

UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG
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INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MOBILITY

**MEDIATION OF TRANSNATIONAL STUDENT MOBILITY: A CASE OF
UGANDAN STUDENTS IN SWEDEN.**

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Abstract

This study examines international student mobility from Uganda to Sweden to understand how this mobility is mediated. More specifically, the study examines the use and impact of intermediaries involved in the student migration process with the aim of bridging the existing gap in the mediation of students from low developed countries to non-English speaking countries. Data was collected through unstructured in-depth interviews conducted face-to-face and through digital platforms such as Zoom due to the COVID -19 pandemic. The study used thematic analysis with the aid of Atlas Ti to analyse the data. The study's findings show that student mobility from Uganda to Sweden is highly mediated like other types of human mobility. The actors were institutions such as scholarship providers and universities as well as social networks. The former played mainly a logistical role by providing or waiving tuition fees and granting scholarships or living expenses. At the same time, the latter were involved in exchanging information with prospective students about study opportunities, helping with admissions, applying for scholarships and visas, arranging accommodation, and facilitating the integration of new students after their arrival in Sweden. In summary, the study shows that unlike student mobility from other parts of the world, especially East Asia, where agents primarily mediate student mobility, student mobility from Uganda was mainly mediated through social networks. In addition, the study shows that mediation of student mobility is only possible when students move through regular channels, so the role of mediators in this process is mainly facilitation.

Keywords: International student mobility, transnational, mediation, actors, intermediaries, Sweden, Uganda.

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List of Abbreviations

EEA.....	European Economic Area
EU.....	European Union
IOM.....	International Organisation of Migration
ISM.....	International Student Mobility
OECD.....	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SI.....	Swedish Institute
UNESCO.....	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
NGO.....	Non-Governmental Organisations

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

1.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the background information on the study. In doing so, the chapter displays the research gap that the thesis intends to address, the research problem, the aim of the study, the specific questions, the relevance of the study to global studies, and delimitation and definition of the key concepts.

1.1 Background to the study

The recent increase in global interconnectedness through globalization has accelerated a "lived reality of hypermobility" (Shamir 2005, 197), particularly human mobility (Sheller & Urry 2016). People are constantly on the move for a variety of reasons, including security (e.g., asylum seekers and refugees), economic (e.g., economic migrants), political (e.g., military personnel and diplomats), and educational (e.g., students and researchers) (Cresswell, 2006; Sheller & Urry 2016). Consequently, current global migration statistics show that over 272 million (or 3.5 percent) of the world's population live in a country other than their country of birth (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2019). The top countries of origin are India with 17.5 million, Mexico with 11.8 million, and China with 10.7 million people living abroad. The United States of America and European Union top the list of destination countries, with 16 and 11 percent of the world's international migrants, respectively (ibid.).

International educational migration has become one of the leading migration channels, along with migration for humanitarian reasons, labour migration and family reunification (Migrationsverket, 2012). For example, according to UNESCO, the number of international students increased from 2 million in 2000 to 5.3 million in 2017 (Migration Data Portal, 2021). This makes international students one of the most mobile groups in the world (Beech, 2015; Collins, 2008; Julia, 2020; Brooks & Johanna, 2011). For example, European Union countries alone have granted more than 20% of residence permits to students, and this number is projected by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to increase to 7 million mobile students by 2022 (Calvo, 2018; Swedish Migration Board, 2012). Growth (by 52%) in international student mobility outpaced overall international migration (growth of 13%) between 1998 and 2004 (IOM 2008: 105). As with general international migration, Eastern Asia leads the world as a sending region for students; for example, "China,

India, and the Republic of Korea accounted for 25% of total outbound mobility (UNESCO, 2019, p. 97). These students also tend to seek education in the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, and Belgium and France (King, Findlay & Ahrens, 2010; de Wit, 2008).

It is believed that the increasing demand for international education is a response to the rise of globalization, development, transnationalism, and human rights (Oreilly, 2012; Wit et al., 2008). Due to globalization, many countries, governments, and institutions have offered international education (Wit et al., 2008), which has led to an increase in student mobility around the world. In addition, student mobility increased as higher education institutions began to internationalize their institutions to attract global talent and expand their reach by introducing concepts such as study abroad and exchange programs (Larsen & Vincent-Lancrin, 2004). Through attractive recruitment strategies and practices, states and higher education institutions are among the key players in international student mobility (Beech, 2018). International students are seen as valuable to states because they have the potential to become highly skilled immigrants in the future (Migration Data Portal, 2021; King & Raghuram, 2013, p. 1). As a result, most states have adopted user-friendly strategies and recruitment practices to attract and retain international students (Verbik & Lasanowski, 2007; Choudaha, & Chang, 2012; Choudaha and de Wit, 2014). Among these strategies used by states to increase the number of international students is the possibility for skilled migrants to apply for permanent residence after graduation (Matross Helms et al. 2015). On the part of universities, ISM is mainly used as a source of revenue and for global expansion (Beech, 2018).

Sweden is among the countries that have adopted attractive measures to increase the number of international students (Swedish Migration Board, 2012). These include the expansion of scholarships and exchange programs, allowing international students to work while studying, and allowing them to extend their residence permits to seek employment after graduation (ibid.). As a result, there was a gradual increase in international students between the years 2013 and 2017 (Swedish Higher Education Authority, 2018). The number of international students reportedly increased by 1,310 students to 18,310 students in the fall semester of 2016 and 2017 (Swedish Higher Education Authority, 2018). There was also an increase in students from non-EU/EEA countries from 4,000 students in autumn 2012 to 6,630 in six years. According to Swedish Statistics Bureau (SCB), Sweden has admitted 24,099 international students in the academic year 2019/2020 alone, of which 831 are from sub-Saharan Africa

(SCB, 2020). According to UNESCO (2021), there are 6011 international students from Uganda worldwide, of which 81 are studying in Sweden.

Consistent with other types of cross-border movements (Xiang & Lindquist, 2014), international student mobility has been characterized as highly mediated (Beech, 2018; Collins, 2012). For example, "a report by the Observatory on Borderless Higher Education (2014) found that 32% of first-year international students at 48 universities in the three largest destination countries" (Harvey, et al., 2018, pp. 652-653) had used intermediaries. This suggests a growing reliance on 'experts'/'knowledgeable' individuals or institutions to help students navigate migration regulations, systems, and controls (Fernandez, 2013). Yet, there is limited academic information on how international students from non-EU countries to EU are recruited. With this in mind, this study focuses on the mediation process of international students from Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly Uganda, to Sweden.

1.2 Problem statement

International studies form a significant part of what has been termed the 'migration industry' (Beech, 2018), with ISM increasingly mediated by a range of actors (Harvey, et al., 2018). Yet academic research on migration and population movements has not paid sufficient attention to this important group. The academic consideration of transnational students as a mobile group of migrants is relatively new (Baas, 2018). Research on transnational human mobility has largely focused on the management and control of asylum seekers and economic migrants (King & Raghuram, 2013), neglecting student mobility. The few existing studies on ISM focus on "the perspectives of students themselves and the structural factors that lead to the pursuit of education abroad" (Beech, 2018, p. 610), as well as "other social, cultural and economic factors that may influence [students] to study abroad" (ibid, p. 610; Brooks and Waters, 2011; Verbik & Lasanowski, 2007; Sidhu, 2007; Mathies and Karhunen, 2020), and have paid little attention to the actors who recruit international students, despite their important role in disseminating information about different study destinations to potential students (Harvey, et al, 2018). Moreover, these studies have mainly focused on the Asian region, particularly China and India (Baas, 2018; Lan, 2018) to Anglophone countries. And so far, there is little information on how international student mobility takes place in other parts of the world, such as from Uganda to Sweden, which is the focus of this study.

1.3 The overall aim of the study

The aim of this study is to investigate the mediation of transnational student mobility. More precisely, the study examines how students from Uganda use, and are impacted by the involvement of intermediaries in their migration process for studies in Sweden. In this way, the thesis aims to make a valuable contribution to existing body of knowledge around student mobility as well as mediated migration processes by adding a perspective on the mediation of students from low developed countries to non-English speaking countries. This is operationalized by answering the following specific questions.:

1.3.1 Research questions

- 1) Which actors are involved in facilitating transnational student mobility from Uganda to Sweden?
- 2) What specific roles do these actors play in the different stages of the student migration process?
- 3) What are the implications of intermediaries' involvement in international student mobility?

1.4 Delimitation

Human mobility, especially transnational mobility, is a multifaceted topic and a rich field of study that can be examined from various dimensions, such as cultural, political, or economic. The field also encompasses numerous types of mobilities triggered by different forces (Cresswell, 2006), including refugees, students, migrant workers, expatriates, researchers, diplomats, military personnel, and others who migrate through various channels (IOM, 2019). The purpose of this study, therefore, is not to neglect research that is already underway, but rather to build upon it. In relation to (ISM) and considering other aspects such as drivers of international student mobility, politics and economics, cultural dimensions, and how (ISM) relates to the international mobility of people in general, this study focuses on the intermediation of international student mobility as it relates to the migration industry by examining the actors, roles, and implications of students' reliance on intermediaries.

1.5 Relevance to Global Studies

Globalisation has opened numerous channels for travel and migration due to increasing global interconnections and transplanetary activities (Sheller & Urry 2016). As a result, transnational human migration has become one of the most critical issues in global politics, economics, and culture, making it a central topic within the discourse of global studies. Moreover, the politics of migration forms a significant part of international diplomacy and discourse. Part of the human migration flows are international students who, like other forms of migration, mostly come from third world countries to seek (quality) education in the developed world (King & Raghuram, 2013). This is referred to by some scholars as brain circulation and by others as brain drain. As globalisation is the reference point for Global Studies - where Global Studies seeks to understand the impact of globalisation on various global issues such as climate change, international political economy, sustainability issues, and migration and migration and security - the issue of international student mobility is very valuable to Global Studies (Oreilly, 2012; Wit et al., 2008). Moreover, the increase in demand for and participation in international student mobility and the internationalisation of education is an attribute of the interconnected global activities that emanate from globalisation. Furthermore, according to Brooks & Johanna, (2011), "student mobility, migration, and the internationalisation of higher education makes an important contribution to the development of a broader understanding of the relationship between student migration and labour market participation worldwide" (p. 12).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This section reviews previous research on mediation of transnational migration, including international student mobility. First, it provides a general overview of research on mediated international migration and then narrows it down to international student mobility. The latter presents the trends in international student mobility, the strategies used in recruiting international students, and the actors that facilitate the recruitment processes. The student sourced previous literature from multiple sources, including online and print sources. Online resources included Google scholar and the University of Gothenburg library site using social science databases such as Scopus and ProQuest. To facilitate the search for relevant literature, terms such as International Student Mobility, educational migration and mediated student mobility were used, and print sources such as textbooks and journals that could not be accessed online were accessed through the university library where necessary.

2.1 Mediated migration

International migration has recently been mediated more than ever by various intermediaries (Xiang and Lindquist, 2014). Although mediated migration is not a new phenomenon, its visibility and importance has increased greatly over the past three decades (Jones et al., 2017). This rise is attributed to "increasing levels of mobility due to the expansion of market forces and the improvement of state regulatory capacity" (Xiang and Lindquist, 2014, p. 125). Thus, amidst increasing immigration restrictions, intermediaries assist potential migrants in navigating the bureaucracy associated with immigration (Jones et al., 2017; Hernandez-Leon, 2005).

2.2 Actors

Actors in the mediation of transnational migration are divided into two categories, including profit intermediaries and non-profit intermediaries.

2.2.1 Profit-oriented actors

These are often referred to as migration industries (Gammeltoft-Hansen & Sorensen, 2013; Salt and Stein, 1997; Cohen, 1997) Salt and Stein (1997). Consisting of individuals, agents, and institutions involved in facilitating cross-border migration, for-profit intermediaries are

influenced solely by commercial gain (Bilger et al. 2006; Gammeltoft-Hansen & Sorensen, 2013; Salt and Stein, 1997). In other words, their motivation for participating in facilitating international migration is material (commercial) gain (Elrick and Lewandowska, 2008). These include "private actors such as lawyers, brokers, recruiters, fixers, travel agents, [whose role is] to maintain links with countries of origin and destination" (Gammeltoft-Hansen & Sorensen, 2013, p. 5). Intermediaries charge fees for activities ranging from arranging transportation to the host country, reserving en route and arrival accommodations, issuing employment contracts, arranging insurance, to providing training and arranging a medical examination, which is often required by destination countries (Jones et al., 2017, p. 1; Jones and Sha, 2020; Gammeltoft-Hansen & Sorensen, 2013). Furthermore, Lindquist et al. (2012) in their study "opening the black box of migration" find that middlemen are the main actors in recruiting and producing documents related to the migration process for prospective migrants. They are involved in facilitating both illegal (irregular) migration, including asylum seekers (Jones and Sha, 2020; Triandafyllidou and Maroukis, 2012), and regular migration such as labour migration (Deshingkar, 2019; Lindquist et al., 2012). They include both control and facilitation intermediaries, as discussed below.

Migration control industry

Although a great deal of the existing literature on mediated migration emphasises the mediating role of intermediaries (Gammeltoft-Hansen & Sorensen, 2013). Gammeltoft-Hansen & Sorensen argue that migration industries are also involved in controlling cross-border movements (mostly) on behalf of the state and in humanitarian activities (mostly) in irregular migration. Migration control industry actors, such as private companies, are believed to be heavily involved in the supposed state functions of screening, controlling, detaining, and deporting irregular migrants (ibid.). For example, through state privatisation and outsourcing, private security firms and airlines have taken a leading role in operating border checkpoints and verifying travel documents (Gammeltoft-Hansen & Sorensen 2013, p. 4). Moreover, in countries with guest worker schemes, the state and private employers rely heavily on the services of private companies to administer guest worker visas. An example of this is the guest worker programmes in the United States and Malaysia, where the state delegates its responsibilities, such as visa administration, through outsourcing or privatisation (Anderson & Franck, 2019).

2.2.2 Not-for-profit actors

Rescue Industry or Humanitarian actors

Moreover, Gammeltoft-Hansen & Sorensen (2013) draw our attention to the humanitarian role of the migration industry, in which various actors such as NGOs, humanitarian organisations and migrant associations are involved in the management of migration flows. These perform both facilitation and control functions in migration processes. For example, religious organisations typically provide accommodation for travelling and transporting migrants (usually rescue or repatriation) of asylum seekers and other irregular migrants. In addition, NGOs and anti-immigration associations usually participate in "conducting campaigns warning of the dangers of irregular migration" (ibid., p. 11). Some of these activities are carried out on behalf of, or sponsored by, states - an example of this is the management of asylum detention centres or return migration. The literature shows that these are mainly, but not exclusively, motivated by humanitarian factors other than money (Gammeltoft-Hansen & Sorensen, 2013).

2.3 The reasons for involvement of mediators in transnational migration.

Increased migration control

A wealth of academic work points to the recent increase in the securitization of migration, expressed in restrictive migration policies in all major migration destinations (Gammeltoft-Hansen and Sorensen, 2013; Pijpers, 2010; Schapendonk, 2018). The recent tightening of migration restrictions and policies (partly due to the 2001 terrorist attacks) has made immigration to the world's most popular destinations, such as the United States of America and Europe, increasingly complex and cumbersome, which has attracted the attention of migration brokerage service providers (Fernandez, 2013). There have been strong developments in the securitization of migrations (Byaruhanga, 2020), including increases in "border control budgets, new laws targeting unauthorised entries and mobilities, the use of sophisticated surveillance and information technology, stricter visa controls, and the increasing role of military personnel, methods, and hardware" (Walters, 2006, p. 117). As a result, many potential migrants increasingly seek outside help, from "knowledgeable" individuals or institutions, to help them navigate and overcome the impenetrable migration regimes, systems, and controls (Gammeltoft-Hansen & Sorensen, 2013) or circumvent the barriers erected by destination countries. Moreover, in circumstances where migration policies make regular migration impossible or difficult, potential migrants are forced to seek clandestine channels to realise their migration prospects. Research argues that border militarisation and increased border

controls have made (irregular) migration more dangerous (Crawley et al., 2017), forcing migrants to rely on middlemen (who have experience and knowledge) to circumvent border controls and travel safely. The study by Crawley et al. (2017) identifies militarised borders as a key factor in the prevalence of middlemen; migrants rely on the assistance of smugglers to enter European territory via Mediterranean Sea. Middlemen have become an integral part of the migration industry, both for irregular and regular migration. For example, Spaan and Naerssen (2018) observed in their study "Migration decision-making and migration industry in the Indonesia-Malaysia corridor" that even regular migrants who want to comply with all immigration procedures are likely to rely on a middleman to help them speed up the process and/or avert the corruption embedded in migration processes and/or reduce fraud risks.

Privatisation and outsourcing of migration management.

Migration research shows that states are increasingly relying on the migration industry to manage and control migration (Gammeltoft-Hansen and Sorensen, 2013; Hernández-León, 2005; Cohen, 2020). As a form of network governance practised by many states today, several governments have increasingly delegated the formerly exclusively state functions of migration control/management to non-state actors through public-private partnerships (Groutsis et al., 2015) and "privatisation of migration management" or outsourcing (Gammeltoft-Hansen and Sorensen, 2013:13). Activities such as border security, travel document verification, operation of detention centres and deportation of migrants are carried out by private actors on behalf of the state (ibid.). A study by Cohen (2020) on "Israel's Return Migration Industry" found that the state uses the services of transnational recruitment agencies to recruit talented diaspora Israelis interested in returning home. As a strategy to recruit diaspora Israelis under the "policy of homecoming", according to Cohen, the state offers migrants one or more forms of material benefits, including lucrative jobs or discounted airline tickets, tax breaks through transnational recruitment agencies that operate both abroad and in Israel. The state also relied on the Israel-based branches of multinational companies to scan and entice the labour market by offering jobs to all Israelis interested in returning home (Cohen, 2020). Therefore, it is plausible that the proliferation of migration brokers is a response to their demand by various users, including the state.

Guest-worker schemes

Moreover, employers in countries with guest worker programmes tend to rely on the migration industry to meet their labour needs (Spaan and Naerssen, 2018; Harvey et al., 2018). Some studies have pointed out that "[w]hile these programmes are government-sponsored, they often rely heavily on private actors to function" (Anderson and Franck, 2019, p. 1207). Thus, Harvey et al. (2018) link the rise in mediated migration to the increasing commercialization of migration services through privatisation and outsourcing by governments that accompanies liberal market economies. Closely related to this is the pressure arising from economic globalisation and offshore production, which make it easy to draw on (relatively) cheaper foreign labour. This is exacerbated by the internal development policies and regulations of (industrial) states, such as Trade Unions and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), which make it expensive to hire locals due to high wages and fringe benefits (Spaan and Naerssen, 2018); therefore, many companies source workers from abroad through recruitment agencies and brokers.

2.4 The implication of migrants' dependence on reliance on intermediaries.

Despite the indisputable role that intermediaries play in the facilitation, control, and/or rescue industry, intermediated migration is fraught with several shortcomings. As summarised below.

To begin with, previous research has linked the involvement of intermediaries in facilitating international migration to increased irregular migration (Gammeltoft-Hansen and Sorensen, 2013). For example, according to Massey et al. (1993), "[f]or-profit organisations and private entrepreneurs provide a range of services to migrants in exchange for fees set in the underground market. These actors engage in clandestine smuggling of people across borders, clandestine transportation to domestic destinations, forged documents and visas..." (ibid., p. 450). Illegal practises of migration such as human trafficking and forced labour (Agunias, 2009) by criminal organisations expose migrants to extreme cases of human rights violations (IOM, 2020), such as exploitation, abuse, discrimination, and subjection to slave-like conditions (De Haas, 2008). In the worst cases, migrants lose their lives while crossing the border through incognito and unsafe routes (Ansa, 2019).

In addition, some intermediaries tend to deceive migrants about the nature and conditions of work and collaborate with employers in illegal wage deductions (Jones et al., 2017). This is

exacerbated by the fact that intermediaries are the custodians of and control information and resources that migrants need (Salt and Stein, 1997; Spaan and Naerssen, 2018). Moreover, other studies indicate that intermediaries can extort migrants for their money, mainly by processing forged documents (Agunias, 2009; Broek et al., 2016; Kern and Müller-Böker, 2015). Other studies have shown that intermediaries such as recruiters, brokers, lawyers and or smugglers charge exorbitant fees and are likely to exploit migrant workers (Jones et al., 2017; Agunias, 2009; Broek et al., 2016; Kern and Müller-Böker, 2015). This is exacerbated by the fact that the huge sums of money paid by intermediaries often result in debt bondage leading to abuse/exploitation (Davidson, 2013). For example, according to Awumbila et al. (2019), a study conducted in Ghana found that intermediaries are responsible for exposing rural women to precarious employment, with rural women placed with foreign expatriates and middle-class families in urban Ghana at great risk of exploitation, sexual abuse and non-payment.

2.4.1 Summary

In general, while the studies summarised above provide comprehensive coverage of international migration mediation (Xiang and Lindquist, 2014; Gammeltoft-Hansen and Sorensen, 2013), its role (Jones et al., 2017; Hernandez-Leon, 2005) and its illegitimate side (Salt and Stein, 1997; Triandafyllidou and Maroukis, 2012; Jones et al, 2017; Agunias, 2009; Broek et al, 2016; Kern and Müller-Böker, 2015), little attention has been paid to the actors involved in mediating skilled migration and movements. They reflect a huge emphasis on low-skilled asylum seekers and irregular economic migrants and essentially neglect the aspect of regular skilled migration. Therefore, this study aims to contribute to the literature by focusing on cross-border student mobility categorised as a group of skilled migrants (Brooks and Johanna, 2011).

2.5 International student mobility

International students are "individuals who leave their country or territory of origin and travel to another country to study" (Global Education Digest, 2006). Previous research on population movements ranks this group as the most mobile in the world (Beech, 2015; Collins, 2008; Julia, 2020; Brooks & Johanna, 2011). Student mobility has increased over the past three decades (Brooks & Johanna, 2011). As with other types of human migration, most students seeking overseas education come from the global South to the global North. Most notably from Southeast Asian countries such as China and India to English-speaking countries such as the

United States and the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia (Findlay and Ahrens, 2010; Choudaha and Chang, 2012). The increase in the number of students seeking international qualifications is inextricably linked to the globalisation of markets internationally, regionally and locally (King, Findlay, Ahrens, 2010; Verbik and Lasanowski, 2007). For example, Aba (2013) argues that the widespread internationalisation of higher education "has emerged and gained speed because of real needs that were the result of globalisation" (p. 107). Thus, Aba posits that globalisation, combined with economic and cultural changes, has created a demand for well-educated graduates to serve as professionals in highly competitive professional and academic fields. To meet the need for globally employable graduates, mobility programmes such as Erasmus have become one of the most important variables in higher education in Europe.

It is believed that national governments are using the internationalisation of education and student mobility to "secure an essential place in the rapidly changing and developing world" (Aba, 2013, p. 99). Indeed, Findlay, & Ahrens (2010) affirm that international student mobility creates opportunities to acquire the human capital skills necessary for a globally competitive economy. Kindlay and colleagues argue that international education is a valuable channel for increasing "competitiveness in the global graduate labour market" (ibid., p. 4). This is in response to the rise of global capitalism, which is having a significant impact on the labour market, where companies are now investing heavily in attracting global talent (Brooks & Johanna, 2011). To take advantage of these opening global job opportunities, students around the world have opted for international degrees to gain global competitiveness and by acquiring cosmopolitan attributes (Matthews and Sidhu 2005), as well as ... "develop the soft skills and social networks valued by employers" (Brooks & Johanna, 2011, p. 158). Brooks and Johanna argue that "young people and their families seek education abroad in response to labour market pressures, the labour market rewards that accrue to holders of foreign degrees, and other social benefits common to many mobile students around the world" (p. 146). This implies that students seek international degrees to distinguish themselves from others (Findlay et al. 2012), as it is assumed that international education reflects quality (De Wit, 2010). Other studies highlight structural reasons as drivers of international student mobility. For example, a study by Collins (2008) suggests that student mobility is influenced by the changing role of nation states in the provision of education and by the growth of other forms of mobility, including longer-term migration and tourism (p. 413).

2.5. 1 International student recruitment strategies

To enhance global competitiveness, both higher education institutions and states have invested in various recruitment strategies, such as building partnerships with third-party providers, such as private agencies, using social media platforms (Choudaha and Chang, 2012), and international education agents (Beech, 2018). The primary role of the latter [agents] is to connect potential international students with the foreign institutions they represent. They are usually "employed by private companies that have connections and contacts with universities worldwide and receive a commission from the universities for each student successfully placed in one of their programmes" (ibid., p. 611). The work of agents is complemented by social networks, which also play a crucial role in creating and sustaining international student mobility. For example, a study conducted by Collins (2008) titled 'Bridges to learning: international student mobilities, education agencies and interpersonal networks' showed that interpersonal networks/relationships, migration agents and education agencies work synergistically to facilitate the migration of South Korean students who wish to study in New Zealand. In other words, migration agents work through collaborations to generate international student mobility. For example, Collins' study shows that education agents rely on connections with people and places overseas to sustain their business as facilitators of transnational student mobility. He observes that while interpersonal relationships were crucial in providing guidance and a sense of security to students wishing to move to New Zealand, education agents also assisted with visa processing, counselling, and placements.

Previous research also suggests that institutions of higher learning themselves act as 'migration entrepreneurs'; for example, in examining the recruitment of international students in the UK, Beech (2018) finds that higher learning institutions are directly involved in the recruitment of students from overseas. These institutions "often provide opportunities for mobility and often invest significant financial resources in outreach activities to gain access to these students" (Beech, 2018, p. 611). Another important actor in student mobility that is frequently mentioned in the existing literature are states (Verbik and Lasanowski, 2007). Verbik and Lasanowski postulate that states use visa regimes and favourable immigration policies to attract international students. Indeed, a study conducted by Monash University found that "the most important reason [...] why students chose to study in Australia was not only the academic reputation of the universities, but also the possibility of obtaining a permanent residence visa after graduation" (Verbik and Lasanowski, 2007, p. 8).

2.5.2 Summary

In summary, while there is extensive academic research on what motivates students to study abroad, where they move to study, and what strategies institutions and states use to attract them, the literature on the "forms of infrastructure that facilitate their mobility ... such as institutions, networks, and people that move students from one point to another" (Lindquist et al., 2012, pp. 8-9) is not well developed. Existing academic studies also reflect a bias on student mobility from Southeast Asian (especially China and India) to English-speaking countries such as the US, UK, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand (Beech, 2018; King, Findlay, Ahrens, 2010; Choudaha and Chang, 2012). For this reason, a study focusing on the mediated ISM from Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly from Uganda to Sweden (a non-English speaking country) is highly relevant.

CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical framework that has guided the analysis and interpretation of the findings of this study. In doing so, the theoretical foundation of this study consists of several theoretical approaches which are drawn from migration theory. It was considered that these approaches are appropriate for this study as they complement each other and form an overlap to some extent. These approaches include Sheller's approach Mobility Justice, Carling's aspirations/ability approach and the migration industry.

3.1 Sheller's Mobility Justice

Mobility justice from Mimi Sheller sheds light on the inequalities inherent in mobility as a social phenomenon. The focus of this approach is to illuminate "how power and inequality influence the governance and control of movement and shape patterns of unequal mobility and immobility in the circulation of people, resources, and information" (Sheller 2012, p. 38). Sheller provides this concept as a new theoretical tool for thinking about how we can move towards more equitable mobilities. In relation to international migration, Sheller's approach considers how migration controls such as border checkpoints, visa requirements, increased surveillance and biometrics designed to facilitate 'safe' migration have led to the immobility of some people. For example, in his *Politics of Mobility*, Cresswell notes that mobility is associated with entrenchment. In other words, increased access to mobility for individuals or groups may be associated with immobility for others (Cresswell, 2010).

Moreover, today's increased restrictions on migration, largely due to the 2001 terrorist attacks and the global refugee crisis, have contributed to people having less access to mobility while others enjoy their privileges of mobility (Amoore, 2006). Following this, Glick Schiller and Salazar (2013) believe that "mobility regimes" normalise the movements of some travellers while criminalising and restricting the ventures of others, "... to the extent that ... "the poor and disempowered find themselves enclosed" (pp. 186-9). An example of this is the border regime European Union, which grants more freedom of movement to EU members while being burdensome to non-members. Through such practises, some groups of people such as tourists and diplomats have more privileges of mobility compared to other groups such as asylum seekers and labour migrants (Glick Schiller and Salazar, 2013). What these scholars emphasise

is the shift in the way we conceptualise the mobility-immobility nexus, for example, "a temptation to think of a mobile world as something that replaces a world of fixities" (Cresswell, 2010, p. 29). While it is true that the world is becoming more porous, this movement affects or is experienced differently. To further clarify this, the study will also consider Carling's aspiration/ability model, which will be discussed below.

3.2 Aspiration/Ability approach

In relation to the above, Carling's model critiques earlier theories of migration, such as the push and pull model, which took emigration and immigration as given - that anyone who wishes to migrate can freely and easily leave the territory of one country and enter another. In contrast, the aspiration/ability approach resists such simplistic assumptions. According to Carling, international migration must be understood from two perspectives: Aspirations - the desire to migrate - and Abilities - the realisation of actual migration (Carling, 2001). The underlying notion to Carling's concept is that "migration aspirations may or may not lead to actual mobility". He advocates that migration theory "evaluates migration as a potential action and the realisation of actual mobility or immobility at a given point in time" (Carling & Schewel., 2018, p. 947).

The ability to migrate is not an absolute right but depends on other intervening factors such as legal and financial opportunities (Van Heelsum, 2016). For instance, legal factors such as access and passport to exit or entry visas and affordability of travel costs such as airline tickets are believed to have a major impact on the ability of an aspiring migrant to leave home and enter (legally) the desired destination country (ibid.); otherwise, mobility becomes impossible or is only made possible through clandestine and illegal means (Van Heelsum, 2016). Moreover, for Van Heelsum, a person's ability to migrate goes beyond mere access to legal documents and the ability to finance the journey, and includes other aspects, such as access to information about the intended destination country. Nonetheless, literature on circular migration reflects and a "mobility bias" (Schewel, 2020)—that is,

the structural forces that encourage emigration from origin areas, the structural forces that attract immigrants to destination areas, the social and economic structures that link origin and destination areas, and the aspirations and motivations of people who respond to these structural forces by migrating (Massey et al. 1999, p. 281).

What falls short here are the conditions that prevent or lead people to resist migration. This presents a situation in which some potential migrants may remain involuntarily immobile despite strong aspirations to migrate.

Involuntary immobility

This term, used by Carling (2002), attempts to shed light on a situation in which aspiring migrants fail to achieve their goal of migrating to their desired destination country. Several factors, such as increasingly restrictive policies and prohibitive costs, may contribute to the failure of some migration aspirations to translate into actual migration (Massey et al. 1999); Van Hear, 2014). Furthermore, the cumbersome migration process may limit people's migration aspirations as they may not commit to something they are unlikely to achieve (Carling, 2002). The concept of involuntary immobility is multifaceted; therefore, its application captures the situations in which people who view migration as desirable because of its perceived benefits, both intrinsic and instrumental [in this case, the value associated with international education], are unable to migrate (Carling, 2014).

Using the aspiration/ability approach, therefore, we can understand how economic, legal, political, and social factors enable and/or hinder international student migration and how potential migrants (in this case, students) may negotiate opportunities to migrate. This is because this approach "provides the conceptual tools to analyse processes that lead to both mobility and immobility outcomes" (Schewel, 2020, p. 334). In this sense, the study will provide an understanding of how migration intermediaries contribute to students' involuntary immobility or to overcoming the barriers that cause it, or both. To understand the involvement of different intermediaries and their respective roles in managing migration, particularly in relation to international student migration, the focus will be on the migration industry (Gammeltoft-Hansen & Sorensen, 2013).

3.3 Migration industry

Previous research has highlighted the role of the migration industry in the governance and management of international migration. The migration industry comprises "the ensemble of entrepreneurs, firms, and services that, motivated primarily by financial gain, facilitate international mobility, settlement and adjustment, and communication and resource transfers of migrants and their families across borders" (Gammeltoft-Hansen & Sorensen, 2013, p. 25). As a composition of migration entrepreneurs, the migration industry plays a significant role in

the social processes of international migration. The migration industry, especially the intermediaries, also help potential migrants to bypass the barriers set by the state. By and large, previous research suggests that while the migration industry opens doors for potential migrants to migrate, it also proves burdensome and dangerous to migrants' lives. Regardless, the focus of this study is on the "actors [intermediaries] in the social process of international human mobility that cause, facilitate, and sustain mobility at all stages of the migration cycle" (Sorensen et al., 2013, p. 40). This is because it is argued that "the services offered by the migration industry contribute to an increased transnational character [by facilitating the process]" (Gammeltoft-Hansen & Sorensen, 2013, p. 543). Closely related to the migration industry is Xiang and Lindquist's migration infrastructure, which is helpful in analysing how migration actors (governmental

, nongovernmental, and humanitarian organisations), technologies, and institutions are systematically linked to promote, support, or impede international mobility. Migration infrastructure explains the essential infrastructures such as commercial (e.g. recruitment agencies); regulatory (e.g. immigration policy); technological (e.g. communications, transport and visas); humanitarian and social (e.g. migrant network) that are critical to the production of international human mobility (Lindquist and Xiang, 2014). Thus, migration infrastructure provides a basis for analysing how institutions, technologies, and social networks are involved in striking a balance between the desire to migrate and the limited opportunities to migrate by "circumventing the barriers that core countries use to keep people out" (Massey et al., 1993, p. 451).

3.3.1 Social networks

The literature on mediated migration, particularly the role of the migration industry, also highlights the important role of networks in enabling human mobility. Manuel Castells (2004) and Bruno Latour (2011) believe that people activities are networked. In human mobility, social networks play a crucial role in generating mobilities through relationships and linkages between individuals, groups, and organisations (Beech, 2015).

Migration networks have their roots in 'chain migration' (Collyer, 2011), which emerged in the 1960s and refers to a situation where a substantial and successive flow of migrants from the same territorial area arrives at the same destination, with a high probability that further migrants will take the same route (ibid.). These networks arise from "interpersonal ties that link migrants,

former migrants, and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through kinship, friendship, and shared communities of origin" (Caces, 2010b, p. 448; Boyd, 1989, p. 641). Although many studies limit social networks to expatriate populations, transnational communities, including those in countries of origin, are also essential components of migration networks (Ryan et al., 2008). For example, many former or returning migrants play an important role in the migration process while operating in sending countries. Social networks vary in degree of social distance and can range from friends, family, organisational contacts, acquaintances and sometimes strangers (Elrick & Lewandowska, 2008) and so are their respective roles. This variation consists of strong ties - usually in the form of consanguine relationships such as family; and weaker ties which are (usually) non-consanguine relationships such as friends, acquaintances, and the like (Collyer, 2011).

In terms of their roles, Collyer asserts that the weaker ties are helpful in acquiring resources, while the stronger ties ensure the sustainability of those resources. In this regard, such kinship and friendship ties act as 'nodes' in the migration process (Castells, 2011). These contacts or ties abroad facilitate the integration process of incoming migrants by helping them settle in and adapt to the new environment (Elrick & Lewandowska, 2008), as well as other social processes such as language learning and/or translation. Thus, they contribute to the continuous circulation of migrants and the multiplication of the migration process (Collyer, 2011) by influencing or inspiring people to migrate (Massey et al., 1993).

Other scholarly work shows that social networks serve as a conduit for information flow to potential migrants (Ritchey, 1976; Boyd, 1989; Massey et al., 1998). Indeed, according to Elrick & Lewandowska (2008), the provision of resources, such as information, is a critical component of social networks in the migration process. Moreover, "social networks are crucial for finding jobs and housing, for the circulation of goods and services, and for psychological support and continuous social and economic information" (Vertovec, 2002, p. 3). Friends and relatives in the diaspora also tend to help with the financial costs associated with the migration process (Caces, 2010b; Massey et al. 1993; Boyd, 1989) and provide a source of social capital (Ryan et al., 2008) that helps immigrants access employment in the destination country. Migrant social capital is referred to as "informational or support resources that individuals obtain through their social relationships with previous migrants" which in turn help to "reduce the costs and risks of migration for potential migrants" (Garip, 2008, p. 591). In other words, Garip suggests that the information or direct support received from previous migrants is crucial

in minimising migration costs for potential migrants (p. 593). Thus, as these networks control the flow of resources and information, they have the power to influence who migrates and where they migrate to (Spaan and Naerssen, 2018). As shown in some studies, social networks abroad have the power to determine which people get access to the means to migrate (Somerville, 2015; Gurak and Caces, 1992). For example, Bauer et al. (2000) claim that many local connections in a given region increase the likelihood that incoming migrants will settle in that area. In destination countries, "social networks act as conduits for resources and determine the quality of life [...] of new migrants" (Caces, 2010b, p. 164).

Altruism or symbiotic ties are partly the driving force behind these (informal) networks" (Rahman, 2012) that facilitate migration. While Fawcett (1989) believes that friendship or ethnic obligations also compel migrant networks to provide the necessary support for the future because of these ties and obligations, personal networks influence hiring preferences and priorities for support (ibid). Furthermore, Collyer (2011) and Elrick & Lewandowska (2008) consider reciprocity, bounded solidarity, trust exchange and esteem as the primary drivers of network participation in extending support to migrants. In general, the study starts from the understanding that different individuals, groups, and/or organisations facilitate student mobility and uses the network approach as a theoretical tool to understand the process and mediation of international student mobility because it "provides a clear account of the social reproduction of migration" (Collyer, 2011, p. 704).

Therefore, as a concept, the migration industry provides a theoretical toolkit to fill a "gap regarding the position, contribution, and relationships of for-profit actors in the social organisation of international migration" (Gammeltoft-Hansen & Sorensen, 2013, p. 24). Using the migration industry, then, allows us to identify the types of actors involved in international student mobility, their roles in the student migration process, their motivations for facilitating student mobility, and how different actors are connected in their respective roles in the student migration process.

3.4 Definition of concepts

3.4.1 International student mobility

According to OECD (2021), the term international student mobility includes "students who received their prior education in another country and are not residents of their current country

of study". In other words, this definition includes all students who have crossed the territorial borders of another country for study purposes (Global Education Digest, 2006). Thus, according to UNESCO (2015), an internationally mobile student is a person who has physically crossed an international border between two countries for the purpose of participating in educational activities in a destination country, where the destination country is different from his/her country of origin (Migration Data Portal, 2021, front page). Therefore, this study understands ISM from this perspective to justify its inclusion and consideration of both credit/exchange students and degree students as international students (Harvey, et al, 2018).

3.4.2 Intermediaries

Migration intermediaries "are meso-level actors, connected to migrants, to local communities, to employers and to national governments in both origin and destination states" (MIDEQ, 2021, p.1). These range from travel agencies, smugglers, employment agencies, traffickers, brokers and family members or wider social networks (Gammeltoft-Hansen & Sorensen, 2013). Their specific roles include helping to arrange visas, arranging birth certificates and passports, booking transport, providing advice, finding jobs and accommodation, connecting people to healthcare and medical tests, and providing training (Jones & Sha, 2020, p. 1). Although the migration industry includes both control and facilitation actors according to Gammeltoft-Hansen & Sorensen (2013), this study focuses on the latter actors who mediate the process of ISM.

3.4.3 Human mobility and International Migration

According to Cambridge English Dictionary, mobility refers to the ability to move freely or to be moved easily. According to Cresswell (2006), mobility then becomes the "act of moving between [places] or locations" (p. 2). Based on the understanding that mobility is triggered by certain forces and has meaning, Cresswell claims that "human mobility implicates both physical bodies moving through material landscapes and categorical figures moving through representational spaces." He claims that mobile people "such as dancers and pedestrians, drivers and athletes, refugees and citizens, tourists or business people, men and women" represent motifs of movement, not just people in motion (pp. 3-4). It is therefore plausible that increasing global connectivity (Shamir, 2005) and the development of mobility infrastructures such as airports have a major impact on the speed and frequency of human mobility (Larkin, 2013). The latter not only serve to regulate cross-border movements but have also led to an increase in transnational movements (Shamir, 2005).

This leads to the realisation that mobility and migration are inextricably linked; increased access to cross-border mobility is synonymous with an increase in transnational movements in today's world of globalisation (Shamir, 2005). Therefore, these two terms are used interchangeably in this study as the researcher considers mobile students as migrants (Harvey, et al., 2018) who use student mobility as a channel to achieve other migration goals (King & Raghuram, 2013). In this vein, research shows, for example, that states' engagement with ISM focuses on attracting and retaining global talent and skills (Verbik & Lasanowski, 2007; Choudaha, & Chang 2012; Choudaha and de Wit 2014), as permanent migrants after graduation (Matross Helms et al. 2015). Indeed, some scholars argue that international students form a dynamic group categorised as highly skilled migrants (Cranston 2016; 2018; Brooks and Johanna, 2011), whose migration is considered by global mobility studies as "expatriate migration" (Cranston, 2018).

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological considerations and the research methods used in the study. In doing so, the chapter explains the choice of research design, research approach, study population, data collection methods and techniques, and the process of data management and analysis. The chapter also discusses the limitations of the study, ethical considerations and reflexivity.

4.1 Research Approach

The study employed a qualitative research strategy by using an interpretivist approach. According to Bryman (2012), this approach opens up possibilities for understanding "'social action' rather than external forces that have no meaning to those involved in that social action" and allows the researcher to "capture subjective meanings of social action" (p. 30). This acknowledges the fact that a single phenomenon under study may have multiple interpretations rather than a single, measurable truth (Hammersley, 2013). Therefore, the researcher believes that this approach is appropriate for this study as the study aims to understand the mediation of international student mobility from the perspective of the respondents. By doing so, the researcher seeks to gain a deeper understanding of how different students from different social backgrounds experienced their migration process. However, a shortcoming of this approach is that it may be difficult to generalize the findings to a large population as the approach aimed for depth rather than breadth.

4.2 Description of the research design

The study used a qualitative single case design. The research relied on qualitative data collection methods - semi-structured interviews. These methods were appropriate for this type of study because they are "helpful in generating an intensive, detailed inquiry" (Bryman, 2012, p. 68) into the phenomenon being studied and offer flexibility and limited structure. Furthermore, in qualitative research, meanings and interpretations are constructed from individual narratives about personal experiences of the phenomenon (Creswell, 1998).

4.3 Geographical setting

The study was conducted in Gothenburg, a city in Västra Götaland region. According to Statistics Sweden (2020), there are over 571,868 people living in the city of Gothenburg, of which 36,492 are categorized as immigrants. This area was chosen due to the convenience of the researcher and the size of the city - the second largest city in Sweden. The city is also home to two major universities that are popular with international students. However, the study focused on students from Sub-Saharan Africa, who are studying or have studied at Chalmers and Gothenburg Universities, particularly from Uganda.

4.3 Data Collection

4.3.1 Sampling procedure and sample size

The study used purposive sampling, which is a type of nonprobability sampling that involved convenience and a snowball sampling. Here, the researcher used his initial contacts of the students he knew from Uganda who recommended other international students from the same country and provided their contact details if necessary. Finally, all (9) nine students who agreed to participate in the study were interviewed, including six females and three males. The final sample included master's students who were currently enrolled or had recently graduated from Chalmers or Gothenburg Universities. Four students had spent a short period of time (less than one year) in Sweden, while the other five students had spent more than one year in Sweden. The study focused on students from Uganda studying or living in Gothenburg. The use of non-probability sampling ensured a higher probability of selecting participants with relevant characteristics for the study (Bryman, 2012). Convenience sampling was the most appropriate technique for this study as participants were difficult to reach due to the COVID -19 pandemic. Therefore, this technique not only provided easy access to respondents but is also cost effective. However, one of the disadvantages of random sampling is that the results may not be generalizable as the sample may not be representative of the target population (ibid).

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of participants

Name (Not real names)	Age	Duration in Sweden	Gender	Education level	Funder
Emma	30	3 years	M	Masters	GU
Jimmy	26	8 months	M	Masters	Erasmus
Olivia	37	4 years	F	Masters	SI
Ann	30	2 years	F	Masters	SI
Anita	26	3 years	F	Masters	SI
Jane	27	8 months	F	Masters	Erasmus
Racheal	31	2 years	F	Masters	SI
Lilian	28	1.5 years	F	Masters	Erasmus
Jacob	29	7 months	M	Masters	SI

4.3.2 Data collection technique

4.3.2.1 In-depth interviews

Data for this study were obtained through in-depth interviews that were semi-structured. This technique was preferred because it allows the interviewee to give as much information as possible about the topic being discussed without many interruptions. In addition, the method allows the interviewer to follow-up on the responses through probing for clarity or further information (Bryman, 2012). The type of questions that were answered were suitable for this method as they required extensive and detailed responses. The interviews were conducted between March and April 2021 in Gothenburg Municipality. Due to the pandemic COVID -19, some of the interviews (three interviews) were conducted through digital platforms, while the majority of the interviews (six) were conducted in person. In this regard, respondents who were able to attend an in-person meeting were interviewed in physical meetings, while others were interviewed via Zoom or Skype. The physical meetings took place in a spacious study room on the Haga campus, following all COVID -19 preventive guidelines such as maintaining a 1.5-metre social distance rule and wearing face masks. During the interviews, the interviewer asked the question and allowed the interviewee to respond, with exploratory conversations in situations where the interviewer wanted to elaborate on certain topics. All interviews were tape-recorded using a mobile voice recording application with the full consent and permission of

the interviewee and notes were taken where necessary. The duration of the interviews oscillated between 45-60 minutes.

4.4. Data Collection Instruments:

4.4.1 Semi-structured interview guide

The study used a semi-structured interview guide to collect data. The guide consisted of a list of open-ended questions to guide the discussion during the interview. The guiding themes of the interview were derived from the main research questions of the study. The interview guide was developed in relation to the research objectives and was informed by previous research and theory. The semi-structured Interview Guide interview guide allows the researcher to focus on the main themes and gives the interviewee the opportunity to respond in the most appropriate way by allowing flexibility, rephrasing and/or even allowing the researcher to follow-up on given responses where necessary (Bryman 2016). *see appendix one.*

4.5 Data Analysis

The analyses and interpretations for this study were conducted from the perspective of the researcher. This is because, as Bryman (2012) states, "findings need to be interpreted, reflected upon, and theorised by the researcher [in order] to acquire significance in the intellectual realm and to avoid distorting the respondent's words" (p.578). To this end, the student used thematic analysis; this according to Braun and Clarke (2006), is a technique in which the researcher "identifies, analyses and reports patterns [or themes] within the data" (p.79). Latent thematic analysis was used. According to Braun and Clarke, this allows the researcher to "code and develop the analysis around more implicit ideas or concepts that underlie what is explicitly expressed" (p.3). Latent thematic analysis allows the researcher to capture underlying conceptualisations, assumptions, and ideas (ibid). This analysis technique was appropriate for this study, which included (9) nine interviews. This is because according to Braun, Clarke & Weate (2016), one needs at least 6 interviews or more to be able to identify meaningful patterns in the data (p. 6). In general, thematic analysis provides flexibility and allows the researcher to exercise creativity and explore the data appropriately (ibid.). Therefore, students selected the most salient data directly or indirectly related to the research questions or theories guiding the study.

4.5.1 Transcription

Transcription is a crucial stage of data analysis because it allows the researcher to interpret, reflect, and draw meanings from the data. It is not just a mechanical step of converting sounds into written text (Braun & Clarke 2006). Therefore, in order to analyze the data from this study, the tape-recorded data were transcribed into textual data. Specifically, denaturalized transcription was used in the study (Nascimento & Steinbruch, 2019). This technique of transcription allows the data to be described verbatim while limiting the unwanted or unintended sounds and noises captured in the recording (Mero-Jaffe, 2011). It allows the researcher to focus on reflecting on the perceptions and meanings captured through the conversation rather than semantics (Oliver, Serovich, & Mason, 2005). In doing so, the transcriber reflected on the data and omitted the unintended utterances such as repetitions, long pauses, and other sounds and noises. Grammatical errors were also corrected, and pronunciation was standardized accordingly (e.g., word contractions were changed to full-form words), and incomplete sentences were omitted. While the transcriber takes the risk of empathizing with and altering the respondents, denaturalization makes the data clear and easy to understand for readers who are unable to decipher spoken sounds in the text (Nascimento & Steinbruch, 2019). The researcher did most of the transcription manually; however, he later discovered online software to convert speech to text. Here, the researcher used a software called Otter.ai. Nonetheless, the researcher had to manually edit the transcripts as the software left minor errors.

4.5.2 Coding

Once the transcription was complete, the researcher carefully read through the transcripts while listening to the recordings again to ensure the precision and quality of the data. This involved confirming whether the information captured in text represented the meaning or inferences or was consistent with the oral data. Furthermore, according to Bryman (2016), coding must be done through thorough rereading. After thoroughly and repeatedly reading the transcripts and becoming familiar with the data, the researcher created codes in the form of phrases (code creation) or brief snapshots of sentences from the transcripts (in vivo coding). The researcher then began to draw and create emergent themes based on the repeated inferences (code grouping), which were later divided into subthemes. At this point, the researcher went again to make the connection between the codes and the created themes. As per Järvinen (2000) asserts, meanings are derived by making connections within the data. The researcher then reflected on

the codes and merged those that were similar to find the main themes (code groups) and the meanings associated with them [guided by previous literature]. The actual data analysis was done with the help of computer software - Atlas.ti, version 10. With the help of this software, the researcher was able to generate patterns, quotations, and main themes. Finally, the researcher began to interpret and analyze the data to extract underlying meanings guided by prior literature and theories. Interesting and meaningful sections were also extracted from the data to represent the actual voices of the participants in writing the chapter on the discussion and findings. *see appendix two.*

4.6 Limitations of the study

The study took place in the midst of the global pandemic COVID -19. This influenced the study from the design to the end. For example, the researcher felt that it would have been beneficial to conduct a focus group discussion to corroborate the data collected through individual in-depth interviews as this would enrich the data. However, this was not possible at the time of the study due to restrictions on meetings instituted in Sweden as recommended by the Public Health Agency. However, the researcher believes that this did not affect the quality of the findings as he used previous research to corroborate the findings.

Similarly, some interviews were conducted through online platforms such as Zoom. Although this technique was suitable because it gave both the researcher and the interviewee a sense of security and offered flexibility, "online interviews can present challenges and distractions, not present in face-to-face interviews" ... and technological issues such as "audio and/or video internet connection delays, garbled or unclear audio, or malfunctioning technology" (Mirick & Wladkowski, 2019, p. 3063). However, the researcher prepared for such disruptions by asking respondents to seek out a quiet environment with fewer distractions and to find a stable internet connection. As recommended by (Hanna & Mwale, 2017) who "concluded that the environment of both home and work offices is not a distraction", the researcher ensured that the respondents were in a quiet environment especially the quiet study rooms of Haga Campus. This was the most suitable environment as most students were not in the school premises at these times as they were advised to do their studies from home.

Moreover, the study had a limited time frame to be completed. The four months allocated to write the entire master's thesis felt insufficient and therefore forced the student to work under pressure, which could ultimately affect the quality of the outcome (the thesis). However, the

student, in collaboration with his supervisor, planned the master's thesis writing process in such a way that he had time to achieve the desired milestones on time: This alleviated the pressure and ensured that the student completed the dissertation within the given time frame. In terms of methodological limitations, with in-depth interviews, the results are not generalisable due to the small sample and the subjectivity of the responses with a high degree of bias from different worldviews due to different contextual backgrounds. However, the researcher cross-checked the findings with previous literature to ensure internal validity and conducted enough interviews to achieve saturation when responses were repetitive.

4.6 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are an indispensable part of scientific research as they make the results scientifically sound and credible (Bryman, 2012). For example, Connelly, (2014), states that "[m]ore readers pay attention to whether the study was approved by a review board and whether there was informed consent from the participants" (p. 54). Therefore, the most sensitive ethical principles such as confidentiality and informed consent were observed in this study, as described below.

4.6.1 Confidentiality

The study adhered to the principle of confidentiality (Atkinson, 2007). This principle was followed at all stages of the study, i.e., from contacting the interviewees, designing the interview guide which did not include the names and addresses of the participants or the institution of study, conducting the interviews and after the interviews. The goal was to protect the identities of the study participants from any form of retribution based on the information they disclosed. In order to identify which interviewee said what, the researcher assigned all participants pseudonyms (Connelly, 2014) that were used in place of their actual names. The physical interviews were also conducted in remote locations to avoid the risk of eavesdropping by third parties. The audio recordings of the interviews were kept in a password protected computer to which only the researcher had access.

4.6.2 Informed consent

For ethical reasons, the researcher ensured that participants gave their full consent prior to the interview (Holloway, 1997). To this end, when contacting participants, I clearly stated that they

were free to participate in the interview, decline it, or terminate it at any time, including the right to recall their information after the interview. This was reiterated before the actual interviews began. As the interviews were conducted via digital platforms (Zoom), consent was obtained verbally, and no consent forms were sent to respondents in advance. The consent declaration included a verbal statement on the purpose of the research; the procedures to be followed; the risks and benefits of the research (Bailey 1996); and the freedom to withdraw from the research. According to Atkinson & Hammersley (2007) and Connelly (2014), obtaining informed consent from participants opens the door for voluntary participation without any form of coercion or force. All participants agreed to proceed with the study.

4.7 Reflexivity

Self-reflexivity in the research process allows the researcher to reflect on their personal biases and values that may influence the way they conceptualize the findings. It involves "expectations, hopes, and attitudes that the [researcher] has brought to the field, for these will surely influence not only how he sees things, but even what he sees" (Bryman, 2012, p. 39). This was critical for this study since the study was about international student mobility, of which the researcher was a part. Therefore, the researcher was an insider while trying to study international student mobility without including personal biases and assumptions. As the researcher can admit that at some points during the interview, he almost shared his personal experiences, but he tried to maintain his position as a researcher and focused on understanding the phenomenon from the participants' perspective. At some points, participants simply assumed that he knew their experiences, using the phrase "as you know", "you know these things", "as you know our country". However, being an insider helped me gain the trust of the study participants and build rapport with them. The insider effect also enabled me to understand some idiomatic expressions, especially in Ugandan dialects or phrases in the local language used to emphasize a point.

CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and discussion of the study. The chapter is organised according to the specific research questions that guided this study. In this sense, the first part addresses the first two questions by simultaneously introducing and discussing the actors involved in ISM from Uganda to Sweden and their specific roles, while the second part, which focuses on the implications for students' reliance on intermediaries, addresses the third research question.

To provide a recap, the study examined the intermediation of international student mobility from Uganda to Sweden by focusing on the actors involved in the process, their role in the student migration process, and the potential impact on students who rely on intermediaries. As with other types of human mobility, the study found that student mobility from Uganda to Sweden is highly mediated by various actors, as discussed below:

5.1 Actors

According to the findings of the study, these actors mainly included institutions such as universities, scholarship providers, states, and networks such as family members, friends, former/returnee international students and professors. To this end, the study shows that both state and non-state actors are involved in facilitating international student mobility.

5.1.1 Scholarship institutions

The study revealed that most Ugandan students studying in Sweden were facilitated by various study institutions through the provision of study grants. These included the Swedish Institute (SI), the Erasmus Mundus Programme, and the University of Gothenburg:

5.1.1.1 The Swedish Institute

Most (five out of nine) of the students who participated in the study reported that they were funded by the Swedish Institute to come to Sweden. The Swedish Institute (a semi-governmental agency) has a mission to promote Sweden's interests and increase confidence in Sweden around the world - through science, business, culture, and education (si.se; Åkerlund, 2014). One of the main ways SI promotes Sweden and builds lasting relationships with other

countries is by recruiting international students to study in Sweden through the provision of fully funded study scholarships. Through its scholarship programmes such as "Swedish institute scholarships for global professionals" and "Visby programme", the institute awards over 350 scholarships annually to students outside the EEA zone, making it the largest provider of study scholarships in Sweden. In addition to awarding study scholarships, the SI is responsible for the international marketing of Sweden as a study destination (si.se).

5.1.1.2 Erasmus Mundus

Other students reported that they were supported by the Erasmus Mundus under the MFamily Programme. The Erasmus Mundus is funded by European Union to promote student mobility and the internationalization of education (Lloyd, 2013). Mainly in the field of higher education, this cooperation and mobility programme,

... aims to enhance the quality of European higher education and to promote dialogue and understanding between people and cultures through cooperation with Third Countries. In addition, it contributes to the development of human resources and the international cooperation capacity of Higher education institutions in Third Countries by increasing mobility between the European Union and these countries (Lloyd, 2013, p. 329).

It promotes the internationalization of education and student mobility by, among other things, providing student scholarships, most of which are implemented through partnerships with universities, including those outside European Union. In fact, three out of five students who participated in the study came to Sweden through the Erasmus Mundus (Mfamily) programme. Under this scholarship programme, students rotate between different universities that are (usually) located in different countries. For example, the students who participated in the study had spent a semester at the Universities of Lisbon and Stavanger in Portugal and Norway, respectively, before moving to the University of Gothenburg in Sweden.

5.1.1.3 Gothenburg University/ Axel Adler scholarship

Higher education institutions, particularly Gothenburg University, also contribute to student mobility to Sweden by awarding scholarships. This scholarship is funded through the Adlerbertska foundation.

Axel Adler Scholarship is awarded for programme studies at the University of Gothenburg where the language of instruction is English. The scholarship covers the tuition fee and is awarded students at undergraduate and graduate level. Axel Adler Scholarship is primarily awarded based on the applicant's study qualifications and is funded by Adlerbertska Scholarship Foundation and Adlerbertska Grant Foundation and the Swedish Council for Higher Education (UHR)¹.

Indeed, one participant pointed out that his mobility to Sweden was made possible by the GU-Adlerbertska scholarship. As he comments,

“I had been applying for different scholarships, including SI but had not gone through...Then one of my friends told me about the GU [Gothenburg University] scholarship and I applied...luckily enough, I went through”. Emma.

The involvement of higher education institutions in the recruitment of international students is in line with Baas (2019), who claims that the interaction between "companies, agents, government agencies as well as academic institutions" (p. 230) is part of the initiatives to recruit international students. It is imperative to note that two of these scholarship providers - namely Swedish Institute and Erasmus Mundus Programme - are funded by the government in one way or another. As mentioned earlier, SI is part of Swedish Foreign Ministry and Erasmus Mundus is funded by European Union. The involvement of states in recruiting foreign students is not surprising, as previous research has linked this phenomenon to states' desire to be globally competitive. For example, Verbik & Lasanowski, 2007 claim that due to "increasing market competition and changes in mobility patterns, many countries have begun to consider how to implement or strengthen their strategic approaches to recruiting international [students]" (pp. 7-8). Verbik and Lasanowski postulate that countries use various strategies, such as graduate visa programmes, to attract international students in order to increase their global competitiveness. Indeed, student scholarships became a new channel to attract international students in Sweden after a new policy of charging tuition fees to non-EU students was introduced in 2011. A 2018 article published in PIE News claims that the introduction of non-

¹ <https://www.gu.se/en/study-in-gothenburg/apply/scholarships-for-fee-paying-students/axel-adler-scholarship>

EEA fees has led to a drastic decrease in the number of international students from third world countries. To reverse this, the Swedish Institute has invested heavily in campaigns to study in Sweden through its digital platforms and collaboration with Swedish consulates and embassies abroad to increase the number of international students. This means that the Swedish government recognises the intrinsic social, political, and economic value of international students to the economy. This is consistent with King & Raghuram's (2013) assertion that states often engage in the recruitment of international students because they have fundamental benefits from international students, such as attracting global talent. For example, Åkerlund (2014) notes that the internationalisation of higher education is used as a tool of public diplomacy embodied in states' efforts to promote their "ideas and ideals, their institutions and culture, and their national goals and current policies" (p. 391). Although Sweden recruits international students to fulfil national interests, scholarships have become an important means of providing international education to students from low-income countries. For example, Jane stated,

"... Without this scholarship, it is really hard, because then you will have to pay, where are you going to get that money...the money we earn back home is too small. If you want to undertake further studies, it just cannot cover anything. So, scholarships, for some of us, is the only way to heighten our education. Otherwise, there is no other way..." Jane.

In affirmation of the above assertion, another student added,

"I mainly came here because I got the admission, backed up with a scholarship. So, minus the scholarship. I do not think I would have come..." Ann.

This student's scenario is consistent with Carling's assertion in his aspiration/ability theory that some aspiring migrants cannot realise their dream of migrating to their desired destination country to pursue their desired goals due to bottlenecks associated with the migration process, including financial constraints and lack of opportunities. Therefore, in this case, scholarships act as a key to unlock the potential of potential students to realise their dream of acquiring an international education. Indeed, it was clear that some students who wanted to study abroad were prevented from doing so by the lack of financial opportunities. To this end, Jimmy commented,

“I have friends who I applied with to do a master’s but unfortunately, they did not pass through..... but I think they are really qualified people, if they were just in the same situation as me, it’s about the financial inability to do further studies...” Jimmy.

This implies that scholarships were the only way for some prospective international students to finance their studies abroad. The study revealed that although there are qualified and willing potential international students in Uganda, the lack of financial opportunities makes them involuntarily immobile as one of the participants, Olivia exclaimed,

“ I tried to help some friends to apply...almost all of them were successful in applying to the university, they were admitted to different programmes in different universities in Sweden, but they were not successful when it comes to the scholarship, so they did not come...but we are still trying, as the competition is also very high, so we are optimistic...” Olivia.

So, while a lack of financial resources to pay for study abroad discourages prospective students from poor countries from pursuing their dreams, it is plausible that study scholarships increase students' ability to acquire an international qualification and thus increase their mobility. Research on international students in Sweden and other Western countries shows that students from so-called third world countries were not as mobile as students from wealthy countries, particularly China, Japan, and South Korea. For example, trends of international students coming to Sweden after the introduction of tuition fees show that the vast majority are from wealthy Asian countries, especially China and India (SCB, 2021). Trends of international students in other popular destination countries such as the USA, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand also paint a similar picture, with students from China, India, South Korea and Japan making up the majority of international students (King, Findlay& Ahrens, 2010; de Wit, 2008). Previous studies emphasise the role of student support in the mobility of international students. For example, the study (Choudaha, 2017) - *Three Waves of International Student Mobility (1999-2020)* - showed that a disruption in the ability of governments and institutions to offer financial support and scholarships for study abroad due to the global crisis made it more difficult for students from hard-hit countries to study abroad. At the same time, it opened the door for students from countries like Saudi Arabia to offer study abroad scholarships to their domestic students.

5.1.2 Roles Played by scholarship institutions.

Building on the above, this section outlines the role of scholarship institutions in international student migration. This includes covering tuition fees and other costs associated with study, such as visas and travel expenses, as discussed below:

Stipend and tuition provision

The study found that scholarship providers-supported student mobility by covering tuition and living expenses for students, with Racheal and Jacob each offering their views on scholarship funding.

“And then also the financial part of it because I came, I was insured. I had a sure deal that my education would be funded for two years. I had a sure deal that I would get my keep even if I did not have any relatives, but with my scholarship I would get my money to survive. So yes, the scholarship made it easier for me to settle in this country...”
Racheal.

“The scholarship is really a Godsent because then you don't have to worry about tuition. You do not have to work alongside your studies because so many people work alongside their studies, which is really hard. So, I think a scholarship lowers the pressure of having to worry about money for tuition. I think that's the most important thing; you're not under pressure...” Jacob.

The implication here is that study grants enable students who would not otherwise have managed to study abroad to do so. This confirms Carling's view that some people's migration aspirations do not translate into actual mobility. For example, as mentioned earlier, many potential international students, especially from developing countries such as Uganda, are prevented from studying abroad by a lack of financial resources. Indeed, existing research shows that scholarships are critical to increasing the chances of international student mobility. For example, "enrollments from China, India, and Saudi Arabia accounted for 81 percent of the 8 percent total annual growth in international students in the United States between 2013 and 2014" (Ortiz et al., 2015, p. 4) due to the availability of scholarships. The same study shows that students from India relied on institutional financial aid, while Saudi students funded their studies with scholarships from the Saudi government (ibid.).

Visa accessibility

The study further revealed that scholarship is associated with ease of visa processing and accessibility. Students indicated that having a scholarship makes it easier to obtain a visa to

enter the destination country. This is attributed to the fact that scholarship students are most likely to meet the requirements of the Swedish Migration board, especially that of sufficient financial support (Swedish Migration Board, 2012). Not only is the visa granted almost automatically, but it is also usually paid for in full by the sponsors. As Ann comments,

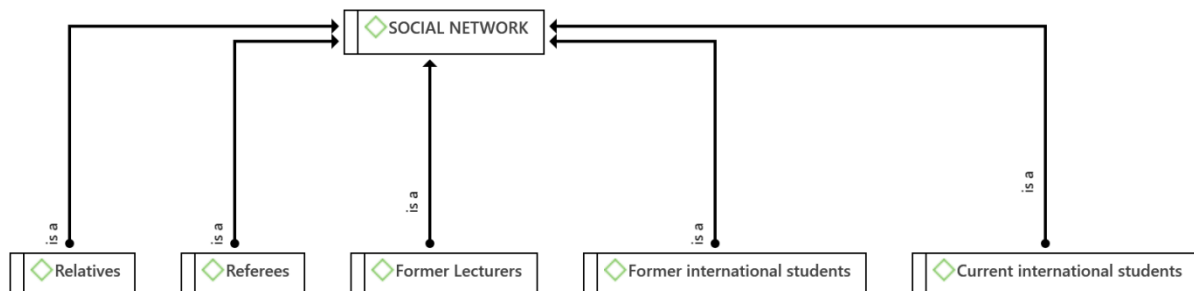
"...The scholarship carries with it a thousand advantages; in the first place, there is no need to hustle for the visa. It's sort of automatic, if you apply for the visa through the scholarship, you have to get a visa and then the visa was fully paid for by the sponsors ..." Ann.

Moreover, existing research shows that access to visas is one of the key technologies for securitising human mobility (Amoore, 2006) - thus, easy access increases the chances of crossing nation-state borders legally. Moreover, some scholars believe that lack of access to travel visas can render many aspiring migrants immobile (Van Heelsum, 2016). As migrants are increasingly categorised as a security risk (Pajnik, Fabbro, and Kamenova, 2016), creating "safe" and "unsafe" migrants, it can be argued that easy access to student visas increases student mobility by giving students from low-income countries - who typically fall into the unsafe migrant category - the same mobility opportunities as, for example, students from European Union, who have a right to free movement within the EU.

5.1.3 Migrant networks

Social networks such as friends, family members and returnees, current and former international students in Sweden, work colleagues and former lecturers were most notable actors in the migration of international students from Uganda to Sweden in this study. This is further illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 2: Actors in the ISM from Uganda to Sweden



Furthermore, the study found that these actors are mostly members in the close circle of international students. This is consistent with previous research that indicated that social networks are associated with "interpersonal ties that link migrants, former migrants, and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through kinship ties, friendship, and shared communities of origin" (Caces, 2010b, p. 448; Boyd, 1989, p. 641). Moreover, the study showed that prospective international students always applied to the same universities or cities to which they had connections or to which their networks had connections. As one student commented,

"I have family members here [in Gothenburg] who have been in Sweden for quite a long time, over 7 to 10 years.....to some extent [I came here] because of relatives, of course, because they knew more about the country, they knew more about the scholarships, and how I might be able to manoeuvre through the country. It was a little bit easier to settle in this country than to go to a new country where I would be the first migrant..."Anita.

This corresponds with the ideas of previous research that social networks influence migration decisions and the location choices of potential migrants (Somerville, 2015), in that having many local connections in a particular region increases the likelihood of migrants settling in that area (Bauer et al., 2000) and determines the quality of life of new migrants (Caces, 2010, p. 164). This also reflects the 'chain migration' described by Collyer (2011), where the successful arrival of migrants at the same destination is likely to lead to further migration to that area. Indeed, the same student who came here because relatives stated that she also helped her sister come to Sweden on the same scholarship, confirming Collyer's claim. This is partly because, as discussed in the subsequent section, social networks play a significant role in inspiring, helping, or influencing students to migrate (Massey et al., 1993).

5.1.3.1 International students as migration intermediaries.

One of the key findings of the study is that among social network connections, current or former international students stood out as key nodes connecting prospective students to both study opportunities and study locations. The study found that, on average, each student had attempted to help at least three students, most of whom were successful. In addition, all participants reported that they had been helped or encouraged in one way or another by a current or former international student to apply to study abroad. Respondents explained this as follows.

“...I have helped people to apply, helped them know about the different scholarships, some were waitlisted, some were successful, and now they're going through the same process I went through, so luckily there's someone I helped through that process and his application was successful, so he's about to travel and I've helped him go through the right channels and luckily he's got enough time to do all the steps, in the right way, so I've kept him up to date on what steps to take and I think he's making very good progress...” Emma

“I want to help as many people as I can, yeah, I mean I have helped others, like some people have said, “Okay, I'm trying to apply for this, but can you help me review my resume, can you help me read through my personal statement and see if it makes sense?”, or they've asked me to send them links to possible scholarships that they can apply for, I mean, I have already done that, and I'll be happy to do it because I've gotten the same help and I want to give it back to other people who need it..”Lillian

“... I have tried to help several people, but they have not been successful. I have tried to walk them through the application process of both the university and the scholarship...” Jacob.

“... I have helped several students, and I have been successful three times. I have directly helped people apply, taken them through the scholarship application process. And I can name three that I helped from start to finish, and they got the same scholarship that I am on...” Ann.

The above statements corroborate the claims in previous literature which assumes that migrants or returnees from migrant backgrounds have extensive understanding and knowledge of how to navigate the complexities of migration which they could pass on to help other potential migrants (Beech, 2018) to migrate either to study or settle. Interestingly, one of the students stated that she intentionally tried to go through the application process herself to gain a better understanding of the system so that she could help others, as she comments,

“... I felt like I had to go through it myself, because that's the only way I would appreciate it, and then I would also get more experience, and learn the system, just in case somebody else needed my help in the future, then I would know what to do, just like I got help from the former students.”. Jane.

In addition, study participants indicated that they trusted migrant networks over regular brokers and other forms of mediation because they [the individuals in their social network] had lived experience and knowledge. They postulated that student migration brokering, especially scholarship application, can be done well by someone who has gone through it themselves (see section 5.2.2). For example, the study also found that students largely refrained from using paid

intermediaries to obtain passports, visas and other documents required for emigration and immigration. This is partly because they considered using intermediaries to be expensive, but also because they were able to navigate the process themselves as they were literate. They also checked with their social networks, which they considered to be more efficient and cost effective. To confirm this, one participant who attempted to use the services of brokers noted that the brokers had not delivered even though he had paid them.

“They [brokers] could promise you that I will deliver in a couple of days, and you had to run there for almost a week to process one document, and without that document you couldn't go to the next step to maybe transfer all your documents and get them to the embassy... so, however much they took their money I experienced a lot of frustration from them... even though the idea was to speed up the process, some things came out in almost the same amount of time that a normal process would have taken, so I felt like I was being manipulated by the system in some way...” Jimmy.

While others categorically stated that they do not trust brokers to have the expertise, knowledge and experience required for scholarships and study abroad admissions. Indeed, previous studies of mediated migration suggest that intermediaries who have "the same cultural and local understanding as students" can easily gain students' trust in terms of the information they pass on to them regarding study abroad opportunities and the intermediary services therein (Beech, 2018, p. 611).

5.1.3.2 Roles played by social networks.

Most of these social networks facilitated the migration process for students by sharing links to scholarship opportunities with prospective international students, assisting with admissions and visa applications, supporting the integration process, and organising housing, among other things. These are discussed in detail hereunder:

Financing the migratory costs

The study found that social networks were involved in funding migration costs for some international students. These costs included visa fees, ground transportation for document processing, and university application fees. As Olivia comments,

“My husband [international student in Sweden, at the time] helped me with the application process and paying the 900 kronor [application fees] because I was unemployed. I didn't have the money. So, he helped me with all these processes, even with the residence permit processing...” Olivia.

This result is consistent with Massey et al.'s (1993) assertion that financing the migration process is one of the main ways through which social networks facilitate transnational migration. In doing so, these diaspora networks not only create opportunities for the potential migrants to migrate but can also decide who migrates and where they migrate to (Spaan and Naerssen, 2018). Some studies have postulated that social networks "both act as a conduit for resources and determine the quality of life experienced by new migrants" (Caces, 2010b, p. 164); which ultimately helps the potentially involuntarily immobile (Carling, 2002) [due to financial constraints] (Van Heelsum, 2016) migrants achieve their desired mobility.

Information exchange

The results of the study showed that social networks, especially current and former international students, shared information about study opportunities, which led to some of them getting the scholarships and admissions to study in Sweden, as Anita and Jane commented, respectively.

"I have a doctor friend who works in public health in Kenya. She was the one who sent me the link because I was looking for masters' opportunities and scholarships. I talked to her at one of the meetings about my needs and everything. And then she gave me a link for Sweden. I applied and got lucky..." Anita.

"... they [the relatives in Sweden] connected me with the scholarship because I didn't even know there was a scholarship, in the first place. And yes, we were together throughout the whole scholarship process; the application, through the application to the university, and of course the application for the visa when I got the scholarship..." Jane.

The situation of these students is consistent with previous research that supports the notion that "social networks shape both the decision to study abroad and where to study" (Beech, 2015, p. 333). This usually occurs through the exchange of information about available migration opportunities. This is not a new finding, as previous research cites information exchange as one of the most important components characterising the interplay between social networks and the migration nexus (Elrick & Lewandowska, 2008; Massey et al., (1993). Some scholars believe that the information obtained from social connections helps migrants to minimise the costs and avert the risks associated with the migration process (Garip, 2008; Vertovec, 2002). Moreover, according to Van Heelsum (2016), access to information, especially about the destination country, is as important as other aspects of the migration process, such as access to legal documents and the ability to finance the journey, to increase people's ability to migrate.

Housing and student jobs

The study also showed that social networks play a role in arranging accommodation for incoming students. Current international students in Sweden and returnees/former international students were most active in this process. They arranged temporary accommodation for the students, helped them avoid scams and passed on information about cheaper accommodation options, Anita and Ann respectively stated,

“...the last week before I came here, I had not secured housing. It is really difficult to get accommodation in Gothenburg. And Ronnie- [an international student] helped me get in touch with someone who gave me the accommodation for the first two months I was here...” Anita.

“... I had former Erasmus Mundus students and Ugandan friends living here, so they helped me get cheaper accommodation ... later on, after I got settled and wanted the job, I got more friends, Ugandan friends and other people who recommended Oh, you can do this, and then they recommended me for several jobs as well. So, I think the social networks here were helpful...” Ann.

Olivia added in confirmation that she had offered temporary accommodation to a student,

“...One of them [new students] I had to also accommodate her in my house for about a month and a half before she found her own student apartment...” Olivia.

These statements are consistent with the views of previous migration researchers such as Vertovec (2002) that "social networks are critical for finding jobs and housing, for the circulation of goods and services, and for psychological support and ongoing social and economic information" (p. 3). Other studies suggest that kinship and friendship ties are a source of social capital (Ryan et al., 2008) that help immigrants access employment in the destination country (Caces, 2010b; Massey et al. 1993; Boyd, 1989).

Integration of the new international students

The social networks were also keen to promote the integration and settlement of international students in Gothenburg. To this end, Ann stated,

“I had to move around with them [the new students], show them Gothenburg, and show them how to do things here. Like all the support they needed as new students. I was there for them. Just like Ronnie was there for me when I came...” Ann.

The finding reinforces the notion that migration networks contribute to the perpetual circulation of migrants through the integration of new migrants. For example, Collyer (2011) posits that, contacts or connections abroad facilitate the integration process of incoming migrants and help in their settlement and adaptation to the new environment. Ann's assertion is also consistent with the view of Collyer (2011) and Elrick & Lewandowska (2008) regarding the involvement of social networks in facilitating migration, which point to reciprocity, bounded solidarity, exchange of trust, and value introjections as important influencing factors of social networks.

University admissions and visa application

Furthermore, it was found that students received a great deal of support from their social networks, (mostly) current international students and former students, when applying for the study visa. The latter are presumed to be aware of the system and process for obtaining a student visa, Olivia explains this as follows.

“I did not have the money. So, he [husband in Sweden] helped me with all these processes, even processing the residence permit. Immediately after that, I found out that I got the scholarship. So, the next step was to apply for the permit. So, we knew how the system worked...” Olivia.

This result is not surprising, as the existing literature on mediated migration shows that, due to the complexity of migration systems, prospective migrants rely heavily on the expertise and knowledge of intermediaries, including social networks, to navigate or circumvent existing regulations (Fernandez, 2013). Indeed, some studies suggest that even migrants who potentially have the expertise to navigate the systems themselves are also likely to rely on an intermediary to help them speed up the process and/or avert the corruption embedded in migration processes and/or reduce the risk of fraud (Spaan and Naerssen, 2018).

Considering the above findings, one can agree with previous research that access to social networks is among the most important channels to overcome mobility limitations (Schewel, 2019). Indeed, Kothari (2003) posits that a lack of social or human capital can make people immobile. Applied to the present study, it can therefore be argued that social networks play an important role in unlocking potential for prospective international students to achieve their desired mobility for study. Thus, although all the actors discussed in this section were important in the migration of students from Uganda to Sweden, social networks played an anchor role in the overall migration process. As outlined in this section, the role of social networks was comprehensive and ranged from encouraging or inspiring potential students to apply to study

in Sweden, offering practical help in the application process and covering some of the logistical migration costs, to integrating students once they arrived in Sweden. This implies that social networks made the other actors in the process relevant, for example, it was social networks that shared information about available providers of study grants. Therefore, in my view, it always started and ended with social connections.

5.2 Consequences of students' reliance on intermediaries

Notwithstanding the numerous positive implications for intermediaries' involvement in student mobility from Uganda to Sweden, most of which are subsumed in the roles played intermediaries in the student migration process, the study also highlighted some negative implications associated with student mobility through intermediaries.

5.2.1 Fraud and Fees

The study found that brokerage services sometimes involved exorbitant fees. To make matters worse, even after paying these fees, there was no guarantee that the intermediaries, especially those in documentation processing, would deliver. Consequently, mediation services were reported to involve a lot of frustration and manipulation as Jimmy explained,

“ ... it took a lot of money and almost some of the things came out at the same time a normal procedure would have taken, ... so I felt I was manipulated by the system in some way..... I paid the initial payments but still, they took extra money, and they did not deliver in time...” Jimmy.

In fact, other students added that they would have liked to use the services of a broker to facilitate or speed up documentation but were constrained by such exorbitant fees. Olivia, for example, reported,

“Like if you have the money, you can really get what you want. Because for instance, when we went to immigration migration office, [brokers] were there on standby. They are there; once you enter like this, someone is like, please, I just want to give you help. So long as you facilitate me, within a few days, you will find your passport. People are there who are ready to help. If you have the money. ...but for me, I did not have the money to give them” ...Olivia.

This result is consistent with prevailing views in previous migration research that portray intermediaries as costly. Studies by Agunias, (2009); Broek et al, (2016); Kern and Müller-

Böker, (2015) indicate that intermediaries can extort migrants for their money and sometimes present forged documents. In this vein, Jones et al, (2017) point out that intermediaries such as recruitment agencies, brokers, lawyers and or smugglers charge exorbitant fees and tend to exploit migrant workers. Indeed, some students admitted that they did not trust intermediaries, especially online brokers, to help them apply for scholarships for fear of being scammed or not getting the right services, as Jane lamented.

“... it would be literally someone doing it for you online and I have never met this person so how do I trust that they will do what I want? Also, that could be one of the things that will stop me from hiring a broker because I do not trust if they are authentic or if they are doing the right thing, I mean there are so many cheats on the internet all over” ...Jane.

Ultimately, the inability to pay the fees charged by migration intermediaries, coupled with uncertainties about their authenticity, may prevent some potential international students from achieving their desired dream - leading to immobility (Carling, 2002). For example, Van Hear (2014) notes that economic constraints such as the affordability of migration costs can lead to some migration aspirations not being translated into actual migration. This in turn can lead to potential migrants falling into debt bondage or even becoming involved in illegal migration activities such as smuggling and human trafficking (Agunias, 2009; De Haas, 2008). In addition, students also revealed a lack of information about legal and effective intermediary services as Anita commented,

“.... for me, the nature of my programme I do not know if there are agencies within the country that do that kind of brokerage. The problem is I do not have the knowledge.... I don't know about them so the lack of knowledge itself, on who to approach, would also stop me because you cannot use something if you don't know about it yeah so, the lack of information also would also be one of the challenges on top of the trust and of course the lack of the money” ...Anita.

This implies that the lack of knowledge about intermediary services is likely to deter some potential students from going abroad for study. Indeed, previous research on mediated migration emphasizes the role that migration intermediaries play in circumventing and/or navigating the barriers that limit migration (Gammeltoft-Hansen & Sorensen, 2013), thus knowledge of authentic intermediaries would increase students' chances of migrating for study or help them avoid scams.

5.2.2 Lack of sufficient expertise

In addition, students felt that the tasks involved in international student mobility - particularly scholarship and university admissions and visa processing - required a certain level of expertise that would require someone with practical experience. This is consistent with Fernandez's (2013) statement highlighting "the fragmentation of knowledge [among the various intermediaries], as no single actor in this complex landscape has all the necessary information about how the [...] regulatory regimes work, especially because both can change rapidly in response to changes in context" (p. 838). In this regard, prospective students preferred to rely on former and current international students or to face the process themselves rather than using the external intermediaries, Racheal reported.

"... the [brokerage] services are good, but to be realistic, the way I see this scholarship and the university part of application. It needs someone who has been through it, or someone who has an idea about it. But for someone who is just outside, I think this would not be the best visa or the best kind of application to be helped by just a mere person outside" ... Racheal.

Racheal's situation confirms the notion prevalent in previous research on mediated migration, which associates mediation services with lived experiences, mostly from migration networks, and expertise on how to navigate the migration process (Fernandez, 2013; Lindquist et al., 2012). These authors also emphasise the increased demand for migration facilitators to enable would-be migrants to manoeuvre through the cumbersome migration systems. Indeed, some study participants corroborated this assertion by mentioning that they felt able to adequately help other prospective students because they [current international students] had learned the intricacies of the system. Jimmy exclaims.

"I've helped people apply, helped them know about the different scholarships, some were waitlisted, some were successful and now they're going through the same process that I went through; fortunately, there's somebody that I helped through that process and his application was successful, so he's about to travel and I've helped him go through the right channels and fortunately, he has enough time to do each process the right way. So, I have been keeping him updated on what steps he should take, and I think he is making very good progress. I do not think he is going to go through the same stress and procedures that I had to go through due to limited information and awareness.... I have also connected him with some of the brokers that I have used to help in this process... so I have been actively involved in this process and I think I still help other people who intend or who have the motive to study" Jimmy.

The above observation confirms the ideas in the literature that connections abroad can increase a person's ability to migrate, especially through the exchange of information about available migration opportunities (Massey et al., 1999). In addition, Garip (2008) suggests that information and direct support from social networks can help reduce the costs and risks associated with the migration process. With support, social networks help overcome barriers such as lack of knowledge about legal intermediaries and navigating the migration process, which increases students' mobility opportunities.

5.2.3 Conditionalities.

The study found that reliance on scholarship providers comes with strict requirements that students must adhere to in order to maintain funding and avoid penalties, which include refunding money already spent. As detailed below.

Pressure for good academic performance

Students indicated that dependence on funders was associated with stress and pressure to do well academically. Most scholarship funders, especially Swedish Institute and Erasmus Mundus, require scholars to achieve a certain number of credits within a certain period of time in order to receive an extension of scholarship funding. This not only puts pressure on the international students who receive this scholarship, but also prevents them from exploring and integrating into the new culture and places. One student commented as follows,

"... It is a challenge because in my programme, the Erasmus Mundus master's, which is a master's programme in social work with families and children, you had to achieve a certain average in your first year. If you did not make that you probably lost your scholarship. So, I think it comes with that tension, or I must work hard, or you will lose it in the first year. And that wouldn't be good" ... Jane.

The pressure to perform has a detrimental effect on the social life of international students, in part because it prevents them from exploring the culture. Indeed, some students noted that one of the reasons for studying abroad, apart from gaining a foreign qualification, is to explore a new culture. Jacob commented,

"When you come, you come to study abroad, but you also travel around to different countries and see different interesting things" ... Jacob.

Moreover, previous research on international student mobility has emphasised the relationship between culture and student mobility. For example, a study by Findlay (2012) points out "that several different dimensions of social and cultural capital are accrued through study abroad" (p. 118). According to Findlay et al.,

...advantages associated with international study are thought to stretch beyond academic credentials and include features such as the cosmopolitan identities (Beck 2004) acquired because of international experience. The significance of cultural capital varies spatially and over time (p, 121).

Therefore, although scholarships open doors for "unprivileged" international students to study abroad, some conditions associated with them may inadvertently close another door to realizing their full potential in relation to their career goals.

Affects long-term settlement.

The study found that some students who would have liked to settle in Sweden to find a job and permanent residence were affected by the structure of the scholarship program. For example, the Erasmus Mundus Mfamily program requires students to transfer to a different university (in a different country) each semester, which hinders their acclimatization and integration process. Anita, one of the respondents in the study, as one student mentioned,

"The challenge I got was settling in; for example, the fact that we moved from different countries, for example, our first semester was in Portugal, our second semester was in Norway, our third semester was in Gothenburg, Sweden. So, it was difficult to get acclimated. Because our first semester, for example, was about four months... You have to learn the transportation system, where I lived and where the university was, you learn that in a short period of time, and then you move to another country as you start learning...oh, how do the subways work in Portugal, then the next four months are over, and you go to Norway, Norway is really different, the currency is different, the people are different, the language, etc..." Anita.

"It [mobility] already affects your opportunities. For example, I have colleagues that I studied with because they didn't stay in Sweden for a year, so they didn't end up getting the extra year because in Sweden if you are a student and you stay for two semesters, like a year, you have the chance to extend your permit to look for a job. But my colleagues didn't get that chance because they weren't here for two semesters... So, I think it affected them. And in Sweden, for example, you don't get a personal number because of mobility, you're not here for more than a year, like we were. So, you don't

get some privileges. Your health, the fees are higher, you can't just open a bank account" ...Lilian.

The above literally suggests that the goal of students goes beyond obtaining a qualification and includes other aspects of migration, such as settling down and acquiring a residence or a job (Findlay et al., 2012). This is consistent with previous studies which indicate that one of the factors influencing international students' choice of destination is the predicted chances of residency after graduation (Baas, 2019). Findlay et al. (2012) also highlight that students are usually attracted by the perceived job opportunities in their chosen country of study. In fact, retaining qualified international students is also the goal of the host countries, which use student mobility to fill existing gaps in the labour market (Matross Helms et al. 2015). Building on this, some scholars believe that student scholarships offered to international students are used by states as a recruitment strategy for the former purpose [student retention] (Verbik & Lasanowski, 2007; Choudaha, & Chang, 2012; Choudaha and de Wit, 2014). This is reflected in policies such as granting international students a visa to seek employment after graduation (Swedish Higher Education Authority, 2018). Thus, when the structure of the scholarship and study program requires students to change countries of study, it denies them the chance to establish themselves and achieve their secondary goal of settling down. For example, most exchange students in Sweden do not benefit from the work-the above-mentioned job-seeking visa because 1) they do not get enough time to learn how the system works, or 2) their time in Sweden is too short to grant them the number of credits required to renew their visa to look for work.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

6.0 Introduction

The dissertation examined the mediation of international student mobility. It focused on the mapping of actors, the role of these actors and the implications of using intermediaries. This chapter summarises the main findings of the thesis and makes recommendations for further research.

6.1 Conclusions

As with other forms of transnational human mobility, the study revealed the involvement of various actors in mediating international student mobility from Uganda to Sweden. Both state and non-state actors play different roles in this mobility. Thus, the study showed that states are indirectly and directly involved in facilitating international student mobility through programmes such as scholarships and visa schemes that enable student mobility. To this end, the study shows that the scholarship programmes that facilitated the mobility of almost all students who participated in the study were funded in one way or another by the government.

Although there is an overarching idea in the literature that facilitators have resourceful knowledge to navigate regulations and help people migrate, the study shows that this is context-specific. Different types of international mobility may require different levels of expertise. In this case, the study showed that insiders or people who were previously involved in the process, i.e. [social networks], were more effective than those who were detached from the system. For example, the study showed that students preferred or trusted current or former international students - as important sources of help - over mainstream brokers. Study participants believe that the former have a better understanding of how the system (scholarships, university admissions, and student visa applications) works, which gives them a better chance of success.

Another plausible reason for trusting social networks is that they were willing to help prospective students for free, as opposed to exorbitant, fee-based brokers.

This could explain the differences in recruitment modes and the differences in the numbers of international students from Eastern Asia and those from Sub-Saharan Africa found in previous literature. For example, the literature shows that the use of brokers was the most popular mode of recruiting international students from East-Asian countries such as China and India to Western countries - particularly United Kingdom (Beech, 2018; Collins, 2012), and these were mostly fee-paying students. In contrast, the mobility of international students from Uganda to Sweden was largely or exclusively facilitated by student grants, without which they could not afford to study abroad and mostly relied on social networks. It is therefore plausible that the difference is due to the lack of financial resources to pay for intermediary services. The study highlighted that these different actors play different roles at different stages of the student migration process. For example, the study showed that universities, scholarship providers, and states were crucial in providing financial support through scholarships, while social networks played an important role in the application process, sharing information about study abroad opportunities, arranging accommodation, applying for student visas, and integration by introducing new students to how to navigate life in a new country.

Finally, this study finds that contrary to the portrayal of the migration industry in previous research, certain aspects of international migration, such as irregular migration, do not apply to ISM. This means, for example, that although part of the migration industry is to control migration (Gammeltoft-Hansen & Sorensen, 2013), the role of the migration industry on ISM is mainly to facilitate mobility, as it is almost impossible to travel or apply to study and be accepted as an illegal migrant.

6.2 Recommendation for Further Research

The main finding of this study reflects a difference in trends, mediation methods, and funding sources between South-East Asia - where most international students studying in Western countries come from - and Sub-Saharan Africa, which was the focus of this study. Therefore, I would recommend that future researchers consider a comparative study that compares at least one Asian country and one African country to dig deeper into these differences. This would be a relevant study, especially for policy makers, higher education institutions, and prospective international students.

This study also used qualitative methods - on a small sample that included only Ugandan students. Therefore, these findings may not be sufficient to inform policy. Future research can therefore use data from a larger sample representing different countries in SSA and employ multiple methods of data collection to provide a more comprehensive picture of the mediation of student mobility from SSA to Europe in general.

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Appendices

Appendix one: Interview guide

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Personal Identification

1. Age _____
2. Sex
3. Country of birth _____
4. Educational Attainment:
5. Marital status
6. Occupation status before coming to Sweden.
7. How long have you been in Sweden?

A. International Studies

1. How did you end up in Sweden?
2. Why did you choose to study abroad?
3. Why did you choose Sweden as the destination for your studies?
Motivations for coming to Sweden.
4. What academic program are you undertaking, and at what University?
5. For how long will your studies in Sweden be or have been?
6. How did you find the place you first stayed (accommodation) when you came to Sweden?
7. Apart from studies, are you engaged in any other activities in Gothenburg?

B. Actors in the mediation of international student migration.

1. How did you learn about the Universities you applied to in Sweden?
 2. Did you have any connections in Sweden before you came?
Friends, family, acquaintances.
 - *If yes, how did your connections/networks influence your decision to come to Sweden?*
 - *What kind of assistance did you get from your connections before, during and after you arrived?*
 3. How are your studies funded?
 - *If external funder, how did the funder influence your decision to come to Sweden?*
-

- *How did you learn about your funder?*
4. Tell me about your preparation for the journey to Sweden, what kind of support did you get and from whom?
 - *Passport acquisition, visa processing, financial support for document processing.*
 5. Have you tried helping someone to come to Sweden? *A friend, family et cetera.*
If yes, what kind of support have you or do you give them?
 6. Do you have or intend to get a student job? If yes, how are your connections who came before you helping you?

C. Implications for involvement of the intermediaries in the student migration process.

1. If you relied on agents to process your travel, what challenges or opportunities did you encounter?
2. If you have a scholarship, what challenges/limitation do you face as a student depending on scholarship funding?
3. How did your connections or funders help you to overcome some of those challenges?
4. How does relying on an external funder/scholarship affect your life situation in Sweden?
5. Do you intend or have you tried to help some of your friends or family also come for studies in Sweden?
 - *If yes, what kind of support have you or are you offering to them?*
6. What are you planning to do after your studies are done?

D. Suggestions

1. What advice do you have for international students who hope to study in Sweden?

Thank you for accepting to participate in the study!

Appendix two: Data processing/analysis

Analysis process

QUOTATIONS	Codes
ACTORS IN ISM	
<i>My husband [international student in Sweden, then] helped me in the application process.....</i>	relatives
	Scholarship providers
I had a doctor friend who told me about the scholarship...Ann	Friends
ROLES OF ACTORS	
<i>...the last week before I came here, I had not secured accommodation. So really, it is a hassle getting accommodation in Gothenburg. And Ronnie--[an international student] helped me to get connected to someone who gave me the place where I stayed for the first two months that I was here.... Anita</i>	Accommodation and integration from networks
<i>I had to move around with them [new students], showing them Gothenburg, showing them how to do stuff around here. Like all the support that they needed as new students. I was there for them. Just like Ronnie, was there for me. Ann.</i>	Accommodation arrangements
<i>My husband [international student in Sweden, then] helped me in the application process, and paying that the 900 kronor [application fees], because I was jobless, I did not have the money. So, he helped me all those processes, even processing the residence permit.... Olivia</i>	Financial support
<i>they [relatives in Sweden] connected me to the scholarship because I didn't know about a scholarship in the first place. And yeah, we were together throughout the whole scholarship process; the application, through the University application, and of course visa application when I got the scholarship...Jane</i>	Help with scholarship application
	The travel costs were covered by the scholarship Institute

	Use of brokerage and networks to expedite documentation
	Visa acquisitions
<i>I had been applying for different scholarships, including SI but had not gone through...Then one of my friends told me about the GU scholarship and I applied...luckily enough, I went through, Emma.</i>	Shared information about study possibilities
IMPLICATIONS	
	Conditionalities from sponsors
<i>The challenge I got was settlement; for example, the fact that we moved from different countries, for example, our first semester was in Portugal, our second semester, Norway, our third semester in Gothenburg, Sweden. So, settling in you, it's just because our first for example, first semester was like four months settling in.... You have to learn even the transport system, where I used to stay and where the university was, learning it within a short time, and then you move to another country as you're starting to learn or how do the subways in Portugal work the next four months are done then, and you're going to Norway, Norway is really different, the currency is different, that people, that language... Anita</i>	Effects your chances of settlement
<i>.... it took a lot of money and almost some of the things came out at the same time a normal procedure would have taken but still, they had manipulated me, so I felt I was manipulated by the system in some way..... I paid the initial payments but still, they took extra money, and they did not deliver in time, Jimmy.</i>	Fraud from brokers
	Referees
<i>My husband [international student in Sweden, then] helped me in the application process.....Olivia</i>	Relatives
	Scholarship providers

I had a doctor friend who told me about the scholarship...Ann

Friends
