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## **Players on the interactive media market**

**A discussion of social exclusion and inclusion among interactive media firms**

**Karin Darin**



**CID, CENTRE FOR USER ORIENTED IT DESIGN**

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**E-mail of author:** darin@nada.kth.se

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CID, Centre for User Oriented IT Design

NADA, Department of Numerical Analysis and Computer Science

KTH (Royal Institute of Technology)

SE-100 44 Stockholm, Sweden

Telephone: + 46 (0) 8 790 91 00

Fax: + 46 (0) 8 790 90 99

E-mail: cid@nada.kth.se

URL: <http://cid.nada.kth.se>

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## Foreword

This report is part of the research program “Working lives in urban areas” <http://www.arbetslivsinstitutet.se/storstad/> and is based on a research carried out within the MITIOR program (Media, ICT and innovation in organization and work), the National Institute for Working Life and at NADA, the Royal Institute of Technology. The report is an attempt to describe the notion of social exclusion and inclusion among interactive media producing firms. Only 18 percent of the employees producing interactive media are women and only 19 percent of all employees are over 40 years of age. Furthermore, the number of employees with an immigrant background is low among the firms. Given this, the interactive media sector is composed of a relatively homogenous group of employees seen to age, sex and ethnicity. The purpose of this report is to explain the process of social exclusion and inclusion among interactive media firms in central Stockholm, mainly with a focus on immigrants living in immigrant dense suburban areas, as a potentially excluded group.

The Swedish interactive media sector, often referred to as the new media or multimedia industry, was developed during the latter part of the 1990s. Several surveys aiming at the sector have been carried out within the MITIOR program with the aim of creating a detailed picture of the sector, its working life and ways of organizing production, in a context of technological innovations and working life transformations. The latest interactive media study, carried out in 2001, and further information about the MITIOR program, can be found at <http://www.arbetslivsinstitutet.se>

Stockholm, December 2003

*Karin Darin*

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## **Abstract in an English and Swedish version**

### ***Abstract***

The purpose of this report is to explain the process of social exclusion and inclusion among interactive media firms in central Stockholm and to see if immigrants living in immigrant dense suburban areas are among a potentially excluded group. The report also discusses initiatives aiming at integrating people with an immigrant background into the interactive media sector, both firm based initiatives and political initiatives are referred to here.

The study is based on case studies of eight interactive media firms, where interviews have been carried out with a total of six managers and 13 employees. Interviews have also been carried out with 'political experts', i.e. people with an insight to political initiatives to integration. The discussion is mainly applying Pierre Bourdieu's concepts and it hovers between a micro and a macro perspective, where for example, immigrants' situation on the labour market of interactive media is placed in a larger Swedish context.

Inclusion and exclusion take place in a social context where higher positioned groups' superiority is preserved through distinctions, i.e. through preservation of a distance towards lower positioned groups. The interactive media market has a high social status, which is indicated by, and reproduced through, the capital compositions of the included actors. Since a majority of the residents in immigrant dense suburban areas occupy a lower socioeconomic position, the immigrants living there are also among the potentially excluded on the interactive media market.

### ***Sammanfattning***

Syftet med den här rapporten är att förklara inkluderings- och exkluderingsprocessen bland interaktiva medieföretag i centrala Stockholm samt att undersöka om invandrare som är bosatta i invandrantäta bostadsområden är en potentiellt exkluderad grupp. Rapporten diskuterar även politiska initiativ, samt företagsbaserade initiativ, som tagits för att integrera människor med en invandrarbakgrund i den interaktiva mediesektorn.

Rapporten baseras på åtta fallstudier där intervjuer har utförts med sex företagsledare och 13 anställda. Intervjuer har även genomförts med 'politiska experter', det vill säga med människor som har en inblick i politiska integrationsinitiativ.

Genomgående i diskussionen appliceras Pierre Bourdieus begrepp och resonemanget pendlar mellan ett mikro- och makroperspektiv där, till exempel, invandrades förutsättningar på den interaktiva mediebranschens arbetsmarknad placeras i en större svensk kontext.

Inklusion och exklusion tar sig uttryck i en social kontext där högre positionerade gruppers överlägsenhet bibehålls och reproduceras genom distinktioner, det vill säga genom bibehållandet av ett avstånd gentemot lägre positionerade grupper. Den interaktiva mediemarknaden har en hög social status vilken indikeras av, och reproduceras genom, de inkluderade aktörernas kapitalsammansättningar. Eftersom invandrare i invandrantäta bostadsområden har en sämre socioekonomisk situation är dessa människor en potentiellt exkluderad grupp på den interaktiva mediemarknaden.

***Key concepts are: capital, taste, distinction, interactive media, game, player, network, immigrant, integration, exclusion and inclusion.***

## **Introduction**

### ***Social exclusion***

This report deals with the notion of social exclusion and inclusion in relation to the market for interactive media. A great deal has been written about the subject in general in Sweden the past years. There have been discussions on labour market marginalization, residential segregation and diversity within working life (see for example: Ekberg 1991, De los Reyes 2001, Alvesson 1997, Andersson 2002, Bunar 2001). Focus has been put on the deviant in relation to the normal in a Swedish context, including discussions on ethnicity, gender, disabilities, age groups, and etceteras. The discussions reflect the Swedish society and the political discourse, the values and ideals that permeate it. The notion of social exclusion is further developed in contexts dealing with the perception of a post- industrial society, recently referred to as a new economy or information society, where arguments are made supporting an increasing polarization between low- and high-qualified work (see for example: Castells 2001, Burton-Jones 1999). A main aspect of the changing labour market and increasing polarization is the shift in focus from physical to knowledge resources as a main asset in production (See: Lundvall & Kristensen Skov 1997, Burton- Jones 1999).

The purpose of this report is to explain the process of social exclusion/inclusion among interactive media producing firms. This process is shaped by social mechanisms that emerge in a system of social relations in a social room. The structure of the social room is shaped by social positions where each position's social status is defined by its relative value. Actors compete for positions and it is the competition for, and preservation of, positions that creates the dynamics of the social room (Bourdieu 1986). It is within this dynamics that the notion of social exclusion gains meaning and in this sense the definition of social exclusion lies within its process. The discussion throughout this report is based upon the social relations and dynamics within the social room, which makes it possible to explain the process of exclusion/inclusion on the interactive media market. The discussion is further placed in relation to a geographical segregation process in which many immigrants are reduced to immigrant dense residential areas in Stockholm. The report has two sections; the first one discusses the process of social inclusion/exclusion and the latter one describes initiatives aiming at increasing the share of immigrants within interactive media firms. Both political initiatives and initiatives taken within firms are referred to in the discussion. The report accordingly revolves around three questions:

- What social mechanisms shape the process of social exclusion/inclusion on the interactive media market?
- Are immigrants living in immigrant dense areas among the potentially excluded on the interactive media market?
- What political and/or firm based initiatives have been taken to increase the share of immigrants within the interactive media sector?

### ***The Interactive Media Sector***

This report is based on research carried out within the MITIOR program<sup>1</sup> at the National Institute for Working Life and at NADA, the Royal Institute of Technology. Several surveys aiming at both management and employees have been carried out within the program, which focuses on the transformation of working life and organizational changes and its relation to human resources issues in IT- related work. Both in earlier research and in this report the

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.arbetslivsinstitutet.se/projektkatalog/detaljerad.asp?record\\_id=230](http://www.arbetslivsinstitutet.se/projektkatalog/detaljerad.asp?record_id=230)

interactive media sector is defined based on what actors produce and how they produce it. Interactive media companies are “...*developing interactive media products or services, integrating text, graphics, sound, vision and video (multimedia or multimodal products)*” (Sandberg & Augustsson 2002, p. 3). Both firms that produce entire interactive media solutions and parts of it are included in this definition. However, companies that only use or sell the solutions are not, and this also goes for companies that produce digital content for use in traditional media only. Furthermore, only firms producing solutions for external use are included. The platform/information carrier for those firms included is defined as “...*on-line (Internet, Intranet), off-line (CD-ROM, DVD, information kiosks, etc.) or wireless, mobile Internet (WAP, GPRS etc.)*” (Sandberg & Augustsson 2002, p. 3).

The second interactive media company survey conducted in the MITIOR program (Sandberg & Augustsson 2002) gives a picture of the interactive media sector in Sweden around the years 2001/2002 and following are some key findings. The sector mainly developed in Sweden during the latter part of the 1990s. Most firms started to appear in the beginning of the 1990s, but did not start producing interactive media solutions until the latter part of the same decade. There is a high concentration of interactive media producers in the Stockholm area; 33 percent of all actors are located there. A majority of these actors, 29 percent, were in 2001 located in central Stockholm. The collaboration between interactive media producers seems to be mainly regional or local. Collaborations, or client – supplier - sub-supplier relations, among producers are not fixed. 65 percent of the actors outsource part of their interactive media production to other actors and 52 percent of the actors perform work as sub-contractors to other interactive media producers. Further, clients perform functions in 32 percent of all productions. An actor can perform different functions and have different roles/positions in a production network over time and simultaneously in different projects. One reason is that interactive media companies often are small, with a median workforce of five and mean of 16, and they are sometimes dependent on other actors in order to produce whole interactive media solutions. Given this, firms collaborating with other firms, but also freelancers and consultants to meet requirements of productions. The production network is therefor dynamic and includes different actors, but only employees with permanent and conditional tenure present in firms at the time of study are included here.

### ***Case studies among interactive media firms***

Since the interactive media sector mostly consists of small- and medium sized firms, many of them located in the central part of Stockholm, these kinds of firms are the focus of this report. The report is based on interviews with both management and employees in eight different firms in Stockholm. However, interviews with both management and employees have not been conducted in each firm. 13 interviews have been conducted with employees from five of the firms and six interviews have been conducted with managers from six firms (table 1).

**Table 1.** Selected firms, number of employees and interviews

Firm No.	No of employees incl. management	Managers interviewed	Employees interviewed
1	3	Yes	1
2	7	Yes	0
3	7	Yes	2
4	19	Yes	4
5	9	Yes	0
6	22	Yes	0
7	7	No	4
8	8	No	2
Tot.	82	6	13



Almost all interviewed employees are Swedish. However, four of the interviewed have an immigrant background defined as having at least one parent that has immigrated to Sweden. Three of these have one parent born in, and immigrated from, other European countries, but are themselves born in Sweden. One has both parents born in other Nordic countries. The share of employees with a foreign background is relatively low among the firms in general. Interviews with the management reveal that only two firms have people with a foreign background among their employees, a total of three people. Two of these are from other Nordic countries and one is from Eastern Europe. One has to keep in mind that the managers and employees interviewed are not consistently from the same firm, thus the difference in number of immigrants.

The share of women in the sector is low. 18 percent of the employees producing interactive media are women and less than 14 percent of firms have a woman as the highest-ranking director (Sandberg & Augustsson 2002). Interviews with the management reveal that the share of women is 33 percent. Further, only 30 percent of the employees interviewed are women.

There is also a high concentration of employees with less than 40 years of age, although managers' average age range between 40 to 49 years, according to interviews with management. Earlier research shows that 45 percent of employees are under 29 years of age, 36 percent are between 30-39, and 19 percent are over 40 (Ibid).

Interviews with both management and employees were conducted and recorded at their workplaces. Interviews with employees have usually been conducted within a time range of one firm per week. All firms and individuals are presented under a pseudonym in the report in order not to disclose their identity. Managers are referred to by the number that represents their firm (table 1). All quotations are translated into English. There has also been communication with, referred to in this report as, 'political experts'. These are people who have an insight into political initiatives, programs and projects, aiming at integrating people with an immigrant background into the Swedish labour market. The experts represent the National integration office, the Swedish county administration board (Integration department), the Integration administration of the municipality in Stockholm, the People's palace in Rinkeby, the Stockholm Matching (a project initiated by the municipality in Stockholm) and Transfer (a nonprofit organization). Three of the political experts have been interviewed at their workplace while the rest have been sent questions electronically. The political experts are referred to in the report by the name of the organization they represent.

### ***Immigrant dense areas in Stockholm***

Social exclusion is mainly discussed in relation to ethnicity, or immigrants versus non-immigrants, although aspects of gender and age are also included to some extent in this report. Social exclusion is rather about the values and ideals that exist within the excluding sphere than categorizing potentially excluded groups, thus the arguments can be applied to any group that diverges from a given standard. Accordingly, it is also difficult to determine whom to include under the concept *immigrant*. The question is when a person cease to be an immigrant, i.e. after what range of time or generation, or under what preconditions. Questions like if a person should be defined by the immigration or by the features are relevant in order to capture discriminative aspects. The definition of immigrant is here simply done with reference to *first-* and *second generation immigrants*, defined by having at least one parent immigrated from abroad, in opposition to the definition of *Swedish*. Thus, both 'naturalized' immigrants and people with foreign citizenship are included in the definition. The concept

'naturalized' is in itself problematic since it implicitly implies that an immigrant is something different from the normal, and thereby natural, until he/she becomes viewed as a Swedish/natural. But it also shows that categorizations are socially constructed and thus people can move between them. The reason for employing the definition of immigrant that is done here is partially that it allows practical gathering of statistical data on persons that have immigrated to Sweden from other countries since this is often the definition employed in official sources. The categorization further allows a discussion on the deviant in relation to the normal even though it is not the immigration *per se* that creates belonging to one or another category. The fact that immigrants are not a homogeneous group, all with the same preconditions in the Swedish context, will permeate the discussion throughout the report.

The relative relation between different gender, ages and origins, and the presence of people from each group, is referred to when applying the concept diversity. The same goes for the concept homogeneity, implying lack of diversity.

Many of those who have immigrated to Sweden from other countries and reside in the Stockholm area live in immigrant dense suburbs to the city. The most immigrant dense areas are Rinkeby and Tensta (Bäckström & Forsell 2001). Therefore, these two areas will be given as examples when discussing immigrant dense areas further on. 69 percent of the population in Rinkeby and 63 percent in Tensta are immigrants according to the definition made here ([www.usk.stockholm.se](http://www.usk.stockholm.se)). The ethnic resident segregation in Stockholm is partly related to "Miljonprogrammet", a program that aimed at solving the housing shortage in Stockholm in the 1960s (Andersson 2002). The program was an initiative taken by the Swedish government and resulted in the construction of a million apartments in the Stockholm suburban areas between the years 1965 and 1975 (Molina & De los Reyes 2002). Because of the housings geographical location, with commuting time to central Stockholm, and the less attractive architecture and material used to build these areas, and the lack of city qualities as entertainment, services and work, these areas soon became defined as less attractive (Andersson 2001). Later on, the neighborhoods became more immigrant dense because of a greater supply of available apartments, which in turn was due to an outflow of the Swedish population. (Molina 2001). Because of the negative perception of these areas, which contributed to an outflow of Swedish residents and an inflow of immigrants, the negative picture was further reinforced (Andersson 2001). The more immigrants that moved into these areas, the less Swedish residents stayed as a dialectic outcome of a stigmatization process. (Andersson 2002). These areas are today not only immigrant dense, but also comprise a larger proportion of unemployed, low-income households and low- educated population compared to Swedish dense areas (Andersson 2002). Since this report has a particular focus on the Stockholm Metropolitan area, this dimension of immigration will be dealt with when discussing social exclusion. Immigrant dense areas are therefore defined in socioeconomic terms, and related to the notion of social position, throughout the discussion.

### ***Development of a theoretical model***

In order to capture the essence of this report, some concepts and basic assumptions that are essential for the discussion need explanation here, although some will be defined and further developed throughout it. A basic assumption is that people are *agents* that internalize and reproduce social structures. There is a dialectic relation between the social reality and agents' values. Incorporated social structures, also referred to as *habitus*, take shapes through agents' *practices*, i.e. actions and behaviors, and in turn shape the social structure (Bourdieu 1986, Berger & Luckmann 1966). The social structure is further regulated and preserved through

distinctions, i.e. dissociation between groups of actors based on their capital assets and its change over time (see below).

Agents internalize values that exist, not only in society at large, but also in fields within which they are active. The notion of *field* is used to explain a certain sphere of activity, which is defined by the rules that exist within that particular field. The rules regulate actions and give a field its own particular structure, which is incorporated in those that compete for social positions within the field. An agent has to compete according to the field specific rules in order to be part of the field. Although the rules are incorporated and thereby reproduced, they are renegotiable thus to some extent dynamic (Bourdieu 1997). Even though a brief explanation of the notion of field is given here, this concept will not be referred to further on. Instead the concept will underlie the discussion in terms of a *social room* that comprises different fields, thus capturing an overall social structure built upon values and assumptions in society at large. But the reasoning will also be applied at a micro level in order to understand and explain actions and symbols within a narrower context. At this level people incorporate values within a particular context, as within a given market (see below) (Ehn & Löfgren 1982).

Agents compete on the market with their *capital assets*. Capital is symbolic and materialized assets that are defined as valuable in society at large and/or within particular fields/markets (Broady 2002). Economic, cultural and social capitals are capitals that are defined and distributed in the social room, but capitals can also be divided into more or less field specific subgroups, to be further defined in relation to a given market. Different types of capitals have different value and can be more or less negotiable within the social room and/or within different fields. *Economic capital* includes materialized assets while for example *cultural capital* comprises immaterial assets such as familiarity with recognized culture and education (Bourdieu 1997). Symbolic capital is a generic term that, together with the volume of capital, defines an agent's movement and position in the social room and given markets. Any capital can be symbolic given that the capital is given recognition within the sphere in which it is defined. Throughout life courses agents acquire capitals that stand in relation to their dispositions, i.e. their habitus, concurrently as habitus is shaped by the capital acquired. Given this, there is a strong, even though not determinant, correlation between habitus and the choices made in life.

Here, the most essential form of capital is *social capital*, which can roughly be defined in two ways; as social assets in terms of abstract connections or relations to other people, or as valuable social contacts (Hasselberg et al 2002). This report employs the latter definition and refers to the sum of social contacts as *social networks*. The value of a network is for each agent defined by the volume of capital accumulated in the network and its symbolic value, i.e. to what extent one can convert a capital asset into another through the network (Lin 2001, Broady 2002) on the market of interactive media. Network theories are often focused on the structure of networks and less on the functions of the same (See for example: Hasselberg 2002, Granovetter 1973, Burt 1992). This report primarily deals with the latter perspective in order to explain how a network functions in the process of social inclusion/exclusion.

A *market* is a sphere of activity where the relative value of capital is defined according to the rules on the market and where one form of capital can be converted to another through capital investments and return on capital (Bourdieu 1986). The notion of market is related to the notion of field but a market can be a part of a field, or run across different fields. The competition for valuable positions within the market will be referred to in terms of a *game*

throughout the discussion. The game basically comprises those rules defined by shared values and norms that indicate which capital assets that are negotiable on the market and which are not, thus indicate premises for access to the market (Bourdieu 1986).

### **Inclusion/exclusion on the interactive media market**

#### *Creativity, visibility and success*

How an actor is socially defined determines his/her precondition on the market, since in order to be part of the game the actor has to be recognized as a player by others. This is further a result of how successful the rules are presented. In order to gain access to the game, the rules that define it have to be socially performed. Thus, an agent becomes the game in the sense that the rules are reproduced through his/her actions (Ehn & Löfgren 1982). Definitions of the normal and deviant are shaped by the rules since the normal stands in relation to the positively embedded and socially encouraged and indicates acceptable behaviors, actions, appearance and more (Douglas 1997). Those defined as normal are the ones that get access to the game, since the game reproduces and is reproduced by the ideal (Ehn & Löfgren 1982), at the same time as it excludes, or sanctions, those that diverge from the given standards.

A sign of ones success in the game, i.e. how well one succeed in reproducing the rules, are the career steps one take, which in turn reflect on the status one gain. The traditional way of doing a career is to move between functions within or between firms, but among the interactive media firms an employee's social position and status defined in relation to function or profession is not obvious. Many employees are engaged in more than one function within their organization, i.e. the same person can perform both programming and system development, project management and sales, administration and graphic design and so on. A manager expresses the latter by saying *"We are such a small firm, [functions like] programming or system development, I think these are concepts that apply to larger firms where there are people working with different pieces [of the production]"* (Firm 5). One employee can have different roles, thus employ different functions, at the same time and/or over time. *"We are a smaller company so it is a question of combining different roles, to be both project manager, art director, illustrator..."* (David). The size of a firm affects the division of labour; firms having fewer employees generally have less division of labour (Mintzberg 1983). Given this, when discussing social positions within the interactive media market, the conception of function might create an impasse that prevents from perceiving nuances of status. In this context social status seems rather to be shaped by aspects that crosses functions. *"It is more about participating in prestigious projects than being a manager in any way... once you are in the company you can only have a career by being given the possibility to do larger projects "* (Firm 2). Since the ideal is not obviously attached to a given function, it appears that social status is not received primarily by the function one employ (Aspers 2001), but by the interactive media solutions one create.

In the interactive media market, the ideal is based upon the notion of creativity. Creativity is what generates access to, and success in, the game but only if made visible to others, which is prominent both at a firm- and individual level since it is what generates status. Agents gain recognition through engaging in creative work; possessing a position defined as creative and being creators. *"Creativity is something that [generates status], one should be creative and one should say that one is creative and one should be so very creative"* (Per). Firms gain recognition through working with recognized clients and productions that generate visibility. In this way, they present themselves, and make themselves known as, creative. *"The general perception is that the firms that are written about in media are more fun to work at. If they*

*win a lot of awards, get a lot of press, thus are a little crazy and creative, they are more fun to work at” (Per). Awards are, in this context, recognized and legitimate materialized symbols for firms’ creativity (Bourdieu 1991, Augustsson 2003). Earlier research shows that social status also can be achieved in relation to technical and economic knowledge and how these are expressed (Augustsson 2003). However, these are not aspects that have emerged in the research for this report.*

The positions defined as prestigious are those creative ones that entail visibility since visibility is what confirms a firm or an agent as creative and successful. Accordingly, an actor who is engaged in creative work or projects without being visible does not receive the social status that is generated by visibility. *“[Some professions] are perceived as more glamorous because they are more visible” (David). The notion of visibility becomes a premise that confirms the level of ones creativity at the same time as visibility reinforces the actor’s presentation as creative and thereby successful. [Some projects] generate more prestige... if they [the projects] show that the firm has done something that is exposed in media or that they receive an award for, it gives more status” (Anna). By being visible, the actor (firm or agent) is presented as creative without the level of creativity being questioned, since visibility reinsures the actor is fulfilling the standards, i.e. it generates a form of legitimacy. Therefore, an actor’s social position is in part measured by his/her visibility. However, the notion of creativity and visibility performs in a dialectical way. Visibility is achieved in relation to level of creativity as defined on the market, even though there might be discrepancies between the actual level of creativity and the perceived level. It is how things are socially defined that creates the preconditions in the game.*

Actors’ creativity is made visible in relation to each other, which in turn entails a paradox since for many employees, interactive media production implies teamwork and co-productions (Sandberg & Augustsson 2002). This paradox is also what seems to be creating conflicts in collaborations since there is a fine line between expressing ones opinion, i.e. making ones own creativity permeates a production, and crossing the line for coworkers’ similar wish. *“There’re a lot of strong wills in this business and [conflicts] occur because everybody wants to show themselves and prove themselves” (Claes). Making ones own creativity visible in a production is important since visibility is what defines the individual as successful and has an impact on the recruitment process. “You must be able to show what you’ve done, in particular visible things. One should choose to work in projects where one is visible, where the own talent permeates the production” (David). Given this, in order to access the game one must have earlier productions to present, which further implies that agents who are currently active in the firms have fulfilled this standard. “We recruit people mainly based on their earlier experiences...documented experiences” (Firm 2). “I generally want to see earlier productions” (Firm 6). That most players have had earlier productions to present also corresponds to the fact that majority of respondents have worked in the sector, or related ones, before entering the present firm. Given this, it is difficult to enter the game if being on the outside of the market since one has, per definition, to be part of the market in order to have earlier productions to present.*

The notion of creativity is not just a limited expression for the values that exist within firms on the interactive media market; it is rather a symbol expressing position in the social room (Florida 2002). Creativity, as it figures among the interactive media actors, symbolizes intellectual work, which in turn stands in opposition to manual work or bodywork. In intellectual work the body is distanced in the production process hence distinct from manual labour, which implies physical investment (Willis 1981). Different social groups correspond

to different kinds of labour indicated by, and indicating, their positions in the social room (Ibid). In this sense creativity functions as a demarcation towards lower positioned agents.

### ***Social position and higher education***

A higher education, i.e. a university degree or a post secondary education is not required in order to gain employment into the interactive media firms. *“I have not asked for [the applicants’] formal education”* (Firm 1). In an earlier survey formal education is referred to as the least important qualification for employees (Sandberg & Augustsson 2003). The fact that the management does not perceives formal education as a criterion for employment is reflected upon employees’ perception. *“The fact that I have a master in economics have not mattered, no one have ever cared about that”* (Linda). Although a degree from a higher education is not explicitly a necessity to gain access to the market, the majority of employees have a degree from a university and/or post secondary school. Research shows that 40 percent of employees within the sector have some university education, while 37 percent have post secondary school education (Sandberg & Augustsson 2002). Interviews with management reveal that a majority of employees has a university degree and/or some kind of post secondary school education.

However, a majority of interactive media workers do not have an education aiming at interactive media, some have an educational background that do not relate to interactive media at all. One reason is that interactive media courses are often of recent date, before the late 90s there were practically no courses available (Augustsson & Sandberg 2003). The fact that higher education is not explicitly perceived as important and that many do not have an education that focus on interactive media production, indicate that formal education is not a necessity in order for employees to carry out their work. However, given that the majority has a higher education indicates its importance in the inclusion process, further to be stressed at two levels. At one level, a higher education is an outcome of a greater social setting, i.e. whether or not one goes through a higher education stands in relation to ones social position. At another level, higher education represents a higher position in the social room incorporated in the shape of taste in common for those that possesses higher social positions. Furthermore, there is a dialectic relation between a markets social position and agents’ capital compositions, its symbolic value and volume. Higher positioned agents contribute to a markets status and reverse (Bourdieu 1979). Given that the majority active on the interactive media market has a higher education indicates the interactive media market’s high position. A reproduction of the market’s position is dependent on the player’s social position, which partly is indicated by their educational capital. The reproduction process is reinforced through the notion of social networks. When using contacts to find and recruit workforce, social similarity in the inclusion process is reinforced. *“If you have a structure of four guys starting up a company, then one has a network of contacts that is mainly built up by men. I think that is a fundamental reason to why it looks like it does today”* (Firm 4). Networks generate similarity because they are shaped by it (see below). Given this, among the interactive media firms it is not the education *per se* that is important to possess in order to gain access to the market, but the social context that generates a higher education, where a certain kind of values indicate that ones goes on to higher education.

### ***Social similarity as base for social networks***

A social network is a composition of relations between agents based upon mutual dependence (Hasselberg 2002). Members of a network gain from being part of it in relation to its total value, which means that to what extent an agent can convert a capital to another, or accumulate the value of a capital through the network, depends on its symbolic value. A

university degree can, for example, be converted to a valuable work position through the mentioning of a name if social contacts are given recognition on the given market. If networks are recognized as a legitimate part of the game, the degree to which they can be brought into the game increases (Bourdieu 1991). Who one knows, the accumulated social capital, can then be more important than the knowledge one possesses (Gunz 1989).

On the interactive media market, social networks are an important part of the game since networks is a main channel to find and recruit workforce in the interactive media firms. “[*Recruitment*] takes place through social contacts; colleagues, business colleagues, competitors, word of mouth, either they come to us or we find them” (Firm 3), “*Contacts is the only source to employment*” (Anna). Nearly all employees have gained employment into the firms based on whom they know, both for their present and previous jobs on one or several occasions. Since most employees have worked in the sector before their present employment, majority has gained their social contacts while being active on the market. “*Social contacts, everybody has worked somewhere else and knows people in the business*” (Firm 4). If not yet active on the interactive media market, educational organizations can function as a platform to enter it since they provide the possibility to extend a social network during the period of study. “*At my earlier job there were many that came from the same education as I which I still had contact with*” (Daniel). Some educational organizations offer the possibility of internships in firms as part of the education, which in turn can generate social contacts and employment. “*The only way [to enter the market directly from school] is through internship at a firm*” (David). What kind of network one is part of indicates preconditions for gaining employment (Granovetter 1973) and just as ones social position indicates if one goes on to higher education, higher education indicates which social network one becomes part of. In this sense, requesting contacts in the recruitment process is a way of asking for a specific social background, including educational level, and lifestyle in common for those that are part of the same network.

Networks indicate social similarity because of the notion of trust. Trust is a condition for social networks to take shape since it is a social mechanism that represses feelings of uncertainty. Accordingly, agents feel they can predict behaviors in interaction, which in turn generates a feeling of certainty inside the network (Luhman 1979). Agents seek this kind of trust in social relations and social similarities tend to communicate trust (Kanter 1977). Similar *habitus* implies similarity since *habitus* indicates a certain social position and movement in the social room for which there is a given set of cultural codes embedded in the notion of *taste*. Taste indicates different lifestyles and preferences related to sport, music, clothes, food and so on, i.e. social similarities or differences. In this perspective higher education is one of the aspects that creates solidarity among higher educated agents; a university graduate tend to be part of a network including other university graduates, recruit other university graduates, and so on. But it is not solely the university degree that indicates network membership or inclusion on a market. Other valuable capitals can balance lack of higher education and indicate social position. In the same way a higher education can loose its value, for example due to negative embedded secondary characteristics (see further). Hence, higher education does not ensure access to the interactive media market even though it indicates access since it is an aspect of social position (Bourdieu 1979).

The greater extent of uncertainty within a sphere of activity, the more essential is the notion of trust (Kanter 1993). Uncertainty is generated in situations were structures and routines, thus feelings of control, do not establish or disappear (Kanter 1993). There is a dimension of uncertainty among the interactive media firms, which is due to individualization of work, or

rather an individualization of preconditions on the market and the absence of institutions. Individuals have more difficulty to enhance their own compatibility in the game or secure their employability on the market in relation to collective performances. It is only in the relative relation that individual creativity becomes visible and it is only the individual creativity that generates compatibility. Further more, the individual has constantly to keep his/her knowledge up to date, due to product developments, in order to stay employable and compatible on the market (Sandberg & Augustsson 2003). *“It is not possible to stop acquiring knowledge, then one may as well quit the business and do something else”* (Per). New knowledge is achieved through the actual production of interactive media solutions. *“[I develop my knowledge] through working with more demanding projects”* (Daniel). Earlier research indicates that the most important source of knowledge development is the work, i.e. the knowledge that is acquired simultaneously as working, and limited resources, as for example time, are given for learning outside working hours (Sandberg & Augustsson 2003). Given this, the responsibility for knowledge development, thus employability, is placed upon the individual. Together with the fact that production of interactive media solutions is flexible, in the sense that it lacks routine, and that each production process looks different, partly due to product developments, the individualization alter a situation of uncertainty.

A certain level of uncertainty among the interactive media firms enhances the importance of trust in the inclusion process, which is also supported by the fact that in most cases agents knew someone within the firm before they got hired. These social contacts have primarily been acquired while being active on the market. Being part of the market enhances the possibilities in the game since the mere fact of being present on the market confirms the player as initiated into an overall *we*. *“It’s an inbred business, the advertising- and web business, if you know someone that knows someone then you’re part of a network that socializes and encourages each other”* (Per). The common *we* is reflected in a common culture which values are indicated by, and representative for, a position and movement in the social room, earlier exemplified in terms of creativity. Accordingly, it is important to possess the common lifestyle since it enhances the possibility to enter the game. A common lifestyle indicates that one can play the game convincingly and thus present oneself as trustworthy. The latter since a given life path indicate familiarity with a given set of cultural codes in common for those that possesses the same social position. The more familiar an agent is with this codes the more able is she/he to present them in the game, that is structured upon the same set of codes, and thus play the game according to the rules. *“In our world the ability to decode the cultural codes is totally decisive [for employment]”* (Firm 3). From this perspective a higher education can indicate an agents inclusion on the interactive media market since a higher education represent a social position and lifestyle.

### ***Immigration and social degradation***

Immigrants that live in segregated residential areas are not part of the social and geographical spheres for interactive media production since these spheres are geographically situated mainly to central Stockholm, and socially to the higher positioned social groups. Social inclusion on the interactive media market reflects on a geographical inclusion in the sense that most agents working in the interactive media firms live in Swedish dense areas. In these areas residents have a higher educational level, a higher income level and fewer are unemployed. There is a relation between residential area and employment rate, income level and educational level. Many people living in immigrant dense areas occupy a relatively lower socioeconomic position than those living in Swedish dense areas do (Andersson 2002), which further indicates each group’s social position. The relationship between social and geographical inclusion/exclusion exists since they require each other i.e. an approach in one



sphere would imply difficulties to demarcate ones contrasting existence and superiority in the social room even though dissociation takes place in another (see further). Accordingly, since Rinkeby and Tensta populate most immigrants in Stockholm they also comprise most unemployment, number of low educated people and low-income households. The latter since many immigrants are socially excluded on the labour market and hence geographically to stigmatized areas. Given this, these areas are the most socially exposed areas in Stockholm measured by income level and employment rate (Bäckström & Forsell 2001) and compared to central Stockholm, where a large share of the population is Swedish, the differences are notable (table 2)

**Table 2.** Average income level, employment rate, level of education and immigrant density/resident area<sup>2</sup>

	Income level in SEK <sup>4</sup>	Employment rate in percent <sup>3</sup>	Share of population with post secondary school education <sup>5</sup>	Share of immigrants among residents <sup>6</sup>
Central Stockholm	272 800	77.0	58.0	14.0
Rinkeby	131 100	44.9	19.0	69.0
Tensta	141 900	48.7	21.0	63.0

Although there are differences in educational level for Swedish dense areas and immigrant dense areas, overall figures show that immigrants can have more or less the same educational level as Swedish (Edin & Åslund 2001) but still work in positions that do not correspond to their educational level (Ekberg 1995). The difference between general figures and figures based on residential area is related to the fact that immigrant dense areas comprises more people, also Swedish ones, that in general have a lower education and thus contribute to the statistics. It is also related to the fact that some immigrants are less excluded in the Swedish society than others (see further) and thus resided in relation to, for example, their educational level, i.e. in Swedish dense areas.

The lower work positions that many immigrants employ on the Swedish labour market is further reflected in income level and residential area. Having an academic background but employing a work position that does not correspond to the educational level implies social incongruity since a higher education corresponds to intellectual work. Immigrants can thus possess a higher education while still living in socially exposed areas and occupying a lower socioeconomic position than those living in Swedish dense areas do (Molina & De los Reyes 2002). An underlying factor that contributes to the social incongruity is that the immigration can contribute to an overall decreasing value of the agent's capital assets. Being of certain nationalities contribute more to a declining value than others since the Swedish labour market is based on a hierarchical division of labour between different nationalities where the country of origin indicates position (Hosseini Kaladjahi 1997). Immigrants from the Nordic countries have the highest positions measured by income level and employment rate, immigrants from other European countries come second whereas the ones from countries outside Europe are most disadvantaged, or excluded (Andersson 2002, Molina & De los Reyes 2002). Given this, country of origin, indicating secondary characteristics (see further for definition) generates

<sup>2</sup> [www.usk.stockholm.se](http://www.usk.stockholm.se)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Based on the age group 20-64, year 2000

<sup>5</sup> Figures based on population between 25 to 64 years of age, year 2001 for Central Stockholm and Rinkeby and year 2002 for Tensta

<sup>6</sup> Figures based on first generation immigrants, year 2002

different movements, or lack of movement, in the social room. Persons with higher education from Africa can, for example, confront more difficulties finding employment that correspond to their educational level than, for example, persons from Finland or France, which in turn has an impact on their socioeconomic status in the Swedish society. Accordingly, people that immigrate to Sweden from Europe, in particular from other Nordic countries, are typically resided in relation to their socioeconomic situation, indicated by their educational level, hence lower socioeconomic position implies segregation to socially exposed residential areas. However, people from countries outside Europe, especially from Africa and Asia, follow a segregation pattern related to their ethnic background. The hierarchy that exists between different immigrants in the Swedish context stresses the significance of not defining all people that immigrates to Sweden as one group. Some immigrants are more disadvantaged than others and that is partly why this report has a focus on immigrants living in stigmatized areas since these areas comprise disadvantaged immigrants.

The gap between educational level, work position and income level implies a social degradation given that higher education generally indicates higher position in the social room (Bourdieu 1986). Immigrants that possess higher education can have been working with intellectual work back in their home countries even though they do not in a Swedish context. However, although immigration can imply a social degradation, the lifestyle as indicated by habitus does not necessarily change. The lifestyle might change in such a way that the preconditions for living the kind of life they used to changes, for example by receiving a lower income, but the taste for a certain kind of lifestyle does not necessarily change. When the preconditions that once produced habitus changes so that they no longer correspond to ones habitus, it is the taste that continues to indicate behaviors and practices as it was initially produced by habitus (Bourdieu 1986). One has to keep in mind that not all immigrants are from higher social positions though, which means that the Swedish context does not imply degradation for everyone. However, the immigration implies a declining value of the agent's total capital assets independently of his/her position in the social room.

A social degradation in the Swedish context can reflect on later generations. It is, for example, possible that later generations do not move on to higher education even though their parents have an academic background (Ekberg 1997). Usually a given socioeconomic pattern carries on over generations in the process of socialization, which means that children to parents with academic capital move on to higher education themselves (Willis 1993). However, the social exposure that the parents face in the Swedish society have an impact on how their children perceive the social reality, their preferences and choices. Given this, even though children learn values through their family setting, which correspond to their parents' habitus they are also socialized into the social position that their parents possess. In other words, the parents' social degradation is partly shaping the children's habitus since there is a dialectic relation between social structure and habitus, which is the social structure in an incorporated form (Ibid). *"I have worked with one person from another ethnic-, cultural, background during my eight years in the business. It was an Indian who was brought up in Sweden. To access the sector you have to have a high education, high education implies high [social] position, high position in Sweden implies that you are Swedish and so on... It is a matter of class"* (Per). Accordingly, if the parents that immigrate to Sweden already possess a lower social position this carries on to coming generation through the process of socialization. In this sense life course of earlier generation indicates preconditions for later generation's movement in the social room (Willis 1981).

### ***Distinction***

It is the presentation of one's lifestyle that matters in the inclusion process since it is not until the player is socially recognized as such that he/she can access the game. The player has to step into a role where the rules of the game are reproduced through his/her actions. The player can only truly be convincing in the role if he/she owns the role that is being played, i.e. possesses a habitus that corresponds to the rules, since the rules are expressed through actions that are shaped by habitus (Bourdieu 1991, North 1993). Habitus is in this sense the rules of the game in incorporated form and as habitus strongly influences the actions we take, it has to correspond to the rules of the specific game that is being played in order for the player to be convincing. When entering a market there is a socialization process that takes place through which the player becomes familiar with the market specific rules and in this way is being prepared for the game and the rules that has to be followed to play it (Goffman 1998). Through the socialization process the social setting is influencing one's habitus thus actions. But just as one's lifestyle indicates which market to invest in, the market one invests in does not revolutionize one's lifestyle even though it can change it. In this sense lifestyle thus habitus and social position correspond to the market specific rules and the position of the market. But it is not only the incorporated rules reflected in an agent's social position that indicate his/her inclusion on a market. Those that deviate from a given standard have attributes that indicate their distinctiveness. Attributes partly include aspects that cannot easily be changed, and that are not indicated by habitus, such as country of origin or sex. Attributes can in other words be referred to as *secondary characteristics*, which figure as regulatory mechanisms in the definition of a social group or agent, implying that not only capital assets, but also secondary characteristics, define a group's or agent's social position since they contribute to the value of one's capital assets (Bourdieu 1986). These characteristics can accordingly increase or decrease an agent's position within the social room or a given market depending on the social status attached to them. It is the negatively embedded that generate stagnation or degradation in the social room and sanctions or exclusion on a given market. Correspondingly it is possible to say something about a market with reference to the agents that are a part of it (Bourdieu 1986). An increasing amount of women or immigrants can, for example, indicate a position's decline (De los Reyes 2001, Andersson 2001). Given that the interactive media market comprises few women, the domination of men indicates a high social position. "*The [art] director is a creator, he's an artist, and artistry is reserved for men within this [business]*" (Firm 3). Also, the number of immigrants is low in the firms, which supports the idea of a market, composed by and exclusively for, those whose capital composition contributes to the reproduction of the market's status.

The interactive media market's social status is also indicated by the intellectual work that is carried out and reflected upon the values in the shape of creativity. Creativity is by the relation to intellectual work, and distinctiveness from bodywork, a symbol for a high position in the social room. The notion of creativity functions as an excluding mechanism as it is part of the culture that permeates the interactive media firms and thereby indicates a border toward lower positioned agents. Creativity is an aspect that interfuses the rules of the game and has to take shape in one's performances in order to be recognized as a player. It is the dimension of visibility that reinsures the agent as creative and thus successful since all players are measured according to their level of visibility. But just as creativity, if made visible, defines an agent as successful, the immigration attribute can permeate the presentation of an immigrant and define him/her in the eyes of the others. Since the immigration indicates a degrading social position in a Swedish context it is in turn socially perceived as to correspond to a lifestyle in common for those that occupy a lower position. The phenomenon shows how a fictive identity can be socially constructed (Goffman 1990) based upon a given attribute,

which in turn is based upon values that exist in the society at large. Given this, some immigrants are associated with a certain taste, in common, and symbolic for lower positions in the social room due to their immigration. Since trust is the foundation for social relations, agents who are believed to diverge from the given taste, thus culture, are not trusted and therefore excluded in a distinction process.

Given this, being an immigrant can indicate ones exclusion from the interactive media market since it is a market composed of people who contribute to the reproduction of its high social position. *“There’s a group [in the business] which have very similar points of references and cultural preferences”* (Firm 2). It is through distinctions between social groups that the social structure is preserved. Thus, if agents from a lower social position gain access to higher ones, these positions loose their distinctive character and demarcation. The latter would imply a social degradation and contamination of the group i.e. it looses its social position. Through the reproduction of the social structure the definition of positive and negative embedded characteristics is reproduced. The latter since it is the positively embedded thus socially encouraged that generate movement upward in the social room, just as within a given market such as the interactive media market (Bourdieu 1997). The solidarity created by social similarity on the interactive media market is a significant mechanism in the process of social exclusion since it preserves the social structure and the markets superiority (Elias 1999). *“It is a quite closed world in a sense, and very introspective”* (Firm 3). The process of social exclusion in the shape of distinction regulates the social structure in a way that strengthens boundaries between social positions and thus reproduces their existence (Bourdieu 1979). Accordingly, immigrants that are living in immigrant dense areas are potentially excluded from the interactive media market since their social position prevents them from accessing through the notion of distinction.

## **Diversity initiatives aiming on the interactive media sector**

### ***Initiatives taken within firms***

Given the low share of immigrants in the interactive media firms, management and political experts were asked to state their opinion on this issue and also state if any initiatives have been, or are being, taken to increase the number of immigrants. It turned out that none of the interactive media firms work actively with equality plans or strategies to increase diversity within their organizations. Only one firm states that they have a diversity policy, but it is not an issue they work actively with or commit resources to. The firms generally do not see any need for committing to diversity programs or equality plans, often referring to this as an issue dedicated for the large, public, firms and governments. *“We are too small in order to be politically correct in this company”* (Firm 5), *“There’re no reason [for us to work with diversity policies], that’s what they do; those who work in another kind of structured work, large firms”* (Firm 1). Many managers talk about diversity work with a reference to the *politically correct*. The notion of political correctness can be defined as when statements and arguments are reduced to opinions regarding right and wrong (Olsson 1998). The political correctness is thus related to values. Many organizations within the public sector have a public requirement on them to reflect dominating values within the society in order to gain legitimacy. This kind of requirement is usually not reflected in private firms since private firms foremost aim to maximize economic profit (Alvesson 1997). The latter can however be questioned since large corporations in the Swedish context most definitely have the public eyes on them, i.e. a public demand to reflect dominating values and take on a larger societal responsibility. One of the increasingly dominating values in the Swedish society today is related to diversity, which in turn replicates in the work of the public sector (Alvesson 1997)

and large firms. There is an increasing need for public- and large firms to increase the diversity within organizations in order to gain public acceptance and legitimacy. Working with diversity then becomes politically correct as defined above, i.e. it reflects the dominating values and can be done without really being questioned.

When managers among interactive media firms relate to diversity issues as a politically correct discourse dedicated to the large and public companies, they also express a boarder between them and others. They are then referring to a reference group, which is not perceived to share the same reality, or values, that is recognized among the interactive media firms. A common *we* is developed in relation to *the others*. Values and attitudes take shape in this relation, which means that the opposite perception of right and wrong is adapted. To work with diversity issues would for interactive media firms imply taking on the others way of doing things, which in turn would reduce the boarder towards what is perceived as different and they would hence loose their demarcation (Douglas 1997). This does not mean that interactive media actors are consciously against diversity among employees. It rather shows that the diversity discourse, defined as a political correct one, is something that can be chosen to follow and that is perceived to be dedicated for *the others*.

### ***Political initiatives***

Almost no initiatives have been taken, neither to integrate people with an immigrant background, nor to increase these firms' awareness and willingness to work with diversity issues, in the interactive media sector. A majority of political experts confirm the latter by stating that the organization they represent has not taken any initiatives, aiming on the interactive media sector, neither do they recall any initiatives taken by other governmental organizations. Some initiatives are mentioned, but they do not have a focus on central Stockholm or the interactive media sector. Two projects mentioned that seem to be related to the interactive media sector in Stockholm turned out to not really have the pertinent focus. However, these two initiatives are presented below to give a picture of what is done within the area.

The Swedish Administration Board took an initiative during the latter part of the 1990s that aimed at integrating people living in Rinkeby, and had an immigrant background, into the new media sector. The People's palace in Rinkeby was involved in the project that amounted to starting up a business that produces interactive media. The purpose was to educate people who had talent for, and interest in, artistic productions but were long- term unemployed. "*When starting the recruitment process [to the project] we directed the interest to those that had artistic professions*" (People's palace in Rinkeby). The project focused on those people who did not have the right education for interactive media production, but the talent for it. "*We wanted to give the opportunity to those with a talent for web design to get access to the sector even if they didn't have the proper formal education*" (Sweden's county administration board). The idea was to employ the people that had gone through the education in the start- up firm but this was never possible because the lack of profit. The firm therefor never fully entered the interactive media market because of the difficulties to gain customers. Today there is one person employed on full time basis. This initiative focused on integrating people with a foreign background into the interactive media sector, although not in the central Stockholm firms. Thus, the purpose was to keep the people that had gone through the program in the start- up firm in Rinkeby.

"Stockholm Matchning" is another initiative taken by the City of Stockholm, but it is not primarily directed towards the interactive media sector. The focus is rather on sectors where

there is a demand for labour at the present time. The latter is not the case in the interactive media sector. Furthermore, the “Stockholm Matching project” is foremost directed towards areas outside central Stockholm.

Although there is presently not a high demand for labour in the interactive media sector, this fact cannot explain why initiatives aiming to integrating immigrants have not been taken earlier when the sector had a high demand for labour. When asking the political experts why no initiatives have been taken, many refer to the way the interactive media firms recruit people. There is a belief that these firms take on employees through social contacts, i.e. the recruitment process is based on social networks. The latter would in turn make it more difficult for immigrants to enter the sector, thus it seems to be no idea to try to integrate them into this sector. *“I believe that for a new population [i.e. immigrants] that comes from outside and don’t have a circle of contacts this is the last sector that one conquers. Even if they are second generation immigrants, they are still on the outside”* (People’s palace in Rinkeby). Another argument for why not much has been done in this area is that the interactive media sector is difficult to capture and influence. *“Political initiatives are often focusing on sectors which one has more grip on, you know the sector you are referring to [interactive media] has kind of lived its own life over the past years”* (Integration administration of the municipality in Stockholm). The argument is also supported by the experts’ belief that the interactive media sector is an attractive, i.e. high valued, sector that is not easy to permeate, its positioning seems to indicate social distance both for immigrants to gain employment and for political actors to initiate social integration.

The role of educational organizations is mentioned in the answers from experts. Many interactive media, art and design and media schools have traditionally charged students who wish to enter. Further more, these schools are often not approved by the governmental authority that administrates loans and grants during the time of study.<sup>7</sup> The latter implies difficulties for those who do not have the economical resources to finance these kinds of education, for example those living in immigrant dense areas since these people are more socially exposed.

Given this, initiatives aiming at integrating people with an immigrant background in the interactive media firms in central Stockholm have not been taken among interactive media producing firms, nor within the political sphere. Whether diversity work, and political initiatives aiming at integrating people with an immigrant background on the labour market, foremost takes shape as a politically correct discourse or as well implemented, and renegotiable, arguments and statements, is to be left unargued. Of significance here is rather how diversity work is perceived among the interactive media firms. Given that diversity is socially defined as a politically correct discourse by the interactive media producing firms, further results in the lack of firms working actively with diversity plans. The reason is the resistance to approach the reference group, their values and ideals, as the interactive media actors perceive them. It is the political correctness that is expressed as a diverging value in the interactive media firms’ perspective, thus this is what they are distancing from. However, given that the discussion is rooted in the political sphere and among large, public, firms, almost inevitable implies that it is to be labeled with a stigma and rejected on the interactive media market, being a discourse or not.

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<sup>7</sup> The Swedish National Board of Student aid, [www.csn.se](http://www.csn.se)

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