Experiences and Perceptions of Discrimination among Highly Educated Immigrants in the Swedish Labour Market
– A Qualitative Study

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Abstract

Skilled migrant populations are arguably discriminated against in the labour market. That discrimination follows lines of ethnic association, body traits, social capital, and legal status. However, the existing literature seems to lack investigation on employment patterns affecting highly educated immigrant workers. So far, most studies have focused on exploring how changes in policy and Swedish legislation have affected the identified populations. This study seeks to complement the research conducted and determine how different employment experiences have affected immigrant workers. Twelve interviews were conducted to establish the concerned country’s intention to attract highly educated immigrant workers and determine how those discriminatory experiences can be associated with hampered career mobility among highly educated immigrant workers. This study aims to investigate this understudied topic by conducting interviews with highly educated immigrants who take part in the Swedish labour market. The findings of the study showed that so far, the Swedish labour market entails various unnoticeable factors that have not been captured adequately in this current study that builds on the quality and appropriateness of considering the opportunities that result in better or poor transferability of skills depending on market demand and supply. The study argues that by examining the characteristics of ethnic background, social capital distribution, and legal status in the Swedish labour market, it is possible to determine the details demonstrating the experiences and perceptions of discrimination toward immigrant workers.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Sweden is an OECD country renowned for its performance in accommodating programs for initiating international collaborations to bolster business (Dietz et al., 2015). In this process, the country has experienced a major shift in population characteristics. More refugees have been allowed to move into, within, and out of the country for economic and humanitarian reasons. However, discrimination against immigrants grounded on ethnic backgrounds, physical traits, social capital distribution, legal status, and ethnic background is a major challenge that demands in-depth exploration and scrutiny to determine how to reduce negative repercussions to the guest and host (Dietz et al., 2015). Previous research has been conducted on ethnic and racial discrimination against foreign workers and has shed some light on the current status whereby the immigrants are discriminated against by their employers, either by being immigrants working in the black market or those whose employers seek to take advantage of financial aid from international agencies. The fact that most of the research has focused on unskilled or poorly educated immigrants shows that the current problem is understudied (Behtoui, 2007).

So far, it has been identified that most immigrants who arrived in Sweden as early as the 1970s managed to find jobs in labour sectors that would demand low qualifications even though the individuals had the same educational level as their native counterparts (Carlsson & Rooth, 2007).
Therefore, the early market should serve as a foundation to determine what is necessary for interpreting the trends that have affected the labour market in Sweden over time. Many studies that have been undertaken on the labour market have found that unemployment among immigrants is significantly higher than non-immigrants; and that it is more severe among second-generation immigrants who fall in the bracket of those populations identified in the past two decades (Behtoui, 2004).

Additionally, there are disparities in the partial treatment of labourers in the market with foreign backgrounds, which have remained unexplored and unexplained when determining various individual characteristics such as language, educational attainment, and gender employment opportunities. Behtoui (2007) has shown that the inherent composition of the labour market affecting a certain area may have a considerable effect on labour market behavior and outcomes.

1.1 Problem Statement

Based on interviews with 12 subjects, this thesis aims to investigate and analyze discrimination experienced among skilled immigrants in Sweden. How do they experience their working lives and how do they identify discriminatory practices related to their native peers? As recent statistics in an experiment by Carlsson and Rooth (2007) show, the models of market structuring established in Sweden influence demand and supply of labour tend to show some level of tolerance against diversity and ethnic differences when dealing with diverse populations in the labour market. The current market structure in Sweden has been modified to show a muted form of discrimination against immigrants. It means that it is possible to find highly skilled workers in Sweden, although they have limited opportunities to participate in developing the Swedish economy compared to natives (Behtoui, 2004). This phenomenon explains that the immigrants expend many resources to
go to Sweden for highly competitive jobs that require high educational and skill credentials. However, the problem under analysis here is that the current system does not justify immigrants' rights and privileges as a priority, a fact echoed in interviewee responses. Instead of providing more facilities to immigrants, the authorities tend to minimize the distribution of social capital resources such as the tools and networks of relationships among individuals who live together.

Additionally, there are few measures to protect immigrant populations from workplace discrimination. Despite the continuing efforts to integrate immigrants into the mainstream labour market, the Swedish market still records the immigrants’ subpar outcomes. Strikingly, even though most immigrants who live in Sweden or work in Sweden are skilled, they are less likely to find employment matching their skills than non-immigrants (Dietz et al., 2015).

Indeed, A.A. indicates that his occupational and educational specialization is in geology and he worked with an American company for two years while they were in his home country, but when he arrived in Sweden, he realized it was hard for immigrants for his country to gain permanent residency in Sweden, “…but even if I got work…I will get a temporary contract, and this means that I do not have chance to get an extension to stay in Sweden. He noted that he was forced to take a job in a restaurant for long hours and low pay, and “…I had to accept this work because it is the only opportunity currently to ensure that I can stay in Sweden” (Appendix A). His response aligns with that of 64.1% of respondents who stated they were only offered temporary contracts while their Swedish colleagues received full-time contracts (Appendix B).
1.2 Limitations of the Study

The study uses a small sample size of informants, which may not provide substantial evidence for making high-quality interpretations of the phenomenon under investigation. A larger sample size is needed to avoid potential biases about immigrant workers’ experiences and perceptions. The other limitation is in the choice of theoretical framework. The system justification theory does not distinctively show the relationship between the economic beliefs and the expected response to inequality. More research is required to determine if any other theories can demonstrate how the ideological differences can be extracted piece by piece to show the underlying systems justifying ideologies of Sweden's native supremacy against highly skilled immigrants in the labour market.

1.3 Background

My personal experience in Sweden as a resident and worker with an immigrant background has shown many different forms of discrimination that immigrant workers may encounter. The hidden forms of discrimination that educated immigrant workers encounter have been quite alarming (Tannock, 2011). These include wage gaps whereby immigrants suffer wage cuts (Tannock, 2011). Additionally, there is a possibility of discrimination against professional occupational development as immigrants are not easily granted job promotions and even miss the chance to get a permanent job. Of those surveyed for this study, sixty-four percent indicated that they have seen Swedish colleagues promoted before them or given higher salaries even though they were an equally or better qualified candidate for the position or raise (Appendix B). Despite having the requisite education and skill set for a job in Sweden, it is still difficult for a non-native job applicant or employee to secure a good labour sector position. Hammarstedt and Miao (2020) stated that immigrants in Sweden
encounter some difficulties while seeking employment, and 82.1% of respondents indicated that they only need more support in finding a job in Sweden because they are an immigrant (Appendix B). Neuman (2019) compared job performance and job creation amongst natives and immigrants in Sweden and stated immigrants might experience more job-seeking difficulties for multiple reasons. According to Bevelander and Irastorza (2021), the governments of multiple countries (including Sweden), the OECD, and other responsible institutions recently developed policies to increase immigrants' opportunities and leverage them in the economic integration process through some initiatives such as Job Centre Programs. Bevelander and Irastorza (2017) carried out a study on the labour market in Sweden. This was meant to ensure that Sweden improves its performance toward attaining the international integration of immigrants into the Swedish economy. It has been obvious for some time that some immigrants, especially those with higher education or robust skill sets have job opportunities but encounter severe discrimination in their work environment. There are also many instances of unchecked mistreatment which are part of a larger effort to exploit the capabilities of the immigrants without injecting back significant gains to the affected populations. Some of these offenses include poor job placement, great wage gaps, gender-based discrimination, and even ethnic and cultural discrimination for example, B.K. noted that he accepted a job in a nursing home to build employment history in Sweden, but native Swedish managers and colleagues practice racial discrimination by assigning the undesirable work to the immigrant workers:

“In the building where we work there are two floors, the first floor for normal cases of elderly people who need a little help, while the second floor has difficult cases for the elderly who suffer from Alzheimer and need intensive care…refugees and foreigners work in difficult jobs on the second floor with difficult cases that require physical exertion. When they set the schedule, they divide the work over everyone and our share as refugees is constantly on the second floor and even if a new employee starts to work of Swedish origin, he/she will join the work on the first floor with easier cases. I know that there is challenge in this work, and I accepted it, and I know how difficult it is, but they [set] the work schedule according to race” (Appendix A).
Whenever these differences occur in a given sector, they limit an organization's opportunity to develop an effective working environment that may undermine the integration process and eventually significantly undermine output of that sector.

1.4 Thesis structure

This thesis will provide an overview of the literature regarding the labour market participation experiences and perceptions affecting highly educated immigrants in the Swedish labour force. The next section will discuss the system justification theory. It will also describe opportunities and issues affecting potential candidates in an organised labour market and establish the relationship with discrimination experienced among immigrant workers. The methodology section will describe the participants' selection and how the data collection, including interviews, was conducted. The results section will narrate the findings and feedback from the interviews conducted. The discussion will answer the question as to how immigrant workers experience discrimination in the Swedish labour market. It will also blend literature, theory, and analytical techniques to demonstrate the experiences and perceptions of discrimination against immigrant workers.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Many researchers, including Arai et al. (2011), have attempted to demonstrate how immigrants are represented in the systems built for their protection and security. Focus is especially placed on OECD member countries’ progression in improving immigrant workers' experiences and
perceptions joining the Swedish labour force. Goudarzi et al. (2020) have also expounded on the topic by exploring unemployment rates between immigrants and natives in Sweden. Some researchers, such as Dietz et al., 2015, have also tracked and evaluated employment experience trends among immigrant workers. The study has shown how after the global financial crisis (2007-2009; cited by Chau, Lin & Lin, 2020), the unemployment rate for immigrants within Sweden rose from 3.4 percent to 17.2 percent (Hiyoshi, Kondo & Rostila 2018; p. 1011).

In comparison, the unemployment rate of natives rose to 8.1 percent from 1.4 percent at the beginning of the 21st century (Behtoui, 2008). Research reveals that immigrants' experiences are worsening and would benefit from inclusivity. As Wilhelmsson's (2000) research also confirms, immigrants' chances of finding a job are slim, with a high risk of poor employment relations. Most of the issues surrounding this phenomenon can be associated with various factors that range from economic and social issues. These factors include but are not limited to the high inflation rate that led the country to adjust and enforce severe economic policies surrounding significant changes in fiscal policy reforms, major job cuts, and other related microeconomic policies (Wilhelmsson, 2000).

Sakamoto et al. (2013) also present their argument claiming that Sweden's labour sector witnessed a cumulative rise in immigrant populations' employment rates by two percent a year in the last years of the 20th century. This is a strong argument to support the evidence about better inclusivity measures to achieve the goals set out by OECD. The authors have done well in showing Sweden’s determination to acknowledge the problems of unemployment facing immigrants considering the severe dent caused by the 2008 and 2009 global financial crisis. However, Wilhelmsson (2000) counters this argument with a claim that even after the significant improvements witnessed in the labour market, the nature of overrepresentation experienced in Sweden has led to intense undermining tendencies on immigrants even though on the surface, the numbers of
immigrants being integrated into the economic system is improving. As interviewees indicated, an immigrant’s ability to obtain a job does not mean that it offers a salary or contract commensurate with their skills and experience. In fact, the opposite is more often true. Additionally, R.Y. noted, “The difficulty for us as migrants with highly educated [sic], may be our specialization is not desirable or there is difficulty in finding work within our field. This compels us to try to find alternative methods such as studying another specialization and we do not know whether it will succeed or not” (Appendix A).

The difficulty for immigrants to truly become integrated into the economic system guides this research's focus and demonstrates the muted tendencies of discrimination against educated and/or skilled immigrant workers in Sweden. For that reason, a thorough review of current evidence and proper theoretical foundation will guide the assessment of evidence from respondents who have participated in the Swedish labour market as educated and/or skilled immigrants.

2.1 Skill-based Employment Discrimination Against Immigrants

Dhanani et al. (2018) defined workplace discrimination as the act of causing unfair discrimination against people by group, class, or by other group characteristics as they see fit. Dietz et al. (2015) identified that discrimination against educated or skilled immigrants in Sweden is grounded in wage gaps, poor working conditions, and lower employment security rates. From this perspective, it seems that partial treatment of native and non-native workers in the labour market shows that the academic and professional credentials and capabilities of skilled immigrants are significantly devalued despite the low but steady rise in unemployment rates of this population. Sakamoto et al. (2013) support the argument that there is a high probability that a skilled immigrant
may experience exclusion from employment opportunities afforded to native individuals with similar characteristics seeking the same job opportunities. This literature is relevant to my research because it demonstrates that it is possible for highly educated immigrants to have difficulty securing a steady job despite their educational qualifications and technical skills even when it is possible to secure an initial job opportunity. Of those surveyed, 59% agreed, “I feel that my ethnicity plays a bigger role in determining my salary in Sweden than my level of education or experience” (Appendix B).

Skedinger (2018) attempted to analyze non-standard employment in Sweden and stated that in Sweden, both immigrants and natives are to an extent at a disadvantage of not receiving adequate pay because of improper contracts. Skedinger’s study can assist in explaining why those of Swedish origin tend to be treated fairly while those with a foreign background are discriminated against in securing a job.

Research by Arai et al. (2011) has also revealed that the traditional culture of naturalization and normalizing white privilege, which refers to the identity and assimilation of non-immigrants into their social systems, was the root cause of the continuing anxiety of post-industrialization discrimination. It entails new forms of discrimination that emerged after integrating labour forces after the labour market's mass revolution. Forty-six percent of respondents indicated that “Swedish colleagues, employers, or managers have asked me questions about my culture, race, or lifestyle that have made me uncomfortable” (Appendix B). Wilhelmsson conducted a similar type of study in 2000, in which prejudgment and inequity were established within institutional settings and fashioned by the key market players based on their experiences and perceptions of a perfect Swedish labour market. It is a daunting task for organizations or employers to institutionalize traditions that appreciate diversity and subsume systems that discriminate against educated immigrants' endeavours in the labour market. To do so risks flouting the flagrant examples of system justification theory.
within the structures underpinning the Swedish labour market, which would in turn defy a carefully curated panacea for a rise in apparent nationalistic anxieties following the global financial crisis. As Behtoui (2007) identified, market establishments are developed and nurtured by Swedish natives. This literature acknowledges that educated immigrants face discrimination because of the majority population, implying that the Swedish natives or non-immigrants craft racial discourses intentionally or unintentionally against immigrants. It may limit access to resources and impose a set of unfair restrictions for compromising the immigrant’s access to social capital (Behtoui, 2007). Indeed, O.L. indicates “Although I have a good relationship with [my colleagues], but I do not feel that I am one of them, sometimes they meet after work, but no one has invited me with them, I do not know what the reason is, even though I tried to invite some of them to lunch several times, but I feel that I am ignored by them” (Appendix A).

2.1.1 Skill-Discounting and Devaluation-Based Skill Paradox

Researchers such as Sakamoto et al. (2013) have also examined the extent to which discriminatory discourses are portrayed among immigrants through skill devaluation. Their research begins by highlighting the basic understanding of skill discounting among various scholars and labour market experts. It identified that this happens when the academic credentials, technical skills, and professional expertise of immigrants are poorly recognized in the labour market. This means that immigrants with such achievements or significant attributes are evaluated worse in various job settings than native Swedes. Of greatest interest is that this issue occurs both at the institutional and individual levels, where immigrants encounter severe biases in different job contexts. For instance, a study by Dietz et al. (2015) reveals that educated Chinese workers in Sweden can be denied equitable wages, and 69.2% of respondents indicated, “I feel like I constantly have to prove myself
and my worth because I am consistently underestimated by my Swedish colleagues, employers, or managers based on my race” (Appendix B).

The OECD Employment Outlook report shows that the set of hypotheses introduced into the econometric analysis of the panel that interests us here has been easier to explain and understand but more restrictive than that introduced in the 2003 document (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2019). The OECD report includes a linear equation that characterizes the determination of the unemployment rate of a country in the year, with a set of terms each relating to an explanatory variable observed in each country and each year multiplied by a coefficient that applies uniformly to all countries and years.

Additionally, in countries with extended support programs for the unemployed, as is the case in OECD countries, their high costs coupled with assessments of the motivation of beneficiaries have promoted the development of active policies. It is expected that a good design not only helps bring them down but also to increase numbers of effective job offers. This is the case of programs aimed at groups with specific problems. Equity considerations are involved, seeking to cushion the negative effects on some structural reforms or technological change on workers, etc. These programs may be motivated by the desire to redirect the labour market results, even when these are not due to failures in this market. Again, this type of motivation also presents the objective of increasing the effective offer of work and their qualifications.

In general terms, in OECD countries, the programs with the best results are search and placement assistance, although the rest of the programs are successful for specific groups. In terms of population groups, women benefit from a wide range of interventions. At the same time, young people constitute the group most difficult to help, at least when evaluating the effect on labour
market variables. These overall results are undoubtedly affected by the macroeconomic and institutional contexts, and in fact, there are disparities in the results between countries. For example, among those immigrants surveyed in Sweden, 56.4% indicated, “I found my job through a certain program (such as Job Centre) and was given a low salary with a temporary contract because I used that program” (Appendix B).

The report by OECD also includes goals and intervention strategies in other contexts that are motivated by different reasons: probably the most-cited ones refer to the need to correct some market failure, such as information problems, insufficient qualification of the workforce, or difficulties accessing credit. That supports labour intermediation, training programs, and support for small businesses, respectively.

Many organizations have failed at meeting the OECD goals adopted by the country because the issue negatively affects the welfare of workers. Through designing a field experiment, a study by Jost (2017) has managed to determine that even though all participants of Swedish and Chinese backgrounds had equal qualifications for employment opportunities, job applicants with foreign identities or even backgrounds were less likely to qualify for an interview or job appraisal than the applicants with native Swedish backgrounds. Research by Wilhelmsson (2000) supports this perspective. It reveals that these issues can be very costly as immigrants advance further in skills and education. For instance, more time must be allowed in school to accommodate immigrants who learn more slowly, and the government must pay for the expenses. Other issues can be the provision of accommodation and health facilities. Current research illustrates immigrants wishing to secure a higher academic level in a given field of expertise such as healthcare, even if there would be few chances to secure advanced positions in the healthcare sector and in the job itself. It will help
determine if the employment and skill appreciation rates decrease with the increase in skill levels among immigrants compared to natives.

Further, a study by Goudarzi et al. (2020) identified that the devaluation of educated and skilled immigrants in Sweden also emanates from organized institutions or entities. Organisations that use the agencies to hire workers tend to show some harboured latent biases that devalue immigrants' skills seeking a solution to a job-related issue. All this indicates that, indeed, there has been a dearth in the voices meant to unmute the discriminatory discourse against immigrants in the country for decades. As immigrants possess more advanced skills and education in a given profession, it becomes difficult for them to be recognized by native institutions or even stand a chance to increase job security opportunities. Data from several interviews indicates that increase in educational attainment among immigrants seldom increases their chances at securing a job offer commensurate with their education and experience. Indeed, 61.5% of respondents had a Bachelor’s degree, and 30.8% had a Master’s degree or PhD. Of those respondents, 71.8% received their degree from their homeland and 20.5% received their degree in Sweden (Appendix B).

2.1.2 Threat-based Skill Paradox

In the hope of meeting the threats facing the Swedish labour market, a study by Jost et al. (2004) further examined the driving factor for discrimination against immigrants as they pursue their endeavours in the labour market. The findings maintain that while most immigrants may possess the same educational credentials, technical expertise, and exemplary professionalism as their native colleagues in the labour market, they are usually stereotyped as a threat to the native labour force whenever they compete directly in any industrial sector. This is arguably an example of system
justification theory at work. Indeed, one interviewee, E.M., explained that many colleagues and managers praise her work yet native workers with fewer qualifications who started in her workplace after she did are offered better, permanent positions with higher salaries and she is not. She goes on to say that other colleagues strongly insinuate that she should be grateful to be employed at all (Appendix A), agreeing with 68.4% of respondents (Appendix B). It is likely that system justification theory is to blame for some immigrants’ reluctance to advocate more strongly for their own circumstances and those of their fellows—perhaps some have internalised the nationalist concerns of many parties of the Swedish labour market and feel it is ultimately better not to disrupt the structure in place.

This threat leads to an indefinite tendency of discrimination for fear of undermining native labour force capabilities. This case provides an environment in which immigrants are devalued in the labour market. This issue is most salient for highly educated or skilled immigrants who desire to advance their professional knowledge and experience for advanced job opportunities or appreciation. However, such positions pose a significant competitive threat from the native participants. Adding an immigrant to the equation readily renders them the least choice for participating fully in labour market endeavours. Accordingly, 57.9% of those surveyed agreed that “I feel that my Swedish colleagues, employers, or managers question my level of education or knowledge because I wasn’t educated in Sweden” (Appendix B).

Devaluation or reduction of skills among the native participants in the labour industry means that Swedish natives already fear facing a skills paradox in their own country. The country’s efforts to influence policies and rules of total responsibility for employment issues faced by natives, such as unemployment and wage equality also underscore the problem of emphasizing the benefits of economic integration among skilled natives rather than skilled immigrants. For example, S.M.
explained that he “tried to prove [his] merit and the fact that [he has] good experience in [his] field, but…the manager did not give [him] any practical task but…work as an assistant or…administrative work although that my colleagues testify that I have experience ..I felt that because of my ethnicity I [did] not have the qualification to be relied upon for work” (Appendix A). Fifty-one percent of survey respondents agreed that they “do not feel that my Swedish colleagues, employers, or managers take me seriously” (Appendix B). Many immigrants encounter multiple employment issues, and it is important to discuss the policies behind these issues.

2.2 Integration Policies for Immigrants in the Swedish Labor Market

Inasmuch as the Scandinavian countries, such as Sweden, are doing their best to integrate immigrant workers into the mainstream labour force, there is some lag in addressing the underlying issues of discrimination. Based on this and other evidence sources, this controversial issue has compelled many employees to revise their standards and practices, as expected by the economic integration standards practice set by OECD board members (Bevelander & Irastorza, 2014). Therefore, by analyzing individual accounts, evidence will be gathered and reviewed on how discrimination against immigrant workers is reflected at high levels. This will be followed by demonstration of how international companies are coping with the policy regimes to inform other employers on the way forward to integrate educated immigrant workers within the mainstream labour force (Greve Harbo et al., 2017). Obviously, it will take time for a shift of any degree to take place, though this could occur more quickly if more of the larger international companies adopt these policies by choice. One interviewee who works for such company noted, “It takes energy and time to change the society's view that there are many refugees who hold certificates, qualifications and experiences that society needs” (Appendix A) and sadly, 64.1% of survey respondents indicated “My
Swedish colleagues don’t expect me to perform as well as them because I’m an immigrant” (Appendix B).

During the 1990s and 2000s, the OECD member countries joined to form a single market integrated with the expansion of the renewed labour migration policies affecting Western and Northern Europe (Wilhelmsson, 2000). Backing up the history, Karlsdóttir et al. (2017) maintain that change in immigration laws partially influenced the policy reforms' developments, especially regarding work permits and family reunification. Within the 1990s, the employment rates were low and high disparities in worker’s welfare prompted some countries, such as Sweden, to adopt the new labour market integration policies. This literature will support the research by determining how immigrant workers have benefited through the programs associated with the integration policies in tangible ways, such as expanding skills through rigorous training and employment fit programs and reducing out-of-work benefits. The integration policies in Sweden have generally involved optimizing the eligibility criteria to absorb the skills and uplift the affected community.

Therefore, regardless of other socioeconomic issues such as income levels and poverty rates, this thesis demonstrates immigrant workers’ specific experiences in the Swedish labour market. In order to assess companies' success, it is important to investigate how the skilled immigrant workers' labour market integration is being promoted in Sweden (OECD, 2015). This process has involved determining how various policies have been synthesized to establish that improvements in education policies have increased integration of immigrant workers, active labour markets have provided more opportunities for immigrant workers to find their best-fit work environment, and changes in social benefits and significant wage policies have promoted the welfare of immigrant workers enhancing their integration rates into the mainstream labour force. However, one interviewee, S.M., indicated that he was only given a job so the employer could exploit him: “they used me as a foreigner to get
an idea through the media that they are helping refugees to find job[s], because they have interviewed [with] several newspapers in this regard” (Appendix A).

As Bussi and Pareliussen's (2017) study confirms, achieving a successful integration of immigrants in the labour market is crucial to native Swedes and foreign-born individuals. Considering that the Swedish labour market has a generous welfare system that encourages high employment rates, facilitating a speedy and effective transition of immigrant workers into the labour force can help reduce pressure on programs funded by the humanitarian sector. Besides, attaining successful integration of skilled workers into the labour force can help them learn the language more quickly, integrate socially, and obtain a reliable source of income to enhance their well-being. It is possible to justify that determining the solution for the total integration of immigrants can facilitate social cohesion through equitable distribution of social capital and elimination of disparities such as access to work (Bussi & Pareliussen, 2017).

Considering that a certain number of refugees have attained high levels of education and originate from countries with labour markets that offer different job opportunities than the skills and capabilities they possess, their qualifications often tend have a positive impact when utilized appropriately within the Sweden labour market (Andersson et al., 2015). It is for this reason that some organisations have decided to harmonise their conflicts of interests and demonstrate the highest level of corporate social responsibility through employing the integration policies to ensure that while the mainstream labour market is taking longer to integrate the immigrant workers, there is much room for improvement within the private sector. Some public sector areas ensure that labour absorption is high regardless of nationality (Andersson et al., 2015). Several respondents who were able to secure employment within international companies with a more diverse workforce indicated that they did not face the discrimination faced by the majority of respondents who work in smaller
organisations with a predominantly Swedish workforce. Consequently, 14.3% of those working in international companies report having experienced discrimination on the job, compared to 69% working in the Swedish government sector and 55.6% of respondents working in private Swedish companies (Appendix B).

2.3 Policies for Integrating Immigrants Into the Swedish Labour Market

Research has continued to demonstrate that a single policy may not work effectively in facilitating the process of addressing discrimination of immigrant workers through ensuring their total integration in the mainstream labour force (OECD, 2015). The most recent studies have emphasized that the best way forward is to develop a multifaceted approach toward policy implementation that is likely to promote the employment and well-being of immigrants in Sweden (Hammarstedt & Miao, 2020; Jonsson et al., 2019). While a solution has indeed been found, how these policies can be combined to achieve optimal outcomes in different labour sectors is still questionable.

The involved stakeholders have tabled this debate to address the conflicts of interests around the items and how the policies are formulated (Butschek & Walter, 2014). It can be demonstrated by the fact that the policies command trade-offs against the objectives of the labour market integration and employment practices among the stakeholders involved. The first one involves the education policy whereby immigrants who seek to attain employment security through education-based initiatives must consider high budget costs and time spent on learning compared to the time to be spent finding stable employment given particular educational credentials (Bevelander & Irastorza, 2014).
Secondly, as educated immigrant workers are taught to gradually accept lower employment benefit levels to embrace the integration process, they suffer from decreased access to proper employment gains than native colleagues within the same labour force (Butschek & Walter, 2014). While Swedish natives will most likely gain more income with higher benefit levels, the immigrant workers, on the other hand, tend to fail to garner beneficial income gains.

On the same level, a trade-off is initiated when immigrant workers enjoy benefit sanctions for being employed in organizations that do not necessarily consider the impact of conforming to all job search requirements outlined by the national labour legislation authority (Butschek & Walter, 2014). In this case, inasmuch as the skilled immigrants may have access to employment, the employment standards are below par as the individuals are subjected to constant job pressure and extreme assessment routines as set by the Swedish market.

Further, lower minimum wage rates among immigrants than among natives’ skilled workers were also outlined as crucial in integrating policies for seeing the successful integration process (Butschek & Walter, 2014). Under this issue, the trade-off is that financial gains can be enjoyed for those immigrants who are transforming their status from partially employed to full-time employed. This can also be enjoyed in other forms that may not directly involve financial gains, such as increased work scope as a determinant of higher wage rates as the rank increases. The other scenario involves those skilled immigrant workers who retain a job position without a significantly improving wage over time as seen with their native colleagues. For example, 61.5% of respondents agreed “My salary is less than my colleagues', although we are equal in educational level, and we share work tasks” (Appendix B).
Chapter 3

Theoretical Framework

Sweden is among the best performing OECD countries considering its recent adoption and enactment of the economic integration programs set by member counties. However, pervasive discrimination against immigrant workers in Sweden’s labour market is developing at an alarming rate. But current actions that policymakers and market players have taken to address the issue are insufficient (Kirchner & Schüßler 2020). To find an answer to this problem, this thesis presents the theories below to understand the foundation and argument for basing judgment upon the phenomenon being discussed (Dietz et al., 2015).

3.1 System Justification Theory

According to Friesen et al. (2019), the system justification theory states that a capitalist society is made of blunt systems that stir the aversive impacts of inequalities embedded within that society. The capitalist system is designed to provide all individuals with equal chances of success in various economic endeavours (Jost & Hunyady, 2003). Considering the approach of this concept, it is obvious to note that when an environment is grounded on this philosophy, it provides an environment in which the individual with the capability to exercise their merit can interpret their privileges based on the patterns of wealth and poverty on equal grounds regardless of the legitimacy and appropriateness of the justifications (Tan et al., 2016).

According to the system justification theory, the proponents of discrimination are based on the attributes associated with the majority group. They can be manipulated to gain significant benefits in access to social capital and other resources (Tan et al., 2016). It means that for the
immigrant workers to benefit from the integration program, they are also encouraged to emulate the attributes desirable in the Swedish labour market and culture to obtain more chances for greater employment benefits and welfare in the workplace.

While the system justification theory stands out to provide some substantial arguments to interpret the situation in Sweden's labour market, some critics have pointed out that the grounding effect brought by the idea of palliation does not show distinctively the relationship connecting the economic beliefs and the expected response to inequality. As a result, other theories have been suggested by researchers such as Lang and Lehmann (2012) to demonstrate how the ideological differences can be extracted piece by piece to show the underlying system justifying ideologies within low levels of motivation to feel empathy. Therefore, having some knowledge of the supporting theories can help to provide a strong foundation for exploring internally and externally how the system justification manifests and is disarmed.

The system's justification consists of defending, supporting, and justifying the social, economic, and political structures as they are (Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004). Research in this area has contributed to increasing our knowledge of the causes (Jost et al, 2004; Jost & Hunyady, 2002; Laurin, Shepherd, & Kay, 2010) and consequences (e.g., Jost & Burgess, 2000; Jost & Amodio 2012; Kay, Jost, & Young, 2005) from motivation to system justification. More specifically, the authors have highlighted a link between the tendency to justify the system and certain dispositional characteristics, including the orientation to social dominance, political conservatism, or even adherence to meritocratic ideology (e.g., Jost & Hunyady, 2003). Much research has also emphasized the role of contextual variables in increasing the motivation to justify the system. They highlighted, in particular, that exposure to situations of injustice or inequality reduced the perception of justice of the system and, consequently, increased the motivation, conscious and unconscious, to restore belief
in a fair system (e.g., Jost & Burgess, 2000). This is done to create an illusion that the disagreements between wealth and poverty among different people in a given society do not matter as long as it is possible to attain progress. Regardless of the inequalities, the conservatives report high levels of happiness and satisfaction with work and life (Butz, Kieslich, & Bless, 2017). Butz and colleagues (2017) attempted to find the reasons for conservatives being happier. It is considered that the satisfaction and happiness gap between these two groups (i.e., conservative and non-conservative) can increase more. Leadership evidence for efficiency and appropriateness was intended to answer anger, aggression, and frustration with the unregistered policy of classification. For these reasons, it is possible to accept the idea that legitimacy in the capitalist market provides a climate that allows victims and perpetrators. They feel protected from the negative experience that is caused by or associated with inconsistencies.

3.2 Capitalism in Sweden

In this policy of integrating social and economic that historians such as Francis Sejersted and Lars Tragardh consider one of the most striking features of Swedish society in the late 20th century until the 1980s it would be possible to argue in opposition to Esping-Andersen (2019): the impregnation of the values of capitalism in society would have resulted in the creation, not of a policy against the market, but a policy for the systematic insertion of market values into society (Esping-Andersen, 2019). For critics, as stated by Pempel (2019), this policy has been interpreted as a betrayal of socialism's values under the emblem of pragmatism. But for its supporters — especially in the recent period of the 1990s and 2000s — this acceptance of the rules of the capitalist game has been interpreted as an early version of today called supply-side economics, an integral part of the theory of economics of the so-called "third goose" policy. The Swedish model would therefore be
more modern than ever (Schierup & Scarpa, 2017). Most studies of the Swedish economy in the industry are optimistic about the circumstances and prospects of the Swedish model. Indeed, the Swedish economy has responded to the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) with what appears to be success. This comparative data presents an analysis of the impact of spending because it does not take into account long-term performance in terms of change.

During the 1920s and 1930s, especially under the economist and socialist intellectual Gunnar Myrdal's influence, productivism became a strategic element in a new conception of reformism. For Myrdal, a consensus was established around Bismarckian inspiration's social policy (Morey, 2017). So, he intended to promote a break with such social conservatism favouring a radical transformation of society. At the base of this transformation, he saw a new conception of political economy as “radical architecture”: an economy which no longer contented itself with alleviating the evils of capitalist society, but which intended to set up a completely different structure; a society oriented towards the development of human capital rather than towards its destruction (Schierup & Scarpa, 2017). The Swedish social democracy is often seen as a paradigmatic case — perhaps even as the epitome of what social democratic thought and action would be. According to a dominant representation, a hegemonic erosion of reformism would have reigned in Sweden, the Social Democratic Party appearing as the "natural party" of government. Swedish social democracy has invented the welfare state and created one of the most favourable social models globally. The “Swedish model” quickly became a sort of earthly paradise — even before its conception in the 1930s — an international benchmark (Prado & Waara, 2018).

It is particularly interesting to note two things. First, while there are positive images of Sweden, there are also negative, and even dystopian, images in Western political history. If the praises tend to be part of the left's political discourse, critics are often from the liberal and
conservative Anglo-Saxon right. Sweden is then presented as the country of socialists, new totalitarians, and the Welfare State "nanny" or "cradle to grave" by the American Republicans and the British Tories. These images of Sweden can be traced throughout the 20th century to a whole European and international political landscape (Éhn & Horváthová, 2020).

Second, the Swedish model's images change with representations of capitalism, experience peaks in popularity, and are reworked by major rereadings and reinterpretations, both internationally and in Sweden. While the liberal capitalism/Soviet communism dichotomy died out in 1989, the image of Nordic capitalism, particularly sophisticated, resurfaced as a symbol of the flexicurity proclaimed by the European Union (Rahman & Thelen, 2019).

3.3 Social Identity and Discrimination

The social identity theory has been acknowledged for its competency in demonstrating the phenomenon of discrimination against skilled immigrants (Behtoui, 2006). This theory is based on the notion that the social group in which individuals define themselves as part of who or what they are can imply the person’s identity or membership to that social group (Lundberg et al., 2008). Based on such a setting or context, individuals entitled to certain justifications can easily get motivated and encouraged to develop a positive self-concept that can promote an image identifiable to the natives (McLeod, 2008).

This can lead to preferential treatment of the group entitled to better justifications than that on the weaker side. The critical point at which this theory intersects with the social identity theory is where it explains that preferential treatment expressed toward the social groups is based on the group members' ability to demonstrate their identities in a positive light. Nevertheless, this image-enhancing function does not manifest fully when different social groups are competing for scarce
resources (Fleischmann et al., 2011). This linkage can indeed provide substantial arguments to support the idea that in Sweden, the natives are entitled to the identity and justifications established within the concepts of their social groups such that they feel threatened when competing for a scarce resource in the labour market and turn to respond with discriminatory acts to mock the immigrant's identity within the labour market.

Another theoretical framework is the discrimination theory. As Arrow (1973) points out, this theory is crucial in determining the extent to which justifications, deservingness, and merits of native social groups are developed, transformed, manifested, and translated within a given society. It does so by laying out the distinct characteristics of discrimination. As Kaufman and Hotchkiss (2000) claim, the theory simply related discrimination against immigrant workers as a form of unfair treatment of individuals who belong to a different social group based on their skill set and wage differences or other characteristics valued in the market. Like the social identity theory, social discrimination theory also intersects with the social justification system concept. It demonstrates how personal attributes unrelated to productivity are critiqued as sources of discrimination against immigrant workers.

Such characteristics include, but are not limited to, race, ethnic background, and gender, among others noted to be frequently adduced in the market. In such a situation, Lang and Lehmann (2012) admit that it is possible to experience some discrimination tendencies whereby decisions may affect other individuals or raise concerns since the personal characteristics may not be relevant or aligned to those decisions. This then explains and strengthens the ability to understand why the system justification theory relates to discrimination in Sweden and why immigrants act in silence.
To conclude, the empirical analysis stated in this chapter states that immigrants encounter multiple employment issues, yet there is a need to study this notion in multiple dimensions. Therefore, this study aims to analyse and investigate the discrimination immigrants encounter in Sweden concerning their perceptions of native employees. The next chapter attempts to describe the methodology adopted to analyse the study's aim.

Chapter 4

Methodology

Using the system justification theory, it is possible to claim that skilled immigrants' inferior labour market position in Sweden's labour market is influenced by the inherent tendencies grounded to reaffirm a certain identity's superiority. The theory, in this case, assumes that the foundation for justifying an act of discrimination or non-discrimination is grounded on the idea that the supply of labour is affected by characteristics specific to express certain market values in demand for workers.

By using semi-structured interviews, it is possible to analyse and determine how existing literature and theoretical foundations can interact to explain the current state of discrimination amongst skilled or educated immigrant workers in Sweden.

4.1 Researching Discrimination Among Immigrant Workers

When explaining the nexus between individual professional accomplishments and immigrant worker experiences, it becomes obvious that other underlying characteristics of the sample such as national background, time since migration, place of education and stage, and professional career
progress will be considered diversely. It is believed that the data will help strengthen and facilitate relevance and credibility because it is within the social systems that acts of discrimination are muted. The majority group with a more highly regarded identity and justifications has a larger share in perpetuating discriminatory acts against minority social groups.

4.2 Informants

The research is based on data collected through semi-structured interviews, which were conducted with 12 skilled workers who came to Sweden as immigrants. Of these, four were female, and eight were males between the ages of 25 and 40. At the time of interview, the sample identified participants working in technical professions ranging from information technology and communications, engineering, healthcare, and law. Additionally, 70.3% of respondents worked in the Swedish public sector, 24.3% worked in private Swedish companies, and the rest worked in international companies (Appendix B). This is to improve the study of the cognitive and behavioural factors that contribute to the development of discrimination. This creates a unique situation for the analysis of which immigrant workers, even if they are members of the professional workforce, even if immigrants come from smaller groups.

4.2.1 Inclusion Criteria

The emphasis of the research on immigrant workers who want to work or are working in Sweden is based on the distinct regulations that workers can exercise or face as it pertains to integrating native and immigrant workers wishing to work or already working in Sweden (Carlsson & Rooth, 2007). Therefore, all individuals selected for the study had higher education and
knowledge for working in the information, technology, and communications sector and received
similar training, either from Sweden, the immigrant’s home country, or another country.

4.2.2 Exclusion Criteria

Non-educated persons were not included in the study. Moreover, employees working in
sectors other than the information, technology, and communications sector and those who did not
receive similar training were not included in the study.

4.3 Study Design

A qualitative research design was adopted for this study. Interviews were conducted with
immigrants to Sweden with similar education and training. Only a few were employed, and others
were unemployed. Due to the pandemic, these employees were reached through online portals.
Interviews were conducted over the telephone in Arabic and translated to English. The maximum
time set for each interview was 30 minutes.

4.4 Data Collection

Data was collected from interview questions and optimized to provide specific information
regarding discriminatory acts against immigrants. The immigrant respondents were all invited to
share and provide some brief details regarding their professional encounters before and upon coming
to work in Sweden, the job-seeking process, and the path to obtaining a steady job. This will help to
illustrate what kind of discriminatory acts immigrants face in Sweden's labour market and the shifts
in contextual implications brought about by the changes in nature of occurrence of discriminatory justifications caused by the way the market is organized.

4.5 Interpretation of Data Collected

Attempting to capture the individual’s perceptions about the phenomenon will allow an opportunity to grasp the immigrant’s understanding of, and feelings toward; discriminatory encounters within lived experiences in the Swedish labour market (Bevelander & Irastorza, 2017). Therefore, by scrutinising the interview structure, it was possible to code the narratives to facilitate better interpretation of data collected as follows:

1. How are the discriminating encounters of educated and/or skilled immigrants within their work environments?
2. How do educated immigrants with certification from Sweden or elsewhere get a steady job for the first time?
3. How do educated immigrants face exploitation and job-related difficulties?
4. How are actions being taken to demonstrate responsiveness by relevant authorities against discriminatory acts?
5. How can immigrants manoeuvre job difficulties and obstacles?

4.6 Ethical Considerations

The ethics involving the research were assessed, and the standards for conducting social sciences research were determined. The ethical standards of practice were determined per the Swedish council in the humanities and social sciences. The guidelines and principles for establishing non-invasive and substantial research were established. According to Bevelander and Irastorza
(2017), the council's consent was obtained before their participation; for this study a consent form was sent to willing participants through an online portal. To maintain ethical considerations for the research study, the participants were assured that their personal information would be safe with the researcher and never reach anyone else. Additionally, they were permitted to end their participation while the research study was underway, and they were assured that no one would force them to remain a participant. All have pseudonyms, and their location is not named in order to maintain anonymity.

4.7 Overview

Out of the 12 participants, only two reported having positive experiences in their workplace and negligible incidents of discrimination. Also, local employers had a relationship with the labour market tendencies to discriminate against immigrant individuals with higher education or skills achievement as the system justification theory predicts. Immigrants with higher educational achievement are less likely to be considered for better jobs, and the majority tend to experience relatively poor status in Sweden’s labour market (Bevelander & Irastorza, 2017). Regardless of these underlying issues associated with discrimination against educated immigrant workers, some organizations have taken a bold step to introduce solutions to address discrimination based on the proponents of the economic integration interventions.

What has been noted is that a single practice recommendation cannot work effectively in solving the issues of discrimination as per the economic integration process (Butschek & Walter, 2014). As such, the evidence that will be presented indeed conforms to the idea of combining policies while accounting for trade-offs that affect the way specific policies are used. For instance, it
has been noted that while it is desirable to reduce the disparity in employment opportunities between natives and immigrants, the problem of dealing with high income gaps due to the effect of lowering the average wage to serve many immigrants also begs for further consideration (OECD, 2015). This and many other factors identified in the literature review seem to provide a solid foundation for examining how the identified theory demonstrates the impact of a multi-policy approach to deal with discrimination against immigrants in the Swedish labour market (D’Amuri & Peri, 2014).

Chapter 5

Analysis

5.1 Discrimination Against Educated or Skilled Immigrants

It seems obvious that discrimination against immigrants is a deliberate act in Sweden's labour market. Based on the interviews conducted, several participants said they were victims or witnesses of a discriminatory encounter within the workplace. The majority said that most of the discriminatory acts are common among educated and skilled immigrants seeking to secure steady employment or better positions in the occupation. An interesting revelation was that some skilled immigrant workers could be employed in job settings that do not fit their academic credentials even after undergoing the skills acknowledgement process. Two respondents stated they worked as an administrator in a given organization even though their academic qualifications suggested they qualified for a high-skilled position in the occupation. One participant continued to claim that even advancing through the occupational levels is a difficult experience for immigrants, unlike native Swedish workers with the same academic and skill qualifications for a given job position. Of those surveyed, 74.4% of respondents indicated that they are “often given the position of assistant or given
simple tasks to do while Swedish colleagues get higher positions than me” (Appendix B). When asked about discriminatory acts, E.M. said: “Yes, the distinction includes the salary and the type of contract, as there is more than one person who started work after me, but he got a steady contract, while I did not get a steady contract, even though I had the testimony of my manager at work” (Appendix A). E.M. attained a degree from Iraq and is now doing a contract job in Sweden. She feels that wage gaps and job appraisals are hardly addressed by the employers as expected. This issue is relevant, especially on matters affecting immigrant workers. The informant shows how many issues discrimination presents in Sweden’s labour market.

D’Amuri and Peri (2014) pointed out in their study that another issue surrounding discrimination against educated immigrant workers is job placement by sector. In some industrial sectors such as healthcare and law, immigrants are placed in poor job settings and sometimes compelled to work in substandard levels within their line of specialization (Lundborg & Skedinger 2016). A striking incident was observed with B.K., a 26-year-old student specializing in engineering and taking a part-time job in nursing care, demonstrating that there were prominent examples of limited staffing of healthcare workers in the healthcare sector (Appendix A). Some participants noticed that individuals of a foreign origin who came to Sweden for employment purposes were placed in difficult care areas with problematic working conditions in their work setting, and B.K. went on to say, “I felt that there is discrimination that occurs through the fact that refugees and foreigners work in difficult jobs with difficult cases that require physical exertion” Appendix A). This statement by one informant indicated that in some industry sectors in Sweden, the Human Resource Management (HRM) practices were not streamlined adequately to cater to immigrants’ needs. This notion raises a question as to why the authorities are reluctant to conduct fair
recruitment, selection, and placement of healthcare workers with a non-native background (Bevelander & Irastorza, 2017).

Another case involved a law student who was employed to work as an administrator long before securing a steady job in Sweden despite being evaluated for better qualifications in law. The worker complains that while they are trying hard, there are intangible forms of discrimination in the foreign work setting. “I'm working in the administrative department in one of the municipalities, and although I make an effort at work, I feel that I am not trustworthy because I did not get my degree from Sweden. Something is missing; this feeling is exhausting” (Appendix A). In this case, the informant attempts to demonstrate discrimination against workers with high education qualifications. This is especially true in high-end employment sectors or occupational positions in law, political occupations, and even in learning institutions, among many others. It means that discrimination is multifaceted and rampant as the education degree of an immigrant increases (Carlsson & Rooth, 2007; Stronge et al., 2016).

5.2 A Steady Job for the First Time

The process of getting a job as an immigrant is quite complex in Sweden. One can either use networks or reference institutions. The employment chances for highly educated immigrants are only high if the individual has some connections to a particular reference group, not just through using networks. “I work as an engineer, and I came to Sweden by my husband [reunification], from the first day I knew how to take my first steps in Sweden, my husband helped me a lot in planning this stage through knowing the labour market and how to get a job.” This statement came from T.M., a 31-year-old woman who obtained a degree from Syria. She claims that were it not for the reference
group through her husband that she would not have been initiated to the concerned organization. It is certainly difficult for immigrants to get a job through the job centre networks. Another study by Carlsson and Rooth (2007) confirmed that due to the elevated tendency of natives to discriminate against immigrants, they often subject the victims to low wages and sometimes no steady jobs. E.M. stated, ”Legally, if I work for two years in a specific job, I must get a permanent contract after that, but they extend it for only 23 months.” According to the study by Wright, Groutsis, and Van Den Broek (2017), this is a form of exploitation. Structural issues that enable exploitation have the highest priority. Solving these problems requires the collective efforts of several stakeholders. A single country cannot tackle extreme labour exploitation in the fisheries sector alone because migrant seafarers travel across national borders. In excessive use of labour exploitation, a person cannot refuse a job or leave because of threats, violence, coercion, deception, or abuse of power. It is also an example of discrimination. Some immigrant workers are forced to work with low wages and mostly without a guarantee for further employment. It is unfair treatment in the workplace as it encompasses a lack of morality and empathy for the immigrant workers. However, some immigrants reported having a smooth experience of getting a steady job. S.M. gained a degree from Saudi Arabia and came to Sweden to pursue employment said that while working in an international company, it is easy to get a steady job even though some mildly discriminatory acts can always occur (Appendix A).

“Through this course and through one of the teachers who nominated me for a position in one of the major companies, I got an internship for three months, and then I got a permanent contract” Appendix A). Here, H.A. suggests that it is not always the case everywhere that immigrants face persistent unfair treatment in securing a steady job easily. This means that in some instances, the cases of discrimination are rare, probably due to the establishment of organizational standards to fit
the national objectives for integration of immigrants among member countries. Respondents to the survey overwhelmingly indicated that discrimination is much rarer in international companies than in the Swedish public sector (Appendix B).

5.3 Exploitation and Job-Related Difficulties

Most of the immigrant workers are exploited and encounter several difficulties and obstacles while integrating with other colleagues and players in the Swedish labour market. Exploitation is action that unfairly treats others for their benefit. Exploitation is one of the most common forms of prejudice, though this situation may ultimately decrease in severity with time. It is noted that those individuals with high education or significant skills for a specific job can be given short-term contracts with poor working conditions. Later, they may possibly obtain a steady job or a better position in the occupation.

Native employers can exploit immigrants to protect the interests of the business by cutting the cost of human capital. “I think many employers know that we find it difficult in finding a job, so they expect that we will accept the lowest salaries and any conditions, knowing that the job centre pays 60% of my salary” says S.G., a 36-year-old man who gained a degree from Syria (Appendix A). Despite being more highly-skilled, he only managed to secure an administrative job.

Another form of mistreatment that immigrants in Sweden face is difficulty with learning a new language, social cues, and even the culture of Sweden (Bevelander & Irastorza, 2017). Working around the Swedish labour market demands effective communication, conflict management, and building better employment relationships. However, considering that most immigrant workers have difficulty with learning a new language, it takes more time to adapt and thereby gain distinction over other immigrants competing for the same position (Carlsson & Rooth 2007). S.G. noted that
“Language is the key to the country, and since we came to Sweden when we are adults, it is difficult to be able to reach fluency in the language at the same level as citizens, and as an employer, it may be difficult to allocate time and money to train a person who may need more time than the citizen” (Appendix A). S.G. explains that individuals are usually encouraged to learn the language to facilitate integration with the labour market. Additionally, any educated immigrant worker should be familiar with the communication techniques and business culture of Sweden to have better relationships with employers. Interviewee E.M. indicated, “I think that the immigrants from Eastern European countries, have more chance to find a job and settle in it, maybe due to the fact that the culture is somewhat closer” (Appendix A).

5.4 Actions and Responsiveness by Relevant Authorities Against Discriminatory Acts

Indeed, some actions are in place to enhance the integration of immigrants. The problem, however, lies in the aspect of dominance whereby the native workers feel justified and entitled to greater participation in business and the desire to be represented more than the immigrant colleagues. “Although I have a good relationship with them, I do not feel that I am one of them,” says a O. L., a 33-year-old man with a law degree (Appendix A). This passage indicates the reality that, indeed, the level of participation recommended by the OECD union guidelines about immigrants is not being adequately implemented by the labour sector since Sweden is a member county. The authorities are not sufficiently demonstrating integration of immigrants into the country’s labour economy.

However, some organizations, especially those operating globally, show great efforts toward ensuring that employees have great experiences with the employers regardless of their background. Three participants responded that they have a good relationship with their employers and colleagues,
even of native Swedish background. To some extent, the international organizations established within Sweden tend to show some awareness of discriminatory acts. They are enforcing every standard and practice to ensure the total integration of immigrant workers into the labour force (Carlsson & Rooth 2007). For instance, N.S., a 33-year-old working for an international company in Sweden reported, “I have never felt that there is discrimination because we are all from various nationalities, and what is important in our work is competence” (Appendix A). It is clear that being perceived as competent is a challenging factor for being a foreigner in Sweden. According to the statement, in addition to coordinating the overall participation of immigrant workers, some companies continue to develop programs in which employees can participate and travel professionally. Unfortunately, however, 76.9% of survey respondents indicated “I feel like I have to work twice as hard as my Swedish colleagues, employers, or managers just to keep my job or position” (Appendix B).

5.5 Job Difficulties and Obstacles

Certainly, employment practices have changed, which affects employment relationships across immigrant populations. A single policy approach may not work effectively in ensuring the successful manoeuvring of discrimination against skilled immigrant workers. A combination of labour policies, wage policies, and employment-based policies offers better incentives for work. It can help strengthen stakeholders' responsiveness toward integrating different policies to influence the market and sales of the labour force among skilled immigrant workers.

5.6 Education Efforts for Enhancing Immigrants’ Skillset
It was identified that having higher education in Sweden is important as it prepares the students for employment (Carlsson & Rooth 2007). By 2016, about 50% of immigrants had joined higher education, exceeding the current rate at which the natives are also pursuing education. As Bratsberg et al. (2012) note, this high representation of immigrants in the mainstream education system is due to an enhanced market training system and preparation of the skilled workers to fill the specific job gap or learn a new language to communicate effectively.

Following a response given by a 28-year-old man who had a degree from Sweden claimed that even with a foreign academic certification, Sweden’s engineering board mandated those foreigners should at least engage with training from the local program to enhance their skill set within the local industrial scope. H.A stated, “I am a communications engineer and when I came to Sweden, I found that it was difficult to find work in this field, so I studied a programming course for six months” (Appendix A).

Based on the response demonstrated above, offering employment-fit education programs favoured skilled local workers more than skilled immigrant workers. It seems that the increasing rates of immigrants' participation in education show that the education programs offered have been successful in targeting the integration of the immigrant workers by tailoring and advancing their skill set. A response by the same informant shows that, indeed, education policies are contributing significantly towards the successful implementing of the integration process. Considering that H.A. is working with an international company, it could imply that some organizations in Sweden are dedicating their time and resources to cater to the welfare of the minority populations and demonstrate corporate social responsibility as expected of the OECD member countries.
On the same topic, research by Carlsson and Rooth (2007), the greater inclusion of immigrants in higher education has shown higher literacy levels than among Swedish. It translates to a high level of loyalty toward job seekers and immigrants to build better employment relationships with natives. This certainly suggests that immigrants are gaining more traction in obtaining more benefits from the education-based integration programs as they are gradually absorbed in the mainstream Swedish labour force. Indeed, it has been challenging to overcome the disadvantages of immigrants in the Swedish labour force. The substantial evidence demonstrates the policy conclusions about the effectiveness of existing interventions and practices for addressing discrimination against immigrants in enhancing their literacy levels to influence smooth integration into Sweden’s labour market. So far, many higher learning systems have adopted programs that focus on rendering more support in language learning to enhance bilingual skills. One respondent, R.Y., had received her degree from Syria. When she arrived in Sweden, she realized that language learning is essential to gain the basic skills to operate in the Swedish labour force. She recalls, “My son was a little child when I came to Sweden. I did not go to the language school directly, but my husband helped me a lot in learning the language before I entered the school, and after my son started at the nursery, I found work in one of the nurseries through the job centre” (Appendix A). She goes on to say that those who have difficulty with the language can face many types of discrimination during the workday: “When I try to ask about something in English they do not respond and want to speak only in Swedish, this may be considered something that helps me to learn Swedish faster, but [it] is a somewhat provocative style” (Appendix A).

Certainly, education is vital to be given priority to join the Swedish labour force. Additionally, Swedish language proficiency is a significant attribute for employer consideration (Chiswick & Miller, 2005). As such, employees who have this basic competency are better
positioned for employment (besides having the desired academic qualifications). Indeed, language proficiency is a vital component for communicating effectively. As immigrants have learned Sweden's national language at various educational levels, it has improved the way they can interact with native and even non-native employers to secure a job opportunity (Chiswick & Miller, 2005). Adding to that, tailored vocational training for immigrant workers has also contributed to the chances of finding a job. In instances where most immigrant students under an ICT or engineering course can demonstrate competency during vocational training, there are high chances of being absorbed into the labour force (Bratsberg et al., 2012). This means that learning institutions are indeed taking a bold step to generate educational objectives suited to ensure that all students and, more so, immigrants can cultivate academic aptitudes appropriate to a given level of intelligence in solving different tasks.

5.7 Policies for New Immigrants in the Labor Market

For the Swedish government to ensure enhanced integration of immigrant workers, it must tie the introduction programs to immigration activities to benefit new arrivals. In the programs, the key players of economic integration such as language proficiency, education, and training for civic orientation and preparation in labour market measures are given adequate emphasis under Sweden's ministry Public Employment Service. Therefore, as research by the OECD (2015) has shown, the current efforts regarding the enforcement of the proposed policies and standards of practice indicate that language training has been accorded the highest priority for ensuring the successful integration of immigrants in Sweden's labour market. At the same time, regular education on employment-fit initiatives has been launched, although it is gradually being practised at optimal levels. Further, the subsidized employment system has also played a significant role in benefitting the absorption of
immigrant workers (Røed, 2012). However, there is low participation of immigrant women workers based on these market measures, unlike male workers (Bratsberg et al., 2012). Based on these findings, the authors like Røed (2012) and Bratsberg et al. (2012) concluded that the labour market policies adopted in Sweden to facilitate the integration of immigrant workers as a solution towards curbing discrimination against the immigrant populations are indeed up to par (Røed, 2012). In some way, the policies have contributed, although in slightly lower levels, to better labour market outcomes over a considerable period for the key market players than the conventional programs.

Testimony by N.S., an interviewee who came as a new immigrant and obtained a first degree from Sweden, suggests employee integration and absorption within the international companies shows some improvement toward the economic integration goals. He states that in his company, discrimination occurs: “Never, since I work in an international company that has employees from different nationalities, so I did not feel that there is someone preferred because of his/her nationality, but the efficiency is what governs” (Appendix A). Indeed, respondents to both the survey and interviews overwhelmingly suggest that immigrant employees of international companies with clear anti-discrimination and workplace conduct policies experienced little to no discernible discrimination, whereas those working in private Swedish companies and the Swedish public sector reported discrimination (14.3% vs and 69%, respectively) (Appendix B). Unfortunately, it seems improbable that true immigrant integration into the Swedish labour force will occur on a larger scale without deliberate policy interventions designed to guard against discrimination. In supporting the discussion on discrimination against skilled immigrant workers in the Swedish labour market, the quote above provides relevant insight regarding the forward activities included in Sweden’s introduction programs for new immigrants. For instance, it is possible to ascertain that language training programs have produced great results in ensuring that the immigrant workers benefit in the
long run while engaging in various employment relationships. However, this may not guarantee an increase in wage rates, and it may not necessarily warrant an immigrant worker's priority in greater market participation. This, however, will depend on the level of standards enforced by various organizations to ensure the objectives tied to the policies are met.

Another fascinating finding demonstrated by Røed (2012) is that the subsidized organizations operating in the private sector are more effective in promoting the regulated employment of immigrants. This argument is drawn from assumptions drawn from responses from S.G., who obtained a certificate from Syria but was evaluated within Sweden before joining the labour force (Appendix A). Notably, while employers in Sweden seem excited to take the opportunities of subsidized employment, they are sometimes compelled to suffer a compensation trade-off. This occurs when employers are obliged to pay about 40% of their salary to the immigrant workforce while the rest are taken care of by government-based programs. However, in some cases, educated immigrant workers must bear the brunt of low minimum wages to compensate for the large-scale demand for jobs between skilled immigrants and natives. This is based on the adoption of the introduction programs on a large scale to ensure that all the labour market initiatives accommodate the interest of broad categories of job seekers. This study identified that subsidizing the private labour markets has allowed the concerned organizations to necessitate measures to motivate employers to take the subsidies and encourage more immigrant workers to enter the Swedish labour force. Further, training and education policies have also demonstrated great benefits for the immigrants. Most immigrants who enter Sweden with low levels of education are encouraged to participate in education-based programs. At the same time, those who come into Sweden with high education levels are also given a chance to participate in labour market training to ensure they can develop employment fit characteristics.
5.8 Organizing Integration Efforts

While the policies developed under the introduction programs discussed above may prove substantial for the newly arriving immigrants, the difference in efforts shown by the private and public employment sector and the central versus local government is quite significant. According to research by Andersson Joona et al. (2016), having a good interpretation of the association between discrimination encounters and immigrant’s welfare is crucial in ensuring the success of the labour market integration measures set to benefit both immigrants and native workers. Just a few organizations have mastered the payment technique that favours individual performance, in other words, payment per participant.

Most employers suffer from parking employees who are immigrants who desire to gain recognition by the OECD board members (Butschek & Walter, 2014). This means that when adapting integration policies, organizations are encouraged to determine the resource capacity and ensure that the job placement offered for the skilled immigrants is manageable enough to the extent that an employer can fully guarantee to deliver. Butschek and Walter (2014) identified that integration efforts between the private and public sectors take time to achieve fruition because of a lack of proper accountability in measuring labour market outcomes. Some studies have revealed that experts encounter some practical challenges in assessing the quality of service provided to the immigrant workers in participating in the labour market. There is scarce research as to which kind of government must take part in facilitating employment services for immigrants. Notably, the local government has leverage on information advantage, unlike the central government. The local government usually has the upper hand in obtaining primary information through census and other statistical databases, which helps make decisions regarding the employment relations of immigrant
workers and native employers (Andersson Joona et al., 2016). It is worth noting this because the
decision-making process used by the local government is decentralized. While the policies developed
within one municipality may become effective in facilitating the integration of immigrant workers
into the labour force, they may not fully account for the negative effects and opportunities available
in other municipalities. For instance, testimony by one respondent clarifies that the impact of local
government in association with economic integration initiatives is below par (Appendix A). The
structure of governance within the local government is facilitating the entrance of immigrant workers
into the workforce, and it is crucial for the local government to ensure that it uses all resources and
power to assist with the inclusion of skilled immigrants in the mainstream labour force. The second
item is that although this approach is doing well to increase the number of immigrants joining
Sweden’s labour force, it seems likely that more effort is needed to ensure the welfare of the skilled
immigrant workers.

This case is different for the central government. Here decisions are obtained at the national
level, and a centralized system is used for making decisions. Of note is that the centralized system of
governance promotes equity such that there is reduced discrimination against immigrant workers in
some municipalities (Bredtmann & Otten, 2013). In this way, collaboration between the local and
central government has elevated the participation of immigrants at the local and national level, which
has contributed to the gradual increase in immigrants' participation and well-being in the Swedish
labour force.
5.9 Social Security Policies and Economic Integration

Policies around the social benefits associated with skilled immigrant workers around the Swedish labour force have also changed significantly to accommodate the economic integration goals. The changes in social security policies affecting immigrant workers define the benefit levels that immigrants must fulfil to enjoy working in the Swedish labour force or benefit sanctions they should avoid on fulfilling job search requirements (Bratsberg et al., 2018). Under this policy, a literature review from diverse scholars has shown that the inclusion and extension of benefit levels of skilled immigrant workers under the economic integration regimes have improved the employment rate and privileges rendered to the targeted populations.

Policies for winning issues against discrimination and ensuring permanent employment for immigrants in Sweden are lenient for the targeted populations. Despite that, it is only the administrators who are weak at enforcing the policies as required. At the same time, benefit sanctions have also affected how employers can manipulate employment relationships and structures (Broadway et al., 2016). The impact of this added privilege is that some skilled immigrant workers who could possess the greatest skill and even be most productive may be locked out of the labour market simply due to gaining employment opportunities besides presenting insufficient characteristics during the job-search process. In this case, the current literature indicates that social benefit policies are crucial in balancing the economic integration process of educated immigrant workers. It is certain that if the underlying social policies can be given enough attention by the concerned stakeholders (Bredtmann & Otten, 2013), it will be possible to improve employment rates and self-sufficiency in output among the immigrants because they will be operating from a favourable employment relationship environment and a sustainable labour force system that
recognizes the essence of total inclusion in ascertaining total social responsibility among stakeholders.

However, achieving a perfect system for implementing social security policies to ensure the total inclusion of educated immigrant workers is not that easy (D’Amuri & Peri, 2014). Considering the existing trade-offs and intertwined conflicts of interest in the components of the social policies includes considering the disparities in benefit levels and benefit sanctions. Whenever there are employment gains, there is a high cost to be borne by the beneficiaries of the integration program. The problem is that while male immigrants can meet most requirements for having adequate access to social capital and assistance, there is a significant reduction in impact achieved among women participants (Bratsberg et al., 2017). This observation has indeed raised a controversial issue that warrants a perfect foundation for this research. It means that the default role of the social security policy in the economic integration of educated immigrant workers to improve the activation levels for educated immigrant workers has not been sustained fully in a manner that can facilitate more opportunities and benefit from the integration initiatives.

5.10 Conflicts of Interest and Immigrant Women

Considering the issues noted above, it is obvious that the welfare of immigrant workers must also be addressed in the process of ensuring full social security systems are in place. According to research, skilled immigrant women in Sweden encounter more discrimination despite the integration process (David et al., 2016). Respondent Z.A., when asked if she experiences discrimination, first stated no but readers can easily see it in her response: “No, I did not feel discrimination, but there are several employees asking me if my husband forced me to wear a veil (that I am veiled)” (Appendix A). Indeed, some participants have revealed some statements to demonstrate how organizations
within Sweden can address immigrant discrimination within the work environment. Further data suggests that while the current solutions exist, practicality is still subject to debate. E.M stated, “The work program (Nystartsjobb) served me to obtain support, but on the other hand, it is a means of exploitation where the employer [is] benefiting from this salary and then uses another migrant” (Appendix A).

The Nystartsjobb program described above has been initiated to ensure that immigrant workers' rights are protected, and employers can exploit certain items within the legal grounds. However, due to the justification of a native superiority complex, it seems unlikely that employers are ready to promote immigrant workers’ rights as a priority compared to non-immigrant and native workers. This shows that the current program is deficient and may need more research and efforts to facilitate its practical impact and enhance the integration of immigrant workers into the labour force.

However, most immigrant workers complained that they hardly received any interventions to support their integration process in the new work environments. This was supported by evidence from several respondents who demonstrated that immigrants' welfare is receives less attention. However, the victims are compelled to sublimate their suffering as they seek to build their education and skills (Appendix A).

The concerned stakeholders have also attempted to determine the best methods to address the low employment rates among educated immigrant female workers compared to educated native female workers and even educated immigrant male workers. Based on research by Bratsberg et al. (2012) conducted to investigate the causes of disparity among educated female immigrant workers, it has been identified that these populations suffer due to low levels of education, little knowledge on
language proficiency and interpretation, and the adverse health issues compared to the male and native counterparts.

The extension of social security and education programs and policies to include women's needs has also been approved by the concerned Office of Public Employment Service. Based on a quote by Z.A., a 34-year-old woman who graduated from Syria but was evaluated within Sweden, it is obvious that some organizations in the private sector are showing greater commitment to ensuring the employability of educated immigrant women. She stated: “I sent one of the managers who put an advertisement asking for someone for a specific project and told them that they would get financial support from the Job Centre in case they hired me. She met me, and I was hired directly” (Appendix A). All these and many other reforms are meant to ensure an increase in the smoother, longer-term transition of educated immigrant into the Swedish labour force. It means that upon determining the risk factors associated with discrimination of educated immigrant women workers in Sweden, the best way forward is to ensure that all women entering Sweden are engaged actively in labour programs, especially those who have a long history of residency in the host country.

5.11 Wage Policies and the Integration of Immigrants

At the government level, education-based reform policies, the formation of active labour markets, and the establishment of insurance on social matters can be instrumental in shaping the integration process of skilled immigrant workers. However, other market forces play a crucial role in influencing this process. The most common issue that has sparked debate is wage discrimination (Bratsberg & Raaum, 2012). Unlike low-skilled immigrant workers, highly-skilled immigrant
workers have been compensated well in some employment sectors. For instance, in the private sector, most highly educated immigrant workers are privileged with high wages based on some employers’ goals to develop better employment prospects in employment relationships.

However, some cases of intentional discrimination have caused wage decreases that have affected the employment rate and well-being of skilled immigrant workers (Bratsberg et al., 2017). Regardless, the highly educated immigrant workers within the high minimum wage category have benefited from significant changes in policy reforms that allow them to engage in auxiliary jobs to avoid the negative impacts due to low wages or wage cuts.

Testimony from N.S., who received his degree in Sweden and has been evaluated in the Swedish labour force reveals that international companies and organizations that have adopted a competency-based management structure embracing equality in rewarding the effort of their workers regardless of their civil background (Appendix A). As for those working at low wage rates, the issue of disparities in wage rates can also be explained by job types. Based on the type of job being sought, the worker’s education may have little bearing on the salary offered. E.M. obtained her degree from Iraq and was evaluated in Sweden and admits “Yes, the distinction includes the salary and the type of contract” (Appendix A). This means that the issue of low minimum wages or wage cuts is not there to keep educated immigrant workers under pressure to find sustainable jobs. Rather, it is meant to help control the problem of parking workers when employers cannot sustain high wage rates and even increase the chances of improving employability. However, it benefits low-skilled workers more than highly-skilled workers.
Chapter 6

Discussion and Conclusion

6.1 Discussion

The study shows that educated or skilled immigrant workers experience discrimination in their workplaces. Considering their situation in foreign countries and their desire to become part of the mainstream labour force, I argue that the immigrant workers have adapted to most discriminatory acts to the extent that it has become part of the labour system in their perspective. As shown in this thesis, the immigrant workers are more likely to be subjected to discrimination in subtle stages that may appear normal to the public but still affects the concerned individual. Immigrant workers suffer many kinds of discrimination, ranging from wage discrepancies, gender inequality, job placement, and even a hostile work environment. Interpreting evidence from participants reveals that immigrant workers received lower wages than their native colleagues with the same skill sets and education levels. Additionally, obtaining a steady job and securing favorable occupational positions is difficult for immigrants (Behtoui, 2004). The system justification theory supports the idea that the nature of discriminatory acts against immigrant workers is multifaceted. It is rationalised as allowable for native Swedes, who see it as necessary because they view themselves as deserving of the best opportunities and advantages; while they feel that immigrants should feel grateful for even the worst occupational opportunities regardless of their educational and professional skills and credentials. Sadly, some immigrants seem to sustain this cycle by internalising this belief.

Immigrants who are members or communicators have better access to the employers of the residents who have always had a better job finding and holding a permanent job even if they are
skilled and educated. This explains why most workers complain of being discriminated against in securing jobs that suit their education and skill set for the first time (Jost & Hunyady, 2003).

Furthermore, in Sweden, highly educated workers are given complex jobs or are employed on contract terms that fetch lower wages and/or benefits. Organisational leaders are not adequately attempting to limit obstacles in the integration process of immigrant workers, making communication and relationship issues difficult (Friesen et al., 2019). Many immigrant workers complain of language deficiency when interacting with stakeholders of Swedish origin and find it difficult to adapt to Sweden's communication and relationship culture. However, since they need a job to make a living, they ignore the deficiencies and disparities.

Considering that Sweden is a member country of the OECD, its steady progress toward integrating immigrant workers into the labour force has helped to decrease instances of discrimination, including facilitating total employee participation and developing competency-based programs that facilitate free and fair treatment of all kinds of workers (Mozetič, 2018). These solutions have worked for some companies, while others more slowly adapt the standards of practice. As previously identified, the slow progress has been attributed to the changes in policy reforms over time and, particularly, those requiring organizations to adapt economic integration initiatives that demand trade-offs with the interest of employers, employees, and other major players in Sweden’s labour force. For this reason, organizations have been forced to adopt a combination of policies integrated in a manner benefiting all involved participants. However, due to a lack of knowledge and evidence on integrating the policy areas concerned with the employment and welfare of educated immigrant workers, most organizations can be slow to acknowledge the integration goals set by OECD member countries (Wilhelmsson, 2000). As experienced by some informants in this study, the example of successful international organisations is crucial for this study analysis. Indeed,
it can be adapted to facilitate better efforts to reduce discrimination against immigrant workers in Sweden. This can be done by ensuring that organizations and stakeholders are conversant with the laws, policies, procedures, and standards of practice as it applies to recruitment, selection, maintenance, and other related endeavours necessary to build valuable employment relationships.

So far, what the participants have demonstrated is fundamental in establishing significant measures for developing better employment relationships with skilled immigrant workers. The latter study from Sweden or abroad can reduce the wrangles revolving around discrimination in the workplace (Bratsberg et al., 2017). Multiple policies have been identified as essential in enhancing the employer’s agility towards skilled immigrant workers while ensuring that the job seekers are also conversant with the culture of the national labour market of Sweden. Therefore, to understand the impact of the integration policies, it is vital to recognize how the proponents of system justification theory influence the policy reforms and trade-offs with the identified conflicts of interest (Butschek & Walter, 2014). Additionally, interviewee testimony suggested a positive feedback loop involving system justification theory and continued discrimination and poor employment relations and welfare for the majority of immigrant workers in comparison to their native Swedish peers. Elimination of this phenomenon will undoubtedly require a multifaceted interventional approach.

Therefore, the reforms in education policy to include introduction programs for all immigrants are essential in ensuring a functioning system for proactively preparing immigrants for the Sweden labour market. Based on Bratsberg et al. (2012), the level of education offered in European countries, especially Sweden, is of high quality and can guarantee young immigrants willing to enter the Swedish labour market will have high skills that can attract even high minimum wages. Similarly, those immigrants who have already earned high educational certifications from other schools can also take advantage of the concerned education policies with the provisions
discussed in this research to update their skills and finesse with the local workplace environments around the concerned nation (Chiswick & Miller, 2005). This contribution adequately demonstrates how education policies have helped solve employment issues and the underlying relationship affecting skilled immigrant workers.

The other solution to the integration of new immigrants is that discrimination against skilled immigrant workers can be addressed if learning institutions and those providing necessary employment fit training are equipped with adequate resources. In developing these policies, they should influence the way resources are used as they are motivated by the risk factors for failure to integrate educated immigrant students (Røed, 2012).

So far, the targeted interventions have worked well, including integrating native languages in the introduction programs for immigrants and individual assessment at early stages after immigration and even the individual study plan used in the short term after immigration. Indeed, attaining a total integration policy for immigrants in Sweden is crucial in ensuring that immigrants have a chance to sharpen their skills and improve their cohesion with their native colleagues. This is because speaking the native language improves communication and therefore business relations. It can improve the assessment process and help build study plans that can nurture and sharpen skill development among the affected individuals. The trade-off is that working through the various education programs as required in the education policies can be time-consuming and may affect the production time required to participate in the market (Bratsberg et al., 2018). It can reduce the privileges to be enjoyed in the long term and even cause some workers to have self-esteem issues as they enter the market at an increased age.
In the next agenda, policies surrounding labour market developments have also been improved significantly to influence specific measures. Some of them include bolstering the supply side to boost human capital through the education regimes proposed earlier and enhancing work experience (Broadway et al., 2016). Educational achievements are associated with language proficiency, employment-based skill training, and regular education. To ease the transition process, some evidence has also shown that it is important to ensure the work practices are aligned with the organizational standards and subsidized employment programs as outlined in the specific policy regimes (D’Amuri & Peri, 2014). This means that for highly educated individuals under these circumstances, it can be easy to secure employment and even establish better relationships with the key players in the market in low and even relatively advanced Swedish labour markets.

For the social policies, the current research suggests that immigrants who have come to work in Sweden from low-income nations tend to appreciate the generosity of social insurance offered in Sweden's labour market. This, together with the ideology of system justification and social discrimination theory, it is obvious that the appreciation shown by immigrants from low-income countries and the OECD countries demonstrates that in the process of accommodating the needs of immigrants in the mainstream employment welfare system, Sweden’s labour system supports the egalitarian values that influence employment relationships on a global scale (Butschek & Walter, 2014). Also, considering that Sweden has a free labour market, employers, employees, and the key stakeholders involved are encouraged to identify the alternatives for offsetting external issues that may affect the state of employment systems being used per the newly adjusted policies earlier to secure larger economic benefits (Ahmed & Lång, 2017).

Some conflicts of interest have also been addressed, especially on issues to do with employment and discrimination of educated immigrant women workers (Bredtmann & Otten, 2013).
While it did not affect their chances of securing employment, it affected their experience in the workplace and, in turn, undermined the integration initiatives (Bredtmann & Otten, 2013). Additionally, issues such as maternity leave and vacations may affect women as they transition to motherhood. In this case, conflicts of interest can emerge regarding how benefit levels and benefit sanctions should be implemented. These are some of the issues that have been tabled, and policy reforms are initiated regularly to ensure immigrants get a fair share of the labour market compared to native colleagues.

Finally, it has been claimed that companies with a high rate of intake and integration of educated immigrant workers into the labour force, have sufficient strategies and resources in place to cater to mass employment and low wages (D’Amuri & Peri, 2014). To avoid falling into the lowest wage zone and increasing it, constant training and education are encouraged, especially for competency-based organizations. It is vital to facilitate the continuous development of skills and attract higher wages due to higher productivity.

### 6.2 Conclusion

Although previous studies have dealt with challenges facing several aspects of the labour market, a few have focused on discrimination against educated or skilled immigrants. The research conducted and gathered through semi-structured interviews has shown that discrimination is rampant against highly skilled immigrant workers in Sweden. Immigrant workers have high and negative perceptions about the issue. Therefore, this research aims to increase the knowledge base for discrimination issues against skilled immigrants in Sweden’s labour market. Of particular interest are the issues influencing the widening gap between natives and immigrants in terms of partiality during
job application, recruitment, maintenance, and appraisal, among other endeavours in the labour market. This thesis will hopefully help to understand and make relevant efforts to transform the experience of educated immigrant labourers in various contexts of discrimination. It will perhaps also help to understand how much has been done by employers to address the issue.
References


Appendix A

Interview Questions

Name:
Age:
Civil status:
Do you have children/ How many/ How old are they?
How long have you been in Sweden?
From where did you get your degree?
Did you get your degree evaluated?
Do you need to study more?
Is this your first job?
How did you get the job? Job center or networks?
How long have you been working?
Do you have a steady job? How long did it take to get a steady job? And did you get steady job from the first time?
Do you think the salary is as much as your colleagues' salary?
Do you think that you are subjected to discrimination in treatment at work as a foreigner?
If you are married, is your husband/wife working?
Do you feel threatened that your job will be finished?
Does this affect your psychological condition?
How do you describe your relationship with your colleagues?
Do you feel that you are exploited?
What are the job difficulties or obstacles?
Have you felt that you have been discriminated…? Please describe the situation... Why do you think that happened… Very important also with the network question (in relation to native Swedes)
Appendix A

Interview 1

- Name: S. G. (Man)
- Age: 36 years.
- Civil status: Married
- Do you have children? How many? How old are they? 2 children 7 & 1 years old.
- How long have you been in Sweden? 6 years
- From where did you get your degree? Syria
- Did you get your degree evaluated? Yes,
- Do you need to study more? 2 years
- Is this your first job? Yes.
- How did you get the job? Job center or networks? Network
- How long have you been working? 1.5 years
- Do you have a steady job? How long did it take to get a steady job? And did you get a steady job for the first time? No, I have a law degree but work administrative job. One-year contract.
- Do you think the salary is as much as your colleagues' salary? No.
- Do you think that you are subjected to discrimination in treatment at work as a foreigner?
  I'm working in the administrative department in one of the municipalities, and although I make an effort at work, I feel that I am not trustworthy because I did not get my degree from Sweden, there is something missing, this feeling is exhausting. Several employees say that you should be grateful for your job. This thing is possible in the beginning, but for how long should I be grateful?
- If you are married, is your husband/wife working? I am married, my wife doesn't work now.
- Do you feel threatened if they finish your job? Yes
- Does this affect your psychological condition? Of course.
- How do you describe your relationship with your colleagues? Good
- Do you feel that you are exploited? Yes, even if I did not work in my field except that I have experience in dealing with and adapting to the circumstances, there are more than two
people of Swedish origin who started work and although this was their first job but they got a steady job and a higher salary, I think many employers know that we find it difficult in finding a job, so they expect that we will accept the lowest salaries and any conditions, knowing that 60% of my salary is paid by the Job center.

What are Job difficulties or obstacles? The difficulties lie in the language, when we study, and work in the field of law, as in other nearby fields such as the press and the media which highly dependent on the language and the fact that the migrant comes to Sweden as an adult, we need reaching the stage of fluency in the language and this is not an easy thing, it is a challenge and requires patience and perseverance to try to bridge this gap. Language is definitely the key to the country, and since we came to Sweden when we are adults, it is difficult to be able to reach fluency in language at the same level as citizens, and as an employer it may be difficult to allocate time and money to train a person who may need more time than the citizen.
Interview 2

- Name: S.M. (Man)
- Age: 37 years.
- Civil status: Married
- Do you have children/ How many/ How old are they? 2
- How long have you been in Sweden? 5.5
- From where did you get your degree? An Arabic country
- Did you get your degree evaluated? Yes
- Do you need to study more? No
- Is this your first job? No, the second one.
  I previously worked in an international company in one of Arabic country that has employees of different nationalities and speaks English fluently and this enabled me to easily communicate with people from a variety of backgrounds. At the beginning of my arrival in Sweden, I tried to talk to the native people and my English helped me to reach my goal to enrich my social network, I went to places where the Swedish language is taught and I got to know many people who helped me get an internship for 3 months in a company, and then get job contract for 6 months, but I didn't continue there because of discrimination.
- How long have you been working? 9 months
- Do you have a steady job? How long did it take to get a steady job? And did you get steady job from the first time? Yes, now I have a steady job.
- Do you think the salary is as much as your colleagues' salary? Yes
• Do you think that you are subjected to discrimination in treatment at work as a foreigner? Yes, that happened in my previous job, I tried to prove my merit and the fact that I have a good experience in my field, but what happened is that the manager did not give me any practical task but rather I work as an assistant or in an administrative work although that my colleagues testify that I have experience .. that was frustrating for me I felt that because of my ethnicity I do not have the qualification to be relied upon for work.

• If you are married, is your husband/wife working? Yes

• Do you feel threatened if they finish your job? No, I don't feel threatened in my current job because I got a good opportunity and steady work, and after 9 months of the work I became a project manager.

• Does this affect your psychological condition? In my previous work, yes, I felt threatened and that I was inappropriate and that I was less than others, but this did not prevent me from going ahead and trying to find suitable opportunities for me and felt that I am grateful now because I am in a place that appreciates my qualifications

• How do you describe your relationship with your colleagues? Excellent

• Do you feel that you are exploited? I felt exploited in my previous work, and they used me as a foreigner to get an idea through the media that they are helping refugees to find job, because they have interviewed several newspapers in this regard. My manager used to argue that I have a lack in my Swedish, even though my work is in engineering programs and I have excellent experience with it. I came to the company ready with a certificate and experience only I wanted to prove myself and the issue of language is a matter of time.

• What are the Job difficulties or obstacles? The difficulties lie in accepting the other, since I suffered from this matter in my previous work, that is to try to prove yourself in a place and
know that your manager ignores you and does not want to give you this opportunity and you were working in this place for a media purpose only.

It takes energy and time to change the society's view that there are many refugees who hold certificates, qualifications and experiences that society needs.
Interview 3

- Name: R. B. (Man)
- Age: 28 years.
- Civil status: Single
- Do you have children/ How many/ How old are they? /
- How long have you been in Sweden? 5 years
- From where did you get your degree? Syria
- Did you get your degree evaluated? Yes
- Do you need to study more? No, I didn't need it, but I took an intensive language course for engineers
- Is this your first job? Yes
- How did you get the job? Job center or networks? I got an internship first through an organization of engineers for a period of 4 months and through this internship I met a person who helped me find a job in a specific project, contract for 10 months.
- How long have you been working? 6 months
- Do you have a steady job? How long did it take to get a steady job? And did you get steady job from the first time? No
- Do you think the salary is as much as your colleagues' salary? No, When the manager asked me about the salary I wanted, I gave her a number, I expected it was a lot, but then I discovered that it was very little compared to my peers.

I think the problem is that we have no knowledge of salaries in Sweden and it may be a lack of confidence, because my language is not good enough that this thing may negatively affect self-confidence.
• Do you think that you are subjected to discrimination in treatment at work as a foreigner? There is a person at work that I noticed trying to complain about my work or the work of colleagues from foreign backgrounds, and this happened several times, but the manager was very understanding.

• If you are married, is your husband/wife working? /

• Do you feel threatened if they finish your job? Yes.

• Does this affect your psychological condition? Of course, I feel that I need external support to find a job in Sweden. This is causing fatigue just to think about it.

• How do you describe your relationship with your colleagues? Ordinary relationship, but I think there is apathy due to functional class division, as each group of people is sitting together with some in lunch time and I feel it is difficult to enter into one of these groups. I feel that I am not welcome there.

• Do you feel that you are exploited? I really don’t know.

• What are the Job difficulties or obstacles? Language or integration with other employees may be in order to make the working environment more acceptable.
Interview 4

- Name: O. L. (Man)
- Age: 33 years.
- Civil status: Married
- Do you have children/ How many/ How old are they? 1 child, 8 months.
- How long have you been in Sweden? 5 years
- From where did you get your degree? Syria
- Did you get your degree evaluated? Yes
- Do you need to study more? I have to do an internship.
- Is this your first job? Yes.
- How did you get the job? Job center or networks? I learned the language quickly and tried to help people who need translation at the Job center. I was communicating with them by providing help to their customers and they offered to work with them.
- How long have you been working? 14 months.
- Do you have a steady job? How long did it take to get a steady job? And did you get steady job from the first time?
- Do you think the salary is as much as your colleagues' salary? No, although I work at the Job center, I did not get a permanent contract, but rather a temporary one without A-Kassa compensation.
- Do you think that you are subjected to discrimination in treatment at work as a foreigner? The discrimination is that I feel the employees’ view of me being strange among them and that I need more effort to show my work and always in a position of accusation until I prove myself.
There is one of colleague who is trying to bully me through my language and says that he does not understand me even though the rest of the colleagues do not complain about this.

- If you are married, is your husband/wife working? No
- Do you feel threatened if they finish your job? Yes.
- Does this affect your psychological condition? Somewhat
- How do you describe your relationship with your colleagues? Although I have a good relationship with them, but I do not feel that I am one of them, sometimes they meet after work, but no one has invited me with them, I do not know what the reason is, even though I tried to invite some of them to lunch several times, but I feel that I am ignored by them.
- Do you feel that you are exploited? No
- What are the Job difficulties or obstacles? The problem is that my university degree (law) may be undesirable here in Sweden and it needs a high linguistic skill and this matter causes me frustration, as I studied a lot and have good experience, but it is difficult to find work in my field while if I was a craftsman as a barber, a mechanic or a cook was easy to find work, as this type of business does not need a high level of language but only the basics.
Interview 5

- Name: H. A. (Man)
- Age: 28 years
- Civil status: Married
- Do you have children/ How many/ How old are they? /
- How long have you been in Sweden? 4 years
- From where did you get your degree? Syria
- Did you get your degree evaluated? I am a communications engineer and when I came to Sweden, I found that it was difficult to find work in this field, so I studied a programming course for 6 months
- Do you need to study more?
- Is this your first job? Yes.
- How did you get the job? Job center or networks? Through this course and through one of the teachers who nominated me for a position in one of the major companies I got an internship for 3 months and then I got a permanent contract.
- How long have you been working? 8 months.
- Do you have a steady job? How long did it take to get a steady job? And did you get steady job from the first time? Yes after 3 months internship.
- Do you think the salary is as much as your colleagues' salary? Yes
- Do you think that you are subjected to discrimination in treatment at work as a foreigner? Never, since I work in an international company that has employees from different
nationalities, so I did not feel that there is someone preferred because of his/her nationality, but the efficiency is what governs.

- If you are married, is your husband/wife working? My wife works in a school.
- Do you feel threatened if they finish your job? No
- Does this affect your psychological condition?
- How do you describe your relationship with your colleagues? Very good
- Do you feel that you are exploited? No
- What are the Job difficulties or obstacles? I don't have obstacles, but I think the social network has the biggest role in overcoming obstacles but with the competence of course.
Interview 6

- Name: R. Y. (Woman)
- Age: 29
- Civil status: Married
- Do you have children/ How many/ How old are they? Not yet
- How long have you been in Sweden? 3 years
- From where did you get your degree? Syria
- Did you get your degree evaluated? Yes
- Do you need to study more? No.
- Is this your first job? Yes
- How did you get the job? Job center or networks? I work as an engineer and I came to Sweden by my husband (reunification), from the first day I knew how to take my first steps in Sweden, my husband helped me a lot in planning this stage through knowing the labor market and how to get a job. As the Job center does not help and I think it has a negative role with the refugees, especially as they do not know the specialties that we studied well, and this leads to a lack of understanding and thus affects finding jobs.
- How long have you been working? 4 months
- Do you have a steady job? How long did it take to get a steady job? And did you get steady job from the first time?
- Do you think the salary is as much as your colleagues' salary? Yes
- Do you think that you are subjected to discrimination in treatment at work as a foreigner? It may be indirect discrimination since I feel that the staff don't take me seriously, when I try to
ask about something in English they do not respond and want to speak only in Swedish, this may be considered something that helps me to learn Swedish faster, but there is a somewhat provocative style.

- If you are married, is your husband/wife working? Yes.
- Do you feel threatened if they finish your job? Maybe.
- Does this affect your psychological condition? No
- How do you describe your relationship with your colleagues? Good
- Do you feel that you are exploited? No
- What are the Job difficulties or obstacles? The difficulty for us as migrants with highly educated, may be our specialization is not desirable or there is difficulty in finding work within our field. This compels us to try to find alternative methods such as studying another specialization and we do not know whether it will succeed or not.
Interview 7

- Name: A. A. (Man)
- Age: 33 years
- Civil status: Married
- Do you have children/ How many/ How old are they? One child
- How long have you been in Sweden? 4 years
- From where did you get your degree? Iraq
- Did you get your degree evaluated? Yes
- Do you need to study more? No
- Is this your first job? Yes
- How did you get the job? Job center or networks? My specialist is geology and I have two years’ experience in an American company when they were working in Iraq but I migrated because of the threats and when I arrived in Sweden I did not get permanent residence but rather temporary and there are conditions that must be available to get a permanent residence most importantly I have a fixed work contract, I tried to get work in my specialty, but I only got an internship, and even if I got work, it is unlikely that I will get a fixed contract direct, but rather I will get a temporary contract, and this means that I do not have chance to get an extension to stay in Sweden, that because I am Iraqi. There is currently difficulty in obtaining residency for Iraqis in Sweden. So, I had to find work in a restaurant. The work is tiring and does not fit what I studied neither my experience, but I had to accept this work because it is the only opportunity currently to ensure that I can stay in Sweden.
- How long have you been working? 5 months
• Do you have a steady job? How long did it take to get a steady job? And did you get steady job from the first time? Yes, it is steady, but it is far from my specialty.

• Do you think the salary is as much as your colleagues' salary? No

• Do you think that you are subjected to discrimination in treatment at work as a foreigner? No comment.

• If you are married, is your husband/wife working? Yes, my wife works in a kindergarten and it is also a temporary contract.

• Do you feel threatened if they finish your job? Yes, every day.

• Does this affect your psychological condition? The whole situation is difficult for me because I am forced to do this work because of the circumstances, and this is the most difficult thing.

• How do you describe your relationship with your colleagues? /

• Do you feel that you are exploited? Certainly, I am exploited, especially because my employer knows my circumstances, he agreed to give me a steady job contract, but he exploits me through a very low salary and long working hours.

• What are the Job difficulties or obstacles? Immigration laws sometimes push employers to exploit us as refugees, when setting impossible conditions for permanent residency, such as finding a steady job, even though citizens themselves may not be able to obtain a permanent contract in a short period.
**Interview 8**

- **Name:** T. M. (Woman)
- **Age:** 31
- **Civil status:** Married
- **Do you have children/ How many/ How old are they?** 1 child, 6 years
- **How long have you been in Sweden?** 5 years
- **From where did you get your degree?** Syria
- **Did you get your degree evaluated?** Yes
- **Do you need to study more?** No
- **Is this your first job?** No, the second one
- **How did you get the job?** Job center or networks? My son was a little child when I came to Sweden I did not go to the language school directly, but my husband helped me a lot in learning the language before I entered the school, and after my son started at the nursery I found work in one of the nurseries through the job center. Then I tried to find work in my field and to get a better chance I studied a supplementary course that I added to my CV.

I think employers do not trust our degrees, so trying to study other courses in Sweden gives additional support to us.

Then I found work through LinkedIn close to my field.

I sent many private messages to company owners or recruitment officials and explained that I am new in Sweden and excited to work. I do not have enough experience, but I am ready for challenges.
I think there is importance for migrants to know how to market themselves and not wait for the opportunity but rather to go to it.

- How long have you been working? 9 months in my current job, 6 months in previous job.
- Do you have a steady job? How long did it take to get a steady job? And did you get steady job from the first time? No.
- Do you think the salary is as much as your colleagues' salary? No, it is less
- Do you think that you are subjected to discrimination in treatment at work as a foreigner? No, but I don't feel I'm integrated with other employees.
- If you are married, is your husband/wife working? Yes
- Do you feel threatened if they finish your job? Yes
- Does this affect your psychological condition? Yes, I cannot plan for the future without steady job.
- How do you describe your relationship with your colleagues? Sometimes good and sometimes I feel they ignore me, I do not know whether the nature of the people is different or what, this confuses me.
- Do you feel that you are exploited? Maybe there is exploitation, but I am new in Sweden and it is possible that they gave me an opportunity even if the salary is less or a temporary contract.
- What are the Job difficulties or obstacles? As refugees, we need more effort to get work and more effort to be accepted by others.
Interview 9

- Name: B. K. (Man)
- Age: 26 years
- Civil status: Single
- Do you have children/ How many/ How old are they? / How long have you been in Sweden? 4 years
- From where did you get your degree? I studied 3 years of engineering in Syria and did not complete it, because I came to Sweden with my family, I needed to study two more years, and I am now in the last stage of the study.
- Did you get your degree evaluated? Yes
- Do you need to study more? Yes, 2 years
- Is this your first job? Yes
- How did you get the job? Job center or networks? I am currently working in a nursing home to gain experience working in Sweden and to strengthen my Swedish language. I started with them as summer work for two years and now I work extra when needed.
- How long have you been working? 2 years
- Do you have a steady job? How long did it take to get a steady job? And did you get steady job from the first time? No
- Do you think the salary is as much as your colleagues' salary? No, less
- Do you think that you are subjected to discrimination in treatment at work as a foreigner? In the building where we work there are two floors, the first floor for normal cases of elderly people who need a little help, while the second floor has difficult cases for the elderly who
suffer from Alzheimer and need intensive care. In the beginning I tried to work very hard and help others in their work. I expected that thing would support me more.

I felt that there is discrimination that occurs through the fact that refugees and foreigners work in difficult jobs on the second floor with difficult cases that require physical exertion. When they set the schedule, they divide the work over everyone and our share as refugees is constantly on the second floor and even if a new employee starts to work of Swedish origin, he/she will join the work on the first floor with easier cases.

I know that there is challenge in this work, and I accepted it, and I know how difficult it is, but they put the work schedule according to race in the tasks distribution and that is considered racial discrimination, if the distribution was several days on the first floor and several days on the second floor, that would be ok,

But they give us the tasks that they don't want to do, that is annoying and provocative.

- If you are married, is your husband/wife working? /
- Do you feel threatened if they finish your job? Yes
- Does this affect your psychological condition? Working as a whole in this place makes me nervous because I feel discrimination and disrespect, especially when I started feeling that some of them were deliberately underestimating me or making fun of my language.
- How do you describe your relationship with your colleagues? There is a kind of class at the work, it is an unhealthy work environment so there will be no healthy relationship between colleagues.
- Do you feel that you are exploited? Yes, as I mentioned, there is exploitation for the workers with foreign backgrounds at work.
• What are the Job difficulties or obstacles? I love this work because it is a humanitarian work and I love working with the elderly because it reminds me of my grandfather and my grandmother in Syria, but he needs patience and great ability to endure.
Interview 10

- Name: E. M. (Woman)
- Age: 37
- Civil status: Married
- Do you have children/ How many/ How old are they? 1 child
- How long have you been in Sweden? 8 years
- From where did you get your degree? Iraq
- Did you get your degree evaluated? Yes
- Do you need to study more? No
- Is this your first job? Yes
- How did you get the job? Job center or networks? Social network
- How long have you been working? 1,5 years
- Do you have a steady job? How long did it take to get a steady job? And did you get steady job from the first time? No
- Do you think the salary is as much as your colleagues' salary? No, less than them.
- Do you think that you are subjected to discrimination in treatment at work as a foreigner? Yes, the distinction includes the salary and the type of contract, as there is more than one person who started work after me, but he got a steady contract, while I did not get a steady contract, even though I, with the testimony of my manager at work, I am very diligent and they appreciate my work, but the estimate is only words since my salary is like the salary of students who work in the summer, I have a university degree and were not counted and the argument is that it is not the same specialty required although there are more than three people who started
working after me and the hold another field also, some of them do not have university degrees but they got higher salaries and a steady contract.

This confuses me, all feedbacks are positive, and I developed quickly, but I do not find a convincing answer to not giving me a salary equal to my colleagues’ salary, or even an answer to why I am excluded from obtaining a permanent contract.

- If you are married, is your husband/wife working? Yes

- Do you feel threatened if they finish your job? Yes, certainly I feel that I am unstable in my job and do not know what the solution is, even though I work in an administrative position in one of the municipalities, which is supposedly the most encouraging place for refugees to enter the labor market, although my whole salary is paid by the Job centre, but it is a place where refugees are exploited on the pretext of helping to enter the labor market.

Duplication in dealing is one of the worst things that we suffer as refugees. We have university degrees, but they are not taken seriously, although many refugees have proven competence at work.

- Does this affect your psychological condition? Certainly, I do not know whether or not the contract will be extended, there is a solution for most employees that guarantees their survival and development on the job ladder, but I feel that I am outside their accounts.

In the beginning, I used to say that my salary is very little, but they have the right to try me, but when my contract is extended twice in succession and without a good salary increase and without a guarantee to stay at work it is very difficult. The work program (Ny start jobb) served me to obtain support, but on the other hand, it is a means of exploitation where the employer benefiting from this salary and then uses another migrant.
This program is deficient because more guarantees must be put in place for the competent person.

How do you describe your relationship with your colleagues? Good, but there are a few people insinuating in their words that I should be grateful. I do not think that Swedish employee would hear these words.

In addition, there are colleagues praising my work, as if they did not expect that I could do these tasks!

I think that the immigrants from Eastern European countries, have more chance to find a job and settle in it, may be due to the fact that the culture is somewhat closer.

- Do you feel that you are exploited? Legally, if I work for two years in a specific job, I must get a permanent contract after that, but they extend for only 23 months, meaning they use me and use the law to not give me this opportunity to get a permanent contract.

- What are the Job difficulties or obstacles? To start from scratch and begin to persuade others that you are a hard worker it takes a lot from you, especially for a person who is not at the beginning of his career, but to start professionally in another country and other laws, and there is a prejudgment on you that you are not qualified enough is something that impedes the integration process and affects the whole family.

The system helps to exploit us, although it gives us the opportunity, but there are gaps in the system.

We have few opportunities and narrow possibilities that push us to accept the minimal conditions and salaries.

I feel that those who found job through the program (Ny start jobb) they have been stigmatized.
Interview 11

• Name: N. S. (Man)
• Age: 33
• Civil status: Single
• Do you have children/ How many/ How old are they? /
• How long have you been in Sweden? 13 years
• From where did you get your degree? Sweden
• Did you get your degree evaluated? /
• Do you need to study more? /
• Is this your first job? Yes
• How did you get the job? Job center or networks? The company has announced that they needed a person with the same my field, I sent them my CV, they made several interviews with me and then hired me.
• How long have you been working? 3 years.
• Do you have a steady job? How long did it take to get a steady job? And did you get steady job from the first time? Yes.
• Do you think the salary is as much as your colleagues' salary? Yes.
• Do you think that you are subjected to discrimination in treatment at work as a foreigner? No, I work for an international company that has several branches in different countries of Europe and includes employees of different nationalities. I have never felt that there is discrimination because we are all from various nationalities, and what is important in our work is the competence.
• If you are married, is your husband/wife working? /
• Do you feel threatened if they finish your job? No
• Does this affect your psychological condition? /
• How do you describe your relationship with your colleagues? Very Good
• Do you feel that you are exploited? No.
• What are the Job difficulties or obstacles? There are challenges not obstacles.
Interview 12

- Name: Z. A. (woman)
- Age: 34 years
- Civil status: Married
- Do you have children/ How many/ How old are they? 2 kids
- How long have you been in Sweden? 4 years.
- From where did you get your degree? Syria
- Did you get your degree evaluated? Yes
- Do you need to study more? No
- Is this your first job? Yes
- How did you get the job? Job center or networks? I work in the environmental field. This work may be not very close to my specialist, but as my first work in Sweden I consider myself fortunate that I found work. I wrote to many companies, in addition to the job center, I did not get any response, but by LinkedIn, I sent one of the managers who put an advertisement asking for someone for a specific project and told them that they would get financial support from the Job center in case they hired me, shed met me and I was hired directly.
- How long have you been working? 11 months.
- Do you have a steady job? How long did it take to get a steady job? And did you get steady job from the first time? Not yet, this work is a project for one of the municipalities, and I don't know if I will stay with them or not in case the project will finish.
- Do you think the salary is as much as your colleagues' salary? The salary is very low, in addition to that they are receiving financial support from the Job centre.
• Do you think that you are subjected to discrimination in treatment at work as a foreigner? No, I did not feel discrimination, but there are several employees asking me if my husband forced me to wear a veil (that I am veiled). They are trying to repeat the question with another a form, are you convinced or are there circumstances that cause you to accept wearing the veil? They may be curious; I try to answer them even though there are somewhat provocative questions.

• If you are married, is your husband/wife working? Yes

• Do you feel threatened if they finish your job? Yes

• Does this affect your psychological condition? is someone that works at the Job center who advised me to take off the veil because I will not get a job and if I find a job it will not be good enough for me or that the job will not fit my degree.

This always makes me doubt my abilities, which has affected me and makes me accept any offer.

• How do you describe your relationship with your colleagues? Good, but there are some kind of questions that try to belittle people about whether it is easy to study at the university in your country since your country is not considered a developed country.

• Do you feel that you are exploited? No

• What are the Job difficulties or obstacles? The obstacles are the terminology at work that differs from what I studied.
Appendix B
Survey Responses

تجارب التمييز في العمل التي تواجه المهاجرين من ذوي التعليم العالي في السويد

Experiences of discrimination at work facing immigrants with higher education in Sweden

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1co6H7aCX-ApsTWYWwazQ69DGKPp0DCL7fiebbgEC7r0/prefill
What is your education level?

- College student
- I have a Bachelor's degree
- Master's or Ph.D
- Bachelor
- Master's or Ph.D

You get a university degree from:

- My homeland
- From Sweden
- From another country
- From Sweden
- From another country

I work in:

- Privet Swedish company
- International company
- The Swedish public sector
I do not feel that my Swedish colleagues, employers, or managers take me seriously.

أشعر أن زملائي السويديين أو أصحاب العمل أو المدر_Translated from Arabic to English.

I feel that my Swedish colleagues, employers, or managers question my level of education or knowledge because I wasn’t educated in Sweden.

أشعر أن زملائي السويديين أو أصحاب العمل أو المدر_Translated from Arabic to English.

I am often given the position of assistant or given simple tasks to do while Swedish colleagues get higher positions than me.

غالباً ما يتم إعطائي منصب مساعد أو أسئلة مهام بسيطة لأكون بها بينما يحصل الزملاء السويديون على مناصب أعلى مني.

37 responses

38 responses

39 responses
My salary is less than my colleagues; although we are equal in educational level and we share work tasks.

I have seen Swedish colleagues promoted before me or given higher salaries even though I was an equally or better qualified candidate for the position or raise.

Most of the Swedish colleagues, employers, or managers I've had believe that I should feel grateful just to have a job.
I feel that my ethnicity plays a bigger role in determining my salary in Sweden than my level of education or experience.

أشعر أن عرقي يلعب دورًا أكبر في تحديد راتبي في السويد أكثر من مستوى تعليمي أو خبرتي.

39 responses

17.9% Yes
82.1% No

I need more support to find a job in Sweden only because I am an immigrant.

أحتاج إلى مزيد من الدعم للعثور على وظيفة في السويد فقط لأني مهاجر.

39 responses

41% Yes
59% No

My Swedish colleagues don’t expect me to perform as well as them because I’m an immigrant.

زملائي السويديون لا يتوقعون مني أداء جيدًا كمهاجر.

39 responses

35.9% Yes
64.1% No
My Swedish colleagues pretend they cannot understand me when I speak Swedish, even though I believe I speak clearly.

I have Swedish colleagues, employers, or managers who refuse to speak to me in English and will only respond to me in Swedish.

I have been offered a temporary contract while the majority of my Swedish colleagues have permanent or steady contracts.
I feel that I’m given tasks, jobs or positions that my Swedish colleagues do not want to do.

Ifeel like I constantly have to prove myself and my worth because I am consistently underestimated by my Swedish colleagues, employers, or managers based on my race.

I found my job through a certain program (such as Job Center), and was given a low salary with a temporary contract because I used that program.
My Swedish colleagues, employers, or managers have asked me questions about my culture, race, or lifestyle that have made me uncomfortable.

I feel like I have to work twice as hard as my Swedish colleagues, employers, or managers just to keep my job or position.

I work for a private Swedish company and..
I work for an international company and...

- I have not experienced any discrimination at the job
- I have experienced discrimination at the job

85.7% 14.3% 14 responses

I work in the Swedish government sector and...

- I have not experienced any discrimination at the job
- I have experienced discrimination at the job

69% 31% 29 responses