Crisis Politics in Contemporary Nordic Film Culture: Representing Race and Ethnicity in a Transforming Europe

Katie Louise Moffat

Department of Literature and Languages
University of Stirling

For Lorna, Ray and Joan

Acknowledgements

I hereby declare that this thesis has been composed by myself and embodies the work done by me unless explicitly stated otherwise. I also declare that this work has not been previously included in any other thesis.

November 2018   Kate Moffat

Abstract

Identity politics in the Nordic region, that is, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Norway, is in crisis. While these five small nations have garnered a reputation for their perceived exceptionalism, liberal progressiveness and strong welfare-orientated agendas, over the last thirty years, immigration into the Nordic region has increased significantly, and the political and cultural debates over ethnicity and belonging have become more intensely polarised. However, the film cultures of these five small nations have responded to these developments in complex and multifaceted ways giving rise to a broad calibre of film texts that both challenge and reinforce dominant perceptions of national identity.

This thesis attempts to provide some insight into how wider political and ideological shifts have influenced onscreen representations of ethnicity and race over the last three decades. It does so by exploring a range of genres including comedy, social realism, art-house and documentary cinema using close textual and thematic analysis to unearth a region wrestling with the influences of globalisation. The thesis also situates this analysis in relation to film policies relevant to each respective national Nordic film institute, all of whom play an essential role in dictating the direction of Nordic film and media culture.

Consequently, this research shows that representations of ethnic identity are shaped by ethnocentric perceptions of Nordic whiteness where 'ethnic Nordic' characters typically turn the experiences and perspectives of ethnic minorities into their own. However, it also demonstrates how a diversification of production channels, media policy directives and an emerging generation of filmmakers are challenging fixed perceptions of ethnic and racial identities and their relationships with conventional notions of 'Nordicness.' These contributions enhance the current scholarship on Nordic film culture by foregrounding the politics of race and ethnicity and further developing the theoretical argument for locating Nordic cinema in the global, transnational context.

Contents

List of Figures

Introduction

This thesis explores the representation of immigrants and ethnic minorities in contemporary Nordic film culture. Predominately, this covers the films of Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Iceland over a thirty-year period between the late 1980s to the present day. Its main line of argument claims that ethnic Otherness helps to facilitate, restore, and ultimately reinforce a white 'ethnic Nordic' perspective. Specifically, focusing on close textual and thematic readings of film texts, I argue that ethnic Others are used to emphasise wider societal crises in ways that reflect back on the contested and contradictory identity politics of the Nordic welfare states, where both narratives of collective ethnic homogeneity and multicultural tolerance exist simultaneously. To these ends, the general thrust of the thesis also aims to demonstrate how representations of ethnicity in Nordic cinema are shaped and influenced by broader economic and sociological change particularly since the gradual introduction of neoliberal policies from the 1980s onwards, which has broadly resulted in 'competitive' and 'individualist' attitudes towards the welfare state. Such socio-economic developments have challenged the fundamental egalitarian ethos of the state as a progressive force for good.

I contend that these films position immigrant characters in ways that draw out inconsistencies and tensions between both the collective and the individualist values that are central to contemporary Nordic nation-building rhetoric. In many examples explored here, I argue that the Nordic countries often project these contradictions onto migrant characters and attempt to 'resolve' perceived problems of belonging by reinforcing dominant ideas specific to imagined egalitarian community values. These are critical concerns because the subjects of borders, borderlessness and belonging have

become key flashpoints in the contemporary Nordic region.[1] For example, it is also imperative that we examine these representations in the context of rising far-right activity across the Nordic region, where welfare state protectionism, that is, denying state provisions and benefits to outsiders, has become a staple mantra not only for far-right populists but also in mainstream political discourse, especially since the 2015 refugee crisis. Particularly over the last two decades, attitudes towards immigration have also become a principal feature of the Nordic mediascape, polarising policy and public opinion across the five countries and calling into question the 'openness' of these affluent and typically highly regarded welfare societies.

Given these developments, as aforementioned, I claim the films discussed in this thesis are underpinned by an overarching theme of white identity crisis which is used to structure character and plot. I will demonstrate that while these films are broad in scope and genre, themes of crisis and ethnic Otherness are largely visually and narratively expressed as interchangeable. Loftsdóttir and Jensen (2014), who identify the theme of crisis in the Nordic region as broadly related to the power dynamics of welfare rhetoric, state that prioritising the theme of crisis across a wide range of contexts 'can determine what identities and interests are at stake' (2014: 3). This statement, and their study at large, demonstrates how we can explore the theme of crisis in cinema and use it to determine how ethnic identities are constructed ideologically and in ways that prioritise a crisis of identity in one group above another.

We can ask where the crisis is located in these texts and around whom, and how does crisis structure the relationship between these characters and narrative themes. As many of these case studies are also self-conscious in their politics, by unpacking the underlying themes and ideological leanings, I also aim to show how crisis can be used as a rhetorical

---

[1] The Brexit vote in June 2016, the election of Donald Trump and ongoing debates over refugee re-settlement in affluent European nations, particularly under Giuseppe Conte and Matteo Salvini's 2018 right-wing coalition in Italy, have catapulted nationalism and its associated themes of borders, boundaries, multiculturalism, and immigration into the global spotlight.

device to manufacture division between ethnic groups, intentionally or otherwise, through particular stylistic choices and narrative subjects. In doing so, I demonstrate how the crisis narratives in these texts emerge as part of a complex relay between filmmakers, funding systems, national politics, and economics.

Since cinema was introduced in the Nordic region at the end of the nineteenth century, themes of race and ethnicity have proven widespread across many genres and have evolved in many complex and contradictory ways. Complicating matters is the fact that immigration has occurred disproportionately across the region (Horsti 2008: 275). Similarly, the formation of each respective country's welfare states has also occurred at different times and in different ways. However, there is evidence to suggest that these countries maintain a strong sense of regional identity that is supported by both cultural and governmental organisations. In order to bring the discussion together, we must first acknowledge the globalisation of the Nordic region's image and identity where recent developments have seen Nordic popular culture reach transnational audiences.

Scandimania: The Global Rise of Nordic Pop Culture

Over the last two decades, the Nordic region has experienced a cultural revolution. Galvanized by the global literary success of Nordic noir, Nordic culture has taken the world by storm. From cuisine to knitted jumpers, interior design and health and well-being, this small, affluent cluster of countries in Northern Europe have undergone a significant re-brand as international interest in the region has grown exponentially. Indeed, the global appetite for the 'uniqueness' of Nordic culture, along with the demands made to satisfy it, are reflected in a recent plethora of 'lifestyle philosophy' and self-help books emanating from the region. These include *Lagom: The Swedish Art of Balanced Living* (Dunne 2017), Meik Wiking's *The Little Book of Hygge: The Danish Way to Live Well* (2016), Marie Tourell Søderberg's *Hygge: The Danish Art of Happiness* (2016) and, most recently, Katja Pantzar's *The Finnish Way: Finding Courage, Wellness, and Happiness Through the Power of Sisu* (2018). All published in English and aimed at an international

market, these works propagate cultural terminology with specific ideological connections. The Swedish 'lagom' is a word that roughly translates as meaning 'just enough', connoting moderation, the Danish[2] term 'hygge' represents contentment or 'cosiness', and the Finnish 'sisu' is a term that encapsulates a certain stoic resilience or courage of the national character. The marketization of these culturally constructed concepts speaks to an increasing preoccupation with the Nordic region as a place of socio-cultural fulfilment, aspiration and authenticity.

Discussing the agency of the so-called 'Nordic brandscape' in the context of this recent resurgence, Andersen et al. (2019: 215) identify two key processes through which 'Nordic' ideas, values and identities are communicated through branding. According to their analysis, Nordic branding manifests as something they call 'place branding', which is where advertisers and agencies work to build a coherent sense of Nordic geographical identity. The second way that Nordic branding finds expression is through strategies that emphasise how the Nordic label imparts a specific measure of quality and value onto a product or service (2019: 215). A wide variety of agencies and official bodies have a vested interest in these branding strategies including the geo-cultural body known as the Nordic Council, who, as we shall see, plays a significant role shaping the image of the region on an international level. Indeed, as well as tapping into consumer markets, the aim of this branding has also been to project a specific kind of identity, particularly one that is conducive to the notions of Nordic exceptionalism. Indeed, Andersen et al. state that 'the myth market of Nordic branding is also a translation of Nordic exceptionalism: the superior values of the Nordic region (land, culture, people, and traditions)' (2019: 234). This is certainly an aspect reflected in the self-help literature outlined above. The ideological roots of this exceptionalism are something we shall return to later. The factors differentiating these ideas and traditions as authentically 'Nordic' can be traced back to the region's prominent literary traditions and, crucially, its connection with the landscape.

---

[2] The word also exists in Norwegian.

Themes related to nature and the natural environment feature prominently as part of the Nordic countries' positive nation-building rhetoric. Classic literary traditions of the nineteenth century helped to popularise a convergence between rural communal values and the physical landscapes on which people depended. As a cultural-philosophical doctrine, nature (and belonging in nature) has helped to foster and reinforce a perceived connectedness between these landscapes and a markedly 'ethnically Nordic' sense of cultural authenticity. The cinemas of the Nordic countries have a long-established tradition for reflecting these Imagined Arcadian communities, especially in the early half of the twentieth century when it became popular for filmmakers to mine classic literary works that helped to create links between national patriotism and romanticised visions of the countryside. The fact that nature has become a distinct hallmark of Nordic identity is an important consideration here as it is often used to define established 'norms of belonging' against which minorities are made visible or indeed invisible (Kääpä 2014: 159). Part of my argument here is that the Nordic film institutes are also actively engaged with their own form of brand identity that, similarly, equates Nordicness with artistic innovation, strong moral principles, and the aforementioned authenticity of 'belonging to nature.' This, in my investigation, has impacted the way ethnic diversity has found expression onscreen.

According to Woolridge, this cultural re-branding renaissance has emerged through the aid of new technologies, but also through a self-conscious repositioning of each country by their respective governments in line with global competitiveness. He describes how the Nordic countries were traditionally perceived as closed societies that were 'dominated by a single political orthodoxy (social democracy) and by a narrow definition of national identity (say, Swedishness or Finnishness)' and that this is now effectively 'being shaken up by powerful forces such as globalisation and immigration' (Woolridge 2013: 10).

Indeed, the perceived 'openness', accessibility and exceptionalism of the Nordic region has come under the spotlight partly due to the increasing international presence, popularity, and influence of Nordic culture abroad. This is particularly true in the

context of Nordic media culture.[3] Indeed, in a rather contradictory sense, despite assertions of contentment, themes of discontent, murder, civil unrest, and racism are undeniably pervasive across other parts of the Nordic cultural landscape, namely in the aforementioned phenomenon commonly referred to as Nordic noir or 'Scandi noir', a now globally renowned brand of crime fiction spanning literature, film and television. Such contrarian political topics were pioneered by literary staples such as Maj Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö's gritty self-reflexive *Martin Beck* novels of the 1960s and 70s, Stieg Larsson's *Millennium Trilogy* and Henning Mankell's *Wallander* series, which count among the many influences on the pan-global success of contemporary Nordic film and TV.

Additionally, shows like *Forbrydelsen/The Killing* (2007-2012) and *Broen/Bron/The Bridge* (2011- 2018) have helped to foster the region's now celebrated reputation for incisive, political and, above all, 'quality' drama. *The Bridge*[4] and other offerings such as the *Johan Falk* franchise (1999-2015), Icelandic series *Ófærð/Trapped* (2015-), Danish political drama *Borgen* (2010-2013), enormously popular teen drama *Skam/Shame* (2015-2017) and Swedish thriller *Blå ögon/Blue Eyes* (2014-2015) appear, on the surface, to be explicitly concerned with contemporary immigrant politics. However, as we shall see, despite appearing regularly in highly politicised contexts, immigrant characters typically occupy secondary or indeed, in some cases, deceptively redundant roles, where their inclusion is typically only part of a plot device (Kääpä and Moffat 2018: 150-152). Consequently, film and media culture provide some of the most effective ways to communicate and explore contemporary issues like immigration and notions of Otherness.

---

[3] Evidence for this can be found in international articles, especially in the UK, where writers for *The Guardian* like Aisha Gani (2016) have used examples like *Blå ögon/Blue Eyes* (2014-2015) to frame and explore the politics of anti-immigrant populism and the rise of the far-right in Sweden.

[4] Celebrated Danish-Jewish actor Kim Bodnia known internationally for his former starring role in *The Bridge* recently revealed that rising anti-Semitism in Sweden was one of the reasons that led to his early departure from the show in 2013. See Bangsgaard (2016) for more information.

However, tectonic shifts unfolding in this era of late capitalist globalisation, particularly those associated with migration, border politics and transnational mobility, present many challenges for film scholars. The film and media cultures of the five small Nordic nations with their complex and varied histories and contradictory strands of pop culture embody many of these challenges. Although the Nordic crime fiction genre—both in its literary and televised forms—has become a cult phenomenon across the globe attracting critical acclaim and spawning re-makes in the UK and the US, I choose to focus primarily on cinema in this thesis. This is because the Nordic welfare states have long recognised the role of cinema as a tool for promoting and enshrining cultural identity. This is something I shall return to in chapter one where I explore the film policies of the five respective Nordic film industries, discussing both divergent and convergent approaches to framing identity politics onscreen.

Despite this cinematic focus, however, contemporary Nordic cinema and television are often discussed interchangeably especially, as Koskinen highlights, because the collaboration between these two mediums has become an increasingly significant strategy for promoting film and television culture abroad (2016: 199-224). Consequently, I do not seek to exclude television entirely, but rather explore the increasing interrelations between these modes of address as part of my focus on Nordic culture. This involves acknowledging television as part of the more recent developments in Nordic media culture. For example, I elaborate on the blurring of television and cinema in chapter five where I look at how the documentary film has transitioned and borrowed from conventions and genres typically associated with serial television dramas, specifically in this case, Nordic noir. Scholarship addressing the growth and transformation of Nordic film and media has also expanded. Much of this literature reflects a growing interest in the transnational direction of both the Nordic film industries and the onscreen narrative themes.

These works include Andrew Nestingen and Trevor Elkington's *Transnational Cinema in a Global North: Nordic Cinema in Transition* (2005), Pietari Kääpä and Tommy Gustafsson's *Nordic Genre Film: Small Nation Film Cultures in a Global Marketplace* (2015),

Pietari Kääpä's *Ecology and Contemporary Nordic Cinemas* (2014), C. Claire Thomson's *Northern Constellations: New Readings in Nordic Cinema* (2006), Andrew Nestingen's *Crime and Fantasy in Scandinavia* (2008) and, more recently, Mette Hjort and Ursula Lindqvist's edited collection *A Companion to Nordic Cinema* (2016) which includes an extensive analysis of industry practices and policy directives. However, although the theme of immigration appears in several chapters of these works, there has yet to be a volume dedicated exclusively to a regional overview of contemporary immigrant politics in Nordic cinema. With its explicit interest in identity politics and the fluidity of Nordic borders, this thesis is designed to complement these texts, particularly Tommy Gustafsson's *Masculinity in the Golden Age of Swedish Cinema* (2014), *The Historical Dictionary of Scandinavian Cinema* by Sundholm, et al. (2012) and Rochelle Wright's *The Visible Wall: Jews and Other Ethnic Minorities in Swedish Cinema* (1998) which all cover similar issues of immigrant representations particularly throughout the twentieth century. Additionally, this thesis shares similar thematic insights to recent scholarly explorations like Julianne Q. M. Yang's PhD thesis *Screening Privilege: Global Injustice and Responsibility in 21st-Century Scandinavian Film and Media* (University of Oslo 2018) which provides a critical commentary on the politics of Scandinavian egalitarianism in a broader global context.

As aforementioned, other works such as and Kristin Loftsdóttir and Lars Jensen's *Crisis in the Nordic Nations and Beyond: At the Intersection of Environment, Finance and Multiculturalism* (2014) take a broader approach to the globalisation of the Nordic region by positioning the theme of crisis as central to understanding the tensions emerging in a rapidly globalising Nordic landscape. Their study helps to ground this thesis in its contemporary context particularly by undermining the image of utopian exceptionalism often associated with the Nordic region and by drawing out the realities of crisis politics mirrored in many of the populist dramas and literary works described above. To fully contemplate these developments, we must explore how the position of these small national film cultures has shifted in recent decades as they have become ever more entangled with the forces of global politics.

The Politics of Small Nation Cinemas

The role of nationhood in film studies continues to be a focal point for scholars as national identity is still used to determine cultural impact and meaning on many different textual and paratextual levels. The film cultures of the five Nordic countries are classified as what Hjort and Petrie term 'small nation cinemas' (2007). In their analysis, they establish a set of criteria for identifying and distinguishing this type of cinema. These films typically emerge from countries with small population sizes that are marked by a distinct small language and operate within limited domestic markets (Hjort and Petrie 2007: 15). Acknowledging the small nation context of the five Nordic film industries is an essential part of this study. It allows us to situate the discussion both regarding the textual and industrial implications of 'smallness' and the limitations that necessitate the conditions of these film cultures and their reliance on wider support mechanisms. More specifically, the key to understanding the relevance of small nation cinemas in a Nordic context stems from analysing the role the five nation-states play in providing financial support through the respective national film institutes and, along with it, a degree of cultural legitimacy. It is without doubt that these support mechanisms have shaped the cultural, political and economic development of these film cultures.

However, roughly over the last thirty years, the theme of national identity as a contested concept both on and off-screen has also become a critical area of inquiry. Terms like 'hybridity' and 'transnationalism' have become part of an expanding vocabulary in film studies aimed at challenging fixed ideas about national cinema. The shift towards the transnational in film scholarship considers a broad range of technological, political and economic factors and the concept has arisen in conjunction with a flurry of other interrelated terms like 'migrant and diasporic cinema' (see Berghahn and Sternberg 2010: 12-49) that broadly address the impact of globalisation on cinema culture. Such concepts aim to capture the response of filmmakers seeking to explore the realities of globalisation from a multitude of textual, industrial and economic perspectives. Andrew Higson's

seminal article 'The Concept of National Cinema' (1989)[5] was one of the first academic works to push these ideas by offering a critical appraisal of national cinema as a homogenous and monolithic conception or expression of collective identity. Higson's article explores the filmmaking process by breaking down the different stages of film development with a view to challenging the notion that cinema can be contained within borders of any kind.

Specifically, Higson identifies the production, distribution and exhibition strategies involved, arguing that these processes can no longer be contained within singular nation states. To these ends, approaching any film culture from a 'national perspective' disregards the ideological dynamics at work within the construction of the nation-state as a concept (1989: 42-46). As well as neglecting the influence of different cultures and film practices stretching across borders, the concept of national cinema presupposes a fixed sense of identity against which everything else is defined. By re-thinking the boundaries of national cinema, Higson became one of the first film scholars to introduce the notion of transnationalism. Although he does not elaborate on the term in detail, Higson refers to the phrase 'leaky borders' (2000: 67) which he uses to conceptualise the global reach of cinema as an industry and an art form[6].

Since these initial developments, the concept of transnational cinema has become an evolving field within the discipline of film studies with collections like Elizabeth Ezra and Terry Rowden's *Transnational Cinema: The Film Reader* (2006), a volume of fourteen essays designed to introduce, interrogate and develop the concept through a series of cultural and technological frameworks. As transnational cinema has developed to account for these broad and often abstract ideas, the concept has become an umbrella term, playing host to numerous interpretations and uses.

Consequently, transnationalism is a slippery concept and many debates in the field centre on trying to define a clear meaning and application. So far, many of these

---

[5] See also Higson's *The Limiting Imagination of National Cinema* (2000).
[6] See also Lu (1997).

discussions look at how transnationalism re-frames cinema in a global context. Effectively, the concept acts as a global viewfinder for conceptualising thematic content, and a film's production and exhibition process, as part of a cross-border exchange, addressing many diverse audiences. In the inaugural journal issue of *Transnational Cinemas*, Will Higbee and Song Hwee Lim (2010) broadly summarise three fundamental ways in which the term can be understood. Firstly, they echo Higson's model of analysis by stressing the significance of shifting channels of distribution, reception, and exhibition, and the ways these mechanisms work across borders. The second perspective outlined by Higbee and Lim 'privileges an analysis of the transnational as a regional phenomenon by examining film cultures/national cinemas which invest in a shared cultural heritage and/or geo-political boundary' (2010: 9). This second approach highlights how the transnational challenges the cultural conventions of a homogenous nation-state but also introduces a level of complexity regarding the interactions between the regional, the national and the global. The third intervention deals with post-colonial, exilic and diasporic themes where filmmakers, particularly those whose ancestry and culture lie outside Europe, are increasingly working to challenge Western conceptualisations of transnationalism. Despite these characterisations, however, Higbee and Lim's work also draws attention to the ambiguous nature of the concept and the way it is broadly employed to describe any film that does not explicitly address 'national themes' or issues.

Building on this ambiguity, Higbee and Lim develop a critical approach to transnational cinema where they propose a move away from a binary understanding of the relationship between the national and the transnational (2010: 10). They also claim the role of power is a key consideration when exploring any form of transnational dialogue, stating that 'In examining all forms of cross-border film-making activities, it is also always attentive to questions of postcoloniality, politics and power, and how these may, in turn, uncover new forms of neocolonialist practices in the guise of popular genres or auteurist aesthetics' (2010: 18). This concern with power relations and genre is highly significant in the context of this thesis, particularly when, as we shall see, power

hierarchies are fundamental to both the rhetoric of contemporary multicultural politics on Nordic screens and within the context of key concepts like genre. Part of my argument here focuses on how, despite many of the 'egalitarian' and positive transnational approaches to immigrant politics in these examples, including those that borrow from international genre conventions, many filmmakers deliberately and inadvertently reinforce an implicit set of conventions tied to the welfare state, echoing broader cultural and political trends. This is often a result of the taken-for-granted political and ideological undercurrents that are central to Nordic nation-building rhetoric.

The work of Deborah Shaw (2013) on transnational cinema is also noteworthy for its theoretical considerations, specifically those concerned with on and off-screen dynamics. Like Higbee and Lim, Shaw elaborates on the difficulties in conceptualising the term highlighting how ''transnational cinema' is lacking in specific meaning in that discrete concepts have been conflated: it does not define an aesthetic approach, a movement of filmmakers, any specific national grouping, and neither does it separate out areas of study' (Shaw 2013: 51). Shaw also highlights other potential limitations of the term, such as the problematic way it negates 'local' or regional influences. As a result of these insights, the transnational represents an idea that is as complex and multifaceted as the concept of national cinema. In a bid to explore the many sides of transnationalism, Shaw develops the work of Mette Hjort (2009) and devises fifteen categories as a means of contextualising the term.

One of these categories is the 'cinema of globalisation', a term originally devised by Tom Zaniello (2007) in his encyclopedic compendium of films focused on global capitalist themes including corporatism, multi-national domination and the penetrating influence of big capital across borders. In her interpretation of the cinema of globalisation, Shaw states how these film texts 'explicitly address questions of globalisation within their narratives, central to which are how relations of power between nations and peoples are played out on screen' (Shaw 2013: 54). The movement of people across borders and the resulting identity politics is a globally significant reality, especially as it invokes the subject of power across all levels of the political and

social spectrum including those subjects concerned with economic exploitation and not just cultural difference. This is especially useful for this study as the theme of crisis goes hand-in-hand with the complex and homogenising implications of globalisation.

Andrew Nestingen and Trevor Elkington's edited collection, *Transnational Cinema in a Global North: Nordic Cinema in Transition* (2005) specifically addresses these topics of borders and transnational politics in a Nordic context. They suggest that we must challenge the national cinema framework by situating Nordic film culture in the increasingly global context of its production and reception processes (Nestingen and Elkington 2005: 16). Indeed, the examples explored in this thesis can arguably be interpreted as small nation responses to immigration and identity politics in an increasingly borderless world. We must also account for how state funding channels maintain a level of what could be termed 'artistic integrity' on their terms when it comes to supporting film production. This involves us carefully considering how national identity is represented under these generally accepted cultural norms especially as transnational cultural flows have impacted the region's film culture. Indeed, each respective film institute is increasingly invested in populist genre fare.

The Nordic case, in particular, offers a specifically illustrative set of examples where transnational genre conventions find expression or a specific national currency in an international marketplace. Indeed, the film histories and contemporary status of the five Nordic countries reflect these highly complex and international developments, and many of the examples explored throughout this thesis self-consciously engage with the politics of nationhood in a globalising world where the borrowing and reconstitution of international genre conventions is used to great effect. Indeed, the interaction with internationally recognisable genre tropes or the incorporation of broadly recognisable Hollywood stylistic trends are typically infected or re-contextualised through a 'national' lens, and we shall return to this in chapter one when exploring these recent policy transitions.

Andrew Nestingen argues that regional cooperation between these five nations through their shared egalitarian agendas as well as conflicts over neoliberalism and the

welfare state (2008: 11) has emerged because of their smallness, where there is a need to pool resources and strengthen cultural ties in the face of global challenges. In this respect, there is a broadening consensus that we must develop a transnational approach to small nation cinemas, as Bacon argues in the Finnish case (2017:12), to fully account for both the historical and contemporary exchanges and mutuality between these countries and wider global cultural movements. The permeability of borders is even more pertinent when we consider how themes of immigration, multiculturalism and ethnic diversity fundamentally challenge the notion that, particularly small, national cinemas and identities are finite. The themes under discussion here fundamentally sit at the intersection of these debates.

Regarding the complexities, interrelations and convergences between the national and the transnational, Shaw also identifies the category of 'exilic and diasporic' filmmakers. Here, she builds on concepts such as 'accented cinema' (Naficy 2001), 'hybridity' (Marks 2000) and the 'cinema of transvergence' (Higbee 2007), all of which are designed to challenge fixed cultural conventions by picking apart the relationships between minorities and dominant ideologies. One of the other key aspects of this emerging transnational vocabulary is how it seeks to challenge and break down a binary understanding of identities by emphasising exchange, cross-over and mutual experiences between characters otherwise assumed to be divided by cultural or religious differences. This brings us to the problematic notion of the 'immigrant film'. In her book, *Immigration Cinema in the New Europe* (2015), Isolina Ballesteros introduces and subsequently challenges the concept of 'immigration cinema' by drawing on themes of diaspora and hybridity. In addition to race, ethnicity, national identity and culture, Ballesteros claims that the idea of hybridity extends into both genre considerations and the production cultures of films that are designed to cross borders. By emphasising the notion of hybridity and the way it functions on both textual and paratextual levels, Ballesteros emphasises how transnationalism can effectively challenge the limited notion of immigration cinema as an idea defined by a fixed set of cultural expectations and as a notion that forms part of a particular production strategy or viewpoint (2015:

12). I also make a case here for generally avoiding the term 'immigrant cinema' as this may narrow our point of departure and end up inadvertently leaning on the politicised language surrounding immigration as opposed to interrogating the wider cultural implications of racial exclusion more generally.

However, this thesis is not merely focused on using global influences to measure the 'relevancy' of these texts. Part of our exploration will look at how immigration and transnational mobility both challenge *and* reinforce many of themes of Nordic national identity even if each Nordic country responded differently to immigration and ethnic diversity. Here, I also concentrate on the 'indigenous' Nordic films, that is, examples produced by Nordic filmmakers that do not explicitly appear to travel beyond the borders of one nation. These examples are just as relevant because they often speak implicitly and inclusively to the nation in question about specific topics and often go unnoticed abroad. This can often lead to the circulation of ideas, themes and images of Others that would not otherwise appear on the global stage or catch the attention of critics or scholars. Clear examples of this insular perspective can be found in the Finnish road movie comedies discussed in chapter three or indeed many of the historical examples discussed in chapter one (see Römpötti 2012 for further details).

Understanding the Role and Relevance of Cinema

I argue that the Nordic countries' renowned reputation as pillars of utopianism finds expression in film and visual culture. Specifically, these texts reflect and consolidate wider historical and political attitudes towards race, and many of them explore (and reinforce) the tensions and contradictions between this reputation and the realities facing 'outsiders'. These contradictions are especially evident, in some cases, when we consider the wider significance of hostile immigration policies in countries like Denmark. Of course, I acknowledge that cinema is not necessarily a direct and unwavering reflection of the wider film policy environment from which it emerges. However, when we look towards examples explored throughout this thesis, and especially in the final chapter, there is evidence to suggest that films receiving support from official sources tend to

conform to certain expectations where the value of artistic merit, at least as it is understood by the industries, remains a priority. However, the small nation context allows us to differentiate at the same time that it allows us to see how this region has fostered a collaborative film and media landscape. Hjort and Petrie's 'small nation cinemas' concept contextualises the nation within a broader framework of transnational and global factors acknowledging the continuing importance and emphasis placed on national and regional identity politics both in terms of policy and with regard to thematic and textual expressions within the text. By focusing on cinema, this thesis both expands and challenges these regional self-perceptions by focusing on the crisis politics of race, ethnicity, and belonging on Nordic screens.

It is expressly through visual culture that these ideas about belonging are communicated and framed. In the Nordic case, it is especially important that we consider how this framing takes place because ethnic minority voices are considerably underrepresented both on Nordic screens and within the film industries. Kääpä (2012: 215) highlights systemic problems with representation (or lack thereof) throughout the Finnish film industry and its history, the consequences of which have failed to produce film narratives that are able to address the nuances of multicultural perspectives. Equally, according to Vitting-Seerup, the 'representation of diversity is not yet the norm in Danish cultural institutions' (2017: 45). This is despite recent initiatives designed to promote ethnic inclusion, some of which I will return to in chapter one when I outline the role of ethnicity in the film policies of the Nordic countries. The head of the Swedish Film Institute (SFI), Anna Serner, discusses how Sweden has 'yet to achieve film production that fully sees beyond gender, ethnicity, LGBTQ and varying levels of able-bodiedness. We need to broaden representation, both behind and in front of the cameras' (Serner 2017: 4 quoted in the SFI's official 2017 report on gender equality in Swedish cinema). Equally, this view is shared by the Norwegian Ministry of Culture (NFI) which issued a White Paper in autumn 2018 titled 'The Power of Culture' outlining targets for increasing ethnic representation in cinema both on and off-screen. The objectives of this Paper seek to encourage this growth 'across the board' with 'a more diverse recruitment

in cultural and culture-related professions, increasing cultural diversity and reaching new audiences' (NFI website 2018).

Consequently, the focus on cinema from this region is also critical because the medium holds an esteemed position within the cultural industries of the Nordic countries and beyond. Specifically, it is historically recognised as a significant political and cultural vehicle for communicating and debating serious political issues. Indeed, despite their 'smallness', films emanating from the Nordic region have garnered global, critical acclaim and have pioneered and contributed to major film movements that are universally recognised and admired. It is important, in that case, that we look at how the film cultures and production environments of these nations are shaped and influenced by the national film institutes and their policies. Equally, we must also consider the texts that fall outside these frameworks.

It is also worth considering more philosophical questions about the role and relevance of cinema, particularly as an approach to framing identity politics. Films can act as alternative spaces to imagine or reimagine societal belonging, and I will tackle this angle, specifically in chapter four. A film can be used to rouse or stifle political debates, reinforce collective social imaginaries or provide a snapshot of wider cultural-political contexts. In many of these cases, the films under discussion provide spaces to forge alternative ways of imagining a region in transition and one coming to terms with increasingly complex entanglements with globalisation.

We must also consider how cinema can act as a representative or vicarious tool in an international marketplace where the interests of a given industry are reflected in, for example, films selected as Academy Award contenders. Studying them can help us understand and unpack the degree of agency filmmakers have in expressing ideas about identity. Some of the case studies discussed also play a direct role in instigating changes to wider policy. A case in point is Lukas Moodysson's *Lilja 4-ever* (2002), a harrowing dramatization of a sex-traffic victim's experiences in modern Sweden (discussed in chapter four). Here, the film relayed the plight and urgency of sex trafficking and dispelled the myths of a utopian Sweden. However, the film also became an important

tool in its own right, acting as an educational resource and promoting Sweden's own ideological goals in projecting an image of progressiveness. There are parallels here between the institutional incentives to support and promote certain productions with particular messages or stylistic approaches and the ideological drive to appear progressive, particularly when it comes to ethnic diversity.

The international success and recognition of texts that address national and global issues like unemployment and migration also enable these countries to effectively 'tick the diversity box' without acknowledging their own more systemic role in the cause and effect of ethnic marginalisation or the unconscious whitewashing of multicultural narratives. How do these texts reproduce dominant attitudes and narratives evident in wider cultural spheres? What can these texts and narrative frameworks tell us about the societies from which they emerge? These are some of the questions I hope to address here.

Of course, cinema engages with (and is a product of) many different social, cultural and political discourses and contexts. As aforementioned, these production cultures and frameworks have shifted over the last thirty years, where there has been an increasing recognition of genre cinema as a key tool for expressing ideas about belonging. We must also consider the role of popular culture in the debate and not just the artistic or politically inclined films traditionally favoured by the film institutes. The commercialisation of Nordic cultures in an important knock-on effect of the engagement with genre cinema and we must consider the ways this has re-shaped the national image abroad. While establishing a systemic chain of links between policy and film content may be problematic, as most of the analysis is based on my interpretation of how these policies and wider cultural-political attitudes find expression in the texts, I nonetheless take these films to broadly draw on their contemporary cultural contexts and the general framework of their production periods. In my discussion, these examples inflect, reinforce and subvert the tendencies of these frames of references.

However, if we are to understand the interplay between insular national policies and wider concepts like genre, we must first establish a brief timeline of the Nordic countries'

welfare histories as political and ideological philosophies linked to ideas about belonging. This will also allow us to critically address and explore how identity politics has become a key undercurrent in these film texts when we return to our discussion on cinema later. Further to our discussion on ideas of Nordic branding, we must also consider how the regional and national dynamics manifest on both cultural and administrative levels.

Strengths and Regional Commonalities: Norden

The concept known as 'Norden', meaning 'the North', is generally employed a means of self-characterising the Nordic nations as a collective geopolitical region. According to Hilson (2008: 11), the formalisation of a common Nordic identity across various political, economic and cultural institutions after the Second World War emerged in response to the need for solidarity between the Nordics after what was otherwise a divisive political environment of conflicting stances and divided sympathies. Specifically, the founding of 'Norden' as an actual geopolitical organisation occurred in the inter-war period acting as a transregional coalition designed to bring together the shared interests and perspectives of these countries, partly by drawing on the historical crosscurrents between their welfare states. The adoption of the term Norden thus sought to strengthen the image of stability and bolster the commonalities of the region as well as incorporate the linguistic and geographical complexity of Finland and Iceland. These two countries are excluded from the conventional cultural and geographical conceptualisation of Scandinavia, although, outside the region and especially in the Anglo-speaking world, the term Scandinavia remains a popular way of characterising the five Nordic nations as a collective entity. Subsequent developments have seen Norden grow into a formal inter-parliamentary co-operation body overseen by The Nordic Council of Ministers since 1971. These Ministers are elected senior representatives and an extension of the Nordic Council, which was formed in 1952. In addition to the five Nordic states, self-governing

territories like Greenland, Åland and the Faroe Islands are also included as part of Norden's geographical scope. As a result, 'Norden or Scandinavia presented a powerful image of regional homogeneity to the outside world' (Hilson 2008: 18). Today, Norden holds annual meetings on a range of pressing contemporary issues relevant to small nations attempting to meet the demands of globalisation.

However, the history of Norden as a collective idea predates this post-war period. Øystein Sørensen and Bo Stråth's *The Cultural Construction of Norden* (1997) traces the complexities of this transregional Nordic alliance through the nineteenth century, noting that despite the regions' internal conflicts and oppositions (1997: 21-22), a coherent unity has emerged due to the countries' relatively comparable sizes and shared economic ambitions. The border politics of Norden take centre stage in Kazimierz Musiał's analysis of the reconceptualization of Nordic identity during the twentieth century where he asserts how the collective association between these five countries 'has been traced back to the area's nineteenth-century Romantic movement, which successfully promoted a feeling of shared values and a common cultural heritage' (Musiał 2010: 109).

More recently, the Council has addressed the theme of borders. To take a recent example of the kind of dialogue within the organisation, in April 2016, the Council came together in Oslo to discuss the fallout from the 2015 refugee crisis and the clamp-down on border controls. During April's meeting, political opponents and lawmakers convened to hear both sides of the debate on border controls. The Danish Conservative People's Party (DKF) argued for further restrictions on the movement of people and entered into negotiations with Swedish ministers over how to police the borders (see Lindahl 2016). Finnish Minister for Nordic co-operation, Anne Berner, argued for more leniencies. The Øresund region, which forms part of the border between Sweden and Denmark, is a key point of entry for asylum seekers. The Øresund Institute, which focuses on urban research in the area, reported on the financial limitations of increased security measures after a drop in rail commuters in the area. This fall in passenger numbers is presumably taken to be a consequence of extra security checks and associated delays. Here, we see a three-way debate between border controls, human rights, and the

commercial implications of these restrictions. Although the Council acknowledges the changing relationship between the Nordic countries and their borders, it remains committed to transparency and self-evaluation. This rhetoric is of course contradicted by other attitudes across the Nordic countries, namely the emphasis on protecting the integrity of the welfare state in the face of increasing immigration. Given the position of the welfare state in these societies, this is a subject to which we will now turn our attention.

Imagined Communities and The Welfare State: The Cultural and Ethnic Convergence of Folkhemmet

Undoubtedly, one of the other key factors in debating the role of national identity on Nordic screens, and concurrently, the position of minorities, is the welfare state. The welfare system has shaped the social conventions and codes of Nordic societies for nearly seven decades. Although there are variations in the histories and development of the Nordic welfare states across all five nations, traditionally they share some fundamental characteristics. Broadly, the Nordic welfare states were founded on the principles of social continuity and collective responsibility. This system, which is also referred to in its contemporary form as 'the Nordic Model', is best defined by what Kananen explores as a mix of capitalist economic practices and socialist values funded through a fiscal model of high taxes and equally high-income redistribution levels (Kananen 2014).

Additionally, investment in public services, infrastructure, health and social care, and education has traditionally been central to the Nordic welfare philosophy. Historically, during the late nineteenth and early to mid-twentieth-century period of modernisation, municipal institutions and communities worked together as a collective 'from the ground up' (Nestingen 2008: 25), an aspect that was fortified by the Nordic countries'

small population sizes.[7] From these collective dynamics, a strong sense of localised social democracy emerged where communities, unions and workforces were heavily involved in negotiations with the state. Decision-making became a question of public participation, and this grassroots-level integration helped to foster a sense of community particiaption (see Ervasti et al. 2008: 3-5) as well an ideological system of values based on cohesion, consensus, togetherness, and egalitarianism. Beyond the redistribution of wealth, Bratberg, Brandal and Thorsen define the key perception of the welfare state as one where anyone, regardless of class or social background, can realise their potential. However, they also raise questions over its role in the contemporary socio-political landscape where globalisation has heralded new challenges.

> The fight for equality is seen as a fight against social and cultural obstacles to human growth, a pursuit of diversity on the basis of equal opportunities, ultimately with the aim of increased personal freedom for all. It is an open question to what extent and under what circumstances the welfare state can be conducive to equality defined in these terms. The question is pre-eminent at a time when advanced welfare states like those in Scandinavia face new and complicated tasks with regard to individual responsibility, social inclusion, and adaptation to an era of personal choice. (Brandal, Bratberg and Thorsen 2013: 94)

Despite these difficulties, however, if return to the geopolitical organisation known as Norden, we can see how the strengths of the region as a collective identity work on different rhetorical and ideological levels. Indeed, Norden works to facilitate social and economic cooperation between each nation. Part of this enterprise aims to strengthen the ideological conventions of the Nordic egalitarian politics discussed above. In addition to trade and policy, the Council oversee activities linked to the operation of the cultural industries. Critically within their remit, the Council wield influence over film and media production by allocating funding and hosting the annual Nordic Council Film Prize, which is something we will explore later. On their official website, norden.org, the

---

[7] Finland, Norway, and Denmark at around 5.5 million, Sweden at 9.5 million and Iceland at just over 300,000. (Nordic Council of Ministers: Nordic Statistics 2017).

Council provides extensive detail on the collective objectives of the organisation. Elaborating on these aims, Icelandic politician and council member Eygló Harðardóttir states:

> The world is interested in and inquisitive about all things Nordic at the moment. Not just literature, films and design but also about our social structures and fundamental values. We appear to have answers to some of the questions the world is posing itself right now – how to build an open society capable of progress and of coping with crises. We should respond positively to this curiosity and use it as a source of inspiration for further social improvements. (Harðardóttir 2014)

The Council, moreover, emphasises a shared sense of moral and ethical responsibility. The framework of the organisation, with its stress on how Norden is viewed from a global perspective, feeds into the wider idea of 'Nordic exceptionalism', a concept that elevates the beliefs, principles, actions and practices of one nation or region above others. Browning (2007) states how 'the idea of the Nordic exception and of a particular Nordic way of doing things has been a central element in Nordic and national identity construction for the Nordic states' (2007: 27). According to the website, the binding of these countries is forged from a history of 'trust-based co-operation stemming from our common historical, cultural, and geographical heritage. Our national societies are also based on the same fundamental values, such as democracy, human rights, and sustainability. Working together also means that the Nordic Region exerts greater global influence' (norden.org). As Carl Marklund notes in his article on the effective marketization of the Nordic region as a brand: 'It is significant that increasing efforts at a specifically Nordic transnational branding or profiling explicitly resting upon the notion of the Nordic welfare state model takes place at a time when the present status and future scope of the welfare state is under heated debate' (Marklund 2016: 633). Here, Marklund infers that bolstering a shared sense of identity has become a key strategy for these countries in the face of perceived crises, including, most notably, immigration.

Consequently, we can draw parallels here between these ideological visions of the welfare state as part of a cohesive Nordic identity and Benedict Anderson's 'imagined

communities' concept which first emerged in 1983. Despite shared social practices, customs or even feelings of solidarity between people who live in a given community, Anderson argues that this notion of collective identity is ultimately constructed and therefore imagined by the people themselves. Rather it is the *idea* of community that functions in place of real contact and communication between community members. Expanding on the political implications, he states that nations function as imagined communities precisely 'because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship' (Anderson 1991: 7). An imagined community thus helps to facilitate nationalism by creating a sense of kinship among its members based on a fixed set of ideas and expectations about what it means to belong to the community in question. For us, the significance of Anderson's theory emerges in the way that the welfare state, as a powerful ideological concept, helps to underpin an imagined national (and in this case, regional) coherence. Although he does not address the role of cinema as a contributing factor in the creation of the imagined national community directly, Anderson does state that 'fiction seeps quietly and continuously into reality, creating that remarkable confidence of community in anonymity which is the hallmark of nations' (Anderson 1991: 36). As Coates (2000: 177) points out, Anderson also emphasises how imagining the nation occurs through a process of visualisation. Here, the communicative powers of cinema with its immediacy and accessibility wields considerable power over how the national image is shaped onscreen.

However, in elaborating on the relationship between cinema and Anderson's notion of the imagined community, Hjort and Mackenzie (2000: 4) qualify that imagined ideas about national cohesiveness do not necessarily always translate onscreen in a way that reflects Anderson's assertion. Rather, they emphasise how cinema is a complex process defined by many different aspects of its production culture and the shifting contexts of its reception processes. Cinema is, therefore not solely characterised by the nation from which it emerges and recent transformative ideas both on and off-screen gesture more firmly towards the transcendence of national boundaries where filmmakers are moving

away from established practices and are introducing ideas that challenge accepted socio-cultural norms. Nevertheless, it is worth examining the origins of dominant ideas that have contributed to the collective imagined exceptionalism of the welfare states.

In a speech in 1928, the Swedish Social Democratic Party Leader Per Albin Hansson's adopted the term 'folkhemmet' (translated as 'the people's home') to describe his vision of a Swedish society which would uphold the basic tenets of universal equality and inclusivity. One of the first known usages of the term *folkhem* is attributed to renowned Swedish author Selma Lagerlöf (1858 – 1940) who used the idea to express the way different cultures, ideas and identities converge in harmony in Sweden but often in accordance with specific traditional moral values (Sundmark 2011: 168).[8] In Hansson's speech, the term took on a political significance that was designed, above all, to encapsulate a sense of national cultural and cohesion. In practical terms, folkhemmet promised equality to all citizens through a comprehensive state-subsidised social welfare programme. The notion quickly evolved into a sociocultural philosophy that still used to evoke an essence of Swedishness. The term is not used in any other Nordic country. However, while folkhemmet is rooted and understood in the context of Swedish history, and while we must be careful not to conflate Sweden's political developments with the other Nordic nations, there are certain aspects of folkhemmet that cross over into other Nordic contexts. Hilson states that:

> although the folkhem expression did not translate directly into the other Nordic countries, the links between the welfare state and national identity were no less strong than they were in Sweden. Inevitably, this meant that the challenges to the welfare state from the late twentieth century came to be perceived to some extent as direct challenges to the very idea of Nordic nationhood. (Hilson 2008: 105)

---

[8] See Björn Sundmark's article 'Of Nils and Nation: Selma Lagerlöf's The Wonderful Adventures of Nils' (2011: 168-186) for more information on Lagerlöf's use of the term folkhem.

Here, a key aspect of folkhemmet in the Swedish context is the way it was also used to construct a collective ethnic identity on which the welfare model was based. Kamali states how 'the social democratic project for the homogenisation of the nation, which started in Sweden in early 1930s, was legitimised by the notion of *"Folkhemmet"* (the people's home)' and that as a result of this homogenisation '"the people" were presented as a family constituted of Swedes with a common origin 'in time and space'. However, this national exclusiveness was not only a specific characteristic of modern nation states and political parties, but also an integral part of the creation of a nation against "Others."' (Kamali 2009: 48-49 original emphasis). Returning to Anderson, literary scholar Anne Heith (2013) draws parallels between 'the people's home' and Anderson's imagined community concept where, according to her, Hansson's interpretation of folkhemmet 'envisaged the people as a community of ethnic Swedes' (2013: 86). She goes on to discuss how images of 'imagined national purity' (2013: 86) tied to folkhemmet notions of community have also provided grounds for resistance among indigenous and ethnic minority writers whose exclusion from this ideal has triggered alternative and critical understandings about how Sweden constructs and propagates images of its own apparent cultural and political inclusivity.[9] The underlying principle of folkhemmet, that is, the way it bolstered a connection between the progressive welfare values of equality and national identity, is evident in the other four Nordic nations as we shall see throughout this thesis. Consequently, for the purposes of our discussion, I choose to re-appropriate the term folkhemmet as a metaphor for the type of white ethnocentric homogeneity that is implicitly underpinned by the political and ideological use of the concept.

---

[9] As folkhemmet continued to take shape as a political idea in Sweden over the coming decades, Borevi states how, simultaneously, 'policies directed at national minorities were also characterised by an assimilatory outlook, where 'turning a person into a Swede' was an explicit or implicit aim. In this context, one could mention the special 'gipsy policy aimed at the Roma minority between 1954 and 1969. The aim was to encourage Romani to abandon their own cultural patterns and conception of justice, so as to achieve general living conditions equal to the rest of the population […] the prerequisite of equality was quite simply assumed to be cultural *conformity*.' (2012: 26-27 original emphasis).

Such imagined ideas about unity, togetherness and mutual interests bring us to the notion of essentialism. While each chapter in the thesis approaches the representation of ethnicity from a variety of perspectives, like my interpretation of folkhemmet values, both essentialism and Nordic exceptionalism will run throughout as key ideological terms. Essentialism is part of a 'belief that people who are part of the same culture or nation are devoid of differences of any kind; so different cultures can disturb this unity or homogeneity of the nation or society' (Toğral 2011: 223). The creation of particular conventions, especially those that define notions of freedom and collective identity in very specific ways, can also give rise to types of extremist beliefs that emerge in conjunction with the 'egalitarian tolerance' of the contemporary welfare states. Indeed, in an age of increasing global challenges, serious questions over the sustainability of the Nordic welfare states as ideologically bound and community-orientated societies need to be asked. This is especially true in an age where neoliberal restructuring has had a significant and largely negative impact on the contemporary welfare systems. Consequently, as the politics of ethnic identity in Nordic film culture are significantly intertwined with the contextual conventions of belonging established by the folkhemmet philosophy, it is also essential that we understand the role of neoliberal politics in reshaping the tenets of these societies. However, if we are to apply the folkhemmet concept as an expression of white ethnocentricity in all five Nordic countries, then we must also build a clearer picture of the politics of whiteness across the region.

Nordic Whiteness and The Politics of Melancholia

A highly relevant aspect of our discussion revolves around the conceptualisation of whiteness in the Nordic region. Broadly, from the 1980s onwards, there has been an increasing scholarly interest in the critical study and evaluation of whiteness as a

constructed racial category.[10] Although this body of research spans many disciplines, the main thrust of this rapidly evolving field seeks to understand and critique the role and position of whiteness as the prevailing ideological force underpinning dominant Eurocentric and imperialistic Western ideas. Among the disciplines that have emerged from these critical lines of inquiry are fields like Critical Race Theory (CRT), which originated in legal studies but has now found footing in sociology and, more recently, film and media studies.[11] Specifically, CRT seeks to make the default ideology of whiteness visible and hold its hierarchical supremacy accountable for the suppression of other non-white and typically non-Western perspectives. This process of decoding pays critical attention to the normalisation of whiteness as the unmarked and authentic ethnic group against which all others are defined, compared or contrasted. While these approaches have called attention to discriminatory practices embedded in the social, political and cultural institutions of modern societies, they have also highlighted the historical roots and processes that have helped to sustain racial inequality. Consequently, the other objective central to CRT is the deconstruction of whiteness as an all-encompassing or homogenous racial class.

The critical study of whiteness and its ideological context in Nordic film and media studies remains largely underdeveloped. To contextualise a comprehensive history of whiteness within the cultural milieu of these five nation-states is not feasible here. However, I will provide a condensed overview of how whiteness is characterised as a short-hand for national belonging on many different socio-cultural and political levels, particularly from the dominant liberal egalitarian perspective. One critical line of argument running through this thesis is that many of the films explored here consciously

---

[10] Richard Dyer's *White: Essays on Race and Culture* (1997) investigates the theme of whiteness across a range of cultural contexts, including cinema.
[11] For a close theoretical discussion on whiteness in cinema see *Critical Race Theory and Bamboozled* by Alessandra Raengo (2016).

and unconsciously reflect the anxieties of the white liberal middle-classes responding to the realities of multiculturalism, immigration and ethnic diversity.

Self-conceptualisations of whiteness have definitively left their mark on Nordic societies and remain a guiding force behind both the construction of both liberal egalitarian social norms and the racist ideologies of the far-right who cling to imagined ideas of Aryan purity.[12] Loftsdóttir and Jensen's edited collection *Whiteness and Postcolonialism in the Nordic Region: Exceptionalism, Migrant Others and National Identities* (2012) and Rikke Andreassen's *Human Exhibitions Race, Gender and Sexuality in Ethnic Displays* (2015) provide deconstructed historical analyses on how whiteness has shaped and informed national political ideologies across the Nordic region. Without neglecting the nuances of national difference, Loftsdóttir and Jensen claim that, like exceptionalism, whiteness as a social, cultural and political construct forms a constituent part of Nordic national identity leading to an inherent conflation of Nordicness and whiteness (2012). However, the case studies explored throughout this thesis will also reflect the complexities of whiteness as we view it through many different cultural and historical lenses. The discrimination against other white migrants in films like Lukas Moodysson's *Lilya 4-ever* (2002) or Lars-Göran Pettersson's *Blåbärskriget/The Blueberry War* (2007), explored in the fourth and final chapters respectively, gestures towards a further hierarchical distinction within the category of 'white' where Nordic whiteness becomes both an implicit and explicit superior grouping of its own.

Indeed, the idea of the 'Nordic race' as the most 'refined' or 'undiluted' form of white identity coveted and idealised by racist and nationalistic ideologies has its genesis in numerous historical, philosophical and anthropological narratives (see Field 1977: 523-540). Nazi Germany, for instance, upheld the Nordic race as the very personification of this imagined racial purity with German race theorist Hans F. K. Günther helping to introduce and propagate romantic ideas about the perceived authenticity of the so-called

---

[12] A comprehensive analysis of these ideas in a Nordic context can be found in Peter Hervik's edited collection *Racialization, Racism, and Anti-Racism in the Nordic Countries* (2018).

Nordic master race (Stone 2016: 455). These distorted perspectives are by no means limited to the context of National Socialism in 1930s and 40s Germany. According to Steven Garner, editor of a 2014 special collection focused on whiteness in the Nordic region in the *Journal for the Study of Race, Nation and Culture*:

> The state is a decisive agent in the production of racialising practices and racialised identities. It encourages particular versions of national identification and discourages others; frames and enforces legislation; controls a variety of resources (ranging from employment, replacement income benefits and housing, through education and policing to control of borders); and it sets the rules for access to all of them. (2014: 412)

Garner speaks inclusively about all five Nordic nations here, but it is worth looking further into the origins of racism and the construction of whiteness in these countries especially if we are concerned with the role of state institutions in perpetuating ideas about collective ethnic groups. In Sweden, from a historical perspective, one of the most startling examples of this white ideology at work, and one that dramatically supported an embedded sense of ethnocultural bias within the broader social fabric, was the state-supported eugenics programme. In this case, we must consider the Statens institut för rasbiologi/State Institute for Racial Biology which operated between 1922 and 1958 before merging with the Institutionen för medicinsk genetik/The State Institute for Human Genetics. Over this thirty-six-year period, the Institute developed a pseudoscientific racial taxonomy based on ethnic heritage. Within this hierarchy, Jews, travellers, the Roma, the indigenous Sámi people and even the neighbouring Finns were classified as biologically inferior against the white Swedish ideal. The programme led to mass cases of sterilisation where different ethnic groups became the subject of intense 'scientific' interest and debate. The Institute's damning legacy has tainted the progressive image of Swedish exceptionalism and called into question the founding principles of its moral and ethical standpoint, particularly regarding the collective ideas about equality preserved by concepts like folkhemmet. The positioning of the Finns as part of an inferior racial group is a testament to the complexities of Nordic whiteness and its regional applications.

Examining the position of whiteness in postcolonial Norden reveals a complex and contradictory picture of conflicting 'internal hierarchies and contingencies' (Lundström and Teitelbaum 2017: 151). Whiteness as a descriptor has been applied to the populations of the Nordic and Scandinavian nations in disproportionate and conflicting ways at various points in history. In spite of perceived notions of embodied whiteness within the Nordic region, the Anglo-American vision of white identity placed the Nordics on a lower plane (Lundström and Teitelbaum 2017: 152). However, divergent approaches to defining whiteness only serve to reinforce how the constructed, ideological notion of Nordic whiteness remains a pervasive idea in spite of the complexities in its historical manifestations and usages.

More recent studies on white identity politics in the Nordic region have attempted to unpack the way whiteness informs both the racist ideologies of the far-right and the liberal egalitarianism of the left. Hübinette and Lundström (2015) refer to the concept of 'white melancholia' in the contemporary Swedish context. For them, white melancholia emerges from two parallel manifestations of nostalgia that have found expression within dominant political and cultural narratives. The first type of nostalgia yearns for an imagined past where Sweden is perceived as free from immigrants; the second interrelated type of nostalgia is found among the white liberal middle-classes who seek to re-establish a lost egalitarian sense of acceptance and tolerance of the Other. This latter form of nostalgia, as Hübinette and Lundström point out, shares much in common with the former as it is underpinned by an imagined sense of homogenous Swedishness. White melancholia, be it the kind found on the left or right end of the political spectrum, is in this sense another indication of the tussle to define and project a coherent sense of Swedish national identity.

Hübinette and Andersson (2012) also allude to something more inherently problematic in the nostalgia politics of white liberal middle-class Sweden, drawing attention to 'colour-blindness' as a key characteristic of this idealised understanding of racial equality. Colour-blindness is a form of anti-racism that remains a dominant normative perspective in Swedish society. Similarly, Sara Ahmed's work describes how

the privileging of the subject position of whiteness often remains intact even when it reflects on its own role as part of the social conditioning on white as the supreme racial character (2007: 164-165). We can draw parallels between Ahmed's observations and colour-blindness. Here, such a perspective critically reflects on itself as oppressive and accountable without ever stepping outside or acknowledging itself as something other than a fixed or monolithic category. Here, liberal anti-racist discourses are led by an underlying assumption that whiteness remains the cultural and social default norm. While the rueful self-refection on whiteness is an aspect reflected in the liberal media culture of the Nordic countries, it is worth noting that these nations do differ in their approach to multiculturalism.

Like Sweden, race 'science' has also impacted Danish society throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries where whiteness was constructed and imagined in a quest for 'racial hygiene' (Hansen 1996: 10-12). In contemporary Denmark, and especially since the refugee crisis in 2015, race and ethnicity have become more of an explicitly political flashpoint in the media, owing perhaps to what Myong and Bissenbakker describe as 'some of the strictest immigration laws in Europe' (2016: 129) certainly since the year 2000. Siim and Meret state how 'Danish exceptionalism is embedded in a culturalist ideology that prioritises what are perceived as 'our' values, principles and rights against the threat represented by Islam and Muslim immigration' (2016: 111).

The increasing politicisation of immigration in the Danish media since the 2015 crisis and its subsequent fallout is framed around concerns over the welfare state's resources and a threat to 'traditional' values. Alongside this, just like its Nordic counterparts, media coverage surrounding whiteness tends to go unmarked, and non-white has become synonymous with Islam (Blaagaard and Andreassen 2012: 92). Blaagaard and Andreassen also point out that the term 'race' is seldom used in Denmark and matters of differences are most frequently translated and explained away on cultural and religious grounds (2012: 92). The consequences of these perceptions tend to dilute the historical significance of racism and white supremacy in Danish history. Indeed, part of

my exploration will emphasise how these attitudes have well-established roots in these countries. I will attempt to shed light on Denmark's attitude to race and ethnicity in chapter two in my discussion on the 'ethnic' crime genre which I read as a response to politics of Denmark's stance on immigration.

Equally, whiteness in Finland has stood as an unmarked category. Just as with the study of whiteness in other Nordic national contexts, the relationship between Finnishness and whiteness is gaining traction in sociology and cultural studies. Much of this research has focused on the way race is couched in linguistic terms. Such critical awareness is reflected in studies like Mari Toivanen's (2014) work where she refers to the existence of a visual lexicon, that is, the use of a racialised language to group and categorise people from non-white ethnic backgrounds in casual social scenarios. Here 'the logic of "racial" belonging to the collectivity of "Finns" and the understanding of this as being inherently about being "white" becomes evident, when we pay attention to how the visual lexica of belonging are employed to construct certain groups and individuals as more visible than others in everyday interactions' (Toivanen 2014: 198). Toivanen's concluding remarks thus reflect on the idea that to belong within the Finnish nation is to be white and that the parallels between race and national identity in the Finnish case cannot be taken for granted, especially as multicultural politics remains at the forefront of the agenda.

In Norway, arguably, one of the defining moments regarding the public and academic recognition and discussion of whiteness came in 2011 following the bomb and gun attacks perpetrated by self-identified right-wing terrorist Anders Behring Breivik against the Norwegian Labour Party and its youth wing. This unprecedented act of violence that occurred in Oslo and on the small island of Utøya led to the deaths of 77 people, most of them teenagers. One of Breivik's primary goals was to defend white supremacy in the face of what he perceived as the encroaching threat of Islam in both Norwegian and Western societies. He was equally critical of Norway's apparent liberalist tendencies and its rhetorical openness towards multiculturalism. However, Eileen Muller Myrdahl's analysis on the coverage following Breivik's trial (2016)

uncovers similar parallels between ideas of whiteness and national belonging circulating in the Norwegian media where such connections are designed to be understood as implicitly normative. According to Myrdahl, following the attacks, there was a quick move to show a united political and social front by adopting the language of tolerance and acceptance. This occurred both within the dominant media channels and in political speeches, most notably those given by the then Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg who was one of Breivik's primary targets. Myrdahl points out that although these efforts were commendable on one level, ultimately, they did not go far enough in acknowledging the correlations between Breivik's anti-immigrant sentiments and the anti-immigrant bias in sections of the Norwegian media (2014: 497).

The results were a reassertion of 'good liberal Norwegian whiteness', the type not dissimilar to that described by Hübinette and Andersson (2012) in their work on colour-blindness in Sweden. Myrdahl's work is a testament to the pervasive understanding of whiteness as an underlying characteristic in the contemporary Norwegian political, social and cultural agenda. Like Toivanen and Myrdahl's linguistic approach to framing race in the Nordic countries, we can perhaps extend this to explore how the visual language of cinema contributes to the construction of a folkhemmet-like white identity and the way it is positioned in relation to the social and cultural integration (and assimilation) of immigrants. In the following sections, I will elaborate further on the conflicts within this liberal white goodness as economic and political crises have disrupted the cohesion of national identity and belonging.

Neoliberalism and Contemporary Crisis Politics

Despite their prosperous legacy and image of universal equality, the Nordic welfare states have encountered significant challenges over the last thirty years as they have transitioned from small fiscal economies to globally orientated neoliberal competitors. As such, the traditions of the welfare model have shifted to account for these changes.

Although the coveted so-called Nordic model continues to serve as an aspirational benchmark for economies outside the region, sociologists like John Roemer and Pranab Bardhan (1992) have openly criticised the structural and ideological transitions made to the welfare state mentality. They cite precisely the increasing move towards neoliberal interests during the 1980s as a key turning point in the region's socio-economic history and attest to how this free-market re-shaping of societal conditions fundamentally contradicts the basis of the welfare state's state-orientated ethos. The most radical changes to the Nordic welfare model occurred when the 'international competition state paradigm' came into play in the 1980s (Kananen 2014: 164). Fundamentally, this saw priorities shift from social and public interests towards economic ambitions, international market competition, privatisation and the gradual, yet uneven, implementation of austerity measures. According to Kananen, moves towards private interests have damaged the social infrastructure of the welfare state's operations and continue to undermine its founding values of equality. In the context of immigration and perhaps more pointedly, ethnic Otherness, we also need to consider how the neoliberalisation has impacted cultural and political attitudes towards ethnic diversity.

While the concept of neoliberalism is a broad and complex phenomenon, covering an expansive range of ideas, policies, economic theories and practices, I choose here to focus on a more critical approach to neoliberal politics and the implications of neoliberal reform on the Nordic region's welfare states. There are several reasons for this approach, not least because these reforms have had a significant impact on the identity politics under discussion here. As we shall see in the concluding chapter, the neoliberal restructuring of work and labour conditions has had a disproportionately negative impact on migrants, particularly in Sweden as Frank highlights (2014) where the modification of immigration policy in 2008 had a profound bearing on the rights of migrant workers. Trade unions were weakened, and deregulation of employment laws meant that control was handed to employers allowing them to exploit illegal immigrants with impunity. Elaborating on the ideological underpinnings of neoliberalism, Frank states that 'Neoliberal freedom is a peculiar form of freedom that presupposes

disciplined and flexible subjects, which have the capability to exercise this "freedom". Those that lack the capability to exercise "freedom" – whether it is the unemployed, the poor or migrants – have regularly been subject to coercive measures' (Frank 2014: 430).

This ideological notion of freedom provides grounding for this thesis especially when we examine the influence of neoliberalism in a socio-cultural Nordic context. A shift in the welfare system towards a more individualist attitude has placed an 'emphasis on the duty of immigrants to (re)form themselves into autonomous and active citizens' (Mouritsen and Olsen 2013: 707). Such attitudes betray a disproportionate preoccupation with the idea that it is the immigrant who must change and adapt to their host society. As a result, scholars from a wide range of disciplines have drawn correlations between racism and neoliberalism. Critical race scholar David Goldberg refers to the concept of 'racial neoliberalis' (2008) which he defines as a particular cultural manifestation of neoliberalism's general ideological tendencies which he claims revolve around power structures that are biased towards certain groups.

Recent explorations of racial neoliberalism in a Nordic context include Kristen Simonsen's 'Encountering Racism in the (Post-) Welfare State: Danish Experiences' (2015). Accordingly, Simonsen discusses how 'a tendency in neoliberalism to reduce government to an (economic) necessity – a de-politicized expert administration and regulation – seems to create a general insecurity and adds fuel to the flames of populism and emotional mobilization around fear and xenophobia' (Simonsen 2015: 221). Similarly, in discussing the position of immigrants in Finland during these tumultuous decades, Matti Similä draws a direct correlation between economic instability, unemployment and escalating racial tensions (2003). The perceptions of welfare state cohesion are understood to be under threat, not from neoliberal politics, but a politically constructed view that immigrants are responsible for extra financial pressure placed on social institutions. This often translates on a cultural level where 'there has been a shift from a Keynesian welfare state towards a neoliberal welfare regime, and a parallel process (starting later) from a multicultural migration regime

towards a regime characterised by a neoassimilationist and racialised social cohesion project' (Mulinari and Neergaard 2010: 138).

In addition to the region's recent socio-economic evolution, the Nordic countries were hit by the global economic downturn of the late 1980s and 90s. However, the combined effects of this emerging neoliberalist mentality with economic uncertainty painted a complex picture of Nordic societies in transition. The negative impact of the 1990s recession was disproportionately felt across the region, hitting Sweden and Finland the hardest (Jonung, Kiander and Vartia 2009: 19), and associated state rollbacks were unequal and occurred at different points in each respective country. Consequently, we must qualify the extent and effects of neoliberalism on the Nordic welfare states. This qualification is especially pertinent in relation to claims that, since its onset from the 1970s, neoliberalism has effectively dismantled the Nordic welfare state model in its entirety. While this region was, without doubt, affected by the neoliberalism, cuts to social spending were not as severe across the Nordic region compared with other European nations, and in some cases, investment even increased in some areas. As Langford notes, 'social expenditure as a share of gross domestic product (GDP) has been constant or rising across the Nordic states since the 1980s' (2017: 43).

Somewhat paradoxically, however, the recession of the 1990s has had a long-lasting systemic impact in other areas. For instance, charitable food redistribution can be found in all the Nordic countries where food banks are not only the result of progressive policies on tackling food waste but also exist to supplement low-income families (Hanssen et al. 2014).[13] The permeant establishment of these services is particularly noteworthy in Finland. Salonen, Ohisalo and Laihiala's article on the realities of food banks emphasizes how those forced to use them are victims of deep economic inequality.

---

[13] See Hanssen et al. (2014) on the study of food redistribution services across the Nordic region. While their study is not focused on the cause of food banks and they elaborate extensively on their useage in other contexts, such as a means of reducing food waste, they nonetheless highlight the need for them in the context of poverty.

Furthermore, they also highlight how the 'public perceptions about food aid often portray food recipients as dishonourable and responsible for their own poverty' and that 'charity food aid raises particular disputes in the context of a Nordic welfare state that is presumed to guarantee basic social security for all its citizens' (2018: 1-2). Swank (2002) notes how neoliberalisation under both centre-right and social democratic governments across the Nordic region during this period 'shifted to (or affirmed) priorities and policies of price and currency stability and fiscal austerity' (2002: 154). Such measures have, again, manifested in ways that have hit certain social groups in disproportionate ways where, 'the high at risk of poverty rates among young single adults and immigrants in the Nordic countries are particularly discouraging for advocates of the Nordic model' (Fritzell, Bäckman and Ritakallio 2012: 182). Here, I suggest we must account for the ideological attitudes brought about by neoliberalism as well as the economic realities of spending cuts. In other words, we must expand and elaborate on the exact nature of 'crisis politics' and how far anxiety over newcomers is facilitated by the realities of economic pressure and employment markets or whether there is more of a manufactured ideological component in the resistance to and failure of multicultural policies. Here, I want to look at how far cinema has captured and responded to the parallels between these anti-immigrant nationalist discourses and ideological transformations to the respective welfare states. Effectively, this involves examining how these economic contexts, where ethnic groups are pitted against one another for employment and entitlement to state provisions in a 'competitive economic maketplace', find expression on a cultural level.

Similar ideas are expressed by Loftsdóttir and Jensen (2014: 1-2) who state that the theme of crisis plays a crucial role in the contemporary social, political, and economic landscapes of the Nordic region. Specifically, the complex exchanges between these five small affluent nations and neoliberal globalising economic and political forces have led to significant contradictions in the folkhemmet welfare state mentality. While Loftsdóttir and Jensen explore a broad spectrum of social, political, economic, and environmental factors and events in the creation of contemporary crisis politics, their perspective

provides a highly significant means of approaching the theme of immigration, not least because they emphasise the interrelations between political, economic and cultural landscapes. Part of their study also relays how many of these crises undermine the notion of Nordic exceptionalism, particularly regarding the role of multiculturalism as a specific intervention designed to integrate minorities into society to, at least superficially, off-set the anti-immigrant populism that has steadily arisen in public discourse over the last several decades.

I should point out that, like neoliberalism, the concept of multiculturalism is equally complex and highly contested. As well as simply describing the process of a given society becoming more culturally diverse, particularly in an age of globalisation, the concept can be understood from many political and social angles. Faist (2013) argues that regardless of the context, multiculturalism is a loaded term that promises equality to immigrants by supporting and investing in the idea of social unity whilst concurrently engaging with policy and practices that contribute to inequality and ethnic segregation (2013: 24). Faist's understanding of the term is particularly useful here especially because, as Edie and Nikunen point out, 'multiculturalism has particular dimensions in the Nordic context where societies have been perceived as having a more or less homogenous composition' and 'the idea of one people is strongly embedded in the narrations of Nordic nation states' (2011: 6). Similarly, Peter Kivisto and Östen Wahlbeck examine some of the contradictory dynamics arising in the convergence between multiculturalism and the welfare ideology stating how it becomes a question of 'whether or not a mode of inclusion predicated on accepting or overcoming difference is a mismatch for social democratic welfare states that have historically been defined in terms of universalistic principles'(2013: 327). Thus, their analysis highlights the mutually exclusive separation between the welfare state as an ethos built on sameness and the notion of multiculturalism which is premised on diversity.

Indeed, immigration and issues relating to multiculturalism and ethnic identity have caused serious rifts in politics and public opinion across the Nordic region in the last three decades. The five Nordic countries are members of the Schengen Agreement which

has effectively abolished passport and borders control checks across large swathes of the European continent. However, the 2015 refugee crisis has prompted the provisional restoration of these checks in Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. In 2016, Sweden introduced ID checks at the Danish border for the first time in half a century, a move instigated by the influx of refugees fleeing Syria during the 2015 refugee crisis. Additionally, Denmark made world headlines in 2017 with the highly controversial policy of forcibly removing possessions from refugees in a bid to recoup costs (Crouch and Kingsley 2016). These tensions are replicated in Finland where, as Wahlbeck observes, although the country has a long history of participating in international programmes supporting refugees, politically, there was less enthusiasm for investing in a robust domestic resettlement program (Wahlbeck 2018: 299). Like Sweden and Denmark, Norway also announced stricter border checks in response to the 2015 crisis. In roughly the first twelve months after the checks were introduced by the right-wing coalition the number of people seeking asylum in Norway dropped by 95 percent (Dearden 2016). In an international context, countries like Sweden have also featured in the alarmist propaganda of prominent right-wing figures in Britain and America.

Specifically, this propaganda has aimed to link the free movement of immigrants, especially those from sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East, into Europe as a direct threat to 'Western values'. For instance, in 2017, again following the arrival of refugees from the Syrian crisis, Sweden was named the 'rape capital' of Europe by former leader of the UK Independence Party (UKIP) Nigel Farage (Batchelor 2017), a spurious claim that drew comparisons with a 2017 Donald Trump rally during which the President made similar false statements about the apparent disintegration of social order in a wealthy Western nation who had initially opened its doors to immigrants (Kahn 2017). Restating the relationship between economic hardships and rising anti-immigrant rhetoric, Volquardsen also draws parallels between what he terms the 'crisis of Nordic exceptionalism' where, during times of austerity 'traditional values' are more likely to appear under threat, not only from economic exploits but from outsiders. The result, he

claims, is an attempt to reinforce 'traditional values'. Discussing the need to emphasise these exceptionalist qualities, he states:

> In the wake of growing social and cultural diversity, primarily caused by immigration, Scandinavians have recently been discussing perceptions of Danishness, Swedishness and Norwegianness intensely, and in this context at times reinforced self-conceptions of exceptionalism, which let the countries appear ethically and morally superior and at the same time placed a high degree of normativity pressure on all outsiders. (Volquardsen 2014: 46)

Furthermore, debates over multiculturalism and exceptionalism have intensified following the Breivik attacks in July 2011. Although many prominent right-wing parties have surfaced in the mainstream recently, they have played an active role in shaping immigration policies for decades and have created a fissure in this sense of cohesive identity politics characterised by the collective folkhemmet mentality. Despite the political and economic tensions underpinning many of these crisis narratives, broadly, the liberal response to immigrant politics, and the right-wing reactions it has provoked has been to reinforce the notion of tolerance as an antidote to such division, a problematic development to which I now turn.

Tolerance and Culturalising Politics: Defining an Approach to the Other

Rising hostility towards immigrants and minorities across the region has led to a number of ideological interventions by the Nordic governments. In Sweden, for instance, the recently inaugurated Segerstedt Institute at the University of Gothenburg (funded by the Swedish government) was designed to centralise resources and academic collaboration on violent extremism with the centre aiming to reduce the number of people radicalised by extremist organisations. However, the opening of the institute proved controversial. Eighteen faculty members at the University of Gothenburg shunned the inauguration, citing their belief that the institute was the product of a political agenda and concentrated too intensely on extremist violence in a distorted or

ambiguous context (Myklebust 2015). The default focus on Islamic fundamentalism as the main threat to Europe and a lack of scientific analysis backing up the ethos of the institute caused a further basis for objection. These ideological measures were introduced despite the radical right-wing atrocities committed by the likes of Breivik in neighbouring Norway. Furthermore, the Institute is closely associated with the so-called 'Tolerance Project', a model of teaching practice backed by the United Nations and aimed at school-aged children. The project reinforces the acceptance and 'tolerance' of others. In elaborating on their manifesto, The Tolerance Project states:

> Tolerance then becomes the individual's ability to meet persons that are different from oneself and find the necessary and reciprocal compromises that reduce friction and promotes just coexistence. Throughout history we have learnt that we cannot ask for more than simply living side by side, sharing space, respecting individual choices that do not reduce other people's freedom of choice. A community that meets this is tolerant and will promote diversity. (University of Gothenburg Tolerance Project manifesto statement 2014)

While the focus is on establishing an anti-racist dialogue, the use of the term 'tolerance' is disputed by cultural philosopher Slavoj Žižek who views it as an inherently loaded and ideological concept that enshrines a more embedded form of racism. For him, tolerance glosses over and effectively ignores inequality and injustice on more fundamental economic and political levels. He states how the liberal agendas of Western societies are guided by specific reactions to prejudice where the 'immediate answer is the liberal multiculturalist's basic ideological operation: the "culturalization of politics" — political differences, differences conditioned by political inequality, economic exploitation, etc., are naturalized/neutralized into "cultural" differences, different "ways of life," which are something given, something that cannot be overcome, but merely "tolerated."'

Žižek's 'culturalising politics' (2007) theory also provides a useful means of examining cultural and social divides in the context of the Nordic countries' aforementioned ideological vision of egalitarianism. These two seemingly polarising narratives — that of tolerance and anti-immigrant rhetoric — broadly embody the

fragmentation of ideological consensus across the Nordic region. Specifically, the culturalisation of politics occurs when a struggle for recognition is expressed through cultural identity narratives as opposed to a more complex consideration of broader socio-political and economic realities. By focusing on how politics becomes culturalised, Žižek is able to highlight and elaborate on how less 'visible' forms of political and economic manipulation function as a means of dividing social groups.

Similarly, multiculturalism has also come under attack from critics who cite the concept's reliance on similar hegemonic relationships to the ones it purportedly denounces. Again, Žižek claims that multiculturalism is dependent on the Other behaving in ways that conform to Western expectations. Without this conformity, equality quickly disintegrates. Multiculturalism has risen out of the dominant ideology as a way of tackling cultural exclusion; however, according to Žižek's interpretation, these expectations are based on a sanitised and homogeneous image of the Other, free from antagonisms, complexities, and contradictions.

The conflicts discussed by Žižek, together with the recent wave of violence in the Nordic region, run parallel to growing calls for a re-examination of the welfare system. For the likes of Žižek, the political notions of multiculturalism and tolerance mask wider problems within the welfare state mentality and left-wing attitudes towards cultural difference. The welfare states' contradictory move towards neoliberalisation has reinforced narratives of cultural difference by helping to establish a competitive basis for access to the provisions of the state. Here, identity politics plays a key role in drawing the battle lines over who does and does not belong. The resulting contradictions between universal equality, welfare cuts and hostility towards outsiders has led to cinematic narratives where the crisis of identity mantra has become a form of new and ironic continuity, replacing the certainties of paternalistic egalitarianism and, indeed, the image of collective imagined collective community values. I now elaborate on the significance of culturalising politics, as a specific way of approaching film culture amid these complexities.

In cinematic terms, I claim the culturalisation of politics behaves as an intervention designed to tease out the two polarising and problematic attitudes towards ethnic minorities in the contemporary Nordic countries, namely the anti-immigrant stance and the idea of liberal tolerance, an approach that masks its own tone-deaf attitude towards Otherness. Examples of culturalising politics in Nordic films would place problems with perceived cultural differences, intentionally or otherwise, at the centre of the narrative in a way that conforms to one of the two poles of representation identified above and often at the expense of more complex political or economic contexts. These contradictions between tolerance, racism and collectivity have given way to a crisis of identity that pervades many levels of the cultural and political spectrum. For this reason, as Elizabeth Ezra and Terry Rowden (2006: 1-14) highlight, we should be careful not to overlook the significance of national identity in cinematic terms despite the increasing influence of globalisation.

I also draw on ideological criticism, an established methodology in the field of film studies with a long history rooted in Marxist theory. According to Kuhn and Westwell's *A Dictionary of Film Studies*, ideological criticism 'is motivated by an explicit political impulse to lay bare, and so make available for comment and critique, the ways in which films shape and are shaped by ideology' (2012: 218). This ideological approach critically assesses how the ideas and beliefs of the ruling elites come to dominate and drown out other voices. As a method, ideological criticism was developed by Jean-Louis Comolli and Jean Narboni in *Cinema/Ideology/Criticism* in 1971 and *The Cahiers du Cinéma*[14] who pushed the movement further by analysing how filmmakers could challenge ideological hierarchies by drawing attention to whichever ideological perspective was perceived to be dominant in the text.

---

[14] *Cahiers du Cinéma* was establishes by André Bazin, Jacques Doniol-Valcroze and Joseph-Marie Lo Duca in 1951.

Consequently, this method accounts for films that replicate the dominant ideology of the society from which it emerged but also accounts for films that challenge the embedded belief system. Because ideological criticism lays bare the power struggles in societies and penetrates through the economic and political systems it helps us assess the scope and influence of dominant beliefs within a culture. For our purposes, this means ideological criticism provides a fundamental way of examining the representation of ethnic minorities against the context of the Nordic countries' recent crisis politics. It allows me to interrogate the values and influences of contemporary welfare politics as an ideology now heavily dictated and influenced by the kind of individualist thinking reinforced by neoliberal politics and its racial dimensions. However, it also allows me to explore how filmmakers from a variety of backgrounds are working to challenge these dominant ideas about belonging and identity.

The justification for my use of thematic and textual analysis alongside ideological criticism is that these methods help to identify both repetitive thematic trends as well as the recurring ideological patterns that manifest across a broad spectrum of genres and stylistic interventions. This is significant as I read these films as responses to the conflicts faced by five small nations in flux and grappling with political questions about the relevance of national belonging that all have a distinct ideological dimension. This is evident in our explorations of folkhemmet whiteness. However, I am consciously aware of several significant drawbacks. In the following section, and in the interests of balance, I will outline the project's technical boundaries as well as evaluate my own position in relation to these subjects and approaches.

Limitations and Accessing the Materials

Regarding my methodology, while useful in many ways, there is no doubt that my ideological approach also has its limitations. Throughout the thesis, I choose to focus on the largely negative ideological impact that neoliberalism has had on the Nordic region.

This, of course, negates the other more positive factors at play as far as neoliberalism is concerned, particularly regarding the way it has positively contributed to growth and economic expansion. We must also qualify the idea that neoliberalism represents the greatest or singular source and exponent of racial division. I want to be careful not to attribute all forms of racism to the cultural impact of neoliberal transitions and market forces. Racism has, as we have seen, existed in the Nordic region prior to the adoption of neoliberal politics.

My rationale for working within this historical scope, particularly from the 1970s onwards, is because I believe this period best captures the ways that modernisations in film policy have developed alongside wider socio-cultural change. This was, for instance, the period where neoliberalism emerged alongside significant waves of immigration from non-European and non-western countries. This resulted in a conscious ideological effort to incorporate and openly discuss the non-white and non-Nordic perspectives. While race and ethnicity have been visible on Nordic screens prior to the period under discussion, the 1970s and 80s ushered in new liberal, if paternalistic, attitudes towards immigrants. For the first time, first and second-generation immigrants whose ancestry originated outside the Nordic region began to produce and direct films. We can, therefore, take this period as a point of departure for the many debates over immigration and practitioner agency that have followed. However, by narrowing the focus to this timeframe, I am well aware that I have excluded many other important contributions and developments. While it is impossible to avoid historical bias completely, in focusing on the convergence between the shifting film policy agendas and wider socio-economic and political discourse, it is the hope that the thesis can elaborate on the origins of specific and recent onscreen trends and representations. As we have seen, several studies like Loftsdóttir and Jensen's *Crisis in the Nordic Nations* (2014) collection highlight the significance of neoliberal politics in changing ideological attitudes towards the welfare state and I choose to follow the same path here as I believe this work provides convincing perspectives on how both self-conceptualisations of Nordicness and attitudes towards immigrants have their roots in the ideological

leanings of the prevailing power structures (see Volquardsen in Loftsdóttir and Jensen 2014: 31-51).

On the issue of scope, we must also qualify the use of the term 'contemporary' cinema. Defining contemporary cinema is arguably a tricky task. Ulf Hedetoft locates

> contemporary cinema within such forms of tension between its transnational forms of production, dissemination and (sometimes) contents, and its routinely national modes of reception, decoding and interpretation, based on national identities, cultural history and aesthetic traditions, as well as particular readings of the world informed by a given national habitus and certain foreign stereotypes. (2000: 279 original emphasis)

Similarly, we will also be considering the transnational and regional dimensions of film production. I will also base my definition on the impact of broader socio-cultural changes. In this study, contemporary cinema encompasses my chosen period of study, that is, roughly between the 1970s and the present day. Once again, my justification for this is because many of the contemporary challenges facing the Nordic region have their roots in neoliberalism. Neoliberalism has fundamentally changed cultural and social attitudes as well as the direction of political and economic change. As many of the film trends discussed here have evolved alongside such transitions, neoliberalism provides a useful benchmark for streamlining the discussion on small national cinemas and the impact of globalising film trends. The realignment of political strategies to fit with the demands of markets has also affected film policy, as we shall see in chapter one.

We must also consider the project's regional scope. One justification for moving beyond the perspective of a singular Nordic country is supported by Nestingen and Elkington (2005) who argue that the concept of the nation-state as a homogenous entity has always been in question in the context of Nordic film culture. Their collection reinforces the transnational dynamics at work on the level of film production and reception and, indeed, regarding the narrative content itself (Nestingen and Elkington 2005: 1-28). Rather, their work calls for us to consider the Nordic region in a global context where the national and international meet at various cultural and political junctures. As Pietari Kääpä points out, a diverse number of academic collections adopt

a regional comparative approach to studying the Nordic countries (2014: 13). As such, my regional focus is similarly drawn from the rationale and approaches used by other scholars working in the field of Nordic cinema.

Further justifying this approach, Kääpä considers the wider framework of these small nations' shared histories, stating how we must consider the context of the region's similar identity politics and cooperative relationships (Kääpä 2014: 13). As we have seen, chief among these similarities, from both a filmic and socio-cultural perspective, are the shared contextual links between these countries' welfare ideologies, perceived notions of their 'exceptionalism' and, in some instances, their correlating attitudes towards multiculturalism and immigration. We can also rationalise this regional approach through our focus on the theme of crisis and, specifically, the crises of ethnic identity and belonging. Although these themes are not expressly tied to one nation or cultural context, a comparative regional approach is also a useful way of determining how films from each Nordic country have contributed to a collective sense of Nordic identity or reinforced perceived ideas of not only Swedishness or Danishness, but more broadly 'Nordicness.' This is significant because the concept of Nordicness is often employed as a shorthand for 'quality' or authenticity. Echoing Carl Marklund's analysis (2016) and Harðardóttir's comments (2014) on the international branding strategy of a collective Nordic identity by the Nordic Council of Ministers, it is also clear that 'Nordicness' can function as a form of soft power. Nordicness is perceived by the Council as not just a brand, but a model or methodology for effectively *doing* geopolitics. This model of collective identity is also peddled as a way to offset global crises. This is critical as my analysis of many the case studies discussed throughout this thesis offer a critical perspective on the positive perception of Nordicness as a monolithic entity.

In the case of this thesis, these arguments are especially valid as the subjects under discussion fundamentally deal with border crossing, diaspora and questions of national belonging in an age of global interconnectedness. An approach that considers both the national and transnational dynamics at play within these texts is necessitated by the need to view the Nordic countries as caught between national and global and key to this

exploration is considering the tensions within the welfare state, where an economic model designed for a small homogeneous population must adapt in ways that can accommodate new and alternative perspectives. Indeed, while the complexities of mass migration cannot be contained or understood from the perspective of a single nation, more recently, the response to immigration from a Nordic perspective indicates an attempt to forge a collective regional consensus on the practical and socio-cultural challenges that result from such developments. In a joint publication on the realities of immigration in the Nordic countries produced by The Nordic Council of Ministers, Karlsdóttir et al. (2018) state that:

> the population of the Nordic Region has increased substantially in recent decades, growing by 16 percent between 1990 and 2017 […] The nature of major immigration flows to the Nordic countries has also undergone a transformation, evolving from primarily intra-Nordic immigration in the 1990s to inflows from an increasingly diverse range of countries between 2010 and 2016. (2018: 20)

The publication provides a collective streamlining of data on immigration into the Nordic region on national, regional and municipal levels and is designed to create recommendations for cross-collaboration on developing methods for enhancing the efficacy of integration. Consequently, as well as data harvesting, the report promotes a joint ambition and shared vision across the Nordic region—one that seeks to reinforce the benefits of integrating immigrants into society. Evidence can be found, for example, on the discussion surrounding the advantages of positive net immigration needed to sustain economic growth (2018: 16). Indeed, while the purpose of the report is to generally provide a politically neutral and unbiased interpretation of the data, there is no explicit discussion of precisely the kind of values or cultural expectations with which newcomers are expected to conform. This is an important detail for us here, as the taken-for-granted 'values' at work within the social fabric will inform the basis of our discussion throughout this work.

The immigration report does, however, rightly acknowledge the highly complex and challenging factors involved with immigration, but its primary directives are to encourage a regional response. Consequently, the fact that the document was produced by the Nordic Council of Ministers speaks to the collective efforts made by a major geopolitical organisation to build a unified front on these challenges. Furthermore, and perhaps most significantly for us, the report states that 'the countries all describe cultural institutions as playing an important role in integration' (2018: 71).

In spite of these developments, however, one might ask, in that case, why it is useful to isolate the Nordic region from the rest of Europe or indeed, the rest of the world, especially if we are considering the global dynamics of immigration. I claim the need for this focus stems from the region's now globally renowned reputation for progressive egalitarian politics and economic supremacy. The contextual isolation of the Nordic countries from their European counterparts is evident in many contexts. The region has featured in *The Economist* in articles titled 'The Next Supermodel' (Woolridge: 2013) which promotes the region's collective strengths. The five nations also consistently top the World Happiness Index. This annual report draws on a wide array of national statistical indicators designed to measure the general satisfaction and overall contentedness in a given society (see Helliwell, Layard and Sachs 2019: 24-25). According to *The Economist*, 'the Nordics dominate indices of competitiveness as well as of well-being' (The Economist Special Report 2018: 2). The region also has a reputation for taking the lead on global issues like climate change, and their comparable economic models are frequently used as the blueprints for other less affluent nations.

However, while the founding of regional geopolitical organisations like Norden reflects the collective efforts to recognise, explore and promote cultural links between the five countries, each nation has its own policies on immigration, and their approaches to race and ethnic identity also differ across the board. We must, therefore, acknowledge here that nuance may be lost in such an expansive regionally-orientated undertaking. However, given that the region is often perceived as a collective entity, both from internal and external perspectives, a regional approach to these film cultures would help

to tease out and highlight the inner tensions and differences. It can help us understand and critique the merits of self-conceptualised projections of the region as a force for good. Additionally, in exploring the differences between each Nordic state, we can also emphasise and highlight their commonalities. As Kääpä states, 'a comparative take on interregional differences and similarities evokes a sense of unity in diversity' (2014: 13), and it is from this perspective that we shall approach the themes of ethnicity and diversity across the Nordic region. Perhaps what makes this regional approach especially interesting is that, as Bondebjerg and Redvall (2011: 14) point out, there is no perceptible demand for each other's film and media products across the region, signalling that, in spite of common film policies, the cultural affinities between these nations are not as strong as they appear according to regional organisations like the Nordisk Film and TV Fond. This makes the images of collective brand identity promoted by these organisations even more relevant when we consider the significant differences between the way these institutes operate and the realities of cultural exchange across borders.

As an outside observer, I am consciously aware of another particular drawback. While competent in the three Scandinavian languages, that is Norwegian, Danish and Swedish, the lack of native fluency, as well as challenges posed by Finnish and Icelandic, have shaped the approach to the thesis. Furthermore, by nature of this thesis' main themes, many other minority languages such as Urdu, Chinese, Russian, Polish and a variety of Arabic languages and dialects amongst others are included here. The language barriers have created challenges specifically regarding my interaction with dialogue in the film texts and my engagement with existing academic literature written in the native Nordic languages.

However, the vast bulk of the data and policy directives relating to cinema is published in English. Digital repositories offered by the five Nordic film industries contain policy documents and extensive information on their funding infrastructures and, in some cases, their approach to ethnic and cultural inclusion. I have obtained information from the main databases provided by these institutes and, where relevant,

I have also had first-hand contact with them in order to establish if specific or appropriate policies on diversity and inclusion exist in the country's native language. I was able to determine at the time of writing and to the best of my knowledge that no untranslated specific policies on ethnic diversity exist within these film institutes for the period covered here. While I fully acknowledge these limitations, it is the hope that, as such an observer, I can bring other strengths to the research. These linguistic weaknesses aside, my perspective as an outsider arguably gives me extra pause to consciously evaluate my own position in relation to these cultures and consider the nuances at play. It is the hope, in that case, that I can provide a new perspective through the combination of my methodological approaches and regional focus.

This study is not designed to give a comprehensive insight into what is an extensive back catalogue of films involving themes of ethnic Otherness. Indeed, one aspect that became increasingly clear throughout the initial exploration of these topics was the sheer number of films from this region that consciously tackle the subject of race. As these subjects remain relatively under-researched, especially from a regional point of view, the hope is that this thesis can, instead, deliver a broad introduction to contemporary films, that is, films released in the last thirty years, that explicitly frame race and ethnic identity. The criteria for selecting the films explored here is, therefore, based on a range of factors.

In order to structure this introductory exploration and, given the depth and breadth of the films, the thesis is split into several genre-orientated discussions. These are designed to reflect a range of key developments, including the emergence of particular stylistic trends like the 'ethnic' crime film. Some films were also selected on the basis of their relationship with national production channels who often set specific artistic standards for the films they fund. By contrast, my range of texts also extends to films that fall outside these channels and have received little or no attention from critics and scholars. These include films that I believe to offer an alternative view to that of the status quo.

Ethnic diversity is only now emerging in film policy. However, my discussion of films that precede these developments will help give the reader an idea about the position of diversity onscreen before the introduction of these inclusion strategies. Above all, every film included in this work presents a self-conscious engagement with immigrant and minority politics, yet many seldom question the intrinsic logic of the underlying values with which minorities are expected to integrate.

As well as textual and thematic analysis, I also engage with metadata relating to the production and reception contexts in addition to the paratextual material associated with these films. Many of these resources can be sourced from the respective national film institutes as well as expansive data on websites like IMDB Pro. Materials, including interviews with directors and other film personnel are also accessible through established sites like *Variety* and *Cineuropa*.

Chapter Framework

Each of the six chapters draws from a diverse range of texts including social realist dramas, dystopian post-apocalyptic animations, road movie comedies, and Hollywood-inspired revenge thrillers. Here, I will also pay particular attention to the role of genre cinema, especially as this concept is becoming increasingly central in scholarship focused on Nordic film culture and policy from both a historical and contemporary perspective. Broadly, I aim to bridge these varied approaches by providing clear thematic links to the notion of crisis, which I claim finds expression in my selected case studies. Where relevant, this thesis will also delve into the production culture of critical texts, with a particular emphasis on the role of first and second-generation immigrant directors and the extent of practitioner agency in the Nordic film industries. I will now summarise the aims of each chapter in the broader context of our discussion.

Chapter one, *Immigration, Film Policy and the Welfare State: Transforming Approaches to Inclusion*, is designed to give the reader sufficient background on the position of cinema within the broader framework of the welfare states. This will largely consist of exposition

on both historical and contemporary funding infrastructures to establish what kind of influence the nation-state has in influencing film policy. Centralising the role of film in the welfare state is significant for our discussion on the way film is shaped and re-shaped by broader cultural-political trends and economic realities. Consequently, this chapter also considers the infrastructural operations of the Nordic film industries, where historically, state funding has, until recently, favoured certain types of arthouse and 'social problem' films. This has been in keeping with the general perception among the industries that cinema serves an educational or creative role rather than a purely commercial one. This is a perception that has shifted throughout our timeframe. As a result, chapter one builds on previous scholarship and key concepts developed by the likes of Kääpä and Gustafsson (2015) and Nestingen (2008) who map the position of art and genre film in the context of these national film strategies.

I will discuss each country in turn before elaborating on regional collaborative initiatives like the Nordisk Film and TV Fond and the Nordic Council Film Prize. This will be an extension to our discussion in the introduction on Norden where the politics of regional cooperation across the creative sector help us to understand and challenge the notion of a collective Nordic identity. This opening chapter will also include a rundown of data and statistics on immigration in each country, an aspect I discuss alongside film policy in order to rationalise the recent efforts made by the Nordic film industries to explicitly address the lack of diversity in front and behind the camera.

Chapter two, *The Collapse of Multicultural Inclusion: Second-Generation Discontent and the Rise of the Ethnic Crime Film* will explore the emergence and subsequent evolution of the 'ethnic' crime/gang films of the 1990s and 2000s. Specifically, the chapter argues how the tribal politics of racial division evident in these texts reflects the fallout of both the shift towards neoliberalism in the 1980s and the Nordic countries' failure to account for the complexity of their increasingly multicultural makeup. The films in this chapter present race relations in the Nordic countries as firmly in crisis and make a point of locating this crisis in relation to second-generation immigrants. These are not crises faced by newcomers in unfamiliar surroundings, but rather involve those who have grown up

'assimilated' into the dominant host society. However, while they expose hierarchical and oppressive problems with race as a product of a broken system, I propose many of these examples disproportionately frame the crisis from the perspective of a white male protagonist often side-lining a more nuanced critique or understanding of the complexities of ethnicity and exclusion from the welfare state.

Chapter three, *Significant Others: Intercultural Romance and the Buddy Comedy*, argues that the comedy genre has contributed significantly to themes of race and ethnicity in contemporary Nordic film culture. Here, crises of identity are typically 'resolved' through uplifting narratives that conform to what Ellen Rees describes as the 'Nordic quirky feel-good comedy' (2015: 147-159). In these examples, comedy is used as a rhetorical device to facilitate a national fantasy of social integration that reinforces specific ideas about togetherness that ultimately echo the rhetoric of the liberal multiculturalist agenda. I extend this discussion by developing the quirky feel-good concept in relation to themes of ethnic Otherness, arguing how migrant characters function as part of this integration, but often only if they behave as 'good immigrants' and conform to specific expectations established by the dominant ideology. The focus is on how migrant, native, and multicultural identities find expression through the performance of crisis in comedy using stereotyping. Specifically, this involves looking at how comedy uses the crisis of identity mantra and the ethnic Other to restore the white 'ethnic' Nordic character's relationship to their imagined community. Exploring stereotyping, I also identify what I call 'no context characters' which describe migrant or immigrant characters who are stripped of a clear contextual history and background and whose role in the narrative structure is defined by a certain redundancy.

Chapter four, *Boundary Politics: Spatial Expressions of Otherness*, now moves away from more populist genre-orientated cinema and looks towards spatial conceptions of Otherness. Here, I argue how space is used as a visual language to reflect marginality and, in their spatial explorations, the films largely appear to treat places as divorced from their social contexts in a way that challenge the conventional conceptions of belonging seen in chapter Three. These include 'Othered places' like refugee camps, shipping

containers and transnational spaces like Chinese restaurants. The chapter also examines the limitations of these spatial reconfigurations, contending how they can also play host to coded forms of belonging and exclusion.

Chapter five, *Towards a 'Docu-Noir': Crisis Narratives and Stylistic Interventions in Contemporary Documentary Cinema*, focuses on how ethnic identity has become a particular kind of spectacle in Nordic documentary cinema and, as such, I contend these texts walk a fine line between capturing a crisis of identity and manufacturing or contributing to a crisis narrative through their form and construction. Here, I argue that contemporary Nordic documentaries privilege style and emotion over fact and analysis when addressing racial politics. Rather than reflect or interrogate the ongoing crisis of racial discrimination against refugees or even second-generation immigrants, these emerging stylistic conventions form part of what I term the 'docu-noir'. I characterise this as a specific aesthetic and narrative approach that partly reflects the increasing commercialisation of documentary cinema. Primarily, I argue that these examples locate crisis as a symptom of identity politics alone, a fact aided by the dramatic stylization which tends to contribute to a binary sense of debate, i.e. those for and against immigration. This is often at the cost of a more intricate account of the convergent relationships between economic exploitation and the agendas of successive right and centre-right governments who have taken racial politics into the mainstream with loaded language and biased ideological thinking.

Finally, chapter six, *Nostalgia for the Future: Representing Ethnic Identities Amid a Crisis of Labour and Economic Uncertainty*, explores Lauren Berlant's notion of 'crisis ordinariness' (Berlant 2011), where the phenomenon of economic, political, and societal crises has broadly become a normative way of existence where life, especially for those on the margins, revolves around a continual adjustment to new realities brought about by the contingencies and uncertainties of contemporary post-industrial capitalist societies. Here, I explore the term 'precariat' (Standing 2011) as a symptom of neoliberal crisis where migrant-themed narratives are defined by images of work, labour, and economic hardship. This chapter refers back to the themes of 'folkhemmet', arguing how

these films have moved from images of white Nordic characters nostalgic for an idealised vision of the past where migrants were either a hindrance or threat, towards films that position the immigrant as the central focus. In these films, nostalgia for the past becomes nostalgia for the future.

The nature of crisis ordinariness is also reshaping the migrant experience and challenging conventional notions of the 'immigrant film'. The films present us with conflicting representations of mobility. In particular, this includes the upward kind of mobility enjoyed by the European elites and the enforced transnational mobility of migrant workers. While by no means flawless in their approach, these films take a broader stance on the migrant experience, conflating alienation with economic exploitation more forcefully and exploring mutual forms of exclusion where economic marginalisation unites migrants and native characters. Most significantly of all, these films show how austerity and economic crises have helped to manufacture prejudice against ethnic minorities and expose conflicting political agendas. They highlight the widening gap between those forced to move to the region to find precarious work, and the mobility of the neoliberal elites who exploit them. Consequently, because of these economic contexts, I claim these examples present the most radical alternatives to representations of crisis and ethnic Otherness than the five preceding chapters.

In summary, the general aims of the thesis seek to demonstrate how representations of ethnic identity in Nordic cinema are shaped and influenced by broader economic contexts, national self-perceptions of 'Nordicness' and transnational cultural flows. I contend that it is vital to focus here on thematic representations for a number of reasons. Firstly, in a Nordic context, as we shall see, there are longheld perceptions that these countries are free from racial hierarchies and prejudices. It is also important that we consider how these false perceptions are sustained through the power of culture and ideology feeding Nordic exceptionalism. Wider assumptions about particular ethnic groups are often mirrored in the types of cultural representations carved out onscreen. Furthermore, Žižek's work on the culturalisation of politics, which posits that the roles of politics and culture in society have effectively switched places, highlights how

identity politics is fast becoming a key crisis point in the contemporary cultural landscape.

In addition to these considerations, populist anti-immigration rhetoric has become part of mainstream political narratives across Europe and beyond. Its impact on every social, political, and cultural level cannot be overstated. While a transnational understanding of Nordic culture is central to the project, my approach also allows us to understand and interrogate the return of nationalism. Nations are becoming more insular, more nativist and more convinced by those advocating the 'us' versus 'them' mantra. On these issues, and regarding representations of Otherness, the ideological impact of cinema has much to offer in the current fraught global political climate. I thus seek to expand the existing literature on Nordic cinema by making minorities the central consideration. We turn now to the opening chapter where I will explore the historical role of cinema as a cultural institution as well as its influence and social position. This is significant not just because the Nordic states are still largely responsible for funding and regulating content on a domestic level, but also because cinema, more broadly, has been used to strengthen the cultural identity and reputation of the region as a whole.

Immigration, Film Policy and the Welfare State: Transforming Approaches to Inclusion

The Nordic countries are historically associated with emigration,[15] and as it was only in the 1950s that the region began to experience significant waves of immigration from countries like Iraq, Turkey, the former Yugoslavia, Pakistan, and Somalia (Kivisto and Wahlbeck 2013: 10), they are often conceived of (and represented) as ethnically homogenous. However, this assumption needs further qualification. Ethnic minority groups like the Jews have resided in countries like Denmark since the seventeenth century (Bak 2011: 23) and the Romani people as early as the fifteenth century (Simonsen 2011: 92). Furthermore, there are indigenous groups like the Kvens and the Tornedalians as well as the Sámi who have inhabited the geo-cultural region known as Sápmi since prehistoric times. More recent developments have also seen the established presence of Muslim Tartars in nineteenth-century Finland (Martikainen 2009: 117). Additionally, the complex colonial history of the Nordic region has also distorted narratives of ethnic and cultural homogeneity throughout history, particularly in countries like Finland whose independence in the early part of the twentieth century was ushered in under a deeply divisive political and cultural climate.

Before taking a closer look at representations of ethnic Otherness onscreen, we must also consider film policy and the general infrastructure of film production across the Nordic region. This is because, as we discussed in the introduction, the respective Nordic states play a substantial role in supporting and shaping film and media culture. Given this influence, we must consider if there are broader ideological incentives behind this

---

[15] During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, large numbers of people from the Nordic countries emigrated to the United States.

support and whether it has any bearing on the types of films that are produced. This will involve an integrated discussion on relevant texts emerging in the 1970s and 80s, especially those that have coincided with changing attitudes towards newcomers. Part of this discussion includes a brief historical overview of each official Nordic film institute. While film production predates the inauguration of these institutes, most of which emerged post-Second World War, the most significant changes to policy in Nordic film history for our purposes have occurred since these organisations came into being. For instance, the establishment of official government-backed cultural authorities has helped to streamline support for cinema as a medium. This period also coincides with the first significant waves of immigration into the Nordic region, which witnessed the arrival of the first non-white and non-Nordic filmmakers. Where relevant, I will draw attention to particularly significant or pioneering films that reflect the dominant trends emerging in film production during this period.

There is room here to consolidate official population data with some of the emerging film production mandates provided by the film institutes. This will give us a clearer indication of how the cultural industries have responded to ethnic diversity. The late 1970s onwards also saw the arrival of neoliberalism which, according to scholars like Pantti (2000), has directly affected film policy. While an extensive analysis on the position of the indigenous Sámi people, native to Northernmost Sweden, Finland and Norway, is beyond the scope of this thesis, I include an overview of their emerging film industry here as they are included as part of the Nordic countries' visibility and inclusion strategies. While I acknowledge that other marginal film cultures are neglected here, such as those of Greenland and the Faroe Islands, the extensive history of Sámi politics, which has crossed many political and cultural thresholds, helps to give us a comparative perspective on other diversity policies now emerging in the Nordic media industries. I will also use this chapter to outline some of the significant structural transformations that have occurred in the film cultures of these countries since the 1990s, a period that marked the beginning of an overhaul in how the industries operate. Given our regional scope, we must also look at the increasingly cooperative dynamics where we will explore

funding initiatives like the Nordisk Film og TV Fond/Nordic Film and TV Fund (NFTF) which is designed to encourage and facilitate creative partnerships between the five nations. This will merge with our discussion on the Nordic Council Film Prize which is, of course, a central part of Norden's cultural outreach. The key question here is how have the respective states' dominant ideological perceptions of cinema impacted the types of representations we see onscreen?

Nordic Film Production: Institutional Perspectives and Artistic Incentives

The purpose of this section is to outline the position of cinema in relation to the chief cultural authorities, that is, each official film body, since they were established. All five Nordic countries have their own film institutes, and each provides considerable financial and promotional support. Despite developing disproportionately with independent golden age periods of prosperity and crisis throughout the twentieth century, there are several aspects that unite the five Nordic film industries. One such unifying trait is that each respective Nordic film institute has traditionally invested in a trademark style of films characterised by what Kääpä and Gustafsson call 'existential artistry' (2015: 1) or those involving socially conscious subject matter. Indeed, the 'art cinema' label remains a prominent signature brand attached to and associated with Nordic cinema on the international scene and has largely provided the focal point for film scholars. According to Kääpä 'the establishment of film institutes to safeguard the cultural health of the film industries means that they have been able to dictate the direction of domestic cinema at least to a considerable degree' (Kääpä 2014: 106). Indeed, according to Nestingen and Elkington, 'the international profile of national film gained new importance with the rise of the art film in the 1960s. Since then, national cinema has been sustained by the nation-state's investment in film as a form of cultural expression through the national film institutes' (2005: 11).

Regarding the border-crossing potential of Nordic film culture, Bondebjerg and Redvall state that 'A few of the Scandinavian auteurs do in fact have a transnational audience, but the large proportion of Scandinavian films are rarely able to travel, neither in Scandinavia nor in Europe as such' (2011: 14). However, the concept of auteurism has nonetheless played a key role in shaping the reputation of the region's art film landscape abroad. From the bleak, melancholic and existential commentary on the national character seen in the works of Carl Theodor Dreyer, Ingmar Bergman, Roy Andersson, Lars von Trier, Aki Kaurismäki and towards the likes of Lukas Moodysson, art and auteur filmmaking has helped to craft the Nordic countries' global cinematic status for serious and occasionally ground-breaking works.

Although many of these filmmakers found themselves in conflict with the industries over their approach to depicting the nation onscreen (see Kääpä 2010 on Kaurismäki), their work and reputation often carry a certain currency marked by artistic merit. Key scholarly collections addressing the subject include Soila's *The Cinema of Scandinavia* (2005). There have also been a number of focused studies, like Kääpä's work on Mika Kaurismäki in *The Cinema of Mika Kaurismäki: Transvergent Cinescapes, Emergent Identities* (2011) and Thomson's and Hjort's respective independent studies on the Danish Dogma films *Festen/The Celebration* (2013) and *Italiensk for begyndere/Italian for Beginners* (2010), that offer a critical perspective on the concept of auteurism. Tommy Gustafsson also discusses the more problematic implications of this bias towards art-house cinema in the industry and beyond, particularly in relation to how it has helped foster the Nordic countries' reputation abroad for 'quality filmmaking'. According to Gustafsson, the longstanding reputation for exporting revered national art cinema has helped to mask and overshadow the racist stereotyping evident in genre-orientated popular farce, which has, until recently, tended not to travel beyond domestic markets. He states that:

> the fact that use of racial stereotyping has been made invisible is a consequence of the division of art into culture and the mainstream, which is illustrated by film studies' focus on the style and form of a few films, but also by the fact that racism and racial stereotypes are in very poor accordance with "art" (Gustafsson 2014: 150)

The birth of the institutes who came to support this art cinema culture came about in the post-war period. Faced with increasing competition from alternative forms of mass entertainment like television, the Nordic film landscape experienced a radical shakeup during the 1960s. Each respective state began to take film seriously as a mediated form of political address with considerable, far-reaching implications, and as a medium with the capacity for artistic innovation. This resulted in the establishment of several funding initiatives aimed at investing in this newly appreciated art form.

At the same time, as the modern welfare states continued to take shape into the 1950s and beyond, the post-war decades witnessed significant economic expansion. As a result, labour shortages led to an increasing demand for overseas workers across the Nordic region. This initiated a recruitment drive dubbed 'the guest worker scheme' where foreign workers from countries like Turkey, parts of the Middle East, Eastern and central Europe and parts of Africa, became temporary residents and contributed significantly to shaping the foundations of the welfare state. Simultaneously, as the magnitude of wartime suffering and its distinctly racial contexts became increasingly apparent, film culture in the post-war period saw a more sympathetic, if paternalistic empathy develop for the expanding minority populations in the Nordic countries. For the Nordic nations, the post-war decades marked the most prosperous era of the welfare state. When the guest worker programs ended, there was an expectation that foreign workers would return to their original nation-states (Walter 2016: 31-32).

However, many had made the Nordic countries their permanent home, moving their families over and marrying into the host nation. As a result, from the 1970s onwards, the concept of multiculturalism became an established political discourse across the Nordic region. Christiansen and Petersen (2001) argue that in keeping with the desire to maintain a sense of cohesion, the rhetoric of multiculturalism was incorporated into the wider liberal agenda's commitment to social democracy. Thus, the ideology of multiculturalism was conceptualised as part of the narrative of cohesion itself. However, according to Kivisto and Wahlbeck, this presented a problem for the welfare states, as they were faced with either having to accept or overcome difference in society (2013:

326-327). The notion of difference, of course, contradicted the founding principles of the welfare state, where, as we have seen, to be considered equal, one must be considered the same. To contextualise these developments, I will now discuss the film institutes in each country and further elaborate on how the operational practices of each body have shifted in response to wider cultural and political changes.

Sweden

The Swedish Film Institute (SFI) was established in 1963 and was designed to enhance the development of film production. As Furhammar (2003: 262) points out, the SFI was particularly invested in films that were deemed 'important.' According to Soila, the 1960s were viewed as a period of significant redevelopment in the Swedish film industry, and the formal inauguration of the SFI was taken to represent a step-change in the status of cinema (2005: 151). The SFI was not, however, a government agency and its policies where not enshrined in law. Rather, it was designed as a national support agency and was sustained by an agreement between the government and film producers where funding was raised by a 'fee, or levy, of 10 percent on cinema admissions' (Hedling 2016: 63). During the first significant arrival of migrant workers, which began in the 1950s, Sweden never officially adopted a guest worker policy, expecting this labour to stay for only a short-term period (Hammar 1991: 184). Up until this point, Swedish cinema was notable for treating Others with disdain or as objects of anthropological intrigue or sexualised mystique (see Gustafsson 2014: 116-149). By the 1970s and early 1980s, however, onscreen representations of immigrants and minorities had largely shifted away from that of the menacing outsider and filmmakers were now consciously exploring the 'immigrant experience' and the economic, social and cultural challenges faced by newcomers. The other significant development of this period was the emergence of first-generation immigrant directors who began to develop their own perspectives on the subject of socio-cultural alienation. Here, identity politics began to emerge as a key narrative device. However, despite these onscreen shifts, Wright (1998:

258) also highlights how audiences largely failed to take an interest in many of these films and attendance figures reflected a bias towards classic rural melodrama and farce, two genres that dominated the box office before and during the outbreak of the Second World War, and which largely revealed more regressive attitudes to the Other.[16]

Turkish filmmaker Muammer Özer became one of the pioneers of this movement who, after arriving in Sweden in 1977, made his directorial debut with *Splittring/Fragmentation* in 1984. As the title suggests, *Fragmentation* explores an acute cultural and ethnic identity crisis faced by an immigrant family again living in the capital. Here, two sons are caught between Sweden's hedonistic liberal norms and their father's strict Muslim values raising questions about tradition and belonging between two men effectively caught between conflicting cultural identities. The film reinforces Sweden's shifting cultural landscape but also emphasises the country's collective social responsibility towards these so-called 'new Swedes'.[17] Equally significant were accompanying landmark television films like *Svartskallen/Blackskull* (Karabuda, 1981) which follows a young Turkish boy and his family as they attempt to find their feet in Sweden. *Blackskull* attempts to oust stereotypes and explore an 'authentic immigrant' experience based on displacement and longing for the homeland. However, according to Amanda Doxtater (2006) '*Blackskull* suffers from a heavy-handed didacticism typical of many new immigrant experience narratives of 1970s and 80s that critique "Swedish" narrow-mindedness and racism not only at the expense of formal or embodied innovation, but to a certain extent at the expense of the stories of its main characters' (2006: 62). These decades, then, can be understood as a period of 'permissive tolerance', that is, where even films directed by first-generation immigrants that purport to offer a critical or alternative perspective come to reflect back on the egalitarian outlook of the

---

[16] See Wright 1998 for a comprehensive account of ethnic minorities in Swedish cinema between the 1930s and the 1990s.

[17] Also see Lars Andersson and John Sundholm's *The Cultural Practice of Immigrant Filmmaking: Minor Immigrant Cinemas in Sweden* 1950-1990 (2019).

status quo often in ways that overshadow or take for granted the explicit messages of intolerance and prejudice in these films. The effect tends to leave social conventions, in this case, those of the folkhemmet, intact and betrays a brand of tolerance for a specific kind of immigrant; one that conforms to a set of expectations defined by the multicultural agenda.

Indeed, Wright (2005) notes how many filmmakers adopted an authoritarian approach towards their subjects. Johan Bergenstråhle's *Jag heter Stelios/Foreigners* (1972) became one of the first films to frame the subject of immigration by exploring the everyday struggles of Greek migrants living in Sweden's capital, Stockholm. The film was funded by the SFI with a 'quality grant' of SEK 285, 912 (Swedish Film Database no date). *Foreigners* — which was shot in a quasi-documentary style — was concerned with many of the contemporary challenges faced by an emerging social group as they encounter, above all, difficulties with cultural difference. The perceived authenticity of Bergenstråhle's documentary-style approach earned him a prestigious Guldbagge Award in 1973. These awards are the Swedish equivalent of the Academy Awards. However, although designed to dispel stereotypes, the film is shot from a perspective that encapsulates the dominant Swedish attitude towards the Other, which in this case can be characterised by the same implicit sense of paternal authority identified by Wright (2005).

In the 1990s, a number of regional film centres were established across Sweden in what was effectively a process of decentralisation. These 'sub-national' film sites are semi-autonomous in status and operate with support from the EU. Hedling argues that, since the 1990s, these changes have reflected the increasingly transnational fragmentation of the Swedish film landscape where regulatory state control has been weakened (Hedling 2016: 73). The SFI nonetheless retains a considerable role in shaping the direction of the industry. In 2017, the ten percent levy funding infrastructure system ended, and since then, the SFI has been funded entirely by the state (SFI website 2017). In the contemporary climate, and since the introduction of a new 2017 film policy, the state set aside 'SEK 545 million annually for film budget for 2017 and 2018' (Pham 2017).

Along with these changes, Swedish cinema is increasingly recognising the significance of diversity in its policies. With the largest population out of the five countries, currently standing at around 10 million, Sweden recorded 932, 266 foreign nationals in 2018 (Statistics Sweden 2018). The first real step-changes in the film industry regarding diversity have come in response to the disproportionate gender representations onscreen,[18] and this has been both the driving factor of change and the site of much debate in the last five years. In laying out its recognition for diversity, in 2016, the SFI states that 'gender equality and diversity are hallmarks in the area of film' while, at the same time, the institute reinforces the need to develop and produce 'valuable Swedish film' (SFI 2016).

Denmark

Like Sweden, Denmark saw its migrant population increase in the 1960s and 70s through the guest worker scheme with people arriving predominately from Yugoslavia, Turkey, Pakistan and Morocco (Jønsson and Petersen 2012: 100-101). Despite this, it would be several decades before Danish films came to explictly reflect the changes in its social-cultural and ethnic makeup. Although the 1980s and 90s witnessed a steady increase in the number of films involving immigrant characters, during the 1970s, there were sporadic efforts to frame the theme of multiculturalism and associated problems with displacement and inclusion. The Danish Film Institute (DFI) was founded in 1972 but, prior to this, the infrastructure for Danish cinema existed in many forms. According to Granhøj Dam, The Film Fund and The Film Council were established in Denmark in 1938 with other significant reforms occurring in 1964 with the inauguration on the Film Foundation whose funding 'came partly from the cinema ticket tax of 15% and partly

---

[18] The Swedish Film Institute vocally supported the introduction of the so-called Bechdel Test in 2013, which is designed to account for the representation of women onscreen by measuring screen time dedicated to female characters (Morse 2013).

from the cinema grant fee, as well as a smaller annual amount directly from the Ministry of Culture' (Granhøj Dam DFI, no date). The reform of the film industry in 1972 coincided with the government's tumultuous attitude towards immigration.

According to Nannestad, 'in the wake of the first oil price crisis, the recruitment of guest workers ceased in 1973 as part of a general stop to immigration'(2004: 2). Although the context may be different today, this highly conflicted position on immigration is still a major fault line in Danish culture and society, and we shall return to this in more depth in chapter two. As debates over multiculturalism intensified, Voja Miladinovic's[19] *Gæstearbejdere/Guest Workers* (1974) became one of the earliest films to capture an immigrant's perspective in a Danish context. The Yugoslavian director drew on his own experiences in the country as part of the guest worker scheme. In line with these developments, Miladinovic's film follows a Yugoslavian guest worker who, as well as struggling to adapt to working conditions in Denmark, also has to contend with unfair dismissal and deportation. Accordingly, many of the images in *Guest Workers* present a dim outlook on the immigrant experience and the film refuses to ignore the underlying realities faced by migrant labour whose sense of belonging was contingent on the rules and policies of its Danish 'host nation.' *Guest Workers*'s production context offers an insight into how a film dealing with these issues was perceived by the industry. The film was produced by Crone Films[20], and according to the DFI the company emerged after the Danish Film Institute's Film Commissioner Programme in 1972, which 'offered an opportunity for artistic valuable film to receive funding from the state' (DFI website no date). *Guest Workers*, with its focus on contemporary social and cultural challenges faced by outsiders, was therefore viewed as part of the state-funded mandate on support for cinema with a social conscience. In this case, the themes of immigration and socio-cultural integration formed part of that social consciousness.

---

[19] A few years later Miladinovic himself starred as an immigrant in Anders Refn's *Strømer/Copper* (1976) playing a Yugoslavian who is subject to the uncompromising interrogation tactics of a tough Danish detective. Director Anders Refn's son, Nicolas Winding Refn would go on to make Eastern European criminals a regular motif in his films in the 1990s.
[20] Today, Crone Films predominantly produces children's cinema.

Today, the DFI oversees all aspects of funding and promotion and hosts an extensive archive and film library. In 2015, a record 21,000 refugees arrived in Denmark (Bendixen 2019). With an average population of 5.8 million, in the first quarter of 2019 Denmark recorded 256,198 immigrants from western countries and 351,424 from non-western countries (Statistics Denmark 2019). A study[21] conducted by the DFI in 2015 concluded that ethnic diversity was significantly lacking in the Danish film industry and the institute has made a conscious effort to enhance its diversity quotas over the last decade. A 2018 statement on its official website claims that:

> a number of initiatives were launched to ensure that Danish film is developed and enriched by the cultural diversity found in the general population. Casting directors have held workshops for amateurs and professional actors of non-Danish ethnicity and created a bank of names to be used by casting directors throughout the country. A mentor programme has been set up, where experienced filmmakers, including producers, directors and screenwriters, help young colleagues get a foot in the door of the business. Plans are also being drawn up for a special internship programme at production companies. (DFI 2018)

Indeed, perhaps more than any of its Nordic counterparts, over the last decade the DFI has actively invested in the theme of diversity. Intriguingly, these developments have occurred at the same time that Denmark has earned a reputation for some of the most stringent, monocultural policies on immigration in Europe. The fact that the Danish cultural industries have positioned themselves differently, choosing to embrace and endorse diversity proves that we must take care when making casual generalisations about the links between films and their wider cultural and political environments. Additionally, another factor complicating the relationship between politics and culture is the central tenet in Denmark known as *armslængdeprincippet* or the so-called 'arm's length principle' which dictates that matters of cultural policy must be handled by committees that are removed from the direct influence of political players. However, as

---

[21] See further information in 'Undersøgelse af Etnisk Mangfoldighed i Dansk Film/Study on Ethnic Diversity in Danish Film' (in Danish only) (DFI 2015).

clear-cut film policies on diversity are only now emerging, I claim we must look towards the film texts as key indicators to help diagnose how culture and society have responded to significant social change.

Norway

Although Norway also opened its borders to migrant labour to aid economic expansion in the decades following the Second World War, the country did not receive as many immigrants as Sweden. As a result, films involving immigrants have not featured prominently in Norway's film canon, at least until the last two decades. Bakøy argues that Norway had been a 'relatively monocultural nation' owing to its history as a colonized country, and notes that by the 1970s, immigrants made up just 1.5 percent of the population (2010: 148). Today, with a comparable population size to that of Denmark, immigrants made up approximately fourteen percent of Norway's population in 2018 bringing the number to 746,700 with a further 170,000 Norwegians born to immigrant parents (Statistisk sentralbyrå 2018).

The chief financier of cinema falls to the Norwegian Film Institute which operates under the mandate of the Norwegian Ministry of Culture. The NFI's history is a long and complex one with many mergers and reformations since it was officially established in 1955. The NFI has only existed its current form since 2008 when several previous institutional bodies were integrated and, currently, the NFI operates with an annual budget of NOK 625 million (NFI no date). The modernisation of Norway's film industry has occurred through a number of initiatives that have been phased in to revitalise both the image and reach of national film culture. According to Gunnar Iversen (2005: 263), the New Norwegian Film Policy introduced in 2001 has led to an increased interest in Norwegian cinema both domestically and abroad. During this process, a constellation of Norwegian film and audio-visual companies were consolidated, and production frameworks were simplified in order to enhance the brand identity of Norwegian cinema. The 50/50 scheme was introduced simultaneously in which the NFI pledged to

match fifty percent of a project's total budget, providing the other half could be sourced through private capital by the production company (Solum 2016: 191).

Ove Solum asserts that the 1980s represented an increased awareness of global issues and themes within Norwegian cinema as well as concentrated attempt to draw in both domestic and international audiences (1997). Following on from this, Rees (2010: 89) analyses the so-called 'Norwave' phenomenon between 1997 and 2006 which was a term adopted by the industry in an attempt to mimic the international success and recognition of Denmark's Dogme 95 film movement. This term was effectively designed to create a collective identity for Norwegian films that achieved relative success, despite the fact that few of them shared any particular characteristics beyond the fact that they emerged from Norway (Rees 2010: 106). The Norwave phenomenon does demonstrate, however, that the industry was self-consciously aware and was prepared to change its strategy when it came to projecting an image of its film culture, especially to outside markets. The same could be said for more recent developments regarding the industries' diversity policies.

Regarding representation, Norway have become some of the early adopters of domestic policies on ethnic inclusion. This is evident in NFI's White Paper on diversity, unveiled in February 2019 when Norway's Minister of Culture, Tine Skei Grande, announced a conscious drive to enhance the general visibility and presence of women and ethnic minorities in Norwegian film. In a statement encapsulating both these ambitions and Norway's continuing global aspirations, Grande states that '2019 will be a big year for Norway. We want Norwegian talent to pop up everywhere. Our ambition is to push co-productions, co-financing, artistic knowledge, talent development and stimulate changes in Norwegian film and TV drama to have more diversity, representation as well as innovation' (Grande quoted in Pham 2019). The Paper resulted in a 'Diversity Action Plan' running between 2019-2023 which focuses on instigating direct systemic changes regarding how the industry operates through educational workshops and annual diversity quotas to enable Norwegian films to 'reflect

contemporary society in a way that will enable all social groups to experience relevance and representation' (Diversity Action Plan Mandate 2019).

Iceland

With a total population in the region of just 350,000, fifteen percent of Iceland's residents are foreign-born according to the country's official population statistics in 2018 with the majority coming from Poland (Statistics Iceland 2018). The Icelandic film industry is a relative newcomer having established itself in the 1970s (Söderbergh Widding 1998: 91). After relying entirely on co-production support from the other Nordic nations for decades, following a campaign in the 1970s, the state established a fund to support national film production and an emerging generation of filmmakers.[22]

Currently, the Icelandic Film Centre (IFC) is a small state agency compared to the other Nordic institutes. There are only five full-time employees and the documentation of policies and policymaking is not as extensive as the larger organisations. However, ICF does operate under a clear legal framework and have a set policy mandate from the Icelandic Ministry of Culture. Additionally, Iceland has a Film Board that serves as a semi-independent advisory committee for the Minister on the goals and objectives of film policy in Iceland. To date, inclusion and ethnic diversity have yet to play a substantial role in Icelandic film policy rhetoric. However, like Sweden and Norway, there has been a recent emphasis in gender equality and representation in film.

Several contemporary examples best illustrate how Icelandic cinema is embracing the theme of transnational identity politics. One particularly noteworthy example is Friðrik Þór Friðriksson's *Á köldum klaka/Cold Fever* (1995), a road movie which thematises an intercultural encounter by playing on popular stereotypes (see Thomson 2006a: 149-174).

---

[22] Astrid Söderbergh Widding (1998: 92) notes that a large percentage of emerging Icelandic directors were educated abroad, and many attended prominent film schools in the other Nordic countries.

The film follows a Japanese tourist visiting Iceland to honour the spot where his parents died some years earlier. While his transnational odyssey through the country's otherworldly landscapes do not foreground immigration as an expressly political subject per se, it offers a curious view of this small country and its relationship with the outside world through the use of contrasting foreign characters. Baltasar Kormákur's *101 Reykjavík* (2000) and *Hafið/The Sea* (2002) also appear to explore similar themes, placing the 'smallness' of Iceland in a broader transnational context. Irish-Icelandic director Róbert Ingi Douglas explores the comic potential of interculturalism in his upbeat romantic dramedy *Maður eins og ég/A Man Like Me* (2002) about alienated Icelander Júlli (Jón Gnarr) who falls for Chinese waitress Qi (Stephanie Che). In a different context, Ólaf de Fleur draws on Hollywoodized narrative conventions and genre structures (see Vilhjalmsson (2012: 74-75) in his crime thriller *Borgríki/City State* (2011)[23] which follows Sergej (Zlatko Krickic), a Serbian immigrant who enacts revenge on the ruthless gang who attacked him and his pregnant wife. In contrast to Friðrik Þór Friðriksson and Baltasar Kormákur's earlier self-reflective explorations, aside from the language spoken, Norðfjörð (2015: 61-76) notes that very little else in *City State* directly relates to Iceland, reflecting an increasing preoccupation with immigrant politics in Icelandic cinema. More recently still, directional debuts like Ísold Uggadóttir's *Andið eðlilega/And Breathe Normally* (2018) are making headway into representations of shared experiences between refugees and native Icelanders united by common struggles. As the smallness of Iceland's population and the context of its isolated geographical position are often subjects built into its film culture, it is also worth considering other 'small' contexts, namely in relation to the emerging indigenous film and media industries of the Nordic circumpolar region.

---

[23] Jóhannesson's is also known for his documentary *Africa United* (2005) which focuses on a multicultural football in Iceland.

Indigenous Others: Screening the Sámi People

Here, I will also briefly address the contested onscreen representations of the indigenous Sámi populations who largely reside in the northernmost parts of Sweden, Norway, Finland and Russia in a geo-cultural region known as Sápmi. Although an in-depth exploration of these films is beyond the scope of this thesis, as the Sámi regularly face discrimination in Nordic film and popular culture, I aim to provide a summary of both historical depictions and more recent developments where we are witnessing an authorial shift towards a 'new wave' Sámi-led production culture. Cinematic representations of the Sámi can be traced back to as early as 1914 with examples like pioneering Swedish filmmaker Victor Sjöström's *Högfjällets dotter*/*Daughter of the Peaks* (see Dahlquist 2015: 279-885) and early melodramatic films like the Finnish *Noidan kirot*/*The Curse of the Witch* (Puro, 1927) which play up the natural 'exoticness' of the Sámi's diverse cultural ancestry. *The Curse of the Witch* revolves around a farm cursed by a vengeful Sámi shaman called Jantukka who was murdered during a conflict with the locals. Although subject to an extensive history of cultural, political, and economic assimilation strategies at the hands of their Nordic hosts, much like the Romani and traveller populations, the perceived 'otherworldliness' of the Sámi has long provided visual and thematic source material for Nordic filmmakers looking to capture the 'authenticity' of Sámi cultural traditions and practices. The Sámi represent a culturally, socially, and linguistically varied population whose practices and histories are in no way uniform. In the cultural imaginaries of the dominant host populations, however, this tendency to conflate Sáminess with 'artisanal' imagery in primitive or romantic ways

has often reduced them to symbolic or tokenesque figures of fascination.[24] Wright (1998: 148-179) cites the post-war years as a period marked by an intense interest in Sáminess. Indeed, Per Høst' *Same-Jakki/Same Jacket* frames Sápmi through a 'docu-fictional' lens capturing the Sámi as they struggle and triumph over the elements.[25] Linguist Anne-Kari Skarðhamar describes the inherent problems with Høst's approach:

> The film director wants to inform and encourage empathy and insight, nevertheless the result is ambiguous. The narrator's voice-over expresses a romantic admiration for Sami culture, but his commentaries simultaneously tend to indicate a picture of the happy savage, a primitive, but extremely clever marginal tribe in the wilderness. (Skarðhamar 2008: 297)

Similarly, Monica Kim Mecsei (2015) refers to the construction of the Sámi as 'noble savages' (2015: 72), an Othering trend where Sáminess was defined through dark mysticism, shamanistic abilities, perceived wisdom and, in perhaps another parallel with the Roma, a 'closeness' with the natural environment. In addition to ethnographic documentaries traversing Lapland life, 1952 saw the debut of Erik Blomberg's renowned fiction film *Valkoinen peura/The White Reindeer*, a pioneering Finnish horror film that consolidated mythic elements of Finnish and Sámi folklore into a story about a young Sámi woman who is turned into a demonic, flesh-eating reindeer. Similarly, as we move into the 1970s, Rauni Mollberg's erotically charged drama *Maa on syntinen laulu/The Earth is a Sinful Song* (1973) depicts the Sámi as primitive peoples mired by a culture of alcoholism and violence. Although there is a clear divergence here from the types of representations evident in *Same Jacket*, once again, Mollberg mines the landscape for suitable analogies between wild, untamed nature and the apparent primordial ways of the Sámi.

---

[24] This enduring legacy of crude caricaturing persists in recent shows like the Swedish *Midnattssol/Midnight Sun* (Stein and Mårlind 2016 -).
[25] Per Høst was also well regarded for his outlandish documentaries set outside Norway.

However, in 1987, the release of Nils Gaup's *Ofelaš/Pathfinder*[26] marked the first feature-length production directed by a native Sámi filmmaker. The following year, *Pathfinder* was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film and, as result of its extraordinary critical and commercial success, the film marks a watershed moment in what has been dubbed the 'revitalization of Sámi culture' in the 1980s (Pearson 2016: 387). *Pathfinder* was born from an infamous 1,000-year-old Sámi folklore legend about a young Sámi boy, Aigin (Mikkel Gaup) who is forced to confront a mysterious group of plunderers after they slaughter his family. Gaup uses the film to build a positive image of Sámi fortitude where Aigin must rely on his canny abilities to navigate the snowy tundra and manipulate the enemy over the edge of a cliff where they fall to their deaths.[27] Christensen attributes *Pathfinder*'s popularity to its blend of internationally established Hollywood genre conventions where it strategically conflates folklorist Sámi heroism with tropes borrowed from the western (Christensen 2015: 175-190). Gaup's later offering, *Guovdageaidnu Stuimmit/The Kautokeino Rebellion* (2008), dramatises an infamous uprising in 1852 where several Sámi rebels revolted against Norwegian attempts to Christianize the local population. Like *Pathfinder*, the general thrust of the film appears to encourage the Sámi to unite under a strong and cohesive identity. Given the thematic trends identified here, issues about colonialism and cultural authenticity have become key areas of contention for Sámi filmmakers. Debates on Gaup's films tend to centre on how he effectively re-appropriates the 'exotic' qualities identified by Skarðhamar. However, this approach has met with criticism for nonetheless playing up similar reductive stereotypes reflected in films produced by the host populations throughout Nordic film history (Moffat 2017: 22-23).

[26] *Pathfinder*'s success also coincides wider trends in Norway's changing relationship with Hollywood genre cinema (see (Iversen 2005: 261-279).
[27] The political/economic turmoil over the construction of a hydro-electric dam in Finnmark, Norway caused widespread upheaval and violent retaliation, divided activist groups and the revitalisation was linked attempts to rebuild a collective identity among the Sámi.

However, there are several notable exceptions to these kinds of representations. Lars Göran Pettersson's *Bázo* (2003) for instance, bucks this tradition by offering a more nuanced and challenging view of the Sámi with its focus on poverty, dysfunctional families, and violence in the contemporary Sápmi region, capturing a reality far from the images of perceived 'spiritual authenticity' evident in both Nordic and Sámi cinema. Paul-Anders Simma's fiction film *Sagojogan ministeri/The Minister of State* (1997) set during WWII in Finnish-Swedish Sápmi, focuses on intercultural border politics, and playfully mocks ideas of nationalism and cultural authenticity on all sides. Katja Gauriloff's documentary *Huuto tuuleen/A Shout into the Wind* (2007) unpacks and challenges images of Sámi exoticness by focusing on what Kääpä calls the 'banal everydayness' (2016: 147) of Sámi fighting petty bureaucracy in Finland (2016: 147) of Sámi fighting petty bureaucracy in Finland. Here, the focus is on the everyday life of Sámi who do not live in accordance with traditional Sámi cultural customs. Pettersson, Gauriloff and Simma continue to push boundaries and challenge accepted notions of visual and cultural authenticity on both sides of the divide. The work of other Sámi filmmakers is also increasingly attracting attention outside the region with more recent additions like Amanda Kernell's multi-award winning *Sameblod/Sami Blood* (2016) again drawing on the Nordic countries' lengthy colonial history. Equally, Swedish-Sámi filmmakers like Liselotte Wajstedt are blurring the distinctions between 'native' and 'host' with experimental artistic documentaries like *Sámi Nieida Jojk/Sámi Daughter Yoik* (2007) which functions as a 'living journal' using stop-motion montage, animation, and collage to explore her conflicted position caught in-between Swedish and Sámi culture. Similarly, Gauriloff's *Kuun metsän Kaisa/Kaisa's Enchanted Forest* (2016) and Norwegian-Sámi filmmaker Ellen-Astri Lundby's *Min Mors Hemmelighet/Suddenly Sami* (2009) draw on the themes of maternal identity politics using first-person narrative structures to account for displacement and alienation from multiple and often conflicting perspectives.

These complex and intriguing transformations are also evident off-screen. Recent developments have shifted focus to the Norwegian-based International Sámi Film

Institute (ISFI), a semi-autonomous production company focused on the development and dissemination of indigenous cinema. The ISFI's rapidly expanding and increasingly transnational outlook is paving the way for indigenous film production worldwide. Their recent outputs include the *7 Sámi Stories*, a series of short films produced between 2014-2015 that broadly reflect themes of empowerment through nature and the re-working of Sámi mythology. Gaup's legacy has had a lasting impact on the organisation, and his collaboration on the board of directors signifies his strong role in the Institute's policy-building strategies.[28]

Despite these positive developments, questions remain over the ISFI's language bias where there is a clear preference for funding productions made in the Sámi languages. There are also matters related to who commands true authorial control over the institute, especially given how financial regulation largely rests with the Norwegian Film Institute. These host organisations reserve the right to challenge the type of content selected for production by the ISFI and hold power to withdraw funding if productions do not meet their expectations. These behind the scenes realities raise questions over practitioner agency and issues related to authenticity among directors from minority backgrounds.

Finland

Like its Nordic counterparts, Finland's film industry is supported by the state under the authority of the Ministry of Education and Culture. The Finnish Film Foundation (FFF) emerged in 1969 and, as of 2017, 'The Foundation handed out EUR 24 million in support for the production, distribution and exhibition of films' with production support 'given to an average of 80 films per year' (Rantanen 2018: 8).

---

[28] See Moffat (2016) *Negotiating the Thresholds: Sámi Cinema & the Politics of Identity*. Master of Research. Bangor University.

Mervi Pantti's work (2000) explores the relationship between cinema and the welfare state in a Finnish context. She concludes that, since the founding of the Finnish Film Foundation, there have been distinct correlations between the developments in film policy and those of the welfare state. Continuing this line of argument, Kääpä states how 'the slow but escalating dilution of the welfare state into a more mixed economy, combining both socialist and capitalist principles, and lately into neoliberal politics is mirrored in the role of the Foundation whose policies are increasingly directed towards integration with other (read commercial) funding sources' (2014: 106).

Unlike Sweden and Denmark, immigration into Finland has remained relatively low except for recent years where the refugee crisis in 2015 has seen the population increase fairly dramatically. With a population of around 5.5 million in 2018, the number of immigrants stands at 257,572 with 4,548 asylum seekers and 750 refugees (National Statistics Finland 2018). Before this, the first refugees granted asylum arrived in Finland in 1973 from Chile as political exiles (Hiltunen 2016: 235). Perhaps as a result of these figures, there is currently very little research on the position of immigrants in Finnish film history either in front or behind the camera. What is also clear is that, up until the last decade, the representation of ethnic diversity in Finnish cinema has been a distinct rarity. The parallels between the Finnish welfare state and the evolving film policies of the FFF are significant for us, especially as we are examining the role of other institutions in influencing the image of Nordic cinema. It is to these other regional bodies to which I now turn.

Norden and the Nordisk Film and TV Fond

Considering the contemporary funding and support mechanisms, we must also refer to The Nordic Council, and, by extension, the geo-cultural body known as Norden, and the active cultural role they play in the Nordic media industries. The Nordic Council works closely with their subsidiary organisation the Nordisk Film and TV Fond (NFTF), a regional body which provides financial support for a wide range of Nordic productions.

Founded in 1990 and with an annual budget of NOK 100 million, in addition to support from each independent film institute, the fund is another significant investor in Nordic film culture. The Council is one of seventeen partner organisations which subsidise the fund. The Nordic Council of Ministers is also involved in consulting with professionals in the film and media industries.

In the NFTF's 2015 annual report, the Council was involved in discussions about the future direction of the industries, and as a financial partner in the fund, Council ministers sat on the Board of Directors, overseeing the strategic and financial infrastructure. As the report highlights, these board members are certified experts in the Nordic film industries, reinforcing the significance of films, particularly the 'artistic' kind, as a source of cultural currency and investment for the Nordic Council. Norden plays a critical role in outlining the region's collective identity through fighting social injustice and campaigning for equality. However, as we have seen in the introduction, Norden has a tendency to project a collective self-perception of the region as exceptional, especially regarding the approach to dealing with global themes like immigration on both local and regional levels. This projection extends to the cultural identity of the region. As well as investment in the infrastructure of Nordic film culture, the Nordisk Film and TV Fond is responsible for giving out the annual Nordic Council Film Prize.

The Prize, which amounts to DKK 350,000 (or approximately €47,000), was first awarded in 2002 to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Nordic Council. Initially intended as a single event, the Prize was made a permanent feature of the Council's commitment to boosting the regional film market and supporting Nordic film production. Decided by a jury of experts from each country who work independently of their national film institutes, the Norden's website outlines the basic criteria for nominees and winners by stating how the Prize is 'awarded to a full-length feature that has roots in Nordic culture and displays high standards of artistic quality and originality. Innovation is also weighted heavily.' (Norden, no date). The objectives of the Prize and its associated criteria represent a consolidation of the respective Nordic film institutes' primary goals – to invest in a film culture with strong production values and a sense of 'Nordicness.'

This is significant for us as, again, the Prize indicates a shared regional aspiration regarding the projection of a homogenous Nordic identity bound by exceptionalism. I claim we must look at how Norden's role as a soft power is communicated through culture, especially as the body has no actual constitutional authority in directly changing domestic policies. This makes film and media culture a primary site of investigation.

Nordic Cool: Genre Cinema and Recent Transformations in the Nordic Film Industries

As we have seen above, although they have developed along different lines and operate in different ways, one common thread uniting these five institutes is the active role of the state in governing the infrastructure and policy mandates of film production. The second aspect that unifies these five industries is their shared globalising ambitions to reach both domestic and international audiences, using policy to address key issues like gender inequality and, more recently still, the lack of ethnic diversity. To explain these operational changes, we must look at the last two decades, in particular. Roughly, from the 1990s onwards as we have seen, structural and operational transformations in the Nordic film industries have radically altered the relationship between institutional support and the aforementioned form of national art cinema.[29]

The results have led to the emergence of genre cinema in the mainstream marketplace. Recent scholarship addressing genre in the small nation film cultures of the Nordic region has blossomed with anthologies like Kääpä and Gustafsson's *Nordic Genre Film* (2015) exploring the depth and variation of the subject and the evolving economic role of cinema. Such sea changes can be characterised by a move in the industry to consciously invest in the commercial potential of genre filmmaking.

---

[29] Throughout the 1960s, 70s and 80s there was a sharp increase in the number of imported films, with Europe and the United States now dominating the domestic market.

According to their analysis, these structural changes have occurred because of technological developments, allowing aspiring filmmakers to access global platforms. Secondly, a new generation of filmmakers influenced by 1980s Hollywood genre cinema has helped to modernise film policy. Finally, many of these emerging filmmakers and producers represent the increasing professionalisation of cinema in the Nordic countries and who are increasingly invested in training and education-based resources to support aspiring practitioners. These transitions have seen the cultural position of Nordic film culture change whereby the region's genre film productions are now regarded as internationally competitive.[30]

Again, in this context, it is worth considering how this commercialisation impacts the representational politics of subjects like race and ethnic identity. Are immigrant-themed narratives concentrated in particular genres and what, if any, difference does the artistic stamp of approval that comes with state support make to how representations are constructed? Changing film policy incentives and a general diversification of funding streams have affected the Nordic countries' long-held reputation for what could be considered 'prestige' productions operating within certain ideological or artistic constraints. However, while the ushering in of genre production over the last twenty years has seen a distinct rise in support for films that fall outside these lines, certain 'artistic' production standards remain a central priority for all five film institutes. Indeed, as we shall see, the cultural hallmark of approval that comes with state support is still an evident reality in spite of the re-positioning of genre in the mainstream.

Consequently, we must also consider the some of the scholarly concepts that have emerged in response to these developments. I explore many of these examples as a distinct integration of genre and prestige, that is, films that skirt the lines between the ideological leanings of progressive inclusive politics, artistic innovation and the conventions of genre cinema. Such blends of genre and art do not necessarily, as I shall

---

[30] See Kääpä and Gustafsson (2015: 1-21).

argue, compromise the integrity of progressive politics or the efforts to strengthen the representation of minorities onscreen. Rather, we must consider how the move towards commercial filmmaking impacts the way these films attempt to differentiate themselves in an international marketplace and whether images of national identity or inclusion are affected by the ambitions to appeal to both domestic and international audiences. To address this further, I now elaborate on Andrew Nestingen's term, the 'medium concept' film which is an idea that attempts to encapsulate films that offer a hybridised mix of genre and art.

Medium Concept

According to Nestingen, 'medium concept' films represent a unique permutation of genre and art films, where tropes and conventions from both types of cinema effectively form a hybrid. Nestingen states that 'medium concept can be understood as filmmaking that involves the adaptation of genre models and art-film aesthetics; an engagement with political debates, lending the films cultural significance; and that integrates with these elements a marketing strategy designed to reach a specific audience' (Nestingen 2008: 53). Thus, in their negotiation of multiple stylistic and narrative themes, medium concept films are able to simultaneously engage with immersive weighty subject matter (typically those seen in 'high art' cinema) without compromising on the appeal of a genre-orientated aesthetic. Nestingen also emphasises how over the last twenty years, the medium concept format has become a key mode of addressing contemporary issues, including those centred on ethnicity and belonging (2008: 63).

A prime candidate for this mix of genre and art is Swedish-Iranian director Reza Parsa's *Före stormen/Before the Storm* (2000). As the Swedish film industry experienced a transitional phase in the 1990s, Rochelle Wright (2005) points out how the millennium brought with it a new wave of more nuanced films focused on ethnic identity, where several key titles were produced by second-generation filmmakers. According to

Wright, Swedish cinema in the post-millennium period presents immigrants as a 'self-evident' part of Sweden (2005). She cites *Before the Storm* as an especially significant example. The film was produced with support from both the Swedish Film Institute and the Nordisk Film and TV Fond and received a Guldbagge nomination. Here, I claim we can use the medium concept idea to better understand the way Parsa's film operates on both on a narrative level, but also how it has emerged as part of a more recent shift in the direction of minority politics onscreen. In the film, first-generation immigrant taxi driver Ali (Per Graffman) leads a settled and happy life in Sweden with his Swedish wife and two teenage daughters. However, when he receives a phone call from his native country, an unspecified part of the Middle East, his life is turned upside down. Ali's mysterious past as a former resistance fighter of an unnamed war is exposed, and he is forced to confront the secrets he left behind. The film lacks context in regard to Ali's home country and the war in which he was involved. With no specific ethnic or cultural framework to draw from, the audience is instead left to ponder the more existential questions on the nature of belonging. Elaborating on this strategy, Wright states how:

> throughout the narrative, Ali's immigrant status, ethnic identity, and position within Swedish society are of secondary importance. Neither does the film focus on ethnic conflict in the international arena, but rather on Ali's moral quandary and the impossibility of erasing the past or determining the course of future events (Wright 2005: 69)

In true medium concept fashion, *Before the Storm* combines familiar tropes from thriller, drama, and action cinema with a serious 'artistic' appeal to pressing contemporary issues; in this case, this discussion also extends to how the film questions the position and relevance of the immigrant film label. Although depictions of racism play a role in the film, Wright argues that *Before the Storm* represents an important step change in representing minorities in Swedish cinema. In the context of migrant-themed narratives over the last twenty years, the significance of the medium concept film continues to resonate. Wright positions this film's nuanced and multifaceted approach to diasporic displacement as part of a step change in the history of migrant narratives. For her, the

film represents a break with the problematic immigrant film label, a divergence that is perhaps also aided by the familiar commercially orientated elements of its narrative structure. Rather, its artistic relevance is rooted in its universal appeal to themes of love, retribution and reunification that are not specific to race, creed or religious affiliation. I use the medium concept idea to explore how immigrants are used to embody times of crisis, but also maintain a level of artistic merit and commercial relevance.

Conclusion

The image of the ethnic Other has always played a role in shaping and reflecting the onscreen politics of these small national cinemas. Equally, off-screen developments, from socioeconomic and economic expansion and the emerging multicultural realities of the post-war period, are closely intertwined with the representational politics that we have explored here. By the 1970s and 80s, immigrant-themed narratives became the focus of sympathetic, if paternalistic, interest from filmmakers. However, this era can also be understood as one that ushered in a wave of first-generation immigrant filmmakers exploring cultural clash narratives. In contemporary representational contexts, we are beginning to see an increasingly self-conscious and political retort aimed at the status quo's limited and often reductive racial and ethnic stereotypes. As we have seen, these developments are also reflected in the diversity policies now emerging from each respective film institute. Indeed, what has also become clear is how these institutes have played (and continue to play) a defining role in shaping the film cultures of this small region. The direction of these institutes has shifted to account for the increasingly transnational ambitions of a new generation of filmmakers.

As in *Before the Storm*, first-and second-generation directors are increasingly demanding more authorial control over the types of narratives involving immigrant identities. Equally, developments in the respective film institutes have given rise to a radical shift in the outlook and approaches to cinematic identity once bound up by specific stylistic and thematic criteria. What is also clear across the board, however, is

how characterisations of immigrants and ethnic minorities have been used in times of crisis to reflect the social conventions. As we have seen, many of these cinematic trends were not merely part of a superficial media culture echo chamber, but rather reflected social consciousness and policy. To explore this notion further, I now turn to a genre of medium concept cinema focused on gangsters that broadly established itself in the 1990s where the multicultural idealism peddled in the 1970s has utterly failed to materialise. Here, the theme of crisis acts as an implicit formula for constructing contemporary representations of immigrants on Nordic screens.

Two

The Collapse of Multicultural Inclusion: Second-Generation Discontent and the Rise of the 'Ethnic' Crime Film

Since the initial onscreen explorations of ethnic identity and Otherness in the 1970s and 80s, there has been a considerable rise in films addressing topics related to immigration and race relations. The 1990s ushered in a series of films centred on gang violence, organised crime and general discontent in the Nordic welfare societies. These gritty social realist texts are typically set in dilapidated urban locations and present us with characters in crisis. Above all, many of these examples offer up a cynical view on multiculturalism and inclusion by pitting different ethnic gangs against each other. I claim this form of ethnic tribal politics reflects the neoliberal dismantling of the welfare states in the 1980s and the ideological move towards individualism. I also argue this trend captures the mood of the political agenda, when attitudes towards ethnic minorities became more openly hostile following renewed anti-immigrant political campaigns in the 2000s, particularly, as we shall see, in Denmark.

Following on from Loftsdóttir and Jensen's argument, I also discuss how a crisis of identity politics is central to understanding these texts, drawing parallels between crisis and failed assimilationist strategies. I follow these developments from the mid-1990s, focusing specifically on depictions of racial division in several key texts. These include the Danish Michael Noer's *Nordvest/Northwest* (2013), Michael Noer and Tobias Lindholm's *R: Hit First, Hit Hardest* (2010), Omar Shargawi's *Gå med fred, Jamil/Go with Peace, Jamil* (2008) and Ruben Östlund's controversial Swedish film *Play* (2011).

The Danish media continues to play a critical role in influencing the perception of immigrants and, as the impact of mediatised images cannot be understated, I choose to emphasise the Danish case in this chapter. This is not to say, of course, that the influence of the media is any less significant in the other Nordic countries. However, Denmark's

media culture has been highlighted again and again over its overtly anti-immigrant position. A 2019 study (Hovden and Mjelde 2019: 138-157) on the immigration debate in Scandinavian newspapers between 1970 and 2016 identifies a particularly prevalent trend in the way Denmark has framed the subject. According to their analysis, Danish newspapers, more so than in other Scandinavian countries, employ a 'threat frame' to their stories about immigration more than a 'victim frame', meaning that immigrant-themed stories are typically presented in a manner that implies they threaten society (Hovden and Mjelde 2019: 152).

This chapter's non-chronological order is based on my interpretation of the strengths and weaknesses of the gangster motif as a device for exploring ethnic identity politics. I begin with a short historical exploration of the genre, including Nicolas Winding Refn's iconic *Pusher* films (1996-2005) and those emanating from other Nordic contexts and then move on to the four main case studies. The four studies, three from Denmark and one from Sweden, represent four clear strands of the genre. *Northwest* comes first on the basis that it represents a more superficial play on racial stereotyping. By contrast, *R* is used to illustrate a more complex handling of manufactured ethnic barriers set inside a prison and *Go with Peace, Jamil* provides an interesting transition into a discussion on race and a different kind of ethnic segregation, in this case, the so-called 'parallel society.' Lastly, *Play* is introduced as an 'artistic' variant of the more action-based stylisation of the previous three examples. The first three films allow us to contextualise the main points on the gangster film and its main features, whereas *Play*'s heavier art-house tendencies provide a neat way of bringing us back to the continuing presence and significance of art cinema in the broader context of our discussion on genre.

Although the primary focus is on the themes underpinning these representations, in some cases I also acknowledge the wider impact of these films, including anecdotal accounts from directors who have faced difficulties in the industry when attempting to bring unconventional 'non-Nordic experiences' to the fore. To open the discussion, however, I begin by tracing the emergence of the Nordic 'gangster genre' back to the late

1980s, when tensions over multiculturalism and neoliberal politics began to surface in both political and cultural forums.

Trouble on the Estate: The Beginnings of the Nordic Gangster Film

Brief explorations of the gangster genre's history allow us to build a picture of how the gangster figure can be used to reflect wider political and economic movements. Catherine Nickerson's account (2010) of the pioneering American gangster cinema of the 1920s and 30s explores this direct link between the gangster motif and rising socio-economic tensions. Accordingly, Nickerson claims how the hardships of the Great Depression and the widening social divides brought about by an increasingly individualist-driven form of capitalism in the decades following the crash gave rise to the onscreen gangster. Many of these pernicious characters emerged as an embodiment of the economic climate, exploiting loopholes in the socio-economic systems. Nickerson also draws attention to the genre's longstanding association with ethnicity and how popular images of the archetypal 'ethnic' criminal have contributed to negative onscreen stereotypes. The Irish, Italian, and Jewish mafias, the Triads and South American cartels have all shaped the legacy of the American gangster movie (Nickerson 2010: 111). While these 'Othering' characteristics often appear to be constructed as a direct threat to the 'traditional' values of the host nation in question, the gangster figure also represents a twisted embodiment of an American identity. Examining how this embodiment manifests in a Nordic context is also key to my discussion especially because, as I have argued in chapter one, characterisations of the Other onscreen in the mid-part to late part of the twentieth century served to personify a sense of the cultural and political zeitgeist regarding the inherent 'values' or 'cohesiveness' of a Nordic society responding to multiculturalism. This was particularly the case regarding representation in art films and those with a social or educational purpose.

However, the longstanding connections between genre cinema and themes of ethnic identity identified by Nickerson are also evident in a Nordic context. For these reasons, it is important to acknowledge the wider political events occurring when the genre first emerged. By the 1990s, mass unemployment, particularly in Sweden and Finland, had taken effect and cuts to public spending in line with an increasing shift towards neoliberal politics led to widespread disillusionment with the failings of the fabled welfare model. In addition to these mounting social pressures, countries like Sweden also witnessed a rise in far-right fanaticism and anti-immigrant rhetoric. Alongside more public displays of anti-immigrant sentiment by these emerging right-wing groups, another significant landmark political event occurred; the political assassination of the prominent social democratic Prime Minister and equal rights campaigner Olof Palme in 1986. The murder stunned the whole region and led to serious questions about the role of egalitarianism in society. Although it remains unsolved, there was much speculation on the motive, particularly as Palme's positive position on immigration was a well-founded part of his political agenda.

The cultural reaction to Palme's murder and an emerging anti-immigrant bias also made its way on screen. Swedish director Suzanne Osten, who according to Tytti Soila has 'taken a militant attitude in the treatment of the immigrant issue' (1998: 219), released *Tala! Det är så mörkt/Speak Up! It's So Dark*, 1993), exploring the interaction between volatile neo-Nazi skinhead and gang member Søren (Simon Norrthon) and his Jewish psychiatrist, Jacob (Etienne Glaser). The film largely focuses on Søren's reconciliation with his own fears of abonnement and unresolved issues between him and his absent father. Søren's gradual self-understanding is facilitated by Jacob who perseveres despite Søren's vile anti-Semitism. Søren even comes to recognise Jacob as a substitute father-figure. However, as Slane notes (2001: 193), the film is largely an exercise in explaining away racial hatred as a matter of unresolved internal conflict, where recourse to fascist violence is found in self-understanding. *Speak Up!* is arguably informed by the political climate surrounding Palme's assassination. Films like *Speak Up!* appear to use the theme of psychoanalysis as a tool of national self-reflection especially

with regard to the increasingly tenuous political, social and economic relations. While Osten's film firmly places fascist movements in the present, I claim the self-effacing work of these directors reflect a crisis of conscience in the Swedish nation about how to deal with its own identity politics and merge conflicting perspectives with the collective spirit at the heart of its welfare institutions.

As well as self-reflective and insular takes on the genre, more recent examples include Daniel Espinosa's Swedish *Snabba Cash/Easy Money* (2010-2013) where the gangster motif is again used to explore the limits of Swedish neoliberal politics (Tapper 2015: 104-119). Ulrik Imtiaz Rolfsen's *Izzat* (2005) and its sequel *Haram* (2014) continue the theme in Norway. Other variations explore the 'comic' potential of the genre where the rough treatment of immigrants is played for laughs in examples like Lasse Spang Olsen's *I Kina Spiser de Hunde/ In China They Eat Dogs* (1999) which pays homage to iconic transatlantic pop culture figures like Quentin Tarantino. Finland and Iceland have also seen aspects of the genre used to explore neo-Nazism in *Leijonasydän/Heart of a Lion* (Karukoski, 2013), as well as institutionalised financial corruption and criminal underworlds in the aforementioned Icelandic thriller *Borgríki/City State* (Johannesson, 2011). More broadly in the Nordic region, gang violence narratives have become a vehicle for framing a distinctly 'ethnified' brand of identity politics echoing the types of Nordic anxiety narratives seen throughout history cinematic history.

However, although these ethnic associations have crossed over into the Nordic variations of the genre, I want to explore more culturally specific aspects of the these cases by interpreting this genre as a response to immigration policies as well as general attitutes represented in the media over the last few decades. As aforementioned, this is particularly relevant for our discussion on the Danish cases where I attribute the particular prevalence of Danish gangster films specifically to the country's ideological anti-multiculturalist attitude. Despite the emerging multicultural realities of post-War Denmark, ethnicity in Danish cinema largely remained absent between the 1950s and the 1980s. In wider society, even with their actively positive role during the guest worker phase, attitudes towards immigrants began to shift in the 1970s. Although the oil crisis

did have an impact on Denmark in the early 1970s, the welfare state persevered until the global economic downturn hit in the late 1980s. Fears over rising unemployment apparently fuelled division between ethnic groups. The other barrier between ethnic Danes and so-called 'new Danes'[31] was the perception that some cultures and religions were less susceptible to integration. The far-right embraced this mantra and seized the opportunity to paint a picture, particularly of Muslim immigrants, as inherently less willing to adapt to Danish cultural norms and social 'values' (Hjort 2005: 240-241). This particular outlook remains central to the immigration debate in Denmark, something I shall explore in more depth later. With such impressions of immigrants, particularly those from the Middle East, circulating in the Danish media, it is clear that the concept of multiculturalism faced opposition early on in its introduction and development as a political tool for negotiating ethnic and cultural difference. Before the gangster figure became a visible trope during the 1990s, there were several little-known examples of films depicting ethnic tribalism. Although these were not explicitly coded as 'gangster films' per se, I claim the examples emerging in the 1980s represent some of the earliest explorations of ethnic-themed territorial conflicts and can, therefore, be considered forerunners of the subsequent evolution of the genre in the 1990s.

One such early example is Erik Clausen's *Rami og Julie/Rami and Julie* (1988). In this modern re-working of the Montague-Capulet motif, Clausen exploits the metaphorical implications of the Shakespearean parable where the division between the two families comes to represent a cultural and political split between 'ethnic Danes' and 'new Danes.' When a young Palestinian immigrant, Rami (Saleh Malek) falls in love with Danish girl Julie (Sofie Gråbøl), dire consequences ensue after he is forced to confront her racist family. Rather than ending in a mutual suicide, however, Clausen's film takes a tragic turn when Rami is killed after being sent out of the country by his father. These

---

[31] In Denmark, the arrival of newcomers has given rise to a new vocabulary. Terms like ethnic Danes and new Danes are now employed in political and public discourse to distinguish between those born in Denmark and those whose ethnic ancestry typically lies outside the Nordic region.

adolescent perspectives reflect the experiences of an emerging generation growing up alongside increasingly fraught multicultural policies in the 1980s. These crisis-ridden 'trouble on the estate' narratives usefully consolidate ethnic tensions, social deprivation, and confinement brought about by a move away from the collectivist values of the Danish welfare states.

Again, while it is not a gangster film in a conventional sense, another early example of ethnic conflict organised around two opposing ethnic sides is Danish director Brita Wielopolska's *17 Op/17 Up* (later renamed *Sally's Bizniz*, 1989). In Wielopolska's film, teenager Sally (Jane Eggertsen) befriends Zuhal (Mia El Mousti), a Turkish girl of the same age who moves into her grim social housing block. Initially, Sally is prone to racist views, but amongst the poverty, punks and social delinquency, the two girls form an unlikely friendship. Although the film places less emphasis on narrative, choosing instead to focus on visual style which arguably borders more on experimental than social realist, with its hard-hitting sub-text based on deprivation, *17 Op* nonetheless paints a sobering picture of Denmark in the 1980s. The complexities of both girls' lives and their contrasting cultural backgrounds are clear, and Wielopolska extends her critique to include more negative elements of Zuhal's family traditions as we see her forced into an arranged marriage. Like *Rami and Julie*, *17 Up* is an early exploration of the kind of urban tribal politics that would come to define the genre in the 1990s. It also merges with these themes a depiction of the welfare state that fails to live up to the prosperity promised by its image and reputation.

However, both *17 Up* and *Rami and Julie* are broadly sympathetic explorations of immigrant experiences set in the same mould as the paternalistic narratives in films from the guest worker phase. They also expose racial hatred, and the kind of universal suffering brought about by austerity in a country undergoing political and economic reform. The wider political and economic circumstances appear to mitigate ethnic clashes, where opportunities, especially for those on the economic and cultural margins, are limited. As we shall see, poverty and the social exclusion it brings overlaps

significantly with developments in the 1990s, where the concept of genre emerges more explicitly as a key strategy for negotiating ethnic politics onscreen.

Genre and the *Pusher* Trilogy (Refn, 1996-2005)

Given the social contexts attached to the examples discussed above, Andrew Nestingen's notion of the 'medium concept film' (2008: 48) provides a highly useful way of exploring the genre conventions at play here, particularly as they intersect with national politics. As outlined in chapter one, medium concept films blend internationally recognised genre conventions with nationally 'relevant' political or cultural issues in ways that appeal to both national and transnational audiences. More specifically, Nestingen suggests that the films in the medium concept category visually and thematically draw from both the type of 'high concept' spectacle one would typically expect to see in Hollywood and the more serious or experimental conventions associated with 'art cinema'. The process of hybridizing the commercial high concept potential of genre cinema with more weighty political issues and artistic themes certainly applies to the first three case studies discussed in this chapter, that is, *Northwest*, *R* and *Go with Peace, Jamil.* However, we must also consider some of the case studies that helped to launch the genre in this small region.

Nicolas Winding Refn's *Pusher* (1996) and its two sequels *Pusher II/Pusher II: With Blood on My Hands* (2004) and *Pusher 3/Pusher III: I'm the Angel of Death* (2005) have helped to establish the Nordic gangster narrative's gritty popularity and all three films have since developed a cult status. In true medium concept fashion, *Pusher* mixes the fractured identity politics of Copenhagen (Nestingen 2008: 90) with the terrifying brutality of organized crime — characteristics that are accentuated by the bleak atmosphere of urban living spaces shot using handheld cameras and other vérité-style aesthetics. It is a world that swaps any sleek, cosmopolitan images of contemporary Copenhagen with insipid

grey tower blocks, dodgy back alley drug dealing and marginal down-and-out characters.

Here, small-time heroin dealer Frank (Kim Bodnia) and his sidekick Tonny (Mads Mikkelsen) become involved with Milo (Zlatko Burić), a ruthless Serbian drug lord. In keeping with the 'individualist' theme, Frank aspires to rise above street-level crime and establish his own narcotics empire. Although it appears to paint a distantly negative impression of Eastern Europeans as brutal criminals, Mette Hjort claims that *Pusher* presents an ironic take on the ethnic criminal gangster. In her analysis, the hyper-exaggerated Eastern European immigrant stereotypes are designed to mock ethnic Danes and their often-baseless misconceptions about immigrants (2005: 267). She reinforces her argument by exploring the 'ethnifiction' of Milo's character and his domestic surroundings, which rely heavily on stereotyped aspects of Eastern European kitsch culture. This observation echoes back to the exaggerated or distorted images of migrants that began circulating in Denmark in the late 1970s when negative press about specific cultural and religious practices began to emerge. Nestingen also describes how, in line with the medium concept notion, *Pusher*'s gangster motif and its characters' unrelenting lives of brutality draw on the influence of *Goodfellas* (Scorsese, 1990) and *Scarface* (De Palma, 1983) (2008: 91-94). However, one significant difference identified by Nestingen between American gangsters and the Nordic variations is how 'the ambivalence towards individualism captures seminal features of the discourse in the Nordic countries about the new values of competitiveness, entrepreneurialism and self-interest' (2008: 96). Nestingen's argument implies that *Pusher* presents us with a critical view of the kind of individualist values associated with neoliberalism.

I propose we can add multiculturalism to the film's critique. I also claim that we must develop a more forceful connection between the gangster motif and immigration, particularly in Denmark, where this ambivalence towards both individualism and specific cultural and religious practices is palpable among many social and political lines. The relationship between Frank and Milo is also a curious and satirical role-reversal of Denmark's assimilationist strategies, where Frank's unquestioning

compliance with Milo's rules is non-negotiable. Indeed, this resonates in a Danish context because, as Hedetoft highlights, the Danish approach to ethnic diversity was less about integration and more about assimilation (Hedetoft 2010: 119).

As aforementioned, the justification for the Danish emphasis in this chapter is based on the prevalence of the genre in this country following the release of the first *Pusher* film in 1996, a factor I also attribute to Denmark's swing to the right, especially in the wake of the 2001 general election. In 2001, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, a centre-right politician, was elected as Prime Minister in coalition with the Conservative People's Party. However, support was also gleaned from the anti-immigrant populists the Danish People's Party. This election marked a distinct change in Denmark's political identity as the right-wing parties held the majority. As well as a reduction in the number of immigrants entering Denmark, laws were passed restricting family reunification, and obtaining required residence permits became much tougher, as did the means tested benefit rules for immigrants where proof of self-sufficiency was introduced (Mouritsen and Jensen 2014: 7). Indeed, according to Hotlug 'with the election of the Liberal–Conservative coalition in 2001 social cohesion became 'ethnicized', in the sense that ethnic and other forms of diversity became regarded as a threat to social cohesion.' (Hotlug 2013: 196).

Elaborating on the wider ideological and political context of Denmark's attitude towards Otherness, Ulf Hedetoft notes how Danish multiculturalism is considered 'an oxymoronic notion' (2010: 111). Although immigration is a key issue across the societal spectrum, in policy terms, multiculturalism does not exist in Denmark (Lægaard 2013: 170). Moreover, the rhetoric maintained by successive governments, particularly since the 2001 coalition, have generally worked to remain a mono-cultural society and one generally opposed to globalization (Hedetoft 117: 2010). A knock-on effect of these restrictions has witnessed tougher stances on immigration develop in the left-leaning parties attempting to gain a foothold in the political mainstream once again. The left-wing Social Democrats were elected in 2019 under the controversial leader Mette Frederiksen. It should be made clear that the Social Democrats have also built a stronger,

less liberal stance on immigration under Frederiksen who is effectively known for her leftist economic position and right-wing approach to immigration (Orange 2019). Although the government is supported by Radikale Venstre (Danish Social Liberal Party) whose position on immigration is explicitly liberal, the election of Mattias Tesfaye as Minister for Immigration and Integration in Frederiksen's 2019 Cabinet is a further testament to the shifting attitudes towards multicultural politics on Denmark's left. Despite his Danish-Ethiopian background, Tesfaye has become an advocate of the left's hard-line on migration. There are also other added complications regarding Denmark's attitude towards immigrants because of the relative autonomy granted to Danish municipalities, who have the power to implement their own agenda on how ethnic relations are 'managed.' In policy and political rhetoric, multiculturalism is best understood as a series of fragmented terms and conflicting ideas that play out in contradictory ways in Danish film culture.

However, yet another complication emerges in the creative industries. As we explored in chapter one, the Danish Film Institute has actively shown an interest in enhancing and encouraging diversity within the industry. These efforts appear to stand in opposition to the dominant political trends discussed above. Again, these tensions further reflect the conflicted position of multiculturalism in Danish society. This divide also supports Hjort and Mackenzie's argument that Anderson's imagined communities idea, which purports that fiction helps to sustain notions of a shared cohesive national identity, (1991: 36) does not necessarily translate directly onscreen (2000: 4). It is the hope that the Danish case studies explored here will highlight these conflicting ideas, where filmmakers and DFI consultants have responded in ways that both challenge dominant media trends and declared cultural policy as well as reinforce them.

Despite the DFI's investment in diversity, however, discussions about ethnic Otherness in Danish political discourses are based on a binary view of contrasting cultures, where prevailing notions of Danish values built around the collective community-oriented welfare ideology of the Nordic model are discussed in opposition to all other cultures, beliefs and practices. Significantly, debates about race tend to

emerge as matters of culture in Denmark which is another important factor when considering the appropriation of gangster conventions in Danish cinema. However, we must qualify the situation. Despite the resistance to describing itself as multicultural on a national level, in large cities like Copenhagen, there is a drive to attract skilled immigrant workers and promote ethnic diversity.

These developments are, however, contradicted by many of the texts discussed in this chapter, not least because many of them centre on urban areas like Copenhagen. As Hedetoft describes how Denmark has essentially used assimilationist strategies in its approach to integration, perhaps what is most interesting of all in the context of the Danish gangster trend is how attitudes towards newcomers were (and are) based on a very specific set of expectations; that immigrants are expected to demonstrate self-sufficiency before they can access the same welfare provisions as ethnic Danes (Jöhncke 2011: 48). Indeed, themes of self-sufficiency have emerged as a defining feature of this genre. To explore this further, I now turn to Michael Noer's *Northwest* (2013) which captures many of the political and cultural themes discussed above.

'You're Either with Us or Against Us': Michael Noer's *Nordvest/Northwest* (2013)

Like *Pusher*, with its inferences to Copenhagen's grittier side, Michael Noer's *Northwest* is shot in a documentary-like style, using handheld cameras and raw ungraded footage which serve to emphasise a degree of vérité social realism. Stylistically, while the film echoes many of the transnational conventions associated with the gangster genre, it also shares elements with Refn's *Pusher* series, particularly the first film. Casper (Gustav Dyekjær Giese), the white teenage protagonist, works as a petty thief for a Danish-Arab clique headed by Jamal (Dulfi Al-Jabouri) and his sidekick Ali (Ali Abdul Amir Najei). The gang trade in stolen goods and as an accomplished burglar, Casper is an asset to Jamal's operation. Jamal's control over Casper and his younger brother Andy (Oscar Dyekjær Giese) is clear from the outset, and he frequently exerts his authority, beating, and threatening both teenagers for straying too far from his reach.

Although he is a criminal, Casper is committed to his family, investing his profits in his young sister, and struggling, single mother. However, after growing tired of Jamal's control, Casper begins working for Bjørn (Roland Møller), a white Danish local drug dealer and pimp. Dragged further into the criminal underworld, Casper is tasked with ferrying Bjørn's prostitutes to their clients. As tensions escalate between the two ethnic groups, Jamal launches an attack on Bjørn's property causing significant damage. In response, Bjørn sends Casper on a grim assassination mission to get rid of Jamal for good. Ultimately, however, Casper finds himself unable to carry out the task, leaving his younger brother, Andy to shoot Jamal dead outside a petrol station. When Bjørn discovers that Casper has failed to commit the killing, he threatens his life. Fleeing from Bjørn and Jamil's clique, Casper takes off running. The film ends with gunshots ringing out as Casper, trapped from all sides, disappears out of shot, his fate unknown but predictably grim.

Specifically, the events in *Northwest* unfold in the district of Nørrebro, which according to Madsen is 'characterised by comparably large multi-ethnic communities (often described by the Danish media as immigrant ghettos) and material disadvantage' (2015: 35). As a result, Nørrebro has come to reflect the crisis of Denmark's multicultural politics where poverty and ethnic diversity converge. Rather like Frank, Casper is doomed to fail in his attempts to climb the hoodlum ladder. However, unlike *Pusher*, I would suggest that *Northwest* lacks the subtle nuances of Refn's self-stereotyping highlighted by Hjort. There is also a distinct bias in terms of which character's perspectives take priority. Casper becomes the only real layered character. We witness each unfolding crisis through his eyes and develop an understanding of his circumstances caught between the two factions. His delinquency is also, to a certain extent, mitigated by what appears to be a hostile and generally unforgiving society where few opportunities beyond a life of crime are presented. Casper's interactions with his family reflect the only real ray of light, but these relationships also serve another function. Casper's family and even his initial interactions with Bjørn contrast sharply

with Jamal and his homogenised Asian clique, who largely loom as a threat in the background.

Figure 1: Fenced in: Casper faces off against Ail and Jamal in *Northwest* **(Noer, 2013).**

Northwest contains another characteristic that is prominently associated with this genre, namely the theme of absent fathers or a distinct lack of male role models. Although Bjørn is evidently cruel and ultimately turns on Casper, there are flickers of a paternal-like bond between them. Although brief, these moments of camaraderie are distinctly different from the boys' experiences with Jamal, who controls the pair using threats of violence and coercion. After joining Bjørn's circle, Casper is confronted by Jamal and Ali during which Jamal declares 'you're either with us or against us'. We are already acutely aware at this point that any collective sense of 'us' Jamal refers to is based on a falsehood. Captured in this statement is the main thrust of *Northwest*'s thematic crisis sub-text, where we witness a shattering of the 'traditional' collectivist welfare logic. The neoliberal politics of individualism is effectively 'acted out' and mirrored in these divides where, in place of solidarity or cohesion, a mentality built on greed, profitability, and betrayal emerges as the predominant social structure.

The 'ethnic' gangsters in these films appear to epitomise the fears echoed by many on the populist right. Consequently, it is worth situating the territorial nature of *Northwest*'s

ethnic divisions in the broader context of Denmark's stance on immigration. While *Northwest* gestures towards a fractured social system, the film nonetheless appears to locate any semblance of morality with its white protagonist and therefore reinforces a crisis narrative based on an 'us and them' kind of mindset. At times, the erasure of the Asian gang does not feel like an incidental choice, but rather one used to superficially signify a general breakdown of the social fabric, particularly regarding 'ethnic relations'. Indeed, one could interpret the general absence of the Asian characters as a statement on the underrepresentation or marginalisation of ethnic minorities in the public sphere or, in fact, in general, political discourse.[32] The work of Mustafa Hussein (2000) focuses extensively on the role of the Danish media, where Muslim and Arab cultures and religious practices are routinely caricatured and chastised. He contends that these minorities in particular face significant prejudice and exclusion on many socio-cultural and political levels. In studying these dominant media discourses, Hussein concludes that 'media practices around ethnic affairs reproduce a discourse that legitimizes ethnic inequalities in Danish society' (2000: 109). If we were to interpret *Northwest* as a critical embodiment of these exclusionary practices, it would also seem puzzling to further undermine the voices of these minorities by minimizing their role in the narrative. This 'every man for himself' mentality reveals itself in an even more explicit way as we move away from the streets of Copenhagen and into the confined spaces of Denmark's prison system, where similar conflicts play out in a space again designed to encapsulate the failed politics of Denmark's attitude towards ethnic diversity.

---

[32] For more information on the exclusion of ethnic minorities in the Danish media industries see Hussein (2002).

'There is No Us': 'Ethnic' Wars and Failed Collectivist Logic in *R: Hit First, Hit Hardest* (2010)

Michael Noer and Tobias Lindholm's *R* is a gangster film that reflects many of the issues highlighted in *Northwest*, not least, the centralisation of a white male protagonist, the hostile environment and the notable absence of the conventions of the welfare state. However, it also deviates in several significant ways, largely in terms of its commentary on racial politics. After he is jailed for assault, white first-time young offender Rune (Pilou Asbæk) is thrown into a cut-throat world where the rules revolve around ethnic cliques fighting over a hidden narcotics network. The ethnic white and Arab groups each operate in separate units of the facility, and their drug trading is intertwined with racial hatred and underhanded manoeuvring on both sides. *R* appears to follow in the footsteps of its predecessors by exploiting the raw, visceral qualities of documentary-like realism and drawing out a distinct sense of futility. By setting the narrative in a Danish correctional institution, Noer and Lindholm help to focus our attention on a social system that is, on the surface at least, meant to represent justice or rehabilitation. However, the film fervently mocks these assumptions and introduces a deep scepticism over Denmark's perceived egalitarianism.

Metaphorically, we could read this environment as a reflection of the racial hierarchies at play within Danish society. Following his arrival, Rune is forcibly recruited into the ethnic Danish clique. With his own safety under threat, he is tasked with carrying out menial cleaning jobs for the head of the group, Carsten (Jacob Gredsted) and Mureren (Roland Møller), his violent sociopathic subordinate. Mureren's sadistic attitude towards Rune is clear from the outset as he forces him to perform brutal acts of initiation, such as stabbing a fellow Albanian inmate seemingly without any motive. Even so, Rune's only hope of surviving is to swear loyalty to his clique. Through his job as a dishwasher, Rune meets new Dane Rashid (Dulfi Al-Jabouri), and the two men begin a hesitant friendship. Rashid's situation mirrors Rune's as he finds himself forced to conform to the equally brutal regime in the Arab faction which operates in a

separate unit of the prison. This group is headed by the equally psychotic Bazhir who, like Mureren, appears to be devoid of empathy.

As he adjusts to life in prison, Rune finds a way to smuggle drugs and money between each prison unit through the bathroom plumbing system. Rashid becomes his counterpart on the other side, distributing the narcotics to the Arab clique and sending back the cash. Without revealing his drug smuggling method, Rune becomes an asset to Carsten, a situation that provokes Mureren's jealousy. As the only two people privy to the smuggling method, together, Rune and Rashid 'hustle' the system by keeping back small amounts of cash. However, Rune's situation unravels when a drug deal goes wrong, and his hustle is exposed. As a result, he is savagely knifed to death by Mureren who is aided reluctantly by Rashid, who helps lure Rune to his death. In fact, the film plays with Rashid's character, keeping his true motivations and loyalties hidden until after Rune's murder. However, although Rashid betrays Rune for fear of his own safety, he is consumed with guilt. This is where the film's perspective shifts to Rashid. The familiarity of his predicament is reinforced when he is shunned by his fellow gang members for collaborating with the ethnic Danes. His punishment ultimately entails having boiling oil thrown in his face by Bazhir himself.

The segregated environment of the prison is greatly symbolic in the context of our discussion, encapsulating the failure of both the welfare state and Denmark's dubious assimilationist strategies. In his analysis of the ecological dimensions of the prison environment, Pietari Kääpä discusses how 'the microsociety of the prison is premised on a similar set of rules concerning individualistic and capitalist exploitation, all in a distinctly multicultural (though segregated) setting' (2014: 134). On the surface, *R* appears to go further in its emphasis on the destructive politics of individualism, surpassing even the unforgiving streets of *Northwest* where there was at least some semblance of family or solidarity. Instead, *R* subverts any positive image of the Danish penal system as an embodiment of state intervention by transforming it into the penultimate battleground for asserting one's identity.

While the corruption and literal backstabbing are universal traits inside this brutal anti-society and the ethnic self-segregation points towards a failure of any kind of assimilationist logic, unlike *Northwest* and many of its predecessors, *R* actively works to build a sense of continuity between some of the characters and their experiences on both sides of the ethnic divide. This is done largely by placing Rune and Rashid in a parallel state of crisis where Rashid's situation is revealed to be just as dire as Rune's. Although, once again, the film primarily centres of the perspective of the white ethnic Dane, both men are ultimately trapped by the same insidious people, whose greed and appetite for violence is not bound by any specific ethnic background or cultural identity. The film makes several gestures towards this shared sense of jeopardy. Indeed, as the ambiguous title '*R*' suggests, the film could represent either or indeed both characters. The crossovers between these characters' experiences contrast with *Northwest*'s perplexing racial segregation logic, where the Other is both vilified and made invisible in a narrative supposedly designed to highlight the kind of social injustice and economic marginalisation that reaches across many race and class boundaries.

As well as the parallels between the crises facing Rune and Rashid, another sense of continuity emerges when we compare the behaviour of the two factions. The leaders of each ethnic group are shown to have far more in common with each other than they do with Rune or Rashid. Both Carsten and Bazhir and their parties are equally ruthless and violent, and their self-serving hierarchies appear to demonstrate how ethnicity itself plays a markedly superficial role in the broader context of their operations. During a crucial confrontation scene between ethnic Danes Mureren and Rune, a documentary on natural selection can be heard in the background. The documentary's take-home message preaches the virtues of difference or uniqueness and how it defines us as a species. This moment coincides with Mureren declaring 'there is no us' when he discovers that Rune's drug deal with Bazhir has gone wrong.

This nihilistic Darwinian reference implies that the 'survival of the fittest' applies to those willing to use violence or whatever underhanded means are necessary to maintain complete supremacy. Violence for the likes of Mureren and Bazhir is also about exerting

power. In fact, for them, it is more about power than survival. In *R*, we see an evolution of individualism; it is no longer just for profit, but rather sadistic control or, in the case of Rune and Rashid, a necessary means of survival. This dog-eat-dog world is the ultimate manifestation of the neoliberal individualist mentality that emerged in the 1980s. By establishing this context within the confines of the tribalistic Danish prison system, *R* suggests Denmark's divisive racial politics are a by-product of aggressive individualism. However, while the film is relentlessly bleak in its outlook, there are other examples that attempt to incorporate more explicit moral and ethical themes.

Gå med fred, Jamil/Go with Peace, Jamil (Shargawi, 2008): Parallel Crises and the Problem of Representation

In contrast to *Northwest* and *R*, Omar Shargawi's *Go with Peace, Jamil* (2008) plays with the rhetoric of the dominant host nation by challenging the so-called 'parallel society' concept. The concept of parallel societies is used as a pejorative to describe ethnic minority communities who strategically segregate themselves by refusing to adopt the practices or values of their host nation. Parallel societies are considered deeply damaging in Denmark where the term plays a key role in party politics. Mikkel Rytter notes how in 2004, Denmark's Minister of Culture, Brian Mikkelsen of the Conservative People's Party, delivered a speech in which he condemned the emergence of so-called parallel societies in Denmark for their 'medieval norms and undemocratic mindsets' (Mikkelsen quoted in Rytter 2013: 45). Rather, these societies are viewed in contrast to the 'Danish cultural values and practices' of collective welfare consensus. However, I claim that *Go with Peace, Jamil* uses the gangster genre format to challenge the fundamental notion of the parallel societies concept, specifically by re-framing themes associated with specific cultural practices and beliefs in a more universal way.

Go with Peace, Jamil[33] begins by exploring two warring Sunni and Shia communities once again set in Copenhagen's notorious Nørrebro neighbourhood. In this intriguing inversion of *Northwest*'s dominant white ethnic Danish perspective, the film instead focuses entirely on the Muslim community which is here besieged by internal religious conflict. By framing the conflicts in the film around ancient vendettas between religious factions, superficially, *Go with Peace, Jamil* appears to capture the socio-politics of Mikkelsen's assumptions about parallel societies. However, a closer look at the thematic elements sewn into the depictions of these supposedly insular societies actually reveal them to be plagued by the same moral and existential dilemmas as any other given community. Furthermore, because of its emphasis on the underrepresented Muslim community, and as one of the only European films to feature an exclusively Arabic-speaking cast, Shargawi's film is something of a pioneering move in contemporary Danish cinema. To situate this film in a broader context, Mette Hjort stresses how, as a result of its relative cultural and ethnic homogeneity, Denmark 'lacks the kind of multicultural literacy that it needs as a multi-ethnic society' and argues that 'while ethnicity is a recurrent theme in contemporary Danish feature films, these films are for the most part made by Danes with ancestral ties to Denmark, and not by new Danes or Danes with a bi-racial heritage' (Hjort 2007: 40). Speaking on his position as one of the few 'minority' directors Shargawi states:

I live in Denmark and I make films in Denmark, and that's the starting point for the film. But the story could have played out anywhere. That's one of the reasons why Denmark is cut out visually. I'm not trying to hide that it's Denmark, and the characters do sometimes speak Danish, but I'm trying to capture what it feels like to live in those communities, how people who are part of them see the world. I think

---

[33] *Go with Peace Jamil* grew out of a shorter project that began in 2003. After receiving 10,000 DKK from Copenhagen's Film Workshop, an organisation affiliated with the Danish Film Institute (DFI) designed to support semi-professional filmmakers, Shargawi pitched a three-minute edit to Danish producers at the Cannes film festival and after generating significant interest, subsequently negotiated a deal with Zentropa (Jørholt 2010: 237-240).

those immigrant environments are very similar across Europe. They're small, closed societies. (Shargawi quoted in Hjort, Jørholt and Redvall 2010: 242)

Go with Peace, Jamil reflects these sentiments and sets out to create a universal understanding of small, insular Arab communities. Again, in line with the medium concept framework, the film balances the explosive subjects of religious and cultural conflict with a genre-orientated lens where aesthetically, the film comes replete with high-speed car chases and the type of gun-toting vengeance fare associated with action cinema. The film's authentic edge comes partly from its engagement with an ethnic community seldom represented in great depth. This is significant because, as we have seen in a Nordic context, notions of 'authenticity' often resonate in specific ways that are typically associated with a white ethnocentric perspective. The result is an 'inside-out' perspective that offers a unique take on the kind of crisis narratives we have seen so far.

The plot condenses the events of a single day into a fast-paced action revenge format. Before emigrating from Lebanon to Denmark as a child, Sunni Muslim Jamil (Dar Salim) witnesses the murder of his mother at the hands of Mahmoud (Khalid Alssubeihi), a powerful member of the Shia community. As an adult, Jamil discovers Mahmoud is also living in Copenhagen and decides to take revenge by murdering one of his key conspirators. In response, Mahmoud sends his men after Jamil insisting they bring him back alive. With his son in hiding, Jamil's father tries to neutralise the conflict with Mahmoud, pleading with him not to propagate the cycle of vengeance. Jamil's father tries in vain to encourage his son to embrace the concept of forgiveness and begs him to consider the future of his young son Adam (Elias Samir Al-Sobehi). However, Jamil refuses to let go of the past. Adam ends up becoming the lynchpin of the conflict, and when he is abducted by Mahmoud's accomplices, Jamil goes into meltdown. Tragically, the little boy is accidentally shot in the final conflict and dies in his father's arms on the pavement.

Again, markers of the welfare state or any sense of cohesion associated with its ideals are absent in the lives of these characters. For Jamil, escaping Copenhagen and returning

116

to his homeland of Lebanon is the focus of desire. Nothing in the film speaks of Denmark's contemporary cosmopolitanism, and Shargawi almost erases Denmark from the film entirely. There are no cultural landmarks; the cast is almost all of Middle Eastern descent, and the language is predominantly Arabic. Traces of Denmark emerge from Jamil's young Danish-born son, Adam as they speak to him in Danish. However, by largely removing any association with Denmark, Shargawi effectively re-appropriates the landscape of Nørrebro, which, as we have seen, has become a contested space in the context of multicultural debates. Instead, *Go with Peace, Jamil* uses this location to re-frame the expectations and associations surrounding its large Arab demographic by integrating populist action and gangster orientated genre conventions with what is effectively a universal tale of human conflict based on both a desire for revenge and a reconciliation with the past.

Indeed, the film also plays with the notion of the parallel society, which is used in Danish political rhetoric, including by Denmark's former Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen (2016-2019), to homogenise and target Muslim communities (Raatz 2018). In 2018, the Danish government released its strategy titled 'Ét Danmark uden parallelsamfund - Ingen ghettoer i 2030/One Denmark without a parallel society - No ghettos in 2030' (Danish Government Report 2018) on effectively eradicating what it also calls 'ghettos', and better integrating immigrant communities into their host society. However, although *Go with Peace, Jamil*'s perspective comes from inside a seemingly ethnically segregated community, the explicit use of the gangster motif indicates how this 'parallel society' is equally at odds with itself, as demonstrated by the religious divides as well as the more universal impulses to enact revenge. The key point here is how this supposed parallel society is not, as the Danish political rhetoric frames it, a homogenous collective sustained by a single set of beliefs or principles that differ dramatically from the 'ethnic Danish' society, but rather plays host to the same problems and tensions as anywhere else. At the centre of each faction, families are searching for stability and suppressing the desire for vengeance or retribution. Jamil is a conflicted character. We identify with him like Casper because of his tragic situation, trapped in an

endless war between two factions. We also identify with his elderly father, who simply wants peace and consensus between the two warring families. Jamil's son is the driving force behind his desire for a better life. Amid the violence, Shargawi emphasises the bond between Jamil, Adam and his grandfather. These cohesive family values are not unlike those purported to represent Danish values. Like his ethnic Danish predecessors in the genre, Jamil is also divided between an individual desire for vengeance and caring for his family. The irony is that given the tone of the various integration policies over the last twenty years, it is Denmark which appears as the parallel society, refusing to adapt or integrate in accordance with its emerging multi-ethnic and multicultural make-up on a national level and emphasising its own mono-cultural inclusiveness through the 'value struggle' agenda. This is arguably highlighted in the film through its erasure of Denmark, where the country remains strangely foreign, distant and closed-off.

The film explores conflict as not just about a clash of specific ideologies, but of the human condition flawed in its desire for revenge. However, we must also qualify the use of the Sunni-Shia conflict and the way it is integrated as part of the film's genre framework. This is because, as it becomes part of the universal narrative of existentialism, the historical nuances of the divides between these two denominations of Islam are effectively lost. By choosing to use this context to frame a narrative that also relies on the glossy conventions of Hollywood-inspired genre spectacle, there is potentially a danger these conflicts are further reduced. The clashes between Sunni and Shia Muslims are highly politicised and multifaceted. Furthermore, representations of these complexities in Western journalistic circles are oftentimes neglected. Jakobsen notes how, in the Danish public sphere which is 'heavily influenced by the ways in which journalists and editors frame the news' there is growing evidence to show that 'the coverage of Islam and Muslims in European countries, and certainly Denmark, has been characterised by structural asymmetries such as over-problematisation, stereotypes, distortion of views, exclusion of arguments or relevant spokespersons, and uncritical reliance on biased 'experts on Islam' (2015: 190). While the film works to undo some

stereotypes, the superficial use of the Sunni-Shia divide may, in fact, contribute to a binary or oversimplified understanding of this discord and the relevance of its history.

Despite his efforts to introduce a sense of aesthetic and narrative universalism into Danish cinema through the perspective of the Other, Shargawi was attacked by some critics for failing to address the 2005 Prophet Mohammed cartoon controversy in Denmark (Jørholt 2010: 246). Shargawi defended his position, claiming that such criticism exemplified the narrow-mindedness of the Danish film industry. This kind of criticism signifies the institutional problems facing directors from minority backgrounds. In keeping with Žižek's critique of the expectations inherent in multiculturalist logic, the critics clearly expected Shargawi, as a Dane of Palestinian descent, to address topical issues related to Islamic fundamentalism. Not only that, but they expected him to discuss how these issues have affected Denmark and the West. Specifically, the anticipation is that a single director from a minority background is expected to represent the views of the entire minority community. Running counter to these expectations, Shargawi defines himself as a Danish director and shuns the 'immigrant filmmaker' label.

Here, I acknowledge Shargawi's experiences as part of my discussion on how examples like *Go with Peace, Jamil* appear to subvert expectations. This context also reinforces the broader political framework within which these films operate, where dominant ideas about particular ethnic groups remain pervasive and can hold sway over the narrative agendas of filmmakers looking to break with established conventions. While the ethnic backgrounds of white 'ethnic Danish and Swedish' filmmakers like Noer, Lindholm, and Östlund appear to be taken as normative, Shargawi's ethnicity was clearly made visible and mattered to the film industry in Denmark but only on their terms where it can be best exploited to reflect the interests of Denmark. In considering the significance of critical expectations, my next case study takes the gang themed narrative a stage further by using provocation and more 'artistic' interventions in its commentary on racism in contemporary Sweden.

Playing Devil's Advocate in the Anti-Coming-of-Age Film: Ruben Östlund's *Play* (2011)

> Ruben Östlund knows his audience belongs to the part of the middle classes with intellectual ambitions that affirms the multicultural society. He wants to shake up people like me. But what does he want me to think? (Linderborg 2011)

Unlike the universal struggles of Shargawi's protagonist or the seemingly futile battles to stay afloat in prison and on the streets in *R* and *Northwest*, *Play* takes a different but no less relevant path in our discussion of the emergence of the ethnic gang film. Specifically, I argue *Play* appropriates the gang theme as a way of targeting the imperialistic role of consumer capitalism in creating and maintaining racial divides. The film opens in a contemporary Göteborg shopping precinct. The camera pans slowly and horizontally eventually focusing on two distinct groups of children. A group of young black teenage boys, Kevin (Kevin Vaz), Anas (Anas Abdirahman), Yannick (Yannick Diakité), Abdi (Abdiaziz Hilowle) and Nana (Nana Manu), approach two young white Swedish boys and falsely accuse them of stealing a mobile phone as part of an intricate con. The victims must then accompany the black boys to prove their innocence in a prolonged ordeal that stretches over the day during which they are taunted, humiliated and eventually forced to hand over all their valuables. [34] The group then target three other boys, two white, Sebastian (Sebastian Blyckert) and Alex (Sebastian Hegmar) and one Asian, John (John Oritz) who become the main focal point for the remainder of the film as we follow them in throughout their ordeal. The three victims mutely appear to capitulate to the requests of the black boys and eventually lose their valuables and dignity as the day progresses.

With echoes of Michael Haneke and Gus Van Sant, *Play*'s voyeuristic tracking movements, which have drawn comparisons with a stylised CCTV-like effect

---

[34] See Moffat and Kääpä (2018) for an ecocritical reading of *Play*'s use of space and location.

(Stubberud and Ringrose 2014: 65), pan slowly between wide establishing shots and tightly framed, claustrophobic images often focused on the three victims' faces and bodies as they struggle to second-guess their assailants' next move. Unlike the other variations of the gangster trend discussed here, *Play* is not a medium concept film, but rather ventures into more 'artistic' territory with its muted yet provocative attempts to appeal to a less commercially orientated market. In contrast to the genre spectacle seen in *Go with Peace, Jamil* or *R*, much of the action in *Play* takes place off camera or hidden from view where we are often left with lingering takes of empty frames. The punishments dealt to Sebastian, Alex, and John also often occur out of shot.

The film places the boys in the contextual framework of the modern Swedish present-day cityscape. This frame of reference is key to understanding the construction of ethnic identities as it helps to establish the normative set of conventions in the background. The film seeks to critique this a normativity and the way it appears to neutralise the racial tensions below the surface. Specifically, these spaces seem to create a veneer between those inside and outside. The black boys are often seen at the margins of the frame or are cut out of it entirely. The shots inside the malls, cafes and designer sports shoe stores reveal how the adult population are largely indifferent or passive towards the bullying behaviour. Their absence is emphasised through the film's focus on the children's perspective. These public spaces are part of the interplay between these broken relationships and *Play* shows us how these spaces deceptively offer up a sense of static ordinariness.

The film's representations of this bullying behaviour and apparent vilification of the black children provoked a backlash in sectors of the left-wing Swedish press. Stubberud and Ringrose (2014) attempt to penetrate the many layers of the film's positioning of ethnic identity. They claim that *Play* is designed to push the spectators out of their comfort zone in terms of its racial politics specifically by not adhering to the conventions of the liberal multicultural agenda, which as we have seen, constructs its narratives of tolerance on reductive or simplified views of the good and deserving immigrant Other. Instead, the representational politics in *Play* target the white middle-class spectator and

121

the status quo's self-image of tolerance along with the exceptionalist values that go with it. It asks its spectators to reflect on the boundaries of these liberal views and how they block any deeper insight into understanding the complexities of race and class relations. Specifically, *Play* attacks the innate perception that those who hold liberal middle-class views understand the notions of equality or diversity. The process of culturalisation is thus complicated in *Play*, both in its characterisations and through its use of locations. The ethnic identities of the victims — represented here as both white and East Asian — gestures towards more a complex handling of racial division. If *Play* was intended as a commentary on the victimisation of white children at the hands of the black gang, then surely the inclusion of John's character adds another dimension. Furthermore, the black children are, at times, shown to be equally at odds with each other. When one boy attempts to extricate himself from the bullying, he is attacked and dismissed by the other boys as a result.

One strategy used by the black boys is to role-play with different identities, appearing to feign empathy for their victims one minute and then reverting to mockery the next. In doing so, the black boys acknowledge their inferior position in society, excluded by both the values of multicultural 'tolerance' and other racist discourses in Sweden. They subversively embody and act out these characteristics in their role-playing exercises, swinging between the implied fake sympathy of affirmative tolerance and chastising the victims over their looks and demeanour. This is designed to mirror the way black people have been and continue to be judged on the basis of their looks. In one scene, the ringleader of the black gang, Kevin, mocks the victims for placing their trust in them, insinuating they should have known what to expect from a group of black children. This admission is not so much a statement on how all black people cannot be trusted, but rather speaks of Kevin's self-understanding and awareness that negative perceptions, particularly surrounding black youth, are present in the Swedish social and political system and that the boys are simply acting out the predetermined roles they are given by society. Consequently, *Play* is neither a straightforward depiction of racist stereotyping nor an assertion of multicultural tolerance.

Figure 2: Framing the divide in cosmopolitan Sweden in *Play* (Östlund, 2011).

Interpreting *Play* as a critical commentary on consumer capitalism allows us to see other power dynamics at work. In this sense, the perceived 'threat' from immigrants helps to preserve neo-liberal capitalism because it displaces institutionalised forms of economic and political inequality and crisis onto a cultural level. *Play* shows us how a crisis of faith in the economic model where the displacement experienced by both the black boys and their victims manifests within the social landscape of Göteborg's sleek and contemporary surface replete with its mod cons and affluent 'progressive' image. The fact that these locations were chosen to stage the assault was no incidental choice, but rather one where, alongside these contemporary trappings, *Play* asks us to concurrently consume a different narrative — one focused on social exclusion.

Unlike *Northwest*, *R* and *Go with Peace, Jamil*, *Play* chooses not to focus on the high concept action spectacle associated with the medium concept variations of the crime genre. This absence, together with the long often unbroken static takes, allows us to focus instead on the context of the boys' surroundings. Here, the use of the 'organised' crime motif is designed to reflect the expectations and roles set out for the Other in populist media narratives. However, unlike *Northwest*, where the 'foreignness' of the Other is emphasised by their marginal position and appearance in the narrative, *Play* effectively exaggerates the dynamics of this role-play and then uses the contemporary interiors and exteriors of Göteborg's city and surroundings to deconstruct this crisis narrative. The

123

gang theme becomes a device for exploring the fault lines of contemporary Sweden — who is included and who is excluded — and how the backdrop lends itself to the assignment of these roles. Here, crisis is an ideological component of the role-playing system where a crisis of belonging is in part manufactured by the capitalist system itself and designed to keep the middle classes at odds with one another over the position of the Other in society.

This is perhaps best captured by the penultimate scene where Nana, one of the black children, is confronted by a victim's father who is shown to be white. As the man angrily chases the boy, a white Swedish woman tries to intervene. Despite her lack of understanding over the context of the father's attack, she defends Nana by claiming 'he is just an immigrant' and that 'he doesn't understand'. The ensuing argument between the two adults over the complicity of the gang is precisely the conflict that *Play*'s anti-capitalist sentiment targets. While caught up in their bickering, neither adult can fully comprehend the wider exclusivist narratives within which they are all caught. As Žižek points out, capitalism relies on crisis to continue to function and develop (Žižek 2012) so Nordic capitalism's brand of multicultural inclusion relies on manufacturing a crisis of belonging between 'ethnic Swedes' and Others to continue its exploits in the background. Their argument exemplifies the way the capitalist system has paralysed the ability of politics to change attitudes in society. As we see in the argument, these attitudes are now reflected in the conflicted and contradictory notions of populist liberal narratives of tolerance. Divisions over race and class become the only outlets for expressing frustration against what Žižek perceives as this late capitalist 'deadlock' where:

> The western middle class ideology has two opposed features: it displays arrogance and belief in the superiority of its values (universal human rights and freedoms threatened by the barbarian outsiders), but, simultaneously, it is obsessed by the fear that its limited domain will be invaded by the billions outside, who do not count in global capitalism since they are neither producing commodities nor consuming them. (Žižek 2016: 2)

Thus, the real villain here is not part of some vague gesture towards the broken system or indeed the largely unseen 'ethnic enclaves' of Copenhagen as seen examples like *Nordvest*. *Play* shows us how the system engineers crisis precisely by steering clear of the urban dilapidation or representations of societal breakdown evident in the gritty social realism of the previous examples. Crisis is innate, systemic and hidden to most white middle-class Swedes, which is how it continues to breed the ignorant and complacent attitudes that *Play* seeks to critique. Furthermore, in *Play*, crisis is explored exclusively through the eyes of children, which like its counterparts, gestures towards the discontent of the second and perhaps even the third generation of immigrants and the failure of multicultural policies from the preceding decades. However, the opening quote from Åsa Linderborg, the cultural editor for Swedish tabloid newspaper *Aftonbladet*, reinforces precisely one of the drawbacks of *Play*'s targeted attack; that it was made with a white middle-class Swedish audience in mind. This, ironically, would appear to reinforce the same sense of exclusivist politics that *Play* works hard to unravel by alluding to a form of inward-looking analysis that continues to operate under the assumption of a dominant ethnocentric perspective.

Conclusion

If the fundamental conventions of the gangster genre revolve around hierarchy, opportunism and those seeking to 'rise through the ranks' as suggested by Anable (2013: 90), then we can see clear parallels between representations of these characteristics onscreen and the shift in power dynamics in Nordic societies. Crucially, we can also see how the pervasiveness of neoliberal individualism has gradually merged with an anti-multiculturalist outlook. Thus, the convergence of ideological changes in the political spectrum, increasing economic tension, and social neglect all contribute to the emergence (and subsequent re-shaping) of the Nordic 'ethnic gangster' film. A crisis of multiculturalism is clearly visible in this trend. Here, we also see how crisis is located in

narratives involving young second-generation immigrants, the significance of which cannot be understated in the context of the Nordic countries, where the negative implications of failed assimilationist strategies and multicultural policies are shown to have transitioned into a new generation. The key to understanding these films lies in acknowledging how division is framed. While it is clear that multiculturalism has failed in these narratives, some present us with more complex ways of understanding why it has failed.

While I have argued that the gangster genre reflects a crisis of Nordic multiculturalism, in examples like *Northwest*, social deprivation, racial segregation, and violence are seldom explored on any meaningful level and fail to provide any real insight into the nuances of wider political agendas. These failings are reflected in the way the film structures the relationships between the white and Asian characters where there is an inherent bias towards the white protagonist. This gives way to an underlying sense of culturalisation, where political problems are expressed in the divides between the two ethnic groups without fully acknowledging the role of those political or ideological forces in shaping race relations. However, although many of these examples remain problematic, they illustrate an increasing preoccupation with themes of immigration and displaced identity politics and infer the political climate surrounding attitudes towards diversity, especially in Denmark, where, over the last twenty years, a succession of governments has developed a reputation for stringent laws on immigration and multiculturalism.

The other examples challenge *Northwest*'s one-sided perspective. Examples like *R* foreground the rise of individualism and greed, themes that resonate with the collapse of collectivist social values such as those of the traditional welfare state. Through the dynamics of the prison system, the values of both gangs mirror the logic of the welfare state in its current form, based on the competitive values of individualist neoliberalism. In the process, both films encapsulate the struggles of those who are fundamentally excluded from the social system. *Go with Peace, Jamil* does away with the emphasis on the white protagonist's view, providing an insight into the universality of vengeance in

126

minority communities. In exploring his film, we have seen how debates about representational politics extend off-screen, where directors from ethnic minority backgrounds are expected to address particular subject matters.

The key to understanding *Play*'s complex take on the gang/crime theme lies in the context of its background narrative and strategic use of locations. In *Play*, crisis politics is concentrated in the tension between foreground and background where the wider frame of reference alludes to the cause and effect of ethnic division which is tied to the deceptive normalisation of Göteborg's glossy exteriors. However, although the crime genre remains a pervasive and popular lens for addressing the ongoing 'crisis of belonging', it is by no means the only approach used by filmmakers exploring the topic of race relations in contemporary Nordic cinema. Other genres have sought to integrate similar thematic trends related to ethnic tribalism with a more optimistic spin.

Three

Significant Others: Intercultural Romance and Buddy Comedies

In contrast to the fragmented urban nihilism of chapter two, I now turn broadly to comedy and romance, where I argue that the premise of the 'intercultural encounter' has proven to be fertile comic ground for exploring cultural miscommunication and 'lost in translation' narratives, particularly those reliant on stereotyping or exaggerated notions of (perceived) cultural specificity. I identify three dominant 'crisis' themes arising from such encounters in a Nordic context including conflict tied to generational divides, familial inclusion and, lastly, a thematic trend that expressly gestures towards the Nordic countries' relationship with the outside world. Specifically, this involves examining the region's response to the recent refugee crisis. What is also reflected in this chapter is a broad representation of the Nordic nations with case studies from Finland, Sweden and Norway. This is a testament to the prevalence of the genre across the region. The emphasis on Finland is particularly significant especially, as we explored in the first chapter, the subjects of race and multiculturalism remain a distinct rarity in Finnish cinema.

Included here are 'feel-good' films *En man som heter Ove/A Man Called Ove* (Hannes Holm, 2015) and *Saattokeikka/Unexpected Journey* (Valkama, 2017). I begin with these two more recent examples because they neatly outline the folkhemmet ideology at work within the text. They also act as a primer for the rest of the chapter because they help to frame multiculturalism from a white Eurocentric perspective. I then move on to discuss the two romantic multicultural comedies, *Jalla Jalla!* (Fares, 2000) and *Import-Eksport/Import-Export* (Hussain, 2005), both directed by second-generation immigrants from Pakistan and Lebanon, respectively. Both examples expand on, play with and challenge the idea of folkhemmet as it is understood in the first two introductory case studies. As well as ironic self-stereotyping, these second-generation filmmakers move towards a more explicit interpretation of crisis and socio-cultural integration. This

happens largely through the introduction of ethnic hybridity. I then move on to satirical explorations of domestic refugee crisis management in Rune Denstad Langlo's *Velkommen til Norge/Welcome to Norway!* (2016) and Aki Kaurismäki's *Toivon tuolla puolen/The Other Side of Hope* (2017). These case studies are expressly more political in their framing of minority politics and refocus the discussion on Nordic exceptionalism. Finally, the chapter culminates in a discussion on the use of racial caricaturing as an explicit comedic device that finds expression in a Nordic context because of the codes and societal norms based around egalitarianism in Ilkka Vanne's *Vieraalla maalla/Land of Love* (2003).

Here, I explore what I call 'no context' characters, where the immigrant Other has their identity completely stripped away or is recognised only on the basis of a tokenesque perception of Otherness that is deliberately devoid of any contextual understanding or depth. I position *Land of Love* in contrast to the other films in the chapter specifically because of the de-politicisation of the ethnic stereotype within the film's diegesis, making a distinction between characters and *devices*. In the comedy genre, I claim that devices, as opposed to characters, function by effectively playing up the clichés of stereotypical characterisations in a way that strategically neutralises a wider political discussion on the topic of immigration or displaced ethnic identity. Ultimately, I choose to end the discussion on this film as I believe it serves as the best example of the pitfalls of 'comedy' as an intervention into ethnic relations. Before exploring these case studies further, however, I discuss the strengths and limitations of comedy as an ever-evolving approach to intercultural politics and its evolution in a Nordic context.

'Ethnic' Comedy and the 'Feel-Good Film'

Throughout Nordic film history, the comedy genre has proven to be the most popular and enduring form of cinematic entertainment. However, as Kääpä notes, comedy 'is

often a genre identified as "inexportable" because of its excessive reliance on cultural references that do not travel to foreign audiences' (2015: 259-260). Considering this inward-looking perspective, it is useful here to refer back to Gustafsson's comments in chapter one (2014: 150), where he discusses how the salacious and low-brow reputation of many films involving ethnic stereotyping evaded serious examination by critics precisely because they were viewed as part of a popular culture canon as opposed to 'serious art'. Many such examples included comedies and farce. The 'ethnic' dimensions of the genre's intense popularity are also discussed at length in a historical context by Wright (1998), who explores how anti-Semitic stereotyping came to 'define the ideology' of the urban comedy genre in 1930s Sweden (1998: 96).

Despite this reputation and history, however, the evolution of the comedy genre and the emergence of different tropes echo both its complexity and significance as a vehicle for analysing shifting social and cultural relations. To examine the more problematic angles of this approach, we must turn to some of the recent scholarly explorations of Nordic genre cinema. Ellen Rees identifies the 'quirky feel-good' as a key sub-genre and form of narrative intervention in a Nordic context. The conventions of the quirky feel-good draw on a sense of 'emotional connectedness' (Rees 2015: 147) where humour brings together a quirky set of eccentric characters, often based on Nordic stereotypes, and a distinct sense of melancholy or nostalgic longing for an imagined past.[35] More specifically, she expands by describing how:

> …there is a sudden relocation to an idyllic setting, a sense of loss that creates a persistent undertone of melancholy, a quirky cast of characters who provide comic relief, a loosely happy ending, and – most importantly – an overarching thematic focus on what might be called a national fantasy of social integration (Rees 2015: 157)

---

[35] Rees also notes how this particular 'brand' of Nordic identity politics has become an important marketing strategy on the international film festival circuit where Nordic 'kookiness' is in demand.

Consequently, there is a close association between the quirky feel-good genre and the notion of the 'imagined community', where, despite the individual eccentricities of the characters, there is a pervading emphasis on togetherness that, according to Rees, is ultimately designed to reinforce a sense of welfare community. This politically and ideologically charged angle often results in a problematic reaffirmation of the dominant host culture and its philosophical outlook. While the communities in these films may face problems, both the characters and narrative structures work to restore order, or at least 'order' as it is understood in a dominant sense where the principles of togetherness rest on an implicit ethnocentric perspective. Given this context, we must carefully evaluate the position of the Other in these examples where comedies carry underlying ideological messages on the nature of belonging but are also able to channel such messages through an accessible and entertaining format. The notion of accessibility is important here because, as we shall see, stereotyping plays a role in reinforcing reductive characterisations of the Other in order to communicate these political narratives and ideas. As with examples in the previous chapters, rather than take these films at face value, I base my approach on Samuel's (1978: 23) and Frank Manchel's (1990: 819) observations on how ethnic stereotyping is related to the social positions adopted by *and* imposed on different ethnic groups.

Many of the examples discussed in this chapter fall into Rees's category which is also similar in nature to Nestingen's idea of the 'medium concept film' (2008), which, as we have seen in chapter two, represents a blurring of populist genre conventions and art cinema which is traditionally used in the Nordic countries to explore pressing social questions. The results of these feel-good and medium concept blends are films that explore serious, often nationally relevant, subjects through an accessible genre-orientated lens, using comedy as a device for diffusing weightier topics — in this case, racism and cultural division. An analysis using both ideas captures the complexity of intercultural encounters and immigrant identity politics, particularly against the ideological context of the Nordic welfare state, where 'togetherness', community, and, most significantly, 'sameness' is a central factor in constructing and reinforcing the

dominant ideology. Subsequently, I ask where does ethnic stereotyping feature in these affirmative imagined communities and do the stereotypical character conventions used in these comic intercultural encounters challenge or help us re-examine the core values of community-orientated genres like the feel-good film?

In addition to terms like the medium concept or the feel-good film, it is also worth considering broader conceptual approaches to so-called 'ethnic comedies'. Scholars working on contemporary Turkish-German cinema (Benbow 2015: 85) for instance, discuss the emergence of sub-genres like the 'ethno-comedy' or the integration comedy. These terms are applied to films made by ethnic minorities or specifically address subjects and questions related to ethnicity. While such terms are useful on one level, they can also be problematically used to restrict the focus to particular aspects of identity or cultural heritage politics. Indeed, we may encounter similar problems with concepts like the ethno-comedy as we do with ideas like the 'immigrant film', which, again, is often associated with a specific contextual framing of the Other. These concepts may often come already loaded with an established set of essentialist expectations that fail to capture the complexities and intricacies of the identity politics. Speaking more broadly in the context of auteur cinema (Goss 2009) highlights the problematic assumption that a director from a particular background or nationality is automatically assumed to be speaking for, or indeed collectively addressing, that particular community.[36] He states how these 'essentializing and reductionist assumptions may underwrite stereotype and caricature, if unwittingly' and actually reduce 'the film to a director's identity without acknowledging any possibility of slippage between them' Goss (2009: 56). Isolina Ballesteros's work on immigration cinema in Europe (2015) highlights similar risks of essentialism, particularly in relation to the comedy genre with its typical reliance on stereotypes and caricatures. Discussing the challenges faced by directors from minority backgrounds who use comedy to address issues of exclusion, she states:

---

[36] See links to the interview with Omar Shargawi in chapter two for more detail on this problem.

In the context of comedy, authorship becomes a crucial factor in establishing the often-thin line between homogenizing and even eroticizing the immigrant subject and ridiculing immigrants' behaviours and traditions, which are depicted through the authority conferred to directors who themselves belong on the diasporic or immigrant community they depict. (Ballesteros 2015: 21)

Like Goss, she also discusses the so-called 'burden of representation' where first and second-generation immigrant directors are expected to address specific issues related to their ethnic background. Here, ethnic heritage is often the singular form of identity politics projected on to second-generation immigrants, making it difficult to see the complexities of the 'double conscientiousness' often experienced by those caught between two cultures. For these reasons, I am especially interested in the use of ironic self-stereotyping, where first and second-generation immigrant filmmakers satirise elements of their cultural heritage in order to draw attention to reductive cultural constructs and the kinds of essentialist expectations mentioned above. 'Diasporic' comedies in this chapter like *Import-Export* and *Jalla! Jalla!* for instance, play up and parody customs associated with Middle Eastern cultures, such as arranged marriages. To explore how the social positions adopted by white ethnic Nordic filmmakers are used to structure, position and characterise the Other in these ethnically themed comedies, firstly, I return to the notion of folkhemmet.

Restoring Folkhemmet Values in *En man som heter Ove/A Man Called Ove* (Holm, 2015)

My first case studies look at how the immigrant Other functions as a restorer of the imagined folkhemmet community values in examples that conflate racism and intolerance with themes of a generational division. The imagined communities represented here play into the concept 'folkhemmet', a notion, as Michael Tapper (2014) writes, that revolved around a 'a national set of virtues, including self-discipline,

politeness, honesty, a sense of justice, industry, a sense of duty, helpfulness, loyalty, optimism, consensus, modesty and common sense' (2014: 42). Based on Fredrik Backman's (2012) eponymous novel, *A Man Called Ove* is a 'feel-good' black comedy about a misanthropic elderly widower Ove (Rolf Lassgård) and his conflicted relationship with his small community of neighbours. With support from a variety of national and regional institutes including the Nordisk Film and TV Fond, *A Man Called Ove* attracted approximately 1.7 million spectators at the domestic box office making it the third biggest national hit since the Swedish Film Institute was established in 1963 (SFI 2015: 4). On top of this, it received three Guldbagge Awards and an Oscar nomination. According to the SFI, the film was also one of the most watched feature-length productions on Swedish television in 2015, drawing in 1,223,000 domestic spectators (SFI 2018: 12). These statistics matter for our discussion because they reflect the popularity of a film that, as we shall see, reinforces conventional ideas about belonging in the Swedish welfare state.

After losing his beloved wife and then his job, Ove now lives alone in a perpetual state of irritation, a fact exacerbated by his neighbours who consistently disregard strict community rules over parking, dog walking and driving along prohibited paths of the community's fenced off parameters. Indeed, this is a community with clearly demarcated borders which are largely visible because of Ove's meticulous rule-driven control over the neighbourhood. However, Ove's community is both evidently aware of and forgiving towards his finicky reputation. They give him the benefit of the doubt and consider his attitude a result of unresolved grief.

After rather un-dramatically deciding to kill himself, Ove's many suicide bids are inconveniently interrupted by new neighbours Patrick (Tobias Almborg), his Swedish-Iranian wife Parvaneh (Bahar Pars) and their two young daughters, Sepideh (Nelly Jamarani) and Nasanin (Zozan Akgün). Ove scoffs at the family's lack of basic practical or domestic skills such as their inability to drive cars or plumb in dishwashers. Their apparent laissez-faire approach to life clashes with Ove's propensity for old-fashioned values based on his job as a manual labourer, where he once commanded the

community's respect with his strong work ethic. The Ove character plays on a popular Swedish stereotype which is based on a preoccupation with rules and order (Anton, 1980: 118). The film reinforces these clichés through its black humour, particularly in the scenes where Ove attempts suicide in increasingly fastidious and methodical ways. However, the affectionate bond that slowly develops between Ove and Parvaneh helps to counterbalance the absurdity of these black comic moments.

Parvaneh is a compassionate, level-headed character who develops a close connection to Ove, particularly as parts of his tragic past begin to emerge. Indeed, underneath his irascible exterior, Ove is shown to be a deeply moral individual who cares for others regardless of race, religion or ethnic background. These apparently inherent characteristics are part of a deliberate representational choice. Ove develops a paternal relationship with Parvaneh; he teaches her how to drive a car, develops a mutual affection for her daughters and even names her as next of kin when he is hospitalised for an underlying heart condition. The film has tragicomic moments, echoing the melancholic tendencies of the quirky feel-good trope, as Parvaneh learns more about the accidental death of Ove's unborn child many years before and the loss of his beloved wife. In place of these absences, Parvaneh and her two children become Ove's surrogate daughter and granddaughters who both lovingly refer to him as 'granddad'. As these moments demonstrate, not only is ethnic difference proven to present no barrier in this imagined community, ethnic diversity itself is shown to be part of a self-evident shift in the Nordic welfare value system. In the film, Ove, as the embodiment of these values, proves that multicultural togetherness and socially progressive attitudes towards change evolve organically and without resistance.

The real enemies or outsiders appear to be the so-called 'white-shirts' represented here by interfering neoliberal state officials peddling innovation and technological progress and exploiting the health and social care system for their own financial gain. Grievances with these aspects of modern society are expressed in a subplot when a private company, the ironically named 'Konsensus', attempts to strong-arm a disabled resident from Ove's community into a private residential program, effectively breaking

up the closely bonded neighbourhood. Again, in contrast to the disconnected attitude of the contemporary social services, it is ultimately the Ove character that helps to unify and reinforce the values that underpin his community, a point reinforced by another sub-plot in which he takes a young Muslim man, Mirsad (Poyan Karimi) under his wing when he is rejected by his father for being gay. In true quirky feel-good form, the ending for Ove and his community is bittersweet. When he inevitably succumbs to a heart condition, there is a sense that his community will simply carry on as before having embraced his legacy and the implicit morals he leaves behind.

Given the significance of tight-knit community values in the film, it is important here to return to Rees's conceptualisation of the feel-good genre. In the context of ethnic Otherness, Rees identifies an important distinction between integration and self-realisation in her quirky feel-good analysis. This is particularly true of films involving immigrant characters or ethnic diversity. According to Rees, use of the 'foreign' Other is often strategic in the quirky feel-good. These characters are used to prop up the status quo. The results mean that 'these films are thus ultimately not really about integration in the face of globalisation, but rather about individual self-realisation, and perhaps – by extension – the consolidation (rather than hybridisation) of national identity' (Rees 2015: 147-159). This notion can be extended to account for how this consolidation of national identity places racial conflict into a binary narrative which, in turn, helps to shape perceptions of racism in Sweden. The self-realisation of the welfare community lies at the heart of Holm's quirky feel-good. Here, ethnic difference is accommodated, but only when that difference conforms to certain expectations. It involves the immigrant characters reaffirming and reinstating the white ethnic Nordic protagonist's faith in the (idealised) welfare community. The immigrant Other teaches the protagonists the errors of their ways, be that remedying their casual racism or restoring their connection to this vision of social integration.

Here, ethnic difference is tolerated or accepted providing it does not disrupt the ideological vision of togetherness. Explicit references to Parvaneh's ethnic background are limited. We learn how she escaped the fallout from the Iranian Revolution of 1978-

79 and that she is a chef who often leaves 'exotic' food parcels on Ove's doorstep, much to his initial irritation. These small gestures have ethnocultural symbolic value by providing the only other limited form of interaction with a vague sense of 'foreignness'.

The off-beat humour of the quirky-feel good contributes to a sense of resolution as does the type of ethnic stereotyping employed. Both help to play up the apparent pre-eminence of Nordic societies as tolerant and progressive, even though the reality may be different, especially for immigrants. Social and cultural integration is an unspoken adaptation in this community, and any resistance to it is erased. The physical neighbourhood community is used as a device for facilitating, and ultimately, reinforcing, the imagined multicultural values of folkhemmet. The 'restorative' qualities of the intercultural encounter and the Other's role in bridging a generational crisis between 'old' and 'new' values are also evident in other Nordic contexts. In this next example, the white character's journey of reconciliation with the past through the second-generation immigrant is also enabled by another popular comedy genre convention; namely the road movie trope.

Road Movie Interventions: The Crisis of Generational Nostalgia in *Saattokeikka/Unexpected Journey* (Valkama, 2017)

Saattokeikka/Unexpected Journey (2017) is a feel-good road movie involving the unlikely pairing of two Finns, one a teenage boy called Kamal (Noah Kin) from a second-generation Kenyan family, the other a short-tempered widowed pensioner called Veikko (Heikki Nousiainen) who is prone to both racist and homophobic outbursts. Their journey together begins as one of convenience with both looking to abandon their old lives. Kamal, who finds himself at odds with his new stepfamily, seeks to escape to Kenya to be with the biological father who abandoned him some years earlier. Veikko, who also has a terminal heart condition, on the other hand, plans to escape to his summer cabin and eke out his final days in solitude away from the hustle and bustle of Helsinki's

multicultural communities. From the beginning, like Ove, Veikko is shown to be in conflict with many of his neighbours and their apparently juvenile ways. Predictably, the pair does not see eye to eye; Veikko insists on referring to Kamal as 'the Somali' or just 'Somali', seemingly a shorthand way of saying 'immigrant.' Kamal retaliates but despite their sarcastic exchanges, the two form an unlikely bond. Kamal attempts to unite Veikko with his adult son, Mika (Mikko Nousiainen) who is getting married up in Northern Finland. After much resistance, Veikko gives in, and the pair turns up at the wedding where the reason for the long-standing feud between father and son is revealed when it turns out that Mika is marrying another man. After much turmoil, Kamal eventually abandons his plans to run away to Nairobi in order to help Veikko and Mika reconcile in time before Veikko finally succumbs to his heart condition.
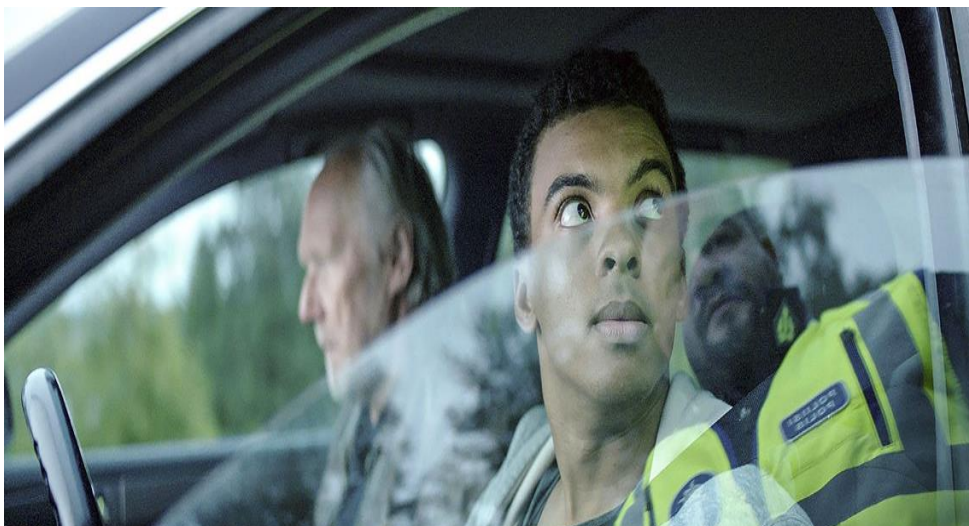
Figure 3: A shot visually capturing Noah caught between 'old' and 'new' forms of prejudice in *Unexpected Journey* (Valkama, 2017).

Like *A Man Called Ove*, *Unexpected Journey* uses the 'generation gap' as a framework for incorporating the crisis politics of multicultural belonging. After Kamal has successfully managed to bring Veikko and his son together one final time, he returns to life in Helsinki with his mother and stepfather, seeming with a renewed faith in the concept of family. The real focus throughout, however, is not just on restoring Veikko's relationship with Mika, but rather, reconnecting him with the familiar principles of togetherness and community. Like Parvaneh, Kamal plays a key role in facilitating this reconnection. In

death, characters like Veikko and Ove provide a way for all involved to re-examine their own relationships with one another and impart a sense of tradition designed to be passed on to the next generation, be they 'ethnically' Finnish or not.

In our crisis context, I claim the emphasis on the 'restorative' nature of these transitions is especially significant. This becomes clearer when we look at how other ethnic Finns are characterised in contrast with Veikko. *Unexpected Journey* uses the road movie device to expose a variety of unsavoury cardboard characters whose role in the narrative serves to highlight racism in different guises. These include nods to the contemporary approximation of the 'racist hillbilly' type and also imply that institutional xenophobia exists within the police force. At the same time, Veikko's character and his laughably ignorant musings about Kamal's Kenyan heritage and Finland's second-generation immigrant communities are clearly the basis of much of the ridicule here**.** As the narrative develops, however, the audience is increasingly encouraged to believe that Veikko is not, in fact, a 'real racist' in the same way as the others. Rather, his racism is framed as one of his many 'character quirks' and represents one aspect of his embittered and cynical outer shell.

As in the case of Ove, the take-home message here seems to be that below Veikko's gruff exterior, there exists a significant capacity for embracing Otherness. The significance of this generational crisis is that it also seeks, in part, to locate racist thinking in the past as part of an antiquated 'old ways attitude' that is easily rehabilitated or exonerated when it encounters the Other. Thus, echoing Rees's work, *Unexpected Journey* characterises the quirky Nordic feel-good film by encouraging its audience to view any parallels between racism and the welfare state as not just a way of life relegated to the past, but one that can be neutralised by a feel-good encounter with the Other and a superficial acknowledgement of contemporary multicultural realities. We could even argue that the racist caricatures encountered along the way only exist to help bring Veikko's positive or more enlightened attitude to the fore.

Although films like *Unexpected Journey* clearly draw inspiration from transnational road movie comedies *As Good as it Gets* (Brooks, 1997) and other European variants like

the French buddy road movie *Intouchables/Untouchable* (Nakache and Toledano, 2011), Veikko's relocation to the Finnish countryside, where he reconciles with his son, also reflects a specific Finnish permutation of the road genre. According to film scholar Tommi Römpötti (2012, 2015), the road movie characteristics evident in examples like *Unexpected Journey*, where harmony is resorted by reverting back to a rural setting, signal a firm re-establishment of a distinctly conservative familial togetherness.[37] Along with these conservative values, Römpötti also discusses the representations of freedom expressed and reflected in the Finnish road movie genre. Römpötti (2015: 133-146) notes how the Nordic welfare mentality has traditionally characterised the notions of freedom and individuality in very precise ways where 'in the Nordic welfare state view, the individual is free only when acting as a part of the nation' (2015: 134). Paradoxically, within the welfare mentality, where themes of continuity reign supreme, the idea of a citizen's individuality and freedom was recognised by the state only if one's actions reflected the general ideological agenda of the ruling power, or at least met with the expectations that those actions would benefit the state in an affirmative way.

Freedom thus became synonymously linked with state intervention and support. According to Römpötti, this 'continuity as freedom' mentality is best reflected in the Finnish road movie where a genre typically associated with subverting conservative values is re-contextualised to fit a narrative of convention, permanence and, above all, togetherness. Here, while the road movie device, like Ove's small, insular community, helps to frame the convergence of 'old' and 'new' values, it ultimately belies a clichéd restoration of conservatism that, while seen to cross cultural barriers, originates within the dominant host culture. In the context of my culturalisation of politics framework, relationships between Ove and Parvaneh and Veikko and Kamal signify an emphasis on the need to structure the intercultural meeting around an implied dominant cultural narrative of cohesion. Given the significance of continuity as a theme, I now turn to two

---

[37] See Dome Karukoski's *Napapiirin Sankarit/Lapland Odyssey* (2010) for a popular example of these themes.

examples directed by second-generation filmmakers who both acknowledge and satirise notions of cohesive continuity at the centre of the folkhemmet ideology, specifically by introducing themes of intercultural hybridity.

A Marriage of Inconvenience: Romantic Comedies *Import-Eksport/Import-Export* (Hussain, 2005) and *Jalla, Jalla!* (Fares, 2000)

Import-Export and *Jalla, Jalla!* are two romantic comedies directed by second-generation immigrant filmmakers respectively from Pakistan and Lebanon. *Import-Export* follows Jasmine, from the Norwegian-Pakistani community, who falls in love with ethnic Norwegian, Jan. The couple must hide their relationship from her observant father Allahditta (Talat Hussain), who is set on arranging Jasmin's marriage to another Pakistani man. In pursuit of Jasmine, Jan blags his way into a job in Allahditta's convenience store, so he can mine the customs of her family's Islamic traditions. In an attempt to surreptitiously win Jasmine's father over, he attends prayer meetings at the Mosque, buys a Qu'ran and even undergoes a circumcision. Although Allahditta is oblivious to Jan's relationship with Jasmine and is perplexed by his apparent burgeoning interest in the faith, he welcomes his conversion to Islam. Meanwhile, chaos ensues when, in the days leading up to the wedding, Jasmine's parents discover Jan's real intentions. Ironically, it is Allahditta's own elderly mother who saves the day when she arrives from Pakistan for the wedding. Recognising Jasmine's love for Jan, she persuades her son to switch the grooms at the last minute and allow the pair to marry. By the end, Jan is seen to have assimilated into the Pakistani community where the preservation and promotion of similar values of togetherness are seen through an idealised intercultural lens, where compromise is a two-way process, and love appears to outweigh tradition.

Chiefly, ethnic stereotyping in *Import-Export* relies on the apparent incongruity of contrasting cultural values which are brought together through a romantic relationship. The Pakistani community is one of the largest non-European immigrant groups living

141

in Norway. The community, having first arrived in Norway in the 1960s, stands at approximately 20,000 and is vastly diverse in social class and religious practice (Stiles and Eriksen 2003: 215). Although this diversity has generally yet to feature on Norwegian screens, several films challenge issues related to traditional practices such as the aforementioned arranged marriage among second-generation immigrants. These subjects have caused widespread debate in the largely secular Norway and are often painted in a negative light in the context of Norway's well-established reputation for gender equality (Jacobsen 2011: 129).[38] However, the 'arranged marriage' framework arguably has a novelty value for Norwegian audiences and is commonly associated with Muslim immigrants (see *Chinaman* in chapter four for more on intercultural and arranged marriages). However, *Import-Export* takes a light-hearted approach to this theme.

Hussain emphasises the contrasts between the two communities further by having Jan and his hard-drinking, hard-partying friends play in a metal band — a stereotypical cultural reference to Norway's black metal music scene. Jan's friends try to warn him off by playing up the myths of violence associated with the Pakistani community, referring to 'ethnic gang' culture, a common prejudicial lens through which the Pakistani diaspora is often viewed. However, *Import-Export*'s apparent cultural contrasts require further examination.

The racial prejudice runs both ways and just as Jan's friends vent their fear and suspicion of Pakistani culture, Jasmine's father complains about the 'immoral' behaviour of the Norwegians, implying they make unfit or unsuitable partners for Pakistani men and women. Allahditta's disdain for the trappings of contemporary Norwegian culture, particularly that of young white people and the way they dress and behave, mirrors that of Veikko in *Unexpected Journey*, who regularly pours scorn on the young black and Asian men listening to Finnish rap music in the neighbourhood. I suggest Allahditta's fixation

---

[38] See Predelli (2004: 473-493) for more information on Muslim women and gender equality in Norway.

with cultural orthodoxy, an aspect exaggerated through comic stereotyping, serves another function. By focusing on the cultural homogeneity promoted and enshrined by arranged marriages, Hussain draws an ironic parallel with the Norwegian welfare ideology. As Eastmond points out, there is a general resistance to difference, and this is particularly true in the context of accepting other cultural or religious practices. In Norwegian culture, the emphasis on sameness helps to reinforce how difference is 'problematic and easily translated as anomaly or lack' (Eastmond 2014: 25).

Much of the comic relief is also found in Jasmine's sister Nadia (Anita Uberoi) and the strained relationship she has with her buffoonish husband Yousaf (Assad Siddique) who works alongside Jan in the convenience store. Their as yet unconsummated marriage (which was also implied to be arranged) reveals all the infidelity and in-fighting below the surface of the Pakistani diaspora. Nadia's ongoing affair with a younger, wealthier, and more attractive Pakistani man leaves Yousaf in turmoil. It is up to Jan to effectively 'restore' Yousaf's masculine credentials by paying some Norwegian girls to flirt with him and provoke Nadia. The ploy eventually works, and the couple reconcile.

In mocking the essentialist traditions of ethnic stereotyping and drawing attention to the often-absurd ways ethnic groups are constructed and divided, Hussain also parodies the myths of violence in the Pakistani community. Specifically, when Allahditta initially learns of Jan's true intentions, he turns up at his front door accompanied by a group of seemingly enraged and weapon-wielding Pakistani men. When Jan's friends, who earlier expressed distorted misconceptions about violence in the Pakistani community, answer the door, they are greeted by the enraged group where their suspicions about Pakistanis are momentarily confirmed. However, although these self-deprecating moments allow Hussain to acknowledge this widely held and misleading perception in a satirical way, he nevertheless contributes to the same myths.

Despite Allahditta's stubbornness, as Bakøy notes (2011: 156), Hussain is careful not to dismiss the practice of arranged marriage altogether or minimise its significance through comic intervention. Rather, the notion of the arranged marriage device becomes

something of an 'empty signifier' where it becomes less about the preservation of specific cultural traditions, and more a way of facilitating cultural and social hybridity. In the end, Jan appears to have assimilated into the Norwegian-Pakistani community fully, and as the credits roll, we see how he has helped to expand the family's chain of convenience stores turning the franchise into a roaring commercial and communal success. The implicit message of these idealised final sequences is that, beyond romance, social and cultural integration leads to prosperity and happiness.

In a similar vein to Hussain, Josef Fares's comedy *Jalla Jalla!* (2000) addresses second-generation identity politics using the arranged marriage format to facilitate and explore various intercultural encounters. The release of the film in 2000 is also significant in the context of the historical progression of ethnicity on Nordic screens. Fares's semi-autobiographical tale of intercultural clashes between Sweden and Lebanon acknowledges and exploits cultural clichés on both sides. His negotiation with these angles and the use of the 'small-town comedy' format proved to be a hit with Swedish audiences and positioned Fares as a proponent of the 'new Swedish Cinema' movement[39] (Sundholm et al. 2010: 150). When compared with *Import-Export*, another significant breakthrough in *Jalla Jalla!* is Fares's arguably more nuanced exploration of the conflicts on two cultural fronts. At the behest of his family, Roro (Fares Fares), a second-generation Swede of Lebanese heritage, is set to marry Yasmin (Laleh Pourkarim). However, unbeknownst to them, Roro already as a girlfriend called Lisa (Tuva Novotny), who is a white 'ethnic Swede.' However, Fares includes Yasmin's perspective, exploring the problems facing second-generation immigrants caught between two cultures from two different and arguably gendered viewpoints. Although she too is worried about the ramifications of her marriage to Roro, her doubts are compounded by the threat of being sent back to Lebanon should she choose to renege

---

[39] New Swedish cinema characterises a turn in Swedish filmmaking in the 1990s when a generation of filmmakers exploring new and innovative approaches to social topics emerged to challenge long-held cinematic traditions and themes.

on the deal. Instead, the pair mutually agrees to pretend they are looking forward to the wedding. Fares also explores other types of relationships between 'native' and 'ethnic' characters through Roro's close friendship with work colleague Måns (Torkel Petersson). Roro's situation is mirrored, to an extent, through Måns, who is in love with Yasmin. The narrative builds towards a fully realised 'couple swap' where Roro and Lisa and Måns and Yasmin elope, rejecting traditions from both cultures and challenging the expectations on all sides. As Alexander points out (2014: 286-287) the ending scene shows us the two couples running away from the wedding, their road untraveled and their destination unknown. Yasmin's enraged brother makes a failed attempt to stop the four as they make off in a car. Their escape signifies a definitive break with the themes of reconciliation and community seen in *Import-Export* and *Unexpected Journey* and, equally, subverts the customs associated with Yasmin and Roro's background. Alexander summarises *Jalla Jalla!*'s contribution to the undoing of traditional expectations, stating:

> Through satirizing, allegorizing and critiquing the norms of both immigrant and host cultures, Fares and Hussain pose the question of what it means to be an immigrant or a Scandinavian, and sometimes both. Roro proves to be not only a Lebanese immigrant but also an assimilated Scandinavian, while Jan is a Scandinavian who adopts Pakistani immigrant traditions for the sake of love. In their portrayal of multiculturalism, both films use romance, humour and utopian optimism to illustrate the challenges and possibilities of living in the diaspora. (Alexander 2014: 287)

Rochelle Wright claims that films like *Jalla Jalla!* largely avoid ethnic stereotyping by 'offering the reassurance that cultural differences can be resolved' (2005: 68). While *Jalla Jalla!* may take cultural difference narratives as a starting point, they complicate the process of culturalisation by moving away from a binary understanding of these cultural relationships. By refusing to conform to either set of expectations, *Jalla Jalla!*'s intercultural framework differs from *Import-Export*, where each character's mutual exclusion forms the basis of their connection. Questions of assimilation are undercut by the ending which is both an affirmative subversion of tradition but also arguably alludes to a sense of ambivalence regarding their future.

However, just as with Hussain's film, there are instances where Fares does at several points employ negative self-stereotyping. In one arguably problematic scene, Roro takes Måns to his father's convenience store where we witness Roro's father fleece a white Swedish customer out of more money. He is characterised as an opportunistic, dodgy business type who takes full advantage of the Swedish customer's apparent naivety. Like the scenes in *Import-Export*, where Allahditta and the small army of armed Pakistani men turn up at Jan's door, these instances of self-stereotyping for the purposes of comic relief continue to pose challenges to the representational. Despite any light-heartedness associated with these self-deprecating instances, they also come with an exaggerated incongruity separating the immigrant and host cultures; exaggerations that nonetheless play into the hands of dominant narratives. Again, the kind of negative self-stereotyping of Roro's father also helps to build a contrast between him and his son. While the use of these stereotypes indicates divides within the Lebanese community, they nonetheless contribute to a sense that Roro's rebellion needs to exist in contrast to some form of embellished or exaggerated characterisation.

Here it is important to consider what Spivak calls strategic essentialism (1988) in the context of ethnic stereotyping. Strategic essentialism can be broadly understood as a process whereby a culture, especially a minority one, exaggerates its own social or cultural traits or the widely recognised aspects of their given ethnic identity as a means of establishing a clearly defined identity that appeals to wider audiences outside that culture. These dynamics often play out in post-colonial politics, where Spivak claims that we must carefully consider the political function of strategic essentialism. Here, for a given minority population to gain recognition or draw attention to serious issues like exclusion or racial prejudice, their only way of voicing these concerns often comes about through playing up certain characteristics associated with their cultural identity for the benefit of dominant and typically white audiences. Indeed, the political context of racial prejudice and exclusion becomes even more pronounced in my next two case studies which venture into more explicit political terrain with their comic approaches to the recent refugee crisis in Europe.

Deadpan Dystopias and Ironic Interventions: Nordic Comedy and the Refugee Crisis in *Velkommen til Norge!/Welcome to Norway!* (Langlo, 2016) and *Toivon tuolla puolen/The Other Side of Hope* (Kaurismäki, 2017)

The conflict in Syria has led to a surge in refugees and asylum seekers entering the Nordic region. Accordingly, as with elsewhere in Europe, the Nordic countries have made provisions for managing the crisis by setting up reception centres.[40] However, the crisis has provoked other unprecedented moves within the Nordic region. Sweden's response to the crisis, for instance, involved the introduction of temporary border checks which hit the Øresund Bridge and wider region. According to Barker, the Swedish Border Police carried out 3.2 million ID checks at the Swedish border between 2015-2017, a figure that far exceeded any other EU member state (2017: 54). The far-right groups have also mobilised against this perceived threat to 'Nordic cultural values.' *The Other Side of Hope* and *Welcome to Norway!* both explore this ongoing crisis from different perspectives using ethnic stereotyping to de-fuse the political tensions surrounding the racial politics mentioned above. On the surface, while these intercultural encounters use irony to satirise the type of collective 'togetherness' upheld in *A Man Called Ove* and appear to paint a more complex picture of belonging to the welfare state, we must pay close attention to the context and function of stereotyping refugees as victims.

After escaping by boat from the War in Syria, refugee Khaled (played by former asylum seeker Sherwan Haji) finds himself detained at a reception centre in Finland. Desperately searching for his missing sister, now his only living family member, Khaled must navigate the hellish bureaucracy of Finland's asylum application system. Through

---

[40] Reception centres are temporary housing schemes for refugees and asylum seekers applying for permanent residency. Such centres also aid the process of assimilation, introducing people to the cultural and social practices of the host country. In the Nordic region, as in other European countries, anti-immigrant groups and individuals target these centres.

Khaled's eyes, Kaurismäki presents a dystopian vision of Finland's national and social welfare institutions. The 'invisible' authority of policymakers is a key target and Khaled's vulnerable status as a non-citizen helps to exaggerate the system's cruel detachment from human suffering. Kaurismäki's body of work is concerned with characters that are socially displaced, including many forays into these subjects with explorations of marginality, exclusion from the welfare state and oppressive authoritarian state politics, namely bureaucracy. He firmly locates the idea of 'belonging' within marginal working-class communities or among people with no legal or definitive place in society.[41]

While Khaled is held at the centre, in a separate narrative strand, native Finn Wikström (Sakari Kuosmanen) walks out on his broken marriage and gets lucky in a card game, investing his winnings in a struggling restaurant called *The Golden Pint*. At the same time, he takes on the establishment's disgruntled staff including Calamnius (Ilkka Koivula), the hapless maître d' and resident stooge, the indifferent chef Nyrhinen (Janne Hyytiäinen) who sleeps, drinks, smokes, and cooks simultaneously, and deadpan waitress Mirja (Nuppu Koivu).

Meanwhile, Khaled develops a close relationship with Iraqi refugee, Mazdak (Simon Al-Bazoon), who has managed to assimilate into the community and speaks good Finnish. Together, the two men share a confused fascination with Finnish culture. Advising him on the rules of behaviour, Mazdak warns Khaled that 'The melancholic ones are always deported first.' The irony of this statement resonates here as melancholic characters are the lynchpins of Kaurismäki's work and are frequently used to reflect exaggerated stereotypes of the Finnish national character. These national characterisations are defined by a minimalist use of physical action, reduced dialogue, and unemotional delivery. Effectively Kaurismäki projects these signature characteristics onto Mazdak and Khaled, seemingly making them a part of his

---

[41] Previously films like *Mies vailla menneisyyttä/The Man Without a Past* (2002) explores 'domestic refugee' themes. Here, when a Finnish citizen loses his memory, he also loses his status and rights. He ends up forging new friendships with a homeless community on the edges of Helsinki's harbour.

preoccupation with the universal nature of displacement and therefore expanding the understanding of character traits that are often interpreted as representing something distinctly Finnish.

It is important to understand these themes and approaches in conjunction with the rest of Aki Kaurismäki's oeuvre. Discussing the broader theme of trauma in Kaurismäki's films, Nestingen observes how 'the traumatic narrative is never placed in the foreground in the films, which would construct the characters as victims' (Nestingen 2013: 45) allowing them to 'maintain their dignity and humour' (2013: 46). However, the context of Finland's role in the treatment of refugees is distinctly more pointed in this film. Khaled explains his situation to the administrator of the Immigration Services Department, but despite his horrendous experiences, his asylum application is rejected. After he is summoned to court and treated like a criminal, the establishment coldly dismisses his plight and sends him to a 'holding pen' to await deportation. After he manages to escape, a group of racists confront Khaled. His attackers are members of the so-called 'Finnish Liberation Army' who are a reference to organisations like the Soldiers of Odin.[42] Characteristically, those who rush to his defence are Helsinki's other marginal community, in this case, the homeless, a social group who have featured prominently in Kaurismäki's work. Following his escape, Khaled takes refuge behind *The Golden Pint* where he is confronted by Wikström.

After settling their initial differences with a good old-fashioned fistfight, Wikström invites Khaled to work for him as a janitor in the restaurant. In Khaled's host family, a deadpan Kaurismäki-style dysfunctional family sitcom scenario emerges where the comedy is drawn from the sarcastic exchanges between Wikström and the two underdogs Calamnius and Nyrhinen. Although there is an acknowledged pecking order in this family where Nyrhinen objects to Khaled's inclusion over wage competition, the

---

[42] This anti-immigrant organisation emerged in Kemi, Finland in 2015. It has since spread across the Nordic region and beyond. See Wilson, 2016).

restaurant helps Khaled stay under the radar when the authorities turn up. There is a shared, and understandable, mistrust of authority figures among Khaled's host family. Rather, in Kaurismäki's world, it is the authority figures and faceless bureaucrats who are constructed as the true threat to community values.

When Mazdak locates Khaled's sister, Miriam (Niroz Haji), Wickström helps to smuggle her into the country, and the pair is finally reunited. However, shortly after her arrival and in a typical tragic Kaurismäki twist, Khaled is attacked by one of the racists from the Finnish Liberation Army. Although he has been stabbed several times, he manages to meet his sister as she prepares to enter the Immigration Services building and embark on the application process. After seeing her off without revealing the extent of his injuries, in the final scene, Khaled sits beside a tree and looks out over Helsinki's harbour. Again, through this rough treatment, Kaurismäki highlights the absurdity of Khaled's rejection. As we see things from his perspective and experience the 'foreignness' of Finland through his eyes, Kaurismäki exaggerates this absurdity through the contradictions and tensions between the promise of Finland as a utopian welfare state and the realities faced by those excluded from it.

Nestingen (2016: 306) suggests that Kaurismäki's focus on refugee characters represents an emerging trend in his work. However, there is perhaps something to be said about the context of his detached and aloof style when approaching a subject in this manner. As is commonplace within Kaurismäki's work, there is also a distinct sentimentalisation of Khaled's character. Considering my focus on the process of culturalisation in these narratives, one could arguably recognise a binary understanding of the cultural relationship between Finland and Syria not in how Khaled's Syrian identity clashes with the Finnish one, but rather in how his refugee status makes him a victim. Consequently, this form of culturalisation reinforces a sense of sentimentalised refugee victimhood that is alleviated when it encounters the benevolence of Wikström and his kooky band of eccentric employees.

The 'novelty value' of intercultural relations is also dealt with in other characteristically outlandish Kaurismäkian ways. One particular self-deprecating

cultural reference — which functions against the context of another culture— comes to fruition during a doomed entrepreneurial experiment, where Wikström and co briefly turn *The Golden Pint* into a sushi restaurant. After playing mix and match with the Finnish and Japanese national cuisines in the kitchen, the exclusively (and inexplicably) Japanese clientele silently walk out en masse. This restaurant re-vamp is a misguided attempt to show how Finland interprets or interacts with 'foreignness'. Despite the film's approach, however, *The Other Side of Hope* did not have the same impact as *A Man Called Ove* having garnered 52, 988 domestic spectators and making €482, 578 (Finnish Film Institute 2017: 15). To put this in perspective, in Finland, the highest grossing domestic release of 2017 was Aku Louhimies's *Tuntematon sotilas/The Unknown Solider* which earned €12,998,527 at the box office from its 923,955 spectators. This pattern of domestic performance is also mirrored in other more recent refugee-themed comedies.

Denstad Langlo's ironically titled *Welcome to Norway!* (2016) is set at the Norø Hotell in the remote mountain ranges of Northern Norway. *Welcome to Norway!* was produced on a budget of NOK 16,000,000 including NOK 9,000,000 worth of grants (NFI *Welcome to Norway!).* In return, the film scored a disappointing 53, 147 domestic admissions and made approximately NOK 5,327,993 (NFI 2016: 11) upon its 2016 release. Like *The Other Side of Hope*, it is one of the first Nordic films to deal with the ongoing refugee crisis and, like its Finnish counterpart it appears to add layers of complexity to the cultural values associated with togetherness and community. In this example, comedy appears to open up a serious subject and purports to unravel commonly held beliefs about refugees in Norway. Here, white ethnic Norwegian Primus (Anders Baasmo Christiansen), his wife Hanni (Henriette Steenstrup) and teenage daughter Oda (Nini Bakke Kristiansen) are struggling to make ends meet. Their hotel business is failing, and family relations are strained. Although Primus is prejudiced against foreigners, he sees an opportunity to reinvent his flailing fortune by converting his hotel into a refugee reception centre. Initially, his primary motivation is the generous grant awarded by the Norwegian government which is designed to support such centres. Langlo's use of the reception centre concept is a useful metaphor for Norway's conflicted welfare system. On the

surface, the centre and its comically dysfunctional set-up prove to be the antithesis of Ove's gated community. Langlo positions the hostile, snowy mountain-scapes of Northern Norway as a type of 'frontier environment' where the comic potential of the 'culture clash' narrative is clearly implied.

Like Kaurismäki's host-hybrid family, Langlo's film uses the situational approach to capture the state of this frontier. Primus' initial appalling attitude, particularly towards black and Asian refugees, personifies neoliberal Norway. His refugee project is nothing more than another cynical avenue of self-serving business exploitation. It is Nordic venture capitalism with a 'human face'. However, the 'currency' exchanged in this instance is outwardly based on culture. Equally, Langlo undermines the authority of Norway's immigration and welfare services. For the centre to meet government guidelines, the authorities draw up a list of requirements, including 'cultural integration' lessons. Given the ineptitude of the Norwegian protagonist and the complacent officials, this requirement acts as another ironic stab at Norwegian cultural values. Welfare officer Line (Renate Reinsve) is the interfering government representative sent to monitor the situation. She ends up having an affair with Primus and manipulates him using her power to withdraw or approve funding for the reception project. The reception centre is in a state of total disarray as Primus struggles to organise even basic amenities like the electricity or running water. These jobs ultimately end up in the hands of the refugees. He is also completely ignorant about the refugees themselves, failing to understand that they come from different backgrounds. At various points, we see how they are equally at odds with each other over religion and social practices, although this is not the main focus of the narrative. Rather, Langlo focuses on developing Primus' character as he faces one farcical disaster after another.

By contrast, the voice of reason is Congolese immigrant, Abedi (Olivier Mukuta who, like Sherwan Haji, is also a former asylum seeker). He undermines Primus with his superior intelligence, level-headed negotiating skills and ability to crowd control. He speaks five languages and possesses a deeper understanding of the vast cultural and social differences separating the group of fifty refugees living at the hotel. Abedi also

becomes the key mediator between Primus and the authorities. Despite Primus' casual racism and Abedi's unending optimism, the two men form an unlikely friendship. This 'buddy movie' double act is central to the 'transformation' of Primus' character. When Hanni discovers Primus' affair, he is forced to move in with Abedi. The film playfully suggests how Primus must effectively live in exile in his own reception centre, which forms part of a politics of intervention of sorts. This move appears to place him in a parallel position to that of his refugee guests where, sharing a cramped room with Abedi, Primus is forced to experience a simulation of their poor living conditions. Unlike *The Other Side of Hope*, where Khaled steps into the world of the restaurant, here Primus is the one forced to step into the world of the refugees and the context of hardships. By reconstructing these conditions on Norwegian soil, we experience a curious inversion of the power dynamic at work within Kaurismäki's film. Amid the chaotic surroundings, however, Primus learns to appreciate Abedi's patience and the horrors of his past. In the end, Abedi moves across the border to Sweden, leaving a lasting and affirmative impression on Primus.

Again, the Nordic-centric approach positions the immigrant Other as a source of positive strength for the host character by introducing a sense of much-needed perspective and enlightenment. This approach reduces the role of the immigrant Other to that of the 'good victim', where they serve not only to educate the host but also reaffirm dominant ideas in the liberal mainstream about how refugees are expected to behave. As Primus learns the values of intercultural togetherness, we see an affirmation of the welfare state's 'true' nature, that is, ultimately open and tolerant underneath the incompetence of its surface.

Additionally, the stories and struggles of newcomers are still minimised. In one sobering scene when a female asylum seeker is asked about her experiences, the Norwegian social worker is completely unprepared to hear about how she was brutally raped by a group of soldiers as she was trying to flee. Despite the horrific nature of the story, Langlo appears to invite the audience to mock or even laugh at how the naïve Norwegian is clearly out of her depth. The fact that immigrant experiences are secondary

is, again, highly problematic and reflects the general trend explored so far across a broad spectrum of Nordic genre films.

In *Welcome to Norway!* the ideological conventions of welfare capitalism are used to critique Norway's beleaguered response to the crisis but also address the underlying contradictions in this ethos. The crisis becomes another business opportunity, where, under the guise of 'togetherness' and welfare support, the hosts attempt to profit from the situation. However, ethnic stereotyping, again, helps to undermine this critique by reinforcing popular images of the 'good victim' refugee. Both case studies lean heavily on the sentimentalisation of refugee characters in order to inspire sympathy. This sympathy is also concentrated on the white protagonist's own journey of self-discovery which is facilitated through an encounter with the Other. However, as sentimental as the stereotyping of refugee characters is here, I now turn to a film made by an ethnic Finn who approaches stereotyping in a markedly different but nonetheless problematic way.

Comic Prosthesis: *Vieraalla maalla/Land of Love* (Vanne, 2003)

Land of Love also adopts a light-hearted approach to the subject of intercultural romance. The film follows Tuomas Linna (Ville Haapasalo), a young white academic who embarks on a social experiment designed to unearth the challenges faced by immigrants in Finnish society. His approach involves disguising himself as his friend Omar Ghaala (Jerry Wahlforss) to effectively 'assimilate' with the immigrant communities of Helsinki. In doing so, however, Tuomas falls for Finnish language instructor Hanne (Irina Björklund). Unaware that Omar and Tuomas are in fact the same person, Hanne falls for the Omar persona. With the dilemma established, Tuomas must confess his experiment to Hanne and persuade her to fall in love with his true identity. This superficial disguise leans heavily on the stereotypical imagery of the universal foreigner. More controversially, it also involves Tuomas wearing dark contact lenses and painting his skin brown, an effort that leads to a near disaster scenario following a sexual encounter

with love interest. As Kääpä (2012) notes, examples such as *Land of Love* are especially problematic given that minority voices are significantly underrepresented in Finnish cinema, both on and off-screen. He also notes how the complexities of social interactions are neutralised through things like sport. Kääpä discusses the implications of using oversimplified binary opposition stating how:

> The problem here is that any sort of adaptation is actually premised on expecting the immigrants to forsake their own national customs and assume the normative frameworks of the dominant cultures. This illustrates a weak version of multiculturalism in that it sees adaptation as a one-way system, where all obligations rest with the immigrants (Kääpä 2012: 214)

Undeniably, however, like *The Other Side of Hope*, *Land of Love* draws attention to racism as a visible problem in contemporary Finland. Vanne makes several references to neo-fascist groups who are shown to be willing to use violence against immigrants. However, he frames the confrontation between the racists and the Other in a largely farcical and almost cartoonish way, as demonstrated when Tuomas, still disguised as Omar, is chased from a bar by a group of Nazi skinheads in what could be described as a comic interlude. The film also infers that institutional forms of prejudice exist. This is evident through Tuomas's friend, Mahmud (Pietro Steiner) who, despite having 'assimilated' into Finnish society, is threatened with expulsion over unpaid speeding fines, a triviality that is doubtlessly designed to mock the absurdities of bureaucratic discrimination. Despite the implied tensions surrounding Finnish multiculturalism and discriminatory practices embedded in the Finnish judicial system, however, racism remains superficially explored. Instead, the film ultimately substitutes the nuances of satire with light-hearted gags where the humour rests on the apparent incongruity of Finnish and Turkish cultures.

Ironically, despite any earnest intentions of the filmmaker in exposing contemporary prejudices against minorities in Finland, all non-white characters end up with comparatively minor roles. The real Omar Ghaala makes several brief appearances towards the end and Tuomas's main confidante Mahmud appears intermittently to offer

advice and play Finnish baseball. As Hiltunen states 'By effectively side-lining the multicultural communities of Helsinki, *Land of Love* follows an emerging trend in contemporary Finnish cinema where minority characters tend to occupy secondary roles' (Hiltunen 2016: 247). Mahmud's role is to help facilitate Tuomas's progress, both in relation to his academic pursuits and his ultimately successful pursuit of love. However, the film also relies on stereotypes associated with the Finns. Tuomas's strait-laced personality contrasts sharply with Omar's happy-go-lucky charm. The anthropological nature of Tuomas' academic investigation into 'community integration' could also be interpreted as an attempt to parody the shortcomings of Nordic exceptionalism and its limited engagement with complex cultural issues. However, by abandoning this subplot, the film undermines this critique.

Throughout this chapter, we have discussed how genre conventions such as the road movie or elements of the feel-good film can be used to understand the way intercultural encounters are constructed, especially in relation to wider societal values. I propose that the kind of stereotyping used in *Land of Love* embodies a specific approach to the depiction of the immigrant Other. Characters like Omar lack depth and this, I contend, is part of his appeal both to the other characters in the narrative and to audiences alike. He is designed as a one-dimensional, superficial stereotype, free from complexity and affirms the views of a dominant Western perspective of the Other as the happy-go-lucky 'quirky' foreigner.

So far, we have seen how comedy draws on ethnic stereotyping as both a subversive means of challenging the status quo and as a means of reinforcing basic principles of culturalisation where reductive immigrant characterisations exist primarily to reflect the benevolence of the ethnic Nordic characters. However, in viewing, discussing or even critiquing the kinds of ethnic minority stereotypes in *Welcome to Norway!* or *The Other Side of Hope*, we cannot avoid the contextual links to wider topical and politically charged narratives. In other words, even if the underlying aim of these empathetic characterisations is to strengthen the image of Nordic exceptionalism, they nonetheless force their audiences to confront pressing contemporary issues like displacement. *Land*

of Love's use of ethnic stereotyping is, however, markedly different. In this case, I understand Omar to represent a 'no-context' character who occupies a phantom presence in the narrative. Seemingly, he has no real identity or contextual role in the story and arguably his character must be emptied of context to allow the white protagonist to borrow and literally wear his skin.

In this respect, I contend that the stereotyping of Omar functions as a form of comic prosthesis. No-context characters in this sense are predetermined by a sense of redundancy. Like any other form of prosthetic, no-context 'characters' like Omar exist to restore the function of normality (or at least the appearance and perception of it) for the white ethnic protagonist, which in this case is signified by Tuomas' successful union with Hanne. Consequently, it is perhaps important here, when looking at the process of ethnic stereotyping for comic purposes, to distinguish between *characters* and *devices*. Examples like *Land of Love* seem to permit certain kinds of caricatures or devices that omit any overtly political depth or complexity. The character development is disproportionately weighted in favour of the white Nordic protagonist who benefits from the literal and figurative absence of the ethnic Other as a fully or even partially formed character in their own right. Less sophisticated examples like *Land of Love* merely use race as a comic plot device to facilitate an off-beat romantic tryst that ultimately reinforces ethnocentric ideals.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined issues connected with ethnic representation in Nordic comedy films. This chapter also highlights the importance of cultural specificity and how comedy can transform and take on different levels of significance in different cultural contexts. As reflected in the statistics, *A Man Called Ove*'s domestic popularity well exceeds Kaurismäki and Langlo's films. Perhaps the position of the Other also had an impact here. While these latter two films received funding and dealt with the topic of

immigration in a typically egalitarian and socially responsible way, they did not necessarily capitalise on the theme of white nostalgic melancholia in the same way that Holm's film did, with its strong emphasis on Ove as the protagonist caught between past and present and wrestling with considerable social transition. Another aspect of the financial investments made in films like Langlo's indicates that a cultural favourability for egalitarian comedies persists even when the attendance figures do not reflect the ambitions or cultural mandates of the industries.

However, although the comedy formats used in these examples are disparate and wide-ranging, we have seen evidence of several shared characteristics when it comes to representing racial and cultural difference. The welfare state forms a key point of reference by tying themes of inclusivity together, even in examples where directors appear to superficially use themes of ethnic identity to challenge its ideological basis. Largely, ethnic differences, or at least, problems linked to difference are neutralised by an all-encompassing sense of normative solidarity and togetherness. This neutralisation leaves the dominant values system in place even when examples like *Unexpected Journey* mock the conventions, behaviours, and expectations of the host nation. To expand these ideas related to continuity I now turn to a more focused study on the theme of space where spatial politics holds the potential to challenge the implicit notions underlying the collective 'we' explored in this chapter.

Four

Border Politics: Spatial Expressions of Otherness

Having established how the comedy genre is used to explore identities in crisis, chapter four demonstrates how space is used to distort the physical and ideological conventions of folkhemmet as an all-inclusive imagined community, showing us how spatial constructions and representations are both political and, specifically in this context, reflective of Otherness. I focus here on themes of spatial displacement and transnational mobility in a variety of contexts. Building on well-regarded theoretical interventions on space, I refer to sociologist Henri Lefebvre (1991) who discusses space as both a *product* of its wider social context and as a *producer* of new or infinite meaning. I open the discussion with Lukas Moodysson's *Lilja 4-ever* (2002), a semi-biographical sex trafficking narrative involving a Russian teenager forced into prostitution in Sweden and Henrik Ruben Genz's Danish *Kinamand/Chinaman* (2005) which explores spatial displacement in a story about a visa marriage between a lonely Danish divorcé and a Chinese migrant. Both examples rely on the use of symbolic space where themes of spirituality play a role in shaping how Otherness is understood in relation to national politics. The next case study looks at Swedish-Lebanese director Josef Fares's *Zozo* (2005), a fish-out-of-water drama which offers a critical insight into socio-cultural integration into Swedish society from the perspective of a young Lebanese refugee. Here, I argue that space provides a way of bridging a gap between two seemingly disparate places by uniting them through the theme of violence. Finally, I look at Aki Kaurismäki's *Le Havre* (2011), a 'political fairy-tale' about a young African refugee shielded from authorities by an impoverished writer in an alternative imagining of 'fortress Europe.'

Consequently, as these films position notions of belonging and identity as contingent and unstable, I claim each example uses space to reflect these excluded positions, holding the potential to explore alternative worlds of belonging. As well as reflecting themes of 'in-betweenness', these films treat space as divorced from established socio-cultural contexts in ways that challenge conventional conceptions of cohesion and

continuity, and therefore appear to challenge fixed notions of belonging. This would place these films in contrast to those in chapters two and three where we have seen how space— such as the prison in *R*—is explored in a territorial, context, and in Three where it is used implicitly to evoke an idealistic 'cultural closeness'. This is especially true in *A Man Called Ove*'s gated neighbourhood which is designed to represent an 'inclusive' space to be taken at face value. However, while each case study in this chapter may challenge ideas like folkhemmet by presenting us with markedly different representations of space, moving from social realism to more fairy-tale-like explorations, they can also all be understood as conflicted parables on globalisation. Here, I also argue that space and Otherness converge to expose an underlying anxiety narrative where spatial politics reproduces a need to contain the migrant or refugee characters in ways that allow the dominant culture to examine itself in relation to Otherness. The spatial contexts are defined by representational and symbolic boundaries which must be maintained in order for the host culture to assert itself in an affirmative or self-effacing way. Firstly, however, I open with a theoretical discussion on space and identity in cinema and the ways we can understand space as an intervention designed to explore the power politics of ethnic identity and representation.

Theories on Cinematic Spaces

Scholarship dedicated to the subject of cinematic spaces[43] is extensive. Works like Myrto Konstantarakos' *Spaces in European Cinema* (2000), Wendy Everett and Axel Goodbody's *Revisiting Space: Space and Place in European Cinema* 2005), Thomas Elsaesser and Malte Hagener's *Film Theory: An Introduction Through the Senses* (2010) and Tom Conley's monograph *Cartographic Cinema* (2007) all open up critical perceptions on the uses of space and identity onscreen. As Konstantarakos puts it, 'space is not only recorded as a background stage—its very organisation implies a handling of space, revealing the

---

[43] Many of these studies draw on the disciplines of psychogeography, urban studies and anthropology.

ideology of the time' whereby 'cinema acquires a power of control by fixing in place conflicting ideas about the constitution of social space' (2000: 1). More recently, discussions on space tend to dovetail with themes of transnationalism and globalisation, where space has emerged as a key political concept in relation to shifting representations of home, borderlessness and transnational mobility. We must consider how themes of transnationalism inflect and reconceptualise space and place, particularly in the context of Nordic cinema where themes of space and place are oftentimes used to conjure notions of authenticity.

As we have seen in chapter one, physical spaces and landscapes as visualised onscreen, particularly those associated with the natural environment, have played a key role in shaping and defining the ideological conventions of what is quintessentially thought of as a 'Nordic identity'.[44] Furthermore, such 'authentic' conceptualisations of space and the landscape have historically helped to reinforce a binary between 'native' and Other. Spatial representations that play with themes of transnationalism hold the potential to challenge these ideas of continuity and consensus. Transnational film scholar Milja Radovic considers the inherently political weight carried by space and how cinema 'is never completely bound to a specific, local or socio-political space, as it is always affected by the global and by what lies beyond the borders of state' (Radovic 2014: 136). While this is relevant, I also contend how the spaces in these examples represent and reproduce similar narratives of ethnocentric anxiety. Here, I pay particular attention to the way space reaffirms a belief that the Other can only fit into recognisable spatial contexts that conform to a dominant understanding or interpretation of 'foreignness'.

Henri Lefebvre's work on conceptualising space and spatial relations (1991: 33) provides a useful framework for exploring the transnational dimensions of Nordic film culture. Lefebvre's three interrelated concepts, 'spatial practice', 'representations of

---

[44] See Kääpä (2014) for an in-depth analysis on the environmental links with Nordic identity politics.

space' and 'representational space' each delineate specific ways spaces are socially and culturally constructed. 'Spatial practice' is generally space that is *perceived* and reproduced through physical interaction with reality; 'representations of space', which correlate with what Lefebvre describes as *conceived* spaces, are typically those designed, mapped out and conceptualised by urban planners and designers and, lastly, representational space or *lived space* is connected with symbolism and how we subjectively interpret the meaning of the objects and places around us. According to Zhang, cinema falls into Lefebvre's representational space category because it plays host to fluid, multidirectional, imagined and heterogeneous conceptualisations of space (2010: 2). For him, Lefebvre's spatial model 'emphasises the *interplay* between the production of space and the spaces of production' (2010: 2 original emphasis) positioning cinematic spaces as both a reflection of their socio-ideological contexts and as potential bearers of new meaning. My interpretation of Lefebvre's model acknowledges a double consciousness in this interplay between the representation of space and the production of space. I contend that these films do both things simultaneously. Spaces are never free from ideological constraints and, in cinematic terms, are wholly constructed within a set of conventions. According to film and media scholar Holly Willis:

> space is always a double, coming before and through social action; it is its foundation and embodiment […] When we view a typical film, the realist codes of *mise-en-scène* and continuity editing combine to create apparently seamless, totally coherent spaces. Yet we know that those spaces are radically disjunctive and wholly constructed. Similarly, according to Lefebvre, we accede to a spatial world that accords with the codes that are produced by a culture at any given time. (Willis 2005: 52)

The same applies here in the context of small national cinemas like those of the Nordic countries where borders are fixed by representational techniques, means and ideological notions of belonging just as they are physically defined and policed. Through their unconventional explorations of spatial displacement, these films moreover challenge the ideological borders of Nordic identity politics using the migrant Other as a tool to open

162

up unconventional spaces and ways of belonging. The effect is a deterritorialization of conventional space/time boundaries and binary relationships between self and Other. However, we must also consider the ideological implications of how space behaves as both a product or reflection of a Nordic identity politics in crisis *and* as a producer of new affirmative or ethnocentric ways of dealing with Otherness.

New Guest Workers: Enforced Transnational Mobility in Lukas Moodysson's *Lilja 4-ever* (2002)

Along a grey and anonymous stretch of motorway in present-day Malmö, a young woman, visibly beaten and dishevelled, runs sporadically across the pavements and carriageways. Directionless and against the pounding industrial metal of Rammstein's *Mein Herz Brennt* (My Heart Burns), she wanders onto a bridge overlooking the thoroughfare. The camera follows her as she climbs a ledge, stares down at the tarmac and pauses to contemplate her fate. In *Lilja 4-ever*'s opening shots, the eponymous Lilja (Oksana Akinshina) and her isolated situation evokes the irony of the bridge as a symbol of connection and exchange. Following these establishing shots, and before jumping to her death, the film traces Lilja's journey back to an unnamed part of the former Soviet Union[45] where her mother seemingly abandons her for a new life in the United States. Lilja ends up homeless and turns to prostitution as a matter of survival. Her only friend is her ten-year-old neighbour Volodya (Artyom Bogucharskiy) who is frequently abused and neglected by his violent father. Lilja is unwittingly charmed by sex trafficker Andrei (Pavel Ponomarjov) and agrees to move to Sweden with him after he promises her a job picking vegetables. However, after arriving in Sweden, she is met instead by a sadistic pimp (Tomasz Neuman) who locks her in a cramped and semi-vacant apartment. From here, she is shuttled between a wide-ranging clientele who rape and abuse her.

---

[45] The majority of scenes were actually shot on location in Paldiski, Estonia.

Spatial characterisations of displacement form a key part of the film's challenge to utopian folkhem ideals. *Lilja 4-ever* is shot in a cinéma vérité style from inside grimy and cramped interiors which mirror Lilja's increasingly chaotic downward spiral into a hidden underworld of sexual exploitation. As the film implies, this is an underworld without borders and is designed to reflect the increasingly perverse underside of global capitalism where enforced sex is commodified. Specifically, *Lilja 4-ever* builds a distinct sense of spatial continuity between the dilapidated tower blocks of Lilja's hometown in the former Soviet Union and contemporary Sweden. In doing so, the film spatially re-imagines and re-frames Sweden as a dystopian post-Soviet landscape, offering a markedly different spatial experience from the egalitarian communities seen in chapter Three. This realist documentary-like approach accentuates the suffocating sense of claustrophobia Lilja experiences as an effective prisoner in the Malmö apartment block. The scenes in which Lilja is abused are shot from her perspective, forcing the spectator to experience the assaults from her subject position in a series of tightly framed and extreme close-ups. Andrew Nestingen (2008) reads the theme of enforced prostitution as a metaphorical commentary on Sweden's political and economic exploitation at the hands of the EU. By placing Lilja in Sweden and exploring the country as a site of the global sex trade, Nestingen proposes that Lilja embodies the welfare state abused and degraded by the politics of a neoliberal free market economy:

> The left attacked the EU as a political arrangement in which democracy rested on markets, rather than on a "sense of community", and as a result commodified the weak rather than protecting them. Moodysson's film seizes on this figure, using the prostitute to depict Sweden's suffering from the symptoms of transition to such a system. (Nestingen 2008: 4-5)

We could take this idea of metaphorical self-examination a stage further by suggesting that there are distinct parallels between the guest worker narratives of the 1960s and 70s and Lilja's position as a sex worker. The spaces of the cramped apartment could be taken to represent the social housing schemes established during this guest worker era to

house the foreign workforces. Here, however, the context of Lilja's enforced transnational mobility into Sweden as a sex slave speaks of a warped reinterpretation of these schemes, where contributions from foreign workers are now perversely intertwined into a corrupt and misogynistic hierarchy.

These sequences of abuse offer some of the most striking subversions of folkhemmet. Familial and domestic spaces are here transformed and viewed through a lens that appears to present us with a deftly anti-folkhemmet perspective. The enclosed and distantly private spaces of the clientele's homes reflect a broad range of social class politics. Most notably, one of Lilja's abusers is shown to be an affluent white upper-middle-class Swede. In the cosy spaces of his large, inviting residence, his role-play demands of Lilja emphasise his paedophilic inclinations which run counter to all expectations surrounding the comfortable spaces of middle-class Sweden.

Space is also used to draw comparisons between Lilja's abuse and global capitalism, invoking the idea that anything, or in this case, anyone can be bought or sold. Indeed, Lilja is traded between men in car parks lit and foregrounded by the luminous glow of Swedish fashion retailers like JC Jeans Company, MQ as well as transnational corporations like McDonalds, whose brand is used intermittently to stress the connections between the commercialisation (and globalisation) of Sweden and the enforced transnational mobility of the migrant Other's now commodified body. This context is made even more pointed when we consider how the basis for *Lilja 4-ever*'s narrative came from the real-life suicide of young Lithuanian Danguolė Rasalaitė, who jumped to her death in Malmö in 2000 to escape a life of sexual slavery.

However, the spatial politics also complicate this realist dimension when spatial and narrative boundaries are suddenly transcended, and Lilja is spiritually awakened in what appears to be a kind of afterlife. Trapped in her flat in Sweden and using pillows and bed sheets, Lilja creates a separate interior den-like space underneath the coffee table. Here, she is visited by the angelic ghost of her friend Volodya, who committed suicide shortly after Lilja's departure. In several dream-like sequences, the pair leaves the confines of Lilja's flat and find themselves on the rooftops of their old tower block.

Here, the two friends engage in existential conversations over Lilja's life and purpose on earth in which Volodya tries to persuade her not to follow him into the afterlife. The curious liminal spaces of the rooftops offer the only perceptible escape from her reality. These sequences represent a form of spiritual border-crossing and provide the only positive visual references to boundlessness and freedom from Lilja's perspective. Following her suicide, Lilja is repatriated to this rooftop space which becomes a figurative limbo where she is free to play with Volodya. According to Roos, the film views the Other through a transnational-transcultural lens 'from a Nordic cultural space and understanding' (Roos 2014: 34). However, by introducing this spatial blurring between reality and divine salvation, the film arguably locates morality, innocence and emancipation from the corrupted neoliberal world within this Other imagined space. There is perhaps something to be said here for the way Lilja (and Voldya) are effectively martyred as part of the film's re-framing of spatial expectations, where this moral context functions as part of a self-reflective commentary on Sweden as a nation.

Lilja 4-ever has been screened to a variety of legislative bodies and institutions in Russia and across the European Union including the Swedish Parliament where, as Karlen notes, the film has become 'a compulsory part of the training for all Swedish peace-keeping troops to the Balkans and other destinations' (Karlen 2007). The real-life context of the film has helped to strengthen its significance as a tool for educating others. However, Stenport discusses how Sweden's 'do-gooder' image ultimately presides over the film's thematic and political content (Stenport 2014: 50). Ironically, although the narrative attacks the egalitarian image of Sweden and complacent Western attitudes toward the global sex trafficking trade, *Lilja 4-ever*'s role as a transnational device for 'educating' both its own citizens and those belonging to the former Eastern Bloc furthers Sweden's image as an informed and exceptional nation out to educate the wider world. This angle is problematized further when we analyse the role and position of the spatial dimensions in the film where the use of biblical symbolism and spatial ambivalence reflect a contradiction in *Lilja 4-ever*'s anti-sex trafficking agenda. Kristiansen (2007) claims the religious themes and iconography that pervade the film compromise

the obvious political context of Lilja's sex-trafficking storyline and distort any serious analysis. Equally, according to Stenport:

> *Lilya 4-ever* is a conventional melodrama built on rigid opposition between a young woman victimized by patriarchal social factors and geographical circumstances beyond her control. But the film also involves an attempt to recuperate religious humanism in contemporary secular neoliberal Europe. (Stenport 2012:129)[46]

The film can thus be understood as a device for enlightening others in a way that resonates back on a national context. Here, we must consider the power dynamics involved with the film's sometimes abstruse spatial constructions surrounding the relationship with Otherness. *Lilya 4-ever*'s spatial dimensions speak of a conflict between social realism and the phantasmatic qualities of the undetermined spaces of the afterlife. We can recognise space as a representational product of capitalism's perverse underside, but also as a producer of 'new' meaning, where Lilja's ambiguous spatial repatriation suggests a reversion to ideas about Sweden as an exceptional power. To explore the idea of power, I now turn to a more affirmative example of a spatial reimaging of national politics, where an intercultural encounter facilitates an apparent transcultural experience.

Spatial Ambivalence and the Exotic Other: *Kinamand*/*Chinaman* (Genz, 2005)

Chinaman is a romantic drama about a pro forma marriage between a Danish divorcé and Chinese woman whose temporary travel visa is about to expire. This marriage of

---

[46] According to Stenport, 'Moodysson is one of the few contemporary Swedish directors to take on topics of global significance, including unequal distribution of wealth and, in particular, the abuse of non-Western woman in schemes of trafficking, prostitution and domestic labor' (Stenport 2012: 23). However, Moodysson is also a controversial figure in Sweden and has earned a reputation for the ambiguous way he approaches serious political and social themes. Nevertheless, among its accolades, *Lilja 4-ever* counts five Guldbagge Awards (Sweden's equivalent of an Oscar) and two nominations at the European Film Awards.

convenience begins when Keld (Bjarne Henriksen), a lonely Danish plumber whose business has failed, is abandoned by his wife and cajoled into signing divorce papers. In debt following the legal proceedings, he seeks sanctuary in a local rundown Chinese restaurant. Here, Keld befriends the restaurant's enthusiastic proprietor, Feng (Lin Kun Wu), who offers him free food in exchange for his maintenance services. Seeing potential in Keld's Danish citizenship, this arrangement soon evolves with Feng offering Keld the equivalent of $8,000 to marry his sister Ling (Vivian Wu) as a way of helping her into the country. Although both Ling and Keld are at first challenged by the obvious language barriers, a tentative romance emerges between them. Eventually, however, a lack of verbal communication and the realities of living together cause tensions to erupt between the pair. By the time Keld realises his love for Ling, she dies tragically from a congenital heart condition; a fact kept hidden from Keld until the end. The concluding scenes see Keld return her ashes to China and scatter them in the ancestral river of her home village.

Because *Chinaman* lacks dialogue, space plays an especially important role in the construction of literal and symbolic meaning. Primarily, *Chinaman* does so through the transformation of domestic and familial spaces. When his marriage ends, and with the impending costs of his divorce catching up to him, Keld is forced to strip his apartment and sell most of his remaining possessions. After warding the immigration authorities off with a brief wedding ceremony, Ling moves into Keld's now sparse flat. The apartment quickly fills with Ling's colourful and exotic-looking possessions, which are emphasised by romantically low-lit interiors and the film's polaroid-like aesthetic, prompting Keld's increasing fascination with Ling and her culture. Meryl Shriver-Rice argues that Keld's apartment becomes the primary site of transformation, playing host to cultural exchange aided and facilitated by the strategic use of spatial framing. For her, Keld's empty apartment acts as a blank canvas that symbolically reflects his openness towards other cultures. This, in turn, helps to establish *Chinaman*'s identity politics as fundamentally 'contested and plural' (Shriver-Rice 2015: 81). In the apartment and

restaurant, the two primary locations used throughout,[47] tight shot compositions using walls and door frames help to minimize action and accentuate the film's visual and spatial characteristics. The view is often partially, and somewhat voyeuristically, obscured by other objects like beaded curtains or mirrored glass, evoking a kind of immersive intimacy. The effects of this spatial confinement and the increasingly transcultural otherworldliness of Keld's apartment are comparable with the work of renowned Hong Kong auteur Wong Kar-wai and his cinematographer Christopher Doyle. *Chinaman* could be interpreted as a homage to their collaborative work, particularly the romantic drama *Faa yeung nin wa/In the Mood for Love* (Wong, 2000) (see Redvall 2010: 109-124 for a full interview with Genz). Indeed character and plot development largely appear to be secondary considerations allowing instead for what the director has described as 'moods and sensuality' (Genz quoted in Hjort, Jørholt and Redvall Redvall 2010: 110) to emerge as the primary emphasis. As well as alluding to Wong's interest in the convergences between Eastern and Western cultures, *Chinaman* captures themes of alienation, displacement and the universal cultural ambiguity of Wong's off-beat spatial worlds.

One other such ambiguous space is Feng's modest restaurant which shares many of the same outlandish qualities of Keld's now furnished apartment. Feng's restaurant represents a space that belongs in a globalized, transnational context; a space of transition where several other marginal characters congregate including displaced new Danes, ethnic Danes, and even a racist FedEx worker from Sweden who, despite frequenting the restaurant on a regular basis, warns Keld to stay away from Chinese people, believing them to be universally corrupt. The restaurant and its associated transcultural connotations provide a kind of strange and contradictory sense of continuity between the lives of these isolated characters. The restaurant is both an enduring symbol of transcultural global movement, fusion cultures and capital, but in this case, also plays host to an ephemeral notion of belonging where the characters' sense

---

[47] Both sets were built in Copenhagen.

of self is challenged by related themes of uncertainty and flux. This is best reflected in Feng's son Zhang (Chapper Kim), who despite being born and raised in Denmark, expresses to Keld a sense of detachment from his father's restaurant, his Chinese heritage and his own sense of Danishness; frustrations that once again frame the crisis of identity politics as one that is also connected to second-generation immigrants and the politics of assimilation. There are also parallels between the FedEx worker's job, which is fundamentally about the constant circulation and exchange of goods and capital, and Ling as the somewhat commodified bride, who serves as the cultural equivalent of this continuous exchange and whose circumstances draw out the ironic contrast between the free movement of goods and the restricted or conditional movement of people. These conflicts lend the space of the restaurant, as a place of business, a contradictory quality — open to certain types of cultural flows, but only under guises that conform to Western orientalist expectations.

The more positive relationships explored in the spaces of the restaurant, and subsequently the apartment, are also used to separate and build contrasts between Keld's former wife, who is portrayed as materialistic and shallow, and ill-mannered adult son, who both express scepticism and indifference towards Ling. With Keld increasingly ostracised from Danish society, the conventional representations of familial inclusion and togetherness associated with the welfare state mentality are invoked instead by a type of unity built on Keld and Ling's mutual exclusion. However, although not malicious, certain racial clichés persist. Feng is the courteous but disciplinarian father figure, Feng's wife is largely depicted as submissive and absent, and Feng's elderly cantankerous Chinese parents, who appear to live in the attic, all conform to well-worn East Asian caricatures. Feng is also shown to make several racist remarks about the emerging Pakistani communities in Denmark in reference to their competing business ventures which apparently threaten the Chinese food and hospitality industries.

Figure 4: In *Chinaman* (Genz, 2005), Ling is framed by the cage-like beaded curtain. Here, this shot is almost reminiscent of a stage curtain as though the character is on show or designed to be revealed. The framing and spatial containment of Ling's character is apparent throughout.

Arguably, Ling's exoticised Otherness plays a significant role in the film's homage to Wong**.** In defence of Ling's character, Shriver-Rice argues how, despite her exclusion through language, Ling is assertive, argues back and expresses her own oftentimes frustrated anger with her position (2015: 91). There is, nonetheless, a tendency to mystify her character, especially as little is known about her history or background. This mystification is aided by the strategic use of interior spaces and the objects within them. Perhaps the most intriguing of these objects are the birdcages[48] that appear intermittently in the apartment and upstairs in the restaurant.

These objects act as contradictory signifiers of both freedom and entrapment and, if taken to represent Ling's circumstances as trapped by her medical condition, the birdcages also act as a prescient foreshadowing of her inevitable need to be released. To draw parallels between Ling and a caged bird also speaks of a certain objectification, an

---

[48] The use of the birdcage could also refer to Henrik Ibsen's seminal Norwegian play *A Doll's House* (1879) in which Ibsen symbolically uses birds and bird cages to describe the marital entrapment experienced by the main character, Nora.

171

angle that is also emphasised by *Chinaman*'s final act. Despite its tragic outcome, Shriver-Rice speaks of Ling's positive influence on Keld:

> *Chinaman* highlights the human values that can be learned and gained from foreign culture; as a text, it reprimands ethnic Danes' fear that immigrants will bring the dissolution of positive Danish value systems. Feng's immigrant family provides Keld with a way of life that is better suited to his sensitive disposition. Keld absorbs new interpersonal communicative skills without losing his own sense of being Danish. (Shriver-Rice 2015: 91)

There is, however, a problematic reassertion of the Other not just as a figure condemned to live in exile of some form, but also as a character whose role exists to affirm the ethnic Danes' own sense of belonging and self-worth, thus placing Keld at the centre of this transformative experience. Part of this affirmation relies on effectively playing up exoticised notions of China and one could perhaps ask how far Keld's identification with Ling's culture is based on the ways it is packaged as fascinatingly alien. Like Lilja, there is finality in Ling's symbolic repatriation where the Other is denied the chance to experience the same agency, renewal or pronouncement self. In the context of repatriation, it is perhaps interesting to note how the migrant Other and their spiritualised transition from real to symbolic spaces, act as a source of visual and thematic context for ethnic characters. Here, repatriation is one way of retaining a sense of Otherness designed to propagate an alluring distance or separation between native and Other. We have seen how space has played a role in the exotic objectification of Ling, the martyring of Lilja. While I have concentrated on examples that tend to unconsciously reinforce the bias for the white male protagonist, I turn now to Josef Fares's semi-autobiographical drama *Zozo* which centres on a young Lebanese boy struggling with the grief as he contemplates a new life in Sweden.

Violence and Convergent Spaces in *Zozo* (Fares, 2005)

As the eponymous Zozo and his family prepare to flee their native Lebanon for Sweden during the 1987 Lebanese Civil War, Zozo's mother, father and sister are tragically killed in a bomb strike and his brother is taken by the mercenaries. Zozo is left wandering the crumbling ruins of Beirut and, after a brief interlude in which a young girl called Rita (Antoinette Turk) helps him find his way to the airport, Zozo finally reaches Sweden. Here, he is met by his elderly grandparents who emigrated to Sweden some years prior and begins the painful and confusing process of adapting to his new society.

Zozo received the Swedish Film Institute's highest level of investment during its year of production having been granted a very substantial SEK 10,000,000 (Pham 2005). The film was chosen to represent Sweden in the Best Foreign Film category at the 78th Academy Awards. Although it did not win, it was awarded The Nordic Council Film Prize in 2006. It is included on Norden's website promoting the film's DKK 350,000 (approx. SEK 440,000) prize win where the committee who selected the film state how *Zozo* 'gives an accessible and insightful view of current conflicts and by drawing creative sustenance from different film cultures it offers an innovative approach to traditional Nordic films about growing up' (Nordic Co-operation website 2006). Given the international significance of these accolades and *Zozo*'s recognition as a valuable text in the eyes of the industry, we must consider the film's themes and approaches to ethnic Otherness carefully. This is especially true if we are interested in how these prizes strengthen the film's reputation as well as that of Sweden's film industry in different domestic and global contexts and marketplaces.

Fares's film does not focus on the politics or specific bureaucratic obstacles facing Zozo's arrival and integration into Swedish society. Rather, the focus is on Zozo's subjective dealings with his circumstances where space plays a critical role in expressing his displacement. Zozo's confrontations with grief, displacement and socio-cultural adaptation are expressed through a subjective series of surreal and visually poetic dreamscapes where a disembodied voice visits him. The film is cinematic in its approach

with the kind of sweeping camera pans capturing the bombings of Beirut typically associated with action cinema, POV shots, and the use of dramatic contra-zoom which is used to emphasise Zozo's feelings of entrapment. Unlike the dreamscapes in *Lilja 4-ever*, these sequences, at least initially, do not appear to be an exercise in exploring the overt spiritual morality of life or death, but rather, the blurring of these real and imagined spaces function as a response to Zozo's loss and the demands he faces adjusting to his new home. The spaces of the dreamscape offer an alternative place to reimagine and redefine spatial concepts of time, where new openings and insights into Zozo's character help to generate empathy as he comes to terms with his loss. As an alternative space, the dreamscape is also a space that we, as the audience, can identify with without having to assimilate.

From the small toy boat Zozo carves out of wood at the beginning of the film, to the children's drawings of aeroplanes on the walls of his Swedish classroom, the film uses space and objects to foreshadow themes of journey and movement and, perhaps most significantly of all, violence. Indeed, violence is a foreboding theme throughout and plagues each character in different ways. Zozo, whose tragic past bore witness to the senseless violence of war, comes face-to-face with a different sort of civil conflict at school where he is bullied for being an immigrant. This often causes Zozo to retaliate violently.

The dilapidated spaces of Beirut seem to contrast sharply with the idyllic images of Sweden. For Zozo's family, Sweden represented a haven of escapism, and it is characterised from their perspective by its rustic landscapes. However, as the violence and conflict of Zozo's past experiences are vividly reconstructed in his dreams and flashbacks, they also find expression in Sweden. At school, Zozo meets and befriends another lonely boy called Leo (Viktor Axelsson). We later learn that Leo's father is a violent drunk who beats his son and racially abuses Zozo. This is most pointedly communicated through the scenes in Leo's bedroom where Zozo observes the shredded wallpaper and the large holes, presumably punched, through the door. The encounter

gives Zozo cause to reflect on the idealistic impression he and his family had of the country.

Figure 5: Target practice: Zozo (L) stands in the war zone-like chaos of Leo's bedroom.

Although these violent acts are expressed in different ways, the lack of context given to the war in Lebanon, and through the use of space as an expression of conflict as opposed to direct images of Leo's abuse, Fares is able to give the theme of violence an unsettling omnipresence. Fares thus makes violence on the schoolyard and in the domestic spaces of the home a neat convergent point for Zozo to draw connections with the violence in his homeland. From the fights at school to other forms of domestic disharmony, the two sites — Lebanon and Sweden — are matched and contextualised alongside Zozo's struggle to adapt to Swedish society.

Transferring the violent conflict from one national site to another is significant here as, rather than draw contrasts between the two spaces, the dramatic re-staging of Beirut's conflict in Sweden disrupts the continuity of folkhemmet. If many of these narratives are predicated on the implicit notion that immigrants are required to assimilate fully with the customs and values of folkhemmet, using this very same environment to re-stage civil war provides a useful metaphor for the violence and displacement felt by those forced to adapt.

One of the other most striking scenes that draws parallels between the two places occurs when Zozo is confronted, once again, by the bullies in the playground. During

175

the confrontation, Zozo hallucinates that his Swedish school is being shelled by the same heavy artillery that killed his family. In the same dream, he is reunited with his mother, who forces him to face up to his new life and walk away from the conflicts with the bullies. Zozo's dream about the Swedish school bombing help to reinforce his disdain for violence and he chooses to ignore his tormentors, and so breaking the chain of perpetual violence.

However, by using space in this way, *Zozo* is perhaps less a film about socio-cultural adaptation than it is about broader moral questions of violence. Seeing the Beirut bombing re-appropriated in a Swedish context is the key factor that helps Zozo fully contemplate the futility of war, pointing perhaps towards the idea that Sweden acts as a place of hope, despite the fact that it too is plagued by conflict under the surface. The prophetic undertones of Christianity also play a subtle role in reinforcing this morality in the background, with pictures of Christ and the cross used sporadically in his grandparents' house. The visions of his family at peace in what appears to be an afterlife of sorts also evoke an understated sense of religiosity gently guiding Zozo's path towards a non-violent resolution. Once again, we have a return to a sense of morality shared by Moodysson. To explore the politics of this morality further, I now use Aki Kaurismäki's *Le Havre* to elaborate on how temporal distortions can appear to challenge the status quo but also use space to encode ideas about belonging that are specific to the ideals of welfare consensus. Unlike *Zozo*, *Le Havre* moves away from the realist aspects of Fares's drama and places the immigrant Other in an entirely artificial world.

Hopeful Cynicism and Rootless Spaces in *Le Havre* (Kaurismäki, 2011)

Idrissa (Blondin Miguel), a young, undocumented Gabonese refugee, arrives in the French port city Le Havre as a stowaway on a shipping container. Originally bound for London where Idrissa's father awaits in a refugee camp, the container is accidentally waylaid in France. Visually, the port is shown to be a vast 'container city' of stacked shipping vessels. Even though the backstories of the refugees and undocumented

176

immigrants within them are never fully disclosed, they are characterised by a port worker as the 'living dead'. After managing to escape, Idrissa ends up on the run from French authorities where he is taken in by bohemian shoe-shiner and aspiring author Marcel Marx (André Wilms) and his ailing wife Arletty (Kati Outinen[49]).

Together, Marcel and his tight-knit working-class community, made up of both native and migrant characters, conspire to shelter the boy from Inspector Monet (Jean-Pierre Darroussin), who is charged with arresting and presumably deporting him. Eventually, Marcel helps Idrissa onto a boat bound for England. With its upbeat mix of farce and melodramatic irony, *Le Havre* is an unapologetic fairy-tale take on the contemporary refugee crisis. The film also explicitly critiques the 'fortress Europe' mentality, where the political rhetoric of the centre-right and anti-immigrant populists has redefined perceptions towards newcomers as a threat to social and economic stability. In this small isolated community, attitudes towards outsiders are never in question. They openly accept Idrissa from the outset, doing away with the conventional image of the working-class community as closed off and wary of outsiders (Ballesteros 2015: 167).

While the film is set in the real port city of Le Havre, the construction of space in the film is designed to frame and locate the events and political themes of its narrative within a heavily stylised, unconventional and ultimately fictional universe.[50] Indeed the world of *Le Havre*, which is set in a modest working-class community, is characterised by antiquated objects, archaic or obsolescent technology, recycled furnishings and a highly artificial production design. The performance style of the characters within these spaces is captured largely using static shots and muted understated delivery where gestures and action are minimized. On the surface and despite the unnatural elements, these representations appear to speak of a desire to capture and emphasise the 'ordinariness' of the characters and their humble but sometimes bleak experiences. The use of objects — such as the jukeboxes, mismatched furniture from the 1950s and 60s and general all-

---

[49] Outinen is a fixture in Kaurismäki's work.
[50] Stylistically, and like most other Kaurismäki's films, *Le Havre* is comparable with the work of American realist painter Edward Hopper.

around modest utilitarianism of domestic and interior spaces — plays a role in crafting *Le Havre*'s idiosyncratic universe. The eclectic range of sparingly used knick-knacks, which evoke nostalgia for eras as diverse as the Soviet Union and 1950s Hollywood, work in strange harmony with the influences of Robert Bresson's minimalism.

According to film scholar Thomas Austin, the use of antiquated objects works 'as markers of social and economic exclusion remade into a symbolic refusal of hyper-consumerism' (Austin 2018: 22). Thus, flotsam and jetsam of *Le Havre's* spatial universes typically use ironic humour and double meanings as reflected in places like the aptly named café *Au Retour De La Mer* which is frequented by both Marcel and Inspector Monet. Chiefly, these playful and contradictory nods allude to a sense of optimism or a hopeful form of cynicism where the characters find courage or contentment in despair. Despair (which befalls most of the characters in Kaurismäki's work) is counterbalanced by the strangeness of the spatial incongruities and the irrationality of the protagonists' subdued attitudes towards the often-absurd realities of their lives.[51]

The film's landscapes are perhaps best understood as *neutropias*, a concept Vice (2015) characterises as a clash or hybrid between the conventions of utopian and dystopian societies. Neutropic spaces are designed to break down the binary between these seemingly polarising ideas and recognise that they are not necessarily mutually exclusive. One community's notion of utopia does not necessarily correspond with another's, for instance. This would involve conceptualising the film's spatial worlds as complex negotiations between the utopian visions of collective imagined communities and the nods towards the dystopian authoritarianism of the fortress Europe mentality. Idrissa's relationship with these spaces forms part of the contradictory politics at work. The space is both welcoming and protective, but also hostile and threatening. Placing Idrissa within the context of these spaces also speaks of how they reflect a conflicted relationship with globalisation and notions of inside and outside. They are constructed

---

[51] These somewhat contradictory themes run throughout Kaurismäki's career.

around (and react to) global flows of people and objects associated with globalisation, such as the shipping containers, but they also speak of an unchanging permanence. Consequently, the irony of *Le Havre* as a port city resonates in the wider context of both globalisation and the plight of refugees, where capitalism and the movement of goods is encouraged, whilst simultaneously, the movement of (some) people is forbidden.

According to Kyosola 'these films are not only using spaces to represent different cultural encounters but also represent a merging of different time/historical dimensions—between late and modern capitalism' (Kysola 2004). Thus, *Le Havre*'s complex negotiation with space gives way to a sense of timelessness where the spaces are set in neither the past, present nor future but rather represent another world altogether. This allows the film to frame and negotiate the crisis politics of the refugee situation through a parallel world which is both topical but also defined by elements from the past. These disjunctive relationships between time and space in the world of *Le Havre* allow us to see how unity, and equally, hierarchies of power exist universally across time-space borders. However, the more the film immerses us in the insular and quirky universe of these marginal people, the more alien modern society appears. Indeed, the solidarity between these characters is built on their mutual exclusion from late capitalist societies. By combining this timeless world with contemporary immigration politics, *Le Havre* is able to evoke a sense that subjects of enforced transnational mobility penetrate through history and across many different time/space borders. This idea, at least symbolically, lends weight to the notion that subjects in the foreground—immigration, social marginalization — are universal and part of human history. As this spatial timelessness operates outside the coordinates of conventional narrative structures, it is worth exploring how these expectations challenge or reaffirm the type of generational continuity we discussed in the comedy genre.

We must also consider the irrationalities of the spatial displacement carefully in the broader political context of *Le Havre*'s narrative. The recycling of these objects and the reconstruction of different spatial contexts gestures towards a world that is purely fabricated both visually and through the narrative dimensions. It becomes a question of

reconciling these powerful images and themes concerning the very real and ongoing crisis of fortress Europe politics with the detached spatial confines of *Le Havre*'s world. The spaces are tinged with a melancholic nostalgia for an imagined and largely Western-centric past. Such eclectic worlds arguably frustrate attempts to take *Le Havre*'s sub-text on the new apartheid politics emerging in contemporary Europe seriously. Another aspect worth considering is the fact that, despite the distorted time-space relationships, which could pose a challenge to conventional or taken-for-granted ideological constructions of space, there is nonetheless a linear sense of a narrative development where the good and moral communities of *Le Havre* make good on their promise to save the immigrant boy from capture.

Figure 6: Idrissa forms part of Kaurismäki's distinct visual language

Here, we can also see how the immigrant Other effectively functions in relation to these eccentric but ultimately endearing societies, drawing out their collective sense of authentic goodness. Idrissa ultimately does not belong in this community, and his departure leaves us with an ambiguous or unresolved tension. Although the ending is meant to be affirmative, we do not get to see what becomes of Idrissa. Given the extensive coverage in Europe of the rates at which refugees have drowned or been lost at sea trying to make their way across Europe, the use of the boat to connote freedom is arguably questionable, especially when read against the underlying politicised context of *Le Havre*'s humanist pro-immigrant narrative.

As well as the seeming universality of the objects and spaces of these worlds, we can also take the opposite standpoint. Here, we need to consider Kaurismäki's play with the politics and aesthetics and visual nostalgia. The camera movements are slow, drifting and as artificial as the constructed worlds within each frame. The attention to detail in the construction of each scene and the way they are dressed to reflect the numerous temporal displacements suggests that, rather than disrupt a linear sense of time, Kaurismäki actually imparts a different form of order. Here, the reordering of his world — taking objects from past and present and arranging them in this heavily stylized way — provide a means of containing his subjects. We must ask here where the immigrant character features as part of Kaurismäki's visual iconography and, arguably, his spectacle. I argue that Idrissa's lack of dialogue also means that he exists only really in the visual and that, as a result, he becomes more of an object than a subject. Backed by the moral overtones of the fairy tale superficiality, he too forms part of a visual dialogue on white goodness.

Conclusion

The spaces in these films appear to suggest a certain ambivalence towards the collective narratives of togetherness propagated by ideas like folkhemmet. The global motifs are characterised by the thematic interplay between sexual exploitation and *Lilja 4-ever*'s theological use of space, *Chinaman*'s exotic encounter and *Le Havre*'s spatial alternative to the reality of fortress Europe. However, these films also allude to themes of crises in ways that reflect on the contested position of these small nations when they interact with broader global political issues. Even if these films appear to offer a critical introspective view or approach to fixed ideas about 'Nordicness', the spatial containment of migrant and refugee characters shows us how the Other must remain marginal to facilitate a process of national self-examination.

Similarly, Lilja is entrapped by the spatial context of her transition to an undetermined afterlife which forms part of the film's attempts to reinforce a sense of underlying moral continuity. The transcultural context of *Lilja 4-ever*'s narrative is based on sex trafficking, the realities of which are here reduced to a parabolic series of spiritual-spatial reflections on Sweden's response to the issue. In *Chinaman*, the affirmative use of otherworldliness contains Ling in a way that objectifies her as an unattainable figure and allows the ethnic Dane's pursuit of her mysticism to facilitate his affirmative transformation. Consequently, although the global transcultural context of the restaurant is implied, these spaces still present boundaries because they rely on a specific separation between the 'ethnic Nordic' characters and Otherness. Characters like Keld must step into an unknown world to negotiate and interact with foreignness; however, a two-sided intercultural experience is never realised as he steps back out of the world leaving the Other behind. These Othered characters, as impressions of Chinese culture, or vulnerable femininity, or as refugee victims, carry with them a certain ephemeral currency that speaks of an ingrained Eurocentric perspective. It also presupposes a certain vulnerability or victimhood of the Other, where spaces come to substitute their character development. In the context of spatial displacement and the exploration of alternative cinematic spaces, I argue that *Zozo* represents a convergence of two separate national sites. However, Fares uses Zozo's move to Sweden to positively reinforce the idea that Sweden is the space where those displaced by violence can find a resolution. Finally, in the case of *Le Havre*, the Other functions as a framework for exploring the moral values and subjective identities of the white male protagonists. In *Le Havre*, Idrissa is not only contained within the context of enforced transnational mobility, but he is also contained by the oversimplified dimensions of *Le Havre*'s spatial world which embody an imagined moral community. Considering the significance of stylistic choices used in these examples, I now turn to contemporary documentary cinema as a means of examining how style can further complicate the politics of identity.

Five

Towards a 'Docu-Noir': Crisis Narratives and Stylistic Interventions in Contemporary Documentary Cinema

Having explored a range of fictional representations of ethnic identities in crisis, I now turn to contemporary documentary cinema, where issues related to immigration, multicultural politics, and social integration are becoming increasingly prevalent. These emerging themes also coincide with a diversification of production networks, broadcasting methods, financial sourcing, and, increasingly, transnational collaborations. This includes multiplatform streaming services and distribution channels like danishdox.com which aims to reach international audiences.[52]

Examining the position of documentary cinema in Norway, it becomes clear that the industry is experiencing a significant shift. According to the NFI 'Norway is experiencing a new wave of documentary production and distribution as well as a new breed of internationally ambitious filmmakers' (NFI 2019). This has seen Norwegian documentary cinema expand its horizons, forming international co-production partnerships with other EU countries. Furthermore, in 2019, the NFI introduced an incentive scheme which promises 'grants up to 25% return on costs spent in Norway on productions produced partly or entirely in Norway and are intended for international distribution' (NFI 2019). Non-fiction films are a prominent part of this scheme which allocates a considerable NOK 5 million for a documentary series and NOK 10 million for feature documentaries. Sweden also has a long history of supporting both documentaries and the 'educational film' and this support extends well before the establishment of the Swedish Film Institute in 1963 (see Jönsson 2016: 125-147). In 2018, documentaries accounted for twelve percent of the SFI's total film output (SFI 2018: 23).

[52.] See Eva Novrup Redvall and Ib Bondebjerg's statistical study (2011) on the enduring prevalence and popularity of documentary cinema throughout Scandinavia.

Despite its 'smallness', Iceland produce an average of eight documentaries per year (Icelandic Film Centre, no date). Documentary cinema also forms part of Iceland's legal film funding obligations where the budget is split between features, television and shorts (Icelandic Film Centre 2003).

In 2019, the Finnish Film Foundation funded six feature-length and two short documentaries (Bałaga 2019). The funding infrastructure for Finnish documentaries is formed around support from a variety of national agencies including the Finnish Film Foundation and The Promotion Centre for Audiovisual Culture (Audiovisuaalisen kulttuurin edistämiskeskus (AVEK). According to Haase, Finnish documentaries, along with those in the other Nordic countries, have defined themselves against other emerging trends in documentary cinema over the last thirty years which has seen the marketisation of documentary film culture develop in line with commercial neoliberalist shifts in popular culture production (2016: 126). Rather, he attests that 'documentary film remains the signature piece of national public service' in Finland (Haase 2016: 126).

Denmark has invested heavily in both documentary cinema and the types of digital platforms that now play host to an increasingly diverse array of non-fiction films with 'creative documentaries' making the transition to the big screen with the help of leading Danish production companies like DOKweb. Denmark also encourage international co-productions and shorts with a dedicated annual budget of DKK 2, 500,000 (DFI, no date). However, like many of its Nordic counterparts, the current specifications for documentary funding from the DFI state that 'artistic qualities' remain a high priority (DFI, no date).

The shifting production contexts and platforms for documentary cinema that have emerged in the last few decades have developed alongside new aesthetic approaches which can be broadly characterised as a move towards more 'poetic' and emotive forms of address. These stylistic trends are transforming the expectations surrounding the role of documentary cinema in shaping our perceptions of multicultural realities. While these shifts have been international, our discussion will unpack the significance of these changes in a national context. More specifically, these emerging 'emotive' approaches

typically blur the conventions of political documentary cinema by integrating socially conscious or politically orientated subject matter with a more subjective or personal essay-style method with directors confronting issues of global 'significance' in both localized and personal context. These techniques originate from the general subjective turn in documentary filmmaking that emerged in the 1980s. Here, I analyse how these new stylistic conventions and thematic developments unconsciously contribute to the crisis of ethnic identity politics and belonging that has so far informed my discussion. More explicitly, in the context of these transitions in documentary cinema, I suggest the theme of crisis operates on two levels; where crisis-themed subjects are both captured by the documentary *and* simultaneously manufactured by the form of the documentary itself.

In line with these developments, there has been an increasing academic interest in Nordic documentaries with dedicated collections like Mette Hjort, Ib Bondebjerg and Eva Novrup Redvall's *The Danish Directors 3: Dialogues on the New Danish Documentary* (2014) and Dafydd Sills-Jones and Pietari Kääpä's special issue on *Studies in Documentary Film* (2016: 89-105) (and forthcoming book) on Finnish documentaries.[53] Like Hasse's observation, these works attest that documentary cinema has a long legacy in the Nordic counties and is regarded as a national asset in countries like Finland, where, at least for most of the late 1990s and early 2000s, there were concerted efforts to safeguard the medium from budget cutbacks in the arts under recent neoliberal government agendas (Sills-Jones and Kääpä 2016: 90). Consequently, we must consider how the status of documentary, as a medium traditionally acclaimed and valued for its journalistic/artistic merit, influences the representation of identity politics. One could also consider the elevation of documentary a result of Nordic exceptionalism where the fundamental perception of the medium as a benevolent or edifying force feeds into the egalitarian tendencies we have discussed so far. Kääpä notes how some documentaries build this

[53.] Sills-Jones and Kääpä's journal edition (2016) contextualises perspectives on the contemporary Finnish documentary movement from academics, filmmakers, and other creative practitioners.

exceptionalist ethos in 'as part of their ideological structures' where they 'take part in a construction of a reactive national narrative that sees individuals from these countries assume a leading role on the global stage' (Kääpä 2014: 215).

This exceptionalist agenda is also reflected in the broader production culture with educational partnerships like the one between danishdox, the digital educational resource platform Clio Online, and The Danish Film Institute. These organisations have grouped to produce teaching resources and other interactive educational materials using documentaries and short animations to explore moral and ethical subjects like the ongoing European refugee crisis. These materials are organised thematically under topic headings like *Grænseland/Borderland* and claim to capture key moral flashpoints related to ideas about the integration and assimilation of immigrants into Danish society. Each film belongs to a specific educational classification aimed at a wide range of school-aged children. However, the key strategies emerging from these partnerships are also designed to promote the educational values and reach of Danish documentary cinema as an investigative device and resource. With documentary cinema held in such regard, I claim we must consider the political perspectives of their approaches carefully. Do they challenge the cultural norms of their own production cultures, especially in an age where political context in documentary cinema is increasingly diluted by pathos and a more subjective and lyrical stylisation?[54]

This chapter covers a selection of immigrant-themed documentaries, each probing a different slant on multicultural politics using similar aesthetic approaches including those that frame the subjects in semi-fictionalised contexts. Firstly, I explore Katrine Philp's *De Udvalgte/Suitable* (2013) which follows a 'refugee selection mission' carried out by the Danish government in Malaysia. The documentary is designed to expose the fallacies of the Nordic countries' exceptionalist 'humanitarian interventions.' However,

---

[54.] See Kääpä (2014) for similar discussions on documentary and Nordic exceptionalism in an ecological context pp. 193-217.

in my critical approach towards the documentary's methods, I focus on how the problematic framing of the refugees as passive victims is aided by the visual style.

Secondly, I focus on the failure of social integration in examples like *Barneraneren/What Young Men Do* (Haukeland, 2016) and Elina Hirvonen's *Kiehumispiste/Boiling Point* (2017). *What Young Men Do* blurs the lines between fiction and reality in a story about a young man searching for an identity in the suburbs of Oslo. Hirvonen's award-winning documentary on the contentious ethnic and civil relations traces the roots of racist violence to economic instability, following two opposing sides of the populist anti-immigrant and pro-immigrant narrative sweeping Finland. I explore both examples as what I term the 'docu-noir' where both filmmakers draw on the stylistic and narrative conventions of Nordic noir, the now internationally recognised genre of crime fiction. I claim that the use of noir conventions is key to understanding the way crisis is structured. Fundamentally, this noir approach assigns specific roles to ethnic minorities in a way that effectively reverts to an underlying dualistic or binary understanding of the identity politics narratives at play. Before elaborating on these themes in depth, I will briefly discuss the increasing preoccupation with the subject of ethnic identity in Nordic documentary cinema and elaborate on the context of these emerging stylistic trends.

Ethnicity in Contemporary Nordic Documentary Cinema

In a Nordic context, Winton (2011) credits the term 'new wave documentary' to Karen Rais-Nordentoft, director of Nordisk Panorama — Nordic Short & Doc Film Festival. Rais-Nordentoft characterises shifts in recent stylistic and thematic interventions by stating how 'New Nordic Documentary Cinema is marked by an impulse toward humanist storytelling that combines the personal with the political. It moves away from the dogmatic toward a nuanced social and political cinema intent on exploring actuality through the complexities of personal narrative' (Rais-Nordentoft quoted in Winton

2011). In her observations, Finnish documentarist and academic Susanna Helke claims that documentary styles have moved from the 'strong convention of collective rhetorical address' (Helke 2016: 184) to the more poetic and less politically incisive where there are apparently fewer assumptions about the audiences they address. The convergence of these new themes and aesthetic characteristics echo what Helke calls the 'emotive turn' in documentary (2016). She states:

> one prevailing tendency in the documentary film culture of the last decades in Finland – which has not happened in isolation but reflects similar phenomena in European, North-American and especially Scandinavian documentary film culture – has been the emergence of the realm of the emotively personal as the primary focus of documentary expression. Instead of the traditionally historical, societal or political observations, more and more films – in terms of their perspective, approach and topic – have dealt with the area of emotions, family relations, questions of identity and individual growing pains. (Helke 2016: 185)

Along with this emotive turn, the subject of ethnicity has steadily become a recurrent theme in this new wave trend and, at least superficially, many of these documentaries appear to challenge the tenets of cohesiveness or the notion of collective identity as it was conceived by the dominant ideology. These explorations of ethnic identities are evident in Finnish examples like *Kerjäläiselokuva/A Beggar Film* (Maylett, 2011) which focuses on a group of Romani beggars in Helsinki by examining the ideological implications of charity and Susanne Helke's own *Leikkipuisto/The Playground* (Helke, 2010) which exclusively documents the everyday lives of a group of second-generation immigrants in contemporary Finland. Touching on the theme of fractured family relations, Phie Ambo and Sami Saif search for Saif's Yemeni father, who abandoned his Danish family when he was a child in the emotive *Family* (2001). Equally, the work of Finland-based Bulgarian director Tonislav Hristov makes inroads into familial relations and cultural integration with feature-length documentaries like *Sinkkuelämän säännöt/Rules of a Single Life* (2011), a humorous take on four Bulgarian men searching for love in Helsinki.

From Denmark, Vladimir Tomic revisits the trials and tribulations of his childhood as a Bosnian refugee in *Flotel Europa* (2015). Tomic's documentary is edited together using footage from VHS tapes that were shot during the 1990s during which time Tomic and his family were housed on the eponymous *Flotel Europa*, a ship docked in Copenhagen's harbour which was part of a temporary housing solution designed to alleviate the Yugoslavian refugee crisis in the 1990s. Taking a more political standpoint, examples like *Miten Marjoja Poimitaan/How to Pick Berries* (Talvensaari, 2010)[55] uses long static takes to highlight the cultural and economic injustices faced by migrant berry pickers from East Asia as they clash with Finnish residents in a small Northern town. Norwegian documentarian Mona Friis Bertheussen, renowned for her internationally acclaimed BBC documentary about the reunion of two Chinese siblings separated at birth in *Tvillingsøstrene/Twin Sisters* (2013), leans on the rhetoric of exceptionalism in *Velkommen til Norge/Welcome to Norway* (2008). This film follows the trials and tribulations of a Congolese refugee family as they resettle in Nord-Trøndelag County.

The plight of refugees has become distinctly more visible with Egil Håskjold Larsen's *69 minutter av 86 dager/69 Minutes of 86 Days* (2017), another Norwegian example that uses silence strategically to capture a young family's journey from a Greek refugee camp to Uppsala during the ongoing crisis in Syria. Broadly, these documentaries fall into three categories; those dealing with themes of family, integration and assimilation, those activist-minded works which allude to wider socio-political contexts and lastly humanitarian-themed documentaries made beyond the borders of the Nordic region. However, despite the diversity reflected in these approaches and evidence of a preoccupation with wider political narratives I claim that many also revolve around an implicit bias towards the dominant egalitarian perspective. To expand on these complexities, I choose to focus on several examples which I believe best demonstrate

---

[55] See chapter six for more details on this film.

some of the key issues and contradictions emerging in relation to the framing of ethnic diversity and the context of refugee displacement.

The Crisis of Power and 'Victim Art' in Katrine Philp's *De Udvalgte/Suitable* (2013)

Suitable (also titled '*The Selected*') follows Danish authorities in Malaysia on a so-called 'refugee selection mission'. In doing so, it sheds light on Denmark's immigration policies at their very worst. The narrative revolves around four Burmese families who, after fleeing political oppression and genocide in Myanmar, are now waiting to hear whether the Danish Immigration Services and Refugee Council consider their circumstances and backgrounds to be compatible with Denmark's strict integration criteria. Those who pass a series of assessments are then relocated to Denmark as part of a permanent resettlement program. At the start of the film, the refugees in question are living illegally in Malaysia and hiding from immigration officials there who operate using force and military-style authoritarianism. The bureaucracy of Denmark's restrictive selection process oftentimes appears to parallel Malaysia's oppressive attitude towards the refugees, except, more cuttingly, Philp's films shows us how the Danish authorities operate under the guise of a humanitarian intervention. According to the documentary, the criteria, or 'suitability clause', for successful entry into Denmark excludes those who are illiterate, significantly traumatized or those considered to be mentally or physically 'weak'. Here, the humanitarian crises facing the refugees are not a pre-requisite, but rather a barrier for entering Denmark.

Simultaneously, this 'mission' such as it is characterised by the Danish authorities, epitomises the rhetoric of Nordic exceptionalism and appears to form the basis of Philp's critique. Prior to Denmark's assessment procedure, the UNHCR[56] implements its own

---

[56] The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is a United Nations programme designed to protect refugees and displaced persons.

selection process where quotas of people are identified as in need of resettlement. It remains unclear why Denmark then continues with its own selection agenda and, although the film does not elaborate on this point in depth, it does imply that one of the reasons may be because Denmark's criteria for entry are based more on cultural compatibility than it is on helping those in crisis.

The immigration authorities work to a specific narrative based on perceived labour contributions from the refugees and conditional strong commitments from immigrants over their willingness to participate fully in Danish society and comply with its values (see the Danish Government's Contract and Residence and Self-insurance Declaration, no date). Despite the emphasis on integration, Denmark's attitudes towards refugees and asylum seekers is documented internationally with the UK's *The Independent* (see Barnes 2018) and *The New York Times* (see Barry and Sorensen 2018) regularly reporting on the increasingly restrictive resettlement programmes and the introduction of laws sequestering property and valuables from refugees entering the country. While Philp's insight clearly exposes the cruelties of this selection process, we must take a closer look at how the refugees are characterised through the form and representation of the documentary in order to understand *how* it constructs its critique.

Crisis as an Intervention

Suitable is split into three consecutive parts; the interviews, the decision, and the departure. The first half provides an intimate portrait of each family and their precarious circumstances, many of whom have become separated from their families. The four families who appear as Philp's main subjects express their apprehension about relocating to Denmark. Although some refugees see the move as a way out, their views do not coincide with the opinions expressed by Danish officials who, in a meeting at the beginning of the film, openly voice prejudiced ideas about those seeking asylum. These opinions betray a belief about how the refugees will be willing to lie, embellish or exaggerate their circumstances to gain entry. The opening scenes switch between these

two apparently separate worlds; the cramped apartments in a sweltering Malaysia and the idyllic Denmark where the Danes convene their meeting about the forthcoming mission in an upscale summer house. With these opposing perspectives established, the Danish immigration officials then fly to Malaysia to meet with the refugees. There, the officials are shown to espouse the democratic rights and duties that apparently bind Danish society together. The tone of this selection 'mission' is almost evangelical in its commitment to preserving 'Danish values', an aspect deftly reinforced by a declaration each family is expected to sign. The declaration reads as follows:

> It is important to learn about and understand the basic norms and values of Danish society. On the basis of this information, I wish to be resettled in Denmark. If I am offered resettlement in Denmark, I declare the following: I will work on becoming self-reliant through employment. I will work on learning the Danish language. I will be an active member of society. I will work actively for my family's integration into Danish society. (Denmark's Official Immigration Declaration quoted in *Suitable*)

Further to this, the authorities are condescending and oftentimes struggle to mask their scepticism about those who do not outwardly appear to fit the criteria. Here, Philp uses juxtaposition shots to emphasise the divide between the two sides. This is most apparent during the interviews when scenes are crosscut between the immigration officers and the families who are sitting on opposite sides of the table. The literal dimensions of the selection process are also framed through a series of dehumanising medical inspections performed on each family, including the children. Each individual is interrogated on their lifestyle and health status in a series of tight close-ups. The clinical detachment of these shots is underpinned by our knowledge that those perceived to be physically or mentally 'weak' are likely to be rejected.

Some of *Suitable*'s most poetic qualities emerge from the absence of these rejected refugee stories, where the audience is left to ponder the fate of those who are excluded by the selection process. Arguably, the emotive impact of these excluded stories is heightened when the documentary reveals that it was, in fact, the Immigration Services Department who requested that the rejected stories be cut from the film. Instead, Philp

turns her attention towards the accepted families. Those selected include a young married couple separated from their children who are still stuck in Myanmar, a young family of four, an elderly man looking to reunite with his daughter in Denmark, and a nine-year-old girl, who is expected to live with her estranged father.

As the officials explain, the children of the young married couple, should they manage to escape the conflict in Myanmar, are not guaranteed asylum despite the success of their parents' application. This reality underlines how the crisis of familial separation facing the refugees functions as an inherent condition of the Danish asylum system.[57] Once again, the context of this strict family reunification law where there are, ironically, no guarantees of reunification, again helps to recall the absent stories in Philp's film. Arguably, the dilemma of permanent separation facing the couple also allows Philp to emphasise the restrictions placed on the scope of her own film by the authorities. The tragedy of their separation effectively also allows her to tell the stories of these lost children by proxy as we are shown emotional sequences of their mother speaking with them on the phone. Here, the theme of crisis exists in several forms. Crisis is an evident reality for the refugees, and this is captured by the context of their displacement. Philp also captures the underlying crisis politics at the centre of Denmark's immigration policies, that is, the contradiction between the country's perceived egalitarianism and the reality of its treatment of Others. Here, the crisis facing the refugees is, to a certain extent, generated by the border politics at work.

However, I also contend that the construction of these scenes, and their emotive address, betrays the identity of Philp's intended audience. The vulnerable victim status of the foreign Other and the way the documentary enhances it by feeding snippets of information about the wider context of Denmark's stance on immigration, demonstrates that Philp's documentary was made primarily with a Danish audience in mind. Here,

---

[57] The unresolved issue of family reunification arguably represents another fissure in the goodwill image of Denmark's Refugee Council.

the Other as a victim is part of a power structure that operates in conjunction with the filmmaker's agenda. Post-colonial scholar Homi K. Bhabha refers to this phenomenon as victimology (also called 'victim art', 1998) where the victimisation, particularly of a marginalised or disenfranchised minority, functions as a key strategy for building empathy, typically among audiences who are removed from the context of the subject's displacement. However, this approach often results in a type of 'humanitarian commodification', where sympathy becomes contingent on the victims in question conforming to specific conventions. He states:

> There is an argument that suggests that the problem with the charge of victimage is that those who make that claim (sympathetically) enact a phantasmatic scenario in which the 'other' is in a position of docile subservience, which also provides a kind of panoptic surveillance. The victim-other as 'good' object reflects back a philanthropic benevolence that feeds the narcissism of the 'good Samaritan' or the victim's witness. (Bhabha in Bennett 1998: 46)

For me, it becomes a case of whether a documentary like *Suitable*, although of course well-meaning in its intentions, captures or indeed generates its own form of crisis politics, one that is defined by a style of representation that is limited to making its subjects into passive victims. Specifically, this is a type of crisis generated by the representational politics of film form and where the emphasis is placed. The reality of this representational crisis politics is that, while it undoubtedly creates empathy for the families, it also built on an idea that must conform to an image of the 'acceptable refugee' or 'good and deserving victim'. Consequently, because *Suitable* attacks the political role of Denmark's immigration policies, which appear to favour a certain 'type' of refugee, we could also say that she too requires a tangible victim to illustrate and reinforce the position of her film's agenda.

Figure 7: In *Suitable* (Philp, 2013), constructing victim identities through contrasting realities. Malaysia on the left and Denmark on the right.

This has become a strategy in the age of the 'emotive turn' identified by Helke (2016) where political analysis has become less pointed or explicit. If we are to read *Suitable* as a documentary aimed at a Danish audience, as I have suggested, then we could also consider how these crisis victim narratives are experienced vicariously by Philp's viewers. Thus, this vicarious victim art is dependent on the migrants conforming to an agenda set by the Immigration services and by Philp herself. Without 'good' victims, there is a potential that such narrative approaches to capturing the refugee crisis would break down. The key point about this approach is how the kind of emotional address in *Suitable*, where migrants are rendered as passive victims, becomes the filmmaker's only form of political attack on the Danish government's immigration strategies. This is problematic because it often correlates truth or insight with *feelings* and moves away from discussions on how and why such attitudes persist in the first place. If Philp's critical intervention is based on constructing her subjects as passive victims, which her white Danish audience experience vicariously, then we also need to look towards other emerging emotive stylistic conventions, especially those that play with boundaries between fiction, subjective realities and political sub-texts. Consequently, I now turn to Jon Haukeland's documentary *Barneraneren/What Young Men Do* to explore how these dynamics apply in a domestic context.

195

Untold Stories in *Barneraneren*/*What Young Men Do* (Haukeland, 2016)

Haukeland's *Barneraneren*/*What Young Men Do* follows 15-year-old black teenager Noah who, who, following a juvenile conviction for robbery, struggles with the peer pressures of adolescence and the expectations placed on him by the Norwegian authorities. The conditions of his suspended sentence demand that he move from Groruddalen, a more multicultural neighbourhood where he was raised by his mother, to Bærum[58] where he is now expected to live with his father, from whom he appears to be partly estranged. These conditions are primarily designed to separate Noah from the influence of his tight-knit group of friends, some of whom were also involved in the robbery. The authorities, here represented by a special supervision team of professionals from social services and the local police force, hold regular meetings with Noah as part of his rehabilitation programme and see his move to Bærum as a fresh start. However, Noah expresses feelings of alienation and disconnection from his new friends in Bærum who are decidedly more affluent, white, and middle-class. The temptation to steer clear of his old friends in Groruddalen becomes too great, and the lure of his former life tests Noah's loyalties to both his friends and the social services.

Figure 8: Disapproving authority in *What Young Men Do* (Haukeland, 2016).

---

[58] Both places are districts in Oslo.

Curiously, Haukeland eliminates all traces of parental authority. By excluding Noah's parents, siblings, and even specific details about his background, Haukeland focuses our attention instead on the relationship between Noah, his friends, and the authorities. His review team become the authoritative substitute for his family, and although they are sincere in their goal to help him avoid adulthood as a career criminal, their expectations do not align with his experiences or the realities of his situation. They are blind to the limitations of their own expectations, and there is a lingering sense that the authorities' self-righteous disapproval is part of Haukeland's target. Like *Suitable*, these scenes are cross-cut over a table with Noah on one side and the social services on the other in an interview-like scenario.

Superficially, Noah's ethnic background appears to be of little significance in the main narrative, as the subject is never directly referenced. However, like Philp's documentary, there are arguably traces of a sub-text or a story that remains untold as part of Haukeland's stylistic intervention. In this case, that sub-text relates to the general context surrounding the theme of juvenile delinquency. These inferences hint at a wider culture circulating in Norwegian media that draws unfounded links between criminality and ethnic Otherness. Expanding on the double standards against minorities in the Norwegian penal system, sociologist Marianne Gullestad claims that if an immigrant or ethnic minority commits a crime in Norway, there is often an added penalty. Here, a criminal act committed by a non-white subject 'is more likely to be seen as characteristic of a certain ethnic culture and/or religion' and in turn 'the double standard means that 'immigrants' often have to demonstrate their loyalty more explicitly by praising everything Norwegian' (Gullestad 2004: 193). In the documentary, this context is arguably reflected in the emphasis on Noah's relationship with the arbitrary rules of the social services.

Rather than exploring the broader legal or sociological aspects of Noah's situation, however, Haukeland uses the context of the criminal case as a vehicle for exploring Noah's social displacement. This 'poetic' approach, which in this case leaves the broader

197

context of ethnic discrimination unexplored, goes a step further than *Suitable* by effectively re-constructing Noah's life using semi-fictionalised and subjective dramatizations. Indeed, stylistically, Haukeland's documentary walks a fine line between fiction and reality. The 'cast' effectively play themselves and largely work using improvisation where they act out specific events following their conviction and subsequent rehabilitation. Haukeland uses this approach to strengthen the case for defence — not for the crime itself, but for the mitigating circumstances surrounding Noah's conflicted loyalties. It gives the film a type of cohesive trajectory typically reserved for narrative fiction where there is often a clear developmental structure and the lives and histories of the characters play out, not in real time, but across their childhoods and adolescence. Haukeland is primarily concerned with Noah's search for an identity amid these two communities and states that his motivation came from 'the interest I have in victims, their psychology, the relationship between victims and their assailant' and 'the sometimes completely different ways to perceive the same reality' (Haukeland quoted in Forsgren 2016).

Perhaps most intriguingly of all, Steele (2017) notes how *What Young Men Do* was 'billed as a Nordic noir documentary' (2017). Although it is difficult to characterise Nordic noir in a universal sense, it is generally referred to as a genre of crime fiction now spanning literature and film and television. Typically, based on a police procedural format, Bergman identifies the key features as a stylistically bleak aesthetic coupled with a cynical exposé of the welfare state's failings, often targeting corruption and greed at the heart of social and corporate institutions. Sondrup and Sandberg's (2017: 1-19) working definition describes the trend as a crime fiction brand with 'a distinctive design style expressed in various media (Scandinavian Modern), or a political orientation centred on environmental protection, social equality, welfare-state economics, international peacekeeping, and attention on the rights of women' (2017: 11). Noir can also be understood as a genre fundamentally designed to draw out the contradictions between the reality and the promise of life in the Nordic region.

Steele adopts this angle when framing the noir qualities in *What Young Men Do* by stating how 'against the Nordic backdrop, the allusion to the genre highlights some of the failings and limitations of the systems and institutions currently in place, revealing the social problems – for the younger, disenfranchised generation – living on the city's periphery' (Steele 2017). For Steele, the documentary's appropriations of noir conventions are designed to reveal how something is clearly amiss with the utopian fantasy of universal equality, social democracy, and integration. As well as implying how the docu-noir shares conventions connected to Nordic noir's social critique, we could also expand on how the stylistic qualities of noir interact with the documentary medium. Hansen and Waade note how Nordic noir's identity as a genre is becoming increasingly flexible (2017: 6). Here, we could position the stylistic qualities of these docu-noirs as part of the evolutionary shift in documentary cinema towards an emotive address, broadly in line with Helke's analysis (2016: 183-197). Brookes attributes the term 'docu-noir' to US film producer Alan Silver (2017: 42) who conceived it as a stylistic and ideological evolution of the American film noir movement where fiction masqueraded as fact. Considering the focus on subjective or emotive re-enactments in the film, we can draw parallels with this idea of blurring fact and fiction, where political contexts no longer operate as the primary motivation for documentary filmmakers.

What Young Men Do is a statement on aesthetic form rather than truth or reality because it is shaped by both the subjectivity of the 'protagonist' and arguably the documentarian. However, when the broader political situation is removed, there is potentially a tendency to use the subjects of these documentaries as a way of substituting political context. If the documentary subtly implies that the justice system is in crisis, then there is a danger that personal crises of the subjects are conflated with the wider situation. This is especially problematic if the wider social context is taken to represent an oversimplified tale of two sides rather than as something more complex. These elements are complicated further when we consider how the noir qualities are used to express or frame these ideas. Scholars of critical race studies like Ben Pitcher (2014) have noted a tension at the heart of Nordic noir — both in its literary and televised forms. For

him, the packaging and consumption of the Nordic brand of noir amount to what he calls 'white nostalgia'. The critical interventions made by noir and the way it shines a spotlight on the corruption at the centre of contemporary institutions are also offset by a nostalgic fantasy about the utopian welfare state and what it apparently used to represent (2014: 54-73). Similarly, Stougaard-Nielsen outlines the function of Nordic noir as a device for re-establishing a connection with a clear sense of imagined ethnocentric class identity:

> Nordic noir has come to function as a proxy for a more appropriate white cosmopolitan desire to imagine rooted identities in an age of globalisation steeped in complex identity politics. This nostalgic or romantic fantasy of Nordic whiteness, the allure of the firmly rooted, is, of course, not unproblematic, and is, I would argue, continuously critically examined in Nordic crime fiction itself. (Stougaard-Nielsen 2016: 8)

Stougaard-Nielsen's and Pitcher's critical examinations of the noir genre posit that Nordic noir allows for a specific kind of introspective, critical view on middle-class whiteness without really stepping outside it. Such views speak of an implicit crisis of collective white identity where noir becomes a framework for self-examination often in place of other perspectives. Elsewhere, Moffat and Kääpä suggest that immigrants or ethnic Others largely occupy a secondary role in the noir genre, effectively helping to sustain the narrative without ever really amounting to a significant narrative force outside of an incidental plot device (Moffat and Kääpä 2018: 150-152).

Kiehumispiste/Boiling Point (2017)

Exploring the displaced subjectivity of young men also features in Elina Hirvonen's Finnish *Kiehumispiste/Boiling Point* which seeks to explore the divides in Finland's contemporary identity politics narrative. Here, Hirvonen builds this split around two

poles; the liberal-minded pro-immigrant camp, and the right-wing anti-immigrant populists. To capture these dynamics, the documentary opens with a protest in Helsinki, where, on one side, crowds of people chant racist epithets, while on the other, a pro-immigrant rally wave placards with the now infamous image of Alan Kurdi, the three-year-old Syrian-Kurdish boy who drowned crossing the Mediterranean at the height of the 2015 Syrian refugee crisis.[59] Consecutively, we hear the two sides shout, 'close the borders' and 'open the borders.' The main thrust of *Boiling Point*'s agenda, and accompanying publicity campaign, is how it claims to represent 'both' sides of this conflict. The documentary's mission statement[60] is not explicitly an ideological one, but rather one that seeks to avoid sweeping generalisations and stereotypes on either side. Consequently, Hirvonen positions her documentary as a negotiation between the conflicting and sometimes converging, perspectives of those caught in a battle of identity politics.

The documentary alternates between different protest movements and political rallies but also involves a series of discussions between 'real people.' After the opening shots, Hirvonen then cuts to the Kotiharju Public Sauna in Helsinki where two Finnish men, entrepreneur Tapsa and researcher Oula, debate the recent influx of refugees into Finland with both men take opposing sides. Oula argues for a more nuanced and fact-based understanding of the social realities and struggles faced by migrants and the positive aspects of multiculturalism whereas Tapsa voices concern for Finland's future and the supposed threat to its relative ethnic and cultural homogeneity. The documentary then follows young media activist and aspiring photojournalist Jarkko Jaakkola as he absorbs the racist propaganda of radical right-wing organisations such as the Soldiers of Odin whose rallying cry takes aim at perceived 'Islamisation'[61] of Finland

---

[59] The widely publicised image of Alan Kurdi lying dead on a Turkish beach sparked an international outcry and diplomatic crisis. See Smith (2015).
[60] See the *Boiling Point* Campaign Report (2018).
[61] This term has become a key part of the rhetorical language used by the far-right and is based on the perception that Europe is increasingly and disproportionately embracing Sharia Law.

and Europe. The propaganda stokes fears of hidden ISIS sleeper cells forming in refugee reception centres and exposes distorted perceptions of violent crime by directly linking instances of rape to the ethnic identity of the perpetrators (Lehti quoted in Andersson 2015).

The documentary also exposes how other organisations with ties to the right are attempting to 'soften' their perspective on immigration policies. As well as showing us the racial right in operation, the documentary effectively captures the nuances of other developments, showing us how some of these nationalist-orientated campaigns and individuals are effectively depoliticising their events and neutralising their rhetoric in a bid to appeal to a wider demographic. By including this sort of detail, *Boiling Point* highlights the shape-shifting evolution in the recent history of right-wing politics where attempts are being made to disguise and mask its racist foundations.

On the other side of the debate, meanwhile, black Finnish activist Sulbaan Said Ahmed proudly waves the Finnish flag at a peace march and narrates his experiences of racial prejudice. His appearance, however, is comparatively brief. The same can be said for schoolgirls Shahad and Tabarak, two Syrian refugees who fled with their parents and fought for their lives to reach Europe but who now find themselves at risk of violence in Finland following an attempted arson attack on their block of flats. At a social hub designed for immigrants in Kemi, semi-retiree Liisa Puupponen teaches Finnish and attempts to help Nawras and Mohamed, two asylum seekers whose applications are rejected by the Finnish government. Both men succumb to depression and drop off the radar and seemingly fade into obscurity.

The documentary was released in the shadow of Anders Breivik's horrifying legacy in neighbouring Norway but chooses to omit the recent spate of violent incidents committed by young white men in Finland and the wider political and ideological context of these acts. Indeed, Finland has also witnessed acts of unprecedented violence over the last two decades. The school massacres in Jokela and Kauhajoki, occurring within just ten months of each other, as well as the bombing of the Myyrmanni shopping centre in Helsinki in 2002, suggest further issues of deeply embedded and unresolved

conflicts within Finnish society, as explored in studies unpacking the social roots of violence in Finland (see Kiilakoski and Oksanen 2011). Questions have also been raised regarding the apparent ideological and potentially racial motives behind these assaults, including their links with extremist, anti-immigrant ideologies. Although the documentary primarily focuses on consolidating the perspectives of marginalised people on both 'sides' of these ethnic and cultural divides, *Boiling Point* also gestures towards a more complex politics involving wider socio-economic contexts. Specifically, this sub-narrative draws on the recent history of austerity in Finland. Despite its prosperous or utopian image, the politics of austerity have taken hold under successive neo-liberal governments in Finland, particularly since the economic recession in the 1990s. Elomäki and Kantola (2017) contend that Finland's austerity narrative is underpinned by an ideological bias toward markets and that it is not merely a pragmatic response to global financial pressures. Accordingly, they also highlight how such measures have a distinct racial dimension (2017: 234). This is significant, as austerity hints at a more embedded structural form of manufactured inequality that both breeds and perpetuates ethnic division.

Although missing contextual dialogue on the origins and patterns of white male violence, *Boiling Point* does allude to the relationship between Finland's continuing austerity measures and racial tensions (something I discuss in detail in the final chapter). The documentary carefully exposes how far-right groups use welfare chauvinism to bolster their identity; a mantra that has become part of their rallying cry. Protecting the 'integrity' of the welfare state against those who come from the outside has become more significant in the wake of the 2015 refugee crisis where newcomers are seen as a direct threat particularly when 'economic scarcity' as Hokkinen puts it (2019: 112) is already an issue. Hokkinen (2019: 109) also points out how the Finnish government rowed back on plans in 2015 to cut benefits for refugees in a move that was ultimately ruled unlawful. Here, right-wing movements have been able to exploit these pressures by arguing that entitlement to such services and provisions belongs to 'native Finns'. These beliefs are strategically reinforced by scenes shot on location at various right-wing

rallies, where several prominent anti-immigrant critics are called to speak. These shots, which Hirvonen returns to throughout the documentary, serve two purposes. On the one hand, these sequences draw out the ironic parallels between the toxic rhetoric of right-wing groups and the ideological proponents of Islamic extremism.

Secondly, these scenes help to establish connections with a wider sub-text in *Boiling Point*'s narrative. The images at extremist rallies are broken up by static images of people queuing at a Helsinki food bank. Over these images, ethnic Finns narrate their fears about immigration. However, their concerns are shaped by economic perceptions and on their experiences of poverty. They express no overt fears over supposed threats to cultural homogeneity. As the subjects of poverty and 'food bank culture' are not typically associated with Finland's welfare state, Hirvonen's inclusion of these brief sequences alongside the context of jingoistic rhetoric does much to undermine the broader socio-economic narratives at the heart of Finland's inclusive political rhetoric. However, the documentary also shows us how fears stoked by further cuts and rising unemployment manifest on a cultural level, breeding hatred and division between different ethnic groups. The use of food banks has existed in Finland since the turbulent economic period in the 1990s and arguments about deserving and undeserving migrants, especially in the context of welfare support, continue to dominate public discourse. In their study on the perception of those who depend on food charity aid, Salonen, Ohisalo and Laihiala's survey analysis found that the 'discussants questioned the deservingness of the food aid recipients and emphasized their own responsibility particularly when the food aid recipients were not considered to belong to the same social group as them. The most conditional were the attitudes towards immigrant food recipients' (2018). Although the documentary's focus is disproportionately weighted towards white ethnic Finns, by introducing this context, Hirvonen invokes a wider political-economic context to the anger and displacement expressed by young white men like Jaakkola.

The documentary alludes to a sense that there are victims on all sides of the political spectrum vulnerable to systems of power and exploitation on both a legislative level and

at the hands of fringe extremist groups. The short-lived suggestions that Finland's austerity narrative has played a role in buoying racial prejudice also implies that there are more embedded political reasons behind the social divisions at play here. Part of this insinuation also suggests how the political establishment in Finland benefit from the ethnic and cultural divisions prompted by austerity when a fight for resources is re-framed as a matter of cultural entitlement and identity and not as a manufactured political move. However, I contend that we must look more closely at the balance between political contexts, such as the references to austerity in this case, and the new stylistic conventions that are employed to capture them.

Negotiating Crisis through Docu-Noir

As in *What Young Men Do*, divisions are also reflected allegorically in *Boiling Point*'s cinematic style which draws heavily on the visual characteristics and the conventions of noir. Here, the sweeping bird's eye aerial shots slowly drift over Finland's landscapes and metropolis showing us divides between ice and water, between islands and mainland and between urban and rural, evoking the same noir-esque qualities seen in recent examples like *Ófærð/Trapped* (Kormákur 2015 -), which opens with similar topological separations in the landscape. As Hansen and Waade note, 'shore lines, harbours, bridges and other topoi associated with water are especially well-established places in crime drama, as such locations are generally associated with the geographical landscapes of many major towns and cities in Scandinavia' (2017: 67).

Equally, *Boiling Point*'s blue-grey colour grading emphasises a certain cinematic urbanity reminiscent of recent noirs like Swedish series *Blå ögon/Blue Eyes* (Haridi 2014-

15), a series that also deals with the extremist politics of the far-right.[62] At stake with this comparison is the effective blurring of formats and mediums but also the effective commercialisation of documentary cinema. This is not just a poetic documentary, but one that draws from the well-established conventions of an influential fictional literary and media canon. The aerial shots occur in conjunction with dialogue from Finnish TV and radio broadcasts as well as anecdotes told by the documentary's participants whose views on immigration are contested and contradictory.

Figure 9: Left: An establishing shot from *Boiling Point* **(Hirvonen, 2017) and on the right, the opening credit sequence from Icelandic noir series** *Trapped* **(2015 -) using similar colour filters and shot compositions of the natural landscape, a common convention found in Nordic noir.**

Visually, we can also claim these shots contribute to a sense of authority where images shot from above show us 'the whole picture.' Simultaneously, this reflects the all-encompassing point-of-view of the filmmaker, in true detective style, to see things from a perspective others cannot. It is also interesting to note how Finnish production companies are increasingly recognising the power of the 'fictional documentary cinema.' According to the Finnish Film Foundation's 2019 film catalogue, the Finnish production company 'Made' 'produces films that represent and stretch the borderline between

---

[62] Cultural commentators have also noted the documentary-like qualities of TV shows like *Blue Eyes*. See Gani (2016).

documentary and fiction; films that challenge their genres and present the makers' own voice to reach audiences both in Finland and abroad' (FFF 2019).

Although both Haukeland and Hirvonen began their careers as journalists and investigative reporters, it is perhaps easy to see how their semi-fictionalised and 'noir documentaries' reflect Kääpä and Sills-Jones's views on the problematic developments in cinematic documentary styles in general. They state how 'the populist approach of such films' seeks 'to build audiences through claiming artistic, aesthetic or occasionally journalistic exceptionalism' (2016: 92). However, all three directors discussed here share an emotive narrative approach based on emphasising the human-interest angle of their subjects by expressing a desire to move away from an explicitly journalistic approach to these subjects. Philp states how she did not in fact 'intend to make a critical documentary' (Philp 2013), but rather one focused on personal struggles. Haukeland describes his film as 'a little like a psychological thriller' (Haukeland quoted in Forsgren 2016) when asked to categorise the hybrid approach evident in *What Young Men Do*.

Here, we move towards a 'less critically ambitious' (2016: 92) form of documentary where docu-noir acts as a device that dilutes the factual content and leaves us with an impressionistic view of the events in question (Woodhead 2018). I argue that, in the context of Nordic noir and the recent trends identified by Winton, the docu-noir incorporates various stylistic and ideological conventions from Nordic noir as a vicarious means of negotiating immigration and identity politics but in a way that is shaped by semi-fictionalised understandings of events and identities. Standing in for the detective, the filmmakers reflect back on their own perception and self-understanding. While this is reflected in wider transnational trends in documentary filmmaking, I claim this approach resonates in a Nordic context because of the political implications of Nordic exceptionalism where we have explored how exceptionalism helps to sustain an implicit binary politics between native and Other.

One of the most problematic aspects of this approach, particularly as it appears in *Boiling Point*, is how it contributes to a sense of duality where 'both sides' of the divide, that is, those for and against immigration, are represented. Although *Boiling Point*

alludes to wider political-economic hierarchies at work with the brief sequences about Helsinki's food banks providing a tangible link between a squeeze on resources and the scapegoating of immigrants as a threat to economic stability, this story largely conveys and represents the perspective of white Finnish men. If we interpret the conventions of Nordic noir from Pitcher's critical perspective, who believes the genre reflects a desire to 'return' to a utopian welfare state, we can see how the docu-noir works to create a similar sense of binary politics. The documentarian emphasises a false dichotomy between two opposing sides. But this emotive, noir-esque approach has another effect. While we should not underestimate the influence of far-right politics in Finland or the Nordic region, there is also a sense that, through the dramatic traction of its noir qualities, the documentary profiles the far-right in a way that makes them appear as a more cohesive, powerful and mainstream force than they are in reality. This is also aided by the metaphorical use of binary visual representations of the landscape that are used throughout. These binaries, as I have argued, take their lead from the dichotomies typically found in Nordic noir fiction.

In this case, without a clearer exploration of the political complexities at the heart of the divides between ethnic groups, the poetic approaches of the docu-noir tend to rely more heavily on contrasting narratives built on different subjective juxtapositions. The poetic approach is also a way for the filmmaker to position themselves in the film and to characterise their own subjectivity or express something of themselves through the form of the documentary itself. I suggest that the filmmaker takes the position of authority in place of the detective, and the documentaries' style and aesthetic approaches are designed to test the moral identity of the filmmaker and (possibly) ambiguities of their social position. Here, they seek to craft an emotive and socially conscious form of documentary where the noir qualities are a key part of the social critique that helps to challenge and expose flaws and contradictions in the social fabric of egalitarian exceptionalism. However, if crisis politics in these films is broadly built on a search for an identity, this also extends to the form of the film itself where the docu-noir format becomes part of a self-effacing genre that is nonetheless Nordic-centric in its outlook. In

the context of documentary cinema, a turn towards a more subjective style translates into docu-noir which acts as a way of caricaturing crisis politics and offering the audience a way of experiencing Otherness through a more commercially orientated and vicarious mode of address.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored emerging aesthetic and subjective approaches to the subjects of race and ethnic identity in contemporary Nordic documentary film. Included here are examples that cover topics addressing failed social integration, the rise of nationalist anti-immigrant populism and refugee crises. Just as many of the fiction films explored in this thesis so far place cultural identity at the centre of their implicit crisis narratives, I suggest that the crisis of identity politics is also mirrored and reproduced unconsciously through the specific modes of address used by these documentary filmmakers. Here, it is a question of how crisis is defined in these documentaries and whether these 'poetic' approaches impact our perception of the nature of the crisis narrative under discussion. I contend we must ask to what extent these documentaries cover crisis and to what extent they generate their own form of crisis narrative, particularly through certain stylistic interventions. The emotive angle captured in *Suitable*, which builds sympathy for its subjects by creating visual polarities between Denmark and Malaysia, unconsciously contributes to the victimised image of its subjects in a way that contributes to the filmmaker's agenda. While the documentary fundamentally exposes the way Denmark's immigration services operate, the documentary also requires the refugees to behave as passive victimised subjects, as opposed to just victims of circumstance. The effect of this approach supports the underlying belief that refugees must conform to certain expectations, or certain types of crisis narratives, in order to be recognised.

Consequently, I have framed this type of crisis narrative as part of a vicarious experience explicitly aimed at Philp's audience. Further to this, I have discussed the stylistic evolution of what I call the 'docu-noir', where conventions from the crime fiction

genre are imported into the format and visual approach of documentary cinema. *What Young Men Do* and *Boiling Point* encapsulate these developments, effectively blurring the lines between fiction and reality and staging and dramatizing real events in ways that reflect the characteristics of Nordic noir. Following my discussion of vicarious crisis in *Suitable*, I propose that when applied to documentaries involving race and ethnic identity politics, the conventions of noir also act as a form of vicarious experience. However, again, I claim this experience is specifically targeted at a white audience and perpetuates the same polarised identity narratives we have seen so far where there is an unspoken inference to a fixed set of collective values based around belonging. Having established how crisis can operate as a strategy on different thematic levels in documentary cinema, in the final chapter, I return to fiction where I claim an emerging genre known as 'precariat cinema' is attempting to redress the missing links between displaced identities and broader economic contexts as well as test the fundamental principles and viability of 'collectively' as it is understood in relation to welfare state politics.

Six

Nostalgia for the Future: Representing Ethnic Identities Amid a Crisis of Labour and Economic Uncertainty

The precariat is not victim, villain or hero – it is just a lot of us.

(Standing 2011: 183)

This final chapter broadly explores how the neoliberal restructuring of labour and economic conditions has re-shaped contemporary onscreen representations of migrants and second-generation immigrants both in the workplace and beyond. The focus here is on how these films redefine the role of crisis in the narrative. So far, I have argued that in many of these films, crisis is represented, either explicitly or implicitly, by a clash of ethnic identities, conflicting 'values' or generally by pitting the Other in opposition to the welfare state, which is often unquestioningly taken to represent 'goodness' or authenticity. We have also discussed the problem of the 'good immigrant' where liberal perceptions have a tendency to project a reductive or oversimplified ideal onto the Other, often as a way of countering negative or racist images propagated by the populist right. This, as we have seen, is often at the expense of more nuanced or complex character development, where the ethnic Other acts as a token of the liberal-egalitarian viewpoint. In cinematic terms, this tokenism often reflects back on the typically white 'native' character's own identity politics. In view of these binary patterns, one factor that is perhaps less pronounced in the previous chapters is the role of socioeconomics. Although we have touched upon this in chapter two, where we explored the ideological links between the destructive effects of neoliberalism and the emergence of the 'ethnic' gangster genre, I argue the films in this chapter take a more pointed look at the relationship between ethnic division and socio-economic contexts. Consequently, I draw on the 'precariat' concept, a term originating in economic theory and developed by economist Guy Standing (2011) as a way of defining an emerging class of people trapped by the uncertainties of neoliberalism.

More recently, the precariat concept has spread into other disciplines including film and cultural studies where the so-called 'cinema of precarity' has emerged as a way of encapsulating narratives centred on neoliberal economic displacement. These studies include Alice Bardan's chapter 'The New European Cinema of Precarity: A Transnational Perspective' (2013), Barbara Mennel's article 'From Utopian Collectivity to Solitary Precarity: Thirty Years of Feminist Theory and the Cinema of Women's Work' (2014) and, more recently, Burucúa and Sitnisky's edited collection *The Precarious in the Cinemas of the Americas* (2018). This emerging 'genre' of precariat/precarious films claims to represent new and emerging forms of political subjectivity not necessarily bound by cultural, religious or ethnic identity.

My interpretation of the precariat concept thus focuses instead on how these films explore the relationship between immigrant and 'native' characters through their mutual forms of exclusion, largely in an increasingly neoliberalised employment market. Consequently, my aim here is to explore how the precariat concept can be used to break down or challenge the kind of binary politics we have seen so far by understanding how economic marginalisation stretches across race and class boundaries. The precariat concept also brings economic exploitation into focus and accounts for how wider, more embedded socio-economic narratives help to manufacture and maintain divisions between ethnic groups. Focusing on the precariat, I claim these films offer a way for us to see the causes and effects of division rather than just the division itself. This is significant, as the kinds of ethnic divides evident in the previous chapters are often based on crude or reductive 'culture clash' narratives which tend to pander to the ideological tenets of liberal or conservative cultural agendas. At stake here is how our understanding of crisis is located not as a matter of conflicting ethnic identities, but rather as a consequence generated by structural inequalities of the political and economic systems.

To better understand the relationships between economic crises and increasingly fraught notions of identity politics, I focus on examples such as *Äta sova dö/Eat, Sleep, Die* (Pichler, 2012), *Blåbärskriget/The Blueberry War* (Pettersson, 2007), *Metropia* (Saleh, 2009)

and Måns Månsson's *Yarden/The Yard* (2016). I draw on these examples specifically because I argue that they re-imagine and challenge the welfare state ethos in a more radical way. These examples, in particular, appear to 'punch upwards' rather than downwards, meaning that they do not unquestioningly adopt the dominant folkhemmet stance. Indeed, rather than leave the folkhemmet ideology intact, they ask us to question its validity in the current climate of precarious identity politics where themes of work, labour and economic uncertainty prevail in wider debates on migration. This final chapter also builds towards an understanding of how precariat cinema as an approach to analysing representations of migrant identities plays off against the notions of the folkhemmet-style imagined communities. Do these films offer a more radical opportunity to test the values of egalitarian narratives of inclusive tolerance and represent a move toward new social collectives and political subjectivities that transcend the kind of identity politics explored so far? Or is the notion of a 'precariat cinema' simply tantamount to an imagined community of its own?

This chapter follows a non-linear timeline beginning *The Yard* released in 2016 and ending with *The Blueberry War* which was released in 2007. Three out of the four films were supported by the Swedish Film Institute, and the final example was produced without the endorsement of any official film foundation. If we are attempting to assert that precariat films exist as an independent genre or sub-genre and given that these films critique hegemonic social and economic structures, we must also consider the production contexts of these examples more thoroughly.

I base the chapter's structure around the fundamental differences between the production frameworks of these four case studies. The justification for this structural logic emerges in the way *The Blueberry War* falls outside the typical hegemonic production channels and did not receive as much domestic or international coverage or promotional support. In its production and distribution processes, the film challenges many of the assumptions and dominant patters evident in the three examples supported by the SFI.

My point is that productions that lack the financial or institutional backing tend to fall by the wayside. *The Blueberry War* is one such example, and its handling of themes like economic migration may indicate why the film received such little attention upon its release. It currently does not feature on the SFI's website, and the film lacks the kind of cinematic spectacle or visual qualities common to the other films in this chapter and, indeed, many of the other examples included in this thesis. Therefore, I choose to end the discussion with this film on the basis that it contrasts sharply with the others. Before looking at these films in more depth, I will elaborate on the conceptual understanding of the precariat and its wider context.

The Failure of 'The Good Life' Fantasy: Defining the Precariat

For Lauren Berlant, the fantasy of the 'good life' promised by capitalism, that is, safety, employment security and the general all-round prosperity associated with upward social mobility, has unravelled. The cost of these failings amounts to what she calls 'crisis ordinariness' (2011) where people must now adapt to the constantly shifting uncertainties of the present. Berlant's theory emphasises a state of being where crisis has become normalised by a socio-economic system built on disempowerment and marginalisation. Crisis ordinariness is closely related to the term 'precariat.' In sociological/economic theory, the precariat represents an emerging social class, or *class-in-the-making*, chiefly conceptualised by economist Guy Standing (2011). According to Standing, a neoliberal bias towards markets across all sectors of the global economy[63] has altered the very fabric of our societies. By integrating the Marxian concept of the proletariat with precariousness, Standing's revised precariat class system, like Berlant's crisis ordinariness, reflects the uncertainty and instability brought about by global neoliberalisation. More specifically, the key causes and characteristics of the precariat's

---

[63] See also Naomi Klein's *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (2007) for more on the negative impact of neoliberalism.

subjugation revolve around deregulation, the withdrawal of workers' rights, the general casualization of labour and, perhaps most significantly of all, the negative knock-on effects of the disproportionate re-distribution of wealth. Consequently, the precariat is a class of people whose status and sense of belonging are continuously disrupted and deferred by instability. All of these shifts are underscored by an increasingly aggressive and highly politicised culture of scepticism towards social institutions and state intervention. For Standing, the government-led narratives of austerity,[64] which have found footing across Europe particularly since the 2008 financial crash, go hand-in-hand with the 'precariatisation' of society. As we shall see, these ideologically motivated austerity measures have contributed to social division and have helped to shape the precariat. This is generally because reduction in state benefits and welfare provisions has furthered the vulnerability of the precariat class, but also because these reductions have created competition between different groups. There have been attempts to stave off such damaging employment prospects facing the precariat in the Nordic region. For instance, concepts like 'flexicurity', coined by the then Prime Minister of Denmark Poul Nyrup Rasmussen in the 1990s, have emerged. The flexicurity welfare model is based on a flexible labour market that is built on a rights-based system for workers, including those in what would be thought of as precarious employment positions. According to Houwing et al., Denmark's flexicurity model 'combines high external-numerical flexibility resulting from a low level of protection against dismissal with high levels of income security deriving from, among other things, generous and long-lasting unemployment benefits and a strong emphasis on early and obligatory activation of job-seekers through active labour market policies' (2011: 260). Consequently, Bardan notes how flexicurity functions as a mechanism for countering precarious labour conditions by changing the ideological attitudes towards work, arguing that the model encourages

---

[64] See chapter five for a discussion on allusion to this austerity narrative in the Finnish documentary *Boiling Point* (2016).

people to move away from a 'job for life' mentality and embrace flexible working conditions that are supported by a strong rights-based support system (Bardan 2013: 82). However, as Dyson notes, this model 'requires that all workers have the skills and versatility to repeatedly change jobs and shift into different economic sectors of the economy. The system is not designed to cope with large numbers of immigrants with shaky language skills and lower levels of education' (2019: 69). It is important to consider this context as, according to Jørgensen:

> the role of migrants in the advanced capitalist economies defined by neoliberalism and increased flexibilization, globalization and mobility has gained attention in political economy, labour market studies, in sociological and ethnographic perspectives and more recently in (critical) border studies. The migrant is often described as the emblem of the precariat – the precarious figure per se. (Jørgensen 2016: 53)

This perspective is also shared by Standing (2016: 105-135), who claims that migrants, refugees and asylum seekers represent one of the largest demographics within the precariat. Although the precariat concept implies a shared social condition – one based on exclusion and marginality – Standing is careful to differentiate between forms and degrees of precariousness, preferring to view the precariat as an umbrella term for encapsulating the broad scope of marginalization at play. Despite overlaps between the migrant and native European precariat, Standing also acknowledges how his *class-in-the-making* does not, at least in economic theory, represent a homogenous collective identity or a unified activist movement. Rather, the concept accounts for a wide (and increasingly expanding) demographic who are oftentimes pitted against one another despite their shared economic conditions or exclusions from the welfare state. Thus, the crises facing the precariat have extended beyond the working environment. The term has filtered down from framing and exploring precarious working conditions to describing the knock-on implications regarding social relations and, arguably, the nature of belonging in contemporary societies.

What Standing means by this is that crises of employment have had a pervasive and negative impact on people's subjective identities and sense of self. To illustrate these dynamics, Standing draws our attention to the rise in far-right populism in affluent 'utopian' states like Sweden and Denmark. Specifically, he connects the Sweden Democrats' 2010 electoral success and Denmark's increasingly authoritarian laws against immigration to austerity narratives and welfare cutbacks (Standing 2016: 175). Here, white ethnic nationals who have fallen into the precariat are actively encouraged to oppose immigration on the grounds that Others represent a threat to prosperity or employment security.[65] As we have seen, part of this rhetorical anti-immigrant stance has been manipulated by populist groups into a struggle for and reassertion of national identity and sovereignty. These divisions persist, he claims, despite the fact that many white ethnic Europeans are typically excluded by the same socio-cultural and political hierarchies that exploit migrants.

Perhaps most significantly of all, however, is how contemporary visions of the precariat as a subject of many socio-economic uncertainties call into question the moral and ethical values and foundations of every given society, particularly in the developed West. Precarity is not a condition tied to a specific nation. The uncertainty it brings and the way this uncertainty has spread throughout the world shatters the illusion of national cohesiveness and, in this case, togetherness. Although, as Standing notes, nationalist rhetoric can be linked to the displaced white ethnic precariat, Trifonova (2007: 4) claims that precarity is also simultaneously forcing us to question traditional cultural boundaries through encounters between middle-class natives and immigrants. In cinematic terms, this involves exploring how the solidarity of the precariat is not based on cultural homogeneity, a shared racial identity or indeed a set of values like

---

[65] Historically, as we have seen, the workplace and perceived threats from migrant labour are key battlegrounds for the populist and centre-right movements in the Nordic countries.

folkhemmet, which are thought of as inherently 'Swedish' or Nordic. How do we reconcile folkhemmet — an idea that remains a prevalent source of thematic material and motivation for creating and maintaining divisions between native and Other — with the precariat?

Typically, in cinematic terms, as we have seen, migrant Others are expected to adapt and assimilate into society in ways that not only leave the values of exceptional egalitarianism intact but also reinforce their ideological foundations. Migrants, refugees and immigrants are often defined in opposition to the host society, which is where the moral-ethnic compass is often located. For our purposes, I look at how the films in this chapter attempt to unravel the foundations of folkhemmet largely through the migrant precariat characters and, in turn, expose the myth of the 'good life' promised by the neoliberal welfare states. As a concept, the precariat establishes a framework for exploring identities in transition. The lack of employment security has uprooted people from established or conventional narratives of belonging. In these examples, it is also a question of what the recasting of these narrative boundaries—between native and Other—means for the representation of ethnic minorities onscreen. Here, we can also refer back to Žižek's notion of the culturalisation of politics (2007), which places cultural difference at the centre of the narrative and negates the kind of socio-economic context that the precariat emphasises. This culturalisation, as we have seen, often results in a polemical and oversimplified form of representation that undermines the broader political and economic framework. The precariat is a social identity defined by crisis and in reaching across class and race boundaries by accounting for mutual forms of exclusion; the concept also acknowledges how segregation occurs *through* economic manipulation, especially in the field of labour where infrastructural inequalities still dominate. I now turn to the recent cinematic responses to the idea of precarity, establishing the broader usage of the concept in both contemporary fiction and documentary cinema. Alongside this dissection, and in a fictional context, I use Måns Månsson's *Yarden/The Yard* (2016) to introduce these ideas and sentiments in a Nordic context.

Stockholm Art School educated filmmaker and cinematographer Måns Månsson is regarded as one of Sweden's emerging talents as evident in the way he is profiled by the SFI who, in its official publication, describe *The Yard* as an 'urgent and uncompromising' drama about the journey of a middle-class white Swede exposed to the realities of life for migrant labourers (SFI Catalogue 2016: 20-21). This urgency is perhaps warranted by the sharp rise in asylum seekers arriving in 2015 during the year *The Yard* was produced when an unprecedented 162,877 people arrived in Sweden (Skodo 2018). *The Yard* had official backing from the Swedish Film Institute and was the recipient of three Guldbagge Awards. These included awards for Best Actor in a Leading Role for Mossling's performance, Best Cinematography, which was awarded to the film's Polish cinematographer Ita Zbroniec-Zajt, and Best Sound Design. However, the film sold only 4,127 tickets in the year of its release (SFI 2016) and received a moderately positive reception from critics, scoring a 3.50 on the SFI's rating index. The SFI uses its own ratings system which is calculated on the basis of a film's average critical response across the major national newspapers and media outlets including *Dagens Nyheter*, *Svenska Dagbladet* and *Aftonbladet*.[66] For our purposes, these positive reactions indicate that the film's representation of race was not considered a major flashpoint.

In *The Yard*, the protagonist (Anders Mossling), known only throughout the film as number 11811, is a white middle-class ethnic Swede who has failed to make a living as an author and poet. After he is fired from his job at a newspaper for writing a review of his own work, he is forced to take a job in a Malmö shipyard dealing with the import and export of luxury cars. His colleagues, most of whom are Arab immigrants, are also only ever identified by their assigned numbers. The hierarchy in the yard is predictably

---

[66] A full list of media outlets includes *Göteborgsposten, Sydsvenskan, Expressen, Nyhetsmorgon (TV4), Björns filmguide (P4)*, moviezine.se, filmtopp.se, *TT Nyhetsbyrån, Kulturnyheterna (SVT), Kulturnyt (P1), The Nöjesguiden* and *Västerbottens Kuriren*.

oppressive. The management is represented by a group of suited authoritarians who encourage the backstabbing environment where workers are routinely pitted against one another. What begins as 11811's mid-life crisis rapidly turns into a seething exposé of the cruelties of the contemporary capitalist system. Månsson frames the landscape of the yard as a cinematic dystopia. Here, the aesthetic qualities and the broader context of the objects captured through Månsson's lens resonate in the bleak, nihilistic world of the precariat.

Figure 10: Swamped in a capitalist dystopia in *The Yard* (Månsson, 2016).

To exaggerate the gaps between those on the bottom rung of the employment ladder as well as those at the top, Månsson uses contrasting shot compositions which grant the dystopian expanses of the yard filled with luxury cars what feels like an infinite and panoramic sense of space. In these wide-angle establishing shots, these status symbols, parked in their hundreds, dwarf the small and seemingly insignificant workers. Furthermore, the workers are all dressed in high visibility orange boiler suits, not unlike those associated with prison. Although initially guarded, 11811 develops a tentative friendship with a fellow colleague, Arab immigrant 19213 (Hilal Shoman). One day, seemingly without proper cause, 11811 is randomly dismissed from the position leading his spoilt and entitled teenage son to declare 'you can't even keep an immigrant job'. Eventually, 11811 is allowed back into the yard where he resigns himself to the culture

of backstabbing and ends up selling out his immigrant colleagues in order to keep his own position. *The Yard* forces the white Swedish protagonist to face the realities of a precarious existence on the margins of the capitalist system. This involves him effectively 'slumming it' with the migrant precariat. Indeed, the film's narrative exposes the hidden machinery of the post-industrial working world, where the system is popped up by an invisible migrant workforce. Even in scouting for production locations, Månsson encountered problems with persuading employers and the necessary authorities to permit the shooting of the film. According to Månsson, 'We couldn't get a permit to shoot in Malmö harbour. The subject matter was too sensitive, so the Swedish authorities rejected our application. In the end, thankfully, we were able to shoot in Bremerhaven' (Månsson quoted in the Lübeck Festival catalogue 2018). Again, this context provides an important window into the world that these films are attempting to expose.

The characterisation of ethnic division in *The Yard* is more pointed than examples discussed elsewhere in this thesis because it focuses our attention on exposing the cut-throat world of unbridled consumption and the effect it has on workplace hierarchies. These workplace dynamics appear to leave us with a sense that no single individual or group of people is responsible for the conflict between the workers in the shipyard. Rather, the attention Månsson pays to the detached and clinical background detail of the setting suggests real blame rests with the workings of the system itself. This cold capitalist landscape and the hierarchies within it appear to thrive on the tensions and strife between the workers, where recrimination is a tactic used for controlling and manipulating how the employees relate to each other. On the surface, *The Yard* appears to encapsulate the collective struggles of the precariat workforces, placing the white ethnic middle-class Swede into the same contingent form of existence typically reserved for immigrants—as blatantly illustrated by 11811's son who views low-skilled employment as the inherent domain of migrant workers.

However, in the same sense, *The Yard* also operates by using a 'culture shock'[67] narrative, where the ethnic Swede gets a humbling taste of what an 'immigrant's job' actually entails, which is also potentially problematic. This means that the subjugated position of the immigrant character is used as a way of generating a certain degree of recognition or comprehension as to, literally, how the Other half lives. *The Yard* captures the tensions at the centre of the precariat concept. Although it exposes how capitalist exploitation operates, ultimately, the film focuses on the personal identity crisis of the white ethnic Swede. Here, although immigrants are recognised as victims of the same exploitative order, their perspectives are side-lined and framed as part of the collateral damage rather than as fundamental to understanding the racism within the system. We must also ask if the struggles of the migrant precariat are only now taken seriously because those from white middle-class backgrounds, in this case, can relate more broadly to the type of socio-economic exclusion they face.

Some of these complexities are reflected in the emerging body of scholarship focusing on cinematic responses to the subject of precarity, an area which has steadily grown over the last decade. For film scholar Alice Bardan (2013), it is not fiction but rather documentaries that have played a key role in capturing the struggles of the migrant precariat. She cites the documentary anthology series *Precarity* (2005), which focuses on what Standing calls a 'loss of occupational identity' (Standing 2014: 22), as a key example of the burgeoning trend in narratives featuring people migrating to wealthy regions of Europe and struggling to find work. Bardan also states specifically how the cinema of precarity seeks to address neglected perspectives, such as those of women and minorities, whose viewpoints are often overlooked in other disciplines focused on precariat politics. She states accordingly that many of these documentaries are:

---

[67] Using the workplace to facilitate or 'act out' these conditions from the perspective of migrants and second-generation immigrants links with historic examples discussed in the opening chapter where dramas like Voja Miladinovic's directional debut *Gæstearbejdere/Guest Workers* (1974) paint a grim picture of socio-cultural adjustments and culture shock.

222

generally made by film collectives that seek to forge a collective identity able to accommodate different experiences and vantage points. Some of these documentaries challenge the dominant discourse about precarity by pointing out that it ignores differences based on gender, limited mobility, and the first and third worlds within Europe. (Bardan 2013: 79)

However, if we are to consider examples like *The Yard* as part of the same emerging precariat genre, we must also reflect on Bardan's point about the underrepresentation of viewpoints from 'third worlds within Europe' and whether fictional explorations of precarity like *The Yard* are able to adequately represent collective identities in a way that accounts for the nuances of different perspectives. Largely, however, Bardan describes how the 'cinema of precarity' generally reflects the adversity faced by precarious labour workforces as they struggle, not only to secure work but to find meaning in the other ambiguities created by the same systems of exploitation. As Bardan points out, the precariat concept is also recognised as part of an agenda-driven 'activist' movement designed to build solidarity between different social groups. Despite the negative connotations of precarity and the ways economic uncertainty now affects an increasingly large demographic of people, Bardan claims that precariat politics can also give way to new forms of political struggle and solidarity that go beyond the traditional models of the political parties or trade unions (Bardan 2013: 71). Similarly, in a broader context, Gill and Pratt (2008) wrestle with the complexities of searching for a common or shared identity between those precariats who are invariably excluded by the same systems, although often in markedly different or disproportionate ways. This is a key consideration in the context of migrant workforces, who are oftentimes excluded on many socio-cultural and economic levels simultaneously, as seen in *The Yard*, where racism is directed at the immigrant characters.[68] To summarise these issues, Gill and Pratt state:

---

[68] Mulinari and Neergaard refer to this phenomenon as 'subordinated inclusion' (2010: 135).

In turn, precarity signifies both the multiplication of precarious, unstable, insecure forms of living and, simultaneously, new forms of political struggle and solidarity that reach beyond the traditional models of the political party or trade union. This double meaning is central to understanding the ideas and politics associated with precarity; the new moment of capitalism that engenders precariousness is seen as not only oppressive but also as offering the potential for new subjectivities, new socialities and new kinds of politics. (Gill and Pratt 2008: 2)

Consequently, a burning question for film scholars is, does the failure of the good life fantasy promised to all by capitalism and the welfare state provide an opportunity to redefine the way belonging is conceptualised onscreen? According to Bulut (2016), the 'cinema of precarity is conducive to providing creative and aesthetic outlets for resistance without necessarily reproducing the fantasies of a cohesive working class' (2016: 46). It is also worth considering the context of transnational cinema in relation to the cinema of precarity, especially as both are fundamentally concerned with themes of borderlessness and transition. Will Higbee's 'cinema of transvergence' (2007) provides a useful way of conceptualising the blurring of binaries between race and class politics. For Higbee, the term transnational cinema is just as complex and arcane as national cinema. In his critical appraisal of the concept of transnational cinema, despite its preoccupation with movement and the fluidity of borders, Higbee argues that transnational cinema has failed to account for the complexities of minority experiences. Rather, he posits a 'transvergent approach' that is designed to offer a more balanced view of contemporary matters by breaking down the binaries of 'us' and 'them' and exploring the inevitable ties between seemingly divergent groups. This transvergent outlook is designed to unpack multiple perspectives without compromising on the nuances of conflicting sides by effectively giving equal weight to all viewpoints (Higbee 2007: 88-90).

The concept appears to contradict the overarching theme of consensus as it is understood within the folkhemmet rhetoric, where consensus, implicit or otherwise, is based on conformity to specific cultural ideals. The cinema of precarity shares much in

common with this transvergent approach with its focus on breaking down implicit binaries. However, my analysis of precarity as a concept goes further in articulating how the broader economic context impacts on how these voices are constructed. The cinema of precarity draws out the tensions, confluences and contradictions between collective identities and individual subjectivities, concerns which are central to the Nordic welfare states. With their neoliberal contexts, the films explored in this chapter appear to squarely challenge the inclusive values of togetherness associated with folkhemmet. However, given Berlant's interpretation of precariat cinema as one that reflects a new and emerging sense of solidarity, I aim to explore how far the notion of folkhemmet can also be re-imagined through a 'precariat lens.' Here, it's a question of whether the cinema of precarity is able to articulate these shared experiences and struggles of displacement between migrants and 'natives' in a way that adequately reflects the complexities involved. We need to ask if these films are able to build towards new collective subjectivities and whether precariat cinema can be taken as a transvergent perspective on multicultural realities. Is the cinema of precarity truly able to move away from an ethnocentric perspective like that seen in *The Yard*, and offer a more fundamental or counter-hegemonic form of representational politics without reverting to its own form of imagined community? I turn now to another film that, like *The Yard*, presents us with a dystopian vision of Europe where precarity exists on multiple, but nonetheless potentially problematic levels.

A Precariatised Future: *Metropia* (Saleh, 2009)

Set in Europe in 2024, *Metropia* blends hyperrealist animation with unsettling dream-like visions of a dystopian global landscape. The story largely unfolds in a dank subterranean

metro network connecting Sweden and continental Europe.[69] This vast railway system is run by a company called the Trexx Corporation, headed by ruthless ideologue Ivan Bahn (Udo Kier). The company is designed to represent the ruling neoliberal elite whose colonial-like control over the continent's main transport hub allow them to govern who can and cannot enter Europe. Here, any symbolic connotations between mobility and bridging cultural gaps are extinguished by Trexx's tyrannical attitude towards immigrants and asylum seekers, especially those from outside Europe. Rather, Trexx appears to support a fortress Europe-style politics, carrying forward the sentiments evident in contemporary anti-immigrant populism in Europe. The Trexx Corporation's main focus is using the metro system as a vehicle for feeding its citizens corporate and capitalist-orientated propaganda.

In this nihilistic landscape, Roger (Vincent Gallo), an ordinary call centre worker is drawn into a conspiracy surrounding Trexx's nefarious practices by mysterious stranger Nina (Juliette Lewis). Roger recognises Nina as the model fronting a glossy campaign for a new brand of shampoo. However, Nina convinces Roger that the shampoo delivers mind-controlling transmitters into the heads of its consumers with the goal of securing full corporate-like control over all citizens. However, as the pair unites to take down the Trexx Corp, Roger grows to realise that Nina is setting him up as a scapegoat for the assassination of the corporate head, Ivan, who turns out to be her own father. In the end, Roger manages to escape as Nina succeeds in her mission. The ending culminates in Roger returning to his girlfriend and resigning himself to the inevitably bleak continuation of Trexx's exploitative neoliberal empire. Again, as elsewhere in this thesis, the influence of transnational genre conventions and established thematic tropes is evident in *Metropia*'s visual and narrative references. The film is particularly indebted to Ridley Scott's dystopian science-fiction classic *Blade Runner* (1982). However, there are also clear links with Danish auteur Lars von Trier and his art-house film *Europa* (1993)

---

[69] See Kääpä's reading of *Metropia* as an eco-text (2014: 141-145).

which also revolves around a similar mix of femmes fatales and fascist conspiracies on a sinister railway network.

Although *Metropia* carries forward the dystopian and arguably anti-capitalist themes of *The Yard*, stylistically, the film is dramatically different. The characters are rendered using photographic impressions rendering their movements stunted and almost puppet-like in what could be described as a literal visualisation of the control and manipulation used by the dominant Trexx ideology. Similarly, the speech of the characters is sometimes out of sync or uncoordinated, evoking how the relationship between speaking and thought has become an unnatural ventriloquist-like act. Visually, the world of Metropia is a concrete industrialised jungle replete with urban dilapidation and environmental collapse where work and watching banal reality TV are seemingly the only activities that fill the lives of its inhabitants.

The New World Order, in this case, evokes a well-founded sense of Orwellian paranoia. While *Metropia* is not a film about employment per se, it does present a world where many of the precariat conditions explored by Berlant converge to create a vision of the future in which the outcomes of precarious control extend to all aspects of life. In this visualisation of this precarious future, the neoliberal machine has carried through its implicit goals where precarious conditions preside over all aspects of life. *Metropia* turns the good life fantasy on its head. The film presents us with a perverse reimagining of the folkhemmet concept where the only manifestations of cohesion or consensus are found in each citizen's shared (and unquestioning) compliance with corporate control. Here, the cinema of precarity manifests not as part of what Bardan identifies as a group of films offering up 'fantasies of salvation from economic impasse or catastrophe' (2013: 71), but rather a full realisation of a future in which all aspects of life have become 'precariatised'. This evokes Standing's precaritised mind theory (2011: 20), where peoples' lives and psychological states of mind becomes inextricably tethered to the demands of their precarious working conditions.

Metropia's identity politics offer up a complicated picture with a cast made up of American, Swedish, German, Serbian, and Polish actors with most appearing to retain

their native accents. Consequently, and despite the fortress Europe sub-text, specific nation states do not appear to exist in any coherent way within *Metropia*'s desolate vistas. Rather, the European continent exists as one large homogenised zombie class. Roger and his girlfriend Anna (Sofia Helin) appear to be Americans living in Scandinavia, the head of the Trexx Corporation Ivan Bahn is German, his daughter American, and his henchman Swedish and so on.

The subject of immigration is contextualised within this precarious neoliberalised future and arises most conspicuously in a popular reality TV-style game show called *Asylum* which is premised on the ejection of asylum seekers from European soil. In the game, people seeking access to Europe are asked a series of obtuse or impossible questions about the continent and, when they inevitably answer incorrectly, they are literally blasted into the ocean. The participants in the game are largely Middle Eastern refugees, suggesting that they remain the primary target of exclusion in this precarious future. As Kääpä notes, Trexx's commercial propaganda inundates Europeans with messages about how unique and exclusive they are (2014: 142) presumably in contrast to those cast off into the sea. The relationship between these marginal asylum seekers and Roger is briefly acknowledged as Roger passes by the filming of the game show on his way to work. He stands among a crowd of enthusiasts as a passive observer expressing neither outrage nor glee at the treatment of the game's participants. The game show effectively 'acts out' a perverse realisation of both anti-immigrant populism and the general all-round complacency towards the treatment of refugees whereby people from Western Asia are not only defined in opposition to the white European ideal but where their plight is repurposed into entertainment fodder for a Western audience.

The marrying of the Fortress Europe attitude with neoliberal precariatisation points towards how the game show represents a grotesque parody of the 'competitive' market economy model. Corporate control is clearly the target here, and the disproportionate treatment of the precariat is obvious. However, these game show sequences and the general treatment of these immigrants have no real contextual bearing on the narrative progress or outcome. Some reviewers draw thematic parallels between the absurdist

game shows in Terry Gilliam's *Time Bandits* (1981) and *Brazil* (1985) but qualify this comparison by stating how in Gilliam's films 'those fictional programs are woven into the fabric of their respective storyworlds, offering clues to the frustration and alienation of the heroes' whereas the relationship between Roger and the participants in the game show is left more or less unexplored (Huston 2010).

Although like *The Yard*, *Metropia* exposes the myths of prosperity in Sweden and wider Europe, it does so by keeping the perspectives of those excluded separate. The game show feels like a dislocated strand of the narrative where the connections between Roger's marginalised perspective and those on the edge are never fully realised. Keeping migrants on the margins of this dystopian landscape reaffirms the divided future of the precariat and shows us the extent to which the inhumane treatment of the Other has been normalised and apparently blindly accepted by the masses, as demonstrated by Roger's girlfriend who is shown in a later scene to be watching the show on TV apparently uncritically. The asylum seekers do not appear to exist in any other capacity beyond the hellish context of the game show. While, on the one hand, the inclusion of the asylum seekers in this context where they seek access to Europe gestures towards different perspectives on mobility, the failure to fully reconcile their experiences with precariats like Roger points towards the conflicts within the precariat narrative.

Of course, the portrayal of migrants as one link in a broken chain may be the point of Saleh's critique of how neoliberalism has effectively blocked any form of collective understanding between different groups excluded and controlled by the same systems of power. The film thus acknowledges the trajectory of this precariatised class system and the disproportionate effects of exclusion where there are clearly disparities in the treatment of different races. However, once more, the migrant Other occupies a secondary role and features as background noise, arguably disconnected from Roger's journey of self-discovery and realisation. Although its heavily stylized science fiction approach differs dramatically from *The Yard*, *Metropia* received similar support from official bodies including the Swedish, Norwegian and the Danish Film Institutes. It was also nominated for the Nordic Council Film Prize ultimately losing out to Thomas

Vinterberg's Danish social realist drama *Submarino* (2010). Although visually unique with its use of animated puppetry, *Metropia* carries through the dystopian qualities of *The Yard*'s almost futuristic landscapes. In order to move the discussion forward, I turn now to Gabriela Pichler's *Äta sova dö/Eat, Sleep, Die* (2012) which I claim integrates a broader neoliberal economic context into its narrative in a way that exposes structural inequalities by positioning the second-generation immigrant at the centre of the narrative. This example also differs from *Metropia* in the way it frames and explores the relationship between the Other and the 'native' Swedish characters.

Surplus to Requirements: *Äta sova dö/Eat, Sleep, Die* (Pichler, 2012)

Eat, Sleep, Die is set in a rural part of Skåne County in Southern Sweden where Raša, (Nermina Lukac) a second-generation Swede and Muslim originally from Montenegro, works on a factory assembly line packing vegetables. This context places her literally and figuratively at the bottom of the food chain. Raša and her colleagues, many of whom are also migrant workers, share a sense of blue-collar, working-class solidarity. In the opening scenes, Raša is shown to be a hard worker who is proudly committed to her job. However, when the factory announces redundancies, individuals and different ethnic groups are pitted against one another. When she inevitably loses her job,[70] Raša is left to care for her sick father, Pappan (Milan Dragisic), who, despite his health problems, must make frequent trips across the border into Norway in search of casual work. With few opportunities in Skåne County, Raša is eventually forced to accept a temporary apprenticeship in the nearby city of Malmö. The promise of this temporary position again feeds into the increasing lack of employment security highlighted by Standing

---

[70] This uncertainty has led to what Standing calls a 'loss of occupational identity' where successive 'neo-liberal strategy set out to dismantle occupational communities' leading to an erosion of 'the ethics of reciprocity and solidarity that had been an integral part of occupational life' (Standing 2014: 22).

(2011). Stylistically, *Eat, Sleep, Die* captures a deep-seated sense of futility, aided in part by Pichler's hand-held camera and vérité style. The desolate landscapes oftentimes appear almost post-apocalyptic, carrying through sentiments from *The Yard* and *Metropia*. Flat, dull tarmacked land, bleak grey unkempt shacks and garages, half-abandoned quarry shafts, which intimate a post-industrial context and a general lack of amenities, evoke the aesthetics of the Eastern Bloc. Thus, Raša and a group of her now unemployed colleagues, including Peter (Peter Fält), an older former union representative, represent a wide-ranging ethnic and generational demographic who are all considered equally expendable.

In Bardan's characterisation of precariat cinema, she cites how many emerging examples no longer focus on 'the clash between various social strata or the conflicts between immigrants and European citizens. Rather, they seem to highlight the struggle to maintain traditional class hierarchies in an altered economic landscape, underscoring the precarious conditions of increasing numbers of average Europeans' (Bardan 2013: 73). This is similar to the perspectives explored in *Eat, Sleep, Die* in which the tensions go beyond matters of culture or identity politics. For these reasons, films like *Eat, Sleep, Die* also appear to diverge from the guest worker narratives of the 1960s and 70s which were largely based on exploring the contrasting cultural practices of immigrants with those of the host nation in precarious working environments. Indeed, if we are to consider *Eat, Sleep, Die* as part of a precariat cinema, where cultural politics are not so much neglected, but rather framed in relation to their wider economic contexts, then I argue it is a question of how far the film reflects Gill and Pratt's (2008) notion of new subjectivities insofar that it captures a kind of solidarity between its characters that is not bound to folkhemmet or its implicit rules of conformity.

The most profound nod towards a kind of solidarity that extends beyond the idea of a purely cultural encounter occurs between Raša and her friend, ethnic Swede Nicki (Jonathan Lampinen) who is also laid off from the factory floor. Although he later secures employment in a meat processing plant through his uncle, which causes tension between them, the pair is ultimately united by their vulnerability, a general lack of

direction and the ambiguities cast over their futures. As the two friends hang out at an abandoned amusement park and muse over their tenuous situation, they play on, amongst other things, large novelty dinosaur sculptures. The sculptures symbolically represent the probable extinction of their generation's future goals, ambitions, and security. Later, in one of the other most provocative scenes, Nicki takes Raša to a cowshed where the meat company he works for keeps its livestock. As the two friends admire the beauty of the animals, Nicki describes how the animals are slaughtered, again drawing parallels with a generation sacrificed for the good of the company.

Figure 11: A generation to the slaughter in *Eat, Sleep, Die* **(Pichler, 2012)**

Raša and the group experience the trials and tribulations of unemployed life together at the Employment Agency. They are forced into humiliating and seemingly futile interview role-play exercises. Pichler uses these group sequences to expose other loopholes in the Swedish welfare system when one woman is moved to tears recalling the way her access to disability benefit was revoked without probable cause. She also

describes the prejudiced attitudes of those dealing with her complaint.[71] These group sequences offer an intriguing inversion and subversion of the collective folkhemmet values discussed throughout this thesis. Each member of the group is asked to describe their attributes as individuals and how they contribute to the community. Raša defines herself in relation to how fast and efficiently she can pack mâche lettuce on an assembly line. This signals the transformative relationship between the people's home as a concept built on collective social values and the neoliberal restructuring of those ideals. People are now effectively forced to define themselves in relation to the demands of the neoliberal system. On a practical level, it is not just their employment prospects at stake, but rather their whole role and identity in society.

The political subjectivities in *Eat Sleep Die* emerge somewhere between critiquing the elusive and idealistic notion of the people's home whilst also imagining an emerging form of solidarity built on a mutual exclusion from the imagined community itself. There are similar threads throughout the film that capture a critical view of folkhemmet values and their non-existence in the current climate of competitive employment markets. However, Raša is also shown to share a close relationship with her small marginal community and is deeply apprehensive when forced to leave it behind. The pervasive uncertainty of each character's personal and professional life lingers, and we are left with few real resolutions, especially knowing that Raša's new apprenticeship in Malmö is based on yet another unfixed gig-economy-style contract. The characterisation of Raša also undoubtedly challenges many of the common stereotypical representations of, particularly, female migrant characters explored so far. Her tomboyish style and strong-willed character set her apart from the typically mute or diminutive representations of 'vulnerable' migrant femininity explored elsewhere (see *Chinaman* in chapter four). Because of its nuances, and because it refuses to reinstate representations of the white

---

[71] Fundamentally, Standing's work on the economic and ideological implications of capitalism's exploitation of migrant workforces relates to what Kevin Doogan calls 'manufactured uncertainty' (2001).

ethnocentric values of community as they appear in many other examples throughout this thesis, I argue *Eat Sleep Die*'s complex negotiations with race and precariousness situate it as one of the most sophisticated takes on the so-called 'immigrant film.'

Gender also plays a significant role in reinforcing this sophistication. *Eat, Sleep Die*'s director Gabriela Pichler based large aspects of the story on her own experiences working in a cookie factory in the post-2008 financial crash years. In the context of precarity, Guy Standing notes a general trend within the precariat in Europe and further afield where 'women have taken a disproportionate share of precarious jobs, being far more likely to have short-term contracts or no contracts at all' (Standing 2016: 71). *Eat, Sleep, Die* contextualises this reality within a contemporary Swedish setting, but refuses to make the working-class hero of the story a victim. Pichler herself discusses the importance of centralising a strong female lead from an immigrant background. Speaking on the origins of the narrative and her specific approach she states:

> In Sweden, around 2009, when I was beginning to research the story, the financial crisis was peaking and many factories had to let people go. Many lost their jobs. I wanted to capture that time that we lived through and what it did to the individual human being. I wanted to create a female main character that would be strong and cocky, a bit like "Rocky Balboa" in *Rocky*. But instead of being a boxer in the ring, she fights against situations in her everyday life but often loses. I wanted to bring that fighting spirit, charisma and working-class perspective into the film. You seldom see that with female characters. My main character challenges many of the stereotypes you often see when it comes to women: Muslims, daughter/father-relationships and immigrants in Sweden. (Pichler 2014)

The fact that she chooses to use a second-generation immigrant character to exemplify Swedishness at the crossroads of a socio-economic crisis differentiates her film from many of its ethnocentric counterparts, not least because of the move away from cultural politics. Specifically, the film also draws on the theme of rural poverty which contrasts sharply with the founding conceptualisation of the Nordic countries as rural utopias, where authentic notions of identity are typically located in pastoral or rustic settings. The fact that these new emerging subjectivities are negotiated through the eyes of a

second-generation immigrant is especially significant, especially in a Nordic context, where, as we have seen, these perspectives are often minimized or caricatured.

One of the characteristics central to understanding folkhemmet is the notion of nostalgia, particularly nostalgia for an imagined past based on ideas of communal closeness. Historically, ethnic and cultural homogeneity has appeared onscreen as both an implicit and explicit feature of this togetherness. However, with its strategic positioning of the second-generation immigrant character, *Eat, Sleep, Die* becomes not about nostalgia for an imagined past, but rather more profound sense of nostalgia for a future that is not guaranteed to anyone. As such, with its ambiguous ending and no assurance of stability in her temporary contract, Raša's future is effectively deferred. These ideas reflect Svetlana Boym's work *The Future of Nostalgia* (2001) in which she identifies two dominant nostalgia narratives across a variety of cultural and social milieus. Specifically, she talks about 'restorative nostalgia' and 'reflective nostalgia.' The first kind describes attempts to re-create and reinforce an imagined past directly, whereas the second kind, reflective nostalgia, is more content with reflecting on past memories without seeking to rebuild the past itself.

The other challenge to conventional representations of migrants stems from the fact that Pichler's film is a celebration of ordinariness. One of the representational trends identified so far has been the tendency to project an 'exceptional' or essentialist image and set of expectations onto migrant or second-generation immigrant characters, particularly by ethnic Nordic filmmakers. They are expected to behave in accordance with the liberal multicultural agenda, which broadly relies on images of immigrants as passive victims or indeed 'extraordinary' individuals, a tendency that is particularly evident in the previous documentary chapter. Very rarely are we shown ordinary people struggling with common problems, and more rarely still do those problems become the subject of debate. Again, in my explorations of the process of culturalisation, we have seen how this view tends to establish a binary between those migrants deemed acceptable and deserving of support, and those who fall outside this category. But Raša

is just ordinary and seemingly part of the universality of the economic struggle facing the precariat class.

Pichler uses this perspective to expose the fallacies brought about by Berlant's crisis ordinariness and how race, ethnicity, and precariat politics involve a wide spectrum of social issues that are shown to be interconnected. This is perhaps best demonstrated when Raša, in fear for her job, lashes out at fellow immigrant workers, suggesting those from Iraq should be forced out first having only recently arrived in Sweden and therefore worked at the factory for the shortest period. This 'last in, first out' policy, as one worker puts it, reflects the knock-on effects of economic uncertainty and how it breeds ethnic tensions. Once again, racism is framed as a product of these structures. Pichler shows us the interconnectedness of these socio-economic conflicts, giving way to the 'divide and conquer' implications of the neoliberal project in which workers are turned against each other rather than against the exploits of the system itself. Specifically, Kevin Doogan refers to a phenomenon he calls 'manufactured uncertainty' (2001), a notion which draws a direct correlation between neoliberal market forces and the ideological implications of flexsploitation economies, whereby workers are exposed to short-term contracts and working conditions besieged by uncertainty. For him, 'insecurity is the outcome of a conscious strategy of government that arises from attempts to increase the productivity and competitiveness of the economy' (Doogan 2001: 439). The context of neoliberalism resonates in Sweden here as Denis Frank (2014: 413-432) points out in his analysis of the 2008 neoliberal restructuring of Sweden's migrant employment laws. Changes in 2008, which reflect the individualist direction of neoliberalism, handed back control to employers. Without state regulations to monitor migrant working conditions, employers were free to set their own rules, leaving migrants open to exploitation.

However, Pichler offers us no clear-cut solution to the crises faced by the precariat, nor does she guarantee her working-class protagonist a straightforward way out, reflecting the complexities of changes in the law. Although Raša and her cohort are excluded together and face similar uphill struggles to find work, the film does not undermine the significance of Raša's ethnic or religious background either. Indeed,

Pichler does not whitewash or underwrite the subject of ethnicity or work under the assumption that such tensions do not exist. When applying for one job, Raša's application mysteriously vanishes, and it is later implied that the manager discarded it after objecting to her 'Arabic' sounding surname. Other former colleagues are also heard attacking the cheapness of the migrant workers willing to do more for less and forcing out Swedes with hard-won insurance and employment benefits. These workers also single Muslims out in this context, causing Raša, a Muslim herself, to walk out. Racism, however, also runs both ways. After a misunderstanding in a car park, Raša's father, whom we have been encouraged to identify with because of his ailing health, his poverty and, above all, the close bond he has with his daughter, racially insults a black man. Raša, who clearly does not share her father's views, is left humiliated and angry. The racism in the film is casual and embedded, making its impact particularly shocking. However, there does not appear to be much attention paid to one particularly racist character, and there is no concerted effort to attribute all racism to a specific group of people, leaving us with a lingering sense that their views are part of something larger and more systemic.

However, if precariat cinema is indeed about 'punching up', then we must also account for the complex interplay between *Eat, Sleep, Die*'s themes of precarity and its broader context. Like *The Yard*, *Eat, Sleep Die* was supported by the SFI, and arguably, its equally cinematic approach reflects the kind of implicit 'quality' mandate reserved by the SFI for the types of films dealing with serious or contemporary issues. Out of the four case studies explored in this chapter, *Eat, Sleep, Die* is arguably the most successful, earning international recognition after it was put forward to represent Sweden at the 86th Academy Awards Ceremony. Here, I argue that, at this international event, the film became a nation cipher for Sweden as a producer of 'quality' filmmaking. Like *Metropia*, Pichler's film was also nominated for the Nordic Council Film Prize in 2013 and, like *The Yard*, was honoured with three Guldbagge Awards. Summarising the press reaction to the film, the SFI emphasise how the film's strengths were seen to lie in the perceived

'authenticity' of its 'quasi-documentary' approach (Svenska Film Database 2016), again supporting the idea that perceived realism remains a standard measure.

The key question here is can we really interpret the film, with its critical sub-text on the institutionalisation structures of inequality in Sweden, as a radical challenge to the nation-state when it also functions as part of its hierarchical system? Does this kind of industry recognition undermine or offset the counter-hegemonic statements made in the film? Similarly, we must also ask if using migrants to represent these new and emerging political subjectivities is potentially limiting in a different sense. Do these images tie specific genres, styles, or narrative outcomes to minority characters (and directors), again, forcing them to speak for an imagined collective?

Considering how *Eat, Sleep, Die* was received, venerated (and subsequently adopted) by the industry as a marker of quality national filmmaking I choose to contrast this case study with Lars-Göran Pettersson's *The Blueberry War*, which was made without the support of the dominant industry players. Although Pettersson's film explores similar themes and motifs linked to precarious labour, it targets Sweden's seasonal berry picking industry in a way that further exposes the myths of folkhemmet. Arguably, this exposé is more specific and pointed than in *Eat, Sleep Die* because of how its director integrated the context of precarity into the film's production strategy. As a result, I suggest his take on precariat politics provides a more radical divergence from *Eat, Sleep, Die*'s industry-endorsed success.

The Austeriat's Revenge: *Blåbärskriget*/*The Blueberry War* (Pettersson, 2007)

Lars-Göran Pettersson's *The Blueberry War* is a comedy-farce centring on two Polish berry pickers, Jerzy (Radosław Smużny) and Stefan (Pjotr Giro), who are cheated out of their money by corrupt Swedish landowners. The plight of the two impoverished underdogs is made more desperate by Jerzy's sister back in Poland who needs sight-saving eye surgery. As free healthcare is 'for Swedes only', the two men barter with a corrupt Polish doctor who also ends up extorting money from them. Swedish landowners meanwhile

are cosying up with local politicians and foreign investors from various Eastern European countries in a bid to win a generous EU subsidy. Their plotting and scheming is all based around monetizing Sweden's rural communities and transforming their fortunes through various exploitative commercial and tourist ventures. When Jerzy and Stefan are laid off from their jobs without proper payment and have their latest crop of berries confiscated by the Swedish landowner, the two Poles team up with a group of Chinese and Vietnamese migrants, who are also being exploited, and forcibly take back their berries. Stuck with their soon-to-be-rotting berries and unable to sell them on the run, the two Poles hatch an ingenious plan to turn the berries into a beverage, uniting with the locals to create and successfully market their tonic product. This part-entrepreneurial exercise is also designed to prove that the migrants are highly educated, valuable and economically savvy despite the fact they are nonetheless forced to undertake low-skilled, poorly paid jobs.

Consequently, transnational mobility is conceptualised on two levels. The Swedish elites and international investors represent the venture capitalists whose mobility is seemingly unrestricted. On the other side of the coin are the migrants, whose cross-border mobility is based on necessity. In the context of Roma berry pickers in Sweden, Mešić and Woolfson refer to the term 'austeriat' (2015: 37-50), a variant of the precariat concept that refers specifically to the enforced transnational mobility of an emerging economic group of migrants driven out of their home by austerity. The context of the blueberries is also highly significant here. There are socio-cultural narratives tied to berry picking in the Nordic countries. It has become a quintessential image of Nordic nature, helping to sustain ideas of community, wholesomeness and rite of passage in the context of Nordic cultural heritage. Critically, it is also associated with rights of access to the landscape where berry picking is also sold as a recreational activity. In Sweden, as with the other Nordic countries, the right to access land and the natural resources is supposedly open to all, and this is generally acknowledged as something called *allemansrätten* or the right of public access law. Furthermore, in 2017, The Nordic Council of Ministers released an official information pack designed for local and municipal

governments across the region offering advice on how to better integrate immigrants into Nordic societies. An official statement from this document claims that:

> nature-based solutions may have the potential of offering an efficient and cost-effective way for better integration of the immigrants. One of the key characteristics across all Nordic societies is a lifestyle which highly values active outdoor recreation and living close to nature – even in urban areas. Nordic countries share a similar public right of access to natural areas, foraging traditions and appreciation of natural and rural landscapes and pastoral traditions. Moreover, there is increasing evidence on the positive benefits of natural and rural landscapes for human health and social, psychological and physical well-being (Pitkänen et al. 2017: 7)

Berry picking appears among these recreational activities as both a way to bridge cultural gaps and act as an exercise in assimilation. But in Pettersson's film, these sentiments are re-characterised and ironically subverted when berry picking instead functions as a front for a form of modern slavery. Recent additions like Wiktor Ericsson's *Jordgubbslandet/Strawberry Days* (2017) echo similar themes focused on the exploitation of agricultural migrant workers but take a more serious approach by framing the austeriat crisis around a more conventional love story format. Because of its seasonal dependency, berry picking is a precarious industry by nature. In parts of rural Sweden (and more recently, Finland), berry picking has become a contested political and economic issue. It has also touched a cultural nerve as seen in documentaries like Finland's *Miten marjoja poimitaan/How to Pick Berries* (Talvensaari, 2010) where East Asian berry pickers become embroiled in a war with locals over perceived threats to cultural homogeneity. Many of these films are focused on undoing the economic fallacies behind this exploitation, again making a clear shift away from the 1960s and 70s where the focus was on cultural difference.

Similarly, *The Blueberry War* provides an ironic commentary on the rights of access and freedom of movement. Subversively, in *The Blueberry War*, the rights of access rules have been twisted to serve the mafia-style economic practices of the rural elites. Like *Metropia*, Pettersson appears to use the fallacies of folkhemmet as a springboard for

240

exploring other forms of solidarity. The film is clearly a satirical and ironic take on the folkhemmet concept with its backstabbing local councillors, politicians, and venture capitalists. Among the Swedes, 'togetherness' or consensus is built on the mutual interests of their business exploits.

The fact that Pettersson's take on the austeriat is comic means that it eschews the more serious or critically introspective undertones in the work of Pichler, Saleh and Månsson. This is also interesting if we consider how, throughout the history of Swedish cinema, certain types of lowbrow comedy and farce were often divided off and produced separately from highbrow dramas (Gustafsson 2016: 319). Here, we can perhaps interpret Pettersson's use of comedy as part of his subversive intentions, especially when viewed against the historical standards set by the Swedish film industry. However, although *The Blueberry War* is clearly a comedy with its slapstick humour, absurd caricaturing of corrupted officials, including flamboyant leather-jacketed Russians and hapless Swedish bureaucrats, Pettersson's take on the exploitation of migrant labourers carries more serious undertones. The film is, however, not without its shortcomings regarding the depiction of race and ethnic identity. The representation of the Chinese and Vietnamese characters is reductive, and their presence onscreen is often accompanied by the chime of a clumsy orientalist-sounding musical arrangement. These characters have little to no lines of dialogue and occupy a handy side-kick role in support of the two white protagonists' quest. The depiction of the East Asian characters gestures towards a racial hierarchy in the context of the film's narrative but also indicates a problem within the director's representational politics. Once again, the white male protagonist is a favoured conduit for framing contemporary precariat issues. The subsequent side-lining of the East Asian characters feels like a missed opportunity to establish a coherent expression of precariat identity that crosses racial and ethnic boundaries and gives a voice to others in a similar position. However, the film's visual approach is perhaps its greatest strength in the context of its austeriat politics.

Arguably, *The Blueberry War*'s lo-fi aesthetics playfully speak to a guerrilla-style subversion of established visual or narrative approaches to subjects like unemployment

241

or social inequality. The use of shaky-cam, the grainy quality of the images and the general low-rent production budget work to separate it from *Eat, Sleep, Die* and *The Yard*'s distinctly imposing and cinematic feel. Equally, the ambitious experimental aspirations of *Metropia*'s dystopian odyssey, in which asylum seekers are relegated once again to the margins, are contrasted by Pettersson's approach. However, the 'cheapness' of these aesthetic decisions work in Pettersson's favour, exaggerating both the squalid conditions of the protagonists' environment and capturing the sleazy sentiments of the greedy and venal venture capitalists running the land. The lo-fi feel represents a clear kick against the type of cinematic heritage spectacle typically supported by the Swedish Film Institute—especially those productions that tend to celebrate and idealise the landscape as a symbol of national pride and identity.

Perhaps, then, the most intriguing developments in the context of cinema and precariat politics have arguably happened off screen. The film was funded and produced outside the major production channels. Pettersson also coordinated the distribution across small independent theatres over parts of rural Sweden, where the film is set (Pettersson, 2007). The opening salvo states 'all similarities with real persons and occurrences are intentional.' In an interview following its release, Pettersson, who is best known for his film *Bázo* (2003), which attacks conventional representations, perceived wisdom, and reductive stereotypes of the indigenous Sámi people,[72] implies that *The Blueberry War*'s premise and context failed to win the support of the Swedish Film Institute. There is perhaps also a sense that Pettersson's strategically orchestrated screenings to very small audiences in Sweden's berry-picking heartlands points towards an agenda based on educating as well as entertaining people by bringing wider issues of the migrant austeriat's plight into focus.

For this reason, *The Blueberry War* occupies a distinctive position as a Swedish film that places the precariat migrant worker at the centre of the narrative and uses its

---

[72] See Mecsei (2015: 72-83).

distribution mechanism and lack of official support or industry-backed production framework as an incentive to promote its marginal and subversive undertones. Pettersson's acknowledgement of the film's lack of official endorsement is interesting on two levels. On the one hand, the lack of support from the SFI arguably implies that the Institute operates with an agenda on how issues like migration and social inequality are portrayed. Defiantly, the low-cost production values contrast with the Institute's support for the type of realism or authenticity seen in *The Yard* or *Eat, Sleep, Die*.

However, secondly, the screening process involved targeting a rural 'localised' audience, which appears to have been a deliberate choice on Pettersson's part (2007), where the film intentionally became an anti-establishment agent. According to film critic Jeanette Gentele (2007) writing in the Swedish newspaper *Svenska Dagbladet* SF Studios, Sweden's largest film studio, apparently rejected the film from both medium and large-scale cinemas on the basis of its perceived poor quality. This rejection appears to speak of a film that flies in the face of any formal cultural elite or institution as it takes aim at the very underlying values of those establishments.[73] Although *The Blueberry War* often walks a fine line between genre fare and serious political critique, I claim, nonetheless, that the film explicitly targets and subversively parodies the ills of the Swedish venture capitalists and disrupts a cohesive sense of togetherness as it is understood in the traditions of folkhemmet. This disruption is evident both in the way he targets perceived ideas of togetherness present in Sweden's socio-political rhetoric. The film also acts as a disruptive agent when we compare it against the SFI's generally accepted quality mandate.

---

[73] One could also ask here if the quality control hierarchy implemented by the SFI also contributes to the production of precarious cinema or, indeed, a type of precariat filmmaker.

Conclusion: The End of Solidarity?

This chapter has focused on contextualising and developing the emerging concept of the precariat in contemporary films focusing on work and labour. The rationale for adopting this theory stems from the specific challenges the term poses to the utopian 'good life' promised by the welfare state in an age of neoliberal restructuring. In a Nordic context, precarity or the notion of the precariat undermines the image of stability, especially in this case, from the perspective of the Other. However, I propose the precariat as a framework that challenges established class and social boundaries, allows us to interrogate the notion of Otherness and the problematic 'immigrant film label'. Consequently, the overriding significance of the films in this chapter emerges in the ways they expose structural and economic inequalities and how those inequalities create, or at least contribute to, ethnic conflicts.

While *The Yard* and *Metropia* present us with apocalyptic images of precarity, examples like *Eat, Sleep, Die* represents a move towards a more nuanced take on migrant politics by exposing the roots of precariousness and disaffection among the working classes. This happens through an exploration of a 'common struggle' based on economic exploitation and touching upon where race and class fault lines meet. The characters are effectively all victims of the same power structure and, critically, the film does not neglect or gloss over racism either, but rather builds it into the narrative without making it the defining feature. Crucially, *Eat, Sleep, Die* shows us how economic exploitation breeds racism, but also allows us to see how neoliberalism pits the precariat against itself in order to compete for employment and stability.

The other main point of departure here is how we experience these losses from the perspective of a second-generation immigrant. Again, this is a significant divergence from many of the other examples discussed throughout this thesis because, rather than side-line the perspectives of second-generation immigrants or indeed make them a part of a 'feel-good' or indeed feel-bad narrative, the characters in these films introduce and negotiate the complexities of precarious employment and its associated economic

contexts. Similarly, *The Blueberry War* exposes the fallacies of national romanticism through the eyes of precarious migrant labourers by re-working the context of blueberry picking. I contend that Pettersson's aspirations for the film as a 'marginal' text designed to be screened in the berry heartlands of Sweden speak of its political dynamics. Because it challenges the film industry's expectations through its unfavourable portrayal of Swedish elites and their collusion with corrupt capitalist systems, *The Blueberry War* arguably goes further than *Eat, Sleep, Die* in its exposure of precarious politics.

Conclusion: Crisis as Continuity

This thesis has explored representations of race and ethnic identity in contemporary Nordic film culture drawing on a varied range of genres. My primary approach has concentrated on using ideological criticism to unpack the thematic elements of film texts that deal with immigrant and minority politics. This has been with a view to analysing the underlying ideologies of cultural norms like egalitarianism and multicultural tolerance. Using Slavoj Žižek's 'culturalisation of politics' theory (2007), where oversimplified cultural narratives replace more incisive political explorations of racism and ethnic marginalisation, I have shown that underneath the representational politics, there lies a series of Nordic anxiety narratives. These crisis narratives reflect and contextualise national politics as well as weave themes of globalisation and transnationalism into their frames of reference.

However, while I have explored differences between how these small national cinemas approach ethnic diversity from both a political and cinematic perspective, I have also focused on establishing a regional overview of how these film cultures operate. This approach was motivated by how influential geopolitical organisations like Norden, which exists as an actual body overseeing parts of the cultural and political management of the region, characterise shared ideological and social crossovers between the five nations. I have concentrated on teasing out how such monolithic self-conceptualisations of Norden as an egalitarian or exceptional community find expression on both narrative and visual levels. Thus, the main contributions of the research can be characterised in several ways. Regarding the representational politics and themes in these film texts, I contend the Nordic anxiety narratives identified here largely reflect a white identity in crisis where dominant ideas of liberal 'inclusivity' pay lip service to diversity while continuing to uncritically and implicitly adhere to notions of ethnic homogeneity.

Consequently, the theme of crisis has provided a way of conceptualising the tensions at the centre of the welfare state, an idea common to all five countries and one that is often used politically to exemplify and communicate notions of 'authentic' Nordic egalitarianism. Similarly, the welfare state as an all-encompassing force for good is often

used to contrast against groups who come from the outside or whose perspectives and practices differ from the status quo. This is something I have observed across all five Nordic countries. Onscreen, these ideas manifest by placing the benevolence of the white Nordic characters at the centre of the narrative often at the expense of more nuanced portrayals of non-white or non-Nordic characters. These trends are evident across a broad spectrum of stylistic approaches and speak of a false dichotomy, both regarding how the differences between native and the Other are defined, and in terms of how migrant characters are conceived of as passive victims or indeed vilified through crude caricaturing. The ethnic Other is also typically used to affirm or reinstate the white protagonist's sense of self. However, the outlook is not wholly negative as I have also shown how, more recently, the context of these crisis narratives is shifting from framing issues of race relations through a clash of cultures towards more complex economic-themed stories where ethnic tensions are not a product of cultural division, but rather emerge as a manufactured by-product of exploitative neoliberal politics.

To summarise the discussion, in chapter one, I have shown how the respective Nordic film institutes have played a significant role in shaping the direction of Nordic film culture. The shifts in the industries towards a more internationally orientated outlook over the last two decades have witnessed the growth of genre cinema and its presence in the mainstream. Further to this, in this chapter, we have seen how film scholarship has responded to these developments with the emergence of terms like Andrew Nestingen's 'medium concept' (2008). While accounting for the differences between these institutes since their formalisation in the post-war decades, we have also seen how they share commonalities regarding the support for 'quality' content. The case studies from Sweden especially are a testament to how paternalistic immigrant-themed narratives were seen to reflect the strong emphasis placed on social responsibility that was shared by the chief funders of film production. Policies directly addressing the lack of diversity in front of and behind the camera are only now emerging as a key part of the agenda in the film industries. However, outlining these developments here has

provided a useful benchmark for framing the context of films that have emerged prior to these shifting attitudes.

In chapter two, I examined the emergence of the 'ethnic' gangster genre, tracing its roots to the 1980s and following its subsequent evolution into the present day. In the Nordic context, this specific genre permutation has become a key strategy for negotiating ethnic conflict and identity politics in crisis. These crisis narratives are expressed through representations of ethnic tribalism set in gritty urban environments and a collapse of social cohesion which I take to summarise the ideological shift towards neoliberalisation, which has a distinct racial dimension, especially in Denmark, with immigrants forced to prove self-sufficiency in place of state support. I have also argued that the genre's emergence reflects broader socio-political changes, especially rising mono-cultural narratives, again with an emphasis on Denmark where the partisan politics of anti-immigrant bias is motivated not by economic concerns and welfare cutbacks, but rather an ideological predisposition towards ethnic and cultural sameness. Although the genre acknowledges these political sub-texts, many of the films never fully realise the complexities of intercultural encounters and continue to uphold a bias toward the white male protagonist. Thus, I have shown that the films mostly enact Žižek's culturalisation of politics because tribalistic representations of ethnic and cultural clashes take precedence over a more incisive examination of the causes and effects of economic marginalisation and racist political narratives.

By contrast, in chapter three, I have shown how the migrant Other functions as a device in comedy and 'feel-good' films for strengthening the affirmative politics of the imagined folkhemmet community. Specifically, this means that ethnic Otherness plays an active role in re-establishing an image of the welfare state as an inherently 'inclusive' place. The notion of folkhemmet lies at the heart of these narratives, and the appearance of minority characters is designed to reflect the welfare state's modernisation; a place that has always represented egalitarian cohesion, but now also embraces the Other as part of its community-orientated identity. Again, we see a bias toward this white ethnocentric perspective. This is not simply a case of using the Other to inspire empathy

in the white protagonist, but rather emphasises a sense that the white characters are fundamentally habituated with a latent sense of morality. This goodness is partly evident in a tendency to sentimentalise minority characters where the knock-on effect is an established set of characterisations where the Other must conform to the 'good immigrant' stereotype.

Moving into chapter four, I consider the taken-for-granted spatial politics seen in chapter three by examining the use of space in several films that thematise an intercultural encounter in ways that appear to distort conventional timeframes and spatial boundaries. I claim that while these spatial explorations present us with worlds that appear to exist outside or beyond the status quo, they also carry underlying messages that reinforce the contradictory ideologies of Nordic identity politics. Interactions with the Other in these spaces are preconceived by exotic ideas of Otherness and tend to reflect a one-sided exchange. Space and Otherness function together here as an echo chamber for Nordic anxieties and self-conceptualisations of benevolence.

Carrying the theme of benevolence forward, in chapter five I have expanded the focus to include documentary cinema, concentrating on examples that prioritise emotion over fact or analysis. These films are sympathetic in their explorations of immigrant and minority politics and broadly demonstrate this by drawing on the apparent universality of emotional themes and human-interest narratives. While this tactic can open scope for exploring personal subjectivity, it is often at the expense of a more nuanced understanding of how that subjectivity arises from and interacts with broader political frameworks. These texts borrow aesthetic and narrative conventions from the Nordic noir crime fiction genre, a permutation I refer to as the 'docu-noir'. This variant of the noir genre adds a sense of jeopardy and traction to its contextual explorations of immigrant politics. While the incorporation of these traits is symptomatic of wider transnational trends in documentary filmmaking, I claim the noir qualities speak of what critical race scholar Ben Pitcher terms 'white nostalgia', which resonates in the context of my discussion on folkhemmet. Similarly, I contend that the characteristics of the

docu-noir help to distance its white middle-class audience from the topics under discussion, allowing them to engage with Otherness vicariously.

The case studies in this final chapter reference structural and economic inequalities among migrant workforces. Consequently, I have framed these texts as part of an emerging precariat cinema where themes of expendability and exploitative neoliberal practices are shown to contribute to racism explicitly. What we see here is a re-orientation of the crisis narrative in which cultural and ethnic conflicts no longer hold up as the main source of division between different groups. By foregrounding the economic angle, these films can both expose the manufacturing of ethnic conflict and simultaneously undo the myths of a cohesive folkhemmet identity. Any sense of continuity or consistency associated with authentic notions of Nordicness are undercut by the pervasive effects of economic mismanagement and the manipulations of neoliberal reforms, particularly those concerning workers' rights. Rather, it is the crisis of uncertainty that provides the only sense of continuity for these characters. Both the production contexts and the ethnicity of the filmmakers play a role in our understanding of precariat cinema as a genre that is also designed to effect real change and challenge the status quo. However, I have also argued that the production and reception of these films, as well as their intended audiences, must be taken into account if we are concerned with the ideological impact of these films' critical angles on Nordic identity politics. Specifically, I have shown how the critical views of second-generation filmmakers can effectively be co-opted into dominant industry rhetoric where they become part of a reflection on the industry's inclusive or self-reflexive politics.

The implications of these findings can help us think differently about how identity politics contributes to prejudiced or misguided attitudes towards minorities. I do not take the normalisation of white identity politics as a given, but rather demonstrate how, through these texts, themes of crisis are an inbuilt aspect of ethnocentric conceptualisations of 'Nordicness'. This is with a view to critically approaching this process of normalisation and exposing the visual and thematic characteristics that help to uphold it. By establishing this crisis theme, this thesis also opens up questions about

the underrepresentation (and misrepresentation) of ethnic minorities within the industry. Although a comprehensive discussion of industry politics has generally been beyond the scope of this thesis, I have, at various points, focused attention on the broader production contexts of these films. An industry-focused study on the practitioner agency of first and second-generation filmmakers, the marketing and distribution patterns of immigrant-themed films and, crucially, a study of the audiences would all be fruitful lines of investigation that could build on this thesis. Such leads could use crisis as a starting point and explore whether similar perceptions and patterns of marginalisation evident on visual and narrative levels are also mirrored in the structures of the industry.

Considering the homogenising ambitions of geo-cultural organisations like Norden and its associated cultural bodies, where cooperation and a shared sense of egalitarian identity stand as a central part of both the organisation's underlying ethos and external image, we have seen how embedded and assumed ideas about belonging have formed. The nation or in this case, region-building rhetoric reflected in these organisations is based on an implicit understanding that whiteness is synonymously tied to national identity and belonging. Immigration and the politics of multiculturalism have ruptured, challenged and, in many cases, reinforced these imagined ideas.

However, all of the films included in this thesis are politically aware of the changing cultural and ethnic landscapes. We have also seen how the financing of Nordic film culture has diversified over the last few decades in response to these new challenges. Diversity policies are only now emerging as part of these shifts, and it is only in years to come that we will likely see the effects of these inclusivity mandates within either the film narratives or within the broader production contexts. However, while my study pre-dates these recent developments, I claim we must situate these recent policy innovations against their cultural antecedents to better understand the historical framing of ethnic identities. Again, it is the hope that, in the years to come, this study can provide a point of departure for other lines of research looking to establish some sense of the contemporary situation prior to the introduction of such policies regarding representation.

The 2015 refugee crisis and the ensuing debates over borders and boundaries continue to dominate political and economic agendas across the Nordic countries and show no signs of abating. Film and media culture have responded in a way that highlights a growing interest in exploring the relationship between conflicting ideas about multicultural inclusion and the position of the welfare state. A series of new releases like Gabriela Pichler's *Amatörer*/*Amateurs* (2018), Icelandic director Ásthildur Kjartansdóttir's first feature *Tryggð*/*The Deposit* (2018) and Ali Abbasi's hybrid folklore fantasy film *Gräns*/*Border* (2018) are potentially set to push these themes and issues further. Such examples indicate that we are possibly witnessing a new wave of films dealing with topics of immigration, Otherness and transnational mobility in ways that challenge both established conceptualisations of minorities and collective ethnocentric ideas about Nordic identity politics. Consequently, it is imperative we explore the underlying political narratives of these films and situate them within their broader frameworks, especially as these trends, both in film and television, are become increasingly central to understanding Nordic film culture in a more global context.

Bibliography

Ahmed, S. (2007) 'A Phenomenology of Whiteness', *Feminist Theory*, 8 (2), pp. 149–168.

Alexander, E. L. (2014) '*Jalla! Jalla!* and *Import-Export*: Two Multicultural Romantic Comedies', *Journal of Scandinavian Cinema*, 4 (3), pp. 281–288.

Anable, A. (2013) 'Playing (in) the City: The Warrior and Images of Urban Disorder', in Papazian, G., Michael, J. (ed.) *Game On, Hollywood!: Essays on the Intersection of Video Games and Cinema*. North Carolina: McFarland and Company, pp. 86–101.

Anderson, B. (1983) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London/New York: Verso.

Andersen, P et al. (2019) 'Nordic Branding: An Odyssey into the Nordic Myth Market', in Askegaard, S., Östberg, J. (ed.) *Nordic Consumer Culture: State, Market and Consumers*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 213-238.

Andersson, J., Hilson, M. (2009) 'Images of Sweden and the Nordic Countries', *Scandinavian Journal of History*, 34 (3), pp. 219-228.

Andersson, M.S. (2015) 'Invandrarbakgrund förklarar inte brottslighet', Hufvudstadsbladet, [online]. 2 December. Available at: http://gamla.hbl.fi/nyheter/2015-12-02/780723/invandrarbakgrund-forklarar-inte-brottslighet. (Accessed 6 March 2016).

Andreassen, R. (2015) *Human Exhibitions Race, Gender and Sexuality in Ethnic Displays*. London: Routledge.

Anton, T. (1980) *Administered Politics: Elite Political Culture in Sweden*. Boston/The Hague/London: Martinus Nijhoff Publishing.

Arter, D. (2015) *Scandinavian Politics Today*. 3rd ed. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Arts and Humanities Research Council Network: Migrant and Diasporic Cinema in Contemporaray Europe. (2006-2008) *About this Project: Migrant and Diasporic Cinema in Contemporary Europe*, [online]. Available at: http://www.migrantcinema.net/about/.(Accessed: 4 March 2016).

Austin, T. (2018) *The Films of Aki Kaurismäki: Ludic Engagements*. London: Bloomsbury.

Bak, S. L. (2011) *Nothing to Speak of: Wartime Experiences of the Danish Jews 1943-1945*. Copenhagen: The Danish Jewish Museum.

Bakøy, E. (2010) 'From Lonely Guest Workers to Conflict-ridden Diasporas: A Historical Survey of Norwegian Migrant Cinema', in Eide, E., Nikunen, K., Verkuyten, M. (ed.) *Media in Motion: Cultural Complexity and Migration in the Nordic Region*. London: Routledge. pp. 145-162.

Bakøy, E. (2011) 'From Lonely Guest Workers to Conflict-ridden Diasporas: A Historical Survey of Norwegian Migrant Cinema', in Eide, E., Nikunen, K. (ed.) *Media in Motion: Cultural Complexity and Migration in the Nordic Region*. Farnham: Ashgate, pp. 145–163.

Bałaga, M. (2019) 'The Finnish Film Foundation Makes Sure Different Stories Are Told', *Cineuropa*, [online], Available at: https://cineuropa.org/newsdetail/369552/. (Accessed 18 April 2019).

Ballesteros, I. (2015) *Immigration Cinema in the New Europe*. Bristol: Intellect.

Bangsgaard, J. (2016) 'Svensk jødehad gjorde det nemt for Bodnia at droppe Broen', *Berlingske*, [online]. 16 February. Available at: https://www.berlingske.dk/kultur/svensk-joedehad-gjorde-det-nemt-for-bodnia-at-droppe-broen. (Accessed 17 March 2018).

Bardan, A. (2013) 'The New European Cinema of Precarity: A Transnational Perspective', in Mazierska, M. (ed.) *Work in Cinema Labor and the Human Condition*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 69–90.

Bardhan, P. K., Roemer, J. E. (1992) *Market Socialism: The Current Debate*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Barker, V. (2017) *Nordic Nationalism and Penal Order: Walling the Welfare State*. London: Routledge.

Barnes, T. (2018) Denmark to Give Children in Migrant Neighbourhoods Compulsory Lessons on Democracy and Equality', *The Independent*, [online]. 28 May. Available at: https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/denmark-migrant-

children-ghettos-new-policy-language-skills-a8373261.html. (Accessed July 2018).

Barry, E., Selsoe Sorensen, M. (2018) 'Denmark, Harsh New Laws for Immigrant 'Ghettos'', *The New York Times*, [online]. 1 July. Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/01/world/europe/denmark-immigrant-ghettos.html. (Accessed July 2018).

Batchelor, T. (2017) 'Nigel Farage Investigated by Ofcom for Saying Sweden is 'Rape Capital of Europe', *The Independent*, [online]. 20 March. Available at: https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/nigel-farage-ofcom-investigation-sweden-rape-capital-europe-a7639401.html. (Accessed 29 September 2018).

Bayvel, R. (2006) 'While Jews Serve in My Army I will Not Allow their Deportation', *Jewish Quarterly*, 53 (2), pp. 25-28.

Benbow, H. M. (2015) *Marriage in Turkish German Popular Culture: States of Matrimony in the New Millennium*. London: Lexington Books.

Bendixen, M.C. (2019) 'Information on Refugees in Denmark: How Many are Coming, and From Where?', [online]. Available at: http://refugees.dk/en/facts/numbers-and-statistics/how-many-are-coming-and-from-where/. (Accessed 2 May 2019).

Bennett, D. (1998) *Multicultural States: Rethinking Difference and Identity*. London: Routledge.

Berghahn, D., Sternberg C. (2010) 'Locating Migrant and Diasporic Cinema in Contemporary Europe', in Berghahn, D., Sternberg C. (ed.) *European Cinema in Motion. Palgrave European Film and Media Studies.* London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 12-49.

Bergman, K. (2014) 'The Captivating Chill: Why Readers Desire Nordic Noir', *Scandinavian-Canadian Studies*, 22, pp. 80–89.

Berlant, L. (2011) *Cruel Optimism*. North Carolina: Duke University Press.

Bissenbakker, M., Myong, L. (2016) 'Love Without Borders? White Transraciality in Danish Migration Activism', *Cultural Studies*, 30 (1), pp. 129-146.

Blaagaard, B. (2016) 'The Filpside of my Passport: Myths of Origin and Geneaology of White Supremacy in the Mediated Social Genetic Imaginary' in Tuori, S., Irni, S.,

Mulinari, D. (ed.) *Complying With Colonialism Gender, Race and Ethnicity in the Nordic Region*. London: Routledge, pp. 51-66.

Blaagaard, B., Andreassen, R. (2012) 'Disappearing Act: The Forgotten History of Colonialism, Eugenics and Gendered Othering in Denmark', in Hipfl, B., Loftsdóttir, K. (ed.) *Teaching "Race" with a Gendered Edge*. Budapest/New York: Central European University Press, pp. 81-96.

Boiling Point Campaign Report. (2018) *Kiehumispiste*, [online]. Available at: http://mouka.fi/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Kiehumispisteen-kampanjaraportti.pdf. (Accessed 23 March 2018).

Bondebjerg, I. (2017) Globalisation, Multicultural Reality and the Creative Diversity of Scandinavian Cinema. *Ib Bondebjerg on Media*, [blog] 5 October. Available at: https://ibbondebjerg.com/2017/10/05/globalisation-multicultural-reality-and-the-creative-diversity-of-scandinavian-cinema/. (Accessed 21 April 2019).

Bondebjerg, I., Redvall, E. (2011) 'A Small Region in a Global World. Patterns in Scandinavian Film and TV Culture', *Scandinavian ThinkTank, European ThinkTank on Film and Film Policy*, [online]. Available at: https://cemes.ku.dk/research/research_literature/workingpapers/scandinavian_cinema-final_lrl_.pdf/. (Accessed 17 December 2017).

Borevi, K. (2012) 'Sweden: The Flagship of Multiculturalism', in Brochmann. G., Hagelund, A. (ed.) *Immigration Policy and the Scandinavian Welfare State 1945-2010*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 25-96.

Boym, S. (2001) *The Future of Nostalgia*. New York: Basic Books

Brandal, N., Bratberg, Ø and Thorsen, D. E. (2013) *The Nordic Model of Social Democracy*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Broberg, G., Tydén, M. (2005) 'Eugenics in Sweden: Efficient Care', in Broberg, G., Roll-Hansen, N. (ed.) *Eugenics and the Welfare State: Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, pp. 77-149.

Brookes, I. (2017) *Film Noir: A Critical Introduction*. London: Bloomsbury.

Browning, C. (2007) Branding Nordicity: Models, Identity and the Decline of

Exceptionalism, *Cooperation and Conflict: Journal of the Nordic International Studies Association*, 42 (1), pp. 27–51.

Bulut, E. (2017) 'Can the Intern Resist? Precarity of Blue-Collar Labor and the Fragmented Resistance of the White-Collar Intern in Laurent Cantet's Human Resources', *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 41(1), pp. 42–59.

Burucúa, C,. Sitnisky, C. (2018) *The Precarious in the Cinemas of the Americas*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Chanes, J. (2004) *Antisemitism: A Reference Handbook*. Santa Barbra: ABC-CLIO, Inc.

Christensen, C. (2015) 'Sami Shamanism and Indigenous Film: The Case of *Pathfinder*', in Kraft, E., Fonneland, T., Lewis, J. (ed.) *Nordic Neoshamanisms. Palgrave Studies in New Religions and Alternative Spiritualities*, pp. 175–190.

Clerc, L., Glover, N., Jordan, P. (2015) *Histories of Public Diplomacy and Nation Branding in the Nordic and Baltic Countries*. Leiden/Boston: Brill Nijhoff.

Coates, P. (2000) 'Notes on Polish Cinema, Nationalism and Wajda's *Holy Week*', in Hjort, M., Mackenzie, S. (ed.) *Cinema and Nation*. London: Routledge, pp. 189-203.

Comolli . J., Narboni, J. (1971) 'Cinema/Ideology/Criticism (2) Examining a Critique at its Critical Point', *Screen*, 12 (2), pp. 145-155.

Conley, T. (2007) *Cartographic Cinema*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Crouch, D., Kingsley, P. (2016) 'Danish Parliament Approves Plan to Seize Assets from Refugees', *The Guardian*, [online]. 26 January. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/26/danish-parliament-approves-plan-to-seize-assets-from-refugees. (Accessed 12 July 2018).

Dahlquist, M. (2015) 'The Attractions of the North: Early Film Expeditions to the Exotic Snowscape', in MacKenzie, S., Stenport, A. (ed.) *Films on Ice: Cinemas of the Arctic*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 279–285.

Danish Film Institute. (2018) 'Enhanced Diversity Efforts', [online]. Available at: https://www.dfi.dk/en/english/about-dfi/enhanced-diversity-efforts. (Accessed 28 May 2019).

Danish Film Institute. (2015) 'Undersøgelse af Etnisk Mangfoldighed i Dansk Film', [online]. Available at: https://www.dfi.dk/files/docs/2018-02/Etnisk_mangfoldighed_i_dansk_film_dfi_2015.pdf. (Accessed 12 June 2019).

Danish Film Institute. (no date) 'Minor-co-Productions-Documentaries and Short Fiction', [online]. Available at: https://www.dfi.dk/en/english/funding/minor-co-productions-documentaries-and-short-fiction. (Accessed 12 June 2019).

Danish Government. (2018) 'Ét Danmark uden parallelsamfund - Ingen ghettoer i 2030', [online]. Available at: https://oim.dk/media/19035/et_danmark_uden_parallelsamfund_pdfa.pdf. (Accessed 15 May 2019).

Danish Ministry of Immigration (no date) 'The Danish Government's Contract and Residence and Self-insurance Declaration', [online]. Available at: http://uim.dk/filer/integration/opholds-og-selvforsorgelseserklaering/opholds-og-selvforsoergelseserklaering-engelsk.pdf. (Accessed 20 June 2019).

Dearden, L. (2016) 'Refugee Crisis: Number of Asylum Seekers Arriving in Norway Drops by 95%'. *The Independent*. 1 July. Available at: https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/refugee-crisis-number-of-asylum-seekers-arriving-in-norway-drops-by-95-a7114191.html. (Accessed 14 May 2019).

Doogan, K. (2001) 'Insecurity and Long-term Employment', *Work, Employment & Society*, 15 (3), pp. 419-441.

Doxtater, A. (2006) 'Bodies in Elevators: The Conveyance of Ethnicity in Recent Swedish Films', in Thomson, C. C. (ed.) *Northern Constellations: New Readings in Nordic Cinema*. Norwich: Norvik Press, pp. 59–77.

Dunne, L. (2017) *Linnea Dunne's Lagom: The Swedish Art of Balanced Living*. London: Gaia Books Ltd Publishers.

Dyer, R. (1997) *White: Essays of Race and Culture*. London: Routledge.

Dyson, S. B. (2019) *Imagining Politics: Interpretations in Political Science and Political Science and Political Television*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan.

Eastmond, M. (2014) 'Refugee Trauma as Mobilising Metaphor: Policy and Practice in the Integration and Care of Refugees in Sweden', in Overland, E., Lie, B. (ed.) *Nordic Work with Traumatised Refugees: Do We Really Care?* Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 14-30.

Eide, E., Nikunen, K. (2011) 'Introduction: Change of Climate', in Eide, E., Nikunen, K. (ed.) *Media in Motion: Cultural Complexity and Migration in the Nordic Region*. Farnham: Ashgate, pp.1-19.

Elomäki, A., Kantola, J. (2017) 'Austerity Politics and Feminist Resistance in Finland: From Established Women's Organizations to New Feminist Initiatives', in Kantola, J., Lombardo, E. (ed.) *Gender and the Economic Crisis in Europe*. Baisingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp 231-257.

Elsaesser, T. (2005) *European Cinema: Face to Face with Hollywood*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Elsaesser, T., Hagener, M. (2010) *Film Theory: An Introduction Through the Senses*. London: Routledge.

Ervasti, H., Fridberg, T., Hjerm, M., Kangas, O., and Ringdal, K. (2008) *Nordic Social Attitudes in a European Perspective*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Inc.

Everett, W., Goodbody, A. (2005) *Revisiting Space: Space and Place in European Cinema*. Bern: Peter Lang.

Ezra, E., Rowden, T. (2006) *Transnational Cinema: The Film Reader*. London: Routledge.

Faist T. (2013) 'Multiculturalism: From Heterogeneities to Social (In) Equalities' in Kivisto P., Wahlbeck Ö, (ed.) *Debating Multiculturalism in the Nordic Welfare States*. Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 22-47.

Field, G. (1977) 'Nordic Racism', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 38 (3), pp. 523-540.

Finnish Film Foundation. (2019) 'Finnish Film Industry 2019', [online]. Available at: https://ses.fi/fileadmin/dokumentit/finnish-film-industry-DIGI.pdf. (Accessed 29th May 2019).

Finnish Film Institute. (2017) 'Facts and Figures', [online]. Available at: https://ses.fi/fileadmin/dokumentit/Elokuvavuosi_Facts_Figures_2017.pdf. (Accessed 3 July).

Forsgren, M. (2016) 'Jon Haukeland • Director', *Cineuropa*, [online]. 20 October. Available at: https://www.cineuropa.org/en/interview/318832/. (Accessed 3 September 2018).

Frank, D. (2014) 'Changes in Migration Control During the Neoliberal Era: Surveillance and Border Control in Swedish Labour Immigration Policy', *Journal of Political Power*, 7 (3), pp. 413-432.

Fritzell, J., Bäckman, O., Ritakallio, V.M. (2012) 'Income Inequality and Poverty: Do the Nordic Countries Still Constitute a Family of their Own?', in Kvist, J. (ed.) *Changing Social Equality: The Nordic Welfare Model in the 21st Century*. Bristol: The Policy Press, pp. 165-187.

Furhammar, L. (2003) *Filmen i Sverige. En historia i tio kapitel och en fortsättning*. Stockholm: Dialogos.

Gani, A. (2016) 'Blue Eyes – The Terrifying TV Show that Tracks the Rise of the Far-Fight in Europe', *The Guardian*, [online]. 24 March. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2016/mar/24/blue-eyes-more4-terrifying-tv-show-that-tracks-the-rise-of-the-far-right-in-europe. (Accessed 3 June 2018).

Gentele, J. (2007). '*Review: The Blueberry War'*, [online]. Available at: https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=sv&u=https://www.svd.se/blabarskriget&prev=search. (Accessed 10 May 2019).

Gill, R., Pratt, A. (2008) 'In the Social Factory? Immaterial Labour, Precariousness and Cultural Work', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 25 (7–8), pp. 1–30.

Goldberg, D. (2008) *The Threat of Race: Reflections on Racial Neoliberalism*. Hoboken:

Wiley-Blackwell.

Goss, B. (2009) *Global Auteurs: Politics in the Films of Almodóvar, Von Trier, and Winterbottom*. New York: Peter Lang.

Granhøj Dam, B. (no date). 'DFI: Filmfonden: 1964-1972', [online]. Available at: https://www.dfi.dk/viden-om-film/filmhistorie/filmfonden-1964-1972. (Accessed 29 May 2019).

Grunfelder, J., Rispling, L and Norlén, G. (2018) 'State of the Nordic Region 2018 Theme 1: Demography', [online]. Available at: https://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1180256/FULLTEXT01.pdf. (Accessed 15 June 2019).

Gullestad, M. (1992) *The Art of Social Relations: Essays on Culture, Social Action and Everyday Life in Modern Norway*. Oslo: Scandinavian University Press.

Gullestad, M. (2002) *Det norske sett med nye øyne*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

Gullestad, M. (2004) 'Blind Slaves of Our Prejudices: Debating "Culture" and "Race" in Norway', *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology*, 69 (2), pp. 117–203.

Gustafsson, F. (2016) 'Swedish Cinema of the 1940s, A New Wave', in Hjort, M., Lindqvist, U. (ed.) *A Companion to Nordic Cinema*. Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, pp. 313- 331.

Gustafsson, T. (2014) *Masculinity in the Golden Age of Swedish Cinema: A Cultural Analysis of 1920s Films*. North Carolina: McFarland and Company.

Haase, A. (2016) 'The Golden Era' of Finnish Documentary Film Financing and Production', Studies in Documentary Cinema, 10 (2), pp. 106-129.

Hammar, T. (1991) 'Cradle of Freedom on Earth: Refugee Immigration and Ethnic Pluralism', in Lane, J.E. (ed.) *Understanding the Swedish Model*. London: Frank Cass and Co. LTD, pp. 182- 196.

Hansen, B. (1996) 'Something Rotten in the State of Denmark: Eugenics and the Ascent of the Welfare State', in Broberg, G., Hansen, N.R. (eds.) *Eugenics and the Welfare State: Sterilization Policy in Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland*. Lansing: Michigan State University Press, pp. 9-76.

Hansen, K.T., Waade, A. M. (2017) *Locating Nordic Noir: From Beck to The Bridge*.

Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hanssen et al. (2016) 'Food Redistribution in the Nordic Region Phase II: Identification
of Best Practice Models for Enhanced Food Redistribution', *Norden*, [online].
Available at:
https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/safety/docs/fw_lib_nordic_council_report
_food_donations2_201602_en.pdf. (Accessed 2 April 2019).

Harðardóttir, E. (2014) *New Vision for a Stronger Region*, [online]. Available at:
https://www.norden.org/en/news/new-vision-stronger-region. (Accessed: 12
September 2017).

Harvey, D. (1989) *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural
Change*. London: Sage.

Hedetoft, U. (2000) 'Contemporary Cinema: Between Cultural Globalisation and
National Interpretation', in Hjort, M., Mackenzie, S. (ed.) *Cinema and Nation*.
London: Routledge, pp. 278–297.

Hedetoft, U. (2010) 'Denmark Versus Multiculturalism', in Vertovec, S., Wessendorf, S.
(ed.) *Multiculturalism Backlash: European Discourses, Policies and Practices*. New York:
Routledge, pp. 111–130.

Hedling, O. (2010) 'The Regional Turn: Developments within Scandinavian Film
Production', in Larsson, M., Marklund, A. (ed.) *Swedish Film: An Introduction and
Reader*. Lund: Nordic Academic Press, pp. 334–345.

Hedling, O. (2016) 'Cinema in the Welfare State: Notes on Public Support, Regional
Film Funds, and Swedish Film Policy', in Hjort, M., Lindqvist, U. (ed.) *A Companion
to Nordic Cinema*. Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, pp. 60-78.

Heith, A. (2013) 'Challenging and Negotiating National Borders: Sámi and
Tornedalian AlterNative Literary History', in Viljoen, H. (ed.) *Crossing Borders,
Dissolving Boundaries*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, pp. 75–93.

Helke, S. (2016) 'In Pursuit of Emotions: The Emotive Turn and Postpolitical
Sentiment in Finnish Documentary Film Culture', *Studies in Documentary Film*, 10
(2), pp. 183–197.

Helliwell, J., Layard, R and Sachs, J. D. (2019) 'World Happiness Report 2019', [online]. Available at: https://s3.amazonaws.com/happiness-report/2019/WHR19.pdf. (Accessed 20 June 2019).

Hervik, P. (2018) *Racialization, Racism, and Anti-Racism in the Nordic Countries*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Higbee, W. (2007) 'Locating the Postcolonial in Transnational Cinema: The Place of Algerian Émigré Directors in Contemporary French Film', *Modern & Contemporary France*, 15 (1), pp. 51-64.

Higbee, W., Lim, S. H. (2010) 'Concepts of Transnational Cinema: Towards a Critical Transnationalism in Film Studies', *Transnational Cinemas*, 1 (1), pp. 7-21.

Higson, A. (1989) 'The Concept of National Cinema', *Screen* 30 (4), pp. 36-47.

Higson, A. (2000) 'The Limiting Imagination of National Cinema', in Hjort, M., Mackenzie S. (ed.) *Cinema and Nation*. London: Routledge, pp. 63-74.

Hilson, M. (2008) *The Nordic Model*. London: Reaktion Books.

Hilson, M., Neunsinger, S and Vyff, I. (2017) *Labour, Unions and Politics under the North Star: The Nordic Countries, 1700-2000*. Oxford/New York: Berghahn Books.

Hiltunen, K. (2016) 'Encounters with Immigrants in Recent Finnish Feature Films', *Journal of Scandinavian Cinema*, 6 (3), pp. 235–253.

Hjort, M,. Bondebjerg, I,. Redvall, E. (2014) *The Danish Directors 3 Dialogues on the New Danish Documentary Cinema*. Bristol: Intellect.

Hjort, M. (2005) *Small Nation, Global Cinema.* Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.

Hjort, M. (2007) 'Denmark', in Hjort, M., Petrie, D. (ed.) *Cinemas of Small Nations*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 23–43.

Hjort, M. (2009) 'On the Plurality of Cinematic Transnationalism', in Durovicová , N., Newman, K. (ed.) *World Cinemas, Transnational Perspectives*. New York : Routledge, pp. 12-33.

Hjort, M. (2010) *Italian for Beginners*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Hjort, M. (2011) 'The Problem with Provocation: On Lars von Trier, Enfant Terrible of

Danish Art Film', *Kinema*. 36, pp. 5- 29.

Hjort, M., Lindqvist, U. (2016) *A Companion to Nordic Cinema*. Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell.

Hjort, M., MacKenzie, S. (2000) *Cinema and Nation*. London and New York: Routledge.

Hokkinen, M. (2019) 'Unacceptable Consumption: Conflicts of Refugee Consumption in a Nordic Welfare State', in Askegaard, S., Östberg, J. 92019) *Nordic Consumer Culture: State, Market and Consumers*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 95-118.

Holtug, N. (2012) 'Danish Multiculturalism, Where Art Thou?', in Taras, R. (ed.) *Challenging Multiculturalism: European Models of Diversity.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 190-215.

Horsti, K. (2008) 'Overview of Nordic Media Research on Immigration and Ethnic Relations: From Text Analysis to the Study of Production, Use and Reception', *Nordicom Review*, 29(2), pp. 275–293.

Houwing, H et al. (2011) 'Employment Relations in Belgium and the Netherlands', in Barry, M., Wilkinson, A. (ed.) *Research Handbook of Comparative Employment Relations*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, pp. 260-285.

Hussein, M. (2000) 'Islam, Media and Minorities in Denmark', *Current Sociology*, 48 (4), pp. 95- 116.

Hussein, M. (2002) *Mapping Minorities and their Media: The National Context*. Denmark: L.S.E.

Huston, S. (2010) '*Metropia*': Failing from Ambition', *Pop Matters*, [online]. 16 November. Available at: https://www.popmatters.com/133436-metropia-2496111924.html. (Accessed 6 May 2018).

Hübinette, T., Lundström, C. (2015) 'Swedish Whiteness and White Melancholia: A Diagnosis of a White Nation in Crisis', in Watson, V., Howard-Wagner, D and Spanierman, L. (ed.) *Unveiling Whiteness in the Twenty-First Century: Global Manifestations, Transdiciplinary Interventions*. London: Lexington Books, pp. 49–77.

Hübinette, H., Andersson, M. (2012) 'Between Colourblindness and Ethnicisation: Transnational Adoptees and Race in a Swedish Context', *Adoption and Fostering*, 36 (3-4), pp. 97-103.

Icelandic Film Centre. (2003) 'Regulation on the Icelandic Film Fund', [online]. Available at: http://www.icelandicfilmcentre.is/media/skjol/229_2003-Film-Fund-Regulation-ENGLISH.pdf. (Accessed 2 July 2019).

Icelandic Film Centre. (2014-2018) 'Key Figures', [online]. Available at: http://www.icelandicfilmcentre.is/facts-and-figures/key-figures/. (Accessed 18 June 2019).

Indregard, S., Wergeland, I and Wold, B. (2012) 'Svar på tiltale', in Indregard, S., Wergeland, I., Wold, B. (ed.) *Motgift. Akademisk respons på den nye høyreekstremismen*. Oslo: Flamme Forlag & Forlaget Manifest.

International Research in Children's Literature, 1 (2), pp. 168-186.

Irni, S. (2009) 'Experience is a National Asset' – A Postcolonial Reading of Ageing in the Labour Market', in Keskinen, S., Tuori, S., Irni, S and Mulinari D. (ed.) *Complying with Colonialism: Gender, Race and Ethnicity in the Nordic Region*. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, pp. 171–187.

Iversen, G. (1998) 'Norway', in Iversen, G., Söderbergh Widding, A and Soila, T. (ed.) *Nordic National Cinemas*. London: Routledge, pp. 97–135.

Iversen, G. (2005) 'Learning from Genre: Genre Cycles in Modern Norwegian Cinema', in Nestingen, A. Elkington, T. (ed.) *Transnational Cinema in a Global North: Nordic Cinema in Transition*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, pp. 261–279.

Iversen, G., Söderbergh Widding, A and Soila, T. (1998) *Nordic National Cinemas*. London: Routledge.

Jacobsen, C. (2010) *Islamic Traditions and Muslim Youth in Norway*. Leiden: Koniklijke Brill.

Rees, E. (2010) 'Norwave: Norwegian Cinema 1997-2006', *Scandinavian-Canadian Studies*, 19, pp. 88-110.

Jakobsen, J. (2015) 'Contextualsing Religious Pain: Saba Mahmood, Axel Honneth and

the Danish Cartoons', in Jakobsen, J., Lysaker, O. (ed.) *Recognition and Freedom: Axel Honneth's Political Thought*. Leiden/Boston: Brill. pp. 169-193.

Jakobsen, S. (2013) 'Hvem er de mest egnede?', *Filmmagasinet Ekko*, [online].5 November. Available at https://www.ekkofilm.dk/artikler/de-mest-egnede/. (Accessed 18 June 2017).

Jonung, L., Kiander, J., Vartia, P. (2009) 'The Great Financial Crisis in Finland and Sweden: The Dynamics of Boom, Bust and Recovery, 1985-2000', in Jonung, L., Kiander, J., Vartia, P. (ed.) *The Great Financial Crisis in Finland and Sweden: The Nordic Experience of Financial Liberalization*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, pp. 19-71.

Jønsson, H., Petersen, K. (2012) 'Denmark: A National Welfare State Meets the World', in Brochmann et al. (ed.) Immigration Policy and the Scandinavian Welfare State 1945-2010. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 97-149.

Jørgensen, M. (2016) 'The Precariat Strikes Back: Precarity Struggles in Practice', in Schierup, C. U., Jørgensen, M. (ed.) *Politics of Precarity: Migrant Conditions, Struggles and Experiences*. Leiden: Brill Publishers, pp. 52–78.

Jørholt, E. (2010) 'Omar Shargawi', in Hjort, M., Jørholt, E., Redvall, E. (ed.) *Danish Directors 2*. Bristol: Intellect, pp. 233–249.

Jöhncke, S. (2011) 'Integrating Denmark: The Welfare State as a National(ist) Accomplishment', in Olwig, K.F., Paerregaard, K. (ed.) *The Question of Integration: Immigration, Exclusion and the Danish Welfare State*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 30–54.

Jönsson , M. (2016) 'Non -Fiction Film Culture in Sweden circa 1920–1960: Pragmatic Governance and Consensual Solidarity in a Welfare State', in Hjort, M., Lindqvist, U. (ed.) A Companion to Nordic Cinema. Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, pp. 125-147.

Kahn, S. (2017) 'Former Swedish PM Asks 'What has Trump Been Smoking?' As Country Ridicules President's Attack Claim', *The Independent*, [online]. 19 February. Available at: https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/donald-trump-former-swedish-prime-minister-carl-bildt-a7588476.html. (Accessed 28 September 2018).

Kamali, M. (2009) Racial Discrimination: Institutional Patterns and Politics. New York: Routledge.

Kananen, J. (2014) *The Nordic Welfare State in Three Eras: From Emancipation to Discipline*. Farnham: Ashgate.

Kang, L.H. (2002) *Compositional Subjects: Enfiguring Asian/American Women*. Durham /London: Duke University Press.

Karlen, H. (2007) Preventing Trafficking in Human Beings', in *End Child Prostitution and Trafficking Sweden (ECPAT)*. Vilnius, Lithuania, 25-26 October 2007. Available at: https://www.osce.org/what/trafficking/60894?download=true. (Accessed 17 March 2019).

Karlsson, H. (2014) 'Ruben Östlund's *Play* (2011): Race and Segregation in "Good" Liberal Sweden', *Journal of Scandinavian Cinema*, 4 (1), pp. 43–60.

Kiilakoski, T., Oksanen, A. (2011) 'Cultural and Peer Influences on Homicidal Violence: A Finnish Perspective', *New Dir Youth Dev*,129, pp. 31-42.

Kivisto, P., Wahlbeck, Ö. (2013) 'Reflections on the Future of Multicultural Inclusion in the Nordic Countries', in Kivisto, P., Wahlbeck, Ö. (ed.) *Debating Multiculturalism in the Nordic Welfare States*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 325-339.

Klein, N. (2007) *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

Koefoed, L. (2015) 'Majority and Minority Nationalism in the Danish Post-Welfare State', *Human Geography*, 97 (3), pp. 223-232.

Konstantarakos, M. (2000) *Spaces in European Cinema*. Exeter/Portland: Intellect.

Koskinen, M. (2016) 'The Capital of Scandinavia? Imaginary Cinescapes and the Art of Creating an Appetite for Nordic Cinematic Spaces"', in Hjort, M., Lindqvist, U. (ed.) *A Companion to Nordic Cinema*. Hoboken:Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 199–224.

Kristensen, L.L.F. (2007) 'Divergent Accounts of Equivalent Narratives : Russian-Swedish Interdevochka meets Swedish-Russian *Lilya 4-ever*', *Portal Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies*, 4 (2), [online]. Available at:

https://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/journals/index.php/portal/article/view/488/443. (Accessed 29 March 2017).

Kuhn, A.,Westwell, G. (2012) *A Dictionary of Film Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kyllingstad, J. R. (2017) 'The Absence of Race in Norway?', *Journal of Anthropological Sciences*, 95, pp. 319-327.

Kysola, S. (2004) 'Kadotettu Par(at)iisi Bohemielämää Aki Kaurimäen Elokuvatuotannossa', in Toiviainen, S. (ed.) *Suomen Kansallisfilmografia II*. Helsinki: Edita Prima Oy, pp. 144–149.

Kääpä, P. (2008) *The National and Beyond: The Globalisation of Finnish Cinema in the Films of Aki and Mika Kaurismäki*. Bern: Peter Lang.

Kääpä, P. (2011) *The Cinema of Mika Kaurismäki: Transvergent Cinescapes, Emergent Identities*. Bristol: Intellect.

Kääpä, P. (2012) *Directory of World Cinema: Finland*. Bristol: Intellect.

Kääpä, P. (2014) *Ecology and Contemporary Nordic Cinemas*. London: Bloomsbury.

Kääpä, P. (2016) 'Cyclical Conceptualisations of Time: The Cinema of the Sámi from an Ecocritical Perspective', in Monani, S., Adamson, J. (ed.) *Indigenous Cinema and Ecocriticism*. London: Routledge, pp. 136–154.

Kääpä, P., Gustafsson, T. (2015) *Nordic Genre Film: Small Nation Film Cultures in a Global Marketplace*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Kääpä, P., Moffat, K. (2018) 'Unthinking Ethnocentrism: Ecocritical Approaches to Ethnic Diversity in Nordic Screen Media', *Journal of Scandinavian Cinema*, 8 (2), pp. 149–165.

Lacey, L. (2011) 'Kaurismäki's 'Le Havre' Serves Up Trademark Wit - On a Baguette', *The Globe and Mail*, [online]. 17 May. Available at: https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/film/kaurismakis-le-havre-serves-up-trademark-wit---on-a-baguette/article580174/. (Accessed 19 June 2019).

Langford, M. (2017) 'The Norwegian Welfare State and Social Rights', in Kotkas, T., Veitch, K. (ed.) *Social Rights in the Welfare State: Origins and Transformations*. London: Routledge, pp. 35-58.

Larsen, D. (2019) 'Statistics Denmark: Population in Denmark', [online]. Available at: https://www.dst.dk/en/Statistik/emner/befolkning-og-valg/befolkning-og-befolkningsfremskrivning/folketal. (Accessed 1 July 2019).

Larsen, I., Ugelvik, S. (1997) 'Scandinavia', in Eatwell, R. (ed.) *European Political Cultures*. London: Routledge, pp. 210–233.

Lefebvre, H. (1991) *The Production of Space*. Hoboken: Blackwell Publishing.

Leffler, Y. (2013) 'The Devious Landscape in Contemporary Scandinavian Horror', in Mesye, D. (ed.) *Gothic Topographies Language Nation Building and Race*. Farnham: Ashgate, pp. 141-152.

Lentin, A., Titley, G. (2011) *The Crises of Multiculturalism: Racism in a Neoliberal Age*. London: Zed Books.

Lindahl, B. (2016) 'Can Nordic Refugee Policies be Coordinated?', *Nordic Labour Journal*, [online]. 18 April. Available at: http://www.nordiclabourjournal.org/i-fokus/in-focus-2016/the-threat-to-nordic-freedom-of-movement/article.2016-04-19.8913661499. (Accessed 4 March 2019).

Linderborg, Å. (2011) 'Provokation utan ansvar', *Aftonbladet*, [online]. 23 November. Available at: https://www.aftonbladet.se/kultur/a/1kVnnq/provokation-utan-ansvar. (Accessed 13 May 2017).

Loftsdóttir, K., Jensen, L. (2013) *Whiteness and Postcolonialism in the Nordic Region: Exceptionalism, Migrant Others and National Identities*. London: Routledge.

Loftsdóttir, K., Jensen, L. (2014) *Crisis in the Nordic Nations and Beyond: At the Intersection of Environment, Finance and Multiculturalism*. London: Routledge.

Lu, S. (1997) *Transnational Chinese Cinemas: Identity, Nationhood, Gender*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Lundström, C., Teitelbaum, B.R. (2017) 'Nordic Whiteness: An Introduction', *Scandinavian Studies*, 89 (2), pp. 151-158.

Lübeck Festival Retrospektive. (2016) '*Yarden*', [online]. Available at: https://www.luebeck.de/filmtage/filmdb/files/2018/NFL_Katalog_2018_Seite_139.pdf.(Accessed 12 June 2019).

Lægaard, S. (2013) 'Danish Anti-multiculturalism ? The Significance of the Political Framing of Diversity', in Kivisto, P., Wahlbeck, Ö. (ed.) *Debating Multiculturalism in the Nordic Welfare States*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 170–197.

Madsen, L. (2015) *Fighters, Girls and Other Identities: Sociolinguistics in a Martial Arts Club*. Bristol/Buffalo/Toronto: Multilingual Matters.

Manchel, F. (1990) *Film Study: An Analytical Bibliography, Volume 1*. London/New York/Ontario: Associated Univesrity Press.

Marklund, C. (2016) 'The Nordic Model on the Global Market of Ideas: The Welfare State as Scandinavia's Best Brand', *Geopolitics*, 22 (3), pp. 623–639.

Marks, L. U. (2000) *The Skin of the Film. In Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*. North Carolina: Duke University Press.

Martikainen, T. (2009) 'Finland', in Nielsen, J. et. al (ed.) *Yearbook of Muslims in Europe: Volume 1*. Leiden: Koninklijke: Brill, pp. 117–127.

Mecsei, M. K. (2015) 'Cultural Stereotypes and Negotiations in Sámi Cinema', in Mackenzie, S., Stenport, A. (ed.) *Films on Ice: Cinemas of the Arctic*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 72–83.

Mennel, B. (2014) 'From Utopian Collectivity to Solitary Precarity: Thirty Years of Feminist Theory and the Cinema of Women's Work', *Women in Germany Yearbook*, 30, pp. 125–137.

Mešić, N.,Woolfson, C. (2015) 'Roma Berry Pickers in Sweden Economic Crisis and New Contingents of the Austeriat', *Transfer*, 21(1), pp. 37–50.

Migration: Immigration and Emigration in International Perspective. Westport/Connecticut/London: Praeger, pp. 207- 224.

Ministers for Nordic Co-operation Joint Declaration. (2016) 'Freedom of Movement in the Nordic Region Must be Protected – Declaration from the Meeting of the Ministers for Nordic Co-operation', [online]. 19 April. Available at: https://www.norden.org/en/node/4814. (Accessed 4 March 2019).

Moffat, K. (2016) *Negotiating the Thresholds: Sámi Cinema and the Politics of Identity*. MRes. Bangor University.

Moffat, K. (2017) 'Saamelainen elokuvakulttuuri muotoutuvana 'verkostoelokuvana', *Lähikuva*, 30 (2), pp. 8–26.

Moffat, K. (2018) 'Race, Ethnicity, and Gang Violence: Exploring Multicultural Tensions in Contemporary Danish Cinema', *Scandinavian-Canadian Studies,* 25 (1), pp. 136-153.

Morse, F. (2013) 'Swedish Cinemas to Stamp Out Sexism with Bechdel Test Rating on Movies'. *The Independent*, [online]. 6 November. Available at: https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/swedish-cinemas-to-stamp-out-sexism-with-bechdel-test-rating-on-movies-8924758.html. (Accessed 13 May 2019).

Mouritsen, P., Jensen, C.H. (2014) 'Integration Policies in Denmark', European University Institute, [online]. Available at: http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/32020/INTERACT-RR-2014_06.pdf?sequence=1. (Accessed 3 July 2019).

Mouritsen, P., Vincents Olsen, T. (2013) 'Denmark Between Liberalism and Nationalism', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. 36 (4), pp. 691-710.

Mulinari, D., Neergaard, A. (2010) 'The "Others" in Sweden: Neoliberal Policies and the Politics of "Race" in Education', *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, 8 (2), pp. 130-164.

Musiał, K. (2010) 'Reconceptualising Nordic Identities After 1989', in Hurd, M. (ed.) *Bordering the Baltic: Scandinavian Boundary-drawing Processes, 1900-2000*. Berlin: LIT Verlag, pp. 105-127.

Mykelbust, J. P. (2015) '*Boycott of Opening of New Racism Research Institute*', [online].
    Available at: https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=
20150818160250889. (Accessed 5 May 2019).

Naficy, H. (2001) *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*. New Jersey:
    Princeton University Press.

Nannestad, P. (2004) 'Immigration as a Challenge to the Danish Welfare State?',
    European Journal of Political Economy, 20, pp. 755–767.

Nestingen, A. (2008) *Crime and Fantasy in Scandinavia*. Seattle: University of
    Washington Press.

Nestingen, A. (2013) *The Cinema of Aki Kaurismäki: Contrarian Stories*. London/New
    York: Wallflower Press.

Nestingen, A. (2016) 'Aki Kaurismäki-From Punk to Social Democracy', in Hjort, M.,
    Lindqvist, U. (ed.) *A Companion to Nordic Cinema*. Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, pp.
    291-313.

Nestingen, A. and Elkington, T. (2005) *Transnational Cinema in a Global North: Nordic
    Cinema in Transition*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

Nickerson, K. R. (2010) *The Cambridge Companion to American Crime Fiction*. Cambridge
    and New York: Cambridge University Press.

Norden. (2014) Nordic Culture Fund Newsletter: Diversity in Nordic Art and Culture
    Projects – Let's Connect!', [online]. Available at:
    http://newspublicator.com/e10/parker/nl/6dda2e97862dd104/mc3160945/email/.
    (Accessed 2 May 2019).

Norden. (2013) 'Labour Migrants from Central and Eastern Europe in the Nordic
    Countries', [online]. Available at: http://norden.diva-
    portal.org/smash/get/diva2:702572/FULLTEXT01.pdf. (Accessed 12 March 2019).

Norden. (2006) '*Zozo*', [online]. Available at:
    https://www.norden.org/en/nominee/zozo. (Accessed 27 June 2019).

Norden. (no date) 'Nordic Council Film Prize Website', [online]. Available at: https://www.norden.org/en/information/film-prize. (Accessed 1 July 2019).

Norðfjörð, B. (2010) *Dagur Kari's Noi the Albino*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Norðfjörð, B. (2015) 'Crime Up North: The Case of Norway, Finland and Iceland', in Kääpä, P., Gustafsson, T. (ed.) *Nordic Genre Film*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 61–76.

Nordic Co-operation Webpage. (2018) Welcome to Nordic Co-operation English', [online]. Available at: https://www.norden.org/en. (Accessed 16 September 2018).

Nordic Council of Ministers. (2018) 'Immigration and Integration Edition 2018', [online]. Available at: http://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1192284/FULLTEXT01.pdf. (Accessed 15 June 2019).

Nordic Council of Ministers. (2017) 'Nordic Statistics 2017', [online]. *Nordic Co-operation*. Available at: https://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1146911/FULLTEXT05.pdf. (Accessed 14 May 2019).

Nordisk Film and TV Fund Annual Report. (2015) *Nordisk Film & TV Fond Årsrapport 2015*, [online]. Available at: http://cdn.nordiskfilmogtvfond.com/assets/download/NFTF-Annual-Report-2015.pdf. (Accessed 4 January 2016).

Nordisk Kulturfond. (2014) 'MultiCool Nord', [online]. Available at: https://www.nordiskkulturfond.org/en/inspirational-projects/multicool-nord/. (Accessed 2 May 2019).

Norwegian Film Institute. (2019) 'Co-produce with Norway', [online]. Available at: file:///C:/Users/katie/Downloads/NFI-Co-production2019-NY.pdf. (Accessed 5th April 2019).

Norwegian Film Institute. (2019) 'Norwegian Doc Showcase at DOC Corner in Cannes', [online]. Available at: https://www.nfi.no/eng/news/2019/norwegian-doc-showcase-at-doc-corner-in-cannes. (Accessed 6 May 2019).

Norwegian Film Institute. (2018) 'Announcing Action Plan for Inclusion and Diversity in Norwegian Films and Film Culture', [online]. Available at: https://www.nfi.no/eng/news/2019/announcing-action-plan-for-inclusion-and-diversity-in-norwegian-films-and-film-culture. (Accessed 14 June 2019).

Norwegian Film Institute. (2018) 'The Power of Culture: Relevance. Audience. Sustainability', [online]. Available at: https://www.nfi.no/eng/about-us/relevance.audience.sustainability. (Accessed 16 June 2019).

Norwegian Ministry of Culture White Paper Statement. (2018) 'Relevance. Audience. Sustainability', [online]. *Norwegian Film Institute*. Available at: https://www.nfi.no/eng/about-us/relevance.audience.sustainability. (Accessed 23 April 2019).

Norwegian Film Institute. (2016) 'Facts and Figures Annual Report 2016', [online]. Available at: https://indd.adobe.com/view/e7a0e8ac-11a7-46d8-bc6a-19fdd91cee6e. (Accessed 27 June 2019).

Norwegian Film Institute. (2016) '*Welcome to Norway!* Facts Page', [online]. Available at:https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=no&u=https://www.nfi.no/tildelinger/produksjon/spillefilm/welcome-to-norway&prev=search. (Accessed 4 July 2019).

Norwegian Film Institute. (no date) 'About Us: Annual Budget', [online]. Available at: https://www.nfi.no/eng/about-us. (Accessed 16 June 2019).

Orange, R. (2019) 'Mette Frederiksen: The Anti-immigration Left Leader Set to Win Power in Denmark'. *The Guardian*, [online]. 11 May. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/may/11/denmark-election-matte-frederiksen-leftwing-immigration. (Accessed 25 June 2019).

Pantti, M. (2000) *Kansallinen elokuva pelastettava*. Helsinki: SKS.

Pantzar, K. (2018) *The Finnish Way: Finding Courage, Wellness, and Happiness Through the Power of Sisu*. London: Penguin Publishing Group.

Pearson, W. (2016) 'Memories of Cultural Dismemberment: Nils Gaup, Mons Somby, and the Re-Membering of Sámi History', in Hjort, M., Lindqvist, U. (ed.) *A*

Companion to Nordic Cinema. Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 377–396.

 Pettersson, L.G. (2007) 'Blåbärskriget" - film om landsbygden', *Sveska Dagbladet*, [online]. 24 October. Available at: https://www.svd.se/blabarskriget-film-om-landsbygden. (Accessed 4 May 2018).

Pham, A. (2005) 'Josef Fares Gets Highest SFI Support', *Cineuropa*, [online]. Available at: https://cineuropa.org/en/newsdetail/50663/. (Accessed 4 June 2019).

Pham, A. (2017) 'Nordisk Film and TV Fond: New Film Policy Creates Major Friction in Swedish Industry', [online]. Available at: http://www.nordiskfilmogtvfond.com/news/stories/new-film-policy-creates-major-roar-in-swedish-industry. (Accessed 7 June 2019).

Pham, A. (2019) 'Nordisk Film and TV Fond: Norwegian Way at the Berlinale', [online]. Available at: http://www.nordiskfilmogtvfond.com/news/stories/norwegian-way-at-the-berlinale. (Accessed 2 July 2019).

Phan, A. (2019) 'Anna Serner: 'Gender Equality and Diversity is the Key to Success', [online]. Nordisk Film and TV Fond. Available at: http://www.nordiskfilmogtvfond.com/news/interview/anna-serner-gender-equality-and-diversity-is-the-key-to-success. (Accessed 10 May 2019).

Pichler, G. (2014) 'An Interview with Gabriela Pichler', *Dharamshala International Film Festival*, [online]. 29 September. Available at: http://diff.co.in/blog/interview-gabriela-pitchler/ (Accessed 17 July 2018).

Pitakänen, K. et al. (2017) 'Nature-Based Integration Nordic Experiences and Examples', *Nordic Council of Ministers*,' [online]. Available at: https://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1099117/FULLTEXT01.pdf. (Accessed 13 April 2018).

Pitcher, B. (2014) *Consuming Race*. London: Routledge.

Pitkänen, P. et. al. (2017) 'Nature-based Integration', [online]. Available at: https://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1099117/FULLTEXT01.pdf. Accessed 10 March 2019).

Predelli, L. (2004) 'Interpreting Gender in Islam: A Case Study of Immigrant Muslim Women in Oslo, Norway', *Sociologists for Women in Society*, 18 (4), pp. 473-493.

Qijun H. (2016) *The Cinematic Representation of the Chinese American Family*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Raatz, M. (2018) 'Løkke varsler igen, igen opgør med parallelsamfund', Jyllands-Posten Indland, [online]. Available at: https://jyllands-posten.dk/indland/ECE10161455/loekke-varsler-igen-igen-opgoer-med-parallelsamfund/. (Accessed 4 April 2019).

Radovic, M. (2014) *Transnational Cinema and Ideology: Representing Religion, Identity and Cultural Myths*. London: Routledge.

Raengo, A. (2016) *Critical Race Theory and Bamboozled*. New York: Bloomsbury.

Rantanen, T. (2018) 'Co-Producing with the Nordic Countries', [online]. *Icelandic Film Centre*. Available at: http://www.kvikmyndamidstod.is/media/skjol/Co-Production-18-animation_hi-res--1-.pdf. (Accessed 2 May 2019).

Rastas, A. (2005) 'Racializing Categorization Among Young People in Finland', *Young: Nordic Journal of Youth Research*, 13 (2), pp. 147–166.

Rastas, A. (2009) 'Racism in the Everyday Life of Finnish Children with Transnational Roots', *Barn - Nordic Journal of Child Research,* 1, pp. 29–43.

Redvall, E. (2010) 'Henrik Ruben Genz', in Hjort, M., Jørholt, E., Redvall, E. (ed.) *The Danish Directors 2, Volume 2*. Bristol: Intellect, pp. 109–125.

Rees, E. (2015) 'The Nordic "Quirky Feel-Good"', in Kääpä, P., Gustafsson, T. (ed.) *Nordic Genre Film*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 147–19.

Reestorff, C.M. (2017) *Culture Wars*. Bristol: Intellect.

Roos, L. (2014) 'Post-Soviet Trauma in the Nordic Imagination: Occupation and Sex Trafficking in Purge and *Lilya 4-Ever', Baltic Screen Media Review*, 2 (1), pp. 22–35.

Römpötti, T. (2012) *Vieraana omassa maassa : suomalaiset road-elokuvat vapauden ja vastustuksen kertomuksina 1950-luvun lopusta 2000-luvulle*. Ph.D. University of Jyväskylä.

Römpötti, T. (2015) 'Fathers and Sons Reunited: Road Movies as Stories of

Generational Continuity', in Kääpä, P.,Gustafsson, T. (ed.) *Nordic Genre Film*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 133–146.

Salonen. A.S., Ohisalo, M and Laihiala, T. (2018) 'Undeserving, Disadvantaged, Disregarded: Three Viewpoints of Charity Food Aid Recipients in Finland', *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health Health*, 15 (12), pp. 1-15.

Samuels, S. (1978) 'The Evolutionary Image of the Jew in American Film', in Miller, R. (ed.) *Ethnic Images in American Film and Television*. Philadelphia: The Balch Institute. pp. 23-34.

Serner, A. (2017) 'Looking Back and Moving Forward: Swedish Film Institute Gender Equality Report 2017', [online]. *Swedish Film Institute*. Available at: https://www.filminstitutet.se/globalassets/_dokument/rapporter/swedish-film-insitute-gender-equality-report_2017_eng.pdf. (Accessed 10 May 2019).

Shaw, D. (2013) 'Deconstructing and Reconstructing "Transnational Cinema"', in Dennison, S. (ed.) *Contemporary Hispanic Cinema: Interrogating the Transnational in Spanish and Latin American Cinema*. Suffolk: Tamesis Books, pp. 47–67.

Shriver-Rice, M. (2015) *Inclusion in New Danish Cinema: Sexuality and Transnational Belonging*. Bristol: Intellect.

Siim, B., Meret, S. (2016). 'Right-wing Populism in Denmark: People, Nation and Welfare in the Construction of the 'Other'', in Lazaridis, G., Campani, G and Benveniste, A. (ed.) *The Rise of the Far-Right in Europe,* London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 109–136.

Sills-Jones, D., Kääpä, P. (2016) 'The Finnish Documentary: A Critical Overview of Historical Perspectives and Thematic Developments', *Studies in Documentary Film*, 10 (2), pp. 89-105.

Similä, M. (2003) 'Immigrants and Minorities in Finland: Problems and Challenges', in Turton, D., González, J. (ed.) *Immigration in Europe: Issues, Policies and Case Studies*. Bilbao: University of Deusto, pp. 97–113.

Simonsen, A. H. (2011) '"Just Like Vacuum …" Reporting the Roma Beggar Tourists in

Norway', in E. Edie., K. Nikunen. (ed.) *Media in Motion: Cultural Complexity and Migration in the Nordic Region*. London: Routledge, pp. 89–107.

Simonsen, K. (2015) Encountering Racism in the (post-) Welfare State: Danish Experiences, *Human Geography*, 97 (3), pp. 213-222.

Skarðhamar, A. K. (2008) 'Changes in Film Representations of Sami Culture and Identity', *Nordlit*, 23, pp. 293–303.

Skodo, A. (2018) 'Sweden: By Turns Welcoming and Restrictive in its Immigration Policy', *Migration Policy Institute*, [online]. Available at: https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/sweden-turns-welcoming-and-restrictive-its-immigration-policy. (Accessed 14 April 2019).

Slane, A. (2001) *A Not So Foreign Affair: Fascism, Sexuality, and the Cultural Rhetoric of American Democracy*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Smith, H. (2015) 'Shocking Images of Drowned Syrian Boy Show Tragic Plight of Refugees', *The Guardian*, [online]. 2 September. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/02/shocking-image-of-drowned-syrian-boy-shows-tragic-plight-of-refugees. (Accessed 23 August 2018).

Soila, T. (1998) 'Finland', in Iversen, G., Söderbergh Widding, A and Soila, T. (ed.) *Nordic National Cinemas*. London: Routledge, pp. 30–91.

Soila, T. (1998) 'Sweden', in Iversen, G., Söderbergh Widding, A and Soila, T. (eds.) *Nordic National Cinemas*. London: Routledge, pp. 142–232.

Soila, T. (2005) *The Cinema of Scandinavia*. London/New York: Wallflower Press.

Solum, O. (1997) 'Veiviserne', in Iversen, G., Solum, O. (ed.) *Nærbilder: Artikler om norsk filmhistorie*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, pp.187-202.

Sondrup, S., Sandberg, M. (2017) 'General Project Introduction', in Sondrup, S., Sandberg, M., Dubois, T., Ringaard, D. (ed.) *Nordic Literature: A Comparative History, Volume 1: Spatial Nodes*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, pp. 1–19.

Spivak, G. (1988) *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*. London: Routledge Classics.

Standing, G. (2011) *The Precariat; The Dangerous New Class*, London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic.

Standing, G. (2014) *A Precariat Charter: From Denizens to Citizens*. London: Bloomsbury.

Standing, G. (2016) *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*. London: Bloomsbury.

Statistics Finland. (2018) Population Structure 1900-2018', [online]. Available at: https://www.stat.fi/tup/suoluk/suoluk_vaesto_en.html. (Accessed 12 May 2019).

Statistics Iceland. (2018) 'Population by Country of Birth, Sex and Age 1 January 1998-2018', [online]. Available at: https://px.hagstofa.is/pxen/pxweb/en/Ibuar/Ibuar__mannfjoldi__3_bakgrunnur__F aedingarland/MAN12103.px/?rxid=92af00af-93d6-4d06-9be0-3a88f29ad64f. (Accessed 13 May 2019).

Statistics Sweden. (2018) 'Population Statistics in Summary 1960–2018', [online]. Available at: https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/statistik-efter-amne/befolkning/befolkningens-sammansattning/befolkningsstatistik/pong/tabell-och-diagram/helarsstatistik--riket/befolkningsstatistik-i-sammandrag/. (Accessed 14 May 2019).

Statistisk sentralbyrå. (2018) 'Immigrant Population of Norway Figures', [online]. Available at: https://www.ssb.no/en/befolkning/artikler-og-publikasjoner/14-per-cent-of-population-are-immigrants. (Accessed 8 May 2019).

Steele, J. (2017) '*What Young Men Do*', *Cinema Scandinavia*, [online]. 4 September. Available at: http://www.cinemascandinavia.com/what-young-men-do/ (Accessed 23 June 2018).

Stenport, A. (2012) *Lukas Moodysson's Show Me Love*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Stenport, A. (2014) '*Lilya 4-ever*: Post-Soviet Neoliberal Angels and Nordic Intellectual Secularism', *Scandinavica*, 53 (1), pp. 34–55.

Steve Garner (2014) 'Injured Nations, Racialising States and Repressed Histories: Making Whiteness Visible in the Nordic Countries', *Social Identities: Journal for the Study of Race, Nation and Culture*, 20 (6), pp. 407-422

Stiles, D., Eriksen, T. (2003) 'Psychosocial Adjustment and Migration in Norway', in Adler, L.L., Gielen, U.P. (ed.) *Migration: Immigration and Emigration in International Perspective*. London/Connecticut: Preager, pp. 207-224.

Stone, D. (2016) 'Nazi Race Ideologues', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 50 (4-5), pp. 445-457.

Stougaard-Nielsen, J. (2016) 'Nordic Noir in the UK: The Allure of Accessible Difference', *Journal of Aesthetics and Culture*, 8 (1), [online]. 8 November. Available at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.3402/jac.v8.32704?needAccess=true 9.(Accessed 3 September 2018).

Stråth, B., Sørensen, Ø. (1997) *The Cultural Construction of Norden*. Oslo: Scandinavian University Press.

Stubberud., E., Ringrose P. (2014) 'Speaking Images, Race-less Words: *Play* and The Absence of Race in Contemporary Scandinavia'', *Journal of Scandinavian Cinema*, 4 (1), pp. 61–76.

Sundholm, J., Andersson, L. (2019) *The Cultural Practice of Immigrant Filmmaking: Minor Immigrant Cinemas in Sweden 1950-1990*. London: Intellect.

Sundholm, J., Thorsen, I., Andersson, L.G., Hedling, O., Iversen, G., Møller, B. (2012) *Historical Dictionary of Scandinavian Cinema*. Maryland: Scarecrow Press.

Sundmark, B. (2011) 'Of Nils and Nation: Selma Lagerlöf's *The Wonderful Adventures of Nils*', *International Research in Children's Literature*, 1 (2), pp. 168-186.

Swank, D. (2002) *Global Capital, Political Institutions, and Policy Change in Developed Welfare States*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Swedish Film Institute. (2018) 'Facts and Figures: A Man Called Ove TV Ratings', [online], Available at: https://www.filminstitutet.se/globalassets/2.-fa-kunskap-om-film/analys-och-statistik/publications/facts-and-figures/facts--figures-2018.pdf. (Accessed 26 June 2019).

Swedish Film Institute. (2018) 'Facts and Figures', [online]. Available at: https://www.filminstitutet.se/globalassets/2.-fa-kunskap-om-film/analys-och-statistik/publications/facts-and-figures/facts--figures-2018.pdf. (Accessed 25 June 2019).

Swedish Film Institute. (2016) 'A fully governmental film policy – bill', [online].

    Available at: https://www.filminstitutet.se/en/about-us/filmpolitiken/a-fully-

    governmental-film-policy--bill/. (Accessed 12 April 2019).

Swedish Film Institute. (2016) 'Statistikrapport 2016-03 Mars och första kvartalet 2016',

    [online]. Available at: https://www.filminstitutet.se/globalassets/2.-fa-kunskap-om-

    film/analys-och-statistik/publikationer/manadsrapporter/2016/2016-03-mars-

    2016.pdf. (Accessed 24 June 2019).

Swedish Film Institute. (2016) 'Swedish Film: Måns Månsson', *issuu*, [online].

    Available at:

    https://issuu.com/swedishfilminstitute/docs/swedish_film_1_2016_sidor/20.

    (Accessed 28 June 2019).

Swedish Film Institute. (2015) 'Facts and Figures: *A Man Called Ove* Cinema

    Admissions', [online]. Available at: https://www.filminstitutet.se/globalassets/2.-fa-

    kunskap-om-film/analys-och-statistik/publications/facts-and-

    figures/Facts_and_Figures_2015.pdf. (Accessed 28 June 2019).

Swedish Film Institute. (2015) 'History', [online]. Available at:

    https://www.filminstitutet.se/sv/om-oss/vart-uppdrag/verksamhet--

    organisation/historik/. (Accessed 15 May 2019.)

Swedish Film Institute. (2013) 'Financing of Film: A Comparison of Public Film

    Funding in Eight European Countries', [online]. Available at:

    https://www.filminstitutet.se/globalassets/2.-fa-kunskap-om-film/analys-och-

    statistik/publications/other-

    publications/financing_of_film_a_comparative_overview_final.pdf. (Accessed 12

    June 2019).

Swedish Film Institute. (2012) '*Äta sova dö*', [online]. Available at:

    http://www.svenskfilmdatabas.se/sv/Item/?type=film&itemid=68810#comments.

    (Accessed 17 June 2019).

Swedish Film Institute. (2008) 'Så gör du en kritikersuccé/*The Blueberry War*'s SFI Rating', [online]. Available at: https://www.filminstitutet.se/sv/nyheter/2008/sa-gor-du-en-kritikersucce/. (Accessed 3 June 2019).

Swedish Film Institute. (no date) 'Swedish Film Database: *Jag heter Stelios* (1972)', [online]. Available at: http://www.svenskfilmdatabas.se/en/Item/?type=film&itemid=4893#awards. (Accessed 6 March 2019).

Syvertsen, T. (2014) *The Media Welfare State: Nordic Media in the Digital Age*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Søderberg, M. T. (2016) *Hygge: The Danish Art of Happiness*. London: Michael Joseph Penguin Books.

Söderbergh Widding, A. (1998) 'Iceland', in Iversen, G., Söderbergh Widding, A and Soila, T. (ed.) *Nordic National Cinemas*. London: Routledge, pp. 91–97.

Tapper, M. (2014) *Swedish Cops: From Sjöwall and Wahlöö to Stieg Larsson*. Bristol: Intellect.

Tench Coxe, B. (2010) 'Playground-Graveyard: Violence, the Body and Borderline Urban Space in "*Lilja 4-Ever*"', *Ulbandus Review, 13, pp.* 29-40.

The Economist. (2013) 'The Next Supermodel', [online]. Available at: https://www.economist.com/leaders/2013/02/02/the-next-supermodel. (Accessed 13 May 2019).

Thomson, C. C. (2006a) 'Incense in the Snow: Topologies of Intimacy and Interculturality in Friðriksson's *Cold Fever* and Gondry's *Jóga*', in Thomson, C. C. (ed.) *Northern Constellations: New Readings in Nordic Cinema*. Norwich: Norvik Press, pp. 149–174.

Thomson, C. C. (2006b) *Northern Constellations: New Readings in Nordic Cinema*. Norwich: Norvik Press.

Thomson, C. C. (2013) Thomas Vinterberg's *Festen* (*The Celebration*). Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Toğral, B. (2011) 'Convergences of Securitizatation of Migration and "New Racism" in

Europe: Rise of Culturalism and Disappearance of Politics', in Lazaridis, G. (ed.) *Security, Insecurity and Migration in Europe*. London: Routledge, pp. 219–293.

Toivanen, M. (2014) 'The Visual Lexica of (National) Belonging and Nonbelonging in the Accounts of Young Kurds in Finland', *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*, 4(4), pp. 192-200.

Tägil, S. (1995) *Ethnicity and Nation-Building in the Nordic World*. London: Hurst and Co.

Trifonova, T. (2007) 'Code Unknown: European Identity in Cinema', *Scope*, 8, [online]. Available at: https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/scope/documents/2007/may-2007/trifonova.pdf .(Accessed 23 February 2018).

University of Gothenburg. (2014) *Rooting Out Intolerance: The Kungälv Model*, [online]. Available at: http://citiesofmigration.ca/good_idea/rooting-out-intolerance-the-kungalv-model/ .(Accessed: 4 January 2016).

Valtysson, B. (2016) 'Nor Cool, but Cosy – Five Perspectives on Nordic City Cultural Policies', *Nordisk kulturpolitisk tidsskrift*, [online]. Available at: https://www.idunn.no/nkt/2016/02/not_cool_but_cosy_-_five_perspectives_on_nordic_city_cultu. (Accessed 26 April 2019).

Vice, S. (2015) 'Tragedy or Neutropia? The Honourable Woman', in *Open University Postcolonial Literatures Research Group, The Promised Land: Utopia and Dystopia in Contemporary British Jewish Culture*. Open University.

Vilhjalmsson, B. (2012) 'Violently Funny: Comedic Capers, Claustrophobia and Icelandic Crime Cinema', in Conolly, J., Whelan, C. (ed.) *World Film Locations: Reykjavik*. Bristol: Intellect, pp. 74–90.

Vitting-Seerup, S. (2017) 'Working Towards Diversity with a Post-migrant Perspective: How to Examine Representation of Ethnic Minorities in Cultural Institutions', *Journal of Aesthetics and Culture*, 9 (2), pp. 45-55.

Volquardsen, E. (2014) 'Scandinavia and "The Land of UnSwedish Freedom": Jonathan Franzen, Susan Bier and Self-conceptions of Exceptionalism in Crisis', in Loftsdóttir, K., Jensen, L. (ed.) *Crisis in the Nordic Nations and Beyond: At the*

Intersection of Environment, Finance and Multiculturalism. London: Routledge, pp. 31–50.

Wahlbeck, Ö. (2018) 'To Share or Not to Share Responsibility? Finnish Refugee Policy and the Hesitant Support for a Common European Asylum System', *Journal of Immigrant and Refugee Studies*, 17 (3), pp. 299-316.

Walter, R. J. (2016) *Coercive Concern: Nationalism, Liberalism, and the Schooling of Muslim Youth*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Wiking, M. (2016) *The Little Book of Hygge: The Danish Way to Live Well*. London: Penguin Life.

Willis, H. (2005) *New Digital Cinema: Reinventing the Moving Image*. London/New York: Wallflower Press.

Wilson, J. (2016) 'Fear and Loathing on the Streets: The Soldiers of Odin and the Rise of Anti-Refugee Vigilantes', *The Guardian*, [online]. 28 October. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/oct/28/fear-and-loathing-on-the-streets-the-soldiers-of-odin-and-the-rise-of-anti-refugee-vigilantes. (Accessed 3 February 2017).

Winton, E. (2011) 'New Nordic Documentary Cinema Making Identity Visible'. *POV*, [online]. 1 September. Available at: http://povmagazine.com/articles/view/new-nordic-documentary-cinema. (Accessed 12 May 2018).

Woodhead, H. (2018) 'Real-Life Terror: Is it Exploitative to Use Human Suffering for Cinematic Thrills?', *The Guardian*, [online]. 3 September. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/film/2018/sep/03/real-life-terror-is-it-exploitative-to-use-human-suffering-for-cinematic-thrills. (Accessed 4 October 2018).

Woolridge, A. (2013) 'Special Report: The Nordic Countries', *The Economist*, [online]. Available at: https://www.economist.com/sites/default/files/20130202_nordic_countries.pdf. (Accessed 25 June 2019).

Wright, E. (2002) 'Wong, Kar-wai', *Senses of Cinema*, 20, [online]. Available at: http://sensesofcinema.com/2002/great-directors/wong/. (Accessed 4 April 2017).

Wright, R. (1998) *The Visible Wall: Jews and Other Ethnic Minorities in Swedish Cinema*. Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press.

Wright, R. (2005) '"Immigrant" Film in Sweden at the Millennium', in Nestingen, A., Elkington, T. (ed.) *Transnational Cinema in a Global North: Nordic Cinema in Transition*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, pp. 55–73.

Yang, J. Q. M. (2018) *Screening Privilege: Global Injustice and Responsibility in 21st-Century Scandinavian Film and Media*. PhD. University of Oslo.

Zaniello, T. (2007) *The Cinema of Globalization: A Guide to Films About the New Economic Order*. New York: Cornell University Press.

Zhang, Y. (2010) *Cinema, Space, and Polylocality in a Globalizing China*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Žižek, S. (1997) 'Multiculturalism, or, the Cultural Logic of Multinational Capitalism', *New Left Review*, 1(225), pp. 28–51.

Žižek, S. (2007) 'Tolerance as an Ideological Category: The Culturalization of Politics', *Critical Inquiry*,' [online]. Available at: http://www.lacan.com/zizek-inquiry.html. (Accessed 12 October 2015).

Žižek, S. (2016) 'The Cologne Attacks Were an Obscene Version of Carnival', *New Statesman*, [online]. Available at: https://www.newstatesman.com/world/europe/2016/01/slavoj-zizek-cologne-attacks. (Accessed 17 September 2018).

Film and Television References

Abbasi, Ali (2018), *Border*, Sweden: Meta Film Stockholm/Spark Film & TV/Kärnfilm/Film i Väst.

Allen, Johannes and Sørensen, Anker (1957), *Night Girls (Bed without Breakfast)*, Denmark: Dansk Film co.

Ambo, Phie and Saif, Sami (2001), *Family*, Denmark: Cinevita Aps.

Axel, Gabriel (1950), *Golden Mountains* (*The Girls are Willing*), Denmark: Nordisk Film.

Bergenstråhle, Johan (1972), *Foreigners*, Sweden: Stiftelsen Svenska Filminstitutet/ FilmTeknik AB.

Berthheussen, Mona Friis (2013), *Twin Sisters*, Norway/United Kingdom: BBC.

Bertheussen, Mona Friis (2008), *Welcome to Norway*, Norway: Moment TV.

Blomberg, Erik (1952), *The White Reindeer*, Finland: Junior-Film Oy.

Blue Eyes (2014-2015), Sweden: Strix Drama/Sveriges Television (SVT)/ Film i Väst/Ljud & Bildmedia/Chimney.

Boe, Christoffer (2018), *The Purity of Vengeance*, Denmark/Germany: Zentropa Entertainments/Det Danske Filminstitut/Deutscher Filmförderfonds (DFFF)/Film i Väst/Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein/Nordmedia Fonds.

Borgen (2010-2013), Denmark: DR1.

Broen (2011–18), Sweden/Denmark: Nimbus Film/Filmlance International.

Brooks, James. L (1997), *As Good as It Gets*, United States: TriStar Pictures/Gracie Films.

Clausen, Erik (1988), *Rami and Julie*, Denmark: Film-Cooperativet Danmark/C.C. Cosmos Cph.

Cuarón, Alfonso (2006), *Children of Men*, United Kingdom/United States/Japan:Universal Pictures/Strike Entertainment/Hit & Run Productions/Ingenious Film Partners 2/Toho-Towa.

De Palma, Brian (1983), *Scarface*, United States: Universal Pictures.

Denstad, Rune Langlo (2016), *Welcome to Norway!*, Norway: Motlys.

Dinesen, Robert (1917), *A Prince of Bharata I,* Denmark: Nordisk Film Kompagni.

Douglas, Róbert Ingi (2002), *A Man Like Me*, Iceland: KISI- The Icelandic Film
 Company/Icelandic Film Fund.

Ericsson, Wiktor (2017), *Strawberry Days*, Sweden: Anagram Film & TV AB.

Espinosa, Daniel (2010) *Easy Money*, Sweden: Tre Vänner Produktion AB.

Fares, Josef (2005), *Zozo*, Sweden/Czech Republic/UK/Denmark: Memfis Film/Film i
 Väst/Sigma Films/Zentropa Entertainments.

Fares, Josef (2000), *Jalla Jalla!*, Sweden: Memfis Film AB.

Fiennes, Sophie (2006), *The Pervert's Guide to Cinema*, United Kingdom: Amoeba
 Film/Kasander Film Company/Lone Star Productions/Mischief Films.

Friðriksson, Friðrik Þór (1995), *Cold Fever*, Iceland/Denmark/Japan/Germany/United
States: Icicle/Altar Productions/Film Fonds/Icelandic Film/Pandora Filmproduktion/
Sunrise/Zentropa Entertainments.

Gaup, Nils (2008), *The Kautokeino Rebellion*, Norway: Borealis Production.

Gaup, Nils (1987), *Pathfinder*, Norway: Norsk Film.

Gauriloff, Katja (2016), *Kaisa's Enchanted Forest*, Finland: AVEK/Finnish Film
 Foundation/ Oktober/Yleisradio (YLE).

Gauriloff, Katja (2007), *A Shout into the Wind*, Finland: Oktober Oy.

Genz, Henrik Ruben (2005), *Chinaman*, Denmark: Fine and Mellow.

Gilliam, Terry (1985), *Brazil*, United Kingdom/United States: Embassy International
 Pictures/Brazil Productions.

Gilliam, Terry (1981), *Time Bandits*, United Kingdom: Handmade Films Limited/Janus
 Films.

Greengrass, Paul (2018), *22 July*, Norway/Iceland/United States: Scott Rudin
 Productions.

Haukeland, Jon (2016), *What Young Men Do,* Norway: Mediaoperatørene.

Helke, Susanne (2016), *The Playground*, Finland: For Real Productions.

Hirvonen, Elina (2017), *Boiling Point*, Finland: Mouka Filmi Oy.

Holm, Hannes (2015), *A Man Called Ove*, Sweden: Tre Vänner.

Høst, Per (1957), *Same Jacket*, Norway: Per Høst Film A/S.

Hristov, Tonislav (2011), *Rules of a Single Life*, Finland: Making Movies Oy/AVEK/Agitprop/BNT/Finnish Film Foundation/Nordisk Film & TV Finland/Norsk Rikskringkasting (NRK)/Yleisradio (YLE).

Hussain, Khalid (2005), *Import-Export*, Norway: Filmhuset AS.

Jensen, Astrid Henning (1959), *Paw*, Denmark: Laterna Film.

Jóhannesson, Olaf de Fleur (2005), *Africa United*, Iceland: Poppoli Pictures.

Jóhannesson, Olaf de Fleur (2011), *City State*, Iceland: Poppoli Pictures.

Karabuda, Barbro (1981), *Blackskull*, Sweden: Drakfilm Produktion.

Karukoski, Dome (2010), *Lapland Odyssey*, Finland: Helsinki Filmi Oy/Anagram Produktion/ Ripple World Pictures.

Karukoski, Dome (2013), *Heart of Lion*, Finland: Film i Väst/Helsinki Filmi Oy/Kirkon Mediasäätiö/Nordisk Film- & TV-Fond/SVT/Suomen Elokuvasäätiö/Svenska Filminstitutet (SFI)/Yleisradio (YLE).

Kaurismäki, Aki (2017), *The Other Side of Hope*, Finland: Sputnik/Bufo/Pandora Film.

Kaurismäki, Aki (2011), *Le Havre*, Finland: Sputnik/Pyramide Productions/Pandora Film.

Kaurismäki, Aki (2002), *The Man Without a Past*, Finland: Sputnik/Yleisradio (YLE)/Pandora Filmproduktion/ZDF/Arte/Network Movie Film-und Fernsehproduktion/Pyramide Productions/Arte France Cinéma/Canal+/Centre National de la Cinématographie (CNC)/Bavaria Film.

Kernell, Amanda (2016), *Sami Blood*, Sweden/Denmark/Norway: Nordisk Film Production Sverige AB Bautafilm AB Digipilot A/S Nordisk Film Production A/S Sveriges Television AB.

Kjartansdóttir, Ásthildur (2018), *The Deposit*, Iceland: Askja Films and Rebella Filmworks.

Kormákur, Baltasar (2002), *The Sea*, Iceland/France/Norway: Blueeyes Productions/Emotion Pictures/Filmhuset AS.

Kormákur, Baltasar (2000), *101 Reykjavík,* Iceland/Denmark/Norway: Blueeyes Productions/Filmhuset AS/ Liberator Productions/ Troika Entertainment GmbH/ Zentropa Entertainments.

288

Larsen, Egil Håskjold (2017), *69 Minutes of 86 Days*, Norway: Sant and Usant.

Louhimies, Aku (2017), *The Unknown Soldier,* Finland: Elokuvaosakeyhtiö Suomi 2017/ Kvikmyndafélag Íslands/ Scope Pictures.

Lundby, Ellen-Astri (2009), *My Mother's Secret*, Norway: Nordic Film Institute.

Mansson, Måns (2016), *The Yard*, Sweden/Germany: Anagram Film & TV AB.

Maylett, Hanna (2011), *A Beggar Film*, Finland: Avanton Productions Oy.

Midnight Sun (2016 –), Sweden: Sveriges Television (SVT)/Canal Plus/Nice Drama/Atlantique Productions/Filmpool Nord/GMT Productions/Nordisk Film- & TV-Fond.

Miladinovic, Voja (1974), *Guest Workers*, Denmark: Crone Film.

Mollberg, Rauni (1973), *The Earth is a Sinful Song*, Finland: RM-Tuotanto.

Moodysson, Lukas (2002), *Lilya 4-ever*, Sweden: Memfis Films/Film i Väst/Sveriges Television/Zentropa Entertainments/Svenska Filminstitutet/Det Danske Filminstitut.

Nakache, Oliver and Toledano, Éric (2011), *Untouchable*, France: Quad Productions/Ten Films/Canal+/CinéCinéma/TF1/Chaocorp/Gaumont/TF1 Films Production.

Noer, Michael (2013), *Northwest*, Denmark: Nordisk Film Production/Danmarks Radio (DR/ Det Danske Filminstitut.

Noer, Michael and Lindholm, Tobias (2010), *R: Hit First, Hit Hardest*, Denmark: Nordisk Film.

Olsen, Lasse Spang (1999), *In China They Eat Dogs*, Denmark: Steen Herdel & Co.

Osten, Suzanne (1993), *Speak Up! It's So Dark*, Sweden: Göta Film AB/Stiftelsen Svenska Filminstitutet/ Sveriges Television AB/ TV2/Kodak AB.

Östlund, Ruben (2011), *Play*, Sweden: Plattform Produktion/Coproduction Office.

Özer, Muammer (1984), *Fragmentation*, Sweden: Devkino.

Parsa, Reza (2000), *Before the Storm*, Sweden: Felicia Film/Film i Väst/Illusion Film & Television/Mainostelevisio (MTV3)/Norsk Film/Per Holst Filmproduktion/ Ríkisútvarpið-Sjónvarp RÚV/SVT Drama/Sveriges Television (SVT)/TV1000 AB.

Pettersson, Lars-Göran (2007), *The Blueberry War*, Sweden: Mañana Film AB/Film Form i Örebro AB.

Pettersson, Lars-Göran (2003), *Bázo*, Norway: Filbmagoahti A/S/Filmpool Nord.

Philp, Katrine (2013), *Suitable*, Denmark: Bullitt Film**.**

Pichler, Gabriela (2018), *Amateurs*, Sweden: Film i Väst/Garagefilm International.

Pichler, Gabriela (2012), *Eat, Sleep, Die*, Sweden: Anagram Produktion AB.

Poppe, Erik (2018), *U – July 22*, Norway: Paradox Film 7/Paradox/MEDIA Programme of the European Union/Nordisk Film- & TV-Fond/Norsk Filminstitutt.

Refn, Anders (1976), *Copper*, Denmark: Crone Films.

Refn, Nicolas Winding (2005), *Pusher III: I'm the Angel of Death*, Denmark: Det Danske Filminstitut/Nordisk Film/ TV2 Danmark/ Pusher III Ltd/ NWR Film Productions.

Refn, Nicolas Winding (2004), *Pusher II: With Blood on My Hands*, Denmark: Nordisk Film/Billy's People.

Refn, Nicolas Winding (1996), *Pusher*, Denmark: Balboa Entertainment.

Rolfsen, Ulrik Imtiaz (2014), *Haram*, Norway: Curry Film.

Ronkainen, Mika (2012), *Finnish Blood Swedish Heart*, Finland: Hysteria Film AB/Klaffi Productions.

Rolfsen, Ulrik Imtiaz (2005), *Izzat*, Norway: Filmkameratene A/S.

Saleh, Tarik (2009), *Metropia*, Sweden: Atmo Media Network/Boulder Media Limited.

Scherfig, Lone (2000), *Italian for Beginners*, Denmark: Danmarks Radio (DR)/Det Danske Filminstitut/Zentropa Entertainments.

Scorsese, Martin (1990), *Goodfellas*, United States: Warner Bros.

Scott, Ridley (1982), *Blade Runner*, United States/Hong Kong: The Ladd Company/Shaw Brothers/Blade Runner Partnership.

Shargawi, Omar (2008), *Go with Peace, Jamil*, Denmark: Zentropa.

Simma, Paul-Anders (1997), *The Minister of State*, Finland: Eurimages/Filmpool Nord/Kinotuotanto//MovieMakers/Nordisk Film- & TV-Fond/Northern Lights/SVT Drama/ Svenska Filminstitutet (SFI)/Yleisradio (YLE).

Skam (2015–17), Norway: NRK.

Standing, Leif (1932), *The Gypsy Boy*, Norway: Viking-Film.

Sveriges Television (SVT)/Meta Film/Copenhagen Film Fund/Svenska Filminstitutet (SFI)/Eurimages/MEDIA Programme of the European Union/Nordisk Film- & TV-Fond/Det Danske Filminstitut.

Talvensaari, Elina (2010), *How to Pick Berries*, Finland: Aalto University.

The Killing (2007-2012), Denmark: DR.

Tomic, Vladimir (2015), *Flotel Europa*, Denmark: Uzrok.

Trapped (2015-), Iceland: RVK Studios.

Trier, Lars von (1992), *Europa*, Denmark/United Kingdom: Det Danske Filminstitut/Svenska Filminstitutet/Eurimages/UGC.

Uggadóttir, Ísold (2018), *And Breathe Normally*, Iceland: Zik Zak Filmworks.

Valkama, Samuli (2017), *Unexpected Journey*, Finland: Solar Films.

Vanne, Ilkka (2003), *Land of Love*, Finland: Matila Röhr Productions (MRP).

Vinterberg, Thomas (1998), *The Celebration*, Denmark: Nimbus Film Productions/Danmarks Radio (DR)/Nordisk Film- & TV-Fond/SVT Drama.

Vinterberg, Thomas (2010), *Submarino*, Sweden/Denmark: Nimbus Film Productions/TV2 Danmark/Nordisk Film- & TV-Fond/Canal+/Swedish Television/Mainstream/Nordisk Film ShortCut/Lysudlejningen/Kameraudlejningen.

Wajstedt, Liselotte (2007), *Sámi Daughter Yoik*, Sweden: LittleBig Productions.

Wielopolska, Brita (1989), *17 Up, (Sally's Bizniz)*, Denmark: Det Danske Filmstudie/Obel Film.

Wong, Kar-wai (2000), *In the Mood for Love*, China/Hong Kong: Block 2 Pictures/Jet Tone Production/ Paradis Films.