

Somali Immigrants in Sweden

Their Perspective and Experience Regarding the Integration Process.

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International Migration and Ethnic Relations

Bachelor Thesis 15 credits

Spring 2024: IM245L

Supervisor: Inge Dahlstedt

Word count: 12820

Abstract.

Previous studies have shown that Somali immigrants in Sweden are one of the migrant groups that are struggling to integrate into mainstream society (Salat, 2010: 5). Most of these previous studies are done by majority members and based on the perspectives of the mainstream societies and institutions. This thesis utilizes the Somali perspective and gives a voice to the group. Therefore, it aims to investigate and explore how Somali immigrants perceive and experience the integration process in Sweden, particularly in Malmö. The study seeks also to provide insight into the elements that have shaped the Somali immigrant's perception about the integration process. A qualitative research approach is applied, gathering data through semi-structured individual interviews. The findings identify that Somali immigrant in Malmö face significant legal-political, socio-economic, and cultural-religious barriers, including lengthy bureaucratic processes, employment and housing discrimination. These obstacles hinder their integration and highlight the need for more inclusive and adaptive integration policies.

Keywords

Immigrants, Integration, Discrimination, Segregation, Somalis.

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1.0 Introduction

In recent decades, the Integration of immigrants into the hosting society become a popular topic for researchers and continues to gain increasing interest in the academic and political world. Integration of immigrants into hosting society is a complex and multifaceted process that involves various dimensions such as equal access to opportunities, social justice, economic, and cultural aspects (Ismael, 2020: 3). Having said that, it is important to keep in mind that successful integration between immigrants and hosting society impacts positively on the development and the resilience of both immigrants and the hosting society. It contributes to economic growth, cultural tolerance, equality, advancement of sustainable development, social trust, and other socio-economic interconnectedness of both societies (Ismael, 2020: 3).

1.1 Contextual Background

1.1.1 Short Background about Swedish Migration and Integration History.

Sweden has a history of both being a country of emigration (sending country) and a country of immigration (receiving country). In the 19th century, approximately one million Swedes migrated to America. However, by the mid-20th century, Sweden became the primary migration destination country (Cetres et al, 2020: 17). During the 1960s and 1970s, labor migration from countries like Greece and Finland addressed the high demand for labor in Sweden's industries. The State Migration Agency (SIV), today's Migration Agency, was established in 1969 to be responsible for both immigration and integration matters. An important shift occurred in 1975 with the adoption of multicultural policy, aiming to embrace cultural diversity and support minority cultures (Barthoma et al., 2020: 24).

From the 1980s onward, Sweden experienced a shift towards refugee reception, notably during the Balkan wars in the 1990s, when a high number of refugees arrived from former Yugoslavia. This was the time when Somalia's central government collapsed with a high number of Somali immigrants leaving their country and some managed to come to Sweden. In 1996, the minister for integration was established, overseeing Swedish citizenship and combating discrimination based on religious and ethnic background. A shift towards targeted integration policies for newcomers occurred in the 1990s, aiming to facilitate their initial period in Sweden. The focus evolved further with the establishment reform in 2010, transferring responsibility for newcomer's introduction from municipalities to the Swedish Public Employment Service (PES). Emphasizing labor market integration became paramount, reflecting from social inclusion to paid work as the solution to immigrants' social exclusion (Eriksson, 2019: 16).

Legal reform in the 2010s of Swedish governments' integration policies aimed for equal rights, equal opportunities, and responsibilities regardless of ethnic or cultural background. Concurrently, efforts to reduce and prevent segregation and discrimination with a focus on long-term objectives to address socioeconomic, housing, education, and labor market access, freedom of choice, democratic participation, and personal safety (regeringen.se). This reform outlined also changes in transferring responsibility for integrating migrants from municipalities to public employment service (PES). The transformation did not only structure the administration but also broadened policy focus and facilitated private organizations' involvement in implementation (Brännström et al., 2018: 25). However, the 2010s legal reform saw a flow in asylum seekers, peaking in 2015. Subsequent laws in 2016 brought Sweden restrictive migration policies more in line with minimum EU standards (Migrationverket, "Historik").

Still, despite migration restrictions, integration is one of the top priorities strategies in the governmental policies in Sweden. The government document of sustainable development strategies in Sweden puts the idea of integration within the social pillars of sustainable development. Meaning that integration is one of the three most essential elements of the sustainable development ideas that are a central prerequisite for long-term development. Therefore, it can be argued that achieving the goal of Sweden's sustainable development concept requires social cohesion and integration between immigrants and hosting society

1.1.2 Somali immigrants in Sweden

The Somali migration to Sweden historically dates back to the 1950s, with the first migrants coming for labor migration and international students following the independence of Somalia in 1960 (Kleist, 2018: 18-20). However, their migration to Sweden decreased until 1990 when the civil war in Somalia led to the collapse of the central government. Resulting in a huge increase of Somali immigrants in Sweden mostly through the process of seeking asylum and family reunification. Notably, there has been a prominent flow in Somali immigration to Sweden during the last decades. Nonetheless, the estimate of Somali immigrants in Sweden is 69477 (Agaba, 2022: 31), and more than 50% of these individuals acquired the Swedish citizenship passport and underwent naturalization. During the above-mentioned time, the Somali became arguably one of the largest immigrant communities in the Scandinavian countries (Kleist, 2018: 18-20). However, In recent years, there has been a steady flow of new immigrants from Somalia, with over smaller number

arriving each year (Kleist, 2018: 20). Statistics show that the Somali community in Sweden is one of the most segregated immigrant groups in Swedish society (Johnsdotter 2009: 10).

This shows that the new politics in Sweden and restrictions on particular immigrant groups resulted in reduced immigrant arrivals in Sweden. Sweden has been known for being one of the most attractive examples of refugee and immigrant-friendly countries regarding immigration and integration policies. However, nowadays, it seems that the effort that the government put into limiting immigrant integration is a challenge due to the current political situation in the country.

1.1.3 About Malmö

This study focuses on Malmö, Sweden. Malmö is a cosmopolitan city hosting approximately 186 nationalities (Malmö Stad, 2024: 1). Migrants significantly impact the economy of the city and at the country level as people in the city seek economic and social opportunities daily (Mugo, 2022: 6). Historically, migration to Malmö has been significant, encompassing always labor migrants, refugees, students, and family reunification (Joshi, 2020: 17). Despite immigrants' struggles to resettle and integrate smoothly in Malmö with support and effort from the state, discrimination remains a challenge, with high levels of exclusion in the labor market, housing, and education are recorded, especially among foreign-born and African immigrants (ibid.).

1.2 Problem Statement.

In general, there is considerable criticism directed towards both Sweden's integration studies and policy implementation. One of the problems is that the majority of integration activities are expected to come from the migrants or minority groups rather than approaching the adoption of the two-way integration process (Arora-Jonsson, 2017: 94). Konle-Seidl condemns how empirical research is studied regarding the integration of different immigrant groups (Konle-Seidl, 2018: 35). Accordingly, while most of the immigrant groups share common challenges in integrating, there is a general belief that certain groups face more difficulties than others. Among these groups, Somali immigrants are one of them confronting numerous condemnations regarding their integration into Swedish society (M. Sharif, 2013: 2). According to them, the process of immigrating and coming to Sweden was relatively easy in the past for the Somalis, yet their integration journey into mainstream society has proven difficult. The reason is said to be different aspects including discrimination, segregation, non-recognition of Somali qualifications, voicelessness, and socially, economically and religiously exclusion (Salat, 2010: 3).

Regrettably, problems of exclusions and discrimination against the group continue and it hasn't been studied. Even if it had been studied, it is not done that much on this topic from a Somali perspective

standpoint. Therefore, narratives and stories related to this area remain unheard both in the literature that is currently available and in public discourse as well as the policy discussions. Consequently, introducing and adding a Somali-based perspective to integration studies would improve scholarly and policy discussions. These kinds of studies would point out the various difficulties within the integration process overall. The study also offers some insight and explanation for why certain immigrant groups experience more difficulties than others. Therefore, I believe this thesis will address a significant knowledge gap about the experience of many immigrant groups in Sweden, particularly about the migrant's struggles to integrate and establish new lives in the country.

1.3 Research Question.

1. How do immigrants from Somalia experience and perceive the integration process of Malmö, Sweden?
2. What elements have played a role in shaping their perceptions and what can we learn from their experience in their path towards integration?

1.4 Delimitation.

In this thesis study, some selections and delimitations were made on what to focus on and what to leave out. First, I was looking at how Somali immigrants who move to Malmö, Sweden integrate into the new country's society. Instead of studying multiple immigrant groups, I decided to focus on one group of communities in Malmö. By doing so, we hope to get a clearer a deeper understanding of the group. Secondly, the study gives the voice to the group to see and look at their perspective and experiences about integration, contrasting with the predominant approach typically adopted. Usually, studies on this topic tend to reflect the majority's perspective. In contrast, this study aims to center the experience of the group itself. Throughout the study, the term "integration" will be used to examine the process through which the group integrates into the hosting society. Finally, the study looks at how these groups both men and women face challenges and how they deal and manage with the obstacles and use the opportunities they are offered.

2.0 Literature review

2.1 Introduction

As highlighted by Creswell and Creswell a literature review is crucial in research, as it not only establishes the study's significance but also provides a basis for comparing findings with existing research in the field (2023: 29). Despite the limited availability of literature discussing integration in the perspectives of Somalis immigrants in Malmö, this study reviewed and utilized previous academic researches, governmental documents and organizational sources discussing the integration of Somali in Sweden. The review will address different key areas highlighted in previous research including discrimination and exclusion in the labor market, education, housing, entrepreneurship, and language barriers.

2.2 Previous research

Previous research has emphasized that Somali immigrants in Sweden face challenges in integrating into mainstream society (Salat, 2010: 5). While immigrants from various countries and backgrounds encounter obstacles in integration, Somali immigrants stand out as facing significant difficulties in integrating with Swedish society (Sharif, 2013: 2).

Demographic research conducted by Bevelander and Dahlstedt pointed to the struggles Somali immigrants encounter in the Swedish labor market and education sector. Despite a general improvement trend in employment among immigrants, Somali males, and females between the age of 25-39 have shown no improvement in their employment level (Bevelander and Dahlstedt, 2012: 70). Moreover, while unemployment rates have declined over time for many immigrants' groups, Somalis continued to score high unemployment during 2003-2008 (Ibid.).

Reasons why Somalis continue to score higher in unemployment than other immigrant groups include social, economic, and cultural exclusion (Sahlberg, 2000: 7). Somalis have struggled with the high unemployment rate in Sweden and are excluded from engaging in economic activities such as education, entrepreneurship, and employment. The situation has been described as "mass unemployment" in official media circles. Education was mentioned as a challenge, with many Somalis having separated from the labor market and their prior education and skills for the jobs were not recognized in the labor market (Sahlberg, 2000: 7). Despite some improvement in recent years, unemployment remains a persistent problem for many Somalis, creating and demanding more effort and a difficult cycle to break off (ibid.).

2.2.1 Comparison Somalis in Sweden and Somalis in other Countries like UK and the US

Benny Carlson, a professor of economic history at Lund University has spent many years studying the social and economic integration of immigrants in Sweden, focusing on the labor market and entrepreneurship situation of Somalis by comparing the diaspora experience here in Sweden, and other countries like United Kingdom (UK), the United States (US), and Canada (Carlson, et al., 2012: 44). Carlson identified among others, that factors such as discrimination, education, length of time in the country, negative media portrayals and biases among employers contribute to integration hurdles for Somali in Sweden.

Carlson emphasizes learning the Swedish language and discrimination barriers as a significant hindrance for Somali immigrants in Sweden. Unlike those who migrated to the US and the UK, Somali immigrants in Sweden must learn a new language, which requires more time and effort, delaying their access to the labor market. He underlined those Somali immigrants face less integration difficulties in other countries like the UK and the US (Carlson, et al., 2012: 46). According to Carlson, as a consequence of several years of discrimination, unemployment, and hopelessness, many Somalis have chosen to leave Sweden for destinations such as England, which has become one of the favorite destinations for Somalis from Sweden (2011: 17).

2.3 Lack of Recognition of prior Education and work experience

Most of the official documents from Somalia are not recognized in Sweden. The Swedish government does not accept documents from Somalia including education qualifications, work experience, passports, birth certificates, and other certificates, etc. The reason for not recognizing Somali documents is that, according to the Swedish government there is no central stable government that can offer and provide reliable documents (Schmidt, 2016: 12).

Recognition of prior education and work experience is significant for the integration of migrants. Their prior education and experience, whether formal or informal, should be considered when assessing their skills and integrating them into the workforce and society (Teräs, 2024: 37). Policies and practices have been implemented to facilitate labor market integration and improve skills for migrants. However, this seems not enough and need more effort that facilitate the recognition of immigrants document particularly the Somali immigrants in Sweden.

2.4 Labor Market Discrimination

Discrimination in labor markets can be viewed from an economic perspective, which distinguishes between taste-based discrimination and statistical discrimination. Taste-based discrimination, as outlined by Becker (2010), involves employers' subjective hate to certain groups, resulting in discriminatory hiring or wage practices (Becker, 2010: 15). In contrast, statistical discrimination, proposed by Phelps (1972) and Arrow (2014), suggests that employers use race, ethnicity, or gender as proxies for productivity due to imperfect information. While taste-based discrimination is considered irrational, statistical discrimination is seen as a rational response to uncertainty in hiring decisions. However, the accuracy of employers' beliefs about group productivity in statistical discrimination models remains unclear, potentially relying on stereotypes (Phelps, 1972: 87). Some economists argue that statistical discrimination is based on "true stereotypes" and that employers update their beliefs over time based on positive experiences with minority groups. However, sociologists criticize this view, suggesting that employers often rely on crude stereotypes rather than accurate assessments of productivity. Additionally, sociological research highlights the distinction between statistical discrimination and "error discrimination," where discriminatory practices stem from erroneous stereotypes (Arrow 2014: 685).

Somalis face institutional discrimination in various aspects of society, particularly in the Swedish labor market and housing sectors. Research concentrated on these two areas identifies that the labor market, the most significant form of institutional discrimination was observed during the recruitment process (Salat, 2010: 39). Many researchers identified labor market discrimination as a critical issue, as securing employment is a primary goal for Somalis struggling with high unemployment rates (ibid)

2.5 Entrepreneur.

In Malmö, many foreign-born immigrants turn to self-employment as an alternative, with a notable number of Middle Eastern and Asians in the entrepreneurship sector. Africans, particularly Somali immigrants though a small percentage of the population, face considerable vulnerability and exclusion in the labor market, leading some to pursue entrepreneurship as a means of economic integration. Yet, even this sector remains challenging for Somali immigrants in Malmö due to discrimination-related treatment (Ngeh, 2011: 39).

On the contrary, UK and Minnesota in the USA, there are approximately as many Somali immigrants as in Sweden. Among Somalis in Minnesota, the employment rate is significantly higher than in Sweden. Perhaps even double (Carlson et al., 2012: 27). Most Somalis in Minnesota are concentrated in Minneapolis. This Somali-populated area is busy with economic activities, with numerous Somali

restaurants, shops, and even Somali "shopping malls" dotting the area. It is not difficult to find Somalis who are proud of their achievements and show optimism for the future. The Somali area in Minneapolis is worth studying to uncover explanations for its dynamics, explanations that could provide insights applicable to another environment as well like Sweden (Carlson et al., 2012: 29).

Based on that, in his research, Carlson explored the question of why Somalis integrate better in other countries compared to Sweden. He traveled to different countries, including the US and UK, where he observed significant differences. In England, Canada, and the US, many Somalis are employed or are entrepreneurs, unlike in Sweden where very few, less than 1% are entrepreneurs (Carlson, 2006, 2011, 2012). One of his studies aimed particularly to understand why Somalis choose entrepreneurship in England over Sweden and how entrepreneurship can be improved among Somalis in Sweden. To get a result, the author met and interviewed sixteen Somali-Swedish entrepreneurs in England. These entrepreneurs left Sweden in search of better opportunities and some of them were unemployed in Sweden before leaving for the UK. The Somali-Swedish entrepreneurs in England provided advice to Swedish society and policymakers on improving conditions for entrepreneurship and simplifying bureaucracy processes, reducing taxes for small businesses providing better access to suitable business premises, and offering more support for immigrants and intrapreneurs in the country. The advice underscored also the importance of addressing systematic barriers and promoting equal opportunity in the intrapreneurial area (ibid). implementing this advice could result in more integration and encouragement for entrepreneurs among immigrants in Sweden, leading to increased economic opportunities, higher integration, and stronger cohesion within immigrant communities and the broader society.

2.6 Housing Segregation

Housing discrimination against immigrants has been studied through correspondence audits in Europe. These studies usually focus on the initial stage of renting housing, where potential landlords respond to inquiries from individuals. Rich (2014) reviewed housing discrimination literature and found prevalent discrimination against Muslims and African immigrants in Europe. Names and background information of the person play a role in the outcomes for the possibility of getting a rental house. Socioeconomic and employment information also improves the opportunities for immigrant groups but does not eliminate discrimination (Rich, 2014: 64). Van der Bracht et al. (2015) found evidence of housing discrimination against Muslim immigrants in many different European countries including Sweden. This research suggests the need for further research to understand housing discrimination trends better (Van der Bracht, 2015: 158).

Berglund et al. Found that the area where immigrants live significantly impacts their integration process, as Somali immigrants used to reside in areas with fewer Swedish speakers, leading to increased segregation and decreased integration. The report highlighted limited housing and job opportunities for Somalis. The study also noted both advantages and disadvantages of living in ethnic and migrant-concentrated areas. Advantages include that communities offer safety and a feeling of security and assist each other. They also limit interaction with the broader society, resulting in social inclusion (Svärd, 2006: 23).

An example of housing discrimination occurs when landlords assume that immigrants are less likely to pay rent due to their typically lower incomes. This kind of situation is known as statistical discrimination. While statistical discrimination is not motivated by prejudice for a particular group, it still entails making assumptions about the performance of the group (Esses et al., 1998: 699)

2.7 Negative media portrayal and Discrimination against Hijab

The report titled “Delaktighet för integration” (Svärd, 2006: 23). prepared by the integration office addressed the challenges faced by Somali immigrants in Sweden. It examined factors such as discrimination, and negative media portrayal affecting Somali integration. The report noted that Somali women’s wearing hijab is portrayed in the Swedish media. This hinders their employment opportunity due to employers' perceptions of the hijab. Despite women expressing in the report their willingness to adapt and do their job responsibilities at the same time while wearing the hijab in the workplace and applying for jobs, they often face difficulties finding employment. Women interviewed in a report emphasized that competence should matter more than clothing and hijab (Svärd, 2006: 23). The report, similar to Carlson’s findings, highlighted the role of discrimination and media in shaping perceptions about the Somalis.

Discrimination attitudes and behaviors in the hosting society create significant obstacles for migrants trying to integrate (Bursell, 2015: 279). Bursell highlights that structural discrimination is a particularly prevalent form in the Swedish system and sectors like the labor market, housing, education, and social services (ibid.). An example is when employers hold biases based on individuals' names or backgrounds, assuming that immigrants have less quality education or proficiency in Swedish compared to native Swedes. Additionally, there is a perception that Swedish education and qualifications are superior, leading to the exclusion of immigrants from Job opportunities (Bursell, 2015: 279).

The Open Society Foundation published a book titled “Somalis in Malmö” (a part of the “Somalis in European Cities” series) with contributions from various authors including Carlson. This book

compares the integration of Somalis living in Sweden with those in other European cities like Copenhagen, Helsinki, and Oslo. It is a broad study focusing on Somali integration at the micro-level. The book suggests that factors such as discrimination and vulnerability contribute to the lower success of Somalis in integration. It highlights that Afro-Swedish Muslims face double discrimination due to their ethnicity, color, and religious beliefs, as noted by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance and the Council of Europe's human rights monitoring bodies (Carlson, 2013: 60).

2.8 Cultural Integration.

In the discourse surrounding Somali immigrants in Sweden, there is often a narrative of blame regarding their perceived lack of cultural integration into mainstream society. This perspective overlooks the complexities of cultural adjustment faced by immigrants and fails to acknowledge the effort made by many individuals to adopt to the new environment while preserving aspects to their own culture. Research conducted by Dirie et al. (2013) underscores the importance of immigrants maintaining their cultural identity while also learning about and engaging with the culture of their host country (Dirie et al., 2013: 36). However, findings from interview conducted Somali immigrants reveal challenges faced by some individuals in fully integrating into Swedish Society. Factors such as limited knowledge of Swedish culture, language barrier, and preference for familiar cultural contexts contribute to difficulties in cultural integration/assimilation for some immigrants. It is crucial to recognize that integration is a multifaced process that requires support and understanding from both immigrants and host society (ibid.). By acknowledging the complexities of cultural integration and addressing the barrier faced by Somali immigrants, society can work towards fostering a more inclusive and supportive for all individuals.

2.9 Addressing Gaps in the Literature regarding Somali Integration in Sweden

Hill (2017) identifies significant knowledge gaps regarding the integration experiences of Somali immigrants in European countries. The available literature tends to overlook critical areas that require further investigation, particularly concerning Somali effort and commitment practices, and the discrimination barriers that hinder Somalis from integration into the society. Hill's critique highlights the need for more comprehensive research that explores the details of Somali integration experiences and their intersection with broader societal dynamics Hill (2017: 901)

Areas of gaps identified include the absence of Comprehensive Studies on Somali Integration Experiences. There is a shortage of comprehensive studies giving voice to Somali immigrants and examining the experiences of Somali immigrants at different stages of the integration

process. Scholars underline how important it is to take the viewpoints of the people being studied into account. The Cadaan Studies Movement's recent work demonstrates how academic discourses concerning Somali people frequently restrict access to their tales and uphold power hierarchies (Tuck and Yang, 2014; Aidid, 2015; Tuhiwai Smith, 2021). Research is needed to explore the challenges faced by Somalis for not recognizing their prior education, employment discrimination, access to healthcare, housing segregation, and social exclusion to identify barriers and facilitators to their integration into Swedish society. Intersectional factors such as being African Muslim migrants, need to be considered in studying the integration as it plays a significant role in shaping Somali integration experiences. However, there is limited research exploring how these intersecting identities influence integration outcomes and access to resources and opportunities (Hill 2017: 902).

2.10 Conclusion

The major obstacle that hindered Somalis from integrating into society is indicated to be Discrimination. Discrimination is the unequal treatment of individuals based on their color, status, gender, or religion (Cambridge Dictionary, 2016: 1). This unequal treatment can result in unjust treatment in institutions, policies, society, laws, or actions. EU law mandates equal treatment for migrants from non-EU countries as natives in terms of employment, housing, education, and other social services (Olsson, 2019: 15). However, Olsson's research found immigrants often do not receive equal treatment compared to natives and local people, indicating non-compliance with EU regulations (ibid.).

Although, even the Swedsh integration program aimed to address discrimination through policies and tried to promote equal opportunities in the integration guidelines, challenges continue (see introduction section). Parliaments underlined equal opportunity in migration law in 1975 (Rydgren, 2004: 75), and subsequent legislation extended protections against discrimination in the workplace and other services (Hoglund, 2000: 23). However, research indicates ongoing discrimination, particularly against non-EU immigrants in Sweden (Rydgren, 2004: 77).

3.0 Theoretical and concepts approaches.

3.1 Introduction.

As noted in the previous chapter/text, earlier research highlighted those Somali immigrants often face challenges in integrating into mainstream society in Sweden. Most of this research was conducted by the majority member and was based on their perspective. This study aims to see the Somali perspective and experiences in relation to the integration process. Integration is a complex and continuous process that involves equality, accessibility, smooth resettlement, discrimination, equal rights and equal opportunity, and economic, social, and cultural aspects that are interconnected (UNHCR, 2009: 5). To better understand how Somalis perceive and experience the integration process in Sweden, the study will employ theoretical perspectives and analytical framework that helps us investigate and analyst both the importance of giving and amplifying the voice to the group and examining their experience in detail.

3.2 Discrimination

Discrimination means treating someone unfairly because they are seen as different in some way. This happens in all societies and has been happening for a long time. People can be discriminated against for many reasons like their race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, religion, social class, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or how they look like. Discrimination usually leads to bad experiences for people who are treated unfairly. Prejudice often comes up when we talk about discrimination. Prejudice is when someone has a biased belief or attitude against another person or group before knowing them (Carter, 1986: 05). People might hold prejudice because they see another group as different or as having negative qualities. Prejudices are seen as a big reason why discrimination happens against certain groups. (Feagin & Eckberg, 1980: 20).

Discrimination occurs when someone acts on their prejudiced attitudes to treat someone unfairly (Carter, 1986: 205). It is like putting those negative thoughts into action (Kinloch, 1974: 54). Discrimination can be intentional or direct, meaning the person meant to do it, someone purposely treats others unfairly because of their differences. It's more obvious and deliberate. Unintentional or Indirect, meaning they don't realize they were being unfair. It is less clear, and the person doing it might not even understand they are been discriminating. They don't mean to harm others, but their action still has an unfair effect (Feagin & Eckberg, 1980: 20).

3.2.1 Institutional Discrimination.

Institutional discrimination refers to discrimination embedded within organizations and intuitions intended to serve all individuals settled in Sweden, regardless of their background (Feagin et al.,

1980: 20). Institutional discrimination occurs when laws or policies directly discriminate against specific individuals or groups, or indirectly, when prejudice becomes normalized within institutional behavior under the guise of legitimacy (Pager et al., 2008: 181). Pager and Shepherd define institutional discrimination as policies and practices contributing to the disadvantages of certain racial or ethnic groups (ibid.). An example of such kind group could be migrants

3.3 Integration concept

Firstly, since different scholars and different people understand integration in different ways, it is not simple to interpret the concept easily (Lemaître, 2007: 10). Another reason that makes it difficult to interpret integration is that it involves a wide range of concepts, ranging from multiculturalism to assimilation (Penninx, 2003: 9). Assimilation refers to the adaptation of minorities to the majority's culture. While Multiculturalism refers to allowing minorities to maintain their own culture. However, some people interpret integration as assimilation, while others interpret it as multiculturalism. Some others see it as something in between, neither assimilation nor multiculturalism (Penninx, 20003: 9).

According to IOM (International Organization for Migration), effective integration is a two-way process that involves and contains a joint adaptation of both migrants and the host society based on principles of inclusion, respect, protection, fundamental rights, non-discrimination, and tolerance. Integration is crucial for managing migration effectively. It is not just about the benefits immigrants bring but also the well-being of migrants, and the stability and prosperity of the whole society. Integration means that both the hosting society and migrants must adapt to each other, individually and as a group. Policies for migration integration should cover rights and responsibilities such as access to work, housing, healthcare, education, and other social services. There is also a need for mutual respect and adherence to shared values between migrants and the host society.

IOM argues that integration policies shouldn't only focus on long-term migrants but also address the needs of short-term ones. They should enable migrants to fully participate in society, whether economically, politically, or culturally. These policies should be tailored to the specific context of migration, considering factors like gender, age, and the duration of stay. Migrant integration policies intersect with various other policy areas like employment, housing, equal opportunities, social cohesion, education, and equality. Effective integration policies can't work alone. It needs to align with policies in this area. By promoting social, economic, political, and cultural inclusion, comprehensive policies can maximize the benefit of migration for both migrants and the host society (IOM, 2019: 6).

3.3.1 Criticizing on how we use and study the concept of immigrant integration in Sweden.

Schinkel (2018), makes some valid points about the concept of immigrant integration in Europe. The definition of the concept of Integration is often unclear and used selectively in both political discourse and research. Research and policy are closely linked to each other, but it is unclear how they influence each other, so we need to learn the link between these two. Schinkel blames research for being a problem in politics and policy-making. He argues that research contributes to negative portrayals of migrants and supports dominance by certain groups. Researchers can improve their approach by defining integration broadly and scientifically instead of opposing integration policy by considering legal, economic, and cultural-religion aspects of newcomers' integration with society. The definition should be separate from policy ideas. And researchers should also analyze integration policies separately, recognizing that they are driven by politics and policies. Lastly, researchers must be aware of the influence of policies on research. Maintaining scientific independence, especially in politically charged topics like migration, is challenging but essential for unbiased research (Schinkel 2018: 1-31).

Another point is that integration is often seen as a process that only migrants experience. While some research recognizes that changes in the receiving society affect immigrants' integration, it doesn't consider non-immigrants as actively integrated themselves. Integration outcomes are explained by factors like institutions and perspectives of the hosting society, but they aren't measured by these indicators. Therefore, integration remains primarily a one-way process (Klarenbeek, 2021: 902) Scholars criticize integration policies and discourse for focusing too much on immigrants' responsibilities and overlooking the role of the receiving society (Schinkel 2018: 1-31).

3.3.2 An Alternative perspective:

Integration refers to how newcomers settle into a new society. It involves the immigrant interacting with the society. When immigrants come into a new society, they must find legal rights, a place to live, schools for their children, access to healthcare, work, and earn income. Immigrants also need to fit into the social and cultural aspects by cooperating with both individuals and groups in society. They need to know, understand, and use the host society's institutions. The hosting society and institutions should also accept and recognize that migrants are actors in politics, cultures, and economics. Therefore, integration is a two-way process that involves both immigrants adopting and the host society accepting them. However, the hosting society holds more power and resources, influencing the integration policies and outcomes, so the reaction and how the hosting society accepts immigrants is important for how integration succeeds. Exclusionary policies in institutions and organizations, and negative perceptions about immigrants can lead to discrimination in areas

such as granting residence permits, housing, employment, and access to basic social resources (Penninx 2019: 1-11).

According to Penninx (2019), integration can be measured across three dimensions: Legal-political, socio-economic, and culture-religious. The legal-political dimension looks at immigrant's residency and political rights, ranging from illegal migrants to national citizens. Socio-economic Integration examines immigrants' access to essential services like work, housing, education, and healthcare, comparing their outcomes with natives. Cultural-religious integration involves how immigrants and host societies perceive and accept cultural and religious diversity.

Measuring cultural-religious integration is challenging due to subjective perception and changing categorization of diversity. These perception affects interactions at individual, collective, and institutional levels, influencing societal attitudes and policies.

These dimensions are interconnected. Legal-political conditions impact socio-economic and cultural-religious integration. Exclusionary policies reflect how immigrants are perceived as outsiders, affecting their opportunism. Negative perceptions can lead to discrimination in areas like housing and employment, even if the access to legally guaranteed (2019: 1-11).

3.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, the above theoretical framework from Penninx underscores the importance of amplifying minorities' voices and understanding integration as a two-way process involving legal-political, socio-economic, and cultural-religious dimensions (Penninx 2019: 1-11). It offers the three dimensions of Penninx to use for researchers and studying immigrants' integration into hosting society, making it useful for this research to follow and study integration empirically. It discussed the different types of discrimination embedded in the institutions and inequalities that affect immigrant's integration process. It focused also on the process of immigrants becoming a part of the new society and hosting society accepting immigrants. It mentioned that the hosting society holds more power and influences the integration outcomes through their perception of involvement in institutions and integration policies.

4.0 Research Methodology

The research design for this study is qualitative, focusing on exploring the social world from the perspective of the participants (Creswell and Creswell 2023: 46). Qualitative research seeks to understand how individuals interpret their environment and how it shapes their actions (Ibid).

To answer the research question, I did a case study to examine the integration process of Somali immigrants in Malmö, focusing on their perception and experience. case-oriented study design is chosen because it is well-suited for exploring the integration of Somali immigrants, allowing for detailed information gathering to comprehend the research question (Creswell and Creswell 2023: 47). This study adopted a constructivist perspective approach and utilized qualitative methodology to understand the perception of Somali immigrants in Malmö regarding the integration.

The decision to use qualitative constructivist design is justified by two main reasons. Firstly, the topic deals with human experiences that cannot be quantified, focusing on subjective experiences and personal perspectives related to Somali immigrant's integration process and interpreting to understand it. Secondly, data was collected by deepening through interviews and interaction with the participants in the phenomenon.

4.1 Method

Zapata-Barrero and Yalaz highlight the effectiveness of interviews in capturing respondents' perspectives and experiences (2018: 271) making it a suitable method for my research. Compared to other methods such as surveys and other methods, interviews offer unique access to descriptive data about Somali immigrants' perceptions and experiences related to integration in Sweden.

According to Creswell and Creswell, qualitative research focuses on participants and their contribution to understanding specific issues (2023: 223). In line with this approach and constructivist perspective, I have chosen to employ qualitative semi-structured interviews to explore my research question. The Semi-structured interview approach I have selected is designed to maintain relevance to my research question while also encouraging diverse perspectives. This approach is crucial for knowledge production, both within the scope of my case and in broader discussions about the topic.

Semi-structured interviews begin with a flexible plan, typically aligned with the researcher's objectives or specific topic of interest. The interviewer ensures participants remain focused on the topic while allowing them the freedom to discuss related matters, fostering exploratory conversation and collaborative knowledge creation. Known for their openness, Semi-structured interviews afford

respondents the liberty to respond candidly. Moreover, they facilitate discussions encompassing pertinent contextual themes from prior research and explore new areas in the field (Zapata-Barrero and Yalaz 2018: 181). Based on that, my decision to use semi-structured interviews aligned with my research objective and my research question. The methodologies used in this thesis provided and accommodated a result for the complexities of integration.

In migration studies, using interviews as a method plays a significant role, as highlighted by Zapata-Barrero and Yalaz (2018), careful consideration was significant regarding the use of interviews, including understanding its strengths and limitations (Zapata-Barrero and Yalaz, 2018: 182). Moses and Knutsen stress the need to ensure that interview questions accurately clear the target/participants group under study, while also considering the relevant characteristics of the sample (ibid.). To achieve a quality research interview, the study approached the interviewing process with careful consideration. I paid close attention to the way in which I conducted the interview. I was careful about biases and errors in the information I collected from the participants when conducting the interview. To avoid the problem of sampling error, I tried that my interview group reflects and represents the larger number of Somali immigrants in Malmö in terms of characteristics like gender, age, education, employment status, and duration of stay in Sweden.

In an interview, the creation and the use of interview protocol are crucial (Cresswell and Cresswell 2013: 231). In this study, the interview was recorded using audio recording and handwriting notes. Handwriting notes have been taken alongside the audio recording process to use in case of failure to record equipment. The protocol used consisted of two pages and included essential details such as date, time, location, and participants' names. Interview questions consist of leading questions and sub-questions that are formulated to answer and correspond to the research question and the research objective. An introduction of myself as an interviewer and the purpose of the study was presented to the participants before the interview started and, in the meantime, their consent was collected.

4.2. Material and sampling.

This research utilized interviews as the primary method of data collection as mentioned above. Specifically, it employed purposive sampling to target Somali immigrants residing in Sweden, with a focus on Malmö. Purposive Sampling involves the selection and identification of specific cases and materials to be utilized in the research (Zapata-Barrero and Yalaz 2018: 171). Cresswell and Cresswell explain what to consider during the purposive sampling plan mentioning four aspects including where the research will take place, who will be interviewed, what the participants will be doing, and how events evolve within the setting (2023: 229).

The number of interviewees who participated in this study was 6 participants, comprising both female and male Somali immigrants in Malmö. Participants varied the duration of their stay in Sweden, their familiarity with Sweden's integration process, and their status as first-generation migrants was expressed. This diversity within the participants aimed to pool offers several advantages for the research such as enriching the study by capturing a wide range of experiences, perspectives, and challenges within the target group.

I used as a researcher my network and Somali community organization in Malmö to recruit and identify a participant for this study. Moreover, the study was conducted in Somali language to ease the communication between us which I translated into English and transcribed manually. A quiet and secure place was selected for all events under the interview so the participants felt safe and secure. The final step was transcribing all interviews, including recorded voices and notes taken. All responses have been transcribed without any modification and refined to the step of analyzing and producing a meaningful and reliable result.

4.2.1 Gramsci's outlined Model for studying Marginalized groups

To formulate interview guide that goes the research aim and analyze the empirical data in this study, Gramsci's idea of "Subaltern" from the postcolonial concept has been utilized. This model comprises six elements that can be connected to the integration situation of the group under study (Gramsci, 2020: 49). The subaltern concept of postcolonial theory draws attention to the experience and perspective of marginalized and subordinated groups, often referred to as the "Subaltern." It seeks to strengthen the voices of those who have been excluded and undermined by dominant narratives and academic discourse (Del Roio, 2022: 17).

In postcolonial studies and critical theory, the term "Subaltern" referred to the groups of people who were left out of the power structure during colonial times in places like India. Antonio Gramsci first used this term to talk about certain cultures of colonized people and social groups that were pushed aside and denied a voice in politics and their history as well as perspectives were overlooked in mainstream discourse (Ibid). Later, the idea of "Subaltern" was developed by a group of historians known as the "Subaltern Studies Group", who looked at the role of regular people in history by telling the story of colonialism from the Indian people's perspective rather than just focusing the viewpoints of colonizers, dominants, and hegemonies (Slemon 2007: 3). Overtime, the term becomes a way to study and understand the experiences and the perspectives of those who are colonized or marginalized by the majority by giving the voice to the minority groups.

Gramsci's concept of subaltern subordination classes which covers marginalized minorities and excluded social group's experiences can be relevant today or related to current discussions about immigrant's integration into hosting societies. The concept offers an understanding of minorities' perspectives and their resistance in society as it refers to disregarded groups who are excluded from the mainstream social, political, and economic power structure and as this group is subjected to domination by the ruling class or majority. These groups may include the working class and ethnic minorities, women, and other marginalized groups (Del Roio, 2022: 17).

Gramsci and other researchers who studied the subaltern minority groups outlined different methods and stages to use when studying these groups, emphasizing the importance of reclaiming their history and voices. The aim is to retrieve, record, and understand the histories of the marginalized classes that have been overlooked in mainstream historiography. It involved bringing these narratives to light and challenging dominant historical narratives (Ludden 2003: 22).

Some of Gramsci's methods outlined for studying Subaltern groups are presented here. 1) the Beginning of their history 2) Their development and evolution 3) Their organization and growth 4) Their struggle and conflict 5) Their articulation and expression 6) Their coming to voice. These six methods of Subaltern studying models will be the framework applied to this study. Hence, all parts of these models will be covered and based on the study. See In the appendix section for more about the method and a listed steps with an explanation.

4.2.2 Material Analyzing Process

Some data, I analyzed some directly after the interview while some others, while I was not able to do due to time constraints and I did some after. The process of both ways was to listen to the recorded data and revisit the notes multiple times for understanding deeper and reflection. All data collected was recorded and saved on my computer desktop. I deleted it immediately from the device I used for recording. Notes taken during the interview were stored safely without attaching the real names of the participants.

To analyze the interview data, I first transcribed the responses by translating them from Somali to English manually. This process, although time-consuming, was crucial for ensuring accuracy. Each theme identified during the transcription was named and assigned a specific code. Through careful examination of the transcripts, I identified several recurring themes across the interviews, including discrimination, labor market challenges, housing segregation, and the non-recognition of qualifications. These emerged as the main themes from the interviews. For further analysis, I categorized the themes based on Penninx's framework (see literature section). This framework

divides the themes into three dimensions: Legal-Political, Socio-Economic, and Cultural-Religious. Under these main themes, I explored sub-themes such as labor market and employment discrimination, housing segregation, non-recognition of Somali qualifications in Sweden, entrepreneurship problems, and so on. In my final writing, I described the themes, the connections between them, and any observed patterns. I also compared these findings to existing theories and discourses to identify areas of agreement and discrepancy. This structured approach provided a comprehensive understanding of the integration challenges faced by Somali immigrants in Malmö.

4.3 Validity and Reliability

In qualitative research, validity and reliability emphasize that research aims for accuracy within the specific context studied, rather than generalizing findings (Creswell and Creswell 2023: 199).

Validity stresses accuracy in research findings, while consistency ensures reliability. This research design employed various validity approaches and reliability measures to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings. These included the selection of purposive sampling and the developed questions which were clear and easily understandable by the interviewees. The interview questions were truly reflecting the research aim sidestepping biases or effects that may lead to dishonest answers from the participants. Validity relates to whether our questions effectively measure and capture the core phenomena that we aim to capture.

Moses and Knutsen 2012: 149). Even though using purposeful sampling helped the validity of the research, yet, the research doesn't guarantee that participants represent the Somali immigrants in Sweden (Barglowski 2018: 157). Due to my decision to conduct a case study, I was not able to establish strong external validity, which is a common limitation of case studies (Bryman, 2016: 62). However, external validity is not always a crucial measure of success in qualitative case-oriented research (Creswell & Creswell, 2017: 177-8). In this type of research, external validity is used in a limited way because the focus is on specific cases rather than generalizability (ibid). Therefore, the case and findings of this study are not generalized to wider Somalis in Sweden. However, it enriches and provides new perspectives and experiences for immigration studies.

The reliability and trustworthiness of the research are assured by making sure the participants voluntarily want to participate in the research for the specified reason and that they want to share their experiences and opinions with me as a researcher. Moreover, reliability was assured by getting the participants to relax and feel secure by selecting a calm and safe place during the interview.

4.4 Philosophical Perspective

From an epistemology and ontological standpoint, the study focused on how individuals interpret, understand the world, and construct knowledge of social realities (Moses and Knutsen, 2012). The research question reflected the subjective factors of the constructivism perspective by trying to explore and understand the Somali perception and experiences of the reality regarding the integration process of Sweden. Additionally, the research aimed to examine how individuals' views and background influence their perceptions (Moses and Knutsen, 2012: 217). Following the constructivist framework, an inductive approach has been used for the data collection and interpreting process by designing a structure for collecting data and categorizing and building themes from the bottom-up approach (Creswell and Creswell, 2017: 296). Subsequently, the research began with a research question and collected empirical data which was used to generate results and conclusions. Qualitative research typically utilizes an inductive approach, where the research starts with a specific detail or research question and gradually develops broader patterns and themes from the developed details. Data was organized in more abstract categories and themes working back and forth between the themes and dataset until they have a comprehensive understanding of the pattern present (Creswell 2023: 26-226).

This study had a different step in the research process. First, a clear research question is presented. It focused on understanding Somali immigrants' perceptions and experiences regarding socioeconomic integration in Sweden. Second, the methodology, particularly the qualitative case study design, allows for detailed data collection and analysis, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the research question. Third, the use of purposive sampling ensures the selection of participants who can offer relevant insights, enhancing the validity of the findings. The reliability is prioritized through confirming voluntary participation and creating a relaxed and secure environment for the interviews. Fourth, the use of semi-structured interviews enables the exploration of diverse perspectives, contributing to the richness and depth of the data collection. The researcher's positionality is clearly explained. Finally, ethical considerations were carefully addressed throughout the research process, ensuring respect for the participants and the responsible handling of personal data with consent requests and anonymity.

4.5 Positionality

Conducting research on the integration of Somali immigrants in Sweden brought a unique insider perspective to the study as I am a migrant and have gone through the integration process as many of my interviewee participants are. I felt I understood the challenges and nuances my participants faced firsthand. Additionally, being a man and Somali relate to me closely to male participants while

female participant relates to me as an outsider. Therefore, I think my insider positionality undoubtedly influences various aspects of the research, such as formulating questions and interpreting data. According to Fedyuk and Zentai, our personality, position, and perspective don't make our research less credible (2018: 171). Hence, my positionality doesn't compromise the credibility of the study or result in purely subjective findings. Instead, it enriched the research by providing insight and understanding that outsider perspectives may bring luck.

4.6 Ethical Consideration

The study addressed each issue raised for its specific importance and sensitivity during the data collection and the potentiality of the ethical issues was considered. Qualitative research involves direct communication with participants and often involves vulnerable groups. Therefore, it was crucial to be mindful of ethical considerations (Creswell Cresswell 2023: 233-5). When I was gathering information from the participants, their collaboration and permission were requested and a signed copy of the informed consent was collected from each participant while leaving one copy with my contact information and the supervisor's information. The aim of the study and the interview procedure was informed clearly to the participants including where the research will be published and how their information will be used and stored. Participants were promised that any sensitive information shared during the interview or personal details that could cause harm would be kept confidential. Questions were asked respectfully and I thanked the participants for their participation and contribution.

5.0 Empirical Results and Data Analysis

I conducted interviews with six Somali participants as part of my thesis research in Malmö. The participants shared their experiences related to their journey coming to Sweden, settlement, opportunities, obstacles, and integrating into the society. This section is categorized into three themes and sub-themes with direct quotations and analysis of each theme and sub-theme. However, the theme of Integration will be analyzed and discussed separately. This theme stands out as unique and does not fit neatly into the other three categories. Integration directly addresses the research question and represents the primary aim of the study. Due to its distinctiveness and importance, it warrants separate consideration.

5.1 Legal-Political Dimension

This stage involves understanding how was the participant's reception experience in Sweden. The legal-political dimension examines the impact of immigration policies, legal statuses, and political rights ranging from illegal migrants to national citizens on the immigration of immigrants. In the case of the Somali immigrants in Malmö, several key challenges were identified including lengthy waiting periods for residence permits, citizenship, family reunification, and restrictive policies.

5.1.1 Lengthy Waiting Periods Residence Permit

The first thing asked of every respondent was to tell about themselves. We started by exploring their journey to Sweden, asking questions such as: What prompted them to come to Sweden? What was their reception experience in Sweden and so on?

Respondents highlighted the prolonged waiting time periods for a residence permit, which creates uncertainty and hinders their ability to integrate fully. For instance, Dalmar and Dhoof noted significant delays in receiving their permits, impacting their stability and integration effort even after getting the residence permit.

“I came to Sweden as an adult, seeking a better life. My reception here in Sweden was good, but not as easy as I was expecting. I applied for asylum, but it took a long time for a decision on my residence permit, which was frustrating. But I managed to find a job during that time. Most of those Somali asylum seekers I knew couldn't manage to get a job under the asylum process. However, my job situation was unstable because my residence permit was pending. My employer had to dismiss me several times because of it.....” (Dalmar).

“I was waiting three years for the residence permit. It was a waste of time, during which I couldn’t participate in activities offered to migrants like language studies. I faced a challenge in getting a job. Work and studying were some of my goals in this country. This prolonged period..... not only delayed my plans for integration but also undermined my sense of security and stability” (Dhoof).

Dalmar stated the decision to come to Sweden was driven by a desire for a better life with expecting opportunities and smoother integration. The responses from both Dalmar and Dhoof highlight the significant impact of the lengthy waiting period for a decision on the residence permit. This waiting time creates a sense of uncertainty and frustration among immigrants early hindering their ability to fully integrate into Swedish society as mentioned by the respondent.

5.1.2 National Citizenship

Obtaining Swedish citizenship is a significant challenge for Somalis in Malmö and Sweden in general.

“We have to wait 8 years before we are eligible to apply, and even then, the process can take over a year due to the long queue in the migration system. Our identity is not accepted and recognized by the migration board for identifying our nationality so we could be eligible for the citizen less years..... I have been waiting 8 years to be eligible to apply for Swedish national citizenship. The process took also one and a half years. It hindered me the rights to vote, to find a job the neighboring countries like Copenhagen”

This prolonged waiting period has several serious consequences for Somali migrants in Sweden. First, without citizenship, they are unable to vote in national elections. This means they cannot participate fully in the democratic process or have a say in the decisions that affect their lives and communities. Secondly, Not having citizenship restricts their job opportunities, especially in neighboring countries like Denmark. Malmö is close to Copenhagen and there are potential employment opportunities, but without citizenship, we cannot legally work there (Hayaan).

Moreover, the lack of citizenship hinders their integration into Swedish society. Being legally discriminated against in this way makes them feel excluded and less valued. It affects their sense of belonging and ability to contribute fully to the community. The citizenship process itself feels like an obstacle rather than a pathway to becoming a fully integrated member of society (Hayaan).

5.1.3 Family Reunification

Another participant highlighted challenges related to societal and political changes in the last years and it is the effect on their life and future. One respondent mentioned.

“The recent introduction of new restrictive laws against migrants has affected my family's lives significantly receiving a family reunification application rejected by the migration board, despite meeting all criteria such as enough accommodation and sufficient income. I did everything I could however it didn't work. The absence of my family due to rejection created an additional barrier to my integration. I felt depressed which affected my overall well-being. I struggled alone to navigate an unfamiliar system and environment and my financial responsibilities increased as I am responsible for the basic needs of my family back home impacting my ability to fully participate in society and engage in activities that would promote my integration into society” (Geedi).

Sweden introduced new restrictive immigration laws last decade year after year, most significant restrictions started introducing at the end of 2015 and 2016. These new restrictive policies aimed to reduce the number of immigrants and refugees coming to Sweden (Government Offices of Sweden, 2003). To align with stricter EU policies, the migration board required the supporting person who wants to bring their family to Sweden to be financially and housing stable to bring family members (Government bill, 2003/16: 174). This move has significant implications for immigrants and asylum seekers only receiving temporary permits, affecting their ability to reunite with family members in Sweden.

Family plays an important role both for the individual and in the integration process of the person. Family provides support, encouragement, and a sense of economic and health stability. Therefore, the experience of the respondent underscores the impact of changes in migration policies on Somali individuals living in Malmö, helping us understand how shifts in the policies and political landscapes against immigrants have a direct impact on the integration process of the individuals. Research recognizes that changes in the receiving society affect immigrants' integration. The changes in the system and the policies do not affect natives (Klarenbeek, 2021: 902). Integration outcomes are mostly explained by factors such as institutions and attitudes of the hosting society, but when studying and considering integration, these indicators are not measured. Therefore, integration remains mainly a one-way process (ibid). Imagine how new policies providing good opportunities for immigrants would positively impact them.

Moreover, restrictive immigration laws such as those affecting family reunification have negatively impacted their lives. Geedi mentioned how new laws have made it difficult to reunite with family members despite meeting all necessary criteria.

5.1.4 Discrimination and Bureaucratic Challenges.

Somali immigrants in Malmö also face discrimination from authorities and bureaucratic hurdles, particularly in entrepreneurship. One respondent highlighted how escalating taxes, fines and limited access to loans often lead to business closure, exacerbating their struggle for integration.

“They come and control my business regularly. They try to find any possible detailed mistakes in my business just to give me fines and punishment measures. I am planning to move to other countries so that I can improve my business dream. Here in Malmö and Sweden, I don’t see hope for my entrepreneur. I was waiting for my citizenship for 9 years but recently received”.

The respondent additionally pointed out that African ethnic-based businesses rapidly declined as a result of factors of high taxes, fines and penalties, and the absence of tax incentives. Unfavorable regulations and limited Swedish loans create significant obstacles for Somali migrant entrepreneurs in Malmö, often leading to the closer of their business. The respondent continues emphasizing that compared to other migrant communities like Asian and Arab migrants, Somali entrepreneurs lack legal experts that support them in protecting their rights from the authorities. Lack of customers and sufficient visitors due to the Somali immigrant’s size in Malmö is one factor determining to sustain their business as the product in the shop is similar to Somali traditional production and cloths. Unlike natives, Asians, and Arabs, who benefit from strong community support, come from wealthy countries, and have been here for decades, Somali entrepreneurs face greater challenges in maintaining their businesses in Malmö. Depending on minority community-based lending initiatives.

The respondent expressed a plan to relocate to another country for better business prospects, now that his citizenship obstacles have been recently resolved and his passport grants him the opportunity to establish business elsewhere. This decision confirms findings from Carlson’s research on Somali entrepreneurs which shed light on the challenges faced by entrepreneurs in Sweden’s bureaucratic system, concluding that a substantial number of Somali entrepreneurs who left Sweden are running businesses with fewer problems in England (Carlson, 2006, 2011, 2012). According to Carlson, as a consequence of several years of discrimination and hopelessness, many Somalis have chosen to leave Sweden for destinations such as England, which has become one of the favorite destinations for Somalis from Sweden (Carlson, 2011: 17).

5.2 Socio-Economic Dimension

The socio-economic dimension focused on the access to and quality of essential services such as employment, education, and housing. The findings reveal substantial barriers for Somali immigrants in these areas of employment, education and housing.

5.2.1 Education and Non-recognition of Prior Qualification

Respondents reported that their qualifications are often not recognized, limiting their employment opportunities. This leads to underemployment of employment in low-skilled jobs despite having higher qualifications. Respondent mentioned their educational background and work experiences.

“I had a university master's degree in water and environment studies from my country. I had work experience, but my previous education and experiences weren't recognized here. Learning a new professional took a long time.... The state support during my unemployment cost the country a lot annually. It is frustrating to think about the potential millions of Swedish kroner spent to support skilled immigrants” (Guure).

The non-recognition of educational qualifications and documents from Somalia worsens integration challenges faced by Somalis in Sweden. Guure expressed frustration over the rejection of their education credentials, which forced them to learn a new low-level profession. Respondent mentioned also that he previously experienced discrimination when he was terminated from a job. He said he felt like they judged him based on stereotypes about immigrants' abilities to perform a job rather than his qualifications. He said that his position was given to another person despite having worked in the position before. The office told him his job was terminated but he realized that a new person was employed in his position (Guure). Many skilled and highly educated Somalis face unemployment or do a job below their qualification (Reitz et al., 2014; Batalova et al., 2016). This underutilization of skilled Somalis results in economic losses for both individuals and the country. (Reitz et al., 2014: 26). According to Guure, his skills were not accepted in Sweden, and it took him a long time to learn another new profession. for instance, the support provided by the state during my unemployment as a skilled immigrant cost a lot of money annually for the country to support me. If I calculate it can be millions of Swedish kroner (Guure).

Additionally, Guure mentioned discrimination due to the non-recognition of documents from Somalia. This discrimination further marginalizes Somalis and reinforces feelings of exclusion and isolation from the rest of society. It aligns with previous research indicating that Somalis in Sweden face systematic barriers to integration including discrimination in employment, education, and access

to social services. According to Acolin, there are two types of discrimination against immigrants, where the one called taste-based discrimination is biased against certain groups because of personal prejudice, not because of expected outcomes (Acolin et al., 2016: 45).

“I was young when I came to Sweden and attended high school in Malmö. When it was time to choose a career program, I selected Transport Technical Mechanic. However, one of the teachers refused to let me join the program, saying that my Swedish language skills were not good enough. This was frustrating because my Swedish was not that bad. I had good grades in my exams. Although I wasn’t as fluent as my Swedish classmate, I could communicate effectively and had been in Sweden 4 years”

The respondent tried to convince the teacher but he was unsuccessful. Later, he spoke to another teacher while the one who refused him was absent due to illness. This second teacher knew the respondent well and the teacher was disappointed to hear about the situation of the refusal. The second teacher said it was impossible that the student wasn’t eligible for the program and assured that the student was more than capable. He took the student to the direction, and after a few days of discussion and questioning the initial teacher, the student was finally allowed into the program. Thanks to the sending teacher (Markabo).

Despite the initial resistance, I was one of the best students in the program. The whole experience made the respondent feel that the teacher wanted to exclude him and discriminate against him based on his background rather than seeing my ability (Markabo).

5.2.2 Employment and labor market

“As a Muslim woman wearing a Hijab, I always face significant challenges in the workplace and getting a job. I remember once I applied for a job and I was called for an interview. During the interview, I noticed a shift in attitude as the employer saw my Hijab. One employer explicitly mentioned concerns about my fit within their company culture. It was the Hotel receptionist position”

The respondent mentioned that she experienced both denial of employment and exclusions in the workplace. She said that in the previous time, workplace discrimination was not an issue but thanks to development in the world now it is not like the early years. There are rules and regulations and anti-discrimination policies, particularly in the workplace. Discrimination happens in everyday life but still, some anti-discrimination organizations and institutions work against it. However, she mentioned experiencing this incident disheartened her to the reality that her skills and qualifications were overlooked due to her appearance and religious attire. The respondent expressed

her feelings of exclusion at that time, not for her professional ability but for her personal and religious identity (Markabo). According to Svärd, Somali women expressed in a report he wrote, their willingness to adapt and do their job responsibility at the same time while wearing the hijab in the workplace. However, they often face difficulties finding employment. Women interviewed in a report emphasized that competence should matter more than clothing and hijab (Svärd, 2006: 23).

This experience has made it difficult to find a job for many Somali woman immigrants in Malmö and has impacted their confidence and sense of being part of society. Research concentrated on labor market discrimination identified that the labor market, the most significant form of institutional discrimination is observed during the recruitment process Many researchers identified labor market discrimination as a critical issue, as securing employment is a primary goal for Somalis struggling with high unemployment rates (Salat, 2010: 39)

5.2.3 Housing Segregation

Access to housing is another critical issue. Somali immigrants in Malmö often experience segregation and discrimination in housing, which affects their overall quality of life and integration process.

“I have experienced housing discrimination firsthand. I was searching for an apartment. The queue system in Malmö is too long to wait. I contacted a private landlord several times. I realized the hesitation of two landlords as they many times asked me for my income evidence and I gave it to them but never offered me an apartment. One day an immigrant worker told me that landlords don’t want immigrants in their apartments. The reason he said they assume that immigrants are less likely to pay the rental on time due to the immigrant’s lower income and they damage the apartments”

According to the respondent, this kind of discrimination is incredibly frustrating. The landlords did not have anything against the person, but the landlord made assumptions about the ability of the migrant person to pay rent just because the person is an immigrant. This not only limited the housing options but also pushed the respondents into segregated areas where landlords are more willing to rent to immigrants. It is a vicious cycle that keeps immigrants marginalized and prevents them from fully integration into Swedish society. The respondent lives now in one of the segregated areas in Malmö and feels that it was their choice to live here rather than systematic challenges (Hayaan). An example of housing discrimination occurs when landlords assume that immigrants are less likely to

pay rent due to their typically lower incomes. This kind of situation is known as statistical discrimination. Statistical discrimination is not motivated by a prejudice for a particular group, but it still entails assuming the performance of the group (Esses et al., 1998: 699).

5.3 Culture-Religious Dimension

The culture-religious dimension explores how cultural and religious identities are maintained, perceived, and accepted within the host society. For Somali immigrants in Malmö, the following aspects were noted.

5.3.1 Cultural and Religion

Despite facing discrimination and social exclusions, Somali immigrants strive to maintain their culture and religion. They engage in

“I have been trying to adopt Swedish culture while maintaining my own culture and religion. Sometimes it works, but other times it doesn't. I have learned the Swedish language. The language makes it easy to understand the culture of the society. For me learning the Swedish language is like knowing their culture. I have Swedish work colleagues with whom I celebrate some of their cultures. I know the Swedish culture well. However, many Swedish people do not know much about Somali culture. The only information they have is often negative, coming from the media. I used to talk about my culture and celebrate sometimes. They like the Somali culture as well” (Markabo).

The respondent's experience highlights the complex process of cultural integration for both Somali immigrants and even the Swedish. However, despite learning the Swedish language and actively engaging with Swedish colleagues, the respondent encounters different results. The two efforts to adopt Swedish culture and maintain the Somali culture and religion sometimes succeed but as the respondent mentioned sometimes face challenges. A significant barrier identified by the respondent is the negative perception of Somali culture among many Swedes, largely influenced by media portrayals. The stereotype persists despite individual efforts to integrate, leading to a generalized belief that Somalis do not integrate into Swedish society. According to Dirie et al., (2013) In the discourse surrounding Somali immigrants in Sweden, there is often a narrative of blame regarding their perceived lack of cultural integration into mainstream society. This perspective overlooks the complexities of cultural adjustment faced by immigrants and fails to acknowledge the effort made by many individuals to adapt to the new environment while preserving aspects of their own culture. However, the respondent's positive interactions with colleagues who appreciate Somali culture suggest that direct and personal contact can challenge and change the negative stereotypes

(Dirie et al., 2013: 38). Yet, the broader society narratives may remain a hurdle. The respondent mentions the importance of addressing and correcting the misconception at the societal level to foster a more inclusive and accurate understanding of integration efforts by Somali immigrants.

5.3.2 Social Exclusion and Recognition.

The respondent was asked if there is an effort from the Somali immigrant side to manage and address the integration obstacles.

While the Somali immigrants feel discrimination and exclusion, there is some recognition of Somali culture in Swedish society. This is due to some steps taken by the Somali immigrants in Malmö individually and as a community. Steps taken by Somali immigrants to gain recognition and acceptance in society include organizing community organizations and running integration projects. Despite their effort, they acknowledge that more work is needed to address challenges like discrimination and promote inclusion.

“We took steps and organized in several ways both individually and as a community. However, we acknowledge that more work is needed to fully address challenges....., particularly discrimination and promote inclusion”.

The respondent repeatedly stated that Somali immigrants face various challenges in Malmö, including discrimination in housing, the workplace, education, and socially (Hayaan).

Respondents have admitted seeing some recognition of their culture, religion, and identity within Swedish society. For example, the opportunity for financial support and allowing the establishment of ethnic-based associations and running projects with activities aimed to promote cultures, social activities as well as anti-discrimination activities, demonstrates a growing acknowledgment of Somali experiences and perspectives. While some initiatives have been successful, there is still a need for ongoing efforts to promote understanding and inclusion. These explanations and examples illustrate how Somali immigrants in Sweden navigate challenges, maintain their identity, and seek recognition within Swedish society.

5.4 Integration Familiarity

When asked about what integration means to the respondent and what have their perception and experiences been regarding integration into Swedish society. The respondents expressed various perspectives. One respondent highlighted the importance of *“resettlement support to immigrants, equal rights, obligations and opportunities for all, regardless of ethnic and cultural backgrounds”*. Another one emphasizes integration as *“getting a job, first-hand accommodation and*

having Swedish friends' network within the Swedish society". "Another respondent stated integration as *"respect for differences within the limited of fundamental democratic values to which everyone in both immigrants and hosting society contributes and work together for the development of the society and the country with responsibility regardless of ethnicity and background"*. One respondent seen integration *"as creating a society inclusion and free of discrimination and exclusion"*.

The respondents also shed light on their experience and perception of integration in Malmö. They expressed the challenges and inequalities they face in achieving true integration. One respondent noted experiencing exclusion (Guure) despite the integration ideal of equal opportunities (regeringen.se). Another highlighted pervasive discrimination against migrants, Muslims, and Africans, particularly the Somali community. These responses underscore the perception and experience of Somali immigrants regarding integration and the gap between the idea of integration (based on their understanding of integration) and the reality experienced by many immigrants, where discrimination and exclusion remain significant barriers to full participation in society. Integration policies implemented at the end of 2010 and the beginning of 2011 were better than old policies. This time we noticed changes and improvements as many Somalis who arrived during this period got work and learned new skills. Almost all people I know who come to this time are employed or studying (Hayaan). The 2010 reform scored some advances in immigrant integration. It outlined changes in transferring responsibility for integrating migrants from municipalities to public employment services (PES). The transformation did not only structure the administration but also broadened policy focus and facilitated private organizations' involvement in implementation (Brännström et al., 2018: 33).

6.0 Conclusion.

The empirical findings from the interview with Somali immigrants in Malmö together with the theoretical interpretations of discrimination and integration concepts as well as the previous findings that explained both the systematic barriers and the necessary components for successful integration provided a rich context to analyze the findings and come to this conclusion.

The legal-political challenges faced by Somali immigrants, such as lengthy waiting periods for residence permits, national citizenship, and the bureaucratic obstacles in entrepreneurship exemplify institutional discrimination. Institutional discrimination refers to the embedded practices and policies within institutions that disadvantage certain groups (Feagin & Eckberg, 1980: 19). The experience of Dalmar and Dhoo with prolonged waiting time brings into line with this concept, highlighting how bureaucratic inefficiencies and systematic delays can result in uncertainty and hinder integration efforts. Similarly, the case of Hayaan's prolonged national citizenship and Geedi's difficult family reunification underscore institutional discrimination that hindered their integration process.

The socio-economic challenges, such as non-recognition of prior qualifications and labor market discrimination also demonstrate aspects of institutional and direct discrimination. Guure's unrecognized qualification highlights how systematic barriers prevent skilled immigrants from getting equivalent jobs to their qualifications and contributing fully to the economy (Reitz et al., 2014: 22). The experience of Markabo, who faces workplace discrimination due to religious attire, illustrates direct discrimination based on the visible culture and religious symbol. This aligns with Berglund's (1999) findings on labor market discrimination against immigrants, particularly women, which hinders their economic integration inclusion.

Housing segregation, highlighted by Hayaan illustrates socio-economic discrimination.

Discrimination practices in the housing market perpetuate social exclusion, limiting access to essential resources and opportunities necessary for successful integration (Esses et al., 1998: 699).

The findings from Malmö reveal that despite the idea of two ways integration and mutual adaptation from both societies, hosting and immigrants (IMO, 2019), systematic barriers and discriminatory practices place the problem of adaptation on immigrants. Schinkel's critique of integration policies which often emphasize immigrants' responsibilities while neglecting the role of the hosting society is evident in the experience of Somali immigrants in Malmö. The exclusionary policies and negative perceptions within the host society significantly influence the integration outcome. The 2010 reform aimed to improve integration outcomes by focusing on equal access to opportunities and rights. It showed a positive effect (Brännström et al., 2018: 25). However, the

persistent challenges highlighted by the respondents indicate that these reforms are not sufficient to address deeply and eliminate the systematic problems.

Finally, the perception of Somali immigrants in Malmö about the integration process is troubled with significant challenges and systematic barriers. Key elements that shaped their integration perception include experiences in institutional discrimination that are embedded with the legal and political frameworks, socio-economic barriers, including lengthy bureaucratic processes, employment and housing discrimination, and challenges in maintaining cultural identity. These obstacles hinder their integration and highlight the need for more inclusive and adaptive integration policies.

Future research is recommended studying both societies, hosting and Somalis in Malmö, but should consider more the effort and the commitment of the group to integrate. Important to explore the detailed experience considering the different factors that hinder the immigrants to integrate by investigating systematic barriers and discrimination factors. More studies giving voice to Somali immigrants and addressing gaps in existing literatures and fostering more inclusive integration policy is important.

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8.0 Appendix: -

Gramsci's outlined model with short explanation for studying Subaltern groups

1. **Beginning of their history:** - this stage involves examining the origins and early experiences of the subaltern groups, and understanding how they emerged and were initially treated within society.
2. **Their development and evolution:** Gramsci suggest studying the development and evolution of subaltern groups over time, including how their social, political economic conditions change.
3. **Their organization and growth:** This stage involves analyzing how subaltern groups organized themselves and grew in size or influence, exploring the factors that facilitate or hinder their development.
4. **Their struggle and conflict:** Gramsci emphasizes studying the struggle and conflicts faced by the subaltern groups, including their resistance against oppression and efforts to assert their right.
5. **Their articulation and expression:** This stage focuses on how subaltern groups articulate their grievances and express their identities, examining their culture, social, and political expression.
6. **Their coming to voice:** The final stage involves exploring how subaltern groups eventually find a voice and gain recognition within society, examining the process through which their perspective and experiences become acknowledged and valued.

Interview Guide

1. Your history/story.
 - a. Can you tell me little bit about you, your journey to Sweden, what prompted you to come to Sweden, your reception in Sweden as well as your integration situation into the hosting society?
 - b. Your early experiences and education before you come to Sweden and your progress under your presence here in Sweden?
 - c. What does the term 'integration' mean to you? What is your perception and experience about your integrating into the Swedish society?
2. Your personal development and evolution:
 - a. How did you evolved over time since coming to Sweden?
 - b. Have there been any significant change in your social, political or economic conditions in your life since you come to Sweden.
 - c. Have there been significant change social, political or economic conditions in the society that affected your life and future since you come to Sweden.
3. Your agency and growth:
 - a. How did you organize and plan yourself to address your future life here in Sweden?
 - b. What actions and factors do you think have contributed to the growth or hindered your plan or development in Sweden?
4. Obstacles and struggle:
 - a. Have you ever faced any struggles, discriminations or conflicts from the hosting society? If so, could you share some examples?
 - b. How have you resisted the mentioned obstacles or managed them to move forward and did the obstacles effected your future plan?
5. Culture, religion, identity and expression:
 - a. How do you maintain your culture religion and identity while performing your dailly life?
 - b. What is your opinion/ impression about your culture, religion and identity? Do they hinder or facilitate you to integrate in to the Swedish society? Explain more and/or examples?
6. Coming to voice and recognition:
 - a. Have you noticed any change in how your knowledge, culture, religion, identity, perspectives and experience are accepted, acknowledges and valued in Swedish society?
 - b. How do you think you have gained recognition or denial within Swedish society?
7. Your future plan: - after 5 years what is your plan?

END-THANKS

Participants Consent Form:

Research Title: Somali Immigrants in Malmö, Sweden: Their Perception and experience regarding the Integration Process

Researcher: - [Asad Mohamed Yusuf, Ahmed]

Introduction: You are invited to participate my Bachelor thesis research in International Migration and Ethnic Relations at Malmö University. The purpose of the study is to explore the experience and perception of Somali immigrants regarding the integration process of Sweden, particularly in Malmö.

Research Objective:

This study aims to investigate the following research question:

1. How do Somali immigrants perceive and experience the integration process of Sweden?
2. What elements have played a role in shaping their perceptions, and what can we learn from their experience in their path towards integrating in to the Sweden?

Participant Information: Participating in this study involves

- A one-on-one interview meeting with the researcher.
- Sharing your experience, perception, and challenges related to your integration process in Malmö, Sweden.
- The interview will be audio-recorded and note will be taken for accuracy and analysis purpose.

Confidentiality: All information obtained from you during this study and the interview will be kept confidential. Your identity will be anonym and your responses will be kept securely. Only the researcher, my supervisor and the examiner will have access the anonymized transcript of the recorded interview or the data collected. Only the researcher will have access to your identity.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You will not benefit directly from participating in this research. You have the right to deny or withdraw from the study at any time without providing a reason. Denying to participate or withdraw will not affect any current or future relationship with the researcher or the institution.

Contact information: If you have any question or concerns about the study, you can contact the researcher and the supervisor: Asad Ahmed (Researcher) phone 0764498742 or email aar.libaax@gmail.com

Inge Dahlstedt: Supervisor: phone: [040-665 75 57](tel:040-6657557) email: inge.dahlstedt@mau.se

Participants Consent Form:

No. _____

Research Title: Somali Immigrants in Sweden: Their Perception and experience regarding the Integration Process

Researcher: - [Asad Mohamed Yusuf, Ahmed]

Consent:

I have read and understood both orally the written information provided above. I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

Participant's Name: _____

Participant's Signature: _____

Participants phone number and e-mail _____

Date: _____

By signing this consent form, you acknowledge that you have received a copy of this form and agreed to participate the research study

Asad Ahmed (Researcher) phone: 0764498742: email aar.libaax@gmail.com

Inge Dahlstedt (Supervisor) phone: 040-665 75 57 email: inge.dahlstedt@mau.se

Researcher name and signature: _____

Participants

Number	Given Names	Age	Educatio Level	City	Occupation
1	Dalmar	48	University	Malmö	School coordinator
2	Dhoof	36	University	Malmö	Taxi-driver
3	Guure	35	High school	Malmö	Bus Driver
4	Geeddi	55	University	Malmö	Teacher
5	Hayaan	31	High school	Malmö	Teacher
6	Markabo	51	High School	Malmö	Social Worker