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THE AFTERMATH OF 2015 REFUGEE CRISIS: THE EFFECTS ON SWEDISH SOCIETY AND THE COMPLEXITIES AROUND INTEGRATING IMMIGRANTS IN SWEDEN

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ABSTRACT

The beginning of the Syrian Civil War in 2011 sparked an influx of people looking for ways to escape the increasing violence within the region. The situation reached its peak 4 years later, when it became known worldwide as the 2015 Refugee Crisis. European Union countries, being under tremendous pressure, were forced to open their borders to tens of thousands of immigrants seeking refuge. Sweden was one of these EU member states who would end up accepting more immigrants per capita than any other country in Europe.

This bachelor`s thesis analyses the challenges of integrating large numbers of immigrants into Sweden's society. In today's world, successfully developing and implementing an efficient integration policy plays a vital role in creating and sustaining a peaceful and multicultural nation. Rising crime, immigrant unemployment, and rise in extremist activities can hint at the failures and inefficiencies within the existing integration policy. By understanding what the failures are, one can begin to understand what are the limits of one nation's ability to integrate more than its fair share of immigrants into its society.

Keywords: immigration, integration, crimes, unemployment, terrorism, immigrants, refugees.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AF – Public Employment Service (Arbetsförmedlingen)

Brå – National Council for Crime Prevention (Brottsförebyggande rådet)

CIVIX – Civic Integration Index

EU – European Union

MIPEX – Migrant Integration Policy Index

NCT – National Centre for Terrorist Threat

OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

UN – United Nations

UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

INTRODUCTION

The extensive flow of immigrants into Europe, especially those classified as refugees, has become one of the crucial political issues of our time. The countries inside the European Union are governed by a collective law dictating the admission and distribution of people applying for refugee status. Certain countries within the union – Sweden and Germany for example – have however accepted more refugees than others. These countries are now facing complications in integrating those, who have arrived, into their societies.

Before the 1930s Sweden had seen high numbers of emigrants leaving and low numbers of immigrants entering its borders (OECD 2007, 12). As more people started to migrate into Sweden, it became necessary to control immigration. The first steps to regulate immigration were taken by Sweden's government in the 1960s (Migrationsverket 2020a). Most extensive changes to the immigration policy, however, were enacted at the turn of the 21st century, where Sweden's "open-door" politics began attracting more and more immigrants from countries inside as well as outside Europe. Sweden was facing a change in its populace and society, which for a long time had been culturally and ethnically homogenous. In 2015 Sweden became the number one country in the European Union, as well as in the world, that witnessed the highest influx of immigrants per-capita that has ever been recorded in history (OECD 2016b, 3). This large influx of immigrants – that were mostly comprised of Syrian war-refugees, as well as Afghans, Iraqis, Eritreans, and Somalis – was mainly the result and the aftermath of Syria's Civil War and the continuous political instabilities afflicting other Middle-Eastern and North-African countries (Migrationverket 2020b). These large numbers of immigrants arriving in Sweden would thoroughly test the efficiency of Sweden's immigration policy and its integration systems.

The purpose of this bachelor's thesis is to examine how Sweden has handled the flow of refugees entering its borders and how Sweden has applied its existing integration policy during the refugee crisis. The paper will also explore what Sweden's immigration policy was like before the crisis and what changes were implemented after the crisis had deepened. The paper will further

observe how these large numbers of immigrants have affected Sweden internally by examining the effects that they have had on unemployment, crime, and extremist activities within the country. Finally, it will analyse which aspects of Sweden's integration policy are assimilatory or multicultural, and how well the policy measures up to the standards of civic integration.

This research paper presents and tries to answer the following questions:

1) What are the differences between the past and current integration policies in Sweden, when it comes to accepting new immigrants?

2) Has the 2015 Refugee Crisis affected crime, unemployment, and extremist activities in Sweden?

3) What are the assimilatory or multicultural elements within Sweden's 2009 integration policy?

Structural Overview

This research paper is divided into three chapters. The first chapter will investigate what it means to discuss immigrant integration and what are the various types of integration the integration theorists can differentiate. It will examine what Sweden's experience has been like in accepting immigrants in the past. It will further explore the contemporary integration practices that Sweden employs while accepting new immigrants and will review Sweden's "open-door" policy when it comes to immigration. To compile this chapter, historical and various other data were used from Sweden's governmental migration website – Migrationsverket. Also, the opinions and insights of integration theorists were studied and analysed when it came to defining the concept of integration.

The second chapter will concentrate on the aftermath of the Syrian refugee crisis of 2015. The author will make an effort to detail the numbers and nationalities of immigrants entering Sweden. Furthermore, the chapter will explore the effects of accepting large numbers of asylum seekers – how such a significant influx in refugees and immigrants can affect crime, extremist activities, and immigrant unemployment. The sources used in this chapter were mainly OECD and UNHCR reports detailing various immigrant numbers seeking refugee status in Sweden. When compiling data various governmental statistics were used and analysed: for unemployment data the author used Sweden's Public Employment Service statistics, Sweden's National Council

for Crime Prevention statistics were used for crime data, and statistics from Sweden's National Centre for Terrorist Threat were used to provide an overview of terror and extremist activities.

The third chapter is composed of a short analysis of Sweden's 2009 integration policy. It will determine what aspects of the policy are either assimilatory (mandatory) or multicultural. The chapter will further analyse the policy by examining what effects granting citizenship status to immigrants has in the context of civic integration. When analysing what are these effects, Sara Wallace Goodman's study about civic integration was examined and utilised.

Methodology

The methodology of the research paper employs empirical analysis, which is based on a wide review of different sets of sources. Those sources range from governmental policy decisions and press articles, research studies, Sweden's national newspapers, to OECD and UNHCR reports, and stem from various other secondary literatures dealing with immigration and integration. Quantitative sources used in the paper include several sets of data from immigration, population, unemployment, and crime statistics. Furthermore, qualitative methodology was also followed, as explanations and analyses that the author observed through the course of the research were eventually also filtered through the author's own personal lens when writing the paper. The descriptive method was subsequently used to answer the paper's research questions and to determine the efficacy of Sweden's integration policy.

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1. SWEDEN'S INTEGRATION POLICY

Sweden, located in Northern Europe, has historically been cut off from large movements of people mainly thanks to its favourable geopolitical location situated on the Scandinavian Peninsula. Because of this throughout centuries Sweden has largely remained culturally and ethnically homogenous compared to other European countries, with almost insignificant numbers of minorities living inside its borders. Before the 1930s Sweden was a country of emigrants, with most of its people relocating to the USA, Canada and even Australia (Migrationsverket 2020a). The start and the ending of the Second World War brought with itself the refugees from Germany, Denmark, and Finland, as well as from Baltic States. Sweden from here on and to this day would become a country of immigrants (OECD 2007, 12).

The establishment of the Nordic Council in 1952 between Sweden, Denmark, Iceland, and Norway would guarantee the free movement of migrant workers between these countries in the region. Finland would join the council in 1955. In 1954 the Nordic countries established the Nordic Passport Union, which was the beginning of a common labour market in Scandinavia (OECD 2007, 12). The further economic and social cooperation between these 5 Nordic countries was solidified in 1962 with the signing of the Helsinki Treaty (Nordic Council of Ministers 2018). Because of this Sweden in the 20th century has predominantly welcomed immigrants – mainly from Finland – who typically share the cultural and ethnical history with natural-born Swedes. Between the 1950s and 1960s every year 9000 Finns migrated to Sweden (OECD 2007, 13).

In the past, and mainly because of these similarities, it has always been easier for Sweden to integrate immigrants into their society who were culturally, ethnically, and religiously homogeneous to Swedes. As Sweden in the 1980's was starting to experience immigration from the Middle-East and Africa, the necessity to underline the integration efforts in Sweden's immigration policies has become more precedential over time (Migrationsverket 2020a). Culturally and religiously different immigrants naturally bring along with them different cultural

and religious practices. Successfully integrating these foreign practices into the society dictates the future cultural and societal cohesion of the welcoming country. The failings to successfully carry out these integration efforts however can be witnessed in society by a number of prevalent symptoms. Immigrants and their children stereotypically have lower education levels, tend to live in poor housing, and earn lower wages when compared to populations of a typical Western host country (Green 2007, 47-52). Communities that the immigrants inhabit are characterised often by rise in crime, unemployment as well as underemployment, and surge in various radical movements (Nesser 2015, 10, 130, 296).

1.1. What is Integration?

Before discussing the specifics around Sweden's integration policy, one needs to define integration. From one side, the concept of immigrant integration can take on a meaning of economic and social convergence between the citizens of the host country and the newcomers (OECD 2007, 10). This convergence can happen when comparing statistical measures like employment or unemployment rate, average income, home ownership, school achievement or other economic and social outcomes between the immigrants and native populace. On the other side, definition of integration is the acceptance of host country values and beliefs, as well as the behaviour in accordance with these local customs (OECD 2007, 10). Immigrants entering host countries will bring along with them a different language, cultural customs, religious traditions, as well as a secular and religious set of beliefs on how their lives should proceed in a new land. These traditions and beliefs might end up creating tensions between the host population and the newcomers, especially if the customs and beliefs among the citizens and immigrants are too diverse and end up conflicting with one another. Issues arising from immigration will further deal with topics like demographics change, ageing populace of the host country, and will result in constantly changing social and economic consequences (European Economic and Social Committee 2020, 4). The purpose behind the existing integration policy legislated in the host country should therefore be to ease these potential frictions; initially by assuring its citizens about immigrants not becoming a burden on the society, and furthermore providing immigrants with the same rights and opportunities within the society that are already available to the citizens of that country (Novotny 2012, 510).

Integration at first did not play a vital part in post-war Europe, since the governments behind the labour policies in various countries – including Sweden – did not implement them in the belief that immigrant workers would eventually return to their homes and there would be no need for integration. In Western EU countries integration issues started to become part of the political debate in the 1980s, while in Central and Eastern EU countries integration entered the stage of political discussions at the start of the 2000s (Novotny 2012, 509). These changes were gradually brought on primarily by immigrants who chose to remain in the countries that they had immigrated into and secondarily by more and more immigrants seeking refugee status inside the borders of the European Union.

Currently among the political scientists there are three different viewpoints on how integration of foreign individuals should be achieved. The first viewpoint is an integration of immigrants through assimilation (Adida *et al.* 2016, 13). The viewpoint of assimilation relies on mandatory assimilation policies that immigrants need to follow in order to integrate themselves into host country's society; therefore it has been referred to also as mandatory integration (Goodman, Wright 2015, 1887-1888). Those mandatory policies can start with something as simple as learning the language of the host country and end with something more demanding, like the adherence by the immigrants to the cultural norms and customs valued inside that country. In 2005 the European Council presented an action plan, titled Hague Programme, with the intention to manage the legal migration flows and to help member states to adopt better policies on integration (European Council 2005). The Hague Programme would specifically underline the assimilation aspect in European Union's future immigration policies, by claiming that immigrants should acquire the culture of the host society, as well as attaining the basic knowledge about language, history and institutions within the host country (O'Brien 2016, 97). These assimilation policies are of course compulsory in their nature and can be viewed as being repressive against the identities and beliefs of immigrants, who might not want to comply with these conditions.

The second viewpoint relies on the creation of a multicultural society. The societal multicultural theories – which oppose the idea of assimilation – rely on the assumption that people with different cultural backgrounds can get along side-by-side, living in peace and harmony (Adida *et al.* 2016, 13). The multiculturalists and cultural pluralists see assimilation policies as suggestions that cultures are incompatible and therefore cannot exist together – something that they entirely disagree with. They view assimilation policies as harmful to the immigrants, impractical to

implement, and oppressive against the existing cultural identities that immigrants already carry with them. Multicultural societies will help to reduce ethnic tensions within the populace, promote mutual respect and encourage minorities to participate in the society, while being generally more inclusive and unbiased (The Multiculturalism Policy Index 2022). These multicultural experiments seem to have so far generally been failures, as evidenced by speeches made by former German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Britain's former Prime Minister David Cameron. In October 2010 Merkel noted that the idea where different people from different cultures would happily live side-by-side simply does not work, that immigrants needed to do more to integrate themselves into Germany's society, and called multiculturalism an utter failure (BBC News 2010). A few months after Merkel's speech, David Cameron gave quite a similar one denouncing multiculturalism in a security conference in Munich (Gov.uk 2011). According to him Britain needed to have stronger national identity to curb the Islamist extremism spreading in the country, as most terrorist attacks at the time were being carried out by Britain's own citizens of Muslim background. Cameron recognised the doctrine of multiculturalism as something that weakens the collective national identity, which encourages cultures to live apart from one another, in segregated communities, often acting contrary to the mainstream values. These segregated communities, in his opinion, are often the places where Islamic extremism spreads. The notion of immigrants living in a parallel society, divided into separate cultural communities cut off from the native populace, has received a disparaging connotation across Europe during past decades (O'Brien 2016, 94). These separate societies lack the bonds required for social cohesion within the host country and impede the progress of integration.

The third new emerging immigrant integration viewpoint is called civic integration. In 2003 Nicolas Sarkozy, working as French interior minister, implemented a policy measure called Reception and Integration Contract (Contrat d'Accueil et d'Intégration), where immigrants entering France had to sign a contract pledging to learn the language during 500 hours of study classes and take French national values' courses (Adida *et al.* 2016, 181). While there are earlier examples of civic integration measures, Sarkozy's policy has been widely copied by countries in Europe and was implemented in France nationally in 2007. The civic integration puts the emphasis on granting citizenship status to immigrants in measured steps once they have fulfilled the necessary civic skill requirements. These skills range from immigrants knowing the local language, having knowledge about history, culture and rules, and understanding and following the values prevalent in their new country (Goodman, Wright 2015, 1886). Before the granting of citizenship can take place, immigrants need to be measured for their language level and skills

when they enter the country, examine whether they have had to pay entrance fees, if they have an already existing family present, and if there are requirements for additional language skills when obtaining settlement status. By quoting one of the political scientists behind this integration theory, Sara Wallace Goodman, fulfilling these requirements, after which immigrants are rewarded citizenship status, creates a "contract relationship" between the country and the individual (Goodman 2010, 769). This contract relationship will in turn mirror what a successfully integrated individual of a nation state, a former immigrant, should look like.

1.2. Past and Present Immigration and Integration Practices

Sweden started to regulate immigration in the 1960s (OECD 2007, 14). Sweden's National Board of Labour would assess the need for migrant workers in the labour market, by consulting with various labour authorities, and after that the work permits would be granted according to the market's needs. Those who wanted to enter Sweden as migrant workers would have to provide proof of employment as well as the proof of living space within Sweden. If the labour market already had access to the unemployed workers residing in Sweden, no permits were granted to immigrants. The groups exempt from these requirements were citizens of other Nordic countries – thanks to the regulations passed by the Nordic Council; as well as the family members of Swedish citizens, and refugees. In 1969 Swedish Immigration Board was established and it took over the immigration responsibilities from the National Board of Labour (OECD 2007, 14).

In 1970 the Swedish government first introduced free language training classes to its immigration policy. Here Sweden saw its first regulated intermittent arrival of refugees from Chile, after the 1973 military coup against President Salvador Allende (OECD 2007, 13). the 1970s also witnessed a change in the process of applying for Swedish citizenship. After obtaining the permit of residence the waiting time for citizenship was lowered for immigrants from 7 years to 5 years, for refugees to 4 years, and in case of immigrants from Nordic countries to 2 years (Migrationsverket 2020a). Today immigrants in Sweden need to have a permanent residence permit, be able to prove their identity, and must have not committed any crimes when applying for citizenship. The waiting time for someone living together with a Swedish citizen is 3 years, the stateless immigrants or refugees is still 4 years, while the waiting time for immigrants from other Nordic countries is now the same length with the rest of the immigrants – 5 years (Migrationsverket 2022).

In 1985 Swedish Immigration Board adopted a new system for the reception of refugees that no longer consulted with the labour market authorities for Sweden's need of migrant workers (OECD 2007, 14). The National Board of Labour from here on was no longer responsible for managing refugee integration. Sweden started to see an increase in the arrival of asylum seekers from Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, Somalia, and Eritrea (Migrationsverket 2020a). As the Soviet Union started to collapse, asylum seekers also came from Kosovo and several other Eastern Bloc countries. From 1989 to 1993 the wars in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo brought into Sweden 115 900 asylum seekers from Yugoslavia, virtually all asylum applications registered by mainly Bosnian Muslims were approved. Non-European immigrants – 43 000 in total – came to Sweden from the Middle-East, mostly Iraqis (Westin 2006). The year 1993 also marked the first time Sweden would grant permanent residence to arriving refugees. Whereas neighbouring countries – Denmark and Norway – were only granting temporary residence permits and refugee protection at the time, Sweden would allow 40 000 Bosnian refugees to stay in the country permanently (Appelqvist 2010). Once the numbers of refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, and Kosovo had grown too large, the government was forced to introduce visa requirements for all asylum applicants entering from former Yugoslavia. Today, however, immigrants are still arriving from this region using Sweden's family reunification system (Migrationsverket 2020a).

The start of the 2000s can be viewed as the beginning to the open-door immigration policy in Sweden. The immigration legislation and integration practices that led up to the massive influx of immigrants in 2015, started gradually to become more liberal than they had ever been historically. After joining the European Union in 1995, Sweden would also become part of the Schengen Agreement in 2001 and allow the free movement of all people across the EU member states, as well as allow them to work and live in Sweden (European Council 2000). The changes made in 2001 to the Swedish Citizenship law granted the possibility to hold dual citizenship, as Sweden would now also accept immigrants who wanted to keep their old citizenship after becoming Swedish citizens (Migrationsverket 2020a). In 2002 proposals for more immigration were introduced by the ruling government parties. These proposals however came with first Swedish language test requirements for immigrants applying for citizenship (Green-Pedersen, Krogstrup 2008, 625).

The outbreak of the Iraq War in 2003 brought another wave of asylum seekers to Sweden. Besides the refugees from Iraq, Sweden at that time also accepted large numbers of immigrants from Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, and from the Turkish Kurdistan (Migrationsverket 2020a). Smaller numbers of asylum seekers arrived from Somalia. For a brief period of time, from 2003 to 2004 Sweden did experience a loss in net immigration to neighbouring Nordic countries, as more than 3000 people left to those countries than arrived to Sweden. In 2006 changes in the immigration legislation made municipalities, instead of the Migration Agency, responsible to find accommodations to unaccompanied minors seeking asylum (Migrationsverket 2020a). This was another way that illegal immigrants could seek to obtain asylum seeker status within Sweden. The number of unaccompanied minors started to increase from 400 per year to several thousands in the following years. These changes in the legislation ended up putting unnecessary strain on the municipalities, which were clearly lacking in their ability to carry out immigration related tasks. In 2019 it was discovered that 90% out of 1800 Moroccan unaccompanied minors who were granted asylum in Sweden during the past 7 years, and were placed into high schools and foster homes by the municipalities, had turned out to be adults (Luning 2019).

In 2013 more liberal immigration practices were enacted by the government, as immigrants those had successfully applied for refugee status were now allowed by the Swedish government to access medical and emergency care (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2015, 16). In 2013, after the outbreak of violence in Syria, the Migration Agency announced that it would grant permanent residence permits to all Syrian asylum seekers, including the stateless persons who had arrived from Syria (UNHCR 2013). This declaration would ignite the efforts by migrants coming from outside of Syria, who were seeking refugee status in Sweden, to destroy their passports in order to qualify more easily for the refugee status. As the result from 2000 to 2020 these so-called „stateless persons“ would end up being the fifth largest group of immigrants, behind Syrians, Iraqis, Afghanis, and Somalis, whose asylum applications Sweden would end up accepting – totalling in 41 563 (Migrationsverket 2020b)

1.2.1. The 2009 Integration Policy

For those wishing to become citizens, the Swedish Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality has worked out a detailed programme of immigrant integration policy, compiled in 2009 (Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality 2009). The Swedish Public Employment Service

will produce a personal introduction plan to each immigrant arriving into Sweden. Once the residence permit has been granted, immigrants will receive information where there is a demand in Sweden for their skills, which the migrant either has or can acquire in the process of introduction plan. This is referred to as "introduction dialogue" and it will work out a plan of employment, place of residence, courses and other initiatives for each individual. Immigrants aged 20 and older, including 18 and 19-year-olds that do not have parents residing in Sweden, are all eligible for the program (OECD 2014, 18). The introduction plan itself can last up to 24 months and it will take into account every individual's previous education, as well as their previous work experience.

In order to entice immigrants to take part in these introduction courses the Swedish state will pay each one a financial benefit, which is equal to everyone taking part of these courses. In 2014 the money paid while drawing up the plan was 231 SEK (~23 euros) per day, while taking part of these courses during the plan; the payment was increased up to 308 SEK (~30 euros) per day (OECD 2014, 26). All these financial benefits are conditional on the migrant's attendance of the introduction courses. For just 40 hours each month – the total hours that every migrant is required to attend these courses – each asylum applicant would end up receiving 700-900 euros. Even if applicants will find work during their 2 year plan, they can still continue to receive the benefit along with their wages for a period of up to 6 months (OECD 2014, 26). The courses, which applicants are required to attend, consist of three activities: Swedish language courses, preparation courses for future employment, and courses providing basic knowledge of Swedish society. When it comes to the settlement of immigrants, the Swedish Migration Board will step in and find the best municipalities where there are good conditions for employment and education, as well as good access to a labour market (Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality 2009, 2). The applicants are free to choose their own place of residence and they will also be granted mentors on the basis of their occupation and education. Since many immigrants choose to settle inside the same municipalities, the Swedish government will also make an effort to re-settle applicants to municipalities where there is a higher need for labour. The entire program aims to grant opportunities to all of the asylum applicants regardless of their country of birth, their ethnic or cultural backgrounds.

MIPEX, Migrant Integration Policy Index, that evaluates 56 countries around the world based on policies to integrate immigrants into their societies, has ranked Sweden as number 1 in their top 10 index, with Finland as a close second (Solano, Huddleston 2019). The index itself is

calculated based on 8 different variables, which are healthcare polices, anti-discrimination efforts, access to education, ability to find permanent residence, the labour market mobility, the chance to participate in local politics, opportunities for the family reunification, and obtainability to the eventual nationality for the immigrants. In all these 8 different areas MIPEX has given Sweden the highest "favourable" rating (Solano, Huddleston 2020). The purpose of MIPEX index is to determine which countries are the best at implementing a comprehensive approach to integrating migrants, by guaranteeing equal rights, security and opportunities compared to the citizens of the named country. These policies are supposed to encourage the public to see immigrants as their equals and neighbours. However, what MIPEX or any other currently existing system meant to measure integration policies does not do, is to show whether immigrants themselves want to view the citizens of the said country as their equals. While integration policies do matter, because the way in which the immigrants are treated by the host country influences how well people will react to the integration process, one also has to take into account whether the desirability for immigrants to integrate into society even exist in the first place, and then adequately evaluate that desirability.

Short Summary

When looking at differences between Sweden's current integration policy and past policies, with every passing decade, since the 1960s, regulating integration has become an integral part of Sweden's immigration politics. Sweden no longer consults with the labour authorities when accepting new immigrants. Immigrants from other Nordic countries no longer experience the preferential treatment that they once did when obtaining citizenship, when compared to other immigrants; for example, those coming from Eastern Europe or Middle-East. Immigrants who are qualified to apply for refugee status and those who are stateless have now access to medical and emergency care, the same way Swedish citizens do. Those immigrants that agree to follow the directives in Sweden's integration policy enjoy a variety of financial benefits, like monthly payments and government subsidised housing.

2. THE 2015 REFUGEE CRISIS AND ITS EFFECTS ON SWEDEN

The Syrian Refugee Crisis was ignited by anti-government protests in Southern Syria in the March of 2011, mostly led by Syrian students and youths (Mason 2018). As Syrian governmental security forces started to violently crack down on the protests and began to arrest the student protesters, they ended up escalating the situation. All this led to further protests and rioting as the number of people involved in the anti-governmental revolts, demanding change for the leadership of Syria and new governmental reforms, started to increase. In 2012 these violent confrontations eventually spiralled into civil war between Syria's military, defending the rule of dictatorial president Bashar al-Assad, and numerous militant groups, either working together or separately, trying to topple his government. The significant contributors to the Syrian people trying to escape the war have mostly been either the violence or the collapse of the regional infrastructure. Today more than 80% of Syria's population is living under the poverty line, and among the civilian population there is a general lack of access to food, clean water, healthcare, and shelter (UNHCR 2019). According to the United Nations Syrian civil war has displaced more than 13 million people – 6.6 million Syrians are hosted as refugees by the neighbouring countries, while 6.7 have been displaced from their homes and are still living inside Syria (UNHCR 2022). More than half of those 6.6 million refugees who have fled from their homeland reside in Turkey.

2.1. The Start of the Crisis

As Syria started to destabilise and slowly edge towards the civil war, the numbers of Syrian immigrants seeking refuge in Sweden began to rise steadily in 2012. From 2012 to 2014 Sweden had accepted more than 31 000 Syrian refugees, with 9000 more joining them later on the grounds of family reunification (OECD 2016b). In 2015 more than 380 000 people applying for refugee status in the European Union had crossed the Mediterranean Sea, while as many as 200

000 were in need of alternative places of relocation in Greece, Italy, and Hungary (UNHCR 2015). The deepening crisis pushed the European Commission to implement a set of proposals to alleviate the rising tensions inside these three member states. The plan proposed the relocation of a total of 120 000 individuals seeking international protection into other EU countries (European Commission 2015).

According to the OECD 2015 would turn out to be a record breaking year for Sweden, as it would end up accepting more immigrants per its population capita that have ever been recorded in any other country in history (OECD 2016b, 3). The grand total of asylum seekers Sweden would end up accepting was 162 877, almost twice as many as it did in 2014. 114 728 of them would be men or boys and 48 149 women or girls (Migrationsverket 2020b). The 3 biggest groups would arrive from Syria (51 338), Afghanistan (41 564) and Iraq (20 858). As mentioned in subchapter 1.2.1, the Swedish integration policy implemented in 2009 was neither altered nor replaced before or after the events of 2015 and 2016, which led up to these record-breaking immigration numbers. The only changes that were introduced, according to the Migrant Integration Policy Index, were the efforts to better the implementation of the already existing 2009 integration policy and the introduction of limitations to family reunification (Solano, Huddleston 2019). OECD specifically emphasised the importance of providing assistance to the children of immigrants, as they would normally always do worse at integrating into the society when compared to native-born children. According to the OECD 71 000 children came to Sweden in 2015 (OECD 2016a). Half of these children arrived as unaccompanied minors and therefore were seen by OECD to be particularly vulnerable.

2.2. The Effects on Sweden's Society

Up to 2015 Sweden was seen in Europe as the most generous country in welfare programs and benefits being provided to immigrants seeking asylum status. The average immigrant at the time would receive a minimum of 6000 SEK a month (converted to ~700 euros in 2015) on top of government subsidised living space, and a 2-year-long free Swedish language courses (Higgins 2015). This would create a precedent where immigrants being directed to Sweden's neighbouring countries would travel on their own onward to Sweden, as they already knew about the generous and favourable social benefits that they could reap as refugees. It didn't help that at the time the governing political parties – primarily Sweden Democrats, headed by Prime Minister Stefan

Löfven – prided Sweden as morally superior when compared to the rest of EU countries (Wente 2015). Prime Minister Löfven would hold pro-immigrant rallies, declare that Sweden must continue to take responsibility and demand Europe to do more to address the refugee crisis (The Local 2015a). By 2015 the 85 billion SEK (850 million euros) that Sweden had regularly spent on immigrant benefits years before had now inflated to 340 billion SEK (3.4 billion euros) a year, while the percentage of immigrants within Sweden's population reached 16% (Wente, 2015). By the autumn of 2015, Sweden was witnessing the arrival of around 10 000 immigrants a week. The brunt of this pain would be shouldered by local municipalities where the immigrants were being directed in large numbers – in 2015 the Ljusnarsberg Municipality in Örebro county would end up taking as much as 230 immigrants per its 1000 inhabitants (Wiman 2019).

As the refugee situation in Sweden was beginning to destabilise, the public opinion was quickly starting to turn negative against the open-door policies and against the ruling parties within the government. At the end of 2015 Sweden's Prime Minister Löfven was suddenly starting to claim that Sweden needed a respite from tens of thousands of refugees seeking entry and announced that the government would act to introduce limits to the arrival of all refugees (Crouch 2015). In 2016 the first set of new restrictive regulations were introduced to the immigration policy, by lowering the refugee family reunification application period to three months from the day of the arrival of the refugee (McCoumb 2016). If those three months had passed, refugees now had to provide proof that they were financially able to support their entire family. From April of 2016 most refugees could only apply for temporary residential permits within Sweden, instead of permanent ones. The total numbers of refugees being accepted by Sweden after years of open-door policies would eventually revert to the absolute European Union minimum.

2.2.1. Unemployment

Low unemployment numbers play a vital part in successfully integrating immigrant populace into the host country's society. Before the 2015 crisis, Sweden was already struggling in finding the necessary job positions when it came to the immigrant populace. In May 2013 Sweden saw a series of mass riots in Northern Stockholm, that were mostly attributed to high unemployment numbers among immigrants living in Husby suburb (Liu 2014, 1). At the time, the immigrant unemployment rate was twice the size of the national average, while youth unemployment was 23.6% – thrice the size of the unemployment rate in Sweden (Liu 2014, 1).

As Sweden began to struggle with the influx of asylum seekers in 2015, OECD pointed out that Sweden's labour market consisted mainly of highly-skilled job positions and only 5% of jobs required low-skilled workers (OECD 2016a; Redfern 2016, 9). More than a decade before the start of the 2015 crisis, the numbers of refugees arriving to Sweden with low levels of education had already been steadily increasing – with only 40% of them having either primary or lower-secondary education (OECD 2016b, 19). These asylum seekers would all require additional schooling and training to enter the Swedish labour market, and therefore in the future would end up hindering and undermining the integration efforts. The low skill levels of many refugees would also inflate already existing pools of employed or unemployed unskilled workers and further increase unemployment rates among the immigrants competing in the job market (Redfern 2016, 9-10). In 2019 OECD ranked Sweden as the third country in the European Union, behind Greece and Spain, with the highest numbers of unemployed immigrants (OECD 2020). To clarify, those categorised as unemployed immigrants were foreign-born people aged 15-64, who had reported to be without work, were available to work, and had taken steps to find work during the compiling of OECD's data. According to OECD 14.6% of foreign-born men and 16.6% of foreign-born women were unemployed in 2019, while the native Swedish-born unemployment between men and women was an even 4.5% (OECD 2020).

The Swedish Public Employment Service (Arbetsförmedlingen in Swedish), which works to lower the unemployment and records their own yearly statistics in Sweden, has implemented several programmes, which are designed to get immigrants to join the labour force, including the use of government subsidised jobs. Ideally, AF prefers that after a while immigrants would move on from subsidised jobs to non-subsidised jobs, as subsidised jobs are paid by the AF's budget and this puts the financial burden on the Swedish taxpayers. In 2019, after the constant rise in immigrant unemployment numbers and before the onset of COVID-19 virus, there was a small drop among the foreign-born unemployment numbers. The percentage of unemployed foreign-born men fell to 18.5%, having been as high as 21% in 2018 (The Local 2019). The drop among foreign-born women was smaller – 19.6%, compared to 20.8% in 2018. After years of efforts by the AF to improve the immigrant unemployment levels, the large differences in Sweden still remain between the unemployment percentages of foreign-born and native-born people. As COVID-19 was beginning to affect Sweden, AF warned that foreign-born unemployment numbers were on the rise again. In 2020 AF announced that they would require 800 million Swedish kronor (~78 million euros) more added to their 2 year budget of 6.8 billion

– totalling 7.6 billion (~740 million euros) – to deal with the falling immigrant employment numbers (Sydsvenskan 2020).

With passing decades the unemployment issues in Sweden have become endemic, concentrating in cities with high percentages of immigrants. The studies have found that existing integration policy has supported the promotion of foreigners with elite backgrounds to leading job positions, but there are a growing number of unemployed and underemployed immigrants who are being pushed into low-wage jobs (Schierup, Ålund 2011, 50; Liu 10). Sweden's job market is increasingly causing social polarisation, poverty, and exclusion among immigrants as the existing integration policy has not been adequately regulated to manage the prevalent large-scale and long-term unemployment.

2.2.2. Crime

The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brottsförebyggande rådet in Swedish; acronymed as Brå) released a study on gun homicide in August of 2021 (Brå 2021). Brå as an agency works for the Swedish government by providing information in order to reduce crime and improve safety. The study itself compared gun homicide in Sweden to other countries in the European Union, and found that a steady rise in gun homicide has contributed to the general increase in Sweden's homicide rate (Brå 2021). While the countries in the rest of Europe have seen a drop in gun homicides, since 2013 Sweden has witnessed a steady increase. When comparing all the countries in Europe, the average number of homicide victims per million inhabitants was just under 8 in 2017, while in Sweden it was 11. That number saw another rise in 2020, as homicide victims in Sweden per million increased to 12. There was no corresponding increase in the rate of gun homicides anywhere in Europe, including Baltics or Eastern Europe, except in Sweden. The characteristic of the gun homicides, when citing Brå, show that it occurs within the criminal milieu in socially disadvantaged areas, involving young men, and having links to illegal drug markets.

According to Brå, Sweden is also witnessing a rise in cases of lethal violence – murder, in layman's terms. In 2020 there were 124 recorded cases of murder in Sweden, which was an increase compared to 2019, when there were 111 recorded murders (Brå 2022). Until 2014 there had been a downward trend of murder cases in Sweden. The last six years however, starting with

2015, the number of murders each year has constantly passed the numbers of murders from the previous year. The Brå's study from 2019 notes that the majority of murders from 2014-2017 were committed in the major metropolitan counties. The highest, in relation to the population, were Stockholm with 1.4 cases, Skåne with 1.3 cases, and Västra Götaland with 1.1 murder cases per 100 000 of population (Brå 2019b). In the rest of the country the rate of lethal violence was 0.7 cases per 100 000.

Here we can find a concrete correlation between murder cases and the immigrants living inside Sweden, when compared to the Swedish Police report about the vulnerable areas within Sweden (Polisen 2022; Figure 1). The highest of vulnerable areas is categorised by the police as a "particularly vulnerable area", where there is a general reluctance by the populace to participate in the legal processes and there is an existence of systematic threats and acts of violence against witnesses. The situation in these areas means that it is difficult or impossible for the police to accomplish their operations by using standard operating measures and equipment, and the majority of criminal behaviour is either ignored by the residents or is not reported to the authorities. The 2017 report by the Swedish Police points out three areas that share with each other characteristics of high populations of immigrants that have arrived in Sweden in previous years – suburbs of Northern and Southern Stockholm, the city of Malmö in the county of Skåne, and Gothenburg situated in the county of Västra Götaland (Polisen 2017; Figure 1).

2019 Brå also released a study concentrating on the sexual offences among 3 different groups of individuals – known to carry with them an excess risk recorded in the registered criminality – which were men, young people, and foreign-born individuals who had recently migrated to Sweden. These analyses show that the proportion of crimes of sexual nature had increased gradually among these 3 groups from 2015-2016. The correlation between the extensive influx of refugees in 2015 and the steep increase of minor sexual offences was also noted in following years (Brå 2019a). The deviant behaviour that falls under minor sexual offences in Sweden is sexual molestation, which in turn includes both physical and verbal violations, as well as digital communication and redistribution in the form photographs or film clips of sexual nature. Also the police-reported cases of sexual molestation against individuals aged 15 witnessed an increase, particularly during the years of 2016 and 2017. In 2017, almost one-third of minor sexual offences were committed at festivals, a crime location which had been very rarely noted in Sweden's police reports before the year of 2011 (Brå 2019a).

A study conducted by Malmö University concluded that Sweden had witnessed a rise not only in minor sexual offences, but also in various categories of sexual crime – including rape, aggravated rape, attempted rape, and attempted aggravated rape. This study, published in 2021 concentrated on 3039 convicted rape offenders from 2000-2015 and found that a majority – 59.2% – out of these offenders were immigrants (Khoshnood *et al.* 2021). These 3039 offenders were aged from 15-60 and two significantly largest groups of them came to Sweden from either Middle East or North Africa (34.5%) or from Sub-Saharan Africa (19.1%). In 2020 another study was conducted in Southern Sweden city of Malmö, with a large percentage of immigrant population. The study determined that between 2013 and 2018 the majority of rape offenders were foreign-born men (71%) between the ages of 30-40, who were experiencing problems with employment (Stiernströmer *et al.* 2020). Both of these studies have emphasised the need for future studies to explain the over-representation of men with foreign ethnicity in crime statistics, in order to understand the possible significance of differing socio-cultural values and factors behind immigrants committing these acts more often than ethnic Swedes.

2.2.3. Islamic Extremism and Terrorism

Before the 2015 Refugee Crisis Scandinavian countries along with Sweden experienced a sudden rise in single-actor terrorist plots linked to Swedish artist Lars Vilks. Two weeks before Christmas, on 11th December 2010, Swedish-Iraqi Taimour Abdulwahab who had ties to al-Qaida detonated two bombs in Stockholm with an aim to kill up to 40 people (Nesser 2015, 245, 262). He managed to injure 2 and only killed himself. His martyrdom statement declared that he wanted to avenge Sweden for military participation in Afghanistan and for Swedish artist Vilks mocking Islam by portraying Prophet Muhammad as a dog. Abdulwahab had emigrated from Iraq to Sweden at the age of ten (Nesser 2015, 262).

The city of Gothenburg in Sweden has experienced one of the largest recruitment rates of Islamic extremism. The statistics from the Swedish Security Service show that more than 300 Swedish nationals left the country after the breakout of Syria's civil war to fight for various jihadist militant groups in Syria or Iraq, especially the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant/Syria, also known as Daesh (The Local 2015b). According to the Swedish integration police chief, Ulf Boström, around 120 of those Islamic fighters came from the neighbourhoods of Bergsjon and Angered, inside the city of Gothenburg (The Local 2015b). Boström also said that many of these

jihadist have come back home to Gothenburg simply to receive free medical care provided by Sweden to immigrants, before returning back to fighting in Syria. In 2017 the Swedish Defence University estimated that close to 120 Swedes from the Gothenburg have returned home, while none of them have so far been prosecuted for the terrorist activities that they have committed in Syria (The Local 2017). A study done in Swedish Defence University notes that Swedish Islamist fighters who had travelled to Syria had mostly come from Västra Götaland county, Skåne county, Örebro county, and from the suburbs of capital Stockholm; 75% had citizenship status, while only 34% were born in Sweden (Gustafsson, Ranstorp 2017, 104). More than 70% of these foreign fighters came from socially deprived areas in these cities, struggling with high criminality and low socio-economic status. 36 foreign fighters had travelled to Syria or Iraq in 2012, 98 in 2013, 78 in 2014, 36 in 2015, and 5 in 2016 (Gustafsson, Ranstorp 2017, 103). Around 80% had been fighting for Daesh and more than 30% had been associated with another Jihadist group called Jabhat al-Nusra.

On April 7, 2017 Sweden experienced its first large scale Islamic terrorist attack, where Rakhmat Akilov hijacked a truck and rammed it into a crowd of pedestrians outside the shopping mall in Stockholm (Deutsche Welle 2018). He managed to kill five, while seriously injuring 15 others. Akilov, an Uzbek immigrant, claimed that he intended to punish Sweden for joining the military coalition against the Islamic State in Syria. Akilov received a life imprisonment in 2018. Sweden had previously sent its troops to Afghanistan in 2002 and into Iraq in 2015 (Reuters 2015). By expanding its role in military coalitions abroad and because of liberal immigration policies at home, Sweden was witnessing the growing presence of foreign-born extremists. In 2017, shortly after Akilov's attack, Swedish Security Service chief Anders Thornberg reported that during the past 5 years the presence of Islamic extremists residing inside Sweden had increased from hundreds to thousands (Newsweek 2017). According to Thornberg most of these suspected extremists were mainly living and operating in Stockholm, Gothenburg, Malmö, and Orebro.

In 2019 the Sweden's National Centre for Terrorist Threat (NCT), which presents a yearly assessment and monitors terrorist threats, found that the main threat directed at Sweden came from the Islamist-motivated terrorism (The National Centre for Terrorist Threat Assessment 2019, 1). Four years after the influx of immigrants, NCT assessed the overall threat level in Sweden for terrorism related attacks to be "elevated" – a 3rd level rating on their 5 point scale. NCT warned about the existence of Islamist environment in Sweden, which consisted of groups or individuals that were espousing an ideology of violence, according to which terrorist attacks

inside Sweden were considered to be legitimate. Two main groups that were spreading this violent Islamist propaganda were pointed out to be al-Qaeda and Daesh – where in 2018, Daesh was mainly seen as the foremost source of inspiration to commit terrorist attacks in Sweden (The National Centre for Terrorist Threat Assessment 2019, 1). NCT specified that after 2018 Daesh had fallen under considerate military pressure in Syria, where a number of individuals who had previously left Sweden to fight for Daesh and had clear links to terrorism, were now returning back to Sweden. NCT advised that the potential terrorist attack in Sweden would be carried out by a lone actor or a small group, while the attack would be inspired or guided by Islamist actors promoting violence either in Sweden or abroad.

In 2021 it was revealed that Islamic school in Gothenburg, The Romosseskolan, which was practising gender segregation and forcing its students to take part in Islamic prayer sessions, was also taking part in spreading extremism (The National 2021). When the local Gothenburg government cut its funds, Islamic Association of Sweden stepped up to pay the teachers' salaries. According to the Swedish Defence University, Islamic Association of Sweden was founded by Muslim Brotherhood in the 1990s. Swedish Security Services have also noted that Islamic radicalisation was still taking place in Gothenburg and the school was appointing Islamist fighters, who had previously been fighting and had returned from Syria, as teachers. Previously a similar high school spreading Islamic extremism had been closed in Gothenburg; however the efforts by the local government officials to close the Romosseskolan have so far been in vain.

The French think tank "Fondation pour l'innovation politique" has published a study detailing a steady increase of Jihadist attacks between 1979 and 2019. Since 2013 onward, there has been intensification in violence around the world as 63.4% of people have been killed – 125 672 deaths out of 198 351 – due to Islamist terrorism (Reynie 2019). The top three countries most affected by terrorism, according to the foundation's study, were Afghanistan, Iraq, and Somalia. Generally, higher immigration numbers are usually linked to lower levels of terrorism; however this is not the case when the immigrants arriving to the host country are associated by the widespread terrorism in their own countries of origin, as terrorism will end up travelling from one country to another by migration flows (Bove, Böhmelt 2016, 25). Sweden, along with other Scandinavian nations, have allowed Jihadi radicals to use their countries as sanctuary states and places to set up extremist support networks (Nesser 2015, 245-246). Furthermore, terrorist organizations will exploit immigrant communities and use them as recruitment pools for future

extremist activities – this has also transpired in Sweden (Gustafsson, Ranstorp 2017, 104; Nesser 2015, 246).

Short Summary

Employment plays a vital part in making immigrants self-sustainable, helping them by becoming independent and no longer relying on government subsidies. There has been a minor improvement in Sweden among foreign-born immigrant men when examining unemployment numbers during the past few years; the unemployment is still high among foreign-born women. Sweden has witnessed a yearly rise in crime concentrating mostly around cities inhabited by large percentages of immigrants. This in turn will undoubtedly further raise questions about what oversights have there been in current integration policy and what further additional steps should be taken to successfully integrate the immigrant populace.

3. ANALYSIS OF SWEDEN'S INTEGRATION POLICY

The issues around integration have become increasingly politicised in the European Union during the last two decades by two opposite sides of the political spectrum. As mentioned in introductory integration chapter (1.1) immigration policies that deal with integration can be viewed through a dualistic lens. These policies in their aspect can either be assimilatory or multicultural. The left-wing parties have idealised multicultural and multi-ethnic societies, while right-wing parties have tapped into the public concern over the rise in unemployment and crime – often in order to win elections – and have tried to address these concerns by imposing stricter assimilatory integration measures or outright limit the immigration (Novotny 2012, 509-510). The host societies themselves do have the need to preserve their cultural identities. Immigrants, however, will bring along their own cultural customs and identity. This will inevitably raise questions if one side has to give up part of their own identity or cultural customs to accommodate the other – for example, in 2015 there was a proposal by a bishop to remove crosses from a Swedish church as they were found to be offensive (SVT News 2015).

It is safe therefore to label the aspects and measures where immigrants are asked to conform to the requirements of the host country as assimilatory; whereas the measures within the policy where immigrants can retain their culture and identity, without being affected by the assimilatory mandates, can be labelled as multicultural. The author needs to emphasise the fact that this sort of labelling can be somewhat arbitrary, and not categorical. Also, it is difficult to quantify the assimilatory or multicultural "weight" of these measures. When looking at the results, one should not assume that a country, which applies these assimilatory aspects in their integration policy, would do better at integrating its immigrant populace by instead applying multicultural aspects; or vice versa. One of the studies conducted concerning this issue in France shows that assimilationist policies have helped to reduce the diffusion of cultural differences between Muslim immigrants and Christian-French populace, as well as reduce the levels of discriminatory acts that these immigrants had faced in France (Adida *et al.* 2016, 180). There is evidence that assimilatory courses and tests, which are becoming more entrenched in European

states, seem to bring the host country closer to the lives of immigrants, where these increased requirements, when obtaining citizenship, function as gatekeepers, where they allow those immigrants that have crossed the necessary hurdles to proceed while barring others (Goodman, Wright 2015, 1903). To suggest something more concrete about whether either assimilatory or multicultural measures are better at integrating immigrant populace, more comparative studies would be required in the future.

3.1. Assimilationist Aspects in the Policy

The first identifiable assimilatory measure, immigrants and refugees have to follow when arriving to Sweden, is the mandatory participation in the introduction programme. The programme is coordinated and drawn up by Sweden's public employment service and was introduced in 2010 (OECD 2014, 10, 20). It lasts for 2 years and the participation grants immigrants access to social security benefits, if they participate and finish the programme. All immigrant participation, as well as those who do not qualify for refugee status, is subsidised by the government (as previously mentioned in 1.2.1 sub-chapter), which softens the assimilatory aspect of this requirement.

The second measure is the obligatory participation in the civic orientation courses, which is part of the previously mentioned introduction programme. Civic orientation is administered by Swedish municipalities and provides immigrants with preliminary understanding of Sweden and its values – knowledge about its society and customs, fundamental democratic and human rights, and individual rights and responsibilities (OECD 2014, 20).

The third assimilatory aspect identified in the integration policy is the immigrant participation in the Swedish language training classes. The language training is also one of the components of the mandatory introduction programme. These classes are administered by Sweden’s municipalities through the provision titled as “Swedish for Immigrants”, and are aimed at immigrant residents lacking basic knowledge of Swedish (OECD 2014, 7). In some municipalities the language training is specifically tailored so immigrants could learn the Swedish language skills particular to their current professions. The standards of teaching, however, can vary considerably between different municipalities and in 2009 compulsory

national final language tests were introduced by the government to all immigrants (Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality 2009, 3).
Identified assimilatory measures are:

- Participation in the introduction plan
- Participation in the civic orientation programme
- Participation in Swedish language courses

3.2. Multicultural Aspects in the Policy

The first recognizable multicultural measure in Sweden's integration policy is the access to healthcare. However, this is only limited to those immigrants who have obtained refugee status. By law refugees are entitled to emergency healthcare, dental care, childbirth care, abortion care, advice on contraception, and maternity care (Migrationsverket 2021a). It is safe to assume that integration should start by granting immigrants equal access to societal rights, the same way the host populace has access to these rights. Access to healthcare is one of those rights.

While the Swedish Migration Board together with the county administrative boards will make an effort to settle immigrants to municipalities with good conditions for employment, education, and access to a labour market, overall the immigrants in Sweden are free to choose their own place of residence (Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality 2009, 2). The Swedish Migration Board can also re-settle immigrants to municipalities where there is better access to the labour market. This freedom to choose your own place of residence usually encourages newcomers to settle within already present immigrant neighbourhoods most similar to them and will further enlarge these already existing multicultural communities within Sweden. Therefore, it can be viewed as another multicultural aspect in the policy.

Sweden, along with other Scandinavian countries, permits dual citizenship. When becoming a Swedish citizen, immigrants can retain their foreign citizenship if the other country permits by law (Migrationsverket 2021b). There are exceptions, since some countries might not allow dual citizenship and Swedish citizenship might not be recognised by other countries. Dual citizenship helps immigrants retain their connection to their native country, and is the third multicultural aspect in the policy.

The fourth multicultural aspect in the policy is the existing anti-discrimination legislation. In 2009 Anti-Discrimination Act in Sweden became a new law, which combined much of the previously existing judicial anti-discrimination legislation into a common framework (Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality 2009, 3). This act introduces a new penalty, along with compensation for discrimination, in order to deter people from discriminating against immigrants. Factors laid out in the legislation, which may provoke discrimination targeted at immigrants are gender, gender identity, gender expression, ethnicity, religion or other beliefs, disabilities, sexual orientation, and age (Migrationsverket 2019).

Identified multicultural measures are:

- Access to healthcare (for refugees)
- Freedom to choose the place of residence
- Ability to have dual citizenship
- Governmental anti-discrimination legislation

3.3. Access to Citizenship in the Context of Civic Integration Policy Index

The civic integration policy index (CIVIX) was coined by Sara Wallace Goodman as theoretical concept to categorise the content and tools required for achieving immigrant's civic integration into the society (Goodman 2010, 755). The integration policies that emphasise civic integration use assessment tools like integration tests, various courses and contracts to measure immigrant eligibility to earn their citizenship. These tools are applied as conditions during the processes of obtaining citizenship. The process itself is divided into 3 categories: immigrant's entry into the country, immigrant's settlement process, and the attainment of citizenship.

To measure how well one country's integration policy is geared towards civic integration, Goodman assessed 15 European countries based on their integration policies, attributed an 8-point scale in measuring their civic integration, and formulated CIVIX 2009 (Goodman 2010, 763). If these measures in the policies were partial the country received half a point (0.5) in each category; in case of extensive civic integration measures, it amounted up to a full point (1). The highest rating on Goodman's CIVIX 2009 scale belonged to Germany (6 points), while the lowest to Sweden (0 points). The instances where Sweden's integration policy failed to live up to the standards of civic integration were following:

- No language requirement during the process of entry
- No language courses during the process of entry
- No language level requirement at entry
- No residence permit fee
- No settlement requirements, like language, orientation, integration tests or courses
- No previous family requirement during the settlement application
- No language requirement when obtaining citizenship
- No ceremonies or oral oath when obtaining citizenship

Since this policy index was measured in 2009, certain changes have taken place in Sweden's integration policy. Some of these policy changes include the expanding of mandatory citizenship ceremonies (Goodman 2010, 770). The strides have been made when granting citizenship to immigrants, as Swedish language classes have now become mandatory to all individuals aiming to become Swedish citizens (Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality 2009, 3).

CONCLUSION

The questions revolving around immigrant integration are becoming one of the biggest contemporary social challenges that European countries are currently forced to confront. The social and political instabilities in Middle-Eastern regions and North-African countries are driving large numbers of people to take refuge inside one of the most politically stable and financially prosperous countries in the Western world. During the last few decades a number of these countries in Europe have been tightening their immigration policies and increasing the integration demands for the newcomers.

The aim of the thesis was to examine how well Sweden's integration policy has managed to handle the influx of immigrants caused by the 2015 Refugee Crisis. Overall, the results show how Sweden's policy implemented in 2009 was not capable of managing such large numbers of immigrants. There has been a steady rise in crime in Sweden, even years after the end of the 2015 crisis. Immigrant unemployment, which Sweden was already struggling with before the crisis, has not seen any considerable improvement. The unemployment numbers among foreign-born men are currently more than three times and foreign-born women almost four times as high as the unemployment figures among ethnic Swedes. When it comes to extremist activities, after the 2015 crisis Sweden became an importer of terrorism, with people from immigrant communities inside Sweden travelling to Syria or Iraq to fight for Islamic terrorist organizations.

Thesis presented and answered the following research questions:

1) What are the differences between the past and current integration policies in Sweden, when it comes to accepting new immigrants?
2) Has the 2015 Refugee Crisis affected crime, unemployment, and extremist activities in Sweden?
3) What are the assimilatory or multicultural elements within Sweden's 2009 integration policy?

Historically Sweden has been cut off from large movements of migrants affecting other countries in mainland Europe, thanks to its geopolitical position. When in 1960's changes were being introduced to Sweden's immigration policy, the country was starting to see its first big arrivals of people with different cultural backgrounds. The start of the 21st century marked the beginning of Sweden's open-door immigration policy – where tens of thousands of immigrants would enter a country that in the past had been mostly culturally and ethnically homogenous.

What are the differences between the past and current integration policies in Sweden, when it comes to accepting new immigrants?

After joining the Nordic Council in the 1950s, Sweden's immigration policy for a long time involved accepting migrant labour from Finland. For more than 50 years after the end of the Second World War, Sweden opened its doors to only small numbers of asylum seekers – mainly from Yugoslavia, Iraq, and Chile. Before the turn of the millennium, any movement of people into the country would be strictly regulated by Sweden's government, requiring immigrants to have a residence permit and a proof of employment. There were few exceptions made for those immigrants, who Sweden would accept as refugees. Over time Sweden would begin to change its immigration policies to be more liberal, breaking immigration's dependence on the necessities of labour markets and allowing larger inflows of immigrants to enter its borders.

In 1993 Sweden became the first country in Scandinavia to grant permanent residence to all immigrants who successfully applied for refugee status. Refugees over time would also get access to medical and hospital care the same way Swedish citizens did. The 2009 integration policy laid out a 2 year plan for each immigrant to be integrated into society. It presented an introductory programme consisting of civic orientation courses and language classes. The participation in the programme became mandatory to all immigrants entering Sweden. The immigrants, who agreed to follow these directives by the Migration Agency, would also enjoy a variety of financial benefits, like monthly payments and government subsidised housing.

Has the 2015 Refugee Crisis affected crime, unemployment, and extremist activities in Sweden?

The policies by the Sweden's Migration Agency and the Swedish government at the start of the new millennia resulted in swelling of the numbers of immigrants seeking entrance into the

country. The warnings by the OECD, that Sweden's labour market typically requires highly skilled workers while having too few low-skilled job positions available, were ignored by the politicians in the government. Since most immigrants arriving from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Somalia had either basic or no education, meant that the Swedish labour market was not able to accommodate their needs. The current job market in Sweden is increasingly causing social polarisation, poverty, and exclusion among immigrants. The Migration Agency has tried to alleviate these problems by offering government subsidised jobs, additional training and study courses.

Gun crimes, murders, and sexual assaults have all witnessed a rise in Sweden during the last decade. This in turn undermines the efforts of law enforcement agencies, who are struggling with vulnerable high risk areas, where the immigrant populace refuses to cooperate with the authorities and where there is rampant gun crime. The Sweden's Security Service reported in 2019 that the main threat directed at Sweden came from the Islamist-motivated terrorism. From 2012 to 2017 the presence of Islamic extremists residing inside Sweden had increased from hundreds to thousands. Most of these suspected extremists were mainly located in the cities of Stockholm, Gothenburg, Malmö, and Orebro – cities with large immigrant populations. Some have previously travelled to Syria or Iraq to fight for terrorist organizations as foreign fighters, while others pose a risk of spreading violent propaganda inside Sweden and converting more to their cause. Lot of these problems in Sweden concerning unemployment and crime over time have become endemic, concentrated into cities and regions with high populations of immigrants.

What are the assimilatory or multicultural aspects within Sweden's 2009 integration policy?

The analysis 2009 integration policy determined that three recognizable assimilatory aspects in the policy were the mandatory immigrant participation in the introduction plan, in the civic orientation programme, and in Swedish language studies. Four multicultural measures were identified in the policy, which were refugee access to healthcare, freedom for immigrants to choose their own place of residence, ability to have dual citizenship, and the existing anti-discrimination legislation. Overall, the author found that Sweden's 2009 integration policy can be regarded to be geared more towards multicultural than assimilatory viewpoints.

Possible areas of further research

One of the interesting possible areas for future study involving integration would be to see how adherence to certain religion or religious customs can affect immigrant integration efforts. While Sweden has historically not witnessed any serious problems in integrating numerous immigrants from neighbouring Finland or recent arrivals from Poland across the Baltic Sea, integrating people from religiously homogeneous Islamic countries, like Afghanistan, Iraq, and Somalia, has to contribute to the current difficulties of Sweden's integration efforts.

There is also a need for comparative studies assessing the different measures present in integration policies currently in use in European Union states. From there integration theorists could move forward by assessing the efficacy of these assimilatory or multicultural measures. Then the next step would be to understand which of these integration measures work better than others and which countries are better at implementing them. Perhaps that would one day lead to the creation and the application of a common integration legislation policy across the European Union countries.

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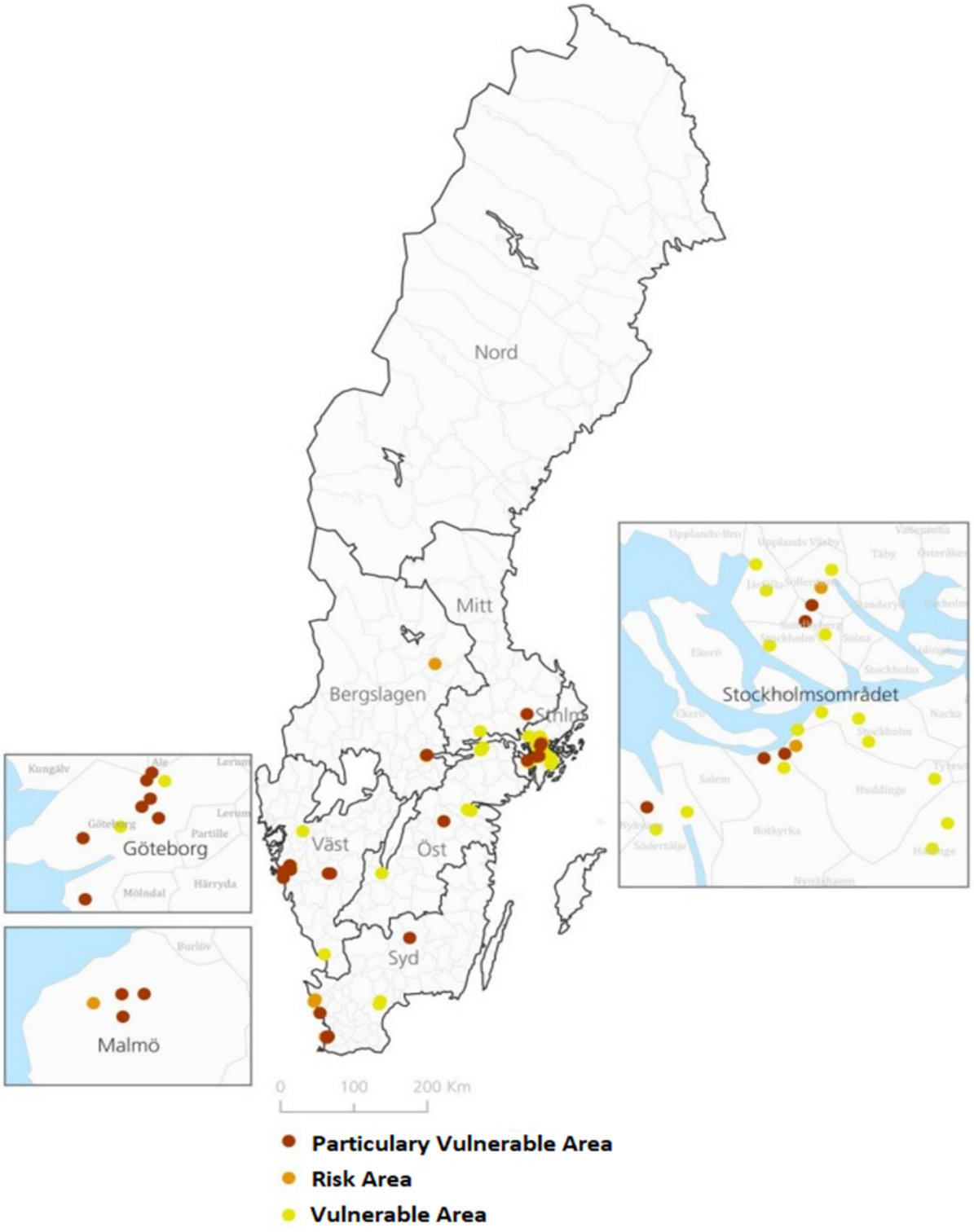
APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Figure 1



Map of vulnerable areas in Sweden.

Source: Polisen (2017)

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