Integration of the Employed
The sociocultural integration of highly educated migrants in Sweden

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Abstract

In 2008, Sweden changed its labor migration legislation and allowed for labor migrants from non EU/EEA¹ countries to migrate to Sweden, which had essentially been impossible since the 1970s. This shift in labor migration policy is mirrored in Swedish integration policy where the focus in recent years has been on labor market integration. This thesis aims to investigate the sociocultural integration of migrants who are employed and, in the Swedish context, assumed to be integrated. In addition, sociocultural integration is related to employment and length of stay. Sociocultural integration is measured by three indicators: knowledge of Swedish language, having Swedish friends, and membership in organizations. The data was collected through sixteen semi-structured interviews of highly educated migrants with employment in Sweden and analyzed using four integration theories.² The study reveals that employed migrants are only partially socioculturally integrated. Respondents presented low levels of Swedish-language knowledge, which can be explained by their short stay in the country as well having international workplaces where mostly English is spoken. However, these workplaces also offer respondents opportunities to meet natives and most respondents met their Swedish friends through work. There is a need for further studies of integration, in particular those that would explore multiple dimensions of integration and incorporate migrants who are already economically integrated.

Key words: sociocultural integration, employment, length of stay, highly educated migrants

¹ EEA stands for European Economic Area.
² Human capital-, social capital-, structural opportunity-, and prejudice theory
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Introduction

During the last century Sweden has transformed from being an emigration country to an immigration country. The type of migrants who come here has also changed, from mainly labor migrants in the post-World War II era to primarily refugees and their relatives today. These transformations have had consequences for Swedish politics, and this thesis is driven by two aspects of current Swedish policy regarding integration and migration: its focus on labor market integration, and the changes in labor migration legislation from 2008.

First, Swedish integration has focused on labor market integration in recent years, which might be a consequence of the arrival of mainly humanitarian migrants with less connection to the Swedish labor market than previous labor migrants. The focus on labor market integration is made evident by the fact that the Minister for Integration, Erik Ullenhag, is now placed in the Ministry of Employment. Ullenhag expresses the goal of Swedish integration policy, “It is not rocket science that we should try to achieve ... it is jobs and knowledge in Swedish” (Timbro 2012). This demonstrates that employment is seen as one of the most important aspects of immigrant integration in Sweden. Furthermore, the Swedish government’s official indicators of integration are: financial self-sufficiency, employment, and language proficiency (Ministry of Integration and Equality 2008, 35). Nevertheless, integration consists of multiple other dimensions and one of the driving forces of this paper was to investigate non-economic indicators of integration.

The second driving force was the idea that employed migrants will increase the integration of all migrants, which is one of the assumptions of the new labor migration legislation enacted in 2008 (Ministry of Justice 2008, 73). In 2008, the Swedish government opened up the possibility for labor migrants from non-EU/EEA countries to move to Sweden if they had an offer of employment in Sweden. The new law is based on the assumption that labor migrants’ employment will help them integrate and they will “have a positive impact on the public’s views on immigration and the status of immigrants in our country” (Committee for Labor Immigration 2006, 41). Other studies have also argued that labor migrants improve public attitudes in regard to migration (Bauer et.al. 2000; Quirico 2012).

The argument that labor migrants can improve immigrant integration in Sweden assumes that the labor migrants themselves are integrated. This assumption is connected to the current focus of Swedish integration policy. As stated above, on a policy level integration is currently seen as approximately equal to labor market integration in Sweden: thus migrants who are economically
integrated are assumed to be fully integrated or at least not in need of government actions. This has meant that migrants who are employed are not included in most integration initiatives.

The aim of this thesis is to explore the sociocultural integration of migrants who are economically integrated. Sociocultural integration is a dimension of integration that is not often researched since it is difficult to define and measure. However, it is important to investigate since it relates to essential aspects of a person’s life. In this thesis, sociocultural integration is measured using the following three indicators: language proficiency, having friends from the host country, and membership in organizations.

In addition, this thesis delineates the connections between sociocultural integration and two key indicators of integration: employment and length of stay. The goal is to answer these two research questions:

1. How does having employment influence a person’s sociocultural integration?
2. How does a person’s length of stay affect their sociocultural integration?

The data used to answer these questions derive from sixteen semi-structured interviews of highly educated migrants who are currently working in Sweden. The respondents are employed and financially self-sufficient, which are two of the main indicators of integration in Sweden as well as key indicators of economic integration. Since the respondents can be assumed to be economically integrated this interview study provides insights into the connection between economic- and sociocultural integration.

In the first chapter I will explore the Swedish context; the country’s migration history as well as the historical development of Swedish integration policy. The following section provides a discussion of the concept of integration and provides a definition and indicators of the sociocultural dimension of integration. This section also explores theories and previous studies that relate to integration and the research questions. The third chapter describes how the study was conducted, and the fourth presents an analysis of the interview material in relation to the indicators of sociocultural integration as well as the research questions. Finally, the last chapter concludes the thesis and offers suggestions for future studies.

3 Host country refers to country that receives immigrants.
1. Contextual background

This section will provide a brief overview of Sweden’s migration history and integration policies with a focus on labor migration to provide a basic understanding of the historical context in which the respondents have entered Sweden, and the development of current integration policies.

1.1 Migration to Sweden, an overview

Before 1917, the Swedish immigration policies were quite liberal and most people could move to Sweden without a passport or any type of permit (Lundh and Ohlsson 1999, 11). Until the 1930s Sweden had a larger emigration than immigration but this changed after the 1930s and since then more people have moved to Sweden than have left (ibid, 11).

From 1917 to 1945 the restrictive immigration policies of Sweden were characterized by wanting to protect the economy and the purity of the Swedish race (Borevi 2002, 77; Lundh and Ohlsson 1999, 12). After World War II Sweden loosened its restrictive migration policies to accommodate the Allies and the increased demand for labor (Boguslaw 2012, 31). The Swedish economy was growing, in part due to the restoration of neighboring countries (Bevelander 2010, 287; Lundh and Ohlsson 1999, 55). In addition, Sweden had had positive experiences with refugees who worked in Sweden during the war (Lundh and Ohlsson 1999, 55). However, although migration became less restrictive, labor migration was still regulated. Sweden signed agreements for transfer of labor with countries such as Italy, Hungary, Germany, and Austria (ibid, 58-59).

In the 1950s, the procedures regarding labor migration changed and the recruitment of labor was now facilitated by the Swedish AMS. Companies who wanted to recruit foreign labor would contact AMS, who together with the unions would approve the recruitment. Thereafter Swedish AMS facilitated the recruitment together with the company and the AMS in the concerned country. Most of the labor migrants at this time came from Germany, Italy, Belgium and Holland and were skilled workers (Boguslaw 2012, 59; Bevelander 2010, 287). Many also came from Nordic countries, which was facilitated by the communal labor market that the Nordic countries created in 1954 and Iceland joined in 1955 (Boguslaw 2012, 61; Bevelander 2010, 287; Lundh and Ohlsson 1999, 56).

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4 National Labor Market Board
During the 1960s labor migrants kept coming from the Nordic countries but also from southern Europe. At first, this migration was unregulated and later it was incorporated into the existing regulations (Boguslaw 2012, 60; Bevelander 2010, 287). These workers were not a supplement to the native workforce but rather a substitute, which made the economy widen instead of grow (Bevelander 2010, 287). At the end of the 1960s, unions felt that the interests of their members were threatened by the labor migration and claimed that immigration opposed the goals of Swedish welfare politics (Boguslaw 2012, 64). The Swedish unions had several problems with labor migration: 1) migrant workers were being exploited; 2) it decreased the structural transformation of the economy; 3) it created competition and conflicts between Swedes and migrants; and 4) most migrant workers were not union members (Lundh and Ohlsson 1999, 65).

The Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO) argued that immigration would create a separate society with isolated foreign workers, and lobbied successfully for a more regulated labor migration to avoid this from happening (Boguslaw 2012, 64; Borevi 2013, 140). The government declared that immigrants should be able to have the same living standards as the rest of the population, and this required regulated immigration (Borevi 2013, 140). In 1967, Sweden began to restrict the opportunity for foreign migrants to enter the country, and in 1972 the borders were essentially closed to foreign migrant workers (Brochmann and Hagelund 2011, 16; Lundh and Ohlsson 1999, 12). Primarily, this stopped labor migrants from poor countries working in low-wage sectors; migrants with higher skill sets, those seeking family reunification, and refugees were still able to enter (Brochmann and Hagelund 2011, 16).

In the 1970s, Sweden went into recession and many of the Finns that had come in 1969 and 1970 returned home in the beginning of the 1970s (Boguslaw 2012, 60). In the middle of the 1970s the Nordic immigration increased again when many Danes began to come to Sweden (ibid, 64). However, labor migration in general continued to decrease during the 1980s and by the end of the decade very few individuals were entering Sweden as labor migrants (Boguslaw 2012, 64). Labor migration decreased at the same time as the migration of tied movers\(^5\) and refugees increased (Bevelander 2010, 288). The refugees at this time came from countries such as Chile, Poland, Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and former Yugoslavia (ibid, 288).

\(^5\) Tied movers can also be referred to as family-based migrants.
During the 1990s, Sweden experienced another recession and many Swedes immigrated to Norway (Boguslaw 2012, 70). In 1994 Sweden joined EEA,\(^6\) which meant that EEA-citizens could move to Sweden without restrictions (ibid, 70). Not very many EEA-citizens moved to Sweden, but Swedes became more likely to work in EEA-countries (Lundh and Ohlsson 1999, 72). Labor migration from non-EU/EEA countries was regulated by AMS and recruitment was only allowed if the job in question could not be filled by natives or EU/EEA-residents (ibid, 72-3).

This continued until 2008 when new legislation was enacted with the goal to make it easier to recruit from third countries\(^7\) (Boguslaw 2012, 76-7). The 2008 law has transformed the Swedish system into one of “the industrialized world’s most open, where the state’s influence on who can get a work permit has been limited to a minimum” (Emilsson 2012, 1). One of the biggest changes of the law is that the Migration Board and the Public Employment Service are no longer in charge of determining if there is a need for labor recruitment, instead the employers themselves make these judgments (Boguslaw 2012, 77). Another difference is that labor migrants are not able to obtain permanent residency at arrival (Ministry of Justice 2008, 2). Residence permits for labor migrants are limited to two years with the opportunity for an additional two-year extension, and thereafter the labor migrant can apply for permanent residency (Boguslaw 2012, 77).

To sum up, Swedish labor migration policies gradually became more open after World War II, and then closed during the end of the 1960s and 1970s. However, immigration to Sweden was still open to Nordic citizens and when Sweden entered the European Union in 1995, EU/EEA-citizens were also able to immigrate to Sweden. In 2008, Swedish labor migration policies opened up again and allowed for labor migration from non-EU/EEA-countries. After World War II until the beginning of the 1970s, immigration to Sweden was primarily made up of labor migrants. After the 1970s it has been dominated by refugees and their family members (Bevelander 2010, 287; Lundh and Ohlsson 1999, 27-8).

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\(^6\) On January 1, 1995, Sweden joined the EU and had to harmonize its regulations with those of the EU (Boguslaw 2012, 70).

\(^7\) Third countries refer to non-EU/EEA countries.
1.2 Swedish integration policy

Integration policy is concerned with improving immigrants’ introduction and integration into society. However, these policies can differ depending on which aspect of integration one refers to: cultural-, communicative-, or labor market integration (Lundh 2005, 51). Sweden’s integration policies are ranked the highest in the Migrant Integration Policy Index, which evaluates different governments’ integration policies based on their commitment to granting migrants equal opportunities (Mipex 2013).

Sweden created state institutions early that were responsible for the introduction and integration of immigrants (Ekberg 2007, 27; Brochmann and Hagelund 2011, 18). In 1969, the State Immigrant Agency was founded, which was responsible for migration and integration politics until 1998. In 1998, the Agency was split into two branches, one dealing with integration and the other with migration. The Migration Board still exists, but the agency in charge of integration was discontinued in 2007 (Boguslaw 2012, 237). To understand the current Swedish integration policy it is helpful to look back to review its development.

The Swedish welfare state was focused on creating a sense of solidarity by promoting homogeneity and eradicating differences between social classes (Borevi 2013, 141). The ideas of eradicating differences can be seen in Swedish “Gypsy policies,” the aim of which was to get the Roma to give up their cultural practices and integrate into Sweden (Borevi 2013, 141). In regard to its national minorities Sweden had historically pursued politics of assimilation and these policies were carried over to immigrants (Lundh 2005, 51). According to Swedish integration policy in the 1950s and 1960s, immigrants were supposed to adapt to Swedish norms and values (Boguslaw 2012, 231).

The policies of assimilation started to change during the 1960s when both immigrants and native minorities demanded more opportunities to practice their language and culture (Lundh 2005, 51). New arguments were brought forth which said that the state should aim to integrate immigrants but not demand that people give up their identity and culture (Borevi 2013, 141). There was a debate between those who held on to the value of assimilation and those who argued for cultural pluralism and promotion of collective identities (ibid, 142). Among the political parties, the Conservative party supported pluralism whereas the Social Democratic party was more cautious and focused more on creating a belonging to the Swedish community (ibid, 142). LO played an important role when they took the side of the cultural pluralists and influenced the Social Democratic government.

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8 The Gypsy policies were in place from 1954 to 1969 (Borevi 2013, 141).
to become less opposed to pluralist policies (ibid, 142-3). Another reason for the government to move away from assimilation was to be able to present Sweden as a promoter of human- and minority rights internationally (ibid, 144). Even though attitudes started to change during the 1960s, Sweden’s integration policy did not have a clear goal during this time (Bevelander 2010, 291).

This changed in 1975 when a new immigrant and minority policy was enacted based on three principles: equality, freedom of choice, and partnership (Bevelander 2010, 292; Boguslaw 2012, 231; Borevi 2013, 143). According to Borevi, this policy, although based on pluralist ideals, was designed to integrate immigrants into the Swedish welfare state. Thus, unlike the Netherlands, Sweden did not introduce any special institutions for ethnic groups (Borevi 2013, 144). Another example of the merger between pluralism and institutional integration was the so-called mother tongue education, which was provided in Swedish public schools (ibid, 144). The political discussion regarding migrants focused on their special needs as newcomers, which required language training and information, as well as their position as ethnic and cultural minorities, which meant help with maintaining their culture and enabling worship (Brochmann and Hagelund 2011, 16). The purpose of Swedish integration policy was twofold, it attempted to ease immigrants’ adaptation into Swedish society, and make it possible for them to maintain their cultural- and linguistic heritage (Lundh and Ohlsson 1999, 110). Assimilation was no longer the focus of Swedish integration politics; instead different cultures were seen to enrich society (Lundh 2005, 52).

During the 1970s, the political aspects of integration were addressed. In 1976, persons who had lived in Sweden for three years were allowed to vote in municipal and provincial elections; this was seen as a success for integration (Bevelander 2010, 298; Lundh and Ohlsson 1999, 111). Sweden’s citizenship laws are based on the *jus sanguinis* principle, which means that a child born in Sweden to parents who are not Swedish citizens does not automatically gain Swedish citizenship (Bevelander 2010, 298). The Swedish naturalization laws are liberal compared to other European countries, and since the 1970s citizens of non-Nordic countries can obtain Swedish citizenship after

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9 Immigrants should have equal opportunities/living standards to natives (Borevi 2013, 143; Lundh and Ohlsson 1999, 109).
10 Immigrants should have the freedom to decide how much to adapt to the Swedish culture and identity (Borevi 2013, 144).
11 Immigrants should receive support to build their own associations to help develop society (Borevi 2013, 144), and there should be understanding and solidarity between immigrants and natives (Bevelander 2010, 292).
12 In 1976-7 rules were enacted which forced municipalities to offer education in the students’ mother tongue from day care until high school (Boguslaw 2012, 239). The reasoning behind the regulation was the importance for these students to develop knowledge in both Swedish and in their mother tongue. This was determined to be important for their psychological development (ibid, 242).
13 To vote in national elections one still needed to be a Swedish citizen (Bevelander 2010, 298)
five years of residency\textsuperscript{14} (ibid, 298). Nevertheless, five years of residency refers to permanent residency,\textsuperscript{15} which means that labor migrants who have arrived after 2008 will be able to gain Swedish citizenship only after nine years since during their first four years in the country they are considered temporary residents (Migrationsverket 2012, 2013 a.).

In the middle of the 1980s there was a shift away from the multicultural politics of the 1970s and the goal was no longer for immigrants to form tightly knit groups within the Swedish society (Borevi 2004, 47; Brochmann and Hagelund 2011, 18). The 1986 decision renounced the multiculturalist approach because it was seen as decreasing social integration and promoting a static view of cultures (Borevi 2013, 146). This decision was made in the context of a changing composition of immigrants (ibid, 145). Previously, most immigrants were labor migrants from Nordic and European countries; however in the 1980s most were humanitarian migrants from South America, Asia and the Middle East (ibid, 145). The decision of 1986 did not change many policies, however it did dissolve the attempt of combining immigrants- and national minority policies (ibid, 147). The shift did not mean that the state no longer approved of immigrants preserving their cultural heritage; however, the state no longer took responsibility for the maintenance (Borevi 2004, 47).

In the beginning of the 1990s the policies regarding immigrants changed from having been incorporated into the general welfare policies to become specific to immigrants, a group that was considered needing special support (Boguslaw 2012, 231). Throughout the 1990s, cultural diversity was still valued, however adaptation and integration to Swedish conditions was incorporated into the policies. During this time it was also made clear that if integration was the goal, the native population also needed to adapt (Lundh 2005, 52).

A new integration policy in 1997 moved away from previous multicultural policies and argued that they had created divisions in society and led to marginalization of migrants (Brochmann and Hagelund 2011, 20; Borevi 2013, 148). The 1997 policy removed the focus from immigrants as a group and declared that actions directed at immigrants were only possible during their first two years in Sweden, after that the immigrants should be incorporated into general social programs. This was not an entirely new idea since it had been part of immigration policies since the 1960s (Borevi 2013, 148).

\textsuperscript{14} Two years for Nordic citizens, and four years for refugees (Bevelander 2010, 298).
\textsuperscript{15} Permanent residency is different from temporary residency since it is not limited to time or any other aspects.
According to Borevi, the multiculturalist policies of the 1970s were rejected twice, first in 1986 and then more strongly in 1997 (Borevi 2013, 148). However, Borevi argues that Sweden still maintained some aspects of multiculturalism by recognizing itself as a culturally diverse society and by not implementing any integration requirements for non-citizens such as language- or civic tests (Borevi 2013, 155).

The integration policy of the 2000s has continued the focus on general labor market policies and few targeted efforts (Boguslaw 2012, 232). The centre-right political coalition that has been in power since 2006 has emphasized labor market integration and they have, as previously, been “using general policies as its main tools for integration” (Brochmann and Hagelund 2011, 21). In 2010, the introductory programs for refugees were reformed with the goal to improve their labor market integration. As part of these reforms, the Ministry of Employment was made responsible for refugee reception (Boguslaw 2012, 232). Most of the more recent integration policies have focused on economic integration of humanitarian migrants and their relatives (ibid, 254-256).

The reason for the focus on economic integration may be the fact that the employment rates of immigrants compared to natives have worsened since the 1970s (Bevelander 2010, 294). Between 1950 and 1970 immigrants had a higher employment rate than native Swedes (Lundh and Ohlsson 1999, 113). Since the 1970s employment among immigrants has been a lot lower than among natives, this shift can be explained by changes in categories of migrants (from labor migrants to more refugees and family members) and slower economic growth (ibid, 114). The employment gap between immigrants and natives was also exacerbated by the recession in the 1990s (Bevelander 2010, 295). Entering the Swedish labor market has become problematic for all immigrants, even for the well-educated (Lundh and Ohlsson 1999, 115).
2. Theoretical framework

Before conducting research on immigrant integration it is crucial to discuss the concept and the variety of definitions within this area of study. The first section of this chapter will delve into the concept of integration and the different aspects of the term. The second part will examine integration theories that will be useful during the analysis in chapter four. Finally, previous studies related to the research topic will be presented.

2.1 Definition of integration

‘To integrate’ means “to make a whole by bringing all parts together; unify” and is used in various fields such as mathematics, electronics and psychology (The American Heritage College Dictionary). In the field of ethnic relations the dictionary provides us with this definition of integration: “the bringing of people of different racial or ethnic groups into unrestricted and equal association, as in society or an organization” (ibid). Although the definition of integration might seem clear, when further examined the concept becomes rather ambiguous. How is ‘unrestricted and equal association’ to be defined? Ager and Strang argue that one of the problems with developing policies or publicly debating the concept of integration is that there are so many different interpretations of the concept (2008, 166).

The confusion of the term might be partially explained by the fact that integration is both used as an analytic concept in academia as well as a normative notion in national policy making (Phalet and Swyngedouw 2003, 7). In addition, researchers from different fields of study have not coordinated their efforts which have increased the ambiguity of integration studies (Hosseini-Kaladjahi 1997, 155). In this chapter, I will attempt to clarify the different understandings of integration as well as my own interpretation of the concept. The following sections will present the difference between integration and assimilation, explore who is responsible for integration, and delineate the multiple dimensions of the integration process.
2.1.1 Pluralist- and assimilationist perspectives

Integration can be used as an umbrella concept but can also be a more specific term that varies in its degree of pluralism (Vermeulen and Penninx 2000, 2). Integration through a pluralistic perspective allows ethnic groups to keep their group identity and simultaneously receive equal access to the receiving society (ibid, 3). The assimilationist perspective, on the other hand, does not believe in maintaining group identities. According to assimilation promoters, integration requires creating a normative consensus in society and is measured by for example intermarriages with the native population (ibid, 3).

When the concept of integration was introduced in the 1960s and 1970s, it was used to replace assimilation and show more tolerance for ethnocultural differences (Vermeulen and Penninx 2000, 2). However, the term has been criticized for merely being “a cover-up for assimilationist goals” (ibid, 3). The concepts of assimilation and integration are often confused thus their differences will be clarified in the following paragraph.

To begin with, Diaz differentiates assimilation from integration by describing assimilation as the process of immigrants becoming similar to natives (Diaz 1993, 16). Assimilation is focused on learning the language, norms and values of the native population (ibid, 17). According to Popoola, assimilation is a one-sided adaptation to the majority’s values and behavior (2002, 72). If complete adaptation to certain values is required then it should not be referred to as integration but rather “partial assimilation” (ibid, 72). Integration, on the other hand, is concerned with social networks and contacts between immigrants and natives. Diaz defines integration as a “mainly social phenomena that can be related to the quality of immigrants’ participation in different types of social relations in the receiving society” (1996, 74). Immigrant integration means having access to socially valuable resources at the same level as natives, however, it does not require cultural similarity (Diaz 1993, 16-7).

One of the difficulties when trying to keep these two terms separate is that assimilation has become stigmatized and at times people shy away from using it to avoid the negative connotations. Consequently one uses integration, which has less bad connotations, to describe both concepts. Another issue is that the concepts are closely interlinked. One could imagine how the two concepts could coexist; assimilation of the migrant group, e.g. learning the language, might be needed in order to create social networks with the native population, which in its turn is the focus of integration.
2.1.2 Critical perspective

Some researchers are critical of the way integration has been defined and how countries have incorporated the process. The researchers in this section emphasize the idea that immigrants are not supposed to integrate into a predetermined norm nor are they the only actors responsible for the process of integration.

According to Li, “integration is about incorporating newcomers into a democratic process of participation and negotiation that shapes the future, and not about conforming and confining people to pre-established outcomes based on the status quo” (2003, 330). Li is especially critical of academics, who in his opinion, have not challenged the normative standards of integration and instead treated these norms as “scientific standards of integration” (2003, 318).

Furthermore, Li asserts that integration is a two-way street, with requirements for both the immigrants and the receiving society (2003, 327). In the Swedish context, Popoola argues along similar lines and declares that integration incorporates both the majority population as well as minorities (2002, 9). However, she argues that Sweden has still focused primarily on the role of immigrants and not on society’s responsibilities in the integration process (Popoola 2002, 9). In the Canadian context, integration has also focused too much on the changes immigrants need to make and too little on the institutional openness in society according to Li (2003, 328).

2.1.3 Multiple dimensions of integration

Diaz acknowledges the complexity of integration and argues for the importance of acknowledging the multidimensional aspects of the integration process (1996, 88). He has developed a model for the cohabitation integration process in the Swedish context, which makes the multiple dimensions of integration more concrete and easier to investigate.

- Economic integration: incorporation into the labor market by access to income and occupational positions,
- Social integration: access to a Swedish social network where contacts with natives can be developed,
- Political integration: naturalization, voting participation, representation in political institutions,
• Communicative integration: access to information and language,
• Family integration: access to social networks including Swedish relatives through intermarriage, and cohabitation,
• Residential integration: access to qualitative accommodation and development of ethnically mixed residential areas,
• Personal integration: satisfaction with life in Sweden (Diaz 1993, 76).

2.1.4 Sociocultural integration

Because of the time constraints of this study, I was not able to investigate all of Diaz’ seven dimensions and decided to choose a different division of integration. The one chosen for this thesis was Van Tubergen’s division, which separates economic integration from sociocultural integration (2006). It fits with the purpose of this study, that is, to investigate migrants who are already economically integrated and explore how their economic integration relates to other dimensions of integration.

Economic integration involves “economic equality between immigrants and natives” and relates to issues such as employment, occupational status, self-employment and income (Van Tubergen 2006, 7). Sociocultural integration, on the other hand, combines social integration, which Van Tubergen defines as the social interactions between immigrants and natives, and cultural integration, the level to which immigrants and natives share cultural values and patterns (ibid, 7). Indicators for social integration are: contacts with the native population such as friendships and marriages, and membership in organizations (Diaz 1996, 86; Hosseini-Kaladjahi 1997, 131; Van Tubergen 2006, 7). Proficiency in the new language is one of the main indicators of cultural integration (Hosseini-Kaladjahi 1997, 91; Van Tubergen 2006, 7). According to Van Tubergen, an immigrant group is considered socially- and culturally integrated when “interethnic contacts, friendships and marriages are common, and when immigrants speak the destination language well” (2006, 7). To investigate the respondents’ sociocultural integration I will be using these three indicators: knowledge of Swedish, friendships with Swedes, and membership in organizations.

Language proficiency was previously linked to assimilation, but since I have chosen to use Van Tubergen’s definition from here onward it will be referred to as an indicator of cultural integration. A reason for using the term cultural integration instead of assimilation is because assimilation is no longer seen as the unavoidable end for immigrants’ adaptation to the host society (Hosseini-Kaladjahi 1997, 120). Furthermore, as previously mentioned, assimilation brings up negative
connotations of outside forces pressuring immigrants to lose their origin culture. Since learning a new language does not require a person to forget their mother tongue, I will refer to learning Swedish as an indicator of cultural integration and not assimilation. Furthermore, learning the native language is closely connected to being able to communicate with the native population, which is a vital aspect of social integration.

In conclusion, I define integration as immigrants gaining access to all aspects of the receiving society while not having to abolish their ties with their country of origin. I acknowledge that gaining access to society might require learning the host country’s language and understanding cultural norms. However, I also agree with Popoola and Li that integration needs to stay true to its original meaning of unity, the coming together of more parts than one. In order to accomplish integration, natives also need to be involved in the process and develop social relations and networks with immigrants.

2.2 Integration theories

Besides having a clear understanding of the term integration, it is also important to consider integration theories. The first integration theories were based on assimilation, on the idea that immigrants would assimilate both socioculturally and economically over time. However, these theories were unsuccessful in accounting for differences in integration between immigrant groups from different origins in one destination; and between immigrants from the same origin country in different destinations (Van Tubergen 2006; 8-9, 35). It has been determined that both the immigrant group and the destination country play important roles for both sociocultural- and economic integration (ibid, 13).

When assimilation theories were abandoned, others were developed to address the downfalls of assimilation theories. Van Tubergen outlines four main theories that can be used to explain immigrant integration today; however, he asserts that “at the present time, there is no grand theory of immigrant integration” (2006, 41). None of the theories of immigrant integration has been successfully applied to all sides of sociocultural- and economic integration (ibid, 36). Previous research has also failed to separate “origin effects” from “community effects” (ibid, 37).

This study is bound to one destination and investigates persons from many different origins and it will not be able to separate origin- from destination effects. Instead of origin, the respondents are brought together by having a high level of education from their origin and by being employed in
their destination country. In the analysis, their sociocultural integration will be explained using Van Tubergen’s selection of theories; human capital-, social capital-, structural opportunity-, and prejudice theory. The rest of this section will be dedicated to outlining these four theories.

2.2.1 Human capital theory

The assimilation theory failed to explain differences in levels of integration among different immigrant groups and different destinations. Human capital theory explains these differences through selection policies in the host country, the differences between host- and origin country, travel distance, exposure to language of host country, and reasons of migration (Van Tubergen 2006, 19).

Human capital theory is based on the idea that one’s opportunities in life depend on one’s human capital. Human capital refers to skills, qualifications, experiences and even cultural characteristics (Hosseini-Kaladjahi 1997, 26). Human capital theory predicts that age and qualifications will increase a person’s likelihood of being employed, obtaining higher occupations, and being self-employed (Phalet and Swyngedouw 2003; 12, 14). People are aware of the importance of human capital and are therefore likely to invest in their own capital through for example education (Phalet and Swyngedouw 2003; 12, 14).

In migration studies this theory is primarily used to explain economic integration (Van Tubergen 2006, 15-16). These studies often use human capital theory to explain differences in labor market integration with demographic and human capital characteristics (Bevelander 2010, 296). Human capital economists argue that the differences in labor market success between minorities and the majority can be explained by different amounts of human capital (Hosseini-Kaladjahi 1997, 26). According to this theory, immigrants have a worse economic position than natives at arrival because 1) they have less human capital and in particular less host country-specific human capital; 2) they have less knowledge of the host language; and 3) their previous experience is devalued in the host country (Van Tubergen 2006, 16).

However, an immigrant can improve his/her situation by investing in human capital. Studies have shown that obtaining education in the host country and becoming proficient in the host language improve immigrants’ economic integration (Van Tubergen 2006, 16). Language proficiency is human capital that can improve one’s economic integration as well as one’s sociocultural integration (Van Tubergen 2006, 20).
The propensity to invest in human capital is connected to the length of stay since time spent in the host country will allow immigrants to invest in education in the host country and learn about the host country’s labor market (Van Tubergen 2006, 16). Chiswick argues that the acquisition of human capital differs depending on the migrants’ length of stay. He asserts that migrants who expect to spend a short time in the destination country are less likely to invest in country-specific human capital since this investment would be lost once they leave the destination. Instead, temporary migrants are more likely to invest in human capital that can be used internationally or not invest in human capital at all (Chiswick 2008, 71).

2.2.2 Social capital theory

Human and social capital are closely connected since social capital was introduced to outline the social resources that were determined to be useful in developing human capital (Coleman 1990, 300). Human capital materializes when a person changes by acquiring new skills which enables them to act in new ways (ibid, 304). Social capital is less tangible since it is created through relationships between people; it appears when a relationship changes in a manner that provokes an action (ibid, 304). For example, when trust is created between people in a group that group will be more likely to act and create resources than a group without trust (ibid, 304). Social capital combines the resources connected to membership in a group (Bourdieu 1997, 51).

According to Putnam, social capital exists in many dimensions, and the most important two are “bonding” and “bridging” (2000). Bonding is a type of exclusive social capital that does not allow everyone to enter. It often exists in homogeneous groups, between family members and close friends (Putnam 2000, 22-4). Bridging, on the other hand, is more inclusive and can encompass people with different backgrounds; it existed in the civil rights movement in the US, and is more common between acquaintances rather than close friends (ibid, 22-4). Both types can be beneficial but in different situations, e.g. “strong ties with intimate friends may ensure chicken soup when you’re sick, but weak ties with distant acquaintances are more likely to produce leads for a new job” (ibid, 363).

Social capital theory emphasizes the importance of social networks for individuals and society in general. It was developed by Bourdieu, Coleman, and Portes & Sensenbrenner (Van Tubergen 2006, 32). The term has been used in different contexts during the 1900s by scholars in different fields (Putnam 2000, 19-20). According to Putnam, “the core idea of social capital theory is that
social networks have value. Just as a screwdriver (physical capital) or a college education (human capital) can increase productivity (both individual and collective), so too social contacts affect the productivity of individuals and groups” (2000, 19). These social networks referred to as social capital can have a positive impact on an individual’s labor performance (Odé 2002, 16). Social capital can also have positive effects on the broader society and increase cooperation, mutual support, trust and institutional effectiveness (Putnam 2000, 22). However, Putnam also points out that social capital is not always a positive force, it can be used to commit vicious acts and be manifested in ethnocentrism and corruption (ibid, 22).

Social capital theory has been expanded to not only incorporate relations between the minority and the majority but also relationships within the minority group. These ideas have given birth to theories related to ethnic enclaves (Odé 2002, 16-17). The ideas of the importance of an ethnic enclave for integration are strongly connected to social capital theory (Van Tubergen 2006, 14). The assumption is that the resources and information available to a person within his/her ethnic community will determine his/her economic opportunities (ibid, 14). Thus, the economic integration of an immigrant is determined by their group’s social capital, e.g. members of immigrant groups with much social capital will gain access to more economic opportunities (ibid, 33).

In the migration field this theory has mainly been used to explain differences between immigrant groups concerning economic integration (Van Tubergen 2006, 33). However, social capital is also closely connected to social integration since they both focus on access to social networks. Social integration often focuses on the networks that an immigrant forms with natives, whereas social capital theory also shows the importance of other types of networks such as within one’s own ethnic community.

2.2.3 Structural opportunity theory

Structural opportunity theory is used to explain macro differences in integration and is based on the assumptions that people prefer to interact with people of the same social standing, and that structural features restrict people’s opportunities to meet people who are different from themselves (Van Tubergen 2006, 22).

According to sociologist Blau, immigrants’ sociocultural integration depends on their structural opportunities to meet natives (1960). These opportunities are determined by group size, segregation,
inequality,\textsuperscript{16} and intersection\textsuperscript{17} (Van Tubergen 2006, 23). Several studies have used this theory in regard to social integration to explain e.g. ethnic intermarriage (ibid, 23). When researchers use structural opportunity theory to investigate cultural integration the theory is expanded with the assumption that more social interaction with natives generates cultural integration e.g. language acquisition (ibid, 25).

\textit{2.2.4 Prejudice theory}

Prejudice theory is based on the general assumption that people have positive attitudes towards their own group and negative attitudes towards other groups or “out-groups.” The sociopsychological reasoning behind this theory is that people seek a positive “self-concept,” which can partly be derived from identifying with a social group and creating negative attitudes towards people who are not part of one’s own group (Van Tubergen 2006, 26). Negative attitudes toward out-groups can lead to negative actions, which often develop in the following order: 1) expressing prejudice among friends; 2) avoiding members of the out-group; 3) excluding out-group from employment, housing, rights, etc.; 4) acting violently towards out-group; 5) killing out-group (ibid, 26-7).

In order to expand this theory to cover migration studies, researchers have added three assumptions: first, natives identify with their country and countrymen; second, natives consider immigrants as the out-group; third, negative attitudes of natives result in discrimination and low economic opportunities for the immigrant group (Van Tubergen 2006; 27, 29). Being part of an out-group not only affects economic prospects, it can also lead to being avoided by natives which would lower immigrants’ sociocultural integration (ibid, 32). Prejudice theory can help us understand discrimination and other actions by natives that might complicate the sociocultural integration of immigrants.

According to prejudice theory, one person can be a member of several groups, and some out-groups are more disliked than others (Van Tubergen 2006, 26). All immigrants are not considered part of one homogenous group and natives’ attitudes can vary towards different immigrant groups (ibid, 29). The “group-level approach” explains the differences in prejudice by the level of perceived threat, which depends on the number of out-group members, the visibility of out-group members, and the scarcity of goods at stake (ibid, 27). Migration studies have found that natives’ negative

\textsuperscript{16} Inequality is how a group is distributed when it comes to education and income, if a group is not very much alike when it comes to those parameters they are more likely to interact with other groups (Van Tubergen 2006, 23).

\textsuperscript{17} Intersection refers to how homogeneous different groups are. If dimensions of different groups (race, occupation, and education) intersect, it is more likely that different groups will be in contact (Van Tubergen 2006, 23).
attitudes increase with the immigrant group’s difference in race and color (ibid, 30). Natives have more positive attitudes towards those groups that are more similar to them in regard to appearance, class, language, and religion (ibid, 14). The groups who differ more from the native population will be discriminated against more and therefore gain less opportunities in the labor market (ibid, 14).

### 2.3 Previous research

Besides theories, this thesis is based on previous studies that can be related to the research topic. First, this section will introduce studies related to education: studies investigating migrants with high education in Sweden, and studies that research the impact of education on integration. Second, studies will be presented that explore the connection between employment and integration. Finally, the connection between length of stay and integration will be examined.

#### 2.3.1 Highly educated migrants

A study by the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise declares that Sweden is below the average of OECD\(^\text{18}\) when it comes to having newly arrived immigrants hired within highly skilled professions. Possible explanations for this might be the low influx of highly skilled immigrants in Sweden, and that it takes longer for highly skilled migrants to integrate into the Swedish labor market since it is inflexible, has higher taxes, and is more regulated than that of many other countries (Confederation of Swedish Enterprise 2012, 22).

One of the few existing studies on the situation of highly educated migrants in Sweden was done by Oxford Research in 2009. On behalf of multiple Swedish organizations they conducted an Internet survey of 1350 mostly highly educated foreign citizens working in Sweden.

The conclusions of the survey were that the main difficulties these migrants met in Sweden were making Swedish friends and finding a job for their partner (Oxford Research 2009, 5). Among the respondents there seemed to be a willingness to integrate but many believed that it was hard to form social networks in Sweden, and that the Swedes were not very open or social (ibid, 34). The majority of those that made Swedish friends met them in the workplace (ibid, 36). Another difficulty that the respondents encountered was getting an overview of laws and regulations in Sweden (ibid, 36) and although the respondents were positively surprised by the English skills of the Swedes, many of them believed that it was difficult to completely integrate in Sweden without

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\(^{18}\) Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
speaking Swedish (ibid; 31, 71). Some workplaces offered language courses, but only half of the respondents were happy with the courses offered (ibid, 42).

2.3.2 Education and integration

According to human capital theory, education is an investment that boosts a person’s productivity and career (Bevelander 2010, 296). Having a higher level of education makes it more likely for both immigrants and natives to find employment (ibid, 296). However, immigrants might have a hard time getting a full return on the education from their home country since Swedish employers feel uncertain of the content and quality of that education. According to Lundh, several studies show that as the level of education increases so does the likelihood of finding employment but having a Swedish education increases the likelihood even more (2005, 71). Similarly, Bevelander’s study shows that having a Swedish degree is more beneficial than having a foreign degree (2010, 297).

The devaluation of education obtained outside of the new country has serious consequences for integration and is one of the reasons why the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers in 2011 recommended EU member states to validate migrants’ skills and not only leave it up to employment bodies (IOM 2012, 170). Studies have shown that the outcome of validation processes for education depend on similarities between the origin- and destination countries. If the country of origin is similar to the country of destination the education is likely to be valued higher than if the two countries are very different (ibid, 167).

Despite the difficulties of depreciation of foreign degrees, education is positively connected to integration. A person with high education is more likely to be culturally integrated than one with low education according to Hosseini-Kaladjahi (1997, 128). However, the importance of education is more often linked to economic integration because of its close connection to employment (Ager and Strang 2008, 172). The connection between employment and education can be seen in a study of minorities in the Netherlands by Odé (2002). Education has a greater impact than other sociocultural factors on the occupational level, and “schooling is by far the most important factor to understand why some minorities have achieved better labor market positions than others” (Odé 2002, 120).
2.3.3 Employment and integration

Education is related to employment, but the connection between employment and integration is not always direct. However, employment has been determined to influence a number of topics that are crucial for integration such as: “promoting economic independence, planning for the future, meeting members of the host society, providing opportunity to develop language skills, restoring self-esteem and encouraging self-reliance” (Ager and Strang 2008, 170).

Having employment can be positively linked to cultural integration since it allows a person to interact with the host population (Hosseini-Kaladjahi 1997, 88). Hosseini-Kaladjahi’s study of Iranians in Sweden supports this link by showing that those who are in the labor market are more culturally integrated than those who are not (ibid, 97). The importance of the workplace is further developed by Hosseini-Kaladjahi as a setting where immigrants can get to know and gain an understanding of the norms and values of the native population (ibid, 128-9). Having an income is also important for integration since it allows people to create networks by being able to entertain and engage in social activities (ibid, 129).

2.3.4 Length of stay and integration

If the connection between employment and integration is indirect, the connection between length of stay and integration is more straightforward. A longer time spent in the destination country allows a migrant to integrate structurally, socially, residentially, and personally (Diaz 1993, 186). Hammar states that the process of integration starts at arrival: “Immigration to another country, a new region or city, a neighborhood and another working place, etc., inevitably starts social processes of relearning, reevaluation, etc., which in sociological research is usually called integration, re-socialization or incorporation” (Hammar 1994, 195-6). Several studies have delved deeper into the connections between length of stay and integration and tried to explain why longer residency promotes integration.

Klinthäll relates length of residency to human capital and states that depending on whether the immigration is temporary or permanent the migrants will have different incentives for host country-specific investments (2006, 2). Dustmann concurs that length of stay is closely connected to acquisition of country-specific human capital (1999, 299). More time in the country allows migrants time to gain new qualifications that are needed in the new country (Hosseini-Kaladjahi 1997, 55). It
also makes them more likely to gain knowledge on different employment channels and, thereby have access to more job opportunities (ibid, 56).

Language knowledge is an example of country-specific human capital. Dustmann has found that language fluency is negatively correlated to a person’s intention to return (1999, 312). If a person is intending to return to their home country they are less likely to become fluent in the destination country’s language (Dustmann 1999, 312). In addition to language acquisition, according to Hosseini-Kaladjahi, length of residency also positively affects cultural integration since it weakens the influence of the origin culture and strengthens the importance of the new culture (1997, 88).

Furthermore, Hosseini-Kaladjahi asserts that length of residency has an impact on social integration (1997, 129-30). The intentions of a person to remain in the host society are strongly connected with the person’s investments in social integration (Hosseini-Kaladjahi 1997, 129-30). Hosseini-Kaladjahi’s study shows that this is true for Iranians in Sweden. The longer they stay, or the longer they intend to stay in Sweden, the more they interact with Swedes (ibid, 134). Nevertheless, it is difficult to determine which is the cause and which is the effect, e.g. individuals might decide to leave the host country because they have not made friends with the host population (ibid, 138).

If the connection to social integration is ambiguous, the connection to political integration is clearer since length of residence is one of the requirements for naturalization (Diaz 1993, 186). To be eligible for Swedish citizenship one usually has to have been a permanent resident for five years (Migrationsverket 2013 a.). For labor migrants this means that they must reside in Sweden for nine years to be able to obtain citizenship since they will usually not obtain permanent residency until after four years of temporary residency (Boguslaw 2012, 77).

The relationship between temporary- and permanent residency has been explored by Khoo et.al., and one of their conclusions is that skilled temporary migrants from less developed countries are more likely to become permanent residents than those who originate from more developed countries (2008, 221). Their study demonstrates that migration policies have little effect on the likelihood that a migrant remains in a country since it is the situations in the origin- and destination countries that determine whether a temporary migrant decides to stay (ibid, 223). In Sweden, a migrant’s likelihood of remaining permanently differs depending on his/her migration category. According to a study from the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, highly skilled labor migrants in Sweden are

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19 The first two years in Sweden a labor migrant will obtain a temporary work permit, which is connected to a specific employer. The residence permit can be extended for another two years, and is then only connected to a specific occupation (Migrationsverket 2013 b.).
not likely to become permanent residents (2012, 17). A large portion of the labor migrants in Sweden only stay for a short time in comparison to those who arrive in Sweden as humanitarian migrants or based on family reunification, these groups are much more likely to remain permanently (Confederation of Swedish Enterprise 2012, 17).

The benefits of providing migrants with a permanent residency is argued for by Klinthäll who states that in a system based on permanent residency, the migrants are more efficient when it comes to their economic behavior. These migrants are more likely to be economically integrated and in a better position to return to their home country. Klinthäll states that a permanent residence model will be beneficial for all parties involved: the host country, the country of origin, and the individual migrant (2006, 14).
3. Methodology

The previous chapters have laid out the groundwork for this thesis; the following chapters will focus on the research design of this study and the data collected. The data presented in this thesis is derived from a qualitative interview study. I chose a qualitative approach in order to conduct semi-structured interviews that allowed me to gain a deeper knowledge of the situation than if I had used a quantitative approach, such as a survey or a structured interview. My choice will be explained further in section ‘3.3.2 Interviews’ and ‘3.5 Limitations’. This chapter will break down how the study was conducted and provide a discussion of its limitations.

3.1 Participants

I conducted sixteen interviews between March 4 and April 4 in 2013, thirteen of them in person and three by telephone, two in Swedish and fourteen in English. Six of the respondents were female and ten were male. Their ages ranged from 27 to 49. One respondent originated from an EU-country and fifteen from non-EU countries: three from North America, one from South America, nine from Asia, one from Africa, and one from Europe (not the EU). They all have university degrees, ranging from a Bachelor’s degree to a Doctoral degree (Ph.D). Nine are employed by a university, five at private companies within the field of telecommunications, and two in private companies in other sectors. They have arrived in Sweden during the period 1999-2012. The vast majority, thirteen respondents, have arrived after 2008. At first arrival to Sweden, eight of the respondents entered the country as labor migrants, four as visiting researchers, three as students, and one through family reunification.

3.1.1 Sampling Procedure

I wanted to interview highly educated migrants who are currently employed in Sweden since their high education and employment would thus allow me to assume that they are economically integrated. In addition, I gave preference to individuals living in Malmö and Lund since that would enable me to meet with them in person. I preferred conducting the interviews in person since I agree with Bryman that there are some difficulties related to doing interviews over the phone, e.g. one is not able to see the other person and cannot determine how the respondent reacts to the questions based on their body language (2008, 457).
To find potential respondents I attempted to locate companies that have hired highly educated foreign labor and through these companies contact their employees. I obtained a list from the Swedish Migration Board of those companies in Malmö and Lund that during 2012 had hired at least one employee with a work permit issued by the Migration Board. However, the companies were organized by the zip code of the headquarters, which meant that some Malmö/Lund companies with headquarters in other parts of Sweden might have been overlooked. Furthermore, the list was not organized by city and I had to spend quite some time reorganizing the list to target companies in Malmö and Lund. Another issue was that the list showed work permits issued during 2012, which meant that the employees listed might have already left Sweden. Finally, the list did not provide education level of the labor migrants. In order to find highly educated migrants I researched the companies to determine which companies were likely to have hired migrants with high education.

I identified eighteen companies in Malmö and Lund and contacted seventeen of them by phone, in most cases I was referred to personnel in the HR-department to whom I explained my study and my need to get in touch with their employees. Since they were unable to give out any employee contact information, we agreed that I would send them an email with more information in Swedish as well as information directed towards potential respondents in English. These emails were then forwarded by my contact person at the company to their foreign employees, encouraging them to get in touch with me if they were interested in taking part in the study. I set up interview appointments with those who responded to my email. The sixteen respondents represent six of the seventeen companies I contacted.

3.1.2 List of participants

- Respondent A is a 28 year-old male from Asia. He has a Master’s degree from his home country, and arrived to Sweden one year ago as a labor migrant to work within telecommunications.
- Respondent B is a 35 year-old female from North America. She has a PhD from her home country, and arrived to Sweden as a labor migrant in 2010 to work at a university.
- Respondent C is a 39 year-old male from North America. He has a PhD from his home country, and arrived to Sweden as a labor migrant less than a year ago to work at a university.

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20 Most non-EU labor migrants have to obtain a work permit from the Migration Board prior to arrival.
21 I looked up the companies’ websites and judged whether they were likely to have highly educated labor. For example, I eliminated companies in the service sector such as restaurants and hotels.
22 One of the companies was disqualified at this point since they did not have any contact information on their website.
• Respondent D is a 48 year-old male from Asia. He has a PhD from his home country, and arrived to Sweden in 2012 as a visiting researcher at a university.

• Respondent E is a 57 year-old male from South America with a PhD from Sweden. He first arrived to Sweden as a student at the end of the 1980s. He went back to his home country and returned to Sweden in 2007 to work at a university.

• Respondent F is a 39 year-old female from Asia. She arrived to Sweden as a student in 1999 and obtained a Ph.D in Sweden. She currently works at a university.

• Respondent G is a female from Europe. She has a Master’s degree from her home country, and arrived to Sweden three years ago through family reunification (to be with her husband). She currently works at a university.

• Respondent H is a 49 year-old male from North America. He has a PhD, and arrived to Sweden in 2010 as a visiting researcher at a university.

• Respondent I is a 27 year-old female from Europe with a Master’s degree from Sweden. She arrived to Sweden more than five years ago as a student, and since 2012 she works at a private company.

• Respondent J is a 31 year-old male from Africa. He has a Master’s degree from his home country, and arrived to Sweden as a labor migrant in 2012. He works at a private company.

• Respondent K is a 31 year-old male from Asia. He has a PhD from his home country, and arrived to Sweden two years ago as a visiting researcher at a university.

• Respondent L is a female from Asia. She has a Bachelor’s degree from her home country, and arrived to Sweden as a labor migrant in 2011 to work within telecommunications.

• Respondent M is a male from Asia. He has a Master’s degree from his home region, and arrived to Sweden as a labor migrant in 2012 to work within telecommunications.

• Respondent N is a 32 year-old female from Asia. She has a PhD from Europe, and arrived to Sweden as visiting researcher at a university less than a year ago.

• Respondent O* is a 34 year-old male from Asia. He has a Master’s degree from his home country, and arrived to Sweden as a labor migrant to work within telecommunications. He has lived in Sweden for less than two years in total.

• Respondent P* is a 30 year-old male from Asia. He has a Bachelor’s degree from his home country, and arrived to Sweden in 2011 as a labor migrant to work within telecommunications. (* phone interviews)
3.2 Indicators

This thesis aims to explore the sociocultural integration of the respondents. Their level of sociocultural integration is analyzed by using three indicators: knowledge of Swedish, friendships with Swedes, and membership in organizations. These indicators were investigated through the questions presented below.

3.2.1 Knowledge of Swedish

- How do you evaluate your ability to speak Swedish?
- In what language do you communicate at work, at home, in everyday life, or with Swedish authorities?
- Do you find that people treat you differently depending on if you speak Swedish or English?

Based on the answers from the respondents I created a scale with four levels of Swedish knowledge: none (does not know any Swedish), basic (has taken classes but does not feel comfortable using Swedish outside of the classroom), conversational (has enough Swedish to handle daily life but does not feel comfortable working in Swedish), professional (feels comfortable using Swedish both at- and outside of work). The reason I created my own scale was because the respondents’ answers related to their level of Swedish were not easily incorporated into any preexisting scales. I placed together respondents who had described their level of Swedish in a similar way and came up with the four categories mentioned above.

3.2.2 Friendships with Swedes

- Do you have many close friends in Sweden?
  - How many of them are Swedes?
  - How did you get to know the Swedes? (workplace, etc.)
- What is your impression of Swedes?

The responses allowed me to determine whether the respondents had Swedish friends or not, but did not provide enough detail for any further divisions.
3.2.3 Membership in organizations

• Are you involved in any organizations (athletic, political, etc.)?

The organizations asked about refers to what Putnam (2000) calls ‘bridging’ social capital, which means that they are the kind of organizations that are open to everyone and not focused on a particular group. Regarding membership in organizations the respondents were only divided into two groups: those who are part of a ‘bridging organization’ and those who are not.

3.2.4 Employment and length of stay

Along with investigating sociocultural integration, this thesis relates sociocultural integration to employment and length of stay. The responses related to the three indicators of sociocultural integration were linked to the respondents’ employment experiences and their length of stay. The respondents were divided up in three categories based on their time spent in Sweden: less than one year, one to five years, and more than five years. The respondents were also asked about their future plans:

• How long are you planning on remaining in Sweden? (staying permanently, moving back to home country, moving elsewhere)?

Based on their responses to this question the respondents were divided into three groups with different intentions to stay: plan to leave Sweden, uncertain plans, plan to stay permanently.

3.3 Procedures

This section will describe in detail how I conducted my study from literature review to analysis.

3.3.1 Literature review and theory development

Before starting my interview study, I researched previous studies related to the connections between employment and integration, and length of stay and integration. I explored definitions of integration in the academic field and the diverse perspectives on the concept. I used Van Tubergen’s division of economic- and sociocultural integration as well as the theories he determines “capable of explaining the influence of macro effects on immigrants’ socio-cultural and economic integration” (Van
Tubergen 2006, 15). These theories are human capital theory, social capital theory, structural opportunity theory, and prejudice theory, which were presented in more detail in the previous chapter. I will return to these theories during the analysis of the interview material in chapter four.

3.3.2 Interviews

The interview guide was developed with the research questions, presented in the introduction, in mind and designed for a semi-structured interview. The initial part of the interview guide presented more general questions about the respondent; the second part that focuses on integration was divided into cultural- and social integration. The interview questions have been influenced by interview/survey guides related to levels of integration in other studies such as Aytar (1999), Diaz (1993, 1996), and Hosseini-Kaladjahi (1997).

A semi-structured interview means that the interview covers certain questions but that the order and wording of questions can differ between different interviews, this allows the procedure to be flexible and the respondent to speak more freely and with more details than in a structured interview (Bryman 2008, 437-8). I chose the semi-structured format since it did not force me to follow the interview guide verbatim. However, the interview guide still gave the interview a structure, which enabled the data to have a clear focus and made the analysis process simpler. The chosen questions guided the interviews but did not prevent the respondents from bringing up topics of their own, and allowed me to ask follow-up questions when a response was interesting or unclear.

The semi-structured format meant that the length of the interview varied depending on how much the respondent had to say about the different topics. The interviews ranged from 24 minutes to 77 minutes in length. Twelve of the interviews took place at the offices of the respondents during business hours, one at a coffee shop, and three over the phone. I took notes during the interviews but not very detailed since I wanted to focus on the respondent and on which follow-up questions to ask.

3.3.3 Analysis

When analyzing the interview transcripts I used what Bryman refers to as a thematic analysis and the framework strategy (2008, 554). I created a framework based on the following indicators: knowledge of Swedish, friendships with Swedes, and membership in organizations. This framework
was organized in matrices where interview data from each respondent was inserted. Within a matrix, repeated themes and patterns were sought in order to distinguish the most common responses. Although I attempted to bring forth the general feelings of the sixteen respondents, their individual voices will also be heard through direct quotes.

Once the data was divided according to the three indicators and the common responses had been delineated I analyzed the responses in relation to employment and length of stay. I also utilized the previously outlined integration theories in the analysis to understand and explain the respondents’ level of sociocultural integration.

3.4 Role as researcher

Throughout this study, it has been important for me to ask: how do I as a researcher affect what I am studying? In interview studies in particular there is a high risk of the researcher/interviewer influencing the respondents to respond in a certain way. To prevent this as much as possible I tried to take the following precautions during the interviews:

• Avoided leading questions (Bryman 2008, 242).
• Had no predetermined/favored answer in mind. As Yin states, in order to avoid bias an investigator cannot use his/her study to verify “a preconceived position” (2009, 72).
• Was aware of what Yin refers to as reflexivity -- and Dahmström as the interviewer effect -- where the respondent is affected by the interviewer and answers the way they think the interviewer wants them to respond (Dahmström 2011, 370; Yin 2009, 102).

Other things to be aware of as an interviewer is that one can affect the respondent through tone, body language, choice of words, or dress (Dahmström 2011, 370). Another aspect to watch out for is that the respondent is affected by social norms and responds according to those norms and not to his/her own opinions, Dahmström refers to this as prestige bias (2011, 370). It was beneficial for me to keep this in mind during the interviews and it was also good to keep in mind during the analysis of my data that these biases might have occurred.

Furthermore, “social researchers should be reflective about the implications of their methods, values, biases, and decisions for the knowledge of the social world that they generate. Additionally, reflexivity entails sensitivity to the researcher’s cultural, political, and social context” (Bryman 2008, 682). As Bryman suggests, when analyzing my results I needed to reflect on my own position
as a researcher: as a woman, a student, a white person, and a native Swede. I also considered my political views to try as best I could to prevent those from influencing my interviews as well as my analysis. It is important for a researcher to be reflexive and try to stay objective. However, I am ontologically inclined to agree with relativism that we construct reality, and epistemologically I lean towards subjectivism, which makes it impossible for me to believe in complete objectivity. In this light, the best we can do as researchers is to construct our studies transparently so that the reader can follow the process of data collection, as well as to include how we may have affected our research.

3.5 Ethical considerations

Before agreeing to participate, respondents received written information about the interviews and the study. This information was then reiterated at the beginning of each interview to assure that the respondent was aware of how and for what purpose the interview material was collected. The sampling procedure depended upon voluntary participation from the potential respondents, so presumably the sixteen respondents were intrigued and comforted by the written materials received prior to the interviews. Many of the respondents proved to be interested in the topic of research and all of the respondents will be made aware of the study results by receiving the thesis by email.

All the interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed, after I had asked for permission and assured the respondents that their responses would be kept confidential and anonymous. In other words, respondents’ confidentiality was assured throughout the study process. In section ‘3.1.2 List of participants’ this became particularly important, and therefore the country of origin of the respondents was not specified, nor the field of work if there are less than five respondents working within that field.

3.6 Limitations

Concerning the interviews, I was not able to conduct a pilot study because of time constraints, which might have compromised the quality of the interviews. My interview guide could have been designed differently to gain more detailed information about the respondents’ friendships with Swedes, and their membership in organizations.

Transcripts available upon request.

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23 Transcripts available upon request.
The sampling process was conducted in such a way that the respondents had to get in touch with me, which might have affected the sample and made the respondents more likely to have certain qualities and experiences. Perhaps people with positive experiences are more likely to want to take part in an interview and talk about their experiences. Furthermore, most of the respondents work at universities or in the telecommunications business, and the majority work in English-speaking workplaces. Respondents representing a wider variety of fields and less international workplaces might have given other responses.

A qualitative study has its disadvantages. It can be criticized for depending too heavily on the researcher’s views; creating studies that cannot be repeated; and presenting findings that cannot be generalized (Bryman 2008, 391; Yin 2009, 15). Although I attempted to present the general feelings of the respondents it may not be possible for the results of this interview study to be generalized to all highly educated migrants since the sample only consists of sixteen respondents.

However, a qualitative study can provide the perspective of individuals and give voice to their experiences. Unlike in a quantitative study, I was able to gain a more holistic understanding of the lives of the respondents and their experiences in Sweden, which would not have been possible had I used quantitative measures. Qualitative studies provide a variety of benefits. Because they are less structured than quantitative studies the researcher is able to gain access to the world views of the respondents (Bryman 2008, 389). The respondents are able to share what is important to them since they are not tied to a rigid research structure. Unstructured interviews also gives the researcher the flexibility to change the focus of the interviews during the course of the study (ibid, 389). In the case of this study the interview guide remained the same, however the interviews were influenced by the respondents’ interests, which allowed the interviews to focus on different types of experiences.
4. Analysis

Thirteen respondents have friendships with Swedes, which would indicate that they are socioculturally integrated with regards to this indicator. It should also be noted that these friendships were clearly connected to their workplace. However, according to the other two indicators--knowledge of Swedish and participation in organizations--the majority of respondents are not socioculturally integrated. An intense work schedule seems to prevent the respondents from investing time in language classes and organizations. The respondents’ short length of stay might further explain their low level of Swedish.

4.1 Cultural integration

One main indicator of cultural integration is speaking and understanding the language of the destination country (Hosseini-Kaladjahi 1997, 90; Van Tubergen 2006, 7). Most respondents have a low level of Swedish, which shows that they are not yet culturally integrated. This might be explained by their relatively short length of stay as well as that they only use English at their workplace.

4.1.1 Knowledge of Swedish

Ten of the respondents have a basic level of Swedish. They believe that learning the language is important for their cultural integration, but they have difficulties finding time to invest in learning Swedish since they have full-time employment. Additionally, their knowledge of English enables them to gain access to most parts of society, which lowers their motivation to learn Swedish.

First of all, the importance of language acquisition for cultural integration was supported by several of the respondents. One of the respondents describes the connection in the following quote, “I think you don’t integrate in society, you don’t involve, if you don’t speak the local language, like small things” (J). Many of the respondents believe that learning the new language would deepen their connection to the new country, “if I know the language I think I’ll be even more connected” (P), states another respondent.

As previously stated, during the interviews the respondents were asked to evaluate their level of Swedish, and I developed four levels of language knowledge based on their responses: none, basic, conversational, and professional. Two of the respondents have no knowledge of Swedish. The
majority of the respondents described that they have a basic level of Swedish. They have taken at least one course either provided by the municipality or their employer but they do not use Swedish in their everyday life. The next level is conversational, meaning that the respondents use Swedish in their daily life but would have trouble using it professionally. Two of the respondents belong to this category, and one of them describes his level of Swedish as follows: “I cannot lecture in Swedish it’s really difficult, but I can handle daily life in Swedish” (E). At the next level, which is referred to as the professional level, there are only two respondents and they are placed in this category based on the fact that they use Swedish and no other language at work.

All but three of the respondents had taken Swedish classes either offered by the municipality, language schools or their employers. Some of the respondents had to wait several months before being assigned to a course, but everyone seems to eventually have acquired access to language classes. A couple of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of the courses offered by the municipality but the majority did not raise any concerns with their courses. Finding time to devote to learning Swedish appears to be a bigger obstacle than the quality of education.

In regard to having access to information, many of the respondents describe that it is mostly when receiving written information that not knowing Swedish becomes an issue. One respondent states, “the biggest hurdle was that all the information was in Swedish ... And I bought a house and you have to sign a contract which you don’t know exactly what it is, so it was very tough” (L). Accessing information orally, on the other hand, is not an issue since most Swedes know English and the communication can take place in English, which all the respondents speak. One respondent described the situation as follows, “I’d say that it’s only the written documents [which are a problem] because most of the people here, they speak pretty much good English” (M). A lack of knowledge in Swedish makes it hard to gain written information in Sweden, and although this can be troublesome it does not seem to prevent the respondents from gaining access to society.

Language and employment

Since interactions with natives at the workplace, for most respondents, take place in English, the connection between work and learning Swedish is not as clear as suggested in studies by Ager and Strang (2008) and Hosseini-Kaladjahi (1997). Nevertheless, almost all the respondents are trying to learn Swedish and describe that their work setting and colleagues motivate them to learn.
The interviews show that employment does not help the respondents develop their Swedish skills. Only three of the respondents use Swedish at work, and only one of them had work tasks that required him to learn the language, the other two learned Swedish before obtaining their employments. This would suggest that employment does not positively affect the respondents’ language learning. Most of the respondents only use English at work. The workplace often presents an international setting where Swedish is not necessary. A respondent states, “it’s an international working atmosphere because we have people from all over the world ... so it’s great that everyone can speak English” (N). The international atmosphere, however, does not enable the respondents to practice their Swedish: “I work for an international company ... it’s difficult to practice it [Swedish] because people just speak English to you, it’s a well spoken language here. As soon as you struggle with Swedish they switch over to English” (J). Furthermore, work is time-consuming which the respondents bring up as an obstacle for taking language classes as described in the following quote, “because I’m quite busy now with my work so I don’t have much time to learn [Swedish]” (K).

On the other hand, work can be helpful to language development by offering motivation. Some of the respondents state that knowing Swedish would make them more easily hired at less international companies, and some career opportunities are only open for people who speak Swedish. “The language can be exclusionary. For example there are some professional development opportunities ... that is only offered in Swedish” (B), declares one respondent. The language exclusion can also be felt in more casual settings: “when we’re having ‘fika,’ everyone in the office are really friendly, are really nice, but they’re speaking in English and all of a sudden start in Swedish. But it’s like, they just started -- it’s unintentional. Then later, ‘sorry man we just forgot.’ It’s easier to communicate in your own language, stuff like that” (A). Several respondents describe that there are social benefits of speaking Swedish at work, which motivate them to learn Swedish as suggested by the following quote. “In our work environment I don’t think we need to know Swedish to do our work. But at times I felt I need to learn Swedish because to be in touch, to get more close with colleagues” (M).

**Language and length of stay**

When looking at language ability in relation to length of stay, clear connections become visible. According to human capital theory, a long time spent in a country will allow immigrants to learn the new language (Van Tubergen 2006, 16). The two respondents who have no knowledge of Swedish have also stayed in Sweden the shortest (less than one year). The ones that have a basic
level of Swedish have all lived in Sweden for less than five years. All but one of the respondents who have a conversational or professional level of Swedish have lived in Sweden for more than five years (see table 1).

Table 1: Language ability, length of stay, and intention to stay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of language</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Length of stay</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Intention to stay</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>D, M</td>
<td>&lt; One year</td>
<td>C, D, J, M, N</td>
<td>Plan to leave Sweden</td>
<td>D, F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversational to Professional</td>
<td>E, F, G, I</td>
<td>&gt; Five years</td>
<td>E,F,I</td>
<td>Plan to stay permanently</td>
<td>B, C, E, G, I, O, P</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples from table:
- **Respondent D has no level of Swedish, has lived in Sweden for less than one year, and is planning to leave Sweden.**
- **Respondent H has a basic level of Swedish, has lived in Sweden between one - five years and his future plans are uncertain.**
- **Respondent I has a conversational or professional level of Swedish, has lived in Sweden for more than five years, and plans to stay in Sweden permanently.**

According to Dustmann, there is a strong correlation between learning the destination language and a person’s intention of remaining in the destination country (1999, 312). In the interview material, this relationship is not as clear as the connection between language ability and length of stay. Nevertheless, one can see that most respondents with a high level of Swedish also have an intention of staying permanently (see table 1). There are a few respondents who intend to stay permanently but only have a basic level of Swedish. One could assume that with more years spent in Sweden they will acquire a higher level of Swedish since they intend to stay permanently.
4.1.2 Theoretical discussion

A short length of stay can explain a low level of Swedish using human capital theory. Many of the respondents only need Swedish in social settings, which suggests that knowledge of Swedish would increase their social- rather than human capital. In addition, the respondents have in general received a positive treatment although they are sometimes excluded from conversations because of their lack of Swedish.

According to human capital theory, length of stay positively affects both economic- and sociocultural integration since time spent in the country allows a person to invest in country-specific human capital such as the language of the destination country (Van Tubergen 2006; 16, 20). Many of the respondents have spent a relatively short time in Sweden, which might explain why they have not acquired Swedish, since it takes time to learn a language. According to human capital theory, the respondents will learn Swedish over time, which the interview material also suggests since the respondents who have stayed in Sweden longer have a higher level of Swedish. However, human capital theory also suggests that their motivation for learning Swedish should be economic integration, which does not seem to be the case for the respondents.

The connection between economic integration and language acquisition is not clear in this study since the majority of the respondents describe that the international language that they already possess, English, is enough to be economically integrated. Thirteen of the respondents do not need Swedish professionally. Since speaking English is sufficient in most settings and learning the native language might not improve their economic integration, they might not be very motivated to learn Swedish. One of the respondents describes why it has been hard for her to learn Swedish: “I have taken Swedish classes and I am working to learn the language but that has been kind of inconsistent. Because you know, I kind of had the thought I am investing a lot of time and effort to learn a language that only nine million people speak when they already speak my native language extremely fluently” (B).

However, many of the respondents state that improving their social interactions motivate them to learn Swedish, which can be related to the social capital theory. Speaking English in Sweden can allow a person to create relationships and networks since most people in Sweden speak English. Therefore, many of the respondents have been able to create social capital without learning Swedish. Nevertheless, thirteen of the respondents still are or have been taking Swedish classes since they believe Swedish is important for social integration and in certain settings as expressed by
these two respondents: “I’m learning Swedish so that when I learn I will even get chance to interact more and get more involved into the society” (P); “and especially if you’re at social gatherings it would be useful [to know Swedish], because at some point I do find myself a little lost when I don’t understand people” (N). This would suggest that learning Swedish might give the respondents access to more social capital. It seems more likely that most respondents learn Swedish to build social capital rather than human capital.

The majority of the respondents interact with Swedes daily but not in Swedish. According to the structural opportunity theory, the more access one has to interaction with natives the more likely one is to acquire the language (Van Tubergen 2006, 25). All of the respondents have access to workplaces where many native Swedes work. Nevertheless, most of the respondents work in international workplaces where the spoken language is English. A respondent describes how it is to work as an English speaker in Sweden: “everyone speaks English, so the entire culture is English, so it’s very easy for a person who comes from outside to get integrated, or get work done” (P). The connection between more interactions with natives and learning the language as suggested by the structural opportunity theory is unlikely to be true for fourteen of the respondents since their interactions with natives mainly take place in English. Nevertheless, the interactions with natives at the workplace serve as motivation for many of the respondents to learn Swedish. Many respondents express that their social connections with colleagues would be increased by learning Swedish, so in that sense the interactions with natives might still assist the respondents in learning Swedish.

Prejudice theory also uses contact with natives to explain levels of sociocultural integration such as language proficiency. According to prejudice theory, low sociocultural integration can be explained by immigrants not having contact with natives since the natives avoid and/or exclude the immigrant group.

None of the respondents in this study express that the Swedes try to avoid interaction with them, although many respondents comment that Swedes are not very social, which follows the findings of the Oxford Research study from 2009 (34). One respondent expresses it this way: “The stereotype is that people are kind of reserved and private and I think that is generally pretty true. It does take time to get to know people” (B). The interactions that do take place between the respondents and Swedes are mostly in English. If one strives to use the prejudice theory, one might say that natives are avoiding interaction in their native language with the respondents. Many of the respondents describe that when they initiate a conversation in Swedish the Swedes rapidly switch to English.
This can of course be viewed as accommodating the needs of the “foreigner,” however it does not help them learn Swedish.

In addition to avoidance, prejudice theory mentions the exclusion of immigrants as something that would hinder integration. One experience that is shared by several of the respondents is the feeling of being excluded through the use of Swedish. Several respondents describe how as English-speakers they can feel left out and not know what is going on during conversations in Swedish as described by the following quote, “how many social situations have I been in, or work situations, when people start speaking in English out of deference to me and they will unconsciously slide into speaking Swedish in the course of the conversation” (H).

Apart from in the case of language, the respondents have in general had few experiences of avoidance and exclusion. According to prejudice theory, some immigrant groups are treated more positively because of their similarities with the mainstream society (Van Tubergen 2006, 14). The respondents’ general positive treatment, especially at work, can, according to prejudice theory, be explained by the fact that the respondents have a similar educational background and share a common language with their Swedish colleagues.

That other immigrant groups meet more negative attitudes in Sweden can be detected through the respondents’ stories of being treated worse when speaking Swedish than when speaking English. It could be that speaking less-than-perfect Swedish puts them in a different perceived societal group than when they speak flawless English. In the following quote one respondent describes the treatment she receives when speaking Swedish and how that makes her feel: “As a foreigner how you get treated, first it was very fine, all Swedish people like to speak English, but [when speaking] crappy Swedish you’re treated more like, as a friend told me a ‘jävla invandrare’ -- those immigrants. It gets little unwelcome when you are kind of … [trying] to get into the society, [you] feel unwelcome” (F). Receiving different treatment when speaking Swedish was only voiced by a few of the respondents, which might be explained by the fact that twelve of the respondents do not speak Swedish in their everyday life and might therefore not have experienced these attitudes. If speaking Swedish at a lower level than fluency means that one receives more negative attitudes and less openness from people, it might make immigrants less likely to learn Swedish.
4.2 Social integration

According to Diaz, social integration is for immigrants to have access to social networks where one can develop contacts with natives (1993, 76), and, according to Van Tubergen this results in social interactions between immigrants and natives (Van Tubergen 2006, 7). Furthermore, membership in organizations is another indicator used to measure social integration (Hosseini-Kaladjahi 1997, 131). The social integration of the respondents is examined through two indicators: friendships with Swedes and membership in organizations. The respondents’ friendships with Swedes suggest that they are socially integrated, and that making Swedish friends is connected to employment. However, employment seems to negatively affect involvement in organizations. Few of the respondents are involved in organizations, which can be explained by their lack of free time outside of work as well as their lack of Swedish language. The interviews suggest that there is a correlation between membership in organizations and language proficiency.

4.2.1 Friendships with Swedes and membership in organizations

This section will present interview material that relates to having Swedish friends and being a part of organizations in Sweden. The interviews show that thirteen of the respondents have both friends who originate from Sweden as well as from other countries but few of them are involved in any organizations.

Friendships with Swedes

When asked about their social life in Sweden, most respondents illustrate a positive picture including friends from all over the world. For example, “Yeah I have many friends in Sweden ... I have maybe more than 50% who are Indian, 20% Swedish and rest are from other different parts of the world” (P). A few respondents voice having felt lonely in the beginning of their time in Sweden, but the majority seems to have found friends quite easily. Thirteen respondents have at least some Swedish friends although they are more often described as acquaintances. Although acquaintances imply less closeness it is not necessarily a bad thing in regard to the development of social capital, in Putnam’s words it would be referred to as bridging social capital rather than bonding, which can be beneficial in situations such as finding work (2000).

Many of the respondents describe that they have made their Swedish friends at work: “Yeah, we have quite some Swedish friends but it’s more superficial ... I think mostly through work” (F). This
was also the case in the Oxford Research study (2009, 36), which would suggest that there is a close connection between employment and making Swedish friends. The workplace offers the respondents a space where they can meet Swedes and make friends, however, some of the respondents state that they do not want to make very close friends at work: “I don’t like becoming best friends with my colleagues. I like to have a good relationship but I tend to keep my work and my private life [separate]” (J). Nevertheless, the connection between making native friends and the workplace is quite clear since most of the respondents have met their Swedish friends through work.

The connection between having Swedish friends and length of stay, on the other hand, is harder to analyze since the descriptions of friendships are not detailed enough for one to be able to compare different respondents’ friendships. Therefore, it is not possible to relate their friendships with Swedes to their length of stay. However, the feeling is that most of the respondents, regardless of length of stay, have made at least some Swedish friends.

Membership in organizations

Fourteen of the respondents are not involved in any organizations that provide bridging social capital. However, almost all of them share an interest in becoming involved. In most cases, time constraints are given as the reason why they have not yet joined an organization. “My work is keeping me quite busy, I work 12-13 hours a day so I’m quite busy” (J). The same respondent also describes the importance of being involved in organizations: “I need to integrate as well; I need to get more involved in some activities and actually find some hobbies and things to do” (J). Several respondents talk about that they want to get involved in organizations to meet Swedish people, which supports the idea that membership in organizations is important for social integration.

There seems to be a negative correlation between employment and involvement in organizations since many of the respondents state that the reason they are not more involved is because their work takes so much of their time.

In regard to the connection between length of stay and membership in organizations, it is hard to make any conclusions since only two of the respondents are involved in organizations. One of them is part of the group that has spent more than five years in Sweden; however, the other one has only spent between one to five years in Sweden. An aspect that seems to play a role is language, since

the two respondents that are involved in organizations are also the two with the highest level of Swedish.

4.2.2 Theoretical discussion

Prejudice- and structural opportunity theory focus on the importance of relations with natives, and since thirteen of the respondents have Swedish friends they can be considered socially integrated. All of the respondents are part of social networks with people from other parts of the world, which according to social capital theory will also provide them with social capital. However, friends who are not from Sweden are less likely to provide the respondents with country-specific human capital, such as knowledge of Swedish. Twelve respondents lack conversational Swedish, which might be one explanation as to why they are not members in organizations, which is another indicator of social integration.

When analyzing social integration, the focus is put on Swedish friends. The reasons for this focus can be found in two of the integration theories. According to prejudice theory it is important to ensure that the immigrant group is not being avoided or discriminated by natives since that would decrease the immigrants’ opportunities in society both economically and socioculturally. Structural opportunity theory connects social interaction with natives to the opportunity to learn the host country language (Van Tubergen 2006, 25). The fact that thirteen respondents have Swedish friends shows that they are not avoided by natives, according to prejudice theory, and that they have opportunities to meet natives according to structural opportunity theory.

Social capital theory focuses on the positive impact that social relations and networks can have on an individual’s resources and possibilities. Social capital is not only created through relations with natives; international social networks can also be valuable for creating social capital. Many of the respondents describe that they have friends from all over the world, which would grant them large amounts of social capital. However, these international friends might not be as helpful when it comes to obtaining country-specific human capital, such as knowledge of the labor market or knowledge of Swedish. Country-specific human capital is important for immigrant integration according to human capital theory (Van Tubergen 2006, 20).

In regard to membership in organizations, which is an indicator of social integration, this study suggests that it is positively connected to language proficiency since the two respondents that are involved in organizations are also the two with the highest level of Swedish knowledge. People who
do not speak Swedish might not have the same access to organizations as Swedish speakers. Nonetheless, the respondents did not voice that they lack the structural opportunity to join organizations, and instead it is their work schedule that has prevented them from getting involved.

4.3 Analytical conclusion

The indicators according to which the respondents’ sociocultural integration has been reviewed are knowledge of Swedish, friendships with Swedes, and membership in organizations. The respondents present different levels of sociocultural integration but they also share similar features. They have friends in Sweden, both Swedish and with other nationalities. Few of them have a conversational level of Swedish and even fewer are involved in organizations. Most of the respondents have made Swedish friends and are, therefore, according to one of three indicators, considered socioculturally integrated. They all agree that learning Swedish is important to increase their sociocultural integration.

Language has been problematized as a way for natives to prevent integration. The interviews have shown that Swedes mainly speak English with immigrants and that they have more negative attitudes towards people who attempt to speak Swedish. Although this study is too small to determine if these attitudes exist at large, it is something to keep in mind for future studies. In general, the group of respondents has not met many negative attitudes in Sweden, which might be due to their ability to speak English.

The analysis is concluded with a return to the research questions posed in the introduction:

1. How does having employment influence a person’s sociocultural integration?
2. How does a person’s length of stay affect their sociocultural integration?

4.3.1 Research question 1—Employment and sociocultural integration

First, making Swedish friends seem to be facilitated by having employment, since most of the respondents have met their Swedish friends at work. All of the respondents have had access to places and situations where they can interact with Swedes. In addition the respondents and their Swedish colleagues have similar educations and they also share a common language, these factors might have made the respondents less likely to meet negative attitudes and prejudices.
Employment, however, seems to be a deterrent for involvement in organizations, since many of the respondents state that one of the main reasons why they are not involved in any organizations is that they do not have time because of work. Similarly, their full-time work makes it difficult for them to find the time to learn Swedish.

In regard to language, the effect of employment is dual. On the one hand, thirteen of the respondents do not practice Swedish at work. Fourteen of the respondents work in international environments where their work and career do not require them to speak any language other than English. On the other hand, employment can function as motivation to learn Swedish. Many respondents articulate that in social settings at the workplace their colleagues sometimes speak Swedish, which encourages them to learn the language.

Additionally, the interviews show that most of the respondents are very pleased with their work and career opportunities in Sweden. The following quote portrays a respondent’s thoughts about the Swedish workplace, “Swedish business and the company structure is fantastic. I think it’s a very great environment to work in” (J). Furthermore, work can make a person feel more connected to Sweden, as described in the following statement, “I think one of the reasons [for not feeling disconnected] is that the work I do, I actually love it. If I didn’t like my work I probably would have felt depressed and wouldn’t have felt connected to Sweden at all” (M).

Having employment is positive for sociocultural integration since the workplace can be a forum where immigrants and natives are able to meet and interact, which according to structural opportunity theory, should increase their sociocultural integration (Van Tubergen 2006, 25). However, it is slightly more complicated in the vast majority (fourteen of sixteen) of the respondents’ context since their work environment is international and the working language is English. Most of the respondents use very little Swedish at work, and therefore need to learn Swedish outside of work, which can be quite difficult time-wise.

4.3.2 Research question 2-Length of stay and sociocultural integration

The second research question explores the connection between length of stay and sociocultural integration. First of all, there is a visible pattern between the respondents’ language proficiency and their length of stay. For the most part, the longer they have stayed in Sweden, the higher level of Swedish they present (see table 1). This is supported by the human capital theory, looking at language as a country-specific human capital. The longer time a person has spent in a country the
more likely the person is to have obtained human capital specific to that country (Van Tubergen 2006, 16). Within human capital theory, language is often presented as a means for economic integration. In this interview study however, many of the respondents iterate the importance of language for their social integration. They are learning Swedish to be able to get involved in society, not to integrate economically.

Second, the relationship between having native friends and the time spent in the country has been difficult to investigate since the respondents’ friendships cannot be divided into levels or categories and it is therefore hard to determine if they are affected by time spent in the country. Previous studies have shown that length of stay will increase both economic- and sociocultural integration (Dustman 1999, 299; Chiswick 2008, 71). A Swedish study by Hosseini-Kaladjahi show that immigrants who have stayed in Sweden for a long time have more interactions with natives (1997, 134). Nevertheless, this interview study was unable to decipher that kind of connection. It is not to say that it does not exist, but the interview material did not allow for those connections to be drawn.

The same is true for the relationship between length of stay and membership in organizations. Since only two of the respondents are involved in organizations, it is not possible to determine whether involvement in organizations is related to length of stay. However, knowledge of Swedish might be connected to membership in organizations since both of the respondents who are involved in organizations also speak Swedish at the professional level. If membership is connected to language proficiency then length of stay could improve the respondents’ involvement in organizations since there is a clear connection between length of stay and language proficiency.
5. Conclusion

The migrants who have moved to Sweden since the 1970s have primarily come because of humanitarian- or family reasons. This lack of labor market focus among migrants might have influenced the development of Swedish integration policies that currently focus primarily on economic integration. The 2008 legislation, which reopened Sweden for labor migrants, can also be seen as an attempt by the Swedish government to connect migration to employment and labor market integration. The assumption of the 2008 law is that employed migrants will improve immigrant integration. These Swedish developments inspired this study to explore the sociocultural integration of a group of employed migrants that are presupposed to be integrated.

Through interviews of sixteen economically integrated persons in Sweden, this thesis investigates their level of sociocultural integration using three indicators: native friends, membership in organizations, and language proficiency. The respondents are found to be only partially socioculturally integrated since they have Swedish acquaintances and friends but are not members in organizations nor do they speak Swedish. Since the respondents can be considered economically integrated but not fully socioculturally integrated it would suggest that these two dimensions of integration are not completely interchangeable.

To further understand the relationship between economic- and sociocultural integration, the relationship between employment, a main indicator of economic integration, and sociocultural integration was examined. The respondents’ interactions with Swedes are clearly connected to their employment since most respondents have met their Swedish friends through work. The study shows that employment positively influences having Swedish friends. However, its influence on the other two indicators, membership in organizations and language proficiency, is more negative since the respondents’ work schedule allows little time for classes and other activities. Only one of three indicators shows a positive connection between employment and sociocultural integration. This means that being economically integrated does not automatically ensure sociocultural integration. The focus of Swedish integration policies on primarily economic integration may therefore not be enough to create complete integration into Swedish society.

Additionally, length of stay was related to sociocultural integration. Length of stay is positively correlated to language proficiency. Since language is important for other aspects of sociocultural integration, length of stay is likely to affect other indicators, such as making Swedish friends and being a member in organizations, however this could not be concluded by the interview material.
The clear connections between length of stay and language acquisition, and the respondents’ statements of the importance of language for their sociocultural integration, suggest that the longer an immigrant stays in Sweden the more integrated they will be, which is also supported by previous studies by Dustmann (1999), Hosseini-Kaladjahi (1997), and Klinthäll (2006). If the goal of the new labor migration legislation is to promote the integration of the labor migrants, it might be beneficial to support their longtime stay through granting permanent residency sooner after arrival than the current four years.

I will now return to the ideas presented by Li and Popoola that integration is a two-way street where both immigrants and natives need to participate in the process of integration. Language use seems to be one aspect where the native population can improve their involvement in the integration process. Since speaking English does not seem to be enough to gain access to all aspects of Swedish society, it becomes crucial for immigrants to have opportunities to learn and practice Swedish. Swedes might, therefore, have to make a greater effort to enable immigrants’ acquisition of Swedish by e.g. not switching to English when a person is struggling with Swedish, as well as show a more positive attitude when others are trying to learn the language.

It is difficult to evaluate integration because it is difficult to determine what it means to be integrated. Integration is a complex concept with multiple dimensions. This study attempts to illuminate the aspects of sociocultural integration in order to balance the Swedish integration discussion that often focuses merely on economic integration. Employment is an important aspect of gaining access to society, but as this study has shown it is not always directly connected to sociocultural integration. For the future, it is vital that researchers continue to specify what they mean by integration and attempt to incorporate the integration of employed migrants, whenever possible.

Future studies

Only one of the respondents in the interview study came to Sweden through family reunification; everyone else entered Sweden either to study or work. It would be interesting to explore highly educated migrants within other migration categories since the interview material suggests that there may be significant differences. For example, the respondents who came to Sweden as labor migrants voice that their experience in Sweden differs from that of their spouse who did not. One respondent describes her husband’s struggle to find employment: “He has had a little more trouble than I have because he’s also looking for work. So for me it was pretty straightforward, the
applications and everything, but for him it’s a little bit more round about. So it’s a little difficult finding work especially as a foreigner and you don’t know the language … it still tends to take its time” (N). A future study could provide more insight to sociocultural integration in Sweden by comparing highly educated immigrants who came to Sweden because of work, with those of similar educational backgrounds who came here due to family connections.

Many of the respondents intend to stay permanently in Sweden, and expressed a desire to integrate into Swedish society. A longer stay is needed to acquire, for example, knowledge of a new language and society. However, some of the respondents seem to not want to settle in Sweden and instead see the whole world as a potential place of residence. This may be related to the fact that many of the respondents came to Sweden specifically as labor migrants and are, as previously stated, considered by the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise to be part of a group that is unlikely to stay permanently. It could be interesting in future studies to focus on this group of migrants who have no desire to stay permanently in Sweden, and therefore are not particularly committed to taking part in processes of integration.
6. References


Appendix I: Interview Guide

Background information
• Where are you currently living?
• When were you born?
• Where were you born?

Pre-arrival
• What is the highest education/degree you have completed? In which country did you obtain this degree?
• What was your profession in your home country?
• How long did you plan to stay in Sweden?

Employment
• What is your profession (position) in Sweden?
• What type of company do you work for?
• How big is the company? Multinational?
• Are you satisfied with your work? (income, career opportunities, colleagues)

Length of stay
• How many years have you lived in Sweden?

Intention to stay
• How long are you planning on remaining in Sweden? (staying permanently, moving back to home country, move elsewhere)?
• What do your future plans depend on?

Cultural integration
• How do you evaluate your ability to speak Swedish?
  - If low ability, would you like to learn Swedish? Why/why not? Have you made any efforts to learn?
  - If high ability, how did you learn Swedish (Sfi, friends or partner, etc.)
• In what language do you communicate at work, at home, in everyday life, with Swedish authorities?
• Do you find that people treat you differently depending on if you speak Swedish or English?
• From where do you get most of your news? (Swedish sources, from home country, etc.)

Social integration
• Do you have many close friends in Sweden?
  - How many of them are Swedes?
  - How did you get to know the Swedes? (work place, etc.)
• What is your impression of Swedes?
• Are you involved in any organizations (athletic, political etc)?

Discrimination
• Do you experience that you are treated differently because of your religion/race/ethnicity/nationality? (In what way and where?)