Football as a tool for integration
Abstract

As the number of refugees coming to Sweden increases the importance of integration becomes greater. As one of the most currently important political topics the integration debate is one that continues to grow. Sports have started to be seen as a possible tool for integration. It offers a meeting place (Fundberg, 2004) where different cultures can meet and interact. However the effectiveness of sports as a tool in the integration process is still largely unknown. One of the most popular sports is football as it is a global game followed and played all around the world. As football is a team sport it makes all the players interact with each other. The objective of this study is to further understand how football affects integration. By interviewing refugee boys more information is gathered and this study can then add to the current debate. The interviewee’s answered questions to evaluate if social or cultural integration took place, as well as how football makes them feel to understand the importance football has for them. This study concludes that Football has been an important factor when it comes to learning the Swedish language. Football also played a big role in the social integration of these boys as it gave them friends and a sense of belonging. However cultural integration was limited. The results show clearly that football according to this study has been a useful tool for integration in certain areas. Further research could be made by interviewing more refugees and also by examining other sports to see what the results are there.

**Key words:** Integration, football, Refugees, cultural integration, social integration
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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction and Research Problem

In 2013 approximately 116,000 people came into Sweden from other countries (www.migrationsinfo.se, 2014). A fifth of them are Swedish citizens returning after residing abroad, meaning they have little to no need for integration. However, the remaining amount are people born outside of Sweden. For different reasons they have emigrated to Sweden, be it for financial reasons or seeking asylum. These individuals are expected to integrate into Swedish society by the government in order to become productive citizens. These expectations come both from the government but also from the host nation’s citizens. A host nation’s attitude has a big importance on integration, as a negative view on immigrant’s leads to discrimination which in turn makes it very hard for positive integration to take place (Entzinger & Biezeveld, 2003, ss. 28-29). One of the groups of immigrants arriving to Sweden is lone coming refugee children. In 2013 4000 lone coming refugees applied for asylum in Sweden. The following year (2014) that number was increased to 7000 (migrationsinfo, 2015). An alone coming refugee child is under 18 years old when they arrive to this country and as the title entails they come here by themselves with no support net to lean on. As such they are put in refugee institutions until they become 18 when they are moved to an apartment, sometimes this move can happen earlier. As these children come unassisted their journey in to the Swedish society may differ from other immigrant children their age. Which is why it is out of interest to gain further understanding of their view. In this case through their experience with football.

A key question in the previous election in 2014 and an area of increased importance is the one of integration (Rosén & Olsson, 2015). Sweden continues to receive a large amount of immigrants and refugees but there are still issues with integration and discrimination against immigrants. After 10 years of inhabiting Sweden a bit more than 60% of male and female refugees have a work (Nylin, 2015). This may seem high but considering that it has taken 10 years it shows that more can be done to improve integration as well as to try and speed it up.
The lack of jobs then shows up when it comes to housing where studies show that people born outside of Europe lives in smaller living quarters. Which is defined as less than one room per person. Studies Show that 45% of people born outside of Europe are living under these conditions compared to just 13% of natives (Andö, 2015). This shows that the lack of jobs leads to lack of quality housing. This in turn may lead to segregated suburbs out of which the most famous one is Rosengård were riots have taken place. However the issues of integration goes further than just segregated suburbs. Immigrants also suffer from social exclusion compared to native Swedes proving the existence of some form of discrimination (Bask, 2008, s. 1).

Another indicator that Sweden struggles with integration can again be found in economic integration. Here studies have shown that immigrants have a more difficult time getting promoted and they earn less than Swedes (Reyes, 2000, s. 256). When systematic injustices are in play that can hinder integration to a great extent in other areas. It can create a lack of motivation as well as a frustration towards the host nation. For there to be positive integration immigrants would need the same opportunities as the natives. As integration can be very difficult to measure these indicators gives proof that Sweden still has work to do when it comes to integration.

These are the sort of issues that the government is trying to solve. In their budget a lot of focus is given to work and equality (Integration och jämställdhet, 2015, s. 14). In fact looking at the goals for the integration budget it states “equal rights, obligations and opportunities to all no matter what ethnic or cultural background and a society free from discrimination” (Integration och jämställdhet, 2015, s. 12). These are very wide goals based on a macro level view of integration. In the budget no real explanation is given as to how this is going to be achieved other than financial aid within the work and education sector. The integration reforms and programs reflect that as they mainly concern the financial area (Integration och jämställdhet, 2015, s. 15).

The government sees work to be the greatest step in integration as it allows one to gain more control of ones own life. This is stated as being the main goal of this government in regards to integration (Johansson, 2015). However this is the final goal and the process of getting to that point differs for immigrants. Integration is a process that requires more from some than it does from others. An example being a Norwegian immigrant process is not as extensive as the one for someone from Iraq or Somalia as they already have linguistic skills that are applicable and a cultural similarity to Swedens (UNHCR, 2013, s. 9). On the opposite
side of that spectrum is lone coming refugee boys who has no linguistic skill applicable unless they know some English and has no cultural knowledge of Sweden at all. Refugees leaves their home countries and getting accustomed to a new country is an extensive challenge (UNHCR, 2013, s. 9).

In order to see a more diverse approach towards integration taken by the government one would look at the agreements made by government, value-based organisations and counties (example Växjö kommun). During a number of seminars and meetings in 2011 and 2012 these groups came up with different areas in which integration could be improved. They created 6 themes in which these 3 groups thought that integration could be improved. Language, health, housing, work and occupation, education and meeting places (jämnstäldhetsdepartementet, 2010, s. 7). Here the theme of meeting places is of extra importance as it is where current literature sees participating in football plays a part (Peterson, 2000, s. 142). These meeting places will be explained in more detail later on. However this do show that the government sees the value of participating in different organizations. Therefor finding out more about these arenas could be of help for policy makers. By learning more about different areas of integration and how it works, policies can be made to be more precise. If this is possible this can lead to a positive circle where all the different participants in the integration process start coming together. Immigrants can integrate better leading to them doing better in Sweden. This in turn generates a much more positive look on immigration for the citizens of Sweden which in turn leads to elections where there is less hostility and uncertainty towards immigrants. When this is taken out parties can focus on other agendas in order to improve the country. This also shows that integration is not a one way process. The programs made by the government plays a part as well as the mind-set of the host country’s citizens. It is not only the immigrant that has to integrate but people need to let them be able to do so by giving them a chance (Entzinger & Biezeveld, 2003, s. 28).

The study of integration for immigrants and refugees is a fairly new field of research. The field of sports and integration is very current debate and many are starting to see the role sports can play as seen by a large amount of bachelor thesis’s that the researcher found while looking though the litterateur as well as the mentioning of sport in current literature such as for example Ager and Strang that sees football as a way to build social bridges (Ager & Strang, 2004, s. 18) Therefor gathering of data is required to see if this is a field where new, more efficient policies can be made to improve integration or if focus needs to lie on other areas.
This is where this essay fits in by trying to give a larger understanding of how integration is possible by looking through the perspective of participation in sports and in this case football.

1.2 Purpose
The objective of this study is to gain further information about the integration process. The purpose is to see if football can be a tool for integration and if so what areas of integration it can effect. This will be done by interviewing young refugee boys and let them explain their experiences. By doing this the following essay will be able to add to the integration debate and by gathering this knowledge policies can be made to further improve integration in Sweden.

1.3 Research questions
- In how far did football contribute to social integration?
- In how far did football contribute to cultural integration?
- What other possible integrative impacts can football have?

1.4 Relevance
In order for policy makers to be able to create more effective integration programs more information is needed on the process in regards to what is effective. By collecting data in different areas of integration such as what a meeting place can do for integration, the process can become more transparent and better understood. This study aims to gather information and add knowledge to the debate. If the data comes back showing that football can be helpful then more specific integration plans can be made within the field in the future and as playing football is a very popular activity that could affect many young immigrants. The fact that participating in a club can come at a young age is an important factor as school is seen as the major area for integration at that age. Therefore finding more arenas is of value.

Football as a tool for integration is not a new concept in Sweden. There are studies that shows in what way football could play a part. What areas of integration football can affect the leading authors in this field agree upon. Namely football can be a meeting place for cultures to meet in a way that they would not without it (Fundberg, 2004). What is less known is how things actually turn out? Many of these points uses logic and makes assumptions of what could happen on a football field. A meeting place does not automatically lead to integration. They may get friends but they might not. They might learn the language but if they don’t have anyone to talk to all they might learn are football terms and that is good for that purpose but
cannot be seen as a linguistic improvement to any larger extent. This study tries to understand if the opportunity participation in football gives actually leads to integration. This to see if football can be an actual tool for integration.

As Sweden remains a country of immigration for the foreseeable future the importance of integration will continue. As explained football can be an area of integration. By asking these individuals about their experiences it grants more understanding on the subject and could show that organisations can improve in different ways. Integration is after all a process between actors and all the weight cannot be put on immigrants to integrate.

In order to be able to integrate feeling secure is an important part. (Ager & Strang, 2004, ss. 183-184). If football does not contribute to any of the areas of integration defined in the theory chapter. Can it still be a positive thing in the lives of these participants and in that way enable integration in other areas such as social integration? For example feeling secure and welcome may increase the chance of talking with children from other ethnicities. This is the reason that the way the interviewees feel about football is relevant to this essay.

1.5 Theoretical and methodological design.
An analytical framework for this study is created from the existing secondary literature on current integration theories. This is followed by breaking down the process in different areas of integration to further understand where football may be able to play a role. When the areas are explained a summary of previous literature on football and integration is given to show what previous scholars has found on the subject. After the summary it is explained how the questionnaire was constructed using the ideas and indicators from previous authors.

By understanding theories of integration one can understand that as a concept it is too wide for football to have an effect on all areas. Therefor the areas where it can have an effect are singled out and using definitions in these fields, which are social and cultural integration the questionnaire targets areas where it is possible football plays a part. Adding to these 2 areas of integration are also some personal feelings towards football, such as how it makes them feel and what they like and dislike.

This study is an abductive study based on a qualitative research approach. The study will gather information from written articles in order to gather information to create a questionnaire. The questionnaire will consist of open-ended questions in which the participants can give their individual perspective on their experience playing football. The data gathered will be used to answer the research questions.
1.6 Structure of thesis

Following this introductory chapter, chapter 2 is the methodology part of this study. Including how this study was created and how it was conducted.

Chapter 3 is the theoretical background of integration. It begins with examining definitions of integration. Then breaking down integration into smaller areas. This is followed by looking on football and integration. The final part is the construction of the questionnaire.

Chapter 4 is the findings. This is where the answers of the interviewees are presented.

Chapter 5 Analyses the data gathered in the previous chapter helping to understand the trends that are shown in this work and what can be understood from the answers.

Chapter 6 is the conclusion, it summarizes the results of the study as well as looks into further studies that can be made in the field of football and integration. It also explains policies that can be made to further help football as a tool for integration.

1.7 Limitations and delimitations

It is important to note that all the new data gathered is highly subjective as each of the participant’s experiences are deeply personal, however this is required in order to do the study. The researcher also has a number of assumptions and to stay completely neutral is difficult. When looking for trends it is imperative to look for clear trends and not make connections based on previous ideas on the subject but to be objective.

There is also a delimitation made on the participants. As most of the lone refugee children coming to Sweden are boys and the fact that it is also the group that the researcher has access to, that will be the chosen group of subjects for this study. They must have played football in a licensed Swedish team for at least 6 months. The reason for this is that often ethnic or cultural organisations will have their own football games, for example an afghan organisation can play football 2 nights a week. Even though they are playing they are doing so with countrymen and while there is value in that, it is not likely to aid their integration as well as playing in a licensed team. The reason for this is that it gives the subject a chance to mix with different ethnicities in the team and have some time getting to know them. Integration does not happen overnight this is why time plays a factor. The number of subjects are limited by access to interviewees and to regional institutions.

This limits the target group as there are a limited amount of homes where these children live and a lack of cooperation from some of these homes. After asking all refugee homes in the
vicinity only a few were willing to help, decreasing the participants in this study compared to what it could have been if more homes cooperated.

The reason this study only interviews boys are because they make up the majority of the lone coming refuge children. In 2014 only 19% of the children arriving where girls (migrationsinfo.se, 2015). An essay surveying the situation for girls would be an equally valid paper but due to access is not an option.

Chapter 2: Methodology

2.1 Methodological framework
Qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. (Creswell, 2009, s. 4) The process of a qualitative framework can be described in six essential steps. First, create a general research question. The second step is the selection of relevant sites and subjects. When such a place and participants are found one starts collecting data, after the data is collected the author interprets the data that will lead to a more specific research question. The last step is then to explain the findings and give a conclusion to the study (Bryman, 2013). The data gathered will consist of the information given by lone coming refugee boys. The reason qualitative data is chosen is because the amount of boys that are available for interview are limited. Therefore finding out as much as possible about their experiences grants the most extensive understanding possible for this essay of whether or not football is a tool for integration.

While being qualitative the study still requires to create questions that narrows the focus down to the process of participating in football. It is guided by football as a tool for integration. In qualitative research it is common to have this sort of lens when studying matters of race or other inequalities. (Creswell, 2009, s. 62) It is imperative to understand that the lens is not a theory being tested but a way of narrowing down a large process to find usable information.

As the data gathered by the interviews will be highly subjective to each of the participants the focus will not lie on finding individual details in which integration may have taken place. It is rather common themes that are of more noteworthy interest. If several subjects have similar experience a more narrowly defined research question can be created as the new
information helps to narrow down essential data. Not finding any trends are of equal interest as it forces research to examine the process in a different manner. As the opinions are so biased it is up to the author to try and stay as objective as possible while going through that data in order for the research to be valid. As far as the definition of integration authors, have several theories on the subject and in order to understand the process a synopsis of these theories needs to be made so that a clear understanding of the process is made. As the amount of interviews that can be made are limited the focus will be on the narratives of the subjects understanding of how they have experienced football. It is not possible for this study to gather enough data to make generalisations for all of Sweden due to its limitations. The focus lays on understanding the process better by letting the subjects give their opinions.

For this study the data will be collected by conducting a number of interviews. This is because the participants of the process are the ones with data and this it is the method that gives the most information. By the use of open ended questioning it allows the subjects the opportunity to provide on how football can be a tool for integration

The process of the study begins with examining integration. In order to understand whether or not football can play a part, it is essential to know what integration is. Following the examination, based on the information gathered on integration a questionnaire using open ended questions will be created. So that the interviewees stays on the subject while still giving his own perspective. Following the interviews the data will be examined and the author will look for themes. If some are found it may lead to a new research question in which a more specific question is asked. It may show that there are no trends in which case the study will show that football is not a tool for integration, at least not the indicators examined in this study.

2.2 Sources

For sources on integration the author used several different scholars to explain the different theories and to show many different definition of integration, however a few sources are referenced more frequently as much of their contents are applicable on this work and are useful to explain the different areas of integration.
Ager and Strang created a framework of integration that is very useful for breaking down integration into measurable indicators. It deals with all the major part of integration that are used in this essay as well as giving its own definition. This framework was the basis for their published article. Another source that is frequently referenced is *Benchmarking Integration* by Entzinger and Biezeveld. Much like the previous articles its usefulness lies in its ability to break down integration into smaller measurable indicators. It too covers all the areas of integration explained in this essay and gives a unique view of indicators that shows the importance of the role of the receiving country. These works are published and well referenced and both have high credibility. The European council report is used for giving a different view on the areas of integration as more diverse perspectives on theories gives a better understanding the process. It also explains the separation between a society based on the assimilation model and one based on multiculturalism which is crucial to build the other theories on. The definitions of integration given in the beginning of the theory chapter are all from published scientific papers as are all the authors used in the remaining of the theory chapter. While they give different accounts for the theories of integrations they are all based on science and leave little place for subjective data.

For sources on football and integration the study relied on the works by Jesper Fundberg and Thomas Peterson, two of the leading scientists in the field of sports and integration in Sweden. Both works are highly credible, and the strength with them are that they do not only explain where integration may take place but also where the challenges for sports and integration lay. In this field the sources are limited, however those used give a sufficient understanding of the debate on sports and integration in Sweden.

### 2.3 Abductive study

This is a qualitative study founded in an abductive research theory. Norman Blaikie explains abduction as: “the logic used to construct descriptions and explanations that are grounded in the everyday activities of, as well as in the language and meanings used by, social actors. Abduction refers to the process of moving from the way social actors describe their way of life to technical, social scientific descriptions of that social life. It has two stages: (a) describing these activities and meanings and (b) deriving categories and concepts that can form the basis of an understanding or an explanation of the problem at hand.” (Blaikie, 2015)
Step A in this study is understanding the experiences these boys have had while playing football, followed by B using this information to create a theory of whether or not football is a tool for integration.

2.4 The interviewees

For this study 14 boys living in 2 counties and from 5 different countries were interviewed. The boys come from Afghanistan, Algeria, Nigeria, The Congo and Somalia. Due to the fact that some do not want people to know their legal status they will remain anonymous in this study. These boys played in various divisions but all on licensed Swedish teams. All participants lived in rural or a small town area which is of importance as it meant that these types of teams often are constructed mostly out of Swedish players. As all the boys in the study explained that to be the construct of the team, mixed ethnicities but mostly Swedish.

2.5 The interviews

Some of the interviews were arranged through the work the author of this study has. The other boys were arranged through calls to their institutions as well as the cooperation of the county of Östra Göinge. There could have been more interviews conducted but many of the institutions in the surrounding area declined participation in the study. The reason these boys were chosen was because they all had played football for at least a year and they came to Sweden with a refugee status. All interviews were conducted on a one to one basis meaning there were no group interviews. This method of interviewing was chosen so that the interviewees would feel secure and were more apt to give their honest opinions without feeling any exterior pressure. Before beginning, the interviewees were given a brief presentation on the subject. As some boys were rather nervous it was explained that there were no right or wrong answers to the questions. The thing that would be of most interest was for them to be honest and try to give examples of what they thought about football and their experiences. As the subjects had been in Sweden various amounts of time, their skill in Swedish varied but all were more than capable of understanding and answering the questions. Some needed more explaining to than others but all could give useful answers to the questions presented to them. Something out of interest was that several boys gave interesting comments after the all of the interview questions were asked. Often remembering an example to a previous question.
Chapter 3 Integration and sports and integration.

3.1 Concepts and Analytical Framework
In order to understand if football can provide any function to integrating refugees it is first important to explain what integration is. There is no one accepted definition of integration that is accepted by all scholars (Ager & Strang, 2008, s. 167). The reason for this is that the goal of integration differs amongst nations creating different policies to reach different goals (Europe, 1997, s. 9). Therefore finding a true definition of integration is impossible. It is required for each scholar to construct one for him or herself. 

Integration is a complex process that can be seen from different perspectives, the following chapter will explain this process.

There are two schools of thought when nations are creating their policies of integration. Firstly it is the theory of assimilation, this is based on the idea that it is up to the immigrant to adapt to the new host country and its culture. The second theory is called the multi-cultural theory and it sees integration as a process where both the immigrant and the host nation can keep their identity. It then requires smaller adaptations from both parties in order to reach what this theory sees as integration (Bijl & Verweij, 2012, p.34).

3.2 Definitions of integration
The definition of integration given by European Union is: “integration is a two-way process in which neither group need give up their cultural identity but in which both add a shared dimension to that identity” (Bijl & Verweij, 2012, s. 34). A view that is rooted in the multi-cultural perspective of looking at integration. Sweden has also adapted the multi-cultural approach to integration. The goal of Swedish integration is: integration is a two-way process in which neither group need give up their cultural identity but in which both add a shared dimension to that identity (Bijl & Verweij, 2012, s. 35). An integrated society is when individuals with different backgrounds can coexist, keeping their identity but still functioning together. There are however limitations to the cultural identity and some values are required to be accepted by immigrants coming to Sweden. Values such as: human rights, democratic governance and equality between women and men (Bijl & Verweij, 2012, s. 35) are the core of Swedish values. In order to become integrated and fit in to Sweden, learning these norms
are essential for integration. However, the debate of assimilation compared to the multi-cultural approach is just one of many within the integration debate. As previously mentioned there is no absolute definition of integration but in order to understand the concept better one will have to see what definitions scholars have adapted.

A basic definition of integration can be found in the article “Benchmarking in Immigrant Integration”, where they define integration as such: Integration as a concept is used in many academic disciplines, of which sociology is most relevant for our purpose. Seen from a macro perspective integration refers to a characteristic of a social system, e.g. a society. The more a society is integrated, the more closely and the more intensely its constituent parts (groups or individuals) relate to one another. In recent years, the term social cohesion has become widely used as an equivalent for integration as a characteristic of a society (Entzinger & Biezeveld, 2003, s. 6). As mentioned this is a macro perspective of integration and gives an idea of what the goal of integration is, but in order to understand integration better more detailed definitions are required.

According to Ager and Strang based on their study on refugees in the United Kingdom they came to this definition. An individual or group is integrated within a society when they: achieve public outcomes within employment, housing, education, health etc. which are equivalent to those achieved within the wider host communities, and are in active relationship with members of their ethnic or national community, wider host communities and relevant services and functions of the state, in a manner consistent with shared notions of nationhood and citizenship in that society (Ager & Strang, 2004, s. 9). A definition based on equality both in actual access as well as being able for both sides to identify themselves as inhabitants of the same nation.

Another definition is given by Lori Wilkinson in her work with Canadian integration. She states: integration is a reciprocal process where newcomers are incorporated into a new society. During the process, both the newcomer and host society change as a result of interaction with one another. This change is mutually beneficial; the immigrant makes alterations to their behaviour to “fit in”, while the host society changes as a result of the incorporation of newcomers. The passage of time ensures that the newcomers and their children begin to adapt and reconcile their cultural practices, language and religion towards the prevailing culture of the host society. But work must be done to ensure the host society is ready and amenable to accepting the arrival of newcomers as integration takes place at the community level (Wilkinson, 2013, s. 1). This definition is based in the view of
multiculturalism, meaning this is the same type of integration that is the goal for Sweden’s integration programs.

For a more historic perspective on the concept of integration the definition given by Dietmar Loche gives an extensive view on the term. He says that integration has a double meaning. Firstly, he says it is a fundamental topic within sociology. He states “it is important to know how a group or a society, based on an equilibrium between its collectivising and differentiating forces, constructs its solidarity and guarantees its social cohesion.” This process first came to Western Europe after the creation of nation states and culminated after the Second World War with the economic boom (Loche, 2014, ss. 623-624).

He then states: Second, the term also refers to the integration of individuals or groups into society. Minority groups, such as workers or women, have been concerned with this process, and migrants have been one of the last groups considered. During the twentieth century, migrants were integrated into the different spheres of their ‘receiving society’, often in a linear process which differed according to national constellations (Loche, 2014, s. 624). He then explains this process further: “they (immigrants) assimilated to the core culture of a given society, experienced at least in Europe an individual upward social mobility, identified with their new nation in which they participated politically and gradually lost their community ties.” A definition more based on the principle of assimilation in which the immigrant adapt to the host nation. (Loche, 2014, s. 624)

These definitions show the diversity on the debate and what makes integration a complicated process. However all of these definitions give a more or less macro perspective of integration. In order to understand what the integration process is scholars agree upon the need to divide the subject into different areas or dimensions (Europe, 1997, s. 9). In order to measure integration in these areas there are indicators of integration. These indicators allows scholars to compare data to see if the integration processes is positive or negative. In the report by Ager and Strang they give such indicators within these areas and it is an effective tool in understanding what the different areas of integration actually entails.
3.3 Theories of integration

3.4 Legal and political integration

Legal integration can be divided into two areas. Firstly, it is the legal status of immigrants and at what rate they are admitted citizenship to their new country (Entzinger & Biezeveld, 2003, s. 35). This is controlled by the host nation and can be viewed as an indicator to see how willing the host nation are to receive immigrants. On the other hand when given a legal residence it creates the security and motivation to integrate in other areas. The second area is an indicator of how successful integration is currently. In this type of legal or judicial integration one looks into crime. It looks into such things as how many immigrants are being convicted as well as the amount of racially violent crimes (Europe, 1997, s. 21). It identifies both a general understanding of how well immigrants are settling as well as showing the attitude of the host nation towards immigrants.

Political integration has to do with participation in the political sphere. Are immigrants allowed to vote? If so how is the turnout of immigrants in elections, these are indicators of political integration. However this area also includes the participation of immigrants in politics (Entzinger & Biezeveld, 2003, s. 35). Furthermore the council of Europe explains the importance of political integration like this:” political life represents an integral part of a person's life. Besides, political participation comprises more than the right to vote or the right to be elected for political office. It also includes the right to express one's opinions and beliefs” (Europe, 1997, s. 9). As integration is founded on the idea of equality political integration is a necessary area of the integration process.

Indicators in this field could be: mean length of asylum application procedure for successful claimants, access to, and utilisation of legal and welfare benefits advice by refugees compared to general population, refugees’ reported sense of equity in access to services and entitlements, number of refugees voting in local and parliamentary elections and rates of application for citizenship by refugees (Ager & Strang, 2004, s. 23).

3.5 Economic integration

Economic integration is often the focus and goal for nations when they are creating integration policies. It is viewed that economic integration gives freedom to integrate in other areas. Being financially secure grants a foundation on which other areas can build upon.
Economic or sometimes socioeconomic integration is a wide field of integration. Employment is seen as the main target within the field (Entzinger & Biezeveld, 2003, s. 32). It gives the possibility to improve language as well as making new social connections (Ager & Strang, 2004, s. 14). However there are other areas that are included into socioeconomic integration. Income is another factor within this field, how much does immigrants make compared to the host population? The more equal these numbers are the more integrated a country is. Another indicator is housing where both the area where the immigrants settle gives information about the segregation in a country as well as the quality of housing immigrants have (Entzinger & Biezeveld, 2003, s. 33). A part of economic integration is having equal social rights as explained by Gertrud Neuwirth. “Access to economic rights enables immigrants to enter and compete in the labour market. Access to social rights includes eligibility for government programs, such as education in private schools, health benefits and welfare and social security schemes” (Neuwirth, 1999, s. 53). This means that education as well as access to social security are part of socioeconomic integration. The final indicator within this field is health, how healthy are immigrants compared to natives and do they have equal access to health care when they are sick? (Ager & Strang, 2004, s. 17). Socioeconomic integration is seen by many as the most important area of integration as it helps both the host nation as well as the immigrant but there are other areas that are more focused on the experience of the immigrant and tries to examine how an individual can integrate into a new country.

In a study on economic integration the barometers used were one, length and access to first employment, two income and socioeconomic status after 26 weeks in Quebec, where this study is made (Piché, Renaud, & Gingras, 1999, s. 185). These are just two out of many barometers that can be tested within this area of integration. This is also the most concrete area of integration that is the easiest to make studies based upon statistics. The article also gives a view on how economic integration should be seen stating: economic integration involves many dimensions other than income (…) measures of economic integration should include other dimensions, such as type of employment and socio economic status (Piché, Renaud, & Gingras, 1999, s. 188).

3.6 Social integration
For the European council social integration is seen to include; binational friendships, housing or outer appearance (clothing, hair styles) are as difficult to evaluate as leisure activities or
social status within a certain group of persons (Europe, 1997, s. 12). Here housing is seen as social integration while being an indicator for economic integration for other authors. The report also shares some issues with social integration: “When it comes to assessing the social integration of migrants the availability of data is one of the major problems. Almost all relevant data are the result of small-scale surveys, if they exist at all (…) therefore, statements concerning the migrants' social integration are often limited to speculations. Here the European council sees room for improvement” (Europe, 1997, s. 12).

Ager and Strang found three indicators of social integration: social bridges, social bonds and social links (Ager & Strang, 2004, s. 13). Social bridges is the indicator for socializing with people of other ethnic or religious backgrounds. The importance of this is explained further: mixing is essential to establish the ‘two way’ interaction at the heart of many definitions of integration. Creating bridges to other communities supports social cohesion, and opens up opportunities for broadening cultural understanding, widening economic opportunities (Ager & Strang, 2004, s. 18). This can occur in a couple of different ways for example participation rates of refugees in youth clubs, childcare facilities, sports clubs (Ager & Strang, 2004, s. 18) Social bonds is about the connection the immigrant or refugee has with his or her own culture. It stresses the importance of feeling a belonging within a group in society (Ager & Strang, 2004, s. 19). Social links involves participating in local governmental and non-governmental services. This is the next step after creating social bridges and social bonds (Ager & Strang, 2004, s. 20).

For a more macro view on social integration one can use the definition given by Elif Kısar Koramaz who writes: “social integration, which can be defined as the harmonious and coherent processing of the structures of a social system. The main components of social integration are equal rights and opportunities in society, shared values and trust among social systems, a sense of belonging to society, social relations, and social network” (Koramaz, 2014, ss. 49-50). This definition is helpful as it expands the concept as well as give more areas in which it is possible to actually measure integration, such as a sense of belonging.

3.7 Cultural integration
One of the indicators in this area is knowledge of the new countries culture and acceptance of the rules and norms that exists. This is a difficult indicator as the definition of culture in itself is vague (Europe, 1997, ss. 11-12). Still there are some cultural differences and norms that is
important to learn and understand in order for all ethnicities to live together in an integrated society. Knowledge of these things could also make the everyday life easier for immigrants. Cultural integration also includes practical information such as services and knowledge of benefits (Ager & Strang, 2004, s. 21).

An indicator that almost all scholars write about is language. It is important because it is required for many of the other areas of integration to work. It is required to communicate with the natives. (Entzinger & Biezeveld, 2003, s. 34) In that way being a building block to create social bridges. It is also required in order to gain employment and being able to reach economic integration (Ager & Strang , 2008, s. 182), which is the final goal. Language is fundamental for the integration process.

As mentioned before integration is a two way process and for it to be positive both parties needs to participate in a helpful way (Entzinger & Biezeveld, 2003, s. 36). Therefore it is also of interest to understand how immigrants view the natives. Have they ever felt harassed or been victims of racial abuse? This can have a negative effect on integration and that’s the reason why it is important to evaluate these instances as well as other indicators of integration.

Expanding on the thought of cultural integration being a process this is one theory of how cultural integration or assimilation takes place. It explains the process as such: “When an agent interacts with others, his behaviour is driven by two competing motives. While he wants his choices to agree with his personal preferences, his gains depend on the degree to which his choices are coordinated with those of the agents with whom he interacts. Commonality of language is the most obvious form of coordination that enhances interactions. Shared symbols, meanings, and communication rules facilitate both economic exchanges and social cooperation” (Kuran & Sandholm, 2008, s. 203). Meaning that behaviour changes because of outside norms by the new society making an immigrant act according to a new societies norms instead of the norms he was used to.

Another article breaks this down into to two questions 1) to whom do I belong? and 2) how should I behave? (Snel, Engbersen, & Leerkes, 2006). This article calls this social identity but it is for all intents and purposes a simple definition of a way of looking at the process of individual cultural integration.
3.8 Football and integration

In the article “vi vs dom” the author explains the basic ideas of how sport can be good for integration as well as balance it out with some of the issues it might have. The fields that sport can affect integration, according to Jesper Fundberg who is one of the leading Swedish authors within this field are: teams are founded on democratic values which educates young members in one of the key Swedish values of how society should be. Perhaps the biggest argument and the one used by most authors is that it is a meeting place for people with different backgrounds to speak and interact with each other. A thing that makes sport specifically football different from school is that it does not award intellectual or linguistic skills rather it awards bodily skills and technique. This can help young people that otherwise find themselves struggling in the new country to feel wanted and like they are fitting in somewhere. It is important for these young boys to feel recognized for something.

Football can also work as a break from the “real life” and it lets the person forget about their troubles and issues for a short while creating relief in his life. It is also possible for the boy to learn the language when he communicates on a regular basis with his teammates. When this happens the ability to communicate begins and it opens up a new stage of possible integration. The boy can now start to connect with his teammates more and can create a network of contacts. In the best case scenario it would allow him to make good friends that he would be with on his spare time not just during practice. It can also be good to have leaders that you can put your trust in and that can create a situation where the boy feels like he is welcome. Even if this does not happen maybe the network allows him to be able to say hi to someone in school and feel like he is not totally alone. These are two wildly different outcomes but they can both be seen as integration, the success of it is the thing that varies.

If you are very good at football it can lead to a career as a professional or a coach and that would mean that it could offer employment, while this could be great for integration it is important to realize that this does not happen for many players. Finally being a member in a football club can make you feel like you are part of something. You may play in the youth team and when/if you go and cheer for the first team you will be in a crowd where ethnicity and religion does not play a part only the affiliation of the team matters. This would be the ideal scenario but there is a risk that football will do the opposite to all of it. It may create a place where racism is strong and bullying takes place. It may take away time and attention...
from the education which is important for integration. It may create a wish for a career that is impossible, and the team may be an all immigrant team so it does nothing for your language. Therefore it is arrogant and misinformed to say that football absolutely can help integration. (Fundberg, 2004) It may provide a platform but more information is needed before an answer can be given. Another problem that sport faces with integration is that it is very hard to measure, how can you know the result? Is it the number of players? If they are treated equally within the sport? Or is it the ability sport have to connect boys to the Swedish society?

In the article by Thomas Peterson called “Idrotten som en integrationsarena” where he too sees football as tool to learn immigrant children about Swedish values and he also gives some examples of what he understands to be classic Swedish values: orderly, determined, humble and punctual are some of the thing that to him is Swedish and that are values that can be learnt through football (Peterson, 2000, s. 141). He goes on to argue that sport acts like a meeting arena for these young immigrants where they can meet others of the same age but with different background, and by meeting the host nation’s youth of the same age they may create friendships on the team (Peterson, 2000, p. 142).

Peterson also views a career in sports as a desire of many of foreign decent and often play a integral part in their plan of being employed in the future (Peterson, 2000, s. 143). Football can work as a tool of validation when other parts of life are not working out. If school is hard and you do not feel like you are learning that may cause stress but even if you are poor in the classroom you can be good at football and that can give you some peace of mind when you are playing (Peterson, 2000, s. 144). He also sees sport as a way of communicating without language skills because most of your body does the talking in sports, and you can learn things as pass and shoot after a few practices (Peterson, 2000, s. 156). This allows you to become part of a group without major communication that is something that may grow with time.

3.9 Social and cultural integration: creating the interview questions

By reading what has previously been written on the subject of football and integration as well as defining and examining the concept further it is clear that there are some areas where football could play a part. It is unlikely that it has any extensive impact on economic integration as these are still youths in school. Football is highly unlikely to affect any of the indicators in economic integration. The same goes for legal integration as it has no real impact
on getting asylum or residency. Nor is playing football likely to affect their political integration at this stage in their lives.

However it is clear that there are indicators in both cultural and social integration that football could play a role in as explained in the football and integration chapter. First in cultural integration football offers an opportunity to learn and speak Swedish. As language is a fundamental part of cultural integration this is one of the most important indicators to evaluate for this study. Indicators that are evaluated are: how much do they speak with their teammates? This to understand if language is being practiced or if the only thing being improved is understanding through hearing other teammates talk. Do they think they learn Swedish and if so what do they learn and how? There are many facets to language such as comprehension, verbal and writing. To this there are further factors that need to be taken into account. There is the construction of the team, if it is an all immigrant team perhaps Swedish is not the dominant language during practices or games. There is also the factor of time. As integration is an individual process time plays a part. Have they improved over time, and do they find that their situation in the team has changed over time? Have their relationships to their teammates changed over time?

Football also offers an opportunity to observe. Do these boys learn about Swedish culture and norms? This is also explained in the previous chapter as an essential part of cultural integration. To make it easier to come up with examples the following indicators are examined: do they notice differences between their home country and Sweden? As part of cultural knowledge do these boys learn something about Swedes? Can they learn any typical Swedish traits by observing, do they see similarities between themselves and Swedes? If they played football in their home country can they find any differences or similarities in attitudes or how football is played compared to how it is in Sweden.

Football could also have an impact on social integration. It offers a meeting place for boys to communicate and also making new friends. As written before in the “football and integration” section simply asking if football has given them friends do not thoroughly examine social integration therefore more indicators are needed such as how much do they actually spend together outside of football? Indicators are inspired by the concept of social bridges explained in the “Social integration” section previously. Using that concept but expanding on the idea of how and where they meet further indicators have been created: do they spend time with both immigrants and Swedes? Have they actually been to their teammate’s place of residence or have the teammates visited them? Do they view their fellow
players as actual friends or just teammates that they play football with as well as examining if they have their best friends in the team or outside of it? If it is in the team then football would appear to be important for their social situation.

Finally, this study wanted to understand if football had another effect on these kids. What does football mean to them and how does it make them feel when they play it? As written by Ager and Strang, a sense of security is vital for integration as it allows for other areas of integration to take place. These boys often have a stressful life and therefore it is important to understand if football gives them some sort of comfort, if that is the case that is equally important as the other areas of integration such as social or cultural. By understanding how football makes them feel as well as what they like and dislike it will give further information as to what importance football has for these boys. If they feel a sense of relief or if it is a way to forget about problems those are valuable aspects in the process of integration. What is the most important part of football to them? It is possible that some of these indicators can answer question that also ties in further into cultural and social integration. Given this information the questionnaire will be based on the assimilation theory as the questions try to understand how the boys have integrated into Swedish culture.

Chapter 4 Findings
As each boy has an individual story to tell many answers differed as to be expected. The interviewees played in different teams and lived in different places. However all boys were able to give an answer to every question. Several was able to give concrete examples of what they felt they had learned. There was a big difference in the duration of which the boys in this study had participated in a football team. The shortest time was around a year while the longest was around 5 years. This means that the experiences of the boys varied which gave a diversity in the answers. While some played in boy teams arranged by age, meaning under 16 or under 18 teams and other played in teams with adults in higher divisions all the subjects said that the teams were mixed with ethnicities. While they were mixed all the teams had a clear Swedish majority of players in them.

4.1 Language
All the interviewees stated that the main language spoken during practices and games was Swedish with one boy saying if he did not understand the coach would explain things in English to him. When asked about the amount of Swedish spoken during games and practices
the answers varied. This was mainly due to knowledge and confidence in language. One boy explains: “I speak a lot now. I have played for a long time now and I am the captain of the team so I have to be able to talk to everybody in order to be a leader. Sometimes when new Afghans join the team I help to interpret so that they understand, other than that I only speak Swedish” (interview #5, 2015).

Many explain it as a process. It was hard in the beginning when you do not know the teammates and are unsure about your language. After a while they started feeling more comfortable and could talk more freely. One boy explains that he “does not talk that much during games or on the field but instead he talks more in the locker room or on the bus to and back from away games” (interview #7, 2015). However not all boys felt this way saying; “I don’t really talk that much when I play I just concentrate on the game” (interview #6, 2015). However when asked if they thought participating in football had helped their Swedish they all said yes. One boy explains:” Yes it has helped very much it has helped with my understanding of the language. When I was in SFI (Swedish for immigrants) playing football was the only time I could speak Swedish with boys my own age and that was important for me” (interview #8, 2015). Several boys also said that hearing Swedish spoken in a team environment helped with their understanding and learning of new words. Another boy gives another example; “Football gave me friends that I could chat with on the internet and that helped me with my writing, when I didn’t know words my friends would help me.” He goes on with saying: “I want to become a great player and in order to become that I need to understand the tactics that the coach teaches” (interview #13, 2015).” That motivates me to learn Swedish in school” (interview #13, 2015).

The amount of Swedish that they had learnt varied, some said that it had had a great effect while other said that while it had had an impact they had mostly learned football terms such as pass and shoot. A few boys mentioned the opportunity it gave them to practice their speech. Some said it was hard in the beginning but after a while they got to know their teammates and that gave them confidence to start speaking more. Several boys said that talking in a team environment felt good and the fact that there is no mockery gave them confidence.

4.2 Learning about culture and norms

When asked if they thought participating in football had helped them learn about Swedish culture, most of the boys said yes but they struggled with giving an example. This was expected as mentioned previously defining culture can be difficult. So while most felt that they had learned, only a few could come up with examples of what they thought where
Swedish. One boy explains that he has learnt that in Sweden you have to be on time. Saying that: “in Somalia time is not as big of a deal as it is here” (interview #4, 2015). Another boy states; “I have seen new parts of Sweden by playing football for example when I played Gothia cup in Gothenburg. That tournament has a focus on fair play and respect towards each other. I learned a lot on that trip” (interview #5, 2015). A third boy said he found Sweden to be more fair; “if you train hard you get to play I started as a substitute but now I am in the starting eleven. If you miss practices you get benched no matter who you are even the best players, I like that it feels like everybody has an equal chance to play” (interview #8, 2015).

Traits they found Swedish was then: punctual, respecting each other and a sense of equality in the team. To extend the understanding of cultural learning the boys were asked if they could see any traits that where typical in Swedes, perhaps things that they found foreign to them. Or did the boys feel like they were similar to the Swedes. Most boys could not say that they had seen any particular Swedish traits and said that they felt the same as the other boys. Those that said they saw differences struggled with giving examples here as well, the only example a few boys gave was that Swedes were calmer when they played.

Finally the boys were asked if they played football in their homeland and if so could they see any differences. Only a few played organized football and most said they just played on the streets. Those who played organized could see some differences. One says; “here in Sweden you play with boys in the same age group, we didn’t do that in Somalia. It makes it fairer this way” (interview #1, 2015). Another boy states; “here players drinks and smokes that is not allowed for players back home, football is taken more serious there. I don’t really like that, I think you should be serious when you play” (interview #2, 2015). Finally one boy had another example. “When I was in Iran winning was very important so only the best where allowed to play and you had 3 substitution like professionals. Here in Sweden there is unlimited substitutions so that everybody can play” (interview #13, 2015).

4.3 Football and social skills
In order to understand the relationships that the boys had with their teammates firstly the amount of time spent together was examined. Do they only meet at practices or do they met outside of football as well? If so with whom and what do they do?

It was examined that 7 out of the 14 met their teammates while playing football or when the team was having an event such as watching a game or having team dinners or parties, these activities was widely appreciated by the boys. The other 7 said that they had spent time with
teammates outside of football. All of these 7 boys said they spent time with both immigrant and Swedish teammates. Even outside of playing the shared interest in football plays a big part in the interactions. One boy explains; “we hang out in school and sometimes we meet up and watch games or play Fifa” (interview #4, 2015). Some of the older subjects said their time with the team outside of football was mainly when they were having parties.

It is also interesting to see where the boys interact. Here a trend is evident: 10 out of 14 boys said that they had been to a teammate’s house while only 5 of 14 said that any of the teammates had been to where they live. Some of the boys who had been to a teammates house say that often it was a onetime thing like a game or a party. Only a few said that they regularly visited teammates and if they did it was just 1-3 teammates they went too. However the boys also said that the people they went home to was mixed, both immigrants and Swedes. This is explained further when they are asked about their view on the relationships they have with their fellow players. 2 out of 14 said that they had their best friends on the team and another 4 said that they had some of their best friends on the team while having some outside. The other 8 said they had their best friends outside of football. Many explain that they have a few good friends on the team but most of the teammates while friendly are just people they play football with. One boy says: “I have 2 great friends on the team and I do everything with them, one is a Swede and one is an immigrant. I don’t really talk that much to other players” (interview #11, 2015). When asked if they felt that their teammates treated them different than other Swedes all boys said no. One boy explains; “no everybody in Sweden has been nice to me, like the staff at the home for example, not just teammates” (interview #3, 2015).

Following this the boys were asked if they felt that things had changed since they started playing football. Several of the boys explained that the initial time was hard. Not knowing anyone and having little confidence in their language meant that they did not talk that much. However after a while they started to get to know their teammates and they said things improved. Then talking became less embarrassing and that was when the boys said they really started to speak better. Then they could talk with their teammates more freely and about other things then just football. However one boy had a different experience; ”I thought it was better in the beginning because then everybody was curious about you and who you are so they talked to you. That forced me to talk and that helped me, however now I am just one in the team so I talk less and sometimes I feel like they forget about me and don’t invite me to all the things they do together” (interview #7, 2015). Other boys where neutral on this subject.
saying that nothing had really changed. “They were nice to me when I started and they are still nice to me” (interview #1, 2015).

These were the findings where the traditional indicators of integration were used. The next part of the findings is about what football means to these boys as well as how it makes them feel.

4.4 Other functions of football

Firstly the boys where asked why they played football, several reasons were given. Some said simply because they thought it was fun. A few said that they always wanted to play but they could not play in their home country but now they could. Several mentioned the importance of exercising and that football was a great way of staying in good shape. Many of them said they started playing so they could meet new friends. To further understand their experiences the boys were asked what they liked about football as well as things they did not like. Several boys answered exercising and meeting friends. They also said that playing football makes them feel good. One boy states: “It is fun to score and celebrates with the team, when I score I feel like I am part of a team and that means a lot to me” (interview #10, 2015). Several boys said they like playing because that could lead to them becoming professional football players. One boy has a different view: “In my situation I cannot do many things as I have not been granted residency here I cannot work so football is all I have. It lets me show people that I am good at something and I hope if I play well enough a club will sign me and maybe that could lead to me getting residency here in Sweden” (interview #7, 2015). When asked if there was anything they disliked about football the only bad thing some boys could think of was injuries.

In order to get a further understanding into what football meant for these boys they were asked not only what they liked but also how football made them feel. It was clear that football meant different things for different boys but some themes could be found. For example several boys’ talks about the relief football brings them. One of the boys gives this example: ”Right now my family is not here and it gives me a lot of stress and I worry about it almost all of the time but when I play football I do not really think about that. I only think about football and focus on the game” (interview #12, 2015). Others said it made them happy because they got to be with friends or that it is the only thing they have to look forward to. One boy states: “I live alone in an apartment and it can get lonely. Meeting friends at practice is important for me. It helps me a lot” (interview #8, 2015). Several boys says that football has made them
more confident partly because they feel like they are in good shape but also that they have more friends as well as speak better Swedish. Important to their experience is also the way they feel about being on a team.

All of the boys said that they liked playing on a team some boys had different examples of what they thought was good. One says: "I think it is fun playing in a team, it is fun to meet friends and to feel like you are part of something it has helped me a lot" (interview #1, 2015). Another boy states: "It is good to work hard with a team to try and win because when you when it feels very rewarding" (interview #4, 2015). Another example given is: “everybody is positive and that leads to a good team spirit and that makes you feel like you belong on the team” (interview #10, 2015). One boy gives a different view than the others, he says: “It is nice to be in a team and when we are all together it is fun. However when I meet them outside of football we do not really talk or joke like we do in the team, I wish they were the same towards me outside of football like they are in the team” (interview #13, 2015). In order to see what they value in football they were asked, if they had to stop playing football what would they miss the most? Here there were two popular answers eight said they would miss their teammates, coach and the belonging they feel. Six said they would miss playing because it makes them feel good. Some added they would miss the exercise and missing out on the possibility to go pro. When asked if they had ever felt unwelcome playing football only two said they had experienced bad encounters. One said:” one time they (other team) said things about me and thought I would not understand but I did, I was angry but I just ignored them” (interview #7, 2015). Another boy tells: “A guy called me a blatte and I got mad. My teammates heard him and they stood up for me and that meant a lot to me” (interview #8, 2015).

**Chapter 5 Analysis**

As the information given in these interviews were subjective to each boy the thing of interest is to see if one can see any emerging trends. It is also not possible for this study to research if actual improvement in for example language took place. This study examines the way the boys felt about their improvements.
5.1 Football as a tool for Cultural integration

Football does not appear to be a very effective tool for cultural integration. Apart from having a strong influence in the learning of the Swedish language. Few boys could give examples of values that they had learnt. No boy could really detail any norms that seemed typical Swedish. However one positive sign was the lack of cases of feeling discriminated against. This would implicate that the team is a safe environment for these young boys which is key if there is to be any integration. Football is an area were cultural assimilation can take place as it in these cases where mixed teams. However as mentioned few felt like they were different from the group therefore they did not feel like any of their original values and norms changed over time.

Language however was an area were all boys had felt that football had had an effect. As has been mentioned language is a fundamental step in the integration process as it allows integration in all areas. It helps with communicating with natives to better understand society and to get easier access to employment. The fact that so much communication is taking place in the teams is a good sign. The improvement of Swedish at an early age helps them to integrate faster so that they are able to look for work around the same time a native youth would, not falling behind having to take Swedish classes. As several boys said this was their best opportunity for speaking Swedish openly in a group, a team can be a great learning place. Speech and understanding was improved but few mentioned writing, which seems natural as it is not a frequent in the communication in the team. In all cases of learning Swedish the school plays the largest part but that does not mean that the practice these boys got during football is not of great value.

5.2 Football as a tool for Social integration

When it came to social integration the data gives mixed messages. Several said they gained friendships during their time playing which is central to the concept of social integration. Social bridges were created mixing different ethnicities in a team and letting them play together. The common goal of winning gives the team a sort of motivation that makes them feel like they are part of something. This was the interesting findings in other functions of football. A great feeling of belonging even if traditional indicators of social integration fails to show this. No matter how often they spent time outside of football with their teammates or where they spent the time they all felt connected to the team. Social integration also showed how integration is a very individual process. Some are outgoing some are not leading to different amounts of friends. All boys enjoyed socializing with their teammates outside of the
field when they could, even if it was just in the bus to or from a game or the locker room. Cheering after a win can strengthen the group even further and these are the types of moment where belonging can be felt even if other communication with the team is limited.

The fact that football is a common interest can aid the social integration as it is often the reason that they meet teammates out of football. While watching games or playing games the social bridges are built creating friendships that are stronger than just acquaintances on a football field.

When it came to where they spent their time together a trend was easy to found, it was almost always at the teammates house. There may be different answers to this but one might be the fact that many of these boys live in a refugee home and some might find it slightly embarrassing to bring friends home. However the fact that so many had been to a teammate at least once was a positive sign showing that there is value in being a part of the team outside of the field.

Playing also helped with the self-confidence of several boys which in turn can be another way of improving the social integration. Feeling good about one self allows for a more outgoing nature which can help with social interactions down the road. Many said part of that confidence was given by having more friends. When friends are made in the team it can lead to creating new groups of friends with mixed ethnicities which is a sign of social integration.

A few also expressed a which to go pro meaning that could go in economic integration but until that happens it cannot be included there nor is it an area this study surveys. However no matter what the reason to why they play are, football means a lot for all of these boys. That in itself has value as it gives them joy. When trying to think of something negative some mentioned injuries which is a definite risk in football. Other than that few examples of negative examples could be given and no trend could be found.

Football seemed to have several positive implications on these boys. One major implication that was mentioned by several was the relief it gave. Not having to worry about one’s life whatever the problems might be but simply focus on the game at hand for a few hours. This factor cannot be overlooked as it can play a crucial part in the wellbeing of these boys. As health is a fundamental part of the relief felt can help with for example finding other parts of life tolerable. School might also be a bit more enticing if you are feeling good as well as may have a few more friends in the school that you can talk to.
When it came to the team the trend was positive. While it was hard in the beginning they eased into the team gradually. Here the data may be misleading and the boys were not comfortable talking about this in the interviews as it may be a sensitive subject. However the fact that the team environment was good is shown in the answers to the question what they would miss the most if they had to stop playing football where eight said they would miss their teammates and the coaches, again a sign of strong social integration. Six would miss the feeling they had when playing football showing that football is an important factor in the wellbeing for these boys and something they value.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The main results of the study is that football does have an effect on language for these boys. While individual and to different extents they all said that they had felt some sort of improvement. Understanding of language as well as speech is seen to be the areas mostly improved while writing and reading does not seem to be affected to any greater extent. Cultural integration has been very limited. Few could give examples of norms or mannerisms typical to Sweden. Nor did they feel that they had learnt any traits that were Swedish. They could not see much difference between themselves and their native teammates. Which could be seen as a good thing as well. A sign that they were moulded in to the group and felt equal. Or the reason is that norms and traits can be difficult to explain for anyone, so the interviewees could not put their finger on what was different.

Social integration gives mixed results. The overwhelming sense of social integration being a part of football is something they feel more so than the data supports. Out of the two how they feel is what actually matters meaning that football actually have a rather big impact to the social integration of these boys.

The importance of football extends past these areas. Football plays a major part in their lives and gives them aspects that cannot be found in the previous categories while still adding to the integration process. This has been called other functions of football. This shows that football gives benefits that can aid in the traditional areas of integration. Many feel like it gives them a relief from the rest of their life, it helps with confidence and gives a sense of belonging that they may not feel anywhere else in their new country.
This study is limited due to the amount of participants and a more extensive study with more participants could have given more valuable information. However what the trends in the answers show is that yes, football does play a part in the integration process for these boys. Future research should undertake a time laps study interviewing boys that recently started playing and then interview them after a few years again, in order to see more clearly the progression that the boys would make; or a study comparing a number of boys that plays a sport compared to a group of boys that does not. While integration is individual and there are far more tools than just sports it would be interesting to see if there were any clear trends that one could make out.

Where this study fits into the debate is that it shows the value of football to these refugee boys and that more work can be done here to improve what football can do for these boys. An example of this is more team-organized events that lets the boys socialize with teammates outside of the field. While gaining a few good friends practices that makes all the boys interact with each other could create more positive interactions. A possible option could be to pair up randomly and not always let the same pairs do the exercises. While this may be hard at first over time it can lead to the boys gaining more friends and an overall better team chemistry. A team group where the players can write to each other could help boys with words and grammar by reading what their friends are posting on the thread. It is also a good way of staying in contact with the teammates outside of the field. You cannot force lone coming refugee boys to play sports but it is important that they know it is an option for them and each institution should encourage some sort of sport or physical activity for the boys to engage in. Maybe offer the option to host small gatherings where teammates can come and watch football at the institution. This so interactions is not always in the teammates places. The level of play varies for these boys but it is important not to force someone to stop playing due to lack of skill. Football should be fun for all and while it is about winning at the ages these boys are in there should be room for all. Coaches needs to have patience and let everybody feel welcome and equal or football can have a negative effect as it can turn into resentment for fellow teammates.

The sport football was chosen partly because of its popularity but also because of the access the researcher had to subjects. A study in other sports is of equal value, however the team aspect football has makes it a fitting sport to investigate. The fact that football proved to play a part in the integration process means that further examination should be done to create better policies that can make for quicker integration.
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Appendix

Interview questions

- Name?
- How long have you been playing football?
- Why do you play football?
- What do you like about playing football?
- Is there anything you dislike about playing football?
- How is the team structured, composition of ethnicities?
- How much Swedish do you speak during games and practices?
- Would you say participation has helped your Swedish or has it had a limited effect? If yes give example, better flow or new words? If no any ideas why not?
- To what extent do you spend time with your teammates? Outside of practice, in school? New friends?
  If you are, which players do you spend time with other immigrants or swedes
- Have you ever felt not welcomed when playing football? Your own team or other teams, or the audience. If yes explain.
- Would you consider your teammates as friends?
- Has your teammates been to your home or you to theirs?
- Do you have your best friends in the team or outside of football?
- Have you learned anything about Sweden by playing football? If so what? For examples differences in culture or values?
- Have you learnt anything about Swedes by playing football? If so what? Examples attitudes on the field see any differences from yourself or similarities?
- How does playing football make you feel?
- How does playing on a team make you feel? (Belonging or isolated?)
- Do you notice any changes from when you started playing? Give examples.
- Do you think that your teammates act differently towards you now compared to when you started? Examples.
- Did you play on a team in your home country? Are there any differences?
- How would you compare your relationships with your teammates compared to other swedes like class mates for example?/ Do you experience any difference in behaviour
and attitudes towards you between your teammates and non football playing Swedes that you encounter?

If you were to stop playing football what would you miss the most?