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Racial entanglements and Sociological confusions: Repudiating the rehabilitation of integration

Ethnicity, entangled duality, integration, assimilation, racism, simultaneity, Sweden

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In line with the broader nationalist advances currently remaking the Western political landscape, the concept of integration has witnessed a marked rehabilitation. Whilst many influential critiques of the sociology of integration are already available, this article contests the concept's renewed purchase through addressing its own internal incoherence. Based on research in Stockholm, this critique concerns the relationship between ethnic identity and cultural integration. It will be argued that integration and the production of difference are intertwined, entangled dualities, and far from being a benign entanglement, this duality is premised on the force and reach of everyday civic racisms. Of pivotal and unique analytical significance here is the observation that racism should not only be considered an exogenous process that impedes integration, but as a multifaceted phenomenon folded into integration.

Introduction

The last decade in Europe has witnessed a marked rehabilitation of integration as a cultural and political project. Within the UK context, for instance, this emphatic recourse to the value of integration was made 'aggressively' (*Guardian*, 2016) apparent in Dame Louise Casey's already notorious 2016 report titled, 'The Casey Review – A Review into Opportunity and Integration.'¹ European sociology too, having entertained various detours via both contiguous and oppositional concepts such as cohesion, multi and inter-culturalism, and cosmopolitanism, has resettled on integration as a substantive ideal vis-à-vis multi-ethnic cohabitation (Amin, 2012; Back et al. 2002; Brubaker, 2001; McGhee, 2008). This rehabilitation is of course prompted by broader new nationalist political fashions, of particular prominence being the emphatic pronouncement that multiculturalism 'has failed' (Lentin and Titley, 2011). An early primer of this return to emboldened populist-nationalism was the spate of European political figures and authorities (e.g. Cameron, Merkel, and the Council of Europe [*Financial Times*, 2011]) rallying to announce multiculturalism's 'failure' and 'death' (Sarrazin, 2010), reasserting in turn the need of ethnic minorities to 'melt into one national community' (Sarkozy, quoted in *Financial Times*, 2011). Within this context of multiculturalism's rhetorical repudiation, integration, its alleged antonym, re-enters the political and academic imagination, refurnished with panacean properties as appropriate for an era of renewed ethno-nationalist belligerence.

Deeply troubled by this recuperation, this article addresses a fundamental confusion that continues to be peddled by the sociology of integration. This critique concerns the relationship between ethnic identity and integration's specific emphasis on acculturation – the latter being read as the incorporation into ostensibly 'mainstream' (Alba and Nee, 2003) spheres of cultural activity. I maintain that, as opposed to seeing the two phenomena as unfolding at two different sites, the production of identities of ethnic difference and the incorporation into normative western practices of urban life is better seen as constituting one and the same process.

Making use of interview and observation material generated in Stockholm, Swedenⁱⁱ – and profiling the experiences of two young, second-generation participants (Kale and Agille) in particular – this paper posits that it is the very participation in 'mainstream' (Alba and Nee, 2003) cultural activity that either brings about, or, at the very least, strengthens the second-generation's attachment to identities of racialised ethnic difference. A key provocation here is that analytic inattention to the multiple *racisms* encountered during participation in the cultural mainstream can only engender naïve sociological understandings of the relationship of ethnic difference to integration. Through profiling the everyday racial interrogation and scrutiny that ethnic minorities in Sweden navigate when partaking in mainstream cultural activity (Hübinette and Lundström, 2011; Pred, 2000), a stronger sociological understanding of how positions of ethnic difference are produced vis-à-vis integration can be offered. Put differently, a better understanding of the simultaneity that characterises processes of integration and the affirmation of ethnic minority status respectively is more properly drawn out.

In making this argument, the article first outlines key tenets of integration as ordinarily pictured within a sociological lens, with particular emphasis on its normative attachment to a shared ethno-national identity. Having then offered a précis of the core objections already levelled at it, the article turns to important recent developments within the sociology of integration. These revisions merit closer consideration as they are more attentive than their antecedents to the 'interplay' (Gans, 1997) between integration and the production of ethnic difference. But as analysis of Kale and Agille's reflections will make clear, these revised approaches continue to peddle a narrow conceptualisation and/or application of racism's relevance, unable to appreciate the extent to which everyday racist encounters and interrogation ensure that integration and affirmations of ethnic status are *intertwined* processes.

1. The sociology of integration

Before proceeding, I note that this article does not posit a terminological difference between assimilation and integration. Whilst some readers might object to this conflation, I maintain that in their public circulation, ‘especially in a European context’ (Brubaker, 2001: 539-540), the two terms are frequently subjected to a synonymous use. Contiguously, Wise (2013: 37) notes that contemporary sociology is once again ‘inching ever closer to old ideas of integration and assimilation.’ Tellingly, the underlying ideals of integration and assimilation are listed by Wise as interchangeable. Favell (2001a: 352), who alongside Brubaker might constitute the most authoritative European social theorist of integration, captures particularly well this palimpsest character of politically freighted analytic terminologies when noting that integration ‘builds its success on swallowing up other [more] unfashionable terms for the same kind of process: terms such as ‘assimilation’, ‘acculturation’ and ‘cohesion’’. Accordingly, though some of the seminal American theorists referenced below employ the term assimilation, this article reads them equally as scholars of integration.

Of paradigmatic importance to integration theory is Gordon’s (1964) claim that a process of acculturation (the first phase of integration) that is not succeeded by incorporation into a common identity (the final phase) signals an incomplete integration process. And even though this claim was made nearly half a century ago, it continues to frame much integration sociology. ‘Newer theories of assimilation’, despite moving towards ideas of social complexity, still ‘focus on factors that explain the fading of ethnic distinctions over time’ (Jimenez and Fitzgerald, 2007: 340). In accordance with the durability of this proposition, both ‘straight-line’ and ‘bumpy-line’ (Gans, 1992) conceptions of integration hold the view that a migrant group brings with itself a discrete communal identity and culture, one that gradually dissipates upon social, economic and cultural incorporation of the younger generations into the host society (Morawska, 1994: 77).

More specifically, taking its cue from the aforementioned work of Gordon, and prior to him, the ‘race-relations’ approach of Park (1950) as well as Myrdal (1944), integration perceives itself as involving the gradual incorporation of an already established minority ethnic community into a cluster of ‘mainstream’ cultural habits and values. This either coincides with or precedes a move to identify with the normative community (the ‘*Gemeinschaft*’ as Parsons [1965: 1009] puts it in his ‘Full Citizenship for the American Negro?’). Herein, the ethnic marker of difference is made increasingly ‘less salient’ in shaping the narratives of self and related lifestyle choices that second-

generation individuals construct (Alba and Nee, 2003). In other words, the appeal to ethnic difference takes on an ‘optional’ or merely ‘symbolic’ (Jimenez, 2010: 21) purchase, and those moments where it continues to remain salient are relegated to ‘fewer and fewer social domains’ (Alba, 2005: 23). This end-scenario where the original ethnic difference is either wholly effaced or of only minor, optional value constitutes a successful process of integration.

1.1. Critiques and revisions

There are many well-trodden routes to consider in troubling this above linear scheme concerning integration. These could include:

- a) The integration-imagination obstinately expects all outsiders to vanish. The late Bauman (1993: 163) read this, via Levi-Strauss, as the second of two annihilationist approaches directed against the ‘outsider’ – the anthropophagic strategy: the desire to efface the inferior group, rendering it unrecognisable, beyond, possibly, a nominal, residual prefix.
- b) It presumes, in line with the functionalist sociology of both Durkheim and Parsons, a bonded picture of society that is absolute in its a priori coherence. This phantasmal homogeneity – particularly unlikely in times where the nation-state is subjected to fast proliferating transnational and localised disruptions (Wieviorka, 2008) – is thereby narrated as being under threat of contamination due to the migrant, minority presence.
- c) It problematises, a priori, the racialised community’s inability to disappear, provoking in turn a tautology: the very fact that a minority community is identifiable (as significant) is presented as evidence of the respective minority’s inability to integrate, as being ‘incurably alien’ (Bauman, 1993: 101).
- d) It places the bulk of the moral and practical responsibility at the door of the immigrant, second-generation other (Castles et al. 2002: 11).
- e) Explicitly integrationist policies tend to generate the adverse effect. As such, integration is unable to serve even its proponents’ own putative interests. ‘[Assimilation policies] are indeed more likely to strengthen rather than erode difference, by provoking a reactive mobilisation against such assimilatory pressures’ (Brubaker, 2001: 534).

These problems with integration are of course well-documented and much warranted. However, in avoiding a mere repetition of these critiques, I explore a more unorthodox line – an argument which posits that integration and the affirmation of minority ethnic difference can only be properly considered as mutually constituted, co-articulated phenomena. And though borrowing

from a British Cultural Studies derived emphasis on the normative *making* of racial and ethnic schema, a critical reading of difference is actualised in this article but from within the analytic terms of integration itself. Equally, whilst an extensive critique of integration from within the sociology of race and racism already exists, this tends to be engendered in terms of the wider discursive fields within which integration operates – with emphasis on the racist and nationalist representational regimes that the ideal sponsors (Favell, 2001b; Kundnani, 2007; McGhee, 2008). This article’s intervention looks to address instead some of the very social processes that are commonly referenced as constitutive of integration (e.g. leisure participation in public activities considered habitual to their particular class/age cohort, work-place socialising, etc.), establishing that the concept’s inadequacy vis-à-vis accounting for the ‘retention’ of ethnic difference is apparent even by its own internal sociological schema.

Of related importance is this article’s attempt to incorporate the not insignificant revisions that have transpired from within the sociology of integration. An emergent sociological commentary on integration – as navigated by the searching analysis of figures such as Alba, Gans, Jimenez and Waters with regards to the United States, but also Brubaker and Morawska’s significant commentary within European contexts – has sought to temper the concept’s endgame attachment to identity homogeneity. ‘New assimilation theories’ (Alba and Nee, 2003: 14-17) argue that integration need not be premised upon a ‘disappearance of a distinction’ in everyday life based on ‘racial or ethnic’ background. Instead, these authors advance softer notions of ‘decline’ (11) and ‘minor impact’ as regards the relevance of ethnic difference within the cultural ‘mainstream’. It is maintained that exposure to various institutionalising apparatuses (e.g. education, labour market, popular media) ensures that younger generations do, in the main, assume the cultural and value orientations particular to their broader age, geographical and class cohorts – *irrespective* of how the relevant subjects might primarily identify. (Alba and Nee do stress here that such gradual integration drift is all the more probable if the mainstream itself is partially ‘remade’, absorbing certain symbols, tastes and even values commonly associated with the relevant migrant group.) The prosaic claim here of Alba and others is not that integration is of its own accord desirable, but simply inevitable. But while this constitutes an improvement – on ‘older conceptions of assimilation’ that assumed as normatively necessary ‘the eradication of [ethnic] distinction and differences’ (Alba et al. 2014: 449) – it continues to rehearse an unhelpful reading of ethnic minority status as something that is carried independently and constituted outside of the mainstream. In short, it is still held as an article of faith that cultural integration necessarily *lessens*, to some noteworthy degree, the presence of ethnic diversity; and that ethnic difference, if retained, is operationalized independently of any such cultural integration.

What remains elided in these contributions is the process by which ‘becoming similar’ (Brubaker, 2001) occurs concomitantly to the process of becoming different. In other words, as opposed to considering ethnic difference a static entity, and integration a transformative process, the following analysis submits that *both* must be considered active verbs which trace each other’s trajectory. It might however appear as if some post-classical commentators are attentive to this *simultaneity*:

Immigrants’ engagement with ‘transnational spaces’ has not precluded their identification and involvements with the host society. As they are educated in the host society’s schools, participate in its popular culture, and enter its workforce, native-born children of immigrants become part of the latter while they maintain ties to their ethnic origins (Morawska, 2003: 22).

A recurring issue, however, with Morawska’s ‘transnationalism/assimilation model’, which builds on her oft-cited ‘In Defense of the Assimilation Model’ (1994), is that she understands this dual process as inhabiting two different temporal-spatial cycles. In the later work of the influential Gans (1997) too, who seems initially sympathetic to some of the difficulties flagged here, a similar tension surfaces. Gans, alongside Alba, is notable in consistently attempting to re-theorise integration in line with the always shifting contours of racial structures and migratory patterns. But whilst observing that ‘ethnic culture does not necessarily become a victim of acculturation but is reconstructed or invented anew all the time’, he follows up with a considerably less intertwined understanding: ‘There need be no inherent contradiction between identity [‘retention’] and acculturation. [T]he two processes can operate *independently*’ (883, emphasis added). In contrast, this article introduces a perspective which argues that the moment at which a subject is racialised and the moment at which she/he becomes acculturated is often one and the same.

This attempt at a critical perspective does find some initial traction in Levitt and Glick Schiller’s (2004) seminal article, ‘Conceptualising Simultaneity’. Employing the anti-‘methodological nationalism’ critique that Wimmer and Glick Schiller (2002) had developed elsewhere, the authors argue that ‘assimilation and enduring transnational ties’ are not, contrary to prevailing assumptions, ‘incompatible or binary opposites’ (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004: 1002). The authors instead stress that the seemingly contradictory processes of integration and expanding transnational connections are, in actuality, interdependent, often ‘reinforcing’ (1003) each other. It is however the case that their argument is still primarily concerned with the social, economic

and cultural ties to a country of origin and/or dispersed diasporic community – i.e. a fairly orthodox transnationalism studies oriented conceptualisation of difference. Conversely, the argument does not analytically engage with identity difference as assigned, assumed and experienced within the mainstream itself, independent of any engagement of a transnational social field. Herein, what remains unaddressed in this perspective is the centrality of racism and racialisation from *within the mainstream* in producing the simultaneity of inclusion/exclusion, or, put differently, the simultaneity of integration/difference. It is this final concern, where processes of racism serve as the central analytic node for understanding this entangled duality, that this paper will address as it unfolds in the lives of two young people from Stockholm.

1.2. Integration and racism

The spirit of this argument is of course couched within the well-founded conceptual terrain spurred by identity ‘interpellation’, an Althusserian (1971) consideration that heavily informed – though far less deterministically construed – the shape taken by British Cultural Studies in the 1990s (Alexander, 1996; Back, 1996; Baumann, 1996; Brah, 1996). As Hall (1992; 1996) stressed on numerous occasions, identity is not primarily a question of what you are or what you opt to be, but a question of what you are allowed or required to be. There is no autonomous claim to difference, but only a negotiation of an ascribed position of difference – an observation perhaps best captured by the postcolonial feminist Ahmed (2000: 98): ‘Those who do not fit into a standardised pattern must still fit into the nation. [T]hey fit, not by being the standard, but by being defined in terms of difference.’

Underpinning these observations, regarding the ascribed and relational character of difference, is a broader call to re-centre structures and experiences of *racism* when evaluating contemporary social processes (Back, 2015). This concern has become particularly sharp of late, with Bhabra (2007) in particular holding sociological canons severely wanting in terms of their inability to write racism *into* its analytic script. Lentin (2014), drawing from this critique, locates her objections squarely within the sociology of integration itself, arguing that the ‘elisions’ and ‘neglect’ of race and racism when engaging questions of migrant incorporation can only facilitate simplistic ‘cultural’ accounts of integration outcomes. Such ‘culture talk’ (Mamdani, 2004; Alexander, 2016) reads claims to, performances of, and social outcomes tied to categories of ethnic difference as epiphenomenal instantiations of the discrete culture within which the relevant subject is putatively nested.ⁱⁱⁱ The sociological orthodoxy here is to consider the subject a transparent symptom of the ethnic culture from which she/he ostensibly emerges (Pitcher,

2014: 20-21). Given the long-standing critique as developed, for instance, by Gilroy (1993) – who offered the term ‘ethnic absolutism’ to capture this analytic indexing of culture to racial and ethnic identities – it is apparent that ‘culturalist’ accounts are poorly positioned to read identities of difference as ascribed positions and, secondly, as relationally constituted phenomena that operate within broader encounters with ethno-national normativity. Critics (Kalra et al. 2005; Sharma, A. 1996; Sharma, S. 2007) have also noted that even the brief post-structuralist turn to concepts such as hybridity, transnationalism and new ethnicities, despite their strong anti-racist credentials, often become susceptible to excessive ‘culture talk’ – drawing an emphasis not on the racialisation that plays out within certain institutional and discursive settings, but instead, on both the stigma and/or progressive possibilities associated with *cultural* ‘in-betweenness’.^{iv} Smith’s (2015) observation that the increasingly fashionable accounts of the ‘everyday’ do not adequately fold civic instantiations of racism into its remit is also of contiguous import here – given that the terrain of everyday cultural consumption and public encounters is where this article operationalizes integration. Put differently, the everyday, contrary to its often-romanticised reading as constituting an extra-governmental, extra-ideological domain of social activity, does not operate outside of dominant racial discourses of spatial and cultural propriety, belonging and desirability.

Absorbing this call to place racism centrally *within* any sociological modelling of contemporary urban processes, this article actualises a unique analytic contemplation of racism as it relates to an evaluation of cultural integration. The sociological convention regarding integration, when it does engage racism, asserts that racism is an obstacle to integration, preventing full social participation. Whilst not unimportant, racism remains a category exogenous to integration, acting as a buffer between ethnic identity and integration. This article pursues a shift in emphasis, placing racism *within* integration and thereupon reading ethnic identities’ ‘salience’ and affirmation as being constituted during participation in mainstream cultural and institutional activity. Consequently, the article’s simple claim, via the extended reflections of two young Stockholm participants, is that integration is indeed a given, sociologically unremarkable aspect of their lives; but this habituation often acted in concert with them being marked as different, being marked as problematic racial presences.

2. Kale – Mundane leisure and the assumption of difference

Kale (26), of Iranian origin and of suburban (Sundbyberg), working-class background, was an aspiring property development analyst who recently obtained an internship at a small but reasonably established firm. The observation sessions with Kale comprised a litany of not inexpensive leisure excursions in the company of various friends of assorted second-generation backgrounds (hereafter, *Invandrare*) – despite his friends working in precarious service-sector jobs (e.g. metal disposal truck-driver, sales-assistant and night-club promoter). These engagements included a long night out in the fashionable Söder district as well as a visit to a café in Östermalm (an affluent commercial district close to his workplace) succeeded by a meal at a franchised Italian restaurant nearby.

The above leisure activities, cited during the interview as indicative of his regular leisure patterning, are of course unremarkable in terms of the consumerist habituations of commodified objects *and* experiences (Bauman 2011; Mbembe 2004; Valluvan et al. 2013) that persons of the same Stockholm age cohort, regardless of ethnicity, are expected to assume. But it also becomes apparent that iterations of such habitual consumerist engagements are folded into complex negotiations of race vis-à-vis encounters with white Swedish others.

Two weeks ago, I was in an argument with a girl at a McDonald's after the club. And she said all kinds of things to us. I don't really remember what started her madness. I wasn't that sober, to be honest. [...] And suddenly, there were all kinds of things like suicide-bomber comments, which really provoked me. I became so furious. And we ended up shouting at each other. And finally, police came inside and stood there while we ate! And the thing that most frustrated me was that if she wasn't a girl we would have dealt with it differently, you know. The casual way that she said such racist stuff like that! [And] it was the second time that it had happened on the same night! We walked by a group of girls. They were from Skåne [a southern Swedish province], who stood there talking. And said stuff like, 'Shoo jao!' [form of address associated with an *Invandrare* vernacular], things like that. Like, 'They think they are so cool when they say 'shoo'.' It wasn't meant directly to us, but we walked by just at that moment. And I was thinking like what the fuck. So I replied, loud enough that they would hear me, 'The Skåningar seem to think that they are still in Skåne.'

[...]

V: With incidents like this, do you ever find yourself trying to avoid being seen in that way, like associated with Muslims and...

K: No, in reality no. Because it only shows ignorance and I don't want to justify that. I also got a little different perspective now. Before, I might have tried to downplay it. But now I just think – why should I? Why should I change for their ignorance? So I have maybe become, a bit more, 'militant' [quotation marks gestured with hands].

[Laughter]

But it has become a bit more like that for me. A comment people often make is, 'What good Swedish you speak!' That's a classic. And then you are like, 'Ah, I have lived here all my life. It's just so mad that I have managed to learn the language!' Before I would have been more timid – 'Sure' and 'hehehe, thanks'. But now I am more likely to ridicule them, sarcastically you know. 'You are right; it really is strange that I can speak having being born here.'

Such incidents prefigure what Kale identifies as the intensification in his assertiveness concerning difference. The sharp riposte ('[They] think that they are still in Skåne'), which strongly marks out a local territory as being his own (whilst also perhaps recovering a momentarily injured masculinity), reveals a less compromising tone in terms of communicating and defending the difference ascribed to him. The caricaturing of a particular vernacular^{vi} is instantly understood by Kale as applying to his own dignity as someone who is attributed *Invandrare* status in Sweden – even though, and importantly, he rarely used such inflections whilst I was with him. The process to be stressed here is not simply that Kale professes a strong sense of difference, but that it is only in contingent relation to a normative, Swedish other that such defiant difference becomes manifest. Put differently, his grappling with racialised difference, which can only figure as a relational formation, is brought to the fore when partaking in those activities that are straightforwardly identified as constituting mundane integration (e.g. clubbing and eating at McDonald's^{vii}) and which are habituated as an intuitive, recurring and given circuit in his leisure life.

Kale's stated reluctance to repudiate a Muslim association obtains further resonance when it becomes apparent that he does not consider himself a believer. After all, if only along admittedly crude understandings of impiety, the prevalence of drink should suggest some distance from the practice of Islam. (When out at the fashionable Söder nightclub, the frequency with which cocktails and shots were lined up was both startling and for me, a little intimidating.) Instead, the relevance of a claim to any Muslim affiliation depends upon its functioning as a sign ascribed to him by the dominant gaze. The non-apologetic stance that he communicates concerning that inscription ('the Muslim'), becomes in practice an identity game contingent to the conceptions of self that he speculatively attributes to Swedes in the *public* sphere. This contingency is in direct contrast to the ability to maintain a Muslim identity in a manner removed and *independent* from his other competent interactions with normative, mainstream cultural idioms. Kale's comments concerning language operate on a similar, if counter-intuitive, basis. It is the very fact that he speaks Swedish, perfectly well, that further marks his sense of difference. As he says, speaking Swedish is an unremarkable, obvious feature of his life. And if uncommented upon, it would remain unremarkable. But in the face of repeated and nominally complimentary comments by various Swedish others ('that's a classic'), Kale's understanding of his own difference vacates an earlier 'timidity' towards a more 'militant', uncompromising assertion of that ascribed difference.

Negotiations of the above sort invite a different analytic purposing of how integration relates to racism than ordinarily drawn – as it is, in this instance, the very invocation of an integration marker ('speaking Swedish') that operates as a cue for racialised interlocution. Put differently, such entanglements of integration and difference run against the conceptual framework normally used in integration literature. What transpires here is a complication of the zero-sum concerning integration on the one hand and 'retention' of 'salient' minority identifications on the other. The experiences Kale outlines pertaining to, for instance, 'going out in the city', reveal how acculturated lives (e.g. clubbing in the city) act in concert with the further entrenchment, via routine encounters with civic racism, of a minority identity. In conflict with Gans' claim that 'retention' and 'acculturation' 'operate independently', Kale's experiences point to significant moments where the two function in simultaneous concord. Even in the more careful works of someone like Alba, perhaps the most prominent American sociologist of the integration-ethnicity debate, a similar analytic separation surfaces. In his recent works, Alba (2005; 2009) mobilises a welcome analytic shift towards the role of existing institutional structures as well as privileges of whiteness in determining a group's ability to integrate. He specifies a series of 'boundaries' – enumerated along religion, language, race and citizenship – that affects the

efficacy with which the younger second-generation in different western countries accesses the ‘opportunities’, both material and symbolic, afforded to the majority. But despite this important transference in emphasis from marginalised population to dominant boundary structures (‘bright’ versus ‘blurred’), Alba does slip into a model of ethnicity and integration as mutually exclusive, insofar as they engage *different* social fields and processes. It is difficult to see, in the absence of racisms’ broader retreat, why the identity positions that might emerge in an environment characterised by blurred boundaries (Alba’s preference) would lead to ‘the contraction of ethnicity to fewer and fewer domains of social life’ (23). Why might not ethnicity be implicated in the very process through which these agents take on acculturated idioms (e.g. the aforementioned fluency in Swedish or investment in the many pleasures of Stockholm nightlife)?

This specific interrogation of contemporary sociological conceptualisation becomes all the more resonant when the broader *public* debates regarding integration are more directly brought into view. Namely, the themes of Muslim identification and language proficiency that surface in Kale’s excerpts do both cut through tropes routinely evoked during lamentations about integration. But what Kale’s analysis reveals is the quixotic and ultimately disingenuous character of such public preoccupations. Regarding language, for instance, it is not that the descendants of non-white immigrants do not speak Swedish (or English, or French, and so on), but rather, this alleged linguistic delinquency attests to an ideologically loaded phantasm: a phantasm that reminds Invandrare that their proficiency in Swedish is somehow exceptional, and, by further implication, as Fanon (1952: 117) so memorably observed, it reminds non-white individuals that they are always ‘close to disgrace’. Relatedly, Kale’s compulsion to recover a Muslim, Invandrare identification happens in the very midst of his entirely banal but nonetheless emphatic immersion in a normative, metropolitan leisure culture. Amidst this important context, the pervasive ‘culture clash’, ‘parallel lives’ dystopia circulated by the various public custodians of integration is rendered moot. Kale’s affective and assertive commitment to difference does not arise here from him engaging an ethnically indexed and hermetically sealed cultural code, but instead, difference (re)emerges in the course of Kale experiencing the shared cultural and performative domains appropriate to his particular city, class and age.

3. Agille – Institutional interaction and the reinscribing of difference

Even when a sociological attempt is made to ‘consider these processes as concurrent’ (Morawska, 2003: 133), there persists a failure to theoretically capture the *mutual* texture central to the mainstream undertakings of Kale. For example, in her discussion on Indian second-

generations in the United States, Morawska groups two different sets of behavioural features – transnationalism (reinforced ethnic identity) and assimilation (becoming American). The former consists of, for example, enthusiasm for an Indian ‘consumer industry’ around food, clothing, jewellery, films, music and cultural events. The latter consists of:

[E]vocations of the American dream; its values and realisation of achievement in immigrants’ self-representations; American professional culture and other elements of American lifestyles and self-perceptions (including those concerning female identities and gender relations), [and] even demeanour and ideas, particularly self-assertiveness in body language and opinion (2003: 137-138).

Not only do phrases like ‘self-assertiveness in body language and opinion’ seem to borrow from an awkwardly Orientalist representational regime, but it could be argued that such practices pertain to both ‘spheres’ simultaneously. For example, enthusiasm for an ‘Indian consumer industry’ could well be read as the ‘integrated’ enthusiasm for consumerism itself. Or vice-versa: western consumerism is the vehicle that allows for expressions of ethnic identity.

Attention to the experiences of a second research participant, a young woman (24) from another northern Greater Stockholm suburb, helps thicken this understanding of how an ‘entangled duality’ plays out in contemporary Stockholm. Agille, whose parents are from Kurdish Iran and Kurdish Iraq, was, like Kale, from an impoverished working-class background. Until her recent engagement, Agille lived with her mother in a subsidised social housing residence whilst her father, who lived in nearby Uppsala, had been on long-term incapacity benefits. But after a short period of being formally inactive, Agille had recently commenced a Social Work degree at Sodertörn (the Stockholm equivalent of a post-1992 university in the UK) – an undertaking that she hoped would lead to a secure job in the future.

In critically situating Agille’s reflections, it is first worth recalling Morawska’s schematising of Westernised ‘female identities and gender relations’, which she posits as constituting the integrated flank of the behavioural and value registers relevant to second-generation lives. And initially, when Agille rejects any positive association with her visits to Iran (both Tehran and the Kurdish provinces), it would indeed seem as if the commonplace gender distinction Morawska deploys is vindicated:

In Iran, I wanted to die. We simply didn't get to do anything! It was more about you are a girl; you don't get to do anything. [...] Never. Never. I would rather die [than ever live there].

Yet, when discussing her relationship with her older brother, it becomes clear that Agille does not enter Stockholm's public arena simply as a woman, but as a non-white, Muslim woman. Her extended testimony offers in turn an important challenge to how gender values are referenced as providing self-explanatory instances of integration, or lack thereof.

After all the Fadime chaos [a widely reported 'honour-killing' case], I remember that I was about to visit Iran. I was 15 or 16. And one day, my teacher asked in private, 'Is there something you would like to tell me?' So I answered, 'No, not really.' I didn't connect the dots, right. [...] And she was like, 'Please, I beg you, you can tell me. You are going to Iran?' And I was like, 'Yeah, I'm going soon.' And she continued, 'Tell me, is anything going to happen to you there? Will I see you again?' And then it all clicked. I just started to laugh. It was so funny but also so embarrassing. It was really pathetic of her to even think the thought. That my family was a threat! [...] And the worst thing was that she knew my brother because she taught him when he was in school. So it didn't make sense that she could think of him like that.

[...]

There are also things my friends have said. Well not actually my friends really but my classmates. One classmate asked, 'Your brother, does he oppress you? Does he hit you? Are you allowed to dress like that? Are you allowed to go out? Can you have a boyfriend?'

Having posited Iran in negative relation to her ordinary life, which is presented as being without much inhibition, there is a telling irony here that it is some of her white Swedish acquaintances who re-inscribe a neo-Orientalist image of the passive and always subjugated Middle-Eastern woman upon her body. When amongst her Invandrare circles, Agille cites an ability to express a gender consciousness less burdened by broader representational stereotypes regarding different ethnic backgrounds – 'I think there is some kind of understanding among Invandrare, we know to be more suspicious of what the media say about different people'. And whilst it would be unduly naïve to suggest that her dealings with her Invandrare peers is without gendered

pressures, it was very apparent that Agille did take pleasure in developing a strong gender awareness. For instance, when discussing her current university studies, Agille enthusiastically noted:

‘Oh, I love [the Gender Studies module]! It deals with gender and how it works in society. I think many people misunderstand it. Many think it’s just feminism! [But] it’s actually really proper deep analysis of why society looks like it does.’

By contrast, it is in those public spaces where her body is read by certain Swedish others along civilizationalist representational regimes that her minority identity is (re)made and (re)marked as problematically conspicuous – as problematically and uniquely oppressed. Her experiences point hereby to an inversion, or collapsing, of the spatial distinction commonly evoked when discussing identity retention (intra-minority interaction) contra integrated subjectivities (participation in public realms with a large white contingent). Her experiences signal that becoming a woman in Stockholm is inextricably tied to becoming an Invandrare, Muslim, Middle-Eastern woman – with all the symbolic charge such associations carry.

This intersectional negotiation, which is necessarily couched within larger discursive representations of nation and other, chimes with many scenarios met by Invandrare, Middle-Eastern women like Agille. The purported ‘problem of integration’ so central to contemporary European narrations of nation and its cementing of a liberalism-‘bad diversity’ (Lentin and Titley, 2011: 166) dichotomy has increasingly utilised the Muslim woman as its key object (Afshar, 2008; Mirza, 2013; Rashid, 2016). The instrumental value of gender freedoms in affirming the non-integrated status of the minority ethnic subject has been mapped by a series of canonical critical feminist works – for instance, Bhattacharya’s *Dangerous Brown Men* (2008), Puar’s (2006) development of the term ‘homonationalism’, Scott’s (2005) commentary on the sexual politics of French republicanism, and Butler’s (2008) analysis of how torture and war become framed as progressive ventures in the name of sexual freedoms. All of which speak to the centrality of a putatively feminist symbolism in the determining of renewed European nationalisms.

Within the increased discursive prominence of such compulsions to ‘liberate’ the non-white woman, a woman like Agille must repeatedly negotiate the carried fixation with narratives of alluringly acquiescent Muslim women, an Orientalist representational frame that has found a new lease of life via the return to integration ideals. Agille’s reflections attest to this process where

gendered integration narratives become merely one more significant medium through which women become subject to racialised scrutiny – an invasive, belittling scrutiny of her own subjectivity but also the value and standing of her racialised male peers and kin. Consequently, an analytic complication arises regarding where the ‘assimilated Western’ woman ends and the ‘transnational ethnic’ woman begins when partaking in ordinary undertakings particular to a city such as Stockholm. Perhaps it is preferable, echoing the ‘new ethnicities’ argument of Hall (1992) and Back (1996), to conclude that the distinction is itself misplaced. In other words, Agille’s Kurdish, Invandrare, Muslim location significantly impacts upon the navigation of her acculturated self. It is the exposure to institutions that act as ordinary sites of acculturation (e.g. school) that also affirms ethnic particularity.

4. Becoming the integrated immigrant, becoming the confidante of racism

Agille went on to expand upon how encounters with white acquaintances are often laced with unpredictability precisely *because of* her presumed integration. These acquaintances can sometimes read her comfort with matter-of-fact mainstream cultural activity as licence to articulate a hitherto concealed racism.

When I have been out with work or course-mates, right, the Swedish people who you only know sometimes just totally flip in their ways. When they’re drunk it’s like, ‘Oh, you are the best, coolest Invandrare I have ever met!’ ‘I don’t know any Invandrare, but still, you are the best!’

[...] You know, I have many Invandrare friends who work in big companies. And they say that ‘When their colleagues are drunk, you are like their best friend! But the day after, they won’t even say hi in the corridor.’ Many have said this.

V: So it is common to hear things like this?

A: Yeah. [Assumes a parodic tone] ‘You know what; you are not like other Invandrare.’ ‘Well, how many do you know?’ ‘I don’t know many. Actually, I don’t know any, but you understand!’ And then you think for yourself, how can they think like this?

Again, the prosaic retelling advanced here effectively problematises the foundational assumptions of an integration-difference dichotomy. What is at once a merry, perfectly ordinary

group engagement around drinks after work or suchlike is also the basis upon which her Swedish peers rekindle for Agille a freighted sense of ethnic difference. And whilst consonant with the above themes of racialised differentiation being laced into everyday cultural participation, this reflection also profiles a slightly different negotiation implicated in the experience of integration – where incorporation into spheres of everyday work and leisure activity carries with it an *expectation* to accommodate racism. Put differently, not only is activity constitutive of integration often the self-same spatial and temporal sites at which racialised difference is marked as ‘salient’; but perhaps of more affective significance and discomfort, this marking of difference also often carries the implicit instruction to legitimate or leave uncontested (Harries, 2014) certain actualisations of civic racism.

Whilst this final detail can only be hinted at, I relate one more incident featuring a different participant – Adivic (of Bosniak Muslim [Sandzak] background and a sales assistant at an upmarket boutique). One evening I was at Adivic’s flat watching American football together with his housemate of Syriac Orthodox origin, when Adivic mentioned that a young Swedish woman, whom he had been casually seeing, had just sent a startling text message. The text described two men, who happened to be disturbing her and her friends at a local bar, as ‘Blattar’ (a pejorative term, like ‘Svartskalle’, for those of non-white background). When Adivic conveyed his disapproval, she responded, again via text, that ‘he was not to worry [as] obviously he was not one of them.’ This response, embedding a logic that exempts Adivic from being a *Blatte*, yielded much laughter amongst the two of them, and prompted a lengthy enumeration of similar incidents that they had either directly encountered or had had relayed to them by others. The simple complication to be posed therefore is does the fact that Adivic was seeing a Swedish woman constitute integration, as could be commonly assumed; or does it communicate a more imbricated story about integration and the production of ethnic difference? This query obtains an added political salience when contrasted against the extensive public attention given to intimate mixing as constituting a particularly significant horizon of integration. Against this public intuition, Adivic’s recollection instructively observes that quotidian intimacy does not offer an easy exit from racial assignation and judgement.

Further attention to these terms *Blatte* and *Svartskalle* provides particularly sharp witness to the contradictory processes that integration engenders. The terms, analogous to the ‘n-word’ in Anglophone contexts – in both its complex history of derogatory notoriety and also youth politics of resistant appropriation (Lacatus, 2007) – carry a semiotic content that frames

particularly well the pressures that integration asserts upon the ostensibly accepted young minority subject. Namely, it reveals a need to negotiate strategically the particular renditions of racism that are presented only upon full entry into normative spheres of Stockholm life.

This negotiation in certain (often work) contexts rested on avoiding what Tabbi (another participant) summed up as, ‘Basically man, it’s about not being a Svartskalle.’ For instance, ‘You don’t say shall we go for a kebab unless somebody else has first suggested it.’ The intimation is that certain cultural references, ordinary as they might be to contemporary Stockholm life, are problematically freighted when coupled to a minority speaker – associations of an uncultivated poverty, of ‘just being a ‘ghetto-child’ as Tabbi poetically concluded. Kale too raised the spectre of Svartskalle as it plays out when interacting with middle-class, white work colleagues.

I rid my Swedish of all *brytning* [‘cutting’ – slang/accents associated with Invandrare]. It is really important but maybe unfair too because if a Swede uses really Swedish sayings, like really old-fashioned, farmer language, it is not any problem but we have to be careful because otherwise you are just a Svartskalle in the wrong place.

This setting where difference is interrogated along racialised standards of status provokes of course resentment (‘unfair’), but it is a negotiation that these participants find themselves having to manage when securing entry. Otherwise, evoking the heuristic introduced to social theory by Mary Douglas, Kale runs the risk of being ‘matter out of place’, dirt where it is clean: ‘just a Svartskalle *in the wrong place*.’ It is certainly so that this distinction is equally a classed one as it is racialised. In this classed aspect it is comparable to biopolitical distinctions ubiquitous in Britain between a demonised white urban poor (the viscerally repulsive ‘chav’) and those who obtain dignified, nobly nostalgic presentations of white working-class self (Rhodes, 2013). Yet the overtly racialised aspect of the distinction being outlined by Tabbi and Kale, on the strengths of its *visual* resonance, ensures that all those marked as Invandrare are *always-already* Svartskalle. They always bear the embodied risk of being Svartskalle, always risk confirming their racially inscribed guilt. This trailing risk is what Tabbi and Kale flag as requiring active defusing. And the extent to which one is acculturated does not actualise any mythic ability of minority subjects to shed their difference, but merely shapes the efficacy with which they might execute any such situated management of racial penalties. A management that involves any number of cultural and economic resources – a tailoring of, for instance, one’s clothing, gait, politics, conversation, tastes, and language.

Kale's and Tabbi's agential management of their identity positions within these mainstream spheres hinges on a necessary and socially literate silence when contending with the everyday codes of racism. It is the *not* taking a stance (e.g. regarding debates on immigration or certain cultural activities and excising certain conversational quirks or topics) that prevents their racialised difference from being moved into territory where they become further and problematically visible. To recall the cruel irony of 'institutional' anti-racism's blunt edge (Ahmed, 2012; Puwar, 2004), the access won by certain minorities to normatively white spaces can carry with it the expectation that these same individuals *do not* call out racism. In short, the above attestations reveal that there is often an unsaid compact that the conspicuous minority remains amenable, *accepting of their own ostensible acceptance*.

Whilst these concluding excerpts further complicate mainstream sociological understandings of how racism relates to integration (i.e. internal to integration as opposed to external), it also offers a sharp challenge to the recently prominent emphasis on 'contact' advanced by the broader public proponents of integration. Amidst the resurgence of an integration ideal, ethnic minorities are increasingly accused of wilfully 'self-segregating', engendering a lack of productive *contact* across ethnic lines. The alleged absence of this leisurely but 'deep and meaningful interaction' (CRE 2007: 25) is in turn posited as hampering the possibilities of a cohesive society. The above vignettes bluntly undermine this preoccupation with contact. It is apparent that extended civic contact (with workmates, with schoolmates, and even with figures of potential romantic interest), which is seemingly a perfectly quotidian aspect of many everyday Invandrare lives, does not of itself free individuals from a differentialised identity and the negative visibility tied to it. As Adivic's aforementioned exchange with a prospective partner clarified in a particularly cutting manner: a romantic encounter is at once contact (a rendition of contact that is arguably more 'deep and meaningful' than other social encounters) but is also simultaneously witness to broader processes of racialised differentiation, normativity and strategic negotiation.

This is not to say that contemporary cities such as Stockholm are absent of any routines of multi-ethnic interaction where racialised difference is *not* subject to normative scrutiny vis-à-vis ideals of whiteness and/or respectable presentations of minority difference. *On the contrary*. I have indeed written elsewhere on the very urgent need to properly document and theorize those much more radical, anti-communitarian everyday cultures that suffuse the contemporary city (Valluvan, 2016). It is only that integration, as a sociological and political concept alike, remains particularly poor at capturing these alternative realities. I have accordingly argued for a particular purposing

of Gilroy's (2004) concept of conviviality as being much better suited for harnessing the productive and progressive anti-communitarian energies of the city.

5. Conclusion

As integration re-enters the political fray, recovering its normative centrality amidst the public re-enchantment with nation and nationalism, it is vital that we revisit the many critiques of the concept already available. These critiques range from the concept's misplaced presumption of a priori homogeneity, its perverse responsabilizing of *only* those considered outsiders, to the paradoxical 'reactive' mobilisations that calls for integration often provoke. But this article has argued that another core critique equally important for repudiating this rehabilitation of integration lies in the concept's own internal, sociological incoherence. Namely, integration and difference are themselves intertwined, entangled dualities, and far from being a benign entanglement, this duality is premised on the full force and play of everyday civic racisms. Put simply, integration itself, as a spatially sited experience and phenomenon, is where reinforced senses of racialised difference manifest.

This article accordingly assessed how the above participants' engagement with mainstream culture and institutions escapes easy classification. Their engagements are not free of racialised ethnicity, nor are they estranged from *or* reluctant to engage the cultural mainstream. Yet the conceptual orthodoxies of integration, even when modified, remain reluctant to analytically reconcile this concurrence, resorting only to problematic conceptions of two neatly separated spatio-temporal processes – one constituting integration and the other where ethnic identity is renewed and reinforced. However, an alternative reading would collapse this distinction altogether, demonstrating the play of race and racism *within* the unfolding of integrated lives. Simply put, the 'inevitability' of acculturation does not presage a gradual dissipation in articulations of difference. Rather, there is need for a rereading, via an everyday racisms analytic lens, of ethnicity and its affirmation as being integral to those processes of acculturation into the normative routines and spaces particular to the city and country in question. The second-generation's inscribed and re-inscribed racial difference is a certainty that is entangled in processes of integration. And whilst this argument shares a fundamental affinity with various canonical approaches to racialization, not least Fanon's mapping of racial inferiorization alongside Du Bois' and also Gilroy's later revitalisation of 'double consciousness', this article uniquely situates its critique within some of the core analytic claims advanced by the sociology of integration.

This article consequently posits that integration remains poorly positioned to provide an effective analysis of contemporary multi-ethnic social relations. Integration is particularly ill-disposed to providing a sensitive and informed analysis of the specific challenges faced by those assigned a non-white social identity. It is in turn this article's broader claim that integration – if indeed serving as a proxy for wider concerns relating to fluent civic interaction, social empathy, and political solidarity – is better supplanted by a more rigorous sociological attentiveness to racism: racisms that manifest in representational (discursive), governmental (institutional), and, as regards this article's specific focus, racisms' everyday interactional renditions. Accordingly, I argue that sociologists and policymakers alike, if still insistent on the concept of integration, must more decisively account for the normatively governed engendering of difference from *within*. In short, a better attunement is required regarding how the mainstream itself is the site at which the difference apparent at any given moment in space and time is (hierarchically) organised and reaffirmed. And of pivotal significance here is that everyday encounters with racism should not only be considered a separate, exogenous process that impedes integration, but as a multifaceted phenomenon folded *into* integration.

ⁱ A report that won acclaim across the populist-right press alongside enthusiastic endorsement by the figurehead ideologues of new nationalism, not least Nigel Farage (*Guardian*, 2016b).

ⁱⁱ The interview and observation material presented was the outcome of ESRC funded research conducted from 2010-2013 in Stockholm and London – though only the former features in this article. The participants, aged 22-30, all had at least one parent who was both a racialised minority and an immigrant to Sweden/the UK.

ⁱⁱⁱ A partial analogue from within political theory for what sociologists of race and racism call 'new racism' (Barker, 1981) or 'culturalism' (Brah, 1996) is Pogge's (2005) coining of the term 'explanatory nationalism' when developing his critique of Rawlsian approaches to global justice.

^{iv} Regarding the broader integrationist orthodoxy that shadows certain deliberations on identity ambivalence, Solomos (1990) and Alexander (2016: 1431) both observe that it is the very 'in-betweenness' attributed to second-generation youth that was popularly seen as posing a *uniquely* volatile threat. Put bluntly, it is one thing to be the putative carrier of a problematic alien culture, but it is altogether worse to be located in a cultural void – a cultural 'dislocation' that is commonly seen as informing the dysfunction ascribed to many minority youth.

^v 'Invandrare' (which translates as immigrant) is a term used in Sweden to describe those who are not of Western European origin/appearance – including those who are *born* in Sweden. Put differently, it is not a term which can be applied to anybody who is immigrant but rather, is principally a matter of being non-white. There is hereby an ideologically revealing semantic absurdity to how this term is configured. The term does however enjoy a well-established vernacular as well as official currency in contemporary Sweden, making it largely unavoidable. I add that I too identify as Invandrare when in Sweden.

^{vi} What some researchers (Milani and Jonsson, 2012; Otterbeck, 2010) pick up as a 'sociolect' known colloquially as 'Rinkeby-Swedish' – named after the north Stockholm suburb known for its large ethnic minority population.

vii The emphasis on McDonald's is not as flippant as one might think. One of the stranger articles I have come across – yet one that is emblematic of the public debate's staid standard – was the *Economist's* (2011) 'Charlemagne' (the resident Europe op-ed) column, titled 'From Clichy to Cliché'. Here, a study, based in the notorious Paris banlieue where the 2005 riots originated, cautioned that there was a worrying 'intensification' in Muslim identities which they argued was a result of broken 'integration' processes. But the report also sounded an optimistic note:

Not everything in the banlieues works against integration. More minorities are getting involved in local politics. Turkish entrepreneurs are doing well. In a surprising twist in Clichy, says Mr Kepel, a drive-in McDonald's restaurant has thrived despite refusing to produce halal food, whereas local halal rivals, such as Beurger King (a play on beur, meaning French-Arab), have closed down.

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