UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET

What are the barriers for integration in Sweden?
A study of the perceptions of male refugees from Afghanistan

Matilda Lund

DEPARTMENT OF
EARTH SCIENCES

INSTITUTIONEN FÖR
GEOVETENSKAPER

What are the barriers for integration in Sweden? A study of the perceptions of male refugees from Afghanistan

Matilda Lund

Supervisor: Gloria Gallardo
Subject Reviewer: Fred Saunders

What are the barriers for integration in Sweden?
A study of the perceptions of male refugees from Afghanistan

MATILDA LUND

Abstract: In 2015, the number of unaccompanied children that fled to Sweden and applied for asylum was 35 369, more than ever before. The great majority of them, 22 806, were young male refugees from Afghanistan, often with very small chances of returning back to their countries mainly due to war, oppression and poverty. For any society to become sustainable, integration of new citizens is essential. However, right-wing populist parties and nationalism is growing in Europe, including Sweden. The fundamental socioeconomic and cultural flourishing needed for individuals to get integrated is lacking and thus causing a segregated Sweden. The question is why. Hence, the purpose of this master thesis was to examine what barriers that exist for economic-, social- and cultural integration in Sweden based on the perceptions of young male refugees from Afghanistan. This was studied through ten qualitative semi-structured interviews with young male Afghan refugees between 19 and 25 years' old in Stockholm, the capital of Sweden, in April 2019. The results were analysed through a conceptual framework of economic-, social- and cultural integration. The results revealed that language was perceived to be the main barrier for both economic-, social- and cultural integration, which in turn impacted the other perceived barriers of attaining an employment, lack of governmental support, difficulties in interacting with Swedes and crash of cultures. Experienced discrimination was mentioned throughout all societal spheres. To overcome these barriers, interactions with Swedes was believed to be essential. Factors that showed to enable this were improved language skills, active societal participation and living with host families.

What are the barriers for integration in Sweden?
A study of the perceptions of male refugees from Afghanistan

MATILDA LUND

Summary: The number of refugees worldwide is more than ever and Sweden is the second country in Europe that has received the most refugees. After Syria, Afghanistan is the second largest refugee-producing country due to long history of conflict, oppression, poverty and violence. The majority of the Afghan refugees are male unaccompanied children that are fleeing by themselves without any guardian. More unaccompanied children than ever sought asylum in Sweden in 2015, 64% of them were young male Afghans. Along comes the challenge of getting them integrated into society. Integration is when minorities have the opportunity to participate in various spheres of society. Economic-, social- and cultural integration tend to include important factors for a fundamental establishment. Further, integration is a mutual process including the entire society, and not a process of adaptation but to allow coexistence of diverse types of people. It is vital to ensure that the refugees get integrated to achieve a sustainable and inclusive society. Simultaneously, right-wing populist parties, nationalism and segregation are increasing all around Europe, including Sweden. It is therefore important to evaluate the perceived barriers for integration. This master thesis examined what barriers that exist for economic-, social- and cultural integration in Sweden based on the perceptions of young male refugees from Afghanistan. Ten young male Afghan refugees between 19 and 25 years' old were interviewed in Stockholm, the capital of Sweden, in April 2019. Concepts of economic-, social- and cultural integration which include factors of inter alia employment, education, support, housing, language and cultural differences were used to describe their perceptions. The respondents perceived difficulties to get employment to be the greatest barrier for economic integration. Moreover, it was perceived to be difficult to interact with Swedes which hindered the social integration. The cultural integration was perceived to be obstructed due to cultural differences. The common factor for these barriers was lack of language skills. The respondents had further experienced discrimination both on social media, workplaces, in public spheres and by landlords. The approach to overcome these barriers was perceived to be interactions with Swedes. This could be facilitated through improved language skills, active societal participation and living with host families.

Key words: Integration, segregation, sustainable development, refugees, Afghanistan, Sweden

Matilda Lund, Department of Earth Sciences, Uppsala University, Villavägen 16, SE- 752 36 Uppsala, Sweden

Content

1. Introduction

Threats such as conflicts, persecution, violence, climate change, resource scarcity, political instability and reduced opportunities worldwide cause over 68.5 million people to be displaced today (UNHCR, 2018a). 25.4 million of them are classified as refugees (UNHCR, 2018a). This is the highest number of people fleeing in history and it keeps rising which has accelerated large-scale migration across the world (UNHCR, 2018a). The wave of migration hit Europe in 2015 and Greece and Italy were in the beginning the countries that received most refugees despite strained capacity (Karolewski & Benedikter, 2017). The previous prime minister in Italy, Matteo Renzi, called on Europe to assist in receiving refugees as the challenge was for all of Europe, and not specific countries. Hence, later in 2015, countries as Hungary, Germany and Sweden together received more than 1.3 million refugees. Since then, a recent report by UNHCR in 2018 states that Turkey is the country that has received most refugees in the world, namely 3.6 million. Sweden is the second country in Europe after Germany to have received the most refugees and the sixth country globally to have received the most refugees per capita (UNHCR, 2018b).

Afghanistan has been the largest refugee-producing country for 32 years up until 2013. Today, Afghans refugees are the second largest group after Syrian refugees, representing 2.7 million in 2018 mainly in Pakistan, Iran, Germany, Austria, Sweden and Italy (UNHCR, 2018b). Afghanistan has experienced conflict during the past 40 years which has made it one of the poorest countries in the world (Globalis, 2018). The conflict is currently mainly between the regime in the capital Kabul and rebel groups, mainly the Islamic group Taliban. It began in 2001 when United States of America, after being victim of a terrorist attack from al-Qaidas on the 11th of September, invaded the country (Globalis, 2018). The main reasons for fleeing are conflicts, sexual violence, poverty, remittances, oppression, to improve living conditions and increased knowledge of asylum regulations (Adenfelt, 2016). The hopes are to increase the opportunities for education and economic income to be able to support family back in Afghanistan through fleeing to a high-income country. The majority of the Afghan refugees are males which could be due to the cultural restrictions and strong norms of gender roles that could make it more difficult for women to flee (Adenfelt, 2016). Also, men risk being forced to become soldiers to a greater extent than women which may force them to flee, while it could also be more dangerous for women to flee by themselves (Çelikaksoy & Wadensjö, 2016). Of the ten most common countries of origin for migrants in Sweden in 2018, Afghanistan had the largest proportion of men at 74% (SCB, 2019b).

There are currently 27 300 Afghan refugees in Sweden (UNHCR, 2018b). Both in 2015, 2016 and 2017 the majority of the male unaccompanied children that sought asylum in Sweden came from Afghanistan (SCB, 2017; Migrationsinfo, 2018). Most of the refugees attain a residence permit with hopes of continuing their lives in Sweden. Along comes the challenge of receiving a large number of refugees and integrating them into society. This has brought a political debate on the capability for Sweden to receive the refugees, the rights of refugees and stricter requirements for establishing an integration policy (Hessle, 2009; Wernesjö, 2011; Wiechel, 2018). This challenge is intensified in Europe since the right-wing populist parties and nationalism that grow stronger, including in Sweden (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2012; Bordignon & Moriconi, 2017; Karolewski & Benedikter, 2017; Åberg, 2019).

Many of the Afghan refugees face challenges in the Swedish society. A rapport by SCB (2002) revealed that the longest time to integrate is for refugees from countries that have worse welfare than Sweden, which is the situation for Afghan refugees. Other than the emotional tragedy of leaving their country of origin, there is a collision with language, religion and culture (Emadi, 2002). These differences can be difficult to encounter and may lead to increased segregation instead of integration. Segregation occurs when individuals of certain social groups are delineated from the rest of the society due to various reasons such as social status, ethnicity or sexuality (Bevelander et al., 1997). Integration is achieved when minorities have the opportunity to participate in various spheres of society (Roth, 2005). In addition, integration is a mutual process including the entire society that aims at allowing coexistence of diverse types of people (Oweini & Holmgren, 1999; Martinsson, 2005). Furthermore, there are many vital interlinked components needed to achieve integration mainly related to fundamental economic-, social- and cultural factors (Wilkinson, 2013). The economic integration regards employment, occupation, education and income which is central to ensure a livelihood (Diaz, 1997; Duvander, 2001;

Ager & Strang, 2008). The social integration concerns social support which can improve well-being, mental health, language development, opportunities for employment and societal participation (Diaz, 1997; Wallin & Ahlström, 2005; Hadziabdic & Adatia-Sandström, 2006; Ager & Strang, 2008; Hessle, 2009; Tinghög et al., 2009). The cultural integration is important to feel belonging and involves values, attitudes, knowledge of cultures, language and ethnic composition in housing area (Berry 1997; Diaz, 1997; Deniz & Perdikaris, 2000; Ager & Strang, 2008; Al-Baldawi, 2014).

Despite a successful integration being vital both for the refugees and the society at large (Wallin & Ahlström, 2005; Hessle, 2009; Swedish Government, 2009), segregation, discrimination and racism against migrants are widespread in all societal sphere of Sweden today (Attström, 2007; Bursell, 2007; Carlsson & Rooth 2007; Lilja & Pemer, 2010). In order to combat this problem, the barriers for integration must to be examined. Bordignon and Moriconi (2017) emphasize on the importance to monitor and evaluate the integration process of refugees. More research is needed on the perceptions of the individuals, their experiences of integration and factors that influence their future (Wernesjö, 2011). Many of the unaccompanied children that arrive to Sweden will continue their lives here, hence they are an important part of the future and development of Sweden. The majority of them are male Afghans and thus, their perspectives on barriers for economic-, social- and cultural integration should be highlighted.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this master thesis was to understand the barriers for economic-, social- and cultural integration of refugees in Sweden. This was identified through analysing the perceptions of ten young male refugees from Afghanistan. The result intended to contribute with insights of the barriers that obstruct the integration process of refugees in Sweden, and thus hindering in achieving a sustainable society.

1.2 Research question

∗ What are the barriers for economic-, social- and cultural integration in Sweden according to young male refugees from Afghanistan?

1.3 Definitions

Asylum seeker is a person that is seeking protection in another country because of fear of abuse, persecution or risk of torture, and the application to be granted a residence permit is still under consideration in the new country (Swedish Migration Agency, 2017).

Foreign-born is a person that was born in one country but lives in another country for various reasons such as employment, education or fleeing from war (SCB, 2019a).

Migrant is a person that changes its country of usual residence regardless of legal status, involuntary or voluntary, cause or length of duration (IOM, 2011).

New arrival is a person who have been granted a residence permit and is covered by the Act on Establishments Initiatives. A person who has received a residence permit for three years is considered to be a new arrival (Swedish Migration Agency, 2017).

Refugee is according to Swedish legislation, EU regulations and UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees a person that have valid reasons to fear persecution because of race, nationality, religious/political beliefs, gender, sexual orientation or affiliation to a particular social group. The persecution may occur when the authorities in the person's native country is unwilling or unable to give protection (Swedish Migration Agency, 2017).

Swede is a person born in Sweden and has at least one parent born in Sweden (SCB, 2019a).

Unaccompanied child is an asylum-seeking person under the age of 18 who arrive to a new country without parents or other guardians (SCB, 2019a).

2. Background
2.1 Integration and sustainable development

Sustainability refers to a state whereas the process for reaching this state is denoted sustainable development (Gray, 2010). While the concept of sustainable development has often been discussed in separate dimensions of economic-, social- and environmental facets, it is in fact a multidimensional concept with intertwining relationships (Giovannoni & Fabietti, 2013). The economic aspect includes the relationship between the corporal sector in relation to the social and environmental matters. It is disputable whether the corporations are the unavoidable means to implement sustainability (Gray, 2010), or whether they are mainly hindering sustainability due to production of social inequalities and deterioration of natural resources (Giovannoni & Fabietti, 2013). The social element in general regards an inter-generational equity such as equality of conditions, distributive justice and social justice (Dempsey et al., 2011). The environmental dimension mainly involves the global environmental problems such as pollution, climate change and natural resources (Giovannoni & Fabietti, 2013). In order to achieve sustainability, integrated efforts of managing the synergies, trade-offs and tensions between the economic-, social- and environmental aspects are needed at various levels of society (Giovannoni & Fabietti, 2013). The systems, structures and processes should be following an integrated approach at the different levels (Giovannoni & Fabietti, 2013).

Agenda 2030 was developed by the members of the United Nations (UN) and adopted in 2015 involving 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that were to set the framework for achieving a global sustainable future until 2030 (UN, 2019). The government structures play one of the key roles for this management as good governance is viewed as a key element for a sustainable development (Giovannoni & Fabietti, 2013). The SDGs have several targets and indicators and are highly connected and interlinked to each other to mutually contribute in achieving sustainability economically, socially and environmentally (Le Blanc, 2015). Therefore, institutions and governments have to consider both core and extended targets within different SDGs when policies are designed, implemented and monitored to achieve a specific matter, such as integration (Le Blanc, 2015). Benefits to the societies and economies in developed countries can arise from refugee inflows if the integration policies are designed properly and implemented effectively (Bordignon & Moriconi, 2017). Bloemraad (2005) argues that governmental involvement benefits integration of the migrants through facilitating host societies and community building through policies of multiculturalism and settlement. Governmental support in terms of technical assistance, normative encouragement and funding is important for the establishment of migrants according to Bloemraad (2005). The concept of integration is complex as in includes many dimensions needed to take into account and can therefore be directly or indirectly linked to multiple SDGs. Segregation is a major obstacle for sustainable development since it is affecting opportunities for individuals or whole groups of individuals, thus also affecting the society at large. Bordignon and Moriconi (2017) argue that segregation is prevented through well-designed allocation into municipalities according to labour market and skills of the refugees, access and availability to housing, equal access to integration services, provision of support and access to health care for refugees with physical and mental illness and schooling for unaccompanied children.

> *"By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status" (UN, 2019).*

The sentence above is one of the indicators of *Goal 10* of "reduced inequalities" among the SDGs. *Goal 10* is considered a core of the network of SDGs (Le Blanc, 2015), and it evidently linked to integration since it targets discrimination and inequality based on inter alia race, ethnicity, origin and religion (UN, 2019). The inequality is often based on an unfair access and distribution of resources and goods. Everyone should be included into society and acknowledged the same rights and responsibilities. *Goal 1* of "no poverty" is strongly connected to *Goal 8* of "decent work and economic growth". Both of them involve employment and financial opportunities which is necessary to facilitate so that equal opportunities and ability to sustain livelihood are given to everyone. *Goal 3* of "good health and well-being" is vital in terms of integration due to the fact that mental illness is common among refugees. Access to basic health care and support are essential in order to combat this. *Goal 4* of "quality

education" is also affecting the opportunities for integration. Especially concerning unaccompanied children that perhaps have to terminate their education in their country of origin. *Goal 11* of "sustainable cities and communities" includes inclusive and safe housing which is an important factor that needs to be provided for everyone to achieve integration. (UN, 2019).

2.2 Integration in Sweden

To explain the barriers for economic-, social- and cultural integration in Sweden, the historical and current context of integration in both Sweden and Europe along with criticism must be described. After World War II, migration waves were current in Europe which created integration programs in European countries (Abdulla, 2017). The general perception was that migrants would adhere to the existing societies which is known as assimilation (Abdulla, 2017). During the late 1980s, the rhetorical politics shifted the responsibility of integration from the state to the individual (Borevi, 2010a). A transition took place in 1996 where immigrant policy transformed to an integration policy with the purpose that everyone would receive equal rights and responsibilities (SOU, 2005:56; Wiesbrock, 2011).

The most recent wave of refugees migrating to Europe was in 2015, constituting 1.2 million asylum applicants, which put migration policies on top of the agenda in the European Union (EU) (Bordignon & Moriconi, 2017). Greece and Italy received the most refugees in the beginning before alleging that the challenge was for all of Europe (Karolewski & Benedikter, 2017). This occurrence highlighted the weakness in agreeing to a common solution in the EU (Bordignon & Moriconi, 2017). It contributed to financial constraints, border controls, and stricter policies of migration. This despite the number of refugees representing a small share of the almost 500 million people in Europe which in turn is considered a wealthy continent (Bordignon & Moriconi, 2017). Carrera et al. (2015) criticise the EU policy on migration, borders and asylum. They claim that it needs to be improved on the sharing of institutional solidarity and legal responsibility between and among EU member states, implementation of existing EU laws and standards and implementation of a common policy that prioritizes all policy sectors related to migration. The main critique targets the inability of EU to ensure fundamental human rights principles and standards and instead prioritize military concerns and focus on return, readmission, border controls and smuggling. Moreover, UN pressured Europe to facilitate the process for asylum seekers (Carrera et al., 2015). In 2016, EU had promised to relocate 160 000 refugees in Greece and Italy to various EU countries, but only 8 162 people had found a permanent home. In the second half of 2016, Turkey made a deal to receive all new irregular migrants from Greece in exchange for financial compensation and easier immigration for Turkish nationals to Europe (Bordignon & Moriconi, 2017).

There are major differences between EU countries concerning their welcome and integration policies for refugees (Bordignon & Moriconi, 2017). Countries as Greece, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Latvia and Slovakia tend to have a more negative attitude towards immigration. Germany has received the most refugees in all of Europe and Switzerland, Denmark, Finland and Sweden also have a more positive approach towards immigration (Bordignon & Moriconi, 2017). Borevi (2010b) however, claims the immigration of foreign cultures is considered less threatening to Nordic values in Sweden in comparison to other Nordic countries (Borevi, 2014). Instead, the administrative costs of immigration are of greater concern (Bech et al., 2017). Scuzzarello (2008) considers Sweden to be a role model for its citizens due to its welfare system and core values of neutrality, cooperation and equality.

However, in 2015 Sweden implemented some of the most restrictive asylum regulations in the EU with the purpose to limit immigration, which succeeded through border controls in 2015 and temporary residence permits in 2016 (Banke, 2017; Öberg & Sager, 2017). This contradicts the image of an open and fair Sweden, and Banke (2017) claims that it is devastating for integration. Sweden is today considered marginalized and have ethnic- and social segregation (SOU, 2006:73). Segregation tends to lead to poorer living conditions because of cultural aspects, class divisions and/or discrimination (Darvishpour & Westin, 2015). At the same time, Sweden is depending on immigration since it is contributing the most to the population increase which currently has over 10.2 million residents (SCB, 2019c). At the end of 2018, 19.1% of the Swedish population were foreign-born constituting over 1.9 million (SCB, 2019d). Forecast estimates show that the population in Sweden will reach over 11 million people in 2030 (SCB, 2019e).

A person that has fled to Sweden because of refugee- or protection reasons will receive a residence permit for three years and is considered to be a new arrival (Swedish Migration Agency, 2017). During this time the Act on Establishment Initiatives is effective, a reform that arose in 2010 to facilitate and accelerate the migrants' establishments. The reform reinforced the responsibility of the Public Employment Service in Sweden to establish new arrivals on the labour market, decide financial support and design an establishment plan within two months of receiving a residence permit (Migrationsinfo, 2019). The plan includes a community orientation, Swedish lessons and activities to prepare for labour market during a period of maximum of two years with participation in activities eight hours a day which they receive compensation for (Wikström & Ahnlund, 2018). If the new arrivals do not participate in these activities within a year after the program has been established, they will no longer be entitled to have a program or economic compensation for it. The Swedish language should be taught from the first day for asylum seekers and those that have received residence permit and housing from the Swedish Migration Agency (Swedish Government, 2017).

3. Conceptual framework

3.1 Integration

There are many definitions of integration which is a holistic and abstract concept that is perceived and achieved differently for everyone. Integration from a political perspective is achieved when minorities have the opportunity to participate in various spheres of society such as the educational system, politics and the labour market (Roth, 2005). Martinson (2005) further elaborates by stating how the essential core of integration is not to homogenize the population, but instead allow coexistence of diverse types of people. According to Oweini and Holmgren (1999), the integration process for new arrivals should be a mutual process including the entire society, and not a process with the aim of adapting new arrivals to society. Kamali also stresses the urgency of changing the perception that integration only regards change by "the others" (SOU, 2006:73). Al-Baldawi (2014) on the other hand, discusses how the conditions for succeeding with integration in a new country strongly depends on the migrant and how prepared, motivated and driven the person is to adapt. Berry (1997) argues that caution should be taken towards the general assumption that minorities are striving to become a part of the mainstream culture. During the integration process benefits arise since both migrants and natives are changing as a result of interaction (Wilkinson, 2013). Yet, this integration process is not balanced. There can be differences between individuals' economic-, social- and cultural integration (Wilkinson, 2013). It is essential to focus on every aspect of these to achieve integration in society and integration cannot be measured by only one indicator as they are interlinked (Wilkinson, 2013). Integration is a central mechanism for social cohesion and a multi-dimensional process. Consequently, every measure of integration can be analysed based on a cultural complexity in the social interaction (Carlgren & Diaz, 2004).

Consequently, there are many facets of integration and the definition that will be used in this master thesis is integration as a mutual process between foreign-born and society concerning the economic-, social- and cultural integration. The economic-, social- and cultural integration comprehend many factors such as education, employment, social networks, health and housing which are the most urgent and fundamental factors when arriving to a new country for establishment. Yet, there are other factors, such as political integration, but to be allowed to vote for the parliament in Sweden a person needs to be a Swedish citizen. The refugees in this master thesis have not attained citizenship yet, hence, the political integration is not relevant. The common factor for substantives such as foreign-born, migrants, new arrivals and refugees is that it concerns people who are born in another country than Sweden. Even though this master thesis focus on refugees, it is important to emphasize that integration could be applied to any person in a society, including people born in Sweden.

3.2 Economic integration

The economic integration is related to employment, occupation and income (Diaz, 1997). Ager and Strang (2008) discuss the prominence of employment for integration since it promotes economic independence, future planning, interactions with natives, opportunities to develop language skills and encourages self-confidence. Cvetkovic (2009) argues that it is essential to consider the migrant as an important resource rather than a problem. However, it may be more difficult for a refugee to attain an employment due to lack of documents to prove their previous qualifications (Ager & Strang, 2008). Training, internships or education may help refugees to enter the labour market which benefits the whole country (Ager & Strang, 2008). Education increases chances for employment and for many refugees, school is one the of the most important places for interaction with other people and to improve language skills (Duvander, 2001; Ager & Strang, 2008). Nevertheless, discrimination can prevent inclusion to the labour market. Rydgren (2004) discuss three mechanisms of exclusion. The first mechanism is *statistical discrimination* and is based on discrimination in form of stereotypical thinking by the employers. This signifies when someone attributes characteristics to a person based on beliefs or existing prejudices about the group affiliation of that person. This stereotypical behaviour quickly place people in social categories, often based on physical attributes. The second mechanism is the *institutional discrimination* which entails rules, structures and requirements in a social system that lead to unintentionally discriminatory consequences. The third mechanism is the *network effects* which involves the nepotism in recruitment where employers tend to recruit people that belong to their network that tend to be homogenous (Rydgren, 2004).

3.2.1 Economic integration in Sweden

Following is a description of the economic integration in the Swedish context. The decisions of placement of new arrivals to different municipalities is based on avoiding segregation and facilitating the integration (Swedish Migration Agency, 2018). Yet, often no consideration is taken to the individuals' competence in relation to existing labour market and it may become more difficult to find an employment as a result (Rydgren, 2004). In 2018, there were huge discrepancies in unemployment rates between Swedes (3.1%) and foreign-born (14.9%) regardless of level of education (SCB, 2019f). Dahlstedt (2010) found that individuals that have attained education in Sweden are more likely to get a job in comparison to individuals that have attained education in another country. New arrivals are often forced to accept jobs that they are overqualified for since employers undervalue or are uncertain that foreign education uphold the same quality as Swedish education (Nordin, 2011; Tibajev & Hellgren, 2019). Moreover, Le Grand and Szulkins (1999) found that male migrants earned considerably less than male Swedes after 20 years in Sweden even though they had equivalent experience and education.

This difference and gap between natives and foreign-born in the labour market in Sweden can be explained by the prevalent prejudices by employers, intolerance to diversity and widespread ethnic discrimination (Le Grand and Szulkin, 1999; Duvander, 2001; SOU 2006:73; Bursell, 2007). Both in the study by Bursell (2007) and in the study by Carlsson and Rooth (2007), people with Swedish names were called back for an interview after sending in a job application twice the amount as people with Arabic or African names, despite same level of qualifications. Attström (2007) was studying the same phenomenon by sending in job applications and calculated the amount of applications that had to be sent before an individual was chosen for a job. The results evidently showed that male foreign names in Stockholm not only had to apply more than twice as many times as male Swedish names, but also more times than female foreign names.

In contrary, Çelikaksoy and Wadensjö (2016) discovered that unaccompanied children, especially male Afghans in Stockholm, more often participate in the labour force, education and/or training than refugee children in Sweden. Factors that influence this may be that unaccompanied children receive more support for establishment, more opportunities in the capital Stockholm, have fewer household tasks which results in more time to work or stronger incentives to work to be able to send remittances (Çelikaksoy & Wadensjö, 2016). In the research by Petersson (2013) it was established that the social network of an individual is essential for integration into the Swedish labour market. The better connections to natives a foreign-born has, the easier it is to get integrated into the labour market since natives can provide beneficial resources and knowledge (Petersson, 2013).

3.3 Social integration

According to Diaz (1997) the social integration concerns the contact with people from the majority of society that can build social capital in terms of trustworthy and respectful relationships. The definition of social capital is according to Carrillo Álvarez and Riera Romaní (2017) "the resources available to individuals and groups through membership in social networks". Loneliness, exclusion and inability to influence your own situation and society at large is negatively affecting the mental health of migrants (Hadziabdic & Adatia-Sandström, 2006; Tinghög et al., 2009). Social support is believed to be a vital factor to ensure good quality of physical and mental health according to several studies (Schaefer et al., 1981; Cohen & Wills, 1985; Shisana & Celentano, 1987; Berkman et al., 2000; Geckova et al., 2003; Melchior et al., 2003). Relationships provide well-being, trust and meaning among individuals which contribute to happiness (Tideman, 2004). Besides positive effects on the well-being, a widespread social network is also believed to positively affect the development of language skills, conditions in the labour market and opportunities to participate in the society (Sjögren & Zenou, 2007; Höijer & Magnusson, 2008; Hessle, 2009).

Social support can be divided into a quantitative and a qualitative dimension (Schaefer et al., 1981). The quantitative one regards the social network while the qualitative concerns the perceived social support. In the study by Schaefer et al. (1981), a widespread social network was of less importance than perceived social support in stressful situations. In line with this, Berkman and Syme (1979) and Orth-Gomér and Johnson (1987) state that the health does not necessarily improve because of numerous connections with

people. Brunnberg and Hardt (2016) argue that any kind of social connection is important as long as the relationship is grounded on kindness and care for the refugee. Ager and Strang (2008) mention the importance of the social links between the refugees and the government in terms of support. Greater support and engagement to the refugees from the government is positive for integration.

Giddens and Sutton (2017) explain the concept of socialisation as a process where new arrivals of society learn the social codes that belong to that society. The process of socialization is lifelong and involves continuous learning in order to adapt to the expectations that exist in the environment. It enables the development of abilities among individuals to interact with other members of the society (Giddens & Sutton, 2017). Ager and Strang (2008) stress the importance of a sense of belonging in order to be socially integrated into society. This is enabled through respectful relationships to friends and family and social bridges are described as a fundamental ground for social integration. It includes the active participation of different groups in society in activities such as sports, education, politics and religion, since it generates a sense of equality and may reduce prejudices (Ager & Strang, 2008). Bakker et al. (2016) explain that the level of participation within social networks matters for the social integration. Social exclusion may arise if the commitment to participate in social gatherings is low, in case of discrimination or prejudices (Bakker et al., 2016). Hadziabdic and Adatia-Sandström (2006) discovered that if foreign-born solely have social networks consisting of individuals from the same country of origin, it is more likely that they will get segregated rather than integrated into society. This may result in alienation and reinforce the experience of "we" against "them" towards society, and therefore limit participation and integration (Hadziabdic & Adatia-Sandström, 2006; Hammarén, 2014).

On the other hand, Baker (1982) states that refugees need emotional support and to share experiences with individuals who speak the same language in order to emotionally adapt in a healthy way. Individuals from the same cultural and ethnic origin can provide a sense of belonging and affinity, support, facilitate the transition of old and new and navigate towards an identity of two cultures (Williams & Westermeyer, 1983; Jockenhövel-Schieke, 1986; Porte & Torney-Purta, 1987; Beiser, 1993; Fox et al., 1994). Further, Johansson and Lalander (2013) claim that it is through surroundings with people you can relate to, with the similar social and cultural codes, that a sense of belonging occurs. Additionally, Nordström Skans and Åslund (2010) challenge the idea that segregation would be problematic. They are stating that ethnic segregation should not be perceived as a problem if the choice is voluntary, based on correct information and does not burden the society.

3.3.1 Social integration in Sweden

This section explains the social integration in the Swedish context. Even though the mental health among young refugees may be negatively affected by traumas, family losses and asylum processes, the refugees in the study by Hessle (2009) showed good prospects for a continued life and were doing well in exile. In the study by Wallin and Ahlström (2005), the refugees had a social network consisting of people from the same ethnic background and had begun to adapt to Sweden and experienced contentedness with their situation. Yet, the refugees in the same study also expressed a wish for connections with Swedes to improve their language skills and extend their social network to other ethnic groups. It was however perceived difficult by the refugees and as a one-sided effort on their part (Wallin & Ahlström, 2005). The same result was found in a study by Wernesjö (2014), where the refugees were also aware of the negative beliefs about refugees that exist in society. In the studies by Rojas (1995) and Scuzzarello (2008) the migrants perceived that they were given a homogenous image by society illustrating a burden, incapable of working, weak and hindering socio-economic progression of Sweden. The integration policy has been criticised for being a common policy for a social cohesion in Sweden, to becoming a policy that distinguishes "the others" (SOU, 2006:73). Mass media in Sweden tend to portrait migrants with negative characteristics which reinforce the discrimination and the sense of "we" and "them" (SOU, 2006:21; SOU, 2006:73). Young Afghan men have stated that the prejudices through media have affected their possibility to integrate (Sjöborg, 2017).

3.4 Cultural integration

Culture is a concept that can be interpreted and defined in various ways and from diverse perspectives. Giddens and Sutton (2017) explain that culture involves values, material resources and behavioural patterns that characterize a certain group. Culture is reproduced, changed and created by the variations of knowledge, attitudes and morals of individuals in the society (Deniz & Perdikaris, 2000). Berry (1997) connects culture and integration and focuses on the ability of individuals to adapt to new cultural contexts. Individuals from the dominant cultural group and individuals from the non-dominant cultural group of a plural society must learn how to acculturate in their daily encounters. Berry (1997) describes two strategies of how to acculturate. The first strategy is *cultural maintenance* which regards an assessment of how important the cultural characteristics and identity is to one individual and to what extent the maintenance for them is strived for. The second strategy is *contact and participation* which involves to what extent the individuals should become involved in other cultural groups.

Four approaches derive from these strategies (Berry, 1990). The first approach is *assimilation,* when individuals do not want to maintain their cultural identity and instead interact with other cultural groups (Berry, 1997)*.* The second is the opposite and called *separation*, when individuals instead want to maintain their cultural values and avoid interaction with other cultural groups (Berry, 1997). The third is *integration* and occurs when individuals want to maintain their cultural values and simultaneously interact on a daily basis with other groups (Berry, 1997). Yet, integration can only be successfully pursued in a multicultural society where all cultural groups are inclusive, valuing and accepting cultural diversity, feeling a sense of identification with the society, having positive attitudes between groups and having low levels of prejudices and discrimination (Berry, 1991; Berry & Kalin, 1995). Kymlicka (2002) however, argues that full integration has not been achieved anywhere in the world and that it is a lifelong process. The fourth is *marginalisation,* when individuals are not interested in cultural maintenance nor interested in interacting with others (Berry, 1997). Enforced cultural loss and discrimination are factors that might increase the likelihood for this state to occur (Berry, 1997). Cultural knowledge and skills are considered to be a central part of the integration process according to Ager and Strang (2008). It is vital that the refugees attain increased knowledge about the culture of their new country, but also that the natives learn about the refugees' culture (Ager & Strang, 2008).

Language constitutes the base for communication and thus for integration since is necessary in order to be understood, use and access information to become a part of society (Diaz, 1997). The language is a main factor vital for integration and sometimes the most difficult factor (Rosulnik, Hladnik & Licen, 2016). When an individual can speak and understand the language it benefits the social interaction, increases opportunities for employment and becomes easier to be a part of society and feel belonging (Trost & Levin, 2018). The process of learning a new language is influenced by the age of the migrant, original language, exposure to the new language, interactions with natives, housing area and the quality of the language education (Chiswick & Miller 2002; Tubergen & Kalmijn, 2005). In order to understand the cultural and social meaning of words, such as intonation or gestures, it is essential to interact with natives (Al-Baldawi, 2014; Giddens & Sutton, 2017). Adamuti-Trache (2013) highlights the contradiction of the importance to have a social network with natives in order to learn a new language, while it is difficult to create a social network without knowing the language.

The cultural integration is also affected by the ethnic composition in the residence area. Integration is facilitated if migrants are able to interact with natives in their neighbourhood (Ager & Strang, 2008). Yet, it may be difficult for migrants to get employed and individuals with low incomes tend to live in less attractive areas located in the suburbs often associated with a high concentration of foreign-born residents (Martinson, 2005). Often migrants tend to socialize with people form the same ethnic group due to comfortability (Adamuti-Trache, 2013). Homogenous clusters of settlements for minority populations may however preserve cultural heritage, protect against discrimination and strengthen social networks (Talen, 2012). This protection may be of great value as prejudices and discrimination have significant negative effects on the mental health of individuals (Halpern, 1993). Yet, the mental health may also be negatively affected by these clusters as they may result in isolation and social problems (Bourne & Walks, 2011). Wernesjö (2014) stresses how the sense of belonging among refugees can vary depending on urban and rural areas due to distinctions in social, historical and political contexts.

3.4.1 Cultural integration in Sweden

The cultural integration in Sweden in the Swedish context is described in this segment. In the study by Hessle (2009), young refugees experienced difficulties in the establishment process in Sweden due to the differences in their original culture and the Swedish culture. Migrants believed that society becomes more tolerant if more knowledge of other cultures is provided to the citizens (Scuzzarello, 2008). Refugees that arrive to Sweden often experience financial scarcity, lack of social networks and barriers of language which often place them in a weak position in terms of resources (RTK, 2006). Due to these lack of resources, finding housing can be extra difficult, and the rapid increase of immigration in Sweden has put pressure on the provision of housing for the refugees (RTK, 2006; Boverket, 2019). Ahmed and Hammarstedt (2008) investigated potential discrimination in the rental housing market in Sweden by creating three fictitious characters (one Swedish man, one Swedish woman and one Arabic/Muslim man) and applied for 500 rental apartments online. The foreign man received 35% less response in comparison to the Swedish woman. Hence, ethnic discrimination in the rental housing market in Sweden could make it more difficult for male Afghan refugees to choose residence area themselves, thereby affecting integration.

3.5 Summary

Integration is an abstract and holistic concept that is broad and multidimensional. Integration is considered to be when minorities have the opportunity to participate in various spheres of society. It is further a mutual process including the entire society, and not a process of adaptation but to allow coexistence of diverse types of people. There are many vital interlinked components needed to achieve integration mainly related to fundamental economic-, social- and cultural factors.

The economic integration regards employment, occupation, education and income which is central to ensure a livelihood. Previous studies show that it is twice as hard get a job for migrants than for Swedes. Discrimination, prejudices, lack of networks and preference of education attained in Sweden are believed to be some of the reasons which in turn hinder the economic integration.

The social integration concerns social support which can improve well-being, mental health, language development, opportunities for employment and societal participation. Previous studies show that migrants perceive difficulties to interact with Swedes and prevailing discrimination, which could lead to social exclusion and homogenous social networks that in turn prevent the social integration.

The cultural integration involves values, attitudes, knowledge of cultures, language and ethnic composition in housing area. Previous studies show that the cultural integration is hampered by differences in cultures, language barriers and culturally homogenous housing areas.

The results were analysed in the discussion grounded on this conceptual framework as it defines what aspects that are considered to facilitate integration and what potential barriers that may exist in Sweden. Moreover, the conceptual framework provided a holistic perspective of the diverse facets that compose integration which enabled the interpretation and understanding of the respondents' experiences and perceptions.

4. Methodology

4.1 Qualitative approach

Since the purpose was to understand barriers for integration in Sweden, a qualitative approach with semi-structured interviews that enable understanding and interpretation of diverse perspectives from young male Afghan refugees was the most appropriate method (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Bryman, Bell and Harley (2019) explain how a qualitative method facilitates the process of collecting data, searching for patterns and organizing systematically through dialogues between people. In order to understand the social reality, a qualitative approach is vital according to Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) since the focus is on words rather than quantitative numbers. Denscombe (2017) describes how the interviewer through interviews can discover understandings, reflections, experiences and interpretations of the respondents. The method is preferable because the respondents are given the opportunity to describe, define and elaborate their responses (Denscombe, 2017).

Furthermore, in semi-structured interviews, the interviewer is given the opportunity to manage the interview through follow-up questions that enable flexibility (Bryman et al., 2019). It was essential that all thoughts and distinctions were discovered, hence this method was advantageous because of the many facets of the interviewed subject. Bryman et al. (2019) emphasize the prominence of applying questions that are open and neutral to facilitate the interview and receive comprehensive answers that enable the analysis. This was reflected upon when the form, number and sequence of the questions were created (Esaiasson et al., 2017).

4.2 Respondents

The respondents in this master thesis were young male Afghan refugees in Stockholm in Sweden. The sample was based on a convenience selection which is a non-probability sample that selects respondents based on accessibility, availability, willingness and geographical proximity at the time of the study (Dörnyei, 2007). To be able to conduct physical interviews with the respondents, the geographical demarcation was essential and hence the scope was limited to Stockholm where the master thesis was written. A goal-oriented selection criteria was created to strengthen the relevance of the interviews as well as out of practical and strategic reasons (Bryman et al., 2019).

The sample of respondents was narrowed down to young male Afghan refugees between 19 and 25 years' old that had lived in Sweden for at least three years. The limit of three years was partly set because of the ambition of interviewing in Swedish and also since they would have been given time to start experiencing the economic-, social- and cultural integration process in society. The average number of years the respondents had been in Sweden was four and a half years. Even though it would have been more ideal to interview respondents that had stayed a longer period in Sweden since the integration process often takes time (Kymlicka, 2002), it is also important to evaluate the process along the way. The respondents are described in Table 1 below.

Before the writing of this master thesis began, I had volunteered in different integration projects in Stockholm through various organizations which sparked my interest in the topic. When it was time to find respondents, I contacted the several young male Afghan refugees that I had already briefly been in contact with through my voluntary experiences. Within their acquaintances, they further contacted several other young male Afghan refugees that participated which makes the non-probability snowball sampling also relevant in this study (Bryman et al., 2019).

Table 1: Summary of the respondents:

| Respondent:	Age:	Occupation:	Arrived to Sweden in:
1	19	Full-time employed in a grocery store	2014
2	19	Studying in high school	2015
3	19	Studying in high school	2015
4	19	Studying in high school	2016
5	20	Studying in high school	2014
6	20	Studying in high school	2015
7	23	Full-time employed as a delivery man	2014
8	23	Working extra in a storage while studying in high school	2013
9	24	Full-time employed as a cook	2014
10	25	Working extra as a waiter while studying in high school	2015

4.3 Data collection

The primary data was collected through ten semi-structured interviews with young male Afghan refugees in Stockholm in Sweden. The number of interviews was limited by the time frame of this master thesis. Two pilot interviews were accomplished before interviewing the respondents. The purpose was to train the interview methodology, test the interview questions and examine if they resulted in relevant answers. Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) explain how pilot interviews often result in development and improvement of the questions. Two young male Afghan refugees participated in the pilot interviews based on a convenience sample and their answers were not considered in this master thesis. The respondents got the opportunity to provide feedback on the questions concerning if anything should be added, changed or removed. In the pilot interviews, the question of how the respondents perceived the concept "integration" was included as the first question. However, it became evident that this was a difficult question due to the language barriers. None of the respondents understood what the Swedish word meant and hence asked for an explanation. When the different aspects of integration were explained, they had a better understanding of the meaning of the word and could better relate to the concept. The choice was therefore to operationalize the concept through questions regarding the different aspects of economic-, social- and cultural integration to fulfil the purpose of understanding barriers for integration in Sweden. As a result, the first question was deleted and several questions were rephrased. The final version of the semi-structured interview guide can be found in the appendix.

The respondents were contacted via social media with a request to participate. Following, all respondents were given the opportunity to choose the location for the interviews in order to make them feel as comfortable as possible. Every interview was conducted with face to face meetings at various occasions at coffee shops in April of 2019 for an average of half an hour to an hour. A more undisturbed place in private would have been preferred to avoid the risk of disruption or influenced answers. The sensitive topic may have obstructed the respondents to feel fully comfortable discussing it in public. Nevertheless, the locations were chosen on their initiative, and by trying to adopt the appropriate gestures, language use and body language the aim was to make the respondents feel more confident and comfortable in providing answers (Patel & Davidson, 2011). Before the interviews began, a friendly discussion on everyday things took place in order to make the respondents feel as relaxed as possible. After a while they were given the explanation of the background and purpose of the interview. Then the information of the ethics in this master thesis was provided and the respondents got to approve the interview, recording and that notes were taken. The respondents were then asked about basic information about them such as their age, occupation and when they arrived to Sweden. Subsequently, the semi-structured interview began. Every interview ended with an open question if the respondents wanted to add or ask anything so that they were given the opportunity to highlight any additional considerations of the topic that had been excluded in the interview. Yin (2009) stresses how it is of great importance that the interviews are free from preconceived values to avoid angled results. Yet, Bryman et al. (2019) argue that it is almost impossible to subjectively conduct a study. This was taken into consideration as a reminder that the purpose of writing this master thesis was not to reinforce prejudiced beliefs.

4.4 Interpretation of the material

All interviews were recorded and transcribed to avoid the risk of incorrect interpretation, except in two cases where the respondents declined. The transcriptions facilitated the search of to what extent, intensity and frequency the patterns transpired that eventually set the foundation for the analysis in the discussion (Wibeck, 2010). The empirical material of experiences and perceptions of the respondents was processed through concentration of sentences and division into themes. The concentration of sentences is reducing long explanations into shorter sentences to be able to distinguish different themes (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). This was facilitated through summarizing all answers according to the interview questions in a separate document. Below is an illustration of the main themes that derived from the interview material and set the basis for the results, and what concepts they were analysed through in the discussion.

Figure 1: Summary of the different themes that emerged from the interview material presented in the results, and what concepts they were analysed through in the discussion:
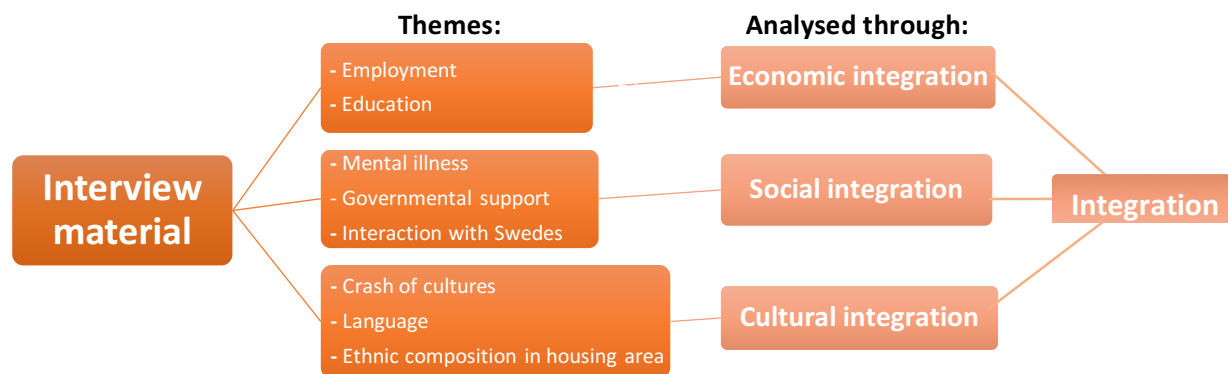
4.5 Reliability

Bryman et al. (2019) discuss four criteria that compose the concept reliability that is prevalent in qualitative studies. The four criteria are credibility, confirmation, dependability and transferability which together construct a reliable study. *Credibility* refers to how well identified and described the phenomenon of the study is in order to answer the research question. The credibility in this master thesis was achieved since the interviews contributed to relevant information that could answer the research question and fulfil the purpose. The credibility was also characterized throughout the master thesis due to the extensive review of the research phenomenon, background and previous studies. *Confirmation* implies whether a qualitative study is unbiased, accurate and can be confirmed through a strong connexion between the theoretical framework and the data gathered. This criterion was considered to be partly fulfilled due to the strong correlation between theory and data, yet, a completely impartial study is difficult to achieve in qualitative studies. *Dependability* indicates if the same result would occur if the study was repeated. The dependability was believed to be satisfied concerning the relevance of the respondents considering their perceptions, experiences and knowledge. However, a certain undependability was still present because opinions tend to alter over time and there is no guarantee that these respondents would perceive the phenomenon similarly in a repeated study. *Transferability* signifies if the understanding of the phenomenon is possible to transfer and generalize. Yet, Merriam and Grenier (2019) argue that transferability and generalisation is unachievable and not the purpose of qualitative studies. The transferability in this master thesis was deficient because integration can be interpreted and understood in various ways. The transferability was also reduced due to the convenience selection and the fact that the interviews were held in public spaces might have impacted the truthfulness in the answers.

4.6 Ethics

Ethics are relevant and necessary to protect the participants in the research (Flick, 2018). The Swedish Research Council (2002) lists four criteria that are necessary to assess when conducting a study; confidentiality requirement, consent requirement, information requirement and utility requirement. The

confidentiality requirement was achieved because all respondents were anonymous and no information was revealed to third parties. The *consent requirement* was accomplished when all respondents were informed of the usage of their personal data and given the opportunity to accept that the interviews were recorded and that notes could be taken. The *information requirement* was fulfilled when the purpose of the study was given to all respondents before the interviews. The *utility requirement* was reached since all the information gathered was never disclosed and solely used as research for this master thesis.

4.7 Method criticism

According to the above mentioned arguments and reasons, the reliability of this master thesis is considered to be of adequate quality. Nevertheless, it is also characterised by some methodological shortcomings. Even though the majority of the references are close in time, some are of older nature such as Schaefer et al. (1981) and Baker (1982). According to Gustavsson (2010), the sources should be comparatively close in time. Due to still relevant and important content in these references, the decision was to keep them.

In qualitative studies, the structure may occasionally adopt a subjective and unsystematic form and moments occurred during the interviews when it was more difficult to maintain objectivity. Furthermore, the recordings may have created less relaxed and secure environments and, as a result, possibly less honest answers. Still, the two interviews that were not recorded may on one hand have contributed to a more comfortable environment, but may on the other hand have increased the risk of lost information and incorrect interpretation.

The locations for the different interviews would ideally have been in more undisturbed and private environments to avoid distractions. However, it was more important that the respondents were given the opportunity to choose the location themselves, so that they were not forced to be interviewed somewhere they felt uncomfortable (Liamputtong, 2007). Since I had never met some of the respondents before due to the snowball selection, it could also have been more uncomfortable for them to meet in private, which was never suggested on their behalf. During the interviews there were no signs of the respondents feeling uncomfortable. On the opposite, they seemed enthusiastic to talk about their situation, made sure they really understood the questions and no one asked to terminate the interview.

The fact that I was familiar with some of the respondents may have impacted the honesty of the answers. It may be difficult to open up heart-to-heart with a person you are close to (Esaiasson et al., 2017). There is also an increased risk that important aspects are overlooked since the interviewer and the respondent may assume that they know each other and do not ask for details (Esaiasson et al., 2017). However, the comfortability of the respondents was always a priority and they were frequently asked how they felt during the interviews, and reminded of the opportunity to decline to answer. Also, it is more problematic to interview people in the closer circle of friends (Esaiasson et al., 2017), while the relationship to the respondents is more of the distant familiar character rather than close friends. We had only met once or twice before during integration events organized by different organizations, and not on a regular basis.

Another aspect that occasionally created difficulty was the communication. Even though the majority of the respondents spoke Swedish fluently, sometimes the mutual understanding was difficult to achieve. Nevertheless, the language use was adapted through different words to explain certain matters in order to assure that all questions were understood. Similarly, the respondents were asked to explain or elaborate further if confusion arose.

The low number of respondents, the qualitative approach, the narrow geographical demarcation, and the different sample selections are factors that reinforce the lack of transferability in this master thesis. No assumptions can be made that all young male refugees from Afghanistan have the same perceptions, experiences and reasoning of barriers for economic-, social- and cultural integration in Sweden. The majority of the respondents were all persons who had already participated in societal activities to foster integration. It is therefore important to mention that they are most likely not the most isolated and vulnerable refugees in the integration process. The lack of transferability should however not be viewed as a limitation since research may bring valuable knowledge even though it is not transferable.

5. Results

The material from the ten semi-structured interviews is presented in this chapter divided into three categories; economic-, social- and cultural integration. Furthermore, these categories are divided into sub-categories based on different themes that occurred in the interviews. The respondents are referred to as R with the respective number according to Table 1 "Summary of the respondents" in chapter 3.2.

5.1 Economic integration

5.1.1 Employment

Everyone arrived as unaccompanied children and all but one respondent were under 20 years old at the time of the arrival. The majority of them had no previous experience of employment. Three of the respondents were currently employed full time while two respondents were working extra while studying at high school. The other five respondents were studying in high school. Everybody expressed a will to work and viewed employment as a vital part of integration, but also emphasized on how difficult it was to get employed. The ones that were employed full time had searched for a job for several years.

> *"It is difficult to find a job because often you need like five years of experience*
> *or a driving licence which is difficult and expensive to get" (R9)*

The few respondents that had prior experience of employment mentioned that it was much easier for them to get a job in the previous countries of residence, such as Iran and Pakistan. Furthermore, R7, R8 and R9 expressed prevailing discrimination in the labour market in terms of recruitment, where their previous employers had preferred to help other Swedes to get employed.

> *"If a Swedish person is applying for the same job, it is easier*
> *for them to get it because they speak Swedish fluently" (R9)*

All of the respondents had previously lived in other Swedish cities before arriving to Stockholm, some for just a few days while others for a couple of months. R2, R7 and R10 were wondering why so many refugees are eventually placed in Stockholm because they felt that it is more difficult to find a job in Stockholm.

> *"I think it is harder to get a job in large cities easier in small towns, it is easier*
> *to connect with people and with everything. Here people are closed" (R10)*

R5 and R8 expressed a desire to get a job to be able to contribute to society. They felt that they had received a lot of governmental support and therefore wanted to be able to offer support in return.

> *"It is good if I got a permanent job and can support myself paying*
> *taxes like everyone else the way it is supposed to be" (R5)*

> *"I once heard that Swedes are thinking that they pay taxes for the immigrants. I chose not*
> *to receive establishment allowance. If I can find a job, I do not want you to pay for me,*
> *it is not good if the country thinks that they pay for us, that we do not fight for our lives" (R8)*

R4 had tried to get a part time job during his study period the past year but experienced it to be very difficult. He had failed courses in math, Swedish and English in high school and therefore stopped receiving financial support from the government which forced him to loan money from his friends. He needed a financial income to be able to sustain himself and send remittances:

> *"I do not have employment, but I want to work, I don't get work.*
> *I have a mother and a brother in Afghanistan that do not have a*
> *job and not a good situation so I need to send money to them" (R4)*

5.1.2 Education

Six of the respondents emphasized specifically that the opportunities to attain education is one of the best things about living Sweden. The majority enjoyed attending high school in Sweden. They explained that education increases chances for employment and school facilitates interaction with other people and improvement of language skills.

> *"It is very good that you can go to school, it is easier to*
> *find job then. Without education, it is really difficult,*
> *no matter if you are Swedish or an immigrant" (R8)*

Some of the respondents arrived to Sweden without any proof of who they are, knowledge of their own age or without ever have gone to school. R2 described the difficulties unaccompanied youths face when arriving to Sweden since they are alone, uncertain of their future and many take suicide. R8 said that establishment is easier for youths rather than adults because they receive additional support from the government in terms of accommodation and education. R10 was the only one that was not under 20 when arriving to Sweden:

> *"It took a year for me to know how to apply for education or*
> *what direction to take. I needed more help and support" (R10)*

The strict regulations of the educational systems were brought up by some respondents. R2 had worked as a cook for a year before arriving to Sweden, without any formal education. To be able to work as a cook in Sweden it was demanded that he got a two-year education which he felt was cumbersome. He felt that the regulations in Sweden were too tough and resulted in disadvantages for the society instead. Furthermore, he explained how he was forced to choose direction of education at high school when he arrived which did not enable him first to get the basic 12 years of primary education. He dreamed of becoming a lawyer, police man or in the military to be able to protect other people, but explained that there is no chance now as he had already chosen construction as a direction at high school. Moreover, he was upset over the process by the Swedish Migration Agency:

> *"The Swedish Migration Agency is throwing away money when*
> *they are spending money to support a refugee for three years,*
> *only to deport them in the end" (R2)*

R1 experienced issues of mental health first year of high school which had resulted in him dropping out to focus on his mental health. That was one and a half year ago and now he said that he felt better and wanted to continue. However, the regulations made it difficult for him to pick up where he dropped off. Both he and the other respondents perceived education to be the foundation future in Sweden.

> *"I do not know what to do in the future. What happens if I*
> *do not get a good education, how will I then survive?" (R1)*

R2 emphasized on the importance of interacting with Swedes to improve integration into the society. He said that he used school as a good platform for establishing social network with Swedes. He elaborated by explaining that to get integrated in a society you must talk to Swedes and get to know them. He said that refugees want to learn about the Swedish society and learn Swedish, and the Swedes must be willing to teach and explain. Furthermore, R2 felt that the process of integrating had been easy and that he now feels like a part of society.

> *"I spend most time with my Swedish friends because I can learn*
> *a lot from them, about society, about integration and about the language.*
> *A Swedish person can influence a lot" (R2)*

5.2 Social integration

5.2.1 Mental illness

Every respondent brought up how alone, sad and devastated they felt when they arrived to Sweden since they did not know anyone and could not speak Swedish. The importance of learning Swedish to improve the sense of belonging and opportunity to interact in the society was frequently mentioned by everyone.

> *"It felt sad when I arrived, I was completely alone, I couldn't speak a single word*
> *in Swedish and it was hard to fall asleep. I did not feel safe in any way when I*
> *came here, it became better as I learned the language and went to school" (R1)*

> *"When I came to Sweden I did not know what to do, I was alone.*
> *I felt really bad, did not knew anyone and did not have friends.*
> *I strongly felt that I needed to learn Swedish to find friends" (R2)*

> *"I know a lot of people, but in my heart I feel that I am alone. I know many refugees*
> *in Sweden that are depressed because everything is new and it takes time to adjust" (R10)*

R2 mentioned discrimination as a cause for sadness. He said that he gets really disappointed every time he goes to the grocery store and the guards check if he has stolen. Another aspect that caused distress at the time of arrival was the uncertainty of the development of their asylum process. Some of the respondents raised a current concern of their future, even after several years in Sweden. They describe the waiting process for approval or denial, that can take a few years, to be the hardest part. Many were upset by the regulations in Sweden and that the government invests in financial resources on refugees for years, only to reject their asylum in the end. R4 tried to take his life when he first got rejected but then he received help from a friend and was able to stay. R2 was one of the respondents that knew several of the refugees that were denied residence permit and later on took their lives as a result. He does not know for how long he can stay and declared that:

> *"Politics change their views every day and play with our lives" (R2)*

> *"Sweden is strict with asylum. The government says that asylum seekers are welcome,*
> *but after a few years the Swedish Migration Agency rejects their application" (R9)*

5.2.2 Governmental support

The respondents were asked how they perceived the governmental support given to them. Half of the respondents stated that they were satisfied with the governmental support and that they had been given the help that they needed. Among the satisfied respondents were the three respondents that had been given the opportunity to stay with host families. The satisfied respondents had received Swedish lessons immediately after arrival.

> *"Sweden has helped me and given me the best help" (R5)*

The other half of the respondents said that they would have needed more help and support by the government when they first arrived to Sweden, mainly in terms of housing. Many respondents had moved several times in a short period of time. R8 described how he was struggling in the beginning because he needed to find an apartment on his own, but in order to get one he needed a job, and to get a job he needed to speak Swedish. He further on said that it is a vicious circle because it takes time to learn Swedish while he needed an apartment and work immediately to be able to sustain his livelihood. Guidance was also mentioned as a lack of support. R3, R4, R5 and R6 experienced confusions about the new rules and regulations of the Swedish society in the beginning. Among the unsatisfied respondents, several had to wait for months before receiving Swedish lessons.

> *"We are thrown out into society, without knowing the language" (R10)*

5.2.3 Interaction with Swedes

Three of the respondents had Swedish friends. It benefitted them in terms of language development and knowledge about the Swedish society. Both positive and negative aspects were brought up regarding the Swedes. The respondents felt that Swedes are caring for refugees, are helping each other and making efforts for integration. Although, everyone emphasized that it is depending on individual Swedes.

> *"Some Swedes are really nice and like to talk or help, they like to help.*
> *But some Swedes are not like that. I have met Swedes*
> *that did not answer when I talked to them" (R4)*

All respondents expressed a desire to get to know Swedes, but perceived Swedes to be difficult to interact and connect with. R2, R3, R4, R5, R7 and R9 said that it is easier to get friends that originated from other countries, which they barely spoke Swedish with. Traits as shy, cold, closed, busy on their phones and antisocial were used to describe Swedes and reasons for the struggle to establish relations. Language barrier was also mentioned as a contributing factor for the difficulty to interact. Many felt that it was a one-sided effort on their behalf.

> *"It was quite difficult to adapt because people here are quite retracted,*
> *it is difficult to get friends, walk around and talk to someone.*
> *It is very difficult to contact Swedes" (R1)*

> *"It is difficult to talk or get in touch with others when you*
> *are new here and cannot speak the language. I want to get Swedish*
> *friends to be able to integrate but it is difficult" (R3)*

> *"If you know the language then it is easy, if you know their language*
> *then you are in the community. If one cannot speak the language*
> *then it is difficult, then the Swedes think: oh he is an immigrant" (R5)*

> *"Swedish people are very shy, they do not want to get to*
> *know people, not all but most of them. They do not have*
> *the courage to talk to you and become friends" (R6)*

> *"At my job we speak different languages because it is an international place.*
> *I want to spend time with Swedes to practice Swedish. But Swedes*
> *are difficult to hang out with, they do not want to hang out" (R7)*

R8 felt that Swedes perhaps do not want foreign friends. According to R1 and R2, some Swedes possess hatred against refugees, something they said that they are constantly reminded of on social media. Several respondents voiced that discrimination and prejudices might be the cause.

> *"There are people who hate refugees,*
> *they do not want to meet us and are spreading hatred" (R2)*

> *"It is harder to get Swedish friends, maybe they do not like immigrants. People*
> *are different, there are racists and fascists, one time I heard someone said:*
> *fucking immigrants who come to Sweden" (R5)*

> *"I have lived in Sweden for 5 years, but I have no Swedish friend,*
> *even though I am very social. Swedes are really bad at saying hello.*
> *They think, here comes an immigrant, it is a little dangerous" (R8)*

5.3 Cultural integration

5.3.1 Crash of cultures

The cultural differences between Afghanistan and Sweden were discussed by everyone. Many were surprised when they arrived to Sweden.

"It is a completely different world. It is impossible to compare Sweden
and Afghanistan. Everything in Sweden was new to me, it is
indescribable. It was difficult to adapt for many" (R1)

All respondents perceived the dissimilarities in values between Sweden and Afghanistan to be positive. In general, the respondents perceived Sweden to be a good country to live in due to freedom of choice concerning religion and sexuality, democracy, welfare, peace, safety and equality, with endless opportunities for education. The majority uttered a gratitude, thankfulness and happiness for the opportunity to continue their lives in Sweden.

"It is very good that everyone can go to school and that we
have democracy. I think that Sweden is a very nice country in
comparison to many other countries in the world" (R1)

"For me, it is very important and I am glad to see that there is equality.
In Sweden there is no difference between men and women,
everyone has human rights and people care about each other" (R2)

"It is very different between Sweden and Afghanistan.
The biggest different is that you feel safe, that is the best thing" (R4)

"Sweden is a good country because of democracy, equality,
education opportunities, freedom of religion and governmental
support. It is very good here" (R5)

"I am so happy to live here and thankful for
everything Sweden has helped me with!"(R10)

All respondents, except R9 who missed his family too much, said that they would rather stay in Sweden than return to Afghanistan even if the political situation changed there. R4 said that he would never return because he liked Sweden so much. R1, R7 and R8 explained that they were very young when they lived in Afghanistan, or had to move to Iran or Pakistan early, and therefore they remembered very little. The memories they had, were bad ones. R2 and R3 said that even though they missed Afghanistan sometimes, they feel more safe in Sweden which they valued more. R5, R6 and R10 said that they chose Sweden because they had a hard time believing that the political situation would change anytime soon.

"I feel Swedish; I feel welcome in Sweden" (R6)

All respondents also perceived a huge cultural difference in interacting with people in a slightly less positive way. According to R5, many people in Afghanistan do not have television, electricity or cell phones which instead enable social interactions. Every respondent portrayed Afghans to generally be more social and respectful compared to Swedes. R2, R4, R5, R8 and R9 described that it is more common to talk to each other even if you are unfamiliar. They explained that if a person sits alone, someone approaches them and ask them how they are feeling. They felt that this is not the case in Sweden, which they experienced made it more difficult to socialize and integrate.

"I used to bring left over food to my neighbours in Afghanistan
and socialize with them. Here I can barely say hello
to them without them getting suspicious" (R7)

R2 and R4 highlighted the freedom of religion as a positive cultural difference between Sweden and Afghanistan. They had also chosen to convert from Islam to Christianity after their arrival to Sweden. R4 had further changed his name from a Muslim name to a Christian name.

"I wanted to change religion because it was forced on me in Afghanistan.
But I did not practice the religion or followed the rules
so I decided to change since I could in Sweden" (R4)

A few respondents brought up experiences of prevailing discrimination of Afghans as a group.

"I know that there has always been prejudices about Afghans among, not all, but some Swedes
and other migrants. I have heard and I have seen, especially on social media. It is tough" (R1)

5.3.2 Language

All respondents asserted that it is essential to learn Swedish if you are living in Sweden. The Swedish language was described as the most important factor for integration, but also the most difficult factor.

"I think knowing Swedish is really important.
The language is the key to solving the problem.
I am so happy that I can speak Swedish, it is a good way to succeed" (R2)

"The language has been the greatest challenge of integrating in Sweden" (R3)

"If you want to live in Sweden, you must learn Swedish" (R4)

"If you live in Sweden, you have to learn the language and adapt to society.
First I had difficulty adjusting and getting in to society, but with time you learn" (R5)

"From the beginning it is really difficult, but when you can speak
Swedish, it is the key everything you want in society" (R8)

The learning process had gone differently for everyone. Half of the respondents had received Swedish lessons from moment they arrived, while the other half waited for months before receiving Swedish lessons. The majority learned Swedish through the educational system. R1, R2 and R8 had learned through interactions with Swedes outside of school, through YouTube videos or books.

"It varies from person to person, some learn fast and some learn slow.
But you have to learn the language to be able to connect with
people because they speak Swedish. It varies how you learn,
but you must learn in order to be understood" (R1)

R9 said that it was very difficult for him to learn. In the process of learning, R9 had got several rejections of permanent residence permit. He had felt that the staff at Social Services and Swedish Migration Agency had treated him in a racist way and he was disappointed at them. He said that he lost the motivation to learn Swedish along this process of rejections, even though he knew the importance.

"When I got so many rejections I thought: why should I learn Swedish?" (R9)

5.3.3 Ethnic composition in housing area

R4 currently lived in an apartment with another refugee in a neighbourhood with majority Swedes and very few refugees. He said that he liked the apartment, but not living with the other refugee. According to R4, his roommate was unfriendly, distant and isolated. R4 wanted to live with someone he could eat with and talk to, while his roommate refused to socialize and they barely spoke. The municipality had refused to let R4 move when he asked.

*"There are not many refugees where I live, only me and my roommate. I used to
live in another place where there were many refugees. I could go outside and meet them,
get friends and play football. But here it is lonely. It is easy for me to talk to people,
I am not shy, but my neighbours are old and I have tried to talk to them but they
do not want to talk. We only greet each other"* (R4)

R4 had previously stayed with a host family for a short period which he enjoyed. R2 and R6 currently lived with host families which they said had benefitted them in several ways.

*"I now live with a family that let me stay there for free and they have helped me a lot,
both with mental illness, Swedish, asylum process, lawyer and driving license.
I want to live there until they say that I should move away!"* (R2)

R6 explained that he had to stay with Somalis in a refugee facility for a year when he arrived to Sweden. He described how he learned everything about the Somali culture, but was upset because that did not benefit him in the Swedish society. He desperately wanted to stay with a Swedish host family in order to get to know Sweden and learn Swedish to get integrated into society. After several visits at the municipality, he finally succeeded.

*"Instead of integrating into the Swedish society, I had learned everything
about Somali culture, the food, the language and the traditions!"* (R6)

R6 was very grateful for the help he had received from his host family in terms of language development, administrative help and sense of belonging.

*"I am part of the family now and invited to everything. I am going to
celebrate my grandma's birthday after this interview, my Swedish grandma!"* (R6)

R3, R5 and R7 of the other respondents lived with other refugees in neighbourhoods with a high density of foreign-born. They received governmental help with provision of housing and rent. They expressed a contentedness with their living situation.

*"It feels good to live there. I want to continue to live there.
People are happy and kind and respect each other"* (R5)

R1, R8, R9 and R10 lived by themselves. The residence areas of R1 and R10 were located in suburbs with a high density of foreign-born. R10 was happy to have received his own place even though he felt that it was small and expensive. R1 expressed a loneliness:

*"I have to manage by myself and have learned everything by myself.
So it feels good and a little sad sometimes. This loneliness is very difficult"* (R1)

R8 and R9 lived in areas with majority Swedes and very few refugees. R9 was satisfied with his accommodation after been struggling for years to find an apartment that he could afford on his own. R8 had also moved around a lot but finally found a place where he could stay for a longer period of time. He described experience of discrimination from his previous apartment:

*"My previous landlord changed his mind and said he wanted to
rent out to an atheist instead because he thought I was a Muslim"* (R8)

6. Discussion

In this chapter, the results from the ten semi-structured interviews is analysed in relation to the conceptual framework of integration and further divided into economic-, social- and cultural integration.

6.1 Economic integration

Diaz (1997) and Ager and Strang (2008) describe education and employment as vital factors for economic integration as they promote economic independence, self-confidence, future planning, interactions with natives and opportunities to develop language skills. Likewise, education and employment was mentioned as vital factors for economic integration by the respondents. All respondents were eager and enthusiastic about attaining education in Sweden, while also longing for employment to be able to sustain their livelihood and facilitate their integration. The chance to return the favour of receiving governmental support through getting employment to pay taxes was also mentioned as an incentive to find a job by R5 and R8 respondents. R8 elaborated by explaining that he perceived that the general views among Swedes was that they were paying taxes to support refugees, and hence he felt like a burden to society. This can be linked to the discussion by Cvetovic (2009) who discusses the importance of valuing migrants as resources rather than problems. Similar results have been found in other studies conducted in Sweden. Rojas (1995) and Scuzzarello (2008) discovered that migrants perceived that they were given a homogenous image by society illustrating a burden, incapable of working, weak and hindering socio-economic progression of Sweden. R5 expressed that he wanted a job to be able to pay taxes "like everyone else, the way it is supposed to be". This indicates that the ability to work and pay taxes was perceived to be a tool to become a part of the Swedish society and the economic integration. Additionally, R8 said that he did not want Swedes to think that the refugees are not fighting for their lives. Hence, according to R5 and R8, paying taxes through employment seemed to be a better justification of being residents in Sweden.

Nevertheless, the search for employment was perceived difficult by all respondents. Ager and Strang (2008) explained that the economic integration in terms of attaining an employment may be hindered by lack of proof of identification, no knowledge of age or no previous education. In relation to this, the fact that the majority of the respondents had no previous experience of employment or education before arriving to Sweden may have impacted this difficulty. Moreover, even though R2 had previous experience as a cook, the strict regulations of achieved formal education for this occupation prevented him from working as a cook in Sweden. This is in line with Dahlstedt (2010), who found that individuals that have attained education in Sweden are more likely to get a job in comparison to individuals that have attained education in another country. Situations like these may force refugees to accept a job they are overqualified for, an occurrence discussed by Nordin (2011) and Tibajev and Hellgren (2019). Simultaneously, a few respondents mentioned that it was much easier for them to get a job in the previous countries of residence. R1 had to drop out of high school due to mental illness one and a half year ago. Now he wanted to continue as he felt better but the regulations and rules made it difficult for him to just pick up where he dropped off. The difficulty for the respondents to get employed in Sweden may therefore to some extent be explained by the lack of education and institutional barriers of strict educational systems and bureaucracy.

Moreover, additional barriers for economic integration in terms of employment can be explained by prevailing discrimination of foreign-born in the labour market (Le Grand & Szulkin, 1999; Duvander, 2001; SOU, 2006:73; Bursell, 2007). The experiences of discrimination in the labour market among the respondents can be explained by the statistical discrimination of stereotypical thinking and prejudices (Rydgren, 2004; Attström, 2007; Bursell, 2007; Carlsson & Rooth, 2007). Rydgren (2004) explains how stereotypical behaviour quickly place people in social categories, often based on physical attributes. It occurs when someone attributes characteristics to a person based on beliefs or existing prejudices about the group affiliation of that person (Rydgren, 2004). In relation, R9 said that he had a hard time finding employment because it is easier for Swedes to get a job since they speak Swedish. Further, the nepotism in recruitment from social networks constitutes the discrimination of network effects (Rydgren, 2004), and was evident among the respondents. R7, R8 and R9 all described how their previous employers had preferred to help other Swedes to get employed. Attström (2007) found that people with male foreign

names in Stockholm have a harder time getting a job, which may be the reason for the experienced difficulties in getting a job for the respondents. Thereby, one barrier for economic integration in terms of employment for the respondents could be the prevalent discrimination in the labour market.

Despite barriers and difficulty to attain employment, the reason that half of the respondent were in fact currently employed full or part time can be explained by the reasoning of Çelikaksoy and Wadensjö (2016). They argue that unaccompanied male Afghan children in Stockholm are more often participating in the labour force, education and/or training in comparison to refugee children. Stronger incentives to work to be able to send remittances is believed to be one reason (Çelikaksoy & Wadensjö, 2016), which was brought up by R4. However, he had been searching for employment for a long time, to be able to send money to his mother and brother in Afghanistan, without success. Çelikaksoy and Wadensjö (2016) suggest additional support as another reason, which was mentioned by R8 who thought that establishment is easier for youths rather than adults because they receive additional governmental support, education and accommodation. On the other hand, all respondents described the difficulties they faced when arriving to Sweden since they were alone and uncertain of their future. Half of the respondents expressed that they needed additional support then arriving to Sweden. It is possible that unaccompanied children in fact face more challenges than refugee children since they have no existing network when arriving. Çelikaksoy and Wadensjö (2016) bring up more opportunities in the capital Stockholm as another reason. All respondents had previously lived in other Swedish cities before arriving to Stockholm and therefore they were able to compare opportunities in Stockholm versus smaller cities. R2, R7 and R10 stated however that they experienced that it was more difficult to find job opportunities in Stockholm in comparison to smaller cities, mainly due to lack of connection with people. This can be linked to the institutional discrimination explained by Rydgren (2004), where measures lead to unintentionally discriminatory effects, such as the placement of new arrivals in certain municipalities. While the intention is to improve the situation, it might result in the opposite.

Duvander (2001) and Ager and Strang (2008) argue that the economic integration can be facilitated through education since it increases chances for employment. This was the general perception among the respondents as well. They all valued education and had understood that it was an important factor for their economic integration. However, while the motivation was strong among the majority of the respondents, some had felt hopelessness from time to time. R9 said that he got several rejections before receiving a residence permit which in turn lead to him questioning why he should learn Swedish. School in turn tends to facilitate interaction with other people and improvement of language skills which could benefit economic integration (Duvander, 2001; Ager & Strang, 2008). R2 had maximized the opportunity of using the school as a platform for extending his social network and improve language skills which he stated could benefit his economic integration. Social connections have been discussed in literature and found in previous studies to be beneficial for integration due to the development of language skills, conditions in the labour market and opportunities to participate in the society. In particular networks with natives since they can provide beneficial resources and knowledge (Wallin & Ahlström, 2005; Sjögren & Zenou, 2007; Höjer & Magnusson, 2008; Hessle, 2009; Petersson, 2013). Hence, the fact that R2 stated that he felt like a part of society may be because he was also one of the respondents with Swedish friends and most development language skills.

In summary, the economic integration tended to be obstructed by difficulty to get employment mainly due to lack of education, language skills and networks with Swedes along with discrimination.

6.2 Social integration

Diaz (1997) brings up how the social integration is achieved through trustworthy and respectful relationships with people that represent the majority of the society. These relationships in turn provide well-being, trust and meaning among individuals which contribute to happiness (Tideman, 2004). While loneliness, exclusion and inability to influence your own situation and society at large is negatively affecting the mental health of migrants (Hadziabdic & Adatia-Sandström, 2006; Tinghög et al., 2009). This can explain why every respondent felt alone, sad and devastated they felt when they arrived to Sweden since they did not know anyone and could not speak Swedish, a common pattern among migrants (Hadziabdic & Adatia-Sandström, 2006; Tinghög et al., 2009). The social support is believed

to be a vital factor to ensure good quality of physical and mental health (Schaefer et al., 1981; Cohen & Wills, 1985; Shisana & Celentano, 1987; Berkman et al., 2000; Geckova et al., 2003; Melchior et al., 2003; Wallin & Ahlström, 2005). Hence, the experience of loneliness that was present among several respondents may have negatively impacted their social integration.

Furthermore, the uncertainty of their future and development of their asylum process was a factor causing anxiety. Many of them had got rejected several times. The respondents constantly brought up the human factor of being a refugee. They heavily criticised the restrictive regulations and rules in Sweden that resulted in refugees being deported, and sometimes taking their lives instead. How is it possible to do that to another human being? The question was asked by numerous respondents. Many still live in uncertainty of their future in Sweden but still try their utmost to integrate in the meanwhile. The reaction to this process was perceived differently. R4 had tried to take his life when he got his first rejection, but because he received support and help from a friend he managed to improve his situation and mental health. Simultaneously, R10 felt alone despite a wide social network. This links to the reasoning by Berkman and Syme (1979), Schaefer et al. (1981) and Orth-Gomér and Johnson (1987), that the perceived social support is more important in stressful situations than a widespread social network. Although, a widespread social network is believed to positively affect the development of language skills, conditions in the labour market and opportunities to participate in the society (Wallin & Ahlström, 2005; Sjögren & Zenou, 2007; Höijer & Magnusson, 2008; Hessle, 2009). Participation in societal activities in turn promotes the social integration, diverse social networks and reduces social exclusion (Hadziabdic & Adatia-Sandström, 2006; Ager & Strang, 2008; Hammarén 2014; Bakker et al., 2016). This was evident since the respondents that were participating in societal activities described a wider social network with more ethnic varieties and expressed contentedness to a greater extent. Those that seldom participated in societal activities, expressed a feeling of loneliness and described a narrower social network rarely consisting of Swedes.

Language skills was frequently mentioned as a factor that could improve the social integration since it could enable interaction with Swedes. The three respondents that had Swedish friends tended to have developed better language skills. All respondents perceived it to be very difficult to interact and connect with Swedes. Similar finding has been made by several researchers (Wallin & Ahlström, 2005; Sjögren & Zenou, 2007; Höjer & Magnusson, 2008; Hessle, 2009; Petersson, 2013). Hence, the paradox discussed by Adamuti-Trache (2013) was also prevalent; socialization with natives is important to learn the language, while it is hard to socialize without knowing the language. Prejudices, racism and discrimination were brought up as potential reasons for the difficulty to interact with examples of experiences. If discrimination is the explanation for the difficulty for migrants to interact with Swedes, it is possible that it is a result from the political development of increased right-wing populist parties and nationalism both in Europe and Sweden. This would imply that the extent of discrimination is most likely to increase as well, causing segregation and hampering the social integration even more. The dilemma arises since interactions is a preferable approach to overcome prejudices and racism. Half of the respondents explicitly mentioned that it was perceived to be easier to get friends that originated from other countries. Nevertheless, surroundings with individuals from the same cultural and ethnic origin is considered beneficial according to Baker (1982), Williams and Westermeyer (1983), Jockenhövel-Schieke (1986), Porte and Torney-Purta (1987), Beiser (1993), Fox et al. (1994) and Johansson and Lalander (2013). It enables emotional support, sharing of experiences, sense of belonging and facilitates the culture adaptation. Nordström Skans and Åslund (2010) argue that it should not be considered a problem if this homogenous selection of friends is voluntary. However, the majority of the respondents expressed a wish to have Swedish friends but felt that it was a one-sided effort on their part. Therefore, it should be considered a hinder towards social integration for the respondents as it increases a sense of loneliness and exclusion as well. If this difficulty to interact is perceived by the majority of the migrants in Sweden, it is more than essential that the whole society tries to facilitate the social integration through enabling the interaction in all societal spheres. Non-governmental organizations and educational systems could play a huge part in this since they often manage to make big impacts on small-scales.

Additionally, Ager and Strang (2008) describe governmental support to refugees as important for the social integration. Half of the respondents were satisfied with the governmental support, while the other half of the respondents said that they would have needed more help and support by the government

when they first arrived to Sweden. The fact that the satisfied respondents had received Swedish lessons immediately after arrival tends to incline that this is a vital factor for the social integration. Hence, the social integration for the respondents that did not receive Swedish lessons right away, could be hampered by institutional barriers. Moreover, it is possible that older refugees face another institutional barrier for integration. R10 was the only respondent that was above 20 years old when he arrived and he felt that he needed more support upon arrival. The lack of support may in fact have impacted his social integration as he also stated that he was just "thrown into society" without accommodation or language skills. He further expressed a strong feeling of loneliness today.

In summary, the social integration inclined to be hindered by the difficulty to interact with Swedes due lack of language skills, governmental support and response from Swedes possible due to discrimination.

6.3 Cultural integration

All respondents experienced a crash of culture when they arrived to Sweden, something experienced by young refugees in Sweden in the study by Hessle (2009) as well. The new rules and laws were confusing for some respondents. Giddens and Sutton (2017) explain culture to involve values, material resources and behavioural patterns that characterize a certain group. The respondents perceived Sweden to be a good country to live in due to freedom of choice concerning religion and sexuality, egalitarianism, democracy, welfare, peace, safety and equality. These cultural contrasts were perceived positively according to every respondent. The majority uttered a gratitude, thankfulness and happiness for the opportunity to continue their lives in Sweden. Similar result was found among refugees in Sweden in the studies by Wallin and Ahlström (2005) and Hessle (2009). Nine of the respondents would rather live in Sweden due to various reasons, even if the political situation would change in Afghanistan. The majority of the respondents felt a belonging to Sweden, which in turn facilitates integration (Ager & Strang, 2008; Bevelander & Pendakur, 2012; Wernesjö, 2014; Trost & Levin, 2018). However, the cultural differences of material resources and behavioural patterns differed in a slightly less positive way. Due to lack of material resources, it was described to be more common in Afghanistan to socialize. Afghans were depicted to be easier to interact with than Swedes which is linked to the behavioural patterns of people. This in turn can hamper the cultural integration for the respondents as interaction with natives is essential to be able to share knowledge of different cultures (Ager & Strang, 2008).

Berry (1997) focuses on the ability of different cultural groups adapt to new cultural contexts. According to Berry (1997), assimilation transpires when individuals do not want to maintain their cultural identity and instead interact with other cultural groups. This strategy for cultural integration might have been adopted for R2 and R4 who converted to the religion that is the most prevalent in Sweden, Christianity. R4 had changed his Muslim name to a Christian name and was more than happy with his life in Sweden, while R2 stated that the integration process had gone well for him. It is possible that they experienced the integration to have been successful due to, knowingly or unknowingly, adopting an assimilation strategy. Assimilation is however believed to be the wrong way towards integration according to Oweini and Holmgren (1999), Martinsson (2005) and Kamali (SOU, 2006:73). Cultural integration occurs when individuals want to maintain their cultural values and simultaneously interact with other cultural groups, which is facilitated through exchange of knowledge of different cultures among groups (Berry, 1997; Ager & Strang, 2008; Scuzzarello, 2008). Hence, the other respondents who maintained their religion might therefore have progressed more in terms of cultural integration given that they interacted with other cultural groups. Yet, integration can only be successfully pursued in a society where all cultural groups are inclusive, valuing and accepting cultural diversity, having positive attitudes between groups and having low levels of prejudices and discrimination (Berry, 1991; Berry & Kalin, 1995). The prevalent discrimination in the Swedish society was repeatedly mentioned by the respondents and sometimes specific to Afghans as a group, hence impeding their cultural integration as well.

What was distinctive among all respondents was their ambition and motivation. Many of them came from tough environments and had experienced severe difficulties in life amongst being separated from their families. Despite this, they had managed to some extent establish in a new society and learn a new language, many of them by themselves through YouTube videos and books. Al-Baldawi (2014) argues that this kind of motivation and drive to adapt is what makes integration successful. Diaz (1997), Ager

and Strang (2008), Bevelander and Pendakur (2012) and Trost and Levin (2018) claim that language is crucial for integration as it benefits the social interaction, increases opportunities for employment and enables participation. This was confirmed by all respondents and everyone asserted that it is essential to learn Swedish if you are living in Sweden. Nevertheless, all respondents brought up how hard it has been, and still is, to learn Swedish. Barriers of language are common among refugees, and sometimes the most difficult factor which place them in a weak position (RTK, 2006; Rosulnik, Hladnik & Licen, 2016). On one hand, the responsibility to learn might be perceived to be solely on behalf of the respondents. However, Swedish is supposed to be taught from the first day for asylum seekers (Swedish Government, 2017), yet, several of the respondents claimed that it took months before they received formal lessons. This could however perhaps be explained by the tremendous increase in unaccompanied children seeking asylum in 2015. Many of the respondents that had to wait for Swedish lessons came in, or after, 2015. The lack of resources and ability to match the supply with the demand in terms of Swedish lessons might be a reason, nevertheless it should not be viewed as an excuse. Therefore, this constitutes a main barrier for the respondents' cultural integration from the societal side since the quality of the language lessons is influencing the process of learning a new language (Chiswick & Miller 2002; Tubergen & Kalmijn, 2005).

Other influences are the exposure to the new language, housing area and interactions with natives (Chiswick & Miller 2002; Tubergen & Kalmijn, 2005; Al-Baldawi, 2014). The interaction with natives tended to be true in this study since the three respondents with Swedish friends also had better language skills. Yet, as previously demonstrated, Swedes prone to be difficult to connect with which constitutes a contradiction. Ager and Strang (2008) emphasize on the importance of diverse ethnic composition in residence area to enable the cultural integration through interaction with natives. The respondents that lived with other refugees had not learned Swedish as fast as those living with Swedish host families. R4 lived with another refugee from Iran in an apartment in an area with very few refugees and majority Swedes. According to above arguments this would have benefitted his language development. However, he experienced loneliness and isolation in the neighbourhood because his neighbours would barely talk to him when he greeted them. He used to live in an area with more refugees in the neighbourhood which he was much happier with. This is in line with Talen (2012) who states that homogenous clusters of settlements for minority populations may strengthen social networks, preserve cultural heritage and protect against discrimination. Bourne and Walks (2011) disputes that these clusters may lead to isolation and social problems, but the opposite was true for R3, R5 and R7. And yet, it is not always possible for refugees to choose housing or residence area themselves. Boverket (2019) reported that there is a struggle to find housing for refugees, an issue confirmed by all respondents. Ahmed and Hammarstedt (2008) found evident ethnic discrimination in the rental housing market in Sweden, something experienced by R8 as well. Three respondents had lived with host families and described how that had benefitted them tremendously in several ways, and provided solutions for many barriers. The host families had provided comfort, housing, livelihood, assistance, administrative help and language improvements. The respondents that spoke Swedish fluently were also the ones that had stayed with host families, hence language skills are likely benefitted by living with a native speaking family. Language in turn can lead to respectful relationships and a sense of belonging which can positively accelerate the integration process (Ager & Strang, 2008). Opportunity to live with host families could therefore be an alternative to encourage since it may alleviate many barriers.

In summary, the cultural integration was perceived to be impeded by crash of cultures, that could have been overcome by interactions with Swedes to learn about cultures. But was in turn hampered by the difficulty to interact because of language barrier and lack of response. Discrimination tended to worsen the cultural integration while living with host families managed to improve the cultural integration.

6.4 Integration

One aspect that derived from the material was the respondents' view on integration. They tended to perceive themselves as integrated when they were given the opportunity to participate in the various spheres of society, such as the labour market. This is in line with the definition by Roth (2005). Nevertheless, Martinson (2005) states that the essential core of integration is not to homogenize the population, but instead allow coexistence of diverse types of people. In addition, Oweini and Holmgren

(1999), define the integration process for new arrivals as a mutual process including the entire society, and not a process with the aim of adapting new arrivals to society. Hence, Oweini and Holmgren (1999), Martinsson (2005) and Wilkinson (2013) underline the essentiality of achieving integration through a mutual process that results in a coexistence of diversity. The respondents conversely, seemed to interpret integration in line with Al-Baldawi (2014); as process of adapting to society. They often used words as "adapt" and "adjust" to society. Yet, Berry (1997) argues that caution should be taken towards the general assumption that minorities are striving to become a part of the mainstream culture. Perhaps their interpretation of integration into the Swedish society includes them willingly or unwillingly changing to become "more Swedish". One example would be the two respondents that chose to convert to Christianity from Islam, where one of them also changed his Muslim name to a Christian name. It is not necessarily a result from a desire to assimilate, but it is still a possibility. It might be imperative to update policies for how integration is learned, implemented and achieved. It is essential to build a Swedish society that allows for a coexistence of diversities in order to ensure a sustainable development. Still, the respondents perceived that the Swedes need to participate in order to achieve integration, just as Kamali who stresses the urgency of changing the perception that integration only regards change by "the others" (2006:73). Moreover, it was evident that the different barriers within the economic-, social- and cultural integration were interlinked to each other which is distinctive for the concept of integration (Wilkinson, 2013). There were common, contradicting and connected barriers. This in turn makes it even more important for different sectors to embrace the holistic perspective of integration to avoid segregation and ensure a sustainable development.

7. Conclusion

The purpose of this master thesis was to understand barriers for economic-, social- and cultural integration in Sweden. This was identified through analysing the perceptions of ten young male refugees from Afghanistan. The research question was: "What are the barriers for economic-, social- and cultural integration in Sweden according to young male refugees from Afghanistan?". Based on the research and empirical data in this master thesis, enough information has been gathered in order to answer the research question and fulfil the purpose. The respondents perceived following:

* The economic integration was mainly hindered by difficulty to get employment, often due to lack of education, social network with Swedes and language skills.
* The social integration was exclusively hampered by the difficulties to interact with Swedes due to lack of response, governmental support and language skills.
* The cultural integration was primarily obstructed by the crash of cultures concerning values and behaviours between Afghanistan and Sweden. Knowledge sharing of cultures along with guidance was necessary, but was limited due to lack of response from Swedes to interact and language skills.
* Discrimination was mentioned as a barrier throughout every societal sphere.
* Concurrently, the most common barrier for both economic-, social- and cultural integration was perceived to be the language, which was also mentioned as the most difficult barrier.

The respondents perceived that language benefits social interaction, increases opportunities for employment, enables participation, creates a sense of belonging and builds towards integration. The most successful approach to tackle the different barriers in every sphere of society and get integrated was unanimously alleged to be interaction with Swedes. A dilemma arises since it was perceived to be more difficult to interact with Swedes because of language deficits, but it was also perceived more difficult to learn Swedish without interacting with Swedes. To overcome these major impediments for integration that hinder sustainable development, active participation from both the individuals (the refugees) and the society (the Swedes) was believed to be central. Active participation could in turn relieve the issue of rising mental illness among the respondents due to loneliness as social networks were perceived to have a positive effect. The mental illness among the respondents was moreover caused by the anxiety of their uncertain future. The rules and regulations for asylum seekers were heavily criticised by the respondents as it had resulted in several suicides within their acquaintances.

Moreover, the respondents had experienced discrimination as a barrier for both the economic-, social- and cultural integration. The respondents felt that the discrimination was potentially the reason for the difficulties to interact with Swedes. It could be a result from the political development of right-wing populist parties and nationalism increasing both in Europe and in Sweden. Furthermore, the respondents that had lived with host families had experienced multiple benefits, most importantly interactions with Swedes and improved language development. Simultaneously, it solved another barrier that was raised by the all respondents; housing. All respondents tended to discuss integration in terms of adaptation rather than a mutual acceptance of a diverse society. It might be imperative to update policies for how integration is learned, implemented and achieved to build a Swedish society that allows for a coexistence of diversities in order to ensure a sustainable development. Despite all barriers highlighted by the respondents, the majority of them were thankful, grateful and content with their lives in Sweden. This signifies a positive progress of the integration process for the respondents, despite several barriers.

7.1 Further studies

There is a great possibility for more research on the topic of barriers for integration in Sweden since a fifth of the population are foreign-born. Considering the current trends of migration worldwide, more migrants are likely to arrive which brings the topic on top of the agenda. An assessment of the current obstacles causing segregation is essential in order to develop a sustainable society. Further studies could be conducted on a larger sample of respondents from different areas, genders and nationalities, and also with more developed language skills to examine if it is the greatest barrier for integration. Another interesting angle could be to interview Swedes and institutional actors to embrace their perspectives as they are important actors. Comparison studies between urban and rural areas, different cities and different countries could moreover be relevant to discover potential similarities or differences.
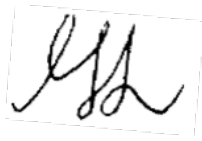
8. Acknowledgments

I want to give my deepest gratitude to the respondents for being helpful and willing to share their experiences with me. Thank you for your warm response and being willing to participate in this master thesis, I value our conversations deeply!

Further, I want to thank my subject reviewer Fred Saunders for bringing excellent inputs and vital aspects within this field of research.

Finally, thanks to my invaluable supervisor professor Gloria Gallardo Fernández for always being effective in bringing new perspectives and providing constructive reviews. I sincerely appreciate your contribution and time invested in the process of this master thesis!

Uppsala, June 2019,

Matilda Lund

9. References

Abdulla, A. (2017). *Readiness or resistance?: Newly arrived adult migrants' experiences, meaning making and learning in Sweden.* Linköping University: Department of Behavioural Sciences and Learning.

Adamuti-Trache, M. (2013). Language acquisition among adult immigrants in canada: The effect of premigration language capital. *Adult Education Quarterly,* 63(2), pp. 103–126.

Adenfelt, O. (2016). *Afghanska ensamkommande barn flyr från fattigdom och förtryck.* Electronic. Available: https://www.migrationsinfo.se/afghanska-ensamkommande-barn-flyr-frn-fattigdom-och-frtryck/ (2019-05-29).

Ager, A., Strang, A. (2008). Understanding Integration: A Conceptual Framework. *Oxford University Press,* 21(2), pp. 166-191.

Ahmed, A.M., Hammarstedt, M. (2008). Discrimination in the renting housing market: A field experiment on the Internet. *Journal of Urban Economics,* 64(2), pp. 362-372.

Al-Baldawi, R. (2014). *Migration och anpassning: den okända resan.* Edition 2. Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Attström, K. (2007). Discrimination against native Swedes of immigrant origin in access to employment. *In International Labor Organization, International Migration Papers* 86E.

Baker, G.N. (1982). Substitute care for unaccompanied refugee minors. *Child Welfare*, 61(6), pp. 352-363.

Bakker, L., Cheung, S.Y., Phillimore, J. (2016). The Asylum-Integration Paradox: Comparing Asylum Support Systems and Refugee Integration in The Netherlands and the UK. *International Migration*, 54(4), pp. 118-132.

Banke, V. (2017). *Andrum – om stölden av en flyktingkris och om de bestulna.* Stockholm: Norstedt.

Bech, E.C., Borevi, K., Mouritsen, P. (2017). A 'civic turn' in Scandinavian family migration policies? Comparing Denmark, Norway and Sweden. *Comparative Migration Studies*, 5(1), pp. 7.

Beiser, M. (1993). After the door has been opened: The mental health of immigrants and refugees in Canada. In *The International Refugee Crisis* (pp. 213-227). London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Berkman, L.F., Glass, T., Brissette, I., Seeman, T.E. (2000). From social integration to health: Durkheim in the new millennium. *Social Science & Medicine,* 51(6), pp. 843-857.

Berkman, L.F., Syme, S.L. (1979). Social networks, host resistance, and mortality: a nine-year follow-up study of Alameda County residents. *American Journal of Epidemiology,* 109(2), pp. 86-204.

Berry, J.W. (1990). The role of psychology in ethnic studies. *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 22(1), p. 8-21.

Berry, J.W. (1991). Understanding and managing multiculturalism. *Psychology and Developing Societies*, 3(1), pp. 17-49.

Berry, J.W. (1997). Immigration, Acculturation, and Adaptation. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 46(1), pp. 5-68.

Berry, J.W., Kalin. R. (1995). Multicultural and ethnic attitudes in Canada. Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science, 27(3), pp. 301-320.

Bevelander, P., Carlson, B., Rojas, M. (1997). *I krusbärslandets storstäder: Om invandrare i Stockholm, Göteborg och Malmö.* Stockholm: SNS Förlag.

Bevelander, P., Pendakur R. (2012). Citizenship, Co-ethnic Populations, and Employment Probabilities of Immigrants in Sweden. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 13(2), pp. 203-222.

Bloemraad, I. (2005). The limits of de Tocqueville: How government facilitates organisational capacity in newcomer communities. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 31(5), pp. 865-887.

Bordignon, M., Moriconi, S. (2017). *The case for a common European refugee policy* (No. 2017/8).

Bruegel Policy Contribution.

Borevi, K. (2010a). *Sverige: Mångkulturalismens flaggskepp i Norden. I Brochmann, Grete, Velferdens grenser: innvandringspolitikk og velferdsstat i Skandinavia 1945–2010.* Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

Borevi, K. (2010b). *2. Dimensions of citizenship: European integration policies from a Scandinavian perspective.* In *Diversity, inclusion and citizenship in Scandinavia* by Bengtsson, B., Strömblad, P., Bay, A-H. (2010). United Kingdom: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Borevi, K. (2014). Multiculturalism and welfare state integration: Swedish model path dependency. *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power,* 21(6), pp. 708-723.

Bourne, L.S., Walks, R.A. (2011). Segregation: Part I. *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Human Geography*, 534-546.

Boverket (2019). *Stort underskott på bostäder för nyanlända.* Electronic. Available: https://www.boverket.se/sv/samhallsplanering/bostadsmarknad/olika-grupper/nyanlanda/ (2019-05-29).

Brinkmann, S., Kvale, S. (2015). *InterViews: learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing.* Edition 3. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Brunnberg, E., Hart, A. (2016). En magisk box för resiliensterapi Strategiskt, kreativt och engagerat stöd i samverkan med barn i kris eller svåra livssituationer. *Socialmedicinsk tidskrift,* 93(1), pp. 82-97.

Bryman, A., Bell, E., Harley, B. (2019). *Business research methods.* Edition 5. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bursell, M. (2007). *What's in a name? - A field experiment test for the existence of ethnic discrimination in the hiring process.* Stockholm: Stockholm University.

Carlgren, A., Diaz, J. A. (2004). *Integration och indikatorer: Några teoretiska och metodologiska utgångspunkter för användandet av indikatorer.* Norrköping: Integrationsverkets rapportserie.

Carlsson, M., Rooth, D.O. (2007). Etnisk diskriminering på svensk arbetsmarknad – resultat från ett fältexperiment. *Ekonomisk debatt,* 3, pp. 55-68.

Carrera, S., Blockmans, S., Gros, D., Guild, E. (2015). The EU's Response to the Refugee Crisis: Taking Stock and Setting Policy Priorities. *Ceps Essay*, (20/16).

Carrillo Álvarez, E., Riera Romaní, J. (2017). Measuring social capital: further insights. *Gaceta sanitaria,* 31(1), pp. 57-61.

Çelikaksoy, A., Wadensjö, E. (2016). Hur har de ensamkommande barnen det i Sverige? *Socialmedicinsk tidskrift,* 93(1), pp. 28-36.

Chiswick, B.R., Miller, P.W. (2002). Immigrant earnings: Language skills, linguistic concentrations and the business cycle. *Journal of population economics*, 15(1), pp. 31-57.

Cohen, S., Wills, T.A. (1985). Stress, social support and the buffering hypothesis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 98(2), pp. 310-357.

Cvetkovic, A. (2009). The Integration of Immigrants in Northern Sweden: A Case Study of the Municipality of Strömsund. *International Migration*, 47(1), pp. 101-131.

Dahlstedt, I. (2010). General Versus Vocational Education and Employment Integration of Immigrants in Sweden. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies,* 8(2), pp. 158-192.

Darvishpour, M., Westin, C. (2015). *Migration och etnicitet: Perspektiv på ett mångkulturellt Sverige.* Edition 2. Lund: Studentlitteratur AB.

Dempsey, N., Bramley, G., Power, S., Brown, C. (2011). The social dimension of sustainable development: defining urban social sustainability. *Sustainable Development*, 19(5), pp. 289-300.

Deniz, F., Perdikaris, A. (2000). *Ett liv mellan två världar - En studie om hur assyriska ungdomar som andra generationens invandrare i Sverige upplever och hanterar sin livssituation.* Örebro: Örebro University.

Denscombe, M. (2017). *The good research guide, for small-scale social research projects.* Edition 6. England: Open University Press.

Diaz, J.A. (1997). *Primärintegration och bidragsberoende: studie av integration och tidigt bidragsberoende inom det kommunala flyktingmottagandet.* Norrköping: Statens invandrarverk.

Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics.* New York: Oxford University

Press.

Duvander, A-Z.E. (2001). A.E. 2001, "Do Country-Specific Skills Lead to Improved Labor Market Positions? An Analysis of Unemployment and Labor Market Returns to Education among Immigrants in Sweden. *Work and Occupations*, 28(2), pp. 210–233.

Eisenhardt, K.M., Graebner, M.E. (2007). Theory building from cases: Opportunities and Challenges. *Academy of Management Journal*, vol. 50 (1), p. 25-32.

Emadi, H. (2002). *Repression, Resistance, and Women in Afghanistan*. USA: Praeger Publishers.

Esaiasson, P., Gilljam, M., Oscarsson, H., Towns, A., Wängnerud, L. (2017). *Metodpraktikan - Konsten att studera samhälle, individ och marknad.* Edition 5. Stockholm: Wolters Kluwer.

Flick, U. (2018). *An introduction to qualitative research.* Edition 6. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Fox, P.G., Muennich Cowell, J., Montgomery, A.C. (1994). The effects of violence on health and adjustment of Southeast Asian refugee children: an integrative review. *Public Health Nursing*, 11(3), pp. 195-201.

Geckova, A., van Dijk, J.P., Stewart, R., Groothoff, J.W., Post, D. (2003). Influence of social support on health among gender and socio-economic groups of adolescents. *European Journal of Public Health*, 13(1), pp. 44-50.

Giddens, A., Sutton, P.W. (2017). *Essential concepts in sociology*. Edition 2. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Giovannoni, E., Fabietti, G. (2013). What is sustainability? A review of the concept and its applications. In *Integrated reporting* (pp. 21-40). Springer, Cham.

Globalis (2018). *Afghanistan.* Electronic. Available: https://www.globalis.se/Konflikter/Afghanistan (2019-05-29).

Gray, R. (2010). Is accounting for sustainability actually accounting for sustainability. . . and how would we know? An exploration of narratives of organisations and the planet. *Account Org Soc*, 35(1), pp. 47-62.

Gustavsson, B. (2010). *Kunskapande metoder inom samhällsvetenskapen.* Edition 6. Lund: Studentlitteratur AB.

Hadziabdic, E., Adatia-Sandström, S. (2006). Bosnian elderly persons health, suffering and wellbeing analysed from narratives. *Nordic Journal Of Nursing Research & Clinical Studies*, 26(4), 31-36.

Halpern, D. (1993). Minorities and mental health. *Social Science and Medicine,* 36(5), pp. 597-607.

Hammarén, N. (2014). Identities at Stake: Young Adult Migrants and Strategies for Resisting Future Unemployment. *Young,* 22(3), pp. 203-225.

Hessle, M. (2009). *Ensamkommande men inte ensamma*. Stockholm: Elanders AB.

Höijer, C., Magnusson, E. (2008). *Från asylhem till eget hem: ensamkommande asylsökande barn.* Stockholm: FOU.

IOM (2011). *Glossary on migration.* Geneva: International Migration Law Series No. 25.

Jockenhövel-Schieke, H. (1986). Realities of life and future prospects within two cultures. Unaccompanied minor refugees from South East Asia in the Federal Republic of Germany. *International Migration,* 24(3), pp. 573-601.

Johansson, T., Lalander, P. (2013). *Vardagslivets socialpsykologi.* Edition 2. Stockholm: Liber.

Karolewski, I. P., Benedikter, R. (2017). Europe's Refugee and Migrant Crisis: Economic and Political Ambivalences. *Challenge,* 60(3), pp. 294-320.

Kymlicka, W. (2002). *Contemporary political philosophy: An introduction.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Le Blanc, D. (2015). Towards integration at last? The sustainable development goals as a network of targets. *Sustainable Development*, 23(3), pp. 176-187.

Le Grand, C., Szulkin, R. (1999). Invandrarnas löner i Sverige: betydelsen av vistelsetid, invandrarland och svensk skolgång. *Arbetsmarknad & Arbetsliv*, 5(2), pp. 89-110.

Liamputtong, P. (2007). *Researching the vulnerable: a guide to sensitive research methods*. London: SAGE.

Lilja, E., Pemer, M. (2010). *Boendesegregationen - orsaker och mekanismer: En genomgång av aktuell forskning*. Karlskrona: Boverket.

Martinson, L. (2005). *Mutual benefit: Rethinking social inclusion*. KTH.

Melchior, M., Berkman, L.F., Niedhammer, I., Chea, M., Goldberg, M. (2003). Social relations and self-reported health: a prospective analysis of the French Gazel cohort. *Social Science & Medicine*, 56(8), pp. 1817-1830.

Merriam, S.B., Grenier, R.S. (2019). *Qualitative Research in Practice: Examples for Discussion and Analysis*. Edition 2. USA: Jossey-Bass.

Migrationsinfo (2018). *Ensamkommande barn*. Electronic. Available: https://www.migrationsinfo.se/migration/sverige/asylsokande-i-sverige/ensamkommande-barn/#fn-140-3 (2019-05-29).

Migrationsinfo (2019). *Etableringsprogrammet*. Electronic. Available: https://www.migrationsinfo.se/arbetsmarknad/etableringsreformen/ (2019-05-29).

Mudde, C., Kaltwasser, C.R. (2012). *Populism in Europe and the Americas: Threat or corrective for democracy?* Cambridge University Press.

Nordin, M. (2011). Immigrants' Returns to Schooling in Sweden. *International Migration*, 49(4), pp. 144–166.

Nordström Skans, O., Åslund, O. (2010). *Etnisk segregation i storstäderna - bostadsområden, arbetsplatser, skolor och familjebildning 1985-2006*. Uppsala: IFAU Institutet För Arbetsmarknadspolitisk Utvärdering.

Olwig, K.F. (2011). Integration: Migrants and Refugees between Scandinavian Welfare Societies and Family Relations. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 37(2), pp. 179-196.

Orth-Gomér, K., Johnson, J.V. (1987). Social network interaction and mortality. A six year follow-up study of a random sample of the Swedish population. *Journal of Chronic Diseases,* 40(10), pp. 949-957.

Oweini, S., Holmgren, A. (1999). *Folkhemmets bakgård: att bana väg för integration i Sverige*. Stockholm: Atlas.

Patel, R., Davidson, B. (2011). *Forskningsmetodikens grunder - att planera, genomföra och rapportera en undersökning*. Edition 4. Lund: Studentlitteratur AB.

Petersson, S. (2013). *Utrikes födda på arbetsmarknaden - En forskningsöversikt*. Stockholm: Stockholms universitets Linnécentrum för integrationsstudier (SULCIS).

Porte, Z., Torney-Purta, J. (1987). Depression and academic achievement among indochinese refugee unaccompanied minors in ethnic and nonethnic placements. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 57(4), pp. 536-547.

Rojas, M. (1995). *Sveriges oälskade barn: att vara svensk men ändå inte*. Stockholm: Bromberg.

Rosulnik, K.K., Hladnik, M.M., Licen, N. (2016). Women's narratives on learning through Migration/Zenske pripovedi o ucenju skozi izkusnje migracije. *Razprave in Gradivo : Revija Za Narodnostna Vprasanja,* (76), pp. 29–47.

Roth, H.I. (2005). *Mångkulturalismens Utmaningar*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.

RTK (2006). Planering för en minskad bostadssegregation. Electronic. Available: http://www.rufs.se/globalassets/h.-publikationer/2007-1_r_planering_for_minskad_boendesegregation.pdf (2019-05-29).

Rydgren, J. (2004). Mechanisms of exclusion: Ethnic discrimination in the Swedish labour market. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies,* 30(4), pp. 697-716.

SCB (2002). *90-tals krisen slog hårt mot flyktingar*. Electronic. Available: http://www.scb.se/statistik/AA/BE0801/2000I02/A05ST0204_03.pdf (2019-05-29).

SCB (2016). *Det stora antalet asylsökande under 2015 ökade inte flyktinginvandringen nämnvärt*. Electronic. Available: https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/statistik-efter-amne/befolkning/befolkningens-sammansattning/befolkningsstatistik/pong/statistiknyhet/asylsokande-grund-for-bosattning-utlandsk-bakgrund-medborgarskaps byten-adoptioner-hushallsstatistik-och-medellivslangder-2015/ (2019-05-29).

SCB (2017). *Syrien vanligaste födelselandet bland invandrare 2016*. Electronic. Available: https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/artiklar/2017/Syrien-vanligaste-fodelselandet-bland-invandrade-2016/ (2019-05-29).

SCB (2018). *New Swedish citizens from 160 countries.* Electronic. Available:
    https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/statistik-efter-amne/befolkning/befolkningens-
    sammansattning/befolkningsstatistik/pong/statistiknyhet/folkmangd-och-
    befolkningsforandringar-20172/ (2019-05-29).
SCB (2019a). *Ordlista.* Electronic. Available: https://www.scb.se/dokumentation/ordlista/
    (2019-05-29).
SCB (2019b). *Invandring till Sverige.* Electronic. Available: https://www.scb.se/hitta-
    statistik/sverige-i-siffror/manniskorna-i-sverige/invandring-till-sverige/ (2019-05-29).
SCB (2019c). *Sveriges befolkning.* Electronic. Available: https://www.scb.se/hitta-
    statistik/sverige-i-siffror/manniskorna-i-sverige/sveriges-befolkning/ (2019-05-29).
SCB (2019d). *Utrikes födda i Sverige.* Electronic. Available: https://www.scb.se/hitta-
    statistik/sverige-i-siffror/manniskorna-i-sverige/utrikes-fodda/ (2019-05-29).
SCB (2019e). *Befolkningsprognos för Sverige.* Electronic. Available: https://www.scb.se/hitta
    -statistik/sverige-i-siffror/manniskorna-i-sverige/befolkningsprognos-for-sverige/
    (2019-05-29).
SCB (2019f). *Fortsatt ökning av fast anställda.* Electronic. Available:
    https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/statistik-efter-amne/arbetsmarknad/arbetskraftsunder
    sokningar/arbetskraftsundersokningarna-aku/pong/statistiknyhet/arbetskraftsunder
    sokningarna-aku-4e-kvartalet-2018/ (2019-05-29).
Schaefer, C., Coyne, J.C., Lazarus, R.S. (1981). The health-related functions of social
    support. *Journal of Behavioural Medicine,* 4(4), pp. 381-406.
Scuzzarello, S. (2008). National Security versus Moral Responsibility: An Analysis of
    Integration Programs in Malmö, Sweden. *Social Politics,* 15(1), pp. 5-31.
Shisana, O., Celentano, D.D. (1987). Relationship of chronic stress, social support, and
    coping style to health among Namibian refugees. *Social Science & Medicine*, 24(2), pp.
    145-157.
Sjöborg, A. (2017). *Varför är det så svårt att få kontakt med svenskar?* Electronic. Available:
    https://www.svd.se/podden-ger-nyanlanda-sprak-och-sjalvfortroende (2019-05-29).
Sjögren, A., Zenou, Y. (2007). *Vad förklarar invandrarens integration på arbetsmarknaden?
    En teoriöversikt.* Norrköping: Integrationsverket.
SOU (2005:56). *Det blågula glashuset – strukturell diskriminering i Sverige.* Stockholm:
    Frtizens.
SOU (2006:21). *Mediernas Vi och Dom – Mediernas betydelse för den strukturella
    diskrimineringen.* Stockholm: Fritzens.
SOU (2006:73). *Den segregerade integrationen – om social sammanhållning och dess
    hinder.* Stockholm: Fritzens.
Swedish Government (2009). *Regeringens proposition 2009/10:55. En politik för det civila
    samhället.* Stockholm.
Swedish Government (2017). *Tidiga insatser för asylsökande.* Electronic. Available:
    https://www.regeringen.se/artiklar/2017/11/tidiga-insatser-for-asylsokande/ (2019-05-29).
Swedish Migration Agency (2017). *Asylum regulations.* Electronic. Available:
    https://www.migrationsverket.se/English/Private-individuals/Protection-and-asylum-in-
    Sweden/Applying-for-asylum/Asylum-regulations.html (2019-05-29).
Swedish Migration Agency (2018). *Allt fler vill bli svenska medborgare.* Electronic.
    Available: https://www.migrationsverket.se/Om-
    Migrationsverket/Pressrum/Nyhetsarkiv/Nyhetsarkiv-2018/2018-06-06-Allt-fler-vill-
    bli-svenska-medborgare.html (2019-05-29).
Swedish Research Council (2002). Forskningsetiska principer inom humanistisk-
    samhällsvetenskaplig forskning. Stockholm: Swedish Research Council.
Talen, E. (2012). *Design for diversity.* London: Routledge.
Tibajev, A., Hellgren, C. (2019). The Effects of Recognition of Foreign Education for Newly
    Arrived Immigrants. *European Sociological Review,* pp. 1-16.
Tideman, M. (2004). *Socialt eller isolerad integrerad?* Lund: Studentlitteratur.
Tinghög, P., Al-Saffar, S., Carstensen, J., Nordenfeldt, L., (2009). The association of
    immigrant- and non-immigrant-specific factors with mental ill health among
    immigrants in Sweden. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, 56(1), pp. 74-93.

Trost, J., Levin, I. (2018). *Att förstå vardagen: med utgångspunkt i symbolisk interaktionism.* Edition 5. Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Tubergen, F., Kalmijn, M. (2005). Destination-language proficiency in cross-national perspective: A study of immigrant groups in nine western countries. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 110(5), pp. 1412–1457.

UN (2019). *Sustainable development goals.* Electronic. Available: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org (2019-05-29).

UNHCR (2018a). *Figures at a Glance.* Electronic. Available: https://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html (2019-05-29).

UNHCR (2018b). *Mid-year trends 2018.* United Nations: The UN Refugee Agency.

Wallin, A-M., Ahlström, G. I. (2005). Unaccompanied Young Adult Refugees in Sweden, Experiences of their Life Situation and Well-being: A Qualitative Follow-up Study. *Ethnicity & Health,* 10(2), pp. 129-144.

Wernesjö, U. (2011). Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children: Whose perspective? *Childhood,* 19(4), pp. 495–507.

Wernesjö, U. (2014). *Conditional Belonging: Listening to Unaccompanied Young Refugees' Voices.* Uppsala: Sociologiska institutionen.

Wibeck, V. (2010). *Fokusgrupper. Om fokuserade gruppintervjuer som undersökningsmetod.* Lund: Studentlitteratur AB.

Wiechel, M. (2018). *Ett starkare nordiskt samarbete.* Motion till riksdagen 2018/19:339.

Wiesbrock, A. (2011). The Integration of Immigrants in Sweden: a Model for the European Union? *International Migration*, 49(4), pp. 48-66.

Wikström, E., Ahnlund, P. (2018). Making Refugees Work? Individualized Work Strategies in the Swedish Refugee Settlement Program 1. *Nordic Journal of Working Life Studies,* 8, pp. 47-65.

Wilkinson, L. (2013). Introduction: Developing and Testing a Generalizable Model of Immigrant Integration. *Canadian Ethnic Studies,* 45(3), pp. 1-7.

Williams, C.L., Westermeyer, J. (1983). Psychiatric problems among adolescent southeast Asian refugees. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 171(2), pp. 79-85.

Yin, R.K. (2009). *Case Study Research.* Edition 4. California: SAGE Publications.

Åberg, J.H. (2019). Is There a State Crisis in Sweden? *Society,* 56(1), pp. 23-30.

Öberg, K., Sager, M. (2017). Articulations of deportability: Changing migration policies in Sweden 2015/2016. *Refugee Review*, 3, pp. 2-14.

Appendix
Semi-structured interview guide

1. When did you come to Sweden?
2. How do you experienced your time in Sweden ever since you arrived? What has been difficult? What has been easy?
3. How do you experience the support from the Swedish government for establishment? What kind of support have you received? Do you feel that it is enough or is there something you need in addition?
4. What do you think of Sweden? What is good and what can be improved?
5. What are the biggest differences of now living in Sweden in comparison to Afghanistan?
6. How do the cultural norms in Sweden differ from Afghanistan? How has that affected you?
7. How does the social behaviour in Sweden differ from Afghanistan? How has that affected you?
8. How do the values in Sweden differ from Afghanistan? How has that affected you?
9. How did you begin to learn Swedish? How has that process gone? What importance do you find in learning Swedish?
10. Where do you live? Are you satisfied with your living area/accommodation? Why/why not? Where would you like to live? Why?
11. Who do you spend time with on your spare time? What kind of activities do you do?
12. Are there any people in your surroundings that you can get help or support from if needed?
13. Have you got any new friends since you came to Sweden? How did you become friends? Are they Swedish or do they have another nationality?
14. How does a normal day look like for you in Sweden? How did a normal day look like for you in Afghanistan?
15. What kind of reactions and treatment have you experienced from Swedes?
16. Are you working?
    → If yes; what are you working with? Are you enjoying it? Why/why not?
    → If no; would you like to have a job? Why/why not? What kind of job? What possibilities do you see for a future employment? What would it mean for you to get a job?
17. Are you studying?
    → If yes; are you enjoying it? Why/why not?
    → If no; would you like to study and in that case, what? Why/why not? What possibilities do you see for a future education? What would it mean for you to get an education?
18. If you could return to Afghanistan, would you? Why/why not?
19. What are the biggest barriers for integration in Sweden according to you?
20. Is there anything you want to add to the subject that has not been brought up? Any questions?