

# *Rejected?*

– immigrants and the  
Swedish labour market



Anna Danielsson



SWEDISH COUNCIL FOR WORKING LIFE  
AND SOCIAL RESEARCH



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Swedish labour market

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(2)

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## **Preface**

**For several decades** employment was higher among people with a foreign background than among native Swedes. That is no longer the case. One explanation for this situation is that we previously had more specific labour-based immigration, with immigrants starting to work a few days after arriving in Sweden. Today, a large proportion of immigrants are refugees and family members, who experience long waits in various institutions. The path from arriving in Sweden to gaining a job is much longer and one which is not completed by large groups of people. Even for people born abroad who have lived in Sweden for a long time, competition for jobs is very high. At the same time, people born abroad are not a homogeneous group. There are large variations between different groups and the importance of education, professional skills and social networks should be emphasised.

Relatively extensive research is being conducted into the opportunities and conditions of immigrants on the Swedish labour market. A large part of the research has been devoted to factors that affect the chances and opportunities of people born abroad.

It is not surprising that many of the interviews in this overview concern the meaning and interpretation of the term discrimination. What is meant by discrimination? To what extent is there patent or latent discrimination against people born abroad in Sweden? This may seem like a simple question but it is hard to find an answer in the research. The fact that a person may feel discriminated against on a

subjective level does not mean that this is the case according to a judicial examination. According to the Swedish Measures to Counteract Ethnic Discrimination in Working Life Act (*lagen om etnisk diskriminering i arbetslivet*), an employer may not discriminate against a job seeker or employee on account of their ethnic affiliation, religion or other belief. Their professional expertise, suitability and skill must be the decisive factors, not their country of origin, religion or beliefs in a broader sense.

Over a decade ago, some researchers raised the idea that immigrants did not know the Swedish business code. This concerned not only direct language skills but also the way of organising work, the use of new technology and communication in the workplace. It was also postulated that some people born abroad lacked social skills. This approach subsequently came to be criticised. Emphasising the concept of social skills could be an expression of discrimination in itself, thought others. Since the start of the 21st century, research and discussion in this field have become more complicated and, at times, more full of controversy between different approaches.

In the past decade, a number of commissions of inquiry have analysed the conditions of people born abroad in the Swedish labour market. A commission of inquiry set up by the Social Democrat Government on structural discrimination on the basis of ethnic or religious affiliation was closed down and a new task was assigned to the “Power, Integration and Structural Discrimination” Commission of Inquiry. One of the reasons was disagreement between some of the researchers involved in the previous commission of inquiry. The new commission of inquiry, chaired by Professor Masoud Kamali, was very extensive and reported a number of different findings. An ‘us and them’ view of the conditions of foreign-born people in Sweden was introduced and the thesis of structural discrimination and ‘racification’ powerfully pursued. Criticism was not slow in coming. A large proportion of other researchers were critical of the quality of the work of the commission of inquiry and the fact that it was driven more by assessments than by scientific facts.

Some researchers have reached increasing agreement that the ethnic aspect cannot be isolated from other background factors. It is

important to relate the conditions of people born abroad to gender and social class. Discrimination and segregation start early in life and opportunities in the labour market reflect the individual's values and approach to his or her location, as well as his or her education and cultural capital. This is shown, among other things, by studies of young people's education and careers in suburban municipalities with high densities of immigrants. The researchers also choose different paths in their analyses. Some try to link together concepts such as ethnicity, gender, social class and sexual orientation in jointly constructed classification concepts. This attitude is sometimes called an intersectional perspective.

Another approach, also covered in this document, is to develop methods for analysing and estimating (in figures) the discrimination that still occurs. By submitting fictitious applications from equivalent applicants with Swedish and foreign names, the aim is to test the degree to which ethnic discrimination exists. Is Erik invited to an interview more frequently than Mohammed? Are more people interested in employing Jessica than Fatima? Ongoing studies show that applicants with Swedish-sounding names are associated with a higher working capacity. The extent to which this is regarded as discrimination is analysed in greater depth in the document.

As research into the conditions and life chances of people born abroad in Swedish society features many different approaches (including controversy and different interpretations), it is not easy to propose measures and initiatives which can be taken by politicians and elected representatives. The terms themselves are very controversial. Some researchers argue that we should not use the term 'immigrant', at least not after the first year. Other researchers use the term 'the immigrated' or 'migrants'. Criticism of the term 'second generation immigrant' is even stronger. Language and terminology are important elements of integration policy. It is a big challenge to find simple, adequate, non-stigmatising terms.

The various contributions in this document demonstrate the need for continued research in this field and deeper discussion in society of the participation of people born abroad in Swedish society and the labour market. People from other countries represent an important

skills reserve both for the Swedish economy and for the development of society in general. FAS hopes that this overview will create space for reflection on the opportunities of people born abroad to develop on and be integrated in the Swedish labour market. It is not enough to hope that economic growth can improve the conditions of people with a foreign background. It is important to implement initiatives that also work when the demand for labour falls.

Social institutions and laws should be designed so that people born abroad have the same opportunities as native Swedes to participate in working life, culture and democracy. The actions of the two sides of industry are central to the creation of greater openness, confidence and respect for people from other cultures. The need for this will increase in the future in an increasingly globalised economy in which people's skills will be an increasingly mobile production factor. However, this challenge is not limited to the two sides of industry and labour market policy. It is just as much a challenge that concerns schools and adult education, welfare, culture and the media. And all Swedish citizens who meet people from other countries in their daily lives and at work.

*Kenneth Abrahamsson*

Programme Manager

The Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research

## 1 . **New terms and broader research**

**Up to the 1960s** research into integration and migration was very limited in Sweden. Since then a great deal has happened in both migration policy and research. Not least, the language used. Immigrant policy has been renamed diversity policy. And researchers no longer talk about immigrants.

“The term has become a kind of antithesis of what being Swedish stands for and often no longer bears any relation to immigration as such. Therefore, researchers should avoid it,” says Charles Westin, Professor and former head of the Centre for Research in International Migration and Ethnic Relations, CEIFO, at Stockholm University.

He hopes that new terms will be established in society and that the research will be expanded.

Today 1.2 million Swedish residents were born abroad. This corresponds to 13.4% of the population. Over 700,000 of those born abroad are also Swedish citizens.

The generic term ‘immigrants’ is still used for everyone of foreign origin, according to Charles Westin. This is wrong, he thinks. Not only because many people who have long been Swedish citizens are being described with a term that makes you think they have just arrived. Technically, you are only an immigrant for a certain period of time until you get a residence permit. But the meaning of the term has also changed. The real meaning now is ‘non-Swedish’.

“Many people who live in Sweden and who have Swedish citizenship are therefore incorrectly called immigrants. For them and many

others who do not consider themselves to be immigrants, the term makes them feel excluded,” he says.

### **Politically incorrect**

In the research community, there has been discussion for several years about which terms should be used. As Charles Westin says, it is now hardly politically correct to use ‘immigrants’ as a generic term. He has written several papers on how Swedish immigration terminology has changed over time. To systematise the terminology, he and a few colleagues prepared a glossary in the early 1990s. The list was long and the terms were fairly long-winded. But it is not really that complicated. The terms that should be used are those used in Swedish registers.

“In a scientific context, it is important for us to use terms that are current and can also be researched. Everyone of foreign origin who comes to Sweden and gets a resident permit is registered as that: a foreign citizen with a residence permit. Like native Swedes, they are in the national register and census.

Therefore, it is reasonable to use the term ‘foreign citizen with a residence permit’ for those groups and ‘Swedish citizen of foreign origin’ for those groups. But not ‘immigrant’.”

Some researchers use the term ‘the immigrated’ instead of ‘immigrants’. Charles Westin thinks this is also wrong. The same applies to ‘migrants’. They are not registered anywhere either.

Charles Westin has devoted a lot of his life as a researcher to Swedish migration research. For 14 years, he was head of the Centre for Research in International Migration and Ethnic Relations, CEIFO. He wrote his pedagogy thesis, “Existence and Identity”, in the early 1970s about people who had immigrated to Sweden. During much of his life as a researcher, he has worked with Professor Tomas Hammar, the first head of CEIFO and one of the first Swedish researchers interested in migration issues.

Another method of using the term ‘immigrant’ that irritates Charles Westin is when it is linked with another word. ‘Second generation immigrant’ is such a term.

“It is completely absurd to call people born in Sweden, whose parents may be Swedish citizens, immigrants. Instead, the description,

if it is necessary, has to be a little long-winded,” he says: “children of people born abroad but who have Swedish citizenship. Or: people of foreign and Swedish origin.”

It used to be enough to be the child of one parent born abroad to land in the ‘second generation trap’. This is no longer the case and Charles Westin thinks this is reasonable. He falls into this category himself as he has a Swedish father and an English mother.

“There are many people who have one foreign parent whom we regard as Swedes. Olof Palme was one such example. It is completely absurd, I think. Nor does it tally with how people are categorised internationally.”

Despite Charles Westin’s and other researchers’ attempts to clear up the terminology, not many people use their suggestions. On the street and in the media, most people still say ‘immigrants’. If the gap between the expressions used by ordinary people and the terms used by researchers increases, so does the risk of confusion.

“It is a dilemma and I have no obvious solution to it, other than that we researchers have to be precise in our terminology.”

### **Political confusion**

Terminological confusion not only prevails in relation to how foreign citizens are described in Sweden. The confusion relates equally to the labels used for the policy on which immigration is based. One term that underlines the confusion is ‘diversity’. Charles Westin thinks that very few people understand it and that many actually regard it as a synonym for immigration policy.

“In the political rhetoric, the meaning seems to be that diversity will promote growth and development. The hope seems to be that more people will be rendered visible with the term,” says Charles Westin.

He thinks that if the term ‘diversity’ is to have any real meaning, it must mean that all people are entitled to their own identity. But at the same time, he does not want to suggest any labels politicians should place on their policies. However, the basic principles of what was called immigration policy in the 1970s should be used.

When the policy was adopted by the Swedish Parliament in 1975,

it was supported by three pillars. Equality was the first, meaning that people of foreign origin who were resident in Sweden should have the same rights as native Swedes. This applied to everything from general welfare to social services. The second pillar was freedom of choice, which meant that society should not apply an assimilation policy. Each individual was entitled to freedom of identity. The third pillar was cooperation and stood for power issues. Everyone was entitled to exert influence in exchange for striving for mutual understanding and reciprocity.

“This policy meant an end to the previous policy, which was more concerned with ensuring that foreigners who came to Sweden should adopt Swedish customs and become assimilated. Now it was established that it is not possible to change people’s identities.”

Children of parents of foreign origin were entitled to learn their parents’ language. This was when home language teaching was expanded.

“It was a far-sighted policy which attracted great attention worldwide and was widely imitated, not least the language policy.”

Since then, however, politicians have tried to expand the policy and the terminology. In the 1980s, immigration policy became integration policy. There was greater focus on participation in the labour market, the school system, clubs and associations and the political system, says Charles Westin. But the change in terminology was also designed to signal that integration concerned not only people of foreign origin. It also concerned Swedes. In 1994 the term ‘diversity’ was introduced into the discussion.

“In fact, the term stands for the same thing as when immigration policy was introduced, while it has been expanded to take in a broader perspective. The problem is that no vision is presented of what a society based on diversity might mean. If this does not happen, the term will not be comprehensible. However, it is obvious that political ambitions have failed,” he says.

“Whatever term is used and whatever their political orientation, people born abroad have a strong feeling of alienation. It has also increased over the past 20 years. Unemployment is constantly higher among people of foreign origin, regardless of the economic situation.

This also applies to those who have a Swedish education and Swedish citizenship. Paradoxically enough, it appears that the more resources that are spent on counteracting discrimination, the bigger the problems become.”

### **Contradictory objectives**

Not only Sweden but also the rest of Europe could learn a lot from countries that have more experience of migration, thinks Charles Westin. By comparing similarities and differences, it should be easier to find a way of managing the fact that the countries of Europe now have a more or less large proportion of foreign citizens.

However, to date, despite their partnership within the EU, the countries of Europe appear to want to stress their respective national characteristics. It is hardly possible, on the one hand, to focus on the nation state and, on the other hand, develop a multicultural society.

“It doesn’t add up. One example of how the nation state is being reinforced is the decision to make the day of the Swedish flag the Swedish national day,” he says. “This is to emphasise ethnic Swedishness.”

### **Reinforced Swedishness**

Charles Westin thinks that it should be possible to confer or emphasise some form of Swedishness. He is thinking about something even more extensive than the ceremony in Stockholm City Hall every year. The participants there are new Swedish citizens but it is not enough, in his opinion.

In the USA the importance of citizenship is much more extensive. When you become an American citizen you become an American. The same thing applies more or less in Australia and Canada. This is no accident, he thinks. These are countries that have had no majority population. When migration to the USA, Canada and Australia began, there was, of course, an aboriginal population. But it was and remained a minority. The majority population became instead the melting pot of different nationalities consisting of the immigrants to the respective countries. They settled there, began to work and became citizens sooner or later.

In Sweden and many other European countries, citizenship does not have the same symbolic significance. It is therefore more difficult to become a full citizen of a European country. There is a majority population which has clear ideas of what it means to be a citizen of the nation. These ideas are hard for an outsider to interpret.

“In Sweden, Swedishness is something associated with our culture, traditions and history.

There are symbols like the national anthem and the royal family but citizenship is not as strongly linked to ethnic Swedishness. The more or less vague national values have replaced religion as the glue that holds Swedish society together,” he says.

But when the pronounced nation states take in more and more people who are not born in those countries, a tension arises that needs to be addressed.

“In everyday parlance, the word ‘Swedish’ does not mean citizenship and membership of the Swedish state. But being Swedish should mean precisely citizenship. For native Swedes, people of foreign origin who have Swedish citizenship tend to be perceived as something considerably less defined than in, for example, the USA.”

### **New identities**

However, the fact that the population of Sweden is being increased by an growing number of people of foreign origin affects what is traditionally Swedish and what is traditionally non-Swedish. The idea of what Swedishness is will quite simply change.

“New identities are developed in a multiethnic society. They are neither one thing nor the other. A person with Turkish parents who was born in and grew up in Sweden is neither traditionally Swedish nor Turkish.”

At the same time, increased immigration entails a risk of social conflict and conflicts of interest between different groups. However, Charles Westin thinks that it must be possible to solve them. There are conflict solution models that should be applicable.

“Despite the conflict between labour and capital, unions and employers have found a conflict solution model that works. It is based on respect for the other party’s right to hold its opinion, plus an ambi-

tion to find an solution that both parties can accept.”

The political task is therefore to find ways of seeing the value of differences and to manage methods for resolving the conflicts that differences lead to. Discrimination and exclusion always exist. However, Charles Westin has no opinion on what a model for conflict resolution might look like in a multicultural society.

### **Different forms of discrimination**

The road to “integration” most frequently stressed in Sweden is via the labour market. By working together, Swedes and people born abroad will become integrated. That is the premise. But labour market integration can hardly be described as successful. Despite a number of attempts, survey after survey shows that people of foreign origin always find it harder to get a job than Swedes. Of course, the situation varies a great deal. It seems to be most difficult for people from the Middle East and Somalia.

Charles Westin has no explanation of why that should be, other than that a lot of it is about discrimination. He thinks it is difficult to define how much discrimination is deliberate.

“To start with, we should distinguish between any form of systematic discrimination based on institutions’ working methods and personal discrimination. When people discriminate, we have to assume that the discrimination is deliberate. The regulatory systems of institutions, on the other hand, are not necessarily designed to discriminate. But their consequences may lead to discrimination.”

“At the same time, we must be aware that employers are entitled to make certain requirements. If an employer considers that language skills are important, it must be reasonable to require them. Others may subsequently still see this as discriminatory.”

### **Wrong direction**

Support and help are required for people born abroad to enter the labour market, at least to find their first job. A big mistake was made in the mid 1980s, according to Charles Westin. Up to then, the Employment Service had been the public authority responsible for immigration, whether the immigrants were foreign workers or refugees.

However, responsibility was taken over by what was then called the Swedish Immigration Board.

“The approach of the Employment Service (AMS) was that everyone should get a job. This was usually a factory job, whatever education people had.”

The group of Indians from Uganda that he has followed since the 1970s show that AMS’s ambition to get people onto the labour market as fast as possible was successful, in his opinion. When the Indians came to Sweden, they were assigned to places like Mariestad, Trollhättan and Jönköping, plus a few other smaller towns. Whatever their professional experience and education, they got jobs in various factories. Some were critical and thought that they were being forced to do things they were unable to do. Others claimed that work they were unused to caused them physical pain and others thought that the jobs were beneath their dignity. But everyone worked.

“In retrospect it was good. They learned Swedish directly without going on courses. They learned how Swedish trade and industry work and they established contacts.”

Follow-up surveys he has conducted show that many advanced in their companies and now have salaried positions. Others have studied and got new jobs commensurate with their new education. The group’s children have all also fared well. Most have attended further education and also have good jobs. “The path that the Indian refugees were forced to take is the same as that offered to Baltic refugees in the 1940s,” says Charles Westin. They came from the middle class and were put in forestry and factory jobs. Once they were well established in Sweden, the Baltic refugees were able to advance and many got jobs that matched those they had had before fleeing their homes.

However, in the 1980s, the forced employment by AMS was considered to be excessive. Instead new arrivals should have training and opportunities to seek jobs that were closer to their previous experience. The Swedish Immigration Board assumed responsibility and the approach of the policy changed.”

“It didn’t work. Those who arrived ended up too far from the labour market. AMS had direct contact with trade and industry and could find them jobs, any jobs.”

Even though the number of refugees has increased since the Swedish Immigration Board took over responsibility in the 1980s and the economic situation has worsened, Charles Westin thinks that a policy that aims to find jobs for new arrivals is the best path to integration.

“You could say that things have come full circle because there is now much more talk of the need for labour market integration again. But I think that more targeted measures are required to ensure success.”

### **Confusion of commissions**

Since the start of the 21st century, several attempts have been made to study in further depth and explain why people born abroad find it harder to get a job than native Swedes. At the end of 2003 the then Social Democrat Government set up a commission of inquiry to report on the knowledge available on structural discrimination on the basis of ethnic or religious affiliation in Sweden. It was also mandated to propose measures. A year later, another commission of inquiry was set up, the ‘Integration Policy Power Commission of Inquiry’. Its aim was to identify structural discrimination, analyse the mechanisms behind it and propose measures to tackle it.

But the ‘power commission of inquiry’ was closed by the then Minister for Integration, Mona Sahlin, and another commission of inquiry was set up instead. This was called ‘Power, Integration and Structural Discrimination’.

One reason for the closure was that a row broke out in the first commission of inquiry. Several researchers of foreign origin resigned from the commission of inquiry’s reference group and criticised the commission for not wanting to see the ethnic discrimination in Sweden. The then Minister for Integration, Mona Sahlin, halted the work of the commission and appointed a new commission chair, one of the critics who had resigned.

“This was wrong in many ways,” says Charles Westin. “The work of the commission became politicised, which was unfortunate, and Mona Sahlin did not look into what was happening. Instead she acted on political instinct when she halted the work of the commission.”

He thinks that some articles in several of the commissions were

certainly important and interesting. But the overall picture was not good. The commission that replaced the integration policy commission also had major deficiencies in respect of scientific quality. If the extent of structural discrimination is to be defined and quantified, extensive work is required.

“The conclusion of the commission of inquiry on power, integration and structural discrimination ended up in a superficial ‘us and them’ argument. However, such a description of structural discrimination is too simple.”

Charles Westin concludes, however, that the result of the ‘confusion of commissions of inquiry’ was worse than poorly substantiated scientific results. Interest in discrimination issues has decreased.

“Unfortunately, this was the price that was paid.”

If structural discrimination is to be studied, you have to start with the basics, democratic society. Democracy is based on majority decisions, he says. “However, the decisions of the majority have consequences for minorities, whether ethnic or otherwise, which a democratic society has to protect and take responsibility for.”

“Democratic society thus contains a dilemma that must be studied further. Political scientists, philosophers and others should have done this.”

### **Public opinion unchanged**

Politicians’ interest in studying and changing migration policy seems, however, not to have any effect on public opinion. Charles Westin and his colleagues have been conducting opinion polls since 1969. The polls have not been held every year, but the surveys are comparable. Public opinion has largely remained critical. And when the proportion of foreign workers or refugees increases, public opinion becomes more uncertain about immigration.

On the other hand, the economic situation seems not to affect public opinion. Even if unemployment is high, including among native Swedes, native Swedes do not become more critical about increased immigration. But this presupposes that the respondents do not, at the time of the survey, feel that the number of people arriving is higher than previously. Another clear result is that the elderly are more criti-

cal than younger people.

“This is not so strange,” he says. “People who grew up in the 1920s grew up in a completely different social environment to those who were born in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Many of the younger people have gone to school with people of foreign origin. They have their own experience.”

### **Interdisciplinary approach**

Charles Westin says that Swedish research into international migration and ethnic relations, usually abbreviated as IMER research, has, however, developed since the 1960s and 1970s. Back then, just a few researchers were interested in migration research, headed by Tomas Hammar.

One dilemma of IMER research is that it is so broad. A review conducted a few years ago found that it was hard for some researchers to get support and respect for their research ideas at the oldest and largest universities.

Charles Westin believes in a more developed interdisciplinary approach to the research. Although he is retiring in 2008, he is not intending to shelve his research. A great deal is unresearched, he points out. The actions and regulations of states should be studied in further detail, as should why people migrate. The reasons can vary from looking for safety to looking for opportunities for their children. Therefore, research should also be devoted more to how flows of information about places of refuge are spread.

“The opportunities for emigration are communicated in so many ways today.”

Another consequence of migration is all the money that migrants send home. The sums involved are huge, much higher than total development aid in the world.

“The sums are enormous and this issue has not been raised. Another issue concerns the requirements made of those who send money. What sacrifices do they have to make and how does this affect their chances in the new country?”

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*Charles Westin*, Professor Emeritus and former head of the Centre for Research in International Migration and Ethnic Relations, CEIFO, at Stockholm University.

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## *Facts*

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### Terms

**Ethnicity:** means people but has become an umbrella term referring to the incidence of ‘ethnic phenomena’ such as identities, categories, groups, collectives, relations, etc.

**Ethnic identity:** a collective identity experienced by individuals, conscious, emotionally charged and usually confirmed or assigned by others.

**Ethnic relations:** a generic term for all kinds of relations that occur in the encounters between people who belong to different ethnic groups.

**Integration:** when the parts are in harmony with the whole. But also involves participation and involvement. The integration of cultural, ethnic and linguistic minorities in the majority society can be defined as participation in the public sphere of society without any requirement to change the private sphere.

**Assimilation:** participation by minorities in the public sphere, with a requirement to change or adapt the private sphere to the prevailing customs in the majority society.

**Segregation:** a striving by the minority to retain traditional ways of life, values and norms in the private sphere, while limiting participation in the public sphere of the majority society to a minimum.

**Marginalisation:** a situation in which a group of people or individuals are on the margins of society, often without functioning social networks or relations with the majority society or established minority groups.

**Discrimination:** a situation in which groups or individuals who are or are perceived to be representatives of these groups are treated differently by other groups or individuals who claim to be representatives of these groups.

**Prejudice:** antipathy based on incorrect and unshakable generalisations.

**Citizenship:** used in Swedish to designate what is usually called ‘formal membership’ of a state and entails an absolute right to stay in the country and to return after a stay abroad.

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**Minority:** a population group that is not the largest or dominant group in a state. The group has stable ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics and traditions that the group itself wishes to preserve.

**Immigrant:** a person who has moved from one country to another country to settle there for a long time or permanently.

**Immigration:** a permanent move to a country other than your original home country.

**Emigration:** a permanent move from your original country to settle in another country.

Source: Charles Westin

## 2. *EU faces major integration challenges*

**The EU labour** market has grown. It now includes 27 countries and 500 million citizens. However, its citizens' interest in participating in the growing labour market is not particularly high. At the same time, ever more people outside the EU want to participate in the European labour market. However, no one knows the extent of movement within and into the EU.

“The statistics are deficient in all member states,” says Eskil Wadensjö, Professor at the Swedish Institute for Social Research, SOFI, at Stockholm University.

The EU faces a number of challenges, according to Eskil Wadensjö. A shortage of labour is expected in several countries. To cope with the shortage of labour, European politicians are discussing a range of measures, everything from raising the retirement age to boosting the number of women in the labour market. Another measure being discussed is controlled immigration of foreign workers to the EU.

There is also discussion of how the EU can gain better control over the grey and black labour markets and all the more or less legal immigrants to EU member states.

In Eskil Wadensjö's view, the problem is that there is little knowledge on how migration flows move within and to the EU.

“We actually know extremely little and we do not yet know what the effects of migration within and to the EU will be,” he says.

Solving the shortage of labour within the EU by increased mobility seems not to be viable. The EU's citizens have no desire at all to move

to the extent hoped for by politicians, according to research by Eskil Wadensjö and others. Large-scale movement has failed to materialise and people have mainly chosen to move within their own countries. Movement and commuting within the EU member states therefore accounts for the majority of European mobility. The same was true during the 1960s and 1970s. After the EEC, the forerunner of the EU, was founded in the 1950s, a common labour market was implemented in three stages during the 1960s. Many people thought that there would be great interest in participating in the strong labour markets within the EEC, for example including immigration from Italy to Germany. But immigration did not happen. When Spain, Greece and Portugal became members, it was thought that many people would move to Western Europe, but migration failed to happen then either.

“The economies developed fast in the new member states and people began instead to move within their own countries,” he says. “And that remains the case throughout Europe. People move within their countries.”

### **Moving comes at a price**

It is not only the economic development of a person's own country's that may influence their decision to move. Research shows that the majority of those who move from one country to another have to expect that their pay will be lower than a comparable group in the country to which they have migrated. This phenomenon is usually called the 'assimilation curve'. After immigration, immigrants do not get jobs commensurate with their education, training and experience. Their pay is therefore lower in relation to comparable groups in the country to which they have migrated. After a few years, the differences tend to decrease for most groups. However, even if immigrants catch up, they rarely earn as much as natives and the difference is probably partly on account of discrimination.

“This is what integration policy is about,” says Eskil Wadensjö. “Ensuring that these differences disappear.”

In his view, considering the potential price of migration, it is natural for people to choose to commute or move within national borders. Pay may, of course, be higher in the new country than in the old one,

but the decision to move is a big one. Not only because the move itself costs money. A family may need to break up and the migrant has to leave behind relatives and friends and a well-known structure. Also, there are still big differences between the member states' educational systems. It is hard to compare education and certificates, which makes it hard for children and young people to change countries.

### **English language attracts most interest**

The language that attracts EU citizens most is English. This was shown by a study conducted by Eskil Wadensjö and some research colleagues from the Economic and Social Research Institute in Dublin. They followed what happened in Sweden and Ireland two years after EU enlargement in 2004.

In Ireland employment for citizens of the new member states tripled between the third quarter of 2004 and the fourth quarter of 2005, from 19,500 people to 61,600. In Sweden immigration from the new member states increased from 2,381 people in 2003 to 5,559 people in 2005.

“There are several explanations for the differences,” says Eskil Wadensjö. “Language is one important explanation. Many people have English skills, which makes it easier to move to an English-speaking country. Immigrants with a high level of education, in particular, prefer to work in English.

He emphasises that since Sweden and Ireland have different systems for measuring immigration and employment, it is difficult to make comparisons. But the results still show that the citizens of the new member states are considerably less interested in moving to Sweden than in moving to Ireland. Another equally important explanation is the labour market situation in the two countries. Although Swedish unemployment was low in 2004, from a European point of view, the demand for labour was low when the study was conducted. In Ireland the demand for labour was high.

According to Eskil Wadensjö, the result of the study shows how far away we are from the mobility the politicians of Europe dream about.. Comparisons are often made with the USA, where mobility within the country is much higher than within the EU.

“But virtually everyone there has a common mother tongue and that makes a big difference.”

Eskil Wadensjö has been studying integration and migration issues for over 30 years. His 1972 thesis, “Immigration and the National Economy”, looked at the position of immigrants in the labour market and the effects of immigration on the Swedish economy. As an economist, he has put a lot of energy into researching economics and migration.

Other issues in which he has been and remains interested are the development of pay for migrants and what makes people decide to move. Since 2007 Eskil Wadensjö has managed a major interdisciplinary project at SULCIS, the Stockholm University Linnaeus Center for Integration Studies. The project has received a total of SEK 75 million to shed light on integration issues in various ways over a period of ten years. Mobility, pay structures, evaluation of measures for recently arrived immigrants and the effects of EU enlargement are some examples of the research conducted within the framework of the project.

### Relevant terms

Unlike several of his colleagues, Eskil Wadensjö considers that the terms ‘immigration’ and ‘immigrant’ are relevant for describing people who move from one country to another. However, he does not use the term ‘second generation immigrant’. He thinks this is wrong.

“These are children of people of foreign origin. It was their parents who immigrated, not they, who were born in Sweden, for example.”

### Types of migration

Immigration within and to the EU takes place in different ways. It involves everything from immigration by foreign workers to people who are in the European labour market more or less legally. EU politicians are also displaying an increasing interest in integration issues, according to Eskil Wadensjö.

“But very little happens,” he concludes. “Legislation and views on immigration differ between member states. Compared with several other member states, the Swedish opinion of immigration differs significantly. In Sweden too, there is a wait-and-see attitude that becomes

more pronounced in the event of extensive immigration by foreign workers or refugees. But, compared with other Nordic countries and the Netherlands, the situation is more positive.”

The most common type of immigration to and within the EU has been by foreign workers. This has been the case since the 1960s. But at that time immigration was mostly by people born in Europe. Since then, the EU member states have opened their borders to foreign workers from non-European countries. This type of immigration varies greatly between countries. A common approach to the immigration of foreign workers to the EU may now be on the cards.

EU politicians are discussing jointly opening borders to foreign workers who live outside the EU. But, as in the 1960s and 1970s, this does not apply to just anyone. Only those with special professional skills are welcome. It is also unclear exactly how immigration by European workers will take place.

Refugees are another type of immigration. EU member states have different approaches to the reception of refugees and still handle it individually. Eskil Wadensjö emphasises that the EU and Sweden receive few refugees.

“The problems in Iraq have meant, of course, that Sweden has taken in a lot of Iraqis, but majority are not here, or in the EU. They are in Iraq’s neighbouring countries. The same applies to conflicts in Africa. The largest number of refugees are in neighbouring countries there too.”

Another type of immigration is immigration by relatives. These people are the family members of refugees who are already in Sweden or the EU who want to be reunited with their families. This type of migration has increased in Sweden in recent years. The EU member states have different rules for immigration by relatives. For example, members such as Denmark and the Netherlands have a more restrictive approach to family reunification.

Another type of immigration or migration is marriage migration. People who are already resident in Sweden marry someone from their home country who thus acquires a right to reside in the country.

## Illegal immigration

Yet another type of immigration is illegal immigration or irregular migration, as it is usually called.

“When you talk about illegal immigration, many people think of boat people in Gibraltar, the Canary Islands, Malta and Sicily. And that happens. But it is much more common for people to come to the EU as tourists or students and remain when their permit has expired. Therefore, ‘irregular’ is the appropriate designation for this type of migration.”

Although the EU is now a single labour market, irregular immigration also occurs within the EU. In connection with the enlargement of the EU in 2004 and 2007, there was concern among the old member states that many citizens of the new member states would move to the old member states. The new citizens were entitled to benefit from the old member states’ social insurance systems and there was a risk that the systems would be overused, according to estimates. The phenomenon was dubbed ‘welfare tourism’.

To prevent excessive immigration, twelve member states introduced what came to be called transitional provisions in 2004. The provisions meant that citizens of the new member states did not have the same rights to move to and settle in the old member states as other EU citizens. Most member states have now abolished or moderated the rules but in 2008 Germany and Austria retained the more restrictive provisions. When Bulgaria and Romania became members, most EU member states introduced transitional provisions for them, with the exception of Sweden and Finland.

However, Eskil Wadensjö, who studied what happened in Sweden and Ireland, says that the concern about welfare tourism was unjustified.

“Citizens of the new member states who came to Sweden use our social security system to a very small extent. It is obvious that they came to work,” he says.

When the transitional rules disappear within the EU, the irregular migrants from new member states who are in other member states become legal. The same internal labour market rules then apply to citizens from the new member states as to citizens of the old member states.

### Hard to estimate

No one knows the extent of irregular migration within and to the EU. Nor does anyone know how many of those who are in the EU illegally are undocumented. They have no identity papers and ‘do not exist’. In recent years, however, the conditions of undocumented people in Sweden have been highlighted in newspaper, TV and radio reports. The reports show that many people are forced to live on pay below the subsistence level. Despite disgusting conditions and a lack of rights in relation to employers, they have no opportunity to seek help as contact with the public authorities may lead to deportation.

Eskil Wadensjö says that most irregular immigrants are probably in southern Europe. Many come from North Africa, but many also from Romania. It is impossible to estimate how many people are involved. The EU Commission has tried to estimate the extent of illegal labour in the EU. According to calculations, it accounts for 5 to 10% of employees in the EU. However, Eskil Wadensjö thinks that the estimates tend to be exaggerated in both directions.” The extent can be overestimated or underestimated. Projects are currently being implemented in various EU member states to establish the effects of irregular immigration. In Norway too, for example, an attempt is being made to follow people who are not registered anywhere.

“Everyone still leaves traces in various registers, for example with debit cards. By trying to estimate the proportion of those who ‘leave traces’ without being registered anywhere, the hope is that it will be possible to make clearer estimates.”

It is unclear whether the Norwegian method will succeed. However, if it does, Eskil Wadensjö thinks that it may be used in other countries.

### Poor statistics

Another problem is that all EU member states have incomplete statistical information. The fundamental problem is the population statistics. Despite attempts to harmonise employment and unemployment figures, progress is slow. Poland, for example, has a grossly overestimated level of unemployment. Member states also have different systems for measuring unemployment, which also affects statistics.

In many member states, it is not possible to rely on the migration

statistics. The main reason is that people do not register the fact that they are moving from one country to another. Sometimes because they do not want to, but in most cases simply because they forget to do so.

Another reason why it is difficult for decision makers and researchers to gain control over the statistics is that many member states do not coordinate their registers.

In the USA the tax authorities are happy to receive tax payments from illegal immigrants but they do not report the payments to the migration authorities. The same applies in some parts of southern Europe. The sectors in which they work are usually the ‘cash sector’, i.e. restaurants, shops and, in particular, the agricultural sector. In Spain there is a large group of agricultural workers mainly from North Africa and Romania. There may be more than a million such people in total, according to some estimates. Eskil Wadensjö points out that the jobs they do are those that young Spaniards do not want. The reason is simple. The pay is much too low.

“The paradox is that the low level of pay has saved the Spanish agricultural sector. It would never have grown to the same extent if the pay had been on a par with what the native population demands.”

### **Immigration from the east**

However, migration to the EU, whether legal or illegal, comes not only from North Africa. Immigration by foreign workers also comes from the east. When Poles and citizens of the Baltic states move within the EU, holes emerge in their growing economies. The construction sector is growing in these countries, like many other sectors. People from Belarus and Ukraine are happy to take the vacant jobs.

Poland is a country of both emigration and immigration. Many Poles continue to migrate, mainly to the United Kingdom and to Ireland. However, in principle, just as many people are migrating from Belarus and Ukraine to Poland.

The question, however, is what will happen when the economies of the new member states catch up with the economies of the old ones. Growth is already strong in member states such as Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia. If the pattern of the 1960s and 1970s is repeated, this will mean that interest in moving will decrease as the

economies in the home countries get stronger. That was the case in Italy, Spain, Greece and Portugal.

“According to economic theory, higher income is the main reason for migration. People move from countries with a low average income to countries with a high average income.”

### **Net and gross costs of migration**

Immigration also affects the costs and revenue of the public sector. Immigrants are often of working age when they arrive and they pay taxes and pay-related contributions. At the same time immigration means costs to the state in the form of various types of income support and public services such as schools and health care.

“The net result of revenue and costs depends on the immigrants’ age, level of employment and pay.”

Eskil Wadensjö’s research shows that immigrants from Western countries result in a net profit to the public sector, while non-Western immigrants result in costs. The reason why non-Western immigrants generate costs is that many do not find work. However, most sources indicate that there is a net contribution to the public purse in respect of immigration from the new EU member states.

“To enhance non-Western immigrants’ opportunities to contribute, integration policy is important.”

### **Fear of pay dumping**

Migration within and to the EU has generated discussion of whether there is a risk of pay in the old, richer member states being forced downwards. The systems for determining pay are different between member states.

In the Nordic countries, pay is negotiated between trade unions and employers via collective agreements. Most agreements contain a minimum level for what the employers may pay, the minimum wage.

Some countries have statutory minimum pay levels as a supplement to the agreement. A third model used in some countries is that collectively agreed pay is ‘declared universally applicable’. This means that agreements are quite simply made law. This method may be used for an entire country, an agreement area or a region.

In recent years, it has been used increasingly frequently in Germany, primarily in the commercial and construction sectors. The same applies to parts of the construction sector in Norway and Denmark. In Sweden, the trade unions have expressed great concern at what will happen to Swedish pay determination when companies from other EU member states come to Sweden. According to the unions, there is a risk of companies that are in Sweden temporarily and have staff from their home countries paying wages that are below Swedish pay levels. There is thus a risk of Swedish pay being forced downwards.

Eskil Wadensjö points out that concern about pay dumping is nothing new. The Swedish Trade Union Confederation said the same thing about the increase in immigration by foreign workers in Sweden in the 1960s.

“But there was no downward pressure.”

In Eskil Wadensjö’s view there is nothing to indicate that the risk of pay dumping is greater today than it was in the 1960s. A study that he conducted on developments in Denmark showed that increased immigration did not lead to Danish pay being forced downwards. Immigrants certainly received lower pay than Danes, but there was no ‘cross-contamination’. Other studies show that extensive immigration over a short period of time may, in fact, lead to pay increasing for some groups. At the same time, the consequence may be that other groups find it harder to negotiate their pay levels. This was what happened in connection with the reunification of Germany.

“When many East Germans moved to western Germany and took jobs, mainly in certain parts of the private sector, the result was that pay rose less in that sector than it otherwise would have done. On the other hand, those who worked in the public sector experienced higher demand and higher pay.”

The low pay paid in the agricultural sector in Italy and Spain to immigrant workers does not seem to have ‘contaminated’ the pay paid to the native workforce either.”

“The native population does not want those jobs. At the same time, the low pay has meant that the agricultural sector has been able to grow. A different, higher, pay level would most probably have meant a smaller agricultural sector.”

### **A single labour market is still a long way off**

In a few years, most of the transitional rules within the EU will disappear and the 500 million citizens of the EU will have the same access to the European labour market. But whether that means that the EU labour market dreamed about by the politicians of Europe will become a reality, Eskil Wadensjö would not like to say. He also thinks that it is difficult to have any idea of what will happen with the EU labour market that the politicians hope for. It may be that there will be more commuting between member states.

But whether that will lead to more people also moving is hard to say.

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*Eskil Wadensjö*, Professor at the Swedish Institute for Social Research, SOFI, at Stockholm University.

### 3. ***‘New Swede’ culture exists in the suburbs***

**“Everyone thinks that** Angered is nothing but robbery and GBH, but they have never been here.”

This is how one of the young people in Angered summarises how the outside world sees the suburb. This summary is correct, thinks Ove Sernhede, Professor at the University of Gothenburg’s Department of Cultural Sciences. He says that politicians mainly see the suburb and its residents as a problem.

Not only politicians have an excessively negative image of suburbs dominated by immigrants. In many cases, this image is shared by schools, the police, social workers and journalists, points out Ove Sernhede.

Residential areas that are called ‘extremely vulnerable areas’ in Government commissions of inquiry are regarded as places that are more or less dominated by crime and in deepening decline.

“Since the crisis in the early 1990s, economic gulfs have widened. The 10% of families with children in the worst situations who live in these areas have suffered a decline in their situation in Göteborg. At the same time, the richest 10%, who live in detached houses in the areas near the sea have seen their income level rise by 17 percentage points.”

Ove Sernhede says that figures from Save the Children Sweden show that over 60% of children who live in areas like Rosengård in Malmö and Bergsjön in Göteborg live in what is regarded as poverty. Dependence on social security and unemployment are both high.

There is misery.

“It is possible to turn people who live in these areas into victims. But that’s not the whole truth. There is community, there is desire and there are, of course, lots of people in these areas who have dreams and visions.”

Ove Sernhede points out that when the media and politicians focus on misery, the residents of the suburbs are rendered invisible and the distance between native Swedes and those who live in the suburbs then increases.

Just over ten years ago, he therefore decided to study how a group of young people who lived in a suburb saw themselves and the world around them. The total number of so-called particularly vulnerable areas in Sweden is usually regarded as 24, most in Stockholm, some in Göteborg and some in Malmö. As Ove Sernhede worked as a social worker in Angered himself, he chose Hammarkullen, one of Angered’s better known districts. As he used to be a rock musician and has devoted a lot of his research time to the link between youth culture and music, he wanted to follow a group of young people in Hammarkullen who were making hiphop music.

In just over two years, between 1997 and 1999, he met and interviewed 50–60 young people in Hammarkullen. In a new project, he is now following up what happened, not only to the young people, but also their younger siblings.

Ove Sernhede considers that his study of how young people handle their lives enables him to show a completely different image of the so-called vulnerable areas to the prevailing one.

“The young people I interviewed referred to themselves as *blattar* (translator’s note: appropriating a negative term used to refer to them) but didn’t like the term immigrants. ‘We aren’t immigrants,’ they say. ‘We were born here, we have Swedish passports but we still have no access to Swedish culture.’”

### **Mixed culture, not immigrant culture**

The young people describe a melting pot of cultures. A melting pot that is created in Sweden, as everyone lives there. They take with them something from home, whether their parents come from

Somalia, Latin America or the Middle East. But it is mixed with other elements, part Swedish, part from global popular culture.

“A girl said to me ‘The most important thing for us is not that our parents have one background or another. The most important thing is to do something with our lives’.”

Although the young people he followed feel at home in Hammarkullen, they feel less at home in the rest of Swedish society. It is enough to take the tram into central Göteborg for their feeling of alienation and isolation to make itself felt.

“They are a part of neither Göteborg nor Sweden. They see Hammarkullen as a reserve for svartskallar (roughly equivalent to „wog“), as they say. Together with other suburbs such as Rinkeby and Rosengård, Hammarkullen has more in common with the string of shanty towns and ghettos that exist around the world.”

Ove Sernhede thinks that politicians, the media and schools do not realise that young people move into a ‘wider’ world rather than shutting themselves in the reality of Sweden. When the Swedish society in which they live rejects them, they turn to the world outside Sweden. Compared with Swedish young people of the same age, their international contact networks (and language skills) are also considerably more extensive. This is not only on account of contacts with their parents’ home countries. Most of the young people he followed have relatives who were forced to move to other countries. Some may have ended up in the USA or Canada, others in Europe. Many of them may have successful careers in their new home countries.

“I have met 16–17-year-olds who speak five or six languages fluently and have constant contact with relatives and friends conducting research in major European cities or US cities. Their knowledge of racism or postcolonial history is often very extensive, sometimes university level.”

He explains that the young people create their own contexts. A type of street university. They document their knowledge in plays, films, music or concerts. They also organise lectures in the library and in Folkets Hus in Hammarkullen.

“Most are posted on the web, for example on YouTube, to be disseminated. They want to create a new adult education movement. But

unfortunately, this energy is not exploited. There are no stages for this culture.”

### **No answers to young people's questions**

No one in Sweden demands this knowledge or even knows that the young people have it. Ove Sernhede explains. The young people think that schools do not want to acknowledge what they know. And when they realise that, they cease to get involved. At the same time, the young people want to know more about and understand why so many people in the suburb they love so dearly are dependent on social assistance or why it is impossible for their parents to get work.

“They have questions for society to which they do not get answers. Why does no one want to employ a father who has an academic qualification from his home country? They want to understand why they are marginalised. But schools do not tackle these issues and therefore they do not get the young people's respect.”

The young people he followed turned to hiphop instead. It gave them an opportunity to find a common way of expressing themselves. Hiphop was created in the New York Bronx district in the mid-1970s. When the economic downturn hit the district, the industrial plants closed down and the white population moved out, the Bronx was transformed into an immigrant district. Crime increased, rival youth gangs warred and drug problems were aggravated.

“Hiphop became a counterweight. Instead of warring, young people began to compete to be the best at breakdancing, graffiti or rap, part of hiphop. Young people found a means of expression that gave them an alternative.”

A decade later, in the mid-1980s, hiphop reached Sweden but it was not until the early 1990s that it reached many people in Hammarkullen.

“A sort of underground scene grew up in Hammarkullen. Everyone who was active, and there were a lot of them, didn't aim at securing a recording deal. Instead they looked after the collective; communal creation.”

The young people's lyrics are accounts of and reflections on live in a suburb. Ove Sernhede points out. In the lyrics it becomes obvious

that the young people are trying to understand and that they are also demanding answers to why their situation is the way it is.

“It’s also a way of demanding attention, of being seen. And of saying that there is more here than crime and drugs.”

The study resulted in the book ‘*Alienation is my Nation*’, which was published in 2002 and in a new edition in 2007. In addition to a follow-up study, a study is also in progress looking at how upper secondary school pupils view their situation in and outside Angered. Ever since Ove Sernhede began his research in the early 1980s, he has been involved in research into young people, culture and modern society. He has written several books on youth culture and music and his 1995 thesis was called ‘*Modernity, Adolescence and Cultural Expression*’.

Although Ove Sernhede thinks that there is much to learn from his fieldwork in Hammarkullen, his experiences cannot be used directly in other suburbs. It is not possible to draw too general conclusions. However, at the same time it is obvious, in his opinion, that cuts in resources for the public sector have resulted in gaps increasing between suburbs and other districts.

“When I was a social worker in Angered there were around 60–70 of us field assistants in Göteborg,” he says. “Fifteen of us worked in Angered. Now there are just three. Instead the youth police has been expanded by 76 positions. There has been a redefinition. These areas used to be considered to have social problems that could be solved with preventive measures and education. Today they are police problems that have to be solved with control, registration and surveillance.”

### **‘New Swede’ culture**

He thinks that claims of drug problems and crime cannot be dismissed. But that does not mean that it is dangerous to live in Hammarkullen. It is not yet a ghetto like in the USA or France. But to prevent the suburbs from developing into ghettos, changes need to be made. And it is not enough to inject more resources into the public sector. Schools have to work in a new way. Young people’s parents have to be the subject of labour market policy measures so that they

get jobs and the culture that young people have created must be given more space.

“It is in fact a type of ‘New Swede’ culture that is worthy of attention and inspires hope. The young people I followed have a considerably more open attitude to each other than most others I have met. The rest of us can learn from this.”

### **Mothers praised**

Many of the young people Ove Sernhede followed have parents who have been unemployed for a long time although many of them had a university education in their respective home countries. The young people’s fathers were often ‘someone’ back home. A well-known trade union leader or a politically active person.

“Then the fathers come here, end up in a refugee centre, bring their family and end up unemployed. It is clear that this causes families stress. The fathers lose their identity and their pride.”

In the Hammarkullen study, Ove Sernhede concentrated mainly on young people. But he also interviewed some of their parents.

“Lyrics praising mothers are common in hiphop. This was also the case in Hammarkullen. The mothers got a lot of attention. After a while, I realised why.”

Many of the young people’s mothers were on their own. When their husbands did not get jobs, it was common for them to leave Sweden and move back. This became increasingly common when the political conditions changed and it was no longer dangerous to return. The mothers wanted to move back too. But their children did not want to.

“Many young people I talked to like going home to their parents’ home countries for a visit in the summer. But they don’t want to live there. They have become too Swedish.”

So the mothers remained and suffered increasingly.”

“This generates feelings of guilt among the young people. They realise that it is their ‘fault’ that their mother is suffering because she cannot move back. At the same time, the young people cannot imagine moving back.

Ove Sernhede thinks that these conflicts within families and how

they affect young people should be studied more. With more knowledge, it should also be possible for schools to understand and support young people who are grappling with this type of problem at home.

“This guilt issue may result in young people acting out. But schools lack the knowledge to understand what is going on. Instead of getting help, the young people are regarded as tiresome and different.”

The interviews Ove Sernhede conducted with the young people’s parents also show that the parents do not think they can be the young people’s bridge into Swedish society. Compared with the young people themselves, they lack the resources, whether linguistic or in terms of contacts. What the parents did instead while Ove Sernhede was conducting the field study was that they got involved with the young people’s activities.

“They organised things behind the scenes at concerts and helped the young people. Some parents even started up a café that they called ‘88:an’, the name of the young people in Hammarkullen. There is an energy in all this that could be used to good effect, I think.”

### **‘Million programme’ a mistake**

Ove Sernhede says that the first steps towards the segregation that is becoming increasingly evident today were taken in the 1970s and 1980s. He uses ethnologist Per Markku Ristilammi’s description of the development. When the ‘Million Programme’ buildings were planned in Angered, there was a completely improbable belief in the future. Industry was flourishing and the vision formulated was that Göteborg would grow larger than Stockholm. The fine new suburbs with their exciting new architecture symbolised the modern future.

However, the native Swedish working class who, according to the plans, were to settle in the newly-built areas did not come in the numbers expected. Industry’s need for labour was no longer so great in the mid-1970s and Göteborg was deindustrialised. The buildings in Angered could not be filled with immigrant labour.

The empty flats were filled instead with people who had their rent paid by the social services. The suburbs came to be characterised by what Ristilammi calls “social otherness”. In the 1980s and 1990s, Swedes moved away and the flats were filled with newly-arrived

people of foreign origin. A new otherness arose, except that now it was ethnic.

“Those who live there are not like ‘us Swedes’. They are others, people we don’t know. The suburbs became strange, threatening and dangerous. There was no fiendish plan to do this. It was how things developed.”

### **Other countries the alternative**

Although many young people defend ‘their’ district, Hammarkullen, and stand up for it, Ove Sernhede thinks that everyone who can will move away. Everyone is aware of the label the suburb bears and that it may limit their options. However, it is by no means certain that young people will choose to move somewhere else in Sweden.

“No. The experience of being a second-class citizen in Sweden, outside Hammarkullen, means that many of them talk about moving abroad. In another study we conducted, I met 20 young Muslim women. All but two have already moved abroad to study.”

### **Before and after the fire**

For everyone who was in Hammarkullen at the end of the 1990s, there is a before and an after, the pivotal event being the serious fire in a disco in Backplan in November 1998. 63 young people died in the fire and nearly 200 were injured, many seriously. The fire attracted great attention in Sweden and most people in Hammarkullen knew someone who was affected. Several of the young people Ove Sernhede had had contact with died in the fire and all the young people involved in the study had one or more friends who died. After the fire, Ove Sernhede considered stopping the project but, at the request of the young people, he decided to complete it.

“I would say that most people have now dealt with what happened. We received a lot of help from the support groups with psychotherapists that were formed after the fire. Despite the fire and the wounds it created, several of the young people who were affected and were involved in the study now support themselves fully or partially from hiphop.”

Ove Sernhede does not want to try to estimate the extent of the im-

fact of his study and his book on the young people's lives. He thinks that most would have been able to support themselves from hiphop anyway. But at the same time he realises that he contributed in some way by drawing attention to the role of hiphop in Hammarkullen.

“Some people may think that I romanticise these young people, their suburb and their hiphop. I admit that. I think that it is important to emphasise their strength and energy.”

### Hope for the future

Ove Sernhede does not think that a riot on the scale of the one in autumn 2005 in a Paris suburb will happen in Sweden. He is actually fairly optimistic about the future, pointing to developments in upper secondary schools, in particular, as inspiring hope. The upper secondary school in Angered is an example showing that it is possible to get native Swedes to travel out to the suburb. The school had big problems for a long time, but a few years ago vocational courses in subjects such as dance, music and sewing were introduced. They did not attract the young people who live in Angered. However, they did attract young people from the city centre.”

“For the first time in many years, therefore, you can see ‘ethnic Swedish’ young people in the centre of Angered. This inspires hope.”

In the same way, young people from Angered leave the suburbs to go to upper secondary schools in Göteborg. This includes both those on vocational courses oriented towards industry and commerce and those who want to take theoretical courses with high minimum entry requirements. The trams are full of young people travelling in both directions, the young people from the city centre on their way to Angered and the young people from Angered on their way to the city centre.

“We don't know how this affects the young people, but in a study we intend to ask them what they think about it.”

To accelerate integration, Ove Sernhede thinks more movement between the suburb and the city centre is required. It is not enough for a couple of social workers or considerably more police to stay in Hammarkullen and subsequently travel away. More people must be attracted to Hammarkullen and the best way of doing this is to

create activities that are sufficiently interesting. In the same way, the residents of Hammarkullen must think that it is worth the trouble of travelling into the city.

“There are already a number of examples of increased mobility between suburb and city centre. But more are required.”

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*Ove Sernhede*, Professor at the Department of Cultural Sciences  
at the University of Gothenburg.

## 4.

**Does Erik have better chances than Mohammed?**

**Is discrimination the** only reason why employers more frequently invite Erik Eriksson to an interview than Mohammed Hassan?

“No, it’s not,” claims economist Dan-Olof Rooth. “There are several reasons. One is a lack of networks, another is poor Swedish skills.”

“The integration debate focuses too much on discrimination and too little on other causes of immigrants’ problems,” he says.

The situation in the labour market is routinely described as being poor for immigrants. The commonest reason cited is discrimination. Dan-Olof Rooth, a senior lecturer in economics at the University of Kalmar, does not suggest that discrimination is not widespread. But immigrants’ language skills and access to networks are also of great importance. In addition, native Swedes have Sweden-specific knowledge that it is more difficult for people born abroad to acquire.

“Networks and Swedish skills are factors that are hard to measure, but they are relevant as they affect the opportunities open to immigrants. Unfortunately, many people dismiss these reasons, which makes it hard to have a more balanced discussion.”

As a social scientist, Dan-Olof Rooth thinks that his job is to clarify the reasons for the differences between the conditions for natives and immigrants in the labour market. The aim of his research is to show what proportion of the differences in the labour market is due to discrimination and what proportion is due to other factors.

“When the reasons for the differences become clearer, it is also easier to remedy them. Do we need stronger discrimination legislation, a better employment service or more and better language tuition?”

### **Fictitious applications**

In summer 2007 one of his studies aroused great attention during the annual political gathering in Almedalen. At the Moderate Party’s economic seminar, he presented fresh figures on how employers handled fictitious applications.

The employers had to choose between applications from applicants with a Swedish-sounding name or an Arabic-sounding name. The ‘Swedish’ applications were chosen more frequently than those with the Arabic-sounding name, although the employers’ most common choice was to invite neither to an interview. However, when employers fail to select people with an Arabic-sounding name, their behaviour sometimes involves an unconscious choice, according to Dan-Olof Rooth.

This was shown by the results of a supplementary study he conducted. In the new study, the employers who were involved in the study with the fictitious applications had to undergo a test investigating their unconscious associations with the working capacity of native Swedish men and men of Arabic origin. The majority of the employers, over 75%, unconsciously associated ‘Swedish’ names with words symbolising a higher working capacity.

It was less common for the same employer to associate Arabic-sounding names in the same way.

Despite the clear results, Dan-Olof Rooth wants to play down the conclusion that Swedish employers are prejudiced and discriminatory against people of foreign origin. He thinks that it is impossible to draw such a conclusion. It is too much of a generalisation.

“It is just as wrong to say that all employers discriminate as to say that discrimination does not occur in the labour market. In my study, the proportion of employers who do not discriminate is much lower than the proportion who discriminate.”

The fact that employers do not select applications from people with an Arabic-sounding name does not always mean that they are discrimi-

minating consciously, in his opinion. There may be many reasons for inviting a person to an interview.

Some results of the study indicate that many employers are quite simply looking for someone like themselves when they employ staff. As a result, it is not only people of foreign origin who may not be selected.

If the person doing the employing is a man, native Swedish women may also not be selected. Another reason may be the opinion of the employer (or the person doing the employing) of a particular group. Young women have children more frequently than older women and that may mean that employers decide not to choose all young women to avoid having employees on maternity leave. If the employees consider that they are looking for specific knowledge, for example of the Swedish language, they may decide that a group with an Arabic-sounding name does not have sufficient knowledge.

“In this explanation model, the employer is acting on the basis of information on the group instead of the individual.”

### **Employers choose ‘Swedes’**

In the study, the researchers applied for a total of 1,552 jobs that employers had placed with the employment service. The researchers sent two fictitious applications for each job advertised. The content of the applications was adapted to the jobs in question and both fictitious applications were identical.

However, in one application the applicant was called Ali Ameer, Mohammed Hassan or Reza Said and in the other Lars Andersson, Erik Nilsson or Karl Pettersson. However, it turned out that the employers were not particularly interested in inviting either of the fictitious applicants to interviews. In 1,030 cases neither of them was invited and in 239 cases both were invited. When the employers chose just one of the fictitious applicants, they chose those with the Swedish-sounding name 217 times, equivalent to 29% of cases. The person with the Arabic-sounding name was invited 66 times, equivalent to 20% of cases.

Or, expressed differently, a person with a Swedish-sounding name has a 50% higher chance of being invited to an interview than a

person with an Arabic-sounding name.

“If a person with a Swedish-sounding name applies for ten jobs, he is invited to an interview three times, on average, while a person with an Arabic-sounding name is invited twice.”

Dan-Olof Rooth points out that in public debate, it is often asserted that people of foreign origin have much worse chances of finding work than native Swedes. . But his study shows that the differences are not actually that big, provided that there are jobs to apply for, in his opinion.

A person with an Arabic-sounding name who applies for more jobs than people with Swedish-sounding names boosts his chances in the labour market.

“From the point of view of society, this is important information. Then it is obviously not acceptable for individuals to be discriminated against. But I still think that it is important to show that the chances are not quite as different as people sometimes might think.”

### **Ethical problems**

The fictitious application method is called correspondence testing and is ethically problematic, Dan-Olof Rooth points out. In the world of research, there is currently a discussion about whether it is reasonable for researchers to mislead people who are going to be participating in studies. At the same time, he considers that the method is required as a supplement to other methods as the results make an important contribution to social science. But when Dan-Olof Rooth and his colleague Magnus Carlsson contacted employers in the follow-up study and told them about the fictitious applications, some reacted negatively.

“Some employers were irritated initially when they found out that this was part of a study. But when we explained the purpose and that we were not after them as individual employers, we were looking for patterns in society, most of them changed their attitude and became positive instead.”

### **Unconscious prejudices**

In the follow-up study, Dan-Olof Rooth and his colleagues wanted to study the employers’ unconscious prejudice against people with

Arabic-sounding names. The study was conducted with the social psychology method the Implicit Association Test, IAT.

The participants are shown names and words that they associate with good or bad on a computer monitor. The names and words are varied and the participants have to sort them as fast as they can. In the test conducted, a total of 351 employers were asked to react to names and words on computer monitors.

A number of sorting exercises were held, including asking the employers to sort words under the headings high-performance and low-performance. Statements such as diligent, ambitious, slow and lacking initiative had to be linked to men with Swedish-sounding names and men with Arabic-sounding names.

It turned out that roughly three-quarters of the employers had unconscious prejudices. Swedish-sounding names were associated much more frequently with positive statements than Arabic-sounding names.

According to Dan-Olof Rooth, the advantage of IAT is that the method reveals ideas and prejudices that the participants do not want to disclose or of which they are not conscious. If the participants had to answer explicit questions, there would be a high risk that they would give answers they know are socially acceptable.

He thinks that the method is applicable for illustrating and highlighting unconscious prejudices. Employers can become aware of behaviour they think, and perhaps hope, they do not possess.

“In itself, this is a step towards creating a fairer labour market.”

However, the method should not be used to single out individuals who are more or less inclined to discriminate.

“The test method is interesting for studying unconscious prejudice at society level, but does not say much about the extent to which an individual acts in a discriminatory manner,” says Dan-Olof Rooth.

Although the studies are reported with results in figures, Dan-Olof Rooth warns against attributing too much importance to the figures in themselves.

This is because the selection is limited. Of all the jobs created on the Swedish labour market, only a fraction are placed with the employment service, roughly 30%. Of the jobs placed with the

employment service, the studies selected those placed from mid-2005 to mid-2006 in Stockholm and Göteborg. Just over 1,500 jobs in the selection were then ‘applied for’.

The next step was the work to develop the studies and combine them.

“Our preliminary results seem really promising. There is definitely something interesting to dig deeper into.”

### **Employment process important**

In Dan-Olof Rooth’s opinion, more studies should examine what happens in the recruitment process in greater depth. There is probably a lot of important knowledge there.

“Even such a simple thing as how the actual sorting of applications takes place. The employers have a pile of them. What do they do? Do they select the ones they want or deselect the ones they don’t want? Does the risk of discrimination increase if the recruitment process itself is stressful?”

### **Specific knowledge**

However, Dan-Olof Rooth thinks that it is not just employers’ attitudes and employment procedures that need to be studied in further detail. The fact that immigrants were not born in Sweden or have parents who were not born in Sweden means that they are less well rooted in Swedish culture.

Knowledge of the Swedish language is one such example, but access to a wide network is another. A foreign appearance may also affect a person’s chances of getting a job. To find further evidence of discrimination, in a study he compared how foreign adoptees fared in the labour market.

The results showed that the risk of unemployment was higher among foreign adoptees with a foreign appearance than among foreign adoptees with a Swedish appearance.

“There was therefore some form of difference, although the children we studied had had Swedish parents since the age of one, had Swedish as their mother tongue and had had all their schooling in Sweden. This should mean that a foreign appearance affects the

situation of the adoptees in the labour market, but we do not actually know to what extent.”

### **Contacts play a role**

Dan-Olof Rooth thinks it is obvious that those who have more limited contacts than native Swedes find it harder to get a job. The question is how great the impact is and what can be done about it.

In a study he conducted with Åsa Olli Segendorf, senior lecturer in economics and a researcher at the Institute for Labour Market Policy Evaluation, they studied how pay is affected depending on the channel via which a job is acquired. It turned out that it is more profitable for a native Swede to get a job via a private contact than via the employment service. The pay is quite simply higher. For a person of foreign origin, the outcome is the reverse. The pay is lower if the job is acquired via a private network than via the employment service.

“However, there is still too little knowledge about how this can explain the difficulties experienced by immigrants. More extensive studies are required in this field. Our study was based on interview material with a limited sample size.”

On the other hand, it is not obvious that education in itself enhances the chances of those born abroad to enter the Swedish labour market. In fact, it seems to be the case that Swedish work experience reduces the risk of unemployment among refugees more than education does.

At least, this was true of the group that Dan-Olof Rooth followed in 1995. They had arrived in Sweden between four and eight years earlier. Those who had work in 1995 had a common denominator; they had got work early on.

“Those who had attended higher education abroad or had completed several semesters in the Swedish education system did not enjoy any greater success in the form of increased employment.”

But the result may also be explained by the time at which the study was conducted. Unemployment was high in Sweden in 1995. Native Swedes with a university education also found it hard to get work during this period.

A more recent study that Dan-Olof Rooth conducted with Olof

Åslund, senior lecturer in economics and a researcher at the Institute for Labour Market Policy Evaluation, shows that good knowledge of Swedish also increases the likelihood of getting employment by 10 percentage points. Good knowledge means, for example, the ability to read texts equivalent to those required to be classified as having good reading ability in year nine at school.

But the same study also shows that it is not impossible for those who read and speak very poor Swedish to find a job. However, those with good knowledge of Swedish have a much higher likelihood of being employed.

Education thus generally enhances opportunities for employment but provides no guarantee of the same pay development as for native Swedes. Dan-Olof Rooth finds that despite this, everyone profits from studying. Whether native Swedes or those born abroad study in Sweden, they all have a higher income after studying.

The incomes increase equally. Those who invest in one year's further education increase their individual incomes by around 5 percentage points.

“It is important to highlight this, I think. Everyone profits from education. Sometimes it appears as if only native Swedes earn more after gaining education. This is not the case.”

However, although everyone has a better income development after gaining education, the income differences remain between native Swedes and those born abroad.

“The difference is undoubtedly down to discrimination and must, of course, be combated. However, language skills and access to networks may also explain the differences.”

### **Not everyone wants to**

Dan-Olof Rooth says that education and increased application intensity may reduce the obstacles to those born abroad entering the labour market. However, it is not obvious that everyone who comes to Sweden is aiming to have the same or similar work to that they had in their home country. Some professions can be extremely difficult to ‘convert’ to Swedish conditions, for example journalism and law. Nor is it obvious that everyone is able to start again, particularly if they

were forced to flee.

We assume that everyone wants to fight hard to attain the same level as before. But that is not necessarily the case. It may be enough to have a job and to be safe. In that case they should not have to hear that they ought to want more.

Dan-Olof Rooth is also concerned that all the attention paid to any discrimination against immigrants in the labour market may have negative effects.

“If I were an immigrant and constantly heard that I risked discrimination when I applied for a job, I might not bother. But if I heard that my problems might have other causes and that sending off more applications increased my chances, then I might apply for jobs to the same extent as native Swedes.”

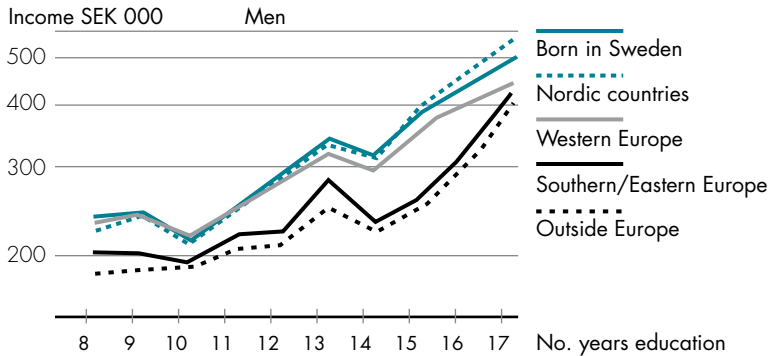
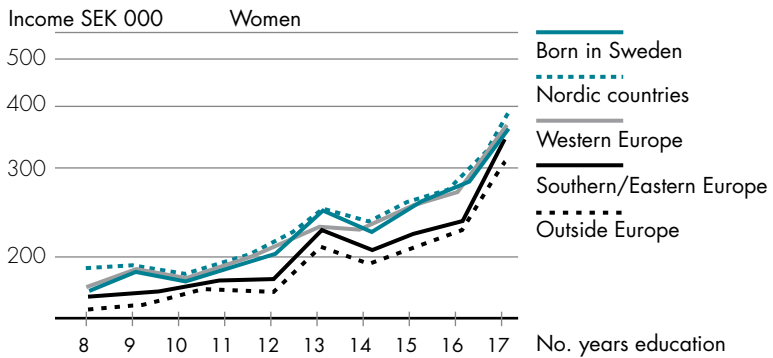
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*Dan-Olof Rooth*, senior lecturer in economics at the University of Kalmar.

### Facts

#### Everyone profits from more education – but immigrants profit less than native Swedes.

The more years of education employees on the Swedish labour market have, the higher is their income. Those who gain education earn more afterwards than before, whatever their origin. However, education does not reduce the gap between different groups. Immigrants earn less than native Swedes, whatever their level of education.



## 5. ***The formation of norms hides power structures in the labour market***

**Laws and agreements** are designed to create a level playing field for all employees in the Swedish labour market. But, despite this, study after study shows that there is discrimination on the Swedish labour market.

“Those who are regarded as different may also be treated differently,” says Paulina de los Reyes.

Most people now seem to agree that discrimination occurs in the labour market. However, opinions differ as to how discrimination manifests itself, how extensive it is and the way in which it affects individuals and society.

“How discrimination is defined is very important in relation to how it can be prevented and combated,” says Paulina de los Reyes, senior lecturer in economic history at Uppsala University.

And discrimination cannot be rendered visible unless the labour market is considered from several different perspectives, she points out. A gender perspective and an ethnic perspective must always be combined in this respect. Otherwise, she considers, it is hard to see and understand the power structures in the labour market.

“The labour market has been divided up on the basis of gender and ethnicity for nearly one hundred years. Some groups are still considered to be exceptions.”

### **“Proper” workers and exceptions**

Paulina de los Reyes says that there is a perception that “proper”

workers are white Swedish men. As the Swedish model developed in the 1930s and 1940s, they became a norm against which others were defined. One reason why the norm arose was that new groups entered the labour market in the 1950s and 1960s. They mainly took jobs that the men did not want. Women, for example, took jobs in the public sector and the majority of the immigrant labour often took jobs in sectors no one else wanted to work in.

“The new groups became a type of substitute, or a form of backup labour that took the jobs left over.”

The labour market was divided and the hierarchy lives on today.

“When the norm is the guiding principle, Swedishness and masculinity become important assets that neither women nor people of foreign origin can compete with.”

The idea behind agreements and labour legislation was to guarantee equal conditions for all. But in the view of Paulina de los Reyes, the guarantees that the agreements and the legislation were designed to represent did not work.

“The aim of the legislation and agreements is to handle specific situations. However, discrimination is so much more complicated and comprises so many elements. Therefore, laws and agreements are not enough to combat discrimination.”

At the same time, history shows that it is possible to change, at least to some extent. Change was seen after the equal opportunities debate in Sweden in the 1970s and 1980s, for example. The changes occurred when the women’s movement grew stronger and was able to create opinion. However, despite several amendments to legislation, women did not achieve equal conditions.

Paulina de los Reyes says that when the realisation grew that the changes were not enough, more and more people began to say that women’s worse situation was no accident. It then also became easier to show that women’s situation was not based on individuals being treated differently. Instead it became obvious that society’s established rules, norm system and power structures were the cause of the inequality between women and men.

“The starting point of the gender equality work was and remains the fact that unequal conditions prevail for women and men.”

## Structural discrimination

However, in the debate the same explanation of unequal conditions was not used for people of foreign origin. Paulina de los Reyes points out that this has only been the case in recent years.

“Recent research has shown that ideas of cultural difference limit people’s opportunities to participate in working life on equal terms in the same way as applies to women. This type of discrimination is usually called structural.”

She points out that in recent years, it has also become more accepted to describe discrimination as structural to explain differences between native Swedes and people of foreign origin. The differences are clear in a range of areas such as employment, terms of employment, breakdown by occupation and pay.

“The basis of structural discrimination is that there are routine actions based on preconceived ideas of difference.”

She says that research has shown, for example, that skin colour, surname and choice of clothes may be important when someone is looking for work. However, the discrimination also continues in the workplace. This can be seen, for example, in the distribution of tasks and the opportunities for promotion in the job. This is a form of structural discrimination. To avoid discrimination, it may turn out that people of foreign origin choose to imitate native Swedes as far as possible, Paulina de los Reyes points out, referring to a study conducted by researchers at Stockholm University.

“It shows that those who change their foreign-sounding names for Swedish names get higher incomes.”

## Discrimination clearest among women

Paulina de los Reyes says that the discrimination that people of foreign origin suffer is even clearer among women and refers to several studies. The level of employment of people of foreign origin is lower for women than for men, for example. The group who have the most unstable positions are young women who come from countries outside Europe.

A new thesis that studied the conditions among employees in the wholesale and retail trades shows that the tasks the employees have

to perform are determined more frequently by their ethnic origin than their professional skill.

“The combination of gender and ethnicity therefore increases the risk of suffering discrimination.”

Paulina de Los Reyes has focused her research on the Swedish model and labour market relations on the basis of an intersectional perspective. She worked for eight years at the Swedish National Institute for Working Life and, when it was closed in 2007, she moved to the department of economic history at Uppsala University. Her 1992 thesis concerned survival strategies among poor farmers in Chile.

### **Intersectional perspective**

Paulina de los Reyes asserts that it is necessary to make discrimination visible. To achieve this, she needs what she calls an intersectional perspective. This perspective enables gender, ethnic and class relations in working life to be studied simultaneously.

“My starting point is that discrimination is always linked to inequality. If we are to study discrimination, it is therefore necessary to have several power perspectives at the same time. No one is ever just a woman, an immigrant, a member of the working class or, for that matter, a Swede. If discrimination is to be rendered visible and become clear, several perspectives must be studied at the same time.

For the same reason, she wants to avoid talking about groups, whether they are women, immigrants or workers.

“A woman who lives in Östermalm and a woman who lives in Rinkeby in Stockholm have completely different experience and opportunities. The same thing applies to people of foreign origin, to take a few examples.”

An intersectional perspective also makes it easier to show the power shifts that have occurred in the labour market in recent decades. Paulina de los Reyes points out that power conditions have changed to the disadvantage of employees and that employers' requirements of a more flexible labour market have led to greater gaps between employees.

“The increased differences also risk leading to an increase in all forms of discrimination. Therefore, more research with a broad

power perspective is required.”

She also thinks it is important to show that discrimination has two sides. Those who may suffer discrimination and those who may cause others to suffer discrimination.

“We cannot define a group that is disadvantaged by inequality at work without also showing that it means that others are favoured. When we get alarmed at discrimination, we rarely think of those who are favoured.”

But Paulina de los Reyes emphasises that this does not mean that those who are favoured are people who consciously discriminate. When we talk about structural discrimination, it is a system of privileges that exists irrespective of people’s good or bad intentions.

On the other hand, it is obvious that if women, or people of foreign origin, are to have just as much power and influence as Swedish men, the Swedish men have to withdraw.

“This is something that is rarely said out loud, but it is necessary in order to reduce discrimination against certain groups.”

### ‘Us and them’

One way of illustrating how discrimination works is to use the concept of ‘us and them’,” says Paulina de los Reyes. Everyone who considers themselves native, us, can talk about the others, them, as different and inferior.

“The approach to integration in Sweden is based on one set of people having to integrate another set. ‘We’ have to integrate ‘them’. But that is obviously not the case.”

Together with the chair of the commission of inquiry, Masoud Kamali, Paulina de los Reyes edited the report ‘Bortom vi och dom’ (Beyond Us and Them), which was published one year after the Commission of Inquiry on Power, Integration and Structural Discrimination was set up in 2004. The commission of inquiry was set up after the then Minister for Integration, Mona Sahlin, stopped a commission of inquiry that was in progress. The chair and sole member of the new commission was Masoud Kamali.

The Commission presented a total of 14 books. Paulina de los Reyes was responsible for two, concerning working life issues and welfare

issues. The new commission attracted criticism, among other things because some of its conclusions were too general and not sufficiently scientifically documented. Paulina de Los Reyes considers that most of the criticism did not concern issues of fact and was actually designed to discredit the chair, Masoud Kamali.

She believes that the entire process before, during and after the work of the commission will be described within a few years.

“As far as I know, several people are writing theses on this at present. This is good. For me it is hard to evaluate the work, as I was active during that period.”

However, in terms of research and knowledge, she is satisfied with the work of the commission. She says that it was performed under great time pressure, but succeeded in conducting important new research in many different fields.

“I am pleased with the interest in the books the Commission presented. Trade unions are showing a high level of interest and the books are used a lot in university teaching.”

### **Too little about the causes of discrimination**

As a researcher, Paulina de los Reyes thinks that current integration and discrimination research concerns itself too much with measuring differences and too little with understanding why the differences occur. She says that the problem is that studies based on statistical studies, usually called quantitative studies, do not reveal what causes discrimination. There is also a risk of the research confirming what everyone already knows.

What is needed is more studies in which researchers use different methods. Via interviews, researchers can, for example study what people think and how they view discrimination at work. This type of study is usually called qualitative but it is more difficult to get financial support for them.

She is also critical of the fact that all funding bodies, in particular the Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research (FAS), so rarely finance research in which new methods and issues are tested.

“It is virtually impossible to get financial support. I think that it is frustrating that a public authority like FAS, for example, has not been

able to support new research findings on discrimination.”

She thinks that more qualitative research and more workplace-based studies are necessary.

“When I conduct in-depth interviews, it becomes obvious that many people have experienced some form of discrimination. The people I have interviewed have either suffered discrimination themselves or they have seen others who have. But we know too little about this. If we want to know more, the only method is qualitative research.”

It is also strange that the research is unable to describe the discrimination that many people see in their workplaces.

“In the studies I have conducted it is obvious that most people seem to take it for granted that there are differences between people at work. We researchers have to be able to demonstrate such things.”

She thinks that research is able to contribute more actively to effective anti-discrimination work, but it must start from the assumption that discrimination is structural. Otherwise there is a risk that the discussion will stop at the belief that it is only individuals who discriminate in a system that otherwise works well. Another area that requires much more investigation is the link between discrimination and the working environment.

### Increased knowledge

Although Pauline de los Reyes is critical of many things, integration policy and what she calls the absence of an anti-discrimination policy, she is more optimistic now than she was a few years ago. She points out that knowledge about how discrimination affects people’s lives and their situation at work has increased.

“When I started to research discrimination in the mid-1990s, it was almost forbidden to talk about racism and discrimination. Now we can talk about that, which is one step forwards. We also have more knowledge than we did four or five years ago.”

In a new research project, Paulina de los Reyes has interviewed local representatives of trade unions affiliated to the Swedish Trade Union Confederation and the Swedish Confederation for Professional Employees. The interviews show that trade unions’ attempts to high-

light discrimination issues seem to be producing results.

“An incredible amount has happened. I see greater awareness of the need to act against structural discrimination, in particular among local elected trade union representatives.”

She also thinks it is also obvious that people realise that discrimination is widespread at Swedish workplaces. In the studies she has conducted, local trade union representatives increasingly frequently say that they have experienced or witnessed discrimination. She believes that there are several reasons for this increased awareness among those active in trade unions.

“Discrimination issues are being discussed more and for many people it is thus becoming more and more obvious that sorting mechanisms are being applied. Reports and articles on people who have no residence and work permit are becoming increasingly common. But she emphasises that much more is needed.

“In particular, a clearer, research-based anti-discrimination policy.”

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*Paulina de los Reyes*, senior lecturer in economic history at Uppsala University.

## 6.

***Invisible decision-makers  
deepen segregation***

**Native Swedes live** separately in houses and tenant-owner's flats. Immigrants live separately in rented flats.

This means that housing segregation is just as severe in Sweden as in many other countries. There are many reasons why this happens. Some of this is due to unconscious discrimination and the unwillingness of native Swedes to have people born abroad as neighbours.

“Something could be done politically. But the situation depends on a range of decision-makers, particularly local politicians, landlords, estate agents and mortgage institutions,” says housing researcher Roger Andersson, Professor of Social and Economic Geography at the Institute for Housing and Urban Research at Uppsala University.

The housing market is segregated in several Swedish cities, but primarily in Stockholm, Göteborg and Malmö. Native Swedes live mainly in detached houses and tenant-owner's flats. Those who were born abroad live mainly in rented flats.

“There are a number of reasons for this unmixed housing. It is difficult to estimate how much is due to discrimination, but indirect and direct discrimination does occur,” says Roger Andersson.

He thinks that the fact that residential areas consist of different forms of housing is one reason. The most one-sided areas in the big cities are those dominated by detached houses and terraced houses. They are mainly inhabited by native Swedes. In the Stockholm region, for example, 40% of the population live in detached houses and the majority of those in areas that have similar housing. Two thirds of all

residential areas have no public housing at all. When newly-arrived refugees come to Sweden they are unable to buy into the housing market, for obvious reasons.

“They lack financial resources and are therefore referred to vacant rented flats.”

The rented flats are, in turn, mainly in certain areas. In the Stockholm region these are, for example, Hovsjö in Södertälje, Järvafältet and Vårberg. In Malmö, Rosengård. These areas take in a disproportionately high proportion of new arrivals, while others take in none at all.

“I find it very hard to believe that all the refugees who come to these places definitely want to settle in areas dominated by people who were born abroad. But what choice do they have?”

### **Attitudes deepen segregation**

Attitudes among native Swedes are also very important. In municipalities in which housing is dominated by detached houses, the residents do not want to have blocks of flats. The fear of changes in the neighbourhood, for example the introduction of people not from the majority population, is well documented in the research and has even acquired a name, the ‘Nimby effect’, an abbreviation for ‘Not in my back yard’.

“Groups with ample resources mobilise the local community and protest against the siting of a refugee centre or rented flats, for example. Then it is hard for planners and politicians to go against public opinion.”

The groups who protest and take action are the local politicians’ own voters, on whom they depend to retain their political power. Therefore, ‘Nimby’ action usually succeeds.

However, native Swedes may also react in a different way. They simply move. This behaviour is called ‘white flight’. The majority group starts to move when it feels that there are too many people from the minority group in the same place. When an area has been labelled by the majority community, its citizens start to avoid it.

“The borders within a municipality or an area may be extremely clear. This is the case, for example, in Järvafältet in Stockholm and

Gottsunda in Uppsala. These areas have both blocks of flats and detached houses. But there are huge differences between the groups who live in each area.”

### **Gatekeepers in command**

According to Roger Andersson, it is not possible to say exactly when the critical point is for ‘white flight’ to occur. But it is obvious that it exists and equally obvious that avoidance behaviour occurs. The majority population not only moves, it simply starts to avoid being seen in certain areas. However, it is not only the behaviour of residents in a residential area that can accelerate or create segregation. There are a number of decision-makers on the housing market whose behaviour may impede intermixing. Roger Andersson calls them gatekeepers.

“The way in which their actions affect housing patterns is underestimated.”

By gatekeepers Roger Andersson means everyone from public and private housing landlords to estate agents, banks and mortgage institutions. By following developments in Uppsala, he and his colleagues hope it will be possible to expose the actions of the gatekeepers and thus explain more clearly why mainly people born abroad end up in certain areas.

“This may involve everything from difficulties getting a mortgage to queuing times being calculated differently.”

Landlords may, for example, apply some form of steering to different housing groups. Roger Andersson says that they themselves may think that this steering is born from thoughtfulness. Young people are placed with other young people and elderly people with elderly people.

The same thing probably also applies to different ethnic groups. Bosnians are thought to get on well with Bosnians, Somalis with Somalis, and therefore they are allocated flats in the same area or on the same staircase.

“The applicants get a kind of selective information. ‘You’ll fit in best here’. But they have no alternative. This is not open discrimination. It is misplaced thoughtfulness.”

The banks and mortgage institutions probably also discriminate

against people of foreign origin. Other studies have shown that it is more difficult for people of foreign origin to get bank loans to start companies. The requirements for financial security are often much stricter than for native Swedes. In the current study in Uppsala, therefore, the extent of mortgage loan rejections will be examined.

If the banks act in the same way with regard to mortgage loans as they do with regard to business loans to people of foreign origin, there is probably some form of structural discrimination at work, Roger Andersson concludes. This type of gatekeeper should, therefore, be studied in greater depth.

“This is yet another very unresearched field, but there is much to indicate that some form of direct or indirect discrimination does occur.”

To date very few discrimination cases on the housing market have been tested, but the discrimination ombudsman is currently investigating whether some housing cooperatives in Helsingborg acted in a discriminatory manner. Roger Andersson thinks that a few clear rulings are required to expose structural discrimination. He wouldn't like to estimate how extensive the discrimination is. Two small studies that he and his colleagues were involved in showed that roughly 25–30% of people of foreign origin looking for somewhere to live risked discrimination and worse treatment.

“In both studies, landlords received phone calls from people enquiring about vacant flats. People with foreign-sounding names were given different information to that given to people with Swedish names.”

But Roger Andersson emphasises that this probably does not mean that all rejections and differences in treatment were on account of conscious discrimination. It can equally frequently involve unconscious steering

“As this remains fairly unclear, it is important to have clear rulings. The decision-makers in the housing sector should then become more aware of their own actions, which should, in turn, lead to less management.”

The public housing sector should set a good example and make its processing routines clear, thinks Roger Andersson. Ultimately, the

municipal housing companies are politically controlled and, as the politicians maintain that they want to reduce segregation, the municipal companies should take the lead. But many local politicians are not putting such pressure on their own companies and it is hard to see any great difference between the public housing sector and, for example, private landlords.

“The local politicians should put their own house in order, in my opinion.”

### **Segregation costs money**

In Roger Andersson’s view, the fact that housing segregation is extensive in Sweden is, in practice, a major political failure. The divided housing market is certainly no worse than in many other countries but very little has happened despite major political ambition since the early 1990s. There is probably money to save for the state.”

His own research shows that unemployment is ‘contagious’. People born abroad who live in areas in which many other people born abroad in the same place live and in which unemployment is higher than four or five per cent suffer worse income development than people born abroad who live in less segregated areas. In particular, the risk of unemployment among men born abroad increases if they live in areas with many other people born abroad.

“If segregation were less extensive and more people lived in other areas, the risk of unemployment would, therefore, be lower and the costs to which unemployment leads would also be lower. It is difficult to estimate in figures exactly which costs are involved.”

Those who live in areas dominated by people born abroad are extremely aware of the labels the majority community places on ‘their’ area, according to Roger Andersson. One of his researcher colleagues interviewed people born abroad on how they view their addresses. It turns out that some try to hide the identity of where they live. This happens when they apply for jobs and on other occasions. Instead of saying that they live in Tensta, they say they live in Spånga.

“Thus, they find an address that need not be incorrect but that does not convey the image by which stigmatised areas are characterised.”

In Roger Andersson’s view, too little research has been carried out

into whether and how employers are affected by different addresses. However, the people who participated in the interview study find that their chances of being invited to interviews increase if they ‘change’ their home addresses on job applications. Those who get jobs and become established in the labour market also try to move away from these areas as soon as they can.

“A lot of people move away. And when they move, most try to move to areas dominated by native Swedes.”

However, there are some exceptions and they are natural, Roger Andersson thinks. There are minority groups who moved to Sweden because there were not permitted to practise their religion or culture in their home country. When they come to Sweden, they make for the common group where many people of the same origin are already.

“There may be a religious aspect. Practising a religion requires that you live close to the same church. But in general the idea that people seek out their own countrymen is exaggerated. That is not the case, if we ignore recent immigrants.”

Another reason for striving for mixed housing with different housing types and more people of different origins is that such areas are not as sensitive to labour market trends. When the labour market situation is favourable and it is easier for people of foreign origin to get work, those who get work move away from the area. But they are not replaced by others from the majority community. They are replaced by new arrivals who have the same long journey into the labour market ahead of them before they may have the chance of leaving the area.

This means that some areas have a constant influx of new arrivals. Therefore, the area never improves, even though the people who move away may have attained a better situation.

### **Politicians fairly powerless**

Roger Andersson says that attempts to reduce segregation have failed for several reasons. The most important one, that politicians rarely talk about, is that their opportunities to exert influence are fairly limited. For example, it is difficult to identify the extent of discrimination among those he calls gatekeepers.

Nor is it possible to prevent people from moving away from areas. On the other hand, politicians should be able to do more to influence the planning of residential areas.

Roger Andersson is convinced that it is possible to reduce or at least halt segregation by means of better planning. Different areas must be linked together more. Planners currently often do the opposite. A traffic route between two areas creates a natural border between them. Instead, areas should be linked together via swimming pools, libraries or department stores.

This would create what Roger Andersson calls common arenas.

It is equally important for schools in vulnerable areas to get more money and for all areas to have a basic standard in the local environment. If the areas are in different municipalities, cooperation is thus also required across municipal borders.

“However, from a political perspective, the essential thing is to tackle segregation in a broader sense. It is not just a few areas, usually called vulnerable, that are segregated. The entire housing market is segregated, in particular areas dominated by native Swedes of Swedish origin.”

The political ambition must therefore be to mix all areas and not direct initiatives at just a few of them. This means in practice that more people of foreign origin must settle in areas that are currently dominated by native Swedes.

“How this should be done, I don’t know. But unless the approach of politicians is broadened, nothing will happen apart from individual initiatives here and there.”

One possible approach is to introduce a regional level in housing policy. Unlike many other countries, Swedish municipalities are completely independent in their housing policy. No one can demand that rich municipalities dominated by detached houses must build blocks of flats. Municipalities that have areas or districts with empty flats for rent therefore have no choice but to continue to take in a large proportion of refugees. But if one region, for example in Stockholm, decides that segregation is a regional problem, it is easier to solve.

“It would then be possible for municipalities that take in many refugees to demand help from others.”

## Regional housing policy

A broader regional approach should also mean that politicians do not devote as much energy and money to ‘improving’ individual areas. Roger Andersson regards the political objective of improving physical environments in residential areas dominated by people born abroad as a not very viable route. It may lead to some short-term improvements for those who live there but it does not reduce segregation.

If initiatives are to be taken, they should involve mixing types of housing. Different types of housing must exist side by side. This increases the chance of having a mixed population composition and reduced segregation.

In cities like Amsterdam and Vienna, segregation is low and one reason is that both cities have rented flats among other types of housing.

However, there is nothing to indicate that fewer rented flats reduce segregation. Roger Andersson is therefore critical of the Centre-right Government’s strategy of converting rented flats into tenant-owner’s flats in areas dominated by people of foreign origin.

“To which districts should people who lived in rented flats move? They have to go somewhere and, with more tenant-owner’s flats, there is a high risk of new segregated areas being created in another areas with blocks of flats.”

Roger Andersson has been working with integration issues since the end of the 1980s. His research primarily concerns where immigrants settle in Sweden, segregation, ethnic clusters and how different neighbourhood cultures arise. His 1987 thesis in ethnogeography concerns urbanisation in Sweden and what happened when more people moved to the cities. In the early 1990s, he initiated several research projects on segregation in Sweden. A few years later, in 1994, he was commissioned by the previous Centre-right Government to conduct an overview of ethnic segregation in Sweden.

When the report was finished, the Social Democrat Government had taken office and a big hearing was organised in the Swedish Parliament. He saw it as a kind of starting pistol for increased political interest and focus on segregation issues.

One of the reasons for increased political interest was the effects of

the economic crisis that Sweden went through in the early 1990s. Employment fell dramatically in what were then called vulnerable areas, which were dominated by people of foreign origin.

“There was a kind of pressure from below. The local politicians spoke to their parent parties and demanded action.”

### Segregated housing

It soon turned out that the areas that began to be built in the 1960s, the Million Programme areas, were most vulnerable. And since then they have been at the centre of the segregation debate, Roger Andersson says. He thinks that it is something of a historical irony that the aim of the Million Programme was to improve housing conditions for the working class. The idea was to create good housing conditions for a stable working class. But the Million Programme developed during a period of generous tax deductions for those who built their own homes.

“Many people seized the opportunity and built houses, which meant that the Million Programme’s areas were drained of the stable working class. Buildings stood empty and when immigration and the influx of refugees increased, the buildings were filled with the weakest groups. When the weak arrived, the desire of the strong to leave the areas increased.”

Several years later, during the 1990s, the then Social Democrat Government tried to avoid even more refugees ending up in Million Programme areas. New arrivals were not allowed to choose where they would settle. They were placed in various parts of Sweden. Roger Andersson considers that force is morally unjustifiable. It is not possible to tell a group that they cannot choose where they will live when everyone else has their own choice. At the same time, research shows that integration increases when new arrivals come to small places.

One of Roger Andersson’s doctoral students has compared the experiences of newly arrived refugees in Lycksele, Katrineholm and Sollentuna. Those who had the best experience were those who ended up in Lycksele. Roger Andersson does not find this so surprising. In small communities there are the common arenas mentioned above; a swimming pool, a library and perhaps just one sports club. This

means that everyone in the area has dealings in the same places. When the communities get bigger, the arenas become separated and integration is more difficult.

“The problem is naturally that many of these small communities suffer from a chronic shortage of jobs. Therefore, there is a risk that what everyone wants, i.e. higher participation in the labour market, is harder to achieve with increased geographical distribution of new arrivals.”

Although Roger Andersson is dissatisfied with politicians’ unwillingness to see how complex the segregation problems are, he believes that housing will be more mixed in ten to fifteen years’ time.

“In an ideal situation, it should be more ‘normal’ for areas of detached houses to be mixed with other types of housing and I actually believe that this will happen.”

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*Roger Andersson*, Professor of Ethnogeography at the Institute for Housing and Urban Research at Uppsala University.

## 7. *Many bad jobs in the service sector*

**Several groups in** the Swedish labour market have experienced a serious deterioration in working conditions. Many of the bad jobs are now in the private and public service sectors. Annika Härenstam, Professor at the Department of Work Science at the University of Gothenburg, says that the worst working situations are to be found in some female-dominated unskilled jobs, and among young people and immigrants, as well as highly educated women in the public sector.

“There is a risk of the working situation in parts of the service sector leading to a new surge in sick leave.”

Annika Härenstam says that the differences between those who have good working conditions and those who do not have increased. She has been studying working conditions for 20–25 years. She thinks there is a greater divide between working conditions today than there used to be. Some groups have fairly good conditions, while others now have worse conditions. The bad jobs are now mainly in the labour-intensive service sector. This is where those with the weakest position in the labour market can be found. They are mainly people with a low level of education, young people and people of foreign origin.

“There are jobs on the Swedish labour market today that no one should have.”

Change, deterioration and division in the labour market have arisen for several reasons. The industrial sector has shrunk and the

service sector has grown.

In many sectors, secure full-time employment is more the exception than the rule. Companies have scaled down their activities and outsourced more tasks to subcontractors. The proportion of employees who have unfixed terms of employment is much higher in this decade than 10–20 years ago. However, despite the big changes, the vision of a good working life continues to rest on the assumptions that prevailed in the 1960s.

“Industry and the conditions that prevail there are still used as a template although many people work in other sectors. Therefore, the conditions are not visible to many employees and it is possible to claim that everyone has ‘fairly’ good conditions.”

In her research, Annika Härenstam has not specifically studied the situation of immigrants. However, after all the years in which she has followed conditions on the Swedish labour market, she is convinced that the insecure situation of immigrants and refugees has contributed to the deterioration in working conditions.

“There are quite simply too many people who are unable to reject jobs with bad working conditions to support themselves. This applies to certain women, young people and immigrants.”

Annika Härenstam thinks that the reason conditions in the service sector are not highlighted more is because researchers, politicians, moulders of public opinion and the two sides of industry still believe that ‘good jobs’ exist or can be created for everyone on the Swedish labour market. The idea of ‘good jobs’, launched by the trade union LO Metall in the 1980s, was that it should be possible to create working conditions in which everyone, more or less, had influence and could exert influence on their working situation. In industry, fairly targeted work is also taking place to improve conditions, but in the service sector there is not the same focus on working conditions.

“The reasoning behind ‘good jobs’ meant that conditions for employees came into focus in a new way. However, since the crisis in the early 1990s, much less is being said about these issues. This is particularly true in the service sector.”

Annika Härenstam is a psychologist and worked in the correctional treatment of offenders in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Since the

early 1980s, she has been conducting research into working conditions. Her first research focused on prisons. Subsequently, the focus has mainly been on conditions at work in general. She has studied differences between women's and men's conditions most frequently. Her 1989 thesis was called 'Prison Personnel – working conditions, stress and health'.

When the Swedish National Institute for Working Life was closed in 2007, she moved from Stockholm to a position as Professor at the University of Gothenburg.

In recent years, she has studied how employees experience their working life in two major research projects. One was implemented between 1995 and 2000 at the Occupational and Environmental Health department of Stockholm County Council. The aim of the project, which was called 'Moderna arbets- och livsvillkor för kvinnor och män' (Modern Working and Living Conditions for Women and Men), abbreviated to MOA, was to identify typical situations for women and men on the Swedish labour market and find out which groups have the best conditions and which have the worst.

Another project, which was financed by the Swedish National Institute for Working Life, was implemented nearly ten years later and had a similar aim. In addition to health, the consequences of income earning ability and employability, for example, were studied. One of the conclusions was that education is no longer a guarantee of good working conditions.

“A person's occupation is quite simply no good measure of working conditions.”

### **Senior salaried employees have best conditions**

The study conducted at the Swedish National Institute for Working Life shows that those who have the best conditions on the Swedish labour market, at work and at home, are senior salaried employees. Those with the worst conditions are manual workers. But there are big differences within the groups.

Many tradesmen and women, regarded as manual workers, have, in principle, conditions as good as those of senior salaried employees and some well-educated groups of women in the service sector have

conditions as bad as those of manual workers. Although the jobs of the tradesmen and women are physically hard, other factors come into play. There are development opportunities in the job and they have a high level of influence.

The worst conditions are experienced by those who work in the labour-intensive service sector who have physically hard, monotonous jobs. The very worst conditions are experienced by those who work close to customers or clients, whether they are salaried employees or manual workers.

“Many people who work at certain call centres, bus drivers and some restaurant and cleaning staff are incredibly restricted. I have met people who cannot meet their children for a week because their timetable does not match that of their children,” says Annika Härenstam.

She points out that as the service sector is very female-dominated, it is mainly women who have the worse conditions. Of all employed women on the Swedish labour market, just over 85% work in the service sector, 70% of whom are in welfare services or labour-intensive activities such as shops or restaurants. When sick leave began to rise in 1997, many of the women on sick leave were in the public sector.

The sick leave trend led to Sweden having record numbers of people on sick leave by 2002. Since then the number of people on sick leave has fallen. However, Annika Härenstam is concerned that sick leave will rise again. And there is a high risk that those on sick leave will mainly be from the service sector.

“Sick leave goes in waves. I think that there is a high risk that front-line employees in the service sector, i.e. those who meet customers and clients, have a working situation that will lead to a new wave of increased sick leave or exclusion from the labour market.”

### **Higher efficiency requirements**

In Annika Härenstam’s view, the reason why industrial employees all have better conditions than employees in the service sector is because there is clearer business logic in the industrial sector. Production takes place in a chain with clear hierarchies. The roles between the production employees and their managers are well established. At the same time, productivity and efficiency requirements are high.

The service sector is now experiencing similarly high efficiency requirements. And the way to meet the stricter requirements is tougher management of operations, often using management models that resemble those used in industry. The financial limits are clearly stated and employees must do their jobs within these limits. The narrow distribution of tasks applied in industry, usually called Taylorisation, is now also being applied in the service sector. It has quite simply been industrialised.

But in industry products are produced in one place and sold in another. If there is a product fault, the employees do not receive any complaints. The complaints are fielded by the people who sell the product. Services are produced in direct contact with customers. The employees have to manage this contact even when production has become more standardised or more financially managed.

“Those who are in the front line and usually have the weakest position in the service sector have to take the blows from the customers or clients.”

As employees in service production often chose their occupations because they like working with people, they try harder and harder to avoid the customer or client suffering when resources decrease and requirements increase.

“I have met employees in superstores in suburbs who are frustrated when management force them to change their product range. The employees know what their customers need, for example if the majority are of foreign origin. But the employees no longer have any opportunity to exert any influence. In turn, this leads to their job satisfaction decreasing.”

According to Annika Härenstam, one of the main reasons why highly educated women in some sectors may experience the same stress and feelings of lack of control as manual workers with a low level of education is that they work in the service sector.” The toughest requirements are in the public welfare sector.

As in the private service sector, management of operations has intensified in recent years.

“In both sectors, management is requiring employees to meet budgets and enhance the efficiency of operations. However, it seems as if

the demands made of employees are huge in the public sector, at least in female-dominated sectors.

Irrespective of whether the conditions change in their operations, the employees have to meet their budgets, she says. If more children come to a nursery or if a nursing home gets more bedbound patients, the staff are responsible for managing the changes within the limits assigned to them. The signal sent out by managers is that staff must solve the problems.

“Even if the changes actually involve costs rising, no new money is made available. Instead, managers require employees to find alternative ways of solving problems that do not cost anything.”

However, the same approach seems not to prevail in all municipal operations, Annika Härenstam points out. In the more technically oriented operations, roads, maintenance, etc., there are great opportunities to solve the problems in a different way.

“If the price of asphalt rises or if maintenance costs more than budgeted for, the issue is raised to a higher level. This often means that more money is injected or that some jobs are postponed. But in the female-dominated operations, changes in conditions rarely lead to the managers responsible tackling the problems.”

### **Wider research**

Annika Härenstam thinks that in order to illustrate the developments in the service sector, the research must be broader in scope. It has been too narrow for a long time. Industry in general and the automotive industry in particular have been studied thoroughly, as has the IT sector to a certain extent. However, the cleaning sector, the recruitment sector and the restaurant sector have not been studied adequately. One reason may be that it is quite simply more difficult for researchers to access these sectors. But that explanation is not enough.

“I have met people in the restaurant sector who told me they had to clock out if there were no guests. They were left without pay. We know very little about their conditions. The same applies to the cleaning sector, although TV and radio reports have provided some insight. Researchers should show greater interest.”

An American researcher coined the term ‘the sameness paradigm’;

everyone is the same. The aim is to describe the ambition or the idea that everyone has the same opportunities.

But that is not the case in Annika Härenstam's view. Equal opportunities or equality at work does not exist. Although she has not looked specifically at immigrants' conditions, she is convinced that the same situation applies for them as for women in male-dominated environments. Research shows that the majority at a workplace determine the rules and the informal culture which apply to everyone. Those who do not fit in, the minority, find it hard to assert themselves.

“Research shows, for example, that the male-dominated IT sector considers itself to be an equal opportunities sector. This is not true. We know that. But the majority opinion prevails.”

Annika Härenstam's research focuses on how those in the labour market feel and how they perceive their jobs. Those who are on the outside, the unemployed, are not included. But she thinks that they probably have the very worst conditions. Other research shows this. Despite this, she thinks that unemployment may be preferable to some jobs.

“Everyone has the built-in motivation to support themselves, so from the point of view of an individual a job is better than unemployment. But from the point of view of society, we should work to eliminate the worst jobs. They are beneath human dignity.”

### **Different perspectives**

Another way of revealing the conditions in the labour market is to combine working life research and management research. Since the 1960s, there has been a split between organisation research and occupational health research. The organisation researchers began increasingly to be interested in management issues and the occupational health researchers in stress theory, work and health. Since then these two ways of looking at working life have been separate.

“Some research management systems, growth and productivity. This is a top-down perspective. Others, like me, research working environments. But there is no overall view.”

In respect of organisational changes, Annika Härenstam thinks it is obvious that the two branches of research are not talking the same

language. Research usually shows that employees are against organisational changes. They are seen as something negative and stressful.

“The problem is that organisation research has not looked at conditions and health but at productivity. If you ask about organisational changes in a survey, people often say no to them. But this is because they perceive organisational changes to be the same as cuts.”

However, she says that if organisational change is defined as a broader change that may also mean positive things for the employees, the replies are different.

“When I have conducted broader studies on this, it has turned out that employees are not at all negative, but that assumes that the changes not only involve cuts.”

### **Social interaction**

Annika Härenstam says that another way of finding out in more detail what is happening at workplaces is to study social relations at the workplace. A research project she is running set to end in 2010 is studying how social relations at work function.

She says that the reason why social relations at workplaces should be studied more is that more and more people have looser ties to their workplaces. Permanent positions used to be the rule and temporary positions the exception. This is no longer the case. There is, of course, a group of people with ‘normal’ full-time jobs, but the group with completely different terms of employment is growing.

Within the group with temporary positions or other terms of employment, the forms vary greatly. They may be everything from hired consultants to people who work on different projects and have the same employer to people who work as substitute employees at a company but have a completely different employer.

“The workplace is an arena in which people are selected in different ways. The production chain has been divided up and the former balance between employer and employee has been disrupted.”

“Different forms of employment also stratify the employees on hierarchical levels that are not visible,” she says. “One group belongs to the core operation, another comes and goes and a third is not even employed at the company but is there anyway. We should reveal how

the different forms interact.”

Annika Härenstam’s own research, for example, shows that those with the best working conditions often work in some form of head office or central operation. They have no contact with customers and are able to delegate tasks to others.

“But there is no class aspect to who enjoys good conditions in these core operations. Everyone does, from the secretary to the manager.”

Although Annika Härenstam thinks that conditions have deteriorated for large numbers of people on the Swedish labour market, she is optimistic about the future. In the same way that consumers demand better food, clothes and furniture produced under fair conditions, they will demand reasonable conditions for those who perform services. She also believes in the generations to come. They will demand better conditions to carry out their professions and most indicators suggest that men will take more responsibility for the home and children.

“When I’m teaching, I think it seems that the young people of today have a different attitude and that gives me hope.”

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*Annika Härenstam*, Professor at the Department of Work Science at the University of Gothenburg.



## **Citizenship on different terms**

**The economic crisis** in Sweden in the 1990s entailed a change in course for welfare policy which, in turn, affected integration policy. “The rights of the welfare state have applied to established groups since then, while large groups of people born abroad and their children have become increasingly marginalised,” maintain Aleksandra Ålund and Carl-Ulrik Schierup, both professors at Linköping University.

“The result has been ethnic class division.”

When Sweden suffered the deep recession in the early 1990s, large parts of Swedish society were affected. Unemployment increased dramatically and affected all groups, while the state’s finances deteriorated. However, those with the worst conditions in the labour market were affected most, in particular people who were born abroad. The state’s costs for the welfare systems increased rapidly. In response, the welfare state reduced its general commitments and welfare policy took a more neo-liberal approach, say Aleksandra Ålund and Carl-Ulrik Schierup.

The change of course towards a more neo-liberal approach continued when the Social Democrat Government took over in 1994 from the Centre-right Government. The Swedish welfare state continued to change. The focus was more on the individual’s obligations instead of the individual’s rights. Voluntary contributions increased while the State’s role decreased.

This meant, in turn, that its right to intervene was affected. Ever

more welfare services have been outsourced to the private market and ever fewer services are provided in the public sector. This change has taken place not only in Sweden. All of Europe's welfare states have moved towards a more neo-liberal trend.

“In Sweden, as in many other European countries, this has led to a less regulated labour market, while the welfare state's general commitments have decreased,” says Carl-Ulrik Schierup.

The result of the change in policy is obvious, according to him and Aleksandra Ålund. The division of the Swedish labour market has deepened. For a large group of people there is a regular labour market offering fairly secure permanent full-time employment.

At the same time, the proportion of insecure jobs has increased. This means part-time positions or short substitute positions. For those not in work, it is increasingly difficult to enter the regular labour market.

“In addition, the informal, grey or black sector seems to be growing,” says Carl-Ulrik Schierup.

At the same time, the price of entering the regular labour market has become increasingly high and the requirements for being entitled to remuneration have changed.

“A growing group, in which people born abroad are over-represented, are subject to conditions that those on the regulated labour market do not need to accept,” says Carl-Ulrik Schierup.

To clarify what he means, he takes a fictitious example from the labour market. A big company gets an order to perform demolition work at another company. The company then engages a smaller company. But this company does not do the job either. It engages an even smaller company to do it.

“Ultimately it is the people without papers who do the job without any form of safety equipment. None of the companies who subcontracted the job need take any responsibility for the conditions and safety of the employees.”

The researchers say that when the welfare state withdraws, citizens' rights ultimately become curtailed and conditions become more varied. Unequal access to work has laid the foundations of what Carl-Ulrik Schierup and Aleksandra Ålund call second-class citizenship. The welfare that politicians claim is there for everyone no longer exists.

“Instead deeper ethnic class division has occurred. For many this has meant increasing social alienation. This is particularly true of young people who are the children of people born abroad,” says Aleksandra Ålund.

According to their analysis, the problem is that the consequences of the changes in welfare policy are not linked to integration policy. The idea of integration policy was and remains to include people of foreign origin. At the same time, welfare policy is designed to give them basic security, like everyone else.

“But an anti-discrimination policy is not enough to compensate for the vulnerability that changes in welfare policy entail. An overall view that demonstrates a structural change is necessary if the aim is to reduce discrimination and give everyone the same basic security,” says Carl-Ulrik Schierup.

Both Aleksandra Ålund and Carl-Ulrik Schierup think that too little attention is paid to the involvement and experience of immigrant women in Sweden in the research. They have devoted a large part of their research to the interplay between gender and ethnicity, primarily at work. They are married and have implemented several large research projects together.

Since 2006, Carl-Ulrik Schierup has been head of the FAS-subsidised research centre REMESO (Institute for Research on Migration, Ethnicity and Society) at Linköping University. He is a professor and wrote a thesis on cultural and social anthropology in Denmark and gained a doctorate in sociology in Sweden.

Aleksandra Ålund is a sociologist and professor. Within the framework of REMESO, she is responsible, among other things, for developing a research area on education, work and social inclusion in the multiethnic city. She also heads the centre’s graduate school.

### **School and social segregation**

Swedish education policy has also changed a lot since the early 1990s. Independent schools, some with an ethnic and religious basis, have become more common and individual freedom has increased in the school system.

It is also more common for parents to choose schools for their

children by criteria other than geographical proximity. According to Aleksandra Ålund, this may threaten the pupil base and financing of state schools and thus also increase the differences between different schools.

“There is also a risk of differences in school performance increasing. This development is clear in Stockholm,” she says.

The differences between lower secondary schools in different parts of the city are increasing. This has led to increased polarisation between inner city and suburban schools. In areas in which the average income is high – Stockholm’s northern suburbs and the inner city – more academically oriented upper secondary schools predominate. In areas dominated by people of foreign origin, mainly the southern suburbs, vocationally oriented upper secondary schools predominate.

“If this trend continues, it may exacerbate the ethnic division we are already seeing,” says Carl-Ulrik Schierup.

Both think that more research is required. To date research has been concentrated on the pupils, while too little interest has been shown in the school as an institution.

“There are also exclusion and marginalisation processes in the school system that should be studied in further detail,” says Aleksandra Ålund.

### **Associations as integration players**

One reaction to the divided labour market and influx into the educational system is that day nurseries and independent schools are managed by alliances formed on ethnic grounds. Aleksandra Ålund says that the growth of this type of alliance has not yet been studied sufficiently. The day nurseries and schools have usually been started by private individuals. Another reaction to the changes in welfare policy is that a number of associations have been started. Aleksandra Ålund explains that these are ethnically based and are on the way to becoming integration players. She has studied several associations and says that their work is usually broad-based.

“The image of what are usually called ‘immigrants’ associations’ still seems to be that of a few old men sitting around playing cards and dreaming about the old country. In fact, they are significant

forces in the work to promote integration and they do not get enough attention.

The associations of today can be described as a type of new popular movement,” she says. The associations focus on education and work and work broadly on several issues at the same time or are part of networks. The activities focus on different groups, children, young people, women and the elderly. The activities may involve anything from helping children and young people with their homework to getting work for their parents. And sometimes two birds can be killed with one stone.

“An association was dedicated to homework in a suburb. In turn, this activity created employment for the children’s mothers in the school meals service.”

The problem for many associations is that they find it hard to get grants for their activities. Therefore, many of the active members are forced to work without pay. The reason why the associations more frequently have their applications for grants refused than other associations is that they do not fit into the grant system. Their broad activities do not fit in as associations have to keep to a strictly defined area of activity.

Aleksandra Ålund hopes that the grant systems will be changed and that the associations will acquire a more prominent role as integration players.

“This is a new type of social movement focusing on civil rights and social inclusion. They have both the will and the energy to fight against deficient civil rights.”

In her view it is also obvious that women are the driving force in many associations, both as managers and as active members. This is another reason to study association activities more.

### **Poorer working conditions for immigrants**

One of the first joint research projects Carl-Ulrik Schierup and Aleksandra Ålund implemented was in the early 1980s. They interviewed immigrant women and men from Yugoslavia about what they thought of their Swedish industrial jobs. Ten years later, between 1989 and 1991, they implemented a major research project directly at

the Volvo car factory in Torslanda.

Both studies showed that the immigrant workers all had poorer conditions than native Swedes. They also had less access to internal training and found it harder to forge a career. The women all had the worst jobs. Many were in their first industrial jobs ever and their work was heavy with unchanging working positions in a poor working environment. Men who had solid vocational training and work experience all had better jobs. Their chances of promotion were also higher.

“It was possible to reach a specific point but no further,” says Aleksandra Ålund.

Since the field studies were conducted, much has happened. The content of industrial work has been further automated and recessions have come and gone. No studies have been conducted that might show whether the differences between native Swedes and people of foreign origin in the workplace have decreased. However, Carl-Ulrik Schierup does not believe that any major improvements have been made.

“In fact, the situation has become more problematic, if anything. There is now another group in the workplace, i.e. people born abroad who are working temporarily in Sweden. We have seen reports and articles on conditions that are really bad,” he says.

### **Bad jobs explain sick leave**

Another reason why their studies of the way things are on the ‘floor’ remain relevant is the discussion of sick leave, the researchers say.

The Torslanda study, in particular, showed why immigrants take sick leave to a greater extent than native Swedes. Their working conditions were poorer without exception, with unchanging working positions and little chance of exerting influence on their job. Sick leave was still lower among immigrants than among native Swedes during the first three years of employment.

“After that, something happens,” says Aleksandra Ålund.

The explanation is that the immigrants stay in the same jobs, while native Swedes are assigned different tasks or quit. Although many of the immigrant Yugoslav workers in Torslanda had better education

and training and longer work experience, it was much more difficult for them to advance to other tasks. The managers interviewed in Torslanda maintained that poorer language skills were the reason why it was harder for the Yugoslavs to advance. But in Aleksandra Ålund's view this is a feeble explanation.

"The study also included people who spoke Finnish. Although they also spoke poor Swedish, it was not nearly as difficult for them to find jobs other than the heaviest at the company."

When the bodies of the people studied in Torslanda began to suffer serious consequences, the majority of them tried to change jobs. They were usually refused. However, their native Swedish colleagues found it easier to change jobs and those who were not allowed to change simply quit. The company filled the gaps with young people who stayed there for a few years and subsequently left for other tasks. The immigrants remained.

"In the end, their bodies gave out. Sick leave was necessary and many had to take early retirement."

In the 1990s, working environment issues were highlighted more. In particular after sick leave rose dramatically at the end of the decade. The trade unions demanded action from the employers and the government. The focus was often on women's working situations as sick leave was generally higher among women than men. But fairly little was said about the working situation for people born abroad.

"It is, of course, good that immigrants get jobs, but the question is what jobs do they get. Unfortunately, it seems that we have learned very little from experience," says Aleksandra Ålund.

Aleksandra Ålund thinks that the ethnic divisions in the labour market should be revealed.

Sick leave means not only suffering and alienation for those affected. It also means costs to companies and society. If the costs to individuals, companies and society were revealed, there would be an increase in interest in creating a more equal labour market and the driving forces to do so.

Research should also focus on what is happening in workplaces in which native Swedes and people born abroad work together. However, this is complicated, expensive research as it requires the

researcher or researchers to spend a long time at the workplace. In the view of the researchers, this is why few workplace studies are carried out.

In addition to the previous field studies that Aleksandra Ålund and Carl-Ulrik Schierup conducted, a few other workplace studies are being conducted within the framework of FAS-financed research in Norrköping. But Carl-Ulrik Schierup thinks more than just workplace studies are required.

Subcontractors should be studied more and more overall studies should be conducted.

“I would like to start studies of what I call ethnic division of labour in one or preferably several sectors,” he says.

Although Carl-Ulrik Schierup and Aleksandra Ålund are highly critical of Swedish integration policy, they are optimistic. From one European perspective, however, Sweden is unique. In the public debate, discrimination is described as a problem. In many other European countries, immigrants are highlighted as the problem, which is a big difference, say the research couple.

“There is consensus among the Swedish political parties, from left to right, about the problems inherent in using populist arguments in respect of immigration. Unfortunately, some change is on the way, but things are still very different from Denmark,” says Carl-Ulrik Schierup. He also considers that there is considerable agreement in Sweden that the collective agreement model is the best way in which to regulate conditions in the labour market. The parties and the government also seem to agree that changes must be introduced to protect the Swedish negotiation model after the EU Court of Justice’s decision in the Vaxholm case. The decision means that trade unions have fewer opportunities to take action against foreign companies that are temporarily in Sweden and do not want to sign Swedish collective agreements.

“However, without trade union resources to defend the Swedish model, there is a high risk of the Swedish labour market system collapsing,” says Carl-Ulrik Schierup.

He also thinks that the trade unions’ previous vacillating attitude to people in Sweden without work and residence permits, so-called

undocumented persons, seems to be changing. “Supporting undocumented persons is not that straightforward for the trade unions.

“Trade unions have not known which leg to stand on. If they act to improve the conditions of undocumented persons, there is a high risk of people without papers being discovered and deported. But the pay these people receive is much lower than that stipulated by agreements. Therefore, the unions must act.”

Carl-Ulrik Schierup points out that now both the Swedish Confederation for Professional Employees and the Swedish Trade Union Confederation have shown increased interest in the conditions of people without papers. The issue is increasingly being discussed and the need for a strategy is becoming increasingly clear. The realisation that the trade unions also have to act on behalf of people without papers has increased. Increased globalisation and the actions of the EU Court of Justice also seem to have increased the interest of the trade unions in investing more resources in international cooperation.

“Primarily within the European trade union movement,” says Aleksandra Ålund.

### **A more open society**

Although integration work is slow and the wrong paths are sometimes taken, in the view of both researchers, a lot of positive things are still being done. Films and books are being produced by people of foreign origin and highlighted as part of Swedish culture. The younger generations, in particular, are choosing new paths. They cross identities and express themselves multiculturally.

However, even if much is in progress, a fair, open and multicultural society requires active work.

“The media, politics, trade and industry, trade unions and the institutions of the welfare state must constantly act against racist ideas and discriminatory treatment,” says Carl-Ulrik Schierup.

## 9.

## **No effective integration policy without effective legislation**

**Swedish integration policy** lacks one necessary instrument – effective discrimination legislation. And, while it is virtually impossible for those suffering ethnic discrimination to claim redress, integration policy remains toothless, maintains Bo Rothstein, Professor of Political Science at the University of Gothenburg. He says that the reason why the legislation is not made more effective is that no one wants to do it.

Assistant Professor Gregg Bucken-Knapp says that when it comes to immigration by foreign workers, the trend is in the opposite direction.

“The restrictions the Swedish Trade Union Confederation thinks are important are disappearing,” he says.

Sweden needs a few major, high-profile ethnic discrimination cases. Only when large private or public employers are forced to explain how they acted in discrimination cases, will anything happen,” thinks Bo Rothstein. But if discrimination cases are to be brought before the courts, the discrimination legislation must be made much more effective. And there are extremely few signs that that will happen.

“On the contrary, there seems to be a secret agreement between the trade unions, the politicians (primarily the Social Democrats) and the employers. No one wants to make the legislation more effective,” says Bo Rothstein. The reason is that everyone profits from the current toothless legislation. The politicians, at least the Social Democrats, might not have anything against being able to apply more effective legislation to single out private employers. But the same politicians

realise that they are employers themselves in the state and municipal sector. Therefore, the political system risks being singled out as discriminatory.

“I think this is the reason why the Social Democratic Party has never pushed this issue. It has too many members with experience of local politics. And I think that the right-wing parties have the same problem,” says Bo Rothstein.

The trade unions have other motives. Their entire mission is based on showing that collective strength provides collective protection. If individual members obtain redress against individual employers in the courts, it is obvious that the trade union cannot defend its members. And Bo Rothstein thinks that it is totally logical that the private employers do not want to have more effective legislation.

“It is obvious that they do not want to sit in the dock and be singled out as discriminatory.”

But he thinks it is precisely this singling out that is necessary. This has been shown by experience in the USA and the UK, which have much more effective legislation than Sweden. Employers that are accused of discrimination see it as a major loss of goodwill that damages the company’s credibility and their own organisation.

“There are many other problems in the USA with racism and other misery. But for someone who thinks they have been discriminated against, the evidence requirements are much less strict than in Sweden. If someone thinks they are suffering discrimination in Sweden, this is virtually impossible to prove, and that has to change.”

### **Ordinary courts**

Bo Rothstein thinks that the court procedure must also be changed. The Swedish Labour Court (Arbetsdomstolen) currently handles discrimination cases at work. But the cases should be handled by the ordinary district court as it is representatives of the parties who pass judgement in the Labour Court.

“Representatives of the perpetrators therefore have to pass judgement on their own. This is not possible and it is certainly one of many reasons why we in Sweden have so few convictions for ethnic discrimination.”

He also wants to remove the current system of ombudsmen monitoring and pursuing various types of discrimination case. Bo Rothstein calls this device a bluff, the main point of which is to conceal how weak Swedish discrimination legislation is.

“The function exists so that there is something to show. But I think the ombudsmen have mostly become ideological megaphones for government policy. This was clear when the previous equal opportunities ombudsman, Claes Borgström, became spokesman for equal opportunities issues for the Social Democrats after he ceased to be ombudsman.”

Although Bo Rothstein thinks that the discrimination legislation needs to be changed, he does not know whether discrimination is more widespread on the Swedish labour market than in other countries.

However, he says that the organisation of the Swedish labour market may increase the risk of discrimination. Work is more hierarchically organised than in many other countries. Many people work in more or less independent groups and managers rarely go the whole way and give orders.

“At a guess, this independence may have a flip side. Cooperation may result in those who are to work together looking for people who are like them. The risk is that those who are perceived to be different are regarded as being more difficult to work with and are therefore not chosen.”

As a political scientist, Bo Rothstein has sometimes taken an interest in integration issues. He wrote his thesis in political science in 1986. Its title was “The Social Democratic State. Reforms and Administration in Swedish Labour Market and School Policy”.

Together with Professor Sören Holmberg at the University of Gothenburg, since 2007 he has been responsible for the Quality of Government Institute at the University of Gothenburg. The institute conducts studies to compare the quality of various public authority departments and study how citizens are affected by various political decisions and the incidence of political corruption.

### **Confidence of citizens**

The fact that legislation does not protect all citizens may have serious consequences for confidence in society in the groups that feel they

are affected, in Bo Rothstein's view. The results of his new research project indicate that citizens' confidence in society, in their fellow citizens and in their environment is closely linked to how they feel public authorities treat them.

A study compared how Swedish and Romanian students who were abroad reacted if they experienced the police or other public authorities acting dishonestly, for example by taking bribes. Both the Swedish and Romanian students reacted to corruption in the same way. They not only lost confidence in the public authorities in question. They also lost confidence in people in general in the society to which they had come.

"As an immigrant, you are more sensitive to how you are treated and are also more uncertain about whether you have approached the right office. If something goes wrong there, it is not surprising if you think that it applies not only to that situation but that there is something wrong with 'society as a whole'."

A Danish study shows the same picture. Immigrants who think that they have been badly treated lose confidence not only in the public authorities who treated them badly but also in Danish society.

The next step in Bo Rothstein's project is a broader study of confidence in Swedish public authorities. One question is whether citizens feel that public authorities treat everyone equally.

"One reason why immigrants feel discriminated against may be that they feel that they are not treated equally by the public authorities. This naturally has a negative impact on confidence. But we still know too little about this."

At the same time, his research shows that people of foreign origin may feel roughly the same confidence in society as native Swedes. But this depends on them having a job.

"In the USA and UK, there is discussion that confidence in other people is falling in ethnically segregated areas. In these areas, the feeling of not being able to rely on others is stronger than in other areas."

"One reason that a lack of confidence is not as common among immigrants in Sweden as in the USA is that housing segregation is not as extensive in our country. There is no Chinatown or Little Italy. Some Swedish suburbs are, of course, dominated by people of foreign origin

but those who live there come from different countries. So far there are extremely few areas in Sweden in which only one ethnic group lives,” says Bo Rothstein.

The most important reason why confidence is higher in Sweden than in the USA, however, is that financial equality is greater in Sweden. However, there are differences in Sweden as well. The higher a person’s level of education, whether a native Swede or a person of foreign origin, the higher their confidence in society.

The same applies to gainful employment. Among people of foreign origin, confidence in Swedish society is much lower among the unemployed than among those who have jobs.

“We need to conduct more studies on this. However, it is obvious that a job and education are important to confidence in society. Therefore, it is very important for immigrants to be given support and assistance to enter the labour market.”

### **Integration via work**

In Bo Rothstein’s view, the best way of achieving integration is therefore via work. However, this does not mean that people of foreign origin should be offered targeted initiatives. That is the wrong way to go and also contradicts Swedish welfare policy.

“When the ‘poverty problem’ was discussed in the 1940s in Sweden, the conclusion was that general initiatives were better than targeted initiatives. At that time, there was already awareness that targeted initiatives can lead to stigmatisation.”

Since then welfare policy has focused on a general policy that covers everyone. But there is one clear exception and that is integration policy. Despite a lot of talk about equal treatment, politicians have repeatedly implemented measures that only target immigrants,” he says and refers to Carl Dahlström’s thesis ‘Almost Welcome’, which was presented at the University of Gothenburg in 2004.

“This shows clearly that political rhetoric differs markedly from reality. The politicians say ‘equal treatment’ but implement a number of targeted measures.”

The measures involve everything from support for immigrant organisations to support for vulnerable areas. The measures are often the

result of commissions of inquiry. However, new measures are added without old ones being taken away and the result is a patchwork with no overall vision. The conclusion of Dahlström's thesis is that few specific changes have been made since the programmes in the 1960s and 1970s were introduced.

"In welfare policy, the idea was to avoid an 'us and them approach', so general measures were introduced. In integration policy, where the risk of the same approach is even higher, targeted measures are applied."

Although Bo Rothstein is critical of many elements of integration policy, he does not think it has completely failed.

"It all depends on what you measure things against. Measured against a standard by which no one who comes here is to suffer any form of discrimination, it is, of course, a phenomenal failure."

However, if the comparison is made with other countries, the result is different.

"There you have to say that the situation is far from dire."

As Bo Rothstein sees it, the problem with politicians is that they cannot talk in plain language. This is not only the case with integration policy but it is clearer there.

"There is not a single politician who can say: 'now we will take in a lot of refugees who will find it hard to get work and there is a risk of tension between them and native Swedes'. No politician does this."

He does not think this can be required either. However, the integration issue would benefit from being less politicised. Equal opportunities policy and, to a certain extent, labour market policy used to arouse strong feelings. Now the same applies to integration policy, and that has affected research.

"This research field has not been able to establish the structures required to avoid politicisation. Unfortunately, this means that alternative political views are not aired. Instead the accepted picture is confirmed, primarily 'feeling sorry for them'."

He says that the clearest evidence, in recent times, of the politicisation of integration research was when the former Minister for Integration, Mona Sahlin, stopped one commission of inquiry on integration and set up another.

"The discussion, before the first commission was closed, was about

the focus research should have. Politicians should not get involved with that. I have always regretted what happened.”

Bo Rothstein also thinks that the second commission of inquiry that Mona Sahlin set up, ‘Power, Integration and Structural Discrimination’, chaired by Masoud Kamali, had many scientific shortcomings.

“When the first commission was stopped, we lost out on a lot of necessary research. And now we know too little in a number of areas. For example, how immigrants feel about the current integration policy.”

### **The unions and immigration by foreign workers**

Gregg Bucken-Knapp, Assistant Professor at University West, says that one area in which it is obvious that the Swedish model has exerted great influence on politics is immigration by foreign workers. To avoid downward pressure on pay, the attitude of the trade unions has been that immigration by foreign workers should only be permitted when there is a shortage of labour. However, trade unions take this attitude not only out of concern for employees in Sweden. It is also out of concern for those who immigrate to Sweden. If they come to Sweden when the economy is weak, there is a higher risk they will have worse conditions than native Swedes.

“This is a line that the Swedish Trade Union Confederation and the Social Democratic Party have pursued since the 1960s. It has also had a strong impact on legislation,” says Gregg Bucken-Knapp.

Ever since the end of the 1960s, there had to have been a shortage of labour if an employer wanted to ‘import’ labour. Of course, the rules have changed over time and have, for example, been adapted since Sweden has been a member of the EU. Irrespective of the changes in rules, it was necessary for there to be a shortage of labour and the public authority that decided whether there was a shortage was the Swedish Labour Market Administration. The trade unions also had to confirm the shortage and that the conditions for the workplace in question were in line with the collective agreements.

“For many years, this model was accepted, although employers were critical of the role of the Employment Service. However, at the

start of the 21st century, other proposals emerged, thus generating a new debate on immigration by foreign workers in Sweden.”

The private employers’ organisation the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise presented a proposal that it was reasonable for employers who needed immigrant foreign workers to decide on this themselves without the involvement of the Employment Service or trade unions. The Swedish Trade Union Confederation and the Social Democrats protested against the proposal and had several objections.

“When I was younger, I was involved with the Social Democrats in the USA. I saw the Swedish Trade Union Confederation and the Social Democrats as those who put solidarity first. But I found their objections unclear.”

### **Documentation required**

At the start of the 21st century, Gregg Bucken-Knapp was working as a researcher in Denmark. He had a PhD in political science and began to follow the Swedish debate and read about the issue. In summer 2002 he moved to Sweden and took up a research position on one of Bo Rothstein’s projects on industrial relations at the University of Gothenburg.

“I realised that this issue needed to be examined. Many international migration researchers do not realise the impact the Swedish model and the attitude of trade unions have on political decisions in Sweden.”

Since 2002 Gregg Bucken-Knapp has been writing a book on the approach of the Swedish Trade Union Confederation and the Social Democrats to immigration by foreign workers. The book should have been finished in 2007 but was delayed as the Conservative Government’s proposals for changes were made in spring 2008. When we meet in April 2008, the book is almost finished and Gregg Bucken-Knapp is teaching on the English ‘International program for politics and economics’ at University West in Trollhättan.

“It now seems as if Sweden has the type of immigration by foreign workers that the Swedish Trade Union Confederation and the Social Democrats have said no to since the 1960s,” says Gregg Bucken-Knapp.

However, he says that the political positions that led to decisions on integration policy are not sufficiently documented. For international

researchers and other interested parties, it is, therefore, difficult to follow the Swedish debate.

“The influence of the unions is so much greater than many international migration researchers realise.”

He therefore hopes to be able to make a contribution to international migration research. In particular for the researchers who claim that Europe’s trade unions have changed their opinion of immigration by foreign workers.

“These researchers, including the two American researchers Leah Haus and Julie Watts, claim that the majority of trade unions in Europe now have a positive attitude to immigration by foreign workers. But this is not true of Sweden, in my opinion. When one of the world’s strongest trade union movements gives an unclear answer on this issue, it should be examined.”

### **Uncertain attitude**

When Gregg Bucken-Knapp examines documents from 2001 to 2008, he can read an uncertain attitude from the Swedish Trade Union Confederation and the Social Democrats. On the one hand, they often talk about solidarity. On the other hand, they want to limit the influx of labour. The message is that the borders of Sweden might be opened, but first those who are in Sweden have to have jobs. And it is primarily immigrants who are unemployed.

Gregg Bucken-Knapp thinks that the Swedish Trade Union Confederation, in particular, has an ambivalent attitude. The Swedish Trade Union Confederation’s argumentation often refers to the 1960s and the organisation claims that it rarely said no to immigration by foreign workers.

“But that was 40 years ago.”

In more recent documents from the 21st century it is clear that the Swedish Trade Union Confederation is trying to say two things at the same time,” he says. “Yes to immigration by foreign workers, but with restrictions. And in his view, the reason for the restrictions is the same today as in the 1960s. Concern about how pay is fixed and the Swedish model.

“The answer is therefore ‘yes, but’. In an international context,

it may be seen as protectionist. And perhaps it is. But the reason is concern for the Swedish model and those who come here, not to close the borders.”

However, according to Gregg Bucken-Knapp, the problem is that the Swedish Trade Union Confederation still finds it hard to describe its position. The messages in both the Swedish Trade Union Confederation’s and the Social Democrats’ documents are contradictory.

“I don’t think this is primarily on account of an ambivalent attitude to the issue. It is more about how a message should be communicated. Within both the Swedish Trade Union Confederation and the Social Democrats, it is quite natural to demand restrictions and the reason for this is concern about the model and anxiety about pay dumping. But if this is said in the wrong way, there is always a risk of being accused of protectionism and therefore the message is contradictory and perhaps a little veiled.”

### **Employers win**

It is impossible to predict what the extent of immigration will be when the current government’s proposal takes effect in December 2008,” says Gregg Bucken-Knapp. Many people assert that the extent will be limited. Nor does he want to say anything about what a new type of immigration by foreign workers might mean for the Swedish model.

“We will simply have to wait and see what happens.”

Gregg Bucken-Knapp thinks it is obvious that the private employers’ organisation the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise has won the battle on immigration by foreign workers. An employers’ proposal presented at the start of the 21st century led to specific policy a few years later.

“If and when the proposal enters into force, it will mean that the rules for immigration by foreign workers will change radically for the first time in 40 years. How that will affect the Swedish Trade Union Confederation and the Social Democrats remains to be seen.”

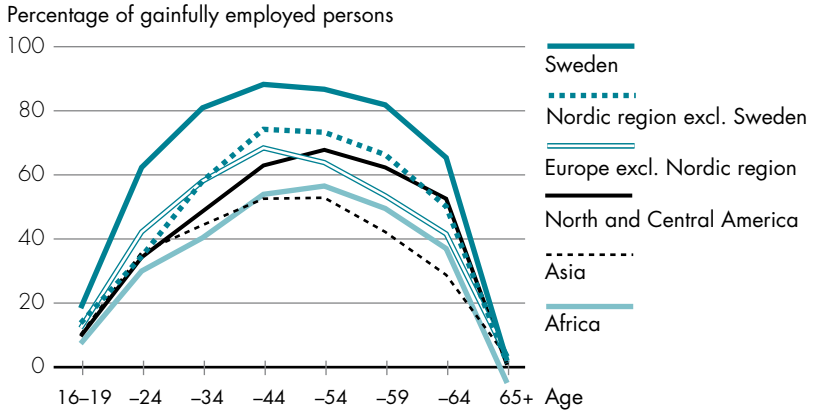
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*Bo Rothstein*, Professor of Political Science at the University of Gothenburg.

*Gregg Bucken-Knapp*, Assistant Professor at University West, Trollhättan.

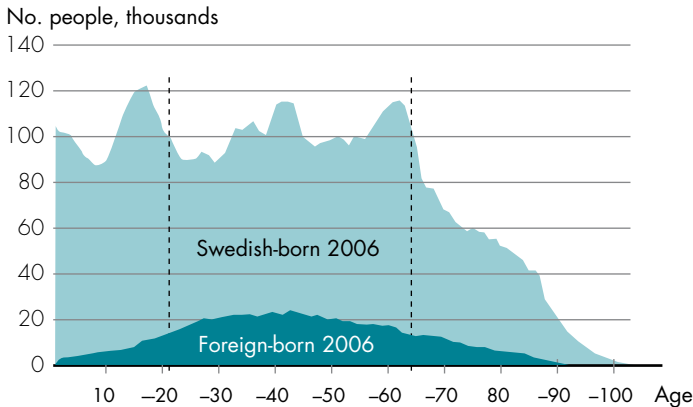
Facts

Employment rates by origin 2006



Source: Institute for Future Studies, Professor Thomas Lindh, Växjö University.

Age distribution of people born in Sweden and abroad, 2006



Source: Institute for Future Studies, Professor Thomas Lindh, Växjö University.

## 10. *Immigration does not solve labour shortages*

**At the end of 2009**, the government's Globalisation Council will present a number of proposals for how Sweden will be better equipped to cope with growing globalisation. The government has 'ordered' clarification in a number of areas. But the work concentrates mainly on a few areas, according to Pontus Braunerhjelm, the principal secretary of the council.

"Sweden as a knowledge nation, the ability of the business community to renew itself, the way in which the labour market functions, taxes and the social insurance systems are the areas to which we are devoting most energy," he says.

Since the start of 2006, a number of basic reports have been presented, many with specific proposals for how policy should be changed. The extent to which the council adopts the proposals will only be clear in 2009.

The government's aim in setting up the council is to deepen knowledge about what is required for Sweden to be able to assert itself in a globalised world. The council includes representatives of private employers, central trade union organisations, company managers, researchers, public officials and the government. The government's hope is that the council will submit proposals that, ideally, everyone will support. This is also Pontus Braunerhjelm's hope, although he does not think it is possible in all issues.

"It may be difficult to find proposals in the labour market area and possibly in respect of tax issues on which everyone can agree. But in

other cases, I actually think it should be possible,” he says. He spends half his time on the council, and the remainder as Professor of Economics at the School of Architecture and the Built Environment at the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm.

Pontus Braunerhjelm thinks that increased globalisation will demand a number of changes in policy if Sweden is to cope with greater international competition. This is particularly true in the labour market area.

“Mobility on the Swedish labour market must probably increase, as must productivity.”

“Greater initiatives are also required to support those affected by structural changes on account of globalisation,” he says. With more globalisation, there is a higher risk that certain sectors and industries will be wiped out or move abroad. In that case, the employees in those sectors must receive support and help to train for jobs in other areas.

It will probably also be necessary to raise the retirement age for those in work as the future demographic changes in Sweden will mean that many people will retire while the number of people in work will decrease. Another way of increasing the number of people in work may be to ensure that young people start work earlier than they do today. However, Pontus Braunerhjelm does not believe that dramatically increased immigration to Sweden can be a way of solving future shortages of labour.

“To date we have not seen any great interest from, for example, citizens in the EU in moving to Sweden. If we are to finance the welfare systems with the coming demographic changes, labour must increase dramatically. And this cannot be done with immigration by foreign workers.”

As little as he believes in extensive immigration to Sweden, does he believe that illegal immigration to Sweden will increase on account of globalisation.

“There is very little to indicate it.”

In addition to measures in the labour market area, measures must be targeted at the business community,” he says. “Both large and small companies need different forms of initiative.

He says that education policy must also change. More people must acquire top-level expertise and the education system must be able to offer broad-based education that equips people better to cope with a changing labour market.

“It will also be necessary to review the tax and social insurance systems,” he says. When capital becomes more mobile, the risk of Swedish capital disappearing abroad increases, for example, if the Swedish tax rates are perceived as being too high. When more people move to and from Sweden, the social insurance systems must also become more flexible.

“However, we will decide exactly which measures will be proposed when all basic reports have been completed. Only then will it be time to submit proposals.”

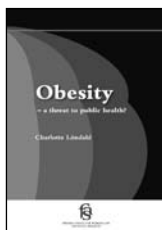
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*Pontus Braunerhjelm*, Principal Secretary of the Globalisation Council in Stockholm.

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