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The Ugandan army patroling the refugee settlement in Rwamwanja, January
2020, photo: Sándor Jászberényi.

Founders:

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Swedish clans, criminal networks and the failure of postmodern theory

Johan Lundberg

Abstract

During the last decades, clans from mainly the Middle East and East Africa have arrived in Sweden, which has led to an increase in family-based criminal networks. Nevertheless, the clan as a phenomenon has been neglected in Swedish migration research and by contemporary politicians and journalists. This paper deals with problems that arise as a consequence of the return of the clan in Sweden, not least when it comes to legal issues but also regarding migration and integration in general. The paper also discusses the causes of the Swedish taboo around the clan issue, and pays particular attention to critical (postmodern) theories that focus more on discourses about reality than on reality itself.

Keywords: clan, Sweden, postmodernism, critical theory, rule of law, family-based criminal networks, criminal clans

Introduction

At the beginning of September 2020, the deputy national police chief in Sweden, Mats Löfving, who is also the head of the National Operation Division of the Police, was interviewed on Swedish public service radio. There he informed about the current criminal situation, and drew attention to the fact that there are at least forty criminal clans in Sweden. These family-based criminal networks are, according to the deputy chief of police, regarded as "threats to the system".[1]

The interview gave rise to strong reactions in the media. Clan cultures seemed to be a new phenomenon. What exactly was a clan? Almost no academic research had been conducted in this field, and the Swedish media's interest in clans had, for a long time, been minimal. How could the emergence of forty criminal clans have taken place without either the media or the academy having drawn attention to this strange phenomenon in Sweden?

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[1] Saarinen 2020.

A few days after the radio interview, two professors of political science – Bo Rothstein and Peter Esaiasson – published an article in Sweden's largest daily newspaper.[2] They criticized Swedish migration research for neglecting the issue of clans for several decades. During the last seven years, the professors pointed out, more than 200 doctoral dissertations, books, reports and articles on migration had been published in the field of migration research. But nothing about clans: "There is a flagrant failure, when it comes to mapping and analysis of this kind of family-based networks which, through threats of violence and harassment, exercise great power in suburban areas with many immigrants and thereby preventing integration".[3]

One reason for this obvious shortcoming in Swedish academia is – according to the two professors – that the field of research has become ideological and political: "This may have made it impossible for researchers to act in this area, if they criticize the established image of the integration problem as a structural problem, which is caused by discrimination by the majority population."[4]

In other words: in Swedish academia, there is a consensus that society is characterized by systematic racism and that this racism – among the majority population – is the reason for the integration failures. I will, later on in this article, return to the reasons for this academic disinterest in clans.

But first, something should be said about the clan's historical origins, how to define a clan and how a clan society differs from a society organized around the state.

The clan and European history

From Greek antiquity until at least the 19th century, clan societies and the struggle against clan rule have been depicted in literature: from Aichylos' trilogy Oresteia to Dante Alighieri's *The Devine Comedy*, William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as well as in 19th century novels by writers such as Walter Scott, Henry James and Edith Wharton. Literary history offers, in this way, an empirical basis for a study of how clans arose and were combated at different eras in European history.

In the ancient epic – often orally transmitted for many centuries before it was put into written form – one can see traces of the clan's origins in the formation of archaic societies organized along bloodlines. One reason for the emergence of

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[2] Esaiasson Et al. 2020.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Ibid.*

the clan seems to have been the ambition to organize society in such a way that incest could be avoided. Seen from an evolutionary perspective, the clan system has probably been the most competitive way of organizing societies – at least until the state system arises. In the competition between different communities, many thousands of years ago, societies organized around the clan were probably more likely to survive than communities which were not organized in this manner.

Why is that? One of the most important factors is that, in clan societies, order is guaranteed through an effective self-regulating system rather than through a superior central power. The clan system is furthermore remarkably adaptable, it can be scaled up to very large units; and scaled down to a single family – or a few families. The clan is, in short, a flexible, amoeba-like insurance company for cousins and siblings that effectively organizes large groups of people in a way that offers protection – financially, legally, socially and with regard to military security.

But how did the clan arise? As is pointed out by the Israeli professor in history Yuval Noah Harari in his bestselling book *Sapiens. A Brief History of Humankind* (2011), homo sapiens had, until the cognitive revolution, around 70 000 years ago, few competitive advantages and could only act in groups of 100–200 people. With the development of cognitive capabilities, this was changed. Men could gradually be organized in communities of thousands or hundreds of thousands of people, which meant enormous competitive advantages in the struggle between species.[5]

The cognitive abilities included, for example, the fictional narrative. From the imagination of possible, fictive scenarios, necessary for vital decision-making, stories gradually emerged. These stories were a necessary condition for holding larger and larger groups together and would eventually include descriptions of the group's origins but also fictional representations of the common codes of ethics and moral rules.

From some of these stories, we can gather information about how clan societies were organized and emerged. Regarding the latter, the clan can be seen as a consequence of the need to regulate sexuality. To avoid incest, a system was created where the sisters or brothers were sent away for marriages, which led to alliances between families. Thereby the clan grew larger and larger. A story considered to have originated from the Hittite Empire, that is assumed to have disappeared in the 1200s BC, concerns the queen of Kanesh, who gives birth to thirty sons in one year. The sons are put in baskets on the river and ultimately end up in the country of Zalpuwa. Some

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[5] HARARI 2014, Chapter 2: "The Tree of Knowledge."

years later the queen gives birth to thirty daughters. She looks after them herself. Many years later the sons arrive, as muleteers, at the town of Tamarmara. There they learnt that the queen of Kanesh is living with her thirty daughters, but that she had previously given birth to thirty sons. The men then go to the queen – to meet the mother they had sought. When they arrive the gods prevent the queen from recognising her sons. She offers her daughters to the thirty men, who do not understand that the women are their sisters. However, the youngest son realises the situation and objects to the arrangement. Unfortunately, that is where the text's fragment comes to an end.[6]

The *Hittites'* story about the importance of keeping the thirty sons separated from the thirty daughters is easily associated to the anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss' "alliance theory", which in turn is linked to the taboo against incest that was a central component of his structuralist analysis.[7] Lévi-Strauss' alliance theory shows how a structuring of society based on clan is emerging, in that the daughters are used as currency in the hunt for mutual alliances in networks that with time become increasingly large and complex. In order to avoid incest, by consistently removing either daughters or sons from their father's house, an organic, amoeba-like system arises, held together by the same mechanisms at both micro and macro level.

The introduction to the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, which like the Hittites' myths originates from the second millennium BC, describes how King Gilgamesh is deprived of the privilege of having sex with all newly-wed women before their husbands.[8] Like the Hittites' story, the opening of the *Epic of Gilgamesh* communicates aspects of the fundamental conditions for the emergence of the very oldest of civilisations; namely the importance of regulating sexuality to avoid incest. According to the 19th century American anthropologist, Lewis Henry Morgan, it was exactly through the procedure described several decades later by Lévi-Strauss in his alliance theory that the clan structures were created by separating daughters and sons from each other.[9] One family's daughters were transferred to another family's sons, and the latter family's daughters to the first family's sons.

Regulations of sexuality, as well as strict rules on who is allowed to marry whom, are thus laid down in the DNA of clan culture. These kinds of rules will prove to live on in the form of family honor until today.

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[6] Hoffner 1991, pp 81–82.
[7] See Lévi-Strauss 2002.
[8] See tablet 1, *The Epic of Gilgamesh* 2001.
[9] See Morgan 1877, pp 227–236.

Aeschylos' tragedy *The Suppliants* from the 5th century BC seems to be a variation of the mythical story, mentioned above, from the Hittite Empire. The Greek tragedy revolves around the danaids' ancestress Hypermnestra and her forty-nine sisters of Argos, fleeing from Egypt. They are being persecuted by their fifty male cousins intending to marry the women. The sisters seek protection and therefore refer to their shared origins with the population of Argos.

However, unlike the Hittites' story, *The Suppliants* can be read as a drama about the transition from clan to state. What the sisters are fleeing from is, after all, forced marriages such as cousin (or endogamous) marriages which aim to keep the clan together. In Argos, the women are protected by the decision of a people-elected assembly. Greek city-states were at this time the prototypes of the state system that would make a big impact in Europe after the Middle Ages. It was to such a state the women fled from a clan-based culture.

As the Harvard professor Joseph Henrich shows in his book from 2020, *The weirdest people in the world. How the West Became Psychologically Peculiar and Particularly Prosperous*, a process in Christianity began as early as the 5th century, that would effectively break down the European family-based communities. Polygamy was forbidden by the church, as well as marriage between cousins (to strengthen the clan) and it was also forbidden for a widow to remarry her dead husband's brother so that she stayed within the family. In the same spirit Magdeburg lawmakers declared in the 10th century that a father cannot be held responsible if his son commits murder. [10]

The break-up of the clans was, according to Henrich, the cause of the Western trend towards democracy. When people left the clan, they developed into individuals. A man and a woman who married in medieval Europe could decide rather independently over their own household. As a consequence of the move from the collective to the individual, rational thinking and a positive attitude towards innovations and improvements, as well as foreigners, replaced conformism and the clan society's hostility towards everything that threatened its traditions. In this way, conditions were created for democracy, science and secularization.

According to Henrich, the guild was crucial in this process. The guild separated individuals from their relatives and united them in new social structures based on professional identity. Without the guilds, there would have been no modernity.[11]

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[10] See Henrich 2021, e.g. pp 156–157, 269–270.
[11] *Ibid*, pp 303–305.

Traces of this historical movement away from clan-based communities can be seen in *The Divine Comedy*, where Dante Alighieri expresses strong antipathies to the clan culture of Florence in the early 14th century. At the end of the 13th century, an attempt was made to overcome Florentine clan culture by banning the magnates of the city's leading families from the government. The clan culture of Florence included forced marriage and honor-based murder. The decades-long conflicts that Dante described (and which developed into a kind of low-intensity civil war) stemmed from the fact that a man had defied an agreement reached between two families about who he would marry.

It is worth noting that the clan-based conflicts displayed in The Divine Comedy has nothing to do with religion, which was also the case in Scotland, where the clans also, as is shown by Walter Scott's novel *Waverley* (1814), had significant elements of honor culture before being crushed by the British army in the mid-18th century. However, the internal mechanisms of the systems (in Florence and Scotland) were the same as in today's clan cultures.

These mechanisms contrast with European society taking shape after the French Revolution. Its slogans *liberté, égalité* and *fraternité* could be broken down into the idea of a national community – *brotherhood* – whose citizens affirm social equality and whose individual freedom is guaranteed by the state. Because man was perceived as primarily a rational being – the Enlightenment marked, as Kant described it, "man's withdrawal from his self-inflicted state of tutelage" – the primary role of the state was considered to guarantee that which after the French Revolution would become the hallmark of the Western world: the autonomy of the individual.

The suppression of the French people by a monarch – whose authority came from God himself – was thus replaced by an idea with universalist claims that an optimal society consists of equal and free citizens that are held together in an intricate network of common rights and obligations, and surrounded by institutions that are autonomous in the sense that it was incumbent on the political and religious power to exercise no or minimal influence over such things as the administration of justice, research, education and the arts.

The citizen whose freedom and autonomy were guaranteed by the state had thereby left behind a society built around the collective instead of the individual. Or was it really left behind? In fact, clan society would return to parts of Europe more than 200 years later.

Clan characteristics

What then are the differences between a clan and other communities in society? In what way does a clan-based organization of people differ from a state-based organization?

After all, people are constantly organizing themselves in collectives with more or less clear rules for being accepted by or expelled from a community. And how exactly are the clans different from families who are successful in economics, media or politics, such as the Kennedys or the Kardashians? To what extent is there a difference between, for example, Lebanese clans (like the criminal Ali Khan Clan in Gothenburg) that have established themselves in Sweden as a consequence of migration, and people living in upper-class areas with a strong consensus on norms, conventions and values?

One should, perhaps, first of all, point out that according to the Swedish constitution, in Sweden you may have whatever values you want: communist, Christian, reactionary, totalitarian, feminist, patriarchal, Islamist and so on. However, whatever your values are, you have to follow Swedish legislation. And it is in this respect that criminal clans and family-based networks are problematic. What distinguishes the clan is namely a legal system that is fundamentally contrary to Swedish law. In communities organized around the clan, people are defined on the basis of collective belonging rather than as individuals. In a modern state, governed by the rule of law, a person who commits a crime against another person is individually liable. If I am run over by a person driving a car when I am on a bicycle, the person driving the car is held liable. If the person driving the car cannot atone for the crime or replace my damaged bicycle, I (or my relatives) do not seek out the driver's relatives to find a solution. They are not considered as having anything to do with the matter.

Clan-based society is, in this way, very different from the state-based form of organisation that has characterised the Western world since, at least, the Enlightenment. The latter is based on, as we have seen, an idea of equality before the law and that justice is administered as objectively as possible. The ultimate result of this legal practice includes the idea that a person's origin, age or gender should not be adduced as support for their reliability or unreliability. Those judged are primarily individuals, rather than being regarded as cousins or offspring. This is an important cornerstone of western democracy, in conflict with the clan, which can

be described, as we have seen, as an insurance company for cousins that organizes people in a way that offers protection – financially, legally, socially et cetera. From the perspective of the clan, the core of the law system is the family or the extended family; and the function of the law is to regulate the relation between the clan's losses and the clan's compensations for these losses.

The American professor of law, Mark S Weiner, discusses in his book *The Rule of the Clan* (2013) an Afghan murder case, in which the clan leaders agreed that an appropriate compensation for the murder would be a marriage between the brother of the murdered man and the perpetrator's sister.[12] From a contemporary Swedish perspective, it may seem unfair that the close relatives of the victim are those affected the most by the punishment. The brother of the murdered Afghan man is, for the rest of his life, through his wife, reminded of his brother's murderer, who, in addition, becomes a member of the victim's family; that is, his own brother-in-law. In accordance with the logic of the clan, the family or extended family as a collective has thus received reasonable compensation for the death of one of its members in the shape of an alliance with the murderer's family through marriage. Under such a system, women – and even men – are seen as objects of exchange in transactions between families. The perpetrator, on the other hand, goes free. The act of receiving compensation is more important than punishing the guilty man.

The question of family honor is closely linked to the question of clan cultures. Within the clan, a person's value is, as we have seen, mainly based on family relations, while in a state-based society one's value depends on individual merits. In clan societies, the status of the individual is based on the clan's status, which in turn is based on the honor of the clan – that is, on the capacity to hold the clan together and the capacity of individual members to act loyally towards the family. The clan is thus no stronger than its weakest link. What makes the clan such an effective way of organizing communities is primarily loyalty – captured in Alexandre Dumas famous motto: *all for one, one for all*. If loyalty begins to fail, then honor can be lost, and when honor is lost the status of the clan's members will be decimated. That is the reason for parents, cousins, uncles and siblings being so strongly involved in dealing with undisciplined behaviors when it comes to things like marriage. In the clan, there is therefore no space for self-realization.

While the clan members are forced to always have the best interests of the clan in mind, the ultimate purpose of the modern state is to act as a guarantee of the individual's autonomy. It is not until the latter happens that the question of sexual liberation can become relevant.

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[12] Weiner 2013, pp 19–23.

The fact that each person's value in the clan is tied to every other person's actions, is an important reason for the clan being such a successful way of organising societies. In clan societies, order is in fact – as Mark S Weiner has pointed out – guaranteed through the self-regulating system of the clan itself rather than through a superior central power: "The system as a whole can be compared to the steel girders of a building, which each provide support to the others so as to keep the entire structure in place."[13]

Why have clans been neglected in Sweden?

One reason why opening a discussion of differences between clan and state has had such difficulties in Sweden, is probably, or at least partly, that we, because of our history, take the state for granted. Due to our unique history, the state has always been perceived by us as something quite natural and almost universal. For us in Sweden, it was unbelievable that in many countries in the Middle East, North and East Africa and the Balkans, the process from clan to state hardly started or only partially took place.

In Sweden the transition from clan to state probably took place gradually from the 14th to the 17th century. From the 17th century, Sweden has had a strong state that could be transformed without major problems in accordance with the *liberté* of the French Revolution – a freedom that threatens to blow up all former communities, such as the family or the clan, and free the people of the nation from their bonds, turning them into free individuals. The Swedish welfare state, since World War II, has not only been one of the richest in the world, but also perhaps one that best implemented the slogans of the French Revolution.

Another plausible explanation has to do with an aversion to the state, both on the right and the left side of the political spectra. Among right-wing libertarians (influenced by for example Ludwig van Mises) as well as among the academic Foucault-reading left, the state – at least at a theoretical level – is frequently perceived not so much as promoting freedom as repressive, authoritarian and disciplinarian.[14] But there are other, even more ideological reasons. At least since the 1970s. it has been a more or less political taboo among Swedish academics to discuss the challenges that the Western state in general, and the Swedish

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[13] *Ibid*, p 61.
[14] See Mises 1962, p 98 and p 109. According to Focault 1980, p 123, "The state is superstructural in relation to a whole series of power networks that invest the body, sexuality, the family, kinship, knowledge, technology, and so forth".

state in particular, has faced as a consequence of the extensive migration during recent decades. The Swedish immigration, during the last 20 years, has largely consisted of people from societies characterized by clans and with extremely weak and fragile state structures – in other words, from countries of a fundamentally and radically different or directly opposite character as compared to the Swedish culture. Historically, this taboo is connected to the ideological shift from 1975 and onwards, when the government declared Sweden a multicultural society. Immigrants could consequently choose the extent to which they would be integrated.[15] From this point of view cultural relativism has been encouraged, especially when it comes to religious demands. Furthermore, other opinions were neglected. It was demonstrated well when I, together with the Swedish journalist Per Brinkemo, edited an anthology in 2017 about clans. We were depicted in the Swedish daily tabloid *Aftonbladet* as racists and right-wing extremists, due to our tendency to discuss cultural differences with respect to the clan-issue.[16]

To understand these kinds of accusations, it is necessary to consider the way in which Swedish research in humanities and social or political science has evolved during the last decades. In my recent book, *When Postmodernism Reached Sweden* (2020), I show how contemporary research in humanities and social or political science has been influenced by a number of thinkers in a tradition dating back to the writings of Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault in the late 1960s. As a consequence of the postmodernist thinking that has dominated Swedish universities since at least the beginning of the 21st century, there has been a shift in focus from the concrete reality to a one-sided interest in discourses.[17]

The question posed from a postmodern point of view is not primarily what reality looks like, but what discourses are reproduced when certain phenomena – such as clans – are described by journalists and academics. This is connected to the postmodern view that research, science and fiction create, rather than describe, reality. This, in turn, is the basis for the kind of constructivism that has come to dominate both the cultural world and academic thinking. The existence of discourses has been considered to prove that a certain phenomenon is a social or cultural construction. Furthermore, the presence of discourses is seen as the key to the perception of Western society as characterized by the oppression of various minority groups.

In my book, *When Postmodernism Reached Sweden*, I take the debate on cultures of honor as an example. As I have previously pointed out, the issue of family honor

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[15] Regeringsproposition 1975. Cf. Bauhn Et al. 2010.
[16] Ravini 2018.
[17] Lundberg 2020.

is closely linked to the question of clan cultures. When Swedish postcolonial academics have directed criticism against what they regard as the social construction of family honor, their accusations of "cultural racism" have been based on the idea that those who discuss family honor reproduce discourses invoking differences between population groups in terms of cultural qualities.

These kinds of discourses are, in turn, considered to reproduce and maintain racist – or in other ways oppressive – ideas. Discussing cultures of honor, honor-based violence and family honor, is perceived to legitimize racist oppression by the use of Western thought patterns. These thought patterns are considered to be built up by binary oppositions which legitimize and perpetuate various forms of oppression. The world is thus, in accordance with those thought patterns, described in the form of different, opposing pairs: men vs women, culture vs nature, civilization vs wildness, health vs disease, human vs non-human et cetera. According to the mostly French philosophers who attacked the Enlightenment in the late 1960s, these contradictions were a misguided and temporally limited way of perceiving reality.

The same kind of thinking, in binary oppositions, was claimed a few decades later to benefit groups traditionally devoted to science and the arts: white, heterosexual males. An example of this kind of thinking can be found in postcolonial theory, whose most prominent precursor has been Edward Said, who in turn was influenced by Michel Foucault. Based on Foucault's concept of discourse and with a biased selection of examples, Said showed in his influential book *Orientalism* (1978) how discourses have been reproduced over the centuries in the visual arts, literature and science, where people from the Orient were depicted in an opposite way compared to people from the western world.[18] While the latter were associated with concepts such as activity, long term thinking, reason and truth, the Orientals were portrayed as dreamy, despotic, primitive, fanatical, irrational, violent and deceitful. These representations came, according to Said, to influence Westerners to perceive the Orient in a racist manner that justified imperialist practices.

A person who talks about cultures as fundamentally different, and, for example, state that there are considerable differences between a population group that has migrated from Somalia and a population group consisting of people born and raised in Sweden by Swedish-born parents, has, by researchers influenced by Said (and later postcolonial thinkers), been considered to reproduce a racist discourse – and can consequently be held responsible for systematic racism in society.

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[18] Said 1978, pp 2–3, p 23 and p 39.

These ideas, where one connects discourse analysis with an image of Western society as characterized by oppression, are also typical of the intersectional theories that have had an extremely large influence in Sweden over the past ten years. The Swedish government has, during that time, prescribed all higher education institutions and government agencies to draw up action plans based on intersectional analysis. An example of the prescribed intersectional focus can be found in a department of police training (at Södertörn University), where police students were taught not to regard the criminals in a neutral way in accordance with the main principle of equality before the law. Instead, the police should make an intersectional analysis, and consider those who were oppressed, from a racial or sexual perspective – and treat criminals belonging to oppressed groups differently from other criminals.[19]

The intersectional theories have thus come to permeate the Swedish education system and Swedish bureaucracy in a way that has made it at worst impossible, at best difficult to discuss such things as clans and cultures of honor. To say that there are cultural differences has, for many years, been dismissed as leading to Nazism. Michael Azar, professor at Gothenburg University, describes the engagement against honor-related violence as an expression of a "racially dominated ideology", which aims to "guard the race to avoid 'racial mixing'" and actualizes "the potential for [. . .] ethnic cleansing".[20]

Another Swedish professor, Masoud Kamali, who was head of a governmental investigation on integration, on behalf of the social democratic government in the early 2000s, criticized women (often with immigrant background) who were engaged against honor-related violence, in an article in the tabloid *Aftonbladet* in October 2003 .[21]

In the article, he asks himself rhetorically what really distinguishes "these groups" of "experts" from "neo-Nazis". He further predicts that these women's public engagements run the risk of "reinforcing discrimination and exclusion and, in the worst case, leading to another genocide". The division of the population into immigrants and natives is in itself a testimony, he claimed, of "an us-and-them-thinking" that justified colonialism, slavery, war and genocide".[22]

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[19] Ibid, pp 211–212.
[20] Azar 2005. See Lundberg 2020, pp 193–200.
[21] Kamali 2003.
[22] *Ibid.*

It ought to be clarified that the views dismissed in this way do not stipulate that people are predisposed to act in a certain way because they originate from a certain culture. In both the debates about clans and about family honor, the people who are criticized have the opinion that man is formable and capable to change.

Consequences of clan cultures in Sweden

The spread of the clan system in countries such as Sweden is, of course, in many ways a threat to certain foundations in a liberal and democratic society. As it has been pointed out, the clan system challenges the judiciary and its innermost principles as well as equality before the law. The expansion of culture of honor is, as we have seen, intimately linked to the clan as a form of organization and entails significant restrictions on individual freedom. In Sweden, a 2009 survey showed that 70,000 young people lived with family honor-related limitations.[23] In 2014, another study estimated that 100,000 young people were affected by family honor.[24] It is unacceptable that a large part of the young population does not enjoy their statutory freedom. A large proportion of young people have their freedom limited and run the risk of being punished by their families because of their sexual orientation or as a consequence of who they love and want to live with.

The existence of forty clan-based criminal networks in Sweden in 2021 shows, on the other hand, how easily the clan system transforms into criminal organizations – and how its system of organization works well in such contexts. After all, the clan organization is the very core of the Italian mafia.

Regarding a major Swedish lawsuit against criminal networks in the spring of 2021, there were revelations about the use of the Somali hawala-system.[25] The hawala system, developed in Asia during the Middle Ages, is closely connected to an honor system and depends on strong clan connections. Hawala means that you can transfer for example 10 000 Euro to a person in Morocco by paying the amount to a hawala dealer in Sweden. A few hours later the person in Morocco receives the same amount of money from a Moroccan hawala dealer. This system is totally dependent on a functioning clan system and built on the clan's capacity to force the individual members to act loyally towards the family. A person who is cheating is punished by "loss of honor" and excommunication.

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[23] Modée 2009.

[24] Götblad 2014, p 221.

[25] Wierup 2021.

What makes the clan such an effective way of organizing communities is primarily loyalty and, of course, a penal system that allows those who do not behave loyally to be punished hard and immediately.

However, every modern state must demand, as a minimum, a monopoly on violence and the rule of law. Neither armed voluntary civilian guards nor criminal gangs with firearms can be allowed, nor an alternative legal system (as customary law) that has no basis in a country with a legislative parliament and an executive judiciary. Clan-based criminal networks are, at the same time, growing as a consequence of a general lack of integration. And the integration is obstructed by the powerlessness of the Swedish authorities.

As a consequence of the large migration during the last decades (the following statistics are from 2018[26]), 25 percent of all Swedish children of school age are foreign-born or born in Sweden with two foreign-born parents. Thus, every fourth child in the Swedish school system does not speak Swedish as their mother tongue. If we include children with one foreign-born parent, more than a third of the children in Swedish schools are in need of extra help in learning the Swedish language. The problem is that as early as 30 years ago you could leave the Swedish school system without the necessary skills in the Swedish language – that is, long before the huge migration. Over the past 30 years, there have also been regular reports about teachers' inadequate knowledge of the Swedish language. There is, therefore, every reason to believe that many students will leave high school with poor language skills, which is worrying given that language skills are necessary for integration. And if integration fails, clans tend to grow, which is an obstacle for integration et cetera.

After all, there are ultimately only two options. Either immigrants must be integrated with the aim of eventually dissolving or destroying the clan and its order or the clan will establish itself as a parallel society at the side of the Swedish welfare state with, among other things, ghettos as one of several possible unpleasant consequences.

Solutions

How should one then act to solve the problems created by clan cultures in Sweden? Probably, the most important factor is firstly to understand how clans actually work, secondly to realize that people do not choose a state-based society automatically, not even in the long run. The state has to offer a number of desirable and functional advantages to the people: protection, justice, health care, education,

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[26] See REGERINGSBESLUT 2019.

insurances. Thirdly, you have to convince the clan members that the freedom that the state provides has many advantages over lack of freedom in a clan-based society, not least regarding individual self-realisation but also – and perhaps even more importantly – when it comes to the creation and the accumulation of wealth that is crucial for a common welfare system

Regarding the first factor – the understanding of the clan phenomenon – what is needed is a de-ideologization or de-politicization of the universities. To a greater extent, a distinction must be maintained between science and ideology. The purpose of the humanities in academia, for example, is not, as formulated in a Swedish textbook in literary theory for university students, to conduct research whose "ultimate goal" is to "prevent Planet Earth from being destroyed". Nor is the purpose of university education and academic research to create gender equality, in the sense that there will be no differences in statistics between women's life choices and men's life choices – or no income and wealth disparities between different ethnic or religious groups.

The purpose of university education and academic research is and must remain to gain knowledge about the world. This requires a broad range of theoretical inputs. Certain theoretical and methodological approaches cannot be categorically dismissed as oppressive or unscientific, just because they assume, for example, that there may be disparities between different cultures. A way to deal with the politicization of research in Sweden is to minimize the political influence over research and to increase the freedom of the individual researcher.

It is also necessary, for productive solutions to be formulated, to realize that the choice between state and clan is not obvious. The choice between state and clan is a choice between loneliness and fellowship, between a lack of context and historical continuity, between having a changeable or relative value as an individual on the basis of performance and of having a natural, firm value as part of a group.

But above all, it is a matter of being able to use the freedom the state provides for something constructive. If this opportunity is not offered, it is difficult to understand why anyone should choose state over a form of organisation that throughout history has exhibited an exceptional competitiveness and capacity for survival. In a society where the state does not function optimally with regards to the administration of justice; in a society where rape cases are investigated too slowly and where the police fail to solve problems with gang violence – in such a society it is no wonder that the most vulnerable people turn to clan leaders

to administer justice. Wherever the state weakens, clan structures tend to grow stronger. A weak state that fails to gain trust is the clan's best soil.

A concluding Swedish example is when it turned out that the criminal Ali Khan clan in Gothenburg had chosen to rent the conference facilities in one of the city's most fancy hotels for the purpose of negotiating with another criminal network, after a series of shootings that, in turn, led to the Ali Khan clan setting up roadblocks in suburban areas where motorists were checked.[27] Both of these episodes – the renting of the conference rooms and the roadblocks – had taken place a few weeks before the initially mentioned police chief informed on the radio that there are about forty clan-based criminal networks in Sweden today. However, both the roadblocks and the conference in Gothenburg signify that the clans do not see the Swedish police force as a major threat. Both of these phenomena can rather be regarded as a demonstration of strength showing contempt not only for the Swedish police force but the Swedish state-based society in general.

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[27] Nordlblad Et al. 2020.

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