

Integrating into the Swedish Labour Market as an Immigrant Lone Mother

A Qualitative Study on the Experiences of Immigrant Lone Mothers in
Finding Employment and Balancing Work and Family



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Abstract

This thesis aims to investigate the experiences of immigrant lone mothers' integration into the Swedish labour market. The study is situated against a background where immigrants and lone mothers are two groups that experience difficulties on the labour market, but where there have been few studies that have explored how immigrant lone mothers experience their labour market integration as both immigrants and lone mothers. Through the use of interviews, this thesis seeks to answer questions regarding the experiences of these women and if they have any strategies that help to facilitate labour market integration. The situation of these women has been examined through an intersectional perspective, with the addition of theories of cultural, social, and human capital when examining difficulties in entering the labour market. A thematic analysis has been used for examining the empirical data. The interviews showed that most of the immigrant women in this sample had experienced some difficulties in integrating into the labour market, due to being immigrants and lone mothers. It was seen that many of the interviewees lack social connections that could facilitate employment, but that the lack of social connections was also a problem once an employment was obtained, as the women did not have a lot of support to care for the children when they were at work. In that sense, the women had difficulties combining work and family as they were not able to work certain hours, due to having the main care responsibility for their children. It was also seen that the organisation of society in Sweden is favourable for dual-earner households which puts lone mothers into a disadvantaged position.

Key words: lone mothers, immigrants, labour market integration, work-family balance

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1. Introduction

Society today is undergoing changes, where employment structures and family relations are changing. In terms of changing employment structures, Timonen (2004) notes that employment is now characterised by insecurity, where temporary and unstable employments are prioritised over other forms of more stable employment. These changes affect everyone in society, but immigrants in particular are affected by these changes (Timonen 2004:93). At the same time as employment is becoming increasingly insecure, Lundborg (2013) notes that it is one of the most important aspects when it comes to the integration of immigrants (Lundborg 2013:221,230). However, it is seen that immigrants are increasingly experiencing difficulties in obtaining employments (Neergard 2006:14). Changing family structures are another aspect that has emerged as a new social risk. According to Chzen and Bradshaw (2012), the number of lone parent households has increased significantly in the past few decades, and it is seen that a large share of lone parents are women. (Chzen and Bradshaw 2012:487). In connection to this, Stranz and Wiklund (2011) argue that lone mothers are a group that has been identified as being in a vulnerable position according to welfare research. It is argued that they are in an economically disadvantaged position compared to other groups in society, as they are more likely to hold part-time employment, earn less income, and are seen to have more difficulties entering into the labour market (2011:42-44). It can thus be seen that women and lone mothers experience certain challenges when partaking in employment. It is against this background that this thesis will investigate the experiences of immigrant lone mothers integrating into Swedish society.

Statistics from Statistics Sweden (2009) show that after a separation, over half of the children stay with their mothers (Statistics Sweden 2009:20), which shows that in a lot of cases the mother becomes the main caretaker. Stranz and Wiklund (2011) note that on a global level, it is seen that lone mothers are in general poorer in comparison to other family compositions. However, in Sweden, this gap is smaller, due to the existing family policies (Stranz and Wiklund 2011:43). Bonoli (2006) argues that being a lone parent is associated with challenges such as attaining a sufficient income, access to childcare services and the reconciliation of work and family. These aspects are all interconnected and the balance of work and family can be particularly challenging for a lone parent in that an income is important for the subsistence of the family, they also need to be able to care for their children (Bonoli 2006:6-8). At the same time,

Lundborg (2013) notes that one of the most important aspects of the integration of immigrants is attaining employment, as it is seen as generating not only income, but also presents opportunities to create new networks and can enhance language skills (Lundborg 2013:221, 230).

The Swedish Social Insurance Agency (2009) notes that although there are certain characteristics that are ascribed to lone parent households, such as being the lone provider in the household, it is important to remember that not all lone parent households are the same, and that there exist differences within the group. These differences depend on factors such as level of education, age, geographic location and place of birth, and can influence income levels and the level of connection to the labour market. In relation to this, it is seen that immigrant lone mothers are generally less established on the labour market and have lower incomes, in comparison to Swedish lone mothers (Socialförsäkringsrapport 2009:4).

1.1 Purpose

This thesis aims to explore the situation of lone mothers with immigrant backgrounds in Sweden, against the backdrop of problems in employment that women, and lone mothers in particular, are facing along with the integration of immigrants onto the labour market. Research done on the situation of lone mothers in Sweden (Leira 2002; Skevik 2006) as well as on the integration of immigrants into the Swedish labour market (Bevelander 2011; Lundborg 2013) demonstrates how lone mothers and immigrants separately are groups that experience difficulties attaining and accessing employment. However, there seems to be little research conducted on the employment situation of immigrant women who are also lone mothers. Based on the background provided in this study, an assumption is made that lone mothers as well as immigrants have more difficulties integrating into the Swedish labour market than their Swedish counterparts. Although there are other groups of lone mothers that could also be seen to be in a similar position to that of the lone mothers in this study, this thesis will be focused on immigrant lone mothers due to their position as immigrants and lone mothers. The study thus aims at investigating the integration of lone mothers onto the labour market by interviewing immigrant lone mothers about their experiences and trying to uncover what factors might have impacted their process of integrating into the labour market, as well as how they are able to balance work and family as a lone parent household.

1.2 Research Questions

The following research questions will be applied in this thesis:

What are the experiences of immigrant lone mothers in integrating into the Swedish labour market?

How do lone mothers of immigrant background perceive their employment possibilities as lone mothers?

What strategies have the women developed to cope with their situation as immigrant lone mothers?

1.3 Research limitations

One of the limitations with this study is that it consists of only 13 interviewees, which means that it is quite a small sample. Furthermore, the interview requests (see appendix 1) were sent out only in Swedish and no other language, which could have had an impact on the number of women who were willing to participate. If the request had been sent out in other languages as well, the sample might have been larger. Nonetheless, the sample is large enough to offer an insight into the experiences of these women. Another limitation of this thesis is that the women are at different stages of labour market integration and are from different backgrounds, which means that their experiences with said integration differ. One last limitation is that the study has not been limited to a specific city, which means that the employment opportunities and life opportunities can be different depending on where the interviewee lives. As such, living in a small or a big city can have an impact on labour market integration as the opportunities to integrate depend on the opportunities that exist where the interviewee lives. It can be inferred that a big city presents more opportunities than that of a village, and therefore the place of residence can also have an impact on the process of labour market integration, something that has not been given focus in this study.

1.4 Disposition

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter one, which is this chapter, discusses the research aim of the thesis, and presents a background and previous studies relating to the purpose of the study. It also presents the definitions of the study's key concepts: lone mother, integration and immigrants. Chapter two presents the theoretical frameworks that that will be used in this thesis,

which are intersectionality, cultural and social capital, and lastly human capital. In this chapter, the basis of these theories and their relevance for this study will be discussed. Chapter three presents the method used in this study, which is interviews, and discusses the ethical and methodological considerations related to this. Furthermore, this chapter will present how the interviews were conducted and who the interviewees are. The method of analysis applied in this thesis is a thematic analysis, for which two major themes have been chosen: entering the labour market, and strategies. These two themes further contain three subthemes each, which are related to the main themes. Chapter four contains the analysis, in which empirical data from the interviews will be discussed in relation to the theories from chapter two and the previous studies from chapter one. It also contains a discussion where the findings are further explored. Chapter five consists of a conclusion in which the findings of the thesis will be discussed, and further research will be proposed. With this structure, this thesis can further illuminate the situation of immigrant lone mothers and their experiences in integrating into the Swedish labour market.

1.5 Background

The following section will provide a background on areas that are related to the study, such as the integration of immigrants and the position of lone mothers. It will start by looking at the family policies in Sweden and then present a background on the other two topics as well. This is done in order to provide the most comprehensive picture possible.

1.5.1 Family Policies and Gender Equality

In order to understand the point of departure of this thesis, it is important to provide a background on family policy in Sweden and the situation of lone mothers, as well as the integration of immigrants into the labour market. According to Duvander (2008), and Leira (2002), Swedish family policy has been implemented to support every individual and their family in achieving an adequate standard of living, as well as make it easier for men and women to create a balance between family and work. In the case of Sweden, the rights of family policy are based on residential rights, which means that the family policies are applicable to any person who resides permanently in Sweden, and has children. There are various areas that constitute family policy in Sweden. However, the three most common are the provision of day care services, child benefits and paid parental leave (Duvander 2008:10; Leira 2002:82). For families that do not utilise day

care services for children, an allowance for home care, also called a cash-for-care allowance, has recently been implemented, so that people can care for their children at home, if necessary (Guo and Xiao 2013:232). Not only are these policies seen as a support for families with children, but they are also seen to promote female employment and work-family balance for women (Misra et al 2012:115). Therefore, through various measures such as the extensive provision of care, and other measures aimed at facilitating its population's wellbeing, the welfare state promotes the participation of individuals in the labour market, as employment and labour market participation are seen as important aspects for the welfare state. The policies that are in place thus influence the way in which individuals can partake in employment, and this in particular is the case for women. Opportunities for part-time work, employment in the private sector and the provision of income support often enable women to participate in the labour market to a larger extent (Daly and Rake 2003:72). Daly and Rake (2003) note that the state in Sweden has significant influence on the labour market and is considered to be large in general, and with measures towards individualisation, it is considered to put little significance on the family. The state is seen to protect its citizens against social risks, as well as trying to lessen the effect of these risks. Furthermore, the state pursues policies promoting gender equality by encouraging women to partake in employment. The policies promoting gender equality do not only go one way as Sweden has introduced paternal leave, also referred to as daddy leave, encouraging men to stay at home with their children when they are young (Daly and Rake 2003:150-151).

With a focus on gender equality, the policies are not aimed at supporting one particular group in society but instead promote the individual. According to Hantrais (2004), the family policies in Sweden are seen as defamilialised, meaning that they are based on supporting the individual and not the family, and thus promote the participation on the labour market of all family members (Hantrais 2004:201). With the individual nature of the policies, all individuals are able to access welfare support or services, regardless of gender or family situation. Support from the welfare state therefore does not differentiate between men and women, nor if a household is composed of a single earner or is a dual-earner household (Daly and Rake 2003:121). In Sweden, most of the family policies, for example the parental insurance, are individualized and are determined based on income and so is taxation (Duvander 2008:4). The focus on the individual therefore promotes equal access as well as independency for the individual, and the household situation and family

composition has no significance in who can access the services and support from the state. However, Duvander (2008) points out that the individualisation of the policies promotes dual-earner households as households with two incomes benefit more than households with one income, due to the additional income of an extra person (Duvander 2008:4). Nonetheless, Esping-Andersen et al. (2002) argue that these policies promote individual freedom, which can strengthen the individual and the role of women, and aim at protecting vulnerable groups, such as pensioners or lone mothers with young children (Esping-Andersen et al. 2002:13-14).

1.5.2 Lone Motherhood

The situation of women extends itself also to the situation of lone mothers. Similarly to others before her, but put in the context of Scandinavia, Skevik (2006) noted that in the Scandinavian countries there is a higher rate of women in the labour market than in other countries, and that many of these are women are lone mothers. It is noted that although lone mothers do have employment, they are facing some challenges that dual-earner households are not. Among these are that women typically earn less than men, and as a single-income household, they have less money to consume with, which therefore means that they do not have the same resources to use as a household with dual incomes (Skevik 2006:244). In relation to this, the Swedish Social Insurance Agency (2009) noted that the main income for lone parents is the income they receive from employment. Households consisting of lone parents tend to be economically worse off than households with two parents. Furthermore, it was seen that lone parent families with numerous children, or where the parent was not born in Sweden had a lower economic standard of living in comparison to other household groups. In addition, income levels are also seen to be lower in lone parent households where the parent is not born in Sweden (Socialförsäkringsrapport 2009:4). It is further noted that lone parent households do, in comparison to other groups, rely to a larger extent on support from the state to generate economic stability, in terms of social insurances (Socialförsäkringsrapport 2009:4).

1.5.3 Integration

For the purpose of the study it is also important to look at the integration of immigrant women onto the Swedish labour market. Although the following studies have not been aimed directly at investigating the integration of immigrant women, they do shed some light on the integration of

immigrants in Sweden, both for women and men. Szulkin et al. (2013) note that Sweden accepts a large number of humanitarian immigrants and refugees, as well as family reunification immigrants in comparison with other European countries, and is often considered as having quite open immigration policies. However, it is seen that many immigrants have difficulties in attaining employment in the first years of their arrival to Sweden (Szulkin 2013:27). An earlier study conducted by Bevelander (2011) regarding the employment outcomes of immigrants shared the same sentiments, as it was shown that immigrants and refugees in general have a weaker connection to the labour market than their Swedish counterparts. It is seen that refugees partake more in temporary employment and also have lower income levels (Bevelander 2011:23). Along the same lines, Szulkin et al. (2013) note that Sweden has integration policies which promote and facilitate integration; however, it is seen that there is a larger employment gap between immigrants and natives in Sweden in comparison to other countries in Europe. Newly arrived immigrants, and immigrants that have only spent a short amount of time in Sweden have the lowest employment rates, although the employment rates rise in accordance with time living in the country (Szulkin et al. 2013:10). This has also been seen in statistics from Statistics Sweden (2014) which show that in 2011, 25 percent of the women that had been in Sweden less than five years were working, whereas the number was 41 percent for men. In comparison, the statistics showed that among immigrants that had lived in Sweden over 20 years, 68 percent of the women, and 70 percent of the men were working (Statistics Sweden 2014:50).

When talking about labour market integration it is important to cover what the labour market looks like in Sweden, along with examining some of the existing labour market policies. Employment is desired for the individual, as it can ease economic security and self-sufficiency. It is also conducive for the welfare state, as tax revenue is collected from those in employment (Szulkin et al. 2013:14). According to Szulkin et al. (2013) labour market policies have an obvious influence on the labour market and its function, and they aim at promoting employment as well decreasing unemployment through various efforts. The policies can be divided into two categories, passive and active labour market policies. The former, passive labour market policies, are aimed at income support in times of unemployment and consist of cash benefits. However, the cash benefits are conditional, in that an individual who is receiving these benefits needs to actively search for employment. The latter, the active policies, consists of measures aimed at

facilitating employment attainment for those that are unemployed, and can constitute different kinds of labour market trainings, as well as the matching of vacancies to those looking for employment. When the right-wing government came to power in 2006, these active policies were given increased significance. In 2010 an establishment reform (etableringsreformen) was introduced, with the aim of facilitating the integration into the labour market and society of newly arrived immigrants (Szulkin et al. 2013:30-33).

1.6 Previous Research

This following section will present studies that have been conducted on the different aspects that are looked at in this thesis, such as lone mothers and the integration of immigrants into the labour market. In order to present the studies more clearly, they will be divided by category, starting with research that has been conducted regarding the situation of lone mothers. After that, previous studies on the integration of immigrants will be presented. This is done in order to try to create a comprehensive picture of the existing research. These studies all differ in terms of scope and direction, but do nonetheless help to map the field and provide a basis for this thesis.

1.6.1 Lone Mothers and Female Employment

There are a great number of studies investigating the situation of lone mothers on the labour market. Among some of the scholars in this section, Skevik (2006) looks at lone motherhood from a Nordic perspective; Yazdanpanah (2008) investigates the situation of lone mothers in Sweden by using qualitative research, originating from an economic perspective by looking at the economic support of lone mothers with low wages. Guo and Xiao (2013), as well as Stranz and Wiklund (2011) discuss Swedish family policy, and Darvishpour (2004) looks at the cultural aspects of integration for immigrant women.

When looking at the situation of lone mothers, it is important to also look at the situation of women in general, and in line with the theme of this study, to look at female employment. The family policies in Sweden are aimed at promoting female employment and through provision of childcare and parental leave, there is an emphasis on being able to combine work and family. Therefore, the availability and extent of these services enables the participation of women on the labour market and the balance of work and family. These family policies are also aimed at promoting gender equality, in that all individuals should have the same rights to participate in

society, irrespective of gender. Furthermore, there is a large focus on engaging women in paid work, through the measures offered by the state, such as childcare provision. The availability of part-time employment has increased participation among women, and particularly mothers, on the labour market and as a result, women have become more established on the labour market and have become less financially dependent on others (Guo and Xiao 2013:232-239). In addition, Stranz and Wiklund (2011) note that women in Sweden do in general hold more employment in the public sector, and it is also seen that wages tend to be lower in this sector in comparison to other sectors (Stranz and Wiklund 2011:43). In a more narrow perspective, Skeivik (2006) looks at the employment of lone mothers in the Nordic countries. Some of the results presented in the study are that the rates of lone mothers who are unemployed are higher than that of other family compositions. Among the reasons given for the unemployment of lone mothers are that lone mothers are less flexible in how much they can work, as they are the sole provider of care in the household and cannot distribute it in the same way as a household consisting of two parents can. Another reason is that they might be discriminated against in the labour market due to being less flexible (Skeivik 2006:256-258). From these studies it can thus be seen that women tend to experience less stable employment. In combination with this, it is seen that lone mothers are less flexible in their working hours, which can impact their capability to work certain jobs as they cannot work certain hours. Based on the research presented on female employment and the situation of lone mothers it can be seen that women as well as lone mothers are experiencing insecurity on the labour market and that they are in general in an inferior situation to that of men.

This is also raised by Yazdanpanah (2008) who investigated the situation of lone mothers in Sweden. The study had a focus on both Swedish and immigrant lone mothers, with reference to women from Iran. It showed that the women in the study firstly gained their income through work, and to some extent from benefits. It was seen that the women tried to control their expenses in relation to their income the best they could, by taking on extra work and being careful with their economic resources, in order to provide the necessities for their children. Although it was not a comparative study, there were some differences between the lone mothers depending on ethnic background, in that the lone mothers from Iran were seen to have smaller social networks as well as less support when caring for the children, and combining family and

work (Yazdanpanah 2008:264). With a similar economic standpoint, Lundqvist (2013) investigated the economic situation of lone mothers after the financial crisis in 2008. It was noted that lone parent households are economically disadvantaged in relation to other types of family compositions, due to not generating an equivalent income to dual-earner households (Lundqvist 2013:250), a factor that was also raised by Duvander (2008:4) in the background. Lundqvist (2013) further argues that many of the mothers in the research experienced difficulties in balancing work and family, as well as undergoing stress related to being able to provide necessities for the children, in terms of school related expenses or other activities. Being able to provide economically for the children is seen as important. The balance of family and work is raised as a dilemma, as it was difficult for the women to manage certain working hours along with taking care of the children, and that the opening hours of childcare and schools were not suitable to the working hours of the mothers (Lundqvist 2013:257).

On a different, but related note, Darvishpour (2004) investigated the family situation of Iranian families in Sweden after immigration, and the impact that a new culture can have on these relations. It is seen that when coming to a new country, the bonds to the home country diminish and the arrival to Sweden can create economic and cultural difficulties. These factors all have an influence on the family situation and as a consequence new family forms such as lone parent households can be created, something that has increased according Darvishpour. It is seen in the research that this also occurs for immigrant families from countries in both Latin America and Africa, and is not just something that is particular to Iranian families (Darvishpour 2004:10-11). Factors such as individualisation as well as a shift or change in power resources when coming to Sweden are investigated as potential aspects contributing to changing family patterns of the Iranian families in the research. Cultural differences, with regard to Iranian immigrants coming from a culture that is family-oriented and integrating into Swedish society, which is very individualised, are also aspects that are raised in the research both in terms of why some Iranian families separate, and why others stay together as a family (Darvishpour 2004:17-19). Although the research from Darvishpour is focused on Iranian families only, the discussion regarding contrast between cultures and their impact lends itself to other research as well and in particular to this study, where cultural contrasts will be discussed.

1.6.2 The Integration of Immigrants into the Labour Market

The integration of immigrants in society is an area that has been studied significantly, and has been looked at from various aspects. For the purpose of this thesis the focus will be on labour market integration, and aspects that have been found to have an influence on the integration process will be presented. Starting from a general integration perspective, it is seen that participation in education as well as the labour market are some of the most important aspects for integration (Westin 2008:45). Labour market integration is seen as facilitating integration into society as a whole, as well as bringing with it increased social connections and increased language proficiency, which are both seen as beneficial for overall integration (Karlsson and Tibajev 2014:266). Integration into the labour market is thus seen as an important facilitator of integration into society as a whole. However, some factors can be seen to influence the process of integrating into the labour market, something that Neergard (2006) has also proposed. He argues that when looking at the integration of immigrants on the labour market and reasons for unemployment in Sweden, it is quite common to refer to an immigrant's lack of certain aspects, such as human capital acquired in Sweden (Neergaard 2006:14). Immigrants who do not have country-specific capital experience an inferior position in relation to individuals who possess that type of capital. Similarly, Bethoui (2008) states that a shortage of resourceful social connections is given as a potential explanation for why some immigrants experience lower labour market participation (Behtoui 2008:411-412). The acquiring of social and country-specific human capital thus becomes an important aspect of integration into the labour market.

Furthermore, Bethoui (2008) finds that social capital and informal methods are used quite frequently in order to find an employment in Sweden. However, this is to a larger extent the case for natives rather than immigrants, who experience greater difficulties in utilising their informal contacts for labour market possibilities. Nonetheless, informal methods are seen as facilitating finding employment, but the quality of the job depends on the arrangement of the social connections (Behtoui 2008:425-426). The shortage of social capital thus provides one possible explanation for the difficulties of immigrants in integrating into the labour market. This is also something that Tovatt (2007) finds in her research, where the role and composition of social networks are examined in relation to the labour market integration of youths with Swedish and immigrant backgrounds. Social networks are seen as a resource that can determine the position

of an individual on the labour market, and can be influenced by power relations on the labour market, in terms of ethnic identity and class belonging. It is further seen that limited social networks are less able to create job opportunities than resourceful social networks, and that this has an impact on the capability of an individual to enter the labour market (Tovatt 2007:300). In relation to social capital, and the composition or even lack of it, Karlsson and Tibajev (2014) argue that there are other factors that also influence access the labour market. One of these is the reason for immigration, as labour market immigrants often have established connections to the labour market prior to immigration, which eases entry into the labour market. In comparison, as refugees and family reunification immigrants do not immigrate for work, their connections to the labour market tend to be weaker (Karlsson and Tibajev 2014:275).

However, other factors that can also influence the integration process into the labour market are aspects such as age and education level, as individuals with higher levels of education and of younger age are seen to integrate easier into the labour market than those with lower education levels, for example (Bevelander 2011:42). However, this is contested to some extent by Karlsson and Tibajev (2014), who note that there is a greater chance of obtaining a job if an immigrant is proficient in Swedish or has education or training from Sweden. This is because their skills and education from their home countries are often not validated in the Swedish system, and therefore many immigrants end up taking jobs below their qualifications in order to gain any sort of income (Karlsson and Tibajev 2014:267-269). It is thus seen that although an immigrant may hold extensive previous experience, that person still can face difficulties when trying to obtain an employment as their experience is not validated to the same extent that a working experience obtained in Sweden would be. This is only one of the mentioned factors that present a possible explanation for the difficulties that immigrants experience when trying to integrate into the labour market. Another important point raised by Karlsson and Tibajev (2014) is that an immigrating individual faces an unfamiliar society and has to learn how that new society functions. Not being able to obtain information regarding this, or having problems to learn how the new structures work, can lead to difficulties in becoming fully integrated, as there is a lack of sufficient knowledge regarding how things work (Karlsson and Tibajev 2014:273).

In general, it is seen that all immigrants do not have the same opportunities and access in terms of integrating into the labour market. Immigrants originating from countries outside of Europe, predominately from regions such as Asia, Africa and Latin America experience more difficulties than immigrants originating from Western countries. In addition, immigrants from non-Western countries also have a harder time increasing their earnings than immigrants from other countries (Le Grand and Szulkin 2002:58-59). Along similar lines, Bevelander (2011) notes that the employment outcomes of immigrants depends on their status of immigration, in other words, if they are asylum seekers, immigrants seeking family reunification or refugees. Although there are differences between these groups as well as between countries of origin, it was seen that most of the groups that were born abroad are less integrated into the labour market than Swedish natives (Bevelander 2011:29). If looking only at the integration of refugees, Lundborg (2013) shows that when comparing various refugee groups to the native population in Sweden, it is seen that refugees from countries in Northern Africa and countries in the Middle East do not integrate to the same extent as refugees from countries in Latin America or Eastern Europe (Lundborg 2013:221). Therefore, Le Grand and Szulkin (2002), Bevelander (2011), and Lundborg (2013) all point towards the fact that immigrants from non-Western countries, primarily Africa, the Middle East and Asia generally experience more difficulties in entering the labour market than immigrants from other regions of origin.

Le Grand and Szulkin (2002) note in their research that immigrant women are seen to perform better than immigrant men on integrating into the labour market. However, it is important to keep in mind that this does not mean that women with immigrant backgrounds excel on the Swedish labour market. On the contrary, it is seen that overall, women tend to earn less than men, irrespective of country of origin. In addition, immigrant women from non-Western countries experience significant difficulties entering the labour market in Sweden. As a consequence, it is stated that immigrant women are disadvantaged as women as well as immigrants (Le Grand and Szulkin 2002:60). As noted above, the reason for immigrating also influences labour market integration. In particular, women who immigrate due to family reunification tend to take a longer time to integrate into the labour market, and a possible reason for this is that women in general have a larger responsibility for domestic care and work, and therefore stay at home to take care of the family (Karlsson and Tibajev 2014:275). Bevelander

(2011) notes that the presence of children impeded the employment possibilities of immigrant women more than what it did for immigrant men, although the reasons for this occurrence were not given (Bevelander 2011:42).

The previous studies have highlighted different aspects of the integration of immigrants and the difficulties that they can face in this process. However, the study from Bevelander (2011) presents an important aspect which is quite relevant for this thesis, namely that immigrant women experience more difficulties in attaining employment if they have a child. In addition, Dahlstedt et al. (2013) point out that there exists a stereotype of immigrant women as culturally different from the native population in Sweden, and these differences are pointed out as an aspect that delays labour market integration. As a consequence of the stereotype, immigrant women are perceived to lack the knowledge and skills necessary for labour market integration due to their cultural belonging, and therefore are seen as in need of empowerment to combat this situation. However, it is argued that the focus on cultural differences presents the immigrant women as a problem, and that they have to change in order to enter the labour market, when it in reality, it should be seen as a structural problem of how the labour market is constructed. Therefore, it is a structural problem rather than an individual one (Dahlstedt et al 2013:137-138). Knocke (2011) has also previously raised that cultural differences are given and accepted as an explanation for why immigrant women have difficulties in entering the labour market. Just like Dahlstedt et al. (2013), Knocke (2011) argues that this position does not reveal any structural problems but instead shifts the focus to the individual, who is perceived as the problem rather than the other way around. It is noted that the cultural belonging of immigrants, in particular immigrant women, is put in contrast to the culture in Sweden, and therefore also in contrast to the norm that exists (Knocke 2011:219-221).

As noted previously, integration into the labour market can help facilitate integration into society overall, and individuals integrating into a new country face several challenges. In conclusion, Le Grand and Szulkin (2002), Behtoui (2008) and Karlsson and Tibajev (2014) all present various explanations to the difficulties faced by immigrants when trying to enter the labour market. Although the presented studies showed some general patterns that have emerged, Karlsson and Tibajev (2014) argue that the individuals and groups whom the research refers to are not a

homogenous group and that the experiences within the group and among individuals can differ widely (Karlsson and Tibajev 2014:283). Nonetheless, the studies all present a general overview of who faces difficulties and what kind of difficulties these can be. Some of the difficulties are ascribed to the significance of social capital for obtaining employment (Behtoui 2008), whereas others point out factors that can help in the integration process. Aspects such as obtaining education or training from a Swedish educational institution, as well as having a proficient knowledge of the Swedish language, will increase the possibility of obtaining an employment that corresponds to the qualifications from the home country (Karlsson and Tibajev (2014:269). All of the aspects that have been covered here are thus important to keep in mind when researching the labour market integration of immigrants.¹

1.7 Definitions

Before proceeding any further, it is important to establish some definitions of certain terms that will be used throughout the thesis. Although there can be a general understanding of what these terms mean, the definition of lone mothers, immigrants and integration can all differ depending on the context. The following section will therefore present the definitions applied in this study.

Single parents, as well as lone mothers have been defined differently in various studies. May (2003) defines lone mothers as women who were the sole care takers of their children, and in which divorced women as well as widows were included. A second definition is presented by Daly and Rake (2003) where a lone mother is defined as “a sole adult woman residing with at least one dependent child” (Daly and Rake 2003:104). Another, more detailed definition is given by Skevik (2006) who in her study defines a lone parent as being “a parent who has at least one child under 18, who is not living with a partner but who may or may not be living in a household with others” (Skevik 2006:243). Similarly, both Stranz and Wiklund (2011) as well as Chzen and Bradshaw (2012) define lone mothers as an individual that lives with their children, without a partner, but that could live in a household with other individuals that is not the father (Stranz and Wiklund 2011:42; Chzen and Bradshaw 2012:489). These last definitions do, in comparison to the other definitions, acknowledges that a lone parent can have living arrangements that mean

¹ For a broad overview of the authors in the different areas of integration research used in this thesis, see table 1 in appendix 2.

they are not the only adult living in a household. The definition applied in this thesis will be similar to the one presented last, in that a lone mother will be defined as being the main caretaker of her child or children, separated from the child's father, and not living with a new partner.

The second definition that needs to be clarified is regarding how to define immigrants. In their research, Le Grand and Szulkin (2002) define immigrants as individuals born abroad, and have three different categorisations depending on the area of origin. The first categorisation refers to immigrants from Western countries, and this includes countries in Western Europe, the Nordic countries and the Anglo-Saxon countries such as USA, New Zealand and Canada. The second categorisation is defined as immigrants from other European countries, thus referring to the remainder of the European countries, in particular the Eastern European countries. The last definition is referred to as immigrants of non-Western origin, with individuals originating from areas such as Latin America, Asia and Africa (Le Grand and Szulkin 2002:43). Another definition is provided by Darvishpour (2008) who defines immigrants as individuals with an ethnic descent that is not Swedish, who reside in Sweden on a permanent basis (Darvishpour 2008:363). Utilising these definitions, in this thesis, immigrants will therefore refer to individuals from non-Western countries and Eastern Europe, who reside permanently in Sweden.

Another term that it is important to define is integration. The Swedish national encyclopaedia defines integration as social processes of different kinds, such as cultural integration or labour market integration, through which immigrants become participants in Swedish society (Nationalencyklopedin, integration 2015). The former, now non-operational, governmental agency called the Swedish Integration Board (2004) identified integration as a multi-faceted concept of many dimensions. Social integration, housing integration and labour market integration are some of the dimensions which were identified as different aspects of the general idea of integration (Integrationsverket 2004:10-11). Lemaitre (2007) presents a similar definition, and also acknowledges different connotations of integration. Social and economic integration, such as employment or participation in the community, are given as examples of different aspects of integration (Lemaitre 2007:10). Although all the aspects that have been mentioned are interconnected, the definition of integration which will be focused on in this thesis is that of labour market integration. Olli Segendorf and Teljosui (2011) note that employment is

an important aspect of integration and for participation in the society, and see improved labour market integration for immigrants as a facilitator for integration overall. Improved labour market integration refers to an increase in income as well as an increased employment rate for immigrants, especially in relation to the native population (Olli Segendorf and Teljosui 2011:9-10). Lemaitre (2007) defines labour market integration of immigrants as immigrants having equivalent labour market participation to Swedish people (Lemaitre 2007:10). Similar to this, Karlsson and Tibajev (2014) offer another definition of labour market integration, being that the end goal of integration is that the differences that exist on the labour market at an initial stage will diminish, and as a result immigrants will have the same prospects of attaining an employment as an individual of the native population (Karlsson and Tibajev 2014:264). These three definitions are similar in that they all refer to labour market integration as fulfilled when immigrants are seen as equivalent to the native population on the labour market. However, when discussing improved income, as well as employment, Olli Segendorf and Teljosui (2011) talk about it both in terms of general improvement and in improvement so as to reach the native population (Olli Segendorf and Teljosui 2011:9-10). As such, the definition that will be applied in this paper is based on the one presented by Olli Segendorf and Teljosui (2011).

2. Theoretical Frameworks and Concepts

The following section will present the theories that will be used in this thesis. Intersectionality is used to examine the positions of the women in this study, and where these positions are located in relation to other individuals in Swedish society. Social and cultural capital will be used when looking at labour market integration and the role that these types of capital are seen to have on that process. These theories are not without criticism, but can nonetheless help to reveal issues relating to the labour market integration of lone mothers. Nevertheless, it is important to be aware of these critiques.

2.1 Intersectionality

The concept of intersectionality arose as a criticism against the ruling 'white' feminism in the 1990s, and the lack of attention given to power structures relating to race and gender. The basis of intersectionality is thus related to power structures in society and their influence on race and gender. Intersectionality is used to denote the intersections of for example gender, race and class,

and the way in which these are influenced by or influence existing power structures. These power structures are seen to create or strengthen superior versus inferior positions of certain individuals or groups (de los Reyes and Mulinari 2005:16-18). Mattson (2010) argues that using an intersectionality perspective allows for examination of the interplay between different categories, and as such, intersectionality is seen as a concept rather than a theory (Mattsson 2010:19). Although these categories can be studied separately, de los Reyes and Mulinari (2005) argue that in order to get a deeper understanding of an issue, the examination of the intersections can highlight how these groups interplay in creating and shaping power structures or power asymmetries (de los Reyes and Mulinari 2005:24). Mattsson (2010) and de los Reyes and Mulinari (2005) therefore all argue that this interplay between the categories is of significant importance when applying an intersectional perspective, but that it is important to remember that the significance given to each category differs depending on the context. Ethnicity might be the point of analysis in one context, but from an intersectional point of view it brings with it notions regarding gender and class as well (Mattsson 2010; de los Reyes and Mulinari 2005:24). An intersectional perspective therefore focuses on how different powers structures are created through a complex interplay of different categories, in which some categories are given prominence over others but are still interlinked (Lykke 2003:53).

As has been shown in the section of previous studies, immigrant lone mothers are disadvantaged on the labour market, and in this study, the concept of intersectionality will be used to investigate the situation of these women from the intersections of gender, class and ethnicity. These intersections are chosen due to their relevance to the object of study, namely immigrant lone mothers. de los Reyes and Mulinari (2005) argue that the categories are seen as influencing each other and linked together. Through an examination of these links, power structures and inequalities can be uncovered (de los Reyes and Mulinari 2005:24). When relating intersectionality to the situation of immigrant lone mothers, de los Reyes and Mulinari (2005) further argue that it is important to look at the construction of the labour market and the structure of it, in order to be able to examine how intersections of ethnicity, class and gender create different power structures on the labour market. In terms of labour market integration, it is noted that being an immigrant and a women is often given as an explanation for inequalities that individuals belonging to these groups experience. However, it is argued that this is misleading

and shifts the responsibility to the individual, when it is the construction of the labour market that creates these inequalities (de los Reyes and Mulinari 2005:129). The incorporation of an institutional aspect is thus important in order to uncover the situation of individuals or certain groups, instead of focusing on one factor.

2.1.1 Critique against Intersectionality

It is important to note that the concept of intersectionality is not without criticism. de los Reyes and Mulinari (2005) noted earlier that the concept of intersectionality works to highlight the intersections between, for example, categories such as ethnicity, gender and class. It is further seen that these intersections influence power structures. However, it is argued that by categorising individuals into groups, for example, by ethnicity and gender (e.g. immigrants and the native population, etc.), it can lead to a comparison between groups, and as a consequence, the focus is on the comparison of the differences between the groups rather than uncovering what it is that creates these differences (de los Reyes 2005:24-25). Another criticism, raised by Lykke (2003) is that the intersectional perspective can be used to look at a vast number of categories from which power structures and asymmetries are created, and as a consequence the argument for the use of intersectionality as a way to uncover complex power structures loses its power (Lykke 2003:53). This argument is further developed by Mattsson (2010), who argues that with so many different categories, every individual can be seen as belonging to an inferior group. This reduces the ability of the theory of intersectionality to reveal how power structures create inferior groups (Mattsson 2010:90).

2.2 Cultural and Social Capital

One of the most prominent scholars on the research on different capital forms such as social and cultural capital is Bourdieu. Bourdieu (2011) suggests that there are three forms of capital that are the most prominent in the discussion on different forms of capital, namely economic, cultural and social capital. Economic capital refers to capital that can be “immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalised in the form of property rights” (Bourdieu 2011:79). Social capital, on the other hand is characterised as a resource for social connections, whereas cultural capital often refers to educational qualifications amongst other things (Bourdieu 2011:79). In relation to Bourdieu’s (2011) forms of capital, Tovatt (2013) argues that the

composition of cultural, social and economic capital that an individual has, influences their opportunities on the labour market (Tovatt 2013:50). It is on similar terms that the theory of cultural and social capital will be used in this thesis. According to Bourdieu (2011), cultural capital can be realised in three different forms: embodied, objectified and institutionalised (Bourdieu 2011:80-84), of which the institutionalised and embodied forms of cultural capital are relevant for this thesis. Objectified cultural capital refers to material items such as paintings and writings (Bourdieu 2011:82) and therefore does not play as prominent a role in labour market integration. The embodied cultural capital refers to cultural knowledge, and often takes time to acquire. It is often displayed through traditions and cultures that have been learned through socialisation. On the other hand, the institutional form of cultural capital refers to academic credentials and educational qualifications. Furthermore, through educational qualifications, the institutionalised cultural capital becomes recognised and can be used as a comparison to other qualifications (Bourdieu 2011:80-83).

Social capital is, according to Bourdieu (2011), referred to as a resource of the social connections that an individual has, both in relation to the family, friends and community, but also in terms of resources that can be utilised to create new connections. The worth of an individual's social capital depends on the relationships of that individual (Bourdieu 2011:84). The capacity of social capital thus depends on the character and size of the social network that an individual possesses. In some cases social capital can help to advance an individual's social position. Social capital is also connected to cultural and economic capital, as the amount of social capital influences an individual's ability to acquire cultural and economic capital. Furthermore, in order for social capital to be used as a resource, and to facilitate the creation of social networks, it needs to be recognized by others (Bourdieu 2011:84-86). This is also true for the other forms of capital. The different forms of capital can become symbolic capital when recognised by others. In other words, the value of economic, social and cultural capital is determined by the recognition of them (Bourdieu 1994:97).

2.2.1 Critique against Cultural and Social Capital

The concept of cultural capital has been criticised as only applicable to an educational context in France, and that that this concept is difficult to apply in other contexts. Furthermore, Bourdieu has been criticised for not providing a clear definition on what is actually meant with cultural

capital and therefore the concept has been considered to be vague. It is also seen to lack empirical roots (Sullivan 2002:155). Nonetheless, the concept does provide an insight regarding cultural capital. The concept of social capital has been criticised for being difficult to measure, as well as being difficult to define (Haynes 2009:11-13). Nevertheless, these theories can be used when studying labour market integration in this thesis.

2.3 Human Capital

Another aspect of capital that will be used in this thesis is the theory of human capital. Mattsson (2001) relates the theory of human capital to the labour market integration of immigrants (Mattsson 2001:121), as will be done in this study. Mattsson (2001) notes that the discussion on labour market integration often focuses on the perceived lack of human capital, which relates to education and the perceived increased productivity gained from it. By taking part in formal education and training, an individual will improve their human capital (Mattsson 2001:122). The lack of human capital as an explanation for the difficulties of immigrants in entering the labour market was also noted by Neergaard (2006), who suggested that these difficulties were due to a lack of country-specific human capital (Neergaard 2006:14). Mattsson (2001) notes that country specific capital refers to human capital being specific to a certain culture and can only be amassed in that culture. Examples of cultural-specific capital are language, access to social networks or understanding of social norms. Human capital acquired elsewhere thus does not translate into country-specific human capital, in that although an individual has knowledge and skills from another country, they are not necessarily transferable to a new country. Furthermore, it is acknowledged that there can be a relation between the labour market opportunities of an individual and the different forms of capital that the individual possesses. In this sense, the more capital an individual has, the better opportunities that person should have. And this goes in the opposite direction as well, in that a lack of capital can lead to decreased labour market opportunities due to a perceived lesser capability as a result of a lower level of social or cultural capital (Mattsson 2001:122-123). In this sense, human capital is very similar to Bourdieu's (2011) theory of institutionalised cultural capital, nevertheless, human capital presents an additional perspective on labour market integration.

2.3.1 Critique of Human Capital Theory

Human capital is extensively used in economics, and it is often identified through quantitative terms, in that the more human capital an individual has, the more knowledge and skills that individual is perceived to have. However, by using this type of approach, all differences on the labour market could thus, through a human capital perspective, be seen as a lack of skills and knowledge on the behalf of other individuals. It is therefore important to relate human capital to factors such as labour market imperfections, rather than just ascribe differences to a lack of human capital (Pischke 2015).

3. Methodology

This thesis has as a starting point previous studies conducted on the situation of lone mothers, and studies on the integration of immigrants into the labour market. These show that in general lone mothers experience problems on the labour market regarding flexibility and their limited capability to work due to their responsibilities caring for their children. Also, it has been concluded that immigrants are experiencing difficulties on the labour market in comparison to the native population in Sweden, both in terms of obtaining employment and finding employment that matches their previous qualifications. As such, this thesis is based on the assumption that immigrant lone mothers are disadvantaged because they are lone mothers and immigrants. The aim of the thesis, which has also been stated earlier in the paper, is to look at the integration of immigrant lone mothers into the labour market and the experiences associated with this process. Research from the Swedish Social Insurance Agency (2009:4) notes that a large percentage of lone parent households consist of women, as much as 81 percent, and the remaining 19 percent are male lone parents (Socialförsäkringsrapport 2009:4). Furthermore, statistics from Statistics Sweden (2009) show that after separation, over 50 % of children end up living with their mom only, and it is almost the same number of children who spend most of their time at their mothers if there is shared custody. It can therefore be seen that in most cases the mothers are the main caretakers of their children. What the statistics do not reveal is how these mothers are able to balance work and taking care of their family. Separate statistics from Statistics Sweden (2012) show that nine percent of households with children under the age of seven experience difficulties in managing time for both work and family (Statistics Sweden 2012:79). Statistics regarding the integration of immigrants tend to focus on the number of

immigrants that are integrated along with what factors that influence the integration process, as well as looking at differences between immigrants and the native population (Statistics Sweden 2014), but the statistics do not reveal a lot, if anything, regarding the situation for lone mothers. As such, immigrant lone mothers are barely visible in the statistics, and there are almost no qualitative studies that focus on the situation of immigrant lone mothers specifically, as has been mentioned previously. That is why interviews have been chosen as a method in this study, as it allows for these women to be heard and to uncover the experiences of immigrant lone mothers. Interviews provide a more nuanced picture and allow for the capturing of experiences, which can go unnoticed in the statistics

3.1 Interviews

The use of semi-structured interviews was applied when investigating the experiences of immigrant lone mothers and their labour market integration. According to Bryman (2012), the use of semi-structured interviews is an appropriate method when there are certain aspects that need to be covered, while at the same time it allows for the interviewee to talk quite freely (Bryman 2012:471). In the case of this thesis, some very important aspects which are covered were labour market integration, as well as being a lone mother, and with the use of semi-structured interviews the interviewees were able to answer questions regarding these topics while having the opportunity to expand more if necessary.

3.1.1 Sample

In total, the sample consists of 13 women, who all have different backgrounds prior to coming to Sweden and have different experiences with integrating into the labour market. Given the narrow perspective of the study, the sample is quite broad and consists of individuals who fit the criteria of being immigrant lone mothers that have integrated into, or are in the process of integrating into the Swedish Labour market. The immigrant lone mothers do, according to Bryman (2012), constitute a purposive sample, which has been chosen due to its appropriateness for the research at hand (Bryman 2012:418). The sample is not limited to lone mothers in certain positions on the labour market or from a certain socio-economic status. The reasons for not limiting the sample were to provide a more wide-ranging picture and offer viewpoints which would have been missed if the study focused on a particular group. In order to come in contact with immigrant lone mothers who were willing to participate in interviews, requests for interviews (see appendix

1) were sent to numerous organisations, projects and groups aimed at single parents, as well as organisations helping with labour market integration. Due to reasons of anonymity, these organisations will not be named. In total, the sample consists of women residing in different areas in mid- and south Sweden, and small as well as bigger cities. Out of the sample, eight of the interviewees were women that had received notifications from said organisations about taking part in an interview and subsequently expressed interest in participating, whereas the other five women were approached through personal contacts.

3.1.2 Conducting and Transcribing the Interviews

The total sample in this study consists of 13 women. For this paper, eight of the interviews were conducted in person, three of them were conducted over the phone, and the remaining two were conducted over skype. The interviews lasted from 15 minutes to an hour and a half. Anonymity has been granted to all the interviewees, and therefore substitute names will be used. Eleven out of the thirteen interviews were conducted in Swedish, and only two interviews were conducted in English. This allowed the interviewees to speak in the language they were most comfortable speaking to the interviewer in. It is acknowledged that there are limitations to this approach, and these limitations are discussed in section 3.2. As some of the interviews were conducted in Swedish, they have been translated into English while trying to stay true to the original. In relation to editing interviews, Ahrne and Svensson (2011) note that there are various approaches that take different positions regarding editing interviews, but that in general it depends on the method that is used. Therefore, in some cases, editing is allowed in order to make some colloquial language more readable or to fill in omitted words (Ahrne and Svensson 2011:220). In this paper, omitted words are filled in with the use of the symbol [*omitted*], and when a section has been edited for length, the symbol [...] has been used. In addition, some of the interviews have also been edited for clarity.

As mentioned, the interviews were of a semi-structured nature and followed an interview guide (see Appendix 3), which covered certain themes such as lone motherhood, work, and integration. Permission to use a tape recorder to document the interview was asked prior to all interviews, and only two of the interviews were not recorded (the interviews with Victoria and Evelina), one on the request of the interviewee, and the other due to negligence on behalf of the researcher. In

these cases, notes were taken instead, and the interviews were transcribed shortly after to give a transcription that was as close as possible to the original interview. Recording the interviews with the use of a tape recorder can, according to Bryman (2012), ease the examination of the interviews, as a recording allows the interviewer to go back and listen to an interview several times, which allows for a more in-depth analysis of the information provided at the interview. Furthermore, the interviews will not be based on the memories of the interviewer, which then means the data is less limited in its presentation (Bryman 2012:482).

3.1.3 Method of Analysis

The method of analysis that has been applied in this thesis is a thematic analysis. As alluded to in the name, a thematic analysis is, according to Bryman (2012), based on the creation of themes, and in some cases subthemes that emerge when reading the empirical data. A thematic analysis is not characterised by a specific way of conducting the analysis. Nonetheless, there are some ways in which to uncover themes from the data. One of these is to look for repetitions in the data, for example when subjects are mentioned multiple times, whereas another way is to look for themes that relate to concepts central to the study (Bryman 2012:578-580). For this thesis, both of these processes have played a part in uncovering the themes used in the analysis. Labour market integration and lone motherhood are the basis of the thesis, and are aspects that need to be covered in the analysis. Therefore, they are themes that were created early on in the coding process, while subthemes also emerged in the process of reading and interpreting the empirical data, which were concepts that continuously came up in the interviews. Bryman (2012) further notes that repetition of concepts is not enough in itself to generate a theme, they also must be connected to the research question (Bryman 2012:580), something that all of the themes in the analysis of this thesis are.

There are two main themes that emerged as important in this thesis, and they are called entering the labour market, and strategies. The first theme regards aspects of entering the labour market, and has three subthemes that enable more in-depth investigation into the experiences the interviewees had in entering the labour market. The three subthemes are labour market integration as an immigrant and lone mother, the role of social contacts, and work-family balance. The second main theme relates to strategies that some of the interviewees have utilised

in order to promote their position on the labour market as well as enhance their position in society as a lone mother. Therefore, the first subtheme relates to strategies regarding being a lone mother, and the other two subthemes discuss employment and other strategies for employment. In total, the analysis therefore consists of two main themes that reflect different aspects of the experiences of labour market integration among the interviewed women. As the themes emerged in part from the repetition in the empirical data, several women point to similar aspects. Although many of the interviewees point to similar aspects, one quote illustrating the point has been selected and is analysed in connection to previous studies and the theoretical frameworks. The theories that will be applied in this thesis emerged during the process of creating the themes, and will be applied to the thematic analysis to prevent it from being entirely descriptive.

3.2 Methodological Limitations

The arguments for the use of interviews as a method for this study have been highlighted in the beginning of this chapter. Through the interviews the women were able to present their experiences and stories which presented different dimension than what could have been discovered if any other method had been used. Bryman (2012) highlights the generalisability of a study as well as the representativeness of the interviewees as aspects that need to be considered when conducting interviews (Bryman 2012:406). This study will not claim to make any generalisations regarding the situation of lone mothers of immigrant background and their integration on the labour market. This is partly due to the sample being quite small, which will limit the generalizability, but also because the aim of the study is to highlight the situation of immigrant lone mothers, through looking at the experience of people who have faced or are currently facing labour market integration. However, another point regarding the generalisability of a study is raised by Svensson and Ahrne (2011) who argue that there are different types of generalisability that can be applied to a research project. Rather than generalising a study to other people or situations, it is argued that a study can be generalizable to theory or concepts and thus have a theoretical generalisability (Svensson and Ahrne 2011:29-30). In other words, a study with a theoretical generalisability ties its findings to established theories and concepts and through that, connects to a more general level, which is also what this thesis aims to do.

One factor that could have had an influence on the willingness of the women to talk is that the author of this paper does not have the same experiences as these women, which might have created a distance between the author and the interviewees. To combat this, most of the interviews were conducted in an informal setting, such as cafés, or even in one interviewee's home, to establish a friendly atmosphere.

3.3 Ethical Considerations

The Swedish Research Council² (2010) has four main principles that are important to adhere to when conducting research, regarding information about the study, informed consent, anonymity and the use of the research (Vetenskapsrådet 2010). These principles have also been followed in this study (for a thorough explanation, see appendix 4).

3.4 Material

The following section will present demographics of the interviewees as well as a bit of their background, in order to provide context for the interview extracts that will be used in the analysis. However, due to the vulnerable position that some of these women are in, this presentation will be done in a way that keeps their anonymity and therefore their names along with other identifying features have been changed.

Arjana: Arjana came to Sweden in 2008 from an Eastern European country. She came to Sweden due to family reunification. She is in her early 50s and has one child of the age of ten, and she has sole custody over her child. She has 19 years of working experience within economy from her home country, and also has a degree within the same area. She is currently participating in a labour market programme.

Amal: Amal comes from a country in East Africa and came to Sweden five years ago as a refugee. She is in her mid-twenties and has one child under the age of five, for whom she shares custody with the father. She has been a single parent for four years. She has no prior higher education or working experience from her home country, but has done some practical experience in Sweden. She is currently enrolled in a labour market programme.

² In Swedish, Vetenskapsrådet

Victoria: Victoria is from a country in West Africa, and has been in Sweden since 2012. She came to Sweden as a refugee. She is in her thirties, and has two children, who are ten and eleven, and is their only caretaker. She has no higher education from her home country, but has experience of manual labour. She is currently participating in a labour market programme.

Ewa: Ewa is from a Baltic country in Europe, is 32 years old, and has a child that is 2 ½ years old. She has a bachelor's degree from her home country, as well as corresponding working experience in the same country. She came to Sweden due to a relationship with a Swedish man. She has been a single mother for a year and a half, but does not yet have sole custody of her child. She is currently studying a higher education at a Swedish university.

Mina: Mina comes from a country in the Middle East, and is 45 years old. She came to Sweden in 2008 with her ex-husband from whom she is now divorced. She met a new man who is the father of her child, but from whom she is now separated. She has one child, who is a little over one year old. She has a university degree from Iran, and worked at a high-skilled profession prior to coming to Sweden. In Sweden, she has had some temporary positions within low skilled occupations, but not any stable employment. She has been a single mother since the start of the year and is currently on maternity leave.

Rania: Rania comes from the Middle East and is 42 years old. She came to Sweden as an asylum seeker four years ago. She has one child who is two and a half years old. She also has two children that do not live with her in Sweden. She has both undergraduate and graduate degrees from different universities in the Middle East, as well as 14 years of international working experience within international organizations, where she worked as project manager and coordinator for different projects. In Sweden, she has had six month internship at a Swedish university, where she still holds an employment. However, this is part-time (under 25 percent) as she is currently studying.

Evelina: Evelina came to Sweden in 2008, and is from Russia originally. She is in her 30s, and has a child around the age of five of whom she shares custody with the father. She has worked at a high-skilled profession in Russia, prior to coming to Sweden. In Sweden she has participated in integration projects, and now holds a substitute position within a high-skilled profession.

Jane: Jane is from East Asia and is in her 40s. She has a graduate degree from a university in a Western country. She came to Sweden in 2001, on the basis of being in a relationship with a Swedish man and has two children that are both under the age of ten. She has been a lone parent for almost eight years and has sole custody over her children. She worked as a middle-manager in the same country where she got her degree, and has worked different low-skilled jobs in Sweden. She is now studying a degree at a Swedish university in order to gain a better position on the labour market.

Dana: Dana is 35 years old and comes from a post-Soviet country. She came to Sweden in 2004 as an asylum seeker. She has a son who is almost nine years old, and she has been a lone parent since the child was one year old. She has sole custody of her son. She has taken part in education in Sweden and currently holds a position with conditional tenure, working as an economy assistant within an organization.

Ani: Ani was born in the Middle East, and came to Sweden when she was eight years old. She is now 47 years old and has two children, one who is in his preteens and the other who is almost nine. She has been educated within the Swedish school system and also has extensive working experience on the Swedish labour market, a large period of that being self-employed. She is currently not active on the labour market.

Irene: Irene is in her early 40s and comes from a country in Latin America. She came to Sweden in 2006 with her children, in order to create a better situation than in her home country. She has three children, all of them in their early and mid-teens and she has had sole custody of them since coming to Sweden. She has extensive education with teaching in her home country, and also worked at a job that corresponded to her education in Latin America. She has held various low-skilled employments in Sweden, but is currently studying to attain a degree from a Swedish university.

Shadi: Shadi is a 52 year old woman from a country in the Middle East. She came to Sweden more than 25 years ago as a political refugee. Prior to coming to Sweden she studied economy and also worked within that in her home country. A couple of years after arriving to Sweden she got her residence permit and shortly thereafter became pregnant. She has worked in the informal

sector and had some practical experiences, but no temporary employment. She is currently not participating on the labour market. Her son is now in his early twenties, and Shadi has been the main caretaker of him for almost ten years, although she has had shared custody with the father.

Elham: Elham is close to 50 years old, and also comes from a country in the Middle East. She came to Sweden in 1990 as a political refugee. She has an upper secondary school education in her home country, but since coming to Sweden she has studied both undergraduate and graduate studies, and also has degrees from both. She is currently working in a high-skilled profession. She has one child of the age of eight, and has been a single parent for two years. She has shared custody of her son.

Table 2. Overview of Interview Participants

Fictive name	Age	Region of Origin	Reason for Immigration	Occupational Status	Arrived in Sweden	Number of Children	Shared Custody
Arjana	52	Eastern Europe	Family Reunification	Participant in a Labour Market Programme	2008	1	No
Amal	26	East Africa	Refugee	Participant in a Labour Market Programme	2010	1	Yes
Victoria	Early 30s	West Africa	Refugee	Participant in a Labour Market Programme	2012	2	No
Ewa	32	Eastern Europe	To live with Spouse	Student	2009	1	Yes
Mina	45	Middle East	Refugee	On Maternity Leave/Unemployed	2008	1	No
Raina	42	Middle East	Asylum Seeker	Student/Part-time Employed	2011	3	Yes
Evelina	In her 30s	Russia	To live with Spouse	Employed	2008	1	Yes
Jane	In her 40s	East Asia	To live with Spouse	Student	2001	2	No
Dana	35	A Post-Soviet Country	Asylum Seeker	Employed	2004	1	No
Ari	47	Middle East	Political Refugee	On sick-leave	1976	2	Yes
Irene	42	Latin America	Find more opportunities	Student	2006	3	No
Shadi	52	Middle East	Political Refugee	On Disability Pension	1989	1	Yes
Elham	49	Middle East	Political Refugee	Employed	1990	1	Yes

Source: Interviews conducted between March 23rd and May 13th, 2015

4. Analysis

It is important to start the analysis by mentioning that the women that have participated in the study all differ in their background, working experience and process of labour market integration. Their common denominators are that they are all women, lone parents and immigrants. Although their experiences differ, it is important to highlight their situation, to show the experiences of these women. Some of the women have integrated into the labour market, whereas others are in the process of doing so, and some are for other reasons not participating in the labour market. Out of the interviewing sample, three women are currently studying; three are taking part in labour market programmes; one is on maternity leave; three are working, and two have worked but are no longer active on the labour market. As such, the sample is quite broad in the sense that they are all at different stages of labour market integration. Nonetheless, most of the women have experiences of integrating into the Swedish labour market and have experiences, which are important to shed light on. The women that are in the process of integrating are aware of the position they might be in, being an immigrant single mother, and what that might entail when subsequently applying for a job.

Three of the interviewees had children prior to coming to Sweden, whereas the remaining ten women had their children after coming to Sweden. This does not present a problem for the purpose of this thesis, as a majority of the women took some time in integrating into the labour market due to reasons such as waiting for a residence permit that allowed them to work, or taking part in studies such Swedish for Immigrants (from here on referred to as SFI). Statistics from Statistics Sweden (2014) noted that studies are a factor that can contribute to a delay in labour market integration as 70 percent of family reunification immigrants and 60 percent of refugees partake in studies at the beginning of their time in Sweden, when SFI is included. The service of SFI is available once a person has registered for a place of residence, and municipalities must provide it for any individual that does not have any language proficiency in Swedish (Statistics Sweden 2014:49). Out of the sample in the study three of the interviewees were the sole caretaker of their children, and the rest had shared custody, although a majority acknowledged themselves as having the main responsibility for the upbringing of their children.

The following analysis has been done according to a thematic analysis, and will cover two main themes: entering the labour market, and strategies for doing so. The analysis will start by looking at the experiences of entering the labour market, by using three subthemes relating to labour market integration as an immigrant and lone mother, the role of social contacts, and work-family balance. The second theme focuses on the how the interviewees have devised strategies to help facilitate labour market integration and lone motherhood. As was mentioned in the method of analysis, the themes were topics that emerged throughout the interviews and as such, they cover aspects that many of the interviewees discussed. In order to illuminate these aspects, quotes from certain interviewees that best highlight these aspects will be used. Therefore, not all of the interviewees will be referred to in the paper, and some will be given more space than others. This is due to the fact that some of the interviews did not present a lot of data and two were not recorded. As such, quotes from these interviews will not be used in the analysis, although they have provided a background to the analysis. The interviews that this concerns are the ones with Arjana, Victoria, and Evelina. They will thus not be explicitly referred to in the analysis.

4.1 Entering the Labour Market

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the experiences of immigrant lone mothers in integrating into the Swedish labour market. As was mentioned previously, the women in this study have different backgrounds and experiences. However, most of the woman touched upon similar aspects when it comes to integrating into the labour market. Some discussed these aspects more in-depth than others. This first theme relates to entering the labour market, and through the use of three subthemes the experiences of these women will be presented. These themes cover different aspects that the women in the sample discussed as relevant for their labour market integration. The first theme discusses labour market integration as an immigrant and lone mother; the second discusses the role of social contacts for employment, and the third theme investigates work-family balance.

4.1.1 Labour Market Integration as an Immigrant and Lone Mother

During the interviews, several aspects of labour market integration emerged. One of the aspects that was brought to light was how employment opportunities can be limited in the city where these women live, but that they as lone parents do not have the possibility to move due to factors

such as the relation to the father of the child, and that moving would maybe not be the best for the children. This issue is exemplified by Ewa who comes from a Baltic country and moved to Sweden a few years back to live with her boyfriend at the time, who was Swedish. Together they have a child that is almost three years old, but she has been a lone parent for almost a year and a half now. They currently share custody together. Ewa was one of the women who had her child after coming to Sweden; however, she has not had any working experience on the Swedish labour market yet. The reasons for this are that she first was taking care of her child, and now she is studying for a graduate degree at a Swedish university, which she will shortly finish. In relation to graduating and finding a job, she raised concerns regarding constraints as a lone parent:

“In my position, that I am alone and split up from my ex... Well, I kind of have to stick to his plan, you know. Because I cannot move out to Gothenburg, I cannot move to Germany [...] I cannot do this, I need to find a job in my city, so that I can commit as fast as possible and make my life comfortable for myself.”

Due to having shared custody with her ex-partner she is not as free in moving for an employment, something that in many cases could facilitate an employment. In her opinion, her only option was to work with the situation at hand and do the best she could with it. This experience presented by Ewa is not unique to her situation. Mina was, in comparison to Ewa, more positive towards moving for employment, but expressed concerns regarding housing:

“It depends on the job and the place, [if I] can find it fast, the housing. Because finding housing is really difficult. I can move for a job, but where is the housing? What do I do about the housing? If they [the employer] can find me a house, then [I would] move fast. I have a child, I cannot live on the streets”.

Many of the other women expressed similar concerns regarding moving for employment, in that not only can the relation to the father of the child be a factor that makes it hard to move, but also that it is not possible to just move as a lone parent. The well-being of the child needs to be considered, the accessibility to childcare or schools; there needs to be appropriate housing for the

mother and her child, and other arrangements that are not necessarily financial need to be settled. There are many aspects that need to be considered and therefore also influence the employment opportunities for the lone mothers in this sample. Ewa also raised further concerns regarding on how she would be perceived as a lone parent and an immigrant when applying for a job:

“I think if I go to work, I mean, it will be hard for me because I am a lone parent, so have to take care of shopping, washing, pick up my child and bring to school, no one can do that for me... I have to handle this myself. And the employer, I mean, some are nice yes, and they can understand, but normally they will employ another person. Not a person who is with problems or that is limited.”

Ewa is thus aware of how being a single mother can be perceived by an employer and how it can be difficult to prove to an employer that she is a suitable person for the job, if the employer will not be able to look past her being a lone parent. The thoughts expressed by Ewa about how being a lone mother influences employment possibilities is supported by research conducted by Bevelander (2011), who noted that having children did negatively influence the likelihood of obtaining an employment for immigrant women (Bevelander (2011:42). In relation to being a lone parent, Ewa also discussed how as an immigrant, language and culture can be further barriers for obtaining an employment. Cultural barriers were also something that was raised by another interviewee, Raina. She comes from a country in the Middle East, but has lived in Sweden for four years now after arriving as an asylum seeker. She has three children, but only one lives with her in Sweden. During her first years in Sweden, she was on sick leave, and then afterwards on maternity leave. After maternity leave she held an internship at a Swedish university until it expired a few months ago, and is currently working part-time for the same university while studying. Raina discussed the cultural knowledge that is collected while spending time in a new country, and that she as an immigrant does not yet possess:

“All these cultural things, you know? Sometimes you feel like there is a barrier between you and people. Sometimes also, if you want to apply for any work, you have to think how they think of you. There are many social codes you don't know.”

In this sense, culture does not only refer to the cultural background, but rather the everyday interactions and behaviours that are learned through socialisation. This can then be tied to Bourdieu's (2011) theory of cultural capital, in particular embodied cultural capital, which in parts is signified by the passive acquisition of traditions and culture through socialisation (Bourdieu 2011:80-82). In this case, Raina notes that she lacks the embodied cultural capital as she does not know all the social structures in the new country. Furthermore, the contrasts between her embodied capital and the culture in Sweden is argued to influence labour market integration from an individual perspective. Another of the interviewees, Mina, who immigrated to Sweden from a country in the Middle East, stressed that cultural contrasts are something that influence an individual:

“[People], they have culture in their blood. They cannot lose everything. It is religion, culture, it depends on the people. A person cannot throw away everything, and then come to the new country, [with a] new culture, new thinking, new food, new everything. Maybe some can, but not everybody.”

Similarly, Raina, who is from a country in the Middle East, discusses how different collective behaviours, or cultures, can potentially create conflicts for the individual, both within her own culture and in contrast to it. The background is that she comes from a culture where, according to her, there is a focus on family and the society is characterised by patriarchal relations. Her cultural background therefore stands in contrast with the culture in Sweden, where there is a larger focus on individualisation than on the family per se:

“I think it is important, the background, and also the conflictual situation that you put these women in. Imagine that you grew up in this [one culture], and then work in the opposite. And you are not aware of who you are. And in the end you feel like you are lost between two of these people, between your traditions and your group, and between the [new] society and the requirements from that society. And you have to follow this, because it is the way to live. And at the same time you don't want to be isolated. It is really difficult.”

Raina also discusses the cultural differences in relation to being a lone mother:

So I think that immigrant women, yes, she is isolated from the society, but also sometimes isolated from her own group. Because, for example, as single mother, she is from the Middle East, because she is a single mother, within her group, they will look at her like she has no man. [...] This is cultural thing maybe. And then if she wants to do anything, they will judge her because she doesn't have any man. This is within the group (...) It would be very hard also, because you are isolated from the group, but also isolated from the society. So you have double isolation.

Raina thus talks about how the culture where she is from and the culture in Sweden differ, and that this affects her as an individual. Dahlstedt et al. (2013) note that when it comes to labour market integration in Sweden, a stereotype of immigrant women as significantly culturally and religiously different to the Swedish population has emerged, and in these cases the cultural differences are ascribed as major obstacles for labour market integration. However, this position is seen to put immigrant women in an inferior position due to their cultural belonging, in that the intersection of ethnicity and gender brings with it a negative connotation in these cases (Dahlstedt et al. 2013:137-138). From an intersectional perspective, this exemplifies de los Reyes and Mulinari (2005) argument regarding the need to look beyond just the intersections of gender and ethnicity, as in this position the women are seen as at fault for being immigrants and women, rather than it being seen a structural problem (de los Reyes and Mulinari 2005:129). However, the example from Dahlstedt et al. (2013) does expose some of the power structures which immigrant women are subjected to due to their gender, ethnicity and class, due to which they often experience an inferior position on the labour market (Knocke 2011:213). These unequal power structures were something that was further touched upon by Raina, especially when it comes to the Swedish government placing a large emphasis on labour market integration:

“If you come as an immigrant, you are not, you do not come... you have your own issues also. They [the Swedish government] don't consider it. This is a big issue, they don't consider it, that not everybody coming to Sweden is happy to come to Sweden. Some people, they are suffering [and] because of that they came. You know, they [the women] have their own problem. [...] Also, they don't give enough information to... single mothers, what opportunities you have, or as migrant women.”

It is thus seen that coming to Sweden as an asylum seeker or a refugee differs very much from coming to Sweden as a labour market immigrant, and Raina argues that it is important to take these aspects under consideration in order to facilitate integration. Similarly to the discussion on cultural contrasts, Dana discusses her position on the labour market, as an immigrant lone mother. She came to Sweden in the mid-2000s as an asylum seeker from a post-Soviet country, and worked as a cleaner and waitress before having her child. After maternity leave she took courses offered by the municipality, and through the Swedish Public Employment Service got an internship as an economy assistant, a position that she is still at today. She recognises that at the department where she is employed, she is the only lone parent. Dana experienced that her position as an immigrant lone mother was reflected in the way she was perceived on the job as well as the way she perceived herself:

“I feel small, like I am not met in a respectful way. I am still the little immigrant girl who is trying to say something, but no one hears her. [...] And that’s why I feel like I have to work, I see me, I respect myself a little more, that I am somebody and not just a poor single mother that knows nothing, that says nothing, like nothing, that is just a poor immigrant woman, mother. I want to develop within my work, and when I do that the other see that ‘oh, she is not stupid, she knows this.’”

Dana thus expresses a feeling of being judged by her position, being an immigrant and a lone mother, although she possesses the same references as the other individuals at her job. This is an example of where the intersection of gender and ethnicity is related to the position of the interviewee, similar to what de los Reyes and Mulinari (2005) noted in their research. Furthermore, it exemplifies what Dahlstedt et al. (2013) discussed regarding the existence of a stereotype in reference to immigrant women when it comes to labour market integration (Dahlstedt et al. 2013:137-138). In this case, Dana is working on showing her co-workers and employers, as well as herself, that she is not like the stereotype.

This section has presented some of the experiences that the interviewees in this study have had in relation to labour market integration as immigrant lone mothers. From what has been presented, it can be seen that the intersections of ethnicity and gender have had an impact for these women,

both in terms of their position as immigrants and women. It can be inferred that being a lone mother on top of being an immigrant further extends the inferior position of immigrant women when it comes to labour market integration, especially if referring back to the beginning section of this chapter.

4.1.2 The Role of Social Contacts

As has been previously mentioned, the women are all at different levels of integration into the labour market. Although their experiences differ, all of the interviewees have had some type of contact with the labour market. The employments have been procured in different ways, which range from participating in labour market programmes, to personal contacts, or even to taking personal initiative. Mina is from a Middle Eastern country, and came to Sweden in 2008 together with her ex-husband. She started courses in SFI, but struggled with it. Around the same time she did SFI and her husband separated and divorced. Mina later met a Swedish man, and they had a son together, who is now just over a year old. Prior to having her child she has had some internships as well as temporary posts within childcare, but not a stable employment. She has just recently become a lone mother, but as she is nearing the end of her maternity leave she is reflecting over being able to find an employment:

“It is very tough for immigrants to come here, they don’t know the rules. You first have to learn the language perfectly, and then have contact with people. But what to do, life needs contact. It doesn’t work without contact. For example, if I want to apply for a job, it is better to have a contact or know someone in that place, that can work. I had no acquaintances, no family, nothing, no friends. How to do when you don’t know what to do? That is the problem.”

Mina thus acknowledges the importance of contacts for obtaining an employment, and that without social contacts it can be difficult to find an employment. In addition, Mina further notes that there is a lot of responsibility in caring for a child, and even more so when there is no family or friends around to help. Yazdanpanah (2008) also raised this in her research, as the immigrant women in her study did not have a large number of people around them that could help them with taking care of the children (Yzdanpanah 2008:271). Mina further notes that being an immigrant lone mother is difficult, due to the lack of support that can help both in terms of

caring for the child when she is at work, but also in finding an employment. She was thus aware of the role that social networks play, something that research from Bethoui (2008) also shows, in that informal methods, such as using social networks to find employment, are seen as a common way for individuals to find a job. However, this is less so for immigrants, as many immigrants are seen to not have as extensive social contacts as the native population (Behtoui 2008:425), something that was also raised in the first quote by Mina. Other women also expressed similar sentiments on the role of social connections for employment. Shadi, who comes from a country in the Middle East, has worked within the informal sector but has struggled with finding formal employment beyond work placements and temporary posts. She also discussed the influence of networks and language for finding employment beyond something short term:

“If I could talk very good Swedish, then I could... there would be a greater chance for me to find a job. And I didn’t have... I think that right now contacts are important to find a job, and I didn’t have that.”

Therefore, Shadi relates her difficulties of labour market integration to her lack of social networks and not enough language proficiency. In addition, Jane, a woman from East Asia who is currently doing an undergraduate degree at a Swedish university, but has a graduate degree from a Western country, as well as working experience in low-skilled labour in Sweden, discussed the importance of personal actions to initiate these social contacts:

“I think that if you understand a little culture, a little behaviour, that you understand a little, then I think it is easier to get in to the market. [...] I don’t really speak good Swedish, but I try to ask. I think I am quite open in that way and I think it is easier to enter the market in that way, even if my language is not good.”

Jane thus also commented that she thought that as an immigrant the language played an important factor for finding an employment. However, in order to decrease the emphasis on language she saw that being outgoing and approaching people could help to create connections that would facilitate the entry into the labour market. Jane was not the only of the interviewees who acknowledged that it is important to establish contact, and that this can help both in terms of

obtaining an employment and gaining connections in society. Similarly, Bourdieu (2011) notes that social capital can facilitate the improvement of an individual's social situation through the development of social relations within old and new social networks (Bourdieu 2011:84-86). In relation to the situations of Mina, Shadi and Jane, it can be seen that they are lacking this type of social capital.

In this section, the role of social contacts for employment has been explored, along with the consequences of a lack of resourceful social contacts, which can lead to labour market segregation. It should be noted that as the women in the study have been accessed through voluntary organisations, they may have a network that is larger than what other immigrant women who do not participate in such organisations do. However, it should be noted that some of the women mentioned in their interviews that they did not socialise with other women in the organisation outside of the arranged meetings. The importance of social networks and connections was something that all of the interviewees in one way or another touched upon as important for finding an employment as well as helping in taking care of the children.

4.1.3 Work-Family Balance

As mentioned previously, the reasons for the interviewees coming to Sweden differ between being refugees, asylum seekers and coming for family reunification. Some of the interviewees came with their family, their children, or alone. Three of the interviewees were lone parents when arriving in Sweden, but most of the interviewees had their children after coming to Sweden. The reasons for becoming a lone mother also varied among the interviewees; however one aspect of lone motherhood that many of the women experienced was difficulties in caring for their children on their own, without support from family and friends. Jane has had sole custody of her two children for almost eight years now, and her children are both under the age of ten. She is currently studying, but previously worked within home-service for the elderly in a large city in Sweden. She expressed concerns about being alone in taking care of her children and at the same time being able to work:

“I quit because... the boss was very nice, they knew I had small children, they knew I was going through a divorce. So they let me take a leave of absence, again and again. [...] They tried to fix

a schedule for me, but it was difficult because the company had a rule that no matter who you are you have to work at least one evening, or a weekend. That didn't work, as I was alone."

Not only was the inability to work evenings and weekends raised as a factor influencing having an employment, but other factors relating to the flexibility as a lone parent without support was also raised. Other interviewees raised similar thoughts, in that some employments, for example night jobs, or jobs where it was required to work many nights, were not even considered as a possibility as there would be no one to take care of the children, especially if the mother has sole custody. At the same time, Jane also said that the best thing was to be honest regarding her situation as a lone mother so that the employer is aware of situations that can arise due her being the only caretaker of her children:

"During [job] interviews I am just being honest. I am a lone mother and I have no help. There are lone parents that have a family, or that they [the children] are every other week at the other parent. I don't have that. [So] I am just being honest. I have no chance to work overtime. If the office closes at five, then I have to go at five. So I understand if nothing comes from it. But I am still happy that there is a telephone interview."

She was aware that being a lone parent could have an impact on her getting the job or not, but still thought it was better to be honest. Furthermore, Jane was not the only woman who expressed concerns about being able to have a job and still have enough time to care for the children; several of the other interviewees did as well. Amal is taking part in a labour market programme, and shares custody with the father, but has no support other than that to help with the caretaking of her child. She talked about the difficulties she had in combining work and family:

"Last year I started a course, an education [...] the practical experience started at seven, and continued to three or four. But sometimes it started at one until nine in the evening. And that was hard for me, because I didn't have anyone to care for my child at home."

Amal thus had difficulties in combining work and family due to lack of support. The capability to balance work and family as a lone parent was something that all the interviewees discussed.

From an intersectional perspective, de los Reyes and Mulinari (2005) argue that the norm in Sweden is based on the nuclear family, and that the society is organised around this, as well as the family consisting of dual-earner households. In this sense, lone mothers are not part of the norm, and are therefore subjected to inequalities as a consequence, and these inequalities can for example be manifested through the opening hours of childcare and schools not matching the work hours of the mothers. The inequalities thus arise in terms of the lone mothers not having the support of an extra family member that could help in organising the care of the children (de los Reyes and Mulinari 2005:110). Thus, the experiences of immigrant lone mothers reveal how the power structures in Sweden favour dual-earner households. This can also be put in relation to other aspects of work family balance that some of the interviewees experienced as lone mothers, namely when they were able to come to work, along with having to take sick days to care for the children. If they were not one-parent households, these aspects would not be seen as issues. Elham, who came to Sweden in the early 1990s from a Middle Eastern country and has both an undergraduate and a graduate degree from Swedish universities and currently holds a position equivalent to her degree, also expressed her thoughts regarding work-family balance. She shares the custody of her child with her ex-husband, and has been a single parent for two years:

“The work hasn’t been affected, but the hours have to match when you have a child on your own. [...] When I have my son, I cannot be as flexible when to pick him up [from school]. When I have to pick him up, I have to pick him up.”

Although she shares custody with her ex-husband, she still experiences difficulties in balancing family and work. According to her, she is fortunate enough to have a job where a lot of flexibility is allowed, so the week when she has her son she is able to take flexitime. The weeks when the child is at the father’s place she is able to work extra to catch up on the flexitime again. Research from Lundqvist (2013) pointed in a similar direction, as it was seen that the lone mothers in her sample had difficulties balancing work and family, and that when there were any problems they turned to family and friends for help with caring for the children (Lundqvist 2013:257). As has been discussed previously, many of the immigrant lone mothers in this study lack this support as they in some cases arrived in Sweden alone, and as such they lack the extended support that lone mothers of Swedish origin have naturally as they were born in

Sweden. It should also be noted that having a new partner can help with the work-family balance, as a partner would be a support when the mother was at work, for example. However, most of the women in this study did not have a partner, and were therefore lacking that support. Another aspect of work-family balance was raised by Ari, who has been in Sweden for the majority of her life. She has been self-employed for a long time, but after maternity leave in 2003 and 2007, as well as some absence due to sickness, she has had only temporary employment. The instability of the temporary employments in relation to taking care of her two children was something that she expressed as challenging:

“I worked at a drop-in day care centre [...] I worked there for a year and seven months, but weren't allowed to stay because I didn't have an education. And then they gave me a contract for two months. How do you live on two months, with two kids?”

Ari thus stresses that temporary employments create insecurity, both for herself and for her children. In relation to balancing work and family, another aspect that came up during the interviews was the concern from the lone mothers to make sure of their children's well-being. This was manifested through financial concerns amongst others, such as that the children should not only be able to go to extracurricular activities but also in that the women needed enough economic resources to care for them. These concerns were also manifested in the development of the children, and that they should not suffer from being part of a one-parent household and all that entails both economically and socially. In addition, it was also discussed that the well-being of the children could be influenced by the children having to move between the parents when there was shared custody. Among the interviewees, the well-being of their children and the prioritization of the children's needs rather than their own was thus something that was raised as an important aspect. The interviewees that had small children or children in their teens mentioned that there is a lot of responsibility to be the main caretaker of a child, but that it is important to focus on the children's well-being when they are young, as expressed by Jane:

“My idea is to now focus on them [the children] so that I am sure that they don't do stupid things. It is better that I do it now, than wait until they are teenagers, maybe then it's too late. So now I think now is the basic foundation for them.”

This was not the only interviewee who discussed the future as well as care taking of the children as important, as many interviewees placed the well-being of their child before their own, in that their own personal lives came second to the needs of the children. These aspects have also been raised in previous research, as Yazdanpanah (2008) noted that women often adjust their priorities and needs to that of the children both in terms of employment and economic resources (Yazdanpanah 2008:268-269).

Almost all of the interviewees raised the work-family balance as difficult when have the main responsibility for their children. There are thus several factors that play in to the flexibility of these women, such as not being able to work certain hours, or have certain types of jobs. Many of the women were aware that having a child could have an influence on the capability to work, and that it made them less flexible due to being the main caretaker of their children. Thus, finding a balance between work and family can also influence the ability of these women to enter the labour market.

4.2 Strategies

So far, the analysis has focused on the experiences of the lone mothers when it comes to entering the labour market, as well as being able to balance work and family without an extensive support from families and friends, due to a limited social network. The analysis will now shift focus, and examine if the lone mothers in this sample have any strategies in terms of being lone mothers and being immigrants, and also if they have any strategies for facilitating labour market integration. Therefore, this section has been divided into three parts, the first about coping strategies concerning lone motherhood, the second regarding education, and the third regarding other strategies for employment.

4.2.1 Lone Motherhood

In the previous section of the analysis, the interviewees expressed concern regarding the difficulties that come with being an immigrant lone mother and having a lack of support. Although most of the women expressed concerns regarding these matters, some of the women did also express gratefulness to organisations that had services directed at helping lone mothers by organising gatherings. There, they could meet other women in the same situation, and the

organisations provided some information on how to deal with legal issues and other aspects. However, although the help from the organisations was appreciated and important, many of the interviewees noted that it was up to them to find out information on their own about where to find these organisations and the help. Furthermore, one issue that interviewees raised as a difficulty relating to being a lone parent was accessing information regarding custody arrangements, and how to apply for legal aid to help in this process. The women who were going through, or had previously gone through applying for legal aid noted that there was a lack of information regarding how to handle the legal system and everything that comes with being a single parent. This was tied back to being without support and not having connections to the system, as well as coming from a different culture and not knowing how things are done in Sweden. On a more general level, in order to get around the lack of information present for lone parents, and in particular immigrant lone mothers, Raina, who lives in a village in the middle of Sweden had devised her own way of accessing information:

“I try to know; try to get information from other people, especially families. I try to let... the families know better than me, or, they apply for many things, or they do many things that I don’t know. I feel like I am absent, that I’m missed from everything”.

Due to the insufficient provision of information to immigrant lone mothers, Raina’s strategy was to turn to families and learn from them, as she perceived them to receive more information as they had different preconditions, and learn from what they were doing and consequently amass more information that could be useful for her situation as well. Irene, from a large city in Sweden and around the same age as Raina, expressed similar thoughts:

“You have to find it on your own. Yes, that is the problem – no one is going to come knocking on the door [and] say ‘come, let’s do something!’. You have to find it on your own. But in the beginning it was hard, because of the language yes, we speak Spanish at home. Now I don’t speak fluent Swedish, but I can look at the webpage, I can listen to friends, I can ask ‘what shall I do, what do Swedish lone parents do?’”

In order to find more information both Raina and Irene thus turned to other people that are in similar positions as themselves, but who they perceived as having more information than what they had themselves. Similarly to what both Raina and Irene expressed regarding a lack of information, Yazdanpanah (2008) noted in her research on lone mothers' economic situation that the women in her study had limited knowledge regarding how societal organisations worked, due to limited social connections to the native population. The limited interaction, along with factors such as language skills and coming to Sweden as an adult, restricted knowledge regarding issues that the native population has learned by being part of the society since a young age. As result of all these factors, the information regarding societal structures and functions was therefore limited (Yazdanpanah 2008:270). Although these strategies are not specific to immigrant lone mothers, they are strategies that the women in this sample have adopted to improve their knowledge and inform themselves about certain issues. The women in this sample perceive others to have more information than them; therefore they attempt to use channels to acquire more knowledge for themselves. The lack of information regarding how to handle certain situations can also be related to Bourdieu's theory of embodied cultural capital and the way in which it is acquired over time (Bourdieu 2011: 80-82).

4.2.2 Education

Some of the interviewees had, after some time in Sweden, been able to find an employment, but in most cases it was a temporary employment with a low salary, and in a low-skilled profession. However, in some of these cases the employment that they had did not correlate to the education they had received in their country of origin. Irene, who has a graduate degree as well as work experience within a high-skilled profession relating to her degree in her home country, was aware that her education was very country-specific and that in order to be able to work within the same occupation in Sweden she had to learn many country-specific skills related to Sweden. She has been alone with her children since arriving to Sweden, and therefore started working odd jobs in order to get by and to provide for her family although that was not her end goal:

“In the beginning I worked everywhere, yes, I worked as a cleaner, I worked at the home-help service, I worked catering, I worked in an office, yes, I did so much. I think that these type of jobs; they are not hard to find. But my goal was not that, because I studied in my country of

origin for 14 years, I educated myself and then I thought, why did I come here? So I started studying and tried to get into my direction of studies.”

After working temporary and low paying jobs, and not feeling fulfilled with her situation due to having an extensive academic as well as working background from her country of origin, Irene decided to start studying again so that she could improve her situation. With her education being country-specific, it can be seen that she lacked embodied cultural capital, as raised by Bourdieu (2011:82). Another woman in a similar situation is Jane. She has a graduate degree from a university in a Western country, and working experience as a middle-manager in the same country. She has also held low-skilled employments in Sweden. She is currently studying to get a teaching license in order to have a better future for herself once the children are older:

“I decided that if I have trouble working, I can take the opportunity to study so that I in the future maybe can get a better job. Because the social security allowance, it is just during that time you can get money, only that time, [and] after the children are grown up, what should you do? So I have never been at the social services.”

Both Irene and Jane have extensive working experience at professional jobs prior to coming to Sweden. They both also have work experience with low-skilled occupations in Sweden, and noted that those jobs were not necessarily difficult to obtain. Irene noted that her degree and experience from her home country would not be transferable to the Swedish context, so instead opted to get a new degree in Sweden. With professional work experience from another country, Jane, did in the beginning feel bad about not being able to use her knowledge and skills in Sweden, but decided to start education again so that she could have a better position for herself. These two women both exemplifies Mattsson’s (2001) discussion on human capital theory, in that both of their educational backgrounds and working experiences could not be transferable to Sweden. Furthermore, their decisions to start a new education can be referred back to the theory on creating country-specific capital that will lead to more opportunities for them (Mattsson 2001:121-122).

4.2.3 Other Strategies for Employment

The importance of social contacts has been discussed previously in this paper, and the role that it plays in finding an employment has also been discussed. With a lack of appropriate social contacts, Raina came up with a different solution to finding an employment. She had extensive educational and working experience prior to coming to Sweden, but still had a difficult time in finding an employment. She has held an internship at a Swedish university and now works part time there at the same time as she is studying some extra courses:

“I am the one who contacted the Swedish Public Employment Service. I am the one who contacted the university. I am the one who tried to fix a job. I fixed for myself an interview”.

Raina has extensive education, but experienced difficulties in obtaining an employment as she experienced that the services available from the Swedish Public Employment Service did not help her in finding an employment as they advised her to start her career over again as an assistant nurse or by working at a preschool. This was something that she raised as difficult, as she had an education and work experience prior to coming to Sweden, which she had difficulties to transferring to Sweden. It was only when she herself took the step and sought out a university that she got her credentials recognized. Similar to what was experienced by Jane and Irene, Raina also experienced difficulties in entering the labour market due to her human capital not being recognised in Sweden (Mattsson 2001:122). Raina did therefore take the initiative to create her own way to an employment, by approaching companies on her own. She also discussed another way to enter the labour market:

“I found it is easier for me to be with English, focus on English, rather than Swedish. Yes, I will continue with Swedish, all my life studying Swedish, because I want to live in this country. But I chose... this is the short way, in English. Imagine that I want to go to study Swedish to go to the University to study. I have to reach then high-school level Swedish. Exams [would be] in Swedish and all would be difficult. That is why I chose this. [It is the] short path.

By choosing to focus on studying, as well as trying to find an employment where English is required, Raina tries to facilitate her integration into the labour market. She acknowledges the

amount of time it would take to learn Swedish at a level that would be appropriate for her taking a new degree. She recognises the time it would take for her to amass appropriate cultural capital (Bourdieu 2011:80-84). What all the three women have in common is that they are trying to find ways to facilitate their integration into the labour market at the level that is appropriate for them, which will as a result also improve their and their children's economic security.

4.3 Discussion

The analysis has covered a wide spectrum on the experiences of the immigrant lone mothers in this study. As was noted, many of the interviewees experienced difficulties in being a lone mother while integrating into the labour market, in part due to not having enough support to help to take care of the children, but also in terms of having employment possibilities that are adversely affected due to being lone mothers and immigrants. One section of the analysis covered the cultural differences that can exist for immigrant women, and put it in relation to their position on the labour market. The discussion followed the argument from Dahlstedt et al. (2013) and the difficulties inherent in placing a lot of significance on cultural differences, which takes away from immigrants being a heterogeneous group, and views all immigrants, and in particular immigrant women, as the same (Dahlstedt et al 2013:137-138). It is important to note that the emergence of a stereotype of immigrant women as culturally distant in comparison to the Swedish population creates a generalisation of all immigrants, and does not recognise that immigrants, and immigrant women in particular, do not have the same background, and therefore in many cases also do not have the same culture. Furthermore, the example given by Dahlstedt et al (2013) exemplifies only one aspect of intersectionality, something that de los Reyes and Mulinari (2005) raised as an issue when applying the concept of intersectionality, in that by just acknowledging the intersections between ethnicity and gender, immigrant women are portrayed as being the problem rather than tying these intersections to societal structures (de los Reyes and Mulinari 2005:129).

de los Reyes and Mulinari (2005) further argue that the structure of the labour market must be examined to view how intersections of ethnicity, gender and class create different power structures (de los Reyes and Mulinari 2005:129). Along similar lines, Knocke (2011) has in earlier research also noted that perceptions of cultural differences have for many decades played

a large part in explaining the positioning of immigrant women on the labour market. However, it is argued that by using cultural differences as an explanation for difficulties in labour market integration, the problem is perceived to be the women themselves, rather than being a structural problem (Knocke 2011:220-221). The experiences of these women reveal certain structural issues with the construction of Swedish society and the labour market. Most importantly, it reveals how these structures favour dual-earner households and disadvantage immigrant lone mothers. Furthermore, an individual must have certain cultural knowledge to be able to effectively participate in the labour market. As Knocke (2011) noted, the intersections of ethnicity, gender and also class create an inferior position on the labour market for most immigrant women, as a consequence of the unequal power structures (Knocke (2011:13).

The empirical data also showed that most of the interviewees who have a larger share of responsibility for their children discussed the difficulties in having a work-family balance that was suitable. It was seen in the background that the family policies in Sweden are aimed at promoting gender equality and the employment of women, even if they are lone parents, but that the individualisation of the policies was favourable to dual-earner households (Duvander 2008:4), as discussed above. This had also previously been raised by de los Reyes and Mulinari (2005) who noted that when it comes to the organisation of labour, dual-earner households are favoured, in that they are the norm on which wage labour is based and organised. As a consequence, childcare services and working hours are arranged according to the dual-earner household norm, which disadvantages lone parents, and has both economic and social effects (de los Reyes and Mulinari 2005:110). These struggles were exemplified by a quote from Jane, in which she discussed not being able to work evenings due to being the sole caretaker of her children, as there was no one to care for them when she was at work. Although it was not explicitly stated, it can be inferred that no one in this case refers not only to family and friends being unable to care for the children, but also to the fact that kindergartens and schools are not open late enough when working nights. Furthermore, irrespective of their position on the labour market, almost all of the women raised concerns about work-family balance, and being able to be active in their children's lives, while at the same time having an employment that would generate sufficient income to care for them. In her research, Yazdanpanah (2008) argued that there are always dilemmas regarding work-family balance, in that it is difficult for lone mothers to reach a

point where the balance of caring for children and having an income-generating employment is optimal. Most often, something has to give way for the other, but there is often a conflict between being absent from caring for the child due to work and the loss of income, which could lead to a lower living standard (Yazdanpanah 2008:266). Due to a lack of social networks, many of the women also did not have anyone that could support them, which could also have an influence on their labour market integration.

Many of the women in this study were aware of the fact that social contacts were an important factor in finding an employment, and that the lack of social contacts made the process more difficult. This is also raised by Tovatt (2007) who argues that immigrants and youths are the groups that becomes the most disadvantaged when informal recruitment methods are used for a job, due to their lack of social contacts beyond their immediate network (Tovatt 2007:300). The awareness of the consequences of a lack of social connections made some of the interviewees search for other ways of finding an employment. The importance of taking their own initiative and being outgoing was raised as important for creating these types of networks. As Bethoui (2008) noted, social contacts can increase the chance of obtaining any employment (Bethoui 2008:415), However, Tovatt (2007) argues that the social networks that most immigrants, in general, hold differ from the social contacts of the native population, and thus can create labour market segregation as many immigrants end up in lower paying as well as lower status jobs due to their limited social networks. As a consequence, immigrants end up in lower paying jobs, rather than being excluded from the labour market (Tovatt 2007:300). It was acknowledged by the interviewees that they as immigrants lack the networks in relation to the native population and are as a result put in an unfair position on the labour market. This was also what led some of the women to take part in education in Sweden, in that it could increase their position on the labour market, as well as create new social networks that could help to facilitate this.

This discussion has explored how immigrant lone mothers experience their position in the labour market, as immigrants and lone mothers. In the cases exemplified in this thesis, the women are seen to be in a disadvantaged position due to their gender and ethnicity. This disadvantaged position manifest itself in three main ways. First, the societal structure is not designed for individuals in their position, as it wage labour is organised around dual-earner households that

have the capability to share the responsibility for the children, in terms of picking them up from school or taking them to extracurricular activities. At the same time, cultural contrasts do in some cases also contribute to the difficulties of immigrant lone mothers in integrating into the labour market. Furthermore, most of the interviewees lack social connections that can help to facilitate labour market integration. Finally, it is difficult for these lone mothers to balance work and family, due to a lack of support and due to the organisation of labour in Swedish society. However, some of the women have developed coping strategies to deal with these issues, such as pursuing further education, and finding other ways of approaching employment. Nonetheless, despite these coping strategies, the experiences of these women highlight how lone immigrant mothers remain in a disadvantaged position in the labour market and have difficulty integrating into the labour market and Swedish society as a whole.

5. Conclusion and Further Research

The purpose of this thesis has been to examine how immigrant lone mother have experienced their integration into the labour market, in their position as immigrant lone mothers, and what strategies they have had in facilitating this integration. It was seen in the background that immigrants and lone mothers are two groups that are experiencing difficulties on the labour market. Immigrant lone mothers are thus disadvantaged in being immigrants on one hand, and lone mothers on the other. The theories of intersectionality, cultural and social capital, along with human capital have been used in order to tie the experiences of these women to a more general level of analysis. Through the use of interviews this thesis has been able to uncover the interviewees experiences of being an immigrant lone mother. This study differs from other studies that explore the labour market integration of immigrants, in that the focus is not on the integration in itself, but rather how the integration into the labour market is affected by the position of these women as immigrants and lone mothers. In total, 13 women were interviewed, and the data from the interviews was analysed through a thematic analysis in which two main themes emerged; entering the labour market and strategies for doing so.

With the use of the themes that were previously mentioned, the analysis covered several aspects relating to the labour market integration of immigrant lone mothers. Some of the women experienced that being a lone mother influenced their employment possibilities, in that there was

a worry that, as lone mothers, they would be perceived as restricted in how many hours they would be able to work, as they had the majority of the responsibility for the childcare. In connection to being lone mothers, some of the women brought up cultural contrasts as creating difficulties in entering the labour market. One factor that many women raised as a concern regarding their integration was a lack of social connections, which can help to facilitate integration, which has also been pointed out in previous studies. However, the women pointed out that not only did the lack of social connections affect them in terms of having connections that could help them in finding an employment, but also in the sense that without extensive social contacts it was difficult for them to have certain types of jobs, as, in many cases, they did not have support in caring for their children when they themselves were at work. This ties into another theme that was raised as well, namely work-family balance. Many of the women, irrespective of their level of integration into the labour market, raised concerns regarding earning a sufficient income, while at the same time being able to be there for their children and raise them. It is therefore seen in the interviews that many of the women are experiencing the same difficulties that have been raised as an issue in other studies on the integration of immigrants, such as a lack of social networks that facilitate finding an employment, or that their qualifications and experience are not validated in a new context, for example. It is also seen that as lone mothers, their experiences do not differ widely to that of other groups of lone mothers. Although the experiences of the women interviewed in this study are similar to other studies on lone mothers, this study presents the situation for these immigrant lone mothers and how they are disadvantaged when it comes to employment, as both immigrants and lone mothers. Not only are they disadvantaged as immigrants, but in most cases, their disadvantages increase when they become lone mothers.

What sets this study apart from the others is that it, through the use of intersectionality, brings in another perspective, in that the immigrant lone mothers in this sample are affected not only because of the reasons just mentioned, but also because there are structural problems such as the organisation of wage labour and childcare that also influence the capability of these women to integrate into the labour market. Furthermore, it was noted that for lone mothers in general, family and friends can step in as support to care for the children when they are at work. However, it was noted that one aspect that the immigrant lone mothers brought up in this study,

was that they do not have this support, as they in most cases do not have any extended family in Sweden. Although immigrant lone mothers are similar to other groups of lone mothers in that other groups might also lack extended family as they might live in a different city, these groups are not necessarily in as vulnerable a position as immigrant lone mothers. The immigrant lone mothers in this study did in most cases lack family, and friends, and had also arrived in a new country that might be different from their home country. The same goes for labour market integration. Due to a lack of social networks, these women have experienced difficulties in integrating into the labour market. The results from this study thus show that immigrant lone mothers are in a disadvantaged position when it comes to labour market integration due to their lack of social connections, both in terms of finding employment as well as for balancing for and family.

The labour market integration of immigrant lone mothers is an area of research that has not been given much attention. Research on lone mothers tends to focus on the economic aspects of lone motherhood and the consequences that this has on the situation for households that consist of lone mothers and their children. However, this thesis has presented another viewpoint on the research area of lone mothers in that it has investigated the situation of a group whose situation has not been extensively researched. As mentioned, the situation of lone mothers has been discussed in other research, but only in few cases has this been extended to examine immigrant lone mothers. Furthermore, those studies also tend to focus on how immigrant lone mothers' experiences differ from that of the native population. The angle that has been taken in this thesis has not been discussed prior, and as such, this thesis presents a starting point from which further research on this topic can and should be conducted, in order to shed more light on the situation of immigrant lone mothers in Sweden. For example, one could investigate how the amount of time an immigrant lone mother has spent in Sweden affects their experiences of labour market integration or how much the location influences the experiences of the women.

This thesis has shown that the immigrant lone mothers in this study have experiences with being in a disadvantaged position on the labour market due to the combination of being lone mothers and immigrants. One reason for their position as disadvantaged is due to the organisation of the labour market, which is designed according to the dual-earner household norm, which leaves the

interviewed women in an unfavourable position. Furthermore, this thesis has uncovered that as cultural differences are perceived as major factor that hinders labour market integration, among people in society, the interviewees are further put in an unfavourable position as immigrants. This study can thus reveal issues that the government needs to address to facilitate the integration of immigrant lone mothers into the labour market. For example, the government could design specific policies aimed at helping lone immigrant mothers to integrate, and achieve a balance between work and family as they currently lack that support. This thesis concludes that while some of the women have devised strategies to facilitate integration, all of the women as immigrant lone mothers remain in a disadvantaged position, and that they will have difficulty in ever developing social connections and networks equivalent to those of their Swedish counterparts.

6. References

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Appendix 1.

Interview request

”Hej!

Jag är intresserad av att komma i kontakt med ensamstående kvinnor födda utanför Sverige som är villiga att delta i en intervju angående sina upplevelser av integration på den svenska arbetsmarknaden i samband med att vara ensamstående mamma. Intervjuerna är en del av min masteruppsats som jag just nu skriver på Lunds Universitet. En intervju beräknas ta cirka en timme och resultaten kommer att vara anonyma, vilket innebär att ingen information som anges kommer kunna härledas tillbaka till dig.

Är du ensamstående mamma och född utanför Sverige? Eller känner du någon som kanske vore intresserad av att ställa upp? Om du vill ha mer information om uppsatsen eller boka ett möte för intervju så kan du kontakta mig på namn@student.lu.se

Tack!
Emma Johansson”

Appendix 2.

Table 1. Overview of References Regarding Integration of Immigrants

Skills (education, language, age, country of immigration)	Situation (children, cultural differences)	Structure (Labour market)
<p>Tovatt (2007)</p> <p>Behtoui (2008)</p> <p>Karlsson and Tibajev (2014)</p>	<p>Knocke (2011)</p> <p>Dahlstedt et al. (2013)</p> <p>Karlsson and Tibajev (2014)</p>	<p>Le Grand and Szulkin (2002)</p> <p>Westin (2008)</p> <p>Bevelander (2011)</p> <p>Lundborg (2013)</p> <p>Karlsson and Tibajev (2014)</p>

Appendix 3.

Interview Guide in Swedish

Tiden innan Sverige

Berätta lite om innan du kom till Sverige:

Har du någon utbildning från ditt hemland?

Arbetade du i ditt hemland? Vilket yrke hade du?

Hur kom du till Sverige?

Hur skiljer sig Sverige från hemlandet?

Tiden i Sverige

När kom du till Sverige, hur länge har du bott här?

Har du någon kontakt till ditt hemland? I så fall hur?

Hur upplevde du din första tid i Sverige?

Hade du kontakt med någon myndighet i Sverige som hjälpte dig med boende eller liknande?

Fick du möjlighet att gå någon språkkurs?

Fick du kontakt med vänner?

Hur fick du denna kontakt?

Barn

Berätta om lite om din familjesituation?

Hur många barn har du?

Hur gamla är dina barn?

Hur länge har du varit ensamstående?

Har du ensam eller delad vårdnad om barnen?

Om delad vårdnad, hur är relationen till den andra föräldern?

Hur ser boendesituationen ut, bor barnen hos dig?

Hur ser en vanlig dag ut för dig och dina barn? Berätta om igår till exempel. Vad gjorde ni på morgonen? Och vid middagen? Hur såg kvällen ut?

Har du tid för dig själv? Hur spenderar du den?

Arbete

Hur viktigt är det för dig att ha ett arbete?

Om du inte har ett arbete, är du inskriven på arbetsförmedlingen eller någon organisation med arbetsmarknadspolitiska åtgärder?

Hur hjälper de dig?

Berätta om ditt första jobb i Sverige, vad gjorde du?

Hur fick du det arbetet?

Har du ett arbete nu?

Om ja, hur länge har du haft ditt nuvarande arbete?

Hur fick du ditt nuvarande arbete?

Vilket yrke arbetar du inom nu?

Har du en utbildning som är relaterad till ditt nuvarande arbete?

Jobbar du deltid eller heltid?

Vilken form av anställning har du?

Har du haft andra jobb? I så fall, vilka?

Hur upplever du dina möjligheter på den svenska arbetsmarknaden i och med att du är ensamstående förälder?

Hur upplever du dina möjligheter på den svenska arbetsmarknaden i och med att du inte är född i Sverige?

Tycker du att vara ensamstående förälder påverkar din situation på arbetsmarknaden?

Rent generellt, hur upplever du invandrarkvinnors möjlighet att få ett arbete på den svenska arbetsmarknaden?

Enligt dig, vilka faktorer tycker du har mest inflytande på möjligheten att få ett arbete? (språk, utbildning, etc).

Integration

Vad tycker du om att bo i Sverige?

Hur ser du på framtiden i Sverige?

Vad innebär arbetsmarknadsintegration för dig?

Hur upplever du din egen integration?

Följdfråga: Vad är det som gör att du känner dig integrerad, eller inte integrerad?

Hur pass viktigt anser du ett arbete vara för integration i samhället överlag?

Känner du dig delaktig i samhället?

Känner du att det något jag missat? Finns det något annat du vill lyfta fram?

Interview guide in English

Interview guide

Is it okay to record the interview?

You have the right to stop the interview whenever you want to, and can choose to not answer a question without giving a reason for it.

Before coming to Sweden

Tell me a bit about before you came to Sweden:

Do you have an education from your country of birth?

Did you work in your country of origin?

How/why did you come to Sweden?

How does Sweden differ from your country of origin?

In Sweden

When did you come to Sweden? How long have you stayed here?

Do you have any contact with your country of origin? In that case, how does that contact look like?

How did you experience your first few months/years in Sweden?

Did you have contact with any authority in Sweden that helped you with housing or similar things? Or an organisation with the same purpose?

Did you have the opportunity to go to a language course (SFI)?

Did you come in contact with any friends? How was that contact established?

Children

Tell me a bit about your family situation:

How many children do you have?

How old are they?

How long have you been a single mother? Why?

Do you have sole or shared custody of your children? How is your relationship with the other parent?

How does the living situation look like, does the child(ren) live with you on a full time basis?

How does an ordinary day look for you and your children? For example, tell me about yesterday.
What did you do in the morning, around midday and the evening?
Do you have any alone time? What do you do on your alone time?

Work

How important is it for you to have a job/an employment?

If you do not have an employment, are you registered at the employment agency office (arbetsförmedlingen) or an organisation with special labour market programmes? Have you been registered at such an agency?

If so, how do they help you?

Tell me about your first job in Sweden? How did you get it, what was it?

Do you have an employment now? What is it?

If yes, how long have you had it? Is it temporary or permanent? Full time, part time? How did you get it?

Do you have an education that is connected to your current employment? Thus, does your employment correspond to your education?

Have there been any factors that have influenced your choice of employment or working hours?

Where are the children when you are at work?

Have you had other jobs? What did they entail?

How do you perceive your opportunities on the Swedish labour market in terms of being a single mother?

How do you perceive your opportunities on the Swedish labour market in terms of not being born in Sweden, or being Swedish?

In general, how do you perceive the opportunities for immigrant women to establish themselves on the Swedish labour market?

In your opinion, when being an immigrant, are there some factors which have an impact on the prospects of getting a job?

Integration

How do you feel about living in Sweden?

How do you see your future in Sweden?

How do you perceive labour market integration? What does it mean to you?

How do you perceive your own integration, both in the society in general and on the labour market?

What makes you feel integrated, or not?

How important do you think an employment is for the integration into the society overall?

Do you feel like you are a part of the society?

Conclusion

Is there something I have missed or that you want to add?

Appendix 4.

Ethical considerations

The Swedish Research Council³ (2010) has four main principles that are important to keep in mind when conducting research. These concern different areas of research that all aim at protecting the individuals who take part in the study (Vetenskapsrådet 2010:6). These principles have been used as guidance when conducting research in this thesis. The first principle refers to information given to the participants, in that they should be aware of what type of study they are taking part in (Vetenskapsrådet 2010:7). In the case of this thesis the interviewees were informed through an interview request (see Appendix 1), about the broad subject of the interviews and that the interviews would be used as part of a master thesis. The second principle from the Swedish Research Council (2011) which regards informed consent, meaning that the participants must give their consent to participate in the interview and can at any time end the interview without giving any reason for doing so (Vetenskapsrådet 2010:9-10). The interviewees were therefore made aware that the participation in the interviews in this study was voluntary, and consent was asked prior to all the interviews. Furthermore, the interviewees were informed that they had the right not to answer questions if they were not comfortable in doing so, as well as has having the right to end the interview at any point without giving a reason. The third principle is about anonymity, and that the participants should be made anonymous if necessary in order to protect them from being identified by outside sources. However, when it comes to life stories, some personal facts may be necessary in order to give more foundation to the stories (Vetenskapsrådet 2010:12). The process of anonymity can be done by creating codes, and not only allowing the interviewees anonymity (Vetenskapsrådet 2011:46). Given the sometimes vulnerable situation that some of these women are in; the choice was taken to keep the interviewees anonymous. Therefore, in this study, the women are given different names. Furthermore, when describing the interviewees the information given about them is as vague as possible in order to keep their anonymity, without taking away information important to understand their situation.

The Swedish Research Council (2010) presents one last principle which refers to the use of the information about and given by the interviewees, and that it is not allowed to be used for any

³ In Swedish, Vetenskapsrådet

other purposes than the research project at hand (Vetenskapsrådet 2010:14). The information provided in this thesis will not be used for any other purpose than the analysis of this thesis and the information from the interviews such as interview recordings and interview transcripts will be erased when the thesis is completed and graded.