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POLITICAL INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS IN SWEDEN... DO DOCUMENTS AFFECT INTEGRATION?

Case study of Arab refugees and asylum seekers
who arrived in Sweden during the period between
2013 and 2017.

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Abstract:

Political integration of refugees and asylum seekers in host countries is an area of research that has interested political scientists for a long time. However, little attention has been given to how the type of documents asylum seekers and refugees have might affect their ability and desire to engage in political life in the countries they flee to. During the last ten years, a large number of Arab refugees and asylum seekers have arrived in Sweden searching for protection, where they have been granted different types of residence permits, both temporary and permanent. In this paper, twenty Arab refugees and asylum seekers have been interviewed. Ten of them hold temporary residence permits, and ten are holders of permanent residence permits. The aim of the study is to investigate whether the type of residence permit granted affects refugees and asylum seekers' level of political integration. In general, permanent residence permit holders seem to have higher levels in some aspects of political integration, like political trust. However, the difference sounds to be slight when it comes to other aspects like political participation and adherence to democratic values. Contrary to the assumption that the type of residence permit would affect all aspects of political integration of refugees and asylum seekers equally, the effects of permit type vary depending on which aspect of political integration is measured.

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Dedication:

To my brother, best friend and biggest supporter, Samir Amr

For his endless love, support, and guidance

Table of contents:

Abstract.....1

Acknowledgment.....2

Dedication.....3

Definitions.....6

1.Introduction.....7

 1.1. Aim of the study and research question.....8

 1.2 Contextual background.....9

2. Literature review.....12

3. Theoretical framework.....17

4. Methodological framework.....20

 4.1. Research design.....20

 4.2. Interviews.....22

 4.3. Sample.....23

 4.4. Ethical discussion.....26

5. Data analysis and results.....27

 5.1. Political trust.....27

 5.2. Adherence to democratic values.....35

 5.3. Political participation.....37

 5.4. Political interest.....42

 5.5. Influence of the temporary aliens’ act.....44

 5.6. Policy recommendations.....47

6. Conclusion.....49

7. List of references.....	51
8. Appendix1, the interview guide.....	59
9. Appendix 2, the consent form.....	63

Definitions:**Political integration:**

As defined by Eggert and Giugini's, "The concept of political integration covers a variety of dimensions pertaining to the activities carried by migrants, their attitudes and values, their resources, and identities, and so forth. And this includes, at least three dimensions: political trust, adherence to democratic values, and political participation. Other scholars add a fourth dimension: political interest" (Eggert and Giugni, 2010:176).

Refugee:

According to the UNHCR, a refugee is someone with a "owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it" (UNHCR, 2009).

Asylum seeker:

According to the UNHCR, an asylum seeker is "an individual who is seeking international protection. In countries with individualized procedures, an asylum-seeker is someone whose claim has not yet been finally decided on by the country in which the claim is submitted. Not every asylum-seeker will ultimately be recognized as a refugee, but every refugee was initially an asylum-seeker" (UNHCR, 2005).

Temporary residence permit:

Temporary residence permit is "a permit to stay in Sweden for a certain limited period of time, for example one or three years" (Migrationsverket, 2005).

Permanent residence permit:

Permanent residence permit is "a permit to stay in Sweden for an unlimited time" (Migrationsverket, 2005).

1.Introduction:

Sweden has been known to be one of the most generous host countries for refugees and asylum seekers over the past decades. The biggest wave of refugees' migration in the history of the country happened after the Syrian crisis reached its peak in 2015. Sweden received an unprecedented number of asylum seekers that reached 162.877 at that time (Asylum statistics, 2016). The high wave of migration has raised a lot of questions about different aspects of integration for the newly arrived refugees and asylum seekers. As a result, the political participation and political engagement of refugees and asylum seekers and factors that might affect them have gained increasing importance in scholarly debates as a prerequisite for refugees' successful inclusion.

As rights and duties are the main determinants of one's political participation in a certain country, documents and official papers play a central role in refugees and asylum seekers' inclusion into the political voice of the host country. Taking into consideration the fact that having valid legal papers of residence in the host country is a pre-requisite for asylum seekers and refugees' political participation, it seems valid to interrogate the possible relationship between type of the residence permit granted to asylum seekers and their level of political integration (Simonsen, 2017). It has been argued that documents can directly and indirectly contribute to migrants' civic, socio-economic, and political integration (Huddleston & Vink, 2015). Rights-based models of integration argue that permanent residence permits increase migrants' opportunities and abilities to be integrated into the host countries and that they should not be given only based on conditional labor market inclusion (Jutvik & Robinson, 2020). On the other hand, many scholars have argued that granting permanent residence permits to asylum seekers early would kill their incentives to be integrated in the host country (culturally and politically), as they would realize that their stability in the country is not conditional on learning the language or being politically active (Blomqvist et al., 2018).

On June 21st, 2016, the Swedish parliament passed a proposed legislation known as the "temporary aliens' act" to change the norm of granting residence permits to people seeking asylum from "permanent" to "temporary" residence permits with very few exceptions for family unification. Although the law was issued in June 2016, it has entered into force on all asylum seekers who submitted their asylum applications after 24th of November 2015

(Government offices of Sweden,2019). This policy change means that all asylum seekers who arrived after the 24th of November have been granted a temporary residence permit.

Previous empirical research has discussed the question of the influence of the type of residence permit and documentation on migrants' ability and willingness to integrate into the host community. Theoretically, asylum seekers who are granted permanent residence permits are more likely to invest more time and effort to integrate into the host community as they feel more secure, which incentivizes them to plan for long-term life in the host country, which includes all aspects of integration, from learning the language to being politically active in the political life (Blomqvist et al., 2018). In addition, it becomes easier for permanent residence permit holders to integrate as government programs and employers tend to target them more than others, which in turn makes their integration process easier and faster than temporary residence permit holders. Although the topic of the integration of asylum seekers and refugees has been the subject of heated debate in the media and political parties in Sweden, the literature written on political integration is surprisingly rare.

In this paper, I aim to analyze how the type of residence permit might affect the level of political integration of refugees and asylum seekers in Sweden in the light of the temporary aliens' act that entered into force in 2015. Building on a sample of 20 interviewees of Arab refugees and asylum seekers who arrived around the time period of the implementation of the act, I would be able to draw an analysis of the effect of the type of residence permit on the political integration of refugees and asylum seekers.

1.1. Research question and the aim of the study:

The aim of this thesis is to investigate how the type of residence permit affects the political integration of refugees and asylum seekers who arrived in Sweden in the light of the temporary aliens' act that entered into force on the 24th of November 2015. The group in focus are refugees and asylum seekers who arrived in Sweden around this time period in order to collect a sample of people who arrived around the same time but were most likely granted different types of residence permits due to the regulatory shift. To this end, the research question is:

How does the type of residence permit influence the political integration of refugees and asylum seekers in Sweden? (Comparative case study of Arab refugees and asylum seekers

who submitted their asylum applications before the temporary aliens' act entered into force and those who submitted their asylum applications after the application of the law).

The thesis will continue as follows: the next part presents a contextual background of the influx of Arab refugees and asylum seekers in Sweden and the temporary aliens' act. Chapter two discusses the previous academic literature that aimed to link the type of documents granted to migrants and their level of integration. Chapter three contains the theoretical backbone for the thesis, which concludes in two theories: the post-migration context theoretical framework and the security of residence theory. Following the theory section, the methods section provides a description of the sampling methods and how the qualitative interviews were conducted. Then I turn to chapter five that shows the findings and analysis of the paper. The thesis then concludes with a final discussion of the results and references list.

1.2. Contextual background:

In order to have a clear view of the relationship between the political integration of Arab refugees and asylum seekers and the type of residence permit they have, it is essential to understand the context of the application of the temporary aliens' act and the history of Arab refugees and asylum seekers in Sweden. Thus, this section provides the reader with a short overview of the Arab refugees and asylum seekers' migration waves to Sweden and how the temporary aliens' act was formulated.

Arab refugees and asylum seekers in Sweden:

The influx of Arab refugees and asylum seekers to Sweden started in the late 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s. Due to the new regulations taken by the labor market authorities during that time, a big number of refugees and asylum seekers from Lebanon, Iraq, and Syria have fled to Sweden seeking protection and looking for better opportunities (Asylum statistics, 2022). The number of Arab refugees and asylum seekers increased during the 1990s after Sweden has agreed to be part of a joint action with the UNHCR to receive more refugees and asylum seekers (migrationsverket,2018).

Migration policies have continued to be the same during the 2000s with a slight change to make them more relaxed and more focused, to create an open healthy economy. From 2010 to 2016, Sweden adopted a very generous migration policy. Due to the Syrian crisis, and the Arab spring revolutions, the number of Arab refugees massively increased after 2011 until it

reached its peak in 2015 with a total number of 75495 Arab refugees and asylum seekers (Asylum statistics, 2015). The large number of Arab refugees has pushed the country to take more restrictive measures to stop the refugee flow. As a result, the Swedish parliament has proposed the temporary aliens' act that ended the open arms policy that Sweden has been adopting for many years. Despite these restrictive measures, Arab refugees and asylum seekers represent the biggest foreign-born diaspora in Sweden now (Migrationsverket,2021). This has motivated many researchers to conduct studies on the integration of this group of refugees and asylum seekers and how the Swedish policies and regulations have affected them.

The Temporary Aliens' Act:

In June 2016, a new proposed asylum regulation was passed by the Swedish parliament. The new legislation changed the norm of granting residence permits to refugees and asylum seekers who have arrived in Sweden seeking protection from permanent to temporary (The new rules of the aliens' act, 2022). The old law granted refugees and asylum seekers the right to get a permanent residence permit and the right to family reunion without the need to show the ability of financial support to the newcomer (Blomqvist, Thoursie and Tyrefors, 2018). “With the new law, the norm is to grant temporary residence permits when asylum decisions are taken by the Swedish Migration Agency on July 20, 2016, or after. The temporary residency permit lasts for 3 years for refugees and typically 13 months for a person who is eligible for subsidiary protection. After the termination of the permit, a new application has to be registered. If there are still grounds for asylum, the temporary residency permit is renewed as long as the new rules are in place” (Blomqvist, Thoursie, and Tyrefors, 2018:9).

However, there are some exceptions to this law. The first is that if the applicant submitted their asylum application before the 25th of November 2015, and if the applicant is under 18, or if there is a family applying for asylum with a child under 18, at the time of the application, they will be granted a permanent residence permit. The second exception is related to the applicant's age at the time of submitting their application. A permanent residence permit would be granted if the youngest applicant in the family is below 18 and if the asylum application was submitted before 25th of November 2015. To make it clear, three factors can determine the type of the granted residence permit for refugees and asylum seekers, (i) the decision about the type of residence permit is made by the Swedish Migration Agency before

July, 20, 2016; (ii) the application is registered before November 25, 2015; and (iii) the applicant or the youngest child in the applicant family is below the age of 18 (Blomqvist, Thoursie and Tyrefors, 2018:10).

Permanent residence permit holders vs. naturalized citizens:

In this paper, permanent residence permit holders and naturalized citizens will be treated the same in terms of their level of political integration. One reason for this is that naturalized citizens are permanent residence permit holders who have spent the required period of time to get the Swedish citizenship. Another reason is that the study focuses on several aspects of political integration, including political trust, adherence to democratic values, political interest, and political knowledge where the legal status of the respondent (permanent residence permit holder vs. naturalized citizen) is not supposed to affect their responses about these aspects as all of them have the same legal rights. The only difference in legal rights between permanent residence permit holders and naturalized citizens is the right to vote in national elections. For this reason, the questions of the study have only tackled the right to vote in local elections, which is an equal right for both. Although some studies (see Hainmueller, Hangartner and Pietrantuono, 2014, Street, 2017, and Hainmueller and Pietrantuono, 2016) argue that citizenship might foster migrants' level of political participation through amplifying their national sense of belonging, i do not expect it to affect the results of my study. As pointed out by Simonsen, the sense of national belonging can be a crucial factor only under certain circumstances, like how the host population perceives citizenship and citizenship policies in the host country (Simonsen, 2017). These factors are beyond the scope of my study, as the study only concentrates on the legal and electoral rights necessary for political integration. For this reason, permanent residence permit holders and naturalized citizens will be placed under the same category in the study.

2. Literature review:

The subject of the integration of foreigners into host communities has inspired scholars to examine the link between documents those foreigners have and their level of integration on different levels, socially, economically, and politically. Yet, most of these studies have focused on naturalization and citizenship as factors affecting the integration of migrants, while very few of them focused on the type of residence permit and how it might influence the integration process of refugees and asylum seekers in the host country. Although it has been proven by many studies (see Haindorfer and Haller, 2021 and Fick, 2016) that naturalization promotes integration, the effects of the type of residence permit on integration are still poorly tested. In addition, very few scholars in this area of research have discussed the influence of the type of residence permit (temporary vs. permanent) on the political integration of refugees and asylum seekers in Sweden (see Eriksson, 2017 and Al-Yassiry, 2018).

In this section of the paper, I will discuss previous research that aimed to build a correlation between documentation and integration. Previous literature on this area of study can be divided into two main lines: studies that constructed a linkage between naturalization and political integration of migrants, and studies that discussed the influence of the type of residence permit and political engagement of refugees and asylum seekers in Sweden.

Linking naturalization and political integration of migrants:

In 2014, quantitative research was conducted by Hainmueller, Hangartner, and Pietrantuono on how naturalization can foster the long-term political integration of migrants. Based on a sample collected in the period between 1970 and 2003 from different Swiss municipalities for all migrants who submitted an application to get a Swiss passport through the “secret ballot” techniques, the researchers found out a direct relationship between acquiring citizenship and high levels of political integration (Hainmueller, Hangartner and Pietrantuono, 2014). Results have shown that political efficacy, political knowledge, political interest, and even informal political participation have improved after getting the Swiss passport. It has also been concluded that the political integration of naturalized people has been improved equally regardless of their social class, level of education, or whether they were born inside or outside the country (Hainmueller, Hangartner and Pietrantuono, 2014). As stated by the authors:

“This stability in the effects suggests that we might expect similar positive integration returns if the stringent residency requirements for naturalization were to be lowered”. (Hainmueller, Hangartner and Pietrantuono, 2014:12655).

In the same line of literature, a quantitative study conducted by the European University Institute suggested that the acquisition of the citizenship of the host country is the key to the political integration of migrants as it gives them a voice in democracy (Bauböck et al., 2022). The study that included all the countries of the European economic area argues that citizenship grants immigrants secure residence, better access to political institutions, and the necessary civil rights without which they get politically marginalized, as political parties and politicians do not take their interests into consideration. As explained by the authors: “The opportunity to naturalize is a guarantee that the electorate and elected officials consider the rights and opportunities of all settled residents within the population” (Bauböck et al., 2022:40). The study also suggests that naturalization enhances migrants’ sense of national belonging. This encourages them to be more active politically and makes them feel more responsible for participating in the political realm because of the sense of belonging they share with the natives (Bauböck et al., 2022). In addition, granting migrants the same equal rights and opportunities as the natives, makes it less likely for them to be discriminated against or excluded from society.

Similarly, through a big quantitative study that included 2648 respondents in Spain, Lobera, Pérez and Rama have observed that not having the right to vote deprives migrant minorities of one of the most important factors for political participation, which is party affiliation and political identity. This weakens incentives for migrants to be politically involved and integrated. In addition, the study pointed out a direct relationship between the legal status of migrants and the risk of social exclusion, as restricting the political opportunities for migrants makes them an unfavored group by political actors and institutions (Lobera, Pérez-Nievas and Rama, 2021).

Within the same context, Simonsen has conducted a quantitative study in 14 western democracies to investigate if citizenship fosters political integration of migrants by enhancing their sense of national belonging. Building on county-level data and surveys conducted in Germany, Great Britain, The United States, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Spain, France, Portugal, Denmark, Switzerland, Finland, Belgium, and Iceland, Simonsen noted that

citizenship plays a vital role in migrants' political integration when the population of the host country considers national citizenship as an essential determinant of national membership. Holding the citizenship of the host country enhances the sense of national belonging of migrants and encourages them to share the same democratic values with the natives, which leads to more political engagement from the migrants (Simonsen, 2017). Similar to Simonsen, Huddleston and Vink have asserted that naturalization is an important factor for immigrant integration and that naturalization policies and political integration outcomes are strongly connected based on quantitative data collected from the 27 members of the European Union, in addition to Norway and Switzerland (Huddleston and Vink, 2015). The study has confirmed that unrestrictive naturalization policies make it easier for migrants to politically participate through giving them equal political rights with natives (Huddleston and Vink, 2015).

In the study conducted by Shkopi and Vathi, it was concluded that the political integration of Albanian immigrants in Italy was strongly connected to their naturalization. The study has also pointed out that getting the Italian citizenship was a strong incentive for migrants to have a clear voice in democracy and to increase their desire for political participation based on data collected from qualitative interviews (Shkopi and Vathi, 2017). Additionally, the study has shown that for migrants, citizenship makes them feel that the relationship between them and the country where they have lived for long years has become formal in terms of rights, and also their obligations and duties towards the country. This creates a new, strong bond between the host country and those migrants. As stated by the authors: "Naturalization makes migrants recognized as subjects and not objects of political decision-making processes and being part of and belonging to a political community" (Shkopi and Vathi, 2017:15).

In the same regard, Street conducted a quantitative study on the political effects of immigrant naturalization in Germany to show that the influence of migrants' naturalization goes beyond providing them with the voting rights and the rights to run for elections, as it gives them a strong motivation for political engagement (Street, 2017). Hence, he has concluded that political interest, party affiliation, and political engagement are much stronger among naturalized migrants compared to non-naturalized ones. However, the study states that the influence of this naturalization becomes bigger when the naturalization process takes place at a young age due to the role played by political parties in educating adults and

involving them in political competition, which makes them more politically active compared to others naturalized at older ages (Street, 2017). Bartram also emphasizes that there is a forthright relationship between the naturalization of migrants, and their level of political integration (Bartram, 2018). His quantitative study on migrants in the UK has suggested that acquiring British citizenship motivates migrants to learn more about the “British values”, which makes them better understand the nature of the political institutions of the country and how they work. This learning process makes them integrate quickly into the political realm of the country and increases their levels of political engagement (Bartram, 2018). Although the above-mentioned studies focus on different components of political integration, they all find positive effects of naturalization on political integration across all of their outcomes.

The political engagement of refugees and asylum seekers in Sweden:

For the second line of literature, it is worth mentioning that there is only one study that sought to explore the influence of the type of residence permit and political engagement of refugees and asylum seekers in Sweden. Eriksson’s paper on Syrian temporary and permanent residence permit holders’ perception of their role as political actors in Sweden has shown that asylum seekers and refugees perceive themselves as important actors who can have an influence on the political realm in Sweden (Eriksson, 2017). In addition, the study finds out that while temporary residence permit holders have low levels of political interest and political participation, both temporary and permanent residence permit holders perceive themselves as important political actors (Eriksson, 2017). Moreover, it has been concluded that both temporary and permanent residence permit holders had high levels of trust in Swedish institutions and politicians and had high expectations that their voices would be heard in Sweden. As explained by the author: “The most unexpected result based on previous research was the high efficacy the respondents expressed as even the ones who are hesitant about their ability to affect change still believes that politicians would listen to them” (Eriksson, 2017:52).

My study can be distinguished from Eriksson’s by four main features. First, Eriksson mainly focused on the perception of refugees and asylum seekers of their political role. This means that he has measured how people perceive or believe how important their role is in political life in Sweden, not what the real actual situation looks like. In addition, the study was conducted with newly arrived refugees and asylum seekers. This explains the high levels

of trust the respondents had in the Swedish government, which can be explained by people's high expectations of the country they have just arrived in. Hence, the study results are not very reliable as people did not have enough time to deal with the Swedish institutions, get engaged in political life, and explore the challenges they might face in the new host country. Also, the study only focused on the Syrian refugees and asylum seekers, while I sought a more diverse sample of Arab refugees and asylum seekers from different countries. Finally, I aim to explore the effect of the type of residence permit on the different aspects of political integration, which makes my study the first one in Sweden to discuss this area of research.

Overall, the vast majority of scholars have focused on how documents might influence the political integration of migrants in host countries. Many of them have focused on how naturalization might foster some aspects of political integration of migrants like political participation, political interest, and political efficacy while others explored who naturalization might give migrants a sense of national belonging to the host country or give them better access for political rights. However, most of researchers have neglected the subject of political integration of refugees and asylum seekers and how the type of documents they hold (temporary vs. permanent) residence permits can affect their whole political integration process. Very few studies have focused on this area of research in Sweden. Hence, this current research attempts to contribute to the studies conducted on how documents affect the political integration of refugees and asylum seekers in Sweden by taking Arab refugees and asylum seekers as a case study. Furthermore, most of the studies in the literature have used quantitative methods which often have trouble finding the real mechanisms behind the results (Krenz and Sax, 1986). That is why I build my study on in-depth qualitative interviews that help dig deeper into people's feelings and ideas. Finally, I seek to bring up arguments on the linkage between the type of the residence permit and the level of political integration of refugees and asylum seekers in Sweden by covering all aspects of political integration including political trust, political participation, and political knowledge, not only one aspect of them.

3. Theoretical framework:

In my paper, I adopt two major theories to explain the relationship between the type of residence permit and the level of political integration of refugees and asylum seekers; the post-migration context theory, and the security of residence theory. Post-migration context for political integration is used to explain “how national regulations in the receiving context may affect immigrants’ possibilities to take political action and how the general socio-political (e.g., less liberal, or open) context of a receiving society may affect immigrants’ political integration” (Dollmann, 2021:7). My primary research question is how the type of residence permit might affect the level of political integration of refugees and asylum seekers in Sweden. According to this theory, there is a relationship between the migration policies in the host country and the level of political integration of the migrants of this country. Hence, the nature of the granted residence permit (temporary or permanent) affects how people will participate in the political sphere as the political behavior of those migrants is dependent on their expectations of their future in the host country (Frattini, 2017). Accordingly, as explained by the author: “The key insight in this case is that the incentive for any investment in skills depends on the length of the payoff period for that investment. Thus, immigrants who are admitted to the country only temporarily have lower incentives to invest in country-specific human capital” (Frattini, 2017:13). In addition, this framework suggests that policies that regulate migration in the host country, whether they are explicit or implicit, play an important role in structuring the political relations between migrants and these host countries (Zapata-Barrero, Gabrielli, Sánchez-Montijano and Jaulin, 2013). As pointed out by the authors: “discursive opportunity structures in receiving countries are a decisive factor permitting the political inclusion of immigrants” (Zapata-Barrero, Gabrielli, Sánchez-Montijano, and Jaulin, 2013:10).

To sum up, the length of the residence permit and legislation and the context of regulations in the host country affect refugees and asylum seekers’ ability to be politically integrated. The confidence one has about the duration of their stay in the host country works as a motivation or hindrance for investing time and effort in political involvement. Temporary residence permits seem to decrease refugees and asylum seekers’ trust and safety. Long-term and permanent residence permits, on the other hand, are seen to be leading to more security and a

better feeling of belonging to the host country, which leads to higher levels of political integration.

The second theoretical backbone I would apply to my research is the security of residence theory. The security of residence theory was developed by Jutvik and Robinson who created a uni-dimensional scale that indicates the level of security felt by a residence permit holder and the type of the residence permit they have (Jutvik and Robinson, 2020). The left side of the scale indicates a high level of residency insecurity where the residence of the person is conditioned upon having a well-paid job that covers their living expenses or studying a certain program at one of the universities in the hosting country. This means that residence permit holders on this side of the scale are threatened with large exclusion from having equal rights with natives or full membership of society (Jutvik and Robinson, 2020). In this case, if the condition for granting the residence permit is lost, individuals on this side of the scale immediately lose the right to stay in the country. This makes them always insecure and concentrates all their efforts on meeting the conditions needed for their residency.

On the right side of the scale, individuals with citizenship and secured residence permits can be found. People on this side can enjoy more residence stability as their residence permits are not conditional and they are not at the risk of having their permits withdrawn. This allows them to better plan for the long-term with a lot of freedom and security. According to Jutvik and Robinson, temporary and permanent residence permits are located in between these two extreme sides. Temporary residence permits are located closer to the left side where there is much insecurity and the residence of people holding them is conditioned upon certain circumstances. Consequently, the attachment between temporary residence permit holders and the host community is fragile (Jutvik and Robinson, 2020). On the other hand, a permanent residence permit is located closer to the right side of the scale where its holders are granted long-term secured residency, but they are still not fully naturalized, which means they still do not have full membership of the host society. An explanation for this scale can be found in the following figure drawn by the authors (Jutvik and Robinson, 2020:5):

4. Methodological framework:

4.1. Research design:

To explore how the type of the residence permit has influenced the political integration of refugees and asylum seekers in Sweden, this thesis approached the investigation through a qualitative approach and focuses on the case of Arab refugees and asylum seekers who arrived during the period between 2013 and 2017. The reason for choosing qualitative methods is that i seek to provide further insights into the causal relationship previous studies have found between documents asylum seekers and refugees have and their level of political integration. Qualitative research “plays the important role of suggesting possible relationships, causes, effects, and dynamic processes” (Mohajan, 2018:17). Qualitative research also helps explain how people interpret and evaluate their social and political experiences (Mohajan, 2018). Another reason for choosing qualitative methods is that i aim to answer the question of “why”. As explained by Mohajan: “qualitative methods are exploratory and seek to explain ‘how’ and ‘why’ a particular social phenomenon, or program, operates as it does in a particular context. It tries to help us to understand the social world in which we live, and why things are the way they are” (Mohajan, 2018:4). An exploratory case study was selected for the thesis as the process of political integration among refugees and asylum seekers does not have certain fixed outcomes and depends on many factors and variables. As illustrated by J. Mills et al.: “The exploratory case study investigates distinct phenomena characterized by a lack of detailed preliminary research, especially formulated hypotheses that can be tested, and/or by a specific research environment that limits the choice of methodology” (Mills, Durepos and Wiebe, 2010:272). Within the context of this thesis, this exploratory case study will allow me to investigate the case of political integration of Arab refugees and asylum seekers in-depth to fill the gap of knowledge in this area of literature.

In addition, the single case study is particularly suitable when the researcher wants to test a certain theory. As explained by Yin: “One rationale for selecting a single-case rather than a multiple-case design is that the single-case can represent the critical test of a significant theory” (Yin, 2018). In this manner, the thesis seeks to test the theory that holding a long-term or permanent residence permit accelerates the process of political integration, while short-term residence permits demotivate refugees and asylum seekers to get politically integrated. Moreover, single case studies allow the researcher to obtain large-scale knowledge of a

particular unit of study to get a broader understanding of similar units. As stated by Gerring: a single case study is “an intensive study of a single unit or a small number of units (the cases), for the purpose of understanding a larger class of similar units (a population of cases)” (Gerring, 2011:7). The selection of the case follows Gary Thomas’ approach of selecting a case that “is not selected based upon a representative sample, but rather is selected because it is interesting, unusual, striking, and may cause changes in the characteristics and specificities of the object” (Rebolj, 2013:9).

The researcher can justify the selection of Arab refugees and asylum seekers in Sweden as a case study by several reasons. First, they represent the biggest number of refugees and asylum seekers and the biggest foreign-born population in Sweden (OECD statistics in Sweden, 2022). Second, the temporary aliens’ act has been issued as a response to the influx of a large number of Arab refugees and asylum seekers in 2015 that reached 76,734 as a result of the Syrian crisis (Asylum statistics in Sweden, 2022). Thus, the study of how Arabs politically integrate into Sweden specifically is timely and important for policy makers and citizens in Sweden, as well as all over Europe. Since the “migration crisis” of 2015, Arab spring revolutions, and wars in the MENA region have brought so many Arabs to this region of the world in recent decades. Moreover, the researcher desired to hold the cultural factor constant and make the selected group more homogenous for more accurate results. Due to the limited time and scope of the study, the researcher was worried about including too many cultures that would probably introduce too much variation. Furthermore, the researcher decided to study a population that he knows the best (being an Arab immigrant to Sweden whose mother tongue is Arabic) which allows for more in-depth understanding and development of a deeper rapport with interviews and permitting the researcher to easily find participants among the Arab diaspora in Sweden. Arabs also represent a hard case as the majority of them are Muslims and suffer discrimination across Europe (European union agency for fundamental rights, 2017).

In addition, Sweden represents the best-case scenario for studying political integration due to its generous policies towards refugees and asylum seekers. These policies allow refugees and asylum seekers (both holding temporary and permanent residence permits) to vote in municipal elections if they stay in the same municipality for at least three years in a row (The Swedish electoral system, 2022). This makes it important to study how refugees and asylum

seekers use these rights and to what extent these policies help them integrate politically. Likewise, as explained by Loshakova: Sweden has been considered as the “the forefront of integration as it is better equipped than many other countries to integrate refugees, given its strong economy and tradition of welcoming immigrants” (D. Shaibakova, 2019). Finally, a research gap exists in the study of political integration of refugees and asylum seekers in Sweden as most of the studies have mainly focused on other aspects of integration, especially refugees and asylum seekers’ economic integration into the labor market.

4.2. Interviews:

Based on the considerations mentioned above, this study used qualitative interviews as a means of extracting data for the thesis. The English version of the interview guide is attached as Appendix 1. The interviews lasted between 30 and 40 minutes. The interviews were held face to face in a neutral, safe place for residents of Västra Götland where others were not able to listen or intervene. For respondents living in all other parts of Sweden, interviews have been conducted through zoom meetings.

The interviews were semi-structured. This allows the researcher to have a flexible approach where he can ask open-ended questions and gives the respondents more room to explain their feelings and ideas. As explained by Coughlan: “the flexibility of semi-standardized interviews allows the interviewer to pursue a series of less structured questioning and also permits the exploration of spontaneous issues raised by the interviewee to be explored” (Ryan, Coughlan, and Cronin, 2009:3). Open questions allow respondents to tell their stories in the right phrasing and context, which increases the validity of their answers. The semi-structured interviews are close to normal conversation. This gives respondents the feeling that they have control over the interview process, which makes them more confident and comfortable (Ryan, Coughlan, and Cronin, 2009). This kind of interview is appropriate when the interviewer desires to understand respondents’ perspective on a certain activity as “issues are explored from an individualistic perspective to reflect the interviewees’ personal experiences of the topic in question” (Ryan, Coughlan, and Cronin, 2009:4). Also, semi-structured interviews are appropriate when “there is limited knowledge about the topic at hand or when an insider perspective is desired” (Eriksson, 2017:65). Moreover, as an outsider of the refugee community, I was able to overcome the social desirability bias by clarifying the purpose of the study and starting interviews with small friendly talks with participants to put them at

ease. As pointed out by Bergen and Labonté: “a better understanding of the purpose of the research makes participants less likely to view the encounter as an audit or evaluation of their performance” (Bergen and Labonté, 2019:786). All these conditions apply to my study, as studies about political integration of refugees and asylum seekers in Sweden seem to be few. This requires conducting further research and investigation to get the proper data.

All interviews have been conducted in Arabic after taking the respondents’ consent to record, transcribe, make summaries, and take direct quotations from the produced transcription. The English version of the consent form is attached as Appendix 2. A verbal recorded consent has been taken from respondents that conducted their interviews through zoom meetings. After contacting respondents to schedule an interview, I have introduced them to the topic of the interview and informed them that the interview would include questions about their political participation in Sweden and their political trust in the Swedish institutions. The process of translation of the data from Arabic to English was done by myself as I am an Arabic native speaker.

To achieve the goal of the thesis, 20 Arab refugees and asylum seekers have been contacted for interviews. Ten of them have arrived before the temporary aliens’ act has entered into force and hold temporary residence permits, and ten have arrived after the temporary aliens’ act has been issued and have got either permanent residence permits or Swedish citizenship after completing their naturalization period. In an attempt to have a balanced representation of genders in the sample, eight females have been interviewed. The sample included refugees and asylum seekers from Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Palestine, and Sudan. All the respondents have similar circumstances as they all fled from their home countries because of war and military conflicts. Interviews were conducted during the period between 27th of March and 22nd of April 2022. Given the amount of data retrieved in a relatively short time span (20 interviews in less than one month), the process of transcription was done hand in hand with the interviewing process. In addition to recording the interviews, written notes have been taken by the researcher during interviews to grasp a clear image of respondents’ feelings and impressions.

4.3. Sample:

The study focuses on Arab refugees and asylum seekers who submitted their asylum applications in Sweden around the year 2015 (when the temporary aliens' act entered into force) with a maximum period of two years before and after 2015 (from 2013 to 2017). My selection of the sample is based on two criteria: First, the group in focus are Arab refugees and asylum seekers who submitted their asylum applications two years before and after the law entered into force. Thus, only refugees and asylum seekers who have submitted their applications between 2013 and 2017 will be eligible as subjects of this research, to test their level of integration. Second, each subject shall have his experiences evaluated over a period of 4 years starting from their arrival date. For instance, should an individual have arrived in 2014, their level of political integration will be tested over the period from 2014 to 2018). I have chosen a two-year time interval before and after the law because I can only include people who submitted their asylum applications at the latest in 2017 due to the four-year time constraint. Moreover, a four-year timeframe has been selected to mark the full integration process. That is consistent with the official period required for his naturalization as proposed by the Swedish migration agency (Citizenship for adults, 2022).

Purposeful samples are selected when the researcher aims to have an in-depth understanding of a certain phenomenon (Gupta, Shaheen and Prathap Reddy, 2019). As illustrated by Shaheen et al.: "Qualitative sampling designs are designed by the researcher based on the objectives of the study. Samples may be added in the later stages of research as well." (Gupta, Shaheen and Prathap Reddy, 2019:28). Accordingly, the participants of this study have been selected purposefully depending on my social networks. A snowball sampling method has been applied to allow the researcher to use the power of social networking and referral. According to Isaic-Maniu and Dragan, snowball sampling technique can be used when "the population cannot be strictly delimited or detailed, and the characteristics of the sample are rare" (Dragan and Isaic-Maniu, 2013:161). This technique was important to guarantee that the target group was homogenous and met the criteria for the research question. In an attempt to avoid having outliers in my sample, a matched pairs technique has been used to select respondents. The matched sampling helps the researcher to make a balance between the important characteristics of the respondents that might affect the outcomes of the research (Nielsen, 2014). It also helps improve the quality and transparency of the research. As explained by Nielsen: "Statistical matching offers a principled way to

make these trade-offs and provides tools for assessing the quality of the resulting case pairings. Selecting cases with matching is transparent, replicable, and protects researchers against the criticism that the cases were intentionally chosen in ways that might bias the findings” (Nielsen, 2014:570). Consequently, it has been taken into consideration to have a matched sample for more accurate outcomes. For instance, if one of the respondents arrived in 2013 and hold permanent residence permit, another respondent has been selected out of those who arrived in 2017 and hold permanent residence permit as well. This is to reduce the influence of the time factor (the time people spent in Sweden) on the outcomes of the study. The breakdown of my sample can be found in the following schedule:

Number of respondents	Sex	Nationality	Type of residence permit
7	Male	Syrian	Temporary
6	Female	Syrian	Permanent
1	Female	Sudanese	Permanent
1	Female	Syrian	Temporary
1	Male	Palestinian	Temporary
1	Male	Iraqi	Temporary
1	Male	Syrian	Swedish citizenship
1	Male	Yemeni	Swedish citizenship
1	Male	Palestinian	Swedish citizenship

As I am using a purposeful sampling method, the results of this study cannot be generalized. The aim of the study is not to generalize the results to a bigger population, but to provide an in-depth understanding of the research question under study. As Smith has stated: “Qualitative research cannot be generalized on a statistical basis – it is not the prevalence of particular views or experiences, not the extent of their location within parts of the sample, about which inferences can be drawn. Nor, of course, is this the objective of qualitative research. Rather, the value of qualitative research is in revealing the breadth and nature of the phenomena under study” (Smith, 2017:139). However, results are expected to be similar among similar groups with similar circumstances. There is no certain number of interviews that should be conducted to guarantee that data is enough. As O’Reilly explained: “a

researcher should understand when to stop the data collection process and what is enough and that nothing new can be added to the research by collecting extra information” (O’Reilly, 2009 :97). The selection of 20 interviews has been considered enough by the researcher due to the limited time and resources available for writing a master’s thesis.

4.4. Ethical discussion:

All research studies should guarantee the protection of the participating human subjects through appropriate ethical principles (Orb, Eisenhauer and Wynaden, 2001). There are some aspects that might make interviewing this target group tricky. Some interviewees might be afraid to express their honest opinions about the political institutions in Sweden due to the political trauma they got in their countries of origin. Also, there might be some suspicions that their opinions may be punishable by the future decision from Migrationsverket about their residence permits. Thus, it was ensured that the study follows the ethical guidelines of qualitative research throughout the process.

Before each interview, respondents have been handed a consent form (a consent has been taken verbally for interviews conducted through zoom meetings) that includes information about the interview process, the purpose of the study, and how data will be managed. The consent was written in Arabic. It was clearly mentioned in the consent that they have the right to interrupt the researcher whenever they like, and that they have the right to not answer some of the questions or withdraw from the interview. At the end of every interview, respondents have been asked if they have any inquiries or wanted to add any comments. It was also clearly mentioned that participation in the interview process was completely voluntary and that there was not any financial reward for participation.

To achieve the principle of privacy and confidentiality, all study participants have been anonymized to guarantee that their names and identities will not be revealed. In addition, participants have been informed in advance that the original recordings of the interviews and the written transcripts will be kept with the researcher, and before being checked by anyone else, another consent should be taken from them in such case. Moreover, it was meant to add some ice-breaking questions that were not included in the analysis at the beginning of the interview to make participants feel more secure and comfortable when answering the questions.

5. Data analysis and results:

In my study, I adopt Eggert and Giugini's definition of political integration, that is explained as follows: "The concept of political integration covers a variety of dimensions pertaining to the activities carried by migrants, their attitudes and values, their resources, and identities, and so forth. And this includes at least three dimensions: political trust, adherence to democratic values, and political participation. Other scholars add a fourth dimension: political interest" (Eggert and Giugni, 2010:176). Thus, depending on the research question, this part illustrates the findings within four main concepts: political trust, adherence to democratic values, political participation and political interest of refugees and asylum seekers. The study's main aim is to analyze how the type of residence permit a refugee or asylum seeker has might affect their level of political integration in the light of the application of the temporary aliens' act that entered into force in 2015. Analysis of this part has been done based on data retrieved from respondents through interviews. The four aspects of political integration are discussed in the following parts in detail.

5.1. Political trust:

Political trust is defined as: "the trust that citizens place in political institutions, including parliaments, presidents, courts, political parties and police forces" (Dodsworth and Cheeseman, 2020:5). Therefore, interviewees have been asked questions about their trust in the Swedish political institutions, like the Swedish government, Migrationsverket, the Swedish police, and the Swedish judicial system.

Trust in the Swedish government actions:

Temporary residence permit holders:

There is a big variance between the level of trust in the Swedish government between temporary and permanent residence permit holders. Temporary residence permit holders have shown lower levels of trust that the decisions taken by the Swedish government are in their own interests. Seven out of ten respondents have answered that they do not trust the Swedish government decisions at all. This has been explained by various reasons. Some of the respondents have justified this by the hurdles they see the Swedish government putting on purpose to force them to leave the country.

“Since my arrival, the Swedish government has been dealing with us in a very harsh way. They always give us the impression that they do not want refugees in the country anymore. They changed the asylum laws, they made everything difficult for us. You have to follow a certain path that they draw for you to stay in the country, there is not any other option, and you have no choice” Interviewee 3, temporary.

Others have referred it to the absence of equality between Arabs and non-Arabs in the decisions taken by the Swedish government:

“The Swedish government still does not recognize us (Muslim Arabs) as an official minority in Sweden. There are many other minorities that are smaller than us in number and they are officially recognized by the Swedish government. We are not fairly represented in the parliament. Most of the decisions taken by the Swedish government are in the interest of the natives not migrants not us” Interviewee 16, temporary.

Only two respondents of the temporary residence permit holders said that they somehow trust the decisions of the Swedish government.

“When it comes to public services like education, health, and housing, I trust the government, but when it comes to migration rules and decisions, I do not trust it” Interviewee 1, temporary.

It is worth mentioning that there is only one respondent of the temporary residence permit holders have expressed that he trusts that the decisions of the Swedish government are in his interest, however, it is important to highlight that this respondent have arrived in Sweden as part of family reunification made by his sister, which might provide the respondent with some level of security even if he holds a temporary residence permit.

Permanent residence permit holders:

On the other hand, permanent residence permit holders have shown higher levels of trust that the Swedish government’s decisions are in their favor. Eight out of ten respondents have said that they trust the Swedish government, while two have mentioned that they “somehow” trust the Swedish government. This has been explained by criticism of the governmental policies regarding migration and dealing with the asylum crisis:

“I somehow trust them; I believe that most of the government’s decisions are in our interest. However, some certain decisions do not really benefit us as migrants; they are mainly directed to the benefit of natives” Interviewee 12, permanent.

Trust in the Migrationsverket:

Temporary residence permit holders:

Like the variance in the level of trust in the government’s decisions, there is also a big difference between permanent and temporary residence permit holders when it comes to trust in the Swedish migration agency. It is interesting to note that all temporary residence permit holders do not trust the Swedish migration agency or its decisions. Some respondents believe that they do not have a fair, equal system for processing cases and that they give case workers a lot of power in handling cases, which creates a big discrepancy in the decisions even if cases are similar.

“I do not trust them at all because I think they are not organized, and their way of handling cases is very arbitrary. It depends on the case officer who is handling your case. If you are lucky enough, your case might be assigned to a case worker who takes a decision quickly, but if you are not, you might wait for years to get a decision, as it is in my case. Migrationsverket also gives a lot of powers to case workers to process cases in the way they think is correct, which creates a lot of contradictions between decisions in different cases” Interviewee 3, temporary.

“No, I do not trust them. Their decisions are completely unfair. It all depends on caseworkers and their personal evaluations and opinions” Interviewee 14, temporary.

Other respondents have explained their mistrust in the institution because of the existence of high corruption, and absence of proper accountability for its employees.

“I believe there is a lot of corruption inside this organization. They take a lot of time to process cases. Most of their decisions are not logical. In addition, I believe they are not fair when handling cases. They do not have the same standards for all cases. They have taken a lot of decisions to deport people who really needed protection and put their lives at risk. There is no justice in this agency” Interviewee 4, temporary.

Also, some respondents believe that the agency does not really work to serve people's interests, but to put more restrictions on their shoulders to force them to leave the country.

"I feel that over time, they are putting more restrictions on people. Regulations and rules are becoming more difficult for refugees and asylum seekers. It is an indirect way to say we do not want you here" Interviewee 6, temporary.

Permanent residence permit holders:

Unlike temporary residence permit holders, almost all permanent residence permit holders have expressed high levels of trust in the Swedish migration agency. They believe that the institution has a high level of fairness, and that the agency's employees are very cooperative.

"Since I arrived, they have been very cooperative with me and sent me the decision in very short time. They have also granted residence permits to my family. My experience with them was really nice" Interviewee 20, permanent.

"Based on my personal experience, they have been very fair and cooperative. They checked every single detail in my case and then they gave me a quick decision" Interviewee 15, permanent.

"Yes, I trust them a lot. all my papers were handled very quickly, and I was able to get the Swedish citizenship" Interviewee 10, naturalized citizen.

Only one permanent residence permit holder has said that she does not trust the Swedish migration agency due to the unfair decisions they make sometimes:

"I do not trust them. Sometimes, I feel that their decisions are unfair and do not make sense to me. I see them giving residence permits and citizenship to some people who do not really deserve, while others who are really suffering and in need of protection are getting rejected and sometimes deported from the country" Interviewee 8, permanent.

Trust in the Swedish police:

Temporary residence permit holders:

Despite the clear discrepancy between temporary and permanent residence permit holders' level of trust in the government's decisions, and in the migration agency, the type of residence permit does not seem to make a difference when it comes to trust in the Swedish police. Both

temporary and permanent residence permit holders have high levels of trust in the Swedish police, with almost the same exact percentage. Eight out of ten temporary residence permit holders have mentioned that they trust the Swedish police. Respondents have illustrated that by the respect and politeness they receive from policemen.

“I have never dealt with them directly, but I believe they are very respectful. I think they do their best to try all peaceful means to create a safe society” Interviewee 4, temporary.

“Yes, I trust them. I have not dealt with them before, but I have witnessed a lot of situations where I found them very reliable and trustworthy” Interviewee 9, temporary.

However, there are two respondents who expressed that they do not trust the Swedish police due to the lack of strictness and inability to take firm decisions when there is need for that.

“No, I do not trust them because they have no power. They are not strict when making important decisions. They are not even able to put control over the security situation in the country” Interviewee 14, temporary.

Permanent residence permit holders:

Similarly, eight out of ten permanent residence permit holders have demonstrated that they trust the Swedish police. The reasons behind this are that they believe the Swedish policemen to be cooperative and helpful when needed, even if they have never had direct interaction with them.

“I have never dealt with them directly, but my impression of them is that they are very friendly and cooperative” Interviewee 18, permanent.

“Yes, I have never dealt with them directly, but I have a very positive outlook on them. They are very organized and helpful” Interviewee 15, permanent.

Only two of the permanent residence permit holders have expressed their mistrust towards the Swedish police due to their ineffectiveness and weakness when dealing with an emergency.

“I do not trust them at all. I have never thought of calling them for help. They are ineffective in making decisions. It takes them a lot of time to process any case and at the end, they do

nothing. They know very well who is a criminal and who is a drug dealer, but they never take actions towards them” Interviewee 20, Naturalized citizen.

Trust in the municipality:

Temporary residence permit holders:

Temporary residence permit holders also have lower levels of trust in their municipalities. Lack of good services and inability to create enough job opportunities for inhabitants of the municipality have been on top of the reasons for this mistrust. As explained by the respondents:

“No, I do not trust them, they are not providing good services that meet people’s needs. Also, they do not care that much about people’s problems and how to solve them” Interview 4, temporary.

“I do not trust them at all. I consider my municipality as one of the worst municipalities in Sweden. They do not spend any money on services. Roads are bad. Services are really deteriorating. Also, their salaries are very low compared to other municipalities” Interview 7, temporary.

“No, I do not feel their existence in my life. I feel that they are an emergency institution. You only see their intervention during disasters. Other than that, I cannot touch their effective existence. Health services are bad. Roads are not good” Interview 14, temporary.

Permanent residence permit holders:

The level of trust in the municipality is a bit higher among permanent residence permit holders. However, the difference is not so big that it can be decided that the type of the residence permit is the reason behind it. Six out of ten respondents of the permanent residence permit holders have mentioned that they trust their municipalities as they do their best to improve services and satisfy people’s needs.

“Yes, I trust them, because they care a lot about renovating buildings, making the municipality always better and solving any kind of problem facing people” Interviewee 2, permanent.

“Yes, I think they are doing their best to solve people’s problems” Interviewee 12, permanent.

On the contrary, four respondents have mentioned that they do not trust their municipalities as they lack good planning, have problems with the decision-making process, and practice discrimination against some poor districts.

“No, I do not trust them. The municipality administration is very weak. They always claim that we are a poor municipality to justify the lack of services. I have dealt with them when I was searching for a job, and they did not help much. Also, I always feel that there is a certain group controlling everything in the municipality as they are powerful, and all other people do not matter” Interviewee 15, permanent.

“No, I do not trust them at all. I believe they have severe planning problems. They do not care that much about poor or migrant districts. Their care about you depends on where you live and whether it is a rich or poor district. They do not even involve people in the decision-making process”. Interviewee 19, permanent.

Trust in the Swedish judicial system:

Temporary residence permit holders:

It is noteworthy that temporary residence permit holders have a bit higher level of trust in the Swedish judicial system than permanent resident permit holders, even if they have never dealt with it before. Nine temporary residence permit respondents out of ten have expressed their trust in the Swedish judicial system. Those respondents believe that the Swedish judicial system is strict and fair.

“Yes, I trust them a lot. I have never dealt with them directly, but I trust them a lot as I believe that the judicial system here is free and not influenced by other authorities” Interviewee 1, temporary.

“Yes, I trust them. I have never dealt with them directly, but that is my impression of them based on the stories I have heard from my friends and relatives” Interview 4, temporary.

Permanent residence permit holders:

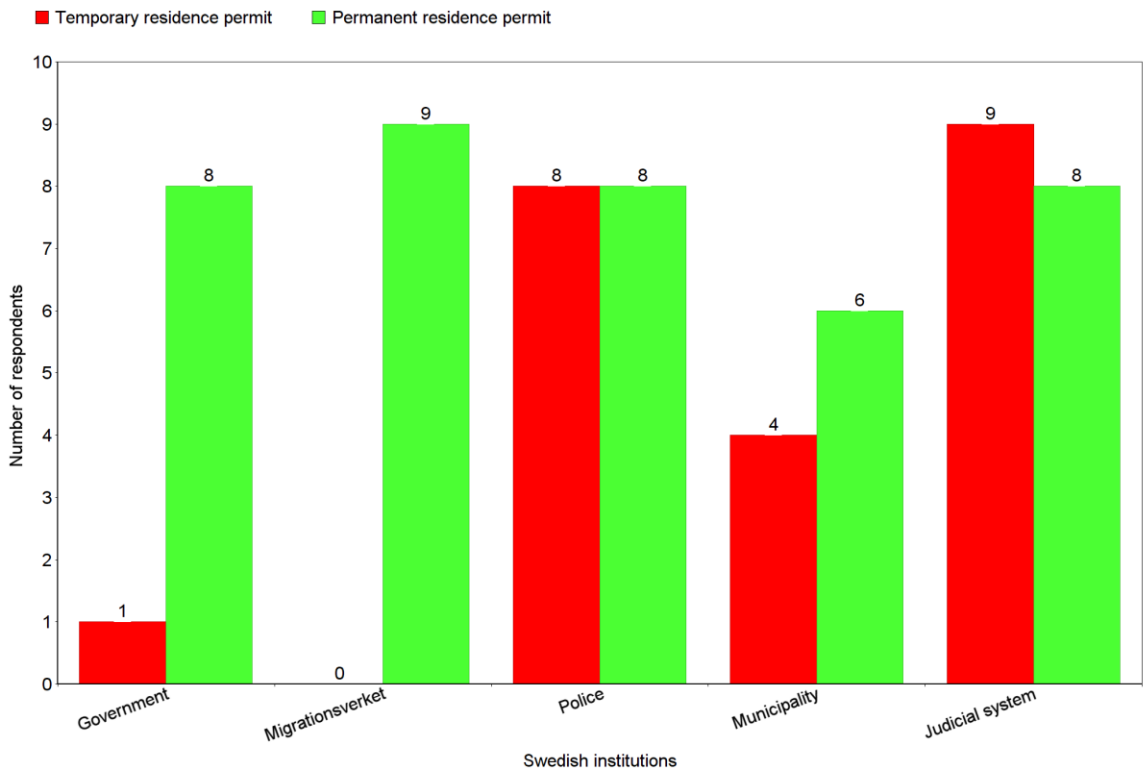
Permanent residence permit holders have also shown solid trust in the Swedish judicial system. Eight respondents have mentioned that they trust the Swedish judicial system. However, only two permanent residence permit holders have expressed their mistrust in the

Swedish judicial system due to bad personal experience with it that made them lose confidence in the efficiency of the system.

“I do not trust them at all, I have seen a lot of people who committed very dangerous crimes like murder or dealing drugs and at the end court’s decisions against them have been very lenient. I think they fear from criminals. That is why they refuse to give strict decisions against them” Interviewee 18, female.

“No, sometimes, they are not fair. They also have wired considerations when processing cases. I have not dealt with them directly, but I have seen a lot of cases among my friends, and they were dealt in an unfair way” Interviewee 17, permanent. Figure 1 shows the discrepancy in the levels of political trust in the different Swedish institutions among temporary and permanent residence permit holders when they were asked if they trust these institutions:

Figure 1: # of respondents who have political trust by the type of residence permit



Discussion of findings:

According to the post-migration theory, regulations, and policies of migration in the host country might decrease refugees and asylum seekers' level of safety and security about their future in the host country. This has been clearly reflected on temporary residence permit holders' lower levels of trust in the decisions of the Swedish government, Migrationsverket and municipality as these institutions represent the executive branch that they deal with in their everyday life and is responsible for carrying out the policies and decisions those refugees and asylum seekers believe that they are against their interests. This might explain why temporary residence permit holders trust the Swedish police and judicial systems more than the other governmental institutions. This comes from their belief that neither the police nor the Swedish courts have a say about forming these regulations and decisions. In addition, the security of residence factor seems to play a crucial role in how temporary residence permit holders mistrust most of the Swedish institutions because of their feeling that they will not stay in the country for long time due to these tight policies of migration taken by these institutions.

5.2. Adherence to democratic values:

According to the Swedish constitution, the Swedish democratic values on which the constitution has been built are equality, government accountability, freedom of expression, freedom of press, gender equality and the fair representation of minorities (The Constitution, 2022).

Temporary residence permit holders:

Both temporary and permanent residence permit holders seem to show a high level of acceptance of all the Swedish democratic values. Nine out of ten temporary residence permit holders have expressed that they totally value all the Swedish democratic values and that they have complete adherence to them.

“Freedom of expression is a natural right for everyone. If you want to restrict and destroy somebody, just deprive them of this right. I totally support this right as long as it is expressed through peaceful means” Interviewee 1, temporary.

“Yes, I totally value the principle of accountability of government. Because you should always have the right to ask any institution about anything regarding their performance without having the fear of the state. This is the only way to fight corruption” Interviewee 9, temporary.

“I really value the principle of gender equality because there is no difference between men and women, both have the same importance to society. Also, both have the same rights and duties” Interviewee 4, temporary.

Only one respondent has criticized the Swedish value of gender equality but agreed with all other democratic values. The respondent has justified this by being a conservative religious man from the Middle East and that his customs and traditions do not accept him to be having the same powers and rights as women. According to him, men and women have different physical and mental abilities. That is why it does not make sense to him that they are treated equally if they have different abilities.

“No, I do not support this value. I think we are different. We are physiologically different. Men and women are different. I am saying this because I am from the Middle East and I am religious, and we have our own standards. Women cannot do everything men can do. I support gender equality in some things, but not in everything. My religion urges me to respect women, but i refuse the idea that women can be a competitor for me in everything. Standards are messed up; the roles of husbands and wives are messed up. We will turn out to be having contradictions in our ethics” Interview 6, temporary.

Permanent residence permit holders:

All permanent residence permit holders have shown their strong adherence to all the Swedish democratic values. However, it is pertinent to note that two respondents believe that even though they value the principle of freedom of expression, there should be a ceiling or limit to this right taken by the government to guarantee that people’s religious beliefs are respected and not hurt by others. Both have spoken particularly about the recent incident of burning Quran (the holy book for Muslims) in Malmö. Respondents have mentioned that they were disappointed when they knew that the person who did so, has already taken permission from the Swedish government.

“Yes, I totally value the principle of freedom of expression. I just believe that there should be a limit to it. It should be guaranteed that people’s beliefs and ideas are respected. A few days ago, I have seen a guy burning the Quran after taking permission from the government. To be honest, this has made me very angry, and I started wondering if this should be allowed”

Interviewee 17, permanent.

“Yes, I really value it, but there should be some restrictions or constraints to guarantee that people’s beliefs and sacred faith are respected. I have watched a guy burning the Quran and it really annoyed me. There should be some restrictions to prevent things like this”

Interviewee 17, permanent.

Discussion of findings:

To sum up, neither the post-migration context nor the security of residence seem to be a factor that makes a change in people’s respect to the Swedish democratic values as both, temporary and permanent residence permit holders have almost the same level of adherence to these values. This also shows the refugees and asylum seekers’ willingness to abide by the Swedish democratic values even if they come from a completely different political and social culture.

5.3. Political participation (institutionalized and non-institutionalized):

Political participation is understood as “actions of private citizens by which they seek to influence or support government and politics” or as “all voluntary activities by individual citizens intended to influence either directly or indirectly political choices at various levels of the political system. Examples of these activities include voting in elections, helping a political campaign, donating money to a candidate or cause, contacting officials, petitioning, protesting, and working with other people on issues.” (Ekman and Amnå, 2012:286). This can be measured through two indicators: political engagement that shows how often people voted in municipal and national elections in the last five years, if they attended a political event, donated or volunteered for a political campaign, contacted an elected official (on the municipal and national level), if they are members of a political party or political organization, and political knowledge that reveals if people know the type of the political system in Sweden, how politicians are elected... etc. Thus, political participation of respondents will be analyzed based on these two factors.

Political engagement:

Temporary residence permit holders:

The type of residence permit seems to have a clear influence on political engagement of refugees and asylum seekers in Sweden. Temporary residence permit holders have shown a very weak level of political engagement. No single respondent of them has ever voted in any local elections, been a member of any ethnic, religious, or humanitarian organization or has participated in any political campaign for a certain political party in Sweden. Not being aware of having the right to vote in local elections and lack of political interest have been two of the main reasons why temporary residence permit holders do not get engaged in political life in Sweden.

“I have never voted. I did not even know that I have the right to vote here without having the Swedish citizenship” Interviewee 4, temporary.

“I have never been interested in reading about my electoral and political rights here. I have other things that always keep me busy, like my work and family obligations” Interview 14, temporary.

Only one respondent out of ten has been a member of a political party and has been interested in sharing stuff about Swedish politics on social media. However, it should be noted that this guy has been a political activist who created a group on Facebook to gather people who were affected by the temporary aliens’ act to try to put pressure on the Swedish government to change this regulation. He has also been selected before to attend discussions with Swedish politicians about this regulation and how it might affect refugees and asylum seekers’ lives in Sweden. This may explain why he has been more politically engaged than others.

In addition, five out of the ten participants have participated in demonstrations and signing petitions before. Both the demonstrations and the petitions’ main purposes were to refuse the temporary aliens’ act. This can be an indicator to explain that refugees and asylum seekers become politically engaged only when they feel that there is something directly affecting their personal lives and future. Finally, only two respondents have tried to contact a politician or local government officials. The main reason for both was also to complain about the temporary aliens’ act and to ask those politicians to help them get their voices heard.

“I used to get e-mails of different politicians in Sweden and contact them regarding the temporary aliens’ act and how this decision will negatively affect refugees and asylum seekers in Sweden, but I never got a response. At that time, I felt very disappointed because I believed that they do not care about us” Interviewee 1, temporary.

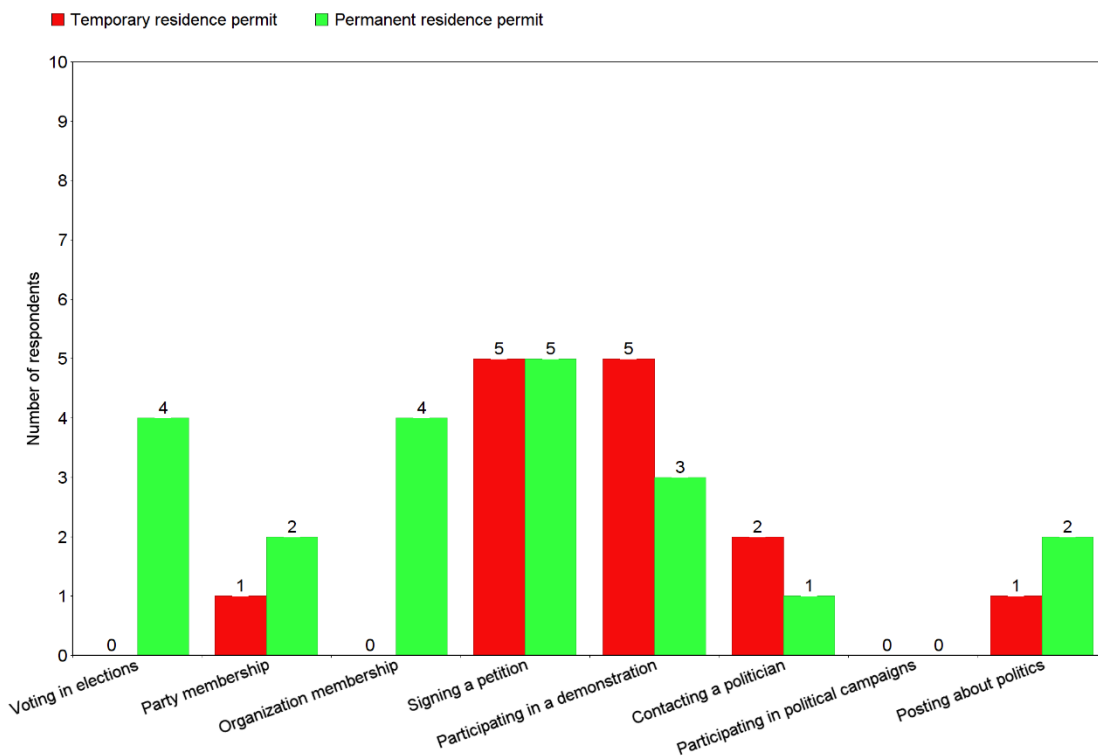
Permanent residence permit holders:

To the contrary, permanent residence permit holders are more politically engaged on almost all levels. Four respondents have been members of ethnic or religious organizations and voted in local elections before. Respondents have illustrated this by the feeling of stability and the desire to have a voice in politics after knowing that they will stay in the country for a long term.

“After getting the permanent residence permit, I have started to feel responsible to make a change in the Swedish politics and to make my voice heard. That is why I started voting in local elections. Also, I have been keen to join an organization to educate myself about politics and to try to make change” Interviewee 15, permanent.

Two respondents out of ten have been members of political parties and have been regularly posting about Swedish politics on social media. Permanent residence permit holders have shown the exact same interest in signing petitions as temporary residence permit holders. Five respondents have done it before. The main motivation for all of them was to also express their refusal for the temporary aliens’ act. In addition, only one respondent has tried to contact a politician in the last five years to discuss gender equality problems and how to empower newly arrived Arab women in Sweden. Moreover, there is no difference between permanent and temporary residence permit holders when it comes to participating in political campaigns as none of the respondents on both sides has ever participated in or donated to any political campaign for a certain candidate or political party. However, permanent residence permit holders have participated less in demonstrations with only three respondents. Differences in the political engagement level among holders of the two residence permit types are shown in figure 2:

Figure 2: # of respondents who are politically engaged by the the type of residence permit



Political knowledge:

Temporary residence permit holders:

Surprisingly, temporary residence permit holders have demonstrated a relatively good level of political knowledge compared to their level of political engagement. Four respondents out of ten have been able to understand how the Swedish government is structured, the powers of the municipality, how often the local elections are held and the political parties in the Swedish parliament, and their ideological stances. Direct interaction with municipalities to get some certain services in addition to following the Swedish media and having discussions with friends have been some of the main sources of this knowledge.

“When I first arrived in Sweden, I got an orientation where I learned a lot about municipalities and the services they provide. Later, I have learned more about their powers and responsibilities through direct interaction with them when I was in need to get advice about housing or searching for a job” Interviewee 7, temporary.

“From time to time, I have conversations with my friends and family members about the Swedish elections and the democratic process here. I also try to read the news when I have time and I talk to my friends when there is something important going on. We try to keep each other updated when there is an important incident or political event” Interviewee 11, temporary.

Only two respondents are aware of their full political rights in Sweden and the political party that got the majority of votes in the last local elections in their municipality. Furthermore, knowledge of the national elections and prime minister has been the highest among temporary residence permit holders. Five respondents were able to understand how the Swedish prime minister is elected and six knew the term of the prime minister in office.

Permanent residence permit holders:

Permanent residence permit holders’ political knowledge seems to be better when it comes to local elections and information about the prime minister. Seven respondents know how often local elections are held and the term of the prime minister in office. In addition, six respondents know which party got the highest votes in the last elections in the municipality. Having the right to vote and participation in elections appear to be the main factor to explain this good knowledge about elections and political parties.

“I started to pay more attention to learning about elections and the differences between political parties when I realized I would be able to be part of this process. Now I can make changes, and this makes me feel responsible to understand and select the right people who will represent me” Interviewee 15, permanent.

However, the process of electing the government was not clear to most of them. Only three were able to answer the question about the structure of the government. Furthermore, five respondents recognize the powers of the municipality, understand how the prime minister is elected and are able to distinguish between different political stances of the political parties in the parliament. Notably, awareness of political rights was exactly the same as temporary residence permit holders with only two respondents knowing it on both sides.

Discussion of findings:

In conclusion, the type of residence permit does not appear to be a decisive factor for political participation. Although there is a kind of discrepancy between levels of political engagement between temporary and permanent residence permit holders, levels of political knowledge sound to be very similar. This means that levels of political participation cannot be explained only by the type of residence permit factor, but there are some other personal characteristics and contextual factors (like the level of education and willingness to obtain political knowledge that should be taken into consideration as well.

5.4. Political interest:

Political interest can be defined as “a citizen's willingness to pay attention to political phenomena at the possible expense of other topics” (Lupia and Philpot, 2005:1128). It can be measured by how often people follow political news and attend political events. To measure political interest among refugees and asylum seekers, respondents have been asked how interested they are in Swedish politics, how often they follow political news and how often they watch political debates between candidates.

Temporary residence permit holders:

Political interest for temporary residence permit holders has seemed to be much lower than permanent residency holders. Six respondents out of ten are not interested at all in Swedish politics, occasionally follow political news or watch political debates between candidates. Three respondents never follow political news or watch political debates while they consider themselves as somehow interested in the Swedish politics. There is only one respondent who showed interest in politics and mentioned that he regularly follows political news and watches political debates between candidates. Respondents have justified this low level of interest by the feeling of instability and the uncertainty they have regarding their future in the country.

“I am not interested in the Swedish politics at all. I do not feel stable and safe here to participate in politics. Why would I care about politics in a country that I do not know anything about my future in? My residence permit might expire next month, and they may ask me to go back to my country. If you are going as a guest to a certain house, will you try to give them your opinion about what the house should look like or how they should manage it? You definitely do not have the right to. That is exactly how I feel in Sweden” Interviewee 4, temporary.

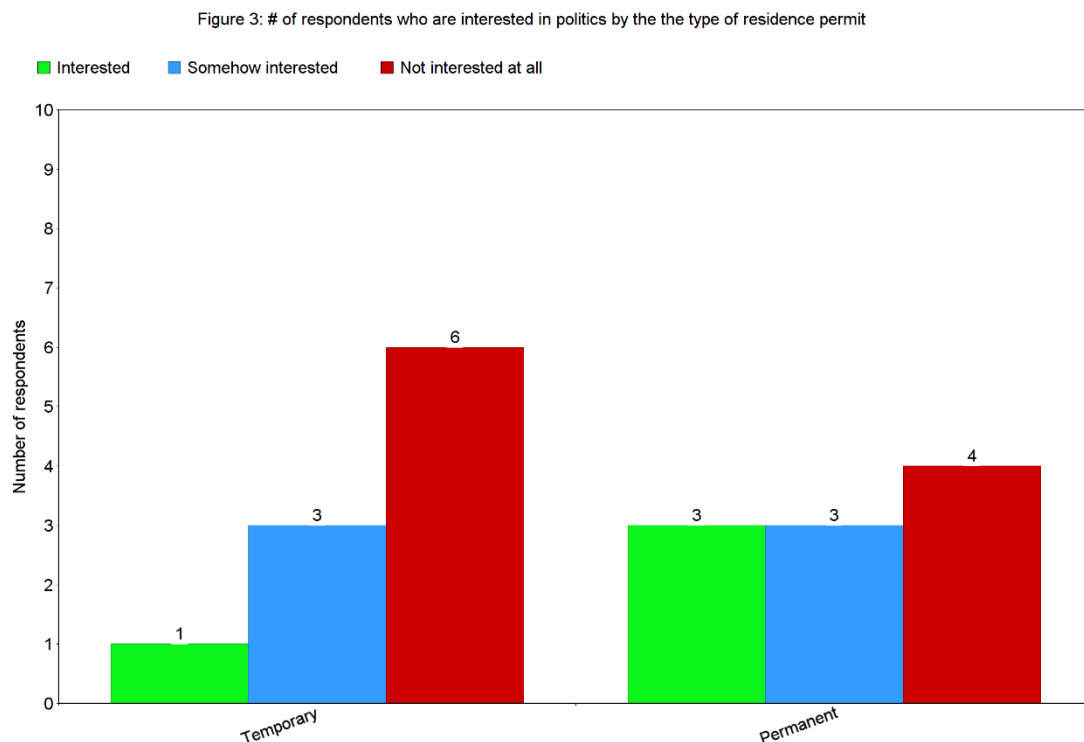
“I am not interested at all in politics because I think as a holder of a temporary residence permit, I do not have any political rights here” Interview 3, temporary.

Permanent residence permit holders:

Permanent residence permit holders show a bit higher level of political interest than temporary residence permit holders. Seven respondents have expressed that they sometimes follow political news and watch political debates. Only one respondent has shown that they follow political news and political debates very often. Moreover, two respondents have never followed either political news or political debates. Also, four respondents out of ten have never been interested in the Swedish politics as she believes that it is useless to talk.

“I am not interested in politics because I think no matter how hard you try to talk about your opinions and demands, the government does not care about that” Interviewee 2, permanent.

Figure 3 illustrates the number of respondents interested in the Swedish politics from temporary and permanent residence permit holders:



Discussion of results:

As explained by my theoretical framework, the security of residence, regulations, and a permissive context of legislation in the host country motivates refugees and asylum seekers to invest more time and effort to get politically integrated when they feel secure about their future in the host country. This was clearly shown by the variance between permanent residence permit holders and temporary residence permit holders in the level of political engagement, political knowledge, and political interest. However, the influence of the type of the residence permit is not the same on these three aspects. Overall, the type of residence permit makes a big influence on the political engagement and political interest of refugees and asylum seekers while it makes a slight difference in the level of political knowledge.

5.5. Influence of the temporary aliens' act:

I consider an understanding of respondents' opinions and perceptions of the temporary aliens' act as a complementary factor to getting better interpretation of results. Respondents have been asked if they know about the regulation and if they think it might have an influence on the political integration of refugees and asylum seekers in Sweden. This part is not directly connected to the research question, but it provides more insights from respondents' side to answer the question. Refugees and asylum seekers' personal perception of the regulation can help understand their previous answers on political trust, political participation, and political interest. It must be mentioned that all respondents (temporary and permanent residence permit holders) knew about the change in regulations and its time when they were asked.

Nine out of ten temporary residence permit holders believe that the temporary aliens' act has negatively affected refugees and asylum seekers' political integration. Respondents think that this regulation has created a societal division in the refugee community in Sweden between those who arrived before the law entered into force and got permanent residence permits and others who arrived after the application of the law and have been granted a temporary residence permit. They also expect the law to have reduced refugees and asylum seekers' trust in the Swedish government since their first days in the country.

“I think it has massively affected political integration of refugees and asylum seekers in a negative way because it has created a severe societal division in the refugees' community in Sweden between those who got a permanent residence permit and others who got temporary ones. It also decreased people's trust in the Swedish government. When refugees and asylum

seekers accepted to have their fingerprints taken in Sweden, they did so because they believed they would get a permanent residence permit and would be naturalized later. When the Swedish government took this decision, people felt that government had betrayed them and, as a result, they lost their trust in it” Interviewee 7, temporary.

In addition, respondents believe that this regulation has made people insecure about their future in the country. This uncertainty and the small timeframe given by a temporary residence permit have demotivated them to invest time and effort in learning the language or getting politically integrated into the Swedish society.

“When someone gets a 13-month temporary residence permit, what is the government expecting them to do during this period? They will not be motivated to learn the language or invest time in the country. I want to ask this question to any Swede out here, if you go to a new country, I will not say a European country because European cultures are similar. Would be able to learn a new language and get integrated into the host country in 13 months? People with temporary residence permits are always insecure about their future as they believe they will never learn the language and be able to find a job in one year, so what is the point of investing any time and effort in a country that might kick me out after a few months?” Interviewee 4, temporary.

“On the personal level, after getting a temporary residence permit, I have not been interested at all in politics. I have felt that they have already decided my destiny, drew the way they want me to take and how my lifestyle would be like in the country since day 1. This has demotivated me to be involved in politics or follow any political news. I knew that I would be staying here for a temporary period. So, why should I care about things I will never be part of?” Interviewee 11, temporary.

Some respondents assume that the temporary aliens’ act has decreased refugees and asylum seekers’ interest in politics by making them always concerned by other bigger problems like finding a full-time job to stay in the country.

“I do not care about politics because I am focusing on other more important things. Migrationsverket has made me put all my focus on finding a full-time job. I forgot about my education, my dreams, and ambitions. How am I supposed to be interested in politics in a

country I feel threatened in? All my efforts and energy are directed to getting a full-time contract to get a permanent residence permit” Interviewee 2, temporary.

Only one respondent saw that the regulation did not influence refugees and asylum seekers’ political integration and that the reason why Arab refugees and asylum seekers may be not interested in the Swedish politics is that they come from the Middle East, and they grew up in societies where talking about politics can be dangerous and risky.

“I do not think this regulation was the crucial factor that affected people’s interest in politics. Most refugees and asylum seekers here come from the Middle East, they have never been interested in politics in their countries. Most of them have suffered a lot from politics in their home countries. That is why they always try to avoid it here. I think it has nothing to do with this regulation in particular, but it is about where people come from and what they are used to” Interviewee 16, male.

The effect of the temporary aliens’ act has been perceived a bit differently by holders of permanent residence permits. Six respondents agreed that it has negatively affected the political integration of refugees and asylum seekers. Two have believed it to make no difference when it comes to political integration. According to these respondents, there are other factors that affect refugees and asylum seekers’ integration process, like personal preferences and if people have been politically active in their home countries or not.

“I think it did not affect it that much. I believe that those who are interested in politics will always be interested in it and vice versa. If you were interested in politics in your country, you will be interested in it in Sweden and if not, it would not matter to you” Interviewee 18, permanent.

“I do not think it has made any difference when it comes to people’s interest in politics. Personally, I hold the Swedish citizenship. However, I see no difference between the level of political interest between me and other people who arrived after 2015 and got a temporary residence permit” Interviewee 19, naturalized citizen.

On the other hand, two respondents believe that this regulation has had a positive influence on the political integration of refugees and asylum seekers in Sweden. This is explained by people’s eagerness to learn more about the Swedish rules and regulations when they have

temporary residence permits. The case they believe to be different when people know that they are staying in the country for the rest of their lives.

“I think it has positively influenced people’s interest in politics. I believe that people who get temporary residence permits will be more interested in knowing about laws, rules, and regulations because they are living under stress, and this makes them more eager to know about the political situation to feel secure. On the other hand, people with permanent residence permits will not care that much because they feel stable and secure and the country” Interviewee 8, female.

“I think it made people more interested in politics. The new regulation has made people feel threatened and unstable and this has motivated them to follow politics more to learn about the Swedish government, how they think and how regulations are made. On the other hand, people who have been granted a permanent residence permit are usually less interested in politics because they feel secure, and they know they will stay in Sweden for the rest of their lives. Instability definitely pushed people to pay more attention to Swedish politics and how it works to know what the government would decide about them” Interviewee 17, female.

Data has clearly shown that perception of asylum seekers and refugees of the law is highly affected by their type of residence permit. Temporary residence permit holders have strong negative feelings towards it. However, permanent residence permit holders seem to be pay less attention the law and its effects.

5.6. Policy recommendations:

The main purpose of a successful political integration program is to make a balanced political inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers through giving them similar political and civil rights like natives to achieve political cohesion in the system (Dollmann, 2021). These procedures are supposed to make refugees and asylum seekers feel motivated to stay longer in the host country and invest more time, resources, and effort in it. To investigate to what extent this purpose is achieved by the Swedish integration program, i asked my respondents about their future plans for the coming five years and if they intend to stay in Sweden or not. Surprisingly, five out of ten permanent residence permit holders (who have already finished their whole integration process) said that they do not intend to stay in the country for long term. Reasons for this varied between the tough weather, lack of job opportunities, the big

difference between the Swedish culture and the culture of their homelands and that they still feel they are not part of the Swedish society.

“No, i do not feel comfortable here. I do not think time will make me get integrated into the Swedish society as a Muslim Hijabi girl. Sometimes, i feel undesired here” Interviewee 8, permanent.

“No, because weather here is very tough, and i do not enjoy life here because it is very cold. I feel that i have to do the same things everyday which is very boring” Interviewee 10, naturalized citizen.

“No, i plan to leave the country as soon as possible. The weather here is really cold and living expenses are very high. I want to move to a country with a nicer weather and cheaper living expenses. I also want to move to a country where I can find more opportunities” Interviewee 15, permanent.

This raises a lot of questions about the effectiveness of the Swedish integration programs and its ability to make refugees and asylum seekers secure and part of the country. In addition, most of the temporary residence permit holders mentioned that they have not been politically engaged because they did not get enough political education about the political institutions, mechanism of elections, and how the Swedish political system works. This clearly shows that the Swedish government should pay more attention to educating refugees and asylum seekers politically to save them from being excluded in the future. Moreover, the respondents of the study have pointed to a very important effect of the temporary aliens' act on their personal and career life. Temporary residence permit holders mentioned that the act has pushed them to accept low skill jobs that neither match their skills and educational background nor meet their salary expectations just to have a full-time job so they can apply for a permanent residence permit. This has put a big burden on temporary residence permit holders and made them an easy target of exploitation by employers. This makes the Swedish labor market a lot of talents who have to shift their careers and forget about their education just to get a permanent residence permit. Although this issue does not fall under the scope of my study, i thought it is important to highlight it as i believe it also has an effect on how much attention people pay to the political events in the country.

6. Conclusion:

The study aimed to investigate the influence of the type of residence permit on political integration of refugees and asylum seekers in Sweden. It focused on Arab refugees and asylum seekers who arrived in Sweden during the period between 2013 and 2017 to explore how the type of the residence permits granted to them affected their level of political integration in the light of the temporary aliens' act that entered into force in 2015. The main research question was:

How does the type of the residence permit influence the political integration of refugees and asylum seekers in Sweden? (Comparative case study of Arab refugees and asylum seekers who submitted their asylum applications before the temporary aliens' act entered into force and those who submitted their asylum applications after the application of the law).

There are several reasons that make this study relevant. One such reason is that the temporary aliens' act has been issued mainly as a reaction to the large influx of Arab refugees and asylum seekers in Sweden as a result of the Syrian crisis and the Arab spring revolutions. Neither are there many studies that discuss how the type of the residence permit might affect the political integration of refugees and asylum seekers in Sweden or provided an in-depth investigation of the concept of political integration in its all aspects. Previous reasons have motivated me to conduct an exploratory single case study. The study provides an account of how documents might affect refugees and asylum seekers' different aspects of political integration including: political trust, political participation, and political interest. Qualitative in-depth interviews have inspired the analysis of data derived from respondents during these interviews. My theoretical framework suggests that the post-migration context of policies and regulations and in addition to the security of residence factor shapes the level of political integration of refugee and asylum seekers in the host country. Accordingly, permanent residence permit holders are more politically integrated than temporary residence permit holders. Overall, the participants' responses show that the type of residence permit may affect refugees and asylum seekers' level of political integration to a certain extent.

According to the results of the study, the type of residence permit plays a crucial role in some aspects of political integration, but not all of them. The levels of political trust in the Swedish institutions are greatly higher among permanent residence permit holders than temporary

residence permit holders. Also, permanent residence permit holders show higher levels of political engagement in terms of belonging to political parties, signing petitions, and participating in demonstrations than temporary residence permit holders. However, the type of the residence permit does not seem to be crucial when it comes to levels of political participation, and political knowledge. Moreover, it does not sound to make any difference in asylum seekers and refugees' level of adherence to the Swedish democratic values. Results have also highlighted the perception of Arab refugees and asylum seekers in Sweden on the temporary alien's act and their ideas on its influence on the political integration of refugees and asylum seekers in the country. Temporary residence permit holders have expressed very negative thoughts about the regulation, while permanent residence permit holders seem to see it as a normal regulation that is not making any big difference.

The conducted study has a few limitations. First, it only included 20 interviewees, all of them were Arab refugees and asylum seekers residing in Sweden which means that the sample is not sufficient enough to build a pattern of generalize results on other groups of refugees and asylum seekers in other parts of Europe. In addition, the study attempted to investigate the level of political integration of Arab refugees and asylum seekers in Sweden on a micro level based on the personal experience of 20 participants. Finally, the study is qualitative, which means we cannot establish causality or generalization based on it. Future studies should focus on conducting a big-scale qualitative data from different countries that covers all aspects of political integration.

In conclusion, it can be viewed that the type of residence permit has a big influence on some aspects of political integration of refugees and asylum seekers in Sweden like political interest, and political engagement, while it has a slight effect on the other aspects.

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8. Appendix 1:

Interview guide

Date: Gender:

Place: Nationality:

Introduction:

1-How long have you been in Sweden? (Not included in the analysis)

.....

1-When did you submit your first asylum application?

.....

2-Do you hold the Swedish citizenship? If not, what kind of residence permit do you have?

.....

3-Do you think you will get the Swedish citizenship?

.....

Political trust:

1-Do you trust that the Swedish government's actions are in your best interest?

.....

2-Do you trust the Swedish migration agency? Why? Why not? Have you dealt with it before?

.....

3-Do you trust the Swedish police? Why? Why not? Have you dealt with it before?

.....

4-Do you trust your municipality? Why? Why not? Have you dealt with it before?

.....

5-Have you faced any kind of racism or discrimination from a Swedish governmental institution? If yes, what was it?

.....

6-Do you trust the Swedish judicial system/ courts? Why? Why not? Have you dealt with it before?

.....

Adherence to democratic values:

1-The Swedish democratic values are based on equality, government accountability, freedom of expression and freedom of press, gender equality and fair representation of minorities, do you value the principle of equality? Why? Why not?

.....

2-Do you value the principle of government accountability? Why? Why not?

.....

3-Do you value the principle of freedom of expression? Why? Why not?

.....

4- Do you value the principle of freedom of press? Why? Why not?

.....

5-Do you value the principle of gender equality? Why? Why not?

.....

6- Do you value the principle of fair representation of minorities? Why? Why not?

.....

Political participation:

1-political engagement:

1-Have you voted in any local elections in Sweden?

.....

2-Are you a member of a political party?

.....

3-Are you a member of any ethnic, religious, or humanitarian organization?

.....

4-Have you signed a petition in the last four years?

.....

5-Have you participated in a demonstration in the last four years?

.....

6- Have you contacted a politician, government, or local government official in the last four years?

.....

7-Have you participated in a political campaign for a certain political party or donated money to it?

.....

8-Have you shared something about Swedish politics on social media in the last four years?

.....

2-Political knowledge:

1-Do you have full information about your political rights in Sweden?

.....

2-Do you know how the Swedish government is structured?

.....

3-Do you know what are the powers of the municipality?

.....

4-How often are local elections held?

.....

5-Do you know which political parties got the majority of votes in your municipality last elections?

.....

6-Do you know how the Swedish prime minister is elected?

.....

7-Do you know the political parties in the Swedish parliament? Do you know the difference between them?

.....

8-How long is a prime minister's term in office?

.....

Political interest:

1-How interested are you in politics?

.....

2-How often do you follow political news?

.....

3-How often do you watch political debates between candidates or political parties?

.....

The temporary aliens act:

1-Do you know about the change in the Swedish asylum regulations that took place in 2015?
If yes, do you think that it has affected the political integration of asylum seekers?

.....

Other:

1-Do you think that you can influence local politics? If yes, to what extent?

.....

2-To what extent you feel Swedish? Why?

.....

3- Do you intend to stay in Sweden for rest of your life? What about the next five years? Why or why not?

.....

9. Appendix 2:

Interview consent form

Research project title: Political integration of refugees and asylum seekers in Sweden.

Research investigator: Hisham Omar

The interview will take almost 30 minutes. I do not anticipate that there are any risks associated with your participation, but you have the right to stop the interview or withdraw from the research at any time.

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of the above research project. Ethical procedures for academic research undertaken from university of Gothenburg require that interviewees explicitly agree to being interviewed and how the information contained in their interview will be used. This consent form is necessary for us to ensure that you understand the purpose of your involvement and that you agree to the conditions of your participation. Would you therefore read the accompanying information sheet and then sign this form to certify that you approve the following:

- The interview will be recorded, and a transcript will be produced.
- The transcript of the interview will be analyzed by me as the research investigator.
- Access to the interview transcript will be limited to me and academic colleagues and researchers with whom i might collaborate as part of the research process.
- Any summary of the interview content, or direct quotations from the interview, that are made available through academic publication or other academic outlets will be anonymized so that you cannot be identified, and care will be taken to ensure that other information in the interview that could identify yourself is not revealed.
- The actual recording will be kept with me.
- Any variation of the conditions above will only occur with your further explicit approval

Quotation agreement:

I understand that my words may be quoted directly or indirectly. I also agree to be quoted directly if my name is not published and a made-up name is used. All or part of the content of your interview may be used;

- In academic papers, policy papers or news articles.
- On our website and in other media that we may produce such as spoken presentations.
- On other feedback events.
- In an archive of the project as noted above

By signing this form, I agree that:

1. I am voluntarily taking part in this project. I understand that I do not have to take part, and I can stop the interview at any time.
2. The transcribed interview or extracts from it may be used as described above.
3. I have read the Information sheet.
4. I do not expect to receive any benefit or payment for my participation.
5. I can request a copy of the transcript of my interview and may make edits I feel necessary to ensure the effectiveness of any agreement made about confidentiality.
6. I have been able to ask any questions I might have, and I understand that I am free to contact the researcher with any questions I may have in the future.

Participant’s signature:

Date:

.....

.....

Researcher’s signature:

Date:

.....

.....

Contact Information

If you have any further questions or concerns about this study, please contact the researcher:

Name of researcher: Hisham Omar

Phone:

E-mail: omar.hisham94@outlook.com