Bakom Rubrikerna

A critique against displays of selective sympathy towards refugees in Swedish society and media.
Abstract

Bakom Rubrikerna (Behind the headlines) is a project that uses visual communication and the idea of negative space to critique Swedish media, politicians, and the discourse regarding refugees with different backgrounds (cultural, geographical, socioeconomical, religious, political) and ethnicities. It explores the concept of selective sympathy and what role media, especially newsprints, have in recreating harmful narratives around certain refugees. The project aims to give the reader a deeper understanding of the harmful Eurocentric and xenophobic views that influence refugee politics and media's coverage of the two different refugee (human) crises, in 2015 and today, in 2022.

Table of Content

1. Introduction
   1.1 Background & research question
   1.2 Finale Outcome
   1.3 Disclaimer

2. Contextualisation and frameworks
   2.1 History of immigration to Sweden, reactions and the ward on terror.
   2.2 Selective Sympathy
   2.3 Orientalism
   2.4 CWS

3. Project and Process
   3.1 Methods
      3.1a Collecting articles
      3.1b Black Out Poetry
      3.1c Theoretical analysis of readings
   3.2 Visual References and Inspiration
   3.3 Design process

4. Conclusion and discussion

5. References

6. Addendum

Keywords

Swedish media, newsprint, selective sympathy, refugee rights, xenophobia, orientalism, refugee politics
1.1 Background & research question

Media and newsprint play a huge role in communicating the world to their reader. What media we consume and how phrasing is used in that media makes us, either consciously or unconsciously, form an opinion of the world (Soules, 2015). During 2015, the biggest topic in media in Sweden (and all over Europe) was the on-going migration from the terror in the Middle East and exposed parts of north-eastern Africa. Only during that year, the number of forcibly displaced worldwide increased by 5.6 million (UNCHR, 2015) and the number of asylum seekers in Sweden reached an historic peak at 162,000 in one year. (Sweden, n.d.)

The headlines depicted the treacherous terror of the “Death Sea” and a tidal wave of empathy hit Europe when the picture of 3 year old Alan Kurdi’s dead body flushed up on a beach in Turkey was published. But at the same time, media painted an image of the “desperate” refugees doing anything (tearing down fences, marching on the highway, fleeing border controls and police forces) to enter EU and top politicians warned about the chaos that came marching in with the refugee crisis. Far right movements and parties were quick to spread their seeds and flowered all over Europe, not least in Sweden where the success story of the Sweden Democrats (SD) became clear during the election in 2018. Having first entered the parliament only 8 years earlier, SD since the previous election in 2014 increased by 4,68 percentage points and became the third biggest party in Sweden.

For me, the refugees only existed within the headlines until November 2015. I spent a lot of my childhood in church, even though my parents aren’t “active” Christians. Smögen is a tiny little island, and if you didn’t play football there really wasn’t a lot of other activities, so for me the church became a place to hang out. While the church in Smögen in general is very liberal, the idea of being a “Good Christian” is very, very present. To be a good human that helps those in need is drilled into every fibre of their organisation. So, when the first asylum accommodation, Lyckan, opened in our municipality it didn’t take many days before the church was there to see how they could help. They started a guitar orchestra, brought fika, made craft nights for the children and together with the organisation Pay it Forward distributed clothes and other necessities.

Me and some of my friends (who also were involved with church) joined them one Saturday. We were met at the gate by a bunch of kids that came rushing towards us, thrilled to see new people. We started playing football on the gravel courtyard of the accommodation. It was us, four or five Swedish teenage girls, a few of the older church men and then all the little kids aged between 8 – 18. The refugee teenage girls sat on the veranda watching us, together with their mothers and the church ladies. After that Saturday we spent almost every single weekend at Lyckan, and some weeks we were there after school as well. We mostly played with the smaller children or hung out with the teenage boys. In the beginning we communicated with smiles, hand gestures and the few words we knew in each other’s languages. After a couple of months, as their Swedish improved, we started sharing stories; about life, dreams, hopes for the future, about loss, pain and the trauma of fleeing your home. Strangers turned into friends, headlines and numbers in statistics into real humans, brought with their own dreams, nightmares, goals, and quirks just like the rest of us. Hearing their stories made me realise something, never before had I been so close to such a story in the news written by a refugee, I had only read things about refugees. Hayfaa Chalabi comments on this in the abstract to her thesis Refugees Welcome (2020):

“Refugees are often portrayed as immigrants and nothing but immigrants, faceless victims on news, and often de-named suffering people drowning in some ocean. This portrayal makes the humanity of the refugee invisible.” (p. 1)

I believe that meeting the humans at Lyckan fundamentally changed my view on the topic of refugee (human) rights and is also probably why I feel like it is such an important topic to me. But what happens when the stories I heard, stories that create compassion and empathy never reach the majority of Swedish citizens? When humans turn into statistics and are viewed like an anonymous, homogeneous group, how does that change our perspective of the group?

Since 2015, questions about immigration, integration and criminality have never been far from media’s spotlight. Often discussed with regards to consequences of each other, these topics drive and influence citizens thoughts and ultimately, what party they choose to vote for. Now, when I started working on this topic early in February, I was mostly interested in looking at how Swedish media has portrayed refugees and the refugee “crisis” since it started in 2015 and how this discourse has affected our understanding of asylum seekers and the ups and downs in support for right-wing parties. Then, on the 22nd of February Putin’s armies invade Ukraine and a full-scale war started.

Europe once again became the centre of a human crisis of enormous scale. Less than three months after the invasion, over 5 million Ukrainians have fled the country and another 7,7 million are displaced within Ukraine. (Sverige för UNCHR, n.d.) The news once again filled with discussions about refugees and refugee policies, but the rhetoric used this time is fundamentally different from the one used in 2015. Parties that before had advocated for closed borders and stated that “Europe is full” changed sides overnight and suddenly wanted to welcome refugees with open arms. For what feels like the first time ever all parties in the Swedish Government, from left wing to far right-wing, where unanimous; these refugees needed our help, and they were going to get it. Even SD whose entire program is based on a Sweden with closed borders and a homogeneous, nationless society seemed eager to provide whatever means necessary to help those fleeing Putin’s aggressions. (Rosén, af Kleen, Costantini, 2022)

It seemed thoroughly impossible for me to ignore the crisis happening as I am writing this text, and thus the project and what is at its core also took a turn. The change in discourse around refugees, both in media, from political and in everyday society, we have witnessed during the last months needs to be addressed. Thus, the focus of my project moved away from being an investigation of how phrasing in media has affected xenophobia in Sweden, and now focuses on showing how xenophobia, orientalism and eurocentrism has affected Sweden’s reaction to refugees from different countries, cultures, and ethnicities.

I asked myself; how can I, as a visual communicator, highlight and underline structures of selective sympathy and xenophobia in Swedish news media and in Swedish society? I realised that I, as a
white, middleclass, Swedish citizen, belong to the target audience for a newsprint in Sweden. It is me, and people like me (privileged, white Swedes that have never needed to worry about fleeing war or conflict, and therefore receive most of their information about people going through these hardships through the news) that they are addressing and it is in turn people like me that need to understand these dangerous structures of xenophobia if we want to see a real change in behaviour.

1.2 Finale outcome

My final outcome, the newsprint Bakom Rubrikena, uses the idea of negative space and Black out poetry to reframe articles and put the hypocrisy of European politicians and media out in the light. It combines more experimental short "poems" with a few more in-depth articles to provide my reader with a better understanding of structures of xenophobia and selective sympathy. The project critiques the eurocentric, xenophobic and postcolonial thoughts that still exists in Sweden today. I also see it as a critique against the authority of newsprints and how their reflection of society is often seen as the truth, even though it is just that, a reflection.

1.3 Disclaimer

While I hope most people reading this already understand this notion, I cant help but feel like a disclaimer is needed. This project is in no way a critique against the humans fleeing Ukraine. I feel the deepest sympathy for the women, men and children forced to flee their homes, and for the ones who has stayed behind to fight for their own and their country's freedom and independence. I feel proud to know how well (most) of these refugees have been met and treated by my fellow Europeans, but in the words of Alice Aedy (2022):

"How do I celebrate the warm welcome of Ukrainians across borders, but simultaneously grieve the stark contrast to Europe's response to the Syrian refugee crisis?... The double standard is blatant. Indeed, we're unlikely to see the informal refugee camps at border like the ones I've visited across Europe - and if Ukrainians needed to cross an ocean, we most certainly wouldn't let them drown. The hypocrisy is painful. The Syrian crisis was not a political crisis, it was a crisis of empathy.

So when you speak of the war in Ukraine, in the same breath, don't forget to mention refugees Syria, Palestine, Afghanistan and beyond. Open your heart and avoid what @hassan-akkad called 'selective sympathy'. Our solidarity should be endlessly expansive, our compassion should know no limits."
2. CONTEXTUALISATION AND FRAMEWORKS

2.1 History of immigration to Sweden, reactions and the ward on terror.

1991, The collapse of former Yugoslavia and the treacherous war that followed caused over 2 million people to flee. Around 100,000 of them fled to Sweden and 70,000 were granted asylum (de Lima Fagerlind, 2015). According to DNS examination the former refugees where well integrated to Swedish society only 10 years after arriving to Sweden and in 2015 the average income of former Yugoslavians was one of Katarina Boréus (2006) four points of discursive discrimination. In the discussion of refugees, this exclusion from the narrative means we never or rarely get to hear their stories and we are as such distanced from their feelings, hardships and their humanity. Furthermore, the wording used in the articles discussing refugees and asylum seekers rarely had a positive connotation. This does of course affect the Swedish readers and their attitude towards refugees and asylum seekers.

However, as mentioned earlier, the integration of refugees from the Balkans in 1990 has gone very well. Despite some hesitancy in the beginning, Balkan people are today more or less fully a part of and included in Swedish society. Very few people, even ones of far-right opinions seem to be troubled by the presence of Balkan people. For the people who came here in 2015, the situation looks widely different, racism and discrimination of those people is still a widespread problem in Sweden.

In the essay “Vad är språklig diskriminering” Mats Landqvist (2015) mentions that if there “is already an established structure of discrimination towards a certain group of people, almost all connotations of that group in time becomes condescending since the meaning is created by the already established (negative) picture.” (p. 97. Translated from Swedish). This shows that even when the language used can seem neutral and not necessary negative, phrases and wording can still provide an overall negative connotation because of the already pre-conceived images and stereotypes of said group present in society.

After 9/11, George Busch declared war against terrorism. In his speech on October 11th 2001 Bush declared:

“”The attack took place on American soil, but it was an attack on the heart and soul of the civilized world.” (George W Bush Presidential Library and Museum, .n.d.)

What the president is basically implementing is that USA is to been seen as the centre of “the civilised world, and that the terrorist who committed this comes from a part of the world which is to be seen as uncivilised, barbaric and a threat to the free western world. While Bush goes on to mention how America “are the friends of almost a billion worldwide who practice the Islamic faith” (George W Bush Presidential Library and Museum, .n.d.) and tries to make a distinction between terrorists operating in the name of a religion and people practising that religion, the reality for Arabs and Muslims in America and worldwide looked different. The war on terror, can in a way be seen as the start of a new wave of patriotism and a fear of “the Other”. It fused the words terrorism and Islam and fueled an Orientalistic view of Muslims as problematic and a threat to the western democracy. (Kumin & Savelin, 2021).

Through this brief historic background, it becomes clear that already before the refugee “crisis” a negative narrative existed around the ethnicity, nationalities, and faith of those who came to Europe from the Middle East and Africa in 2014 – 2017. As mentioned earlier, when a group of people is already viewed in a bad light, what is written about them in media tends to be understood in a negative way. If we connect this to Landqvist study (2015) this means that despite some articles being written in a “neutral” way, the connotation of them could still become negative.
2.2 Selective sympathy.

Selective Sympathy is a term coined by photographer, filmmaker, and refugee rights activist Hassan Akkad (2022).

Sympathy is described as “(an expression of) understanding and care for someone else’s suffering” (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). Most of us are familiar with this term, and with the feeling of sympathy. To be selective with your sympathy basically means that your sympathy only extends to include a limited amount of people. In the context of this project, selective sympathy means an inclusion of Ukrainian refugees whilst refugees from other countries from the Middle East and East Africa are not regarded with the same sympathy. Selective sympathy is a sign of racism and eurocentrism, that values whiteness and “European traits and ideals” higher than non-western cultures.

Akkad argues for the fact that our sympathy should feel no boarders, people should not need to look like us to be regarded as worthy of our sympathy and help.

2.3 Orientalism

Orientalism is a critical concept to describe West’s stereotyping of the Orient and Middle East. The concept was presented by Edward Said in his book by the same name from 1978. Orientalism questions the Eurocentric worldview, and Europe’s (and Americas) historical, sociological, cultural, and political perception on the Orient, that have created an idea of the Orient as the (lesser) opposite of the West. Orientalism, Said says, “Is not an airy European fantasy about the Orient but a created body of theory and practice in which, for many rations, there has been a considerable material investment. Continued investment made Orientalism, as a system of knowledge about the Orient, an accepted grid for filtering through the Orient into Western consciousness” (p. 14)

The system of knowledge that Said mentions has created the groundwork for how we today, understand and interact with culture, information, politics and people from the Orient.

2.4 Critical Whiteness studies.

Critical whiteness studies or CWS is a field of studies that aims to show the structures that uphold white supremacy and privilege (Applebaum, 2016). Racism have often been focused on those who are victims of it, in CWS the table is turned. The baseline is that racism cannot be discussed without focusing on the construction and preservation of whiteness – the ideas that lie at the centre of the problem.

Who is and who isn’t ascribed whiteness has shifted throughout history, (Jews and Italians in America where from the beginning not ascribed to whiteness but have become part of it during the decades) and it is therefore clear that whiteness is a construction and about more than just complexion, Applebaum describes it like this:

“Thus whiteness involves a culturally, socially, politically, and institutionally produced and reproduced system of institutional processes and individual practices that benefit white people while simultaneously marginalizing others.” (p.3)

While all those ascribed whiteness benefit from the system of white supremacy, not all have the same benefits. I do not have the same experience (use) of the white supremacy as say Elon Musk, but I still reap the fruit of the privilege. This means that even when we enter something with good intentions, white people need to be vigilant of our actions as we might (unknowingly or knowingly) still be using the white supremacy to our own advantage.

Applebaum also argues that “rather than resting assured that one is fighting racism, white people must continually be open to interrogating the consequences of one’s ethical and political practice on both self and the world” (p.16), a phrase that really stuck with me. It is important that we are vigilant of our own position in society and of these structures that so clearly benefits us, and Critical Whiteness Studies ground pillars have therefore been a huge influence on my project.
3.1 Methods

3.1a Collecting articles from DN

I started my process by looking at articles about refugees from the years between 2014 – 2017 in DNs online archive and webpage, dagensnyheter.se.

Dagens Nyheter is one of Sweden’s biggest newsprints and have been printed since early 1864. It is what we in Sweden call a “dagstidning” (“day print”) and is therefore seen as a more serious newsprint than the “kvällstidningar” (evening prints) which are more focused on scandals and have a much bolder language, both in terms of content and visuals. DN is positioned as an unbound liberal newsprint, meaning they are not openly supporting any political party but that they support liberal politics.

Apart from being a well-known and trusted newsprint, I chose to work with DNs articles because of their online search function. It gave me the possibility to target my searches and find relevant articles without having to go through ALL the articles posted since 2015. Via their search tool I could easily limit the dates and it also gave me the opportunity to type in one or more search words, so that my search would be limited to articles within the relevant time-period that contained my chosen words. This facilitated my work immensely.

3.1b Black Out Poetry

The idea of negative space became a very important part of my methodology. In ways, my entire project relies on this as a way of underlining and highlighting phrases, words, and concepts that I think add to the relevant discussion around selective sympathy and xenophobia. My interest in using negative space as methodology originates from an old interest of mine, Black Out Poetry. The idea behind Black out Poetry is that you take an already written text and then use a marker to “black out” parts of the text you want hidden, to enhance a new (often completely different) story from the work. Black out poetry has become increasingly popular during the last years, especially on social media platforms like Tumblr and Instagram (Medium, 2019). But according to Austin Kleon (Tedx Talks, 2015) the artform can be traced back as far as 2050 years. Kleon, jokingly, also mentions that black out poetry is if like “the CIA would write haiku”.

3.1c Theoretical analysis of readings.

For the more theoretical part of my project most of my research has been conducted through reading reports on the topics of xenophobia and discrimination in media. I have also derived some of my ideas and concepts through social media, primarily through Instagram. To more easily differ and go through what reports and information are relevant for my project I created a framework of questions to make sure my arguments are strengthened by reliable sources. I analysed the credibility of my sources through questions about sender, currency, text type and audience.

If I lacked the answers to these questions or felt that I could not answer enough of them, I avoided using that piece of information and looked for other sources.

Sender
Who stands behind this information? What institute does it come from? Can I find the person who wrote this? What type of education does this person have?

Currency
When was this written? How old is the data? (if data is older) Can I trust that the data is still relevant or do I need to find a newer source?

Text type and audience
What type of text is this? What function does it fulfil? Who is this text intended for? Who is the audience?
3.2 Visual references and inspirations

This project draws upon several different readings, the most prominent one being Marshall Soules book Media, Persuasion and Propaganda (2015) and Edwards Said’s book Orientalism (1978). These books both touch upon important ideas and concepts that helped enrichen my thesis and deepen the understanding of what (historical, cultural and societal) aspects have created structures of selective sympathy and xenophobia, both in society and media.

Apart from these I have also been very inspired by Hayfaa Chalabi’s master thesis Refugees Welcome? (2020), as well as the EXTRABOLD field guide (Lupron, E. et. al, 2021). The later feels extra important to me as it is crucial that this project is created in a thoughtful way that does not create another harmful depiction of refugees. I also draw inspiration from my collaborator, Henrik Teleman, project and book I telefonen finns hela människan (2017), Jag är 2015 by Atoosa Farahmand and Common Sans.

I telefonen finns hela människan

I telefonen finns hela människan (2017) is a project conducted by artist Henrik Teleman and WHO. Between 2016 and 107 they conducted around a hundred interviews with refugees who had recently arrived in Sweden. The focus of the interviews was the individual’s life, love, lust, dreams and hopes. Though this sometimes included depictions of fleeing war or terror this was never the main focus. The project aims to give readers a better idea of the humans behind the statistics.

Jag är 2015

Jag är 2015 by artist Atoosa Farahmand follows the same principals as "I telefonen finns hela människan". Farahmand encouraged refugees to share a picture of themselves, write their story and share it under the hashtag #jagär2015 (I am 2015). This was a way to show and draw attention to the actual humans and a way for refugees to own their own narrative, instead of being written about they were the ones writing.
The typeface Common Sans created by design firm Essen International in collaboration with Solvatten automatically changes the word refugee to human. I was very attracted to and inspired by this project as it creates an interesting, subtle but still strong form of resistance. It shows that resistance doesn’t always have to be a big parade, but that also small actions are powerful ways to rethink and re-write.

“Founded on the premise that being a refugee is a temporary status, being a human is permanent, Common Sans is a typographic answer to the ongoing global migrant crisis.”
- Typeroom, 2019

3. Design Process

I started my design process by making a thorough mapping of myself, and where I stand in this context. I believe it is always important to look at oneself before starting any type of project and I needed to find out how I relate to the topic of refugees and media both on a personal level, and as a visual communicator. What is my role in this? How can I make sure that the things I put into the world are not harmful or a recreation of Eurocentric, white disciplines? For this starting part of my process, I found the texts and thoughts in the EXTRABOLD handbook extremely relevant and helpful. It contains a lot of very interesting, thought through and educational texts on inclusive design and inclusivity in general.
After that, I started experimenting with using black out poetry on news articles. Since I for a very long time did not have a good idea of how or what I wanted the final outcome to be, a big part of my process was just creating these little black out poetry style poems from different articles. For the first couple of weeks, that was what I spent most of my time on (apart from reading).

While the absolute biggest turning point for my project was the start of Putin’s invasion of Ukraine and the war, that didn’t really alter the way I proceeded with my design process. I kept on using the same methodologies, just now incorporating newer (recently published articles).

One important turn for the design process, however, was when I started moving over towards cutting out words, instead of just blacking out to highlight them. The action of actively taking apart, almost destroying, the original narrative by force and then rearranging, added a new dimension to the poems. It also gave me more freedom to arrange the words in creative ways, rather than sticking to a very vertical layout. I started experimenting a bit more with ways to combine and create interesting patterns and shapes that could still deliver a message. In this process I was very inspired by the book Flowers in Concrete by Mary Ellen Solt (1969).
It took me quite some time to decide what I wanted the final design to be. I had the idea of a zine in mind for quite some time, but with the help of my tutors I concluded that a zine wouldn't really make sense for my topic. If I wanted to reach the target audience I had set out to reach (Swedish people who consume news), the most logical thing would be to put it back into the context of newsprint. Matilda Plöjel recommended a company called Newsprint Club to me, that prints original designs on newspaper. I went ahead and ordered their sample pack to get a better understanding of the different styles they provide.

After receiving their sample pack, I decided to go with the format of their Digital broadsheet. It was the biggest of their three models and for me felt most like an old traditional newspaper. It gave the impression of authority I was looking for. I started to look more in depth to the structure of a newsprint, how they have looked through the ages, classic typefaces used, how the sectioning had been made etc. It felt important to learn what aspects I needed to keep, to make my reader get the feeling of a newsprint so I could also understand and learn what things in the layout I could disrupt.

I haven't got my finale project back from the printers yet, but on this page I will include pictures of that and a discussion about the finale outcome.
4. Conclusions and discussion

Working with a topic that is so highly relevant has at times been a bit overwhelming. In one way (and I understand that this comes from my very privileged position) I could never really escape my project, I could never take a break from new sources, information and statements on the topic because such sources filled all of my social medias.

I think that became a bit of a problem for me, as I meant that at what was supposed to be my time off I was reading and digesting information that could be relevant for my thesis. Looking back, I think setting more rules for myself of how much media I am allowed to digest (and during what times) would have helped me a lot.

I do, however, feel that I have had a very rich process during this project, and I have learned a lot, especially about the power of media and the authority of a newsprint. To really deep dive into the structure and history of a media that I think is often overlooked in today’s digital society have been super-interesting. I have also gathered a much better understanding of the complex history of orientalism and eurocentrism that makes xenophobic and racist views so permanent in the discussion around who and who are not “real” refugees.

While I believe that my project does a decent job of communicating the hypocrisy of Swedish media and Europe’s treatment of refugees during the two crises, I believe much could have been changed to strengthen the visual language of my newsprint and thus also strengthen the message I wanted to convey. In my process of creating cut-out poems I, looking back, can see clearly that I did not do enough experiments, nor did I dare to push boundaries enough for the visual language to reach its full potential. I think I got a bit stuck in my own mind and ended up not daring to think outside the box.

Had I drawn more inspiration from my sources, and especially the beautiful artwork by Mary Ellen Solt (1969), my finale project would have had a much more aesthetically interesting language than it does now. I also believe that could have helped me develop the layout and create a more interesting dynamic between the classic structured newsprint layout and my own cut-out poetry.

For my contextualization I wanted to bring my work back to the world of journalism. I therefore reached out to the journalism students at LNU, to ask if some of them were willing to have a discussion around the topic of selective sympathy and phrasing in media. In the end, I was able to speak to two people, one over phone and another in person.

The discussions I had were, for the most part, not directly related to my project but rather focusing on the theme of objective and responsible journalism. We talked a lot about how they, as journalists, can work to prevent recreation of harmful stereotypes in media but also about their education. How they have experienced topics of xenophobia and racism are dealt with within a school context.

Something that really stood out to me, was that even though the discussion of generalization is so important in journalism, they both felt this topic was mostly discussed in regards of gender or age discrimination. Very little of their education seemed to put theses stereotypes into perspective of xenophobia or racism, something I would have thought would be very central parts of their education.

One of the two participants I talked to had written a report on how Ukrainian refugees had been pictured in Swedish media compared to refugees from outside Europe. She mentioned that she, while writing that, had a hard time positioning herself. What was her role in this? How could she see it, I can recognise it and I know (in most cases) how I can use it to create a sustainable change. It appeared to me as if she lacked many of these insights and felt very unsure of how her privilege af-
fected her standpoint and the things she writes.

She lacked the tools of mapping and reflecting inwards, on her own position, in a critical way. I believe that journalists would highly benefit from reading more of the "radical" texts that we have been given, such as Sara Ahmed’s Orientations Matter (2010) (or anything by Sara Ahmed) or texts about horizontal communication or works by The Decolonisation Design Group.

These might not be directly related to journalism but since traditional media in Sweden is so predominantly white, it is extra important that journalists are aware of how underlying structures of xenophobia, racism and orientalism reinforces stereotypes.

While I kind of expect older journalists to be as up to date around theories of decolonisation, I had expected that the universities teaching journalism would have these topics as a central part of their students’ education. After all, journalists always strive to be objective right? And if young journalists never learn about concepts/theories such as critical whiteness studies, discursive discrimination, or orientalism, how will they be able to report on the world in an objective way?

A big part of the discussions circulated around that word: objectivity. It is taught to them as the absolute most important pillar of journalism, to stay objective. But even so they both agreed that there is no such thing as true objectivity (“We add our own colour to everything we write” one of them stated). However, it is my understanding of the industry that many journalists still like to believe there is. Especially if you look at Swedish Public Service channels. Question is, how far can objectivity be taken? When is a stance needed to not uphold unjust structures in society?

One of my participants put this into the context of the BLM (Black Life Matters) protests in Sweden, where a group of Public Service journalists had expressed their support for the movement (so basically their support for basic human rights). They were then banned from reporting on anything that had to do with BLM, as public service no longer thought they were objective on the matter. Our opinions differed quite a lot about this situation and if this can be counted as an act of objectivity. Even if she personally didn’t fully agree with the choice to ban them, she could professionally agree with the reasoning behind it.

The whole situation, in my opinion, was ridiculous and a pretty good example of white supremacy in action. BLM, even if it of course has become political in the post-colonial world, is per say not a political movement. What they advocate for are basic human rights. And if journalist cannot stand behind that without being banned from reporting on it, just structures in society?

As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, the discussions didn’t always relate to my research question nor project but in a way, I feel like that was okay (and maybe even the best outcome). Because what the project did create, was vivid conversations about journalism and how journalists can work to prevent generalisation and make sure that more voices are represented in newsprints.

It made them think (and maybe even re-think) their roles as journalists, and that is more than I expected my project to do.

Creating such a subjective and strongly opinionated project and putting it into a context “known” for objectivity, became an intriguing paradox to my participants. One of them mentioned that she would find it interesting to use my project as a tool for discussion. For objectivity, became an intriguing paradox to my participants. One of them mentioned that she would find it interesting to use my project as a tool for discussion.

While talking to my two participants, it became clear that Bakom Rubriken has the ability to start these very important conversations around journalism and the journalist’s role in preventing the recreation of harmful narratives in media.
5. REFERENCES


Europas politiker avslöjade - behandlar människor på flykt olika


Men empatin blev ytterst tillfällig, för även om många såg rapporteringen om kriget och terrorn som skedde i länderna och vad som skedde på Medelhavet, så fanns en övervägande inställning att flyktingarna som kom då inte hörde hit.

"De kan väl fly någon annan stans?" Europa var "fullt" och hade inte råd med alla dessa främlingar. För i media blev de beskrivna som just det, främlingar. Annorlunda än oss. Desperata, farliga. De hade andra värderingar, värderingar som skulle skada våra europeiska (vita) värderingar.

Högerextrema nationalistiska partier och rörelser blommade snabbt upp runtom i Europa, inte minst i Sverige där Sverigedemokraterna syntes vid valet 2018 då de från valet före gjorde en ökning på hela 4,68 procentenheter.
Flyktningkris eller empatikris?

Överblick av flyktingmottagandet 2015 versus 2022.


Flyktingarna startade, företag skänkte pengar och erbjöd Gratistjänster för att hjälpa de som kom. Till och med partier som varit emot, verkar nu vara emot, verkar nu vara emot.

Politi
debatt

Publicerades din artikel på fel dag Åkesson?

För den var ett stort skämt. En av dina trogna följare beskrev i DN utomrättsliga flyktingar som ett ”tjuvpack” som ”stjäl och våldtar och mördar och knarkar” och på något sätt måste jag ändå ge en eloge till Thomas von Dahn för att han öppet vågar uttrycka kärnan i er politik; rasism.

Du jobbar säkert efter att ni inte passar er politiska normer i er parti ställt enbart om hudfärg. Visst är det inte en nyhet, utomrättsliga flyktingar är en del av den ”utanförre världen”. Men hade du själv varit lite mer intellektuell Jimme, hade du några fakta och erfarenheter att ställa emot din politik.

”Alla som inte passar er politisk norm tillhör därför de andra”. För det är precis så ditt parti ser världen uppdelat i ett ”vi” och ett ”dom”.

Ni pratar kanske inte längre om hudfärg, men vithet är så sammanhängande med begreppen europeisk, kristen och västerländsk att det inte kan ignoreras.


Den här artikeln är ett svar på Jimme Åkessons debattartikel ”Det är skillnad på flyktingar och flyktingar” som publicerades i Aftonbladet den 31 mars 2022.

Från alla håll varnades det om systemkollaps när Sveriges flyktingmottagande kom på tal 2015 och senare.

nationalokonomerna eniga

Skatter skulle behöva höjas, välården skulle behöva stramas åt.

Statbudsketen skulle gå med underskott länge:

Medierna rapporterade lydigt.

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LO: Flyktingkrisen påverkar ekonomin

Asylkostnad på rekordnivå till 2020

Statens kostnader för migrationspolitiken beräknas 70-80 miljarder kronor årligen de kommande åren. Vårt intresse gick till Europa.

Karlsson säger Löfven om flyktingkostnad

SKL: Kraftiga skattehöjningar behövs

Magdalena Andersson. i Sveriges Radio i slutet av 2015.

Sverige skulle behöva låna massor med pengar på grund av "ökade kostnader för antalet asylsökande".

Blel det så? Nej.

alarmisterna hade fel.
Språklig diskriminering av (uteuropeiska) flyktingar.

När nyhetsmedia blint återskapar och upprepar historier utan att ifrågasätta samhällsstrukturer eller makthavare skapar det en falsk, förvirrad bild av verkligheten. En bild som dessutom upprätthåller de maktsstrukturer som redan existerar. (Soules, 2015).

Under de senaste decennierna har narrativt om den desperata (uteuropeiska) flyktingen tryckts i tusen upplagor och framställningen av muslimer som hotfulla förtryckare har normaliseras (Idevall, 2015).


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Författaren, Hassan Akkad, är en aktivist och fotograf som har dokumenterat situationen i Ukraina och dess flyktingar. Han har också skrivit om detta i sin bok "Flugt och Vård". Akkad har påstått att dess sympati inte påverkas av nationalethniska eller kulturella skillnader och att dess sympati är ett tecken på rasism och dualism. Han har också understrykt att dess sympati inte behöver lika med dess empati och att dess sympati inte behöver vara en del av dess identitet eller dess identitet att veta några människor. Akkad har också understrykt att dess sympati inte behöver vara en del av dess identitet eller dess identitet att veta några människor. Akkad har också understrykt att dess sympati inte behöver vara en del av dess identitet eller dess identitet att veta några människor. Akkad har också understrykt att dess sympati inte behöver vara en del av dess identitet eller dess identitet att veta några människor.