“I had some problems back home with a big group of people and it was not safe for me there anymore so I had to run away”

How LGBT asylum seekers move

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Abstract

Due to the increased number of the amount of asylum-seekers that have migrated to Sweden lately, the topic has received increased attention. This has contributed to housing shortage and policy reforms for new migrants to arise in order to ensure that everybody gets housing. Asylum seekers often experience more difficult patterns to housing, and for LGBT asylum seekers especially since they are such a marginalised group in our society already. Housing is an important part in the initial settlement stage and good housing enables successful resettlement and that will help with the integration process. The aim of this thesis is to look at LGBT asylum seekers mobility and what constrains and opportunities they face in that process. To answer these questions qualitative method and semi-structured life story interviews have been performed with twelve LGBT asylum seekers. The result of these interviews has been presented around four different concepts that were factors contributing to their mobility. These four concepts that were found in the interviews was forced migration, homophobia, social network and freedom. These findings should be of interest for further studies in order for LGBT asylum seekers mobility patterns to become more safe and secure.

Key Words: Residential mobility, LGBT, Asylum seeker, Migration, Forced migration, Homophobia, Social network, Freedom.

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1. Introduction

Migration is one of the great issues of our time. During the year of 2015, more people than ever before were forced to flee due to violence and persecution form all over the world. Over one million people came to Europe in hope of protection. In Sweden, over 160,000 people applied for asylum that year. You are entitled to protection in Sweden if you have a well-founded fear of persecution related to your gender, race, nationality, religious or political beliefs, sexual orientation or affiliation to a particular social group (Migrationsverket, 2016). This means that a person in danger of losing their freedom and/or life if they return to their country of origin should get asylum (Spijkerboer & Jansen, 2011).

In recent years migration studies have been change profoundly in terms of the methodical approach. It has started to be an increase in qualitative research and this is due to researcher’s interest to find links between migration, identity and belonging (Lewis & Naples, 2014; Binnie, 1996; Gorman-Murray, 2009). Despite new rich scholarship in migration with a qualitative approach that focus on identity and belonging, there has not been a lot of research regarding lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) asylum seekers (Spijkerboer & Jansen, 2011; Luibhéid, 1998; Avrahami, 2007). Lewis (2010) explains how there are thousands of LGBT asylum seekers applying for protection in Europe each year. These asylum seekers face enormous difficulties in the asylum-seeking process mostly because the people behind the national authorities often are ingrained with stereotypical assumptions, which might interpose when examining LGBT applications.

Studies on migration and non-heterosexuals have in recent years started focusing on home-making processes and how sexual identity impacts displacement and re-placement (Knopp, 2004; Gorman-Murray, 2007). Migration becomes significant to people with other sexual desires than the norm and research indicates that sexuality often plays a major role in migration decisions for non-heterosexuals (Binnie, 1996). What research has illustrated lately is that migration amongst non-heterosexuals is more diverse than was previously known (Lewis N. M., 2012; Lewis N. M., 2014). That is why it becomes ever more important to look a how LGBT asylum seekers move.

Studies concerning residential mobility and asylum seekers have mainly been focusing on minority ethnic groups and how they tend to end up living in poorer neighbourhoods (Phillips, 2010; Huttmman, 1991). Since researchers in migration studies have turned to qualitative method in recent years some researchers have started to investigate asylum seekers experience in relation to their housing and identity (Phillips, 2005; Rose & Ray, 2001). Policy makers have tended to se ethnic residential segregation in a negative way, mostly because it is liable to cause social inequality (Bolt, Öziekren, & Phillips, 2010). According to Castles (2014) when immigrants are put together in the same housing it could contribute to them being
kept out of certain areas of racism because they are living with people from the same culture, which is favoured by many since it could provide mutual support and protection. However, as this thesis later on will analyse, this aspect is mostly not the case for LGBT asylum seekers. What has been shown in the Swedish media recently is that due to the increased number of asylum seekers coming to Europe and particularly to Sweden, homophobic assaults has grown tremendously against private accommodations were asylum seekers live (Treijis, 2016; Asplid, 2016). In asylum accommodations the LGBT persons are often being viewed as the lowest cast of people and especially when they come from cultures with patriarchal structures were homosexuality is punished, sometimes with death (Spijkerboer & Jansen , 2011).

Research about residential mobility and asylum seekers has mostly been about segregated areas and poor neighbourhoods (Bolt, Özüekren, & Phillips, 2010), policy reforms for new migrants’ integration and resettlements (Phillips, 2005) or about home-ownership among former refugees (Poppe, 2013). Research about residential mobility and LGBT asylum seekers is practically none. Reasons why mobility and LGBT asylum seekers is important to study is because LGBT asylum seekers are already a marginalized group in our society, and their mobility patterns needs to be investigated in order to contribute to a reduction of homophobic assaults. Although it has been shown in media recently that homophobic assaults against the Swedish migration agency have increased rapidly, research on homophobia have been focusing on mental health consequences that homophobia has (Hein & Scharer, 2012) or research have been done on unresolved murderers and homicide linked to homophobia (Tomsen, 1993; 1994; 1997). No studies have been focusing on homophobic assaults that LGBT asylum seekers have been experiencing.

What is important to understand when studying LGBT asylum seekers and how they move is that it is not comprehensible through a heteronormative and westernized lens (Lewis R., 2010). The needs of non-heterosexual identities influence the decision to leave a place and choose to migrate to another (Gorman-Murray, 2009). LGBT migrants do not only experience discrimination from their country of origin, but also from mainstream westernized cultures where heterosexuality is the norm (Manalansan, 2006).

1.2 Research Aim and Questions
This thesis will explore LGBT asylum seekers moving pattern. Together with the interviews done with LGBT asylum seekers this thesis aims to look at what factor made them migrate from their country of origin. This thesis also aims to explore how LGBT asylum seekers find their accommodation in Sweden. In Sweden, 29 percent of the asylum seekers choose their own dwelling (Migrationsverket, 2016). Asylum seekers often experience more difficult patterns to housing, at least in the beginning of the process and for LGBT asylum seekers especially since they are such a marginalised group already. Housing is an important part in the initial settlement
stage and good housing enables successful resettlement and will help with the integration process (Murdie, 2008). The research questions that will be investigated are as follows:

- How do LGBT asylum seekers move?
- What constraints and opportunities do they face?

The life course has in recent years contributed to a new wave of studies concerning lesbian and gay men mobility patterns. The individual identity is important in migration studies (Gorman-Murray, 2009). The life course theory considers how individual subjectivities, such as: age, gender and identity work to shape different life events like migration (Atkinson, 1998). According to Lewis (2014) the life course theory has mainly been focusing on heteronormative migration but less is known about the situation concerning LGBT migrants. LGBT migration is in serious need of research contribution, and life course theory will help to acknowledge the different social, geographical and institutional contexts that will shape LGBT asylum seekers mobility.
2. Theoretical Background/Concepts

This thesis will explore how LGBT asylum seekers move, both their migration path as well as their residential mobility. Why both of these concepts will be evaluated is because why LGBT asylum seekers choose to migrate, and how they find their accommodation are interlinked. The reason for them to migrate from their country of origin has impacted their preferences in accommodation as well as how they have found the place they are living in. This section will help to evaluate different theoretical concept in order to help answer the research questions. That is why this section will help to explain different concepts allowing the result section to better be understood. Since this thesis will look at how LGBT asylum seekers move the first section will explore empirical studies on migration since it will give a wider picture to the subject. Secondly, different reasons to why people move and how these moves are affected by different factors will be explored. Thirdly, the theoretical concept of residential mobility will be evaluated. After that, previous studies on asylum seekers residential mobility will be investigated and finally this section will look at LGBT asylum and how they differ from other asylum seekers. These concepts become crucial in understanding how LGBT asylum seekers move and what constraints and opportunities they face in these moves as well as how they differ from other asylum seekers.

2.1 Empirical studies on migration

According to Samers (2010) there are several different theories to why people migrate and the concept is studied through different angles. To understand why people migrate may be explained with a process of global structural inequalities. An international migrant is someone who individually decides to migrate and live somewhere else than in their country of origin for more than three months. This means that this three-months rule would be a product from different global institutions and multilateral agreements that are concerning people with a visa or passport or another kind of freedom of movement. For instance would a migrant differ from an asylum-seeker or a refugee who often move due to war, poverty, climate change or discrimination (Castles, Miller, & Ammwndola, 2005).

Qualitative research on migration studies has increased in recent years (Samers, 2010). Why it has increased is argued by researchers to be because migration is a complex social phenomena and it is important to shed light on the complexity of the migration processes (Gorman-Murray, 2009; Milbourne, 2007; Gibson & Argent, 2008). Another dimension that has been changing within the field of qualitative research and migration studies is that migration is now understood less as a universal response to economic and demographic pushes and pulls and instead understood with help of the individual and how the individual work in relation with for example class, gender, age, identity, sexuality (Lewis & Naples, 2014; Gorman-Murray, 2009; Mai & King, 2009).
Weeks (2007) argue that one of the most important aspects when exploring migration is its spatial definition. This means that you cannot be a migrant unless you leave your room, however it does not mean that you necessarily are a migrant just because you left your room. He explains that all migrants are movers, since all migrants move from one place to another, but all movers are not migrants. If someone decide to move to another residency, not far away from the old one and in that way could keep the same job, shop at the same stores etc., then that persons would be considered a mover, not a migrant.

Weeks (2007) continue to make a distinction between internal and international migrants. Traditionally internal migration has been viewed as voluntary, meaning the migrants choose to migrate and these choices are often based on economic factors. However, internal migrants accounts for very large proportions of the world’s refugees. This is mostly due to boundaries in developing countries that have been drawn without consideration to ethnic and religious variations amongst inhabitants. It could also be environmental stress that has been affected different regions and especially in developing countries that make people move within a country. Internal migration is also something regarded as voluntary and Weeks describes it as follows:

“it typically means that a person has met fairly stringent entrance requirements, is entering without documents (which carries a load of stress with it), or is being granted refugee status, fleeing from a political, social, or military conflict. You can easily imagine that most kinds of international migration are apt to be more stressful than internal migration. On top of the move itself is heaped the burden of accommodating to a new culture and often a new language, being dominated perhaps by a different religion, being provided different types and levels of government services, and adjusting to different sets of social expectations and obligations” (Weeks, 2007, s. 265).

Samers (2010) also argues about the difference between internal migrants and international migrants and his view is somewhat different from Weeks. Samers states that internal migrants ”involves those who move within their own countries, for example from rural to urban areas”, while international migration is ”the act of moving across international boundaries form a country of origin (or country of emigration) to take residency in a country of destination (or country of immigration)” (Samers, 2010, s. 9). Samers continues to argue that in recent years there has been an increase in both immigration and emigration around the globe. What this thesis argues for is that for LGBT asylum seekers these two concepts affect each other, and that is why it becomes important to look at them together. Why a LGBT person choose to migrate, i.e. become an international migrant, will effect how they will later own find their accommodation i.e. becomes an internal migrant. When having to migrating to a new country, because if the person would have stayed they would have been faced
with persecution due to several factors, it will affect their residential mobility in the country of destination, which this thesis later on will clarify in the result section.

One main debate within migration studies involves the concepts of citizenship, belonging and the nation-state. Favell (2001) argues that we need to move away from nation-states since it forms the idea of a citizenship. He states that instead of looking at citizenship from the nation-state perspective we should look at it from a smaller perspective in form of wider urban areas, or we could go lower and analyse it down to households. Samers (2010) counterargument against this is that many migrants around the world have citizenship to a national state as their main goal when they are migrating. They view citizenship as a strategy. The idea of a citizenship is rather complex. It will mean that when some individuals have the formal citizenship others who do not have it get excluded. What also becomes exuding is the fact that different individuals who migrate get different kind of status in the receiving country. Individuals who migrate as students for example may get permanent residency quite fast and eventually gain nationality after a while because of for instance employment. There are similarities with migrants from outside the European Union who are living in European countries. These migrants may be entitled social benefits that are given to citizens. The same rights are not applied for undocumented migrants. Undocumented migrants often remain undocumented for decades depending of regularization programs as well on what kind of undocumented migrant it is. Their gender, age, national background will affect for how long they will remain undocumented and how hard it will become for them to gain a formal citizenship.

In many immigrant communities there is a great issue of exclusion culturally and especially within employment, housing and school. This will contribute to a lot of difficulties for migrants who try to fit in in their new society. Some migrants reject on exclusion by adapting to the new culture fully and by doing that navigating and negotiating with their own identity, while others become hostile towards their new country they are living in and reject the new countries values and culture (Samers, 2010).

Castles and Davidson (2000) argues that since many individuals feel discriminated because of their gender, class, ethnicity, race, religion or sexual orientation many nation states have tried to secure their participation and their feeling of belonging with the help of democratisation processes. However because of globalization many established Western democracies are facing challenges with the nation-state because of the increase international mobility. The growing international mobility will contribute to many individuals questioning their sense of belonging to the nation-states. It has been argued that the nation-states have started to be eroded and one of the reasons to that is because there are today millions of people with multiple citizenships and living in more than one country. Another influential factor is that the power of the governments has started to decline. Instead there are global markets, transitional corporations and pervasive international cultures that have gained more
power and influences over nation-states. This has made millions of people marginalized because it has made it harder for them to become citizens in their country of residence. There are also people who have gained formal membership but still lack rights that are meant to go with that membership. Multiple identities have contributed to weaken the cultural belonging to a political membership and Castles and Davison describes it as: “Porous boundaries and multiple identities undermine ideas of cultural belonging as a necessary accompaniment to political membership. There are increasing numbers of citizens who do not belong. This in turn undermines the basis of the nation-stat as the central site of democracy” (2000).

There are several definitions to migration and it is always changing, mostly because it is carried out by a lot of different people (migrants) under many different circumstances (Weeks, 2007).

2.2 Empirical studies on why people move
Human kind has always moved. People that are born in Sweden are moving on average 10 times per year. These moves are affected by different factors. Mobility rates are high between the ages 18-24 as well as 25-34. Why people move a lot during these phases are mostly because people move away from parental home or start their own family (Bengtsson, 1989). Later in life, mobility starts to be more rare and only 4 percent of 70-74 year olds move (Andersson, 1997). According to Fisher and Malmberg (2001) this means that mobility propensities vary over the life course. Age-specific moving pattern is not only a phenomenon that happens in Sweden but is regarded as a universal pattern. Although moving rates may differ between different countries, the patterns in industrialised countries look very similar. It has often been claimed that we are living in a world were mobility has become more common than before, however moving is a rare phenomenon and the people who do move are more often young and unsettled people. According to Hägerstrand (1975; 1993) moves is influenced by constrains and that attachment to a specific place will influence people not to move. People often have strong ties to their city of birth because of local networks, meaning they are more likely to remaining in their home region.

According to Fisher and Malmberg (2001) Sweden’s mobility peak is at the age of 21, and people who are over 35 years old rarely move. Most movers in Sweden are short distance, which allows people to maintain their job and social network. During the urbanisation era in the 1960s, many people were forced to move to urban areas where the work opportunities were. Today, most people move voluntarily and why they decide to move is because they to a large extent want to satisfy their needs. It has been argued in the political debate in Sweden that why a move in Sweden is not triggered by labour market condition is because of the social security system as well as a flat income distribution. There is also an argument against this. There are researchers who believe that because of the social security system in Sweden people would be more prone to risk moving. Researchers have also argued that because of
the high rate of dual-income household, people are less likely to move (Nilsson, 1987; Andersson, 1997). What has been shown, not only in Sweden, but in Europe as well is that mobility has become linked to age-specific events today where the majority of movers are relatively young and that moving becomes more rare the older a person gets (Fischer & Malmberg, 2001).

Moves regarding non-heterosexuals have mainly been focusing on “coming-out” moves in order to be able to be yourself in the new place and leave the homophobic place behind (Gorman-Murray, 2007; Weston, 1995). This varies over the life course. Younger non-heterosexuals have a more tendency to move in order to be able to “come out” while older non-heterosexuals are less likely to move because they are less concerned with their sexual identity and being part of the non-heterosexual community (Lewis N. M., 2014). A factor that have influenced non-heterosexuals to move, and that later on will be discussed in the result section, are discusses by Lewis (2012) to involve homophobic incidents in the persons point of origin. Such an event could trigger international migration across boarder, but it could also involve internal moves. Lewis argues that, “Studies of gay and lesbian migration have suggested that sexual non-normativity and mobility are linked in multiple ways. Noting that both sexual discrimination and sexual desire are often central in the migrations of queer people” (Lewis N. M., 2014, s. 212). Meaning that moves for non-heterosexuals could be triggered both by homophobic assaults but also by the desire to be able to live openly as a non-heterosexual.

2.3 Residential mobility
One of the key works within residential mobility was originally formulated by Rossi’s (1955) well-cited work “Why families move”. He argues that residential mobility was primarily a way of trying to adjust to the housing situation and that the moving decision was mainly affected by the life cycle. Rossi describes how residential mobility adjusts over the life course, and that housing need begins from different happenings or changes in the household cycle. He describes how there are five different causes to why people decide to migrate. These five causes are: the creation of a new household, replacement of existing households, mortality, household dissolution or moves related to work. Where the moves are optional, which they often are according to Rossi, most of the households try’s to match the accommodation of their own needs where space is the most important factor.

Another often-cited work on residential mobility is work done by Brown and Moore (1970). They argued that there is not only the housing need that will affect the moving but also changes in the environment. They are arguing that housing need as well as the environment are two major factors for residential mobility. Either you become dissatisfied with you current housing situation and therefore decide to move, or some
kind of stress arises and causes you to want to change the environment and therefore search for a new type of household.

Even though these authors have put the foundation regarding what residential mobility could mean their work has also been subjected to criticism. The family life-cycle model by Rossi is the one that has undergone most the criticism. The most responsive criticism come from Boyle et al., (1998) where they are arguing that this model is geographically dependent and also that it is dependent on time, location and cultural specifics. Because it is dependent on these things, the family life cycle will only fit into a society where white, middleclass, heterosexuals are living. A society that is heteronormative and only fit during the 1950s, because it was then it was invented. Another criticism expressed by Boyle et al., was that the life cycle is based on specific time events in one’s life cycle. It does not explain what is happening in between or before and after these specific events.

The criticism expressed by Boyle et al., could be implemented in this thesis since LGBT asylum seekers do not often follow a heteronormative life cycle; especially since the participant all have fled countries under dreadful conditions. Previous research has indicated that residential mobility among asylum seekers are often formed by networks and social capital (Poppe, 2013) and not by the classical life cycle. Other studies have also shown that residential mobility and homeownership among asylum seekers and refugees are affected by household income, neighbourhood preferences and housing prices (Massey & Denton, 1985; Clark W. A., 2003).

Research in residential mobility has shifted and today authors are more focusing on the individual, even though residential preferences still believes to be a product of household needs such as income, life course, knowledge and neighbourhood preferences, it is believed that residential preferences are a product of the individual as well (Poppe, 2013). What has been central within the research of residential mobility is that the housing market forms residential mobility patterns as well as the housing market is affected by governmental housing policies (Clark & Dieleman, 1996; Murdie, 2008). Even though these factors still are big within residential mobility research, many researchers have started to look at the individual as a major component for migration behaviour.

Dykstra and Wissen (1999) argue of the importance to put a life course approach on demographic changes and mobility, “At various moments in life, people experience events that involve important changes in the structure of their lives. These events are either the result of intentional individual choices, or are caused by other events taking place in the context in which they live” (Dykstra & Wissen, 1999, s. 5). They continue to explain what these experiences and events could be for the individual. A person could for instance chose to leave the parental home; they could choose to live alone or to start a family with someone. A person may also choose to buy a house or a small
apartment. A person could also choose to get a new job or move to another city. The individual makes all these types of decisions; the individual is the agent behind the change she or he decides to do.

Dykstra and Wissen (1999) also argue that not all decisions to move are made by the individual, it is induced by the context in which the person lives, meaning it is context dependent. Factors that could influence an individual to move could for example be to live in a bigger apartment or to move to another city because of work opportunities that are introduced by the individual’s network. There are both macro and micro levels that will influence the individual behaviour. A micro level that could affect a person to move, could for instance be that they are left by another person and becoming single and could therefore be forced to move, whether he or she likes it or not. At a macro level, social norms and institutions affect individual behaviour. For instance in early stages of the individual life, employment and education are two big influential factors. Later in life, leaving the labour market at retirement age could affect the individuals moving pattern. They are arguing that the life course approach is dependent time and place.

Other researcher that believes the individual is the driving factor in residential mobility in the life course approach is Elder et al., (2003). They have similar arguments as Dykstra and Wissen has, but they are saying that human behaviour is the most prominent factor in the life course, meaning that social norms and institutions do not have that big of a roll in how people decide to move. What strongly influence people to move are based on events that happens during the life-course. According to the life-course, big events that could happen in a person’s life and contribute to a move are events such as starting an education, having a baby, moving away from home, marrying, getting a job. These events are related to family migration, residential mobility as well as patterns of age-specific migration propensities (Warnes, 1992). A move could also be triggered by events such as ending an education, losing a job, getting a divorce or when a child is leaving home (Green, 1995).

2.4 Asylum seekers residential mobility
According to UNHCR (UNHCR, 2016) the term asylum-seeker is an individual who says that they are a refugee, but the claim they are making has not yet been evaluated. Every year there are about 1 million people who seek asylum on individual basis. When a person has sought asylum, it is up to national asylum systems to decide if the asylum seeker qualify for international protection. If the person does not qualify for international protection it often means they are sent back to their country of origin. A person may seek asylum in the country they wish to live in or they may seek asylum from outside the country and then entering the country as an asylum seeker (Samers, 2010). The decision that the national authority bases whether the individual can stay
in the country or not is based on the interpretation of the 1951 Geneva Convention and the succeeding 1967 protocol (International Committee of the Red Cross, 1994). In Article 1 it is explained that when a migrant is facing a risk of persecution if they would return to their country of origin for reasons of religion, nationality, race, political opinion or membership of a particular social group they are entitled to stay in the country they have migrated to. In some European countries, Sweden is one, sexual orientation can be added as a reason a person could get asylum (Spijkerboer & Jansen, 2011).

The topic on asylum seekers and residential mobility is relatively sparsely studied (Poppe, 2013). Research done by Hardwick and colleagues (Hardwick, 2003; Hardwick & Meacham, 2005) explains that asylum seekers and refugees have found their housing with the help of social network, often from the same ethnicity as they are. Poppe (2013) argues that there are things missing in their study. They are not looking at spatial patterns related to neighbourhoods that former asylum seekers usually move into. What they have not looked at either is how important different neighbourhoods have been for asylum seekers since these areas become associated with identity, security and stability just because there are other people from the same country of origin living there.

Philips (2006) argues that newly arrived migrants have to depend upon private renting or friends and families in order to find housing. Asylum seekers residential mobility is often poor. Since they are already in a marginalised position it becomes easier for the private rental sector to take advantage of them and offer housing that sometimes could be unacceptable and dangerous for the asylum seeker in terms of fire risk and danger to their health. The housing experience amongst many newly arrived migrants is often unstable. Accommodation in the early stage of housing is likely to be short-term rental agreements or to live with friends and family members. Migrants are in general more likely to be exposed by racist harassments that could occur in their early accommodation stage. Since LGBT asylum seekers residential mobility patterns have not been studied before, their experience is yet unknown as well as how they move and why. That is why this thesis will use qualitative studies since it helps to acknowledge how LGBT asylum seekers experience their early accommodation in Sweden.

The Swedish Migration Agency (SMA) has two different kinds of accommodations. SMA will offer you accommodation during your asylum process, normally an apartment with other asylum seekers. Another option is that you arrange your own accommodation, and that is called EBO (“Eget boende”). This paper aims to look at accommodations that the LGBT asylum seekers have arranged by themselves, i.e. EBO. This becomes an important issue to research because it is here that conflicts may occur. Private accommodations are often found with people from the same country of origin. LGBT asylum seekers could have fled their country of origin because they were exposed to homophobic incidents. This means that homophobic
assault against them could continue to happen in these kinds of private accommodation in Sweden (Migrationsverket, 2016b). It is also an important issue to study since the homophobic assaults that may occur at EBO will be hard to know about since it happens behind closed doors and is often hard to find out about.

2.5 Empirical studies on LGBT asylum seekers
Spijkerboer and Jansen (2011) have written a report where they are comparing different European countries asylum processes for those individuals who are seeking asylum on the basis of sexual orientation. In their report they have identified 8 problematic findings in the asylum seeking process for LGBT asylum seekers. The first (1) category describes the issue of criminalization. In many countries being a LGBT person is illegal and sometimes punished by death. This means that a person seeking asylum from such a country should get asylum. However, due to lack of information in many European countries LGBT persons have been denied asylum when applied because of the lack of knowledge about the law in countries around the globe. The second problem identified (2) is called “state protection against non-state protection”. LGBT persons may be subjected to persecution from actors not related to the state, like family members, neighbours, gangs and should therefore be entitled protection. In cases where this happens it will be quite unlikely that they will get protection from their own state since the culture in these countries is often very homophobic. Many European countries are also using the concealment (3) argument when denying LGBT person asylum. This mean the migration agency have acknowledged the risk of persecution for the LGBT person but believes that they still could live in their country of origin if they stay discrete about their sexual orientation meaning they should go back “living in the closet”. The fourth argument is called internal protection (4) argument. This argument states that the asylum authorities believe that the LGBT person could live in another part of the country and are therefore refusing them international protection. However, if a person feels a well-founded fear of persecution from non-state actors it not specific to one region of the country of origin.

There is also a credibility issue (5). The justification of this is often that the asylum authorities do not think the LGBT asylum seekers match the western stereotype of a lesbian or a gay man. According Luibhéid’s many research articles (1998; 2008a; 2008b) the view among several asylum authorities is that lesbian and gay men are easily defined on the basis of appearance, and if the person searching for asylum does not match that appearance it becomes significantly harder for them to get asylum. This marks out one common type of homophobia amongst many asylum authorities. Spijkerboer and Jansen (2011) continue by addressing the issue of late disclosure (6). It is a common phenomenon that applicants disclose their sexual orientation quite late in the asylum procedure. When they reveal their sexual orientation late in the process it often leads to caution or disbelief by asylum authorities. There is also lack of
knowledge concerning country of origin information (7). To have knowledge about the country of origin is crucial for the determination of asylum claims. The information should not only concern information about facts regarding the criminal law it should also include cultural knowledge about the view of LGBT persons. The last claim they make are about the reception (8) in the European countries. It has happened that LGBT asylum applicants have faced homophobic assaults from the asylum authorities. The asylum authorities should be aware that LGBT applicants might need specific needs and make sure they always get these, specific procedures and guidelines needs to be developed and followed. One appropriate measure includes appropriate housing where they would feel safe from both the people who live there, and also from homophobic staff at the reception of asylum seekers.

Research about residential mobility and asylum seekers has mostly been about segregated areas and poor neighbourhoods (Bolt, Özüekren, & Phillips, 2010), policy reforms for new migrants’ integration and resettlements (Phillips, 2005) or about home-ownership among former refugees (Poppe, 2013). This thesis will look at how LGBT asylum seekers move, since that is something that has not been research before, and due to the problematic experience many of them have had it becomes significant to look at it.

Another problem at migration authorities is that despite the increased prominence of LGBT asylum seekers, nobody knows exactly how many persons there are applying for asylum on the grounds of sexual orientation in Sweden each year. There is also little known about the conditions from which they have fled (Hojem, 2009). Spijkerboer and Jansen (2011) explains how LGBT asylum seekers continue to face harm because of their sexual orientation even in their receiving country, and this is mostly because they are forced to live with people who come from the same homophobic cultures from which they have fled. This could be changed if the asylum authorities would have more information on gender-related persecutions in the asylum seekers country of origin.

2.6 Summary
This section has discussed different theoretical concepts in order for the reader to get a better understanding about LGBT asylum seekers mobility and what difficulties and constrains they might face in that process. These theoretical concepts where described in order to show that previous research on migration, mobility and residential mobility are necessary not applicable to this study. It also becomes apparent that there is a huge gap in the research field of LGBT asylum seekers mobility and that there needs to be more contribution to this field.

Even though research on residential mobility has shifted today and become more focused on the individual and individual preferences such as income, household needs
and neighbourhood preferences the LGBT asylum seekers interviewed for this thesis were affected by other factors not expressed in previous research. Factors they have been affected by are their migration from their country of origin together with other experiences. That is why this thesis will look at their mobility, from their country of origin to Sweden, but also their residential mobility in Sweden. It becomes crucial to look at them together since this thesis is going to argue that they affect each other. Even though housing preferences excised amongst LGBT asylum seekers it was not a driving factor in their moving pattern since they did not have options to where they could live, which will be highlighted below.

LGBT asylum seekers do not follow the classical heteronormative life cycle in their residential mobility, and why it appears this way is because they often have migrated under poor conditions which affects how they later decide to move in the country of destination. Residential mobility amongst asylum seekers are often formed by other factors than the life course, and those factors could for instance be social networks (Poppe, 2013).

Dykstra and Wissen (1999) argues about events that have involved important changes for the individual and will affect how they move. It could be caused by events in a context where that individual live. As this thesis later will analyse living in a culture where you need to be discrete about whom you are in order to stay alive is a migration trigger. That trigger will later on impact the residential mobility for the LGBT asylum seeker in the country of destination rather that factors such as age, divorce and education.
3. Methods

This section describes and motivates the research design and method used in this thesis. In the first section, the research design and methods are argued for. Secondly it will be explained how qualitative research design used in this thesis will be implemented through semi-structured life story interviews. Furthermore, there will be a discussion on sampling strategies and the challenges found when sampling data. Next, this section will describe how the interview participants was found and implemented as well as the ethics surrounding life story interviews. Following comes the exploration of the use grounded theory. Finally, this section will reflect and discuss the limitations and the challenges using this research method.

3.1 Research design and Method

The research design implemented in this thesis is qualitative research design. According to Bryman (2011) the research design reflects what has been prioritized during different dimensions of the process and what has not been prioritized. This thesis aims to understand the behaviour and meaning in its specific social context and to have a temporal estimation of social phenomena in their interconnection and that is why qualitative research has been chosen. The motivation for choosing qualitative research design is that it aims to understand different behaviours within the specific field of study through the context that it is part of.

As Ritchie and Lewis (2013) argue, qualitative research aims to answer questions like “what”, “why” and “how” rather than “how many”. There are some key characteristics of qualitative research. One is that its ambitions is to provide an understanding of the social world of research participants as well as it tries to make sense and learn about social and material circumstance, their perspective, experience and history. The behaviour and meaning in its social context that this thesis will look at is LGBT asylum seekers mobility patterns and what constraints and opportunities they face.

According to Bryman (2011) what qualitative research is about is that it is concerned with words rather than numbers. Bryman outlines different features that are particularly noteworthy in qualitative research. He describes how qualitative research has an epistemological position. What he means by epistemological position is that the aim for the research is to understand the social world through examinations of the interpretation. This thesis aims to understand LGBT asylum seekers mobility, and by examination their mobility it will contribute to becoming one step closer to understanding the social world. Bryman also argues about an ontological position qualitative research has. Ontological position implies that “social properties are outcomes of the interactions between individuals, rather than phenomenon out there and separate from those involved in its construction” (Bryman, 2011, s. 380). That is
why this method have been chosen in this thesis since it is these interactions between different individuals that helps to understand LGBT asylum seekers mobility.

According to Ritchie and Lewis (2013) qualitative method has a specific role, and that role is to provide information and understanding in social research. To provide a good qualitative research study, the defining of a clear purpose becomes important, meaning that one needs to find relevant research questions in order to answer the purpose of your study. These research questions need to be both valid and reliable. The research question that the research chose to ask in a qualitative study needs to meet certain number of requirements. Some of the requirements that need to be fulfilled are that the question needs to be clear to the persons being interviewed. If the question is not clear, the person you are interviewing could get uncomfortable or may not answer your question in the right way. The questions need to be focused, but not too narrow. The researcher needs to consider whether the research question is of value and how the question can relate to already existing research. The questions also need to be feasible, given the resources available. What is important to understand when formulating research questions is that they need to be open to emergent concept and themes. This means that it is not helpful for the researcher to explain data collection, theories and ideas with the person being interviewed. Instead it is important to know that the study you are performing can be built on existing studies and knowledge and ideas.

### 3.2 Semi-structured life story interviews

The qualitative research design used in this thesis is implemented through semi-structured life story interviews. Why interviews were selected in this qualitative research method is because it highlights the agency behind human behaviour and it also helps to explain that all human beings have stories and when they are shared with others it gives them meaning (Atkinson, 1998). Semi-structured life story interviews encompass historical and contextual changes (Gorman-Murray, 2009), which are aspects that become important when examining LGBT asylum seekers experience in their mobility. According to Bryman (2011) interviewing is the most common method within qualitative design. This is mostly because there is a great interest in the interviewee’s point of view. What is specific with semi-structured interviews is that the interview is less structured; the researcher has a list of questions that could be covered during the interview, often referred to as an interview guide (see Appendix 2 for the interview guide used in this thesis). These questions may not always be asked in the same order since the interview may develop differently because the interviewer may pick up on things that are said by the interviewees. In “Semi-structured interviews and Focus Groups” Longhurst (2003) argues that this type of method has been used among geographers to collect data for many different purposes. Since this technique is more conversational and informal it will allow the participants to be more open and explain their experience in their own words.
To acknowledge the experience and agency of LGBT asylum seekers mobility pattern the interviews that have been performed are life story interviews. The life story concept helps to explain the individual’s development along social trajectories and how these trajectories differ in time and place (Dykstra & Wissen, 1999). Life story highlights the agency behind human behaviour (Elder, Johnson, & Crosnoe, 2003). Atkinson (1998) have helped to place life story interviews into a broader research and explains that all human beings have stories, every life event and situation can be shared with others and this is what gives it meaning. As a method, the life story has become a central element in qualitative studies for gathering information of one person’s life. It has become an important interdisciplinary application in how to understand a person’s life as well as understanding the individual’s role in the society.

Atkinson (1998) also describes how life story interviews stand alone in its way of carrying out in-depth studies of an individual’s life. Especially in the understanding of how an individual’s life works in a bigger context within our society. An individual’s life will be best understood with the help of the individual’s own stories. With the help of stories we become fully aware of the context and meaning of the individual’s role in our society.

### 3.2.1 Sampling Strategies and Challenges

Marshall (1996) argues that samples for qualitative research tend to be small, especially when the time limit for the paper is short. One can never be sure that random sampling of a population’s belief, values and attitudes can produce evidence for the larger mass, since the researcher’s role in the sampling process will affect who will be interviewed. People are not all equally good at doing interviews and to understand their own role as well as others behaviour. This means that the result of the sampling process is likely to look different among different researchers.

However, there are sampling strategies for social research that will make the sampling of the research more successful. Ritchie and Lewis (2013) states that sampling strategies are an important component of the research design because it will affect the usefulness of the collected data as well as the opportunity to draw wider inference. What is often used in qualitative research is non-probability sampling for the study. Non-probability sampling means that the units selected for the research will reflect the particular features of the sampled population. The study does not intend to be statistically representable, but instead it intends to represent the features of the population as a basis for the selection. The meaning of qualitative research is to develop explanation or to generate ideas about a specific topic. The samples therefore need to be relevant in relation to what is investigated.

The sample technique used for this thesis was snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is where the researcher primarily gathers a small group of participants who are relevant to the research question and according to Bryman (2011) these participant
then may know other people who have experienced similar things that could be relevant to the research. The interviews conducted for this thesis all occurred with the help of RFSL newcomers. Newcomers are a network for LGBT asylum seekers, undocumented and newly arrived people. The people who are a part of newcomers come from all parts of the world and many of them have experienced persecution in their native countries because of their sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression. RFSL newcomers are a political independent network and their goal is to influence political decisions that are affecting LGBT asylum seekers as well as to help them with legal advice and support of different kinds (Newcomers, 2015). Several interviews that were conducted for this thesis were suggestions from people who were interviewed before since many of the LGBT asylum seekers that are a part of RFSL newcomers know each other and are aware of other LGBT asylum seekers housing experience that are relevant for this thesis. This was appreciated since LGBT asylum seekers otherwise would be difficult to find. The place where most of the interviews were conducted were at RFSLs facilities in Stockholm. This was preferred since it is a safe place for the asylum seekers, as well as a private space since they sometimes are talking about things that could be difficult for them to talk about. There have been some challenges trying to find participants for this thesis. During 2015, more people than ever before was forced to flee due to violence and persecution form all over the world. Last year 160,000 people migrated to Sweden and applied for asylum (Migrationsverket, 2016). This could mean that the selection for participants will be wider than normal. However, this also meant that people who work with asylum seekers has had an unusually large reception of people and that has resulted in volunteering and heavy workloads, meaning they have been too busy to help finding participants for this thesis. Therefore the gatekeepers used for this thesis are RFSL newcomers, since it was them who could help contribute with possible participants to this thesis.

Another dilemma noticed under the sampling process and that Spijkerboer and Jansen (2011) argued for was that since same-sex sexual activities between adults are illegal in 76 countries and in at least seven of those countries punished by death, there are many LGBT asylum seekers who do not dare to tell the asylum authorities about their sexual orientation, and are therefore seeking asylum on other basis that their sexual orientation. There are also many asylum authorities that are denying LGBT persons asylum because the person seeking asylum does not match the stereotype of a homosexual. There have also been people applying asylum on the grounds of sexual orientation who have gotten rejected because the asylum authorities explains that the person have nothing to fear in their country of origin as long as they remain discrete about who they are. The discretion argument goes against the European refugee law as well as human rights law but it still occurs. What was noticed when trying to find participants to interview for this thesis was that these issues really had affected the LGBT asylum seekers. However, it made them keener to talk with me since they believe this problem needs to be changed, and talking about it was one step forward.
As Bryman (2011) argues, sampling for qualitative research is conducted to reference the goal of the research, meaning that the units selected to analyse meets the criteria to answer the research questions. The researcher does not seek to select sample to the research on a random basis. Instead the goal when sampling material for the thesis is to seek participants that is relevant for the study. This study aims to answer LGBT asylum seekers mobility and their experience of it. To answer these questions LGBT asylum seekers have been interviewed in order to find out about their experience in their mobility. The initial goal for this thesis was to focus on lesbian asylum seekers residential mobility. However, what was noticed early in the process was that it would be a lot more difficult to find only lesbian asylum seeker to interview and due to the time limit for this thesis, it would not have been possible to perform.

Glaser (1998) argues what it could mean to have previous knowledge on the subject researched about, as well previous knowledge about the people what is interviewed in the research. He argues that previous knowledge is always something that the researcher has because the society is built on normative knowledge of how you think, feel and behave. It is important to have this in mind when analysing the result since it is important to let the material speak for itself, not ones previous knowledge about the subject. Even though previous knowledge cannot bee avoided. When preforming interviews in this thesis there where some preconceptions about LGBT asylum seekers. The preconception I had was that because research (Hojem, 2009; Spijkerboer & Jansen, 2011) indicated that these people often had to flee under poor conditions because they may have been subjected by state authorities, their family or friends to physical, sexual or verbal discrimination because who they are, they would be depressed or afraid. However even though the preconception about why they had migrated what true in most cases, none of the participants showed anything but hope and gratefulness.

3.2.2 Implementation
The interviewees were invited to participate by myself at an introductory meeting at RFSL in the middle of March. At the meeting I introduced the aim of my study as well as what it will be used for, and asked the present members if anyone would be interested to participate. During the first occasion two LGBT asylum seekers volunteered to participate. After that I have kept going to RFSLs weekly meeting and asked people if they would like to participate. All the interviews were held in English except one, which was help in Arabic. Since I don’t speak Arabic a member of newcomers who were present during the interview translated it into English. Having a translator could be problematic since the translator can withhold information or change the answer of the interviewee. As Clifford and Valentine (2010) argues the translation of a text is a political one and you always need to adopt critical approaches to the translation to understand the loss of meaning when they are translated between different languages.
In this study twelve LGBT asylum seekers were interviewed. The participants are from different parts of the world and of different ages and sexual orientation (see Table 1 or the presentation of the participation in Appendix 2). The interviews lasted between 20-80 minutes and during the interviews open-ended question were asked in order for them to share their mobility pattern. All the interviews were recorded and after that transcribed by myself. Before each interview, it was explained again how the interview will be performed as well as the purpose for it. What was also explained was that anonymity is highly valued in this thesis, even though some participants did not feel the need to, they all chose their own pseudonyms. Several places have been changed in the transcript in order to ensure their anonymity. The interviews were conducted between March the 16th and the 14th of April.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age Span</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Sexual Orientation</th>
<th>Region of Origin</th>
<th>Been in Sweden</th>
<th>Place of Interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elie</td>
<td>30-40</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Gay</td>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>RFSL facilities</td>
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<td>Badr</td>
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<td>Man</td>
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<td>11 months</td>
<td>RFSL facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emma</td>
<td>30-40</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>Lesbian</td>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>10 months</td>
<td>RFSL facilities</td>
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<td>Keem</td>
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<td>Man</td>
<td>Gay</td>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>5 months</td>
<td>RFSL facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryan</td>
<td>30-40</td>
<td>Transgender</td>
<td>Gay</td>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>Church in Stockholm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shajjad</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Gay</td>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>Church in Stockholm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adnan</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Gay</td>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td>5 months</td>
<td>Café in Stockholm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rita</td>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>Transgender</td>
<td>Gay</td>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td>8 months</td>
<td>Café in Stockholm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paddy</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Gay</td>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>1 years</td>
<td>RFSL facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tarek</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Gay</td>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td>8 months</td>
<td>RFSL facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Gay</td>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>Church in Stockholm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lena</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Lesbian</td>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td>18 months</td>
<td>RFSL facilities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. The interviews and data about them
3.2.3 Ethics
What has been highly valued in this thesis is ethics. Ethics is extremely important when performing interviews, and especially with such a marginalised group as LGBT asylum seekers. Ritchie and Lewis (2013) have stressed this aspect, they write that ethics is important from early design stages to reporting and beyond during the research process. They also argue that ethical guidelines have barely changed over the years, but it has become more central and important in the research process. There are some key elements that need to be followed when performing interviews. Before, during and after the interview it is important that the researcher does not make unreasonable demands on participants or pushes the participants to talk about things they will be uncomfortable with. Participation should always be voluntary and since the participants could talk about things that is either very private or could cause some kind of harm to them if revealed, anonymity should always be respected and maintained throughout the process. Even though these aspects may seem obvious to follow when performing interviews, there are many researchers who do not always follow their own guidelines. This is not because they intentionally do not want to. Instead every principle involves a “yes but” to fit into certain circumstances. Good ethical qualitative research means that you as a researcher should be able to anticipate and respond to unexpected scenarios in a thoughtful way. During the entire process you should put the participants interest first, in every decision.

During the interviews that were conducted for this thesis there were many participants talking about scenarios that had happen to them in the past that was painful to them to remember. The strategies used for scenarios like that was never to push the participants to talk and instead clarify that they do not have to talk about things they are uncomfortable with. The interviews were also held in a facility of an organization where they can get support. Following ethical codes are important and Bryman (2011) explains that it means that the identities and records of the individuals always should maintain confidential as well as always maintain the participants right to privacy. The right to privacy is a principle that many people hold dear, and not to follow that right is regarded as unacceptable. The participants for this thesis were informed before the interview that they could choose not to answer certain questions if they felt uncomfortable with it, and they were also reminded during the interview if there were things that they became uncomfortable with. I believe that unanswered question, long silences and/or short answers also contribute to the research since it gives meaning to their experience. For example, a participant had trouble to talk about the reason why he chose to migrate to Sweden. The reason was that an “incident” happened with his family and he was therefore forced to move. This short answer and following long silence I believe gives meaning to the material since it describes how difficult it could be for a LGBT person before they migrate.

An important aspect in this paper has been that all of the participants interviewed would remain anonymous. This becomes particularly important in this paper since there are some of the participants currently living undocumented in the wait to be able
to apply for asylum again. To ensure their anonymity they all chosen their fake name, their country of origin are never revealed in this paper and instead regions have been used. I also chosen to not reveal their exact age and instead use an age span.

All of the participants in this thesis have previously been interviewed by the Swedish migration agency about similar things asked for in this thesis. This was something highlighted before starting the interview because I wanted to distinguish these initial interview with the Swedish migrating agency and the one preformed for this thesis. The interviews with the migration agency are often something considered difficult to implement and I did no want the participants to feel that in this thesis. That is why it was discussed beforehand that the interviews for this thesis is something else and they would remain anonymous and they could at any time choose to interrupt the interview.

An ethical consideration when performing interviews is the role of the researcher. During the interview meetings I represent a white European women and since majority of the research participants had trouble finding housing in Sweden I also became someone to them who might help them find housing. There were also some participants who thought that I would be able the help them get residency in Sweden. I then told them it would be difficult for me helping them with residency since I do not have these connections. All this could have influenced the answers from the participants because they perhaps highlighted some difficulties extra since they might though I would be able to help them; even though I found that most of the participants was mostly glad that they had someone they could talk to and that contributed to the thesis when they talked about their experience. The stories that I got from the interviews have been influenced by who I am who I represent to the persons I interviewed. This mean that we all become a part of the study we are doing and in that sense continue to contribute to reproducing stereotypes, however at the same time by doing this study it tries to break down stereotypes and think beyond them (Winter & Phillips, 2000). Rose (1997) argues that it is important to situate the knowledge when doing research. This means that you as a researcher never should see your material as something universal and applicable to all instance of LGBT asylum seekers experience. She is arguing that there is a specific power that comes from academic knowledge and that all knowledge is a product in its specific circumstances and that power and knowledge are inextricably connected.

3.3 Grounded Theory Data Analysis
The analysing of the data collected in this thesis has been with the help of grounded theory. Grounded theory is the most used framework for analysing qualitative data and Glaser (1998) explains how grounded theory is a systematic method that uses the creation of theory through the analysis of data. The transcripts were coded into different concepts. These concepts have helped to make sense of the material and provide the researcher a language that easier can be used as data in the research. All
the concept that are used comes from the data collected. It is up to the researcher to select these concepts so that the research questions become easier to answer. The concepts are the symbol that gives meaningful data different theoretical levels. The coding will help the researcher to sort the material, and then be able to compare and analyse data that have been collected (Guvå & Hylander, 1998) In grounded theory the sampling involves to select sources that have knowledge about the research question that you aim to answer (Bryman, 2011).

The interviews collected for this thesis were all recorded and transcribed and then coded by identifying common concepts. When transcribing I stayed as close to the spoken language as possible and therefore the transcripts contains grammatical errors as well as long sentences. When someone was unclear in the interview I have marked that in the transcript. When using the transcript in the section of analyses I have changed small parts of the text to make them more grammatically correct in order for the reader to understand it better. However, the meaning of the material is still the same that was told during the interview by the participants.

The process of the coding started at the interview situation and transcription and then continued when the process of reading the material occurred. It then continued when the comparing of the interviews started. During this section I tried to find similarities and patterns in the different interviews in order to find common narratives. I did this because I wanted to find and highlight important items that are specific for the interviews conducted but also important for the broader picture of LGBT asylum seekers mobility. When the different concepts had emerged from the material I linked the concepts with previous literature in order to be able to draw wider conclusions. As Kvale and Brinkamann (2014) argue the coding of the material could either be retrieved from theories or the material could arise from the collected data. In the beginning of the coding process the concepts arose from the collected data. However, the concepts that are used in the analysis process have been affected by previous knowledge of the literature meaning that the coding has arisen both from the data collected but also from already set theories.

3.4 Limitations
A deeper understanding of the subject would naturally be favoured, and to get a deeper understanding more interviews would have been conducted. Due to the predetermined frame of time and resources as well as the difficulty in finding participants, this was not possible for this study. This thesis focuses on LGBT asylum seekers, but it would also be interesting to look at sub-groups such as just lesbian asylum seekers mobility patterns or transgender person’s mobility patterns. Since the collection of the data for this research was all gathered with the help of RFSL newcomers one can critique that the persons that were interviewed are all identifying themselves as homosexuals. This problem is addressed by Savin-Williams (2001) who argues that sexual minority is often being categorised, either one is heterosexual,
bisexual or homosexual which may exclude people who do not identify themselves under the LGBT umbrella. There are also a lot of people who are identifying themselves as LGBT and are asylum seekers but are not a part of RFSL newcomers. However, because of the limited time for collecting data, finding LGBT asylum seekers outside newcomers would be rather difficult.

There are also LGBT people who have difficulties being open with whom they are since they fear harm from other people such as family members, friends and neighbours. The environment at RFSL newcomers is safe for LGBT persons, which make it easier to find participants for this thesis. However, what was noticed during the sampling process was that members of RFSL newcomers who had migrated to Sweden with family members had more trouble talking with me since they were afraid that information about their sexual orientation would be revealed. None of the participant who was interviewed is open about their sexual orientation with their family. Most of the persons who participated for this thesis do not have any family members in Sweden, which made it easier for them to participate. It would have been preferred to do interviews with LGBT asylum seekers who have migrated to Sweden with family members as well since it would have been interesting to see their mobility patterns. This was not possible because they were afraid to participate, even if I guaranteed their anonymity. However I believe that the participants who did contribute to this thesis also have an important story to tell.

When using this method one always needs to be aware that human people are involved. When one is asking a person to tell their story, especially a story that is assumed to be a traumatic experience to the participants the researcher needs to be aware that painful stories may be told. One also needs to be aware that memories could change, especially when being traumatic or happened a long time ago. Another problem with performing interviews is discussed by Atkinson (1998) regarding the issue of truth. How can one know that the person being interviewed is telling the truth? Atkinson explains that truthfulness is a matter of scale. He writes, “The truths of “the little story” may be valid but perhaps questionable in relation to larger social questions, such as the typicality of a particular respondent’s story in relation to others of similar backgrounds. It all depends on the interpretive context in question” (1988, p 136). He continues by explaining that there are also scales of validity for all interviews. People are not under oath when they are telling their story so one can never be sure that the entire story will be the truth. However, the story that is being told is the story the respondents want to tell, and that tells a great deal about what we really want to know.

Erel (2007) argues that a limitation when preforming a qualitative study, and is often being criticised, is the fact that it is an authority giving voice to a marginalised group. This means that it becomes a power relation between the researcher and the person being interviewed. This criticism is directed both towards the actual interview, where the person doing the interview may influence the participants when intensely asking
certain questions. The researcher could also change the meaning of the answers in the process of analysing and interpreting. But it is also important to remember that when qualitative methods are performed in the right way, it will help to explain what has happened in a person’s life and, how they experience certain events. It explores the link between subjectivity and social structures. It also gives personal identity to the people interviewed; otherwise people becoming just numbers on a paper.

3.5 Summary
This section have discussed about the research design used in this thesis. Qualitative research design will reflect what has been prioritized during different dimensions of the process. It also aims to look at different behaviours within the specific field of the context that it is a part of (Bryman, 2011). This thesis aims to look at LGBT asylum seekers and to better understand their mobility. In order to better understand their mobility semi-structured life story interviews have been used. Semi-structured life story interviews encompass historical and contextual changes (Gorman-Murray, 2009) which are aspects that becomes important when examining LGBT asylum seekers and their mobility. Why interviews were selected in this qualitative research method is because it highlights the agency behind human behaviour and it also helps to explain that all human beings have stories and when they are shared with others it gives them meaning (Atkinson, 1998). When examining LGBT asylum seekers mobility it was important to get information from those who had experiences it, and not only from previous literature.

Finding sample was difficult for a thesis, especially when it is such a marginalised group as LGBT asylum seekers. This thesis found the participants with the help of RFSL newcomers. After have gotten in contact with them and started talking to participants snowball sampling was used within this network in order to come in contact with more participants. The analysing of the data has been used with the help of grounded theory. Grounded theory is the most used framework in qualitative research and with the help of grounded theory this thesis have coded the interviews in order to find common concepts, and these concepts will be analysed in the result section below. Finally this section has highlighted limitation and ethical considerations that could arise when using this type of method.
4. Result

This part of the thesis will analyse the interviews that have been conducted. The analysis of the results is presented around four different concepts. The concepts in this section were all common elements from the interviews. These four elements will describe different factors that have influenced the participants to migrate from their country of origin to Sweden and also impacted their residential mobility in Sweden. At least one of these four concepts has been an influential factor for all the twelve participants interviewed for this thesis. Some of the participants have been affected by all four of them, others just one of them. The conclusion is that these four concepts are common feature in how LGBT asylum seekers migration pattern looks like, both when migrating to Sweden but also in Sweden. The first concept that will be presented is forced migration due to their sexual orientation. This concept becomes important because LGBT asylum seekers reason for migration often differs from other asylum seekers. The second concept that will be evaluated is homophobia and how that has been a driving factor for many of the participants, both regarding them moving to Sweden, but also in how they found housing in Sweden. The third concept is more focused on their residential mobility, since all the participants found their housing this way, with the help of social networks. The final concept looked at is freedom and how that have been a driving factor for them.

4.1 Forced migration due to Sexual Orientation

There is a great distinction between illegal migration and those individuals who migrate legally. The individuals who have migrated legally have asked authorization of the national government to live in the country they have chosen to migrate to, even if there could be some restrictions involving the right to work, or the right to bring family members. Illegal migrants or undocumented migrants are those individuals who have migrated over national borders and have not been detected by authorities. It could also be those individuals who have overstayed their visa (Samers, 2010). There is also a distinction between forced migration and voluntary migration. Forced migration is a concept that has existed a long time and movement of refugees as a consequence of war as existed as long as human history (Castles, Miller, & Ammwendola, 2005).

As Samers (2010) argues there are two types of forced migration. Firstly we have asylum seekers or refugees; they have been recognized by the international conventions that exist right now. They may be forced to flee their homes because the state authorities are not willing or are unable to protect the people who are living in their country. Why they are forced to flee could be for reasons such as conflicts because of war, there could be inner conflicts in the country. People may also be forced to flee because of persecution on the grounds of race, nationality, political opinion or if you would be a part of a particular social group. Persecution because of
your sexual orientation is under the umbrella of being part of a particular social group. The second type of forced migration is “economic migration” and they are forced to migrate due to poverty or low wages.

The people interviewed for this thesis all migrated for different reasons, some migrated legally while some came illegally. What they all have in common is that they all felt the need to move away from their country of origin because they felt a well-founded fear of being persecuted due to their sexual orientation. Most of the participants felt that they were forced to leave their country of origin, either because they wanted to express their sexual orientation openly, or because they feared being hurt, or killed if they would have stayed. Emma, one of the participants explains it like this when asked why she chose to migrate to Sweden:

**Emma** (30-40, woman): Mm (thinking a long time) I just came to seek asylum because I have problems in my country related to my sexual orientation and things happened to me and I just was forced to leave the country.

Castles (2003) discusses how forced migration has become a concern at a national-level with border controls and national security. This is mostly because forced migration has grown dramatically in recent years and the reason for that is mostly because the world has become more global due to North-South relationships in the Cold-War era. What also has contributed to forced migration in recent years is the Northern economical interest in the South. Such interest could be the trade of oil, diamonds etc. These trades may not contribute to war between the North and the South; it rather contributes to local wars beginning or already existing local wars getting prolonged. This means that these trades and investments will continue to favour the industrialized countries in the North while the countries in the South will maintain underdeveloped. What becomes contradictory is that while powerful Northern states contribute to local wars and the South being underdeveloped, the North has never tried as hard to prevent forced migration from these countries like they are now. They try to prevent it both through entry restrictions but also through containment measurements in the South. These containment measurements include humanitarian aid, peacekeeping and sometimes even military intervention. However, Castles continue to describe how the North due more to cause forced migration than to stop it, meaning it becomes contradictory when industrialized countries contributes to forced migration and then when migrants try to enter they have entry restrictions and border controls.

What has been shown in the interviews conducted is that because the North has started to prevent forced migration, the migration paths have started to be more dangerous since it becomes significantly harder for them to get entry. When I ask Tarek about his migration to Sweden and what constrains he was facing with that he answer like this:
Tarek (20-30 years old, man): I had to talk with smugglers, and that cost me 100-200 dollar. I tried that, and took the boat between Turkey and Greece and I fall down twice in the sea. After this the police caught me and they put me in jail for five days and they treat us in a really bad way because they let us sleep outside in the sun for three days.

When Tarek eventually arrived in Sweden he did not have any more money since he had to pay a lot of money to smugglers in order to save his life. This contributed to his mobility in Sweden. Both because of his money situation but also because of his well being due to how he was able to come to Sweden.

All the participants for this thesis have migrated because they could not live in their country of origin due to fear of persecution because of their sexual orientation. Many of them who have migrated to Sweden have had trouble getting asylum here and Castles (2003) describes how this has been the truth for migrants, mostly because Western countries have increased their security in order to reduce migrants entering the country. Maryan describes it as follows when I ask her about the asylum process:

Maryan (30-40 years old, transgender): Because I applied for visa to come to Sweden and they rejected it so I had to make “sambo” with her [a Swedish girl that helped her coming here] to come to Sweden. I lied, this is not good, but it was like a chance for me to save my future and also my life.

Several of the interview participants have been denied asylum because the Swedish migration agency do not believe that they are telling the truth about their sexual orientation. This means that they are forced to migrate because they have been or are afraid they will experience persecution and ill treatment because of their sexual orientation and then when they are arriving here, they are not believed. Spijkerboer and Jansen (2011) describes that creditability issues has become a major concern in most of the asylum cases concerning sexual orientation. The asylum authorities have to base their decision on whether the claim the asylum seeker does is credible or not. It has been questioned on what grounds the decision makers are basing their decision. It has often been on different assumption on how an LGBT person should behave. If the person does not behave in a certain way that matches the Western stereotype of what a LGBT person is, they may not get asylum and be sent back to their country of origin were they actually could die. Things that the migration agency could ask to see if the person applying actually is a non-heterosexual could be if they have been a part of any LGBT organisation, if they know any gay bars and when they told their family about their sexual orientation. It is very common that LGBT migrants who come here have never been in contact with any LGBT organisation, they might not be aware of gay bars in their country of origin or in Sweden and they have probably not “come out” to their family or friends because it is common it is those people they are fleeing from.
Elie is one of the participants that have been rejected because he was not believed. He described it like this.

**R:** So, the first time you applied asylum it was because you were fleeing war? How about the second time?

**Elie** (30-40 years old, man): When I came with my family I did not speak about all this stuff, sexual orientation. It was very hard inside of the family and plus it was, I did not even know about these rights and stuff like that. After this I spoke with a lawyer and that is when they made a hearing for me. And it was very hard, we are not going into details, but it was really hard because, it was very hard for me to speak about it. Anyway the immigration [Swedish migration agency] they did not help me because they were saying that I was lying. And then I gave proof for them, but then they gave me a negative decision anyway.

What is interesting here, and also common at migration agencies all over Europe is that LGBT asylum seeker are not believed because it is hard for them to talk about it. They have been forced to migrate because of their sexual orientation and it is common that they have lived “in the closet” their entire life and never talked about their sexual orientation. These people who have survived through secrecy are now forced to “out” themselves to a decision maker. These people may have to overcome stigma, shame and fear in order to get asylum and in that way protection. When an LGBT asylum seekers have trouble to talk about their orientation, it has been shown to be common that the authorities choose not to believe them because of this (Jordan & Morrissey, 2013).

### 4.2 Migration and Residential Mobility driven by Homophobia

What became clear during the interviews was how much homophobia had impacted the interviewee’s mobility pattern. Many of them tried by any means to avoid living in camp since they knew that there would be people there from the same culture as they had fled from and that made them afraid. Homophobia provokes feelings of shame to a person. It will not only contribute to an awareness of being a person that is not approved by other people, you will walk around being subject of disapproval or disgrace. What differs sexual orientating from other oppressed minority groups is that your sexual orientation is not necessarily visible and does not have to be revealed if you do not choose to tell about it. It is common that many people are living in secrecy and especially in repressive societies since telling about your sexual orientation could be life threatening, meaning that many LGBT persons will suppress their identity for a very long time. It is also commented that LGBT asylum seekers coming from countries where homophobia may be encouraged and very common, it could be hard
for them to imagine living in a country were the culture is not homophobic (Berg & Millbank, 2009).

Most of the participants had experienced homophobia in their country of origin in some kind of way. Sam describes homophobia in his country as follows:

**Sam** (20-30 years old, man): The reasons why people do not like gay in my country are not because they are Muslims, it is more because of the information that they heard about gay people. There is a misconception about gay and lesbian in my country, propaganda made by the government. We have many tourists in my country and because of this, the gay community has grown. In my culture, in my society they believe that as gay, you can make another person be gay and as a lesbian you can make another person become a lesbian and this misconception is still in the mind of the people. In my country we are 90 percent Muslim, but we are not radical Muslims. We are more liberal Muslims. Islam is not the main reason why they hate gay but it is because the propaganda is being spread. So the community do not like it, but is more lack of knowledge.

Sam is describing here how homophobia is deeply rooted in the culture of his society and that means it will be hard to avoid to experience as a non-heterosexual, if you do not choose to “live in the closet” for your entire life. Sam has been driven by homophobia because he wanted to live in another country where there would be more possibilities for him to live open as a free person. Homophobia is not just a driving factor to move to another country but also within a country (Weston, 1995; Knopp, 2004). Sam continues to describe about his residential mobility in Sweden. When he first arrived here he lived with his friend, after a couple of months Sam’s friend’s sister was coming to live with them so Sam had to move out. He then asked the Swedish migration agency for help with his housing situation, and they transferred him to a camp in the North. I ask him about his experience living in camp and he answered me like this:

**Sam** (20-30 years old, man): After some weeks, I actually had some difficulties living there as gay, because there were so many people specifically some nationalities that find that gay is not something they want to even eat with or even come close to. At one point I was even discriminated by the people that I lived with. Because when they knew that I was a bit closer to men than women they started to run away from me and even in the lunchtime they said that even if I touched them they would become gay. This is really ridiculous.

This contributed to Sam feeling uncomfortable and scared which made him to move back to Stockholm again. Homophobia or racism can become a push for people to
actually move away and migrate (Weston, 1995). This has been the truth for many of
the participants, both regarding moving away from their country of origin, but also to
get a new housing in Sweden. What also was shown amongst many participants was
the fact that when they had arrived in Sweden they had more trouble accepting
homophobic assault against them. Herdt (1997) explains this as when people have
migrated to a new country, people’s behaviour starts to change. They might not
become as accepting of certain events and starts taking actions faster because they do
not wish to go back to where they previously were. Homophobia has become one
way of structuring mobility patterns and this is because it occurs in such a high level
around the world. Almost all of my participants migrated because they did not want
to live in homophobic cultures.

R: How come you ended up here in Sweden?

Shajjad (20-30 years old, man): Actually to be honest, I had some
problems back home with a big group of people and it was not safe for
me there anymore so I had to run away.

But as Weston (1995) describes it, homophobia also contributes to local migration.
Tarek describes his time in camp in the Northern part of Sweden and how he
managed to move to Stockholm because he was scared of living in camp. When I ask
him if there have been any homophobic assault against him in Sweden he answers
me like this:

Tarek (20-30 years old, man): Yes, in the camp in XX [Northern part of
Sweden] one thing made me move to Stockholm because I could not feel
safe. We had gays there and some of them got problems like got into
fights. I know a guy who stays there now and he had a fight with another
people, he is from Iraq. They broke his nose because he was gay.

What was noticed is that homophobic assault had not actually happened to him in
that camp. He had heard that it occurred and that made him scared and to make up
his mind to move. Why many of the participants felt the need to migrate due to
homophobic assaults is argued by Waitt and Gorman-Murray (2011) to be because
uneven power relationship between people occurs. Mobility and homemaking may
be affected by the fact that you do not feel safe in the environment you are living in
because there are other people around you that start to express their power over you.
Many of the participants may also be unaware of the non-heterosexual position they
might have in a society. Waitt and Gorman-Murray continues to describe that non-
heterosexuals is often aware that their sexual desires positions them outside the
society and that means their shame, fear, and confusion might contribute to making
them move to a place where they feel they become more safe, both within a country
but also longer moves.

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4.3 The importance of Social Networks

Research on the importance of social networks is hardly new, but recently the concept has been developed due to the world becoming more globalized and the technologies have been developed which have made it easier for people to talk to each other and develop social networks. Samers (2010) argues that social networks are more than migration chains; it binds migrants together. It will help to connect migrants, pre-migrants and non-migrants within and between countries of origin and countries of destination. These networks may be based on friendship between villages, they are usually called “strong ties”, or they may be based on common perception on culture or ethnicities, which are sometimes called “weak ties”. Social networks will also help to get information about shelter, food, health care or just emotional support. As social network increases, migration has increased. This is argued to be because migrants get a broader picture of societies and this often leads to the development of migrant communities and that will in turn lead to strengthening the network within the country of destination but also between the country of origin and the country of destination. When these settlements grows and get more stable, family reunification becomes more common. What also become more common is that when a person have migrated to a new country they might want to be a member of a particular group that unifies them in their country of destination. What these groups often have in common is that the people being a part of these groups have the same ethnicity or are part of a particular religious group. The people interviewed for this thesis are all part of a network and what they all have in common is that they all are LGBT asylum seekers who have migrated to Sweden.

There is also research that argues that social networks will reduce migration and gives a less flattering picture towards it. Coyllers (2005) study on Algerian asylum seekers in the UK shown that that when social networks have increased and new migrants have started to settle in their country of destination, the UK government who have noticed the increase of Algerian asylums seekers have started to tighten the immigration policies, especially towards asylum seekers. The UK government started requiring proof of long-term financial support and that forced some migrants who were already settled, reducing their support for new co-ethnic asylum seekers, even if they knew each other from before. This meant that a social network rather contributed to reduce migration for Algerian asylum seekers than increase and help to develop safer migration.

For the participants interviewed for this thesis, social networks have been shown to be a positive experience for them since it has been with the help of social networks many of them have found their housing in Sweden. When I ask Adnan how he ended up in Stockholm after living in the North during his first period in Sweden he answers like this:
Adnan (20-30 years old, man): I was chatting with an immigrant from the same country as me and he was living in Stockholm and I was asking him for a place to rent that is why I moved. I got a place from the immigrant, a Swedish man from my country.

This shows of what Samers (2010) is calling “weak ties” were a person from the same ethnic group has helped to get housing. The person that helped Adnan with housing is from the same country of origin as he is; they did not know each other before. Because they were from the same country, he decided to help him out.

Massey et al., (1993) arguing that migration begin for a lot of reasons. It could be because you would like to increase you income, save your life, study etc. When these migrants have move, a migrant network will spread. This will mean that networks will help to reduce the cost and risk for migrants who decide to migrate after the first migrants. The first migrant that decides to move will not have any network or social ties to draw upon. This mean that their migration will cost a lot of money and finding housing will be much harder for that person. However, after the first migrant has left, the following migrants cost will be substantially lower and so it continues. Each new migrant that leaves will create a connection toward those who have not migrated and that means the migrant who decided to move becomes connected with non-migrants. This becomes clear in Adnan’s case were a person from his country of origin had migrated before him. The first migrant could then help to get housing for a person that arrived after him. That is also true for Rita; she explains it like this when I ask here how it comes she choose to migrate to Sweden from her country or origin:

Rita (40-50 years old, transgender): Because when the incident happen, I had a friend living here in Sweden, he is also from the same country as me, he has been living here for a while and he has a sambo here and he told me to come to Sweden. Rita had experienced many homophobic incidents in her country of origin and was caught by her brother which made her move because she was afraid being killed. The thing she knew before was that she wanted to go somewhere where she could be herself, but she did not particularly think of Sweden. Since she had a friend living here, that also could arrange housing for her, she decided Sweden would be the best county to migrate to.

Massey et al., (1993) continues to describe how networks will contribute to migrants becoming more willing to form groups with other ethnic or religiously similar individuals to you. Within those groups it will be easier to find comfort and help, and it will also be easier to help other people migrating to the same country that the migrant is living in. This becomes true for the asylum seekers I interviewed since they all are a part of the network RFSL newcomers. RFSL newcomers have helped them
with integrating them in the society, get housing, and get legal help. Many of the participants had also found RFSL newcomers before they decided to come to Sweden and with the help of that network; it made it easier for them to come here. Here is Emma answering why Sweden was a country of her choice:

Emma (30-40 years old, woman): I just came here, because I was working in my country so I came with some money. I had a property and a good job there. When I came here I was communicating with RFSL and tried to get help with housing from them.

Massey et al., (1993) continues to argue that these voluntary organisations get created because the demand arises when a large amount of people start to migrate. This is how RFSL newcomers were created, because they were seeing a need for LGBT asylum seekers to get support and legal advice that gets very specific when you are an LGBT person. However there are also organizations that are for-profit and created by private entrepreneurs that only will help migrants for expensive fees that are on the underground market. Many of the participants for this thesis had to pay a lot of money to come to Sweden since some of them hired smugglers to get across borders. There will always exist organizations and networks that will try to take advantage of people. Clandestine transport, arrange marriages between migrants and falsely created visas and documents are common elements in a migrants life when they are trying to run away from bad conditions.

The more migrants there are, the stronger social networks get. These networks then will contribute to organizations developing to support the migrants that arrive here. These organisations will help to sustain and promote international movements and get even more migrants to arrive here more safely. This will contribute to migration becoming even more institutionalized and these institutions will help to fix problems that the first migrants originally were facing. These problems could for instance be finding housing in Sweden for LGBT asylum seekers, since all of the participants interviewed for this thesis find it very difficult with their housing situation.

All of the participants for this thesis found housing with the help of social networks. It was either with the help of the network RFSL newcomers or as Samers (2010) argues it is the “weak ties” that helped the participants with housing, meaning people who have the same ethnicity or the same culture as the participant have helped with housing. Even though they did not know each other before, because they were from the same country they decided to help each other out. Suluzki (1998) describes how our personal social network, our family, people you work with, study connections, distant family member and friends together with good health will make you live longer. It is also argued that the personal network will affect each of the normative stages in a person’s life. Most of the life passages, from a person’s birth to their marriage and death often involve active network participation.
How active these networks are will depend on cultural aspects and gender variables. There are cultures that are deeply involved in all different stages in a person’s life, and there are cultures that barely have any involvement. It has also been shown that there is a difference between men and women in the development of networks. It has been shown that women do not benefit as much from social networks as men do. Women and radical minorities have a limited access to exclusion from interacting with networks (DiTomaso, Thompson, & Blake, 1988). When a group of people have limited access to the network sector they get disadvantages in different sectors, and that also includes restricted knowledge of what might happen in different places. There are different degrees to which a personal network can provide resources that might help you in your life (Ibarra, 1993). Why it appears that way is hard to know. What I do know is that the women interviewed for this thesis have founded their housing in the same as all the other participants, with the help of social networks.

When I ask Emma about her experience in finding housing she answers as follows:

**Emma** (30-40 years old, women): Eh, It was not easy but if you have network and if you know people that will be easier. But for a person who does not know anyone the only choice is Blocket, and I cannot say it is easy. But you now you have to know people, you have to use resources around you. It takes time, and you have your own taste on what location you need, what kind of house, how many people can be living there, you know there are a lot of criteria’s what you need for a house. It is not easy actually. I can say that I was lucky.

Social networks have been shown to be a powerful way in finding housing. It will also help to reduce cost and make find housing safer for the next coming migrant. People with a wider network have also been shown to be more likely to find permanent housing than people with smaller networks. As Massey et al., (1993) argues migrant find networks in their country of destination trough ties of similar migrants, even though they might not have known each other before. This section have been showing that migrants who have been experiencing persecution because of their sexual orientation find comfort in each other because they were able to organize and help each other in their mobility.

### 4.4 Freedom to be yourself

In the globalized world we are living in women and men who are persecuted due to their gender or sexual orientation have made a growing team of international refugees and asylum seekers. The persecutions they are fleeing from have different forms. It is common that harassment against them come from the police, family members, friends or neighbours. It could also be a belief in a society that LGBT persons are ill and should go through electroshocks and drug “treatments” to get “healthy”. LGBT persons could also live in countries where it is punished and you could be sentence to death for being a non-heterosexual. The survival of these men and women who have
to live under these conditions is depended on obtaining asylum outside their country of origin (Goldberg, 1993). It becomes a discomfort in a place where you would like to be able to express yourself and have the freedom to be a non-heterosexual and perform you sexual identify (Gorman-Murray, 2009). In the globalized world, people have become more aware that there exist other options. There are countries where one can live openly as a non-heterosexual and were it is not punished. The notion of freedom and respectability has made people to migrate (Mai & King, 2009). Rita explains how it feels to her, finally being able to live openly as a transgender and not have to hide who she really is:

**Rita** (40-50 years old, transgender): My mother is dead and my father is dead and after the death of my mother I don’t care anymore. I want to say finally because I am 45 years old and I want to spend the rest of my life to live with dignity and respect. This is what I dreamed of.

What is noticed here is that the knowledge that there are places where one can live with dignity and respect for who you are, where you can live in freedom makes Rita to decide to move. After living her entire life hiding, she decides that she does not want to live like that no longer. The freedom to be able to express your sexual orientation becomes strong and a driving factor that you decide to move.

Research on residential mobility has recently shown that there are more people living alone these days than it was before. Even though this is due to a person’s income and the housing situation were one live, the willingness to live alone amongst those individuals who may not be able to are also big. Since the participants have been living in “in the closet” or been very discrete about whom they really are, their desire to be living alone become high since that gives a fleeing of freedom (Long, 1988). Emma has been living in a small room with another family ever since she arrived in Sweden 10 months ago. She expresses this to be very frustrating. Mostly because she had a good job and good housing in her country of origin and is used to a certain standard, but also because she does not feel free in her current living situation. When I asked how Emma has been experience the housing situation in Sweden she answers like this:

**Emma** (30-40 years old, women): Very depressing and very frustrating because like just to cook in the kitchen, the kitchen must be free. When you want to talk on the phone, okay you close your door and lower your voice. Like, you I am an adult and I lived my life. But now I only go home for sleeping because I don’t want to be at home, I don’t feel free. Oh my god you know, but you know any kind of home that would be mine. Even if it would be 6 or 12 scare meters, were you feel free, you have you own bathroom, your freedom, you can talk any time, laugh or cry. The most important thing is your freedom so I really don’t care if there is a villa or an apartment; I just need my own place.
There are many expectations of the traditional family and especially in countries from where the participants from this thesis have migrated. The reactions from parents who are faced with a non-heterosexual child could be to make them undergo psychiatric treatment or to hurt them in with violence. To be able to avoid these things many distance themselves from the nuclear family in order to be able to live openly (Oksal, 2008). Wimark (2016) argues in his research about the lives of gay and lesbians from a non-Western context and how it differs from the Western experience of the importance of the nuclear family. In his research he have interviewed lesbians and gays living in Izmir, Turkey, where it appeared that for many the family represents something that will restrict them be able to live openly. It is common that the family make their child to hide their sexuality to other people. It was also shown that many non-heterosexuals had decided to disclose their sexuality in respect to their family.

Wimark (2016) continues to argue that there where families who offered economic and emotional support as well while many of the interviewed for his study concealed their sexualities from them. Even thou family can be a supportive role in someone’s life in the sense of economic and emotional support, the family can also come with constrains and that affects migration outcomes. Because many of them had to hide their sexuality it triggered them to move. One of the concepts in this thesis has also argued that when a non-heterosexual cannot live free it triggers their mobility, the desire to feel free become a goal for many.

4.5 Summary
This section has described four concepts that have been common features in how LGBT asylum seekers interviewed for this thesis move and what constrains and difficulties they face in that process. The first concept described was forced migration. This concept was investigated since all of the participants were forced to migrate because they felt a well-founded fear of being persecuted due to their sexual orientation. Since they where forced to migrate from their country of origin it was also shown that it affected how their residential mobility in Sweden looked like. Countries in the global North have started to hinder forced migration through entry restrictions which has contributed to people having to pay smugglers in order to get to the their country of destinations. This costs a lot of money and has affected many mentally, which has been shown to later affect their residential mobility in Sweden.

The second concept that was discussed was homophobia and how that has impacted their mobility pattern. Homophobia has been something the participants had to put up with in their country of origin their entire life and later became a trigger for their migration. What was shown was that some had avoided living in camp because they knew that there would be people there from the same culture as they have fled from. For many, homophobia is deeply rooted in their culture and society and previous
research indicates that homophobia becomes a driving factor to move to another country as well as in a country (Weston, 1995; Knopp, 2004).

The third concept looked at was social network. Samers (2010) argues that social networks binds migrants together and it connects pre-migrants and non-migrants between countries. Social networks helps to inform migrants about shelter and food in the new country. The people interviewed for this thesis are all part of a social network which has helped them in their residential mobility. Social networks have been shown to be a positive experience for the participants since it has been with the help of social networks many of them found their housing in Sweden. Many if the participants also used social networks when decided where to migrate. Many choose Sweden because they new someone here before, while others used Internet in order to find a “gay friendly” country where Sweden was the first that appeared.

The last concept that was used was freedom. The LGBT asylum seekers interviewed for this thesis are living in cultures where being a non-heterosexual is considered unacceptable. In the globalized world, people have become more aware that there exist other options, that there are countries where you could express yourself and have the freedom the live openly as who you are. The knowledge that there are places where you can live in freedom affects their mobility.
5. Conclusion

LGBT asylum seekers differ from other asylum seekers since they are an even more marginalised group in our society, which makes them even more important to study. They do not follow a heteronormative life cycle as Rossi (1955) would have argued. Their mobility is usually not about their neighbourhood preferences, income and where they are in the life cycle at the movement. Reasons to why LGBT asylum seekers move have been shown to be other factors. This thesis has presented previous research on why people move and different reasons and factors for it. There have for example been argued that it could both be the individual that are the driving factor for a move but there are also macro levels that could influence a person mobility such as social norms, institutions and governmental policies. Why and how an individual move are also dependent on time and place (Dykstra & Wissen, 1999). What usually influence people to move are based on big events that often happens in a person’s life. These big events could for instance be starting an education, having a baby, moving away from you parental home, marring etc. (Warnes, 1992). However these events have not been true for the LGBT asylum seekers interviewed for this thesis. First of all, the persons interviewed did not have the same opportunity as many other migrants may have since they all came to Sweden under rather bad conditions. Secondly their life pattern differs from other people’s life patterns and what influence their mobility is caused by factors such as social networks and the avoidance of homophobia.

Because the number of asylum seekers has increased in recent years many European countries have restricted their policies towards asylum seekers. They have increased their control of entry, making it harder for people seeking asylum to get entrance (Spijkerboer & Jansen , 2011). Many of the participants have had trouble coming to Sweden. Their migration has been long and hard and many of them had to pay smugglers in order to get here. This has affected their mobility pattern. Last year 160,000 asylum seekers applied for asylum in Sweden and this has contributed to housing shortage and a lot of people having to live together from the same cultures. This has contributed to many LGBT asylum seekers having to face homophobic assaults in Sweden (Migrationsverket, 2016).

This thesis had used qualitative research in order to acknowledge LGBT asylum seekers constraints and opportunities in their mobility. This was done since research on this topic never been done and their voice and needs have to be heard.

The people interviewed for this thesis all migrated for different reasons. What was found in the analysing of the result was that there are common elements to how the LGBT asylum seekers for this thesis mobility looked like and also what difficulties and opportunities they faced in that process. The first concept discussed was forced migration due to their sexual orientation. This concept evaluated how the participants had to flee their country because they feared persecution because of their sexual orientation. This mean that most of them migrated alone, which in turn will contribute
to their residential mobility here in Sweden getting harder since they do not have any social support from family and friends. The second factor that had been an influential factor for the participants in this thesis is homophobia. Homophobia has become a driving factor to move within a country for both LGBT asylum seekers but also for non-heterosexuals in general (Weston, 1995; Knopp, 2004). Some participants explained that they had avoided living in camp since there would be people living there from cultures who are homophobic, and that made them afraid. Mobility and homemaking is affected by the fact that you do not feel safe in the environment you are living in and therefore decide to move (Waitt & Gorman-Murray, 2011).

The third concept that has been an important factor for the participant’s mobility is social networks. All the participants had found their housing with the help of social networks. Social networks have been shown to contribute to help people get information about shelter, food, health care or just emotional support (Samers, 2010). Social networks have also contributed to migration becoming easier every time a new migrant arrive since that person could help the next person avoid certain difficulties that the previous migrant experienced. The more migrants arriving, the stronger social networks gets and it becomes easier to find housing, meaning it will contribute to the migrants residential mobility.

The last factor that impacted the participants’ mobility was freedom. Because being a LGBT person is illegal in so many countries and because the participants had to migrate under such bad conditions the desire to feel freedom and being able to be yourself became a goal for many of them. In a globalized world, people have become more aware that there exist other options, were one can live openly as a non-heterosexual (Mai & King, 2009). This becomes true in their mobility as well, since many of them wanted their own housing in order to feel free. The freedom to be able to express your sexual orientating becomes a driving factor in the decision to move.

However, the concepts found in in this thesis to why LGBT asylum seekers move cannot be applied to all LGBT asylum seekers in the world. It should rather be seen as a contribution to the research on LGBT asylum seekers mobility and a possibility for others to do more research on the subject.

My hope is that thesis has contributed to a deeper understanding of LGBT asylum seekers mobility and what difficulties and opportunities they might face in that process. From the interviews conducted four concepts were highlighted in order to answer the research questions but also to acknowledge problems LGBT asylum seekers are facing in their search for housing. However there still needs more research on this topic in order for LGBT asylum seekers mobility pattern to become more safe and secure.
5.1 Further research
Since research on LGBT asylum seekers mobility has not been done before, further research is necessary in order to get a deeper understanding regarding their mobility pattern. This thesis choose to look at it from the perspective of the LGBT asylum seeker, but it would also be interesting to look at country of origin information about non-heterosexuals as well as policy reforms in Sweden regarding housing to see how their mobility are affected by such factors.

This thesis has a focused on LGBT asylum seekers who currently live in Stockholm. It would become interesting to look at LGBT asylum seekers mobility in smaller cities in Sweden, or to compare and see if there where any differences between urban and rural areas.

Further research could also be done with only lesbian asylum seekers mobility in order to get a better understanding regarding their mobility. Non-heterosexual research in migration studies are dominated by gay men, as well as in this thesis since most of the participant interviewed where male. Lesbian asylum seekers are experiencing harm as a result of their sexual orientation and gender, mostly because women’s position in society are less powerful than men. In many societies women are being views as wives of men or as mothers, making lesbians even more invisible (UNHCR, 2008). There is a huge lack of research concerning lesbian asylum seekers (Spijkerboer & Jansen, 2011; Andersson, 1997; Jennings, 2010) making it even more important to contribute to it.
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Appendix 1

About the interviewees

Elie is 30-40 years old and comes from a country in the Middle East. He has been in Sweden for 10 years and has applied for asylum three times. He arrived in Sweden with his family 10 years ago and the first time he applied for asylum was because he and his family was fleeing war. They choose to come to Sweden because he has a brother who was living here at that time. During the first asylum process the war in his country of origin ended, meaning his family chose to go back and they withdrew their asylum application. Elie then chose to stay and applied for asylum again and this time on the grounds of sexual orientation. He was denied asylum because the migration board did not believe him since he did not apply on the grounds of sexual orientation the first time. His family does not know he is gay and after being in Sweden this many years he feels that it would be impossible to go back and live in “the closet”. He has been living in Sweden undocumented for a couple of years and has recently applied for asylum again for the third time, and again he applied on the grounds of sexual orientation. He is currently waiting for the decision from the Swedish migration agency.

Badr is 20-30 years old and comes from a country in the Middle East. He has been in Sweden for 11 months and was recently rejected asylum here. He came to Sweden because he had some problems in his country of origin because of his sexual orientation. His family does not know that he is gay and he wishes to live openly and that is why he told his family he would like to move to Europe to find a job. He travelled to France because his father has a friend living there. He stayed there for a couple of months but after a while he starts to be questioned by the friend of his father about why he does not find a girl to marry. He replies to the friend of his father that he would like to have a job first and that there are job opportunities in Sweden. During his time in France he has started to talk with Swedish gay people on the Internet and when the friend of his father agrees to let him go to Sweden, he travels here and directly applies for asylum in the grounds of sexual orientation. Because he has been in France and has the Dublin visa, he is rejected asylum in Sweden and told he needs to go back to France. According to the Dublin visa you have to wait 18 months until you can apply again. He is now living undocumented in Sweden and has to wait another 12 months until he can apply again.

Emma is 30-40 years old and comes from a country in the Africa. She has been living in Sweden for 10 months and has applied asylum on the grounds of sexual orientation. Because of the heavy workloads at the migration agency at the moment she has not gotten any decision yet and is still waiting for the first interview. She came to Sweden
because she had problems in her country related to her sexual orientation and things happen that made her leave her country. She chose Sweden because she had information about Sweden being gay friendly and respecting human rights. Because of her job in her country of origin she had been traveling a lot to European countries before she decided to migrate. She is currently waiting for the decision from the Swedish migration Agency.

**Keem** is 30-40 years old and comes from a country in Africa. He has been living in Sweden for 5 months and has applied asylum on the grounds of sexual orientation. He came to Sweden legally and chose to come to Sweden because he heard that Sweden respect sexual minorities and he believed he would be safe here. Where he is from being gay is illegal and life threatening. He came here by himself without knowing anybody. He is currently waiting for the decision from the Swedish migration agency.

**Maryan** is 30-40 years old and comes from a country in the Middle East. Maryan is transgender and dresses as women and when I ask what pronoun I should use, Maryan explains that it usually does not matter but if there is a choice the pronoun would be she, so that is the pronoun used in this thesis. She explains that she came to Sweden by chance. A girl from Sweden did research about transgender people in her country and after they had met they became friends and the person doing research about Maryan saw that her situation was difficult and that she was suffering. When she first applied for asylum in Sweden she did not apply on the grounds of sexual orientation and the Swedish migration agency rejected her application because they found out that she was lying. The second time she applied it was on the basis of sexual orientation and she is currently waiting for the decision.

**Shajjad** is 20-30 years old and comes from a country in Asia. He has been living here for 2 years and has applied for asylum on the grounds of sexual orientation and was rejected because the migration agency did not believe he was gay. He came to Sweden because he had problems back home and he explains that is was not safe for him to live there anymore. A friend helped him and contacted an agent who helped him to come to Sweden. His way here was long and tough. Why he chose Sweden as a destination was because the agent told him that it is either Sweden or Canada who respect people who are gay, and that Sweden is the best country, he therefore chose Sweden. He is currently living undocumented in the wait to apply for asylum in Sweden again.

**Adnan** is 20-30 years old and comes from a country in the Middle East. He has been living here for 5 months and has applied for asylum on the basis of sexual orientation. He came to Sweden illegally and together with Syrian refugees he manged to come to Europe from Turkey. Why he chose Sweden was because he searched on Google where it would be safe being gay and where gay people have rights and Sweden was the first country that came up. He is currently waiting for the decision from the migration agency.
Rita is 40-50 years old and comes from a country in the Middle East and has been living here for 8 months. Rita is transgender and when I asked Rita what pronoun would be preferred, she explains she prefers she, which will be used in this thesis. Rita chose to migrate from her country of origin since one of her family member caught her with a man and threaten to kill her. She describes that since she is 45 years old she would like to spend the rest of her life with dignity and respect. She had a friend who lived in Stockholm, Sweden and he told her to come here. The way from her country of origin to Sweden was long and dangerous and she had to pass several countries and was close to dying several times on her way here. She has sought asylum on the grounds of sexual orientation and is currently waiting for the decision.

Paddy is 20-30 years old and comes from a country in Africa and he has been living in Sweden for 1 year. He came to Sweden because he had trouble in his country of origin because he is gay and explains that he wanted to live as a free man. He worked as a lawyer in his country and had a lot of lawyer contacts around the world. They advised him to seek asylum in Sweden because they knew about his situation. Therefore he decided to come to Sweden and seek asylum on the basis of sexual orientation. He is currently waiting on the decision from the migration agency.

Tarek is 20-30 years old and comes from a country in the Middle East and has been living in Sweden for 8 months. He migrated from his country of origin because his dad died and it was not safe for him and his brother to continue to live in that country because there are different conflicts there at the moment. Firstly, he wanted to go and live in Turkey because his sister and mother is still living in his home country and he wanted to find a job fast to send them money. In Turkey Tarek and his brother decided to go to Sweden instead because the situation in Turkey at the moment is a bit chaotic. Why he chose Sweden was because he had been dreaming about going to Sweden ever since he was young because he had heard a lot about the humanity here. He also knew some people in Sweden and they had told him about the freedom they felt here. It took Tarek and his brother almost a year to travel from Turkey to Sweden and they were close to dying several times. He applied asylum on the grounds of sexual orientation and is currently waiting for the decision.

Sam is 20-30 years old and comes from a country in Africa and has been living in Sweden for almost 2 years. He describes how Sweden was not a choice for him to migrate to, but due to circumstances he had to move away from his country of origin. He wanted to travel to Holland, but because he had a friend in Sweden he decided that it would be easier for him to move here. He also knew from the Internet that Sweden is gay friendly so that made it easier for him to decide to come here. He has been rejected by the migration agency once because when he migrated to Sweden he had a transit in Spain, and because of that the migration agency decided that he needed to go back there. However, he was only in Spain for less than one hour so Spain did not want to take responsibility for him. During the time the interview occurred he was
still waiting for the decision from the migration agency, but a couple a weeks ago he
got the final decision that he can stay in Sweden.

**Lena** is 20-30 years old and comes from a country in the Middle East and has been
living in Sweden for 1.5 years. She came here with her family due to war in her
country of origin. She did not apply on the grounds of sexual orientation because she
is still living with her family and it would not be possible for her to tell them due to
cultural issues. The migration path to Sweden was long and hard for Lena and her
family and they nearly died on the boat between Turkey and Greece. She is currently
waiting for the decision from the migration agency.
Appendix 2

Interview guide

- How old are you?
- Where are you from?
- How long have you been in Sweden?
- Have you applied for asylum in Sweden? On what grounds?

- How come you ended up here in Sweden?
- How did you migration look like form you country of origin to Sweden?

- How did your living situation look like when you first arrived here?
- How did you find your first accommodation in Sweden?
- How did you experience having to find your first accommodation?

- How have your moving situation looked like in Sweden?
- How did you experience having to move in Sweden?
- What is the reason for you choosing to move and live as you have?
- Did you have another choice for accommodation than the one you ended up in?
- Would you have chosen any other type of housing if you were able to?

- Do you think there should be any change concerning LGBT asylum seekers living situation in Sweden?
- If you could choose, how would your living situation look like today?
- Is there something you would like to add?