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Title: Ethnic monitoring and social control: Descriptions from juveniles in juvenile care institutions

Abstract

Previous research has emphasized the institutional racism in total institutions. Researchers have highlighted the importance of narratives but have not focused on narratives about ethnic monitoring and social control. This article tries to fill this gap by analysing stories related to descriptions of ethnic monitoring and social control as told by juveniles of non-Swedish ethnicity in Swedish juvenile care institutions. A juvenile's ethnicity was highlighted by drawing attention to the staff's monitoring and social control. Interviews elucidated the victimhood that non-Swedish juveniles portrayed in relation to the staff and/or Swedish juveniles. When juveniles of non-Swedish ethnicity described ethnic monitoring and social control, they generally distanced themselves from staff behaviour and portrayed a victim identity. In constructing their identity, juveniles sometimes used their ethnic background rhetorically when describing everyday situations in the institution. The juveniles portrayed a humiliated self through dissociation from the staff and through the descriptions that they were treated differently than Swedish juveniles.

Keywords

Ethnicity, Accounts, Victim, Identity, Humiliated self

Introduction

Thomas Hylland Eriksen (1993, 2007) describes ethnicity as an ongoing relationship-building process between participants. Other researchers engage in more precise interpretations in which ethnicity is connected to experiences of, for example, racism, discrimination, crime, and fear (Back, Sinha, and Bryan 2012; Bosworth, Bowling, and Lee 2008). Ethnicity becomes most important when it is perceived to be threatened (Hylland Eriksen 1993, 2007). Previous research on ethnicity and total institutions (Goffman 1961/1990) has emphasized institutional racism (Back, Sinha, and Bryan 2012; Bosworth, Bowling, and Lee 2008). But how is ethnicity invoked and negotiated in practice in such institutions?

During an evaluation of a juvenile-care project in Sweden (Basic et al. 2009), it became clear that ethnicity was important in juvenile institutions in terms of treatment and staff and among different categories of juveniles. When the evaluation began, neither the evaluators nor the assigners had any intention of investigating issues concerning ethnicity. In reviewing the first transcribed interviews, however, we discovered that some of the respondents actualized ethnicity in their accounts, even though the questions regarded other issues. Thus, in a way, ethnicity ‘slipped in’ as a side issue and was included for exploration in the evaluation (Basic et al. 2009; Basic 2010, 2012). According to statistics published in Dahlström and Åberg (2010), approximately half of youths placed in juvenile institutions of the Swedish National Board of Institutional Care (Statens Institutionsstyrelse – SiS) were of foreign origin in 2009. Some were born in countries other than Sweden, and for others, one or both parents was from another country.

In this article, I aim to analyse empirical examples of ethnic monitoring and social control in institutions for juvenile care, as described by juveniles of non-Swedish ethnicity. The

examples foregrounded the ethnicity of the juveniles by drawing attention to the monitoring and control practices of the staff. In addition, these examples elucidated the victimhood portrayed by juveniles in relation to the staff and/or the Swedish juveniles.

The empirical concept of “ethnic monitoring” in an institution, in my study, refers to cases in which the juveniles in the interviews actualized other people’s descriptions of their own ethnic background or of other individuals. Ethnic social control in an institution is a type of social control in which the juveniles portray their own or others’ ethnic background while describing the discipline in the institution according to its rules, norms, and morals. Ethnic monitoring and social controls were often merged in daily interactions, and it was thus not always possible to isolate these social phenomena (Garland 2002; Peguero et al. 2011). This study showed that institutional ethnic monitoring and social control were clearly visible when (1) a juvenile portrayed a humiliated self or (2) a victim identity; (3) a juvenile complained about demeaning ethnic categorizations; (4) a juvenile made claims of discrimination; or (5) a juvenile produced moral principles through distancing.

The following analysis showed that the ‘establishment’ of ethnicity was intimately associated with juvenile moral criticism of juvenile care practices. Throughout this analysis, I have deliberately avoided the perspective of institutional racism (Back, Sinha, and Bryan 2012; Bosworth, Bowling, and Lee 2008) in order to maintain the analytical focus on interpersonal interaction and its importance to ethnicity (Hylland Eriksen 1993, 2007). My analysis shows monitoring and social control as described by interviewees and that ethnicity emerges in narratives about both phenomena.

Ethnicity was expressed in this study when the juveniles revealed the monitoring and social control of the institution; but it was also expressed when the juveniles recognized their own or another's ethnic background, based on national, language and cultural differences. In this way, the article contributes to a sociological understanding of the phenomenon of ethnicity.

Morality, accounts, identity, and ethnicity

The general starting point of the study was an ethno-methodologically (Garfinkel 1967/1984) inspired perspective on verbal descriptions. I was also inspired by the interactionist perspective, which considers interactions expressed through language and gestures (Blumer 1969/1986). This inquiry was mainly based on the discursive tradition in sociology, where descriptions are considered both experience-based and narrative (Potter 1996). In addition to this general starting point, I focused on morality, accounts, identity, and ethnicity as a particularly relevant component in the specific narratives that I examined.

Goffman (1959/1990) proposed that individuals know how to act when meeting other people by defining different situations in terms of a moral character that instructs us in what we should do. The definition of a situation also depends on the behaviours of the participants and the audience, which then shapes the expected behaviour. Goffman (1961/1990) noted, in his analysis of total institutions, that the humiliated self is the change in an inmate's morality, inflicted by the stay in a closed institution; for example, through certain admission procedures or through violation and distrust from the institution staff. The patterns of interaction that exist in juvenile care institutions may also be said to produce a certain sort of self, characterized by moral resolution and exhaustion. According to Goffman (1961/1990), individual identity creation occurs, among other ways, through dissociation from others. The

author distinguished several ways of dissociation, thus conducting an identity-creating labour. One way was to dissociate oneself from a category and to show that you do not belong to it, by dissociating oneself from an institution, for example.

According to Marvin B. Scott and Stanford M. Lyman (1968), interviewees every now and then may account for the things that deviate or violate their expectations. Adelswärd (1997) proposed that these accounting statements could be seen, on one hand, as responses to explicitly expressed contestations, allegations, and accusations; on the other hand, they can be seen as the interviewee's response to implicit criticism that was assumed or present in the situation. Through their accounts, interviewees often try to repair or neutralize uncertainties about something that has occurred or the possible consequences of something that occurred (Scott and Lyman 1968). Scott and Lyman (1968) also believed that the identities transmitted through these accounts were dynamic and changing; they could be actualized, highlighted, and shaped and used in different ways in different situations. The accounting for situations and events may therefore be seen as the interviewee's way of negotiating identities within a certain context.

Ethnicity, as discussed in this article, is an ongoing relationship process between individuals who perceive themselves as distant from members of other groups with whom they have little, or perceive to have little, regular interaction (Hylland Eriksen 1993, 2007). In accordance with this definition, ethnicity may also be interpreted as a social identity when it is based on a contrast in relation to others. Hylland Eriksen proposed that ethnic identity is shaped when individuals become aware of their own or another's, culture, nation, language, religion, tribe, or skin colour and pointed out a close connection between identities and social circumstances (situations); identities may change as individual circumstances change. In

general, an ethnic identity becomes most important when it is perceived to be threatened (Hylland Eriksen 1993, 2007).

Other researchers assume from similar premises, but they engage in more precise interpretations in which ethnicity is connected to experiences of, for example, discrimination, racism, migration, globalization, crime, vulnerability, and fear. Ethnicity operates throughout a number of interactions in which the individual is involved in different ways. In such interactions, sometimes the actors' gender and class belongings are actualized. These categories and power relations among actors are not homogeneous; rather, they are in relation to other categories and power relationships (Back, Sinha, and Bryan 2012; Bosworth, Bowling, and Lee 2008).

One important starting point in this study was that ethnic identity is not always important for a group or an individual. However, when ethnicity is used to discriminate, its specific importance is not evident (Turtiainen 2013). In this study, ethnicity was expressed, on one hand, when the juveniles revealed the monitoring and social control of the institution; on the other hand, it was expressed when the juveniles recognized their own or another's ethnic background, based on cultural, national, and language differences.

The ethnicity in the specific narratives concerning monitoring and social control in juvenile care institutions is an important theme in my analysis. The viewpoints of the above-mentioned researchers seem useful in serving my goal of understanding the interviewees' expression of ethnic monitoring and social control in juvenile care institutions, both as an analytical starting point and as a subject for nuance.

Methods

The evaluation of the project was based on interviews with the juveniles, parents, coordinators employed within the project, social secretaries, unit managers within the social services, and the personnel at the SiS youth care institutions. Furthermore, I used field notes recorded during organized meetings, during travel (in informal conversations), before and after interviews, during visits to the institutions, and during visits to social offices.

Forty-one juveniles placed in SiS special youth care institutions were interviewed. Twenty-two were boys, and nineteen were girls. All the interviewed juveniles were between ages 15 and 20 years. Eighteen were ethnic Swedes, and twenty-three were of other ethnic origins (background information regarding informant sex and ethnicity was based on field notes taken before, during, and after the interviews). Follow-up interviews were conducted with 13 juveniles after 3 to 12 months.

When I met the juveniles, I personally told them about the purpose of the study and the meaning of anonymity, that participation was voluntary, and that they could terminate their participation at any time. Finally, I conveyed this information in the informed consent form provided to and signed by all youth.

According to Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995, 2–16), a field observation is based on the assumption that, for some purposes, it is best to watch what happens as it happens. Thus, the researcher can collect meaningful data from real situations as they occur in their natural environments. A detailed description of social life is fundamental for gathering knowledge in the social sciences.

In my field notes from before, during, and after the interviews, I noted observations regarding external attributes of the youths such as sex, name, whether they spoke Swedish with an accent, whether they had light- or dark-skinned faces, dark or light hair, scars, etc. I also noted information regarding family members, and I included a short summary of each interview.

During the analysis, the field notes were encoded to protect participant identities. Here, I have changed the names of participants and removed items that might associate individuals with a particular case. The aim was to minimize the identification of a person during the analysis.

In the interviews, I sought to provide informants the opportunity to raise related subjects that they found relevant; thus, the interview was conversational in style, and I took the role of a conversational partner. Holstein and Gubrium (1995) referred to this style as an *active interview*; that is, the interviewer assumes the role of a conversation partner rather than a questioner. This informal style resulted in inconsistent queries; that is, some topics were not mentioned in all conversations, and other topics were covered unintentionally (i.e., ethnicity, class, and gender). The use of ethnicity, class, and gender as explanatory dimensions in earlier conversations prompted me to ask direct questions about these topics during the latter half of 2008.

This method of gathering information may be criticized by scientists that assume that the informant harbours a certain truth that can be elicited with the correct interviewing technique. In this study, I did not examine the truth of the responses. In the spirit of Holstein and

Gubrium (1995), the conversation was stimulated when necessary, and meaning thus emerged in the fields of particular interest for the research.

The interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed in Swedish, usually the same day or in the days just following the interview to ensure good documentation and to comment with details. By commenting on the transcript, I produced a “categorization of data” (Ryen 2004, 110–112, 123–127). When encoding the statements, markers for ethnicity were identified in the material. Empirical sequences presented in this study were categorized into the material as: ”humiliated self”, ”victim identity”, ”demeaning ethnic categorization”, ”discrimination” and ”distance”. To make a choice of empirical examples, I used as guidance the study’s aim and how clearly those empirical examples illustrated the analytical point I wanted to emphasize. For this reason, some of the more articulate informants are heard more often than others.

Portraying a humiliated self

Institutions for juvenile placement can be seen as tension areas, where lock-ups, routines, and conflicts can make juveniles feel that their identities are monitored, controlled, questioned, and threatened (Barn and Tan 2012). In this section, I describe how the boy Safet, who was placed in an institution, portrayed his humiliated self while distancing himself from the behaviour of the institutional staff. Social phenomena similar to those mentioned above could be found during Safet’s interview. He also gave an account of a conflict situation with the institutional staff in which he specified his own and the staff’s behaviours and distanced himself from the latter. I asked Safet whether he could ‘describe the incident’? The following responses indicated an apparent verbal abyss between Safet and the institutional staff:

Safet: You know, there was a staff member that told me; ‘I’m going to stick a knife in your arse’. /.../ We were cooking food, you know. /.../ So I was just in the toilet and I washed myself after using the toilet. Then, I sat down and started peeling potatoes, when he started yelling at me, like: ‘are you stupid?’, ‘are you an idiot?’, and ‘how can you wash like that?’ so I said ‘what? I washed myself in there; plus, we’re going to peel them anyway, so it doesn’t matter’. He began to yell and such, so I put down the knife and said, ‘you can cook the food’, and then I walked out. Then he said he was going to stick the knife in my arse, and I said ‘you (another institutional employee) can go and phone the police for me’; and you know, they can’t block phone calls to the authorities, I have the right to phone the police. /.../ Then he told me ‘yes; but no, first you have to cook, then you can phone the police’, and it is already six o’clock in the evening and everyone knows that the police (station) closes; you can’t phone 112 (the Swedish emergency number) now’. Then I said ‘I want to call social services’; but, he said ‘no, you are going to cook first; end of story.’ So I got mad at him and yelled in Arabic at him. He grabbed me like this, you know, he grabbed me, and I stumbled over it and hit the wall, and he yelled ‘talk Swedish here, don’t talk any other language here’ and such things. That’s how it happened, so I reported him to the police the next day for violation and assault /.../

Goran: Can you tell me what it felt like when he told you to speak Swedish and not Arabic?

Safet: Well, I felt violated so, you know ... Well the rules state that you can’t speak any other language. It says we should only speak Swedish and blah, blah, blah. So, I think he violated me by saying it in that way.

The institutional staff member was portrayed partly as monitoring and partly as socially controlling. In Safet's description, he was monitored and controlled in the institution which caused conflicts between him and the staff person. In retrospect, the struggles could be explained by the behaviour of the different participants.

It is interesting that Safet twice said that he washed after visiting the toilet. It was as though he had responded to the point attributed to the staff member in the account, namely that the staff member was upset based on an assumption that Safet returned to cooking without washing. With this response, Safet succeeded in undermining an accusation that might have come from the staff. After dissociating himself from the staff's behaviour, Safet revealed another rule, namely the prohibition against speaking any language other than Swedish in the institution. Safet's ethnicity was actualized here, in a verbal matter ('talk Swedish here, don't talk any other language here').

Safet's stories are examples of accounts of dissociation and moral condemnation. In the first place, he attacked the staff's action and the staff's account of the action. In the second place, Safet's entire story could be seen as an account, although an account in terms of a humiliated self. He distanced himself from the staff's action, which was constructed as morally incorrect.

Safet seemed to shape his humiliated self when he distanced himself from the staff's action (he wanted to call the police and social services). By distancing himself, Safet presented also that he tried to monitor and control the institutional staff by involving external authorities (the police and social services). The staff person was described as having general monitoring power over Safet; he did not allow Safet to contact the police, although Safet, according to his own moral opinion, had the right to do so.

Safet placed emphasis on the way the staff member displayed power in the institution. For example, in Safet's accounts, this power was displayed when they refused to call the police, although Safet wanted to report the incident. From these accounts, we could glimpse Safet's humiliated self, which was emphasized when he noted the derogatory epithet; that is, when the staff member said to Safet, 'are you stupid?'

Portraying a victim identity

In Safet's account, we can also trace how the 'Arabic' language was placed in relation to 'Swedish'. This context showed how ethnic constructions are staged through contrasting forms (Hylland Eriksen 1993, 2007). In a study by Basic (2010), more young people with non-Swedish ethnicities demonstrated and stated that there was a prohibition against speaking any languages other than Swedish at the institution in which they were placed. These descriptions were often actualized when juveniles talked about conflicts at the institution; i.e., when juveniles started to yell and swear in their native language during brawls. The prohibition was presented as a violation, and it was criticized by several of the interviewed juveniles of non-Swedish ethnic backgrounds.

Both the institutional rule and the way it was expressed were important to Safet. Safet considered that the prohibition against speaking languages other than Swedish was a ridiculous rule. In his description, he said 'blah, blah, blah', which indicated that he did not consider the rule worth repeating ('blah, blah, blah' may also be interpreted as an over-stated rule that was so obvious, it need not be repeated). Nevertheless, he emphasized that the staff person expressed the rule in an offensive manner during the conflict by yelling, 'talk Swedish

here, don't talk any other language here'. Safet's rhetorical use of his ethnicity did not end there. In the ongoing interview, Safet explained a demeaning comment from an employee at the institution:

Safet: Once I said, for example, 'I can't cope with being here in this place (at the institution)'. A staff member then told me, 'well then, it's better if you return home, to your homeland'. You know? I found that offensive.

According to Burcar, Wästerfors, and Åkerström (2011), the 'victim' category is not an objective category; it is in fact created during interaction between individuals. Safet's descriptions portray himself implicitly as a victim in relation to the institutional staff. Safet's reasoning, for example, was that he was accused of something unimportant and trivial ('I have washed myself in there; plus, we're going to peel them anyway') and that the personnel had disparaged him unjustly. Safet tells how he'd been labelled as a 'troublemaker', but that this label was incorrect. In his account, Safet displayed a strategic ethnic victim identity as a contrast to the staff.

Victimhood could also be seen as a product of moral creativity. It should not be possible to question the moral responsibility of a victim (Burcar, Wästerfors, and Åkerström 2011). Safet's account (in which the use of ethnicity appeared) also manifested morality. The fact that Safet used ethnicity to account for the disparagement he was exposed to at the institution implied that he had perceived a morally wrong action as an ethnic issue. This wrong action was constructed by placing blame on Safet, which he then directed to the institutional staff, partly emphasizing Safet's ethnicity as an aspect of the blaming.

Complaints about demeaning ethnic categorizations

In this section, I analyse a story in which a boy, Ahmet, claims that the institution staff had disparaged him by categorizing him in a demeaning way. In a study by Basic (2010, 64–68), attention was given to juvenile descriptions of incidences in which staff demeaned juveniles of non-Swedish ethnic backgrounds by name-calling. These juveniles claimed that the staff members classified them as ‘blatte’, ‘fucking kanakas’, and ‘fucking svartskalle’¹. These classifications were related to different categories in the conversations; for there to be a ‘blatte’ (a derogatory term for a foreigner), there had to be a ‘svenne’ (a derogatory term for Swedes) (Hylland Eriksen 1993, 2007).

During the interview, Ahmet gave examples of how ‘good’ and ‘bad’ staff members did their jobs at the institution. He often hesitated when speaking and often paused. These pauses are represented by the number of seconds (s) shown in parentheses. He sometimes also spoke in a low voice, which is marked in the text by °.

Goran: Can you describe something that a good member of staff did and something a bad one did? /.../

Ahmet: Bad (7 s); like, in Sredby (name of the institution) (3 s), I had to give a blood sample because my pee sample was positive, but it was wrong, so I took a strip from, well, the staff. So she (staff member) said, ‘you fucking kanakas get out of here’, and kanakas means blatte. ‘You fucking “kanakas” get out of here, we don’t want you here’, and such.

¹ In the study, some expressions are quoted in the Swedish language because I have not been able to find adequate translations. These expressions are ‘blatte’, ‘svartskalle’, and ‘kanakas’; all three are degrading names for immigrants that are used in a racist, humiliating way. The expression ‘svenne’ is used by ethnic minorities when talking about ethnic Swedes.

°I think that was bad° (sad voice). They should not call me blatte, so I reported it to the director, but nothing happened.

Goran: The director didn't do anything? That's strange. But do you feel there is a difference in how they treat immigrants compared to Swedes at the SiS institutions?

Ahmet: Yeeeah, it depends. There are Swedes; there are nice Swedes who ... there are nice Swedes who treat me in a good way. They show me respect back, but there are some who ... who say, 'fucking svartskalle'. They hate svartskallar.

In this exchange, Ahmet portrayed the overall situation ('I had to give a blood sample because my pee sample was positive, but it was wrong'). Ahmet implied that the urine sample usually showed a correct result – now, he says, the sample was wrong; that the sample must be retaken, and that the staff resented that. According to Scott and Lyman (1968), accounts occur more often when the participants possess information about function and place that does not add up and when there are conflicting requirements regarding the participants.

Ahmet described the situation and in so doing, undermined the possible accounts from the staff. The sequence from the interview: 'so, I took a strip from, well, the staff. So, she said, 'you fucking "kanakas" get out of here"' implied that there was probably a piece missing between the sequence 'from the staff' and 'she said, "you fucking ..."' . Ahmet probably withheld this segment because it probably contained important information about the situation from the staff's point of view.

The former example also provided insight into ethnic monitoring. Ahmet described the monitoring that he portrayed with the staff members present, and they actualized Ahmet's

ethnic exclusion ('you fucking kanakas get out of here'). Ahmet resented the staff's behaviour, which from his point of view was morally reprehensible ('They should not call me blatte, so I reported it to the director').

Ahmet appeared to be disappointed; the description was enhanced when his complaint to the director failed to accomplish anything. He described that there was no possibility of changing the situation by taking it to a higher power. Nevertheless, Ahmet's report to the director showed that Ahmet both monitored and controlled the institutional staff. Ahmet's staff-monitoring was ethnically based because Ahmet created his own ethnic background when he blamed the staff and the institutional director. The control that he had presented in the relation to the staff was founded on what he saw as the correct morality; that is, a morality in which the staff members should not classify him as 'blatte'.

When Ahmet was explaining the situation, he placed emphasis on the staff monitoring and social control at the institution. According to Adelswärd (1997), accounts may reveal valuation systems that are invoked during the interaction; i.e., norms of rationale, action, and morals that are relevant to the conversation. Ahmet noted, for example, the existence of 'nice Swedes' who showed him respect. With this, on one hand, he presented himself as unprejudiced – he was just and able to respect the Swedes. On the other hand, he expressed his dissociation from others that represented reprehensible morality; those who 'hated svartskallar' (literally 'black heads').

Claims of discrimination

Interviewed juveniles of non-Swedish ethnic origins described situations in which they were “discriminated” against by the staff at the youth care home and by other inmates. In this section, two stories are analysed in which two juveniles presented themselves as victims in relation to Swedish juveniles and the institutional staff. The first example was a boy named Rahim, who used ethnicity when he explained brawls and prohibitions at the institution. Rahim suggested that sanctions after brawls at the institution were not the same for youngsters of Swedish and non-Swedish ethnicities. Rahim pointed out that a guilty Swede often avoided sanctions. The other example, a girl named Sara, used ethnicity when she explained how Swedish juveniles often received more flexible treatment from staff members than that given to juveniles with other ethnic backgrounds. She portrayed the staff members as partisan; i.e., staff members granted privileges for the Swedish juveniles to a greater extent than for juveniles of another ethnicity.

The implicit result in both descriptions was that Rahim and Sara had distanced themselves from the staff and institution by portraying themselves as victims in comparison to the Swedish youth and the institutional staff. Their reasoning was that when they were accused of something they did not do, the guilty Swede was not sanctioned, and the staff members did not do anything about it. In the presentations, they both showcased a strategic ethnic victim identity, which contrasted with the Swedish juveniles and the institutional personnel. During the interview, Rahim recounted a brawl with a Swedish boy.

Rahim: That guy took the ball and kicked it at him, and he said ‘you blatte cunt’, then he left. And the teacher just stood there and said ‘Yes, but take it easy now’; so he just let him go. And nothing happened from that.

Rahim implicitly criticized the fact that no sanction came after the incident. He expected the teacher as reacting to the Swedish boy's use of an ethnically demeaning comment ('you blatte cunt'). Rahim's reaction to being ethnically insulted by another participant created a new dimension to the account – an ethnic one – that gave new meaning to the presentation. Ethnicity was emphasized in the story. If he had not mentioned the expression 'you blatte cunt', the presentation would have been different; the ethnic dimension would not have surfaced. During the ongoing interview, Rahim compared two different brawls; one involved two Swedish boys, and the other involved himself.

Rahim: One guy got bruises and such, and another guy got a lot of scratches, so I said, 'Are they gonna be reported to the police?' They (the institutional employees) just said, 'No, no, no!' So, when they brawled, they could stay in the department, but when I brawled, I almost got reported to the police. When they brawled, nothing happened, no police report; and the thing was that those two (those who brawled) were Swedes.

In the account of this event, the employees' possible account was undermined, and a dividing line was drawn between the way the employees responded to Swedish juveniles and the way they responded to those of another ethnic background. While explaining, Rahim was also being rhetorical; he was trying to convince me. Using rhetoric has two aims, according to Ibarra and Kitsuse (1993): first, to make the already convinced stay convinced; and second, to convince the others. Rhetoric can also be used to defend a particular description from alternative interpretations, according to Potter (1996). Potter proposed that when the individual presents himself, he chooses a certain version in which the *correct* conduct is

portrayed. Rahim had blamed the Swedish juveniles, the teachers at the institution, and the institutional employees by portraying their behaviour as morally wrong.

Rahim also depicted the institutional staff as partisan; i.e., the employees grant privileges to Swedish juveniles to a greater extent than to non-Swedish juveniles. In the following interview, he talks about the privilege of going out:

Rahim: We used to be indoors a lot, you know? We were not allowed to do much, you know? So we said: 'Could you let us go out?' He (the institutional employee) just said, 'No, no!', and when I said, 'Why?', he just said, 'No, nothing today'. Then, half an hour later, I saw the others going out. Like, they went out to buy sweets or they went to a shop, and then, they come back. And the thing is, they were Swedes who went. So I couldn't go, but I saw others going out and coming back; and they brought sweets and soft drinks and such.

Goran: How did you react to that?

Rahim: I got pissed, mad.

Goran: Did you say anything to the employees or did you ask why?

Rahim: They don't care, they just ... They think of some excuse: 'Well you misbehaved, you can't come along'.

Goran: Was it like that, did you misbehave?

Rahim: No, I had not misbehaved.

Rahim seemed to have neutralized the staff's account of why he could not go along to the shop ('you misbehaved'). Rhetorically, Rahim expressed several rejections of the staff's behaviour in which he did not accept their reasons. As Rahim recounted it, there was no

legitimate reason for the employees' action. He did not substantiate the employees' attempt to explain, and he did not represent them as acceptable. Even though Rahim's description was an account in itself, it was an account about the trip circumstances, rather than an acceptable account of the staff's motives.

The employees' morals were rhetorically rejected by Rahim when he explained their actions, and he described the staff's behaviour as morally incorrect. He portrayed himself as a victim of the Swedish juveniles and the institutional personnel; as an example, he claimed that he was excluded from the trip on false grounds and that he was wrongfully labelled as 'the one who misbehaved'.

A girl, Sara, spoke in terms similar to those used by Rahim. She described a similar social phenomenon during an interview at the institution and a couple of months after the institutional stay, when I interviewed her at a café. She told me that differential and unjust treatment of juveniles with non-Swedish ethnicities was explained by the institutional staff as a result of the juvenile's misbehaviour:

Sara: They (Swedish juveniles) were allowed do something after one week (of sanction); for us (juveniles with an ethnic background other than Swedish), it took, like five weeks before we were allowed to do that thing.

Goran: The things you talk about, they are ... for example?

Sara: Going to Ikeus (theme park), for example, and doing things like that. So the rules are not the same; they treat us more harshly than them.

Goran: Ok. This is something you have noticed?

Sara: Yaa.

Goran: Did anyone point this out to the staff?

Sara: Yes, we said, 'is this because ...'; we said, 'is this because we are immigrants?' But they just said, 'no, how can you say that?' We said that because we perceived it like that. After that, they didn't say much.

Goran: Ok, did anything change after that?

Sara: No.

Goran: How did they justify letting you do something five weeks later compared to ...

Sara: Well, they said, 'but you have not behaved'; I just said, 'I have behaved just like everyone else'. Then, they thought of things you'd done, which, in fact, you had not done; they would say 'you did this and that', which I didn't. Then, they would say: 'yes you did' (deep breath).

The above presentation was expressed in dichotomous 'we and them' terms, thus creating a picture of ethnic differentiation at the institution. It seemed that Sara, with her rhetorical presentation, was trying to undermine the staff's account regarding the differentiation and unfair treatment ('no, how can you say that'). She was, like Rahim, rejecting the staff's behaviour, and she disapproved of their accounts. Ethnic monitoring and social control were intertwined in Sara and Rahim's descriptions, and the staff's morals were not accepted by them.

A type of dissociation and identity-creating labour was conducted by Sara in the above quotations. She dissociated herself from the institutional staff's behaviour and the institutional staff's treatment of Swedish juveniles ('They were allowed do something after one week'). A couple of months later, Sara gave a detailed picture of ethnic differentiation during a follow-up interview. She filled in the details of the story by adding more examples.

Sara: At the institution where I lived, there was me and another girl from another country, and we noticed that we were treated differently by them (the institutional personnel). We had phone time until 21:15; when they talked (the Swedish juveniles) until 21:20, it was OK; but when we talked, at 21:14, they told us ‘now you have to hang up, your time is up in one minute’. When they (the Swedish juveniles) talked longer, it was nothing. /.../ So you see, they treated people differently, depending on where they came from.

Goran: Institutional staff?

Sara: Yes. /.../ And also, they didn’t spend as much time on people that came from other countries. They, they’re a little strange.

Goran: Mmm. Do you mean that they spent more of their time on a Swede compared to a ...

Sara: Yes. /.../ And I, as an immigrant, had to perform five times better than a Swede to be able to go out and do the same as her or ...

Goran: OK. Do you have an example? Something that happened?

Sara: Mmm, there was a girl, for example, (unclear), and there was a Swedish girl, and they both had school problems; so the employee told them both ‘if you manage your school well for a week, each of you will be able to go to Ikeus (theme park)’. So the Swedish girl managed her school every day, and the other girl did, too, but she was not allowed to go to Ikeus, only the Swedish girl was allowed to go. And they were promised exactly the same thing.

Sara’s stories after her stay at the institution were detailed with several new examples that were not mentioned during the first interview at the institution. She gave examples of how Swedish juveniles had more flexible phone times, and she highlighted the differentiation and

unjust treatment that the non-Swedish juveniles claimed to have been exposed to, because they were not allowed the same flexibility. Sara spoke about the time the staff gave two juveniles the different treatment despite offering the same terms. The juveniles of other ethnicities were disadvantaged, according to Sara, because the employees ‘didn’t spend as much time on people that came from other countries.’ Even circumstances that concerned unattained privileges were associated with the staff’s injustice; ‘the Swedish girl managed her school every day, and the other girl did too, but she was not allowed to go to Ikeus, only the Swedish girl was allowed to go’.

The dissociation from the staff’s behaviour was clear from Sara’s views on the institutional staff’s work conduct (their use of time, prohibitions, and promises with treatment) and the staff’s treatment of Swedish juveniles compared to non-Swedish juveniles.

Descriptions of ethnic monitoring and social control were intertwined in the interview, ‘now you have to hang up, your time is up in a minute’. However, compared to Sara’s interview given when she was staying at the institution, this earlier account lacked the staffs’ accounts regarding the differentiation and unjust treatment and Sara’s undermining of those accounts.

Moral principles produced through distancing

During interviews, situations were displayed in which a moral principle of correct or incorrect behaviours was produced, and the ethnic background of a juvenile played an important role in the production of the moral principle.

In this section, I analyse an observed and described situation in which ethnic monitoring and social control at the institution were expressed by a boy who distanced himself from the staff's behaviour and simultaneously produced morally correct conduct, in contrast to the staff's incorrect conduct. The distancing, which was observed between the boy and the staff, together with the dissociation that occurred in the situation, took on a morally ethnic meaning. Because of the awareness of the boy's ethnic background, the assumed correct moral principle took on an ethnic dimension.

This boy, called Samir in the study, was photographed after a conflict with the staff in an institution. I (Goran Basic) happened to be present, and I observed the following:

At the institution, an investigation secretary and I entered an office, and from there we could see into the department section through a Plexiglas window. In that section, I observed two heavily built blond men and a skinny dark-haired boy. One of the men photographed the boy with a camera. He aimed the camera from a half meter and photographed the left side of the boy's head, neck, and shoulder. The officer first aimed the camera at the boy, who looked at him; then the officer pushed the boy's head to the right with such force that the boy's head moved lifelessly to the right and stayed like that. The boy's head position was frozen for a while, and the officer seemed to photograph him at that moment. (Field note)

In this field note, the staff were described by their appearance; in contrast to Samir, who was dark, they were 'two heavily built blond men'. This is one way to make distinctions. Half an hour later, I was to interview this previously unknown boy. Samir was a skinny, dark-haired boy with an Arabic name, whose parents originally came from Morocco. He did not like the

social secretary or the majority of the employees at the institution where I met him. Samir told me that he had thrown an empty cigarette pack on the floor as a joke, and the staff then placed him in the isolation room. He told me that there was a scuffle during the operation, in which the staff members injured him, and now, he wanted to report them to the police (field note). During the interview, Samir recounted a brawl with the institutional personnel:

Samir: You're not allowed to smoke here, so I had an empty cigarette box, which I threw on the ground to mess with them (the institutional personnel). One of the staff took a grip on me, he threw me into the wall, and then he pushed the alarm on me. The whole staff came running; an alarm means that you are violent. I wasn't violent, I told them "aaah, let me go, I haven't done anything," then he threatened me, in came another one, he took my hand and pushed me into the wall over there. Later on, they placed me in the isolation (10 s).

Goran: This happened yesterday?

Samir: Aaa.

Goran: This scar is really visible. Do you have any opportunity to complain about them (the institutional personnel)?

Samir: No, I'm just going to report them.

Goran: How do you do that?

Samir: Through the police, they have taken a photo of it, we'll see later when I will call the police.

Samir showed me his left shoulder, and there was a scratch and a blue and red mark about 5 × 5 cm. He also showed me bruise marks on his neck. Samir told me that because of his plan to report them to the police, the employees at the department were now partly angry with him

and partly trying to persuade him not to report the incident; they were saying that it was an accident, that the employees ‘fell onto him’. One day after the incident, they still had not allowed him to file charges. He said the staff were synchronizing their stories and gathering evidence before they let him call the police (field note).

The interview and field note showed an example of ethnic monitoring and social control that took place in the institution. Personnel were physically present and active in the situation. For example, the employee ‘photographed’ Samir; the employee ‘injured’ Samir; and the employee was ‘trying to persuade him to not report the incident’.

Samir seemed to reject the staff’s action in the observed situation. His presence in the situation also actualized the importance of his ethnic background, in contrast to that of the employees. Samir, it seemed, wanted to display the correct moral principle, and he did that by criticizing the staff’s behaviour. He criticizes the staff’s overreaction (‘One of the staff took a grip on me, he threw me into the wall, and then he pushed the alarm on me. The whole staff came running, /.../ he took my hand and pushed me into the wall over there’).

Samir’s ethnic background was present in the observed situation, both as an object that shaped the expected behaviour and as a tool in the definition process. Samir created a certain moral principle when he distanced himself from the staff’s behaviour during the conflict. The expected behaviour of the participants and their mutual definition processes, in which Samir’s ethnic background was significant, played an important role in the creation of the moral principle.

Concluding remarks

Previous research has emphasized the institutional racism in total institutions (Back, Sinha, and Bryan 2012; Bosworth, Bowling, and Lee 2008). Researchers have emphasized the importance of narratives, but they have not focused on narratives about ethnic monitoring and social control. This article tries to fill this gap by analysing stories told by juveniles of non-Swedish ethnicity in Swedish juvenile care institutions. The aim of the article was to analyse descriptions of ethnic monitoring and social control in Swedish juvenile institutions reproduced by juveniles with non-Swedish ethnicities.

Ethnic monitoring at an institution is a type of monitoring in which the juveniles in the descriptions actualized others' monitoring (talk or other behaviour) and their own ethnic background or that of other individuals. Ethnic social control in an institution is a type of social control that is reproduced and enacted in situations in which juveniles are regulated into acting in accordance with the staff's (or the institution's) rules, norms, and values while at the same time, portraying their own ethnic background or that of the other individuals. This analysis showed that when juveniles exhibited ethnic monitoring and social control, they often drew attention to the staff's morally despicable behaviour.

These two phenomena, ethnic monitoring and social control, are often difficult to isolate in daily interactions. Typically, these two social phenomena appear together. When ethnic monitoring and social control in the institution were made evident, the juveniles generally distanced themselves from the staff's behaviour, and they portrayed their victim identity. During construction of their identity, these juveniles tended to use their ethnic background rhetorically when giving accounts of everyday situations at the institution. The juveniles portrayed their humiliated self through their dissociation from the staff and through their

descriptions that they were treated differently from Swedish juveniles. The humiliated self was shaped by recounting situations, and this identity was accentuated when they noted that the staff members and the Swedish juveniles called them ‘fucking svartskalle’, ‘you blatte cunt’, or ‘fucking kanakas’ (Swedish derogatory slang epithets).

The analytic starting point in this article is ethno-methodological, i.e., I am analysing what the participants are saying, as an “account” (Scott and Lyman 1968). The two parties – staff and juveniles – had differing opinions about the meaning of different behaviours. For example, some reprimands were interpreted as ethnic discrimination by the juveniles but were considered “an appropriate response to ill behaviour” by the staff members (Basic 2010).

Finally, if one were to analyse the same phenomena without ethno-methodology as an analytical tool, other analytical horizons would probably illuminate something else, as well. The empirical examples presented in this article suggest something serious is happening in the ‘real world’ in institutions. For instance, a naturalistic tradition in interviewees’ narratives may be a result of the staff’s exercising power and the juveniles’ responses manifesting themselves through resistance or resignation.

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