Integration of immigrants into the Swedish labor market: An intersectional perspective

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ABSTRACT

As an immigrant in Sweden, I connect this study to my embodied experiences in the labor market and reflect throughout this research as I discuss the experiences of other immigrants who struggle with labor market integration. This qualitative study focuses on the phenomenon of the integration of immigrants in the Swedish labor market from an intersectional perspective and from my position as an immigrant which enriches the discussions. I analyzed how immigrants are integrated into the Swedish labor market and how gender intersects with other human factors to influence labor market integration. The study was based on a reflexive ethnography methodology in which interviews and documentation studies were used in collecting the empirical data. A semi-structured interview guide was used during the interviews and the documentation study was focused on scrutinizing integration policy documents in Sweden.

The findings provide a detailed account on the genesis of immigration policies and how they have evolved into integration policies in Sweden. It traces this from the 1950s when integration policies were intertwined with immigration policies. Also it provides an account of how the integration policies are implemented in Sweden focusing on the activities of two main organizations namely Arbetsförmedlingen and the Linköping’s municipality.

Furthermore the findings highlights that, men and women experience labor market integration differently therefore there is the need for this subject to be studied from a heterogeneous perspective instead of a homogenous perspective. It also highlights that women’s gender intersects with other human endowments factors such as education, gender roles, marital status, language and skills that complicate their labor market integration. In addition the findings highlight the transnational lives of some of the participants who hold on to traditional ideologies from their countries of origin. Furthermore, immigrants conceptualized labor market integration according to their own understanding. The results shows that the conceptualization of some of the immigrants was similar to what is common in the literatures but there was one new conceptualization of the term labor market integration that can be added to the already existing conceptualizations.

Keywords: Qualitative Research; Reflexive Ethnography; Immigration; Integration; Intersectionality; Human Factors; Discrimination.
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PROLOGUE

It all began in the year 2013 when I decide to embark on a journey away from home (Ghana) to Sweden. This was to acquire knowledge since I thought a change of country and environment can give a different perspective and input to knowledge development. This is due to the fact that I have spent most of my life in Ghana my motherland and more remarkably educating myself. To satisfy my academic curiosity, I moved to Sweden to pursue a master’s degree and also re-unite with family. Imagine the excitement it brings to be in a new country for the first time, I was thinking of having different experience and greater job opportunity since I was migrating from a developing country. I fantasized a lot in the plane about my host country and could not wait to arrive and explore my fantasies about Sweden. Unfortunately the rosy picture I painted of Sweden was a different story when I arrived. I realized that it was not an easy task getting into the labor market after I applied for different jobs that matched my qualification and working experience yet got no reply. By then I wrote my applications and CV in English and got virtually no response.

I decided to start adapting to the Swedish culture by learning the language and applying for jobs in Swedish instead of English. I immediately joined the Swedish language school which is called Swedish for immigrants (SFI) where I met immigrants from different part of the world including Europe, Africa, and Asia. I also participated in other activities that could help me integrate into the labor market. The idea of this thesis evolved based on my personal experiences and the experiences of other immigrants. Immigrants face a lot of social injustice in their host countries making the issue of immigrants a feminist problem. I am not disputing the fact that migration scholars and feminist have given attention to the issue of immigrants since it is a fast growing phenomenon but I bring in a new and interesting insider perspective as an immigrant struggling with labor market integration in her host country while analyzing the same phenomenon.
INTRODUCTION

Migration is one of the fastest growing phenomena in the contemporary world and has seen incredible pursuit and development by scholars and policy makers (Kapur 2003). Some of these scholars include Miller and Castles who for the past twenty years have been writing about us living in the age of migration (Miller and Castles 2009). They explain that, the age of migration is a critical time frame in which international migration has globalized, accelerated, feminized, broadened and become heavily politicized. For example one can say that immigration has spread globally where immigrants from the third world country travel to the first world countries and vice versa. In terms of immigration being heavily politicized, many decisions on immigrants such as integration policies, permits etc. comes from the politicians who make policies and decisions about this. It is therefore understandable when Miller and Castle make such a statement. Even though immigration has globalized, as noted by the OECD (2014), countries like Sweden have seen a massive inflow of immigrants.

Some of these immigrants move willingly to Sweden while others are being forced out of their countries due to war and other pressing issues to settle in Sweden (Fahlgren et al 2011). These immigrant’s move to Sweden with the notion of finding peace, employment and getting integrated into the society and the labor market in order to help their families left behind and to escape the challenges they face back home. These hopes are sometimes tarnished because on their arrival in the host country the expectation they have in mind are not always fulfilled. Some immigrants struggle to integrate into the labor market and the society as a whole due to several factors such as cultural and social difference, ethnicity, lack of education, language barrier but to name a few. I think that it is important for immigrants to integrate into the labor market not only for their own benefits such as income but for other contributions to the society they live in such as paying taxes, abiding by laws and social integration.

As argued from a functionalist perspective by Lundborg, (2014) and Husted, et al (2009), the integration of immigrants into the labor market does not only provide income for individual immigrants but it also helps them to better their knowledge on the culture, language and rules in the society leading to a better functioning of the society. Husted et al (2009) further argues from an economically oriented perspective that there is the need to successfully integrate immigrants into the labor market since this is important for aggregate labor supply, economic growth and
public finances. To tackle and make integration successful, authorities in Sweden have tried to put some policies and strategies in place that are being implemented by organizations such as Arbetsförmedlingen (the Swedish public employment service) and local municipalities. However, conclusions on the usefulness of these strategies and initiatives in helping immigrants to integrate is not resolute. In addition, in the literature, integration has not always been studied from an intersectional perspective which gives a holistic view on the challenges and situation of immigrants. More so, the integration of immigrants has often been studied by non-immigrants who might have not experienced this phenomenon at first hand. I will therefore be looking at this topic from my position as an immigrant who is experiencing labor market integration challenges in Sweden and will also reflect on my experiences in this thesis.

Aim and Research questions
The aim of this thesis is to critically analyze the integration of immigrants in the Swedish labor market. Having set this aim, I bear in mind that the labor market is not the only important level that integration needs to take place but I will also argue as done by Dorais (1991) that, integration into the labor market is very important for social integration in general. Furthermore, I will like to analyze this topic from an intersectional perspective and critically analyze how gender intersects with other human endowment factors such as education, skills, language, culture, experience, marital status and gender roles in labor market integration. This is because immigration should not be treated as a homogeneous subject since men and women may experience this differently. I will argue that treating immigration heterogeneously may give richer depth into aspects overlooked by previous research.

In order to stay focused on my research aim, the following research questions will be answered. The main research questions are supported by two sub-questions which are also important to look at in this thesis but will not be the main focus. Furthermore the purpose and motivation for asking these questions are discussed.

The main research questions are:

- **Research question 1:** How does gender intersect with other human endowment factors to influence the integration of immigrants in the Swedish labor market?
One can agree that gender and other social differences such as race, class, ethnicity, sexuality and nationality shape all aspect of human life including immigration. Immigration has been treated as a homogeneous subject for decades because as noted by (Driedger 1996) most immigration theories still ignores gender as an important factor when studying immigration. As a feminist I understand that treating issues of immigration heterogeneously give a wider or deeper perspective to the subject. This research question is therefore posed to find out how immigrant men and women experience their integration into the Swedish labor market. Furthermore, this question is also motivated by the fact that immigrants when arrived in their host countries have some human endowment factors that influence their integration into the labor market. This question will also find out how various human endowment factors intersect with gender in the integration of immigrants into the labor market.

> **Research question 2:** How do immigrants in Sweden conceptualize and experience labor market integration?

This question is motivated by the fact that many researchers have studied and written about immigrant’s integration into the labor market from different perspectives, and from different countries. So has labor market integration been defined by many researchers from different perspective but not often from the perspectives of the immigrants themselves. I therefore pose this question to find out how immigrants define and understand this term. I want to find the conceptualization of this term from the immigrant’s perspective. Furthermore, this question will delve into how immigrants experience the labor market. Immigrant’s experiences may be based on different factors such as discrimination and the human endowment factors. This question will therefore find out how immigrants experience the labor market and the factors that contribute to these experiences.

*As stated this thesis has two sub question which are:*

> **Sub-question 1:** What are the integration policies and strategies for the integration of immigrants into the Swedish labor market?

This sub-question is motivated by the fact that immigrants when arrived in their host countries must follow some laid down rules and regulations. Immigrants in Sweden are not exempted from such rules and regulations. The Swedish society has laid down policies and strategies that aim to
support the integration of immigrants in both the society as a whole and the labor market in specific. This question is asked in order to find out the role the Swedish policies and strategies play in integrating the immigrant. In order not to exclude the society from the integration of immigrants in Sweden and not to produce a biased empirical data, this question is to get a holistic view on integration and not only the perspective of immigrants. Furthermore, this question will serve as a basis for discussion on how immigrants perceive the effectiveness of such policies and strategies in their integration.

**Sub-question 2: What are the activities of organizations that implement these policies and strategies for integration of immigrants?**

As pointed out in the sub-question one, integration policies are made in order to help immigrants integrate. These policies when made at the national level must be implemented at different political levels by different organizations. The purpose for asking this question is to find out the activities that are being organized by these organizations to help implement the policies from the national level. In addition how does the activities of these organizations help in the integration of immigrants in the labor market? The activities of these organizations is expected to influence the integration process in one way or the other. This question may also cover how the immigrants utilize the integration policies and the activities to their own benefits. This question will be answered by using documents and also interviews with immigrants about these activities.

**Research Scope and delimitation**

The main scope of this research will be on immigrants in Linköping because of access to information and interviewees. Findings from Linköping case will not be generalizable for the entire Sweden but it will serve as a relevant example from which similarities can be observed in other regions/cities. As explained by Bryman (2012), the interviewees of a qualitative research are not supposed to represent an entire population but the findings can rather be inferred to the theories. This research will focus on immigrants who have Swedish working permit and have some level of education and work qualification or skills and have lived in Sweden for a minimum of two years. This minimum number of years would have given these immigrants the chance to have attempted finding jobs in the labor market. Selected immigrants for this research will cut across all classes or groups of immigrants. Both men and women immigrants were
selected in order to be able to compare the contribution of gender differences on immigrants experience.

Though the research scope will be on immigrants, I will depart from a wide systemic view point based on the argument that integration is not only influenced by the activities of the immigrant but also integration policies and the activities of integration organizations. I will therefore close read some Swedish integration policy documents and the perceived effectiveness of the activities of integration organization. This scope will give me the chance to widen the selection of my interviewees and therefore get a diverse and a broad perspective.

Considering the limited space and time, this research cannot cover all immigrants in Linköping and therefore has its limitations. The thesis will not focus on immigrants who illegally reside in Sweden since this does not open or broaden their chances of labor market integration. Also second generation immigrants who were born in Sweden are not considered since they may have easier access into the labor market considering the facts that they were raised and educated in Sweden. Having stated this I am not disputing the fact that they may be some obstacles that could prevent immigrants born and educated in Sweden from overcoming labor market challenges. For example Råbergh and Liljegren (1993) point out that, immigrants born and raised in Sweden who speak the Swedish language with an accent could face labor market challenges. This according to them could be enough reason not to be considered for an employment. Just like immigrants born and educated in Sweden, immigrants who migrated to Sweden at a very young age will not be considered since their chances of getting a job are also far widened than those who migrate as adults. Boyd (2002) support these facts by pointing out in a research conducted in Canada that, women who migrate as kids are more likely to attain educational credentials and working experiences that are considered beneficial for the Canadian labor market. Furthermore immigrants without any educational credentials will not be considered in this research.

**Thesis Outline**

This section gives the reader a precise view on how the thesis is structured. The “introduction” section includes the aim and research questions which guide this thesis. The “scope and delimitation” of this thesis falls under the introductory section. Followed is the “background” to the entire thesis and the “previous research” that highlights what is known about the topic and what have been done previously. The “Explanation of concepts” section deals with the
explaining of some key concepts, and how they have been used in this thesis. The section that follows is the “theoretical framework” that gives an explanation to the theories that were used to analyze the findings.

The “methodology” section discusses the ontological and epistemological position of the thesis, followed by a discussion on the methodological approach and materials used for gathering the data. It further discusses how the empirical data was collected and a reflection on the implications of the choice of methods and materials for the thesis. It concludes by discussing the ethical issues that are pertaining to this thesis and how they were handled. This section is followed by the “presentation of results” section that presents findings on all the four research questions mainly focusing on policies, implementation of these policies and immigrants activities/stories.

In the “analysis and discussion” section, the findings were grouped into various themes and analyzed using the various theories in relation to answering the research questions. Followed by “conclusion and further research” section that provided conclusions on the analysis and discussions and the contribution of this thesis was also emphasized in this section. In addition, some suggestions were made as to what could be important to study in the future in relation to getting more insights on the subject under discussion. The “references” section gives a list of reference to all the materials used. The final section which is the appendix contains the semi-structured interview guide that was used in conducting the interviews and the kind of questions that were posed.
BACKGROUND

Sweden is one of the OECD countries that allow immigrants into their country with the possibility to work. Under the governance of the social democrats in 1964, Sweden experienced the flow of labor immigrants (Knocke 2000). Immigrants were during this period opted for as a way to resolve Sweden’s shortage in labor, based on an agreement between the Confederation of Trade Union (LO) and the Employers Association (SAF) (ibid). Knocke (2000) further notes that this approved recruitment by these two unions were supposed to recruit immigrants who were skilled or have educational credentials. After people with education credentials and skills have been recruited, they ended up in low skilled jobs and obviously did not have any choice but to accept these low skilled and low paid jobs (ibid). Most of these immigrants migrated mainly from Yugoslavia, Greece, Turkey and Italy which are all European countries and there were not many non-European migrants during this time (Behtoui and Olsson 2014). It was stated by Knocke (2000) that in 1972 before Sweden had it first oil crisis, this labor migrants were stopped and attention was given to Eastern European and Latin American refugees. They were recruited into the domestic workforce instead and worked in the public welfare centers. In the 1980s refugees from other part of the world such as Middle East, Asia and Africa started to arrive in Sweden. 35,000 refugees fled Bosnia to Sweden due to the 1990 Balkan war (Behtoui and Olsson 2014). This figure mentioned by Behtoui and Olsson (2014) increased with the difference of 21,000 people making the total number of immigrants from Bosnia 56,000 in 2011 (Statistic Sweden 2013).

Today Sweden is one of the OECD countries with the largest number of foreign born population (OECD 2014). The most popular form of immigrants in Sweden are refugees from Somalia, Iran, Syria and Pakistan. The Somali refugees arrived after the helter-skelter civil war in Somalia in 1991 (Behtoui and Olsson 2014). Refugees may be the highest number of people applying for asylum but they are not the majority receiving resident permit to stay in Sweden. This is shown through the migration board page who states that the number of residence permits increased by seven per cent in 2014. However refugees are not the biggest group that receive the resident permit but immigrants who are reunified with their relations are the biggest group receiving residence permits.
With the increase number of immigrants in Sweden it became necessary for them to integrate both in the labor market and society as a whole. Employment became a prerequisite for immigrants to integrate (Bergqvist 2011) and language is one of the most important prerequisites for integration in Sweden. As I am an immigrant I have been involved in some of the language learning process which I find quite interesting. On the other hand, I observed that the language class is also used as a platform to also teach the Swedish life and culture which is apparently necessary for integration.

Immigrants and Integration has received a lot of attention from politicians and the general Swedish public in the recent 14 September, 2014 election. During the election, the Sweden Democrats who can be described as anti-immigrants pulled about 13% of total votes. With this percentage for the Sweden Democrat they had enough vote to enter parliament and make changes concerning the life of immigrants. Their main party political goal was to tighten the requirements for immigration entering into Sweden and got so much support to show that a percentage of Swedish people consider immigration and immigrants as a “problem”. This perception about immigrants makes it difficult for some employers to trust and employ them. I will be discussing further in this thesis about how immigrants experience the Sweden labor market.

**Previous Research**

There is a wide range of research on the integration of immigrants not only in the Swedish labor market but in other countries.

In 2007, Husted et al. conducted a research on labor market integration of immigrants where they estimated the effects of the local authorities on integration. This estimation was applied to a local Danish administrative data set. This was to help them identify whether local authorities have been successful in integrating immigrants. They concluded that there are some authorities that have been successful in integrating immigrants in the labor market and the few unsuccessful organizations could learn from them. Hansen et al (2006) also conducted a research comparing successful municipalities to less successful municipalities in terms of labor market integration and they concluded that successful municipalities are characterized by the following features: (1) they have clear and specific aims and a high priority of active integration policies at both political and administrative levels, (2) focus on policies directly aimed at improving
qualifications which are important for labor market integration (3) specialization of case workers servicing immigrants, (4) fast and systematic consideration and (5) demand for active participation of immigrants in the individual integration programs.

Knocke (2000) conducted a research on the working life of immigrants in Sweden and how these immigrants face the Swedish labor market. In this research she pointed out that between the 1960s to the 1980s immigrants use to be well integrated into the Swedish labor market. This was due to the economic growth factor that initiated the employment of foreign workers. Despite this notification, Beckholmen (1978) and Knocke (1982) made it clear that though the trade union policy during this period was to employ only skilled workers or those that had good education credentials they all ended up in low skilled jobs. This was due to gender segregation and ethnical discrimination leading immigrants to take up jobs that needed to be done yet Swedish workers were not available or interested in doing such jobs. In Knocke (2008) she made interesting conclusion on the crisis that exist in the Swedish labor market, yet it affected immigrants more than the native born. The conclusions of Knocke’s research pointed out that immigrants are discriminated against in getting access into the labor market by the fact that employers refuse to appreciate or recognize the foreign education credentials and working experiences. Knocke finally concluded by acknowledging the fact that her studies and other migration scholar’s studies have shown that immigrants are willing to learn the Swedish language in order to integrate. This therefore calls on the mainstream society to open up possibilities for these immigrants. Employers need to make use of what these immigrants have instead of sorting them out of the labor market.

An article written by Heilbrunn et al (2010) about the barriers on immigrant’s integration into the labor market, focused on Ethiopian immigrants and Former Soviet Union immigrants and how they coped with these barriers. It was stated that both immigrants groups face many barriers such as prejudice, language, lack of experience etc. Using the human capital theory to explain the integration of this group into the labor market, it was realized that human capital such as experience and education played a role in how these immigrants cope differently. In summing up the findings of this article, they noted that the barriers faced by these immigrants depended on opportunity structure while being able to cope with it depend on specific peculiarities of the immigrants. This from my perspective shows that having a homogenous perspective of
immigration is not without limitations because this Ethiopians and Former Soviet Union immigrants seem to experience migration in a whole different way. I also think that if a gender perspective was added to this article it would have drawn different conclusions.

On the other hand a very recent research by Per Lundborg (2013) focused on refugee’s employment integration in Sweden. He considered three things that helps immigrants to integrate in the labor market that is gender, age and business cycle effect. Business cycle effect refers to the instability of a countries economic activities. He concluded that the rate of labor market assimilation proceeds from initially less than 70% of natives’ employment to around 90% in 10 years. Despite this conclusion he made it clear that the employment gape between refugees and the native in the labor market never closes. Though all refugees are immigrant, he also pointed out some refugees from countries such as Iran, Iraq, and Horn of Africa face the largest problems in entering the labor market despite many years of residence in Sweden. This could be due to one’s education as pointed out by Lundborg but the may cause differences education causes are not dramatic. In considering gender he compared refugee women to native women and refugee men to native men. He concluded that immigrant women, when compared with native women, do better than when immigrant men are compared to native men. He sum up with the business cycle effect as definitely being stronger for natives than refugees.

These previous researches have done some work to look at the challenges immigrants’ face, how successful the authorities have been in integrating immigrants and comparing immigrants’ gender performance to the natives in the labor market. My research will therefore be on how gender intersects with other human endowment to help immigrants integrate or not integrate in the labor market. More interestingly I will be looking at this topic from my position as an immigrant who will also share her story in this thesis.
EXPLANATION OF CONCEPTS

This section gives a short description of some of the major terms that will be used throughout the thesis. This is to indulge the reader to understand how this terms are being used and why. This is also to show that this terms may be defined from different perspective depending on which perspective one is writing from. Two terms will be described in this section namely immigration and Labor market integration.

Immigration

The term immigration has gone through some transformation over the years. Immigration is described by the Word Web dictionary as the movement of a person from his native country into a country which he/she is not a native in order to settle. The context in which this movement takes place has been politically, socially and technologically transformed (Mamattah 2006). In recent years people have migrated from their countries due to political and social reasons. Most people that settle in this other countries are called immigrants. The term immigrants according to Ng & Estable (1987) is socially constructed and embedded into the legal and economic process of our society that has class, racist and sexist prejudices. In this thesis I will use the term immigrants to refer to people who have moved from their country for one reason or another to stay in Sweden but will bear in mind that there is no such people as immigrants but this term as mentioned by Ng & Estable (1987) was socially constructed. I use this term to also refer to all class/groups of immigrants.

A study conducted in Canada by Mamattah points out that there are three types of immigrant namely: (a) family class (b) economic immigrants, including competent workers and business immigrants and (c) refugees (2006:5). Since Canada is an OECD country just like Sweden, there are different classes of immigrant that live in Sweden as well. Immigrants in Sweden can also be classified under these three heading making the term immigrants applicable to any member from this immigrant class/group. These classes of immigrants will give this research a rich empirical data due to the differences that may occur between them. Education credentials are one of the most important requirements for labor market integration and they may be such significant differences among these groups. Tastsoglou & Preston (2012) point out that immigrants belonging to the economic immigrant’s class are individuals who are mostly highly educated and/or skilled and they also belong to a middle or upper social class. On the other hand refugees
and family class immigrants are not as skilled and educated as the latter group (ibid). With these significant differences, these immigrants will experience the labor market integration in a different way.

**Labor Market Integration**

The concept “Integration” when used in respect to immigrants could mean different things from different perspectives. Lemaitre (2007) notes that at one end of the spectrum one can explain integration as a notion of social and economic intersection between native born and immigrants which can be accessed by some statistical measures. This statistic measures include among other things the employment / population ratio, unemployment rate, average earnings, home ownership, balloting behaviour, birth rates, involvement in organizations, community and school achievement (ibid). At the other end of the spectrum the concept “integration” is seen as a much broader and wider notion in accordance with assimilation, i.e. tolerance of, and conduct in conformity with, host country beliefs and values, including peculiarity of social and economic outcomes (ibid).

With this study I will use the term integration to explain how immigrants are able to access and settle into the labor market in terms of using their gender, work experience, education credentials and other human factors. This term is used to cover the process involved in immigrants’ effort to get financial and economic stability in Sweden. In this research, the concept of integration and labor market will be used together since my focus is on the integration of immigrants into the labor market. Pointing that out, I will like to explain briefly what the term “labor market integration” means in this context. Labor market integration is explained by Tastsoglou and Preston (2012) as a process of accessing employment proportionate to one’s educational credentials and working experiences. Siding with Tastsoglou and Preston, I will be applying this term as explained by them but will take gender also into consideration. I will consider gender in the labor market integration because as stated earlier labor market integration issues cannot be treated homogeneously. Thus I define labor market integration as being able to access the labor market based on one’s educational credentials and working experiences.

Driedger (1996) noted that, of all the integration theories that has evolved over the years some still ignore gender. Ignoring gender make them assume that the problem faced by the immigrant’s men are universal. This assumption may be wrong since a recent intersectional case
study by Coral del Río and Alonso-Villar (2012), Tastsoglou and Preston (2012), Heilbrunn et al (2010) shows that women immigrants face a double segregation in the labor market since not only do their activities tend to be more feminized than that of native women, but they also engage in more segregated activities than immigrant men. This is why I will like to consider gender as a separate variable when using the concept labor market integration therefore treating their experiences differently. The intersection of immigrant’s gender as a woman with other human endowment may produce a different result from men.
THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework provided here is to serve as a guide in explaining the finding of this research.

Many theories have evolved in explaining why people migrate and how they integrate into their host countries. Among immigration theories are the neoclassical (Ravenstein 1885; 1889), push and pull (Lee 1966), dual labor market (Piore 1979) and many others. On the other hand, one of the theories that is used in explaining how immigrants integrate or do not integrate in their host country is the human capital theory. In this thesis I will be using the human capital theory, discrimination and intersectionality as a guide in explaining the research findings.

The neoclassical theory was the first theory developed by geographer and migration scholar Ravenstein (1885; 1889) to understand why people migrate. It is used on both macro and micro level. According to this theory, migration is compelled by geographical differences in labor supply and demand and the resulting differentials in wages between labor-rich versus capital-rich countries making the central argument of the neoclassical approach on the macro-level wages (Kurekova, 2011).

Human capital theory

On the micro-level, Sjaadstad (1962) and Zimmermann and Bauer (1999) pointed out that the neoclassical theory is nourished by the human capital theory by integrating the socio-demographic features of the individual as a significant factor of migration and integration. The human capital theory states that human beings play important roles in migrating and integrating into the labor market with their human capital endowment. Haas (2008) and Kurekova (2011) agree on the fact that personal endowments such as skills, education, age, marital status, gender, occupation, and labor and physical abilities are fundamental “capitals” that boost economic production and strongly affect who migrates and who does not. In the same way this capital endowment strongly affects who integrates into the labor market and who does not. One interesting thing pointed out by Haas and Kurekova is that people are different in terms of personal skills, knowledge, physical abilities, age, gender, sex, and so on, therefore people experience post migration differently.

In this thesis I will be using the human capital theory to explain how immigrants integrate or not in the Swedish labor market. I will use this theory because as argued by Nee et al. (1994) the
human capital theory clarifies the labor market disadvantages of immigrants which include education, gender, experience etc. Following this theory, limited capital endowment limits the employment opportunities in the labor market for immigrants. While using this theory I will bear in mind that having good capital endowment does not always help immigrants to integrate into the mainstream economy. A research conducted by Kogan (2007) show that high level educated immigrants in Germany are still finding it difficult in finding suitable job positions. Also, Eckstein and Cohen-Goldner (2002) found that experience and education imported by immigrants from their countries of origin have nearly no benefit for high-skilled immigrants in the Israeli labor market. Immigrants therefore accept work positions that are not adequate or equivalent to the knowledge and work experience they possess (Weiss et al. 2003).

Behtoui (2004) stated that the established human capital indicators, such education credentials, experience, and seniority are not adequate to explain the difference in labor market. For example the earnings differential that exist between men and women or immigrants and native workers cannot be explain by the human capital indicators (ibid). To explain the earning differentials between immigrants and natives, Behtoui pointed out that, the human capital was extended to make a distinction between the educational credential of men and women that is whether it was acquired abroad or in the country in question in this case Sweden.

**Discrimination**

Aside the human capital factors, Behtoui (2004) explains that discrimination is seen as an explanation for a substandard or lower labor-market position of ethnic minorities who are mostly immigrants in Sweden. This is due to the fact that they are immigrants in Sweden who have educational qualification from Sweden yet find it difficult to get a job. In this case one cannot say that this immigrants are being excluded from the labor market due to human capital factors but clearly a discrimination due to one’s nationality. Two models have evolved when talking about issues of discrimination against immigrants in the labor market. One of the discrimination model is the *Taste Model* which was developed by Becker (1957). In this taste model, discrimination in the labor market against immigrants is based on the fact that employers will rather sacrifice making profit than to employ an immigrant at their work places. This model explains the reason why there are many incentives for employers to employ immigrants yet most immigrants stay unemployed. According to 2013/2014 brief release by Arbetsförmedlingen,
example of such incentives is that, an employer who employ immigrant is only supposed to pay half of the immigrant’s salary and Arbetsförmedlingen pays the rest. Arbetsförmedlingen is the Swedish Public Employment Services that assists jobseekers to find a job. According to them, this initiative is to encourage employers to employ immigrants yet some employers will rather lose this profit than to employ an immigrant.

The second discrimination model is called the statistical model. Aigner and Cain (1977) explained that in this model, employers get the wrong perception about the productivities of the individual. It was also pointed out by Arrow (1972) that this model leads to the labor market balance where a stereotyped perceive productivity about a group is used by the employer. For example immigrants might be seen as having a foreign knowledge therefore may not be able to match the local countries productivity standard. Further as given by Arrow, black and whites may be judged differently when it comes to their productivity level therefore causing a discrimination against the minority group.

Another model of discrimination is the social capital model. Job matching is one of the important ways for the unemployed to get a job and Granovetter (1995) mentioned that the largest job-matching channel is the social networks. Most jobs that are advertised are sometimes done to fulfil maybe a particular rule on the need for a company to advertise a job. This can be confirmed by a Swedish study conducted by Okeke (2001) revealing that in the years 1990-1998, 20 to 26 per cent of newly employed people got their jobs through a formal job finding methods. This formal job finding methods include newspapers, employment agencies and advertise ment on formal public home pages. On the other hand about 65 percent of newly employed got their job through an informal channels as proven by Ekström’s (2001) through her study of the recruitment behavior of the Swedish employers. Personal relationship between immigrants and natives could be difficult because as argued by Behtoui (2004), personal relationship is mostly homogeneous by class, race and ethnicity therefore making the informal recruitment of employees difficult for immigrants leading to prejudice in the labor market. Using this model, I am not disputing the fact that some immigrants may have personal networks with employers which can assist them integrate into the labor market. I am rather contemplating on how many immigrants may have this personal relationship with potential employers. Relaying on Behtoui (2004) argument about personal relationship being homogeneous, one could therefore argue that
social networks are not distributed evenly among the job seekers (immigrants and natives) leading to the blockage of the minorities group’s chances of getting a job. One can therefore expect that the three discrimination models will be relevant in explaining some of the findings of this thesis. The human capital factors and the discrimination as discussed above interacts with each other, therefore immigrants with multiple grounds of discrimination will experience the labor market differently from others. I there present intersectionality as a guide in explaining these aspects of the research findings.

**Intersectionality**

From an epistemological perspective, Yuval Davis (2011) describes intersectionality as a development of a feminist standpoint theory that in various ways is critical in accounting for differences in the social positioning of people caused by oppression, domination or discrimination and challenging “the god-trick of seeing everything from nowhere” (Haraway 1991:189). The multidimensional term was coined by Kimberle Crenshaw (1989) who was specialized in race and gender. Crenshaw introduced the term to examine how one social difference intersects with the others to create multiple discrimination/identity. For example Crenshaw (1991) uses this concept to understand her law cases that involve discrimination on the grounds of two or more social differences. She also stressed that the experiences of black women are more powerful than their race and sex therefore feminist need to take intersection into account in order to be able to properly and adequately address the subordination of black women. In Crenshaw (1991), she illustrate some of the situations where women are oppressed on an intersectional grounds, for example undocumented immigrant’s women in the United States who suffer domestic violence in the hands of their husbands. Interestingly Crenshaw (1991) also emphasizes on the fact that immigrants women who seek shelter are mostly turn away due to the lack of bilingual personnel and resources. This are some example given by Crenshaw to show how patterns of subordination intersect to create the domestic violence experience for immigrant women in the United States. Furthermore Crenshaw made it clear that these patterns of subornation do not need to be created intentionally but if there is an existing subordination and another is imposed, it interacts with each other to create disempowerment.

In her discussion on black feminism, Patricia Hill Collins reintroduced intersectionality in 1990 and made it more applicable to all women instead of only African Americans. Collins argued that
the causes of oppressions are not only interrelated but they are bandaged together and influenced by the intersectional system such as race, class, gender and nationality (Collins 2000). Unlike Collins and Crenshaw who focus intersectional analysis on black and ethnic minority women or at least to the marginalized people in society, Yuval Davis explains that for her intersectionality should be used to explain social stratification as a whole instead of focusing the intersectional theory on a specific group.

Since the coining of this concept by the USA-based law professor (Crenshaw), it has been used by many feminist in different ways and from different perspectives. The term has become popular among many interdisciplinary fields of studies especially gender studies. Nina Lykke highlights the strength of a wide definition of intersectionality, one that covers many and different feminist theorist’s definitions, notwithstanding that they may have other disagreements (2010). They have been many development from this concept as well. For example Yuval-Davis (2011), states that doing intersectional analyses should not only take the marginalized into consideration but should also take into consideration all members of society.

I acknowledge the various debates surrounding the term intersectionality. As noted by Kathy Davis “some suggest that intersectionality is a theory, others regard it as a concept or heuristic device, and still others see it as a reading strategy for doing feminist analysis” (2008:68). Based on this debate Crenshaw (1991) raised concern about whether intersectionality should be conceptualized as a cross road or as an axes of difference as noted by Yuval-Davis (2006). Despite the dilemma surrounding intersectionality I agree with Kathy Davis (2008: 69) who argues that the vagueness and open-endedness of ‘intersectionality’ may be the very secret to its success. In my understanding of Davis’s argument the open endlessness of this term give us the chance as researchers to twist it as a theory or a concept depending on what we are working on and from what perspective. I therefore understand Intersectionality in this thesis broadly and that can be utilized to explain the social status of a person in a society or a community for that matter the issues of immigrants in the Swedish labor market. I will therefore look at gender and other human endowment as different yarns interlacing with one another to complicate the integration of immigrants.

Having explained human capital theory, discrimination and intersectionality, highlighting their relation could prove important moving forward in this thesis and thus I will discuss briefly the
connections between them. Human capital theory and discrimination as explained earlier causes hardship and difficulty in immigrant’s labor market integration. This is to say that an immigrant could experience difficulty in the labor market based on his or her human endowment factors such as education, gender, gender roles, language and experience. On the other hand hardship in immigrant’s labor market integration could be based on prejudice and discrimination, for example how vacancies are occupied at work places could be biased toward natives. The introduction of the theory of intersectionality is to explain that one can experience hardship in the labor market when human factors and the ways in which vacancies are occupied (discrimination) intersect. To be precise, the theory of intersectionality was introduce to discuss how some immigrants may experience labor market harshly based the entanglement of multiple factors which may include human endowment factors and discrimination. With this synthesis, I will argue that, analyzing the dynamics of labor market integration by immigrants could benefit from the synergistic and holistic explanatory power given by the multiple intersectional factors influencing integration.
METHODOLOGY

Ontological and Epistemological Reflection

In social research, ontology is defined as the science of being and the nature of reality (Tuli 2011, Bryman 2012). Ontology questions if there is a reality that does not depend on our knowledge of it or our influence (ibid). On the other hand, Bryman (2012) and Lykke (2010) defines epistemology as a term that pertain to how scientific knowledge is produced through various criteria and what could be regarded as knowledge in a particular field of study. As noted by David and Sutton (2004), it is relevant to write the ontological and epistemological positions on which a research is based because it is a vital facet of a research process. Furthermore, ontological and epistemological distinction alter the researcher to reveal how their sensing of human nature impact on the process they consciously embrace to disclose social verities (ibid). Epistemology position on the other hand, helps a researcher to know the relationship between her/him (the researcher) and what is known, how the researcher knows what she/he knows and how that reckons as knowledge (Tuli, 2011). This being said, Barad (1996) explained that the term ontology cannot be separated from epistemology, which lead to the conception of the term onto-epistemology by Barad which I will use in this thesis.

Bracken and Tuli discussed that, there are two opposite positions which have emerged in ontological differentiation in social research, namely constructionism and objectivism (2010; 2011) while Harding (1986) made three classifications of epistemological position in feminist studies namely; feminist standpoint epistemology, feminist empiricism and postmodern feminist epistemology, Lykke also adds postconstructionism as a fourth epistemological position (see discussions on the various epistemological position in Lykke 2010:126-134). Neuman and Bryman explains that objectivism ontology adjudges that there is a reality that is independent of our knowledge and influence whiles constructionism holds that reality is the intersections of constructed social processes and actors (2006; 2012).

Ontologically, I position my thesis within constructionism while epistemologically, it is positioned within the feminist standpoint. Feminist standpoint theorist argue that women who have access to changing the hegemonic gender norms in our societies are the peculiar group of women who are marginalized and oppressed based on intersectional factors (Lykke 2010). Dorothy Smith being a pioneer of feminist standpoint disregarded how social knowledge is
produced from top to down but instead invented an alternative where social knowledge can be produced using women experience as a point of departure (1987). I interpret this alternative by Smith as making women’s everyday life, contributions, work, perspectives and experiences more visible. Women have made many contributions to society and the world as a whole, women have their unique embodied experiences that cannot be compared to the experiences of men making it important to be critically looked at. Siding with Butler (1990), I problematize constructed fixed gender models of men and women by the society. Nevertheless I also acknowledge that these fixed gender categories exist and must be tackled in order to eliminate gender biases that exist in our societies instead of avoiding them.

I position my thesis within this onto-epistem-ology (constructionism and feminist standpoint) position because as a feminist I understand that many things in this world are constructed based on the intersections of different factors, and the interaction between people. I therefore argue that, the phenomena of immigrants and their experiences are based on the societies constructed knowledge of immigrants. Furthermore the phenomena of migration studies has been created in such a way that men are the universal norm serving as the top evidence of migration experience whiles mostly ignoring women’s perspectives and experiences. The basic argument for this thesis as is the case of feminist standpoint theorist is to change how social knowledge is produced. I argued that migration studies should not consider the experience of immigrant men as the top evidence of migration experiences but women’s perspective must also be considered based on their embodied experiences. Harding (1991) argued that feminist standpoint epistemology also reflects on the position of the knower and the context in which the researcher is located as I have done throughout this thesis.

**Introduction to the methodological approach**

This thesis was conducted as a qualitative research and this type of research has been conducted by many researchers over the years. Qualitative research is described by Hancock et al (2002), Quinn & Cochran (2002) as a social enquiry that helps researchers to understand the world we inhabit and why things are the way they are. That is to say that this method of enquiry helps as to understand the representation and the making sense of peoples experiences in the world they live in (Bryman 2001). As pointed out by Atkinson et al (2008), the term qualitative research could be seen as an umbrella term under which different kind of methods can be discovered. Hancock
et al (2002) mentioned some methods that one could use to collect data when conducting a qualitative research. They mentioned case study, grounded theory, phenomenology and ethnography as examples under a qualitative research. The four methods listed have been used by different researchers in gathering empirical data depending on what a researchers aim and questions are. In this thesis I used a type of ethnographic method called reflexive ethnography.

Reflexive ethnography has its background in anthropology and is one of the methods of enquiry used to learn about the “broad cultural-sharing behavior of individuals or groups” (Creswell 2013: 177) whiles the researcher shares his or her experiences. That is to say that the people that the researcher is studying have something in common with the researcher in the parameter of culture, religion, tribe and shared experiences (Hancock et al 2002). Davies defines reflexivity as “turning back on oneself, a process of self-reference” (2008: 4). As researchers we tell our stories through other people and this makes a researcher aware of her/his connection to the research situation because as explained by Davies all researchers are to some degree connected to the subjects they are studying (2008). Furthermore, Davies mentioned that a researcher cannot research a subject or a situation to which they are total strangers or have no relation at all. I therefore showed my connection to the subject of study by reflecting on my experiences as I discussed the experiences of my participants.

Interviews, participant observation and documentation reading could be counted as one of the effective techniques of gathering data under ethnographic method (Hancock et al 2002; Creswell 2009). Interviews according to Hancock et al (2002) could be both formal and informal. Creswell also stressed that public document in form of minutes, brief or newspapers could be relevant to use whiles on the other hand private documents such as diaries, journals and letters are also worth using.

In this thesis, I conducted interviews to collect my empirical data and supported it with public documents and my personal experience. Semi-structured interviews were used as a guide to assist me in asking my participants questions related to the subject being discussed. Conducting interviews only with immigrants could give a bias view to this research; I therefore read documents regarding integration policies for immigrants in Sweden and also further read about the activities organized by the responsible organizations to implement these policies. With a bias view, I mean I did not want to listen to only the stories of the immigrants since the society they
live in contributes a lot to their labor market integration in terms of policies and policies implementation.

Interviews as Quinn and Cochran (2002) put it could relate to everyday conversation but this time it is to some extend geared towards the kind of data the researcher wants. They further stated that interviews could also differ from everyday conversation based on the fact that the researcher needs to conduct them in an in-depth manner to ensure its validity and reliability. On the other hand, as researchers we do not want to look so serious during the interviews since this may put fear in our interviewees. Hancock et al (2002) cautioned researchers that qualitative interviews should be informal in order to make the interviewees feel more like indulging in a conversation than a formal or strict questions and answers situation. They clearly noted that being able to make qualitative interviews formal and yet still getting valid and reliable information comes with rigorous preparation. The research findings should reflect what the researcher set out to answer but not the bias opinion of the researcher (Quinn and Cochran 2002). This is one of the reasons why I used semi structured interviews to keep me focused on my research aims and questions.

With this knowledge about qualitative research, I see it as one of the effective methodologies that I can use to execute my thesis compared to a quantitative method. This is because I am studying the integration of immigrants into the Swedish labor market; a phenomenon which is better addressed using a qualitative method as described by Hancock et al (2002), Quinn & Cochran (2002). There are qualities of qualitative research which I see as very relevant and a free way of collecting data yet producing valid information. Creswell (2013: 175) mention some characteristics of qualitative research to be: (a) conducting research in the field leading to having a direct interaction with the people being studied in their context, (b) data being collected by researchers themselves by analyzing documents, observation or interviewing participants, (c) multiple sources of data are preferred over a single source which requires the researcher to reexamine all data, make it meaningful and coordinate it into groups or themes that cut across all sources, (d) the focus is on learning the meaning participants hold rather than the meaning brought in by the researcher.

Despite these characteristics, I am also aware of the common criticisms leveled against qualitative research methodology. The common criticism as named by Quinn & Cochran (2002:
4) include (a) samples are small and not necessarily representative of the broader population, so it is difficult to know how far we can generalize the results (b) the findings lack rigor (c) it is difficult point out to what extent the researchers opinion influence the findings. I acknowledge that this criticism may be true to some extent and I have taken measures to reduce the potential influence of these limitations. As stated in my research scope, I do not plan to generalize the findings from Linköping to the entire Sweden but they could be used as a base from which similarities can be found for other regions. As argued by Bryman (2012), the results of a qualitative study cannot be directly generalized for an entire population because the interviewees of a qualitative study are not intended to represent an entire population. Bryman (2012) however elaborates that even though results cannot be generalized for an entire population, the theories used in explaining the results can be generalized.

I also disagree with the fact that qualitative research is being criticized for lacking rigor. Hancock et al (2002) argues that qualitative research can have valid and authentic findings if a researcher plans carefully and have good skills of conducting the interview. Siding with them, I believe that I could attain rigorous information when doing qualitative research by the various preparations I put in place to collect my information. In order to manage some of these criticisms, I triangulate my findings by selecting different interviewees from different countries and supporting my findings with documentation reading from different sources.

**Materials**

As mentioned earlier, I will be analyzing the integration of immigrants in the Swedish labor market focusing both on immigrants, state integration policies and the implementers of the polices and strategies. Though my focus is on immigrants in Linköping, I will not only limit the study to their views and their interview results for analysis since this may give a bias result of the research. This immigrants lives in a society that has policies and strategies in place to help them integrate into the labor market and the society as a whole, I will therefore close read some Sweden integrational policies and strategies documents for immigrants, how the various organizations implements this policies over the years and how successful they have been. I interviewed some selected immigrants who shared their experiences on how they have been integrated or not integrated into the Swedish labor market and how this policies and activities have helped or not helped them. I conducted seven face to face interviews. The participants
consist of four women and three men. The interviews lasted for from 1 and half hours to 2 hours, depending on how much information the interviewee provide per question.

In selecting the interviewees some criterion were considered. First, all the interviewees selected have a Swedish working permit meaning these immigrants have the right to work in Sweden. Also, academic qualification and work experience were taken into consideration and all the interviewees have at least an undergraduate university degree since this would contribute to their labor market integration bearing in mind that it may not make it any easier. In addition, interviewees have lived in Sweden for a minimum of two years, this minimum number of years would have given these immigrants the chance to have attempted finding jobs in the labor market. Furthermore for the purpose of diversity immigrants from different countries were selected. Selected immigrants for this research cut across all classes of immigrants, both unemployed and employed, male and female immigrants. I did not want to focus only on the difficulty immigrant’s face when they are accessing the labor but also their integration experience after finding a job. The above criterion have influenced the selection of interviewees.

The materials for the documentation reading were retrieved from both primary and secondary sources. I used seven documents to answer both the sub-questions. The document are Carl-Ulrik Schierup and Aleksandra ålund (2011), migration policy.org (2006), Charles Westin (2000), Erik Bergqvist (2011), Fact Sheet Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality (2009), Georges Lemaître (2007) and Arbetsförmedlingen in brief 2013/2014. These documents are both academic and governmental reports that were close read.

Aside interviews and documentation reading, I also reflected on my personal experiences as an immigrants to provide some relevant insights to the information. I coordinated my personal experiences with the experiences of the interviewees which is very important for me. Using my experience also served as another way of triangulating the interviews and contributing to the validity and reliability of the empirical information.

Finally, the main research questions which were based mainly on the interviews were analyzed using a thematic approach. Thematic analysis is a way of analyzing empirical data by organizing the data into common or major themes (Quinn & Cochran 2002). I first of all annotated my interview transcripts which helped me in making preliminary observations. I then decided to
group the interviews under major themes based on differences and similarities, and finally analyzed them applying the various theories.

**Evaluation of Sources, Materials and Method**

As mentioned earlier interviews were conducted using selected immigrants. Some of this immigrants are my friends others are not. I have seven interviewees among them one is a friend but the others are not. Some of the interviewees are immigrants from my Swedish class but are not close friends.

Reflecting on the interviews, interviewing my friend and classmates may have some influence on the result but it also gave me a better access to information. Also interviewees often rely on their memory during interviews which could influence their answers but in order to minimize the risk of misinformation, the interview guide that I used was sent to all the interviewees given them time to think about the questions. I also explained to them that the interview will be more of a discussion so they can relax and talk. Furthermore the interviews after transcription were sent back to the interviewees for validation. Not all the interviewees were interested in the validation but others were really glad to cross check their information. Choosing immigrants from all the class/groups of immigrants also nourished my data and has given a diverse perspective on the topic.

The document as mentioned before are from different sources and are made up of both online document and pdfs. I choose to close read this documents because the authors have summarized the policies and the activities of the labor market integration which assisted me to answer my two sub questions. I decided to use this document because almost all the Swedish policy document I came across were written in Swedish which I had difficulty to access. I will therefore like to state clearly that this document are not the original Swedish integration policy document.

Some of this document were found using the snow ball approach, snowball sampling is a technique for gathering research documents by using the original actors to find others (Bryman 2012). Reflecting on the snowball approach, it may have some implications on my information based on which literature I started reading but triangulation with different academic databases and reading different articles on the theories were taken to manage these implications. Furthermore some of the used documents could be influenced by subjective writings by the authors. Also during reading I realized that they were conflicting information in some of the
documents. This implication could have affected the results nonetheless steps such as using information that most of the authors have in common were taken to manage these implications. Also different sources were used during the documentation studies to increase the accuracy of the information.

Finally, reflecting on using my personal experience as source for information could have some implication because I may sometimes overreact to things since this is my thesis and I am expressing myself but the interviews were used to cross check my story to make sure I am not caught up in emotions that will prevent objective consideration of the questions under discussion.

Gathering the empirical data
As aforementioned, ethnographic i.e. qualitative interviews and documentation studies was used for gathering the empirical data. The search for document was done using key words in searching for books and snowball approach in finding my articles and journals. I read the abstract and summaries of books and articles in order to know their relevance to my topic before reading into details. I collated these literatures by placing them in a table side by side which aided me to map out arguments, identify gaps, similarities and differences.

In gathering the interview data, I met face to face with participants in a very quiet place where I can record the interviews which were conducted in English. I used a recorder to record all the interviews which were later transcribed and analyzed. The interviews were discussed around the semi-structured guide and it was very relaxed. The interview discussions revolved around the educational backgrounds and working experiences of the participants. The integrational activities that they have been involved in and what has been their experience so far in terms of accessing the labor market were also discussed. Detailed information on the interview questions has been provided in the appendix.

Ethical Consideration
As a researcher it is very important to write an ethical appraisal as a respect to my participants. Tom Beauchamp and Jim Childress (1983) cited in Quinn & Cochran (2002:7) note that, the rationale behind writing ethical consideration is “(a) autonomy; respect the rights of the individual (b) beneficience; doing good (c) non-maleficence; not doing harm and (d)justice; particularly equity”. Siding with Beauchamp and Jim Childress I will like to write an ethical appraisal for my participants and on the documents I used.
Since I decided to conduct interviews for this studies, I had to plan which people to select as interviewees. After careful planning, I sent a message to the selected immigrants asking them if they would like to grant me an interview for this project. Some accepted and some were not interested which worked well with me because I could not force anyone to participate. Those that accepted were sent a short description about the project and were given the time to read and finally decide if they still want to participate or not. Fortunately none of them changed their mind since they found the project interesting and were willing to participate. After I have finished preparing the interview guide, a copy was sent out to the participants to check if they are comfortable with the questions that will guide the interview and I got positive response from all the participants. I also explained to them that I will be recording the interviews but if anyone is uncomfortable with that process, I can take notes instead. All the participants were comfortable with me recording so I recorded all the interviews.

The interviews were transcribed and sent back to the interviewees, some in person others through an email for them to validate it before further analyses. Some were interested in the validation others were not. On the other hand, all the documents that were close read were well referenced to the right owners and the various web sites have been acknowledged.
PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

In this chapter, I will present the findings from this thesis under the research questions posed at the beginning. I will first present the descriptive findings which correspond to my two sub-questions laying a foundation for answering my two main research questions in the analysis and discussion chapter.

Integration policies

What are the Swedish integration policies and strategies for the integration of immigrants into the Swedish labor market?

In order to get a better understanding of how integration policies are today, I find it important to look at how integration policies have evolved over time in Sweden. I will start this trace from the mid-50s when integration policies were intertwined with immigration policies. I am using seven sources as mentioned earlier in the material section for this question and these sources summarize the integration policies in general which include labor market integration policies.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Sweden had no functional policies to integrate immigrants into the conventional society based on the assumption that immigrants who came from the Scandinavian countries will automatically ingest the Swedish culture because they have similar culture (Migrationpolicy.org 2006). This is not to say that they were no immigrants from outside Scandinavian countries but the majority of immigrants during this period were from neighboring countries such as Denmark and Finland (ibid; Westin 2000). However in the 1960s and 1970s, the underlying features for the Swedish integration policies were articulated. This underlying features were ameliorated and developed based on principled, liberal multicultural citizenship and this was endorsed by the Swedish parliament in 1975 due to the necessity to address the issue of labor migrants who mainly migrated from Southern Europe (Schierup and Ålund 2011; Bergqvist 2011; Westin 2000). The basic idea of this immigration policy rested on three main objectives: “equality, freedom of choice and partnership” (Bergqvist 2011: 5). Equality in the objectives of the integration policy meant that immigrants should have equal living conditions as the Swedish ethnic born and eliminate the guest worker system (ibid). This also gave immigrants the right to bring their families into Sweden without any questioning. Freedom of choice made it possible for immigrants to maintain their own culture or chose their identity (ibid). This was stated in the choice destination where linguistic minorities residing in Sweden
are given the opportunity to choose what degree of their culture they wanted to maintain and develop the original culture and linguistic identity. *Partnership* was based on tolerance and solidarity between the different immigrant groups and Swedes, immigrants were seen as partners for politicians to develop the society (ibid).

Immigration policies were directed at immigrants and their children, that is, first and second generation immigrants and they had special measures to compensate the inadequacy of general policy in this area. An important basic idea at that time was that those who immigrated to Sweden were expected to return to their home countries after some time. Therefore, encouraging immigrants to retain their traditions and culture was seen as a relief for them once they returned to their homeland (Bergqvist 2011). Bergqvist further explained that, a way of categorizing people as "Swedes" and "immigrants" was by simply differentiating them through their ethnic origin. This became a general idea when, for example, unemployment among immigrants was higher than that of the Swedes. Some immigrants' previous education was not taken into account when they applied for jobs, neither was which sector they applied for jobs or economic situation (Bergqvist 2011; Westin 2000). Instead of examining the need for labor based on educational and professional background, attention was rather given to the individual's ethnic and cultural origin (ibid).

The emergence of immigration policy during the 70s laid the foundation for integration policies. In 1997, there was a bill called Sweden, future and diversity (*Sverige, framtiden och mångfalden*) and out of this bill came the concept of integration and integration policy (Westin 2000; Schierup and Ålund 2011; Bergqvist 2011). In this bill the government had two main points in the preposition. First, the government noted that the composition of the population over the past 40 years had changed drastically because of the increasing immigration to Sweden (ibid). There was therefore the need for changes to be made in the immigration policy with the view that it was not the immigrants who needed to change without any general policy in this area to guide or support them. The second point of the integration policies that emerged from the bill was that, immigrants should now be seen as heterogeneous group instead of a homogenous group and there should be a focus on the individual needs and circumstances (ibid). The government preposition explicitly disposed any stress that was laid on individual rights and means of ethnically or culturally fixed groups. This new policy was conceptualized as toward the entire
Swedish population grounded on the various established institutions in the educational system, labor market, health, culture, housing, and so on (Schierup and Ålund 2011; Migrationpolicy.org 2006).

The government and parliament decided on three main objectives of the new integration policy. The objectives were that everyone who lives in Sweden, irrespective of ethnic and cultural background should have; equal rights, opportunities and responsibilities (Westin 2000; Schierup and Ålund 2011; Bergqvist 2011). Westin and Bergqvist explained that, the government wanted to build a community that was based on diversity and a society that was characterized by mutual respect and tolerance. This implied that all persons regardless of their backgrounds were supposed to be involved in the society and share in its responsibilities. The general policies ensured that, there was no discrimination against any individual for his or her ethnic or cultural background (ibid). Regardless of whether individuals are defined as Swedish, Iraqis or Chinese etc., the result was to refrain from categorizing people as Swedes or immigrants but instead see all individuals’ as members of a society. The starting point for the integration policy is that the general policies create conditions for all people in the society. In addition to this, the government and parliament felt that special measures were relevant for people who are in Sweden for the first time. This measures could be given in order to become self-sufficient and participate in the society (Schierup and Ålund 2011; Bergqvist 2011). Therefore, it was important to distinguish between actions for new arrivals in the general integration policy. To be able to fulfill the above objectives of integration policies they had to work on the society's multicultural and ethnic diversity as the basis of the general policy and its execution at all levels of society and regions (Schierup and Ålund 2011).

In the 2000s, the goals of the Swedish integration policy was still as mentioned before, that anyone living in Sweden should have equal rights, obligations and opportunities irrespective of the persons cultural and ethnic backgrounds (Bergqvist 2011). Between the years 2008-2010, the government focused integration policy on seven key strategic areas namely: “faster introduction for new arrivals, more in work, more entrepreneurs, better results and greater equality in school, better language skills and more adult education opportunities, effective anti-discrimination measures, development of urban districts with extensive social exclusion and common basic values in a society characterized by increasing diversity” (Fact Sheet Ministry of Integration and
Gender Equality 2009: 1). The focus on effective system for the reception and introduction of new arrivals was to assist new immigrants in integration. Employment was also an area that was chosen to work with to bring in more jobs and promote entrepreneurship. For those not working, they wanted to invest in better educational outcomes and equality in schools, with the focus on improving language learning and training opportunities for adults (Bergqvist 2011). Creating the conditions for the new arrivals by working more efficiently against discrimination and to create a common set of values for an increasingly growing diversity in Swedish society were also important elements of the Government's integration efforts in these years (Fact Sheet Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality 2009).

In order to work on each of the seven areas chosen by the government in recent policies to focus on, various policies were developed to assist in these areas. Labor market was one of the areas among the seven and since this thesis is focused on labor market integration, I will not discuss the other areas but rather focus on the policies that were developed for labor market integration.

**Labor Market Integration Policies**

Choosing labor market as one of the area to work on, the government has various policies in place in order to help immigrants integrate. It should be noted that “equality” as framed in the immigration policy with a slogan of *equality, freedom of choice and partnership* was to help immigrants get access to the labor market. The labor market is seen as a substantial spot where immigrants and native born meet to interact with one another and improve their interdependency. In Sweden the workplace is regarded one of the areas that promote and inspires values such as commonality and independence dignity (Bergqvist 2011). In spite of the equality catchword and the attempt by the government, it has been challenging to equalize the labor market for immigrants and natives born leading to the surfacing of racial and ethical discrimination at various workplaces (ibid).

Aside from this equality scheme, other policies have emerged. Among others is the “introduction dialogue for immigrant” (Fact Sheet Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality 2009: 2). This policy laid emphasis on the fact that as soon as a residence permit has been granted to new immigrants, they obtain the necessary information on where in Sweden there is a demand for the skills that they have or think they could acquire. The dialogue focuses on better pairing between
the skills of the individual, the provider of courses and the needs of the labor market. The dialogue policy is to lead to a plan for employment, courses, and other initiatives (ibid).

Also lack of networks is one of the factors hampering the introduction of newly arrived immigrants in Sweden (Arbetsförmedlingen in brief 2013/2014). The government has developed a mentorship program which is a proven method for skills development and creating networks. The government therefore started a mentorship strategy, where new arrivals are matched with mentors on the basis of their occupation and education. On the other hand, many new arrivals choose to settle in a small number of municipalities in the metropolitan regions (Lemaître 2007; Fact Sheet Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality 2009). Nonetheless, there are other municipalities where good conditions for education and employment exist. The government inducted a strategy to make it easier and to support re-settlement from municipalities receiving many immigrants to municipalities receiving fewer immigrants and where there is access to a good labor market The basic precede is that the individual is free to choose his or her place of residence, but is given freedom of choice and the ability to access introduction activities that can lead to employment, sufficient income to support himself or herself and a good quality of life (Fact Sheet Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality 2009).

In addition, a policy was introduced by the government which states that all new arrivals in Sweden are entitled to basic education in the Swedish language, but the standards of teaching vary substantially (Bergqvist 2011; Arbetsförmedlingen in brief 2013/2014). The objectives of teaching Swedish For Immigrants were therefore given a concrete form since 2009 (ibid). The government introduced the Swedish national language test which was compulsory for all students studying the language and the government allocates special funds to improve the skills of the teachers (ibid). The performance-based bonus was also introduced for newly arrived immigrants who complete their studies in Swedish For Immigrants with a pass grade within a year (Arbetsförmedlingen in brief 2013/2014). This was to examine if monetary inducement for participants may facilitate faster learning of the Swedish language, thereby increasing their chances of labor market integration (Bergqvist 2011; Arbetsförmedlingen in brief 2013/2014).

Just as the Swedish language, access to vocational training is important to be able to access the Swedish labor market. The ability for immigrants to improve their previous training or vocational experience as an adult may be very important for enabling immigrants to obtain a job.
The Government in 2009 decided to radically increase the number of places in vocational courses for adults at upper secondary school and post-secondary school level (Bergqvist 2011; Lemaître 2007). Many immigrants have sound vocational experiences that are required in the Swedish labor market. A validation procedure will enable individuals to find out whether and how their skills should be supplemented to make it easier for them to be employed. Validation can also make it easier for an employer to assess the skills of an applicant. The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education has been given national responsibility for validation of foreign vocational skills (Fact Sheet Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality 2009).

Also many universities and other institutions of higher education organize supplementary courses for people with completed foreign qualifications at academic level. In the Government Bill for 2009, funds were allocated to reinforce this work in 2009–2011 (Fact Sheet Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality 2009). Extra funds, which are almost twice the originally allocated, are primarily intended for more supplementary courses for qualified people in health and medical care, and for teachers. Sweden is short of qualified staff in the health care and medical services. This is why the government initiated a new, legally secure and effective procedure for recognizing health and medical care qualifications from other countries (ibid).

**Implementation of policies**

*What are the activities of organizations that implement policies and strategies in helping the integration of immigrants in the Swedish labor market?*

The labor market policies presented above are decided at the national level but organizations in the municipalities are responsible for the implementation of these policies. I will therefore answer the question of the activities that are put in place by the various organizations to implement the aforementioned policies. As mentioned earlier the same sources used to answer the first sub question will be used here as well. This part will focus on two main organizations involved in the implementation of labor market integration policies. These organizations are the Linköping municipality and Arbetsförmedlingen.

**Activities of Linköping Municipality**

Linköping Municipality is responsible for Swedish For Immigrants (SFI) and other educational trainings. SFI is a language training with educational objectives, and is considered an important
tool for integration which is part of the state's integration policy. Knowledge of the Swedish language is seen as an important tool in the ranks to become integrated and self-sufficient. For several decades there has been an awareness of the importance of the language to immigrants for them to be established and integrated into the society (Bergqvist 2011; Lemaître 2007). Although the Swedish For Immigrants (SFI) has been in existence since the mid-60s and has been transformed, during this time it has been a free opportunity to learn the Swedish language (ibid: 2011). Thus, it has for a long time had high ambitions that there should be support for integration and establishment in the Swedish society. SFI began in 1973 when a law was passed that gave foreign newly immigrated workers the right to be able to take part in the Swedish language for 240 hours (Bergqvist 2011). Then, Swedish teaching could be done in several different places, such as at refugee centers, colleges and in municipal adult education. During the 1980s, the various approaches of teaching were assessed through various surveys. It was then decided that as of July 1, 1986 SFI teaching would be divided into a basic Swedish tuition and a secondary education (ibid). The basic education would be the responsibility of the municipalities and the teaching of undergraduate courses would cover two years. Postgraduate courses would be offered in adult education associations and labor market training (ibid).

In the 1990s, there was an evaluation of the training which criticized the countless flaws in the system of teaching the language (Bergqvist 2011; Lemaître 2007). Due to this criticisms the government in the spring 1990, introduced a bill (1989/90: 102) that would reform the Swedish teaching for immigrants (ibid). Lemaître explains that, the basic argument for this change was that the division that existed in the teaching of basic SFI and the secondary SFI did not work.

Therefore the responsible for teaching both basic and secondary SFI was given to the municipality (Bergqvist 2011). The municipalities are responsible for teaching, and teaching begins within three months after an immigrant has applied to SFI. Bergqvist explained that, the benchmark for teaching time is 525 hours but this may be adjusted more or less depending on the individual needs. Within the framework of four weeks, teaching covers the average of 15 hours per week which may be reduced if a participant wants it and is in line with the aims of the education (ibid). The decision of time in the education (number of hours) was introduced in 2007 and the objective of this was to raise purposiveness and create a common minimum standards for the municipalities of how teaching should be conducted (Bergqvist 2011; Lemaître 2007). In
addition, instruction may be supplemented by their self-study, work, internships, other studies and/or rehabilitation (Bergqvist 2011).

From 2002, the language class has been divided into four modules, A, B, C and D, where D-course corresponds to the end of the SFI level (Bergqvist 2011). These modules are in turn divided into three different pathways, each of which consists of two courses. The idea is that no matter which pathway a person takes, they should be able to study at the D level since the D level certifies that a person has completed SFI (ibid). The purpose of this is to customize the goals and pace of study to what best suits the individual’s circumstances. By 2007 this was clarified further in the Education Act that the municipalities should work with the Employment Service for the individual to be given the opportunity to practically operate the Swedish language "[...] in the workplace and combine SFI with work experience programs, validation and trainings" (ibid:20). Statistics from the language school reveals that, it was the Swedish municipalities that had arranged the SFI trainings and was usually the municipalities who accounted for this training and not another provider (ibid). However, it became more common to any other provider than the municipality to deliver the training. In 2009, it was reported that 32% out of all those who started SFI depend on another organizer such as the Red Cross, self-organized small groups to read and speak than the municipalities SFI (ibid).

Since 2013 till date the SFI modules as mentioned above are made flexible for immigrants in order for them to combine it with work (Bergqvist 2011; Lemaître 2007). A student can decide to be on the distance course where he/she can take the course from home, work or where ever they are or a student can decide to take the class by meeting the teachers face to face. The municipalities do not only organize the Swedish language but also register students for other courses such as English, mathematics, religion, social studies etc. depending on the student preference (Arbetsförmedlingen in brief 2013/2014; Bergqvist 2011). This is to help the student improve on their foreign credentials or give knowledge to students who have no educational background. At the end of each module (A, B, C, D) the student takes a national exams and when the student passes he or she moves to the next level. If the student is already at the module D and passes the national exams he/she finishes SFI and moves to Swedish as a second language (SAS) which is also divided into various module namely SAS grund (basic), SAS 1, SAS 2 and SAS 3. These modules also come with various exams that certify that one has completed the module. At
the end of SAS 3, it is assumed that the student can speak, read and write Swedish and therefore
should be able to get a job or take extra courses in Swedish (ibid).

In order to find a job one has to do that on his/her own or contact the Swedish public
employment agency which is popularly known as Arbetsförmedlingen in order to help them.
With this I move to the activities of Arbetsförmedlingen which is my second organization.

Activities of Arbetsförmedlingen

Arbetsförmedlingen as mentioned earlier is the Swedish public employment agency with 320
local employment offices. Organized under 11 market areas traversing throughout the whole of
Sweden and the head office is situated in Stockholm the capital city of Sweden
(Arbeitsförmedlingen in brief 2013/2014). The 320 local employment offices are located in
different municipalities such us Malmö, Gothenburg, Stockholm, Linköping etc. My focus is on
the employment service in Linköping since my thesis is in this context.

The mission of Arbetsförmedlingen which include long-term objectives and tasks are given to
them by the Swedish Parliament and the Government (ibid). The overall goal is to alleviate the
matching between jobseekers and employers, with peculiar attention to jobseekers that may face
extra challenges in being able to find employment due to various reasons (Arbetsförmedlingen in
brief 2013/2014; Lemaître 2007). It is also the responsibility of this organization to see to it that
unemployment insurance scheme is effectively used as a transition insurance between jobs (ibid
2013/2014). Arbetsförmedlingen has aligning responsibility to integrate newly arriving
immigrants into the Swedish labor market. The aligning responsibility include giving these
newly arrived immigrants the support they need in order to learn the Swedish language, find
work and becoming self-sufficient as fast as possible (Lemaître 2007). In collaboration with the
Swedish Social Insurance Agency (Försäkringskassan), Arbetsförmedlingen also provides
vocational rehabilitation to individuals who have confined work capacity due to disability or
illness to be able to start to work again (Arbetsförmedlingen in brief 2013/2014).

Being the largest employment agency, the most important task for Arbetsförmedlingen is
bringing together employers and jobseekers. However in order to be able to do this matching,
Arbetsförmedlingen must develop good relationships with employers and to establish contacts
with new employers because the number of matching that is done is based on their available
contacts with employers (ibid 2013/2014). A portion of the matching process includes a national agreement between Arbetsförmedlingen and companies or organizations. The aim of this agreement is to find the competences that these companies and organizations are looking for in young people and in order to get an agreement between Arbetsförmedlingen and employers, Arbetsförmedlingen must provide free advertisement of jobs on their homepage, free access to registered jobseekers, allowed to search for curriculum vitae at Arbetsförmedlingen, get the necessary support in the recruitment process, recruitment meetings on the premises of Arbetsförmedlingen and finally should assist employers with other recruitment solutions, for example, recruitment inside the EU/EEA and Switzerland, coordinating redundancies in conformity with what is needed by the employer (ibid 2013/2014). These are free services provided by Arbetsförmedlingen yet is not a guarantee the employers will recruit the people they recommend (ibid 2013/2014).

Arbetsförmedlingen organizes labor market programmes such as CV workshops for jobseekers as an additional measures for seeking job (ibid 2013/2014; Lemaître 2007). The programmes are designed based on the requirement in the labor market. In addition to the services that are offered to all registered jobseekers, Arbetsförmedlingen also provide labor market programmes to persons who have difficulty in accessing the labor market and the most prominent programmes are the “Job and Development Programme” and the “Youth Job Programme” (ibid 2013/2014:9). Based on this program employers are paid a recruitment incentives in order to stimulate employment. This programs are targeted at people who are struggling with the Swedish language, out of job for a long time, lack of relevant education credentials and other work related deficiencies (ibid 2013/2014; Lemaître 2007). These are the activities that are organized by the Swedish national public employment service in order to help immigrants and other job seekers integrate into the labor market.

To sum it up, the above organizations which are Arbetsförmedlingen and the Linköping municipality are expected to influence the integration of immigrant’s into the labor market and the society as a whole. I must state that there may be other public and private organizations that in one way or the other could influence the integration of immigrants into the labor market but this two are the most common organizations which are known to all immigrants involved in this study.
**Immigrants Activities/Stories**

This part of the thesis consist of seven participants of which three are male and four are female who shared their experience about immigration and their integration into the labor market. Among these interviewees two are fully employed workers, two part-time workers and the remaining four are unemployed. For the purpose of clarity I had seven interviewees but I represent myself as the 8th participant since this is a reflexive ethnography in which I will also share my experiences. This section is organized in this order: I will first introduce the participants, and then present their labor market experiences.

*Introducing the participants*

In this section I present briefly my interviewees, including their countries of origin, employment status and motivation to move to Sweden. For the sake of anonymity and research ethics I will not use their real names but instead I will rename them.

**Participant 1:** My first interviewee is a lady from Colombia and she is called Paola, she is thirty one years of age and was motivated to move to Sweden because of family reasons. She has an educational background in architecture and has worked with this for over five years in Colombia and had taken some courses in architecture when she moved to Sweden about three years ago but currently she is unemployed.

**Participant 2:** My second participant is a lady called Amanda and she comes from Brazil but has lived in Sweden for thirteen years. She has a background in medicine and currently works as a medical doctor in Sweden, to be precise she works as a senior pathologist and she is married to a Swedish man with two kids. She is forty one years old and moved to Sweden because of job and family.

**Participant 3:** The third participant is a man called Derrick and he is twenty nine years old. He comes from Gambia but moved to Sweden for academic purposes but also had in mind to work after his studies. He has a bachelor in agricultural engineering from his country and now a PhD student in Linköping University in the field of environmental engineering and environmental management. He has been in Sweden for 6 years.

**Participant 4:** My fourth participant is a refugee lady called Fathia and hails from Somalia; she is thirty one years old and have lived in Sweden for almost four years. She is married with two
children and moved to Sweden because of war in her home country. She has an educational background and working experience in midwifery and has worked in this profession for six years but she is currently unemployed.

Participant 5: My fifth participant is a man called Yonas, he is thirty one years old and comes from Ethiopia. He has a bachelor’s degree in business administration which he acquired from Ethiopia and a master’s degree from Sweden in the same field. He is partially working from home and learning the Swedish language. He came to Sweden as a student but after the studies he got an opportunity to stay in Sweden and has lived in Sweden for three and a half years.

Participant 6: The sixth interviewee came to Sweden about two and a half years ago from Italy and he is a man called Alfonso who is twenty seven years of age. He came here for academic purposes but during the studies in Sweden he liked it here and decided to stay and look for a job after the masters. His bachelor is in the mechanical engineering from Italy and master in energy and environmental engineering which he acquired from Sweden. He is currently on a three month working contract and therefore working part-time from home and learning the Swedish language as well.

Participant 7: This participant is a lady called Bianca and she is twenty nine years old and hails from the Philippines but moved to Sweden because she is married to a Swedish man. Her bachelor’s degree is in medical technology from the Philippines with a working experience as a lab technician. She has been in Sweden for five years and currently unemployed but learning the Swedish language.

Participant 8: My name is Agnes, I hail from Ghana and I am twenty eight years old. I have been in Sweden for one and a half years now and I came to Sweden for family and academic purposes. I am currently on the Gender Studies master’s program which is a distance program in Linköping University and learning the Swedish language on the side. I have a bachelor in Art specifically Communication (graphic) Design but I have worked as a social welfare officer in my country for two years. I am married and currently unemployed.

Moving on, I will present the migration experiences and labor market integration activities of the immigrants/interviewees under four-sub-headings. These sub-headings are formulated based on
the main research questions guiding this thesis, the theories and the semi-structured interview
guide that was used for the interviews.

- Human endowment factors

*The focus under this sub-heading is to present the human endowment factors such as, language, education, working experience, gender and marital status of these participants which potentially influences their migration experience as I will discuss in the analysis and discussions.*

From the presentation of the participants, one could see that they have mixed human endowment factors. All the participant have different languages as their mother tongue but can all communicate in English. For example Paola has Spanish as her mother tongue, Amanda has Portuguese and Derrick has Mandinka as his mother tongue. They can all speak and work in English if the need be. Another human endowment factor common to all participants was that they all had university undergraduate degree from their country of origin but Derrick, Yonas and Alfonso have their masters from Sweden. Whiles some of the participants do not have any working experience from their country, Paola, Fathia and Bianca have working experiences from their country. For example Paola is an architect by profession and has worked for over five years in Colombia whiles Fathia has midwifery as her profession and has worked for six years in Somalia. Bianca has also worked as a lab technician for three years in the Philippines.

Gender is also another human factor that influences labor market integration because men and women may experience the labor market differently. Three of the participants are male and four are female. Among the three men one (Derrick) is married without a child whiles the other two (Yonas and Alfonso) are not married. Among the four women three are married (Amanda, Fathia and Bianca) with children whiles Paola is not married. Amanda and Fathia both have two children each whiles Bianca has one child. I will like to clarify that marriage or relationship as mentioned here does not take into consideration whether one is a heterosexual or homosexual since this is not my main focus but I bear in mind that this two identities may experience labor market integration differently. For the purpose of this thesis and its aim it is not relevant whether one is in a homosexual or heterosexual relationship or marriage.
Channels for labor market integration

This part focuses on the various channels that these participants have used in order to be able to access and enter into the labor market.

Swedish For Immigrants (SFI) as mentioned earlier is a program organized by the municipality to help immigrants with the Swedish language in order to be able to access the labor market. Out of the seven participants, five of them that is Derrick, Fathia, Yonas, Alfonso and Bianca have participated in the SFI program whiles Paola and Amanda did not. Paola started SFI but decided to quit for lack of motivation whiles Amanda learned the Swedish language through a private university called Folk University (Folkuniversitetet) and was able to speak fluently within six months to a year. The participants that have participated in the SFI program have now moved to the second phase of the program. This is to say that Derrick, Fathia, Yonas, Alfonso and Bianca have successfully completed the various modules (A,B,C,D) which was mention earlier in the SFI program and are now participating in the second phase which is called Swedish as a second language (SaS). Derrick, Fathia and Bianca have just started the first level of this phase which is the basic level (SaS grund), whiles Alfonso is in SAS 1 and Yonas is now in SAS 2.

Despite the progress of these participants they all stated that it is not easy to learn the language because of other responsibilities. For example Derrick mentioned that “I have other responsibilities to family and work making me lack the drive sometimes to continue learning the language”. Regardless of that he understands the importance of the Swedish language and aims to keep trying to learn. Fathia stated that “I started learning the language with my husband but now my husband has finished all the levels and has a job”. She explained that this is partly because when she gave birth, she had to stay home and take care of the children whiles her husband continued the school. This made it difficult for her to catch up with the husband even though they started together. Bianca who is now taking the course on distance because she had a baby explained that taking the course away from the class room makes it harder to learn. She explained that “I do not meet people so often and it’s really hard trying to learn a new language all by myself because taking the course on distance feels like I am on my own”. Whether the course is being studied on distance or not, at this level immigrants are expected to be able to read and be able to access the labor market using the various channels.
The most commonly used channel by the participant’s for job search is Arbetsförmedlingen. As explained earlier this channel is a public service employment organization that helps the entire Swedish population including immigrants to find jobs. Paola, Fathia, Yonas, Alfonso and Bianca mentioned that they are registered in the database of the public service system which is helping them to search for a job. Even though Yonas and Alfonso are registered in the data base of this organization they stated clearly that they did not get their part-time job through this organization but had to use personal contacts. These two participants (Yonas and Alfonso) mentioned their experiences when trying to search for jobs on their own by sending in his curriculum vitae without the help of this organization or any personal contacts. Yonas said “I applied for over two hundred jobs and got only one response and one interview” whiles Alfonso also relate to this experience by noting that “I applied for over three hundred jobs and got only one interview”. Alfonso further explained that sometimes he applied for jobs that really matched his qualification yet he does not even get any form of response and according to him his foreign background may contribute to this silence and rejection. These two participants express their frustration on what happened to the rest of the applications since they never got any replies. What they find interesting is they could get a part-time job just because they were able to contact someone they know that had the power to influence their application.

Amanda and Derrick were never registered with the public employment service data base yet they are currently working full time. They did mention that they used personal contacts to get their jobs. Amanda mentioned that “I got my job through my husband who is Swedish and knew someone in the hospital that I am currently working at so all he had to do was to contact the person at the hospital and I got the job but also because there was a vacancy”. Derrick also explained during the interview that he got his job because he had a personal contact with the person in charge of that department. He stated “I had known my potential employer, worked with my potential employer and I had developed some level of relation with him before I got my position”. Yonas did not reveal much about how he got his part-time job but he made it clear that it was through a friend and not through Arbetsförmedlingen whiles Alfonso noted that “my current three month contract was through my girlfriend’s friend who knew someone in the company that was looking for an employee”.

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Researchers have explained and defined integration from different perspectives but often not from the immigrant’s own perspective. This part focuses on what the immigrant’s thinks labor market integration is and how they explain this term from their perspective.

Interviewing the participants, they seem to have different views on conceptualizing labor market integration even though some had similar views. From the interviews Paola mentioned that the term labor market integration is not a new term for her because there are a lot of immigrants in Colombia. So she has had the privilege to be on both sides as a citizen in Colombia and an immigrant in Sweden. Based on her experience both as an immigrant and citizen, she explained the term as “a way of opening up and making the labor market accessible for people especially immigrants in order for them (immigrants) to contribute or give back to the society”.

On the other hand Amanda and Alfonso conceptualizes the term as beyond accessing the labor market because after you get a job there are other things you have to adjust to, for example adjusting to the Swedish way of working and culture. Amanda mentioned that “when I got my job and came to Sweden, I felt isolated by my colleagues because by then I could not speak Swedish and did not know much about the Swedish culture”. She explains further by saying that during coffee breaks (fika) no one talked to her and she sat all alone. Based on her experience she pointed out that “for me it was not only about getting a job and getting a salary but I wanted to contribute and participate in the activities at the work place and in the society”. She realized that she could not do that without learning the Swedish language so she had to learn the language as fast as possible. Not only did they isolate her based on the fact that she could not speak the Swedish language but also her colleagues judged her based on her appearance and there was a lot of prejudice against her because she was from Latin-America. During the interview she mentioned that “my colleagues doubted my ability to work at the position I was occupying and I had to work hard to prove myself for them to know that I am capable of the job”. She sees all this things as things that an immigrant will have to adjust to after entering the labor market so integration for her is more than just getting a job.

Derrick explained labor market integration as consisting of various levels, and this may depend on the ambitions of the immigrants themselves as well. Some immigrants may be interested in just getting a job and taking care of their families in Sweden and back home but he said “I will
prioritize labor market integration as first getting a job which will be able to provide economic stability and career development”. He will then think of integrating in other part of the Swedish culture like sporting, language, elections etc. because he needs economic stability to help him integrate into other parts of the society. Fathia and Yonas shares the same view as Derrick because they also think that getting a job helps people to integrate further into other parts of the society by associating or relating to the people around you. Yonas further explained that “for me, I feel like an outcast without a job and I feel rejected from the society”. So in his opinion, Integrating into the labor market is not only about economic gain but as he states “I see it as something social, immigrants get much exposure to the society and I see it as a good chance for immigrants to learn the language”.

During the interview with Bianca, she had a very different view on the concept of labor market integration. She notes “for me I will explain labor market integration as when one tries to make something better or to improve on a system that already exist”. She further explained that to it is important to change the systems to fit the current times and era because what worked before might not work in the current era. This is to say that labor market integration is not only the immigrants adapting to the Swedish labor markets but also the Swedish labor market and society adapting to the needs of immigrants.

➢ Immigrants perception of labor market integration organizations and activities

*The focus here is to know the opinions and perceptions of the participants on the organizations and their activities in helping them to integrate into the labor market. This part excludes Amanda since she did not use these organizations and their activities.*

The six participants express their views on the SFI courses organized by the municipality and they think that it is a good way to start learning the Swedish language but some of the participants have their doubts about its effectiveness. Paola and Fathia said that for them SFI is a good activity, well organized and it helped them to start learning the language. Fathia explained “I think the language is not easy to learn but SFI gives you the basics and if you fight hard you can start communicating on the basic level”.

Furthermore Derrick also thinks that SFI is very useful because it gives a structure to follow and get to talk to other colleagues but he also pointed out that SFI has its own limitations. Regardless
of those limitations “I acknowledge that it is a good effort by the municipality to help immigrants with the Swedish language in order to make integration possible knowing how important the language is in Sweden”. This being said he highlighted that even though this programs exist it should be better communicated to newly arrived immigrants. “I think this program should be well communicated to us because one cannot even read about the programs because they are in Swedish which immigrants do not speak on their arrival”. He notes that they should be a package/a leaflet/brochure written in an understandable language that will inform immigrants about organizations that gives help and integration. He noted “sometime it takes too much time to figure out these things by ourselves and by the time you do, one would have wasted so much time”.

During the interview with Yonas, Alfonso and Bianca they also mentioned that SFI is good but then their aims and objectives are not so helpful for people who are seeking to work as professionals. Yonas noted that “SFI could be for people who just want to learn the language and integrate but not sufficient enough for people who want to work as professionals”. They mentioned that the program does not go far enough in helping them express or speak the Swedish language. For example Alfonso noted that “I have finished SFI and now in SAS 1 but I still cannot communicate enough to be considered as a good or qualified candidate for the job market”. For Bianca, she thinks that the structure of the program should be changed. “I think that the SFI program is fine but it would be better if they can change it and make it more of a course for people to learn the Swedish Language in their field of work”. For example if one wants to work with medicine he or she should be learning the language that is used in the medical field. She also pointed out that with her current knowledge in the Swedish language, she does not think she can work in her field because she is not familiar with the terms. In general she finds SFI good but perhaps not sufficient for professional language training

Discussing Arbetsförmedlingen’s activities with the participants who are registered in the database system, they had many perceptions and concerns about the organization.

Yonas did not really like the activities of Arbetsförmedlingen and do not see them as helpful enough in searching for a job. He explained that they only give specific people financial support but not the support one needs to break into the labor market. He continues “they told me to upload my curriculum vitae and I was given a supervisor who just listens to my story but never
helps in a concrete way”. He said “I went there and I told them my problem and they told me to look for a job by myself even though they will register my curriculum vitae in their data base”. They show you how to upload your curriculum vitae and where to search for a job but for me I think this is something individuals can do on their own without their help. This is to say that “I do not think they are effective enough as I expected them to be”.

Alfonso explained that his experience with Arbetsförmedlingen was not so helpful either because he went there for them to help him but they seemed unhelpful. First he had an introductory conversation and they registered him into their data base and that was it. They told him to go home and come back in four months and search for a job on his own and report to them when he finds anything. He went back after the four months without any job and he was sending his activities that he did to Arbetsförmedlingen since they expected him to do so. He further noted that he was given a supervisor but the supervisor was also not helpful because when he visit him they only talk and they tell him to go back and come back again in four months. According him, he was given suggestions which he already knew about. He said “All the time I went there I felt like I was not getting any useful help from them”.

After the fourth month he went back and had his second meeting with the supervisor. During this period he had improved on his Swedish and could manage a conversation and expected them to help him now. He said “I expected them to help me start working with the Swedish I had but when I spoke with them my expectation was lowered”. He later told them that even if he does not get a job in his field he can work with anything just to get an exposure to the Swedish language but they said they cannot help him. This really frustrated him but when he finally got his part-time job they decided to pay the first month as introductory money and the employers will pay the rest of the months left.

Even though Fathia and Bianca have been registered into the data base of this organization, they have not really explored the services of this organization.
ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

I will analyze and discuss the presented results in three steps. First, I will discuss and elaborate on the participant’s conceptualization of labor market integration which answers one of the main research questions guiding this study. Second, I will discuss human endowment factors that influence immigrant’s labor market integration. In this second step, I will argue that when gender intersects with different human endowment factors, men and women experience labor market integration differently. In a final step, I will show how the three models of discrimination presented earlier in the theoretical section affects immigrant’s labor market integration and how immigrants experience the labor market.

Conceptualization of labor market integration

From the interviews, the participants had different views on what is described as labor market integration. Many researchers have conceptualized this term in different ways and from different perspectives as presented earlier in the explanation of concepts of this thesis. For example Lemaitre (2007) explained this term from two perspectives, at one point he conceptualized the term as a notion of social and economic intersection between native born and immigrants which is accessed by a statistical measure. From another perspective he conceptualized integration as a wider and a broader notion in accordance with assimilation which includes tolerance of, and conduct in conformity with the host countries belief and values. Tastsoglou and Preston (2012) on the other hand conceptualized the term as a process of accessing employment proportionate to one’s educational backgrounds and credentials.

During the interviews the participants also shared their views on what this term meant to them. Paola explained the term as a way of opening up and making the labor market accessible for people especially immigrants, in order for them (immigrants) to contribute or give back to the Swedish society. This is an interesting view because integration should not only depend on how immigrants try to adjust into their new society but I also think that the society should be open to give immigrants the chance to integrate. It is however difficult to measure the openness of a society towards immigrants as in the case of Sweden with many interviewees expressing dissatisfaction with their access to the Swedish society.

On the other hand, Amanda and Alfonso conceptualizes the term as beyond accessing the labor market because after you get the job there are other things you have to adjust to. For example
Amanda narrated her experience after getting a job and how she was treated and discriminated against. The conceptualization by these two participants conform with Lemaitre (2007) conceptualization of labor market as being in accordance with assimilation which include tolerance of, and conduct in conformity with the host countries belief and values. I relate this two together because after Amanda got her job she had to learn to behave in a manner that is appropriate to the Swedish beliefs and values regardless of what her original values and belief were. As explained by Foner (1999) even though one may not subdue all their original culture, at a point we should expect some reflection of behavior and attitudes that falls in line with that of the host country. Amanda had to work hard to demonstrate her competence to her colleagues and subdue some of her culture to behave as a Swedish person would do since that will be considered as normal.

Derrick, Fathia and Yonas conceptualize the term in accordance with Tastsoglou and Preston (2012). These participants explained the term as being able to access the labor market which will help one to integrate into other parts of the society. For them getting a job makes you feel that you belong and this helps immigrants to interact with people and learn more about their new country as explained by Lundborg (2013). I share their sentiment but I also believe that labor market integration goes beyond getting a job because one must also adapt after getting the job as already discussed in the case of Amanda.

Finally one different and intriguing conceptualization of this term was by Bianca who explained the term as trying to make something better or to improve on already existing system and make it suitable for the present day situation. She further explained that the labor market integration system that worked for Sweden years ago may not be suitable or applicable in the present day Sweden. For example, years back the inflow of immigrants in Sweden was not the same as the inflow that the country is experiencing today. Therefore there is the need for the labor market systems and structures to be changed to fit the current situation and not hold on to the old systems and ideologies of the Swedish labor market. All this depend on how willing the society is to change and make changes to the old systems that exist. They may have been some changes as mentioned by Lemaitre (2007) that the conditions of immigrant’s integration have changed over the years. Lemaitre may be right about the changes that have occurred over the years for example; the evolvement of migration policies to integration policies. However, I argue from my
perspective as an immigrant struggling with labor market integration that there is the need for the Swedish society to consider the situation at hand today and adjust the labor market system to fit it. Regardless of how these participants conceptualized the term, they all agree that an intersection of different factors influence their integration into the labor market.

**Human endowment factors and their intersectionality**

During the interview it was discovered that the participants have different or similar integration experiences based on different human factors. Ekberg and Rooth (2003), Torun Österberg (2000) and Vilhelmsson (2000) discussed that the differences between immigrants integration into the labor market can be associated with the differences in their human factors such as education, gender, work experience, marital status, culture and language. As mentioned in the results the entire participants had their university undergraduate degree from their respective countries of origin but Derrick, Yonas and Alfonso went a step ahead to acquire their master’s degree from Sweden. Furthermore these three participants have been able to get a job which may be based on the fact that they had their master’s degree in Sweden. Even though these three participants express their struggle in accessing the labor market they were able to find a job because their chances in the labor market increased based on the legitimacy of their master’s degree from Sweden. They can write on their job searching documents such as curriculum vitae and cover letters that they have studied in Sweden, passed through the Swedish system and therefore have some local knowledge. Compared to Paola, Fathia and Bianca who have their bachelors from their country of origin but have no education from Sweden, it is difficult and almost impossible for them to find a job because as noted by Eckstein and Cohen-Goldner (2002) and Nangia (2014) imported education and experiences of immigrants from their country have nearly no benefit in the host country.

Therefore the university undergraduate degree of Paola, Fathia and Bianca from their country may need to be improved in order for them to integrate into the labor market. This is because as pointed out by Behtoui (2004), developing ones foreign skills and education through formal and informal trainings to fit into the local standard increase immigrants chances to access the labor market. If immigrants are able to prove that they have passed through the Swedish system then employers may accord them some level of trust. As pointed out by Lemaitre (2007), Swedish employers do not have much confidence in foreign work experience and education credentials.
Lemaitre further explained that, if these credentials are converted and confirmed as equivalent to that of the Swedish standard then employers may reconsider trusting these credentials. I share the same experience with these three participants since I have working experience as a social worker from my country of origin yet cannot use that to enter into the Swedish labor market. I have applied for several jobs in Sweden in this sector yet I am either told I am not qualified or I do not have social work education (socionom utbildning) from Sweden. The rejection of my application to work in this field can be associated to the fact that employers do not trust my foreign experience just as much as they do not trust the foreign work experience and educational credentials of Paola, Fathia and Bianca.

Nonetheless foreign education and work experiences are not the only human factors influencing immigrant’s integration into the labor market. Even if an immigrant has the Swedish education as in the case of Derrick, Yonas and Alfonso, some other factors could make labor market integration difficult. For example language and cultural differences could contribute harshly to immigrant’s labor market integration. As pointed out by Heilbrunn et al (2010) language barriers and unfamiliarity with immigrant’s culture in the new country makes labor market integration difficult. Nangia (2014) further explained that it takes a long time for immigrants to adjust to the culture of their new countries and to speak the language which makes them face a strong rejection form people who have conservative dominant values.

As experienced by Yonas and Alfonso, I have applied for jobs which the employers explicitly stated in the advertisement that the job is in English and need someone who speaks English yet I got rejected or never got any reply. For example I applied for a job with the Swedish Migration board in Norrkoping to work with newly arrived immigrants or asylum seekers who cannot speak and do not understand Swedish but my application still got rejected. I was told that even though the job is in English their working language for the entire organization is Swedish. This is to say that, even though a particular job position may not require the Swedish language, the organizational culture and beliefs may call for a Swedish speaking person. The difficulty in integrating into the labor market is also influence differently by immigrant’s gender.

Gender and gender roles are among human factors that influence the integration of immigrants in the Swedish labor market. As pointed out by Tastsoglou and Preston (2012) gender and gender roles shape every aspects of labor market integration. Despite the influence of gender and its role
on labor market integration, many integration theories still disregard the importance of gender and rather study integration as homogeneous (Driedger 1996). Nonetheless this way of studying immigrant’s integration has been proven insufficient by many studies which states that integration is experienced by men and women in very different ways (Tastsoglou and Preston 2012). During my interview with Fathia, she mentioned that she came to Sweden with her husband and they started learning the Swedish language at the same time. Today the husband has been able to learn the language faster than her and has been able to integrate into the labor market. She explained that this is because when they started having children she had to stay home while the husband continued the Swedish class and participating in other activities. Bianca also express that she has currently given birth and must shift her program from face to face lectures to a distance class which makes her less active in all labor market training programs.

I acknowledge the fact that Sweden as a country promotes gender equality where men and women are supposed to take equal days from studies or work and stay home when they have children. However, Fathia express that when she got pregnant her body had to go through a lot of changes and her husband cannot do anything about that, but rather continued with the study of the language. Also this participant as other immigrants is from a traditional gender ideology country as Tastsoglou and Preston (2012) calls it, where women are expected to stay home and take care of the children whiles the men continues to study or work to fulfil their bread winner’s role. She is therefore living a transnational live while in her host country.

Portes (1999) cited in King (2012) gives a concise definition for transnationalism to be migrant’s activities that take place frequently on the national borders but does not involve sending and receiving of remittance. This involve cultural, religious and political activities. In this case migrants create a field that link those abroad to those back home. For example transnational migrant cultural activity may include a migrant retaining some part of his or her culture and traditional ideological beliefs. As argued by Faist (2010) not all migrants live a transnational live therefore it will be dangerous to classify all migrant as occupying a transnational space and according to a research by Portes (2003) himself on migrants who are transnational, he proved that transnationalism applies to only minority of migrants. Fathia’s holding on to her traditional role as the homemaker has made it difficult for her to integrate as fast as her husband did. This
division of roles leaves immigrant women especially the less educated vulnerable and cannot take advantage of the language program or other labor market integration programs.

Applying Crenshaw’s intersectionality, one could see that if one’s gender as a woman intersects with the other human factors mentioned earlier it is a different experience for men and women. For example Fathia and Bianca are women, who have their university undergraduate degree and working experiences from Somalia and the Philippines respectively, they both have children and therefore have to stay home and take care of their children, and they are deficient in speaking the Swedish language and have different cultures. These factors intersect with one another to influence the integration of these immigrant women into the labor market. As a black immigrant woman from Africa, with a totally different culture and deficient in speaking the Swedish language, I relate myself to the situation of these two participants. Fathia, Bianca and I are experiencing multiple intersections that is preventing or prolonging our labor market integration. On the other hand Derrick, Yonas and Alfonso who are men, seems to face challenges in accessing the labor market but none of them is bound by taking care of the home or children. They therefore have full access to the language school and other labor market integration programs that are being provided in order to make labor market integration possible. I therefore argue that gender is very important in studying the experiences of immigrants in their host country. The intersection of one’s gender as a man or woman with other human factors produces a different experience for men and women which give a heterogeneous understanding to immigration study.

**Discrimination and experience in the labor market**

Apart from the human factors that contribute to the difficulty of immigrant’s labor market integration, immigrants face discrimination in accessing the labor market. Behtoui (2004) explains that aside the various human factors, discrimination is an explanation for a substandard or lower market position of ethnic minorities which in this case are immigrants in Sweden. Becker (1957) establishes that one way of discriminating against immigrants is using the taste model. By using the taste model employers refuse any incentives from organizations to employ immigrants. As presented in the results section, Arbetsförmedlingen have incentives for employers who employ immigrants, the organization in some cases pay half of the immigrant’s salary while the employer pays other half, giving employers an opportunity to make profit. In
other cases, the employers get an introductory pay for the first month of employment as in the case of Alfonso. This is an incentive to make it possible for employers to employ immigrants yet they prefer to sacrifice these profits as explained by Becker (1957) in order to employ someone that has the same culture as them. This choice of employers could also be due to their wrong perception about immigrant’s productivity.

Having the wrong perception about the productivity of immigrants by employers and basing their recruitment process and judgment on this prejudice is what Behtoui (2004) calls the statistic model of judging immigrants. In the case of all the participants, they had their university undergraduate degree from their country of origin. Even though Derrick, Yonas and Alfonso have their bachelors from their country of origin they at least have some knowledge from Sweden which has improved their chances in the labor market. This will make employers judge them based on the fact that they are capable of work in the Swedish labor market compared to how employers will judge the rest of the participants. As pointed out by Aigner and Cain (1977) a perceived productivity of a group is used to judge what one is capable of as an employee. Since Derrick, Yonas and Alfonso have knowledge from Sweden, employers may associate their productivity to the local Swedish group whiles the other participants productivity will be associated with a foreign group.

Furthermore Amanda recounted her experience when she got her job. She was judged based on her appearance and her colleagues doubted her productivity. As in the case of this participant, most immigrants experience prejudice in their host country, as noted in a recent study by Nangia (2014) that most immigrants in Canada are judged by their appearance instead of their productivity. This participant as stated in the results noted that she was at the work place with colleagues from England, Finland and Germany yet she was judged differently about her productivity. These two groups are judged differently because as pointed out by Arrow (1972), black and white are judged differently when it comes to productivity because the western knowledge is seen as superior to other knowledge and this lead to prejudice against the minority group. This participant further explained that she had to work tirelessly to prove that she is capable of matching her foreign productivity to the local productivity. From my point of view as a black female immigrant, I will say that people of color are seen as migrating from developing countries and therefore cannot contribute to the progress of developed countries but this is not
the case. I argue that immigrants have useful knowledge and good level of productivity that can contribute to the Swedish society but if not given the chance this knowledge and productivity will not be discovered. This discrimination may also occur when the immigrants do not have the right contacts when searching for jobs.

The informal ways of getting a job such as using contacts and personal relationships is described by Behtou (2004) and Loury (2002) as using the social capital model to enter into the labor market. One of the common and fastest ways of getting a job is by using personal contacts and personal relationships (ibid 2002). This is evident in the results where Amanda, Derrick, Yonas and Alfonso used personal contacts in getting their current jobs compared to the other immigrants (Paola, Fathia, Bianca and myself) who have to rely on the public service employment agency. According to the laws in Sweden, available jobs must be reported to the employment offices (Lemaître 2007) but as many as two thirds of jobs are occupied through informal recruitment methods (Ekström 2001). Granovetter (1995) explained that the largest job matching channel is the social networks and as confirmed by Okeke (2001) during the 1990-1998, 20-26 percent of employees got their job through the formal job finding methods compared to 65 percent that got their job through the informal method in the Swedish labor market.

This kind of contacts and social networks are difficult to come by especially for immigrants because as stated by Behtou (2004), immigrants social networks have the tendency of being homogenous by race, class and ethnicity. He further looks at the composition of social network from two perspective namely the “socio economic resource of the people in the network” and “homogeneity/heterogeneity of the network” (ibid: 7). Immigrants that are in contact with socio economic resource people are likely to find a job since this contacts are perceived to be prestigious, wealthy and powerful (Lin et al 1981). During the interview all the participants expressed the importance of contacts in searching for a job. Amanda and Derrick seem to have very powerful contacts which got them their full time jobs. The problem is that not many immigrants have these contacts leaving them struggling in their integration into the labor market. On the other hand Paola, Fathia, Yonas, Alfonso, Bianca and I have friends but they do not really have much power to influence our job search. For example I applied for a job in one of the municipalities where I knew someone working there. I decided to use the person as a reference
on my curriculum vitae in order to get some favors but that person was just a worker and was not powerful enough to influence much but I still got an interview. I think that using an influential or powerful contact as reference could have gotten me more than an interview.

Also homogenous social networks are disadvantageous to immigrants as explained by Stoloff et al. (1999). For example some immigrants try to join some groups which they can ethnically identify with and build contacts with people who have been in Sweden before them. These contacts may not be that useful since this people are also from a minority group. As in the case of Bianca she explained that she does not have any contacts into the job market but they have a Philippines group which meet once every month and discuss how things are going. Bianca uses this platform to maintain a transnational live between Sweden and the Philippines since the people in this group are all from the Philippines. She also notes that she talks with people in this group, who are in her field and if there are any vacancies they tell her about it so that she can apply but these people do not have any influence on her application. So for her those are the only contact she has to rely on.

From my perspective as an immigrant, I argue that this informal way of employment creates prejudice and discrimination for us the minority group since the Swedish born will obviously find it easier to build and establish contacts with people that have better socio economic resources than we the minority groups. The public employment service may not be the best channel for job search because as expressed by other participants these organization is not as effective as one will expect it to be, both from the difficulty in evaluating the usefulness of their integration activities and also from the fact that their activities are meant to complement private labor market integration activities.
CONCLUSION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

This thesis has answered four research questions which include two sub-questions and two main questions. These questions are addressed in order to discuss how immigrants experience integration into the Swedish labor market. The first sub-question was examined to find out the Swedish policies that are put in place for immigrant’s labor market integration. The second sub-question was to find out the activities of the organizations that implement these policies. On the other hand, the two main research questions were classified as how the immigrants themselves have been able to integrate or not into the Swedish labor market, based on their human factors and discrimination. The first main research question analyzed how gender intersects with other human factors in order to influence labor market integration whiles the second main research question studied how immigrants conceptualize and experience labor market integration. As stated earlier in this thesis the two sub-questions were more descriptive whiles the main research questions were critically analyzed using three theories namely human capital theory, intersectionality and discrimination theory.

Upon close reading documents on Swedish integration policies for immigrants, it was found that back in the 1950s and 1960s, Sweden had no policies that integrated immigrants into the mainstream society. It was rather immigration policy that was endorsed by the Swedish parliament in 1975 which had the slogan equality, freedom of choice and partnership. The immigration policy laid a foundation for integration policy and in 1997 the immigrant’s integration policy became a reality based on a bill called Sweden, future and diversity. The aim of the integration policy was to ensure that all people living in Sweden had equal rights, opportunity and responsibility regardless of their ethnicity and cultural background. Until today the aim of the integration policies remained the same but government has focused on some key areas namely: “faster introduction for new arrivals, more in work, more entrepreneurs, better results and greater equality in school, better language skills and more adult education opportunities, effective anti-discrimination measures, development of urban districts with extensive social exclusion and common basic values in a society characterized by increasing diversity” (Fact Sheet Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality 2009: 1).

In effect to the integration policy, policies were developed in order to help immigrants integrate into the labor market because as noted by Martin and Houstoun (1982), dynamic steps are
needed to aid integration since immigrants do not automatically adjust to their host country. These policies are regulated by national laws while the institutions or local authorities are responsible for the implementation of these policies. In this study, Arbetsförmedlingen is responsible for implementing policies concerning employment which include introductory workplace activities, helping with the writing of curriculum vitae and cover letters, and assisting in the translation of foreign credentials. The municipality is responsible for teaching immigrants the Swedish language in order to facilitate their integration into the labor market. As noted by Husted (2009), this kind of structure where institutions or local authorities implement policies in order to help immigrant integrate can also be found in other countries such as the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Great Britain, Canada and Denmark. More so, the difficulty of immigrant’s integration into the labor market is not a problem found only in Sweden but as pointed out by OECD (2005) most European countries such as Canada, USA and the Netherlands face similar challenges.

Despite the programs and activities organized by these two organizations, the participants find it difficult to establish the usefulness of these activities when it comes to assisting them to integrate into the labor market. Nevertheless I side with Husted (2009), who pointed out that it is not sufficient to hold local authorities accountable for their success at integrating immigrants by using a small sample or simple published statistics. This is because such small samples or statistics are usually poor and potentially misinforming indicators of local authorities’ contribution to the success of integration (ibid). However, in my opinion as an immigrant who is participating in these activities of these two organizations, what I have realized is that the language program from the municipality is more focused on teaching us the various cultures of the Swedish society than focusing on teaching us the language. I do not doubt the fact that learning the Swedish culture is also important for integration but this can be learned from getting integrated into the labor market as noted by (Lundborg 2013).

Analyzing how gender intersects with other human factors, it was shown that men and women do not experience labor market integration in the same way. Immigrant’s women experience the labor market differently due to other roles they play in the home. For example, as in the case of Fathia who is delayed in accessing the labor market due to the fact that she had to stay home when she gave birth and the husband continued learning the language. In this case it was shown
that gender intersect with other human factors such as gender roles, marital status, education and work experience given women different labor market experience from men. In the case of the participants that are men, they have been able to integrate without any difficulty because they are not married. This implies that immigrant women could face labor market harshly than men based on the multiple intersections of factors.

Interestingly it was also discovered in the findings that some of the immigrants live a transnational live in respect to their gender roles. Despite immigrants residing in a country that promotes gender equality where men and women are supposed to take up domestic roles, immigrant women hold on to their traditional ideologies of being the homemakers whiles their husbands are the bread winners. This prevents them from participating in labor market activities equally as their husband. Intriguingly some of these roles are biological, for example the embodied experience of pregnant women. Women have to go through this body changes and experiences by themselves which I think is the more reasons why immigrant’s women should be able to share childcare activities with their husband when the child is born instead of holding on to the traditional ideologies from their country.

Departing from how some researchers have conceptualized the term labor market integration, immigrants were asked to share their views on what this term meant to them. Three distinct understandings emerge from their conceptualization of labor market integration namely: (a) accessing the job market (b) integration beyond getting a job (c) changes in the labor market system. Accessing the job market and integration beyond getting a job are similar to that of Tastsoglou & Preston (2012) and Lemaitre (2007) but “changes in the labor market system” gives a new definition to what labor market can be defined to be.

Looking at the differences in gender and its intersection with other human factors is of great importance in this thesis. One can see from the results analysis that men and women clearly experience labor market integration differently, therefore this thesis contributes to the literatures that are arguing for immigration to be studied from a heterogeneous perspective instead of a homogenous perspective (see Man 2004: Boyd and Greco 2003: Tastsoglou & Preston 2012 and Driedger 1996). Taking a heterogeneous perspective clearly gives a deeper understanding of the experience of immigrant women compared to immigrant men as shown in a study by Man (2004). Also conducting this thesis from an intersectional perspective shows that immigrants do
not experience hardship in the labor market based on one factor but based on the intersection of multiple factors. Therefore studying the topic from an intersectional perspective contributes to developing a feminist standpoints theory that can critically address and account for immigrants social and labor market positioning in their host countries based on the intersection of different factors such as human factors and discrimination as applied by Crenshaw (1991) in studying the experience of black women.

Finally, the policies that exist today and how various organizations implement these policies are interesting and have been criticized by the participants even though they also pointed out the strengths of these organizations. For future research it will be very interesting to conduct a study that will find out the factors taken into consideration when integration policies are formulated. This research should not only cover the labor market but the integration policies into the society as a whole. Furthermore, such a research should investigate whether these policies are homogenous or heterogeneous and if they take an intersectional perspective. In addition, the activities of the integration agencies have been studied with documentation reading, case studies can also give deeper insights on their activities.
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APPENDIX

Interview guide

1. Can you introduce yourself (What is your name, age, marital status, country of origin etc.).
2. What motivated you to move to Sweden and how long have you been in Sweden
3. Do you have a permit to work in Sweden
4. How do you like Sweden as a country and their culture (language, dressing, interest, food etc.?)
5. What is your educational background from your country and what are your working experiences in your home country
6. How have you tried using your credentials and experience to look for a job in Sweden? What has been/are your experiences in searching for a job and if no why?
7. If you already have a job, what are your experiences at your work place? Do you feel integrated because you have a job?
8. Do you know about the various activities that assist immigrants in finding a job in Sweden? If yes have you participated in some of these activities?
9. Which organizations are responsible for these activities?
10. How useful do you perceive the activities of these organizations in your job search?
11. Have you tried any other channel for example friends, social networks, close relation etc?
12. What do you understand by integration into the labor market?
13. How much Swedish can you read, speak and write
14. Some immigrants seems to think that given them the chance to work with the Swedish they can speak help them improve and speak faster? What do you think about this?
15. Do you think the society is open enough to give you the chance to learn the language
16. What do you think about immigrants being discriminated against in the labor market apart from the fact that they can’t speak the Swedish language?
17. How should immigrants be integrated in the labor market?