses and executes the sanction

(Rolfson 1994:24)

The environment the norm receivers are in greatly determines their norm interpretation (Rolfson 1994:25). Thus, youths in stereotyped areas can be part of (completely or partly) different norm interpretations than youth in other areas that are not exposed to this type of stereotyping. Our actions and our social behaviour are controlled by social norms. However, according to Matza norms are not absolute. Not even the norms determining the criminal code. Social norms are simply patterns of actions and limitations to such possibilities, as time, place and person. For example, killing is forbidden, not however during times of war, or in time of peace in counties where the death penalty is carried out (Rolfson 1994:25).

2.5.2 Why deviate?

Our point of departure is that the deviating youths through school, society and at home has gained knowledge of what is considered right and wrong. Despite this some individuals choose to go against laws and rules. The intensification of deviating behaviour puts society in great social and economic problems and above all effects the future of the youths themselves.

Albert Cohen argues that deviant behaviour is used to break normative rules. However it is not enough to break a rule once for society to view you as a deviator, it is necessary that the behaviour is repeated to manifest a deviant behaviour (Cohen 1973:40). Cohen argues that the youth crime perhaps mostly should be perceived as the youth’s reaction towards the society they meet and to a value system, they perceive, puts them outside the societal affinity or community (Cohen 1973:100f). In addition, according to Hirschi people do not act deviant if they internalized the law binding norms or developed positive social connection to the conventional society (Hirschi cited in Rolfson, 1994:41). A deficit of norm supporting and a surplus of norm negative factors becomes a driving force to behave deviating (Cohen cited in Rolfson. 1994: 42). A group of friends or a gang can perceive itself as outside society and thus agree on arguments that justify violence and norm deviation in certain situations. This provides them with an identity and hence the comfort of belonging to a group (Rolfson 1994: 42).
Hirschi argues that people who develop good relationships with parents, siblings, and others, i.e. have a good social network generally does not develop a deviating behaviour. If a person has a good social network he or she also has good chance to internalize the moral code of society, which becomes an effective barrier against deviating behaviour. If these social bonds break or never arise, the individual becomes attached from the conventional society and does not feel the loyalty or solidarity that constitutes that barrier against norm deviation (Rolfson, 1994:56). Similarly, others point out that youth’s vandalism is their way of reacting against what they experience as a marginalization from society. They feel that they have no other role in society (Greenberg cited in Rolfson 1994: 152). Rolfson mentions marginalization as one possible factor that serves as norm destructive (Rolfson 1994:17). In addition, the more one is exposed to stereotype presumptions of who one is supposed to be in the search for identity, the easier it is for the individual to fulfil that presumption.

2.6 Media

In light of the above mentioned, that the more one is exposed to stereotype presumptions of who one is supposed to be in this search for identity, the easier it is to become just that, medias part in the process will be examined below.

During the last decades Swedish society has gone through great changes. One third of the Swedish population lives in and around the three greatest cities, Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö. These cities also convey a greater number of immigrants and people with non-Swedish background. Some of the suburban areas in these cities regions have been concluded to be socio-economically underprivileged and media’s coverage of the areas more often than not focuses on social problems and criminality. Some argue that media has a central part in the creation of the stereotypes arising concerning the suburbs. Furthermore, medias way of interpreting and describing the reality in these areas does not only effect the process of integration but also society’s impression of integration and in addition the inhabitants view of themselves and their residential area (Carlgren – Wegraeus – 2002:7f). This chapter will discuss media’s role in this process, firstly as the media can be said to have the power of interpretation and secondly as this power can be argued as to contribute to both segregation and stereotyping.
2.6.1 The power of interpretation

When we discuss media in this context, media and mass media is synonymous with texts and pictures presented in newspapers, radio and TV. The mass media has a key position in the public sphere. It sets the political agenda through its descriptions of events and creates the topic of the day at work. However, most importantly it has huge power of penetration and thus impact on society. Through media we are given access to places and knowledge of happenings we otherwise would not know of. Through the selection of stories the media can choose what, as well as how, to present it. Different subjects are described in connection with an already established model. When the media constantly depict people and environments with the same stereotypical approach and construct stories that are more representative than others, this stereotypical depiction affects the reader as it is constantly repeated. It narrows our vision and makes it difficult to see other things than the already created images, the stereotypes. The people who lack own experiences within the area are thus left to rely on the descriptions portrayed by the media (Ericsson 2002A:32). People are allowed to express themselves from the stereotype position that are ascribe to them. It is from this position they are given the right to express themselves thus they contribute to the expected image of the area or event they are expected to comment on.

Krain Arvatson and Kaija Suur-nuuja argues that the answer to the negative descriptions of the suburban areas, lies in who makes the descriptions and the interpretations. Thus far it has generally not been the inhabitants themselves who have dominated this debate. The power of describing and interpreting lies with the different professionalities that have made it their job to identify problems and suggest solutions. It is most probable that every environment had its specific problems however during the past 30 years it has been the suburb that has been the subject of study. Finally one ends up with a situation where it is difficult to avoid the now fixated view, our stereotype of the suburb. The goal that every part of a city should be an attractive living environment is destroyed by the negative assumption of the suburb that is constantly portrayed by the media. These assumptions can also be viewed as a contribution part of segregation (Arvastson – Suur-Nuuja 2002:12f).

In the general debate these particular suburbs are often portrayed as an antisocial and uncivilized place, without history, an immature environment with inhabitants who should be controlled and more often than not viewed as a threat to the rest of society. At the same time it is considered an environment that can be easily shaped, an area to try out new methods. Journalists have in addition found honesty, freshness and authenticity. Ericsson, Molina and Ristilammi use the metaphor of journalists as colonial discoverers going away into “the heart of darkness” to show us the different, the real. These descriptions clearly show the symbolic line between Us and Them, those that are a part of society and those that are not. The position of the suburbs in the general discourse can be described as that of the abnormal, the deviating (Ericsson et al, 2002A:29). The interpretations are always made by those with precedence. Hence, the suburb is stigmatized and so is its inhabitants in this way of approaching the Other, describing the Other and
represent and depict the Other. Through this certain stereotypes are created and maintained and as time goes by we do not even need a hint of suggestion, we are still able to decode the message. The readers or viewers simply know what for example Rosengård (see below) represents. Through these stereotypes the suburbs have come to represent specific conditions\(^9\), but the problem truly arises when these areas are clearly separated from the rest of society.

2.6.2 Mass media and segregation

The report from 2005 by the ministry of integration states that the living segregation is something evident in all cities in the country, but to a varied degree. In addition, it is claimed that there are factors that create and recreate segregation which shows a process with increasing distances between different inhabitant categories. Moreover, the report argues that 10 years ago the living segregation was a problem caused by a growing socioeconomic gap between different city areas, and even though the problem to some extent is similar today, where one is born in the world seems to have a greater and greater impact on where one lives in Sweden. They also show that this development to a great degree depends on the native population’s attitudes and choices on the housing market as well as institutional actors role in the creation of a segregated living (Rapport Integration 2005:192ff).

If one believes that segregation is produced and reproduced through the discourses, ideas and opinions of segregation, the discourse becomes vital aspects of consideration. Ylva Brune calls it the mental segregation, these prejudices about and against people, cultures or places which are transferred from person to person through the discourse of the Other. In this mental segregation media plays a vital role. According to some, the representation of immigrants and these suburbs are, in the Swedish mass media, meant to be towards a Swedish audience, reaffirming Us and excluding Them. Mass media has an important part in the construction of discourses as it acts both structurally and ideologically (Ericsson et al 2002A:36f). According to the researcher van Dijk there are four interesting stereotypical themes in most international studies of mass media’s treatment of “ethnic issues”.

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\(^9\) The authors to the book *Miljonprogram och media – föreställningar om människor och förorter* (“The million program and media – perceptions of people and suburbs” (our translation)) effectively portrays some on the techniques used by the media – consciously or unconsciously – to produce and reproduce this image of the suburb.
(1) Immigration, with a special focus on problems, illegal behaviour and demographic or cultural threats.

(2) Criminality, with special focus on ethnic crimes or racial crimes such as drug dealing, robberies, theft, prostitution, violence and riots.

(3) Cultural differences, and in particular cultural deviation, such as conservative customs, religious fundamentalism and all social problems that are assumed to be connected to ethnicity and derived from cultural deviations within minorities.

(4) Ethnic relations, such as ethnic tensions, discrimination, racial attacks and rightwing racism, often defined as sad incidents and often explained as a result of the presence of minorities. In addition quotation and special treatment are often hot subjects, frequently defined as controversial and an issue of conflict.

With these dominating messages mass media’s prejudice discourses concerning immigrants and the areas in which they live are reproduced. Van Dijk also claims that it took the journalist a long time to produce and establish these news, which means they do not easily abandon them (Ericsson et al 2002A:37). Even though transnational movements in a global world enables new forms of identification, the patterns of interpretation that have its root in a Eurocentric world lingers in the media and are hence at risk of blocking improved integration (Ericsson et al 2002B:105).

2.6.3 Stereotypes

Bo Petersson focuses on the problematic issue of stereotypes being formed concerning immigrants within the host country. He states that a stereotype entails very simplistic assumptions of an individual, based on ones group belonging. Thus, the individual is automatically presumed to be what the group at large is presumed to be. This is a frozen picture that is characterized by its great resistance towards change and the information that does not fit into the picture is presumed to be irrelevant, unrelated or temporarily dissimilar. When stereotypes are established they are in a high degree self-asserting, which obviously can become somewhat problematic when they concern the members within the state. Stereotypes are often constructed as positive for the own group and negative for the ones that are depicted as alien or unfamiliar. As Norbert Elias has observed the qualities of the greatest members of the group represent the entire group while the qualities of the Others are represented by the most problematic members. More often then not the two groups of representatives are minorities (Peterson 2006: 12).

Petersson points out that much research have been done concerning how immigrants are depicted in the western media. When it comes to Swedish media there is a basic categorization of Us and Them. As mentioned above the news media has a tendency to depict immigrants as either a threat or a burden for the majority society. When a positive image is presented of an immigrant it is often as an example of the exception that confirms the rule. The individual case is given
news value as it goes against the established stereotype. These studies confirm that immigrants hardly are depicted as natural parts of our everyday life in their new societies. As long as this continues, immigrants cannot be viewed as integrated in society, no matter what normative value one choose to put in the term (Petersson 2006: 9f).

However, Billing points out the importance of differencing between the public discourse and its more underlying patterns and factors. To reach these basic structures one needs to, in a greater degree, study the everyday discourse and the, at first sight somewhat clichéd, distinctions between Us and Them (Billing 1995: 47). As mentioned above the picture of the suburb and its inhabitants not only affect the opinions of the majority that has never visited the area in question, but also the inhabitants themselves, especially the youths as they choose to deviate from the social norm and behave as the depicted stereotype. Thus, the stories about “the weak immigrant” run a risk of creating the weak immigrant. When an immigrant is seen as weak, or belonging to a weak group, he or she also, directly or indirectly, is categorized as incapable of initiative and self sustainability. Consequently the discourse portrays the immigrant as inferior to the majority population. The situation observed today reflects this according to Lifvendahl, both concerning attitudes and in practical reality (Lifvendahl 2006:178).

In addition, the official state report concerning integration in Sweden criticises the way in which integration is carried out in Sweden. Rapport Integration from 2005 points out some significant changes concerning the Swedish integration politics that has to be made and it suggests five areas¹⁰ in which change is pressing to lessen the gap between immigrants and Swedes (Rapport Integration 2006:10). Nowhere are media and the public discourse mentioned.

¹⁰ The report suggest that a more open labour market must be created, one that gives way to better advancement for immigrants. Secondly, discrimination must be fought and equal treatment sought after. Thirdly, the possibility for newcomers to establish in Sweden in cooperation with Swedish actors should be facilitated. Fourthly, the housing segregation should increase as it has negative effects on children and youths. Finally, better possibilities for knowledgebase decisions within politics is sought after (Rapport Integration 2006:22).
2.7 Scholars’ opinions about the Swedish context

This far, focus has been on the different views held by different scholars upon multiculturalism, building trust in demos consisting of different cultures, social norms and media’s role in the context. Still, what has not yet been in any explicit way described is the discussion’s relevance for this particular study. The implications of the different theories will mainly be dealt with in the analysis, yet there are some contextual remarks which necessarily should be taken into consideration as the theoretical field is reviewed.

The study focuses on Swedish settings, with relatively well developed levels of social capital and interpersonal trust. Yet, this development has according to some scientists been partly connected to the rather homogenous demos which has earlier distinguished the Swedish population (Dehley & Newton cited in Amnå et al. 2007: 62). Further, according to Amnå, Sweden is still “remarkably uniform, not least in terms of their similar successful combinations of high levels of citizen participation and trust in political leadership” (2007: 62). At the same time though, the increasing multiculturalism is considered one factor which could influence the development of the mechanisms in the Swedish democratic society, such as participation and trust (Amnå et al. 2007: 62; Costa & Kahn, cited in Anderson & Paskeviciute 2006: 785). Assuming these settings, together with the quantitative appreciation of the multiculturalism in Sweden, as well as the increase in official attention aimed at enabling a multicultural development (SOU 2007: 50), the relevance of the different theories that has all been proven to claim a certain path to a better society, are established.

\[11\] As displayed in chapter 3.
3  Methodology and selection

There are primarily three aspects which we intend to justify as we explain our method. These are the selection process, the choice to interview adolescents of the age 15-16, and the form of focus group prior to any other qualitative or quantitative study. Since the selection process derives more directly from the object to render a specific group’s view on their ability to affect the society as a whole, and the part they claim to play in the wider society, this justification will be the first one made. Then a brief discussion concerning the special characteristic of interviewing adolescents prior to interviewing any other group as well as the correctness of using focus group as the main instrument, will take place. Yet, before these more specific claims of how the study was performed, a presentation of which scientific point of view we adopt, hence creating a fundament for the following discussion, will be offered.

3.1  Scientific fundament

As above noted, we agree with the view that studies of identity requires an understanding of human’s fascination concerning differences and the notion of the Other. Moreover, we see identity as multidimensional, process and context dependent, phenomenon which is manifested through the encounter of human beings, individually or in group (Petersson 2003: 139). Identity is, as described by Nasir and Saxe, quoted in Ruben, defined “not as purely essentialist properties of a static self, but rather as multifaceted and as dynamic as people position themselves and are positioned in relation to varied social practices” (Ruben 2003: 454). If we accept this notion of identity as our subject of study, we must also accept a constructivist’s point of view as identities develop in accordance to, and also have an impact on, its surroundings (compare Petersson 2003: 12; Hay 2002: chapter 6).

Once we accept these conditions as fundaments for our further proceedings the importance of which subject should serve as representative of the specific situation we claim to investigate, a justification of our process of selection can proceed.
3.2 Selection

Sweden is an “immigration country”. In 2005 12.2 percent of the population in the country were born somewhere outside its boarders. These numbers are equivalent to countries such as the USA and Germany and higher than for example those of France and Great Britain and considerably higher than our Nordic neighbours. Ever since World War Two Sweden has had an immigrant surplus. According to SCB in the year 2050 18 percent of the population will have been born abroad and adding to this number are the inhabitants born in the country but with a non-Swedish heritage. Countries that take advantage of immigration can enjoy competitive advantage in the global economy and moreover, considering the aging population of Sweden, the country is in need of more labour force to finance a future welfare (Rapport integration 2006: 11).

More than one out of three in Malmö is of a non-Swedish origin. Out of the circa 20.000 people situated in Rosengård, approximately 85 percent are of non-Swedish heritage, which makes the area the most immigrant dense area in Malmö. Of the circa 200 countries in the world a total of 110 countries are represented in Rosengård, and over 50 languages are spoken in the area. Furthermore, Rosengård was built during the years 1967-1974. It consists of five sub areas; Törnrosen, Örtagård; Apelgården, Kryddgården and Herrgården. The media often mentions Rosengård as a homogeneous area; however the different parts of Rosengård are different in quite a few ways. The more central parts consist of a greater number of newly arrived immigrants and have greater mobility rate. The percentage of unemployed and people dependent on welfare is very high in caparison to other areas in Malmö. An area such as Herrgården where 96 percent of the inhabitants have a non-Swedish background, 58 percent are under the age of 25 years old and only 15 percent of the adults have job (Avellan 20081223). The northern parts on the other hand demonstrate more stable living conditions and much less unemployment (Pedersen 2002: 12).

Rosengård is often described as something different – more often than not as a problem. Subsequently, this suburb is made to represent unemployment, criminality and divergence. Today what mostly is associated with Rosengård is perhaps ethnicity, i.e. a non-Swedish ethnicity (Pedersen 2002:6).

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12 One should be careful with the usage of Rosengård as a homogeneous concept thus viewing Rosengård as problem related area, as it itself is heterogeneous (comp Rolfson 1994: 9). Even though, as mentioned above, we are well aware that Rosengård is a diverse area, we will use the term in its stereotypical meaning throughout the essay as this is what we examine.
We chose to interview adolescents from a youth center in Apelgården, in Rosengård, Malmö. Our reasons for doing so derive from a number of different factors. Initially we stated our interest in a specific group which we believed to experience the Swedish society differently than how most Swedish adolescents experience society. The criteria for performing this categorization with focus on the culturally deviant case derived mainly from our interpretations of the medial attention Rosengård has achieved, claiming Rosengård to be a highly problematic area.

As we do accept the difficulties of stating an average Swedish adolescent, and what criteria should state its characteristics, we have focused on the medial picture which conveys a picture of the adolescents in Rosengård as a unit. In that respect, Rosengård as an area has achieved a significant amount of mostly negative attention in media because of people setting cars on fire and throwing stones at firefighters as they try to put fires out (Rex 2008: C10). In addition, all of the four lower secondary schools in the area have among the highest percentage of students with one or both parents born outside of Sweden, in Sweden (Elving 2007: 6). Leaving unstated the connection between grades and students with a foreign background, these schools also has significantly lower grades than the average student in the Swedish school system (Skolverket 2008).

Furthermore, Rosengård has enjoyed national attention at a governmental level for its high percentage of people with a foreign background, high unemployment rates, low voting participation, and a significantly low ability to speak Swedish. These are all factors which we imagine could create an identity which differs from the more common national identity, even though it might be fruitless to talk of a national etnos. Also the fact that our generalizing ambitions are somewhat limited as the participants in the study are neither randomly selected but instead has come in contact with the project through a youth centre, nor are of such numbers that it can be assumed that they are representative for the entire

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13 The interviews were carried out during the fall of 2008, more specifically in November.
14 As the practical foundation of the study is limited to this particular youth center, the results achieved are thus limited to these adolescents, an important note as we do not wish to stereotype youths from Rosengård ourselves. Our generalizing ambitions are therefore somewhat confined, but assuming our methodological explanation, the results could represent a possible way of looking at the problematic associations with Rosengård.
15 By categorizing someone as culturally deviant compared to the majority, we are aware of the fact that this categorization is done from a culturally stereotypical perspective. Yet, as the aim of the study partly is to establish potential consequences of such a categorization, we need to use those prejudices, correct or not as starting points.
16 With foreign background or as mentioned above non-Swedish background we adapt Skolverkets meaning, a person with one or both parents born abroad (Skolverket 2008).
17 Etnos refers to a somewhat scattered notion of common belonging according to some more conventional criteria such as common language, common history, religion et cetera (Habermas 1995).
group contributes to this study ambition to initiate further work rather than draw any far reaching conclusions (comp Esaiasson et al. 2003: 171).

3.3 Method

As for the interview as the main tool for collecting material, there is one primary argument advocating its superiority in this case. This is the necessity to gain a thorough understanding of the participants’ opinions and why they understand themselves and their surroundings in a particular way. Kvale and Petersson claim that the interview is difficult to surpass if you seek a working method that allows the researcher to get close to the individuals (Kvale, cited in Petersson 2003:39). At the same time, our actual presence can have an influence on the respondents’ responses, and the ability to continue into a not foreseen track can also be regarded a problem of validity since the influence of the researcher leading the interview is hard to predict (compare Esaiasson et al. 2003: 345). In this specific study the tradeoff between the two is necessary although not necessarily desirable, and the gains of the interview, as stated above, compared to, for example, a statistical survey in our case makes the interview a better option. In order to limit the problems which thereby arise, the importance of an intersubjective research presentation gain further weight. As we also, rather than reject, assume an active role of the researcher who carries out the interview, the ability to fully recreate the study, a characteristic sought by some more positivistically orientated scientists, take the form of others’ ability to theoretically recreate our conclusions (see for example Lundquist 1993: 41-43). The reason for doing so is primarily the occasional need to explain the questions, as well as to help the participants to express their thoughts in a way which is useful for us. This is further emphasized as the participants in the study are of the ages 14-16 years old, and as some of the participants do not have Swedish as their mother tongue. The linguistic understanding of the responses is crucial in order to interpret the answer as correctly as possible.

Also the choice of focus groups prior to individual interviews requires a short methodological justification. Yet, first a description of how the interviews were executed is necessary. There were three groups with three or four respondents in each. We also had three individual interviews with one 15 year old, one 17 year old who performed his educational practical training at the recreation center at which we performed the interviews and one with a recreation leader responsible for one of the two youth centers in Rosengård. This somewhat limited selection further confines our generalizing ambitions, as has above been more thoroughly discussed.

Regarding the justification of the focus group as main, but not sole, instrument of performing our observations there are three main aspects of consideration. Firstly, we are able to listen to multiple opinions simultaneously. Secondly, focus groups are considered to lessen the interviewers’ directing role. Finally, focus groups works well when it comes to surveying group identities, as focus groups
tend to reveal more deeply rooted values or culturally established ideas (Esaiasson et al. 2003: 346). Moreover, we hope that the use of focus groups create a more relaxed situation, as we believe the age of the participants as somewhat troublesome when getting an as honest answers as possible.
4 Results and analysis

In the analysis of the results achieved so far in the study there are two areas which we need to take into consideration. It is both the role which the stereotypical picture\(^{18}\), of the youth in question, has come to play, as well as how the assumed role in demos affect the development of different identities, or of a collective identity. In order to relevantly demonstrate the results the analysis will derive logically from the results with a continued theoretical fundament. Practically the analysis will be divided into two areas. One will explain the answers achieved with a basis in earlier identity-based research and focus more explicitly on the role of self-fulfilling stereotypical assumptions, while the other part will explain the answers from a perspective of which part the assumed stereotype has to play in a national demos.

As has been shown in the review of the theories concerning different cultural groups in a national demos there are different ways to confront the problems that conflicting values sometimes create. Focus has mainly been upon how trust, as a part of social capital, can be achieved. The normative goal for the theories has also been to illuminate the process of how to create understanding towards cultural differences, and how to form the institutions which foster this understanding. It should also be stated that none of the theories promote a consensus about values, but rather advocate a consensus regarding the right to express opinions. The implications of these perspectives will now be applied to the answers achieved in the study. This will take the form of an analysis of the impressions we had of the recipients’ notion of belonging to a national demos contra a more limited group, their ability to trust fellow citizens contra their closest family and friends, an appreciation of the imagined picture held by “outsiders”\(^{19}\), their experienced ability to achieve set goals and affect their surroundings on a micro- as well as macro-level\(^{20}\).

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18 We are aware of the presumption made as assuming a stereotypical connotation to the adolescents from Rosengård. This is, as will be shown, a conscious choice based on both earlier studies concerning Rosengård, as well as the answers we achieved as we carried out the interviews.

19 With outsiders we refer to the society outside of Rosengård, in the interviews displayed as “others”, in questions such as “how do you believe others perceive people from Rosengård?”

20 The questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1
4.1 The experienced exclusion

In the interviews with the adolescents, which were carried out as described in the chapter describing our method and our methodological choices, the feeling of belonging to a wider society than the closest was dual. As is further discussed in the part more explicitly focused on identity, it was easier to relate to other people with a similar cultural background. The result in itself is not of great value. Yet, what makes it interesting is the fact that they experienced a continuously negative alienation from the rest of the society in the way that media painted a very stereotypical picture of them as a group. This way, they claimed, the division between different groups in society became more of a focus than was necessarily the case. The results, as expressed by one older boy who was presently doing his job experience at the youth center, was an experienced unwillingness from the rest of society to let young people from Rosengård in. This was mostly the case as he had applied at several different work places, it had sounded promising until he mentioned the fact that he was from Rosengård. This was also a phenomenon achieved in a previous study performed at Bergsjön, an area in Gothenburg with a high degree of inhabitants with foreign roots, high unemployment rates, low average school grades, and a common experienced exclusion, by Hoppe and Trulsson (2008: 20-22). Yet, assuming this is due to a mainly negative conveyed picture in media, the question of the exclusion’s origin, as well as how this minority experience their role in the public sphere, are both questions which necessarily should be answered in order to proceed.

4.1.1 The practical applied to the theoretical

Firstly, as for the question of the origin of the exclusion, the answer can be further divided into two parts, each reflecting one side of the different theoretical assumptions earlier discussed. If we adapt Benhabib’s perspective upon the problem, the answer would have its fundament in the structures of the public sphere and the way the majority influence the medial currents. Still, if a cultural bias structurally exist and if this bias is strengthening the stereotypical perception of other cultures than the majority’s, then an expression for this could be the negative focus in media which is experienced, and which is expressed, by all groups which were interviewed. Again this puts focus on the necessity to establish the origin of the experienced exclusion. In the continuation though, one could also argue that the fact that all the groups claimed that the medial attention lacked a nuanced perspective strengthens Benhabib’s thesis that the focus on differences between cultures, assuming that is what we see, can take on disproportional dimensions through lack of functioning channels of communication. Yet, if we on the other hand adapt the other institutional theories’ perspective, the fact that all the groups of adolescents who took part in the study experienced a mainly negative focus in the media does not necessarily derive from media’s failure to rightly describe different groups, but rather from the failure to create institutions
which promote intercultural understanding. Additionally, as the main problem expressed by the recipients was the negative focus in media, which in turn caused negative discrimination in society, the connection between an institutionally created understanding and a shift of the stereotypical picture conveyed in media should be established. This, on the other hand, assumes everyone’s right and possibility to freely express themselves.

4.2 Ability to affect ones surroundings

This leads us to the next question, to what extent the adolescents felt free to express themselves and if anyone listened as they did so. We also asked them whether it was possible to affect one’s surrounding and if they felt that their opinions mattered. The results were quite varying. Some of the recipients answered that they felt that it was possible to talk to the school nurse/teachers/coaches/curators/mentors, while other experienced difficulties doing so due to lack of trust. Again the result was not that surprising, as this would be an answer we could expect from most grade nine students. Yet, what was of greater interest was the fact that almost all the adolescents felt that they could affect their surroundings, regarding the milieu at school or at the youth centre. It was also possible to make an impact on a greater level, by creating opinion through flyers or through talking to people. At the same time though, some expressed it as more problematic to affect certain phenomena, such as media’s stereotypical picture of Rosengård. They again expressed dislike and a feeling of being unjustly portrayed in the way that media only reported the negative happenings, while so much positive development take place.

4.2.1 Institutional design contra an open agenda – implications

Yet, since the ability to affect the wider society, and the feeling expressed among most of the participants in the study was that there existed people who would listen to them, this would also imply a difference between the public and the private. As the recipients made a difference between the ability to affect their close surroundings, politics, and media, a definition of the public sphere is necessary in order to evaluate this minority’s role in it. The scholars do this somewhat differently, as especially Skocpol and Ostrom, but also Putnam, advocate a more institutionalized and more directly focused public agenda, aimed at promoting activities that add to the social capital. Benhabib on the other hand, accepts a wider definition, as she claims that understanding can grow in any

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21 This division between the public and the private is considered hard to incorporate into a neutral public sphere, according to Benhabib. Yet, in this case a difficulty to bring up certain topics in the public sphere was not expressed, but rather an experienced difference in being listened to.
forum with an open agenda. This difference in definition would imply that the more institutionally oriented scholars claim that the fact that the adolescents feel that they are being falsely portrayed in media is due to lack of institutions which promote understanding and the creation of social capital. Benhabib instead would claim that there is a difference in degree of success to construct forums which are more, like politics or the immediate surroundings in this case, or less, like media, culturally unbiased. This view gain further support as the participants actually differentiate between the ability to affect the different forums, as well as the feeling of being listened to in the public sphere. Yet, in order to make justice to the institutionalists’ point of view, it would also be necessary to evaluate the institution’s ability to create trust and understanding as a part of social capital. Still, on the other hand, if the adolescents claim that they can affect the politics and their surroundings, but not media, this could be an expression for trust towards these institutions, and a potential claim that these institutions actually can create social capital.

An additional way to test to what extent the existing institutions are successful in the process of creating social capital is by an evaluation of the actual trust the recipients have for other persons, as well as for institutions. In the interviews this was done by asking, somewhat similarly to the above mentioned question, if most people can be trusted, and if different institutions, or their representatives, can be trusted. The result was partially ambiguous. Most of the participants answered that most people generally can be trusted, but when asked how many people would return a mobile-phone if the recipient borrowed it to another person, the answers were more skeptic.22 The discussions also came to regard how this mistrust was expressed in more realistic forms. A couple of the recipients then brought up their involvement in various associations with members from Rosengård as well as members from the rest of Malmö. They claimed that it generally worked out well, but if someone from Rosengård did something wrong, as opposed to when someone from another part of the city did something wrong, especially the parents to the other members used a negatively loaded language which clustered all adolescents from Rosengård together.

In order to take this debate further, it will be necessary to evaluate the role media, either as part of a bigger society, or independently, has played in establishing the stereotypical picture the participants claim to be associated with. This will be done as the formation of the collective identity, and the way that the assumed stereotypes can be self-fulfilling, is analyzed.

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22 Assuming a sample of 100, most of the recipients answered that 60-80 of the phones would be lost.
4.3 Identity, social norms and self-fulfilling stereotypes

Ristilammi uses the term alterity, with which he means the result of a process which separates Rosengård from the rest of society and which in the debate about the suburbs chisels out genres which fix identity to residential areas and creates an architectural determinism (Ristilammi 1994:177). The representation of these suburbs plays a key role for the immigrants in Swedish society. Both the positive and the negative attributes cerates a distinction from the rest of society. One effect of the debate in media can be that some of the inhabitants of an area, that constantly is ascribed certain qualities, finally end up living up to the descriptions. The result of this stigmatization is thus of great significance for the manner in which the people living in Rosengård perceive their own identities. Hence our interview generated statements such as ”Rosengård is also a part of Sweden” and “the youth in Rosengård are actually the ones in Malmö who drinks the least alcohol”.

As individual identity is in part formed by participation in collective identities, the loyalty to a group, seeing oneself involved in the life of a group, and being proud of ones group, may all be important parts of individual self-understanding and a basis for self-esteem. The importance of collective identity of course varies from individual to individual, but it is natural to want to feel proud of ones area, something we definitely experienced in Rosengård. Many of the interviewed youths expressed pride of coming from Rosengård, they claimed that it is “the most integrated area in Sweden, people from all over the world live and interact here” and “there are so many cultures here that you learn a great deal from each other”. As one recipient said “people do not see the bright side of Rosengård, I have lived here for over 10 years an nothing bad has ever happened to me, I love it here”.

The kids in Rosengård are sometimes described as easily provoked, there is one example with the building of one of the schools in the area where the workers building the new school were seen as intruders, and the story describes a wide spread distrust both from children and from adults in Rosengård, against everyone else outside of Rosengård (Lifvendahl 2003: 36). However, as Rosengård is always forced to relate to these stereotypes the inhabitants are forced to defend their place of living, and thereby their identity, before people who live in other areas. Identity linked to geography is in this context a threat (Ristilliammi 1994:185ff), or in a worst case scenario these stereotypes may be self-affirming, as mentioned above, when groups partly adopt external definitions of their identity and behave thereafter. This was stated during the interviews as well; “if people look down on you, you automatically become defensive” or “if I tell you: you are an idiot 100 times a day that’s what you’ll become”.

29
When it comes to multiculturalism there is a difference between the reality found on the street and the official discourse, i.e. the one that is heard among the political and cultural elite (Friedman – Ekholm Friedman 2006: 69). According to the recipients the attitudes of Others, outside of Rosengård, concerning immigrants from the area, were not seen as consistent with the Swedish state proclaimed positive multicultural attitude. Others were said to, most likely, “view you as a gangster and robber” knowing you lived in Rosengård. It should be pointed out that the Swedish population are considered highly positive towards immigrants and multiculturalism, more so than most populations in the rest of the European countries. This fall, for the forth time, Uppsala University presented the so called “multicultural barometer”23, according to which in 2005 3,8 percent of the Swedish population expressed extremely negative attitudes towards immigrants and multiculturalism. However, in 2008 this number had increased to 5,7 percent. The scientists are surprised that the highest increase is among women and highly educated people (DN 2008-10-23). Yet, most of the recipients claimed to understand the stereotyped assumptions about the inhabitants of Rosengård of the general public outside of the area in light of media’s coverage of immigrants and areas such as Rosengård.

Returning to the coverage of arson fires and stone throwing by some youths in Rosengård, Rolfson argue that the social norms among some of the youths in Rosengård do not function (Rolfson 1994:158). Considering the above mentioned deviating behaviour with arson fires and throwing of stones at fire trucks, one might argue that if one experience an exclusion from society and if social bonds to the rest of society never arise, the individual becomes detached from the conventional society and does not feel the loyalty or solidarity that constitutes that barrier against norm deviation. Thus, the values are still the same as that of the conventional society, as they are exposed to it in their everyday life, however they neutralize the social norms and reinterpret them, which results in a deviating behaviour (Rolfson 1994:158). According to us this behaviour, through media, further strengthens the Othering and stereotyping of the inhabitants of Rosengård.

4.4 Media and the state – different institutions

As for the trust towards institutions, what has earlier been referred to as political trust, it was hard to see any general patterns. Most of the information achieved and interpreted, was in the form of their ability to affect institutions and feel that they are being listened to. Yet, what partly strengthened the earlier interpretations of trust in institutions but not media, was an example brought up several times, from when Fredrik Reinfeldt had visited Rosengård, which was seen as a positive experience as the recipients expressed a feeling of being paid genuine interest and attention.

4.4.1 Media and self-fulfilling stereotypes

That a suburban area such as Rosengård has been under the microscope for the past 30 years proves that there are a few selected places that get to represent mass media’s discourse. Ristiliammi states that if we analyze the manner in which the symbol of “Rosengård” was created, we find two important factors: the need to legitimize an increased allocation of resources to the area, and the individualization and dramatization in the press’s reporting (Ristiliammi 1994:180).

Certain places simply get to represent, and during a long time become symbols for, segregation, problems and criminality. Hence a city such as Malmö is depicted having good and bad areas in the general discourse and in the long run this discourse is reproducing stereotypical images, thus increasing segregation and the Us versus Them mentality. The creation of the stranger, the immigrant as the Other, enables the creation of a recognizable portrayal of the suburb based on deviations. A deviation does not have to be negative however in the context of these suburbs the deviation is about the deviation from the norm. By depicting the suburb as deviating, the place itself gets stereotyped and finally the above mentioned architectural determinism is a fact. When asked directly why the recipients thought some of the youth in Rosengård throw bricks and stones, the answers were that many of them act as just as they are expected to according to mainstream media and “perhaps they feel cool knowing they will be in the paper”.

During the interviews we asked; what do you think of the picture painted of Rosengård by the newspapers? Why does it look the way it does? As mentioned above, all of the questioned youths stated that they felt a strong negative surveillance of the area from the media. They felt there was a difference in how Rosengård was portrayed as opposed to other areas in Malmö. When asked if they experienced any injustice there was a general debate of how most of them at some point had felt excluded or stereotyped when revealing their place of living. On the other hand, this was seen as some what natural, or as the recipients expressed it; "you can’t really blame others from judging people from Rosengård as they only know what the media writes". “If you say you’re from Rosengård, everyone thinks you are a gangster, finally you start to believe it yourself” and “we are all
seen as one in the eyes of the media, we are the common enemy of the Swedish society”. The youths themselves claim that “journalists boost the problems” and that “certain things should not be allowed to be written in the paper”. They believed that there were similar things happening in other places but this was not covered as thoroughly by the press. Among the ones we interviewed many questioned why the papers did not write about the positive aspects in Rosengård as well.

Studies confirm that immigrants hardly ever are depicted as natural parts of the everyday life in their new societies and generally there was an understanding of the singling out the recipients experienced when letting others outside of Rosengård know where they lived, as they claimed that people only believe what they read in the paper. The question of what it will take to make the new year a “happy new year in Rosengård” was put forth in a news paper not long ago. It was claimed that after the fighting and after the police leave, the Us and Them mentality lingers. We can conclude that our recipients, as well as other researcher, identify media as a main part in the process of affirming these stereotypes and thus facilitating the Us and Them mentality.

The recipients claimed that as long as this continues, immigrants, especially people from Rosengård, cannot be viewed as part of Swedish society. In our interviews this was confirmed by statements such as; “I’m born in a county where I’m not welcome”, “I’m not a second generation immigrant, in my family I’m the first generation Swede” and furthermore “the only time I was an immigrant was the seconds it took me to pass the border”. Consequently, there is a risk that the individual as well as the suburb itself is portrayed as distant and secluded from the rest of society, and as one of the youths concluded “only media can change the image of Rosengård”.

24 Avellan, Heidi, ”Skriv om ett gott nytt år i Rosengård”. Sydsvenskan, 2008-12-23. 
http://sydsvenskan.se/opinion/heidiavellan/article400954.ece
5 Conclusion

To sum up, it becomes evident that the issue of immigration and moreover, multiculturalism and identity, are all heavily debated. On at least one point it seems as though most can concur, that is that in countries where, in the wake of immigration, societies fail to accept the existence of culturally different population groups, their integration will subsequently be impaired, possibly also obstructed in the long term. As a rule it leads to marginalization of the immigrant population, a situation which not only results in serious problems for the immigrants, but also to economic and social costs for the country of immigration. In the context of modern democratic societies built upon principles of equity, the marginalization of a large part of the population poses a serious problem of integration, and moreover marginalization is a difficult process to reverse (comp. Sackmann 2003B: 239). In addition, one might argue that cities that cannot “accommodate to diversity, to migratory movements, to new lifestyles and economic, political, religious, and value heterogeneity, will die either through ossification and stagnation or because they will fall apart in violent conflict” (Harvey, 1996:21).

The majority of the European national states are based on the presumption of a common history and language. However, this is generally not a question of heritage but of social norms that are practised in everyday life. The assumption that someone is Swedish, Norwegian or French has to do with their way of acting, their language and their values. Culture does not depend on ethnicity or race but is a phenomenon that belongs to the interpersonal and public sphere (Friedman – Ekholm Friedman 2006: 69).

Sweden is sometimes described as a proclaimed representative of multiculturalism, yet our interviews showed that people in Rosengård feel excluded from society. We do not claim to know much about Rosengård, or the correctness of media’s portrayal of the area. The answer to our main question, why some, especially youths, in an area such as Rosengård, according to the generally held opinion, demonstrate a deviating behavior, might simply be; since it is a bad area and the youth in question behave badly. However, as our interviews show, the answer is more complicated in the eyes of the individual who has grown up there.

To categorize and stereotype is a universal phenomenon and is not in itself evil. However, when these stereotypes are so established that they enhance marginalization of groups of people and finally contribute to the self-fulfilment of certain behaviour, attentiveness is called for. The more one is exposed to stereotype presumptions, the more likely one is to fulfil these presumptions in search of identity. Media’s immense power of penetration might be blocking integration as studies show that immigrants are not depicted as natural parts of the
every day life in their new societies. Our analysis also show that the effects of media’s stereotyping is a negative influence on the individual, as individual identity is partly formed by the collective identity, the images of Rosengård as deviating from the rest of society is hazardous. Being able to associate one’s home to something positive and as any other part of society is important not only for the inhabitants themselves, in creating social bonds to the Swedish society and in creating an identity linked to the Swedish society, but also for society as a whole. The inhabitants of Rosengård are well aware of how they are perceived by outsiders, which influence their self-perception and identity. As the youth are disconnected from society and begin redefining or neutralizing the social norms, or behave according to the ascribe descriptions of the presumed behaviour in the area, society as a whole will loose. Research has shown that youths in stereotyped areas can be part of (completely or partly) different norm interpretations than youth in other areas that are not exposed to stereotyping, something which becomes harmful as social norms unite individuals to groups and groups to societies and states.

Alfredsson and Cars writes that Rosengård is a beautiful and well maintained area and that, even tough it will take some time, its foul reputation will disappear. (Alfredsson – Cars 1997). However, as long as media persists on depicting Rosengård as deviating and continues to authenticate the Us and Them mentality themselves, the “foul reputation” of Rosengård will not only remain but intensify.

Rosengård should not be viewed as an area which is marked by different social norms and a different sense of identity than the rest of the country. Instead attention should be brought to the separation and singling out of the area (comp. Ristilammi cited in Rolfson, 1994:1). Thus, the question that remains is who or what really throws the stones and bricks, the youth in Rosengård, media or someone else?
6 References


media: föreställningar om människor och förorter Ericsson, Urban, Molina, Irene & Ristilammi, Per-Markku (ed.) Stockholm: Riksantikvarieämbetet


**SOU 2007: 50 Mångfald är framtidens.** Rock, Yvonne, samordnare. Kulturdepartementet

Appendix 1

Who is your role model? Why?

What do you want to become when you grow up? Do you feel that there are any limitations in reaching your goal?

Can you express yourself? Where?

In what situation do you feel that people are listening?

Who do you trust?

If someone asks you where you are from, what do you answer?

Is Sweden a good country compared to other countries?

How do you perceive injustice?

Do you want to change anything? What?

What do you think of the image painted by the paper of Rosengård? Why does it look the way it does?

How can you have an impact on society? Is it possible for you to change anything if you want to?

If a stranger should ask for your help, would you offer it?