



LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION

**The Establishment Programme effects on the economic integration
of refugees in Sweden**

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ABSTRACT

In this study, the author explores the stories of twelve refugees and their experiences after having attended the Establishment Programme, a Swedish labour market integration policy. The personal narratives and the Establishment Programme were analysed through qualitative methods; semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis.

The first aim of this study is *to analyse what aspects of integration, and how these aspects are included in the Establishment Programme*. The second aim is *to evaluate and present the effects the Establishment Programme had on the economic integration of refugees* based on the experiences of these participants. Thus, three research questions have been answered:

1. What aspects of integration can be found in the Establishment Programme? How does the Establishment Programme develop and stimulate the economic integration of refugees?
2. What are the refugees' experiences of the Establishment Programme? How relevant did the refugees find the Establishment Programme for their economic integration?
3. What are the effects of the Establishment Programme in terms of the economic integration of refugees? What are its limitations and achievements?

Some of the results include the interdependence of dimensions of integration *e.g.* economic and social, and their effects on the labour market participation of refugees. Additionally, results show that the social networks of the participants determined their integration in the Swedish labour market. The results, depicted in a model of integration, present new aspects of integration which the author suggests for the Establishment Programme. These suggestions consist of strengthening the role of the host community as well as increasing the accountability of the newcomers.

KEYWORDS

Labour market; economic integration; social integration; self-sufficiency; human capital; social capital; refugees; migrants; migration; Establishment Programme; labour market policymaking; national economy; Sweden.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND TRANSLATIONS

EP: Establishment Programme
LMI: Labour Market Integration
PES: Swedish Public Employment Service
SCB: Statistics Sweden
SFI: Swedish for Immigrants
UHR: Universitets- och högskolerådet

Establishment Programme: *Etableringsprogrammet*
Government Offices of Sweden: *Regeringskansliet*
Government of Sweden: *Regeringen*
Swedish för Immigrants: *Svenska för invandrare*
Statistics Sweden: *Statistiska Centralbyrån*
Swedish Agency for Public Management: *Statskontoret*
Swedish Council for Higher Education: *Universitets- och högskolerådet*
Swedish Migration Agency: *Migrationsverket*
Swedish Ministry of Education: *Utbildningsdepartementet*
Swedish National Audit Office: *Riksrevisionen*
Swedish Public Employment Services: *Arbetsförmedlingen*
Swedish Research Council: *Vetenskapsrådet*
Swedish Social Insurance Agency: *Försäkringskassan*

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1. INTRODUCTION

“I want to work and pay taxes - so I become part of this society. One must become part of this country and help it. Until now, Sweden is helping us. Society, people, the government gave us everything, but now we are going to give back”. Respondent 10, refugee from Syria, February 2019.

The quote above reflects a refugee’s personal project of economic integration in Sweden, a goal likely shared by many other refugees residing in the country. However, Aldén & Hammarstedt (2014), concluded in a study on labour market integration¹ (henceforth denoted LMI), that refugees have lower economic integration than natives. Similarly, Irastorza & Bevelander (2017) determined that refugee groups have the lowest rates of labour market integration. On the other hand, official numbers released in 2018 by The Swedish Public Employment Agency, (henceforth PES)², indicate that unemployment among foreign-born individuals in Sweden is declining as “the unemployment rate among foreign-born persons has decreased from 21.8 to 19.9 per cent in one year”. The PES report shows that these numbers have decreased not only for this group but also for Swedish-natives. Yet, PES states that the gap between foreign-born and native-born people is still large (PES 2018a). Correspondingly, Ugland explains that “the public debate on immigration and integration policy reforms has intensified in [...] Sweden” (2014, 145), a statement that has led to the modification of existing labour market policy reforms and efforts, such as the Establishment Programme, implemented throughout the last ten years by the Government of Sweden (ibid; Brännström 2018; Franke Björkman 2018, Joyce 2017). However, Aldén & Hammarstedt (2014) describe these changes in the Swedish labour market policies as ineffective since they did not help to reduce the unemployment of refugees. Thus, by studying the Establishment Programme³ (henceforth EP) as well as by interviewing twelve refugees who participated in the EP, this study seeks to identify how relevant and helpful these participants experienced the EP to be for their economic integration.

This thesis is structured as follows; chapter 2 presents the aim and scope including research questions, chapter 3 background, chapter 4 delimitations, chapter 5 relevance for global studies, chapter 6 previous research, chapter 7 theoretical framework, chapter 8 the Establishment Programme, chapter 9 methodology, chapter 10 analysis and results, and finally chapter 11 the

¹ Labour market integration, employment integration, and economic integration will be used interchangeably in this study.

² *Arbetsförmedlingen*

³ The Establishment Programme was formerly known as Establishment Plan. The new version of this programme was implemented on January 1, 2018.

Core within a Core model of integration and recommended aspects for the Establishment Programme.

1.1 RESEARCH PROBLEM

In Sweden, a number of statistical analyses produced by Statistics Sweden⁴ (henceforth denoted SCB⁵) present empirical evidence on the refugees' LMI in Sweden. The data show, together with previous studies on this issue (Bevelander 2016; Sanandaji 2017; Sandberg, 2017; Diedrich & Hellgren 2018; Fasani *et al* 2018), that refugees still represent a gap in labour market participation compared to natives. As a way to decrease the gap, Swedish integration policies have changed over time, also partly as a response to public and political debate, where a transsectorial approach has been applied, *i.e.* several state institutions work toward integration (European Commission, 2015).

In this case, the Establishment Programme has undergone a series of modifications in order to improve its efficiency. However, regardless of several policy modifications and integration efforts, the refugee employment gap is still evident. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis is to identify the *factors which delay and hinder the participation of refugees in the Swedish labour market.*

The UNHCR (2013) and the OECD (2018b) make calls for the inclusion of refugees' experiences and their voices in the design and improvement of integration initiatives. The existing bridge between academia and polity has also been mentioned by Harder *et al* (2018) who measured immigrants' labour integration empirically with the goal of improving integration policy measures. In addition, Franke Björkman & Spehar (2018) stated that refugees' voices are not always included, and therefore are not available – as a tool to use, for evaluating the efficiency of integration policy efforts. Hence, I argue that a bottom-up approach should be implemented in the design and operation of integration policies to better identify the reasons the refugee employment gap has not been closed. It is for these reasons that the opinions and direct experiences of refugees should be taken into consideration. In this thesis, I therefore contribute to research by giving voice to refugees while including the multidimensional aspects

⁴ See, for example Statistics Sweden 2018 (available only in Swedish): <https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/statistik-efter-amne/levnadsforhallanden/levnadsforhallanden/integration--analys/pong/statistiknyhet/de-forsta-15-aren--flyktingars-forsorjning-i-sverige/>

⁵ Statistiska Centralbyrån

of integration in the design of a theoretical tool for future policy design (see chapter 11) based upon the participants' narratives. Thus, the research problem of this study is to answer the following question: *what effects did the Establishment Programme have on the labour market integration of refugees, according to their own accounts?*

2. AIM & RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The first aim of this study is *to analyse what aspects of integration, and how these aspects are included in the EP* in relation to improve labour market integration of refugees. The second aim is *to evaluate and present the effects the Establishment Programme had on the economic integration of refugees* based on the experiences of these participants. Therefore, I intend to answer three research questions (RQ):

RQ1: What aspects of integration can be found in the Establishment Programme? How does the Establishment Programme develop and stimulate the economic integration of refugees?

RQ2: What are the refugees' experiences of the Establishment Programme? How relevant did the refugees find the Establishment Programme for their economic integration?

RQ3: What are the effects of the Establishment Programme in terms of the economic integration of refugees? What are its limitations and achievements?

3. BACKGROUND

From a historical perspective on immigration to Sweden, Diedrich & Hellgren (2018) affirm that Sweden has taken in the largest number of refugees per capita in Europe in the last four years. This is confirmed in an article by the Government Offices of Sweden⁶ which shows that Sweden “has also taken in more refugees than many other EU Member States” (2018). Similarly, The Swedish Migration Agency⁷ (2018) indicated that Sweden is now the third largest recipient country of resettled refugees in the world. Extensive migration to Sweden has occurred due to political reasons and persecutions, including for example, from countries such as Eritrea, Somalia, Iran, Syria, Afghanistan or Iraq⁸ (Sweden.se 2016; OECD 2018a).

⁶ Regeringskansliet

⁷ Migrationsverket

⁸ According to Eurostat (2018), the number of Venezuelan nationals seeking refuge in Europe has increased between 2017 and 2018. To consult the exact number, see: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics->

In addition to the labour gap, it has been proved by empirical research that it takes much time before obtaining employment. For instance, SCB (2018) shows that 55% of refugees who came to Sweden between 1997 and 2001 had become active in the labour market. However, it took them on average a total of fifteen years before they became employed. Half of the refugees with only primary education who came to Sweden in 2006 found a job after ten years from arrival, while it took eight years for refugees with any type of further education. The employment gap explained above, “has narrowed since the middle of the 1990s” (Bevelander & Lundh 2007, 3). According to SCB (2017), educational levels among refugees is one of the several factors that have a direct effect on their participation in the labour market. SCB (*ibid*) goes further in these differences and showed⁹ that the educational background among refugees has a significant impact on the employment participation rates. For instance, SCB found that those female refugees with only primary education have the lowest employment rate after fifteen years of arrival, both compared to male refugees with the same educational level, and compared to female refugees with post-secondary education. The latter are found to be the individuals with the highest employment rate in total, according to SCB (*ibid*). These statistics are also presented in previous research on the educational background of refugees such as in Bevelander (2009) who explains that the higher the education level, the higher the chances of becoming active in the labour market.

Moreover, Diedrich & Hellgren (2018) explain that structural changes in the Swedish economy have also prevented refugees from entering the local employment market. Such structural changes began to take place in the late 1970s when the demand for relatively low skilled workforce in the Swedish manufacturing sector began to decrease, while the service-oriented sector expanded (Bevelander 2000; Bevelander & Lundh 2007). Similarly, Sanandaji (2017) explains that during the 1950s and 1960s immigrants had an easier access to employment as the industrial sector then, did not required formal qualifications and language requirements in the same way it currently does. This phenomenon has since then, hindered refugees from accessing the current labour market since the quality and form of their human capital is not as valid as it was. Inter-personal skills and formal education are now more on-demand than low-skilled job abilities (Bevelander 2000; Hellgren 2015), which means that newly-arrived migrants need to

[explained/index.php?title=File:Table 1 First time asylum applicants in the EU-28 by citizenship, Q2 2017 %E2%80%93 Q2 2018.png](https://www.scb.se/contentassets/2c67b3f8f46644758f2f5542442c50e3/le0001_2017k03_ti_a05it1703.pdf)

⁹ In their journal *Välfärd*:

https://www.scb.se/contentassets/2c67b3f8f46644758f2f5542442c50e3/le0001_2017k03_ti_a05it1703.pdf

acquire new competences in order to become more attractive to potential employers. Clearly, this process delays the closing of the refugee gap.

4. DELIMITATIONS

This study focuses on twelve adult male and female refugees from several countries, who live or have lived in Gothenburg, and who came to Sweden in 2014 and 2015 (see appendix section for more information). The study focuses on their narratives in regard to their labour market integration process after having attended the EP.

Moreover, I only look into the EP as a labour market integration effort and its effects based on the participants' narratives. This delimitation is based on previous research in terms of the importance of refugees' participation in the national economy. For instance, the European Commission's action plan on the integration of third country nationals declares that employment is "the core part of the integration process" which consequently "enhance[s] the sustainability of the welfare systems against the background of an ageing population and workforce" (2016b, 8-9). Likewise, Marbach *et al* explain that those refugees who have a hard time trying to find a job will eventually contribute to an increase of "public expenditures for welfare and make lower tax contributions" (2018, 4). Flood & Ruist also provide similar interpretations in a study conducted on behalf of the Swedish government as they prove based on empirical results, the low level of employment among foreign-born individuals provides in consequence, low incomes and low tax revenues (2015, 60). Moreover, other studies (Diedrich & Hellgren 2018; Brännström *et al* 2018, Andersson Joonas *et al* 2017, for example) have explained the centralisation of integration measures since 2010 by the implementation of the establishment reform. The centralisation meant that the state would take over the labour market integration of refugees which used to be carried out by the municipalities. Consequently, Joyce points out that "the state has the primary responsibility for refugees during the first time in Sweden" (2015, 8). Based on these studies, the Establishment Programme as a state integration measure has been chosen in this research while municipal initiatives have been excluded.

5. RELEVANCE TO GLOBAL STUDIES

The importance of the economic integration of refugees in the receiving society is an international and ongoing matter (UNHCR, 2013). A fact shared by Castles *et al*, who explain

that these realities need critical examination as “[...] they have become *transnational* issues” (2002, 122). Thus, the research topic and the research questions are relevant to Global Studies as migration and labour market integration of newcomers are considered two aspects of global importance. The European Commission explains that “[t]he inclusion of migrants in the labour market is key to ensure their effective integration into the host societies and their positive impact on the EU economy; this entails fully using their skills and realising their economic potential” (European Commission, 2018). Further, Carrera (2005) affirms that globalisation has an effect on all countries in different spectra *e.g.* economic, political, social, and cultural due to large-scale migration. Therefore, this study will contribute to existing research on matters that unfold locally yet are connected to global affairs, thus of relevance to the subject of global studies.

6. PREVIOUS RESEARCH

The main previous research used in this study has focused on labour market integration of refugees and Swedish labour market integration policies, specifically the EP. For instance, Franke Björkman (2018) discusses the LMI of female refugees and their experiences of their LMI process, which were identified as i) human capital devaluation, ii) not enough support from the institutions, and iii) the difficulty of starting again. Moreover, Brännström *et al* (2018) explain the numerous changes in the LMI policies led immigrants to experience a lack of personal contact with PES agents and difficulties in navigating in a sea of different institutions during their participation in the EP. On a similar note, Aldén & Hammarstedt (2014) show that the numerous changes in the Swedish LMI has not accelerated the integration of refugees in the labour market. Furthermore, Ugland (2014) discusses the Scandinavian and Canadian welfare systems in relation to refugees’ LMI, and explains that the Swedish government in particular, gives priority to incentives rather than obligations for refugees to assume. Furthermore, Bevelander (1999; 2017) and Diedrich (2013; 2018) research mainly focused on the importance of human and social capital; the Swedish economic structure as factors that affect all kind of migrants in their attempt to integrate in the labour market, and LMI efforts such as validation of previous experience, respectively. Their studies have contributed to the economic integration of refugees and have been discussed throughout this thesis.

To summarise, the previous research used in this study has been chosen by its connection between labour market integration policies in the Swedish context, the experiences of refugees, and economic outcomes.

7. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

After conducting a detailed literature review on the concept of integration, nearly all authors conclude similarly: integration is a concept open for numerous interpretations (Robinson, 1998; Castles *et al* 2002; Schneider & Crul 2010; Joyce 2017; Diedrich & Hellgren 2018;) since it has been redefined and thus transformed into a spectrum of categories (Carrera 2005). Such nature of the term may explain the integration of refugees into society and its limitations, particularly in the economic sphere, the scope of this research. The Swedish government defines integration as a process and goal at individual and community level (SOU 2008: 56). The individual level is defined as the migrant's life project while the state has the responsibility of setting goals and supporting the person in order to integrate him/her in the receiving country (*ibid*). Similarly, the *two-way approach* proposed originally by Castles *et al* (2002) is described as the participation of different sectors of society in the active integration of newcomers where both receiving community and newcomers adapt to each other in order to achieve a successful integration in the host society. Contrarily, a *one-way approach* is understood as when newcomers have the sole responsibility and mission of adapting to the host community. Furthermore, Castles *et al* (2002) made a classification of alternative concepts of integration¹⁰ by which the authors describe their meaning and use. The most common ones are often mentioned in integration and migration studies *i.e.* *assimilation*, *acculturation*, *inclusion* and *exclusion*. Also, Castles *et al* (2002) name an alternative concept, *structural* or *functional assimilation*. Such ideas are also presented by Giordano (2010), who points out the importance of defining assimilation and integration separately, suggesting assimilation may be regarded as the immigrant's cultural participation in the host society by sharing same behaviour, values and norms, while integration should be considered effective participation in, for example, the labour market of the receiving country. Moreover, Ager & Strand (2008; 2010) studied different policy sectors such as contact between newcomers, institutions and society as well as LMI efforts as suggestions for integration policy making. They determined that all dimensions of integration *e.g.* economic or social are interconnected. A conclusion also reached by Hynie (2018), who

¹⁰ Please consult Castles *et al* 2002, *Integration: Mapping the Field*, pp. 115-119 concerning the thirteen alternative concepts to integration.

explains the *interrelatedness* of numerous aspects of integration which ultimately affects the well-being of newcomers. In the following table, Castles *et al* (2002) main concepts are summarised.

Table 1: Adapted table on alternative concepts to Integration based on Castles *et al* (2002)

<i>Alternative concepts</i>		
Terminology	Definition	Observations
Integration (1 &2)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Process through which [migrants] become part of the receiving society” (ibid, 115). 2. Both newly-arrived individuals and host society adapt to each other’s norms and behaviours. It implies a two-way approach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be observed as a one-way approach. • It possibly rejects ideas of multicultural society. • Too vague.
Assimilation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on the newcomer • Immigrants give up their ethnic and cultural background. • Adoption of values and rules of the host society. • “Immigrant ‘learns’ the new culture” (ibid, 116). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-way approach. • Devaluation of the newcomer’s culture. • Opens the door to discrimination. • Individualistic approach.
Structural/functional assimilation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful participation of migrants in some sectors of the host society, e.g. labour market participation, but segregated socially. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “It may suggest that certain domains are sufficient for integration on their own” (ibid, 116) • This approach does not connect different aspects in society, such as economic, cultural or political.
Acculturation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newcomers expected to learn language, values and rules from the receiving society. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible ideas of monocultural society: one culture predominates. • Newly-arrived individuals may give up their identity.

Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immigrants are active in “particular sub-sectors of society” (ibid, 117). Similar to structural assimilation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broad and vague concept
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Exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newcomers are denied access to some rights or resources Newcomers to be excluded in some spheres of society while included in other forms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Normative approach i.e. what immigrants ‘should’ change or give up in order to be part of host society.
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Castles *et al* say integration is a process, one whose success is reached as long as the receiving society “provides access to jobs and services, and acceptance of the immigrants in social interaction” (2002, 113). In that respect, the Swedish Government defines *multiculturalism* as an opportunity that should enhance integration of foreign-born individuals (SOU 2008:56, 33). Interestingly, Castles & Miller (2003) note a contradiction in the multicultural models adopted in several countries. Namely, multiculturalism declares that refugees’ cultural backgrounds should be accepted. However, the refugees’ experiences in this regard prove that multiculturalism is not widely accepted by a majority of the host community as it was identified in the form of negative attitudes towards the cultural identity of the refugees rather than their identities themselves.

7.1. ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

In e-mail correspondence with Professor Pieter Bevelander¹¹, a researcher who has been cited extensively in this study, his definition of integration and assimilation in the context of economics was explained. Bevelander affirmed that the concept of integration is defined by economists as *assimilation* while sociologists define it as *integration*. Stark & Jakubek make a distinction between economic assimilation and social integration where the former is defined as a “move in the economic sphere” while the latter is understood as the “move in the social space” (2013, 63). However, I reflect upon a point concerning the social integration as a *catalytic agent* of economic assimilation (Stark & Jakubek 2013). For instance, Flood & Ruist (2015) explain that low employment among immigrants provides low incomes and low tax

¹¹ The correspondence took place via e-mail during March 2019.

revenues. This argument relates to the European Union and Swedish Government's goal of maintaining and preserving the sustainability of the welfare model by individuals becoming self-sufficient. Indeed, self-sufficiency of refugees is one of the main goals of the EP (PES 2019). Valtonen (2004) describes integration as an ability, one that allows individuals to participate in different activities and spheres of society, *e.g.* politically, economically or socially. Likewise, Bevelander defines economic integration as “the stepwise ability of immigrant men¹² to achieve employment of any kind in comparison with native-born men during the first years in the labour market” (2001, 533). Again, Bevelander and Valtonen both consider integration, whether social or economic, as an *ability*. Moreover, Ruist (January 2019) defined economic integration as the ability migrants possess to reach self-sufficiency. Ruist's definition coincides with Hetling *et al* (2016) who defined it as the capacity to reach self-sufficiency without the help of state-paid subsidy. Therefore, I herein explore if the EP develops the ability of migrants to integrate in the labour market while also examining the social dimension as an included element in labour market integration.

7.2. ASPECTS OF INTEGRATION

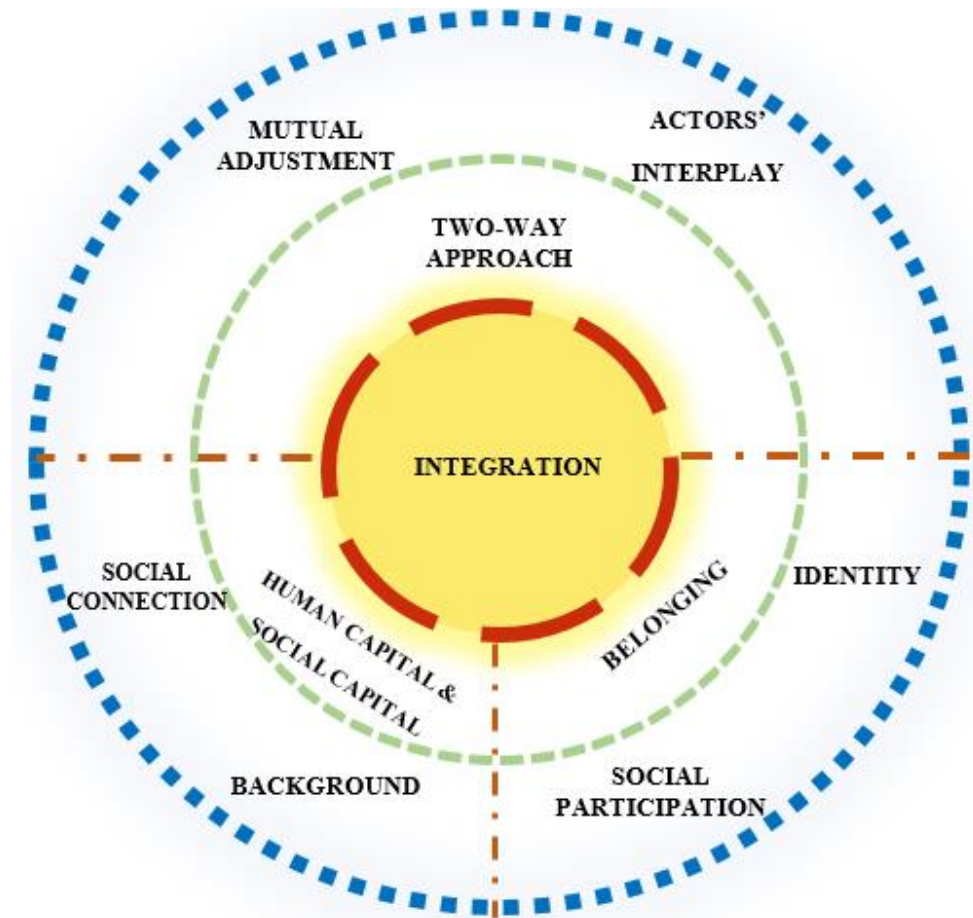
For theoretical purposes and to facilitate readers' comprehension of this chapter, a conceptual tool has been designed. It summarises the different *aspects* of integration which builds upon the theoretical perspectives proposed by Castles *et al* (2002), Ager & Strang (2008), Strang & Ager (2010) and Hellgren (2015). Other authors have been mentioned and discussed as well.

I call this conceptual tool *Core within a Core Model of Integration*. The term *aspect* which is defined in the Cambridge dictionary as “one part of a situation, problem, subject [...]” (2019) is used theoretically based on Strang & Ager (2010) who indicate that policy sectors construct and understand integration in multiple ways. In this context, the term *aspects* should be understood as what *areas* or *fields* of integration are put forward and emphasised in the EP. Simultaneously, the aspects of integration in the EP function as *enablers* as they facilitate the integration process of refugees. The main core (yellow centre) is the concept of integration itself. This central core is surrounded by another core (inside the green circle) which is divided into three main cores, the aspects known as *Two-Way Approach*, *Human & Social Capital*, and *Belonging*¹³.

¹² Bevelander focused on male immigrants in his research, but I include women in this definition equally.

¹³ Later, each of these cores give space to six sub-categories (surrounded by a blue line). Respectively, *Mutual Adjustment* and *Actors' Interplay* for the Two-Way Approach core; *Social Connection* and *Background* for the

Fig.1: Core within a Core Model of Integration



In section 11, I present a similar model depicting the areas the interviewed refugees considered most important to become employable, and as policy suggestions for the EP.

Below, the aspects of integration summarised by the model, including the three main cores of the model will be explained.

CORE 1

The Two-Way Approach

According to Castles *et al* (2002) the two-way approach is understood as a continuous process of interaction between the receiving/host society and the newly-arrived migrant. In this aspect of integration, there is a shared responsibility to reach integration.

Human & Social Capital core, and *Social Participation* and *Identity* for the Belonging core. Also, I have used dotted lines based upon Spencer and Charsley's study (2016) who describe integration as a multiple process in continuous evolution, characterised by the interplay of several domains. Thus, the dotted lines represent the free interaction between the aspects of integration which should be flexible depending on social or economic circumstances of each society, *i.e.* they can be modified if necessary and be adapted by policy makers.

Mutual adjustment

Mutual adjustment refers to the process in which the values, behaviour and norms of the newly-arrived migrant and the receiving society are continuously adapting to each other to reach consensus and harmony (Castles *et al* 2002).

Actors' interplay

Actor's interplay is based on Ager & Strang (2004) who argue that achieved public outcomes should be equally represented by newly-arrived and members of the host society. Similarly, actors' interplay refers to the connection and interaction between the newcomer, public institutions, and the receiving community.

CORE 2

Human Capital & Social Capital

Human and social capital is understood as the personal resources of an individual whether they are professional or social (Eich-Krohne 2013; Piracha *et al* 2016). Becker defines *human capital* as the embodied accumulation of investments that a person makes on herself in education, virtues, work skills or knowledge (1993, 15-25). Later, Lin describes social capital as a type of resource that includes the accumulation of social resources by an individual such as social networks (2001).

Background

The background a refugee brings with him/her plays a role when it is time to map previous competences to give them equal or almost equal validity in the receiving society. In this regard, Bevelander points out that the integration of migrants in the labour market is “dependent on both the human capital for the home country and investment in host country human capital [...]” (2011, 30). In this respect, Diedrich & Styhre (2013) call this human capital *individual resources* which need constant updating and renewal.

Social Connection

Theoretically, social connection is defined as the social connections the newcomer is able to create while living in the host society. These theoretical definitions have been chosen due to the significant role they play in refugees' LMI (Chiswick, 2000; Kindler *et al*, 2015; Bevelander, 2016). Moreover, Ager & Strang (2008) argue that integration is identified if there

are *social links* known as the connections the migrant holds with different state structures “such as government services” (ibid, 181)¹⁴.

CORE 3

Belonging

Belonging is defined in the Cambridge dictionary as “to be in the right place, or (of a person) to feel that you are in the right place” (2019), while Hellgren describes belonging as “essential to integration, understood as becoming a fully accepted part of society” (2015, 9). In this respect, ideas of individual and national identity are displayed as the bigger part (host community) is to accept the smaller part (individual) to belong to the whole.

Social participation

The Swedish Government Bill of 1997 states: “through work, the individual participates in a social context, becomes part of the production and contributes to economic growth” (1997, 45, own translation). The economic aspect of social participation is highlighted by what I previously explained about the European Commission’s (2018) call to integrate refugees in the labour market in order to integrate them socially. However, I argue that this process shall be understood inversely: social integration enabled by civic and social participation, helps refugees to become economically integrated. About this reflection, Carrera (2005) points out that the economic welfare and its efficiency in the European Union depends on the argument I just presented.

Identity

Identity connects to the principle of diversity of cultures within the host society and how refugees have the chance to hold their own identity while succeeding in their social integration and consequently participation in the Swedish labour market. Carrera (2005) explains that Sweden has adopted a multicultural model in regard to immigrants’ integration which means that the Swedish state gives migrants the guarantee the protection of the foreign-born individuals’ identity, culture, language and religion.

¹⁴ Piracha *et al* (2013) define these three social aspects as “bonding, bridging and linking” respectively (p.4).

8. THE ESTABLISHMENT PROGRAMME

Diedrich & Hellgren (2018) describe the Establishment Programme¹⁵ as two-year state initiative created in 2018, previously known as the Establishment Plan¹⁶. The establishment act of 2010 had the objective of strengthening the focus on labour market integration of newly-arrived migrants in Sweden (Brännström *et al* 2018). This task was transferred from municipalities to PES representing a re-centralisation of the integration policy and the introduction of a new set of regulations. According to Migrationsinfo.se (2018), these changes would make the foreign-born individuals' LMI more flexible and easier. In other words, PES is in charge of EP implementation with the goal of leading newly-arrived migrants to their economic integration in the Swedish labour market. Meanwhile, in the EP of 2018, the responsibility of the individual and his/her own integration was strengthened and in addition, their route would be accelerated and simplified. For example, other agencies such as the Swedish Social Insurance Agency¹⁷ would be responsible for processing the monetary establishment allowance provided by the state to migrants participating in the EP.

Also, the monetary allowance is provided to the newly-arrived migrant on condition to his/her participation in the plan and activities that she/he has created together with PES (PES 2019). This plan is on a full-time basis meaning that the targeted individual has the responsibility of attending a series of activities during forty hours per week (Diedrich & Hellgren 2018). These activities are decided with PES and the participant collaboratively based on the individual's work and academic background, to prepare him/her to become active in the labour market. However, The Swedish government emphasizes the importance of being well-prepared and of having the right aptitudes to match the requirements of the Swedish labour market. Therefore, an academic obligation was added to the EP in January 2018 requiring newly-arrived migrants who lack several years of formal education or who need to complete their academic qualifications, to apply to complementary educational courses. If this mandatory requirement is not fulfilled, the PES can decide to cancel the monetary allowance (Government Offices of Sweden 2017b).

¹⁵ *Etableringsprogrammet*

¹⁶ *Etableringsplan*

¹⁷ *Försäkringskassan*

9. METHODOLOGY

The analytical method used in this research is a thematic analysis on the refugees' narratives and on the Establishment Programme, which according to Bryman (2012), seeks to categorise the object or phenomena of interest qualitatively. Braun & Clarke have described thematic analysis as "a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (2006, 79). Moreover, in order to carry out a detailed thematic analysis, I have followed the five-step model proposed by Braun & Clarke: transcription, coding, identification and selection of themes, analysis, and report (2006, 87). Following Braun & Clarke's method (2006) I transcribed the interviews verbatim and then identified the words and phrases that made connections with the theory and research questions. After coding the data, I grouped the codes to create pre-themes and themes. I applied the same method when studying the information provided by the PES chief officer and the online content about the Establishment Programme.

Braun & Clarke's method was chosen because theirs is the most instructional paper on thematic analysis and because it is a foundation paper, other researchers have proposed their own versions based on Braun & Clarke including McGuire & Delahure (2017), Alhojailan (2012), Lawless & Chen (2019), or Javadi & Zarea (2016).

I am aware that this approach might have limited my capacity on identifying new themes that may not be related to the theory or to the research questions, as Braun & Clarke explained (2006). Nevertheless, new themes or patterns have been identified during the analysis and have been analysed and connected to the theoretical framework.

Regarding selection of integration measures in which the interviewees participated, I mentioned in chapter 4 that the state holds the main responsibility in the resettlement of newcomers in Sweden (Joyce 2017). Also, Diedrich & Hellgren (2018) indicate that structural hindrances in the Swedish economy have been explained as one of the causes of the refugee employment gap, situating the EP as a key component in the integration issues of newcomers. Therefore, the EP was selected and analysed as reported here.

9.1. DATA COLLECTION

Firstly, I selected the Establishment Programme and a thematic analysis was conducted in order to identify the aspects of integration and to observe to what extent it stimulated the economic integration of the respondents. Secondly, I have semi-structurally interviewed an Establishment

chief agent at PES Gothenburg in January 2019 during sixty minutes. This meeting had the purpose of gathering information about the EP to complete the information available on the PES website. Thirdly, I performed twelve semi-structured interviews with nine male and three female refugees, from countries Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Palestine, and Syria. All interviews were audio recorded, transcribed verbatim and translated to English in cases when participants responded in Swedish. The interviews took between forty-five and eighty minutes, and the meetings took place at a university library study room in Gothenburg in a one on one setting. The informants were contacted outside the PES offices in Gothenburg, through personal networks, and through groups of migrants on Facebook. Furthermore, *snowball sampling* (Bernard 2006; Bryman, 2012) was used with the purpose of extending the chances to meet and interview relevant informants. For example, two informants contacted their friends who were interested in participating and who in consequence, were interviewed for this study.

9.2. THE INFORMANTS & ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In the beginning of this research, I considered the number of respondents that would be needed in order to carry out this qualitative research. Since this research was intended to be a qualitative study and not a quantitative one, which would have required a greater number of informants, twelve informants was deemed more suitable as well as doable within the time frame, to focus on the refugees' experiences and narratives.

I selected semi structured interviews because according to Trost (2014), they allow the informants to answer with more freedom since the method permits a high degree of fluidity in the conversation. Contrarily, Bernard (2006) explains that structured interviews provide the highest quality of results. However, structured interviews were not selected due to their being a potential hindrance for keeping the informant interested in talking. I decided to use semi-structured interviewing because, as Weller points out "open-ended, semi-structured formats facilitate the collection of new information with the flexibility to explore topics in-depth with informants" (1998, 353). I made an interview guide with thirty questions which I divided into different categories *e.g. human capital* or *belonging* to facilitate the collection of information on a later stage. Even if I designed explicit questions about these subjects in the interview guide, I did not ask the questions literally in order to avoid any kind of influence on the respondents' answers.

Moreover, according to the Swedish Research Council¹⁸ (2017), societies and individuals are to benefit from scientific research, an argument shared by Hugman *et al* who consider the good quality of research “vital for the development of better policies and practices by governments and service providers” (2011, 1276). However, if research is to contribute to the development of societies, a balance between the quality of the research and its ethical considerations should be achieved, especially when subjects are the object of study (*ibid*). In such a case, individuals who are part of the research should be protected by anonymity and confidentiality (Swedish Research Council 2017). Therefore, in this study, participant names were replaced by a nomenclature and anonymity/confidentiality was ensured during and after their participation. Also, the issue of confidentiality did not affect the quality of the results.

Furthermore, George (2015) considers that the well-being of refugees should be improved, and refugees should benefit by the conducted research. I therefore explained to the interviewees that according to previous research and international organisations such as the UNHCR (2013), their voices are to be considered by institutions in policy making. Therefore, by gathering their narratives, this research would benefit other refugees in the future. However, contrary to what George expresses on how research could help the interviewed subjects, I told the refugees from the start that they would not individually receive any direct gains from participating in the study, but that other refugees in the future may experience improvements in labour market integration policies. I also told them their participation and data would be presented in order to potentially improve the EP in the future. Thereafter the interviewees freely chose to participate in the study and proposed to meet several times if I needed so which turned out to be unnecessary.

Adult female and male refugees are included in the study. A refugee is according to Robila, citing the definition of the Geneva Convention of 1951, someone who has a “fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country” (2018, 2). The participants came to Sweden as refugees between November 2014 and November 2015. They were between 21 and 38 years old¹⁹ at the time of their respective interviews and the majority lived in

¹⁸ *Vetenskapsrådet*

¹⁹ This delimitation was based on the requirements that PES establishes to attend the EP which is individuals who are over twenty years and under sixty years of age (PES 2019). For that same reason, minors were excluded in this study.

Gothenburg. Some of these respondents were interviewed on the phone via Facebook Messenger as they had moved from Gothenburg after completing the EP.

Moreover, consent to participate in the interviews was provided in writing. All informants agreed to have their interviews recorded and anonymity and confidentiality was promised and consequently given²⁰. The respondents were also told that they could skip the questions or withdraw from the interview at any time if they wanted to. As it turned out, all the respondents completed their interviews. Further, since the identity of the respondents is kept anonymous, I have replaced their names with a nomenclature. Thus, I call them *R* followed by a number *i.e.* *R1* is *Respondent 1*, and so on. The chief officer at PES is identified as *O1*. Table 2, Demographic Profile of Respondents, present a description of each participant of this study. The table is attached as an appendix at the end of this study. See section Appendix.

10. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Chapter 10 firstly presents the results of the obtained data as well as the analysis in three sections. Secondly, the aim and research questions are answered and addressed. Lastly, the theoretical framework of this study, representing the main results, is presented in the Core within a Core Model of Integration which depicts the main aspects of integration revealed in the analyses. The conclusive part of this chapter is followed by a brief discussion on potential policy alternatives for the EP and other aspects suggested to take into consideration in the programme.

10.1. THE ESTABLISHMENT PROGRAMME: RESULTS

I have applied a thematic analysis on the interview with the PES chief officer and, on the information obtained online which describes the Establishment Programme. The information I gathered for the analysis was mainly retrieved from the PES website and other online resources have been also consulted²¹.

²⁰ In this respect, Bryman (2012) explains that the confidentiality of records in the form of identity, audio files and transcriptions should be kept secured

²¹ For example, the annual report for the labour market policy programmes of 2017, the Government of Sweden and the Government Offices of Sweden websites, known as *Regeringen* and *Regeringskansliet*, respectively.

10.2 PES CHIEF OFFICER INTERVIEW AND THE PES' WEBSITE INFORMATION

The Swedish government emphasises the requirements on the individual to be part of the labour market: “A central part is also that the requirements for the individual are made clear. The Government considers it reasonable to impose the same requirements on all unemployed” (Government Offices of Sweden 2017d). This means that the Swedish government places a greater responsibility to become employed on the programme participant. However, even if the individual’s responsibility is strengthened in the programme, PES has designed activities²² and paths to be taken by the participant, adapted to his/her needs in order to facilitate the integration process in the labour market (PES 2019). In this regard, Officer 1 (henceforth O1), a chief officer of the establishment section at PES in Gothenburg stated that PES’ description of an economically integrated individual is as a person who becomes self-sufficient, detached from social welfare, and able to become independent while living in the country. O1 further explained that integration meant people being able of making their own decisions instead of authorities doing so for them. This condition of self-sufficiency was according to O1, equal to obtaining employment or becoming a student without social welfare.

Moreover, the scope of the programme is defined as full-time but it is possible for participants to take part-time over an extended period of time, reflecting the programme’s flexibility in accordance to the needs of each person (PES 2019). The issue of individualised service provided to the clients was mentioned several times throughout the interview. However, O1 expressed how difficult it is for them to create individualised plans for every client since each of them have different needs. Also, this difficulty is enhanced by the PES’ procurement system as it has pre-defined activities that may not be suitable, nor perfectly fit for the migrants on an individual basis.

In the online information, PES describes personal goals, ambitions and interests being part of the individualised plans in order to start participating in the EP (PES 2019). Further, O1 explained that refugees, regardless of their individual participation in EP, should have “*will, drive and ambition*”. This wording was registered several times during the conversation. It was similarly expressed when talking about the expectations that are put on the newcomers in the form of responsibility and control over one’s life. For instance, O1 said that “*a great deal of*

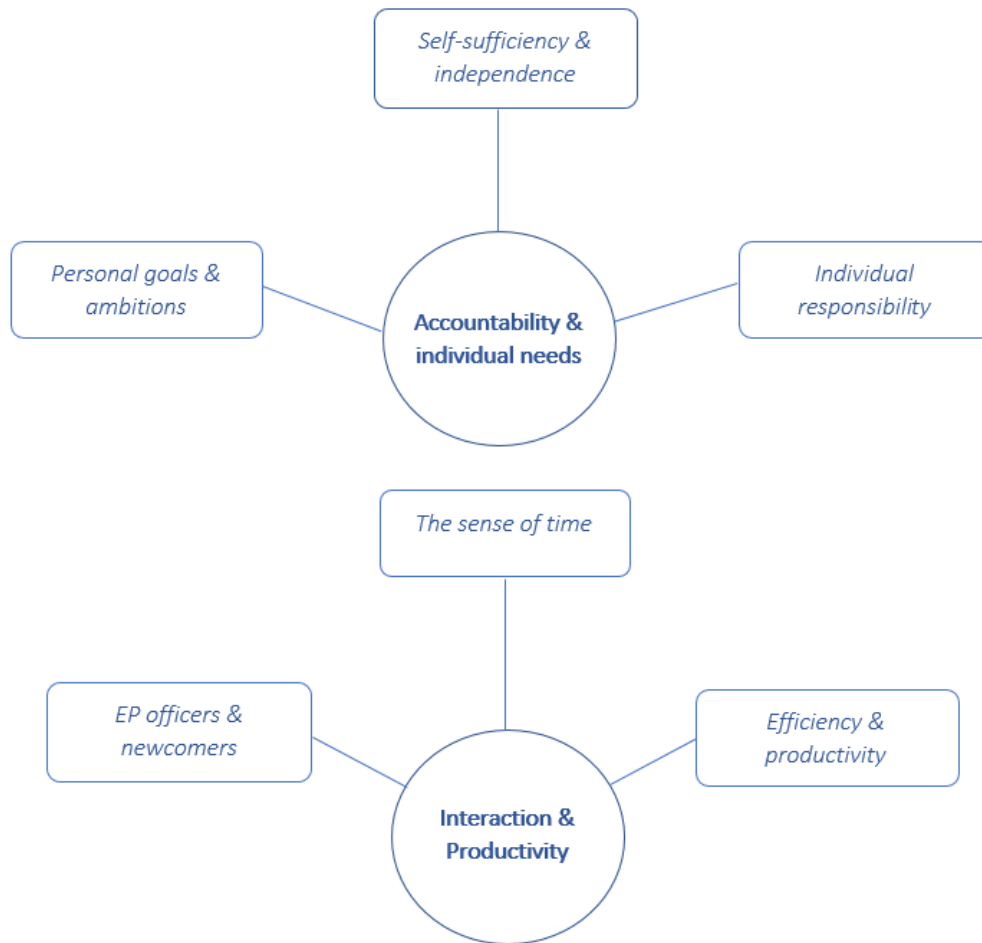
²² Internship, social orientation course, support when looking for work, language training such as SFI -Swedish for Immigrants and guidance in case of creating a start-up.

responsibility is placed on the newly arrived person". When I asked about what the EP does to support individuals in their social integration process and what social, civic or cultural aspects existed in the programme, O1 answered "*No, we do not have that. It is not our mission or task. You can talk about it at the Social Orientation [course]*". Later on, when asked what the EP main goals were, O1 responded that the purpose was to speed up participant's LMI by finding a job or studies as well as becoming self-sufficient as quickly as possible. Similarly, in regard to the acceleration of the integration process, the Swedish Government gives PES the possibility of reallocating existing resources among their divisions enabling better results in areas where the resources are most needed (Government Offices of Sweden 2017a). The Swedish Parliament ordinance for the EP in 2017, section two (§2), states the EP purpose is to make the integration of migrants more expeditious in the work and social spheres (Swedish Parliament 2018). The ordinance also establishes a reduction of the administrative tasks done which increases PES agents time to develop better plans, adjusted to the individual needs of the target users. As the Swedish government explains, the Swedish Social Insurance Agency would be in charge of processing the establishment allowance given to the users which meant that PES would focus more efficiently on people.

Further, the individual planning acquires a predominant role. For O1, the only way to concretise these goals was by using the EP tools efficiently to shorten the time to place an individual in the labour market. However, the successful or unsuccessful outcome after the participation in EP depended entirely on the person according to O1. It is possible to conclude that this new proposed efficiency of the EP lies on the individual. Thus, the programme functions as a guide rather than a facilitator.

In conclusion, the main codes and pre-themes identified in both the interview with O1 and in data collected on the Establishment Programme are: self-sufficiency and independence, personal goals, the sense of time, efficiency (accelerate, facilitate, speed up, decrease time). Also, the sense of responsibility placed on the individual, individual's needs, support, interaction between EP officers and newcomers, and individually adapted measures. The themes are presented in Figure 2 below.

Fig. 2: The Thematic Diagram on the Establishment Programme



Accountability & Individual Needs along with Interaction & Productivity are the main themes analysed and connected to the theory. The rest of the pre-themes are also included in these findings.

10.3. THE ESTABLISHMENT PROGRAMME: ANALYSIS

In this section, the aspects of integration found in the Establishment Programme are discussed along with the efforts that assist the economic integration of refugees.

10.3.1 ASPECTS OF INTEGRATION IN THE ESTABLISHMENT PROGRAMME

As observed in chapter 7²³, the concept of integration is difficult to define. Castles *et al* discuss the question “integration into what?” (2002, 114) by explaining that integration is situated in different arenas. In this section, the concept of integration is connected to the labour market sector and how the EP develops and supports the economic integration of refugees in the Swedish labour market. First, I complete the definition of economic integration as used in this thesis, since it is critically concerned with one of the results revealed in the thematic diagram, *i.e.* accountability and needs.

A definition of economic integration is according to Bevelander (2001) immigrants’ gradual capacity of becoming employed compared with the native-born population, in this case Swedish natives. Moreover, during the process of reviewing previous literature on economic integration of refugees in the Swedish labour market, two researchers were contacted in the hope of obtaining a definition on what economic integration of refugees (and other migrants] mean. Dr. Joakim Ruist²⁴, defined it as the ability migrants have of becoming self-sufficient (*självförsörjande*), a definition that coincides with the goal of the EP (PES 2019). To be self-sufficient means according to Hetling *et al* either “independence from public assistance, receipt of a living wage, or broader family sustainability and empowerment” (2016, 218), while O’Boyle defines self-sufficiency as the “sufficiency of economic resources to meet physical needs” (1987, 28). Thus, self-sufficiency implies having a job, without any form of subsidised pay commonly provided by state institutions such as the Swedish Social Insurance Agency or PES with sufficient pay to support oneself and one’s family.

In relation to these explanations, informant O1 provided in the interview, an idea on what it means to be economically integrated as a migrant which means “*extracting oneself from welfare dependency, enabling the prerequisites for creating a self-sufficient life and making independent decisions without having to consider decisions by authorities*”. Accordingly, Sanandaji²⁵ defines economic integration when immigrants as a group reach the same average proportion in employment and the same average income as the natives. A self-sufficient, economically integrated migrant is thus, someone who does not depend on social benefits and

²³ Theoretical framework

²⁴ Economics researcher at the School of law, business and economics at the University of Gothenburg. Conversation via e-mail took place in January 2019.

²⁵ Researcher and author on migration and economics at Stockholm’s University. Conversation with Sanandaji took place in February 2019.

who in consequence, reaches progressively the same average income as a native-born individual. Thus, social participation as an aspect of integration connects to the idea of a person who participates in society by working. Indeed, the European Commission Integration Action Plan 2016-2017 clearly states that “for migrants, finding a job is fundamental to become part of the host country's economic and social life” (2018). Therefore, economic participation should also be followed by social participation.

In addition to O1's definition described above, the PES itself also advertises the ultimate goal of the EP which is “[...] *for you to learn Swedish, find a job, and become self-sufficient as quickly as possible*” (PES 2019). This is in accordance to the Swedish Government ordinance (2017:820) which dictates that the EP purpose is “*to facilitate and accelerate the establishment of certain new arrivals in work and society*” (Government Offices of Sweden 2017c). Moreover, O1 explained while asked what demands are placed on the authorities, society and the person in question to reach integration, “*the demands placed on the individual is to take part. If you want compensation, you have to take part, it is a clear requirement that the state sets [...]. [For the state] it is for us to use our tools in the right way to shorten the time to integration*”.

In the themes presented in the narratives above concerning *accountability* and *interaction*, it is possible to identify four aspects of integration: the two-way approach, mutual adjustment, actors' interplay and social participation. Castles *et al* (2012) explain that integration of refugees and other migrants is a process. For the first point, migrants should reach equal participation in all aspects of society, including the labour market. However, it is not a process that the newcomer can undertake on his/her own. Society and the state authorities are meant to assist. Nonetheless, I argue this mutual assistance is inseparable in pragmatic terms. Pragmatically speaking, the society and the state depend on these migrants for the survival of the welfare state. Balassa explains in his work *The Theory of Economic Integration* that “[t]he ultimate objective of economic activity is an increase in welfare” (2011, 10). Society depends largely on the welfare state, specifically in Sweden, as it provides free education and healthcare or assistance to those who need it (Hilson 2011). If welfare is to be kept by, for example, refugees participating actively in the labour market, then the welfare state would be able to survive for the benefit of the whole society. Ruist (2015) however, points out that the large number of refugees seeking asylum in Sweden has negatively affected the national economy as their fiscal contributions are particularly low due to the amount of time it takes them to integrate

in the labour market. Contrary to this statement, Hansen defines Ruist and other similar discourses as “racial austerity” (2017, 135) as cutting fiscal contributions for the settlement of refugees would be “only making a mockery of any calls for integration into society and labour market” (*ibid*). While Eklund *et al* (2016) emphasise society can benefit from refugees if they become employed and financially self-sufficient.

In relation to refugees accepting the receiving society and wanting to learn about the community, O1 mentioned the steps a refugee must take in order to integrate “*much is about motivation, the will, you want to learn the language, you need to learn the culture. How it works in a workplace, the usual ... how to say*”. In this case, Ager & Strang explain that for a newcomer to be integrated it “requires from the refugee a preparedness to adapt to the lifestyle of the host community” (2008, 176). This task of adapting to the way things are done in the new country of residence shows that *social integration* is key in order to success in the integration process that leads to the labour market. That is to say, if a refugee is to become self-sufficient, some level of social integration is required to attain economic integration. In table 1, Castles *et al* (2002) include the term *structural assimilation* which they define as the successful participation of refugees in some sectors while lacking partaking in other areas. What is intended to be explained here is that even if a refugee has the *will* and *motivation* of learning about *workplace culture* in Sweden, certain structural hinders such as not knowing the language or discrimination may block his/her project of becoming socially integrated which as a result, becomes a tangible obstacle to become employed.

Again, as I have demonstrated with these previous studies, state, society and refugees depend on each other. Thus, based on the analysed data, theory and previous literature, I argue that four aspects of integration have been identified in the Establishment Programme, namely *the two-way approach, mutual adjustment, actors' interplay* and *social participation* in relation to the accountability and interaction themes.

In regard to the theme Individual Needs, this is a recurring feature of the EP. The idea of becoming self-sufficient in the most efficient way with the support of the EP is found in different sources about the cited labour market integration policy. For instance, PES describes it as “*a programme that consists of activities adapted to your needs in combination with you actively looking for work*” (PES 2019). A more individualised-need oriented approach has been discussed in previous research, such as in Ager & Strang who explain that “social links refer to the connection between individuals and structures of the state, such as government services”

(2008, 181) which in consequence would facilitate refugees to fulfil their needs. This feature of the EP would then match the aspect of integration defined in the literature as actors' interplay. To what extent these intentions are effective in more concrete and empirical terms in the life of migrants is a question to be answered in the analysis of the refugees' narratives. However, as I show in the following paragraph, previous literature shows these intentions still fail at facilitating the journey to economic integration.

Even though it may look like an ideal integration policy, these measures are not exempt from criticism. For example, Aldén & Hammarstedt (2014) argue that certain public actions aimed to assist integration in the labour market actually has worsened it. More recently, a report released by the Swedish Agency for Public Management²⁶ (2019), gives an updated account on the performance of the establishment assignment. The report states that the changes in the establishment assignment put into practice from January 1st 2018, *i.e.* from Establishment Plan to Programme, “have so far had a weak effect on the Employment Service's [PES] opportunities to work more efficiently and more flexibly” (2019, 76). Furthermore, Brännström *et al* (2018) mention what this shift in policy means in reality for those who attend the EP which is described as complex for individuals to understand which in consequence brings confusion. Indeed, this disorientation is clearly manifested by the chief officer at PES, both for the officers and for the participants, as she explained:

“We are working with two programmes. It is not easy for our customers to understand that. Many will start the Programme while others will stay in the Plan because the last ones were registered in 2017. In the Establishment Plan those who started there will then disappear by the end of 2019 because it is the Establishment Programme that started to apply this year, in January 2019. You see? We are so confused. It is a big difference between the Plan and the Programme, because in the other one we had more contact with people, we could make decisions based on the person, but now we can't do that. In the plan, people had the right to attend certain activities, but now they can't”.

According to the Swedish National Audit Office, the labour market integration policies not only in Sweden but in the rest of Europe, have a strong focus on the individual and her responsibility to integrate. As the Swedish National Audit Office explains “[integration] efforts are linked to stricter requirements for the newly arrived” (2015, 38). Thus, so far it is possible to identify a

²⁶ Statskontoret

dichotomy reflected in the aim of the EP which is to help refugees' integration by creating an individualised plan adapted to their needs while parallelly reflecting a difficulty for state officers and programme users to adapt to the new regulations. This finding may be one of the reasons that could explain the refugee gap in the labour market. Even if flexibility is an intrinsic feature of the EP, it has been demonstrated in this chapter that flexibility and adaptation to individual needs is not quite helpful. It seems that a combination of factors could explain the refugee gap in relation to LMI efforts which also leads to another question: are actually the needs of refugees been addressed and taken into account by the EP? Moreover, Aldén & Hammarstedt's (2014) observations coincide with the deductions of the Swedish Government Offices as in "the establishment policy and the efforts offered have had a worse effect due to the increased number of new arrivals who are to be established in the labour market in recent years" (2015, 43). Yet another outcome of this analysis shows that a possible explanation for these conclusions is the saturation of the integration policy systems: the greater the number of refugees' needs to individualise and adapt to, the more challenging is for PES officers and other related actors to handle integration which in return, may partially explain why refugees, according to previous research, fail at integrating in the labour market. Another possible explanation is the confusion among PES officers that this change in the establishment assignment has brought to their capacity. According to the Swedish Agency for Public Management (2019), PES officers do not feel supported in their tasks assigned by the state. This could also clarify the weak progression towards LMI. Does this mean that future research should focus on the relation between unsupported state agents and refugees' integration? How does this issue differentiate in comparison to the local initiatives *i.e.* municipal actions?

10.3.2 ASSISTANCE TO THE ECONOMIC INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES

In regard to the efforts found in the EP that are meant to assist refugees, PES describes it as "*you and your employment officer together plan what activities suit you best to be able to learn Swedish and find a job as quickly as possible [...]*:"

- *language training if you do not have basic skills in Swedish, Swedish for Immigrants (SFI)*
- *social orientation course*
- *courses at different levels if you need to develop or build on your skills*
- *work experience placement*
- *support when you are looking for work*
- *help and guidance if you are considering starting your own business"* (PES 2019).

As stated by PES (2019), these activities are meant to guide the migrant in his/her process, but no clear intention to development or stimulate their LMI is identified. Perhaps this is due to the fact that the issue of development is performed by the individual after attending these efforts which is measured in results. This argument is based upon Joyce (2017) who explains that many EP participants do not work after completing the programme, instead, they continue onto the next labour market measures which are subsidised employments. Thus, the activities described above by PES fail at showing how they could develop the economic integration of refugees. For example, Förslund (2018) shows in a report published by IFAU²⁷ that since 2000 “the number of people with subsidized employment has increased in trend over this period - from under 20,000 to about 60,000” (2018, 8), a figure explained in the number of refugees being granted asylum. However, the studies mentioned above have proved that extra measures after completing the programme seem to delay and prolong the employment integration of refugees. Therefore, it may be possible to conclude that the activities in the EP may assist the refugee in moving forward towards employment but it does not mean that these activities develop their economic integration. If LMI was indeed developed and stimulated, the number of people on subsidised jobs would be then reduced. Thus, these efforts are to be defined as preparatory but not developing.

10.3.3 REVIEW TO RESEARCH QUESTION 1

The analysis in this section has explained the aspects of integration in the EP and thus responded the first part of RQ1, namely ‘*what aspects of integration can be found in the Establishment Programme?*’ The conclusion is that refugees’ LMI is assisted by individualising plans for each person according to their special needs and circumstances. Therefore, in the EP, the two-way approach is reflected in the programme’s own goal of focusing on the person and her needs. Correspondingly, it is recognisable as a requirement demanded by the state in return for supporting the individual’s integration process. This last finding also correlates with one aspect of integration *i.e.* social participation: migrants’ integration in the labour market is also part of their social inclusion according to the European Commission (2018).

The second part of RQ1 *i.e.* ‘*how does it (the EP) develop and stimulate the economic integration of refugees?*’ is also answered. In relation to this question, the analysis did not reveal actions that develops refugees’ labour market participation other than assisting and preparing

²⁷ Institute for Evaluation of Labour Market and Education Policy in Sweden.

the way to become employed. Moreover, by using the tools and measures the state provides to the officers for the implementation of the programme, economic integration is then supported. However, the results of the analysis show that these efforts may be inconsistent or ineffective due to an overload of the system *i.e.* a large number of refugees which consequently increases the demand of services provided by the EP. A result that affects PES agents' performance which is simultaneously affected by a lack of support to facilitate their functions, according to the Swedish Agency for Public Management (2019). Finally, two major themes emerged from the results: accountability and individual needs as well as interaction and productivity. These two themes were then connected to the two-way approach, mutual adjustment, actors' interplay, and social participation.

10.4. THE RESPONDENTS: RESULTS

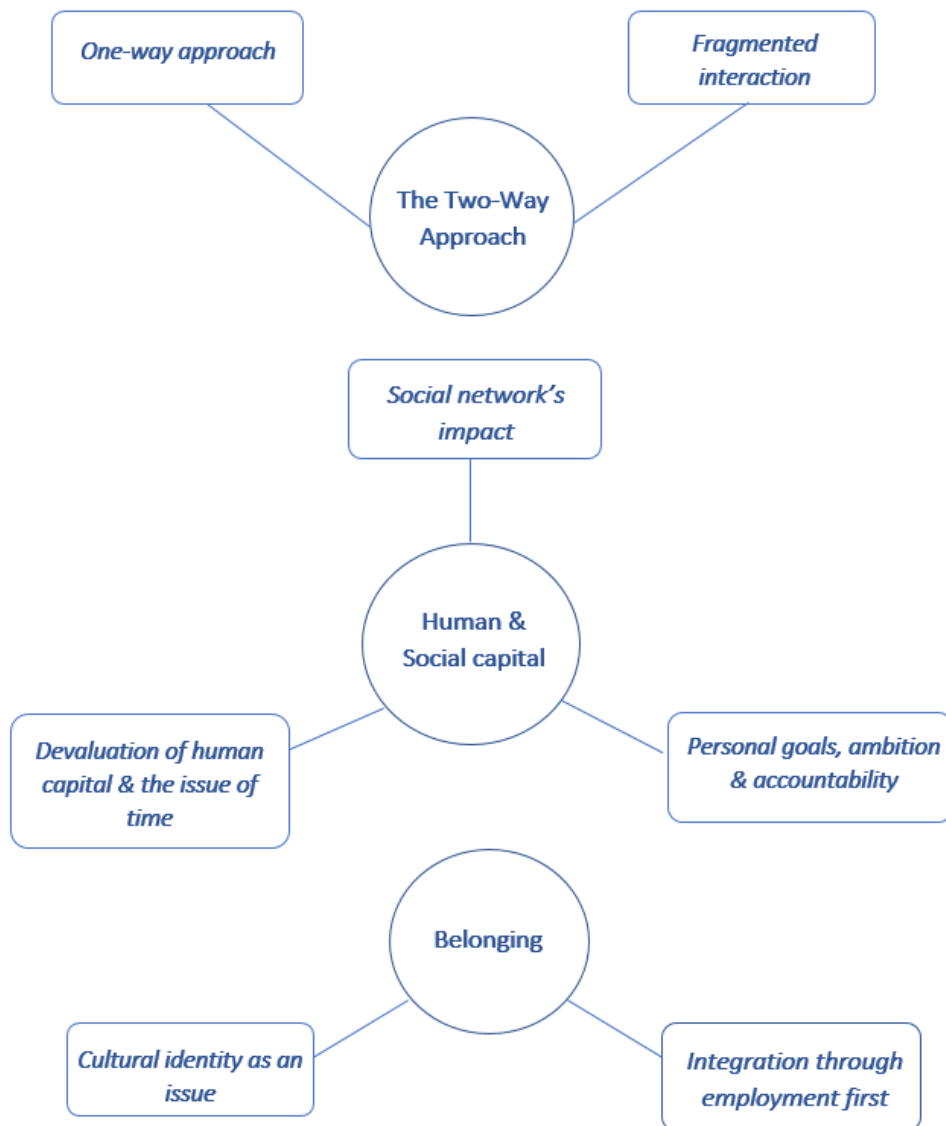
In this chapter, the results from the obtained data *i.e.* twelve interviews with twelve refugees, are presented and summarised. Also, a thematic diagram has been created to depict the main themes from the table. Below, both a summary of the interview results and the thematic diagram are displayed.

Table 3: Table of Results from Interviews: Themes

THEMES			
Respondents	Two-way approach	Human & Social Capital	Belonging
R1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fragmented interaction and actors' interplay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HC: Human capital devaluation & the issue of time. Accountability SC: Limited social network as a hinder for integration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work & study as social participation Cultural identity as an obstacle for integration
R2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community and authorities assisted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HC: Human capital acquisition SC: Social network as a vehicle for integration Future goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structural assimilation Cultural identity as an obstacle for integration
R3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-side adjustment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HC: Accountability Lack of human capital SC: contacts as enablers for labour market integration Ambition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration through employment Cultural identity to be problematic
R4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-side approach (actor's interplay deficient from their side) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HC: Sweden's economic structure as a vehicle for new human capital acquisition; HC devalued. SC: small social networks (individuals) as enablers of integration Accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment as an enabler for LM and social integration
R5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers as key actors for labour market integration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HC: Sweden's economic structure as a vehicle for new human capital acquisition and the issue of time SC: Absence of Swedish nationals in the refugee's social network Ambition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment as an enabler for LM and social integration
R6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institutions' deficiency in their role for LMI process; private sector and social contacts take over this role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HC: language domain as facilitator for integration SC: social network as enabler LMI Accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To belong through LMI and local language
R7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited contact and social isolation as disablers of integration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HC: Ambitions and personal goals as enablers for LMI Faster LMI with validation of HC Delayed integration and the issue of time as hindrance for future integration No social capital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural identity as a hinder for LM integration

R8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deficient contact with institutions prevents LMI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HC: human capital devalued and the issue of time SC: Limited social contact as hindrance for a full integration Ambition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inexistent social and economic participation due to social isolation
R9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structural/fragmented integration not problematic for LMI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Devaluation of human capital and the issue of time Social network as accelerator for integration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural identity restrained to integrate faster in receiving country
R10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-way approach first to facilitate a two-way approach Actors in E.P. as support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HC: devalued/depreciated human capital leads to new human capital SC: social network as facilitator of integration Ambition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation and belonging through employment
R11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration to start on day 1 – issue of wasted time due to waiting Social isolation as a restraint of integration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HC: Self-sufficiency through accountability + personal goals Human capital acquisition and contacts as enablers of LM integration HC: devalued Accountability and ambition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Belonging as a result of LM integration Cultural identity to be problematic during integration process
R12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistance of institutions and actors as key for LM integration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Previous human capital as facilitator of LM integration Social network as enabler of LM integration Personal goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural identity to be problematic in certain dimensions

Fig. 3: The Thematic Diagram on the Refugees' Narratives



10.5 THE RESPONDENTS' NARRATIVES: ANALYSIS

In this section, RQ2, is answered (see section 10.5.10). The emerged themes representing experiences of refugees during their participation in the EP are discussed and based on previous research. The above is then connected to the analysis of the EP. Similarly, RQ3 is addressed (see section 10.5.11).

10.5.1 THE TWO-WAY APPROACH: ONE-WAY APPROACH

As it presented in Figure 3, two themes were revealed in the thematic analysis of the interviews in relation to the two-way approach²⁸: *one way-approach* and *fragmented interaction*. In relation to the one way-approach²⁹, Castles *et al* (2002) define this concept in a normative sense, *i.e.* it implies that refugees should adapt to the receiving society. In this regard, the results obtained from the interviews revealed that a two-way approach is in most cases absent while a one-way approach is what the majority of the respondents experienced during and after attending the EP. For instance, the one-way approach is described as the contact a refugee has with the host community, the institutions and with the labour market which sometimes is absent from one side. Accordingly, R1 described his integration process in relation to the labour market and society: “*I just wonder why is it difficult to find a job. Am I doing something wrong? Because if I become unemployed, should I blame myself or blame the system? I can blame the society because they are not accepting who I am*”. He also adds in relation to his experience with the EP, “*in terms of support from the EP, I didn’t get any support because at the end I didn’t find a job through them. When I talked to my PES agent, I asked her: can you help me to apply for [employment at] companies? She said: ‘you have to do it. It’s up to you’*”. Similarly, when R3 was asked if the EP helped her in some way, she stated, “*yes, but not so much. It helped me in the language, but not that they found a job for me [...]. The positive is that I learned the language. The negative, they don’t help much to find a job.*” Also, R4 affirmed: “*I have sent my officer a lot of emails about job offers, if there are job offers or something and she didn’t respond me. This is the problem, because I sent a lot of emails without a response. And I don’t know why.*” In these cases, the informants experienced a non-reciprocal contact either with some parts of the community or PES agents. Also, the one-way approach in these narratives may reflect the newcomers’ expectations which are turned down by their encounters with community and institutions.

One could say however; these accounts are problematic since the Swedish Government’s integration policy (SOU 2008: 56) explicitly highlights the importance of *accountability* as it states the individual integration process is determined *solely* by the person in question while the state institutions can function as supporters for this process.

²⁸ To remind the reader, the two-way approach (Castles *et al* 2002) is *understood as a continuous process of interaction between the receiving/host society and the newly-arrived migrant. In this aspect of integration, there is a shared responsibility to reach integration.*

²⁹ See table 1

Accordingly, the refugees' narratives are linked to the themes exposed in the analysis on the EP, *i.e.* accountability, self-sufficiency, and individual responsibility³⁰. Moreover, the state expresses³¹ that the responsibility of establishing in Sweden lies on the individual, yet the state institutions shall support him/her in the best possible way. The emerging question is how to clarify this sharing of responsibilities for an optimal LMI process? Also, how to reach an integral two-way approach where both institutions and individuals share commitment while defining their expectations? In that regard, the Swedish Agency for Public Management's report (2019) suggested PES to clarify its tasks and role when supporting newcomers, a measure that may ease the relation between programme and users.

Moreover, what happens to the participants' hopes as in what they can expect to get when attending the EP? R2 explained, "*to be honest you can't rely on PES to find a job. They do their part but you can't just sit home and ask for a job, that doesn't work*". Also, R10 expressed: "*I could say the EP gives all newly-arrived people a foundation, and the first steps to start in society and in the labour market [...] they can't help you with everything*". In this respect, Brännström *et al* explain that the Swedish integration policies, in the last decades, have experienced "a movement towards responsibilities rather than the right to work" (2018, 26). Thus, it is possible to argue that the current integration policies in this respect are implicitly based on a one-way approach which means that individuals hold main accountability. In consequence, if this is the nature of the integration programmes in Sweden, then, as the Swedish Government mandates, it is important to make clear that the responsibility lies in such case, on the individual while state institutions and society function as *supporters*. Does the discussion lead perhaps to a redefinition of the two-way approach in this context?

The issue is complex, and it uncovers a contradiction due to the following reason: the EP is a governmental measure based on the individual and her needs. However, it demands the refugee accountability and individual responsibility at the same time. If we ask the following question: to what extent should the individual expect PES to find a job during his/her participation in the EP? Does PES need to emphasise that participants of the programme are for the most part responsible for their integration? In this sense, it is possible to go back to the term of *social links* proposed by Ager & Strang (2008) who explain these are embodied by government services as *bridges* which support the integration process of newcomers, rather than providing employment. It is interesting, however, the responses from R2 and R10 who acknowledge the

³⁰ see, Fig.2

³¹ Government Bill 1997/98:16

EP as a support in their LMI rather than as a provider of employment. In summary, the majority of the respondents had similar experiences of the EP, with only slight variations.

10.5.2 THE TWO-WAY APPROACH: FRAGMENTED INTERACTION

Further, another unveiled theme connected to the two-way approach was the issue on *fragmented interaction*. Castles *et al* 2002³² defined structural assimilation as the participation or exclusion of newcomers in certain spheres of the receiving country. In a related fashion within the context of LMI, fragmented interaction would be, based upon the theory, defined as the integration in some spheres of the host community (*e.g.* social, economic, cultural) while interacting with certain agents or intermediaries which support or assist the refugees' integration process.

According to previous research, an intrinsic connection and interdependency of different dimensions of integration has been observed. For instance, Robila explains the connection between LMI and contact with the host community where “employment is the most important factor in securing the integration of migrants into society” (2018, 11). Moreover, in terms of social networks in relation to economic integration, Woolcock (1998) argues that the possession of social capital plays a critical role in the economic advancement of the individual, while Lin (2001) argues that social connections are instrumental in the way that they allow the achievement of certain goals.

Several respondents experienced a fragmented interaction due to a lack of support from PES as the economic integration process was instead, supported by social connections. For instance, R4 explained this deficient support and how it has impacted his chances to belong and integrate in the host community, saying: “*actually, I feel that I am not part of this society, because they will respect you, first, when you are working, and I haven't found any job yet*”. Additionally, when R6 was asked in what way the EP helped him to find a job, he said: “*what helped to find a job was contacts, and that means society, and those around me. I didn't get any help during the EP to be completely honest. I didn't get anything from them, it was just that I got my grant. But as I told you, my contacts helped me*”. Also, R1 explained how personal contacts and friends helped him to find a part-time work at the university's restaurant. He also said that a job at a hotel was also found through a friend as the EP did not help him to find employment. Later,

³² See table 1

R11 told about his experience with PES, as *“it’s so bad. It’s like nobody cares. They just give me these 1700 crowns after I finished the EP, and I don’t need this. I need work and help with my studies, not to get money. I called my employment agent; she didn’t answer me. I told her I wanted to meet her. She told me “no, you have to write an e-mail.”*

Thus, most informants³³ as observed experienced either a one-way approach or a fragmented interaction, which in this study, are joined themes. The fragmented integration in different sectors of the society is expressed either by an absence of labour market in the integration process of refugees, informal social contacts taking over institutions’ tasks, or by not experiencing participation in society due to an unbalanced intervention of all actors and means of integration. Respectively, Engbersen defines integration as “equal participation in the major social institutions and sectors” (2003, 4). However, most informants found employment through informal social networks. A possible explanation that may explain the fragmented interaction between the EP and its users was discussed during the interview with O1 who explained that PES agents’ productivity is affected by an overloaded system since 2015, with many users who have different needs along with a procurement system that does not always fit individuals’ requirements. Also, a lack of support from the state to PES agents was described during the adjustment period in regard to the transition from Establishment Plan to Establishment Programme.

Further, R11 explained how social isolation affected his integration process and the sense of safety when asked if he felt part of the host country: *“I feel like I am alone...so no, I am not safe, no, because if I stop working tomorrow, I’ll be on the street”*. Moreover, R7 also experienced fragmented isolation while having some support from PES but feeling socially isolated: *“the institutions, PES, if you can say it, they have supported with compensation, financially. But society, no. I don’t think so. There is no contact. I thought that when I was going to start the internship, I would get many friends. But it didn’t happen”*. According to Valtonen (2004), there are different types of participation which lead to integration in different dimensions. For example, the author explains that economic participation is part of a *secondary structural integration* such as labour market or education. However, this type of structural integration is not possible to achieve without a *primary structural integration* such as the participation of individuals in society and collective arenas. Therefore, these accounts explain

³³ See Table 3

one dimension can be fragmented if the participation in another dimension is absent which leads to a fragmented interaction.

Further, this issue is discussed by Hynie who explains that “successful integration has direct effects on well-being [...]. Refugees ability to integrate, however, is strongly determined by policies that shape their social and material context” (2018, 267). In relation to this statement and as quoted earlier, O1 explained the municipality is in charge of the social aspects of integration since PES’ focus is to assist refugees in finding employment. However, previous research explains that it is not possible to separate these dimensions from each other or to exclude one to prioritise the other in the making of integration policies. In conclusion, an approach that includes a social and economic dimension may reduce the fragmented interaction experienced by refugees. A possible measure could include the strengthening of the cooperation between the municipality and PES in order to fill in spaces which the participant may experience incomplete.

Furthermore, during the collection of data for this research, several interviews were conducted with municipal officers who work directly with integration measures at the local level³⁴. These informants explained and describe the numerous activities provided for refugees in Gothenburg such as *Pathfinder*, an initiative created to integrate refugees in the labour market by helping them to create social networks. Another initiative was *Refugee Guide/Language Friend* which consists of matching a refugee with a volunteer local resident to learn Swedish, create social networks and learn about the Swedish society. Accordingly, Ager & Strang points out the importance of “connecting refugees to relevant services [as] a major task in supporting integration” (2008, 181). However, when the respondents were asked if they knew about these initiatives, ten out of twelve informants did not know them and explained they never received information about other alternatives to complete their integration process.

In conclusion, the EP may benefit from the inclusion of social participation in order to increase the chances a refugee has to integrate multidimensionally. In such a case, refugees’ integration would be much more supported by a community that is willing to engage. For example, by including Piracha *et al* (2013) and Ager & Strang (2008) recommendations of funding organisational centres that can complement the EP objectives. In such case, future policy design

³⁴ Municipal officers interviewed were the head in charge of the integration section of the City of Gothenburg; the project leader of the labour market initiative *Pathfinder (Vägvisaren)*; two heads officers at the Integration Centre of the municipality; and one head officer at the Competence Centre for work and education (*Kompetenscenter*) in Angered, Gothenburg.

of labour market efforts could potentially include the host community as key actors to support integration.

10.5.3 HUMAN AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

In this section, three main findings from the thematic analysis will be discussed based on the aspects of integration presented in the theoretical chapter, human and social capital.

10.5.4 DEVALUATION OF HUMAN CAPITAL AND THE ISSUE OF TIME

A minority of the informants said they made use of their existing human capital in different ways, while the majority faced a devaluation of their previous knowledge. However, their experiences were quite different in this regard, especially the time it took to acquire new human capital, their personal goals or their degree of accountability when it comes to building skills that fit the needs of the Swedish labour market.

Human capital is defined by Becker (1993) as the investments a person makes such as training or schooling and other associated skills accumulated by the individual, while Bevelander & Lundh (2007) notice that an individual's human capital presents differences in terms of quality, affecting their chances to integrate in the labour market. Human capital in the context of refugee migration is a marker for successful or unsuccessful economic integration since human capital may be built, renewed or extended depending on the economic structure and demands of the labour sector in the receiving country (Bevelander, 2000; Weber, 2014; Sanandaji 2017).

Weber describes human capital depreciation as “the decrease of a worker's market value” (2014, 613). Once the interviewed refugees were granted a residence permit, not all of them could make use of their personal resources which in consequence, devalued their human capital. The accounts of R1, R2, R4, R5, R8, R9, R10 and R11 revealed such matter once they informed their EP agents the type of experience and skills they had. This register of previous knowledge did not lead to an opportunity of using such skills as many of them were instead sent to vocational courses and SFI to increase their chances of becoming employed. This is especially problematic in the case of highly-educated refugees³⁵ with bachelor's degrees such as R1, R4, R9, and R10. For instance, R1 an architect with a validated degree by the UHR³⁶ and who has a part-time job as a waiter, explained: *“Until now everything I worked is not related to my experience [...], the companies are not trusted that I know or that I can work with the Swedish*

³⁵ Eich-Krohms defines highly skilled migrants as one who holds a “bachelor's degree or post-tertiary education with a Master's or Doctorate degree [...] (2013, 154).

³⁶ Swedish Council for Higher Education.

system, they are more trusted with things that are for Sweden”. Also, R4, a civil engineer with a validated degree by UHR and who was an unemployed student at university shared a similar experience: “here in Sweden, the employers don’t believe in previous experience, especially from the Middle East. No, I wouldn’t say that I used my previous experience here in Sweden. That’s something that has affected my experience in finding a job”. According to Eich-Krohm (2013), academic degrees are sometimes not transferable from country to country which makes migrants working in low-skilled jobs. Further, R10 owned a company and hired several employees in Syria. His bachelor’s degree in computer engineering was validated by UHR but at the time of the interview he was unemployed. He applied to several jobs but did not receive any response despite his experience. However, he researched about alternative occupations and studied one year as a teacher assistant³⁷. He explained: “I’m an engineer here in Sweden, but the EP and PES did not help because I waited about one year - I sent my CV and personal letters to more than fifty companies, and I received no answer. It didn’t help me”.

These results coincide with Franke Björkman’s study (2018) regarding LMI of female refugees, which identified three main factors which block these migrants their access to the labour market: a devaluation of their previous experience exacerbated by the time it takes them to adapt to a new system while lacking support from state institutions. Moreover, Koshulko (2018) defines the devalued human capital of skilled migrants as *brain waste*. She explains these individuals made use of their educational background in their countries but are unable to use it in the host country where they reside. Brain waste is, according to Batalova *et al* when “college-educated immigrants work in low-skilled jobs or are unemployed” (2016, 1). The Swedish government has in this regard adopted several measures undertaken by the Swedish Ministry of Education³⁸ as part of the national integration policy. One of these efforts is the validation³⁹ of academic degrees and work experience which according to the Swedish Ministry of Education (2003) is defined as the process that includes a structured evaluation and recognition of a person’s skills. For the EP, the Government of Sweden (2017a) explicitly addresses such task as a measure to support and strengthen the LMI of refugees in Sweden.

Brain wasting is an observable issue among the participants of this thesis. Even if these informants’ degrees were recognised in Sweden, validation did not allow them to integrate in the labour market. Brain wasting has been previously confirmed in a study by Diedrich (2017)

³⁷ The equivalent in Swedish is known as *lärarassistent*.

³⁸ *Utbildningsdepartementet*.

³⁹ Known as *validering* in Swedish.

who affirms that this particular integration measure has not accelerated refugees' economic integration. A waste of talent and skills indeed, which also affects the "sustainability of the welfare systems against the background of an ageing population and workforce" (European Commission 2016b, 9), a *problematique* that has not been properly addressed in the EP. Additionally, such an issue stresses the question on how to improve the integration measures to grant employment to highly-skilled migrant workers who can contribute to the national economy. Koshulko (2018) explain in this regard that the biggest problem faced by skilled migrants in terms of wasted human capital are structural barriers such as labour market skills that fit the national labour market and language. Two factors that will be discussed below.

The issue of time and human capital acquisition was also unveiled in the interviews. Informants R1, R5, R7, R8 and R9 experienced that the acquisition of new human capital was something that represented a barrier to the labour market as it takes much time to complete. R9 shared his experience on the time it takes to acquire new skills: "*since you come to a country, you have to study the language first, that is the most important [...] that doesn't take a short time, it is like starting from the beginning*". Alongside these narratives, R8 also believed it took a long time to obtain new skills: "*Actually it is very hard. I can't understand why it is like that. I have to study SFI, then I have to study SAS 1 in 20 weeks, SAS 2 20 weeks, and SAS 3 20 weeks⁴⁰. Then I have to study mathematics. So those steps I have to complete them also in two years. Then I have to study at university. It's very hard.*". Bevelander (2000) explains that the acquisition of host-country skills takes several years before a migrant is fully integrated in the labour market, although it is a necessary process to carry out if the refugee employment gap is to be reduced. In the case of R5, R8 and R9, this process may take time but it is a necessary step to integrate. According to Diedrich & Styhre (2013), integration policies focus on assisting the immigrant by shortening the transition from arrival to a labour market participation by providing numerous services such as validation, language courses or training. However, it is not possible to explain why these measures did not fully facilitate labour market participation during the EP. In the case of R8, she was a young mother of two children without any social network, a particular case that cannot explain the rest of the cases. Nevertheless, if the two-way approach had existed

⁴⁰ According to *Skolverket* (n.d.) (Swedish National Agency for Education), SAS 1, 2 and 3 are known as *Svenska som andraspråk*, i.e. Swedish as a second language. These courses in Swedish are directed to those who do not have Swedish as their mother tongue. See: <https://www.skolverket.se/undervisning/gymnasieskolan/laroplan-program-och-amnen-i-gymnasieskolan/gymnasieprogrammen/amne?url=1530314731%2Fsyllabuscw%2Fjsp%2Fsubject.htm%3FsubjectCode%3DSVA%26lang%3Dsv%26tos%3Dgy&sv.url=12.5dfee44715d35a5cdfa92a3>

in this particular context, R8 would have found the right support from institutions to develop her human capital and become employed.

R1 expressed in relation to the depreciation of his skills and knowledge: *“I know that the longer I stay without doing anything my information will get older, my data will get older and I am getting older”*. What R1 experienced is defined by Benton & Diegert as “the atrophy of skills” which is one of the reasons that may explain the persistent refugee unemployment gap (2018, 26). As the economic structure of Sweden may differ from the economic structure of the refugees’ countries of origin (Bevelander 2000; Eich-Krohnm 2013; Sanandaji 2017) the acquisition of new human capital is then crucial in order to secure a place in the labour market. However, these structural factors aggravate the atrophy of human capital since outdated or unsuitable skills are not of use in the receiving country, while new knowledge such as language and work skills must be acquired.

10.5.5 SOCIAL NETWORK’S IMPACT

As explained in the theoretical chapter, several authors have acknowledged the role of social connections in refugees’ LMI as enablers and facilitators. For Kindler *et al* (2015) social capital is used as a tool in order to obtain certain results. In the context of LMI, this type of capital is characterised by its functionality *i.e.* it is used to access employment. However, not all refugees have created social networks during the first years of residence in the host community. Three informants share in common not having contact with the community. For example, R5 explained: *“yes, I have friends here, from Syria, Afghanistan. But I don’t have Swedish friends”*. Furthermore, R7 admitted that her own family do not help her to integrate socially or economically, *“my life is better than other Syrians, because I have siblings, we can eat together. But I cannot say that they help me integrate into society or find a job”*. R8’s narrative revealed a total isolation while living in Sweden: *“I don’t get any contact with people. When I speak to people by accident at the streets and like that, but I don’t get any friends or any contact. I don’t know...I feel it’s very hard to get involved in the society”*. Piracha *et al* (2013) explain that newcomers do not have the same access to community compared to natives which in consequence affects their chances of becoming integrated in the labour market by being supported by social networks. It is then possible to affirm that a lack of social networks would hinder refugees’ LMI. In such a case, the role of the EP in relation to creating social opportunities should be particularly intensified as refugees with a total lack of social contact would have a harder time integrating in the labour market.

In the opposite way, informants R1, R2, R3, R4, R6, R9, R10, R11, and R12 highlighted how important their social networks were during their LMI process. They all agreed that their social networks helped more significantly than the PES or EP. For example, R3 explained she managed to secure a subsidised occupation through a family friend: *“the job that I found was through my husband’s friend.” PES didn’t find the job, it was that friend who owns a pizzeria and who said to me “I can help you, you can come here”*. A similar account was shared by R12 whose sister helped him to find a job in the municipality’s kitchen as well as a friend: *“relationships helped... my sister, and my friend who works at a restaurant arranged an interview with his boss”*. However, it is important to mention that R12, R2 and R3 said that the EP helped them to find a subsidised activity, but not a job without state sponsorship.

R11 had plans to find another job which was also facilitated through a contact: *“I had met someone from my city, he worked in the same company in Syria and he told me he could help me to find a job, he would talk to his boss, and they called me”*. R6 also shared a similar story: *“it was a foreign friend, and it was for a Swedish company. The manager asked my friend if he knew someone who needed a job; he arranged it and I got the job”*. A common element is identified in these stories of social network which is described by Putnam *et al* (1993) as having a transitive nature in the sense that trust is transferable from person to person which allows people to rely on personal references *i.e.* an employer would give the job to someone that is known by a third party. These narratives would hence, confirm the influence of social capital in the labour market integration process of refugees in Sweden.

When these informants were asked how the PES and EP helped them to get a subsidised activity, most of them said that friends and personal contacts would help them more effectively than any integration measures or state institutions. Yet, they all shared the common experience of acquiring knowledge on how to write a CV, personal letter and learn Swedish through their participation in the EP. Bevelander & Lundh (2007) indicate that in case a refugee does not possess the host country’s specific human capital, social network would in such cases alleviate the integration process into the labour market. This is a fact that has been conclusively corroborated in the refugees’ stories. I argue, based on the empirical evidence and previous literature, that social capital is indeed an effective facilitator of economic integration in the first stage. In conclusion, social network may function as a ladder for those who lack human capital the early stages of labour market integration.

10.5.6. PERSONAL GOALS, AMBITION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

During interview analysis, the empirical evidence indicates a connection between human capital, individual ambition, and accountability. The narratives gathered in this study, revealed an assembly of personal projects, goals, and independence regardless of the roughness of the refugee's journey. All refugees' narratives revealed different degrees of accountability such as independence and ambition, and the clearest examples will be presented in this section. Based on previous research on the role of human capital in the labour market, it is possible to conclude that an individual's knowledge, skills and plans are key to integrate economically, whether these factors are present or not. Chou & Chow (2009) define these indicators of human capital as *observable* and *unobservable*. The first ones refer to, for example, education and work experience, while the second ones are talent, motivation and ambition. How these two types of indicators are displayed in the refugees' narratives have given suggestions for the improvement of the EP.

For instance, R1 expressed: *“my initial thing about finding the job is not the money. I'm working mostly to show that I am having the same qualifications as any other student who is working and studying, whatever the working is related to.”* Further, R10 also shared a similar experience: *“I can get two chances, as a computer engineer or teacher, so that is my thought. The next step is to get the teaching license.”*. Also, R5 expressed his intentions in completing his studies in Swedish and studying at university in the future: *“the most important thing is the language, and I want to continue studying at the university. I have planned. But now I need a job, maybe after a find a job”*. In similar terms, R7 expressed her plans: *“I began to think about important things, I started thinking about my dreams, studying as I have wanted, I began to think about learning English”*. Moreover, R12 also narrated his ambitions: *“I think I should work and make money, not to get welfare. I [also] want to get a driving license, I want to buy a car, I want to travel. All Swedes work and fix everything in their lives”*. From these narratives it is possible to conclude that ambition and goals combined with accountability stimulate the acquisition of human capital therefore, LMI increases. In this respect, it is possible to agree with Chiswick (2000; 1978) who defines human capital as a set of abilities which, if combined with motivation, tenacity and ambition, then individuals' capacities are enhanced, thus, LMI is simplified. However, it is also possible to question the degree of certainty of previous literature in this regard since structural hindrances such as discrimination, segregation or racism would overwhelm a person's ambition, no matter how determined he/she is. It would be interesting in

future research to explore the connection between ambition and motivation with outcomes *i.e.* if migrants do overcome the structural hindrances and become employed.

On the other hand, R3 told during the interview that she was unable to finish her secondary education in Sweden as her time at the EP was finished and didn't have any money; she wanted to work by pausing her studies and finding a job. However, even if she found a subsidised activity at a friend's pizzeria, she had plans to study in the future: *"every day I'm searching about the educational programmes, courses, and educations available. I found something and I can study distance. It's very good. I would like to work at the hospital"*. The EP main objective is, in this particular case, partially fulfilled as the participant obtained a subsidised occupation while having unfinished secondary education⁴¹. However, the Swedish Government introduced a new requirement in the new version of the Establishment policy which came into force on January 1 2018 *i.e.* the education duty⁴² (Swedish Government Offices 2017b) which meant that those who have unfinished primary and secondary education should prioritise the completion of such studies in order to match the requirements of the Swedish labour market (PES 2018c, n.p.). However, such prioritisation seems contradicting and complex to handle. On the one hand, the participant should find employment and become self-sufficient as soon as possible. However, on the other hand, the participant must prioritise unfinished education. Thus, both objectives and obligations would delay the labour market integration of the person in question as it would be difficult to fulfil either of them. However, Aldén & Hammarstedt (2014) found out that education investments seem to increase the employability of newcomers even if their rates of labour market participation do not match the rates of natives' participation in the long term. While education and skills investments may certainly increase the chances of becoming employed, the time it takes would still represent a concealed hinder for refugees.

As it has been explained, integration policies in Sweden aim at integrating newcomers in all spheres of society. Brännström *et al* (2017) argue that a two-way approach should be the tactic implemented in Sweden to improve integration. Yet so far, the formula consisting of accountability, independence and a two-way approach (from state institutions) in the EP does not seem to close the refugee employment gap, a result represented by the participants of this study. Therefore, the data indicates that the EP should focus on clarifying the accountability of refugees, *i.e.* moving partially towards a one-way approach and correspondingly decreasing

⁴¹ As previously described in this study: "the aim is for you to learn Swedish, find a job, and become self-sufficient as quickly as possible" (PES 2019).

⁴² *Utbildningsplikt*

focus on the two-way approach. That is, the EP should clearly indicate that the individuals should take the initiative particularly in the first stages of integration. Moreover, the EP should also emphasise that individuals are to be accountable of their own integration process as their expectations, identified in their narratives, suggest they misunderstand the EP's purpose which is to guide the refugee towards LMI. However, a majority of the participants expected the EP and PES to give them employment. Thus, individual accountability of the EP participants and a clarification from PES' side on what participants can expect are suggested.

The question is, how can the EP be improved in this decisive field? According to Peromingo (2014), the Swedish integration policies stand out for providing training while simultaneously giving refugees opportunities to study the Swedish language. Ugland (2014) points out that these politics of integration seem to provide mostly *incentives* rather than *encouraging* accountability as they do not stimulate self-sufficiency from the beginning. Regarding this point, I disagree with Ugland if we take into account the results obtained from the interviews. The participants of this study contest Ugland's statement in their desire of improving their human capital, and their employment aspirations are indeed, a consequence of personal accountability. The latter is supported by theoretical evidence of the connection between human capital and ambition in order to enter the labour market which Gordon describes as "individuals' progression [and] accumulation of further capabilities for future use" (2015, 1044). It is then possible to conclude that the numerous types of incentive provided by LMI policies are a set of tools to assist an individual's progression and ultimately, a successful integration in the labour market. Yet however 'good' this purpose seems to be, it has been proved by previous literature presented throughout this research, that the refugee employment gap is still large and refugees still represent low labour market outcomes in comparison to Swedes and other types of immigrants⁴³. Since the central issue in this discussion is on how to accelerate and improve the LMI process of refugees, then human capital indicators such as tenacity, ambition and accountability (in this sense, individual responsibility on their own integration process) should be enhanced. It is however possible to infer that the EP has shown the informants the importance of acquiring new human capital such as learning Swedish and completing unfinished education.

In sum, the experiences of the refugees in relation to their own accountability, ambition, and human capital during their participation in the EP, have been identified as potential areas to develop in this integration effort. Personal goals, ambition and accountability have been linked

⁴³ Bevelander 1999; Bevelander 2000; Bevelander 2016; Alén & Hammarstedt 2014; Ruist 2015; Sandberg, 2017; Benton & Dieger 2018; Fasani *et al* 2018, Joyce 2017, Luik *et al* 2018.

to human capital which in return, if stimulated and developed, may open the door to a different approach in the EP. However, as explained earlier, even if the EP highlights the importance of individual responsibility, some of the participants in the programme did not understand it as such since they built up expectations placed on the EP as an effort which would give them an employment rather than supporting their LMI process. On the other hand, other participants narrated how being accountable and ambitious would lead them to the labour market faster, which seems a more promising approach to reach a successful LMI.

10.5.7 BELONGING

In this final section of the analysis, the last aspect of integration *i.e.* belonging will be discussed along with two findings in the material: *integration through employment* and *cultural identity as an issue*.

10.5.8 INTEGRATION THROUGH EMPLOYMENT FIRST

As mentioned earlier in section 7, integration is a multidimensional process (Robila 2018) which Stark & Jakubek (2013) distinguish between economic assimilation and social integration where the latter facilitates labour market participation. However, the refugees' narratives have suggested a different interpretation, that is, both dimensions of integration are interchangeable and support each other continuously. Yet it is important to bear in mind that such a relationship may sometimes lead to a structural assimilation (Castles *et al* 2002) where the integration is not executed and identified in all spheres equally.

Indeed, based on the revealed themes, Castles *et al* (2002) statement did not seem to be problematic for the informants as nearly all of them believed that in order to participate in one dimension of integration, it was necessary to begin in a different dimension first. Correspondingly, when informants were asked in what ways they participated in the receiving country and what integration meant to them, R1 expressed: "*I think I consider myself part of the society, but I am part when I find a job, when I am providing truly with my knowledge and my experience in a place*". Likewise, R2 said: "*well, as long as you work and pay taxes, you're accepted [...] I mean, when I work, when I pay taxes, I believe I participate*". Further, R4 stated: "*Everyone says, 'oh you are very nicely integrated in society' just because I am studying, they consider me an integrated person. But I mean, in the future when I work then I will consider myself an integrated person*". On the other hand, when R10 was asked what were his rights and

duties in Sweden, he answered: “*I want to work, and pay taxes - so I become part of this society. One must become part of this country and help [it]. Until now, Sweden is helping us. Society, people, the government gave us everything, but now we are going to give back*”. A similar approach took R11 in terms of the duties he believed had in Sweden, a narrative that gets closed to the sense of belonging described in previous research: “*I want to show the Swedish society we can do many things, positive things. Because in Syria nobody sits at home, we don’t have the social welfare or anything like that [...]. I think I can help. Because the Swedish government and the Swedish society helped me when I was in a terrible situation*”.

As observed, a structural assimilation may be present in these narratives. In this sense, I disagree with Castles *et al* (2002) in two of their claims. Firstly, the authors explain that when immigrants experience structure assimilation they integrate in certain spheres of the receiving community while “they remain highly discriminated against or excluded from other spaces” (2002, 116). Secondly, the authors state that an integrated foreign-born individual participates in all spaces of society while keeping his/her identity. For the first statement, it is possible to recognise that refugees do experience exclusion in certain areas while trying to integrate in others. However, would it be possible to consider this issue a natural part of the integration process? What if this exclusion is part of the process of adapting *acculturation strategies* (Berry 2005) in order to fit in the receiving society? As Berry (2005) explains, acculturation strategies are the different ways individuals adapt to integrate in the host community, and these strategies are chosen freely by the person. The narratives here presented have revealed that refugees have strategies in mind to succeed on their way towards the labour market: ‘I pay taxes, then I’m accepted; I’m learning Swedish; therefore, I have more chances to find work’. However, even if these individuals intend to integrate in the different spheres of society, they may encounter structural barriers while trying to find a place in society. In that case, acculturation strategies may also be observed as the different encounters *i.e.* different strategies performed by the agent (the individual) to navigate the structures of society.

Moreover, the informants explained they had not received support from PES or during the EP in terms of integration through employment. This was demonstrated in section 10.5.2⁴⁴ where one of the informants claimed to feel “*alone*” (R11) while others (R7, R8) claimed to feel isolated, something which affected their chances to participate in the labour market. Also, in this section, it was revealed that employment would be a catalyst factor for the integration in

⁴⁴ On fragmented interaction

the community. Therefore, an approach of interdependence of dimensions, the economic and the social, should be promoted in the EP. To conclude, based on this discussion, the themes found in the analysis on the EP, *i.e.* accountability and individual responsibility of the migrants should be clarified and then, enhanced. Alternatively, the two-way approach could be explained to members of the host community in order to strengthen their role and importance in the LMI of refugees.

10.5.9 CULTURAL IDENTITY AS AN ISSUE

It has been said that being a full participant in all aspects of integration increases the sense of belonging in foreign-born individuals living in a different country (Hellgren 2015). Also, it leads to a relation of acceptance between newcomers and members of the host community. However, the data revealed that the community's negative attitudes towards a different cultural identity became an issue for the interviewed refugees to access the labour market. For example, informants R1, R2, R3, R7, R9, R11, and R12 experienced rejection in the labour market.

The respondents experienced their names, cultural identity, religion and country of origin evoked hostile attitudes in most part of the community. When they were asked if they had experienced discrimination in the labour market or/and outside of it, R1 for example, expressed: *“yes, a lot. If you consider my name...I have actually changed a little bit of my name and I changed my name on my CV”*. While R2 shared a similar account: *“If you have a CV with a Muslim name and you have a CV with the same competence, same experience, with a different name...the Muslim with the Muslim name will be rejected, the person with the foreign name will be rejected, but the person with the Swedish name will be accepted”*. *I'm an atheist but [I have] a Muslim name. So, I fear I'll have to change my name because whenever I say it, I get this prejudice that I am a Muslim”*. It has further been empirically observed (Lundborg 2013) that Arabic names do have a negative effect when employers recruit workforce which supports the refugees' accounts. Further, R7 claimed that her religion made her feel insecure: *“people tell me ‘you are a good girl, why do you have a veil’. I think that if Swedish society wants to accept me, they would accept me as I am. [But] when I search for jobs, I think they won't accept me because I have a veil”*. In the case of R7, the European Commission (2016a) explains that women wearing the veil do encounter obstacles when trying to participate in the labour market.

Based on these narratives, it is possible to claim that the sense of belonging is cyclical and interdependent: in order to succeed in economic terms, it is necessary to maintain a *harmonised* contact with the receiving community and vice versa. This argument is supported by Ager &

Strang (2008) who consider employment as a vehicle for the contact with individuals of the host community. Furthermore, *cultural identity* is defined by Clarke as “a number of factors – ‘race’, ethnicity, gender and class” (2008, 510). In terms of culture and integration, Berry (1997) connects these two aspects and argues that cultural identity is maintained among culturally-diverse groups within a society which means that they find mechanisms to interact with and respect each other, something the author calls integration.

According to the European Commission (2016a), societal challenges are indeed obstacles that delay the participation of refugees in the labour market, something that is empirically proved to happen in Sweden. For instance, Hynie refers to these problematic encounters with the receiving community as “public attitudes” (2018, 267) which the author claims it affects from the perception the host community has about the newcomers, to the influence over policy-making and institutions’ will to assist refugees. Therefore, such explanation may also clarify the difficulties refugees face during their integration process. Hellgren (2015) argues that such attitudes must be addressed and debated as they affect all dimensions of integration for newcomers.

Furthermore, during their participation in the EP, most of the informants did not experience an improvement in their day-to-day experiences with the host community nor in the labour market. Some of them explained that because they were refugees, they had to constantly prove they were *good enough* or that they too were capable of learning and integrating. As R7 recalled: “*I want to say something: I think we who are immigrants or wearing the veil, we must have better papers, we must show all the time, we must show ourselves. We must make more effort than Swedes*”. An explanation and interpretation of R7’s narrative may be better understood by applying Berry’s (2005) terminology i.e. *acculturation* and *acculturative stress*. The former refers to a process of psychological and cultural change resulting from contact between two or several groups and their members. The latter refers to a “stress reaction in response to life events that are rooted in the experience of acculturation” (*ibid*, 708). Thus, acculturative stress is also an observable barrier that most refugees experience and which may lead to feelings of alienation and isolation, two behaviours and conditions that affect the sense of belonging. Perhaps not only in society, but also in the labour market.

Going back to the stories, elements of both acculturation and acculturative stress were identified in the narratives described above as two informants considered changing their names while one of the participants had to put an extra effort in order to show the host community that she can too fit with it. In these cases, the Government bill of 1997 does not seem to influence the public

attitudes towards refugees which in turn, affects the outcome of the EP when refugees regardless of their participation in this programme, do not reach equality in the access to society and labour market. Thus, these stories and the discussion have demonstrated once again the interrelatedness of the economic and the social spheres. In conclusion, a cyclical factor is identified: prejudice and acculturative stress affect the outcome of the integration policies which in return, affect the pay-revenue of refugees in the national economy.

10.5.10 REVIEW TO RESEARCH QUESTION 2

Thus, RQ2⁴⁵ has been answered in this analysis section. For the first part of RQ2, the thematic analysis revealed the refugees' experiences of the Establishment Programme. The analysis of the participants' stories was in first place, the EP's approach did not contribute, in most cases, in their LMI. On the other hand, it was observed that some refugees did experience support while attending the EP, but such support was embodied in basic aspects *e.g.* Swedish lessons. They also expressed the contact with PES was not satisfactory as most of them did not experience a fluent communication and contact with their respective PES agents.

In second place, *fragmented interaction* was also a new theme which emerged in connection to the two-way approach as the informants experienced participation in some dimensions of integration. For example, some informants revealed society or particular individuals helped them to find employment *i.e.* the EP did not help them in that matter.

In third place, three themes emerged from the interviews: *devaluation of human capital and the issue of time; social network's impact*, as well as *personal goals, ambition, and accountability*. For the first theme, the informants claimed they were in need of new human capital but it was problematic since they considered it took much time to acquire. They also explained they were not able to use their human capital as employers did not show interest, something that led some of them to further educate themselves. Other informants did not have completed secondary education.

Moreover, social network's impact was also discussed. In this regard, there were mixed experiences on how an abundance or absence of social network affected their chances to integrate on a day-to-day basis. The majority of the respondents emphasised the importance

⁴⁵ What are the refugees' experiences of the Establishment Programme?

social contacts when finding employment, a factor that accelerated their entrance to the labour market which was entirely facilitated by having friends or relatives who assisted.

Further, personal goals, ambition and accountability were also identified. Accordingly, the discussion in this matter led to a problematisation of the objectives of the EP which mandates participants to find a job as quickly as possible, nonetheless, the Swedish integration policy requires to complete unfinished studies in order to find employment. Thus, this leads to a *dilemma* for the refugee. Later, a connection between human capital and accountability was developed which helped to conclude that an individual's progression, *i.e.* a sum of human capital and ambition was key to secure a place in a demanding labour market.

Finally, in relation to the third core, *i.e.* belonging, two themes were identified: *integration through employment first*, and *cultural identity as an issue*. In the first one, several informants perceived social integration was possible through being employed first. A recurrent subject, paying taxes, was brought up by the respondents which according to the analysis, it would represent a product/result of being integrated in the labour market. The second theme, revealed that several informants experienced their cultural identity to be problematic based on the negative attitudes from some members of the receiving community. Moreover, acculturation and the two-way approach were two theoretical expressions which seemed to be closely related.

For the second part of RQ2⁴⁶ the refugees' narratives showed the degree of involvement of the EP in the LMI of these individuals which is at times inconsistent and did not necessarily lead to employment. Since a strong emphasis is put on the newcomer's accountability, this does not seem to be in equal terms if we take into account the two-way approach nature of the Swedish integration policies. In such a case, an optimal two-way approach might have shown a different scenario *i.e.* the EP could have facilitated the process that refugees undergo in their new country of residence. Consequently, the EP was not identified to be relevant for refugees' labour market participation, economic integration and self-sufficiency development. This was observed by finding a dichotomy of objectives and results of the EP as one of its objectives is to lead refugees to self-sufficiency (LMI/economic integration).

Also, a one-way approach *e.g.* refugees in contact with agents other than PES' officers was identified in contrast to the two-way approach aspect found in the analysis of the programme itself. Additionally, contact with social networks was found to be a mechanism to obtain employment. It may be then possible to conclude that such dynamics are the result of a lack of

⁴⁶ How relevant did the refugees find the Establishment Programme for their economic integration?

involvement of PES as the ultimate responsibility in leading refugees to the labour market was indirectly transferred to third parties, that is, social networks.

For some refugees, the EP helped them with the acquisition of basic skills (Swedish language) as well as other activities like the production of documents (*e.g.* CV, personal letter, validation of previous studies) to find a job. However, this failed to counteract the ambiguous impact of the programme. It is nevertheless important to point out that these degrees of significance in the long terms were not possible to measure in this study, a potential matter for future research.

10.5.11 REVIEW TO RESEARCH QUESTION 3

The third and final research question, RQ3⁴⁷, revealed the following results:

- A lack of institutional support (PES) during the participation of the EP has affected the chances of the informants in becoming employed and self-sufficient as they did not experience a continuous communication with their corresponding employment agents. This is reflected in the concrete effects revealed by the participants' experiences during and after their attendance in the EP as:
 - They were given subsidised job *i.e.* did not become economically integrated
 - They were unemployed *i.e.* did not participate in the labour market
 - They found employment by using their own social capital *i.e.* did become economically integrated, did enter the labour market.
- An increased need in acquiring human capital possibly stimulated during their participation in the EP was found. This was encouraged by their experiences in the host community *i.e.* in order to fully employment is required. Accountability was also found to be enhanced. However, accountability is not properly clarified in the EP as many participants had expectations on obtaining employment directly through the EP rather than acknowledging the EP as a guiding measure.

The answer to the second part of RQ3⁴⁸ reveals a substantial focus on guidance where the individual's accountability is enhanced. Another evident limitation that may explain the above, is an overload of the system and the lack of support provided to the PES officers. Thus, it is possible to conclude that the EP functions as a guide but it does not lead refugees to participate in the labour market, become economically integrated and become self-sufficient. In regard to the achievements of the EP these are identified as the emphasis on the accountability and

⁴⁷ What are the effects of the Establishment Programme in terms of the economic integration of refugees?

⁴⁸ In relation to the limitations and achievements of the Establishment Programme.

independence of its participants (even if some of the respondents showed individual responsibility beforehand). It has also proved to function as an intermittent pathfinder. The results of the analysis have thus revealed numerous limitations and also achievements based on the experiences and narratives of the interviewed refugees which suggests how the EP should improve in order to decrease the refugee labour gap in Sweden. These findings will hopefully contribute to the research on the experiences of refugees and other migrants who attend several labour market integration efforts and their respective improvement.

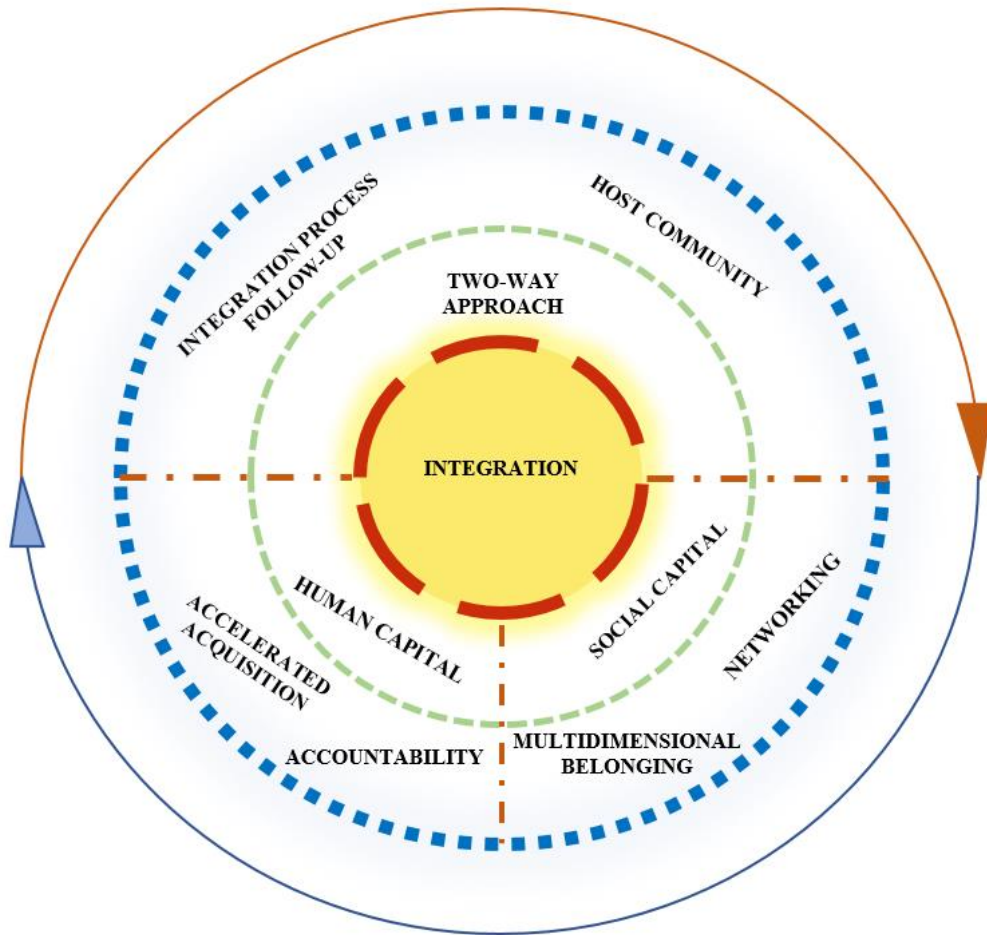
**11. THE CORE WITHIN A CORE MODEL OF INTEGRATION:
RECOMMENDED ASPECTS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT PROGRAMME**

The criteria used in the designing of this suggested model has been based on the refugees’ accounts during and after their participation in the EP. Additionally, their experiences with the host community and the role this one played in their labour market participation is also included. The new model of integration features two arrows which are joined to each other. This representation is based on the interdependent nature of the social and economic dimensions of integration. The new segments are presented in the following table.

Table 4: Earlier and new aspects of integration for the Core within a Core Model of Integration

<i>Earlier and New Aspects of Integration for Labour Market Policy Design</i>		
Two-way approach	<i>Integration process follow-up</i>	<i>Host community</i>
	PES to follow-up and keep continuous communication and track of participant’s progress. Mutual outcomes and obligations should be included.	Host community to be included in the Establishment Programme. Courses and programmes suggested to form ‘labour market-assistants’
Human capital	<i>Accelerated acquisition</i>	<i>Accountability</i>
	PES to shorten the time basic country-specific skills are to be learned.	Accountability of participants should be required, reminded and enhanced continuously.
Social capital	<i>Multidimensional Belonging</i>	<i>Networking</i>
	Sense of belonging of participants should be promoted in all dimensions of integration during their attendance in the EP.	Courses on how, where and why to create social networks should be included in the EP. Host community, private sector, and civic society should be included by PES.

Fig. 4: Updated Core within a Core Model of Integration



12. CONCLUSIONS & FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has presented the aspects of integration found in the Establishment Programme and its effects on the economic integration of refugees based on their narratives and experiences. The research also aimed at exploring the limitations and achievements of the Establishment Programme. Despite the progressiveness and development of the Swedish integration policies, previous research has shown that the refugee employment gap in the country is yet to be closed, and that refugees are still underrepresented in their participation in the labour market in comparison to other migrants. Since the Establishment Programme is a governmental effort on the national level, it then becomes relevant and necessary to explore and analyse its effects on the lives of refugees as the register and study of their experiences and voices may assist future research and policy making of same or similar labour market integration measures.

Consequently, the answers to RQ1 showed the Establishment Programme's aspects of integration including the results on how this programme helps refugees to become self-sufficient and how it develops and assists the participants. The results revealed that a two-way approach and accountability were two of the main findings about the Establishment Programme (although refugees did not experience it so), while it was also possible to conclude that it does not develop the economic integration of refugees since it functioned only as a supporting measure. Further, answering RQ2 revealed that the participants experienced a one-way approach, a fragmented interaction in relation to their contact with the state institutions and partially with the host community. Also, the participants experienced a depreciation of their human capital which led to a dilemma in relation to the time it would take to acquire country-specific skills while accountability was a factor that accelerated their economic integration process.

Moreover, the informants did not find the EP completely relevant for their process towards self-sufficiency. Instead they acknowledge how important their own social capital was to become employed. Finally, answers to RQ3 disclose the intrinsic nature of the EP which is to guide the process of economic integration rather than leading refugees to self-sufficiency. However, these results may suggest that even if they do not lead to labour market participation it may stimulate the accountability of refugees. However, the EP should clarify its role in order to address the expectations of participants properly. Lastly, the study also confirmed the interconnectedness and multidimensional nature of integration where the societal side of it affects refugees' LMI, either positively or negatively, while the economic dimension affects in turn, the social sphere of integration.

Furthermore, an updated version of the Core within a Core was designed based on the experiences of the refugees during their participation in the Establishment Programme and their integration process. This updated model was suggested for future research on refugee labour participation and the relation/experience refugees and other migrants have while they are participants of different LMI initiatives. It could also be used for purposes of policy making and design, as well as for the update of the Establishment Programme. Suggestions for future research were identified as to look into the connection between the lack of support experienced by PES agents and LMI outcomes; also, a connection between refugees' (or migrants in general) ambition with outcomes *i.e.* employment, and the significance of the Establishment Programme in the long term.

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APPENDIX

Table 2: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Profile of Respondents								
Name, Religion, Gender	Country of origin	Age	Residence status	Year of arrival	Educational level & Languages	Working experience	Labour Market Status	Marital status & children
R1, Muslim, male	Kuwait	31	Permanent residence permit	2014	Bachelor's degree of architecture and construction + ongoing master's degree. Fluent in Arabic, English. Some Swedish	Architect; waiter, receptionist	Full time student, occasional employment	Single, no children
R2, none, male	Syria	24	Temporary residence permit	2015	Uncompleted Higher Vocational Education studies in interior design. Fluent in Arabic, English, Swedish	Waiter, cleaner, car mechanic	Full time student, full time employment	Single, no children
R3, none, female	Iran	22	Permanent residence permit	2015	Uncompleted high school, 11 years. Fluent in Farsi, English and Swedish.	None	Full time subsidised employment	Married, no children
R4, Muslim, male	Syria	28	Temporary residence permit	2015	Bachelor's degree of civil engineering + ongoing master's degree. Fluent in Arabic, English, basic Swedish	Civil engineering	Full time student, looking for employment	Single, no children

R5, Muslim, male	Syria	33	Temporary residence permit	2015	Uncompleted university studies in law + completed course as CNC operator. Fluent in Kurdish, Arabic, English, Swedish.	Police officer, embassy guard, primary school teacher, welder, electrician	Unemployed, looking for employment	Single, no children
R6, Muslim, male	Syria	22	Temporary residence permit	2015	High school, uncompleted university studies. Fluent in Arabic, English, some Swedish.	Car assembler, driver, translator, administration assistant, stock worker	Full time student and full-time employment	Single, no children
R7, Muslim, female	Syria	24	Temporary residence permit	2015	Bachelor's degree in primary education. Fluent in Arabic, some Swedish.	None	Half time student and half-time trainee as a teacher, looking for employment	Single, no children
R8, Muslim, female	Palestine/Jordan	29	Permanent residence permit	2015	Uncompleted university studies in architecture engineering. Fluent in Arabic and English. No command of Swedish.	Marketing, hairdresser, makeup artist	Unemployed, not looking for employment	Married, two children
R9, Muslim, male	Palestine	27	Temporary residence permit	2015	Bachelor's degree in English literature and teaching. Fluent in Arabic, English and Swedish.	Teacher, tourist guide and interpreter, stock worker	Full time employment	Single, no children

R10, Muslim, male	Syria	38	Permanent residence permit	2015	Bachelor's degree in Computer Engineering. Completed course as teacher assistant. Fluent in Arabic and Swedish.	Self- employed computer engineer	Unemployed, looking for employment	Married, three children
R11, other religion, male	Syria	24	Permanent residence permit	2015	Uncompleted university studies in Civil Engineering. Fluent in Arabic, English and Swedish.	Electric water company controller, chainsaw operator	Half-time student, half- time subsidised employment	Single, no children
R12, Muslim, male	Syria	22	Permanent residence permit	2015	Unfinished high school. Fluent in Arabic, Kurdish and Swedish. Some English.	Kitchen assistant	full-time student, unemployed, looking for employment	Single, no children