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## Welfare against crime

Can the absence of crime among the second generation immigrants in Sweden bring forward new insights to public policy?

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## ABSTRACT

In both Europe and the United States, researchers have found the second generation immigrants to commit more crime compare to the first, despite the fact that the second generation is expected to be better off. This thesis explores the ‘Swedish Exception’ to this ‘Immigration Paradox’ as was discovered by Ahlberg (1996) and Martens and Holmberg (2005). Reviewing the evidence of the Swedish Exception, deduced the hypothesis whether the uniqueness of the Swedish welfare state could have caused this change. Positive effects by early childhood intervention programs and its potential for crime reduction is tested by a double application of Mill’s Method of Difference. The thesis concludes that the presence of preschools in Sweden could not have caused the Swedish exception, but it is likely that emphasis on early language education did. Further research is, however, needed.



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# 1 INTRODUCTION

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During the years 1985-1989, Jan Ahlberg (1996) discovered that the children of immigrants in Sweden were less likely to commit crime compared to those who immigrated themselves. This finding gained international attention since it contradicted previous research in the United States and in several European countries (Killias, 1989, 2009; Marshall 1997; Tonry, 1997: 226). All these countries had confirmed the second generation, i.e. children with two parents born abroad,<sup>1</sup> was more likely to commit crime compared to the first generation immigrants. But according to Ahlberg (1996) this was not the case in Sweden.

The fact that the second generation did worse than the first generation despite being presumably better off has become known as the 'Immigration Paradox' (Hernandez, Denton, Macartney and Blanchard, 2012). This 'Swedish Exception'<sup>2</sup> to the Immigration Paradox was quickly attributed to the Swedish welfare system. Ahlberg (1996) wrote that the likely explanation for the reduced crime level amongst the second generation was that they "in a greater way had adjusted to the Swedish society" (p. 91). Peter L. Martens and Stina Holmberg (2005), who studied crime levels among the second generation in Sweden during the years 1997-2001, also found support for this explanation. Martens (1997) further attributed the Exception to the Swedish welfare system and its "many regular compensatory measures for less well-to-do persons, their families and their children" (p. 243).

While it has been posited that the Swedish welfare system may have caused this exceptional Swedish behaviour, this claim has never been tested. This thesis will provide such a test, by answering the research question: Did the Swedish welfare system suppress the crime level among the second generation immigrants during the 1980s and the 1990s and, if so, how?

In 2005, Johan Kardell and Karl M. Carlsson (2009) revealed that the Swedish Exception was no longer valid in Sweden. By applying the same method as Ahlberg (1997), they found that during these two years, the second generation of immigrants had higher crime rates compared to the first generation. The second generation of Swedish immigrants had thus gone from

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<sup>1</sup> From here on 'second generation' will refer to children with two parents born abroad, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>2</sup> From here on: 'The Swedish Exception'.



doing better than the first generation, to doing worse. They had become more like second generation immigrants everywhere else. Kardell and Carlsson (2009: 67) who also recognized the Swedish Exception, proposed the explanation that “something had changed in the Swedish society”, but they never went into detail on what. Once again, this curiosity calls out for an explanation.

The Swedish Exception presents a natural opportunity to apply John Stuart Mill’s ‘Method of Difference’. I will achieve this employing a double application of that method. First, I exploit the fact that the Swedish Exception was a temporary phenomenon: it ceased to exist in 2005. As the Swedish Exception is no longer confirmed in Sweden, this implies that the cause of the exception also has been removed. This enables me to compare Sweden in 1985, when Ahlberg (1996) first confirmed the exception, to Sweden in 2005, when Kardell and Carlsson (2009) confirmed it not to be the case anymore. Second, I compare Sweden to two similar cases where the exception has not been confirmed.

The nature of the dependent variable makes a strict application of Mill’s Method of Difference difficult. This is because I am looking at changes in crime levels and not any clear cut absence and presence of crime. The effect I am trying to explain is why the second generation committed *less* crime in Sweden, compared to the first generation in 1985. Since this does not imply that the effect was completely absent among the second generation, the second generation still committed crime, but dramatically less than we would expect. With this in mind I will apply Mill in such a way that subsequent changes would have caused the Swedish exception. A threshold for measuring whether the cause could have affected the effect will thus be based on whether the changes in the cause affected more than half of the second generation adversely, enabling an overwhelming likelihood that there is a connection between the cause and the effect.

The hypotheses I will put forward will be deduced from the pre-existing research literature. The main test will be that the Swedish Exception must have been caused by an independent variable that appeared in Sweden between 1985 and 1989, as well as between 1997 and 2001, and the same causal factor need to be absent in Sweden by 2005. It will also need to be absent in the other Scandinavian countries, where the exception has not been recorded.

A unique advantage of applying a comparative design is that it will allow me to control for factors that Ahlberg (1996) and Martens and Holmberg (2005), could not. In particular, their designs were limited to only one country. Finding out whether variations in country backgrounds among the second generation could explain the Swedish Exception, can only be addressed by applying a comparative design. In the literature review, I will therefore review the literature that confirms the Swedish Exception, as well as the elements in the Swedish welfare state that might have caused this exception. Furthermore, I will compare Sweden to the other Scandinavian countries to see whether the same welfare element is present there. In order to answer the main research question I would therefore need to map these two questions:

1. Can we be completely sure that the exception in Sweden could not have been produced by characteristics among second generation immigrants in Sweden?
2. Can the Swedish welfare state have produced the Swedish Exception?

In order to answer the second part of my research question: How has Sweden suppressed the crime level among the second generation? The Swedish welfare state will be operationalized with reference to Martens' suggestion about a link between Project Head Start and the Swedish welfare state. Project Head Start can be found in both the Swedish dedication to early intervention programs, but it is also found in the Swedish dedication to give children with a background in a second language extra language education. These two interventions are then developed into hypotheses' as I will use as a basis for my analysis. These are:

H1: The Swedish preschool caused the Swedish Exception.

H2: The language support provided in the Swedish preschools caused the Swedish Exception.

The hypotheses' are, however, of a kind that will have to allow for a time delay of the causal connection between the independent and the dependent variable. Due to the fact that when children are in preschool, they are also too young to commit a crime in all the Scandinavian countries. The nature of these hypotheses' is that, they are suggested as long term effects. Part of the challenge in the thesis is to map whether children who experienced these interventions in preschool could have affected the crime levels in Sweden between 1985 and 1989, as well as between 1997 and 2001 and its presence in 2005. To solve this issue and to make sure that

it is possible for those who experienced the effects of Project Head Start in preschool, also was old enough to become a part of the crime statistics. I have decided to widen the scope of the time-intervals I am looking at. That means that I am looking at preschool in Sweden during the 1980s, when the Swedish Exception first was recorded. Compared to Sweden in the 2000s, when the Swedish Exception was not recorded. Emphasis will still be put on 1985 and 2005 when both effects first were recorded.

## 1.1 Contribution

“[T]he province and function of criminology has been thought to be the study of crime. (...) this has meant the study of the reason for the existence of crime. By emphasizing crime—the negative—the exploration of non-crime—the positive—has usually been excluded or neglected” – Freda Adler (1983:1).

The same way as peace research focuses on war; criminology focuses on crime. A literature search for the absence of crime gave me Freda Adler’s book *Nations not obsessed with crime* (1983) and a book called *There is no crime for those who have Christ* (Gaddis, 2005). There is apparently very low interest in studying the absence of crime.

One of the challenges of entering into a different research field is the fact that one just may find that there actually is a reason why they are different. Coming from a Political Science tradition, it has become natural for me to see things from the state’s perspective, and to look at the world through practical lenses. It is also common to interpret social problems by, for instance, gauging the efficiency of welfare policies, integration or full employment policies.

Criminologists, on the other hand, relate to different sets of problems. They deal, for instance, with the extent and distribution of criminal conduct in a given society, as well as the “history, structure and operation” of the criminal justice system (Knepper, 2007:4) In Criminology there is, however, a disagreement about what its relationship should be to public policy. According to Michael Tonry, the different kinds of crime, the different ways of thinking about crime, and the many ways to deal with crime, makes policy making contested and complicated (Tonry, 2009: 4).

Paul Knepper (2007) summarizes the view held by the scientist on what role Criminology should play when it comes to public policies. According to him, an important distinction can be made between those who believe that Criminology has a responsibility to society and those

who believe Criminology should “question, challenge and provoke from a location outside government” (p. 10) The first view holds that taking an active role can contribute to creating evidence-based crime policies that to a greater extent adhere to the applicable society, where “the criminologists supply facts and the policymakers make choices about values and priorities” (Knepper, 2007: 9). The second view denies the existence of an ideology-free zone in Criminology. The risk this perspective refers to is when putting crime on the agenda it could, in policy terms, lead to a disproportional policy response by policy makers. Since policymakers have an interest in being strict on crime. Which, in effect would remove the focus from the actual underlying and structural causes discovered by the criminologists. The latter view draws on many political examples. In particular, Paul Knepper refers to when Richard Nixon took office in the 1970s and replaced Lyndon B. Johnson’s ‘war on poverty’ with his ‘tough on crime’ stance. After this there was no possibility for an American President to appear weak on crime (ibid., p. 17). The same had also been true in the United Kingdom, where Margaret Thatcher and her conservative government’s ‘tough on crime’ stance in the 1970s (ibid). In both the United Kingdom, and in the United States, there has been no going back on crime policies, once they have been introduced to politics: crime should be solved by imposing increasingly punitive policies, anyone who appears weak on crime would later find it hard to be elected (ibid.).

It was against this backdrop that Freda Adler (1983) published her book *Nations not obsessed with crime*. Her view was that the “prevalence of crime has become an American reality and the fear of crime an American preoccupation” (p. xix). Adler had found that there were no necessary connection between the prevalence of crime in a society and the political or media interest in crime when she studied different countries. By focusing on countries not obsessed with crime she somehow hoped to remove the claustrophobic fear of crime deeply rooted in the American public, and hoped that focusing on countries not obsessed with crime could do so.

Freda Adler began her book with a contemplation concerning the future role of Criminology. Adler wished to take the focus away from criminals, and to the few countries that have managed to maintain low crime rates, by instead asking what we can learn from them (Adler, 1983). My interest in studying the absence of crime can also be placed in this tradition, although not as ambitiously as Adler. By framing the thesis onto a ‘non-problem’ I hope to

contribute positively to two otherwise problem-oriented research traditions (as Political Science and Criminology actually are). It has, as far as I know, never been done in Scandinavia. It can also be a positive and refreshing contribution to a change of focus in Norway and the constant crime focus in the media. The fact that the Immigration Paradox has been found to be true everywhere else than in Sweden suggests also that the crime level is a product of society and not of the second generation itself. The absence of crime can thus be of a social and policy interest. I hope to contribute to removing the focus away from an otherwise exposed group (as the second generation actually is) and shifting it on to looking of crime as a symptom of the society it occurs in.

## **1.2 Structure of the thesis**

In order to find out whether the Swedish welfare state may be responsible for the Swedish Exception, I will start by describing the method I will apply in Chapter 2. In Chapter 3, I describe general definitional issues, as well as the general explanations proposed to what is known to cause the existence of crime. I also conclude the chapter by presenting general crime trends in the Scandinavian countries. In Chapter 4, I proceed to introduce the evidence confirming the existence of an Exception to the Immigration Paradox in Sweden, relying heavily on Ahlberg (1996) and Martens and Holmberg (2005). It also includes the changes in crime levels. In this chapter I have gone beyond the existing literature by adding an extra control for the changes in the composition of immigrants. In Chapter 5, I trace the literature of the Immigration Paradox back to its beginning. In this chapter I conclude with theories that have been applied to explain the presence of the Immigration Paradox. These reasons are also suggested to be absent in Sweden, due to the absence of the Immigration Paradox there. I further extend upon these theories in Chapter 6, as well as apply Ahlberg's (1996), and Martens and Holmberg's (2005) own explanations as to what may have caused the low crime rates in Sweden: its unique welfare state.

In Chapter 7, I operationalize the Swedish Welfare state, based on the assumption that it is its similarities to Project Head Start that have caused the absence of crime in Sweden during the 1980s. In Chapter 8, I test these hypotheses. I then proceed to describe the changes that occurred in the Swedish welfare state, and subsequently the changes affecting the variables in 2005, when the Swedish Exception was recoded not to exist. I further test the remaining variable on the Scandinavian countries, in 2005, countries that all have found evidence of the

Immigration Paradox there. Chapter 9, provides a summary and discussion where I also introduce the conclusion. I conclude in both Chapter 9 and 10 by rejecting the suggestion that the preschool in Sweden could have caused the Swedish exception. I do, however, find support for the second hypothesis, suggesting language education in the Swedish preschool to have caused the Swedish exception.

### **1.3 The empirical material**

The empirical weight in this thesis will centre on the question of whether aspects of the Swedish welfare state may have caused Sweden's relative low crime rates among the second generation in the 1980s and the 1990s. The most important documents will thus be propositions from the Swedish government, as well as laws and evaluations conducted on the different policies. Much of the empiricism is based on pre-existing research that I have collected and put into context. Laws, State Official reports and propositions that have preceded specific efforts towards these groups, are thus central to this thesis. I will further apply data collected from the different statistical bureaus in Scandinavia. Several challenges in restricted access to Swedish data have made me have to rely on secondary sources. Restrictions have included among others laws that are no longer active in Sweden, old public reports that are not digitalized, as well as most crime data that are connected to personal characteristics.



## 2 METHODOLOGICAL EVALUATIONS

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This chapter will start by laying out the methodological framework of the thesis. I will begin by introducing Mill's Method of Difference and describe how I will proceed by applying it to the Swedish Exception.

### 2.1 Research Design

"If an instance in which the phenomenon under investigation occurs, and an instance in which it does not occur, have every circumstance in common save one, that one occurring only in the former; the circumstance in which alone the two instances differ is the effect, or the cause, or an indispensable part of the cause, of the phenomenon" - John Stuart Mill ([1843] 1961: 256).

This quote is taken from John Stuart Mill's introduction to his second canon: the Method of Difference (Mill [1843] 1961)). When I, in the Introduction, wrote that the Swedish Exception created a natural opportunity to apply Mill's Method of Difference, I was referring to the fact that it is an exception, i.e. an instance where the Immigration Paradox does not occur. By asking why Sweden is an exception among otherwise similar cases where the phenomenon occurs, enables us to distinguish causal mechanisms (Moses and Knutsen, 2007: 98). Mill's Method of Difference is a method that enables us to distinguish these causal mechanisms. In this case, the Exception is the fact that the crime level in Sweden was recorded to be lower among the second generation compared to the first generation, during the 1980s and 1990s, otherwise referred to as the Swedish Exception.

In order to apply Mill's Method of Difference I will have to identify 'instances' that are similar in nature, any observed difference between them cannot be explained by their similarities (Moses and Knutsen, 2007: 98; Mill, [1843] 1961: 256). I will then have to identify 'instances' that are as similar in nature as possible (except for the phenomenon). The Scandinavian countries fit such a description since these countries share several similarities. This is true for both language and culture, but perhaps more importantly; they have a lot in common when it comes to similar political background: They are all welfare states.

Since higher crime rates have been registered among the second generation in all the Scandinavian countries, during the 1980s and the 1990s--except in Sweden--the cause can be distinguished from something else that occurred only in Sweden. The comparison will



therefore enable me to see what is unique with Sweden. At the same time, we can control for other beneficial effects that may have crime preventive consequences.

The most basic method to distinguish this cause will be to look at what factors in the Swedish welfare state were present when the exception was present, and which were not present in the other Scandinavian countries at the same time. If there is only one key factor that is present at the same time as the Exception is recorded in Sweden, and absent at the same time in the other European countries, those factors would be the cause and effect. There are, however, several limitations to that method. First of all, John Stuart Mill never intended the method to be used in a Political Science setting (Moses and Knutsen, 2007: 97). An important reason for this was that it is difficult to reproduce the same uniformity as you can in a natural science laboratory. In the realm of the social sciences it is difficult to isolate the objects under analysis completely. It is likely that there will be more than two factors that vary between the Scandinavian countries, despite their similarities. A challenge would therefore be to distinguish the key independent variables. Applying theory will reduce the potential risk of distinguishing irrelevant independent variables significantly. The fact that the Swedish Exception is found to be absent in Sweden in 2005, allows me also to employ a stronger design that allows for a further reduced risk of including irrelevant independent variables.

Adding a time dimension will therefore strengthen the design by reducing the number of potential causes. I will achieve this by comparing a snapshot of the Swedish society when the Swedish Exception first was recorded to a snapshot when it was not recorded. The relevant variables would be utterly reduced and the only factor that remains would then be the cause (Moses and Knutsen, 2007: 99). This is the second application of Mills Method of Difference.

The factors must additionally achieve the most basic test of causation. According to John Stuart Mill ([1843] 1961), the first article in the law of universal causation is that “the phenomena of nature exist in two distinct relations to one another; that of simultaneity and that of succession” (p. 211). This means that the cause must take place before the effect but also that both the cause and the effect need to be contiguous in space and time. This means that the effect has to be related to the cause, it cannot be present without the cause and the cause cannot be present without the effect. This will in either case imply that the cause did not cause the effect.

The time measure will be useful due to the fact that since the Swedish Exception is no longer valid in Sweden, the cause of the Exception must have been removed too. In other words, if elements of the welfare state have dampened the second generation effect, those elements must have been present at the same time as the Exception was recorded in Sweden. They must also have been removed at the time that the effect was removed. Both cause and effect thus need to be present at the same time, and removed at the same time, to confirm that the element in the Swedish welfare state might have dampened the second generation effect.

When it comes to the second application of Mills method—where I compare Sweden to itself at two different times—I can then see whether the same proposed explanations to the Swedish Exception is present in Sweden in 1985 and absent in 2005. The requirements in both tests needs to be fulfilled in order to have the potential of causing the Swedish Exception.

## **2.2 Challenges in a Comparative Research Design**

This section will discuss the different difficulties in comparative research, and how the research design applied will enable me to overcome these.

One of the main challenges connected to applying a comparative design, is the issue of case selection (Moses and Knutsen, 2007: 95). In contrast to the statistical method, which selects cases randomly, comparative case studies select cases on the dependent variable. i.e. as I am interested in the absence of crime, I have chosen the case where crime is absent. The main problem refers to the issues of selection bias, and over-determination (ibid.). The problem refers to the fact that the scientist may end up in “cherry-picking” her/his cases in order to prove or disprove their theory, and the problem of generalization. The latter refers to the fact that few observations give no indication of how these observations relate to cases outside the study. This is furthered by the fact that comparative research is limited by few cases, and does not have the same opportunities as one would in a statistical study. In order to get around these problems, two solutions are to increase the number of observations as well as reduce the number of independent variables (ibid: 110/111). The first I have solved by including the other Scandinavian countries, in addition to the time study within Sweden. The second, I have solved by reducing the number of potential independent variables explaining the absence of crime in Sweden. This have been done by applying extensive pre-existing literature on both

the presence of crime among the second generation as well as theories proposed to cause crime prevention among the second generation in Sweden. The risk this thesis encounters is that much valuable information might get lost by reducing the potential number of independent variables. On the other hand, this strategy enables the thesis to: 1) say something interesting and important about our world; and 2) to propose a theory that is useful for further research. In short, its benefits far outweigh its limitations.

Another challenge in applying any comparative study is whether the phenomenon one wishes to study is comparable. The methodical problems that appear when comparing different countries' crime levels are numerous. One of the reasons for this is the issue of 'dark figures', i.e. the discrepancy between the 'actual' crime level in a given society and the level of registered or recorded crimes in the same society (Brå, 2006: 66). The 'total' registered crime levels are likely to differ from the 'actual' crime levels, and the potential of an uneven distribution of dark figures across societies makes comparisons between different countries difficult (ibid).

These dark figures might mask important differences across countries, depending on the propensity for the members in a given society to report crimes, and the ability of the society to solve crimes, by connecting a crime to a criminal. The reporting of crimes as well as the society's ability to solve crimes (i.e. the societies' 'clearance rates') is highly volatile and is affected by factors such as culture, time, politics and resources (Brå, 2006: 66). For instance, criminologists have found that so-called victimless crimes, such as environmental crimes or white-collar crimes have lower clearance rates than those with a victim. Property theft or violent assault fall under typical examples of crimes with a victim.

Another issue is the political interest in increasing clearance rates for certain types of crime. Drug crimes, are for instance known as victimless crimes with a corresponding low clearance rate, but the American-initiated "war on crime" campaign increased the clearance rates significantly (ibid.). Cultural factors are also relevant when it comes to, for instance, sexual assaults. Cultural elements in a society can both increase and reduce the threshold among the victims to report certain crimes. Certain crimes are, in general, easier to report to the police than others, and some types of crime are easier to clear up and attract more resources than

other kinds of crimes. Together all these factors make up the crime numbers in a given society.

Furthermore, the definitional complications related to the dependent variable, needs to be considered. Crime is a legal construct, depending on the laws in a given country at a given time, an issue I will return to in Chapter 3.2. These laws are also known to change over time as well as to vary across countries. A crime is thus only a crime, if the laws in the country defines them to be one.

It is with all these considerations I wish to emphasise that both the dependent variable and Mill's Method of Difference would be an advantage. I am not going to approach the total level of crime in the different societies. But my focus will be trained on the relative crime levels between two groups: the first generation and the second generation at a given point in time, within a given society. The Immigration Paradox and the Swedish Exception are thus examples of how the crime levels among the first- and the second generation relates to each other at a given point in time, within a given society. This focus will enable me to get around the contextual elements affecting the crime levels, by looking at the same phenomenon in different settings. The potential variations of dark figures across countries will thus not affect the results.

The challenges that might still be relevant are whether we can assume that the first- and the second generation are involved in similar crime activity, relative to each other, across countries. Since, as I described above, clearance rates are connected to types of crime, there is a risk that if the groups are involved in different kinds of crime and thus subject to different levels of clearance rates (i.e., if one of the groups, for instance, are primarily involved in a type of crime that have a specific low clearance rate), then this can skew the relative relationship between the groups.

Another issue is discrimination in the justice system. Evidence has been found that those with foreign backgrounds might be discriminated against by the control authorities, and this may be reflected in the crime statistics (Kardell, 2006: 1) Previous research have indicated an increased likelihood for crimes being both reported and more punitive, if the crime has been committed by a person of foreign origin. This discrimination hypothesis has, however, not

found much empirical support. Ahlberg (1996) rejected it as unlikely (p. 88), and studies conducted of register data, have not revealed any selection bias in the justice system (Martens, 1997: 219). Johan Kardell (2011) did find discrimination to explain a part of the difference in crime among different ethnic groups, but only as a limited explanation to the crime levels of the different ethnic groups (p. 96). Although, concerns with regards to discrimination are important and deserves attention, it is not likely to have affected the Swedish Exception. First, because discrimination would be likely to affect the second generation adversely, the consequences of discrimination would thus not have been that the second generation commit less crime as the Swedish Exception is an example of. Second, it would not explain the different crime levels between the first- and the second generations, assuming that discrimination would affect both groups.

## 3 BACKGROUND

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### 3.1 Introductory remarks

When I began writing this thesis, I must admit I was doubtful about the pre-existing research that claims there was an exception to the Immigration Paradox in Sweden. But perhaps most of all, I was doubtful about the fact that this gap had never been studied before. As most students, I have been taught to search for research gaps when planning the subject for my thesis. However, having studied political science for a while, I have come to terms with a general understanding that most research gaps are either too good to be true, or impossible to do research on, i.e. too good to be true. The most one could hope for is, in general, to push the research frontier a bit further. This topic has, however, proven me wrong. I have truly been surprised by the low interest in studying the absence of crime, as well as the potential public policy interest it can generate. A general issue, relating to the ‘too good to be true’ category, has, however, been the difficulty in accessing data: much of the data is old and not digitalized or sensitive and thus unpublished. As a result, I have to rely on meta-data or data about data, in order to do the research I wanted.

I have been further concerned with the framing of my thesis, and the association between crime and immigrants. This association has often been blown out of proportion by both the media and right-wing parties, and my concern has been that my research might contribute to this. I have, however, come to terms with the fact that I attempt to detect measures aimed at reducing social marginalization and achieving equality in the Scandinavian countries. At the same time, I aim to discover whether these measures could have had a discernable impact on crime levels amongst the second generation in these countries. In providing a different angle, I hope that my contribution can be of a constructive kind that might be of benefit the small but important group that is the second generation.

### 3.2 Defining crime

There are several issues concerning the definition of crime. Before I continue describing the contents of the Swedish Exception, I will dwell on the definitional challenges connected to crime. This section will therefore present how crime is defined and what consequences the definition has for crime research.

Crime is defined as a legal concept, which means that behaviours become a crime only after a legislature has defined it to be one (Tonry, 2009: 6). The presence of both the criminal behaviour and the detection of the crime by both the enforcement authorities as well as the legislative authority need to be in place in order for a given behaviour to become formally perceived as a crime<sup>3</sup>. In consequence a crime is defined as both what is written in the law, but also by the reaction attached to the law: the control. This definition entails a key to understanding crime as a phenomenon. Since crime research is based on these two volatile, non-fixed categories (crime and control) in order to study crime, both crime and control need to be understood (Høigård, 2007: 13). The crime data is therefore, and can only be, based on criminal behaviour that have been committed by an individual, but also detected by the society.

Cecilie Høigård (2007) argues that there is a close connection between the types of social control and the most common characteristics applied to individuals in any society, namely age, gender, social class and ethnicity. According to her, all these characteristics are important in defining different kinds of controls, and they constitute a foundation for what she labels 'expulsion mechanisms' in the society. Where an individual is placed with regards to these characteristics defines how that individual would be subject to the control mechanisms, but also which actions are available to him or her (p. 16/17). For instance, an elderly person will less likely commit graffiti-related crimes, compared to a younger person: the elderly person will lack the skills and the opportunity. But also, vice-versa: An elderly person might be more likely to commit, for instance, an insurance fraud compared to a younger person, as the younger person would be more likely to lack the skills and the opportunity.

Furthermore, since the skill of committing a crime is dependent on individual characteristics, there would also exist an association between the crime and the individual characteristics among the control mechanisms in a given society. This means that if the police want to solve a graffiti-related crime, they would most likely not target elderly homes, but instead target youth groups.

Large variations in clearance rates are connected to these expulsion mechanisms. Clearance rates are the society's ability to detect a crime and can amount to large variations, for reasons

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<sup>3</sup> Assuming a modern liberal society.

I described in Chapter 2.2. Different types of crimes often have different clearance rates as well as different individual characteristics, or criminal profiles, connected to them. You could say that both the type of crime and the personal profile is connected to the clearance rates: A young man with a different ethnicity might have a higher possibility of being detected for a graffiti-related crime, compared to an old woman with the national ethnicity. In other words: The societal control mechanisms might work differently on them, based on their place among these characteristics in the society, i.e. their ‘Criminal Profile’. These profiles are very sensitive to discrimination and any study of crime among any vulnerable group should take these into consideration. Further, the type of crime that groups are involved in is relevant, due to the fact that they could (in theory) be subject to different mechanisms of control dependent on the types of crime they are involved in. These will be returned to in Chapter 3.4

### **3.3 The correlates of crime**

“Being criminal is not like having a disease. Most people at some stage in their lives commit crime of some sort, even if it involves nothing more serious than driving above the speed limit”

- (Weatherburn, 2001: 8).

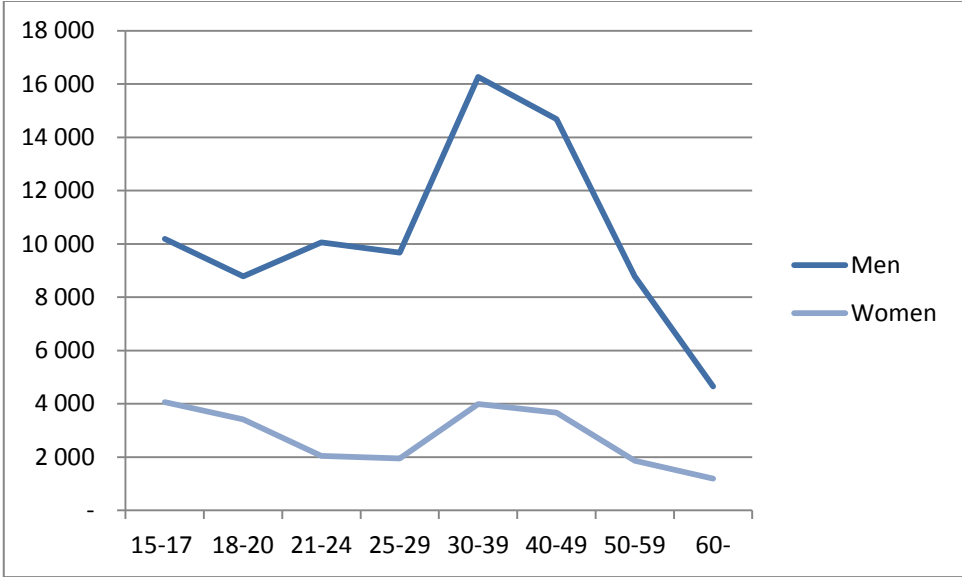
Even though our focus is on absence of crime, it is necessary to address explanations to what causes crime. This section will review some of the criminology literature to what have been known to cause criminal behaviour, also known in the literature as ‘Predictors’.

Although I have provided a definition to crime, the terms criminality and crime itself have the potential to mislead. The terms can easily be associated with the worst offences as well as the individuals who could have been said to develop a criminal career. We rarely view persons with parking or driving offences as criminals. In crime research however, everyone who has broken the law would automatically fit into the same category. A definitional issue that also is highlighted by the fact that the law that the criminal has been found guilty of breaking, is up to each government to define. The same is to be said about the crimes that are discovered and those who remain undiscovered. Different political interest in clearing certain types of crime over others also affects the research tradition. It has been known for instance that certain “victimless” crimes often are less prioritized by law enforcement. Making the crime definition a highly volatile phenomenon and a comparison of different countries is thus also highly problematic.



Another issue is the fact that the vast majority of persons convicted of a crime would only be found guilty of one or a few offences during a short period of their lives (Weatherburn, 2001: 9). Actually, this is one of the most consistent findings across studies on offending in different countries (Loeber and Farrington, 2014: 12; Antonaccio et. al, 2010).

Rolf Loeber and David P. Farrington (2014) studied the relationship between age and crime. According to them the relationship is an asymmetrical bell shape, showing that the percentage of offenders in a population “tends to increase from late childhood, peaks in the teenage years (around ages 15-19) and then declines from the early 20s, often with a long tail” (Loeber and Farrington, 2014: 12). However, the age-crime curve is not invariant, but varies depending on the characteristics of the offender and the offences. For instance the age-crime curve for violence tends to peak later than the one for property crime and it peaks earlier for women compared to men (ibid.). It is however found to be true that most stop committing crimes during the phase of late adolescence and early adulthood (Weatherburn, 2001; Loeber and Farrington, 2014). There is thus reasonable evidence suggesting that those who commit crime commit them during their youth before they then “grow” out of it. But as shown below in Figure 1, this is not the case for Sweden, where the peak seems to be in the late 30s for both men and women.



**Figure 1 Diagram of crime level among suspected persons by gender and age in Sweden, 2005**

(Brå, 2013, Table 210)

Criminologists have found certain traits that can be seen to be associated with higher levels of crime in general. The most distinct factors are age, gender, those of lower socioeconomic status, i.e lack of education and employment, the unmarried, deviant/criminal peer association and lack of religiosity. In general, men are more likely to commit crime compared to women. It is also predominantly, a juvenile phenomenon, whether male or female (Weatherburn, 2001; Antonaccio et. al, 2010). We would thus be more likely to find men to be more likely to commit crimes compared to women, those with low socioeconomic status to commit more crime than those with a high level of socioeconomic status. Furthermore would those who are unemployed and those who are more exposed to crime be more likely to commit crimes. These factors' or predictors are all important characteristics to factor in when trying to understand both the causes crime and the absence of crime. These predictors also serve as important controls when trying to understand what could have explained the Swedish Exception. These predictors will be returned to in Chapter 4, where they will be dealt with as controls done in order to explain crime variations in Sweden.

### **3.4 Crime in Scandinavia**

Since I have chosen to compare the Scandinavian countries, it is useful to look at the general crime patterns in the different countries. In most comparative research literature, the Scandinavian countries are grouped together, either as Scandinavian or as a Nordic Model or cluster. The similarities they share are many: All countries lie at the margin of Europe, they are rather sparsely populated and all countries are constitutional monarchies (Hofer, 2004: 148). The population are mostly protestant and very homogeneous in terms of culture, and it was only until recently they began to feel the impact of immigration. The level of immigration varies between the countries the highest level is in Sweden and the lowest in Denmark (NOSOSKO, 2008: 19). During the modern history, the whole region has been shaped by the principles of social democracy (Hofer, 2004: 148).

The Scandinavian countries can be said to belong to a 'Nordic cluster' of institutional welfare states, that are trademarked by the fact that they are exhibiting high employment rates and social expenditure, but weak family ties coupled with lower poverty rates, as well as lower income inequality (ibid). In order to get a better understanding of what this entails, the Nordic cluster can be contrasted against the 'Southern cluster' of family welfare regimes and the 'Central European cluster' of mixed welfare regimes. The Southern cluster is characterized by

low employment, lower social expenditure, but with strong traditional families, coupled with higher poverty rates and income inequality. While the Central European cluster is more or less located in the middle, concerning geography and welfare as well as distributive outcome. The United Kingdom is considered as a member of the Central European cluster, a country with a relative high level of income inequality and poverty (Vogel 2002: 278).

Despite the similarities in Scandinavia, trends are in general difficult to discern do to the complicated nature of crime data. Although it is widely held that crime levels are increasing, the propensity of the society to report a crime is also changing, along with changes in legislation. The combination of all these three variables makes crime data notoriously difficult to interpret (Estrada, 2006). In order to get around these challenges many Criminologists turn to different combinations of data compilations, often comparing victim surveys to police records.

In a short overview of statistically available data on the Scandinavian countries, Hans Von Hofer, summarises crime trends in the Scandinavian countries in the period 1950-2000. By combining International Crime Victims' Surveys with other statistical sources conducted in that period, Hofer finds that the crime<sup>4</sup> level in Scandinavia is similar to, or lower than that of other western European countries. There is also evidence that the risk of being exposed to a crime varies to a greater extent according to the level of urbanization and other factors. More than it does by country specific factors (Brå 2001:18, p. 52; Hofer, 2004: 159).

Increases in crime rates during the post-world war period have been substantial in the Scandinavian countries (Hofer, 2004: 151/154): a trait, the Scandinavian countries share with other European countries, indicating that this is not something unique to Scandinavia, but may share a common structural cause affecting all the European countries.

Compared to other countries, the Scandinavian countries lie in the middle or at the lower end of the distribution of personal victimizations. They share a similar distribution when it comes to drug problems and there is, in principle, no distinctive increase in the level of reported offences to the police compared to other comparable European countries (Hofer, 2004: 148).

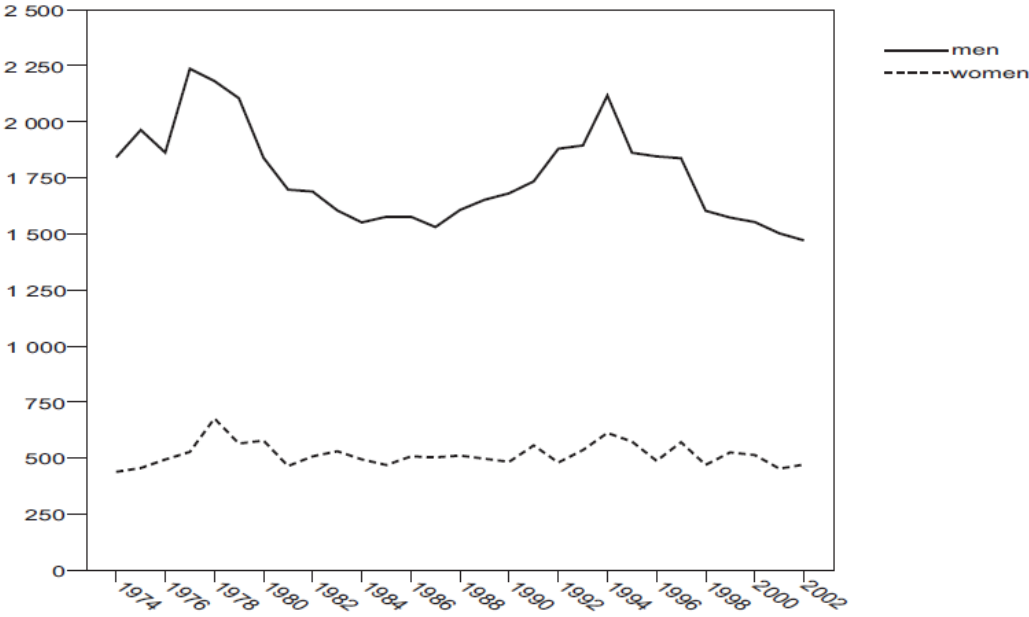
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<sup>4</sup> Defined as traditional offences

The theft offences have also stabilized during the 1990s as they did in most other Western European countries.

In general, national victim-surveys show a great deal of stability in the Scandinavian countries when it comes to reported violence. The homicide rates, which initially increased in the post-World War II period, have also decreased since the beginning of the 1980s.

Felipe Estrada (2006) has also contributed to a study of crime trends in the Scandinavian countries by studying hospital admittance as a result of violence from 1974 to 2002 in Sweden. And according to Estrada the number of violent injuries resulting in hospitalization increased between 1974 and 1979, following a decrease affecting more or less the entire 1980s. Further, the number of violent offences begins to increase at the end of the 1980s, reaching almost the same level as during the 1970s. Whereas it decreases and continues to decrease for the remainder of the 1990s as well as during the early 2000s, as I depict in Figure 2.

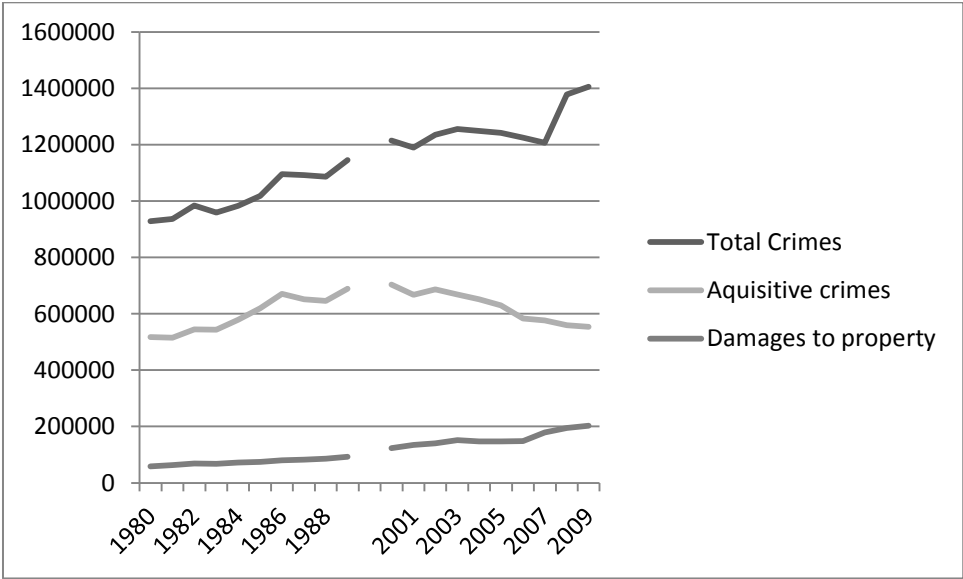


**Figure 2 Number of Hospital Admissions as result of violence by gender in Scandinavia, 1974 - 2000**

(Estrada, 2006: 493)

The crime trends in Sweden are interesting, but can't possibly say anything about the crime levels among the second generations. According to Kardell and Martens (2013) are the crimes

the second generation males is most likely to be involved in: Crimes inflicting damage, car theft, theft out and from vehicles and burglary into dwelling (p. 180). These are also typically associated with juvenile delinquencies. While the women are more likely to be involved in crimes against the law of possessing weapons and the law prohibiting carrying knives, crimes inflicting damage, thefts out of and from motor vehicles and drunken driving. In Figure 3, the development of the total levels of crimes including all offences, as well as the types of crimes the second generation is typically involved in, is given. The numbers are based on reported offences to the police. The numbers do give an indication that the general crime levels are increasing, but it is not controlled for a general increase of population. It does despite this fact, present a general decrease in the crime levels as the second generation is involved in during the 2000s. Referring to the fact that the typical crimes that the second generation was involved in was increasing when the Swedish Exception first was discovered in the 1980s, and decreasing when the Swedish Exception was discovered when the exception was recorded not to exist anymore. This is if we assume that the types of crime the group is involved in would remain stable over time.



**Figure 3 Total Number of crimes reported to the police, 1980s and 2000s**

(Brå, 2012: 40/41)

Even when narrowed down to the specific crimes, there is no possible way of discerning whether the exception of the second generation is caused by a general trend in the Swedish society only from trend analysis. Both due to the combination of factors that make up the

police reported data. The victim surveys are also seen to be unreliable with this regard. The best available data is thus the registry data, where the exception was first discovered. The next section will thus begin by introducing the research that revealed the existence of the Swedish Exception based on more detailed data.



## 4 THE SWEDISH EXCEPTION

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When studying crime among second generation immigrants during the years 1985 to 1989, Jan Ahlberg (1996) found that the second generation in Sweden were less likely to commit a crime, compared to those who were born abroad (Ahlberg, 1996: 90). Ahlberg based his study upon criminal offences reported to the police comprising the whole Swedish population between 11 and 55 years old (born between 1945 and 1974) and who were included in the Swedish population registry during November 1<sup>st</sup> 1985 (Ahlberg, 1996: 19). When controlling for age, gender and urban domicile, Ahlberg (1996) discovered that second generation immigrants were less likely to be registered for an offence compared to the first generation, even though both groups did worse than those without immigration background (p. 14).

This finding contradicted the previous research on the second generation at the time, in the United States and in Europe, where all countries found the second generation did worse than the first generation in the crime statistics (Tonry, 1997: 1).

The requirement for inclusion in the Swedish criminal registry, which Ahlberg (1996) based his finding on, is that the police must find you reasonably suspected of having committed a crime, and have started preliminary investigations (p. 13). Ahlberg (1996) identified the second generation immigrants as anyone above criminal age (15 years) that lived in a household that included an adult person born in another country than Sweden (p. 14).

Controls were made in order to enable correct comparisons between groups. From previous crime research, age and gender have been known to be important factors affecting crime levels among any population (Weatherburn, 2001) A comparison between for instance a population that consists of an even distribution between genders (more or less) with a population consisting of an overweight of men, would thus yield biased results, running the risk of measuring male criminality instead of the properties of the group one is interested in. As in Ahlberg's report, immigrants arrived from certain countries where the share of men consisted of up to 70% (Ahlberg, 1996: 50). We can therefore expect the second generation to have a more equal gender distribution compared to the first generation, related to the fact that becoming a member of the 'second generation group' is not based on a person's choice, but something you are born into.



Ahlberg's (1996) study revealed that 31% the share of the second generation was born during the years 1965-1971, i.e. between 16 and 22 years old (p.77). This is also when the registered crime levels are considered to be highest (ibid.). Applying these controls, Ahlberg (1996) found that the second generation was less likely to commit a crime compared to the first generation regardless of the age group or gender (p.77). He also found this to be true within the groups that lived in the rural and those who lived in the city regions (p. 78). Although the crime level could be assumed to be higher in the cities, this did not affect the crime level among the second generation.

The report had, however, several limitations when it came to controls. One of the limitations was that it did not control for other characteristics we know to be associated with crime, such as unemployment or level of education. The reason for this was, according to Ahlberg, that it would "increas[e] the likelihood for randomness" (Ahlberg, 1996: 23), most likely due to problems with a small sampling size of the second generation at the time. Another weakness was that it did not distinguish between those among the second generation immigrants that only had one parent and those who had two parents born abroad. The problem with applying a different operationalization is that it is possible that at least one native parent would be more likely to have stronger ties to the Swedish society and therefore not measuring the same as the other studies have. This shortcoming could therefore run the potential of skewing the results in the Swedish study from the international studies that confirmed the Immigration Paradox (Martens and Holmberg, 2005: 26).

In order to mend these shortcomings, Martens and Holmberg (2005) did a follow-up study examining the years from 1997 to 2001 including everyone who were registered as a citizen of Sweden in 1997 (Martens and Holmberg, 2005: 70/71). This study supported Ahlberg's study and concluded that those who were born in Sweden with one or two parents born abroad were less likely to commit a crime, compared to those who were born abroad (Martens and Holmberg, 2005: 40). The study was based on the same registry as Ahlberg (1996) had used. The main aspect that distinguished the two studies was that the new study made a distinction between persons born in Sweden from one and two parents as well as studying different time periods. They also used more robust controls that included income and education, in addition to age and gender.

Both studies measured the relative risks of anyone suspected of being involved in a crime. They used Swedish-born by Swedish-born parents as a reference group, by giving them the value 1,0. The other groups' risk levels were then calculated relative to the reference group (Martens and Holmberg, 2005: 33). Table 1 lists the different relative risk scores given for the different groups in the different studies. According to Table 1, a person who is born in Sweden with one or two parents born abroad is 1,5 times more likely to commit a crime, during the period 1985-1989, compared to the reference group.

**Table 1 The relative risk of being suspected of a crime in the years 1985-1989 and 1997-2001<sup>5</sup>**

	Years 1985-1989*	Years 1997-2001**
Born in Sweden with Swedish-born parents***	1,0	1,0
Born in Sweden with one or two parents born abroad	1,5	1,6
Distinguishing between families with one and two foreign-born parents	1,4	2,0
Born abroad	2,1	2,5

(Martens and Holmberg, 2005: 34)

As Table 1 shows, the difference between the two studies are not that big: 1,5 in the period 1985-1989 compared to 1,6 in the period 1997-2001 and 2,1 compared to 2,5 for the foreign born. The table also includes additional correction for the age groups included in the different studies as well as making a distinction between the families with only one parent born abroad and those with two (Martens and Holmberg, 2005: 34). This additional distinction shows that those who only have one parent born abroad, are less likely to commit a crime compared to those with both parents born abroad. The table seemingly confirms the inclination to assume that families with only one parent born abroad are less risk prone, compared to those who have two parents born abroad. But it is still unclear whether this difference and the lack of controls in the Ahlberg study, created the Swedish Exception to the Immigration Paradox. The next table will therefore include the different controls that have been made in the different studies.

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<sup>5</sup> A general issue in comparing Ahlberg (1996) and Martens and Holmberg (2005) have been that the age groups differed between the studies. This has been controlled for in Table 1, including only those who were born between 1952 and 1981. The controls did not change the risk levels.

**Table 2 The relative risk of being suspected of a crime in the years 1985-1989 and 1997-2001 – controls included**

	Ahlberg (1996: p, 41/79) Years 1985- 1989*	Martens and Holmberg (2005: p, 40) Years 1997-2001**
Born in Sweden with Swedish born parents***	1	1
Born in Sweden with one or two parents born abroad	1,4	1,3
Born in Sweden with both parents born abroad	-	1,5
Born Abroad	2,2	2,1

\*Controlled for gender, age and residential area<sup>6</sup>

\*\*Controlled for gender, age, income and education<sup>7</sup>

\*\*\*Reference group

Table 2 is not meant as an absolute comparison of risk levels between the studies. Comparison of the studies is made difficult by the fact that they have made different controls, as described by the asterisks in the table (\*). However, it gives the relative order between the groups within each study after controls have been made. Both studies thus find, consistently, that during both periods the second generation is less likely than the first generation to commit a crime. The row showing those born in Sweden with one or two parents born abroad is operationalized the same way as Ahlberg had done, in 1996, in order to replicate the results (Martens and Holmberg 2005: 34). Martens and Holmberg (2005) concluded that the relationship between the different groups remained the same only the relative risk level was adjusted after adding more robust controls. Additionally, the native Swedes with two Swedish born parents a result only found in the latter study, are also less likely to commit a crime (1,5 times the native Swedes with native parents) compared to those who are born abroad (2,1 times)<sup>8</sup> (p. 40)

<sup>6</sup> Ahlberg (1996) applied the controls through the standard population method. Comparing the groups requiring that all groups have the same distribution of gender, age and residential area (p. 111).

<sup>7</sup> These controls are applied in terms of a standardization of the groups, same as Ahlberg (1996: 111). All groups are therefore divided into the similar sizes based on the characteristics gender, age, income and education (Martens and Holmberg, 2005: 40)

<sup>8</sup> Apparently the level of crime among the second generation was not lower for all crimes. Exceptions included car crimes, burglary, damages, possession of illegal weapons and knives, drunk driving and drug-related crimes (Martens and Holmberg, 2005: 43).

Kardell and Martens (2013) did a critical investigation of the findings in both Ahlberg (1996) and Martens and Holmberg (2005). While primarily focusing on Martens and Holmberg (2005) they added additional data; including the entire civil-registry of citizens in Sweden and the police-registered suspects of crime, in order to analyse the findings further (Kardell and Martens, 2013). Kardell and Martens (2013) both confirmed and improved the Marten and Holmberg (2005) report by re-examining the data from the previous report in a greater depth. They added similar controls: age, gender and education, as well as using a more detailed and descriptive approach. They also focused more on the variations between different crime types. Their study also confirmed the findings in the Ahlberg report, that the second generation immigrants have been registered as suspects of an offence to a lesser extent than the first-generation. This is true with and without the controls added. However, they improved the study by adding the average number of offenses among the suspected criminals.

Their study revealed that the main difference between the second generation and the first-generation is that the latter has higher offender rates than the former. The first generation is more often suspected for a crime than any other group, but relatively many of them are low rate offenders, i.e. offenders who commit only one or few crimes. The second generation has fewer offenders but these displayed a higher number of registered offences each, becoming so called 'high-rate offenders' (Kardell and Martens, 2013: 184). Although the native Swedish population has a higher number of high-rate offenders in total, the proportion of high-rate offenders among the second generation is still higher.

To summarize, we can conclude that the Swedish Exception, as discovered by Ahlberg (1996) and Martens and Holmberg (2005), is true and can provide a basis for comparison. The Exception implied that the second generation (compared to the first) was less likely to commit a crime. The Swedes with Swedish background were least likely to commit a crime. I also have excluded the possibility that the Exception could have been caused by differences in operationalization of the second-generation by the authors, since it has been adjusted for in the follow-up studies. Kardell and Martens (2013) do, however, add to the understanding of the Swedish Exception during 1997 to 2001 by elaborating on what kinds of crime the different generations are most likely to commit. I.e. the first generation is more likely to commit a crime compared to the second generation, but the latter is instead more likely to be a high rate offender compared to the former. Since I am looking at the relative crime

involvement between the groups and not within them, the offender frequencies per person are not relevant for the thesis. Ahlberg (1996) and Martens and Holmberg (2005) did also base their data on records that included only one crime per person, we are therefore interested in the number of persons in each group being involved in at least one crime, and not the total number of crimes per person. The additional understanding of crime patterns among the groups does not explain why Sweden has been the only country to reduce the number of persons involved in crime amongst the second generation. It does, however, specify that the Swedish Exception can be more precisely defined as the fact that fewer persons amongst the second generations commit crimes compared to the first generation in the two periods. And that the second generation are more likely to be involved in typical juvenile crimes, compared to the first generation (Kardell and Martens, 2013: 180).

The relative relationship between the different groups can neither be explained by differences in age levels between the generations, gender differences, differences in socio-economic status, nor differences with regards to residential area among the second generation (compared to the first) as all have been tested and controlled for in Ahlberg's study (1996: 79-80). Neither can it be explained by gender, age, income or education, as controlled for in Martens and Holmberg's (2005) re-examination of Ahlberg (1996). It is thus very likely that we need to look elsewhere to explain the Swedish Exception. Having clarified the Swedish Exception, the next section will address the follow-up study that did not find any evidence of a Swedish Exception in 2005.

#### **4.1 Changes in crime level**

In 2009, Johan Kardell and Karl-Magnus Carlsson (2009) published a comparative study among the Nordic countries based on persons found guilty of an offence among the first and second generations in 2003 and 2005<sup>9</sup>. Their study did not reproduce the Swedish Exception but found instead that the descendants of immigrants were overrepresented compared to immigrants in both Sweden and Denmark. In Norway, they found that the two groups displayed the same level of overrepresentation. The number of factors that differ in this study does, however, make the comparison to the previous studies difficult. The study was based on conviction data and included those who were registered as citizens of Sweden and convicted

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<sup>9</sup> The Swedish data was based on 2003 and 2005, while the data comparing Sweden to the other Nordic countries were only from 2005.

for a crime between 15 and 79 years old. The comparison between the countries is only based on the year 2005. It also included controls based on gender and age, but again it has its strength in the fact that it is made comparative between the Scandinavian countries. It is, however, impossible to deduce whether using the registry from the previous studies (i.e. persons being registered for a crime) would have yielded different results. This is, however, unlikely. Referring to a comparison between the different types of data and its implication on research, Kardell (2011) found that the registered for crime data included cases that the conviction data did not. According to Kardell (2011: 40), the main difference between those data was that the registered for crime data was more vulnerable for potential discrimination in the justice process, since cases without merit, i.e. based on discrimination, often did not reach a conviction. With this in mind, it is not unlikely that the registered data would be somewhat more biased against people with foreign background, as these cases have been known to be dropped later in the judicial process. But there is no reason to believe that the relative sizes of the crime levels among the groups would be affected. And if we look at the unstandardized crime risk among each group across the studies, the pattern we will get is this:

**Table 3 Unstandardized risks in Sweden, all studies**

	Ahlberg (1996, p. 79)**	Martens and Holmberg (2005, p. 40)	Kardell and Carlsson (2009, p. 61)
Swedish Background	1,0	1,0	1,0
First Generation	2,1	2,5	1,8
Second Generation	1,5*	2,0 (1,4*)	2,9

\*Includes both those with one and two parents born abroad

\*\* Although Ahlberg's risk includes more ages than the latter studies, the replication in Martens and Holmberg (2005) did not reveal any changes in the over risk. I have therefore included the unstandardized risks as shown by Ahlberg (1996: 79).

Since the last study is conviction data compared to the two former, we will expect it to decrease because it is likely that there will be persons from the crime registry that will not be found guilty in court, and thus not end up in the conviction database. Kardell (2006) did also find evidence that this happened more often to persons with foreign background, i.e. they were more likely to be suspected for a crime, but then have their cases dropped, but it is still no reason why this should affect only one of the generation groups. We would, therefore not expect the risk level to increase only for one group, as it does for the Second Generation shown in Table 3, based on measurement differences or discrimination between the studies.

Table 3 can therefore give us reasons to assume that there has been a negative change only affecting the second generation in Sweden. This means that the relative relationship between the first and the second generation cannot be caused due to changes affecting the first generation. This is important because a relative relationship could in theory have been affected by changes in either group's crime levels.

In this chapter, I have described the changes affecting Sweden in 2005, as described by Kardell (2005). I have also shown how the subsequent discovery of the Immigration Paradox in Sweden was due to an increase in the crime level among the second generation. In the next chapter I will return to Ahlberg (1996), as he already potentially predicted that this change would occur in Sweden. According to Ahlberg, the cause of this change would be due to changes in the composition of the second generation. This has, however, never been controlled for. The next chapter will thus test whether the change could have been caused by changes in the composition of the second generation.

#### **4.2 Are Recent Immigrants Different?**

Ahlberg did, potentially predict that the second generation would eventually have a higher crime level in Sweden, as confirmed by Kardell and Carlsson (2009). He explained this would be caused by future changes in the composition of the second generation. But he did not go into more specific details on why and to what nature of the composition would cause potential future changes in crime levels. There are thus still very good reasons to look into both possibilities. Did the Swedish welfare state or changes in the composition of the second generation cause the Swedish Exception?

Ahlberg (1996) wondered whether characteristics among the parent generation might have enabled the low crime level among the second generation. He based this on the fact that the previous generations had been labour migrants, while later migrants were not (p. 92). He found, however, no support for this in his study. When he tested the second generation with backgrounds from typical labour countries against those with backgrounds from typical refugee countries at that time, and found no support for this connection. In fact, Ahlberg (1996) found instead that those who arrived from countries that were seen as typical refugee countries displayed a lower crime rate, compared to their parent generation (p.91).

**Table 4 Crime Participation per mille by background country and generation in Sweden, 1985**

	<b>First Generation</b>	<b>Second Generation*</b>	<b>Change</b>
Denmark	105	100	-5
Finland	115	115	0
Norway	87	90	3
Estonia	-	38	-
Greece	102	96	-6
Italy	118	86	-32
Yugoslavia	146	116	-30
Poland	150	68	-82
Portuguese/Spain	108	106	-2
Romania/Bulgaria	153	82	-71
Great Britain	63	43	-20
Czech Republic	136	71	-65
Federal Republic of Germany	80	67	-13
Hungary	116	95	-21
Austria	84	61	-23
Soviet Union	137	81	-56
Algeria, Libya, Tunis	269	187	-82
Ethiopia	156	-	-
The United States	58	63	
Argentina, Uruguay	117	-	-
Bolivia, Peru, Equador	177	-	-
Chile	197	-	-
Colombia	131	-	-
Bangladesh, Pakistan	104	-	-
India	73	0	
Iraq	221	-	-
Iran	194	-	-
Jordan, Palestine, Syria	168	116	-52
Taiwan, China, Japan	49	24	-25
Republic of Korea	65	29	-36
Lebanon	171	-	-
Thailand	59	-	-
Turkey	144	122	-22
Vietnam	65	-	-
Africa, other exl. Uganda	157	83	-74
Europe, other	74	52	-22
Asia, other	87	-	-
Other countries	95	-	-

(Ahlberg, 1996:  
80)

\*Here defined as those with two parents born abroad



Table 4, gives us the changes per mille between the first and the second generation as described in Ahlberg (1996: 84). Most countries did experience a decrease of crime levels among the second generation compared to the first. The largest changes were among those with backgrounds from Poland (-82), Algeria, Libya and Tunis (-82). The lowest differences were amongst the second generations with background from the Scandinavian countries. These were also among the only ones who displayed a higher crime level compared to the first generation.

Ahlberg (1996) did not propose any specific nature of the composition, nor did he find any relationship among second generations and their family refugee or labour background in his study. Because of this, I will provide the descriptive statistics on the composition of the second generation. If we follow the logic suggested by Ahlberg (1996: 91), different intentions to migrate among the first generation would affect the crime level among the second generation in the future. This could be connected to the fact that the refugees often comes from countries with a low development level and their children would perhaps have a greater difficulty in adjusting to Swedish society (compared to children from typical labour migration countries with a higher level of development). We would, thus, expect the largest changes in the composition of the second generation to affect the countries with a low development level, if the cause could have been the changes in composition of the second generation.

Table 5 gives the composition of the second generation in Sweden, by background country in 1985 and in 2005. This is not based on crime data, but retrieved from Statistics Sweden and thus only show those who lived in Sweden with two parents born abroad in 1985 and 2005, not linked to the crime data above. The comparison is meant for guidance, only. It has sadly not been possible to retrieve more detailed information of the second generation, nor the share of crime involvement by region or country in 2005 Table 5 is instead divided between 'European' and 'Non-European' countries, where the Europeans are grouped by regional background and the Non-Europeans are grouped by the development level of their background countries (SCB, 2010).

**Table 5 Number and share of Second Generation by background in Sweden, 1985 and 2005**

Region	1985		2005	
	Number	Share	Number	Share
<b>The Nordic Countries</b>	81 514	49,2 %	86 522	24,4 %
<b>EU-Countries</b>	31 621	19,1 %	40 410	11,4 %
<b>Other European countries</b>	21 005	12,7 %	66 834	18,9 %
<b>Total Europe</b>	134 140	80,9 %	193 766	54,7 %
<b>Countries with a low level of development</b>	3 544	2,1 %	11 111	3,1 %
<b>Countries with a middle level of development</b>	7 807	4,7 %	86 244	24,4 %
<b>Countries with a high level of development</b>	440	0,3 %	18 130	5,1 %
<b>Other country groups</b>	19 900	12,0 %	44 697	12,6 %
<b>Total Non-Europe</b>	31691	19,1 %	160 182	45,3 %
<b>Total</b>	165 831	100,0 %	<b>353 948</b>	<b>100,0 %</b>

(SCB, 2010)

It is, however, difficult to postulate which children of refugees' live in Sweden in 2005. We do, however, know that there has not been large refugee conflicts affecting the 'EU-countries'<sup>10</sup> nor affecting the 'Nordic countries'. Among the groupings of the European countries, we see that these two groups have decreased, while the group of 'other European countries' has increased. This may be because descendants of refugees from the countries most affected by the Balkan war were included, but this is only one possible assumption (Switzerland is also in this group). Still, if we look at the European region in total we see that the EU-countries and the Nordic countries still make up a majority of the second generation with European background in Sweden. It does thus not give any indication that the second generation with backgrounds from refugee countries could have caused the increased crime level among the second generation.

<sup>10</sup> Members of the European Union in 2005: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom (Bache and George, 2006: vi).

Among those who have a background from a ‘Non-European country’, the group with backgrounds from countries with a low level of development only increased by 1 percent. The largest increase has affected those who arrive from countries with a middle level of development. Children with backgrounds from countries with a high level of development have instead increased by almost 5 per cent. If we assume that the labour migrants come from countries with a medium to high development level, while the refugees come from a country with a low development level, those with refugee backgrounds would be a minority among this group too. The composition hypotheses’ as proposed by Ahlberg (1996) does not find any support here either. It is thus very unlikely that the increased crime level among the second generation in Sweden could have been caused by changes in the intentions to migrate among the first generation.

Further, if we look at the data published in Ahlberg, as I displayed in Table 4, the only increase in crime level between the generations was in those with a Norwegian background. If we test the connection between the crime level and the country background (as actually discovered by Ahlberg) we would expect an increase of Norwegians to Sweden in 2005. On the other hand, Norwegians do belong to the only group that actually had a decreased percentage of crime among the second generation in Sweden in 2005. This further underpins the argument that there does not seem to be any connection between the background country and the propensity to commit crime. Put bluntly, if the country background explained the Immigration Paradox, Sweden would have had to be full of Norwegians in 2005.

There is not much support for the hypothesis that the parents’ intention to migrate could have affected the changes in the crime level among the second generation, nor to the fact that crime level should be the same among country groups in 1985 and in 2005. This is because there does not seem to be any pattern to the connection between the country composition of the background countries among the second generation and the increase in crime level as recorded by Martens and Holmberg (2005). I thus hold that it is most likely that the propensity to commit crime is not connected to the second generation’s background country. This also further supports my main hypotheses that the Swedish Exception could have been caused by qualities in the Swedish society.

I can now more clearly delineate the foundation for my study: there has been registered an exception to the Immigration Paradox in Sweden, but it has changed sometime before 2005. The change has also only affected the second generation, and it is not caused by the country backgrounds of the second generation.

This section has elaborated on the Swedish research on crime among second generation immigrants in Sweden. The previous research all points to the fact that the Swedish Exception cannot be caused by qualities among the second generation, and that there are reasons to believe that there has been something unique happening in Swedish society. I will return to this issue in Chapter 6. In this section I have continuously referred to Sweden as an Exception. The next section will therefore be devoted to elaborate on why Sweden is seen as an Exception, and what we can learn from the presence of higher crime levels among the second generation in other countries.



## 5 THE IMMIGRATION PARADOX

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In this section I will trace the research literature on crime among the second generation in Europe and in the United States, back to its beginning. The section will conclude by explaining why we would expect the same to be true in Sweden, i.e. why Sweden actually is an Exception. I will start by reviewing the research that has been conducted on the second generation of immigrants to Europe and the United States. I will trace the origin of the term ‘Immigration Paradox’ and present the research literature confirming its presence. The section will conclude by explaining why we would expect the second generation to have a higher crime level than the first generation, and how we can understand the fact that Sweden is an Exception.

The longer history of both American criminology (in general) as well as the research on the second generation immigrants (in particular) makes the United States a natural vantage point to get an overview of the history of crime and migration research. Despite a quite different history of migration, research from both Europe and the United States has much in common. Researchers in The United States had early-on applied a different practice of studying the second generation in the crime literature, by referring to a large population of African-Americans, that despite having lived in The United States for centuries, continued to be “characterised by differentials in terms of their economic level, education, employment and share of criminality” (Solivetti, 2010: 17).

The ‘Immigration Paradox’, also known as the ‘Crime-Immigration Nexus’ (e.g. Hagan, Levi and Dinocitzer, 2008; Mears, 2001) is a relatively new term developed from an older research tradition aimed at evaluating the quality of integration mechanisms. The literature thus has a foot in two research fields: the psychological assessment of school achievements and the criminological assessment of criminal behaviour. The first tradition discovered the Paradox when studying foreign background and school achievements. Despite being more advantaged than their parents, later generations immigrants were notably less likely to remain in school compared to those without migration background (Waldinger and Perlmann, 1998; Tonry, 1997: 20; Kardell and Martens, 2013). The criminological tradition discovered the Immigration Paradox in 1931, when the American National Crime Commission was tasked to see whether there was an immigration and crime problem. It was also suggested that crime

could be a way of measuring how well the subsequent generations were doing (Crul and Vermeulen, 2003; Tonry, 1997: 20).

The American National Crime Commission conducted the first thorough research projects on the second generation and criminal behaviour in the United States in 1931 ([National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement, 1931]; Tonry, 1997: 20). Based on interviews of justice system officials, such as police officers, prosecutors, probation officers, and judges, the project concluded that there “was an immigrant crime problem but that it was attributable not to the foreign born, but to their children” (Ibid: 20). Despite contradicting both popular opinion and the idea of the American dream, they found that the more ties you had to American society, the worse you did. The American interest in crime among the second-generations faded, however, after World War II due to decreasing migration from Europe as well as a growing interest for a competing operationalization: “race and crime” in the United States (Killias, 2011). And since immigration to Europe is a more recent phenomenon than in the United States, interest in the intergenerational disparity of offending did not appear until the 1970s; when the children of the permanent immigrants that had migrated during the 1950s and 1960s reached criminal age (Killias, 1989). Even though the interest of studying the topic was introduced at that time, the majority of studies on second generation immigrants can only be traced back to the mid-1990s (Crul and Vermeulen, 2003: 965).

When the research appeared in Europe, the researchers discovered the same pattern. In a review Killias (1989) conducted on criminality among second generation immigrants France and Switzerland did also give evidence to this pattern. In Germany, researchers found significant differences in the degree of crime among the second- and third-generations of immigrants (Albrecht, 1997). In the 1970s 1980s and the 1990s, researchers found evidence that the descendants of immigrants, i.e. persons born and raised in Germany, displayed considerably higher offence rates, compared to the first generation of immigrant workers. According to Hans-Jörg Albrecht (1997), some of the gap can be partially explained by demographic differences, especially referring to age, since the foreign populations had a comparatively high proportion of children and juveniles (p. 54). But when taking into account the crime rates per 100,000 of the population in North-Rhine Westphalia per age group, they found that the crime rates increased much faster among the young foreigners, compared to the

young Germans. During 1984-1993 the crime rates among the second generation, had more than doubled from 6,651 to 13,616 per 100,000 (Albrecht, 1997: 55), while the crime rates among the first generation (mainly foreign workers) had only changed from 4,246 per 100,000 in 1984 to 4,339 per 100,000 in 1993 (ibid.). The sudden increase in crime rates among the second generation could not be explained by age alone. One therefore needed to look to other places for explanations to the increased crime levels among the second generations.

## **5.1 The Immigration Paradox in Scandinavia**

Researchers have also confirmed traces of the Immigration Paradox in the Scandinavian countries. Still, the recent nature of migration to Scandinavia and hence the following development of the second generation, has made the research literature scarce. In this section I will review the literature on the Immigration Paradox in the other Scandinavian countries.

### *5.1.1 Denmark*

Two different reports on ethnic minorities in Denmark have been important in the more recent Danish context: “Descendants do not commit more thefts than immigrants” (2008) and “Crime and National Origin, 2006”<sup>11</sup> (DST, 2008). The first report highlights that the second generation does not commit more crime than the first generation. The major limitation to this study is however that crime is not measured as the share of persons who received a verdict, but is measured as the mean number of crimes, that has led to a verdict within the last 5 years, per person. They have therefore overrepresented the extent of crime per person, instead of the share of criminals per group (Andersen and Tranæs, 2011:5). As a result, their finding does not mean that more persons from the second generation commit less crime (than a first generation would). But when both groups actually commit crime, their crime frequency per person is about the same.

In the second report “Crime and National Origin, 2006” (DST, 2008) Statistics Denmark analyse the overrepresentation of ethnic minorities in Danish criminal law cases in 2006. This report looks instead at a wider spectre of laws, including transport law (and other special laws in addition to criminal law). This report also includes men and women, while the previous report only included men. In this report, crime has been measured as the share of persons with

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<sup>11</sup> ”Efterkommere begår ikke flere tyverier end indvandrere” and ”Kriminalitet og national oprindelse 2006” (translation in text: authors own).



Danish background, immigrants and descendants of immigrants that has received at least one verdict during the year. In this way, crime participation per group is measured, and not the crime frequency per individual. The last report controls for age and socio-economic groups<sup>12</sup> and still found the second-generation to be overrepresented in crime.

In a report published by Andersen and Tranæs (2011), which applies the same method as Statistics Denmark, they found that in 1990, the second generation committed more crime than both the first generation and the Danish descendants; this was true in both 1990 and in 2006. In the 1990s, second generation immigrants with backgrounds from the Western countries, committed 6,4 %, while those with background from the Non-Western countries committed 11,2 %. The corresponding crime level among the first generation was 2,8 % and 4,6%.

**Table 6 Share of crime involvement among men from 15-45 years old in Denmark**

Group	Background	1990	2006
First Generation	Danish	2,5 %	1,3 %
	Western Countries	2,8 %	1,4 %
	Non-Western Countries	4,6 %	1,6 %
Second Generation	Western Countries	6,4 %	3,2 %
	Non-Western Countries	11,2 %	5,4 %

(Andersen and Tranæs, 2011: 11)

The report by Andersen and Tranæs paints a picture of a general decline in crime rates affecting everyone in Denmark. From 1990 to 2006 the share of men between 15 and 45 who broke the criminal law was reduced. Still, the relative crime level is highest among the second generation in Denmark, confirming the existence of the Immigration Paradox, also in Denmark.

### 5.1.2 Norway

In the Scandinavian context, Norway is the country with the most recent experience with migration. At the entrance to 2008, 73 % of the second generation was still below criminal

<sup>12</sup> Measured by whether one is an independent business owner, pay check receiver, unemployed, education applicant, pensioner or other.

age and only 5 % was above 30 years (Skardhamar, Thorsen and Henriksen, 2011: 19). This has also resulted in the fact that Norway has lagged behind the others when it comes to research on the second generation. Two reports have, however, dealt with the topic: Torbjørn Skardhamar, Lotte Thorsen and Kristin Henriksen (2011) “Crime and punishment among immigrants and the general population” and Synøve N. Andersen and Torbjørn Skardhamar (2012) “Age at immigration and crime – Findings for male immigrants in Norway”. The first report addresses the crime level in Norway from 2001 to 2004, while the second report include the 1992 to 2007time frame. Although it has been difficult to do research on the second generation due to few observations, Skardhamar, Thorsen and Henriksen (2011) confirm (when controlling for age, gender, urban domicile and employment) the general pattern that the second generation is slightly more represented in breaking the law.

The second and most relevant report: “Age at immigration and crime – Findings for male immigrants in Norway” by Synøve N. Andersen and Torbjørn Skardhamar (2012) intends to map the Immigration Paradox in Norway. In this report, the Immigration Paradox is defined more broadly, including both the first and the second generation- The report also makes a distinction depending on the time of arrival, where early arrivals are included in the second generation group. This definition of the Immigration Paradox thus implies that early arrivals have a higher likelihood of committing a crime, compared to those who arrive later in life. In applying data based on men between 15 and 55, being charged for a crime in the period 1992 to 2007, they find that the earlier a person arrives, the more likely one is to commit a crime. This different definition of the Immigration Paradox is interesting, because it confirms that the longer you live in Norway, the higher likelihood you have of committing a crime. While early arrival should provide an advantage in the ability to advance legally in the Norwegian society, they do in fact not have that advantage.

The previous research suggests that there are reasons to believe that there is a greater crime problem among the second generation, compared to the first generation, despite being expected to be better off. But why did the second generation do worse, compared to the first generation? The previous research from both the United States and Germany is interesting because it sparked an interest in studying crime as a problem of integration, something which implies that crime is seen as a social problem, not something anyone has inherited or is born with, but more a situation which people find themselves in.

This Chapter has given a brief introduction to the pre-existing research on crime levels among the second generation in Norway and Denmark. The fact that each study conducted on the second generation showed a higher crime level (compared to the first generation) makes the Swedish Exception interesting. Furthermore, the existence of the Immigration Paradox in otherwise similar welfare countries prompts the question: Could there be something that is unique with Sweden? The next section will attempt to answer this question by reviewing the existing theories of what explains the presence of the Immigration Paradox. Keeping in mind the understanding of causality as proposed by Mill, we know that the causes of the paradox must be present for the paradox to exist. In answering the question whether there can be something that is unique with Sweden we therefore need to know what causes have been suggested to produce the paradox (while the absence of the same causes will produce the Exception). The next section is therefore devoted to the potential causes that can explain the Immigration Paradox.

## **5.2 Theories explaining the Immigration Paradox**

Researchers have devoted much attention to understanding the situation in which the second generation find themselves, and why the second generation, who supposedly should have been better off and better adjusted to the society, has tended to do worse in most countries.

Many have tried to understand crime among the second generation, based on characteristics found in the first generation. One suggestion refers to properties among the migrants in general. For example, migrant groups may subscribe to cultural values and beliefs that may encourage criminal behaviours – that is the original culture is “Criminogenic” (Belli, Freilich and Newman, 2011: 20). Another theory views immigrants as vulnerable individuals who then are corrupted by both cultural and structural arrangements in the new country, which are viewed as conducive to crime (ibid: 21). According to the last view, the key to understanding crime among immigrants is to understand the cultural and structural arrangements in the new country. None of these views does, however, account for disparities across generations. Why would the second generation commit more crime than the first?

Michael Tonry (1997) explained the deterioration in the second generation with reference to a poetic understanding that the second generation was “caught between two worlds” (p. 21).

Being born, most likely, in a more well-off society than their parents they were unable to draw from the benefits of having moved out of poor conditions. Their parents would receive their strength in the knowledge that they had made an improvement for themselves, while the children landed in a difficult situation with a foot in two different worlds. Or as in the words of Michael Tonry: “Only knowing that their parents often were poor, that others often were better off, and that the same opportunities for legitimate advancement were not available for them” (ibid.).

This understanding of the double position that the second generation finds themselves in has become, known as the ‘anomic strain’ theory and dates back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century and Èmile Durkheim. Although Durkheim initially aimed to explain how social change could generate excessive expectations, succeeded by frustration and deviance, it has later been used to explain criminal behaviour. Robert K. Merton came to develop the theory further into his notion of relative deprivation. He explains it as a feeling of deprivation, and discontent is related to a desired point of reference i.e. a reference group; these feelings of discontent arise when desires are blocked by society (Merton, 1938: 675)

Relative deprivation has been assumed to be the typical situation for societies like the United States, “where socio-economic success is presented as a goal for everybody – regardless of his/her social class- whereas chances of obtaining it are limited and dependent on class structure” (Solivetti, 2012: 134). The theory thus holds that it is not poverty or disparity that encourages crime, but instead an understanding of relative poverty generated by the system when some individuals are prevented from participating. According to Merton, an economic system that prevents participation by some individuals, pressures those very individuals into criminal activity (Merton, 1938: 678, Knepper, 2007: 25).

In light of its Exception to the well-established understanding of an Immigrant Paradox, it implies that the Swedish society must have found a way around the factors that have been shown to promote the likelihood of criminal behaviour among the second generation. The next section will deal with how the reports in Sweden themselves have explained the Swedish Exception.



## 6 EXPLAINING THE ABSENCE OF CRIME

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The reasonable explanation for the crime level amongst the children of immigrants is that they, to a greater extent than their parents, have adjusted to Swedish society and thus, become less risk prone to land on a criminal path (Ahlberg, 1996: 91, own translation).<sup>13</sup>

The fact that we can detect country-specific variations of crime levels among the second generation (as the Swedish Exception is an example of) is interesting because it gives an indication that elements in the host society encouraged that Exception, and that the Immigrant Paradox is not something that occurs everywhere. In addition, we know that the Exception is not caused by differences in gender, age, employment, location or socio-economic status. This makes it plausible that the Swedish Exception may have been caused by something not explained by the characteristics among the second generation and that we would have to look elsewhere, but where?

In his review essay of Michael Tonry's book *Ethnicity, Crime and Immigration* (1997), Peter L. Martens goes through the available research on crime and immigration in Sweden at the time. And a great deal of the essay is devoted to Ahlberg's (1996) study, where Martens argues that the Swedish Exception is caused by a "favo[u]rable effect of the Swedish social welfare system" (Martens, 1997: 243). According to Martens, Sweden provides "many regular compensatory measures for less well-to-do persons, their families and their children" (ibid.). Martens also suggests that the Swedish welfare state provides nation-wide services that for many countries are seen as social programs explicitly directed towards crime prevention (ibid: 244). In this lies the understanding that there might be a potential spill-over effect, in which elements known to reduce crime are provided by the Swedish welfare state. To support his statement, Martens draws lines from a specific project named Project Head Start. Project Head Start was initiated in the United States during the 1960s. According to Martens this project had influenced the theoretical foundation of the Swedish child welfare system (Martens, 1997: 243).

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<sup>13</sup> Den rimliga förklaringen till invandrares barns brottslighetsnivå är att de, jämfört med föräldrarna, i högre grad har anpassat sig till det svenska samhället och därmed löper mindre risk att hamna i brottslighet (Ahlberg, 1996: 91).

Project Head Start was an American-initiated project that focused primarily on children with special needs. Its aim was to provide additional educational support in order to enable them to advance “their intellectual and social development with more advantaged children” (Martens, 1997: 244). This project was established in the United States, initially as an eight-week summer program for children about to enter public schools during the fall of 1965 and provided preschool classes, medical care, dental care, and mental health services for children living below the poverty line (Kagan, 2002; Vinovskis, 2008: 87; Johnson, 1965a). The summer program focused heavily on medical, cultural and self-esteem or self-discovery activities among low income children, three- to four- year olds (Vinovskis, 2008: 88; Kagan, 2002), all aimed at enhancing their future school experience. Immigrant children were also given special training in their mother tongue, in order to enable them to keep in touch with their culture of origin (Martens, 1997: 244; Johnson, 1965b).

The connection between Project Head Start and crime reduction is, however, less clear. As the project was initiated as a part of Lyndon B. Johnson’s ‘War on Poverty’ parole, with the aim of enhancing the education mobility of children with backgrounds in poverty in the American school system (Johnson, 1965a). The idea was that the child’s background characteristics influenced how well children did in school, which in turn influenced their future employment opportunities. By giving children with a disadvantaged background a ‘Head Start’, it was believed that they would be able to ‘break the cycle of poverty’ (ibid.).

Tracing its intellectual background in the American academic tradition, it grew out of a growing interest in studying why poverty continued to exist in the United States, despite an overall economic growth in the American society (Kagan, 2002: 517). In suggesting policies that could eradicate poverty, many focused on the education system. The ideal was that the education system would “serve as a source of social mobility” mechanism and “break the circle of poverty” (ibid.). Scientists in child psychology such as J. M. Hunt and Benjamin Bloom became academic forerunners in supporting childhood interventions. They supported what became known as “the cultural deprivation” hypothesis, where intelligence was not fixed by birth, but rather a product of society. “If the problem was that poor children and minority children were not as smart as white and middle-class children, then those children were being raised poorly” (ibid.: 519).

In Criminology, theories addressing early childhood intervention programs have found much evidence to crime reduction (e.g. Yoshikawa, 1994; Farran, 1990; Farrington, et al., 1990; Kazdin, 1990; Zigler, Taussig, and Black, 1992). It has been determined that cognitive measures represent a risk factor, when it comes to the development of criminal behaviour (Farrington, 1987; Loeber and Dishion, 1983). It has, however, been difficult to distinguish a causal direction between cognitive ability and antisocial behaviour. I.e. whether cognitive ability precedes the development of antisocial behaviour or whether it goes the other way around. The evidence is mixed. Loeber and Dishion (1983) conducted a meta-study on predictors of crime, and found that by the end of elementary school, low school achievements, small vocabulary, and poor verbal reasoning were all strong predictors of later delinquency.

Many of the studies that have investigated family factors leading to criminal behaviour also conclude with a call for early intervention. Preschool enrichment programmes coupled with family intervention have been found to have impressive results in reducing crime. The most successful programmes target at-risk children and begin interventions with children under four years of age. Including a focus on the children's cognitive and emotional development (Knepper, 2007: 114).

Relative deprivation theory could be used to explain the Immigration Paradox and the high crime rates among the second generation. The logic would be that a system that prevents participation by some individuals would pressurise those into criminal activity (Knepper, 2007: 25). I suggested as much in Chapter 5.2 by referring to relative deprivation theory and the fact that it is not poverty per se that encourages criminal activity, but the relative poverty that a system might generate when some individuals are prevented from participating. In this view, Project Head Start's mission to enhance social mobility in a system, by giving a head start to vulnerable groups, would necessarily reduce persisting inequalities of opportunities. As a consequence, the program would indirectly cause crime reduction.

Although experiences from the Project Head Start in America did not manage to alter the existence of the Immigration Paradox there, it might have been the case in Sweden where the inequalities are less, making a Scandinavian comparison very interesting. Since the relative deprivation does not necessarily affect objective inequalities (but individually-perceived inequalities), the factors affecting the second generations could have been altered by the



Swedish welfare state. Of course the differences between American and Swedish society are far too many and way beyond the scope of this thesis to address.

Consequently, I will test whether the implementation of Project Head Start in the Swedish education system has been successful in reducing the difficulties that the second generation face in advancing. Or, using Ahlberg (1996) words: whether Project Head Start has, to a larger extent facilitated adjustment to the Swedish society. Following Martens, this will be achieved by focusing on the potential language barrier.

Peter L. Martens was careful in his conclusions, referring to the limitations in the Ahlberg (1996) study and Ahlberg's wide definition of the second generation (Martens, 1997: 244). He merely opens for a "theoretical plausibility that the Swedish welfare state system with all its compensatory measure for disadvantaged children has managed to keep offending among the second generation immigrants at a relatively low level" (ibid). The problem he referred to is that Ahlberg included children with only one parent born abroad into the second generation definition. Something which has, as I have demonstrated earlier, later been tested by Martens and Holmberg (2005). Martens and Holmberg (2005) found the operational challenges did not have any significant influence on the Swedish Exception. The question, however, still remains: Could it be that this uniqueness of the Swedish school system may have caused the Swedish Exception?

Ahlberg (1996) had initially proposed a theory similar to Martens, namely that "compared to their parents, the second-generation immigrants had to a greater extent adjusted to the Swedish society" (p. 91). He also proposed several different possible explanations based on the fact that the study he conducted was primarily done on the generation that followed after labour migrants, suggesting that characteristics among the parent population might influence crime trajectories among the second generation. This allowed for the possibility that the picture would change when the children of immigrants with a refugee background would reach minimum age (ibid.). He did, however, not find any evidence that supported this hypothesis in his study. According to his findings, those who already had migrated from typical 'refugee countries' did not distinguish themselves by having a higher level of crime involvement, compared to their parent generations at the time (ibid). I also tested and rejected the implications of this theory in Chapter 5.2. Furthermore, Ahlberg (1996) suggested

unemployment might be a factor, and the fact that in some urban areas there had been housing segregation. He did, however, reject both hypotheses due to the fact that the housing segregation has happened so slowly that it was unlikely to have had any impact on the overall crime level. (Both employment and urban domicile has later been tested for.) Although unemployment had although increased during the 1990s, the situation had not changed much since the 1980s. Besides, unemployment is supposedly a long-term effect. Consequently, Ahlberg felt it would be unlikely that it would have had a direct impact on the crime levels during the 1990s (Ahlberg, 1996: 92). Employment has also been controlled for later in Martens and Holmberg, (2005) as I described in Table 2.

To summarize: Ahlberg (1996) and Martens and Holmberg (2005) controlled for age, gender, domicile, education, employment and socio demographic status among the second generation when the Swedish Exception was recorded. I have also further tested whether the changes in the composition of migrants, as proposed by Ahlberg could have affected the crime level among the second generation. It is thus very unlikely that the Swedish Exception could have been caused by characteristics among the first and the second generations. The presence of the Immigration Paradox in the two other Scandinavian welfare states, further suggests it to be something unique with Sweden. Thus the only remaining independent variable is therefore the Swedish welfare state and its implementation of Project Head Start in the child welfare system.

Having summarized all possible explanations given for the Swedish Exception, I will proceed by elaborating on the Swedish welfare state and the implementation of Project Head Start, and whether these could have caused the Swedish Exception. The next chapter will thus describe the connection between the Swedish Welfare State and Project Head Start.



## 7 THE SWEDISH WELFARE STATE AND PROJECT HEAD START

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Martens suggested that lessons could be learned from Project Head Start: a preschool project in the United States that has been found to reduce crime. Its crime-reducing nature was based on the fact that it enhanced the cognitive skills among poor children. According to Martens, these benefits were incorporated into the Swedish Welfare state and its compensatory measures. In this chapter I will map how the influence of Project Head Start is visible in the development of Swedish preschools.

### 7.1 Defining preschool

Before I begin, it is necessary to spend some time elaborating on the concept preschool. One of the challenges in this analysis is that there exist several differences in how the term preschool has been used over time as well as across Scandinavian countries. The same term has different connotations, depending on the language and country. In Sweden, the term preschool works as an umbrella term to include day care centres for children, whereas in Norway, they apply the terms 'day care' or 'Kindergarten' to the same institutions (Alvestad and Samuelsson, 1999). In Denmark, they use the term 'Kindergarten' and/or 'day care' to all group care settings for children younger than compulsory school age (Einarsdottir and Wagner, 2006: 8).

A potential conceptual confusion is that in Sweden it has become customary to distinguish between Preschool and Preschool classes (förskolklass). The latter are only for children that are six years old, and were established as a part of the Swedish primary school in 2004. From 2004, these preschool classes were guided by the same curriculum as compulsory schools and separated from the preschools; they were also made mandatory (Alvestad and Samuelsson, 1999: 3). To avoid any conceptual confusion, I wish to emphasise that I will apply the Swedish meaning of preschool, to include all day care institutions before primary school in all three countries that include children from 0-5 years old. This is primarily done to avoid confusion, but it also serves as an opportunity to keep the analysis focused at the task at hand. Although variations in childcare across the Scandinavian countries may be interesting, it is Martens (1997) understanding of preschool, I am testing.

## 7.2 The early development of the preschool in Sweden

In order to understand Swedish preschools and how they could have affected the Swedish Exception during the 1980s, it is useful to begin with their political foundations, laid during the 1970s. This section will focus on the historical development of the preschool as well as the political foundations as reflected in the most important public reports.

The history of Swedish childhood services has its roots in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and is manifested in the amelioration of the health and wellbeing of poorer children, previously addressed by charitable organisations and later developed into public kindergartens. These *Folkbarnträdgårder* or ‘People’s Kindergartens’ provided for children from all social classes and integrated all concerns for children’s general well-being, learning and development (Cohen, Moss and Petrie, 2004: 141). The Swedish public’s early focus on childcare was due to two interconnected reasons: it was seen as the society’s responsibility to meet the need of the working parents, as well as promoting gender equality (ibid.). The state took an active role in providing support to childcare so that both parents were able to work. And in Sweden, this was believed to cover societal concerns such as gender equality as well as meeting an increased demand for labour.

The Swedish childcare model was developed in an extensive report known as *Barnstugeutredningen*<sup>14</sup> (SOU, 1972:26; SOU, 1972:27), which was published in 1972. This two-part report of almost 1000 pages laid the foundation for the ideological, pedagogical and the organizational needs of childcare in Sweden and served as a precursor to the development of the Swedish *Preschool Act* of 1975 (Korpi, 2007: 25; SFS 1973: 1205). The overarching pedagogical aim of the commission was to combine what had previously been known as day care centres and play schools, into an arena where they could combine care and play.

The report developed new theories of children’s learning and development as starting points for the methods to be used in preschool. Among other things, the commission suggested a general preschool for all children up to the age of six (SOU 1972:26 p. 17). The term ‘Preschool’ was formally coined in this report.

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<sup>14</sup> The Child Care Report

The report was received by Olof Palme, prime minister in Sweden at the time. Palme initiated the grand preschool reform in Sweden, where the state formally was to take part in creating preconditions for the parents' ability to combine family and work (Korpi, 2007: 25). This reform was carried out through *The Preschool Act*, which implemented public preschool in Sweden from 1975 (Prop. 1973: 136; SFS 1973:1205). This act stated that preschool should be free of charge, meet for 525 hours a year, be expanded in every municipality, and priority should be given to children with extra need for support. The municipalities were also obliged to do active outreach in order to enlist parents to send their children to local preschools (Alvestad and Samuelsson, 1999; Korpi 2007: 25; Prop. 1973: 136).

With *The Preschool Act* (SFS 1973: 1205), preschool became a part of the public's responsibility, where local municipalities were responsible for its expansion. Organisationally, the preschools should be run as a full-time or part-time preschool, but with the same pedagogical content. This expansion of the preschools served as an opportunity to achieve the political ideal of a nurturing community, where all children independent of background should be able to meet and develop together as a group.

### **7.3 Project Head Start in Sweden**

The directive preceding *Barnstugeutredningen* described the political aims that the commission was supposed to cover. A nurturing community was supposed to prepare the children to become 'co-citizens' or *Medborgare* in an ever-changing society ([Diskussions – PM 1971: 270] as quoted in Hammarström-Lewenhagen, 2013: 55). The values the report were supposed to uphold came from the school-political discourse at the time and reflected the ideals of equality, holism, integration and normalisation ([Henriksson 1978] as quoted in Hammarström-Lewenhagen, 2013: 56). By these terms it is meant that both the children and the parents should be given the right, as well as the freedom, to become and live as everyone else and that all the children should be given the right to participate in a developing and nurturing environment (ibid.). The directives also put an extra emphasis on children from 'social handicapped environments', that in the 'service of equality' the preschools should enable them an opportunity to achieve a better adjustment to the school and higher education ([Förskolan 3/70: 84] as quoted in Hammarström-Lewenhagen, 2013: 54). With the political aim to achieve equality in *Barnstugeutredningen*, the influence of Project Head Start became clear:

“Children from environments that are poor on stimuli, can be restricted at several areas at the same time in a downward spiral. International studies have described, for instance, these symptoms among children that lag behind compared to other children: delayed language development, worse conceptualization, less abilities to think in abstract terms, animosity towards the society outside the group, disbelief, low self-esteem etc.” (SOU 1972:27, p. 18, own translation).<sup>15</sup>

The quote above clearly states the relationship between the Swedish preschool philosophy and the ideals of Project Head Start concerning compensatory measures for disadvantaged children. Although in Sweden this was adjusted to the socio-political ideology at the time, making it universal by including all children below school age. It was held that children would benefit substantially from play and education by introducing early childhood interventions.

The second aspect reflecting the influence of Project Head Start in Sweden, the emphasis on language training in the children’s mother tongue, was also reflected in the same report. This emphasis came as a result of the directives given to the commission: to map the social-, cultural- and other challenges that met the immigrants when they arrived in Sweden. The commission’s subsequent suggestions of measures that should be taken by society when it came to immigrants and minorities reflected the same idea recognized in Project Head Start<sup>16</sup>. Potential maladjustment was no longer understood as a problem of the individual immigrant or minority, but became recognized as a result of different backgrounds affecting children’s opportunities.

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<sup>15</sup> “Barn från särskild stimulansfattiga miljöer kan hämmas på flera områden samtidigt i en ond kedja. Utländska undersökningar har beskrivit bl.a. följande symptom hos eftersatta barn i jämförelse med andra barn: försenad språkutveckling, sämre begreppsbildning, mindre abstract tänkande, fientlig hållning mot samhället utanför den egna gruppen, misstro, låg självkänsla etc.” (SOU 1972:27, p. 18).

<sup>16</sup> The commission discovered that municipalities had solved the challenges connected with immigration differently. Previous maladjustment by any immigrant had been viewed as something that was explained by the immigrant, and did not have anything to do with society. This was presumably due to the fact that immigration had, in the beginning, happened in small groups and during a longer time period. And those who arrived had often been taken care of by family or friends that had been residing in Sweden over a longer period of time (SOU, 1972: 309).

For the immigrants, preschool was often the first introduction to Swedish society, and the idea was that they should be carefully guided into the new country's cultural conditions (SOU, 1972: 27, p. 309). The report focused especially on the early years as the most important in a child's life, since communication skills are developed at that time. The language was then seen as a most important foundation for the child's personality development. Language training in the child's mother tongue would therefore be necessary in order to give all children equal recognition as well as equal opportunities. The commission argued that challenges that existed relating to language, as well as information barriers, should be viewed from two sides. It involved informing immigrants about their rights, but it also revolved around informing the Swedes about the background of the immigrants and their situation in Sweden (SOU, 1972: 27, p. 309).

The uniqueness of the language focus in the report was evident in the fact that it recognized the need for extraordinary measures to be put in place in order to improve the opportunities to one group. This is not typical for the welfare states, where targeted interventions was seen as welfare chauvinism at the time (Brochmann and Hagelund, 2010: 105). Although it was believed that all children will gain positive language effects by having Swedish playmates, the report also held that "a child cannot learn the Swedish language perfectly only from playing with other children. And the child would have to learn to speak about their experience in the preschool with their parents and vice versa" (SOU, 1972: 309). It could also be the case that the home environment is incapable of giving the children sufficient training in their mother tongue. And in these cases there is extra need for supplemental language training in the Swedish preschool. If the school system was not actively involved, the child could risk having two half languages where none would be enough to give the child sufficient communication skills, and thus lag behind the Swedish children with Swedish background. It was therefore held as important that the children should meet with adults in the preschool that mastered the children's native languages, and who could communicate with the child on the child's own premise both in the mother tongue as well as in Swedish (ibid: 310).

In this chapter, I have described how Project Head Start has been implemented in the Swedish preschool. In doing so, it suggests two hypotheses to what could have caused the Swedish Exception. Did the positive effects of preschool, as an early childhood intervention, cause the Swedish Exception, or did the effect of an extraordinary measure combined with preschool



cause the Swedish Exception? I thus extend upon the original proposal, as suggested by Martens, that the implementation of Project Head Start in the Swedish welfare state could have caused the Swedish Exception. This can be summarized in the following hypotheses:

H1: The Swedish preschool caused the Swedish Exception

H2: The language support provided in the Swedish preschools caused the Swedish Exception

The next chapter will thus test whether the implementation of the different aspects of the manifestations of Project Head Start in Sweden could have caused the Swedish Exception.

## 8 ANALYSIS

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In this section I will apply Mill's Method of Difference. I have previously described studies of the Immigration Paradox in Scandinavia. In Sweden there was found to be an exception. i.e. the second generation did not commit more crime, compared with the first generation immigrants. Curiously, this was not the case in both Denmark and Norway, where the second generation committed more crime than the first generation. We thus know that the cause of the Exception only have existed in Sweden, since the effect was only evident in Sweden. An important part of the analysis will therefore be to map whether elements of Project Head Start that were absent in 2005, also were absent in the other Scandinavian countries. We also know that the cause had to be temporary, since the Exception disappeared in 2005. I will structure this chapter with both the method and the hypotheses in mind by first describing the implementation of the preschool and the language training in Sweden during the 1980s. I will then proceed by describing the implementation of the preschools and the language training in Sweden during the 2000s.

### **8.1 Preschools and home language education during the 1980s**

In Sweden, during the formative years of the preschool, funding from the state was closely connected to the state requirements. These requirements included having educated personnel, providing a decent diet to the children, allowing for fixed space per child through limitations on the number of children per group, as well as state-directed opening hours (Korpi, 2007: 35). In Sweden, the preschools were run in detail, by detailed planning from the state authorities, achieved through earmarked funding. The benefit of this central planning has been that it enabled equal development across municipalities. The municipalities were also particularly motivated to expand the preschools, especially due to the close connection between the expansion of municipalities and the increased tax income they received from this (Korpi, 2007: 34). The other motivation was the increased share of state funding. The public funding of preschools, as began in the 1940s, represented only a 3% share of total costs. This share had increased to 9 % in 1950 and during the 1970s the state funding had grown to 45% of total costs (Korpi, 2007: 35). Over the years, the share provided by the local municipalities had remained stable and parents contributed with approximately 10% of the share (ibid.).

The expansion can be seen in the stable increase in the number of preschool as well as the ratio of children per preschool. During the 1980s, the number of schools remained pretty stable per child in preschool, as shown in table 7.

**Table 7 Number of children and preschool, 1980s**

	Number of children in preschool	Number of preschools	Children pr. Preschool
<b>1980</b>	135 246	8 504	15,9
<b>1981</b>	148 214	8 826	16,8
<b>1982</b>	162 016	9 238	17,5
<b>1983</b>	172 547	9 425	18,3
<b>1984</b>	184 749	9 628	19,2
<b>1985</b>	195 732	10 311	19,0
<b>1986</b>	203 799	10 728	19,0
<b>1987</b>	216 400	11 396	19,0
<b>1988</b>	229 466	12 110	18,9
<b>1989</b>	244 996	12 922	19,0

(SCB 1982/83; SCB 1989; SCB 1993)

Table 7 gives a clear indication of a steady increase in the children in preschools during the 1980s. The 1980s thus experienced a continuous growth in preschools combined with a rigorous funding by the state.

As mentioned in the Section 8.3, the first public emphasis on language training in Sweden appeared in *Barnstugeutredningen* in 1972 (SOU, 1972). As suggested in the report, this acknowledgement had broad political support and resulted in the Home Language reform of 1977. This reform obliged the municipalities to provide courses in the students' mother tongue, meaning that all children that wanted to participate were able to receive adequate language support. The only requirement that existed was that the language had to have a 'living place in the home' (Vetenskapsrådet, 2012: 61). The Swedish Home Language Act of 1977 (SFS 1977: 628) stated that public funding was to be given for home language training in preschool. The requirements were that the child needed to have a different language than Swedish spoken in the home and that it needed to last for a minimum of four hours a week. Funding from the state was earmarked and dependent on the number of students and calculated each year (ibid; Vetenskapsrådet, 2012: 61). This manifestation of the Home Language Act, made home language education into a right for those with a bilingual background. The contents of the Home Language support was that is partly is carried out as training in the mother tongue and partly as help with their school subjects in the language of

their mother tongue. It was also supposed to take part during the ordinary school schedule (Löfgren, 1986: 5; Vetenskapsrådet, 2012: 63).

**Table 8 Number and Share of children (0—5 years) with home language support in preschool in Sweden in the 1980s**

Children with a different mother tongue			
Year	Children	Share (%) of children in preschool	Share (%) of children with home language education
1980	17300	7 %	64 %
1982	18900	8 %	60 %
1984	19900	8 %	60 %
1986	22200	8 %	55 %
1988	26200	9 %	57 %
1990	31500	10 %	57 %

(Skolverket, 2002)

Table 8 shows the coverage level of the mother tongue education in preschool during the 1980s. The Home Language Act as well, as the earmarked funding from the state, resulted in a broad coverage over all of Sweden. In 1979, 63% of those who had a second language with “a living place in the home” received extra language support, as depicted in the table. And since the beginning of the 1980s, coverage has amounted to almost 60%, rendering a stable and increased coverage in line with the increase of children that were entitled to receive language support.

### *8.1.1 Changes in the Swedish preschool*

During the early 1990s, Sweden faced a severe recession that led to a sharp decline in economic growth. As a consequence, Sweden imposed major cutbacks in social services, as well as pressures on the resources available for school education. Deregulation enjoyed strong support in all areas of Swedish society, but it was especially strong in the school system (Alvestad and Samuelsson, 1998) The groundwork for this deregulation reform likely stems from the New Public Management wave, inspiring changes in the public sector all over Europe. The concepts of decentralization and ‘goal steering’ (i.e. the practice of governing by defining a broad set of goals for the local government to achieve rather than steering by strict regulations) took hold in Sweden (Björklund et. al., 2005: 8).

Induced by the recession and inspired by a general dissatisfaction of how the Swedish school systems worked at the time, Sweden went from one of the most centralized educational systems in the world, to one of the most decentralized education systems (ibid.). In 1993 there were changes to most of the laws governing the funding of the preschools. Municipalities were made responsible for education and received large block grants from the central government for the provision of schools. These block grants gave the municipalities the right to decide where they wanted to spend the money. But these grants were not adjusted to meet the increases in costs involved in increased school enrolments, or increases in teachers' salaries; as a result, funding for the previous decision to carry out the local reorganization fell (Cohen, Moss and Petrie, 2004: 144; Björklund, et. al., 2005: 8).

New laws were also imposed, enabling private actors to start and run preschools, free-time care services, compulsory schools and even upper secondary schools. If they met certain required standards, they could also receive public funding—similar to that obtained in the public sector (Cohen, Moss and Petrie, 2004: 141).

These reforms have been both welcomed and criticised. Supporters welcome the ability to make local decisions. Critics opine that decentralisation has threatened the equality of children's education across Sweden. Before decentralisation, central state control had meant that the budget for children in all municipalities was comparable. The ability of the municipalities to control their budgets now had a greater impact on the funding of the local education departments (Cohen, Moss and Petrie, 2004: 145).

In 2005, The SNS<sup>17</sup> Welfare Policy Group or the *Välfärdspolitiska rådet* initiated a report on the effects of these reforms, as published in Björklund et al. (2005). The report concluded that both the reform's opponents and its supporters have exaggerated the effects of the education reforms. They found that the reform had improved the efficiency of the school system modestly. On the other hand they also found the disparities in achievements, resulting from the reform, to be modest. By and large, the school reforms have had a small positive effect on school performance in general. The report did, however, identify the most vulnerable groups affected by the reform. Those who came worst out was the immigrants as

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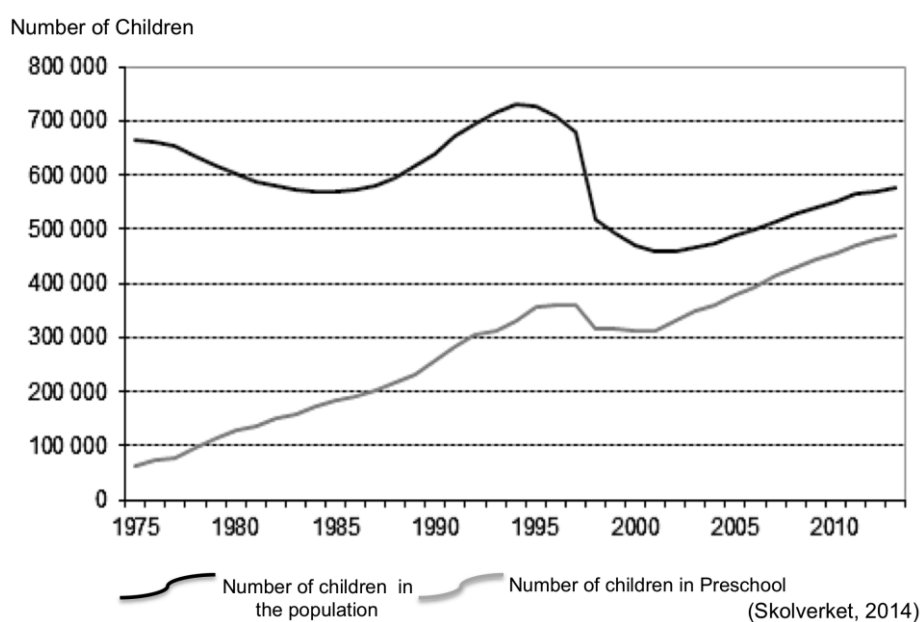
<sup>17</sup> SNS is the Swedish acronym for Studieförbundet Näringsliv och Samhälle (Center for Business and Policy Studies).

well as children from the more disadvantaged families. Both groups seemed to be most vulnerable when it came to the general cutbacks in resources (Björklund, 2005: 18).

## 8.2 Preschool and home language education during the 2000s

Until 1991, home language education had been integrated in the ordinary school schedule. The reforms introduced in 1991, changed this. From now on, all home language education was to be held outside the ordinary school schedule, either during weekends or during afternoons (Vetenskapsrådet, 2012: 61). The state did not provide earmarked subsidies targeting Home Language support, but allowed the municipalities the opportunity to decide whether this should be provided.

## 8.3 Comparison 1980s and 2000s



**Figure 4 Number of children and number of children in preschool, 1975 – 2010**

As I described in Section 8.1 and Section 8.2, and as depicted in Figure 4, both the 1980s and the 2000s have witnessed a stable increase in the number of preschools as well as in the coverage of preschools, measured as share of children in the population as well as number of children in preschools. This means that a continuously greater proportion of the Swedish children have received a place in preschools. A second curious fact that can be read from Figure 4, is the drop with regards to the number of children in the Swedish population during the mid-1990s, made the 2000s the decade when the coverage was the highest.

**Table 9 Number and share of children attending preschool and family day-care homes with another first language than Swedish receiving first language support, 1980-1990, 2000, 2001**

<b>Children with a different mother tongue</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Share (%) of children in preschool</b>	<b>Share (%) of children with home language education</b>
<b>1980</b>	17300	7 %	64 %
<b>1982</b>	18900	8 %	60 %
<b>1984</b>	19900	8 %	60 %
<b>1986</b>	22200	8 %	55 %
<b>1988</b>	26200	9 %	57 %
<b>1990</b>	31500	10 %	57 %
<b>2000</b>	38800	12 %	13 %
<b>2001</b>	40000	13 %	13 %

(Skolverket, 2002)

Table 9 shows the development of home language support in Sweden. Later numbers have been hard to come by, due to the fact that it is up to the municipalities to decide whether they wish to provide home language education, and few municipalities report on things they do not have.

Applying Mill’s Method of Difference, it is clear that while the presence of preschools has increased in Sweden, the philosophy as well as the particular application of Project Head Start--specifically targeting vulnerable individuals—have decreased. As we know, both the preschools and the language training existed at the same time as the absence of crime in Sweden, as well as the Immigration Paradox, did. A strict application of Mill’s method would reject both hypotheses. The cause must be present while the effect is present, at the same time the cause must be absent at the same time as the cause is absent.

On the other hand, in this thesis the dependent variable consists in the fact that less people among the second generation commit crime. The changes are strong between the 1980s and the 2000s, but there is still recorded crime among the second generation during both periods, making the application of the strictest version of Mill’s method impossible. Crime is not absent among the second generation in either the 1980s or the 2000s, but the relative drop in the crime level among the second generation is dramatic compared to the first generation. A

corresponding dramatic drop in the dependent variable should be sufficient to produce a plausible cause of the Swedish Exception.

This analysis has shown that between 1980s and 2000s, preschool coverage in Sweden increased, while the home language education decreased. The changes in the crime level of the second generation can thus not have been caused by the general coverage of preschools. This is true because the cause and effect needs to be in place at the same time, in order for it to have caused the effect. This might be strange, since the second generation needs to be in preschool in order to receive home language education. But if we look at the numbers for first language support, almost 65 % of the second generation received home language education in 1986, while only 13 % received it in 2001 (the latest number available). This clearly suggests that implementing Project Head Start in the Swedish preschool could have caused the Swedish Exception.

The next chapter will look at the different Scandinavian countries in order to see whether a comparison could shine further light onto the hypotheses. The preliminary test on Sweden indicates that it is not preschool that may have caused the Swedish Exception, but the implementation of Project Head Start. This supports my initial hypothesis. The next section will look at the other Scandinavian countries: those that have not experienced the Exception. In order for the hypotheses to be true, we need to confirm that there has been no implementation of Project Head Start in these countries. This follows from the fact that, the cause cannot be present without the effect.

#### **8.4 Preschool and language training in Norway**

Historically, Norway has been far behind the other Nordic countries in the development of its preschool system. They were first discussed publicly in 1951. In 1992, they were formally recognised as child welfare institutions, under the Act of Social Welfare, organized under the former Department of Social Welfare. It was not before 1975, that Norway got an Act for Day Care Institutions, which regulated day care centres as pedagogical institutions (Alvestad and Samuelsson, 1999: 4). Explanations given for the slow development of the preschool in Norway can be traced back to a slower development of the industrialisation process, and to less urbanization. ([Balke, 1995, pp. 234-251] as cited in Alvestad and Samuelsson, 1999:



16). In Norway, preschools enjoy a strong tradition as privately run institutions. In 1999, one-third of the preschools were privately run (Alvestad and Samuelsson, 1999: 16)

There has also been a strong conviction to achieve full preschool coverage. The table below shows both the number of children and the number and share of children in preschools in Norway during the 2000s. Table 10 displays a continuous increased coverage of preschools in Norway.

**Table 10 Number and Share of children in Preschool in Norway, 2001 - 2005**

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Children	357 573	352 769	349 601	348 723	347 815
Children in Preschool	191 433	196 999	203 957	211 869	222 253
Share	53,5	55,8	58,3	60,8	64,1

2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
348 049	351 164	357 451	363 597	368 576
234 336	249 133	261 297	269 523	276 544
67,3	70,9	73,1	74,1	75

(Barnehageprofilen, 2014)

Marit Alvestad and Ingrid P. Samuelsson (1999) compared Norwegian and Swedish preschool curriculums. One of their main findings was that the content of the Swedish preschool curriculum focused on learning holistically and to the need to develop children’s understanding about the world around them. The Norwegian perspective, instead, stresses aspects such as maturity, the needs of the child and socialization – an approach that seemed to be more in line with a traditional preschool perspective and the earlier Educational Program for Preschools in Sweden ([Socialstyrelsen, 1987] as quoted in Alvestad and Samuelsson, 1999: 16). While the Swedish preschool is under the Department of Education, in Norway it is led by the Ministry of Child and Family Affairs.

Norwegian language education in preschool only amounts to a “pat on the back.” The Kindergarten Law does acknowledge the existence of children with different mother tongues, as well as encourages them to express themselves, but the emphasis is on the development of the Norwegian language. Or as described in the Norwegian law:

«Many children have a different mother tongue than Norwegian and are learning Norwegian as a second language in the kindergarten. It is important that these children are understood and given the opportunity to express themselves. The kindergarten has to support children in their use of their first language and, at the same time, work actively towards enhancing the children's competence in Norwegian» (Barnehageloven, 2005 § 2.5, own translation).<sup>18</sup>

The absence of language education in the Norwegian preschool, combined with the existence of the Immigration Paradox, further supports the hypotheses that language education in Sweden could have caused the Swedish Exception.

### 8.5 Preschool and language training in Denmark

The development of preschool in Denmark shares many similarities with the early development in Sweden. It was originally initiated as relief for low-income families, while it was later developed to include all children (Rauhala, 2009: 142). Denmark has, however, been a pioneer when it comes to preschool coverage in the Scandinavian setting. It was the first country to adopt universal goals for child day-care in its welfare legislation, as early as early as the mid-1960s (Kröger, 1997: 493). During the post-war period, Denmark was the leader in the provision of day-care services (ibid.). It was the first Scandinavian country to cross the limit of 10 per cent coverage, in the 1960s and in the 1980s it increased to 50 per cent coverage. The element of universalism in the Danish preschool facilities was thus introduced as early as the 1940s. In table 11, the broad coverage of Danish preschools gives a clear indication to the broad coverage of preschools in Denmark.

**Table 11 Share of children in preschool in Scandinavia, 2000-2010**

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<b>Denmark</b>	69,6	69,8	70,6	70,7	70,5	71,6	72,7	78,7	79,6	80,1	81

(NOSOSKO, 2008: 71).

<sup>18</sup> «En rekke barn har et annet morsmål enn norsk og lærer norsk som andrespråk i barnehagen. Det er viktig at barna blir forstått og får mulighet for å uttrykke seg. Barnehagen må støtte at barn bruker sitt morsmål og samtidig arbeide aktivt med å fremme barnas norskspråklige kompetanse».

In contrast to Swedish preschools, the Danish version does not include any educational activities; it has focused primarily on playing. It is actually explicitly emphasised in the law that the preschool shall be characterised by playing and other development activities (§8.3, Lov om social service, 1997). In Denmark this is closely connected with their view of a good childhood and the name ‘kindergarten classes’ is consciously applied to everything below mandatory school age. This is because of a core philosophy that the childcare before school should not be similar to school, and should not be school-like (Einarsdottir and Wagner, 2006: 8). They did, however, recognize the importance of language development, but not as an active policy, but more as a consequence of play. As the law quotes:

“Preschools shall give opportunities for experiences and activities, where the contributions to stimulate the child’s fantasy, creativity and language development, as well as giving room for play and learning and for physical expressions, companionship and an opportunity to discover the surroundings” (§8.3, Dagtilbudsloven, 1997: own translation)<sup>19</sup>

Further the Danish law recognize the challenges posed by children with two languages, where the preschools role should give children the opportunities to both play and learn. The child learns through playing with others but also through observing and spending time with adults. The general view on language acquisition in Denmark during the 2000s can be summarized by this quote:

“With full integration, the Danish language will be used daily by the whole family, both Danes and immigrants will create social networks with time, through daily encounters in the work place. And if the mother works, the small new-Danes (sic.) in the kindergartens will learn the language at an age, where it is literally effortless” (Social Forskning, 2000: 7, own translation)<sup>20</sup>

All in all, Denmark does not seem to offer second language education. The same pattern is also evident in an increased coverage of preschools, as shown below. Only Sweden has

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<sup>19</sup>

«Dagtilbudene skal give muligheder for oplevelser og aktiviteter, der bidrager til at stimulere barnets fantasi, kreativitet og sproglige udvikling, samt give barnet rum til at lege og lære og til fysisk udfoldelse, samvær og mulighed for udforskning af omgivelserne» (§8.3 Dagtilbudsloven, 1997)

<sup>20</sup> «Med fuld integration vil det danske sprog blive anvendt dagligt af hele familien, ligesom danskere og indvandrere gennem daglig omgang på arbejdspladserne med tiden vil danne sociale netværk. Og hvis mor arbejder, kommer de helt små nydanskere i børnehaven og får lært sproget i en alder, hvor det helt bogstavelig talt er legende let o.s.v.» (Social Forskning, 2000: 7).

offered children second language lessons in their mother tongue. This offer is not provided in neither Denmark nor Norway. Both of these countries seem to adhere to a language philosophy as I will call a kind of 'Laizzes-Faire Assimilation': Children are passively supposed to become like everyone else and learn the Scandinavian languages through social activities in preschool, while no attention is given to their mother tongue.

I thus conclude this chapter by the understanding that there seems to be no connection between the development of preschools as an institution and the crime levels among the second generation. In the analysis I have found no evidence on this part. I therefore reject H1. The presence of language education in Sweden at the time of the Swedish Exception, as well as the absence of language training in Sweden and the other Scandinavian countries where the Swedish Exception was not discovered does, however, show support for H2. The Swedish Exception is quite possibly caused by the extra effort initiated to support the development of the second languages in Sweden.



## 9 SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

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In summarizing the research in this thesis it is clear that it existed an exception to the Immigration Paradox in Sweden during the 1980s and the 1990s. It is also clear that the Exception ceased to exist in 2005. In this thesis I have focused on the onset and the offset of the Swedish Exception, I have therefore only included data from the 1980s and the 2000s in the analysis. The nature of the Exception has also been redefined as the fact that the Second Generation committed less crime per person compared to the first generation, while those who did commit crime was more likely to be high rate offenders compared to the first generation. The Exception was also confirmed in Sweden during the two periods 1985 to 1989 and 1997 to 2001. They did, however, commit crime during both periods. They did also commit more crime than the native Swedes. But they committed less crime than the first generation, which is the essence of the Swedish Exception to the Immigration Paradox.

To further understand the Swedish Exception, Ahlberg (1996) and Martens and Holmberg (2005) controlled for potential characteristics among the second generation. They did not find any evidence that age, education, gender, residential area, nor income, could explain the Swedish Exception. Ahlberg (1996) did also not find any connection between changes in the composition of the second generation when comparing the crime levels among those who came from typical refugee countries at the time and those who came from typical labour countries at the time. A suggestion I have further controlled for by first, testing the assumption that the composition of the second generation with a background from poor income countries may have experienced a dramatic change between 1985 and 2005. And second, by testing whether the country groups that displayed increased crime rates from first to second generation in 1985 had increased. Neither of the explanations gave any indication that there was any connection between country background and crime levels. Martens and Holmberg (2005) did also retest Ahlberg (1996) and whether limitations in the Ahlberg (1996) study could have caused the Swedish Exception, but found no support. I thus concluded that it is highly likely that the cause of the Swedish Exception must have been caused by something else than the characteristics of the Second Generation. This conclusion was also in line with those of Ahlberg (1996), Martens (1997) and Martens and Holmberg (2005).

Both Ahlberg and Martens suggested the Swedish Welfare state as a potential explanation to the Swedish Exception, whereas Martens and Holmberg (2005) was inconclusive, only suggesting that something had changed, but did not elaborate. The most detailed explanation to the Swedish Exception was in Martens (1997) who suggested that the Swedish welfare state had been influenced by Project Head Start, known to have caused crime prevention in the United States. Martens did, however, not provide any detail to the nature of the influence. I did therefore, to the best of my knowledge, interpreted elements as present in Project Head Start into the theoretical foundation of the Swedish child welfare. These interpretations were then operationalized into two different hypotheses, which I then applied in my analysis, supported by previous research confirming evidence of early childhood intervention to contribute positively in crime reduction. As well as supported by theories explaining the presence of the Immigration Paradox and to why it only affects the second generation.

These hypotheses were then tested by a double application of Mill's Method of Difference. Double in the sense that I first tested it on Sweden during both the onset, during the 1980s, and the offset, during the 2000s, of the Swedish Exception. And secondly, I applied the same method on all the Scandinavian countries. In Scandinavia, Norway and Denmark were both examples of welfare states that did not experience the Swedish Exception. This means that both countries had discovered the second generation to commit more crime than the first generation<sup>21</sup>. The first application of Mill's method gave clear indication that there were no connection between the presence of preschools in Sweden and the Swedish Exception. While the Swedish Exception was present, the preschool coverage was low, compared to when the Swedish Exception was absent. This was also held true when I further tested it on the other Scandinavian countries, all countries seemed to have a high level of preschool coverage at the same time as the Immigration Paradox was present.

The second hypothesis, the presence of home language education in Sweden did, however, find support. It was present in Sweden when the Swedish Exception was first confirmed and absent when the Swedish Exception ceased to exist. As I also mentioned, the special nature of dependent variable is made up by an unexpected low crime rate in Sweden during the 1980s, and then a subsequent increase during the early 2000s, only affecting the second generation.

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<sup>21</sup> The Norwegian studies included those who arrived at a very early age as a member of the second generation due to small numbers.

Mill's Method was thus applied in a similar way, by requiring a change that affected over half of the second generation to be sufficient to have been a probable cause of the Swedish Exception. The home language education made this requirement by affecting more than 50 % of the second generation in an adverse way between the first discovery of the Swedish Exception and the subsequent absence of the Swedish Exception. While the Home Language education covered 64% of the population of children with a second language spoken at home in the early 1980s, and reduced to only cover 13% of the children with a second language spoken at home in the early 2000s.

The second application of Mill's Method of Difference found also support for the second hypothesis. Both Norway and Denmark have never provided any Home Language education targeting the second generation. In both these countries special measures directed at specific groups are seen as welfare chauvinism. Both countries do, however, recognize the challenges connected to the second generation. In all three countries today is most emphasis put on their ability to learn Scandinavian. The policy focus on language policies with regards to the second generation seems in Scandinavia, today, to be a form of what I will call 'laissez faire assimilation. Children are passively supposed to become like everyone else and learn the Scandinavian languages through social activities in preschool. If the children are not, they may receive extra education in the Scandinavian languages but not in their mother tongue. Children's first languages do not receive any educational attention, before potentially much later. While the preschools are only focusing on the Scandinavian languages, much of the children's abilities to become active two-language users are lost, as language acquisition is decisive in the formative years. Positive effects are drawn from the introduction of home language education in Sweden, and I will advise general change of focus when it comes to public policy research targeting the second generation.





## 10 CONCLUSION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

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The main limitation to the thesis is the limited access to crime data. The nature of the independent variable, being a relative measure, may have made a study based on co-variation a better fit. And as in all studies that study the relationship between early childhood intervention programmes and crime, there is an issue of a large causal distance between the time of intervention and the time of crime, as most children are below criminal age at the time of preschool. As also was the case in this thesis. A closer look at the co-variations could have reduced the insecurities that are created by this causal distance. This could also be achieved through interviews and potential twin studies of participants and non-participants. Lastly there is also a potential for relevant independent variables that I do not know about and that should have been included. Further research on the matter is definitively welcomed.

During the process of writing this thesis, many new questions have also appeared. Is it the combination of home language education and preschool in Sweden that caused the Swedish Exception? Or is it the essence of home language education that caused the Swedish Exception? A logical next step to improve the thesis would be to widen the scope of the independent variables. Interviews and twin studies could potentially contribute to a deeper understanding.

Further research could also go into whether changes in background countries could affect the need for home language education. It could also be that parents' relationship to the schools could be affected by the inclusion of their mother tongue in the preschools. Potentially improving the relationship between immigrant parents and the preschools, which could have spill-over effects on the children, would allow the parents a better vantage point in providing future school guidance.

In this study I have concluded that language training caused the Swedish Exception. This is true controlling for all other factors such as gender, age, education, income and residential areas. I first compared the Swedish welfare state to itself at two different points in time. The first period being when the Exception was first discovered against the period when the Exception first was found not to exist anymore. This provided a clear indication that changes in the preschool system affected this change in the outcome variable. I then extended this comparison to include other Scandinavian countries, where the Exception had not occurred.

These are countries that have only discovered the existence of the Immigration Paradox, and with a relative high level of crime among the second generation. With this second set of comparisons, I continued to confirm that language education in the preschool must have affected the change.

However, as most real world phenomena, it is unlikely that language education was the only factor. Most real world phenomena occur as a combination of several factors. This study does, however, confirm that language education to be one of the causes. This effect will, however, be affected by changes in the composition of the first and second generations. Language proficiency has also been discovered to be a positive contributor to the further adjustment and even enjoyment at school. That allows us to understand the Immigration Paradox: it is a feeling of being different and being 'half way': not completely Swedish, but not completely anything else either. A child feeling this half-way sensation might experience a setback at school that the other children do not experience. Consequently, children among the second generation may find it more difficult to adjust to school, compared to the other children—setting off hostility and resentment. This will also hold true compared to the first generation—as they have previous experiences from their country of birth to draw from – while the second generation immigrants find themselves falling between two chairs: they are neither immigrants nor nationals.

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