“Why would I not be called for an interview?”

Love Migrants Economic Integration in Sweden

Experiences of highly educated immigrants while searching for employment in Sweden

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Abstract

In this thesis the economic integration of highly educated love migrants in Sweden is investigated, focusing on the experiences of unemployed love migrants while search of employment and examines the factors that influence their economic integration in Sweden. This study is based on human capital theory, social capital theory, discrimination theory, and economic integration theory. The thesis is based on the qualitative research design, for this research, individual interviews with five participants have been conducted and interviewees stories have been analyzed. The findings reveal that human capital acquired in the country of origin could create transferability problems in Sweden. Additionally, discrimination and prejudicial treatment from the employers disadvantage immigrants’ position in the labor market. However, the human capital gain in the form of language skills and education facilitates and enhances economic integration. The study also looks at social and human capital interdependence - human capital gain can facilitate social contacts and network creation, and a social network can accelerate human capital value and overcome the discrimination factor, thus overcoming obstacles for gaining entrance to the labour market.

Keywords: Love migrants, highly educated immigrants, social network, social capital, human capital, discrimination, economic integration.

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1 Introduction

In the twenty-first century, migration has become a global matter and issues that accompany global migration remain a reality. Despite its liberal approach towards migrants, Sweden remains limited and delayed access to the labour market for immigrants.

According to the Migrant Integration Policy Index (2015)\(^{1}\), since the year 2010, Sweden has been the country with the best “migration integration policy”. In fact, Sweden has the highest results in the labour market mobility rate. The evaluation is based on comparative studies between 38 countries on four continents. However, a new statistical analysis of immigrant’s integration in the Swedish labour market reveals that immigrant skills are not fully taken advantage of in the Swedish labour market. Immigrants, compared to native Swedish people, often work lower competency requirement jobs (Statistics Sweden 2017: 120).

Labor market integration is not the effortless process, and there are many factors to reflect on. For the love migrants, the social endorsement is a rather smooth process as their Swedish partners have a positive effect on love migrants’ social integration, although, in order to enroll in the Swedish labor market, there are several important factors to mention such as education and skill transferability. Bureaucracy could be one of the hindering factors, which makes education hardly transferable resource. Even if the education is the transferable asset, due to its low demand in the host country, immigrants could find it hard to acquire the job. Understanding the host country labor market and its demands are also an essential factor, which requires time and adaptation. Social integration and creating the social ties also affects immigrants labor market integration as well as acquiring the language skills. Creating the social network helps immigrants to overcome possible mistrust from the employers towards immigrants. The aim with this thesis is to analyze the access to the labor market for love migrants’ whose human capital is not acquired in Sweden and understand their experiences while searching the job.

1.1 Aim and Research Subject

The intention with this research is to closely examine the love migrants’ experiences of job search in Sweden and answer the following questions:

- What are love migrants experiences of finding jobs in Sweden and

\(^{1}\) [http://www.mipex.eu/sweden](http://www.mipex.eu/sweden)
• How did they manage to enroll in the Swedish labour market?

1.2 Clarification

In this thesis, the term economic integration refers to the immigrants’ access to the majority society’s labour market. In other words, economic integration interprets as immigrants’ involvement in the Swedish labour market under the same work conditions as native Swedes.

Following clarification concerns about the term love Migrant. This term represents the immigrants who migrated in Sweden based on their relationship, in order to marry or cohabit with the Swedish citizen.

1.3 Delimitations

The entirety of the study focused on participants who had moved to Sweden to marry or cohabit with a Swedish citizen, all of which were highly skilled and unemployed when migrating.

The second delimitation concerns the participant’s employment. All the interviewees had highly skilled jobs and were employed in Sweden.

It is assumed, there is an adaptation period required for immigrants. Therefore the length of the love migrant’s residency in Sweden was set at a minimum of 3 years.

The study of Dribe and Lundh (2008. 333-348), emphasized the “spillover effect” and illustrated that native partners could increase human capital accumulation for their immigrant partners. In order to provide approximately the same social and human capital “spillover” for all the research contributors, love migrants partners were ethnic Swedes.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is structured into several sections. First, migration history in Sweden will be discussed which will be followed by contextual information on family-related immigration policies, family formation patterns, and intermarriage statistics. This will then be accompanied by an overview of previous research. In the following section, the theoretical framework will be outlined and afterwards the methods used in the study will be demonstrated along with the empirical findings and their analysis. At the end of the study, a conclusion and suggestion for further research will be included.
2 Contextual Background; An Overview

Sweden has experienced substantial immigration since the end of the Second World War, although the patterns of immigration have changed over time. From 1946 to 2003, almost 2.4 million people emigrated to Sweden, whereas the highest number of immigrants have returned home, return migration varied between different immigrant groups (Dribe and Lundh 2008: 333). By 2015, nearly 1.7 million people (17%) of Sweden’s population was born outside of the country. This data shows that from 1960, when only four percent of the population was born outside of Sweden, the numbers have grown gradually over the years (Statistics Sweden 2016: 161).

The labour migration flow to Sweden can be divided into two phases. The first movement occurred post-Second World War and was caused by economic and industrial growth, which generated a demand for labour power and created the migration pull factor (Dribe and Lundh 2008: 333).

After Sweden joined the Nordic labour market in 1954, the Swedish labour market opened for immigrants from Nordic countries. A substantial part of labour immigrants came from Nordic countries such as Finland, but also from Germany, Austria, Italy, Greece, and former Yugoslavia. The establishment of the immigration policy also simplified procedures for immigrant’s mobility in Sweden if they had employment (Alden and Hammarstedt 2014: 3-4). Unlike Germany, Swedish immigration regulations never considered foreign labour force as “guest workers.” In fact, migrants received the right to stay permanently and were later able to obtain citizenship. The only requirement set for becoming a citizen was a specific period of residence in Sweden (Bäcklund 2003: 39).

The second phase of Swedish labour migration started in 1970 when labour migration policy restrictions decreased labour migration from non-Nordic countries. At this time, the rate of the Swedish economic growth had not been as high as before and employment in the industrial sector lowered. New jobs required Swedish specific skills, such as language proficiency. Therefore, labour migration from non-Nordic countries dropped gradually. After the downturn in labour migration, the category of migration changed from labour migration to refugee and family migration. In the 1970’s refugees from Latin America dominated Sweden, then from 1980-1990 refugees came from the middle east and former Yugoslavia (Dribe and Lundh 2008. 333-334).

When examining the Swedish immigration policy closely, there is an interconnection between economic growth and immigration policy. From 1945 to 1970, the Swedish immigration policies
were more liberal with a strong economic growth. However, from 1970 to 1998, there was low economic growth with policies restricted (Lundh and Ohlsson 1999 pp: 13-14).

During both labour and refugee immigration periods, family reunion immigration was popular. Between 1980 and 2012, family reunions were a common reason for granting a residence permit for immigrants. During this period, 32.2 percent of the residence permits were granted to “other family members” (definition indicates the family members, who are not family members of the refugees, international students, foreign workers and are not adopted children) (Alden and Hammarstedt 2014: 6) During the years 2013-2017, 87,718 residence permits has been issued for the “other family members” in Sweden. Which consists almost 14% of all the first time residence permit applications granted to immigrants during 2013-2017. (Migrationsverket 2018)

The right to emigrate to Sweden as a family member included a husband and wife with underage children, as well as elderly parents and other relatives in some instances. Emigration to Sweden was possible without proof of maintenance; however, the rules for family reunion immigration have changed over time (Alden and Hammarstedt 2014: 5).

At the end of 2015, the Swedish legislation changed for a limited period (3 years) and limited the rights about the family member immigration. Before the only requirement to apply for the first time residence permit, was that sponsors should support themselves, new requirements included maintenance requirements, for example, the proof of a steady job and income. (Although the maintenance requirement does not apply when the sponsor is a refugee, a person eligible for subsidiary protection or a child) (Government offices of Sweden 2016; Migrationsverket 2018)

Family-related immigration in Sweden has distinctive characteristics, and the family reunification procedure is more liberal and welcoming when compared to other countries. Unmarried couples have the same rights to family reunifications as spouses concerning receiving a residence permit for family reunification (Migrationsverket 2017: 25). Moreover, Sweden has ensured that these rights extend to same-sex couples as well as married and cohabiting partners (Wells and Bergnehr 2014: 2). Today, a minimal number of marriages do not begin with cohabitation. As a result, the Swedish policy now provides equal rights for cohabitation and marriage (Duvander 1999: 698-699).

In Swedish, the term “sambo” translates as cohabitants (person with whom one cohabits) such as a common law wife/husband (Arbetsförmedlingen 2011: 22). The definition of “Samboskap” is equal to being married. The term “sambo” is also used in many contexts in social legislation as a term of cohabitation, which is the most common term for unmarried couples who live together.

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2 https://www.migrationsverket.se/Om-Migrationsverket/Statistik/Oversikter-och-statistik-fran-tidigare-ar.html

Before the 1970s, everyone who wished to marry or cohabit with a person who already lived in Sweden was granted a residence permit. Moreover, people with newly established relationships seen as “serious” by the migration authorities were also allowed to have a residence permit. In the mid-1970s, immigrant authorities suspected that family creation was used to avoid immigration rules. To challenge immigration based on marriage, a “test time” was established, which made newly arrived spouses wait six months before they could receive a residence permit. “Test time” later increased from six months to two years, during which authorities had regular interviews with the applicants to determine if the reason for migration was truly based on the desire of living together or an attempt to avoid migration rules. (Lundh and Ohlsson 1999: 100-101) Despite the critiques of these rules, interviewing couples separately and asking the questions about their relationship still exists in 2018 (Migrationsverket 2018) 3

Today, immigrants moving to Sweden for cohabitation or marriage are granted the right to attend an SFI (Swedish for immigrants) language course (European migration network report 2017: 25). Besides the free language course, immigrants have access to Swedish employment agency (Arbetsförmedlingen)4 programs. In addition, the employment office offers internships or complementary education-training for new arrivals who need to develop or improve their skills to match the Swedish labour market requirements. A company who wishes to hire a recent arrival in Sweden may, in some cases, receive financial compensation from the Swedish labour office for a limited period. This means that immigrants who have worked or studied in another country can ascertain how their skills and professional experience stands in relation to the requirements of a similar profession or education in Sweden. (Arbetsförmedlingen)5

However, it is also important to highlight the difficulties in discussing Swedish family formation through marriage patterns due to a large amount of unregistered domestic partnerships. It is therefore important to focus on family formation patterns through migration statistics to generate an overall idea about family formation migration.

5 https://www.arbetsformedlingen.se/Om-oss/Om-Arbetsformedlingen/Etablering-av-nyanlanda/Insatser-for-nyanlanda.html
Cretser’s (1999. 365-372) study of Swedish intermarriage, from 1971-1993 reveals that the overall intermarriage rate from Swedish women was 7.57% and for Swedish men slightly higher at 7.92%. This study indicates that Swedes often marry Finnish citizens with 20% of all intermarriages involving Swedish men and Finnish women. Swedish men also intermarried with Nordic natives rather than Non-Nordic citizens. This result was the same for Swedish women. Apart from Nordic citizens, Swedish men often choose women from Poland as well as Germany and Great Britain.

The latest demographic report from the Statistics of Sweden (2015: 21) indicates intermarriage pattern modifications. From 1998-2007, 350 000 foreign-born people emigrated to Sweden. More than half (almost 214,000) of them were married or cohabited with somebody in Sweden. The average age for immigrants who migrated to Sweden based on their relationship was just over 25 years old. The most common pattern among women who migrated to Sweden based on their relationship was to live with somebody from the same birth country. The most common birth countries for these women who migrated for family reasons were Thailand, the Philippines, and Russia (Ibid. 22-23). Migration for family reasons was not as common for men. Furthermore, most men who emigrated to Sweden to live with a Swedish born partner were from Turkey and the United States (Ibid: 25)
3 Previous Studies

Extensive research was conducted on the economic integration of immigrants in their host countries, exploring the immigrant’s human capital and the role of social connections in relation to economic integration. In addition, several studies have been carried out to monitor discrimination within a specific Swedish labour market.

Interruption between immigrants and host country individuals was considered as an important indicator of an immigrant’s integration into the labour market. A study carried out by Irastorza and Bevelander (2014), based on selected data between 1997 and 2007, analysed the employment rates and job incomes of intermarried immigrants compared to immigrants who intermarry other immigrants in Sweden. 1,935,205 married people aged between 25-60 years were chosen for the sample from STATIV, a longitudinal database for integration studies. The study concluded that intermarriage could play an integrative role for immigrants who married Swedes. Having a host-country born partner could increase an immigrant’s human and social capital specific to the country of residence and improve not only their job opportunities but also their understanding and knowledge of the new country.

Human capital has also been a crucial subject for the study of migration. A study done by Chiswick and Miller (2002), using the 1990 Census of Population, studied 212,384 adult foreign-born men living in the US. Scholars demonstrated that human capital and specifically language skills affect an immigrant’s economic integration in the US. The study emphasized that human capital, especially English language fluency, affects an immigrant’s earnings and their integration into the labour market in the U.S. Therefore, this could increase the transferability of previously acquired human capital (Ibid. 49).

Chiswick and Miller’s (2011) later study based on the 1,052000 immigrants in the U.S. examined the mismatch of the educational attainment and the occupation of employment of high-skilled adult male immigrants in the U.S. labor market in comparison to native-born males in U.S. Study revealed that immigrant workers usually had higher competencies and better education on the jobs than native-born workers. Among the immigrants, only 26 percent were correctly matched to their jobs, compared to 40 percent for the native-born. Scholars refer to this example as education mismatch, which means the difference in the educational attainment of a worker and the usual or typical level of education of those working in the occupation. Scholars argue that education mismatch can arise from several causes and one of them is the limited international transferability of skills, for example, bureaucracy could play a crucial role, as certain education certificates are not always converted and assessed by the host country. Scholars concluded that
educational mismatch tends to result in immigrants over-education on the job, which raises the probability of immigrants’ professional downgrading. Scholars also underlined that human capital, which immigrants acquire in the destination country, helps to facilitate skill transferability.

The study of employment assimilation of different immigrant groups in Sweden between 1970 and 1990 indicated the different assimilation rates between the years of 1970 and 1990. The Study, based on 1,010,134 people, revealed that foreign-born men entering Sweden before 1970 had employment experiences very similar to native-born men, although immigrants who arrived after 1970 experienced difficulties in obtaining employment. The scholar argues that the structural change of the Swedish economy made it more difficult for immigrants to obtain employment. According to the research, from the year of 1990, immigrants’ economic integration developed different pattern: the longer the immigrants had been in Sweden, the probability of their employment got better, even if, the economic integration rate remained quite weak compared to the average Swedish workers. Furthermore, those who had been in the country for more than 15 years were unable to reach a native Swedish person’s employment rate. Education from the country of origin in 1970 had a much lower effect for immigrant’s labour market integration than for natives, although later, in 1990, highly educated immigrants from Finland, Poland, former Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia had significantly increased the effect of employment with the education from the host country (Bevelander 1999. 457-461).

Dahlstedt and Bevelander (2010: 166) examined the effect of human capital in relation to employment obtained by foreign-born men and women in Sweden based on 237,675 immigrants. Researchers investigate if the employment low indicator was depended on the immigrants’ low level of human capital and whether vocational or general education was leading immigrants to a higher probability of employment and if the age of migrants (while migrating) had an impact on the employment access in Sweden. (Ibid. 166) The study outcomes emphasized that in general, immigrants had a lower employment rate than native Swedes and higher education gave higher odds of employment. In addition, the level and type of immigrants’ education have different benefits in the labour market. For most immigrant groups, general university education had a relatively small employment rate, whereas professional university education gave a higher chance of employment ((Scholars did not compare this outcome with native Swedes education type and chances of employment) (Ibid. 177). Additionally, education obtained in Sweden was an added advantage in the labour market, and the younger the immigrant who had arrived in Sweden, the higher the chances of labour market integration. Immigrants who migrated post education relied on education transferability (Ibid. 164).

Scholar Li’s (2000: 31-33) research focused on why have some Canadian immigrant groups
been more leaning to entrepreneurship, used the longitudinal immigration data based on immigrants who landed in Canada between 1980 and 1995, in total 1.5 million people, Scholar revealed that self-employed immigrants earned substantially less than salaried immigrants. Consequently, Li argued that immigrant’s economic integration process is conceptualized in the context of structure within which immigrants negotiate their positions in the labour market. Immigrants are deciding to become entrepreneurs, not because it is their first choice or because it is relatively more lucrative remuneration than employment. Instead, they face employment obstacles, which limit their opportunities and therefore turn to self-employment as an alternative. Scholar emphasized that over time, self-employed immigrants and salaried immigrants improve their earnings, although salaried immigrants can raise their earnings more, than self-employed immigrants.

Social capital has been identified as one of the most important assets in relation to labour market integration for immigrants. Research based on 6,733 people between 1991 and 1998 who had been in their current jobs for one year or less were asked what job seeking method helped them find their current job. Scholar emphasized that informal recruitment methods are common in the Swedish labour market. Acquiring a job through social networks generated more job offers and simplified the process of labour market integration for immigrants. Unfortunately, in comparison with natives, immigrants are less likely to be able to find jobs through informal methods, which could explain the difference between the employment rate among immigrants and native Swedes (Behtoui 2008: 425). The study of Behtoui (2007: 402) considers immigrants associated with a substantial social capital deficit, since immigrants are often embedded in social networks that limit their ability to gain valuable social resources, therefore social capital offers fewer opportunities to immigrants to improve their labour market outcomes.

Several studies have underlined that individuals with the same human capital characteristics of labour supply should have the same annual income, however, reality does not support this prediction, instead, it raises the question of discrimination in the Swedish labour market.

Behtoui’s (2004. 651-652) study of differences related to the labour-market attainment between young people with native-born parents and those with parents of various immigrant backgrounds, studied 22,401 individuals aged between 26-28 (who were already in Sweden before school-starting age) in order to investigate their success in the labour market. Scholar concluded that young people with immigrant parents had lower annual wage income and were at higher risk of not being employed than those with native-born parents. Scholar argues that educational attainment, gender, having children, material status, and living in a big city are all critical variables for being employed although people with immigrant parents had a low annual labour income
regardless of having the same above mentioned variables as people of native-born parents. Behtoui argues that labor market outcome differences between native and immigrant descendants indicate discriminative treatment of immigrants and their children.

The study completed by Carlsson and Rooth (2007: 717-718) emphasized that immigrants’ and native Swedes have different chances in the Swedish labour market and revealed the existence of statistical discrimination. The scholar’s created two duplicate job applications, one with a Swedish-sounding male name and one with a Middle Eastern-sounding male name and replied to 1552 job ads. The data was collected between May 2005 and February 2006 and revealed that individuals with a Swedish name had a 50% higher chance of being called for an interview and being offered a job than individuals with a foreign name. The study emphasized the evidence of the statistical discrimination and explained that impact of this differential treatment was also depended on the availability of jobs, which means that if jobs are scarce statistical discrimination effect is likely to be stronger.
4 Theories

4.1 Human Capital

Human capital encompasses education, knowledge, abilities, and skills that individuals bring to or acquire on the labour market. (Borjas 2000: 235). Scholars, Borjas (2000: 236) and Becker (1964: 30) state that human capital stock develops not only in the school but throughout the individuals’ working lives, the development of knowledge and skills is an ongoing process and investment in human capital, extend over a long period. Scholars focus on economic outcomes of human capital investments and argue that workers, who invest in schooling, are willing to give up earnings today in order to higher their income in the future (Borjas 2000: 235, 242; Becker 1964: 25). Schultz (1961: 1) states that skills and knowledge as the form of capital influence people’s effectiveness to be productive, thus investment in education improves the economic capabilities not only for the individuals with the better human capital but it can enhance the general welfare and economy for the whole nation (Ibid. 2). Scholar emphasizes that people’s productivity depend on the skills and knowledge improvement. Accordingly, by investing in education, people can expand the range of choices available for them and enhance welfare for themselves (Ibid. 2). Becker (1964: 17) describes education and training as the most critical investment, which could considerably increase the chance of employment and a higher the income. Moreover, investing in human capital improves physical and mental health, and increase the overall quality of life (Ibid. 341).

In addition to language skills and education, human capital also refers to a variety of human capabilities; ambition, intelligence, learning speed, entrepreneurial skills, aggressiveness, tenacity and so forth and their significance on the path to success. Immigrants with more human capital and capabilities are more productive in the labour market as the above-listed characteristics allude to a higher probability of investing in the host country-specific human capital, furthermore, scholar argues that human capital acquired in the destination country will facilitate skill transferability (add the value to the education, acquired in the origin country) for immigrants. (Chiswick 2000: 4).

In migration studies, the human capital theory has been widely used for interpreting the economic integration of immigrants in the destination country. The above-mentioned theory based on two main hypotheses: A) People’s possibilities are dependent on their human capital and B) People (namely immigrants) conscious of their individual skills and potentials invest in the expansion of their human capital to improve their future financial well-being (Van Tubergen 2006: 15; Schultz 1961: 7).

Scholar Chiswick (1978: 900) explains that human capital theory through the assimilation
theory, which means, labour market position of the immigrants in the destination country would improve by investing in host country-specific human capital. Several scholars state that those who know the local language will have better chances to obtain a job and will generally be more productive (Schultz 1961: 8; Chiswick and Miller 2014: 4-5). Scholars as Chiswick and Miller (2014: 5) view the language skills as one of the most significant forms of human capital, which is useful in the process of job acquisition and advantageous assets in the labour market of the host country.

4.2 Economic Integration

European research project INTERACT defines the immigrants’ integration as allowing them to participate in the host society same as natives. Integration is a collaboration between two parties, host society and immigrants with the same aim, built a cohesive society (Pasetti 2014:1)

Regards to economic integration, Scholar Wadensjö (1972: 242) explains this term as the status position or the relationship between jobs and individuals’ qualifications and states that economic integration means that immigrants or immigrant groups have the employment and income that correlates with immigrants education, age, and sex.

In the theoretical perspective of the economic integration, having the income is commonly considered as a sign of economic integration. Although Carlson et al. (2012: 73) specify that economic integration is not only about having a job but what kind of job. A migrant with the right to live and work in the country, has the same opportunities as everyone else in the labor market, Accordingly, the economic integration is discussed in terms of immigrants’ involvement in the labor market, having the same career opportunities and wages as the native workers with identical education (Amit 2012: 1289).

Frank Van Tubergen (2006: 73) states that economic integration indicates the degree of economic equality between immigrants and natives. The first step towards economic integration in the host country is signified by immigrants’ participation in the labour market and their acquired job position. Moreover, the economic integration of immigrants is stronger when they have higher participation rates, lower unemployment levels, better jobs, and a higher income (Van Tubergen 2006: 7).

Borjas (1994: 1667) argues that immigrants’ economic integration and a higher level of the productivity in the labor market is depended on their adaptability to conditions in the host country labor market. Which means that if immigrants lack the skills that employers demand, they will find it difficult to adapt to the host country labor market, which will affect their economic integration. Scholar Aydemir (2011: 473) while discussing economic integration’s theoretical perspective also
emphasizes the skill importance and suggests that the low demand of the specific skills in the host country labour market may result in a mismatch between education demand and supply, which triggers challenge of the economic integrations for immigrants. Diaz (1993. 88-89) states that labour market experience after migration has an important effect on the acquisition of language abilities and refers to the strong positive correlation between language abilities and the level of occupational positions in Sweden.

Bauder (2005: 83) argues that immigrants embody a habitus of their origin country, which may not match the rules of the labour market in their host country. Being unfamiliar with the rules of the host labour market, immigrants may fail to navigate the labour market efficiently and are unable to compete with native workers who are aware and observant of the rules. Bourdieu (1998. 141-145) says that the relationship between rules and habitus is not born out of necessity. Rather, they are strategic ordering principles that benefit those who create and obey them, which means, knowing the host country rules and act upon them is not an obligatory, rather good strategy and certainly beneficial for the immigrants for finding the job. Thus labour market adjustment could be easier for immigrants from countries that have similarities to the host countries (Bengtsson et.al 2005: 43; 16; Dribe and Lundh 2008:334 Bevelander 1999:448)

Scholars as Chiswick and Miller (2011: 115-116); Diaz (1993: 2) emphasize that, learning and focusing on participation in the host society, immigrants would experience changes in their occupational status. Learning opportunities would improve their status in the labour market and afford them the ability to move higher in occupational ranks. Diaz (1993: 83) also explains the theoretical interconnection between the motivation for improving one’s socioeconomic position, human capital, and ability to mobilize social resources and states that those variables increase the level of economic integration for immigrants. Moreover, investment in education could facilitate cultural and social learning, which are important factors for optimizing labour market opportunities and overcoming a variety of barriers to gain entrance to the labour market (Ibid. 88).

### 4.3 Social Capital

Several scholars have considered the concept of social capital as instrumental value, well functional, and a pragmatic source of benefits. Lin’s (2001: 6) premise behind the concept of social capital is rather simple and straightforward: investment in social relations with expected returns. The author claims that people engage in interactions and networking to produce profits.

Bourdieu (1986: 16) presents three fundamental appearances of capital: economic capital, which is directly exchangeable into money; cultural capital, which could also be convertible into
economic capital and may be transformed into educational qualifications; and social capital, created through social connections which could be converted into economic capital and may be transformed into a title of nobility. The scholar states that the accumulation of material capital can be presented in an immaterial form as cultural or social capital and vice versa. Erickson (2001: 128-129) underlines the connection among different forms of capital and reflects that human capital could lead people to greater social network diversity. In addition, social capital could explain the effect of human capital, while individuals with better human capital generally get both better jobs and greater network diversity.

Portes (1998: 21) specifies that social capital is accumulated through an individual’s sociability and describes social capital as a source of influence and power, which in monetary forms could be understood as holding stock or a bank account. Bourdieu (1986: 21) states that social capital in the form of membership to a certain group provides each of its members with collectively owned capital, a “credential” which entitles them to a credit. The intensity of the social capital depends on the size of the network of connections that an individual can mobilize. Lin and Dumin (1986: 365-366) view the social network as a hierarchical structure, like that of a pyramid, in which resources and access to resources are embedded. Thus, a person who occupied a higher position on the pyramid has greater control of social resources, and individuals with certain personal characteristics have better access to social resources and use their own social capital to gain valued resources such as wealth, status, and power.

While characterizing social capital, scholars Bourdieu (1986: 22) and Lin (2001: 9) state that a network of social contacts is accumulated through relationships and these relationships are reproduced through exchanging mutual knowledge and recognition. Thus, profit generated from the membership is based on solidarity. Bourdieu (1986. 22-23) also adds that the reproduction of social capital and the creation of a social network requires a persistent effort of sociability, which implies an investment of time and energy. Lin (2001. 6-7) says that resources of social networks will enhance the outcomes for members of social groups through information, influence, social credentials, and reinforcement. Networking facilitates information flow and can provide an individual with useful information about opportunities and choices otherwise not available. Portes (1998 :21) states that “social ties can bring about greater control over wayward behaviour and provide privileged access to resources” (Ibid 21). Moreover, being a member of a social group, which shares several similar interests, can maintain mental health among group members (Lin 2001: 7).

Granovetter (1973: 1362) emphasizes interpersonal ties and states that the strength of the ties depends on time, emotional intensity, and effort of the people connected to each other. The
stronger the ties which connect the individuals, the more similar they are in various ways. Consequently, The scholar identifies friendship as a densely interconnected network of which the members have close ties. In comparison, acquaintanceship and collegiality were characterized as a loose network the members of which have weak ties (Ibid. 1368). Granovetter defines weak ties as a better source of information whereas close and dense ties are more likely to limit the information outside of the circle. Weak ties create more bridges, connect members of different groups, facilitate the flow of information, and even provide mobility opportunities from one weakly connected group to another (Ibid. 1365; 1371). The researcher describes organizations as the source of weak ties and argues that having personal networks with many acquaintances means that an individual gets more information about job openings. Therefore, this facilitates the search for jobs and increases the probability of success in finding employment. (Ibid. 1371)

Fernandez et.al. (2000) expounds on the recruitment method based on social capital from the employer’s point of view and states that employers perceive a worker’s social connections as a resource and use it as an access point to a pool of better-qualified applicants, better job-employee matches, and create natural mentoring of new hires, which reduces screening costs while increasing financial returns (Ibid. 1351).

### 4.4 Discrimination

The Oxford dictionary defines the term discrimination as “the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex” 6.

Labour market discrimination theories examine racial, ethnic, and gender differences across labour force participation, occupational attainment, and earnings between native and immigrant workers. Discrimination theories suggest that human capital variables are insufficient to explain the persistent differences in economic integration between different people (Sullivan 2005: 213; Bengtsson: 42). Rydgren (2004: 698) also supports the idea that discrimination might be a more plausible explanation for the disadvantages that certain groups of immigrant’s experiences in the labour market. Discrimination theory could explain the remaining factors, which have been left unexplained by models focusing on human capital characteristics. Rydgren explains that there are three models of discrimination: statistical discrimination, institutional discrimination and network effect and spillover discrimination. Statistical discrimination is usually based on stereotypical

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6 https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/discrimination
thinking and it usually occurs when the decision is based on an employer’s belief about common characteristics or about the group in which the individual belongs to. Regardless of whether those ideas are true or not, statistical discrimination is always stereotypical (Ibid). Being stereotypical may hence be a “logical” way for employers to save time and resources in the decision-making process (Ibid. 698; 708). Statistical discrimination also arises when employers lack enough information about an applicant’s skills and productivity, when education is acquired abroad, or employers facing the difficulty contacting references (Ibid. 708).

Furthermore, the network effect and spillover discrimination could arise due to an ethnically homogeneous network, which is based on network recruitment (Rydgren 2004: 698). It is stated by the author that individuals who can employ or promote others have a higher probability of choosing someone from the same network and view this mechanism as social disintegration. Moreover, people interact most with people belonging to the same ethnic group. This maintains an ethnically homogeneous network, which leads to create the stereotypes towards immigrants and difficulties finding a job for them. Rydgren argues that discrimination usually takes place without a recruiter’s deliberate intention (Ibid). Andersson and Osman (2008: 30) stress that knowledge and inclusion in the labour market are not always free from power relations and describe the concept of “gatekeepers” who maintain the status quo by excluding immigrants from competing with the “insiders” (members of organizations) while recruitment. Rydgren (2004: 711) argues that during job recruitment, “gatekeepers” are likely to choose someone belonging to the same network.

Institutional discrimination is based on the theory that certain rules, instructions, or everyday practices within a social system have intended or unintended discriminatory consequences. An example of this is if neutral requirements for recruitment or working practice affect certain ethnic groups more than others. Sometimes, jobs require good spoken and written Swedish, which can be deliberately motivated (Rydgren 2004: 698). Reyes (2006: 12) explains that the concept of structural/institutional discrimination is based on societies institutionalized rules and norms, which are sometimes rooted as habits of ethnic and cultural basis. Structural discrimination contributes to creating categorization on an ethnic basis and facilitates inequality by applying similar rules to groups that lack equal conditions.

Lappalainen (2005: 445-447) argues that structural/institutional discrimination in the Swedish labour market is due to a standardized perspective on competence, which comprehends Swedish qualifications and “Swedishness” as a norm. Swedish credentials are not only perceived as educational credentials and knowledge but also as a socio-cultural skill which reduces suspicion in potential employers who believe that education and socio-cultural skills will help the employee cope with Swedish people. Scholars Reyes and Wingborg (2002: 67), Schuster, Desiderio, and
Urso (2013:162), and Rydgren (2004: 707) characterize the competencies currently in demand from Swedish working life, such as Sweden-specific and culture, and describe Sweden-specific human capital as “something that Swedish people obviously and non-Western immigrants obviously do not have” (Reyes and Wingborg 2002: 67). Scholars also argued that demand for these competencies originates from the attempt to express stereotypical notions of “Swedishness” (Ibid).
5 Methodology

5.1 Philosophical Standpoint

The study is based on relativism and social constructivist points of view. According to relativism, we cannot examine our observations independently without considering the environment in which we analyse, classify, and recognize our observations; our observations will always be relative and interdependent on the structures and paradigms in which we collect our data (6 & Bellamy 2012: 55). Relativism claims that there is no rational basis for judging one perspective over another because truth, justice, and rationality are relative to time and circumstance (May 2011: 16).

Social constructivism does not reflect the objective world. Instead, everything we know, and experience is influenced by values, ideologies, religious beliefs and so forth (Given 2008: 117). As the study is based on different experiences and perceptions, the collected data will be interdependent on the respondent’s experiences. This study is based on subjectivity, which will determine the course as well as the positioning of the questions that the participants are asked and will also affect the analysis of the research. May (2011: 13) defines subjectivity as a meaning to which people are assigned to their environments. Researchers cannot comprehend the world independently from people’s interpretations and therefore the only thing, which can be determined from a subjectivist view, is how people interpret facts.

5.2 Qualitative and Inductive Approach

The presented thesis is based on a qualitative research design. The qualitative method has a direct connection with the “real world”, whether through an examination of daily lives or interaction with a group. This method not only focuses on evaluating facts and events but also explains the intention behind how people portray and contextualize specific experiences (May 2002: 199). The scholar Given (2008: xxix) also shares a similar view about the qualitative research design and states that qualitative research is created to search for the human elements on a given topic, where an individual’s thoughts, experiences, and feelings are examined to understand how these people experience the world.
The qualitative method is therefore the most applicable method for this research as the study approach enables investigation labour market experiences of love migrants, understanding employment of their human capital in Sweden, and the effect of social capital in relation to labour market integration. The qualitative research method grants the presented thesis the ability to acquire in-depth and relevant information that the thesis aims to answer.

Due to the research method, the study is limited to providing knowledge regarding all the love migrants in the labour market and therefore the research outcomes cannot be generalized. Moreover, considering the geographic constraints, interviews only include inhabitants of the Skåne region in Sweden. Hence, the outcomes may similarly be region-specific. Instead, the primary focus of the research is analysing smaller scale observations based on the love migrant’s interviews, their experiences, stories, and perceptions concerning their own economic integration in Sweden.

The study uses the inductive research approach, meaning that the respondents and their life experiences create the data that determines the trajectory of the study outcomes. Inductive research commonly starts with a question, without prompting a specific response (6 and Bellamy, 2012: 76). The inductive approach is most accurate when guided by empirical observations and conceptual formulations. Furthermore, the inductive approach introduces a fact upon which consequent theories, explanations, and interpretations reflect on the proposed facts that are built (Given 2008: 15). The theoretical framework used in the study is similarly constructed and built upon the analysis of the material lead by the themes discussed by the respondents themselves.

### 5.3 Sampling Technique

“Sampling may be defined as the selection of a subset of a population for inclusion in a study” (Daniel 2012: 1). The researcher’s mission is to represent the experiences of the respondents through interviews containing enough detail to understand the issues they reflect (Seidman 2005: 51). To recruit love migrants for the study, a summary of the research and its purpose was created and posted on Sweden’s largest online forum. Despite the enormous potential the forum holds, the responses received from love migrants was insufficient. Another outlet for gathering resources was social media. An advertisement was posted in a group intended for immigrants which served as an online platform for meeting foreigners in Sweden.

The interest from this platform was overwhelming, however taking the study delimitations into consideration, only four participants were selected from the social media group. Thus, the
study relied on people who came forward and responded to the advertisement, as well as the people found through the author’s social group and assessed as appropriate participants for the study and who gladly consented to be interviewed.

A total of five respondents were chosen, all with varying lengths of residence in Sweden.

5.4 Interviews

“Effective interviews need to guide respondents through a maze of life experiences in an orderly fashion and within a limited period of time” (May 2002: 204). A semi-structured interview method is used for this research. Semi-structured interviews allow respondents to answer the questions in their own words as opposed to what a standardized interview would grant, yet simultaneously maintain a more structured framework in comparison to an unstructured interview (May 2011: 135). Questions in a semi-structured interview can be based on a variety of themes, and the interviewer can investigate what is beyond the initial answers and establish a dialogue with the interlocutor (May 2011: 134).

The interviews were characterized by an open dialogue, beginning with the examination of the respondent’s arrival in Sweden, going back to the interviewee’s decision to move to Sweden. The interviews were conducted with the intention of examining the participant’s experiences in relation to their economic integration in the host country. Open dialogue granted the opportunity to explore interesting “turnouts” and decided which subjects to explore and target more extensively, as well as which themes needed to be ultimately eliminated. Moreover, additional questions about newly discovered themes and subjects provided elaborate answers, which eliminated the possibility of misinterpretation or misunderstanding.

Additionally, an interview guide was created and used during the interviews to create a rough outline of the themes and questions intended to be covered in the study. However, the interview guide was not used as a strict instruction manual which could determine or restrict the flow of the semi-structured interview and its rich possibility to uncover some interesting revelations. Consequently, the interview guide was modified over time to explore or check the relevance of the subjects that were discovered and discussed in previous interviews.
5.5 Online Call

Face-to-face interviews were used within the study, as well as an online call via a social media platform with 2 of the study participants. One of the aspects of reaching potential respondents online is that it allows the researcher to connect with participants around the globe (Given 2008: 456). In the interest of protecting the anonymity of the respondents and to grant the respondents full control, all the online interviews were recorded without a video. According to Hine (2005: 40), understanding the respondent could be negated by a lack of physical presence, as in such cases examination of gestures, nodding, body language, etc. is limited. Despite the risk of compromising the validity of the study by the interviewer and the interviewees not being in the same physical space, online interviews did not seem to jeopardise the understanding of the study participants. All the interesting themes were covered and sufficiently elaborated on with each participant. These themes included, education obtained in the country of origin and in Sweden, their language proficiency, as well as their experiences and stories in the job searching process in the host country. All the interviews were recorded by a digital recorder and transcribed manually.

Face-to-face interviews were evaluated to have lasted approximately 2 hours, however, online interviews were nearly 20 minutes shorter than the former. Irvine et.al (2012: 103) emphasizes that the participants in telephone interviews tended to provide relatively less detailed and elaborate responses. It should be noted that another possible reason as to why the online interviews were shorter than the face-to-face interviews is that respondents were more focused on the questions and the subject at hand compared to the face-to-face interview respondents, who felt more enabled to jump to irrelevant topics, engage in small talk, jokes, or relay stories of their love migrant comrades. It is also noted that conversations with unknown interviewers can create anxiety in respondents and reduce the motivation and incentive to provide elaborate responses (Irvine et. al. 2012: 90). Although the participation in the research was voluntary, interviewees who engaged in the study, displayed high interest towards the study topic and openly discussed their experiences. Moreover, none of the interviewees seemed to feel uncomfortable during the interviews. On the contrary, a few of the respondents confessed that they had never discussed their experiences in such depth and were able subsequently to view their story from a new perspective.

5.6 Validity and Reliability

The intention with this research was to acquire internal validity within the study. Internal validity supports a researcher’s assumptions and explains the study outcomes by a specific causal factor (6
& Bellamy 2012: 22). Internal validity measures the degree to which the conclusion is designed, if the research defeated the biases, and if the study is free of confusion (Ibid: 259). In other words, internal validity considers if research is relevant to its aim and given topic.

All the study participants illustrated the same main themes to emphasize the important subjects and create the intended descriptive flow towards the aim of the study. Thus, all the ambiguous answers, which could lead to several interpretations, were revisited at the end of the interview and clarified to accentuate the true meaning.

In this thesis, the findings are presented side by side, this method gives the reader the possibility to simultaneously observe the interrelations between the material and analysis, account clarity, and credibility of the material. Additionally, placing the analysis and study findings side by side prevents repetitiveness.

Reliability is concerned with the replicability and consistency of findings. This refers to whether other researchers performing similar research discover similar interpretations and results of the study (Thyer 2001. 273-274). The participant’s described experiences are determined by several aspects: structure and process of the interview; the effect of the interviewer to the respondents; and even the setting of the interview (Seidman 2005: 22). Accordingly, attaining the exact same outcomes in a qualitative study will be challenged. However, “problems with internal reliability are resolved by providing the verbatim account of participants” (Thyer 2001: 277). In other words, staying close to the empirical data, using the precise description of the phrases stating the direct quotes from participants conversations would help the study to build reliability (Ibid). Furthermore, the original transcription is maintained, interviews are transcribed and coded very accurately, the style of the conversation is kept how respondents explained the facts and which provides overall transparency and presupposes the replicability in case of similar research with the same sample material.

5.7 Ethical Guidelines

Ethical principles and guidelines tend to focus on protecting participants from harm or, in some cases, on empowering them (Somekh and Lewin 2004: 58). As a researcher, I acknowledged my power and responsibility towards respondents. Confidentiality grants people the ability to talk with confidence and allows them to decline permission for the publication of any of the material which could abuse them in any way (Somekh and Lewin 2004: 57). In addition, all the participants remained anonymous. Nevertheless, most of the interviewees willingly revealed their identity.
Moreover, any detail which could reveal an interviewees identity was changed, apart from their age and country of origin.

After the participant’s verbal consent, a short summary and possible questions were sent and discussed. The interviewees were granted absolute freedom to ask additional questions about me or the research. Moreover, all the study participants were informed that they could refuse to answer any question. However, none of the respondents felt a reason to not answer any of the questions. Additionally, all the participants were informed that they could withdraw their interview from the study at any point of the research development.

As the research subject is economic integration, the question about income had to be asked. As a researcher, I felt uncomfortable asking questions of income and hence the question was always preceded by a small introduction about how distressing this question was for me and served as an apology for the non-ethical question.

5.8 Role of the Researcher

Being a love migrant, myself determined my choice of the research subject. Experiencing migration helped me choose the right format for the research topic and creating the relevant questions. “Being in the same boat” influenced the understanding of the subject and the development of the research, although at the same time it made me aware of my biases.

Scholars Somekh and Lewin (2004: 43), point out the researcher’s symbolic violence and the importance of its acknowledgment. Violence could be considered as power, social status, or knowledge used by the researcher to manipulate the interview. To prevent manipulation, the researcher could adjust as a listener and adapt according to a respondent’s behaviour to avoid leading the respondent.

To sidestep my biases and avoid my experiences influencing my research or influencing the answers, I took precautions. While working on the paper, I was determined to be as objective as possible to avoid leading the respondents to a preferable answer. Instead, I was open to any kind of interview development. I acknowledged my biases and, to remain relatively objective and kept myself aware to not force the research outcomes in any way.

As all the participants were curious about the reason for my choosing love migrants as my research topic, I introduced myself as a love migrant before the interview took place. Consequently, interviewees spoke to me as a friend rather than a stranger and this removed restraints and mistrust from informants. Furthermore, I have never considered my gender as the
hinder of the research, neither as any help. I do not think that my gender affected the research outcomes in one or another way, or facilitated safety and tryst for informants, nonetheless, I would point on my open and extrovert personal characteristics, which helped me create an atmosphere where every interviewee felt comfortable and safe. The hazard of biases and manipulating the interview was much higher with participants who I personally knew for a while (Kadir and Katya). To not use my personal knowledge about their life stories, I interviewed those informants as if I had never met or heard about them before. This method also gave me the possibility to avoid using my knowledge about the participants and evade any kind of misunderstanding of the facts.
6 Results and Discussion

6.1 Participant Introductions

Emily is a 40-year-old woman from the US. She met her future husband while traveling in Sweden and moved to Sweden 7 years ago. She has 2 master’s degrees, one in Data Science, and the second in Research and Information Science. After residing in Sweden, Emily studied at a Swedish vocational high school. Her annual income is approximately 480 000 Swedish krona before taxes, which is above the national average of 448 800 Swedish krona a year for women. She was able to get employment suited to her education after more than 5 years of residency in Sweden.

Denise is from Hawaii and is 31 years old. In 2008, she came to Sweden as a Political Science master’s program student and met her boyfriend while studying. After finishing her studies, she moved back to the US and started a job as a congressional aide for one of the congresswomen. Later, she returned to Sweden and has been here a total of 8 years. She was able to find suitable employment after residing in Sweden for 2 years. Her annual income is below average at 372 000 Swedish krona before taxes.

Kadir moved to Sweden 22 years ago from Turkey and is 50 years old. He has a bachelor’s degree in Geology Engineering from his home country and finished his bachelor’s degree in Microelectronics and a master’s program in Electronic Design in the KTH-Royal Institute of Technology. Kadir owns a family business, the annual turnover of which is 2,5 million Swedish krona before taxes, which is well above the national average of 543 600 Swedish krona per year for men (Statistics Sweden 2017). He was able to acquire employment suited to his education after 10 years of residency in Sweden.

Katya is a 34-year-old woman from Poland and moved to Sweden 4 years ago. She has a bachelor’s degree in Organizational Management and a master’s degree in Human Resource Management. All her education was acquired in Poland. Katya is employed and works in the field of human resources. Her annual wage is approximately 360 000 Swedish krona before taxes and below the national average. She was able to get employment suited to her education after 2,5 years of residency in Sweden.

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Nathan is a 52-year-old man from the United States who moved to Sweden 14 years ago. Nathan has a bachelor’s degree in Political Science and a master’s degree in Business Administration from the U.S. His annual income is above the national average at approximately 600,000 Swedish krona. Nathan works as a freelance economic consultant. He was able to get employment suited to his education after more than 9 years of residency in Sweden.

6.2 “Foreign Human capital” - finding a job with the education acquired in the country of origin “Are you really trying?!?”

In response to the questions focused on the respondent’s university education acquired in their country of origin and their search for employment in Sweden, we learned about the participant’s struggle in the Swedish labour market. Moreover, finding a highly skilled job shortly after beginning one’s residence in Sweden has been perceived as somewhat of a dream for the immigrants. Nathan was one of those who felt “pushed away” by the labour market.

Nathan: “Everything that I had worked to build in the US, was now gone […] People who looked at my CV, read my education, my work experience and companies I worked for, said: - Oh, that’s not gonna be a problem to find a job here at all! But it was a huge problem! […] I was sending out hundreds of applications for English speaking jobs and getting basically no interviews. I sent out almost 280 job applications over a 3-year period, I would expect to get more than two interviews from that. […] I had 3 different coaches on the Arbetsförmedlingen and neither of them was able to tell me why I could not get an interview, except they thought that I accomplished too much and was overqualified. I had to dumb down my CV and make my career look not as good.”

As Nathan indicated, despite his education and career in the U.S, he found it hard to match his knowledge and skills to the Swedish labour market system which correlates Chiswick and Miller’s (2011: 115-116) previous studies about immigrants who are overqualified. They state that an educational mismatch tends to result in the over-education of immigrants, which raises the probability for immigrant professional downgrading or possible overeducation for the jobs they seek. It appears that Nathan’s achievements were perceived as somewhat unsuitable for the Swedish labour market, which hindered Nathan’s job attainment. This assumption could be
supported by the view that human capital is often country-specific and not a perfectly portable resource. Thus since most immigrants’ lack knowledge about the functioning of the host country labour market, as well as language fluency, they may find it hard to translate and adjust the educational credentials accumulated in their countries of origin to the labour demand of the receiving countries (Chiswick, 1978: 900; Bevelander 1999: 448).

Nathan found himself overqualified on the Swedish labour market, which consequently challenged his ability to find a job. In comparison, Emily experienced the hardly transferable nature of her education.

Emily: “Even if I had a great education and Swedes understand English, it was never good enough for employers - at least for the companies I was applying for. The treatment was, ‘Well, you don’t have the degree in Sweden, so we are not gonna let you have even unpaid internship.’”

Emily clearly outlined the Swedish job market’s attitude towards her education which corresponds with Aydemir’s (2011: 472) theory, that one of the factors that make relevancy of immigrant human capital could be human capital characteristics, their low demand in the host country labour market may result in skill transferability problems, or a mismatch between supply and demand. Hence, even if the immigrant’s education is relevant for the host country, its low demand could cause the low transferable nature of the education. Accordingly, the human capital acquired in an origin country, which has low demand in the host country triggers transferability problems for immigrants and it is harder to adjust for the host country labour market’s demands. Like Emily, Kadir’s story about his education’s transferability also reinforces scholar Aydemir’s (2011) theoretical viewpoint. After moving to Sweden, Kadir was able to get a job in Kiruna, although, considering the job’s undesirable location, he refused the job offer and discovered that his education was not useful or even valid in the capital city.

Kadir: “They (refers to the Swedish labour office - Arbetsförmedlingen) proposed me to go to Kiruna and start the job there because geology engineers were needed up north. My girlfriend lived in Stockholm, so I refused to go to Kiruna and started to study from the beginning because I found out my education was not valid in Sweden.”

Kadir’s example highlighted the fact that the high demand of the workforce and certain skills could reduce or completely avoid the education transferability issues, although, under the circumstances
of low demand of the human capital and arisen mismatch between supply and demand, human capital transferability problems were inevitable. Furthermore, after refusing the job offer, Kadir found out that to be able to study in a Swedish university, he had to redo his high school qualifications as the Swedish educational system did not recognize his credentials in English, Chemistry, and Physics.

Kadir: “Even though I graduated in Turkey in English, they asked me to complete the gymnasium level of English as well as Chemistry and Physics […] I had a good knowledge of the subjects, I knew almost better than the teachers (laughing) […] I just lost a lot of time studying those subjects again.”

Kadir’s emphasis on the demands of the Swedish educational system and bureaucracy pressure describes bureaucracy as human capital mobility obstruction. His example shows that educational certificates obtained in developing nations may be difficult to transfer to a first-world country for the bureaucratic barrier.

Bureaucracy and its hindering role were the reason that it took 4 years for Kadir to finish all those subjects to gain access to Swedish university education. Kadir also emphasized that while taking the recommendations from the student counsellor about his potential choices for improving his education mobility, he did not receive accurate information about his options.

Kadir: “The student counsellor was not judging my situation properly, […] she did not offer me to use my bachelor education and study master’s degree right away. I learned that I had this possibility when I was already studying my masters at the university.”

Kadir’s experience proves that knowledge about functioning of the host country labour market is important, knowing host country rules and norms as well as the regulations is important in relation to immigrants economic integration. This emphasis correlated with Bauder’s (2005: 83) statement, that not knowing the host country rules and regulations, immigrants may fail to navigate on the labour market efficiently. Due to bureaucracy, a lack of information about educational possibilities, and labour market operations, Kadir spent 10 years studying in Sweden. He believed that studying from scratch was an extreme move, although he acknowledged the importance of education acquired in Sweden.
The idea of studying at a Swedish university to adjust to the labour market demands and fill the gap between the acquired competencies from the country of origin and required competencies for the Swedish labour market, was familiar for Kadir and other respondents:

Kadir: “It is useful to complete the previous education with Swedish education; academic knowledge also provides some guideline for labour market adaptation.”

Nathan: “…I actually took the Swedish competency test to see where I fit in with my competency, that maybe I would go back to school and study.”

Emily: “I ended up studying vocational education […] The main point of starting studies was just to show the employer that I had a Swedish degree. I thought, ‘Fine, they want this?! I’ll give it to them.’”

Kadir, Emily, and Nathan’s emphasis demonstrated that all of them acknowledged the value of education in relation to labour market adjustment, which demonstrates Becker’s (1993: 17) view of education and training as the most important investment which could considerably increase the chance of employment and the likelihood of a higher income. Thus correspond scholars Borjas (2000: 235, 242), Becker (1964: 25) and Schultz (1961: 1) view who state that workers who invest in schooling, are willing to give up earnings today in order to higher their income in the future (Borjas 2000: 235, 242; Becker 1964: 25; Schultz 1961: 1) Interviewees emphasis is also supported by Chiswick and Miller’s (2011: 115-116) previous study statement, that the destination country’s human capital would increase skill transferability. Thus, supporting Van Tubergen’s (2006: 15) belief that immigrants invest in their own human capital to improve their future financial position.

Meanwhile, Emily’s words, “I’ll give it to them” highlights her attitude towards her decision about studying one more time, which she felt it was completely unnecessary and she studied only because she felt the demand for it from the Swedish labour market. Emily’s reflection about the demand for Swedish relevant human capital could be explained through Lappalainen’s (2005. 445-447) argument, that structural/institutional discrimination in the Swedish labour market is due to a standardized perspective on competences, which comprehends the Swedish qualifications and “Swedishness as a norm”. Hence, adding a Swedish education to an initial foreign degree, is more likely to lead to success in the labour market. The author argues that Swedish credentials are not only perceived as educational credentials and knowledge, but also as a socio-cultural skill which
reduces suspicion in potential employers who believe that education and socio-cultural skills will help the employee to adapt and interact better with Swedish people. Accordingly, for Emily, investment in Swedish education is not triggered by its need, but rather its demand, and education has been acquired to follow the employer’s requirements and reduce employee scepticism towards her.

Furthermore, Nathan’s story also corresponds to Lappalainen’s (2005: 445-447) argument about “Swedishness as a norm.”

Nathan: “I remember at one international company, I applied to 20 different jobs over the year. Jobs I was qualified for. Never, ever got even an interview. One day, I found their company ad and an introduction of the new employers in the Swedish newspaper “Sydsvenskan”. Among listed 24 new employee names, there was no non-Swedish name! I don’t understand how they think to build the global brand and be competitive if they are not going to include people from all around the world?! Maybe all these 24 people had global experience, lived, and worked outside of Sweden, but it’s hard to believe.”

Nathan’s statement also correlates with Rydgren (2004: 698), Andersson, and Osman’s (2008: 30) approach to statistical discrimination and its specific indication of the “gatekeeper position”. Rydgren (2004: 698) states that individuals can employ or promote others having a higher probability of choosing someone from the same network and ethnic group. Andersson and Osman (2008: 30) argue that “gatekeepers” maintain the status quo by excluding immigrants competing with “insiders” (the members of organizations) by singling out certain sectors/vocations immigrants can occupy or changing the criteria for qualification required to access certain employment. Accordingly, if the gatekeeper has strong biases, “Sweden-specific social competence” could be a crucially important variable for immigrants to acquire employment.

Moreover, as Nathan underlined, he was not able to find a non-Swedish employee in the list and pointed to the discriminatory treatment from the Swedish employers towards non-Swedish workers. His statement about the discrimination points to the relevance of the structural/institutional discrimination theory. Rydgren (2004: 698) and Reyes (2006: 12) state that structural discrimination contributes to creating categorization on an ethnic basis. Which means, employers would prefer to hire Swedes. Accordingly, Nathans suspicion about the possible discrimination could be explained through the Reyes and Wingborg (2002: 67), Schuster, Desiderio, and Urso (2013: 162), and Rydgren’s (2004: 707) view in which they characterize the competencies that are currently demanded by Swedish working life as Sweden-specific or
something that only Swedish people could have, otherwise known as, “Swedish codes.” Accordingly, if employers stress the importance of “Swedish codes”, hiring only Swedish workers could be expected decision.

While discussing finding high-skilled job in Sweden, it is reasonable to wonder if it is easier for highly skilled love migrants to find jobs which require low qualifications.

Katya: “I just needed to work for a few hours in the week while I was studying Swedish. I was searching for extra jobs, which did not need the education […] I was sending my CV everywhere, changing it hundreds of times, nobody even answered my emails. […] I think because I did not have the work experience in Sweden and nobody could give me the references, it was the problem for the employers.”

Katya’s emphasis indicates that obtaining employment did not depend on her education or skills. Even if Katya wished to acquire a low skilled job, her ability to convince the employers to hire her was limited. Katya’s statement about lacking work experience in Sweden supports Rydgren’s (2004: 698; 708) view, who argues that statistical discrimination, could be a “rational” way for employers to economize the decision-making process. A stereotypical judgment also arises when employers have insufficient information about an applicant’s skills as well as when education is acquired abroad.

While discussing the troubles that the immigrants with “foreign education” face in obtaining employment, several other questions were raised. For instance, how the job search could progress for those who had already studied in Sweden? Unfortunately, a job with a degree acquired in Sweden was not a guarantee of immediate employment. Denise, who studied for her master’s degree in Sweden, shared her experience:

Denise: “I thought, I have a master’s degree from Sweden and I worked for congresswomen in the US […] it was a fairly prestigious job, with this kind of background and degree from here, (Sweden), I’m sure I’ll find something. […] I finished all Swedish language courses in a year, […] I was surprised and irritated when finding the job was not as easy as I thought it was gonna be (laughs). […] Mostly, I was applying for the jobs which were asking for English speaking personnel […] I had experience with office work and I am excellent in English, but I was not called, not even for an interview. […] Jobs which demanded the Swedish language fluency, I kind of understand if I did not get called
for the interview, but for those in English, I was mad, why would I not be called for an interview?”

Denise mentions that finding the job not only took a longer time than she and her boyfriend expected but drew a wedge between the couple:

Denise: “At some point, my boyfriend once asked me, ‘Are you even trying?!’ He thought that the problem was not employers, but it was me not doing more to get a job. I was even calling to check the status of my application and they would tell me that the job was already filled... I did not know what more I could do.”

As Denise acquired education in Sweden, which also generated the part of her Sweden-specific human capital, her story did not support the human capital theory. Rather, Rydgren’s (2004: 698) view of statistical discrimination by making decisions about recruitment based on stereotypical, often prejudiced, beliefs rather than on individual merits. Moreover, the fact that Denise’s partner questioned her motivation of finding a job reveals that her native-born Swedish boyfriend had a hard time believing the existence of prejudice and discrimination in the Swedish labour market, thus he had never experienced the same discrimination before.

Even though all the participants were highly educated, their stories of labour market incorporation differed. Nathan was overqualified in Sweden, Emily’s education was not enough for the Swedish labour market, and Kadir’s education completely lost value through education mobility and bureaucracy pressure. Despite the differences between their experience of finding a job, all interviewees alluded to anxiety. Based on interviewees stories, we could conclude that migration can have a negative effect on an individual’s career, especially in the short term, which results in a disadvantageous labour market outcome for immigrants. The immigrants could experience a period of unemployment as well as a downward adjustment in terms of labour market rewards once employed. As disclosed at the beginning of the study, after several years of residency in Sweden, all the participants had adjusted themselves and integrated into the Swedish labour market. The next chapter will focus on the participant’s search for their jobs, their adjustment and integration process, and its importance on the Swedish labour market.
6.3 Language and the ability of adaptation as a tool for economic integration

“When in Rome, do as the Romans do”.

While discussing life in Sweden and experiences of acquiring a job and framing the discussion through the concepts of motivation and adaptability, I noted that most participants had chosen to understand Swedish culture, society, and language to integrate into the Swedish labour market. For Kadir, Denise, Nathan, and Katya their integration started with the general endurance of the culture. The respondents underlined the importance of understanding the Swedish social and work environment. Denise disclosed the significance of the origin country in relation to adapting to environment. Kadir’s way of integration started with copying the Swedish lifestyle:

Kadir: “Wherever you go, you need to adapt yourself for the society. […] I tried to dress like standard Swedish people and copied whatever people were doing, started to read the newspaper in the metro as others did. […] I learned a million things this way; society, language…”

Nathan: “You should at least fit in and try to be a part of Swedish society. […] Once I learned enough about how the different workers interact with each other in the labour market and what they were looking for, it got easier for me to adapt. […] If you take the time and effort to learn how the system functions you can create or find a place for yourself on the job market.”

Denise: “You should have a feel for the culture and general temperament, how one should behave, and things can be easier or harder depending on where are you coming from and also who you are as a person.”

Start from Denice, she pays attention to the immigrant’s origin country and personal characteristics her words, “who are you as a person” point to the importance of persons individual characteristics, which reinforces Chiswick’s (2000: 4) broad description of the human capital as ambition, intelligence, learning speed, entrepreneurial skills, aggressiveness, tenacity and so forth. Chiswick argues that those characteristics are important on the path to success. Furthermore, Denice’s emphasis about feeling the culture and the general temperament, means that cultural and social differences between Swedish locals and an immigrant’s country of origin could be an important
variable, relative to cultural and social adjustment in the host country. According to the respondents, this was the essential factor for them in terms of labour market integration.

The Respondent’s emphasis on the significance of adaptation to integrate into the labour market has an interesting outcome. Nathan’s statement on knowing the general requirements of Swedish working culture to better adjust to the job market reiterates Bauder’s (2005: 83) theory that, if unfamiliar with the rules of the host labour market, immigrants may fail to navigate the labour market effectively. While emphasizing the respondent’s ability to adapt, it is important to indicate their motivation for contemplating new cultural norms.

For all the respondents, the purpose of learning the Swedish language, culture, and society, was initiated by their ambition to create a new life in Sweden. Thus, their emphasis on their dedication and ambition to integrate in the Swedish labour market supports above mentioned Chiswick’s (2000: 4) statement, that the immigrants with higher abilities, increase the chances of their productivity in the labour market. However, Emily indicated that host and origin countries cultural similarities could be irrelevant in the case of an individual not being willing to adapt. Emily stated that for some people, a sense of entitlement and feeling that everything should be as it was in their home country, hinders their ability of integration. “They are just fighting the facts,” stated Emily. For her, life became simpler when she decided to follow Swedish rules.

Emily: “Because of my children and my husband, who was doing really well in Sweden, I decided to stop fighting every step of the way. I realized I could not change the system just by complaining about it. […] I wanted to give my life chance, once in Rome do as the Romans do! So, I decided, whatever they want me to do, I will get it!”

Emily’s example corresponds to Bourdieu’s (1998, 141-145) view that the relationship between rules and habitus are strategic ordering principles that benefit those who create and obey them. Emily’s statement also supports Bauder’s (2005: 83) argument, that sometimes immigrants embody a habitus of the origin country and their frame may not match with the rules of the labour market in the host country. Thus, immigrants who are unable to follow the proper rules of their host country’s labour market, are not competitive with native workers who know and observe the rules.

Furthermore, Emily’s comment on “give my life chance” and “I will get it” shows the motivation and effort she demonstrated to adjust. Emily’s decision to adapt was followed by her emphasis on the well-being of her family in Sweden, which affected her decision to choose this specific country as the site of permanent residence, accordingly, Emily’s motivation to adapt and
invest in human capital specific to the host country was triggered by her decision to resettle permanently.

While emphasizing the importance of adaptation, discussions coursed to the language and its significant power on the Swedish labour market. In fact, the statements about the Swedish language and its effect on economic integration of the love migrants confirmed that language skills are of crucial worth.

Katya: “You cannot over appreciate the language knowledge in Sweden, I would rate its importance with 11 points by the 10-point scale! […] When I learned the Swedish language, I also learned culture. I was really struggling to not only learn the words but understand and find out everything that Swedes went through before I arrived in the country. […] I like Swedes more now when we all speak Swedish.”

Katya emphasized the Swedish language as part of the culture and fluency which let her understand Swedish culture better. The interconnection between Swedish society, working culture, and integration in the labour market were emphasized by Nathan too:

Nathan: “I do totally understand how speaking Swedish will help you to fit in better with your co-workers, to feel more part of the organization and team. […] To be able to communicate in Swedish allowed me to integrate into the workplace better. […] I think, because I am able to communicate with my co-workers in Swedish, it is easier for them to trust me.”

Nathan works as a freelance economic consultant and his career depends on clients who entrust the future of their company to him. Therefore, trust between work partners is crucially important to him. Consequently, for Nathan, language fluency is combined with connections and building a trustworthy environment for clients as it affects his economic integration. Like Nathan, Kadir also referred to language fluency as a great help for creating contacts in Sweden and described it as the key point of integration into Swedish society.

Kadir: “I wanted to learn Swedish, so I could integrate into society. […] language was the key point to get in touch with society. It had a huge effect!”
Respondents highlighted that learning the language facilitated understanding the culture and both helped them create better connection with Swedish society and trust with co-workers. This concurs with Diaz’s (1993: 88) view that investment in education tends to facilitate cultural and social learning, which are important factors for optimizing labour market opportunities and overcoming a variety of barriers for gaining the entrance in the labour market. Denise and Emily underlined the strong positive correlation between language abilities and the level of occupational positions in Sweden. Thus, the acknowledgment of the efficiency of language fluency motivated them to acquire the skills.

Denise: “I feel like language fluency is very important when you apply for jobs in Sweden, otherwise you would get discounted. I am not perfect in Swedish, but it is important to prove it to get the foot in on job market. […] I really feel like language and whom you know is a key to find the job.”

Emily: “I think that learning Swedish got me in the door of my current job. […] Even if we all speak English in my job, it is still important to know the language. […] Swedish people take me seriously because I can speak their language and they really appreciate that I can speak with fluency and with a nice accent. […] Even to catch good accent is very important, more important than they say. If you have a thick accent, people don’t really trust you.”

The Interviewees statements about language skills support Schultz (1961: 8); Chiswick, and Miller’s (2014: 4-5) argument that those who know the local language will find it easier to obtain a job and will generally be more productive. Additionally, it points to the relevance of scholar Diaz’s (1993: 89) emphasis on the strong positive correlation between language abilities and the level of occupational positions in Sweden.

As discussed, adaptation, mimicking the Swedish lifestyle, and language skills helped respondents both with socialization and adjustment to the Swedish job market. Human capital (language skills) attainment facilitates a love migrant’s understanding of culture, which plays a positive role in relation to their overall socialization. Socialization facilitates the social capital accumulation and results in labour market integration. The connection between human capital, social capital gain, and job market incorporation will be reemphasized in the next chapter.
6.4 Place in the Labour Market and Power of Social Capital

“Good people know other good people”

With regards to the study participants education, different forms of capital, and their useful power in relation to economic integration on the Swedish labour market, it appeared that all the respondents had worked in low qualified jobs. Emily and Denice worked as after-school teachers, Kadir baked Pizza for a few years, Nathan worked as a secretary, and Katya volunteered. Accordingly, Bauder’s (2005: 83) reflection that immigrants would negotiate their positions in the host country labour market during their economic integration was familiar for almost all the respondents. For example, from the very beginning, Nathan decided to start his own business:

Nathan: “When I did not get the job, I decided to make my own business. […] It turned out that my own business was way more work than the reward it was giving. We were struggling to make it work for 6 years, and then we gave up.”

Nathan’s emphasis correlates with Li’s (2000: 31) study based on the immigrant entrepreneurs in Canada, that immigrants may decide to become entrepreneurs, not because it was their first choice or because it was more financially lucrative, but rather, due to employment obstacles and the fact that their opportunities in the waged labour sector are blocked, they feel compelled to turn to self-employment as an alternative. Nathan’s emphasis does correlate with given research, although, the decision of starting his own business was not based on the same reason for Kadir:

Kadir: “I was working for one of the biggest technology companies and I quit the contract. After many years of making other companies rich, I decided to make myself profitable and started my own business.”

The decision of becoming an entrepreneur differed between Kadir and Nathan. Nathan chose to start a business because he was unable to find an alternative, whereas Kadir’s decision was rational and well planned after successfully integrating on the Swedish labour market. As mentioned, negotiating their position in the labour market is familiar for almost all the participants. For Emily and Denise, working in a low qualified position proved to be useful.
Denise: “I think the main point of having a low qualified job was that I could show to other employers, that I am hireable and that I am trustworthy and not a monster.”

Emily: “My first job was as an after-school teacher, which my friend, Helen, helped me get. Having the job was a huge advantage for me, I learned about Swedish culture, how the school system works, I learned the language… […] Children couldn’t speak English so, I had to speak good Swedish because otherwise, they did not understand me. […] I learned a lot of Swedish because of my husband’s mother who liked to chat, and she could not communicate in English.”

For Denise, the low qualified job helped overcome mistrust from the employers. In addition, Emily’s emphasis on low qualified jobs corresponds to Diaz’s (1993: 88) reflection that the labour market experience after migration has a positive effect on the acquisition of language abilities. Furthermore, Emily’s statement about her mother-in-law’s role in relation to learning the language reinforces Irastorza, Bevelander (2014: 15), Dribe, and Lundh’s (2008: 33) previous studies statement that intermarriage between natives and immigrants could facilitate an immigrant’s human and social capital specific to the country of residence and could improve job opportunities by obtaining knowledge about the new country.

While discussing the positive influence that native Swedish partners have on love migrants finding jobs, it was found that Swedish partners assist love migrants in creating a CV and cover letter, understanding the culture, connecting with other people, and overall have a positive effect on immigrants navigating the foreign settings in a new country.

Denise: “Who the international person is, is definitely important. The international person’s partner determines what one has access to. I think that I have either consciously or subconsciously taken advantage of it in certain situations. […] For example, I don’t think that I would be able to get the same housing option if I would live on my own in Sweden. I also believe things would be different if my partner would look and sound differently than he does”.

Denise’s reflection on “who the international person partner is” stressed that not all love migrants have access to the same amount of social and human capital. This partly agrees with the research of Dribe and Lundh (2008. 333-348), who explains the concept of the “spillover effect”- native partners could increase human capital accumulation for their immigrant partners. Additionally,
Denise’s reflection supports the relevance of one of the delimitations of the study - choosing ethnic Swede partners to provide approximately the same social and human capital spillover for all the research contributors.

Apart from Denise, the other respondents also discussed their partner’s positive effect in relation to an overall understanding of Swedish culture and lifestyle. All the respondents implied that social capital is helpful for finding a job, however, none of the respondents mentioned their partner’s social capital having a positive effect in relation to job market incorporation. In fact, the interviewees only referred to social capital when referring to themselves. Katya described social capital as something one can build over time.

Katya: “Contacts are all about giving and receiving, when you come from a different country, you don’t have much to offer to others. […] Once you have proved to yourself that you are skilled and responsible, you will gain trust from people. […] There is always somebody who can recommend you to others. If you can get everything with contacts in Poland, here in Sweden, you get anything with your contacts.”

Katya’s thoughts on social capital match Bourdieu’s (1986. 22-23) belief that the reproduction of social capital and creating a social network requires a persistent effort of sociability, which implies time and energy. Also, networking facilitates information flow and can provide an individual with useful information about opportunities and choices otherwise not available (Ibid. 6-7). Katya also asserted that to gain access to resources, one should prove one’s capability. Thus, relationships are reproduced through the exchange of mutual knowledge and recognition and, as a result, profit generated from the membership is based on solidarity (Bourdieu 1986: 22; Lin 2001: 9).

While discussing social capital accumulation and network creation, it is important to emphasize how love migrants contrive their own social capital. It appears, for Denice, Emily, and Katya their very first attempt at creating their own social capital started from SFI-Swedish language class:

Denise: “I made friends in Swedish SFI class.”

Emily: “My SFI class was the most helpful to find friends. After all these years it’s still hard to find friends, even now.”

Katya: “SFI class was my first source of friends.”
Kadir: “Gym was a good place to get healthy and meet new people. In Sweden, you must initiate the contact with people. I was always first to talk to others. Otherwise, rarely somebody would talk to me.”

Three respondents pointed to their language class as the source of their social capital foundation. These findings correspond to Erickson’s (2001: 129) reflection that education positively affects human capital and could lead people to greater network diversity. Furthermore, Bourdieu’s (1986: 16) statement, that accumulation of material capital can be presented in the immaterial form of cultural or social capital or vice versa, is a relevant theoretical emphasis, since the accumulation of human capital opens the door to the accumulation of social capital and results in employment for love migrants. Diaz (1993: 88) also indicated that investment in education tends to facilitate cultural and social learning, which helps immigrants overcome a variety of barriers to gaining entrance to the labour market. It is significant that all the study participants found a job through an informal recruitment method at least once, based on their own social capital.

Denise: “It was my SFI classmate and friend who got me the position where I work now. She helped me get in touch with the right person and got an interview right away. […] They had a temporary position and did not want to advertise the job publicly. Instead tried to hire somebody through the contacts and networks. […] I remember, the head of the department looked at my CV, liked it, and asked, ‘Have you considered applying at our place before?’ ‘Yes, I’ve applied several times to 6 different departments and a few times at your department,’ I said. […] I was never considered for the job until somebody put a good word in for me.”

Emily: “After 4 years since I finished my vocational education, my professor got in touch with me and offered me a job at one of the biggest Swedish companies. […] The guy who interviewed me for the job was telling me later, ‘if you ever see someone you think is good, pass them on my way, because good people know other good people.’”

Kadir: “I believe that with whomever you socialize, you will become like those people. In Swedish, you say “lica barn leker bäst” (Birds of a feather flock together) […] I got my position in one of the biggest multinational technology companies through my gym friend. He recommended me to the boss and I got a contract without having an interview.”
Nathan: “I got my secretary job through my network. The person who should have started
the job called the day before and said that she was not able to work and asked if I wanted
the job the very next day. I said yes.”

Denise and Emily’s story echoes Chiswick, Miller (2011: 115-116), and Diaz’s (1993: 2; 83)
reflections that, while learning and focusing on participation in the host society, immigrants would
experience changes in their occupational status. Learning opportunities improve an immigrant’s
social connection and status in the labour market. For these respondents, accumulation of human
capital not only opened the door for social connection but resulted in job market incorporation.
Previously in the study, the “gatekeeper” position had been emphasized as having a negative effect
on a love migrant’s incorporation into the labour market (Andersson and Osman 2008: 30;
Rydgren 2004: 711). Although, through Denise’s example, we see her SFI friend as a “gatekeeper”
who gave Denise an opportunity to acquire a job. Thus, this finding also supports Rydgren’s
(2004: 711) argument that “gatekeepers” are likely to choose someone belonging to the same
network, as well as Bourdieu’s (1986: 22) and Lin’s (2001: 9) belief that profit, which is generated
through membership of a social group, is based on solidarity between social group members.

Emily’s experience of finding a better job, with the help of her professor, corresponds to
Granovetter’s (1973) argument on weak ties, where the author described acquaintances and
colleagues as weak ties and a loose network (Ibid. 1368). Weak ties have been considered a better
source of information (Ibid. 1365; 1371). Furthermore, Emily’s narrative about recruiters asking
her to help “If you ever see someone you think is good, pass them on to my way,” certainly
reiterates Fernandez et.al. (2000: 1351) view of employers perceiving the worker’s social
connections as a resource which can be used for obtaining access to a better pool of applicants and
better job-worker matches. The recruiter’s request to reach Emily’s social capital could be
triggered by the desire to obtain more appropriate applications as the referrer could provide extra,
hard-to-measure information about the worker’s qualities to the employee (Ibid. 1292). Since the
employer showed trust in Emily’s judgment and referred to her as a good person who knows other
good people, this finding also asserts that recruiters would rather employ people that have been
suggested by employees whom they know and trust.

Kadir’s statement about socializing with people like him correlates with Lin’s (2001: 7) view
that members of a social group sharing similar interests and social resources could also provide
emotional support. In addition, the stronger the social ties connecting the individuals, the more
similar they are in a variety of ways (Granovetter 1973: 1362).
Furthermore, the interviewees allude to social capital benefits, not only in relation to employment but as important assistance for their future career:

Kadir: “Right now, my business success depends on my social crew. In business, every mistake costs a lot and my friend’s professional advice is essential for developing good PR and economy for my company.”

Nathan: “To build relationships and network took years. [...] I was not inherently trusted until people got to know me. Now, it is all about networking and using the contacts for my benefit. [...] I can even help other people who are in similar situations to where I was before.”

Kadir’s comment supports Bourdieu’s (1986: 21) theory that membership in a group provides each of its members with collectively owned capital. A “credentials” which entitles them to credit. Additionally, individuals with certain personal characteristics have better access to social resources and use their own social capital for gaining valued resources such as wealth, status, and power (Lin and Dumin 1986: 366). Kadir’s “certain characteristics” can be assumed as his ability to communicate and create a social network, which he emphasized while discussing his first attempt to find friends at the gym.

Furthermore, Lin’s (2001. 6-7) view that information, influence, social credentials, and reinforcement mobilized in social networks will enhance the outcomes for members of a social group is also a relevant theoretical point. Kadir explained that social capital is not only associated with friendship, rather he mobilizes the resources in demand and uses them as an advantage for his company. Accordingly, Kadir’s emphasis corresponds to Portes’s (1998: 21) statement, that social capital’s source and power in monetary form, could equal to holding stock or a bank account.

Nathan’s statement about creating a network over time, supports Granovetter’s (1973) view that the strength of interpersonal ties depends on time, emotional intensity, and effort (Ibid. 1362). For Nathan, social connections are transferable, in which he created, used and passed them to benefit himself and others.

Social networks and social connections have been one of the most important aids for love migrants in relation to job obtainment and future career development. As Erickson (200: 128-129) argues, social capital explains the effect of human capital. Therefore, individuals with better human capital get both better jobs and greater network diversity.
7 Conclusion

The intention of this research was to closely examine highly educated love migrants’ experiences of job search in Sweden.

The study findings demonstrated that love migrants are challenged in finding skilled jobs upon their arrival in Sweden. Interviews with participants pointed out that there are several factors that influence the employment status of highly educated love migrant’s in Sweden. First and foremost, human capital and education from the country of origin required adjustment for the Swedish labour market, which means that education was not a perfectly portable resource. There were various reasons for low levels of transferability of human capital: mismatch between immigrant skills supply and demand in the Swedish labour market, bureaucracy, and a low level of Swedish as a language. The study shows that transferability problems could result in overeducation as well as undereducation for the love migrants.

At the same time, interviewees portrayed various kinds of discrimination in the labour market upon arrival, although human capital acquired in Sweden had a positive effect in relation to immigrants finding jobs. Language skills and education acquired in Sweden could also improve a person’s chances when acquiring a job. For instance, understanding and speaking the Swedish language could help integrate one into Swedish culture. Language skills were also important for building trust and facilitating a better bond between love migrants and their co-workers. Furthermore, the findings revealed that a love migrant’s native Swedish partner had a positive effect in relation to the immigrant’s language skills, the general understanding of the culture, and adapting to a new environment.

The study also revealed the correlation between human and social capital. For example, language and education gained in Sweden tended to facilitate social capital gain and network creation. Additionally, social capital could enhance the effect of human capital.

Furthermore, the participant’s interviews demonstrated that the role of social capital and networks had an enormous effect in relation to job market integration in Sweden. Social networks and ties could help overcome the existing discrimination in the Swedish labour market. In addition, the study findings emphasized the existence of informal recruitment methods in the Swedish labour market and social connections as a good source of potential employees.

Finally, interviewees portrayed social capital as not only friendship and close ties, but also weak ties, which were helpful when attempting to find a job and tended to benefit both sides of the party.
7.1 Future research

As this thesis was only able to investigate a small share of the broad subject, as a continuation of the study, further research could focus on the comparison between educated-foreign born economic migrants and a love migrant’s economic integration in Sweden. Another focus could be an investigation of the effect of discrimination in the Swedish labour market, as love migrants highlighted in the study that discrimination was present. Further research could investigate an employer’s acceptance of foreign-born educational qualification and professional experiences and discover how discrimination influences the employment of highly educated immigrants.
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9 Appendix

9.1 Interview Guide

Age and Origin, family status etc…
How long have you been in Sweden? When did you first arrive?
What is the education you acquired in your country?
Have you had any friends except your partner in Sweden?
How did you start the job search in Sweden and was your education useful in finding a job in Sweden?
Have you studied in Sweden and if yes, what was the reason for that?
How well do you speak Swedish?
What is your experience is fluency in Swedish important in Sweden?
Do you think the language helped you find a job?
How have you made the most of your friends in Sweden?
Do you think contacts and friends are important for economic success?
Do you have any friends apart from your partner in Sweden and who are they?
Did your partner help you in relation to economic integration in Sweden?
What was your first job and how did you get it?
What helped you find your current place in the Swedish labour market?
How do you think you are integrated into the Swedish labour market and what is the indicator of this?