

Demographics of Sweden - Selected Resources in English

A Collaboration by the African American Registry and American Swedish Institute

Before diving into these resources, start with some reflection. Take time to read the questions below and jot down some notes.

- Who are you? What is your background / how do you identify?
- What is the population like where you live? Who do you interact with on a daily basis?
- How do you/people talk (or don't talk) about race where you live?
- How do you feel when talking about race?
- What do you think the population of Sweden looks like?
- Why is it important to understand race in different countries?

Statistics/General Information

- [General Swedish population statistics](#) from SCB (Swedish Government Statistics Agency)
 - To answer the questions:
 - How many people live in Sweden?
 - How many people who live in Sweden have roots in a country outside of Sweden?
- [Information on Sweden's 5 Official National Minorities](#)
 - To answer the questions:
 - Who are Sweden's 5 national minorities?
 - What government-protected rights do they have?
- [Information on Sámi people](#) (indigenous people of the Arctic Circle) in Sweden
 - To answer the questions:
 - Who are the Sámi? Where do they live? What is their lifestyle like?
 - What history have they had with the Swedish government?
 - What did the Swedish government announce in November 2021 related to the Sámi?



Audio Resources

[This Moment](#)

This Moment is a podcast created by Jason “Timbuktu” Diakit  (a Swedish and American hip-hop artist and author currently living in Stockholm) and Marcus Samuelsson (an Ethiopian-born Swedish chef currently living in New York City) in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the renewed Black Lives Matters protests following the murder of George Floyd. On the show, they invite guest speakers into conversations on race, culture, and current events through the lenses of their respective countries. The podcast has aired 100 episodes thus far which are all well worth listening to, but two especially pertinent conversations are highlighted below.

Episode #39 - [“Understanding Diversity with Frans Johansson”](#)

- To explore:
 - How are the conversations around race and diversity different between the US and Sweden?

Episode #98 - [“New Sweden featuring Dr. Tobias H binette”](#)

- To explore:
 - Why is it so difficult to talk about race in Sweden?
 - What is homogenic whiteness?

Scholarly articles

- T rngren, Sayaka Osanami, [“Understanding Race in Sweden – The Racialisation and Deracialisation of Multiethnic and Multiracial Swedes”](#), Nordic Journal of Social Research, 2022.
- Wikstr m, Peter and H binette, Tobias [“Equality data as immoral race politics: A case study of liberal, colour-blind, and antiracilaist opposition to equality data in Sweden”](#), British Journal of Social Psychology, 2021

Books

- *A Drop of Midnight*, by Jason “Timbuktu” Diakit , 2020 (memoir)
 - About the book: “World-renowned hip-hop artist Jason “Timbuktu” Diakit ’s vivid and intimate journey through his own and his family’s history--from South Carolina slavery to twenty-first-century Sweden.”
- *Afro-Sweden: Becoming Black in a Color-Blind Country* by Ryan Thomas Skinner, 2022 (scholarly monograph)
 - About the book: “The first scholarly monograph in English to focus on the African and Black diaspora in Sweden, *Afro-Sweden* emphasizes the voices, experiences, practices, knowledge, and ideas of these communities. Its interdisciplinary approach to understanding diasporic communities is essential to contemporary conversations around such issues as the status and identity of racialized populations in Europe and the international impact of Black Lives Matter.”



- *Palimpsest: Documents from a Korean Adoption* by Lisa Wool-Rim Sjöblom, 2016 (memoir, graphic novel)
 - About the book: “Thousands of South Korean children were adopted around the world in the 1970s and 1980s. More than nine thousand found their new home in Sweden, including the cartoonist Lisa Wool-Rim Sjöblom, who was adopted when she was two years old. Throughout her childhood she struggled to fit into the homogenous Swedish culture and was continually told to suppress the innate desire to know her origins... In *Palimpsest*, an emotionally charged memoir, Sjöblom’s unaddressed feelings about her adoption come to a head when she is pregnant with her first child... As Sjöblom digs deeper into her own backstory, returning to Korea and the orphanage, she finds that the truth is much more complicated than the story she was told and struggled to believe.”

- *Stolen* by Ann-Helén Laestadius, 2023 (novel)
 - “On a winter day north of the Arctic Circle, nine-year-old Elsa—daughter of Sámi reindeer herders—sees a man brutally kill her beloved reindeer calf and threaten her into silence. When her father takes her to report the crime, local police tell them that there is nothing they can do about these “stolen” animals. Killings like these are classified as theft in the reports that continue to pile up, uninvestigated. But reindeer are not just the Sámi’s livelihood, they also hold spiritual significance; attacking a reindeer is an attack on the culture itself.

Ten years later, hatred and threats against the Sámi keep escalating, and more reindeer are tortured and killed in Elsa’s community. Finally, she’s had enough and decides to push back on the apathetic police force. The hunter comes after her this time, leading to a catastrophic final confrontation.

Based on real events, Ann-Helén Laestadius’s award-winning novel *Stolen* is part coming-of-age story, part love song to a disappearing natural world, and part electrifying countdown to a dramatic resolution.”

- *The Day I Am Free/Katitzi* by Lawen Mohtadi, 2012 (biography)
 - About the book: “Katarina Taikon was an epoch-changing human rights activist, a prolific writer, and a countercultural icon in Sweden whose writing defined the Roma struggle for equal rights. Active in the 1960s through the 1970s, Taikon faced a Sweden in which the Roma minority was heavily discriminated against, excluded from housing, the education system and the rights of citizenship provided by the welfare state.”



Wrap-up Questions:

- What did you learn about Sweden as a result of these lessons/guide?
- What did you learn about yourself / your community as a result of these lessons/guide?
- How do you/people talk (or don't talk) about race where you live? How does it compare to Sweden?

Feedback:

We want to hear from you!

How did these lessons / resource guide help further your understanding of yourself, Sweden, and the world?

Please share your feedback with the African American Registry at st@aaregistry.org.

