Class, race – and place: immigrants' self- perceptions on inclusion, belonging and opportunities in Stockholm and Barcelona[1]

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Introduction

Intercultural agendas representing a discursive shift from top-down integration policies towards a more reciprocal view on the incorporation of immigrants in society have been adopted in several European countries over the last decades, most importantly at the level of local administrations (Zapata- Barrero 2017). There is however also recognition that discrimination and exclusion in practice affect many immigrants' chances to participate in society on equal terms, thereby in practice hindering the fulfilment of intercultural policy aims that rarely reach beyond the rhetoric level (Rodríguez García 2010; Zapata-Barrero 2015).

The main purpose of this article is to inquire into the ways in which immigrants' sense of belonging and identification with the place

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where they live are related to how they perceive that they are treated and what opportunities they have in society. First, I use the narratives of sixty immigrant respondents in Stockholm and Barcelona to explore how they perceive themselves in relation to the ethnic majority society in terms of inclusion, belonging and opportunities. Second, I shift focus to their relationship with the place where they live. The immigrant narratives are complemented by twenty- one stakeholder interviews, to provide a more general account on the inclusion/exclusion of immigrants. My main assumption is that micro-level dynamics (as contacts between neighbours or attitudes towards diversity at the local level) can potentially either compensate for or aggravate experiences of disadvantage in the relation to the ethnic majority society. Comparing immigrants' self-perceptions in two different multi-ethnic European cities may serve to increase our knowledge on which urban environments favour intercultural coexistence more than others.

At the conceptual level, the terms race and racialized are central in this article. I argue that the concept of race, which for long has been largely absent and rather taboo in European discourse, is central to understand the particular forms of exclusion that affect non-western immigrants in European societies. Though concepts as culture and ethnicity came to replace race in post-war Europe, visible features

as skin colour continue to be central markers of difference affecting the treatment of racialized minorities, with serious consequences for their inclusion and identification with the majority society. This article's focus on race in terms of visible difference does not imply that concepts as culture or ethnicity are considered less important (for instance being a Muslim, or a Roma, may not be visible at a first glance but it often seriously affects the prospects of persons with these identities). My argument is that race needs to be used parallel to these more widely used concepts in order to better understand the immigrant disadvantage. As Lentin (2008, 487) argues, "the silence about race in Europe allows European states to declare themselves non-racist, or even anti-racist, while at the same time continuing to imply an inherent European superiority."

Race, moreover, is closely related to class in what appears as a vicious circle of exclusion. Negatively differential treatment based on the majority population's attitudes and preferences, that is, discrimination, may hamper particularly racialized minority and immigrant groups' access to, for instance, quality employment, participation in decision-making contexts, or housing in attractive neighbourhoods. Socio-economic inequalities, in turn, affect racialized people disproportionally and limit their access to influence and resources. These destructive processes intersect and appear

mutually reinforcing: the socio-economically disadvantaged position of many immigrants may reinforce prejudice about them and make people from the ethnic majority associate, for instance, dark skin with poverty and marginalization. Negative ethno-racial stereotyping may result in further discrimination and thereby deepen the socio-economic inequalities through blocked access to ethnic majority contexts and institutions (Galabuzi 2006; Pager and Shepherd 2008; Lentin 2011). “Locked up” in unattractive housing areas, low-status jobs or unemployment, many immigrants also from middle-class backgrounds come to form a racialized underclass in the receiving countries.

In the following sections, I will further discuss the concept of racialized exclusion, before I shift focus to the other main dimension of this article: inclusion as self-perceived and related to place. I will then present the methodological considerations, and finally proceed to the empirical section where immigrant and stakeholder narratives reflect perceptions on belonging in Stockholm and Barcelona.

Racialized exclusion: conceptualizing the immigrant disadvantage

Race as concept has long been taboo in European discourse, based on the argument that highlighting visible differences could be destructive and in itself reflect racist classifications. Such discursive colour-

blindness risk making the (white) European majority societies negligent to how racial hierarchies continue to influence people's life chances, as more subtle racist pat- terns (e.g. a general preference for whiteness) are not recognized and racism is only understood in terms of overt racist manifestations (Lentin 2008)1. For African immigrants in western countries, for instance, blackness is a visible characteristic that affects their self-perceptions and relation with the white majority in a wide range of situations (Hine, Keaton, and Small 2009; Meghji 2017).

For many other immigrant groups with varying degrees of "physical difference," the racial dimension may become more blurred. Each country or region seems to have its own pigmentocracy (Telles 2014): those who are considered closer to the ethnic majority than others appear to be determined through a complex, shifting and arbitrary process of identification and classification. Immigrants with physical traits similar to the native population, as Moroccans in Spain or Poles in Sweden, may not be subject to demeaning comments in public spaces but still suffer from discrimination on the labour market based on their origin, cementing their socio-economic disadvantage. Status hierarchies with roots in colonialism and the economic position of the home country operate worldwide, affecting people's opportunities in society and, ultimately, processes where immigrants are stratified

based on differentness in terms of characteristics as skin colour, culture, ethnicity and religion.

How “pigmentocracy” influences on how a person is defined and received in western societies appears clearly when the migrations of those typically labelled as “immigrants”– non-western, driven by poverty or war and disaster – are compared with the so-called “white migrations” of privileged expatriates and lifestyle migrants (Lundström 2014). Some studies of white migrations provide a more complex picture of this assumed privileged mobility. Not all western migrants are high-paid, transnational professionals; there are indeed westerners who move to other countries for reasons such as love or a subjective concept of “quality of life” and encounter more difficulties and sentiments of otherness than they expected (O’Reilly 2000; Leinonen 2012). Yet, white western migrants are virtually never referred to as “immigrants”2. Not recognizing the centrality of white normativity in European societies may fuel discourses that deny the existence of racism and racialization (Cretton 2017).

One may argue that “immigrant” is in itself a racialized category that embraces both phenotypical and socio-economic features. In a given context one category may matter more than the other, and it is hardly possible to entirely disentangle the multiple forms of discrimination

affecting women and men who are both racialized and poor. For instance, a successful black businessman will have a higher social status than an African immigrant in a low-skilled profession, but may still be denied entrance to a night club based on his appearance.

Balibar once argued that class is more relevant for who is perceived as an immigrant than race or ethnicity:

> A Portuguese, for example, will be more of an "immigrant" than a Spaniard (in Paris), though less than an Arab or a Black; a Briton or a German certainly will not be an "immigrant," though a Greek may perhaps be; a Spanish worker and, a fortiori, a Moroccan worker will be "immigrants," but a Spanish capitalist, or even indeed an Algerian capitalist, will not be. (Balibar 1991, 221)

However, being defined as an "immigrant" based merely on ethno-racial stereotyping may contribute to cement an individual's position in the lower social strata of society. In his call for more research on the racialization processes, Gans points out that being racialized (in relation to the white majority population) entails economic consequences: "economic racialization often steers the racialized into bad jobs, that is, poorly paid, 'dirty' and dangerous ones" (Gans 2017, 342). Immigrants not getting employment, or far below their

qualifications, because of their origin impedes their socio-economic inclusion and cements social exclusion based on ethno-racial grounds.

Inclusion as self-perceived and related to place

At the personal and interpersonal level, racist structures and attitudes have an influence on immigrants' sense of acceptance, belonging and identification with the majority society. To repeatedly be reminded of being deviant from the dominant collective self-image, for instance based on a predefined notion of "Swedishness" that includes being white, leads to a process by which one identifies oneself as different in relation to this norm. The "immigrant stigma" produces negative effects at multiple levels, for instance damaged self-esteem as well as a real risk of rejection that affects one's position on the labour and housing markets. This risk increases when the individual expects to be rejected and acts accordingly, creating a vicious circle of alienation (Bobowik, Basabe, and Páez 2014). The consequences of discrimination for the individual's self-image and behaviour is an undeveloped area in research on immigration and diversity, as pointed out by researchers from the TIES project on the European so-called second generation of immigrants. Their findings reflect how devastating the effects of rejection and dis- crimination may be for

those exposed to it: “Even if it [experiencing discrimination] happened only once or twice in their lives, the psychological effects might be long-lasting and affecting individual feelings of belonging and trust to the place, where the everyday life is centred” (Crul and Schneider 2009, 28).

In their study of the relationship between immigrant generation and integration, Wu, Shimmele, and Ho (2012) found that factors as racial differences (skin colour) and living in low-income neighbourhoods are related to higher discomfort and less sense of belonging. Focus thus lies on immigrants’ own sense of social inclusion, which is also central in Houle and Shellenberg’s work (2010). By stating that the perception of acceptance (or discrimination) in the host society is a salient aspect of the life satisfaction of immigrants, they provide a strong argument for the focus on self-perceived inclusion and subjective wellbeing as indicators of integration (2010). Self-perceived belonging and identification with society are central as “an immigrant’s sense of belonging is a reflection of integration into social networks and institutions, and it fosters feelings of social solidarity with the core or socially predominant group” (Schellenberg 2004). Reversely, experiences of discrimination and perceived non-acceptance, which are widespread in all (27) EU countries (Bobowik, Basabe, and Páez

2014), are likely to decrease solidarity and identification with society (Safi 2010).

Perhaps the strongest potential for immigrants' sense of belonging lies in their relation to the place where they live and the people they meet there, ideally in ethnically mixed neighbourhoods. Nevertheless, urban structures often contribute to deepen cleavages between rich and poor or black and white. In a segregated city, people of different ethnic origins and socio-economic statuses are distanced from each other in everyday life, which is often assumed to be detrimental for the sense of identification between people of different backgrounds (Matejskova and Leitner 2011; Wu, Shimmele, and Ho 2012). It has been suggested that new collective identities take shape in urban areas where immigrants of diverse origins meet (Holston and Appadurai 1999). However, this rather appears as forms of "underdog identity" based on shared experiences of exclusion, than an intercultural collective identity including also the ethnic majority that potentially could constitute a basis for more egalitarian forms of coexistence. In order to foster harmonic coexistence in multi-ethnic societies, it appears central to empirically study which contexts prove more or less favourable for positive interethnic contacts. In a recent publication, Oosterlynck, Schuermans, and Loopmans (2017, 9) stress the necessity of fostering interethnic solidarity and identification in the

places where we live our everyday lives, considering these “the product of relations that stretch way beyond them.” The present article aims to con- tribute in this direction by focusing on what influences on immigrants’ self- perceived inclusion in two different multi-ethnic cities.

Data and methodology

This article relies on sixty in-depth interviews with immigrants, complemented by interviews with twenty-one stakeholders representing integration practitioners from different fields: policy-makers, NGOs, ethnic organizations and trade unions in Stockholm and Barcelona, which were conducted during 2014 and 20153. Thirty respondents with immigrant background (half men, half women) were interviewed in each city, while ten stakeholders were inter- viewed in Stockholm and eleven in Barcelona. Applying an inductive approach (Merriam 1998) the interviews were largely unstructured in the sense that they had an open, conversation-like character. The aim was to create a relaxing atmosphere since we discussed topics that many of the respondents found sensitive, as personal experiences of humiliation and dis- advantage. I did use a few fixed questions in all interviews: what opportunities they think that

they have on the job market, their experiences from job search and employment, and if they had experienced racism or discrimination. Otherwise, I mostly asked the respondents to talk freely about certain themes as what it means to feel “Swedish” or “Catalan,” whether they identify with any nationality, or what they like and dislike about the city and the society they live in.

Based on data on the size of different immigrant groups in Sweden and Spain (migrationsverket.se, ine.es), complemented by some early stakeholder interviews and readings on the situation and stereotyping of different ethnic groups in both countries (e.g. EC 2012; Afrofobi report 2014; Aparicio and Portes 2014), I defined four groups as particularly relevant for the study. They were selected to represent numerous and comparable immigrant com- munities in each context, and be representative of ethno-racial stereotyping in relation to the western norm. With some national variations within the groups due to the presence of different immigrant groups in Sweden and Catalonia, I included twelve interviews with members of each of the following groups: Black Africans, Asians, Muslims4 and Latin Americans. All respondents aim at participating on equal terms with the ethnic majority in the society where they live. They either have a completed or ongoing university degree or hold a post-compulsory high school or professional training diploma, and all of them aim for qualified

employment. They were selected based on the assumption that ethno-racial stereotyping influences on how people of diverse origins are treated in different spheres of society; on the labour and housing markets as well as in everyday interactions with people from the ethnic majority. This assumption was confirmed throughout the interviews. To complement the narratives of the potentially racialized immigrants, twelve interviews with a control group of white, western migrants who moved voluntarily to Stockholm or Barcelona out of personal or professional motives were included. Their narratives provide a valuable contrast to the non-western respondents.

The stakeholder interviews had an informative purpose and were unstructured, given my inductive approach and interest in finding out what views and practices that these actors apply, without having defined beforehand what dimensions might be of particular relevance. I had however defined themes to guide the interviews, and asked the stakeholders to talk about the following concepts: interculturalism, reciprocity in integration processes, belonging/ national identity and racism/discrimination.

Discussion of the findings: perceptions on inclusion, belonging and opportunities in two societies and two cities

According to the interviewed stakeholders representing NGOs, ethnic organizations and trade unions, immigrants in both Sweden and Catalonia/Spain face serious obstacles related to their origin. Sweden and Spain are among the EU countries where the gap between immigrants and the native population is largest in terms of unemployment, poverty and over-qualification in employment (Eurostat 2011; Wiesbrock 2013), though their approaches on how to improve the inclusion of immigrants differ. In Sweden, integration policies explicitly consider employment as key, but there is still lacking recognition of how discrimination of immigrants in practice may hinder their inclusion in the labour market (e.g. Bursell 2012). Sweden is also marked by a polarized political climate where immigration is increasingly perceived as a threat by large segments of the population, which is reflected by the presence (and gradual normalization) of the anti-immigrant party The Sweden Democrats (SD) in Parliament, currently with an estimated support of around twenty per cent of the voters (ipsos.se, May 2018). This is important to take into account as such political and discursive changes influence on immigrants' sense of belonging, of feeling welcome or not, which is reflected in the interviews.

Catalonia, in turn, is just as the rest of Spain still suffering the devastating effects of the financial crisis. Poverty persists and trade unions highlight that inequality increases despite recent signs of economic recovery. Integration policies in Spain are primarily formulated and implemented at the level of the autonomous regional governments, and in Catalonia, these policies are dominated by the intercultural agenda that emphasizes reciprocity (Report on the integration of immigrants in Catalonia 2015). However, much emphasis is placed on the socio-cultural dimension of integration, such as coexistence and respect for different cultural expressions in the neighbourhoods, and less on the economic dimension. Simultaneously, immigrants are overrepresented among those unemployed or in precarious employment, which besides reflecting discriminatory patterns is related to the fact that immigration here mainly consisted of labour migrants who came to occupy low-skilled positions that national workers rejected, jobs that were destroyed in large numbers during the crisis (Moreno Fuentes and Bruquetas Callejo 2011; Marí-Klose and Martínez Pérez 2015). Immigrants and their descendants often face serious economic difficulties that pose important obstacles on their opportunities to improve their conditions of life and gain social mobility. When constructing their sense of identification with the receiving society, immigrants in Catalonia also

encounter a complex situation that sometimes entails tensions between Spanish and Catalan national identities. Catalan politicians and policy-makers often claim that the strong emphasis on Catalan language as the basis for collective identity makes inclusion into Catalan society more accessible compared to other societies. One interviewed Catalan policy-maker claims that "in the minds of people here, someone who speaks Catalan is integrated." This is contrasted by immigrant narratives claiming that no matter how fluent in Catalan, they will never be accepted as such by the majority given their dark skin or "Indian" features.

Beyond these larger structures, actual participation in society mostly takes place at the local level, in the city or the neighbourhood where one actually lives, goes to work, buys food and takes children to school. The recognition of how central every day, interpersonal contacts are for the sense of belonging, inclusion or exclusion that immigrants perceive is reflected by an increasing emphasis on the city level in policies and studies on diversity (e.g. Gilardoni, D'Odorico, and Carrillo 2015; Gebhardt 2014, 2016). Though more dominant in Catalan policy discourses, both Stockholm and Barcelona have developed intercultural policies over the last decade, implemented for instance through broad anti-racism campaigns in Barcelona and local authorities in Stockholm hiring "bridge-builders" to mediate with

particularly vulnerable minorities as the Roma (stakeholder interviews). The results of such measures are hard to evaluate, and the disadvantage of immigrants appears clearly racialized both in Stockholm and Barcelona. However, the perception that racism is the most serious obstacle for immigrants was more salient in Stockholm, while in Barcelona many of the respondents were most concerned about unemployment and precarious conditions on the labour market. There are also important differences regarding the experiences of ethnic mixing in everyday life, where Barcelona overall is perceived as more open and welcoming than the more ethnically segregated Stockholm (interviews; Aldén, Hammarstedt, and Neuman 2015; Catalan integration report 2015).

Race and class in the stakeholder narratives: disadvantage as an obstacle for integration

The notion that inequalities related to race and class hamper the opportunities of immigrants is salient within the stakeholder narratives both in Stock-holm and Barcelona, though its expressions partly differ between the contexts. Among the policy-makers, trade union representatives and ethnic organizations in Stockholm, the most central concern is with negative attitudes among the majority society, which are perceived to hamper the opportunities of immigrants despite a comparably

prosperous economy. Claims- making actors who perceive themselves as racialized advocate for using the controversial concept of race in debates about inequality between peopleof different origins, and to problematize white normativity in western societies(stakeholder interviews). A report on the labour market situation of people of African origin, ordered by the Swedish labour department, argues that speaking of race is necessary to understand how exclusion operates (Afrofobi report 2014). This appears particularly central for immigrants of African descent; their representatives argue that skin colour is the most important marker of differential treatment in society, and explains the particular disadvantage of the Afro-Swedish community (Afrofobi report 2014). An interviewed spokesperson of the Afro-Swedes' national association argues that it is strongly taboo to speak of racial hierarchies in Sweden, while "physical attributes as white skin, blonde hair and blue eyes remain intimately linked to the common perception of Swedishness." He advocates for an integration debate that is framed in terms of justice and race:

> There is such a strong discourse in Sweden that constructs people who are not white as strangers in this country. And yet, it is impossible to speak of race, andtherefore this question cannot be examined. It is a matter of power [...] Speak- ing of white people is perceived as very aggressive, they are simply "Swedish."

The intersection between race and class in the integration process is high- lighted by another interviewed stakeholder, a representative of an

immigrant women's organization in Stockholm, who argues that "racism and discrimination create new forms of poverty." She informs recruiters about ethnic dis- crimination and advocates for merit-based recruitment, highlighting the obstacles for participation and inclusion:

> The main problem is that the class dimension is completely absent from the integration debate in Sweden. People don't see that so much is about money and resources. The white majority doesn't live in the suburbs because they have enough money to buy houses, and someone who is unemployed and lives in a suburb just has no way out, no job, no money, and is discriminated against.

An interviewed integration policy-maker in Stockholm does not consider the problems with discrimination as serious as the anti-racist actors, but believes that subtle forms of exclusion operate at workplaces, for instance. All in all, the political and public debate on immigration, integration – and race – appears increasingly contentious, not the least with the growing presence of anti- immigrant actors in Parliament and elsewhere, which represents a serious challenge to intercultural policy agendas.

In Barcelona, the interviewed stakeholders state that the persisting impact of the economic crisis represents an impediment for the inclusion of immigrants, as it hinders labour market incorporation and directs the focus away from immigrants' rights to participation and equality of opportunities. The city of Barcelona is active in awareness-

raising on racism, but questions as dis- crimination and ethnic stratification on the labour market are apparently not given much attention. In the context of precariousness, inclusion becomes a matter of finding a place in society in the most basic sense: to make a living. The director of a reception office for immigrants in Barcelona describes the situation with the following words:

> Immigration in Spain has been completely linked to a precarious labour market,and I would say that the main challenge for the new generations is how to make them participate with equality of opportunities. Now, the crisis has come between this development, there are no jobs … the whole integration process is pending on what happens with the crisis.

The spokespersons of ethnic organizations representing Latin American, Moroccan and Senegalese immigrants in Barcelona confirm this picture. They describe an alarming situation where men who used to work mainly in theconstruction sector lost their jobs and cannot find new employment, whilefor instance Moroccan women "accept to clean a house for two or three euro per hour, they have children to support." A spokesperson of the Moroccan association says that their work currently focuses on basic assistance tomembers, as aid to buy food and diapers for babies, and that they "cannotworry about racism" at present. The representative of the Senegalese organization, however, sees both economic precariousness and prejudice as serious and interlinked problems:

> Of course people don't come here just because they want to, they come to work, and the sectors where immigrants work are precarious, rights are not respected. When they say that black people or immigrants cannot do the same kind of workas Spaniards that is discrimination. The effects of the crisis are huge, but one could still imagine equality of opportunities and that is not being done here yet.

A recent study by Aparicio and Portes (2014) shows that though a majority ofsecond-generation immigrants in Spain want to study at the university, fewerwill be able to do so due to insufficient family incomes. Economic disadvantage, seriously aggravated by the financial crisis, is a major obstacle for the equality of opportunities in Spain, which also affects many natives but hitsthe (non-western) immigrant population disproportionally (Marí-Klose and Martínez Pérez 2015).

Race and class in the immigrant narratives: lived experiences of discrimination and socio-economic disadvantage

When analysing the immigrant respondents' narratives, the intersection between race and class soon appeared as the thin red line that connected them. A common experience that many of the non-western respondents inboth countries share was that of not being "allowed" to belong; that no matter how hard they try to adopt national customs and how much they declare that they feel "Swedish" or "Catalan," the majority society constantly questions their identity,

which creates frustration and detachment.

> As a child, other kids could give me mean comments, spit at me and say "you should not live here, you are a monkey" and things like that. In general I think that being a foreigner has given me a great need for revenge, wanting to show that "we know this culture, we also belong here." (Woman, 32, Stockholm, migrated from Chile at age 5)

Stereotypes based on ethno-racial features and national origin are central for most of the respondents in their everyday lives. These stereotypes become incorporated in their self-perceptions, affecting their relations with the ethnic majority society in several ways. For instance, some Kurdish and Chilean respondents in Stockholm aim lower when applying for a job than they would like to as they perceive that it is "pointless" (they expect to be discriminated against based on their earlier experiences), while Norwegian and Canadian respondents in Spain perceive that their nationality gives them "carte blanche" from integration expectations, and advantages on the job and housing markets also compared to native Spaniards.

In both Stockholm and Barcelona, the respondents' perceived sense of belonging and opportunities in society is overall clearly racialized: experiences of rejection and discrimination are particularly common among the respondents of African, Muslim and Latin American origin (altogether, twenty-seven out of thirty-six respondents of these origins frequently experienced racism and/or discrimination, and of the

nine respondents who did notfrequently experience it, all except one declared that they did so occasion- ally). In Stockholm, the respondents overall perceive that the most central obstacle for their incorporation in society is attitudes among the ethnic majority: they feel that they are not accepted as equals or considered to fullybelong there. Everyday racism such as insults in the streets or hostile treatment from neighbours, in shops, etc., was frequently experienced by people of Latin American, Muslim, Asian and African origin, though most strongly felt among the Afro-Swedes; all six respondents of African descent experienced racism frequently and four of them felt that it strongly affected their everyday life.

> I have been called "negro" as long as I can remember. My wife is Swedish, white. She told me that she didn't understand what racism was until she met me. Nowshe sees how people treat me every day. And look what has happened withSweden, they let Nazi parties march openly in the streets. It is a different climate now. I don't want to let my son grow up here. (Man, 39, Stockholm, migrated from Guinea Bissau at age 5)

In Barcelona, though there are similar experiences of racism and discrimination, the immigrant respondents define the main problem in economic terms: there are no jobs, or only very precarious ones. Also in Sweden immigrants are overrepresented in unemployment or low-status jobs, but the Swedish welfare state provides more generous coverage (Hellgren 2015). The labour market is the arena where most respondents in both countriesexperienced ethnic discrimination, and

they overall considered labour market discrimination particularly serious as it so tangibly impacts on theirsocio-economic situation and opportunities for social mobility.

> I grew up here, I am fluent in Catalan, I even dance the *sardanes*, but it is very hard for me to find a job. I used to work in a clothes store, and within a few months I was made manager, but then things went wrong. There was this client who wanted to speak with the manager, but when he saw me he said,"no, I want to speak with the manager, not the cleaner." You lose your self-esteem. (Woman, 29, Barcelona, migrated from Peru at age 5)

Moreover, testimonies of direct exploitation are present in several of the respondents' narratives in Barcelona, while none of the Stockholm respondents have any personal experiences of or mention this as a problem. This may have more to do with irregular or temporary migration statuses (whichare far more common in Spain overall) and being in desperate need of a job for basic subsistence, than with discrimination based on ethno-racial grounds, though categories intersect and reinforce stereotypes of for instance black Africans as poor and disempowered. Leaving jobs where the conditions are considered inhumane, as in the agricultural or domestic services sectors, becomes a central part of the integration process for immigrants who start their migration project at the bottom of society.

> When I worked in agriculture, that was not racism, it was exploitation. I worked seven, eight hours per day or more for

> twenty-five euros. (Man, 37, Barcelona, migrated from Nigeria at age 30)

How certain physical features affect the classification of a person may vary depending on the context; each country or region has its own pigmentocracy (Telles 2014). While African and indigenous Latin American immigrants are visibly different compared to autochthonous Spaniards, for instance a Moroccan who "dresses like a westerner" may pass for a native, which the Moroccan respondents in Barcelona experience on a daily basis. In Sweden, where the majority population is more light-haired and light-skinned than in Spain, the concept of whiteness appears narrower. Here, a Moroccan or even a Spaniard would hardly be perceived as "Swedish," while a Pole or a Russian may be, at least in anonymous contacts in public spaces.

> If I had been half Polish, half Swedish, nobody would have said that I am not Swedish. But since I am brown, even if I don't think about being brown myself everybody comments on it all the time. (Woman, 29, Stockholm, father from Eritrea, mother Swedish, born in Sweden)

All in all, in both Stockholm and Barcelona the non-western immigrant respondents perceive that the intersection between class and race influences on their life chances. Being classified as an immigrant often means a devaluation of a person's status, with real socio-economic consequences when translated into patterns of discrimination.

Perceptions on place, inclusion and exclusion

The city, or the neighbourhood, constitutes the physical space where inter- action between people of multiple ethnic backgrounds takes place (or not)on an everyday basis. People's relationship to place may either compensate for or aggravate racial and socio-economic exclusion. When comparing how the respondents in Stockholm and Barcelona relate to their environment, itis striking that despite similar experiences of racism and discrimination, and worse experiences of labour market exclusion and exploitation in Barcelona, the overall sense of inclusion is far higher among the non-western respondents in Barcelona compared to Stockholm.

In Barcelona, many of the respondents consider the frequent interethnic contacts in streets and squares as an important asset and part of the city's much-appreciated "cosmopolitan" character, which is described in positive words by both western and non-western respondents. A representative ofthe Catalan immigration secretariat puts it this way:

> Despite the crisis and poverty and all alarming details, there are no serious problems with racism and xenophobia. Between neighbours in the same building, there is a social contact that is missing in other countries.

In Stockholm, the geographical ethnic and socio-economic segregation (which indeed intersect) in the housing market is deeply cemented

(Hårsman 2006; Aldén, Hammarstedt, and Neuman 2015). Discrimination in the Swedish housing market has been reported to particularly affect Afro-Swedes, Roma, Muslims and asylum-seekers and declared by the European Commission (2012) to contribute to educational segregation and inequality overall. Being associated with a low-status housing area, often denominated "immigrant dense suburb," may strongly affect the way a person is treated in a variety of contexts, as the professional, social and cultural spheres. On the other hand, an immigrant who moves to a high-status neighbourhood may feel constantly questioned.

> It is about these little things, as when we lived in Solna [middle class area outside Stockholm], my name was the only foreign name in the building. And people immediately, well they get curious and you get this label, he is foreign but he has money, how can he afford [to live here] … Like if you drive a nice car, the police will always stop you. (Man, 39, Stockholm, migrated from Chile at age 1)

According to the local NGO *Internationella Bekantskaper (International Acquaintances)*, the lack of intercultural contacts is a main obstacle for integration in Stockholm:

> Our organization started as reaction against an obstacle, the lack of contacts with native Swedes in everyday life. Pelle [the founder] got frustrated as he noticed that many immigrants never had any contact with Swedes because it is so segregated here so people only talk to their compatriots.

Many of the respondents' overall sense of identification with society is related to their experiences of everyday interaction with natives. More respondents in Stockholm than in Barcelona consider society to be racist at a general level, and many of them claim that it has gotten worse lately. Among the respondents in Stockholm, when asked what they consider the main integration problem for Swedish society, twenty-six out of thirty answered intolerance or racism, the lack of contact and the "invisible walls" that make it very difficult to become a part of social life.

> It is difficult to get in, which was painful to notice. The country is very divided, there are no contacts between Swedes and immigrants in schools or at work- places. (Man, 32, Stockholm, migrated from Kurdistan at age 16)

> It is a problem when a place is as segregated as here, there are no natural meeting points. Then people walk around and paint a picture of how others are that may not be correct. Something is wrong about the contact between people when so many vote for SD. (Woman, 27, Stockholm, migrated from Congo at age 2)

The interethnic character of Barcelona is brought up by many of the respondents when they talk about the opportunities for integration in the society where they live. Both western and non-western immigrants think that living in a city where many people share experiences of migration increases tolerance and identification between people.

> People here generally understand the concept of immigration, many of them immigrated themselves or have parents from the south of Spain. That creates more empathy, which is helpful for integration. (Woman, 21, Barcelona, migrated from Congo at age 9)

> Honestly, I have visited other European countries and I think that it is more tolerant here than in any other European society. For instance in France … people here are much nicer. It is much easier to integrate when there is a relation between people. (Man, 34, Barcelona, migrated from Morocco at age 25)

As described earlier, experiences of racism and discrimination are frequent among many respondents, but still very few of the respondents in Barcelona consider racism to be a general problem. Openness to dialogue, tolerance and an active civil society that encourages participation in local networks and cul tural activities, are characteristics that twenty of the thirty respondents con- sider the main assets of Barcelona; some also of Catalan society in general. In contrast to the experiences of difficulties on the labour market, these narratives provide a contradictory picture of immigrants' experiences from life in Barcelona: inclusion appears to some degree facilitated by interpersonal relations, but simultaneously hampered by the lack of professional opportunities and economic security. Contrastingly, the respondents in Stockholm describe the advantages with life there in terms of the Swedish welfare system, not everyday life in Stockholm as a physical space. Twenty-two out of thirty respondents consider economic security as the most important asset of Swedish society. Most of the non-

western respondents in Stockholmperceive that their professional opportunities are seriously hampered, which isexplained by discrimination and not a general lack of jobs. Their main concerns regard the lack of contacts with Swedes and the sense of not beingwanted by the majority society.

Concluding remarks

The main aim of this article was to inquire into how immigrants' sense of belonging and identification with the place where they live is influenced by their experiences of inclusion/exclusion in two multi-ethnic European cities. The article covers two interrelated levels of analysis: (i) conceptualizing the immigrant disadvantage in terms of exclusion based on race and class; and (ii) examining how immigrants' relationship to place influences on their sense of inclusion and belonging. I suggested that a positive relationship to the city or the neighbourhood could potentially mitigate the negative effects of rejection that racialized immigrants and minorities perceive from the ethnic majority society.

Firstly, I argued that the concepts of race and class are central to understand the particular forms of exclusion that affect immigrants and minorities in European societies, who do not match a norm of Europeanness that is closely linked to whiteness. The immigrant respondents' narratives reflect how racialization and negative stereotyping affect their self-esteem and sense of belonging, as well as their perceptions on the opportunities they have to improve their life situations. Common experiences, as for instance not getting the jobs one applies for despite fulfilling the formal requirements, reflect the relationship between race and class in terms of negative stereotyping of racialized minorities, who are exposed to a discrimination that perpetuates their socio-economic disadvantage. Such

experiences may have devastating effects for immigrants' sense of belonging and identification with the majority society. Immigrants and children of immigrants who despite having formal skills as a university degree are being denied access to jobs, housing in attractive areas, or even, as many of the narratives reflect, the perceived right to identify them- selves as "Swedes" or "Catalans" without being questioned by the ethnic majority, are not only being deprived of their possibilities to identify with the majority society and feel that they belong there; they are simultaneously being denied the opportunity to gain social mobility. This, in turn, cements the racialized socio-economic marginalization that is a reality in all European immigration countries. The study however also reflects differences between societal contexts: the stronger importance of the economic barriers in the Catalan case, and the central role played by negative attitudes and more subtle forms of exclusion in the Swedish case.

Secondly, I shifted the analytical focus to the respondents' perceptions on the physical space where they live. In the immigrant narratives, it is not always clear if they refer to the physical place where they live or a more abstract sense of the ethnic majority society; they may for instance say that "people in Spain talk to you in the streets," while they only have this experience from the city of Barcelona. Everyday experiences from the place where they live shape people's perceptions on society as a whole, just as societal phenomena may have concrete repercussions in everyday life. An example is when immigrants in Stockholm perceive growing hostility from their neighbours in a climate of increasing support for xenophobic discourses.

Comparing the cities it becomes clear from both the immigrant and the stakeholder interviews that the lack of contact between natives and immigrants is perceived as a central impediment for integration in Stockholm, while Barcelona is more generally described in terms of an ethnically and culturally mixed "melting pot," which is

considered an asset both by racialized and white immigrant respondents. Being foreign or physically different in a place where many are, as in central Barcelona, makes people feel more at ease than in an ethnically homogeneous neighbourhood. Whereas race and class-related inequalities define exclusionary structures at a general level and more efficient policies to combat both discrimination and socio-economic exclusion are necessary, cities and neighbourhoods that are perceived as inclusive may potentially counteract destructive patterns of detachment and disintegration, providing a sense of belonging and alternative forms of participation at the local level.

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