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Ethnic Discrimination, Name Change and Labor Market Inequality

Mixed approaches to ethnic exclusion in Sweden

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Marks of the stone industry at Bohus Malmö, Sweden
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"There is really nothing more to say - except why.
But since why is difficult to handle, one must take
refuge in how."

Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* (1969)

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Ethnic Discrimination, Name Change and Labor Market Inequality

Introduction

This dissertation consists of four studies on ethnic discrimination, with a primary focus on labor market discrimination of individuals with a non-Western origin in the specific national context of Sweden. The overall aim of the dissertation is to study some of the obstacles to inclusion that non-Western individuals may face in Sweden. A second aim is to study strategies employed as a response to perceived exclusion. Firstly, I do this by empirically investigating ethnic discrimination against job applicants with Middle Eastern or African names in Sweden. Secondly, I study surname change as a response to stigma and discrimination among individuals with a Middle Eastern origin. In order to study such varying aspects of ethnic discrimination, I employ multiple methods using experimental, statistical and qualitative techniques. Although Sweden and particularly the Middle Eastern group are in focus, several of the empirical findings may have relevance for the study of unequal treatment of individuals from other regions and for the study of ethnic exclusion outside the Swedish setting.

Ignoring for a moment the obvious connection between the author of this dissertation and Sweden, there are also comparative reasons why the Swedish case is of general interest to scholars interested in the study of ethnic exclusion and inequality. The countries of immigration in Europe have different national histories that have led to different approaches to immigration, but they also share several features and experiences related to migration. Sweden has, just like several other European countries, transformed from a fairly ethnically homogenous society to a multiethnic one in a couple of decades. In 1940 only one percent of Sweden's population had been born in another country, while fifteen percent is foreign-born, and about four percent has two immigrant parents (Statistics Sweden 2010a). Among the European OECD countries, only Luxembourg, Switzerland, Austria and Germany have a higher proportion of immigrants in the population (OECD 2006, p. 45). Sweden today also shares with most

states, in Europe and elsewhere, the fact that most of its representatives reject xenophobia and discrimination and that there are formal equal opportunities in the labor market as well as in other social arenas. They also share a discrepancy between the goals of integration policies and integration outcomes. All over Europe, immigrants from non-Western countries are overrepresented in unemployment as well as in the labor market sectors with the lowest earnings and worst working conditions (Schierup, Hansen and Castles 2006, OECD 2009). However, Sweden stands out through the tremendous efforts and financial investments its governing administrations over the years have made to make Swedish society multicultural and equally available to all its citizens, irrespective of origin. On the surface, the Swedish population also seems more favorable to immigration and immigrants than most of its European neighbors (Bail 2008, Meuleman, Eldad and Billiet 2008). Against this background, it seems paradoxical that Sweden belongs to the group of OECD countries with some of the largest ethnic labor market inequalities, especially in terms of differences in employment (OECD 2010). Today, the employment rate for the immigrant population is approximately 25 percent lower than for natives, and the income of the immigrant population is only about 70 percent of that of the native population (Statistics Sweden 2010b).

The persistence of labor market inequalities between natives and immigrants seems to be a universal phenomenon. Some scholars look for explanations for this inequality in unintended consequences of the market, in failed migration and integration policies, or in systematic differences in productivity (human capital) between natives and immigrants. Still others study unequal treatment of the immigrants, analyzing the attitudes and behavior of the native-born majority. Finally, a smaller group of researchers study the strategies employed by immigrants to counter social exclusion.

Scholars are guided by subjective values and assessments of what they believe are of societal importance in formulating research questions (Weber 1949, p. 80). These values and conceptions are in turn not unaffected by societal context. Thus, any scholar attempting to understand social phenomena should keep in mind that theory is not unaffected by the large-scale sociopolitical processes it is called upon to explain (Winant 2000). I try to relate to these considerations by presenting and situating the papers of this dissertation in a broader historical context in this introductory chapter. National contexts provide different institutional settings and make different strategies

more or less readily available to agents. An account of the national setting is hence also necessary for the understanding of ethnic inequality (Lamont and Mizrahi 2012a). I begin by reviewing Sweden's history of migration, immigration policy, the emergence of labor market inequalities between foreign-born and natives in Sweden and the history of Swedish research on immigrant integration. Thereafter, I discuss the different explanations for ethnic inequality and exclusion. I also try to position the studies of the dissertation in the ongoing academic discussion on the persistence of inequality between natives and immigrants in Sweden.

Background on Labor Market Inequalities between Natives and Immigrants in Sweden

Labor migration and the emergence of ethnic labor market inequality

The Swedish economy experienced a tremendous boom during the post-war decades. Sweden's industry was unharmed by the war and ready to export its goods when Europe was to be reconstructed. The economic boom and the equality- and welfare-oriented politics of the Swedish Social Democratic party improved the standard of living dramatically for the Swedish population in just a few decades.

The economic boom was so intense that the Swedish workforce could not meet the rapidly expanding industry's demands for labor. At the same time, unemployment was high in several European economies marked by the war. The solution was labor migration. A treaty of a free Nordic labor market (still in place) brought a large group of Finnish workers to Sweden, and companies recruited thousands of workers from Turkey, Central and Southern Europe. On arrival to Sweden, refugees from Eastern Europe were assigned jobs by the Swedish Labor Market Board (Wadensjö 1973). The Swedish government rejected the discriminatory "guest worker" system practiced by other European countries that also imported labor (e.g. West Germany, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Switzerland); instead, the labor migrants were given rights that bore a closer resemblance to those of citizens (Castles 1986, Schröder 2007).

On the surface, both the Swedish economy and the migrants as a group seemed to benefit from migration. The employment rates for the migrants were higher than for natives, and there were no signs of unequal treatment in wages (Wadensjö 1973, Ohlsson 1975, Ekberg

1983). However, the positions in which the immigrants were employed were those rejected by the native population – those with the lowest wages and the worst working conditions; jobs for which the labor migrants were often overqualified (Wadensjö 1973, pp. 203-211). There was thus no conflict of interest between the native population and the labor migrants. To conclude: ethnic inequality in terms of a vertically and to some extent horizontally segregated labor market emerged from the "start" of Sweden's modern history of immigration, and as a result of labor migration in post-war Europe.¹

Immigrant integration policies: from assimilation to multiculturalism

Although migration to Sweden began to take off already after the Second World War, policy-makers did not become seriously interested in its new immigrant population until the 1970s. The number of inhabitants born abroad had increased rapidly during the 1960s and the 1970s, and it had become evident that many of the migrants had chosen to settle permanently in Sweden. The situation cried out for greater knowledge about the impact of immigration on the Swedish economy and about the living conditions of the immigrants. For the first time, the government initiated and funded a series of research projects on issues related to migration; projects conducted by academic scholars (Hammar 1980). The link between policy and research on immigrant incorporation has remained intact over the years, resulting in a body of research that is largely policy-oriented (Ålund and Schierup 1991, p. 15).²

As a response to this demographic development, equality, in terms of both democratic rights as well as material and cultural values, became a key component of the Swedish political model. To ensure that immigrants would have the same rights as the native-born, immigrant and immigration policy became an integrated part of general labor market and social welfare policies (Södergran 1997, pp. 40f).

The ideas of how equality between natives and immigrants should be accomplished have varied over time and between ruling governments. During the 1960s, the road to equality was considered to

¹ For a review of similar patterns concerning labor migration in other European countries, see Castles (1986).

² An example of this link is *Statens Offentliga Utredningar* (SOU), a series of government reports on various topics. These reports include policy suggestions and are often written by prominent scholars within the relevant field.

be through assimilation into Swedish society. The state assisted the immigrants in the assimilation process. For instance, free courses in the Swedish language were offered, and income losses were compensated for those who had to reduce their working hours to attend class (Södergran 1997).

The economic expansion slowed down in the 1970s, with restrictions on labor migration having been implemented in 1968 (with the exception of the free Nordic labor market). However, asylum and family reunion policies remained fairly generous. As a consequence, migration came to be dominated by refugees from South America, the Middle East and Africa, and by tied movers (i.e. family migrants) (Nilsson 2004, p. 24). In the mid-1970s, the assimilation approach to immigrant incorporation was abandoned and multiculturalism (the acknowledging of the cultural heritage and permanence of ethnic groups) was officially incorporated into the Swedish political model (Hammar and Lindby 1979, p. 10). Swedish multiculturalism revolved around the values of equality, freedom of choice and partnership. Equality was defined as equality in living standard and access to welfare and legal rights, and freedom of choice as the freedom to assimilate or retain one's original cultural identity. Finally, the native population and the immigrant groups were expected to work together, in partnership, to achieve these goals. In 1975, non-citizens who had resided in Sweden for more than three years attained the right to vote in the local and regional elections (Södergran 1997, pp. 51f).

Deepening labor market inequalities and stricter refugee policies

Sweden and other OECD countries experienced a large inflow of asylum seekers during the 1980s. While many other countries tightened their asylum policies as a result of this increased pressure, Sweden kept its comparatively humanitarian refugee policy. During this period, the acceptance rate for asylum seekers was still as much as around 80 percent (Bernhardt 2006, Hatton 2009).

It was during the 1980s that the employment and unemployment gaps between immigrants and natives first emerged, despite a booming economy (Ekberg and Hammarstedt 2002). The gaps increased dramatically during the deep economic crisis at the beginning of the 1990s. The recession resulted in a sharp increase of unemployment and deep cutbacks in welfare affecting the entire population. Immigrants, along with young people, were those who suffered the hardest. The refugees who arrived at this time, primarily

from the Balkans and the Middle East, had a very difficult time entering the labor market (Ekberg and Hammarstedt 2002). Public attitudes to immigration and immigrants, particularly Middle Eastern immigrants, were negative (Hvitfelt 1991, Demker 2010). At the policy level, attitudes to integration began to reflect resignation, an attitude resembling a “pragmatic new realism” whereby immigrants were increasingly blamed for failed integration and increasing inequalities (Ålund and Schierup 1991; see also Mattson 2001, Carson 2007). This resignation concerning integration coincided with tightened refugee policies.

When the Swedish economy recovered in the late 1990s, the employment situation improved for the immigrants as well; however, it has again deteriorated, compared with that of native-born, due to the international financial crises in 2008. The inequalities are persisting, in terms of both employment and occupational segregation. In 2008, 81 percent of native men and 80 percent of native women of working age were employed on the regular labor market, compared to only 54 percent of immigrant women and 60 percent of immigrant men, a 26/23-percent employment gap (Statistics Sweden 2010). This is on par with what the difference in employment has been since the 1990s (Ekberg and Hammarstedt 2002). The labor market has also remained segregated, with immigrants over-represented in the low-skilled and low-status positions (Wadensjö 1997, Martinsson 2002, Nordström Skans and Åslund 2010). The median monthly earnings in 2008 for a native-born amounted to 17,900 SEK, and for an immigrant 12,700 SEK. Expressed differently, the earnings of the immigrants are about 71 percent of those of the native population (Statistics Sweden 2010).

There is also stratification within the heterogeneous group of immigrants. le Grand and Szulkin (2002), analyzing data on employed individuals in 1995, show that Western immigrants’ wage assimilation is much smoother compared to that of non-Western migrants, who seem to face considerably higher obstacles. For male non-Western migrants, large differences remain even after 20 years’ stay in the country. Non-Western migrants also have considerably lower employment rates than other immigrant groups (Martinsson 2002).

Explanations for Ethnic Inequalities

The focus of this dissertation is ethnic discrimination. However, all ethnic inequalities in the Swedish labor market are not due to unequal

treatment. In fact, most theories on the integration of immigrants interpret the labor market gaps between natives and immigrants as consequences of migration; i.e. consequences of the transition from one sociocultural context to another. In this section, I account for some of these explanations.

As already mentioned, labor migrants in Sweden were primarily recruited to fill the bottom layer in the labor market hierarchy. But why has this ethnic inequality persisted, and why has unemployment emerged as a new aspect of ethnic labor market inequality?

Inequality despite fair competition - the human capital approach

One basic assumption within the neoclassical economic literature is that market relations and individual investment in human capital determine individual labor market success.³ This approach is widely employed to analyze differences in labor market outcomes between native-born groups of different origins, like the European Americans and African Americans in the United States. According to this approach, individual characteristics like ethnicity or gender are irrelevant to productivity and are thus of minor importance for labor market stratification.

Applied to immigrants, the theory becomes more complex. When moving to a new country, migrants suffer from a temporary lack of "country-specific" human capital. This concept refers to language proficiency and other skills that it takes some time in the new country to acquire, such as knowledge about the society and the understanding or capacity to adapt to both explicit and implicit norms and traditions. It is not until these skills have been acquired that migrants can realize the full potential of their human capital (e.g. Chiswick 1978, Borjas 1987, Chiswick and Miller 2002).

Two characteristics of the migrants are assumed to affect their labor market incorporation: i) their skills in relation to the population in the country of destination. For instance, migrants with no or very little education are assumed to have difficulty entering a labor market where it is standard to have completed high school; ii) the migrants' desire to move. Not all migrants have had such a desire; political and economic factors in the migrants' country of origin affect out-

³ Human capital is a widely used concept in economics, but also in sociology, referring to the sum of all skills and assets related to the productivity an individual has invested in (see primarily Schultz 1961, Becker 1962, Ben-Porath 1967, Mincer 1974).

migration (Borjas 1987). These conditions do not affect all individuals in a country in the same way – even in countries plagued by war or famine there will be groups of people who do not wish to migrate. And among those who do want to leave, some are not allowed and some lack the opportunity or assets to make it happen. Furthermore, even among the movers are people who want to migrate (labor migrants), those who have been forced to migrate (refugees), and tied movers, who are migrating to be reunited with their families. This last group of movers is assumed to have a varying desire to move.

Labor migrants, who are assumed to have the strongest desire to move, are (all other things being equal) assumed to have the highest propensity to do well in the new country. Refugees are assumed to do less well, as their decision to move has been made out of necessity and not because of expected labor market gains. Tied movers are assumed to be more difficult to make predictions about in terms of labor market incorporation. They do not have as strong a desire to move as the labor migrants do, but they get more help settling in the new country as they already have family there waiting for them. Thus, how well migrants fare and how fast they catch up with the new country-specific skills depends on i) the skills they bring and ii) their motives for migrating (e.g. Borjas 1987).

For all the reasons stated above, migrants are not a random selection of people from their countries of origin. They are self-selected, meaning that they have made the decision to move (whether they wanted to or felt forced to do so). As the migrants are not a random selection of individuals from their countries of origin it is difficult to predict, based on what is known about the human capital of the countries, how migrants will fare in their countries of destination. Thus, migrants' human capital resembles neither the total population in their country of origin nor that in their country of destination. Sometimes they have more and sometimes they have less, depending on how political and economic factors in the country of origin affect different groups of people.

As mentioned earlier, migrants to Sweden are a very heterogeneous group, consisting of an early wave of low-skilled labor migrants from Europe and later waves of comparatively highly skilled refugees from Latin America, the Middle East, Africa and the Balkans, and tied movers from all these regions. Swedish scholars employing the human capital approach to explain immigrant incorporation conclude that the theory can only partly explain the differences in labor market outcomes between natives and immigrants (Aguilar and Gustafsson

1994, Edin, Lalone and Åslund 2000, Edin and Åslund 2001, Österberg 2000). Like the theories would predict, the labor migrants of the 1960s and 1970s did better than later waves of refugees in terms of employment. But as will be discussed in the next section, the state of the economy was very different during these different waves of immigration, so it is hard to discern market effects from individual characteristics. It could also be argued – against human capital theory – that the refugees, often highly skilled, should have integrated smoothly on the Swedish labor market with its increasing demand for skilled labor. Although inequalities decrease with time spent in Sweden, just like the country-specific human capital approach would predict, this approach fails to explain why significant differences in employment and wages between natives and immigrants from non-Western countries remain even after more than 20 years in the country (for employment gaps see Ekberg 1991, Wadensjö 1997, Bevelander and Skryt Nielsen 1999, Arai, Regnér and Schröder 2000, Nekby 2003, Scott 2000; for wage gaps see le Grand and Szulkin 2002).

Market and policy effects on labor market integration

The neoclassical economic approach also includes structural or institutional features of the market in explanations for labor market stratification. Ups and downs in the economy, and structural changes in the economy affecting the job market, are all beyond the control of the individual but may still affect rewards for human capital investment. In Sweden, for instance, scholars have argued that the employment gap that emerged between natives and immigrants in the 1980s emerged because of structural changes in the Swedish labor market. A large part of the unskilled jobs in the manufacturing industry (where many immigrants had traditionally worked) disappeared, a trend that began in the 1980s. Instead, the service sector expanded and there was an increase in jobs requiring higher qualifications and "Swedish-specific skills". Thus, recently arrived immigrants and immigrants lacking these skills lost in the competition for jobs (Lund and Ohlsson 1994, Bevelander 2001).⁴

Focus has also been directed toward the economic settings and integration policies affecting immigrants' opportunities at labor market entrance. When individuals enter the labor market in a recession, they risk facing long spells of unemployment. Inactivity

⁴ Similar changes in the "context of reception" have also been discussed in the literature on immigrant incorporation in the United States (Zhou 1997).

may cause a loss of skills, and can also be interpreted by employers as a sign of low productivity. This phenomenon is called "scarring effects" (Concoran 1982, Ellwood 1982).⁵ The labor migrants arrived to Sweden during a booming labor market, and were successfully integrated in terms of employment. They were also less vulnerable to unemployment during the recessions in the decades that followed, compared to more recently arrived immigrants. Åslund and Rooth (2007) show that poor labor market conditions during the time and at the place of arrival to Sweden also had long-term negative effects on both earnings and employment for the refugees arriving in 1987-1991.

However, effects of economic fluctuations can only provide a partial explanation in the Swedish case. Ekberg (1991) showed that ups and downs in the labor market affected immigrants differently prior and post 1970: during the economic boom of the 1980s, immigrants were still suffering from unemployment while the native population had almost full employment. Thus, something else happened that affected immigrant employment. Changes in integration policies have been proposed to be one such set of events.

In the middle of the 1980s, the responsibility for the labor market incorporation of immigrants shifted from the Swedish Labor Market Board (AMS) to the Swedish Immigration Board (*Invandrarverket*). The Immigration Board assigned local municipalities the responsibility for the incorporation of immigrants. This organizational change led to a shift in attitudes toward immigrant incorporation. From regarding labor market incorporation as the key to integration, the focus shifted to education and social assistance. This fundamental shift in the organization of integration also affected the change in official attitudes to immigrants from "resources" to "social problems" (Schröder 2007). A delayed labor market entrance followed this organizational change. Before the shift, at the end of the 1980s (when the economy was good), about 45 percent of newly arrived immigrants got their first job within two years. In 2000 (after the shift, when the economy was also booming), only about a third had a job within the same time frame (Erikson et al. 2007). Today, government

⁵ Evidence concerning immigrants and scarring in international research is conflicting. In the United States, Chiswick and Miller (2002) found scarring effects on immigrant earnings, while Chiswick, Cohen and Zach (1997) found increased probabilities of employment for immigrants who arrive during a time of high unemployment. In Australia, MacDonald and Worswick (1999) found positive effects on earnings assimilation for immigrants who enter the labor market in a recession.

officials state that it takes an average of seven years between arrival to Sweden and labor market entrance.⁶

To sum up thus far, neoclassical economic theory, as practiced by both economists and sociologists, has emphasized i) the costs in terms of individual productivity when moving from one national context to another and ii) the importance of motives for migration for labor market incorporation. They have also showed that factors beyond the control of the individual, such as the state of the market at labor market entrance and integration policies, affect opportunities for labor market integration. The relationship between individual productivity, labor market relations and national contexts are all key components in understanding ethnic stratification.

In the next section, I discuss the relationship between ethnic discrimination and ethnic labor market inequality in Sweden. This is an issue that economists generally have more difficulty dealing with than sociologists, at least in the instances in which discrimination violates assumptions about the market as driven primarily by profit-maximizing principles. Discrimination is also, as mentioned in the introduction, the main focus of this dissertation.

Ethnic Discrimination

Ethnic discrimination was not in focus in the Swedish research community until the past 10-15 years. Inequalities between natives and immigrants were assumed to be the result of the processes involved in the integration processes accounted for above. Although a minor group of scholars have continuously raised the issue of discrimination as a source of ethnic inequality (e.g. Hammar 1964, Lange and Westin 1981, Ålund and Schierup 1991), the focus of the ethnic integration field as a whole shifted its focus fairly recently to

⁶ A concrete example of a policy that had negative effects for the immigrants involved was the policies to disperse recently arrived immigrants across municipalities rather than to have each individual choose his or her place of settlement. The concentration of immigrants in the larger cities was believed to be an obstacle to integration. The result was that the immigrants were placed in municipalities with weak labor markets and where they lacked in-group social networks that could potentially have provided them with job opportunities and valuable information about the Swedish labor market. The policy had significant negative effects on the immigrants' wages, compared to groups who were not exposed to the policy (Edin, Fredriksson and Åslund 2003; 2004).

also include discrimination.⁷ It is within the context of an increased interest in the role of discrimination in ethnic inequality that this dissertational project has been written.

Individual-level ethnic discrimination

I define ethnic discrimination in hiring as the case when an applicant is evaluated more negatively than applicants from the dominant ethnic group by virtue of his or her ethnicity. Ethnicity is unrelated to productivity and is hence an irrelevant criterion in the evaluation of applicants. Discrimination becomes a social problem when the accumulated discriminatory acts of many individual employers and managers as well as employment office staff ("gatekeepers") produce and reproduce unequal access to resources, positions and opportunities for career development.⁸

Employers discriminate, consciously or unconsciously, either because of ethnic homophily, (i.e. they prefer to work with people from their ethnic in-group), because they dislike (are prejudiced against) individuals from ethnic out-groups, or because they believe ethnicity and productivity are related and that individuals from certain ethnic out-groups are less productive. As I will argue next, all these explanations relate to stereotypes.

An influential contribution to the explanation for discrimination based on the neoclassical economic approach is the notion that employers may practice statistical discrimination against immigrants or ethnic or racial minorities because they believe these groups are on average less productive. When choosing a candidate from the dominant majority, they believe they have a better chance of hiring a productive employee (Phelps 1972, Arrow 1973). This explanation accounts for discrimination without challenging one of the most basic assumptions of economic theory: that agents on the market act to maximize profit.

The problem of induction, implicit in the theory of statistical discrimination above, is a classical philosophical issue. No matter how

⁷ For obvious reasons, the issue of discrimination was raised earlier in countries with longer histories of ethnic relations, like the United States where the study of racism and racial discrimination as a source of race inequality has been central since the studies of the Chicago school (Park and Thompson 1939, Park 1950, and Myrdal 1944). However, the focus of these discussions on discrimination has rarely been immigrants but rather the native minority African Americans. Immigrants were assumed to assimilate naturally into the American "melting pot" society.

⁸ For an in-depth discussion of the concept of discrimination, see Banton (1994).

many white swans we observe, we will never know for sure that the next swan we observe will be white. In everyday life, we nevertheless need to make such inferences by categorizing new objects, events and individuals that we encounter based on our past experience. The practice of using ethnicity as a proxy for productivity is an example of such a categorization and stereotyping activity that employers perform in order to maximize efficiency, in this case in hiring decisions (see Fiske for a discussion on stereotyping and categorization as cognitive processes 1998, p. 362). But according to an abundance of social psychological studies these processes are not, as the neoclassical approach assumes, unbiased; especially not when individuals categorize individuals from ethnic out-groups (e.g. Hamilton 1981 and the contributions therein). For instance, i) in-groups are categorized in a more detailed and nuanced way than out-groups and ii) between-group differences are exaggerated (Hamilton 1981, Taylor 1981, Wilder 1981). Thus, employer evaluations of group productivity will inevitably be flawed and result in what social psychologist Hamilton (1981) referred to as “illusory correlation” (see also England’s 1992 discussion of “error discrimination” as a special case of statistical discrimination).

Rydgren (2004a) suggest that erroneous deduction can cause not only wrong ideas about productivity; it can also cause and legitimize xenophobia. Phenomena and situations that we experience vary in complexity. In most cases, our deductive techniques work well, even though in a strict sense they are not valid. When it comes to more complex phenomena, we are more hesitant in the making of inferences, something that we have also learnt from past experiences of erroneous inference. Rydgren argues that individuals who hold xenophobic beliefs may have applied a deductive logic to out-groups that works well when generalizing concerning less complex things or phenomena in their lives, but that, applied to persons or groups, lead to faulty conclusions. If these conclusions result in negative ideas about out-groups, these individuals will hold negative stereotypes against out-groups.

Hence, xenophobia is a psychological or cognitive phenomenon rooted in some individuals expressed as negative ideas, stereotypes or attitudes about ethnic out-groups. Xenophobic employers are unwilling to employ immigrants or ethnic minorities, regardless of their credentials. Theories that attempt to explain why people embrace xenophobic ideas abound. Just to mention one: group threat theory (e.g. Blumer 1958, Bobo 1988) argues that xenophobia and related

negative sentiments toward ethnic out-groups derive from i) a feeling of in-group superiority and a simultaneous conviction that out-groups are intrinsically different, ii) a feeling of having a right to privilege and iii) a fear that the subordinate groups are a threat to the in-group's dominant position. The kind of ad hoc conclusions implicated in the deductive logic that Rydgren (2004a) accounts for in his explanation of how xenophobia may come about may also legitimize xenophobic ideas for individuals who want to feel superior to others.

Many scholars find that the widespread discrimination that results in ethnic inequality is better explained by more subtle mechanisms of social exclusion such as *homophily*. People do not so much dislike other people as they prefer to be around people who resemble themselves. Economist Georg Akerlof (1997) suggested that employers discriminate because of social distance, i.e. because they prefer to work with people who resemble themselves socially. Sociologist Michèle Lamont (2000) illustrated this predisposition in an elaborate manner in her study of Black and White workers in the United States and France. Lamont found that the moral qualities her respondents appreciated in others were those they associated with people from the same race and class position as themselves. The moral qualities they disliked in others were those of people associated with other races or social classes. Thus, her respondents drew moral boundaries that coincided with racial and class boundaries.

In sum, although employers may have different ideas about productivity differentials between ethnic groups, their estimations of group differences are unlikely to be correct and are likely to be disadvantageous to the out-groups. In this sense, the concept of "statistical" discrimination is misleading as it associates to an objectiveness and mathematical precision that is unlikely to characterize real categorization processes in regard to hiring decisions.

The role of institutions in ethnic exclusion

Many scholars emphasize the institutional aspects of racism and discrimination (e.g. Feagin and Feagin 1993, Bonilla-Silva 1997, Sidanius and Pratto 1999, Winant 2000). They assume, in short, that racial or ethnic social relations have, in a given context and at some point in history, become hierarchical and unequal. These relations have become institutionalized, "forming a structure as well as a culture", and affect social life regardless of the will of the individuals involved (Bonilla-Silva 1997, p. 473). Thus, institutional discrimination is considered to be present within all social spheres. What

distinguishes the institutional approach is that it argues that on top of the fact that individuals may hold negative stereotypes, and act discriminatorily against ethnic out-groups, there are discriminatory practices that generate unequal outcomes regardless of individual intent. In other words, it is not primarily the presence of individual negative stereotypes among the various kinds of gatekeepers that causes discrimination. Discrimination is rather the result of the organizational structure of the organizations. The acts of the individuals in gate-keeping positions generate these outcomes largely regardless of who holds these positions. Thus, individuals may come and go, but the behavior of the organization remains the same.

As already mentioned, the Swedish labor market does provide formal equal opportunities and there is legislation in place to protect individuals from ethnic discrimination. In this sense, the basic structure of the Swedish labor market is not discriminatory and is not permeated with racism (as argued in, for instance, some of the contributions in SOU 2006:73). There are, however, important hiring practices that lead to unequal opportunities for immigrants and that are institutional in the sense that they are characteristic of the practices of the organizations rather than of the individuals within the organizations. These practices include i) network recruitment and ii) an ethnocentric bias in the evaluation of merits. As I will argue below, the former tends to altogether exclude immigrants from the competition for positions, and the latter results in unfair evaluations of merits achieved in other countries.

Networks and ethnic exclusion

There is a growing body of research that suggests that the labor market remains segregated because of informal network recruitment. Information about vacancies, and about suitable job candidates, is often spread through networks (e.g. Granovetter 1974, Marsden and Gorman 1998). For instance, the results of a large case study on a “high-technology organization” in the United States suggested that the racial differences (African Americans and other minorities versus European Americans) in hiring were explained by either the access to, or the use of, social networks (Petersen, Saporta and Seidel 2000). In the Swedish case, it has been suggested that only 30 percent of all new employments are mediated by “*Platsbanken*”, the main employment site (Harkman 2003). Although the remaining 70 percent of the employments may have been advertised elsewhere, it must still be

assumed that a substantial share of all the employments was mediated through networks.

Network recruitment is not discriminatory in the sense that it treats equally merited applicants differently because of ethnic background. However, there is an inherent unfairness in network recruitment in that the information about vacant positions is not publicly announced, and informal advice to applicants within the network may make it virtually impossible for outsiders who somehow learn of the vacant position to win the competition. The information is only available to the exclusive group of people within the employer's network and to the network of some of the employees. The exclusion of immigrants and ethnic minorities is a (most likely unintended) consequence of network recruitment, as previous research indicates that networks tend toward ethnic homophily (Rydgren 2004b). And since immigrants are underrepresented among employers and managers, immigrants and their children are often disfavored in informal recruitment. Hensvik, Nordström-Skans and Åslund (2009) provide empirical evidence that managers in Sweden, of all ethnic backgrounds, tend to employ individuals with a background similar to their own. Employees who have a different background than their manager also have a higher propensity to leave the workplace within two years. Working with statistical simulations of inflows and outflows of employees into Swedish workplaces, Bygren (2010) showed that a random distribution of inflow would decrease segregation by 50 percent. Thus, on a labor market that is already ethnically stratified, informal recruitment excludes immigrants from taking part in the competition for many jobs. What is more, as immigrants tend to have a network primarily in the low-wage sectors, this is where they are most likely to find a job (cf. Elliott 2001, Fernandez and Weinberg 1997, Lin 2000).

Lamont's work on moral boundaries, mentioned earlier, can also be used to understand the homophilic composition of networks. Lamont concludes that people tend toward ethnoracial (Lamont 2000) and social-class (Lamont 1992) homophily because of (perceived) differences in moral values. Thus, if social networks based on notions of what kind of people you like to be around constitute a basis for recruitment, people of the same social class and the same ethnic background are more likely to be recruited.

Ethnocentric bias in the evaluation of merits

As already mentioned, the human capital approach predicts that migrants suffer a temporary loss of human capital during the transition

to the new country of residence. Once the new skills have been acquired (i.e. language and knowledge about institutions), the employment and earnings gap between the migrants and natives should disappear. However, many Swedish employers value merits acquired in Sweden more than those acquired abroad. Thus, it seems that immigrants would often need a Swedish degree and Swedish work experience in order to be evaluated similarly to natives with merits of the same quality (Burns et al. 2007). The argument for favoring Swedish credentials is that foreign credentials bring a greater risk into the employment decision, as it is more difficult to judge the quality of education and work tasks at foreign institutions and organizations.

What skills an educational program leads to may of course vary across contexts, and in some occupations it is crucial to know exactly what skills the employees possess. Take for instance the case of nurses, who are responsible for patients' lives. Their educational level varies significantly between countries, and the work tasks included in the profession vary accordingly. In such cases, employers have to be sure they know the exact skill level of their employees. But such between-country differences are not as crucial in all occupations. Even though I only have limited knowledge about the expertise required in the various occupations in society, it is my guess that between-country differences in the education of chefs, receptionists, many teacher profiles (e.g. natural sciences, languages, mathematics), computer specialists, engineers, etc., are not all that difficult to overcome. This is also recognized in "settlement" countries like Australia, Canada and the United States, which recruit high-skilled individuals from all over the world.

Boréus and Mörkenstam's (2010) study of janitors at a municipally owned housing company provides an example of managers' neglect of the qualifications of immigrants. The company they studied (through participant observations and interviews) had immigrant representation in the workforce, and promoted itself as an equal opportunity workplace. In the evaluation of the janitors' merits for the assignment of different work tasks, the managers identified Swedish language skills as a merit. Multiple language skills were not recognized, even though it seemed to the researchers to be an obvious resource as the janitors served tenants from many different countries. When confronted with this point, the managers admitted that they had never thought about multiple language skills as a resource.

The ethnocentric bias in the evaluation of merits seems to be institutionalized, in the sense that government officials who reject other kinds of discriminatory practices do not denounce these standards. Instead, they seem to judge foreign merits by the same standards, as they do not include the devaluation or neglect of foreign credentials in their definition of discrimination. Labor market integration policies are instead directed at assisting immigrants in improving their competitiveness or employability by translating degrees as well as offering language courses and labor market programs. Had policy-makers' view of foreign credentials been more neutral, they would instead have tried to increase the status of foreign education and credentials.

In sum, network recruitment and an ethnocentric evaluation of work credentials are two discriminatory practices that largely work irrespective of the individual recruiters, and that make the competition for jobs unfair.

Proving Discrimination

The most basic, but nevertheless quite difficult, task for scholars studying individual-level hiring discrimination is to document and survey its existence, extent and impact on individual labor market chances.⁹ As it is within the realms of this objective that three of the four studies of this dissertation have been written, the following section is dedicated to the issue of proving discrimination.

The feature of the recruitment process that makes proving the existence of discrimination complicated is its almost complete lack of transparency. Only the recruiters know how many applicants apply for a position, what their credentials are, and exactly what the recruiters themselves are looking for in an applicant.

⁹ In the United States, a discussion of the "declining significance of race" has been ongoing since the 1980s. Sociologist William Julius Wilson (1978; 1987) argued that the Civil rights act had eradicated racial discrimination and that the remaining inequalities could be reduced to class inequality, while for instance Joe Feagin (1991), Feagin and Feagin 1993) argued that the mechanisms of discrimination had not disappeared, but had transformed from overt to covert. A recent series of field experiments measuring racial discrimination in the labor market in the 2000s shows that discrimination is still prevalent (Bertrand and Mullainathan 2004, Pager and Quilian 2005, Pager, Western and Bonikowski 2009).

During the data collection phase of the field experiment (on which three of the papers of this dissertation are based on and which I will describe in a moment), I read about a thousand job ads. One of the most frequent phrases in these ads was that employers “give equal weight to your merits and your personality”, that it is as important that you “fit in the group” or have “that little extra” as that you have “the right skills”.

Personality traits are intangible characteristics and will not be perceived in the same way by all people. This makes it virtually impossible for a researcher, even if allowed to be present at all stages of the recruitment process, to tease out whether an employer who rejects an out-group applicant who the researcher favors feels a social distance to the out-group applicant or has an accurate feeling that the applicant is unfit for the job. Is it at all possible to evaluate another person’s power of judgment? When it comes to discrimination, the burden of proof lies with the accuser. This is probably why no employer in Sweden who has pleaded not guilty has ever been convicted of discrimination.¹⁰

These obstacles have not kept scholars from studying discrimination in the hiring process, however. The residual approach to the study of ethnic labor market inequality, analyzes register or survey data on individual characteristics and interprets the residual that remains after controlling for differences in human capital between groups as discrimination (e.g. Darity and Meyers 1983, Farley 1984, Farley and Allen 1987, Farley 1993, Blackaby et al. 1994, Cancio, Evans and Maume 1996, Blackaby et al. 2002, Tubergen, Maas and Flap 2007; for Swedish studies, see e.g. le Grand and Szulkin 2002, Arai and Vilhelmsson 2004).

However, residual analysis as an approach to establishing discrimination in the labor market and in different returns on human capital investment has been subject to serious criticism. One line of criticism claims that the residual gap is due to measurement errors of the control variables. Variables such as immigrant status, ethnicity or gender contain less measurement errors than the control variables, e.g., educational attainment, labor force experience, etc; and when some explanatory variables are better measured than others in an equation, the explanatory power of the former will be overestimated (Farkas and Vicknair 1996, Neal and Johnson 1996, Farkas 2003).

¹⁰ Source: employee at the Ombudsman of Discrimination (*Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, DO*).

Another line of criticism claims that if there are systematic differences between the studied groups on the unobserved variables, the unexplained residual may just as well be the result of omitted variable bias (O'Neill 1990, Murnane et al. 1995, Neal and Johnson 1996, Farkas and Vicknair 1996, Farkas 2003, Bollinger 2003, Heckman, Lyon and Todd 2005).

Using the residual approach to studying discrimination between natives and immigrants has been argued to be even more problematic, as there are bound to be even more errors and systematic bias when comparing a native, well monitored, group with immigrants, about whom much less is known when it comes to the quality of their education, work experience and so forth. However, as will be argued in Study III of this dissertation, this criticism of the residual method as an approach to studying discrimination is much exaggerated.

Measuring discrimination by asking employers if they discriminate in interviews or surveys is likely to result in heavily biased findings. It has been argued that as ethnic discrimination is no longer a socially accepted practice, it has become more covert (Wellman 1977). Although some employers admit that they prefer to employ individuals from their own ethnic group (Augustsson 1996, Rogstad 2001), international research suggests that there are discrepancies between what employers believe or say about their employment decisions and their actual hiring decisions (Pager and Quilian 2005).

Studies of perceived discrimination (interviews or surveys with immigrants or minority job applicants) suffer from other reliability problems. Job applicants do not possess full information about the processes they have been involved in, and may either over- or underestimate the prevalence of discrimination.

Laboratory experiments are another possible approach (for Swedish examples, see Ahmed 2010, Rödin and Özcan 2011). However, while they are ideal for identifying and suggesting mechanisms of discrimination, the settings are far from realistic. This raises the question of whether results from these experiments would correspond to actual hiring decisions.

Since conventional methods (statistical analysis of register data, interview studies and laboratory experiments) cannot provide the data necessary for linking ethnic inequality to discrimination, field experiments testing discrimination in natural settings are the most reliable technique available for providing empirical evidence of

discrimination.¹¹ There are two main field experiment techniques used for testing ethnic discrimination: audit testing (also called situation testing) and correspondence testing. In audit testing, hired testers, one from a minority group and one from the majority group, test for discrimination by applying for the same jobs. Typically, testers are recruited in pairs that to some extent resemble each other in physical appearance (age, height, weight, etc.). The testers are carefully trained to perform in similar ways during the job-seeking process. Audit studies test mainly for discrimination in job offers, but can also be designed to account for discrimination during the entire job-seeking process: i) whether the job seekers are encouraged to apply for the job when inquiring about a job opening; ii) whether they are contacted for an interview after applying for the job in writing; iii) whether they are offered a job; iv) and for differences in the wages offered.

The first audit test, testing labor market discrimination, was performed in England in 1968 by sociologist William Daniel.¹² Since then audit tests have been performed in many countries, documenting the existence of discrimination wherever the experiments have been performed. A (non-exhaustive) list of studies and contexts includes England (McIntosh and Smith 1974, Brown and Gay 1985), the United States (Turner et al. 1991, Nunes and Seligman 1999, Pager and Quilian 2005, Pager, Western and Bonikowski 2009) and Canada (Henry and Ginzberg 1985). The International Labour Office has performed several audit tests in Europe: Holland (Bovenkerk, Gras and Ramsoedh 1995), Belgium (Arriijn, Feld and Nayer 1998), Italy (Allasino et al. 2004), Spain (Zegers de Beijl 2000) and Sweden (Taran 2007).

The audit testing technique has been criticized for methodological weaknesses and for overstating discrimination (Heckman 1998). The relevance of and the possibility to match testers to make a similar appearance in all relevant aspects have also been questioned. There is also a risk that the minority applicant, consciously or unconsciously, may be motivated to prove the existence of discrimination by performing worse and thereby biasing the results. Instead, several researchers have favored the correspondence testing technique, which faces fewer

¹¹ For more extensive discussions on the issue of measuring and proving discrimination, see le Grand (1999), the National Research Council (2004) and Nekby (2006).

¹² To my knowledge, the first field experiments tested the ethnic discrimination of Chinese (LaPiere 1934) and Jewish hotel guests (Wax 1948) at hotels in the United States and in Canada. The former applied an audit study technique and the latter a correspondence testing technique.

methodological challenges than audit testing (Riach and Rich 2002, pp. 484f).

The correspondence test technique differs from audit testing in that it does not involve individual testers. Instead, pairs of written applications are sent to job openings. Efforts are made to make the applications similar in all relevant aspects, so that the only thing that varies between the application pairs is the characteristic that is to be tested. As soon as there is an invitation to an interview, the job-seeking process for that particular application is terminated. What is measured is therefore discrimination in job interview offers or call-backs; not in actual job offers.

The correspondence testing technique applied to the labor market was also first performed in England, by Jowell and Prescott-Clarke (1970). Since then, social scientists have tested labor market discrimination using this technique in many national contexts. A (non-exhaustive) list of performed correspondence tests includes Great Britain (Hubbuck and Carter 1980, Brown and Gay 1985), Australia (Riach and Rich 1991, Booth, Leigh and Varganova 2012), the United States (Bertrand and Mullainathan 2004), Canada (Oreopoulos 2011), Sweden (Bursell 2007, Carlsson and Rooth 2007), Norway (Haagen- sen Midtboen and Rogstad 2012) and Greece (Drydakis and Vlassis 2010). A limitation of the correspondence test technique is that it only accounts for discrimination at the initial stage of the job-seeking process. But one of the conclusions of the many audit tests that have been performed is that it is at this stage of the hiring process that about 90 percent of the discrimination takes place – concerning whether or not one is offered a job interview (Riach and Rich 2002, p. 494).¹³ The correspondence test has several advantages over the audit test. The researcher is in complete control of the experiment, he or she can control the content of the applications, and unintended bias in the applications can be avoided by randomly assigning the names to applications each time they are sent to job openings. It is also possible to include a larger variety of occupations as well as those requiring academic degrees, which is difficult when using testers. It is also less expensive and time-consuming; hence, a larger number of employers can be tested. Correspondence testing is in fact a type of randomized experi-

¹³ Since audit tests for practical reasons are only performed in occupations with low qualifications, we do not know whether this also holds for occupations that require academic degrees.

ment, and therefore provides the strongest possible opportunity to draw causal inferences.

Swedish scholars joined the field experiment tradition relatively late – not because of a lack of interest in the technique, but because field experiments have been considered unethical as employers cannot give their informed consent to participate. In fact, the first field experiment project that had its application approved by the ethical vetting board was the project that part of this dissertation has been written within. This application was approved in 2006. Studies I-III of this dissertation are written based on this experimental data.

Although it can convincingly prove discriminatory behavior among employers, criticism has been voiced against the field experiment tradition concerning the fact that one cannot draw conclusions from results found in field experiments regarding real-life effects of discrimination in labor market inequalities. For instance, economists Roland Fryer and Steven Levitt (2003) have argued that the obstacle that discriminatory employers constitute for ethno-racial minorities does not necessarily have important long-term effects. Minorities facing discrimination simply have to apply for more jobs until they meet an unprejudiced employer who hires them. James Heckman (1998) totally rejects the results of field experiments, arguing that discrimination found in field experiments might not mean anything at all concerning real-life inequalities, not even in the marginal sense of having to spend more time in one's job search. The experiment set up with equally merited applicants varying only in ethnicity rarely, if ever, occurs in real life. Therefore, we do not know what the implications of these discriminatory practices are for the labor market careers of real individuals. Second, Heckman argues that sending out applications to random employers in various occupations generates biased results. Real applicants choose neither occupation nor a prospective workplace randomly. On the contrary, the labor market is often ethnically segregated, and sending out applications to firms at which minorities are heavily unrepresented does not correspond to real-life application processes. Study III in this dissertation responds to this criticism at the same time as it responds to the criticism of the residual approach. By linking the experimental data of Study I with register data, showing that the results of the field experiment correspond closely with the analysis of unemployment between "twins" to the fictive individuals of the experiment, it shows that the critique against the field experiment method is also exaggerated.

Responses to Stigma and Discrimination

The first three articles of the dissertation have approached the issue of ethnic discrimination with an experimental and quantitative approach. In the final paper, I switch gears methodologically to approach another important theme in the study of ethnic inequality and exclusion – how individuals from immigrant groups *respond* to stigma, xenophobia and discrimination. In doing so, I shift focus from proven to perceived discrimination. I also tap into the growing field of research focusing on individual-level strategies that immigrants or ethnic minorities use to minimize the negative effects of perceived xenophobic and discriminatory incidents (e.g. Essed 1991, Feagin 1991, Lamont 2000, Lamont, Morning and Mooney 2002, Lamont and Fleming 2005, Lamont and Mizrachi 2012b and the contributions therein).

What strategies individuals choose in their responses to xenophobic and discriminatory incidents, and how the responses are performed, mediate the incidents' effect and influence how social exclusion occurs (Lamont and Mizrachi 2012a). To exemplify, Lamont and Fleming (2005) found that members of the African American elite favored education and hard work as an antiracism strategy, while African American workers favored coping with racism through religious faith. This example indicates not only that there may be systematic social class differences in the choice of strategies, but also that strategies are influenced by diverging assessments of society's structure of opportunities. The strategy of upward socioeconomic mobility rests on the assumption that upward mobility is possible, even for members of stigmatized groups. Through working twice as hard and always performing better than individuals from non-stigmatized groups, upward mobility is believed to be possible. Xenophobia and racism are thus seen as an obstacle that can be overcome. Religious faith, on the other hand, is not a mobility strategy. It is only used to cope with the status quo by drawing strength from knowing that we are all equal before God. This strategy can be combined with mobility strategies but can also be used by people who cannot, or do not, think that they can be socioeconomically (upwardly) mobile.

In Study IV, I analyze name change as a destigmatization strategy. I use the stigma concept to emphasize another aspect of unequal treatment that concerns social misrecognition. On top of the fact that people's life chances are circumscribed by discrimination, experiences of repeated xenophobic incidents and discrimination may rub off on

individuals and affect their wellbeing. Drawing on Link and Phelan (2001), I understand stigma as a process of i) labeling, ii) stereotyping, iii) “us and them” categorization, and iv) status loss and discrimination that can only take place if v) there are significant power differentials between the stigmatizers and the stigmatized. I draw on this definition as it makes explicit the components of the stigmatization process. In my view, however, it is not complete as it does not add anything beyond the concept of “xenophobia” combined with that of “ethnic discrimination” as practiced by dominant groups against subordinate groups. It lacks one of the key components of Goffman’s (1963, p. 3) stigma concept: that stigma is not only “deeply discrediting”, but also reduces the individual from a “whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one”. In other words, stigma has to be felt and it has to hurt. If not, the person can hardly be defined as stigmatized. Being stigmatized means not only perceiving xenophobia and discrimination; it involves feeling misrecognized as a human being. As I will discuss in Study IV, social recognition – being recognized as a human being – is a theme that is as prevalent as labor market discrimination when the respondents explain why they changed their Middle Eastern names to more neutral or Swedish-sounding ones.

In Study IV, I describe name change as a destigmatization strategy. I define “responses to stigma” as the rhetorical or strategic tools employed by members of stigmatized groups to cope with perceived exclusion (Lamont and Mizrahi 2012a). Strategies to combat stigma, xenophobia and discrimination range from confrontational strategies (e.g. trying to discuss the issue with the insulting or discriminatory person, suing him or her, or verbally returning the insult) to conflict deflation (e.g. ignoring the incident to preserve emotional energy, or adopting strategic silence). More long-term strategies include coping with racism and discrimination through religious faith (“We are all equal in God’s eyes”) or the use of humor. Another strategy is to systematically avoid situations in which xenophobic and discriminatory incidents are likely to occur. Examples of such avoidance strategies include climbing up the socioeconomic ladder through education and hard work. The idea is that a strong position in the labor market makes you less vulnerable. Other examples include avoiding social interaction with the majority by living in areas populated by ethnic minorities, working at workplaces dominated by ethnic minorities, and marrying and choosing friends from ethnic minorities (see Fleming, Lamont and Welburn 2012 for a longer discussion of different

strategies). Another option is to challenge xenophobic or racist notions through what have been called “universalizing” strategies (e.g. Lamont, Morning and Mooney 2002). These include celebrating racial mixture, a common antiracism strategy in Brazil (Silva and Reis 2012), or referring to membership in the human race (see, for instance, the interview study with North African men in France by Lamont et al. 2002). Finally, assimilating strategies, or passing strategies like religious conversion or name change, are employed to avoid being categorized as a member of the stigmatized group.

The national context can be assumed to play into destigmatization and antidiscrimination strategies in a number of ways. Societal structure affects the destigmatization strategies available; dominant ideologies (Lamont and Thévenot 2000) and national myths (Bouchard 2009) affect cultural repertoires.

Ordinary people’s responses to discrimination and social exclusion in the labor market have received little academic attention in Sweden. There are, however, a number of studies on entrepreneurship as an employment strategy. In a survey by Statistics Sweden, immigrants were overrepresented among those who chose entrepreneurship as a way out of unemployment. These findings are confirmed in several qualitative studies, which also emphasize that perceptions of discrimination have been a factor in immigrant entrepreneurship, especially for Middle Eastern entrepreneurs (e.g. Pripp 2001, Abbasian 2004, Ljungar 2007). Andersson Joona (2009) shows that although entrepreneurship may be an employment strategy, it is not a way out of poverty. Immigrant entrepreneurs, especially non-Western immigrants, have much lower incomes than native-born entrepreneurs. Arai and Skogman Thoursie (2009) suggest that name change is an employment/anti-discrimination strategy, as they find a positive earnings effect of immigrant name change already a year after the name change. Study IV of this dissertation contributes to this field by drawing on interviews with a sample of the same name changers as in Arai and Skogman Thoursie’s study.

Methodological Approach

The more fundamental problem the four studies revolve around is ethnic labor market inequality. While many scholars would have chosen to ask *why* there is ethnic labor market inequality, I have primarily chosen to ask *how* ethnic inequality in the labor market happens. In

her Presidential Address to the American Sociological Association, Barbara Reskin (2003) argues that answering the “how” question is more important when trying to identify social mechanisms than asking “why”. Accordingly, Reskin defines social mechanisms as “specific processes that link individuals’ ascriptive characteristics to [e.g. workplace] outcomes.” Mechanisms should be observable (as opposed to unobservable motives) and specify the practices whose presence and implementation influence, for instance, the level of inequality within a work setting (Reskin 2003, p. 2). While, in my view, this definition of mechanisms is a bit narrow, I share Reskin’s view that it is important to ask not only *why* but also *how* (for a typology of different definitions of social mechanisms, see Gross 2009).

The field experiment (Studies I-III), with its focus on the causality chain, identifies the objective existence of discriminatory hiring practices. The experiment establishes that Swedish employers discriminate, and combined with register data, Study III explores whether the discrimination found in the experiments has lasting effects on inequality in wages and employment. Jointly, these studies illustrate *how* labor market inequality between groups emerges and persists, linking ethnicity with labor market inequality through employer discrimination.

Focusing on *how* of course does not imply that *why* is not an important question (and *how* and *why* are often interrelated). Max Weber argued already in *Economy and Society* (1983, pp. 3f [1922]) that social scientists should pay serious attention to the analysis of causality as well as to the interpretation of subjective meaning, in order to grasp the complexity of culture and society. In his view, social scientists should try to understand social action in order to arrive at causal explanation. Later generations of sociologists have continued to try to create a synthetic link between the micro and macro levels (e.g. Alexander and Giesen 1987, Gerstein 1987, Alexander 1988, Coleman 1990). More recent discussions have focused on social mechanisms as the way forward in the linkage of micro and macro (e.g. Hedström and Swedberg 1998, Tilly 2001, Reskin 2003, Stinchcombe 2005, Gross 2009).

In Paper IV of this dissertation, I have tried to follow Weber’s call to search for the subjective meaning behind certain actions. Methodologically speaking, this epistemological agenda requires both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Study IV builds upon the finding of Arai and Skogman Thoursie (2009) that foreign-named surname changers attain an earnings increase shortly after they change their

names. In terms of a causal relationship, the authors speculate that name change affects earnings through an assimilation reward. While this explanation is plausible it remains speculative, as it is obviously not possible to determine the intentions or motives behind employers' actions or employees'/job applicants' actions by drawing on register data on individual characteristics. The question of Study IV is: Why is a surname change followed by increased earnings?

By analyzing the subjective experiences of some of the individuals in Arai and Skogman Thoursie's data, the purpose of Study IV was to understand how such seemingly strong ethnic boundaries as those between native "Swedes" and immigrants with a background in the Middle East could be so easily crossed or blurred. Or, like an American colleague once asked me concerning the study: "How come the Swedes let the name changers off the hook so easily?" Thus, the objective was to provide a possible explanation for why a change of a surname could have such effects, not to explain all the individual surname changes.

Study IV thus relies on the subjective experiences of individual name changers. As experience influence individuals' worldviews, they also influence individual actions in the real world. Quoting the famous *Thomas Theorem* (1928, p. 571f): "It is not important whether or not the interpretation is correct – if men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences." Accordingly, I was interested in the name changers' accounts: how they reasoned concerning their name change, and how they experienced the world going by their new name compared with going by their old name. If anyone can inform us of how name change can be an efficient destigmatization strategy, it is those who have lived through the whole process. The respondents have, in a sense, experimented with social identity in a struggle for social recognition or a better position on the labor market. Regardless of whether some of them have consciously or subconsciously exaggerated or downplayed some parts of their experience in the accounts, be it the discrimination they experienced prior to the name change or the positive effects afterwards, their accounts together provide a nuanced picture of experiences of exclusion and inclusion. Through a (basic) document analysis of the applications the 45 interviewees had sent to PRV (*Patent och Registeringsverket*: the "Swedish Patent and Registration Office"), the institution that decides on and regulates name change in Sweden, it was confirmed that they had stated similar reasons as those in the interviews at the time of the name change. And, based on the study by Arai and Skogman Thoursie (2009), we know

that for a significant number of people at least their economic integration increased when they had changed their name.

The range and mix of methods I have employed – field experiments, statistical analysis of register data and semi-structured interviews – situate the dissertation within the mixed methods approach to social science (e.g. Tashakkori and Teddlie 1998; 2011, Creswell 1998; 2003, Creswell and Plano Clark 2007, Small 2011). Studies III and IV also include mixed methods or mixed techniques in their design. Study III combines field experiment data and register data. Although the techniques used to collect experimental data and to analyze register data remain within the quantitative paradigm, it is a mixed methods study in that it combines two completely different types of data (Small 2011). To my knowledge this is also the first study to combine the residual approach with the field experiment technique. Study IV is a sequential mixed-method study as it draws on qualitative data (interviews and the respondents' original name change applications) and builds and expands upon Arai and Skogman Thoursie's (2009) quantitative study. The respondents are a subsample of the population in Arai and Skogman Thoursie's study, so the two studies are connected by design. Thus, the mixing in this dissertation also concerns the data, not the analysis.

Scholars who combine different kinds of data either do so with the purpose of i) confirming (triangulating) – i.e. investigating whether the results from two different kinds of data verify each other, or ii) complementing results from two types of data with each other. In the former case the two types of data should measure the same phenomenon, while with the latter design the objective is to mutually compensate for the weakness of one type of data with the strength of the other (Small 2011).

In both Studies III and IV the designs have been complementary. In Study III, the main objective is to evaluate methodological criticism directed at the field experiment tradition and the residual analysis technique (applied to the problem of ethnic discrimination). Thus, the explicit purpose of combining these two techniques was to evaluate whether they could mutually compensate for the weakness of the other technique. Study IV is complimentary in design, in the sense that it complements Arai and Skogman Thoursie's quantitative study with an explanation of how surname change can be an efficient destigmatization strategy, an explanation that could not be directly inferred from the quantitative study alone. Simultaneously, the quantitative study

complements Study IV by providing solid empirical evidence for the existence of a wage reward for surname change.

Thus, the present dissertation takes seriously the call to let the question rule the choice of method, rather than to let the preferred method govern the question posed. However, I diverge from the view that many mixed methods or mixed models scholars seem to embrace, in that I do not agree that every study needs to include several levels of analysis in the research design, i.e. that each study in its design should have a quantitative and a qualitative component. Again, it depends on the research question. I do, however, believe there is a great deal to gain by drawing on the knowledge already produced by scholars using other methods than the one you yourself prefer. Thus, I share Morgan's (2007) view that an interesting avenue is to explore the potential of working back and forth between the kinds of knowledge that have already been produced under the separate banners of quantitative and qualitative research: "If we are truth seekers, then there should not be a quantitative and a qualitative truth" (Liebersohn 1992, p. 3).

Outline of Studies

Study I

In the first study of this dissertation, I present empirical evidence of the existence of ethnic discrimination in the Swedish labor market, drawing on results from a correspondence test. Pairs of equally merited applications, one with a Swedish-sounding name and one that sounds either Arabic or African (traditional, non-Muslim), were sent to employers advertising vacant positions. Keeping all other characteristics on the résumés equal, I have measured ethnic discrimination in employer call-backs. The applications were sent to approximately 1,700 employers in 16 occupations. The occupations were chosen to cover all segments of the Swedish labor market, including jobs in the public as well as the private sector. The occupations have varying degrees of male, female, native and immigrant workforce representation, and require different levels of education. The experiment was performed from March 2006 to December 2007.

The overall result of the experiment was that Swedish-named applicants were called back twice as often as foreign-named applicants with equal merits. The relative call-back rate differed substantially

between the occupations, but statistically significant discrimination was found in 14 of the 16 occupations.

Through statistical analysis on the collected data combined with occupational data from Statistics Sweden, the findings also indicate that employers in male occupations practice gender compensation favoring female-named applicants while employers in female occupations practice both ethnic and gender compensation, favoring particularly foreign-named men.

Study II

The second study is an extension of Study I. Study I provided evidence of ethnic discrimination in the Swedish labor market. In Study II, we move on to measure the strength of employer stereotypes, an issue that has not previously been tested with a field experiment approach. We also continue to study gender differences in ethnic discrimination by using pairs of either male or female applicants.

The experiment of Study II consists of two stages. In the first stage, we analyze data from five of the 16 occupations from Study I and focus on the comparison between Arabic- and Swedish-named applicants only. In Stage 1, the merits in résumés sent to employers are of equal quality. Stage 2 consists of applications for the same five occupations, and only from pairs of Arabic- and Swedish-named applicants. These applications resemble the applications from Stage 1, with one important exception. By enhancing the Arabic-named CVs with one to three years of additional work experience, we test whether Arabic-named applicants can compensate for employer stereotypes through higher qualifications than Swedish-named applicants.

Comparing our findings from Stages 1 and 2, we find that employer stereotypes persist for Arabic-named male applicants, but that the callback gap for Arabic-named women disappears when the merits are enhanced. Thus, Arabic-named women can compensate for employer stereotypes if they have higher qualifications than the Swedish-named female applicants, but Arabic-named male applicants cannot. We interpret our findings as weaker stereotypes toward Arabic women than toward Arabic men. We explain our findings by drawing primarily on a social psychological study by Eagly and Kite (1987), who showed that national stereotypes are driven by stereotypes about men. Stereotypes of women by nationality resemble the stereotypes of men from the same nationality, but they also resemble a more universal female stereotype. Thus, when a stereotype about a

nationality or ethnic group is negative, the male stereotype is more resistant to revision than the female one is.

Study III

The third study is an extension of Studies I and II, which provided evidence i) of ethnic discrimination in the Swedish labor market and ii) that discrimination against Arabic-named men is more intense than that against Arabic-named women. In Study III, we link the results from Studies I and II to the labor market outcomes of real-life individuals to investigate whether the findings of widespread discrimination against Arabic-/African-named applicants and the gendered aspects of ethnic discrimination correspond with real-life labor market gaps. This is an important methodological contribution, as such a link would evaluate two methodological criticisms that have been directed at field experiments and the residual analysis of register data. Critics of the field experiment technique have argued that the discrimination found in experiments might not correspond to what happens in real job-search situations. Thus, we do not know if the discrimination found in the experiments has any real-life effects on labor market inequality.

The criticism against the residual technique argues that results from survey and register data cannot be used to make inferences about ethnic or other types of discrimination, as the unexplained gap may also be the result of omitted variable bias or measurement errors of the control variables.

In Study III, we shed new light on these important questions by linking register data with field experiment data. With the correspondence test as a starting point, we use propensity score matching to identify real-life "twins" of the fictive individuals of the correspondence test, i.e. individuals with equivalent characteristics. We thereafter analyze the labor market outcomes of the "twins" and compare these with the results of the correspondence test. Since the register data results largely do correspond to those of the correspondence test we argue that we can, with much more assurance than before, draw conclusions about discrimination based on results from register data. Simultaneously, this conformity strengthens claims of real-world effects of field experiment results.

Study IV

The fourth study of this dissertation, “Surname change and destigmatization among Middle Eastern immigrants in Sweden”, is a contribution to the emerging literature on responses to stigma and discrimination. I study surname change as a response to perceived stigma and discrimination, drawing on a previous study by Arai and Skogman Thoursie (2009). They found that immigrants in Sweden who changed their surnames during the 1990s had a larger increase in yearly earnings compared to immigrants with similar characteristics who had not (yet) changed their name.¹⁴ The findings are interpreted as an indicator of labor market discrimination. The aim of the study is to identify the mechanisms behind surname change as a response to stigma and discrimination. The study is based on interviews with a sample of 45 individuals included in Arai and Skogman Thoursie’s data set on their experiences with their original name, on their thoughts about the name change and on their experiences since the name change. By linking the macro level findings of Arai and Skogman Thoursie’s study with a description of individual-level motives, I suggest how a surname change can be a destigmatization strategy resulting in increased earnings. By changing name (many respondents also made changes to their first name) the respondents are able to pass as Swedish in certain contexts, such as job applications and in interaction with officials over the telephone. In the contexts in which passing as a Swede is not possible for a Middle Eastern-looking individual, the respondents experience an assimilation reward for signaling attachment to Sweden by choosing a Swedish/neutral name.

The study speaks to several related themes in the literature on responses to stigma and discrimination. For example, the study illustrates how a specific national context affects individual strategies by showing how the national legislation on name change both enables and constrains the opportunities for assimilation. The assimilation rewards, or success of the name change, also point to a somewhat surprising permeability or negotiability of the ethnic boundaries between Middle Eastern origin and Swedishness. This is true not only in the sense that name change seems to be accepted by the name

¹⁴ The control group consisted of individuals who had not yet changed their name but were to do so at a later point in time. In this way, the authors meet the argument that there could be systematic differences between the name changers and the control group. For instance, they avoid the argument that the name changers are more career-oriented than individuals who do not change their name.

changer's in-group (family and friends) but also in how it is accepted by the surrounding society. This indicates that the "us and them" boundary is permeable. Such negotiable ethnic identity would be impossible or even inconceivable in other national contexts.

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