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**The workforce participation of
Sweden's newly arrived immigrants:
An evaluation of the Establishment Reform**

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Declaration

This thesis is submitted to Lund University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science (Development Studies). The work embodied in this thesis is the result of original research and has not been submitted previously for a degree to this or any other university or institution.

Signed:

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List of Abbreviations

CAB	County Administrative Board (Skåne) (<i>Länsstyrelsen Skåne</i>)
SFI	Swedish for Immigrants (<i>Svenska för invandrare</i>)
SMB	Swedish Migration Board (<i>Migrationsverket</i>)
SPEO	Swedish Public Employment Office (<i>Arbetsförmedlingen</i>)

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Abstract

The low levels of workforce participation achieved by Sweden's immigrants is an issue that has challenged policymakers for over 35 years. Recently, the significance of this issue in the minds of Swedish voters has been made clear, as Sweden elected the first far-right anti-immigration party into parliament in almost 20 years. In late 2010, in an effort to combat the ongoing issue, the government introduced a new policy, entitled the Establishment Reform, to facilitate and accelerate the introduction of newly arrived immigrants into working and social life in Sweden. This thesis presents a realistic evaluation of the Establishment Reform, with the aim of highlighting its strengths and limitations, and providing feedback to policymakers that can be used to inform potential amendments to the program. The research employs a combination of document analysis, semi-structured interviews with a selection of public authority employees responsible for delivering the program, and a short answer survey with newly arrived immigrants who have participated in the program. It finds that there are a number of constraints pertaining to the context in which the program was introduced, and the mechanisms by which it is intended to operate. The results suggest that although aspects of the program are functioning well, without resolving contextual issues such as housing and discrimination in the labour market, whilst also improving the recognition of foreign-obtained human capital, and regulating the quality of service providers tasked with assisting the immigrants, the capacity for the Establishment Reform to deliver its desired outcomes will be limited.

Key Words: *workforce participation; barriers to employment; newly arrived immigrants; Establishment Reform; Sweden; critical realism; realistic evaluation.*

Word count: 26,500 words

Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Introduction

On December 1, 2010 a new reform for the reception of newly arrived refugees, asylum seekers, and their dependents came into effect in Sweden (European Commission, 2014). The reform, entitled ‘Labour market introduction of newly arrived immigrants – individual responsibility with professional support’ (Regeringskansliet, 2009a: 1), which is commonly (and henceforth) referred to as “the Establishment Reform”, aims ‘to facilitate and accelerate the establishment of certain newly arrived immigrants¹ into working and social life’ (Sveriges Riksdag, 2014a—*own translation*). When introducing the reform, the government declared that the ‘[m]ore rapid introduction will be accomplished by strengthening incentives to find a job and to participate in introduction activities [and by providing a] clearer and more distinct division of responsibilities between various actors’ (Regeringskansliet, 2009a: 1).

At the announcement of the reform, Nyamko Sabuni, Sweden’s Minister for Integration at the time, released a press statement which revealed that ‘[t]he median time from when a new arrival receives a residence permit to when work is found is seven years. This points to substantial structural problems in the introduction of new arrivals’ (Regeringskansliet, 2009b—*own translation*). This statement, based on findings presented in a 2009 report from Statistics Sweden (see SCB, 2009: 34), was soon reproduced and widely disseminated by a variety of media sources (see Larsson, 2010; Sveriges Radio 2010; Gudmundson, 2009).

¹ The reform encompasses those newly arrived immigrants aged between 20 and 65 who have been granted a residency permit on the basis of being a quota refugee, an asylum seeker, or other humanitarian entrant, as well as any immigrant granted a residency permit on the basis of being a relative or dependent of a quota refugee, asylum seeker, or other humanitarian entrant. The reform also encompasses any immigrant aged between 18 and 20 who satisfies any of the above conditions but does not have a parent or guardian present in Sweden. For more detailed information, see ‘Target group’/*Målgrupp* in Sveriges Riksdag 2014a—*own translation*).

The high level of interest generated by the statement ensured that it became a key component of the discussion that followed the announcement of the Establishment Reform and an important justification for the government's decision.

As a result of the 2010 federal elections, held shortly before the reform was introduced, it may be argued that the Establishment Reform has taken on a greater political significance than originally anticipated. This is due to the emergence of the Sweden Democrats, the first far-right anti-immigration party to be elected to Swedish parliament since New Democracy in 1991. The Sweden Democrats ran their campaign on a single platform that called for a significant cut to Sweden's immigrant intake, citing fears of the Islamisation of Sweden; the growing fiscal cost of Sweden's current immigrant intake and its potential consequences for Swedish pensioners; and a perceived higher crime rate among the immigrant population (Kianzad, 2010; Waterfield and Day, 2010). Following the 2010 result, party leader Jimmie Åkesson declared that '[t]he immigration policy is the most important issue in this election and we want that to be debated and we want the other parties to change their policy' (Waterfield and Day, 2010).

Four years later, the Sweden Democrats have become the fastest growing political party in Sweden, and according to recent opinion polls they currently hold over 12 per cent of the national vote, which more than doubles the number of their supporters from the previous election (SvD, 2013; Kianzad, 2010). Given the sustained growth of the Sweden Democrats, it is clear that immigration—and the workforce participation of Sweden's immigrants in particular—is of increasing importance to many Swedish voters, and as a consequence, the perceived success or failure of the Establishment Reform could have a crucial role to play in Sweden's upcoming federal election.

In addition to Swedish voters and the parliament they will soon elect, the outcomes of the Establishment Reform are important for the newly arrived immigrants in Sweden to whom the reform is directed. This is due to the

significance of employment for integration, as explained in the following statement:

Employment is generally considered to be a crucial factor for the integration of immigrants. Not only does employment yield income for the individual, but obtaining a job also improves knowledge about, for example, language, culture, and the functioning of the labour market ... [it also] creates networks, factors that all facilitate the integration process. (Lundborg, 2013: 219)

Consequently, by improving the workforce participation outcomes of Sweden's newly arrived immigrants, the Establishment Reform can aid in their integration more broadly, and help reduce their marginalisation and exclusion.

An additional note that is crucial for this thesis regards why the integration of immigrants matters for development. Firstly, it must be acknowledged that the integration of immigrants into a receiving or host society is just one small component within the wider field of migration studies, and in that field, the link between migration and development is often discussed with reference to the migration–development nexus. Whilst there are a limited number of studies that have drawn attention to the potential for immigration to lead to improved development outcomes for migrant-receiving countries (see UNDP, 2009; Coleman, 2006; Legrain, 2006; Pritchett, 2006), much of the literature pertaining to the migration–development nexus is focused on the potential for improved development outcomes in the migrant-sending countries of the Global South (see de Haas, 2006; Taylor, 1999; Durand, Parrado, and Massey, 1996), and, in particular, the flow of remittances, both financial and social, from the Global North to the Global South.

Briefly, the flow of financial remittances is important for development as it provides a crucial form of finance to migrants' countries of origin. Recent estimates suggest that global remittances to developing countries reached \$US414

billion in 2013—more than three times the flow of official development aid (The World Bank, 2013). This finance can help provide a range of benefits to the migrant-sending country, at both the local and the national level: at the local level, it is used to increase and diversify household income; to provide access to improved housing, education, healthcare, and nutrition; and to fund investment in land or small business infrastructure; while at the national level it aids in the balance of payments and provides much needed foreign exchange (Castles, de Haas, and Miller, 2014: 75; Nyberg-Sørensen, Van Hear, and Engberg-Pedersen, 2002: 11). At the same time, social remittances, understood as ‘the transfer of attitudes conducive to change and development’ (Castles, 2007: 275), have been linked to important changes in social and political debate; the development of civil society; domestic policy reform; and the empowerment of women and other minority groups in migrants’ countries of origin (de Haas, 2005: 1272–1273).

Whilst the flow of remittances from the migrant-receiving countries of the Global North to the migrant-sending countries of the Global South are significant for development, the work presented in this thesis eschews the conventional discussion of the migration–development nexus and adopts an entirely different and much broader understanding of development. Accordingly, rather than perceiving development as an issue to be addressed by those nations of the world that are classified as developing according to the developing–developed binary, the term is here applied to refer to any form of positive change—in either the developed or the developing world—that reduces the poverty and inequality, marginalisation and exclusion, or oppression of any group of people, whether that group consists of the entire population of a nation, or a subset of that population, such as newly arrived immigrants. Thus, the workforce participation of Sweden’s immigrants matters for development in order to ensure that Sweden’s immigrant community are able to participate in and contribute to Swedish society on equal terms with the native-born population, free from any form of discrimination, marginalisation, or exclusion. Such an understanding of development closely reflects that of Amartya Sen, who describes development as ‘a process of

expanding the real freedoms people enjoy ... [together with] the removal of major sources of unfreedom', including 'poor economic opportunities' and the various forms of deprivation brought about by unemployment (Sen, 1999: 3, 94).

1.2 Research aims and objectives, and the research questions

The research presented in this thesis contains three key aims:

- To conduct a realistic evaluation of the preliminary outcomes² of the Establishment Reform;
- To develop a better understanding of the various factors that limit and/or constrain the workforce participation of newly arrived immigrants in Sweden; and finally,
- To develop a better understanding of the efficacy of the Establishment Reform in assisting newly arrived immigrants to overcome the barriers that limit or constrain their workforce participation in Sweden, whilst also providing important feedback to policymakers that can be used to help inform potential amendments to the reform and so help facilitate and accelerate the workforce participation of newly arrived immigrants in Sweden.

² The preliminary outcomes of the Establishment Reform refers to the outcomes of those participants who had completed their introduction plans by September 2013 and thus whose data is presented in the Swedish Public Employment Office's (SPEO) 2013 annual report (see Nylander, 2013). These outcomes are described as preliminary as they present data for the years immediately following the introduction of the reform, and it is anticipated that more time is needed before a more critical evaluation of the outcomes produced can be conducted. This is due to integration being a lengthy process that often entails large variations in terms of the outcomes, and the process by which it is achieved, within and between different migrant groups (Castles et al., 2002: 127).

In order to help achieve these aims, the following objectives were developed:

- To describe the history of Swedish immigration, including the workforce participation outcomes for immigrants in Sweden prior to the introduction of the Establishment Reform;
- To review the existing academic literature and examine the various factors that limit or constrain the workforce participation of Sweden's immigrants;
- To describe the Establishment Reform, including its key features and how it intends to facilitate and accelerate the workforce participation of Sweden's newly arrived immigrants;
- To describe the workforce participation outcomes for newly arrived immigrants to Sweden following the introduction of the Establishment Reform;
- To assess the efficacy of the Establishment Reform in assisting newly arrived immigrants to overcome the barriers that limit or constrain their workforce participation in Sweden; and lastly,
- To highlight the strengths and limitations of the Establishment Reform in order to provide important feedback to policymakers that can be used to help inform potential amendments to the reform.

The aims and objectives of the research presented above were then used to help formulate the following two research questions:

- What are the key factors to have limited and/or constrained the workforce participation of immigrants in Sweden?
- What are the strengths and limitations of the Establishment Reform, and are any amendments to the reform required in order to facilitate and accelerate the workforce participation of newly arrived immigrants in Sweden?

In light of the research aims and objectives, and the related research questions described above, this study makes a number of contributions to the existing academic literature. Firstly, it performs a realistic evaluation³ of the Establishment Reform; this is a form of evaluation for which there are very few published examples in Sweden, making it quite unique. In addition, this research is one of only a limited number of studies that conducts interviews in order to investigate the workforce participation of Sweden's immigrants. It thus provides an important opportunity to learn from the experiences and expertise of those practitioners responsible for the provision of services pertinent to the delivery of the Establishment Reform, as well as the experiences of the newly arrived immigrants who have participated in the various activities that together comprise the program introduced by the reform. Consequently, the work presented in this thesis capably demonstrates the advantages of adopting a realistic approach to research, as well as the benefits of utilising interviews when investigating immigration and integration, while also providing a platform from which future research can be directed.

1.3 Thesis Structure

The remainder of the thesis is structured as follows: Chapter 2 presents a short history of Swedish immigration, detailing the number of immigrants to have entered Sweden, the circumstances by which they arrived, and the varying degrees of success they experienced with regard to their integration into the Swedish labour market. Chapter 3, the literature review, examines a number of empirical studies in order to explore the range of factors that have been used to explain the low and declining levels of workforce participation among Sweden's immigrant population over the 35-year period preceding the introduction of the reform. The next chapter, Chapter 4, presents an overview of the Establishment Reform, including its aim; its key features; and its theory of change, which details how the

³ Realistic evaluation refers to a form of evaluation that is underpinned by a realist philosophy of science, and which constitutes a form of applied research. For a more detailed discussion, please see Chapter 5.

reform intends to deliver upon its aim. This chapter also makes reference to a number of studies conducted in Sweden prior to the introduction of the Establishment Reform that provide empirical support for its design.

After providing all of the background information for the research in the first four chapters, Chapter 5 presents the methodology for the research. This chapter explores the full scaffold of the research, taking the reader on a step-by-step discussion that begins with an introduction to the researcher's ontological position—namely critical realism—and concludes with a discussion of the chosen research methods and their implementation. The results of the research are then presented in Chapter 6, before being analysed and discussed in Chapter 7. Finally, Chapter 8 presents the conclusions of the research, including the key findings, the strengths and limitations of those findings, and future opportunities for further research to have arisen as a result of the work presented in this thesis.

Chapter 2 – A short history of Swedish immigration

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a short history of Swedish immigration, offering a concise overview of the patterns of migration to Sweden from the early 20th century until 2010, the year in which the Establishment Reform was introduced. It includes a range of data on the number of immigrants to have entered Sweden; their migrant status or reason for entry on arrival; and the countries from which these immigrants originated, while further commenting on changes in the composition of Sweden's immigrant intake, and changes in the workforce participation of the immigrant population, over time.

2.2 Swedish immigration and immigrant employment outcomes

A useful starting point when discussing the history of Swedish migration is found in the period stretching from the late 19th to the early 20th century. Throughout this time, Sweden was a country of emigration, as over one million people—one quarter of the population at the time—emigrated to North America—and the United States in particular—up until 1930 (Lundh, 2010: 13; Westin, 2006). Sweden's status as a country of emigration began to change more noticeably in the period before and during the Second World War, when thousands of people fled first from Germany and Finland, then later from Norway and Denmark, with large numbers also arriving from Estonia and Latvia towards the end of the war. Although Sweden was initially reluctant to accept some of these people in an effort to avoid conflict with Nazi Germany, they were eventually welcomed, and owing to a high labour demand they readily found work 'in factories, agriculture, and forestry', which helped ensure that 'these refugees did not create any major societal problems' (Westin, 2006). The changes in Sweden's annual immigration and emigration flows between 1920 and 2010 are shown in Figure 2.1.

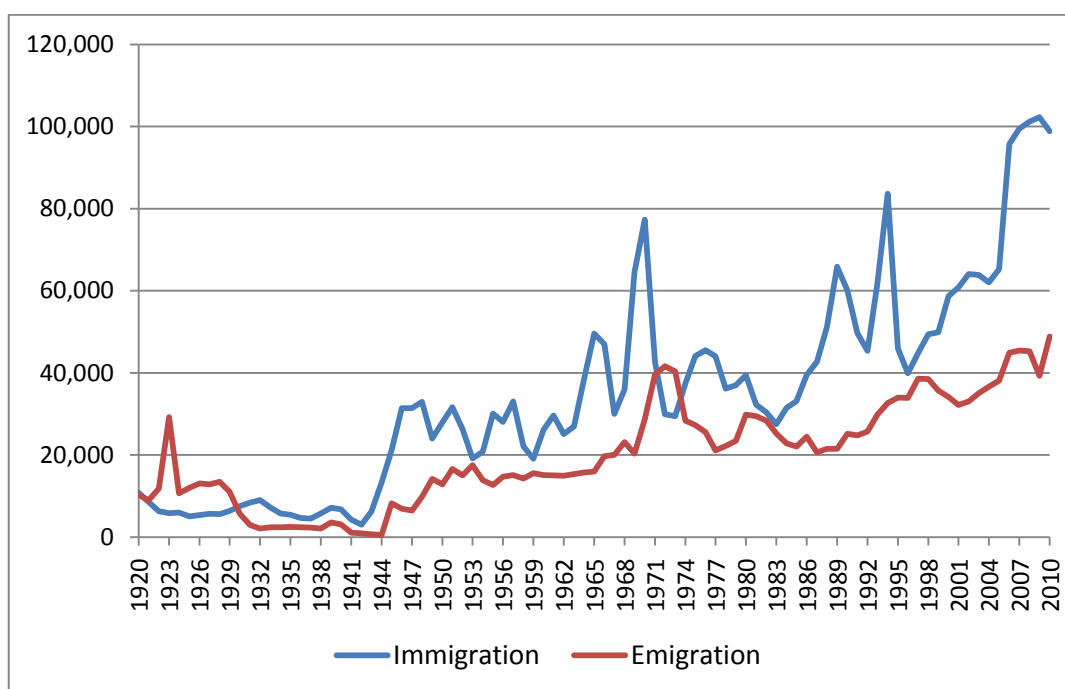


Figure 2.1 – Annual Swedish immigration vs. emigration, 1920—2010.

(Source: SCB, 2014)

In the period immediately following the war, the country entered a boom period, and Sweden's immigrant intake underwent another important change as attention was shifted from refugees to labour migrants. Initially, much of the economic growth that Sweden enjoyed in the post-war period arose as a result of the reconstruction of neighbouring countries, as large numbers of skilled migrants from West Germany and Scandinavia entered Sweden to complement the existing workforce (Bevelander, 2010: 287).

In the 1960s, labour migration to Sweden continued, albeit with a new character, as the focus shifted from high-skilled migrants to low- or unskilled migrants. This enabled Swedish workers to move into the emerging services sector, while immigrants from Finland, Southern Europe, and Yugoslavia maintained production in the country's industrial sector (Bevelander, 2010: 287; Westin, 2006). The high levels of workforce participation among Sweden's immigrant population thus continued unabated until the early 1970s, when first the Confederation of Trade Unions (*Landsorganisationen—LO*) 'put a stop the

immigration of non-Nordic workers' in 1972, citing a 'strained labour market' (Knocke, 2000: 363), and then economic growth took a sharp downturn as a result of the 1973 oil crisis.

The decline in economic growth and the restriction of non-Nordic labour migrants in the early 1970s was followed by an increase in the number of immigrants entering Sweden as refugees or for family reunification purposes (Bevelander, 2010: 288; Rauhut, 2010: 108; Westin, 2006). In the 1970s, significant numbers arrived from Eastern Europe and Latin America, while in the 1980s, many more refugees arrived from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, the majority of these entrants coming from Iran and Iraq (Knocke, 2000: 363; Westin, 2006). Acute crises brought about by the respective conflicts in former Yugoslavia and Iraq led to a salient increase in the number of asylum seekers in the early 1990s (Bevelander, 2010: 288; Knocke, 2000: 363), before additional arrivals from Iraq, Afghanistan, and Somalia constituted the majority of new entrants for the first decade of the 21st century (Migrationsverket, 2014a). Figure 2.2 presents the number of entry permits issued for humanitarian reasons⁴ and family reunification purposes from 1980, when such data began to be collected, up until 2010.

⁴ Individuals who are granted an entry permit to Sweden for humanitarian reasons include convention refugees, resettled refugees, and de-facto refugees, as well as war rejecters, refugees in need of sanctuary, those with humanitarian reasons, and those who are granted temporary protection (for a more detailed summary of these classifications see Bevelander, 2011: 25–26).

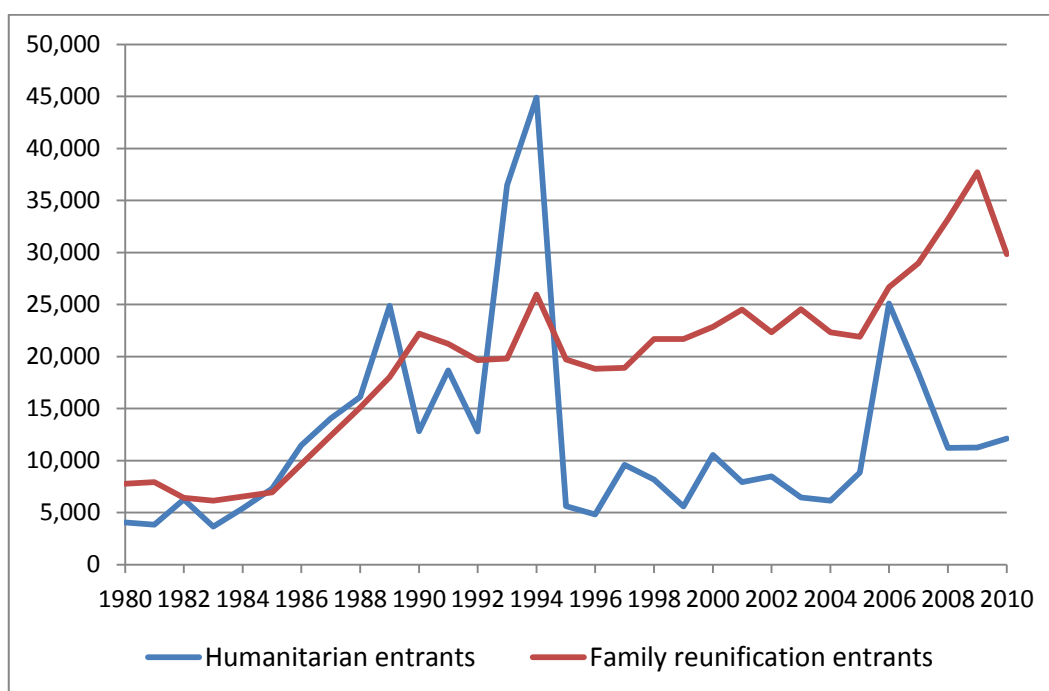


Figure 2.2 – Approved entrance permits, humanitarian vs. family reunification purposes, 1980—2010.

(Source: *Migrationsverket, 2014b*)

The period stretching from the early 1970s onward, when the number of humanitarian entrants began to increase, also came to be characterised by low levels of employment and income among Sweden’s immigrant population, which was particularly striking given the economic upturn that the country experienced towards the end of the 1980s (Rosholm, Scott, and Husted, 2006: 322; Bevelander and Nielsen, 2001: 456; Bevelander, 1999: 446–447). The workforce participation of Sweden’s immigrants continued to decline throughout the 1990s, such that high numbers of refugees and asylum seekers, together with high levels of unemployment, continue to define the situation of many of Sweden’s immigrants today. Given that the steady decline in immigrant employment outcomes coincides with the shift in Sweden’s immigrant intake in the 1970s, a number of authors have pointed to the policy shift towards more humanitarian migrants to explain the decline (Bevelander, 2000: 11; Lundh and Ohlsson, 1999: 114). The annual employment rate for native-born vs. foreign-born men and women,

together with changes in Sweden’s annual GDP growth, between 1960 and 2010, are presented in Figure 2.3.

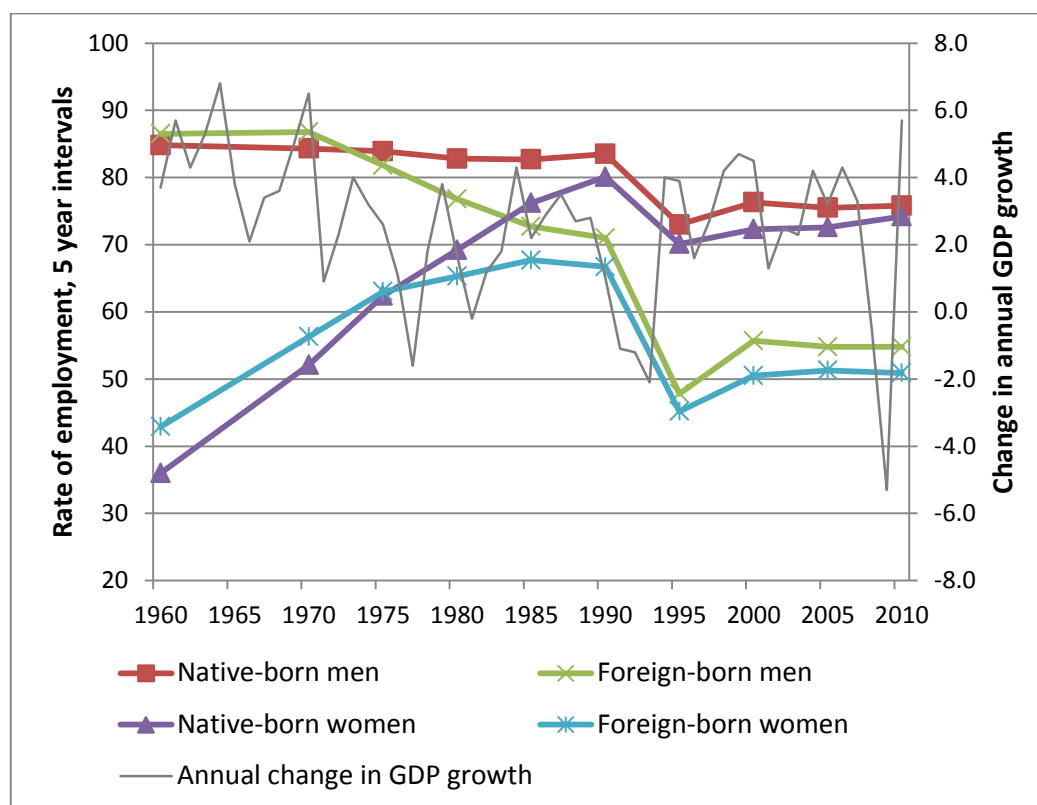


Figure 2.3 – Annual employment rate for native-born vs. foreign-born men and women in Sweden, and the change in Sweden’s annual GDP growth, 1960—2010. (Sources: SCB, 2011; Bevelander, 1999: 452; Personal communication, 2014)⁵

Figure 2.3 shows that until the mid-1970s, foreign-born men and women in Sweden enjoyed higher rates of employment than their native-born counterparts. Between 1975 and 1990, however, native-born men and women began to enjoy higher rates of employment relative to the foreign-born population, as the rate of employment for foreign-born men began to decline, while for foreign-born

⁵ Data for the annual change in Sweden’s GDP growth has been obtained from SCB (2011). Data for the employment rate of native-born and foreign-born men and women between 1960 and 1990 has been obtained from Bevelander (1999: 452), whereas the data for the period 1995–2010 has been obtained from a personal communication (email exchange) with an employee of SCB; this data was gathered from SCB’s employment register for 1995, 2000, 2005, and 2010 respectively, and has not been published in previous reports or otherwise made available for public use on the SCB website.

women, the rate of employment growth slowed substantially. When Sweden experienced a major recession in the early 1990s, the rate of employment fell for all groups, although the foreign-born were far worse affected than the native-born population, as the employment rate for foreign-born men and women fell below 50 per cent. Although a minor recovery was experienced between 1995 and 2000, the rate of employment for all groups has remained relatively stable since, such that the native-born population now enjoy a rate of employment approximately 20 per cent higher than their foreign-born counterparts.

In light of Sweden's immigration history, Ekberg (2006: 147) claims that Sweden's immigrants were better integrated into the local labour market during the 1950s and 1960s, while Lundh (2010, 61–63) asserts that the higher levels of integration lasted as late as the 1970s. In any case, it is difficult to argue with Rauhut's statement that 'the integration of immigrants in Sweden over the past 30 years is no encouraging reading' (2010: 105).

2.3 Conclusion

Sweden has a long and varied history of immigration, and the country has undergone a number of significant changes over the last 100 years. At the beginning of the 20th century Sweden was a country of emigration, and it wasn't until 1930 that the number of immigrants began to exceed the number of emigrants. Between 1930 and the early 1970s, the immigrants arriving to Sweden were able to take advantage of the country's booming industry, and they enjoyed high levels of employment as a result. From the 1970s onward, the number of refugees, asylum seekers, and their dependents began to increase. Unlike the labour migrants who arrived up until the 1970s, the refugees, asylum seekers, and their dependents to have arrived in Sweden over the last 35 years have had great difficulty finding employment, such that in 2009 the median time that it took for a newly arrived immigrant to find employment in Sweden was seven years. In the following chapter, a review of the existing academic literature is conducted in

order to examine the key factors to have limited or constrained the workforce participation of Sweden's immigrants over the last 35 years.

Chapter 3 – Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

The economic integration and workforce participation of Sweden's immigrants is a topic of great interest to policymakers and researchers alike, and as a result there is a wealth of research available on the subject. Some of the important indicators of economic integration include the unemployment rate for immigrants—often categorised by age, sex, and nationality—compared to the native-born population; the proportion of self-employed immigrants compared to the native-born; the employment distribution of immigrants by occupation and industry compared to the native-born; and the levels of income earned through employment compared to the native born (Castles et al., 2002: 131). Although a number of studies have investigated these issues in Sweden, not all are relevant to the Establishment Reform, which is far more concerned with accelerating the introduction of newly arrived immigrants into employment in Sweden than it is with the types of employment they receive or the outcomes of that employment. For this reason, the studies focusing on these issues will not be discussed as part of this literature review; however, should further reading on these topics be desired, some recent studies on the level of self-employment among immigrants in Sweden (see Andersson Joonas and Wadensjö, 2008; Hammarstedt, 2006, 2001; Hjerm, 2004) as well as the immigrant–native-born wage gap in Sweden (see Hammarstedt and Shukur, 2007; Åslund and Rooth, 2007; Hammarstedt, 2003; le Grand and Szulkin 2002) are recommended.

An area of focus within the academic literature that is pertinent to this evaluation of the Establishment Reform is found in the array of studies exploring the low levels of workforce participation of Sweden's immigrant population. A review of the current research in this area is necessary for developing a better understanding of the various factors that limit or constrain entry into the Swedish labour market

for Sweden's immigrants. While a broad range of factors are believed to have contributed to the workforce participation outcomes of Sweden's immigrant population, there does seem to be a consensus that it has been affected by both "supply-" and "demand-side" factors (Rosholm, Scott, and Husted, 2006: 322; Bevelander and Nielsen, 2001: 456; Bevelander, 1999: 447). For sake of clarity, supply-side factors are those relating to changes in the characteristics of the immigrant population, whereas demand-side factors are those relating to changes in the broader socioeconomic conditions in Sweden. As a reflection of this supply-and-demand dichotomy, this chapter is divided into two distinct sections: the first section explores the various factors that relate the low levels of workforce participation achieved by Sweden's immigrants over the past 35 years to changes in Sweden's migrant intake and the characteristics of those immigrants, while the second section examines the factors that relate to the broader socioeconomic changes that have taken place in Sweden over the same period of time.

3.2 Supply-side factors: The composition of Sweden's immigrant population

A meaningful task when setting out to explore the variety of factors that limit or constrain the workforce participation of Sweden's immigrants is to consider any theories that seek to explain variations in employment outcomes between different groups of immigrants, or between the native- and the foreign-born. In this regard, one theory that is of particular relevance to a discussion of supply-side factors is human capital theory. Human capital theory posits that 'economic migrants tend to be favourably self-selected on the basis of skills, health, and other characteristics' and that '[t]he favourable selectivity on the basis of labour market and other characteristics would be less intense among those for whom motives other than economic considerations are most important' (Chiswick, 2008: 64). It thus follows that '[t]he more highly favourably selected migrants are, the more successful will be their adjustment in the destination and the more favourable their impact on the destination economy and society' (Chiswick, 2008: 65). To support these claims, Chiswick uses a series of economic models that calculate the rate of

return on the decision to migrate—under a variety of circumstances—to show that the favourable selectivity of migrants is greater for high-skilled migrants than it is for low- or unskilled migrants (2008: 65–69). In addition, he cites a number of studies to support his assertion that refugees and other non-economic migrants ‘have higher unemployment rates and lower earnings than statistically comparable economic migrants’ (Chiswick, 2008: 73). Given the high numbers of humanitarian entrants to have entered Sweden in recent years, and the significant differences in the employment rate for native- and foreign-born men and women in Sweden, this section begins by exploring the supply-side factors that are relevant to the human capital theory of migration.

3.2.1 Humanitarian and other non-economic migrants

Sweden’s immigration policy appears to be a key factor to influence the workforce participation of Sweden’s immigrants. This statement is well-supported by historical data, which shows that when Sweden had an immigration program that targeted economic or labour migrants the workforce participation outcomes were much higher than for the years following, when ‘changes in the demographic composition of the population and the deteriorating labour market integration of immigrants [resulted in] a 20% lower employment rate for immigrants relative to natives’ (Dahlstedt and Bevelander, 2010: 159). Similarly, a 1997 study comparing Sweden with Switzerland—a country with a vastly different immigration and integration system to that which Sweden has supported over the last 40 years—revealed that ‘as far as relative employment performance is concerned, recent migrants in Sweden fare considerably worse than recent migrants in Switzerland’ (Blos, Fischer, and Straubhaar, 1997: 530). According to the authors of the study, this is likely due to the non-economic selection of migrants, in addition to the high emphasis on income equality in Sweden (Blos, Fischer, and Straubhaar, 1997:530).

A more detailed examination of the influence of admission status on the workforce participation outcomes of humanitarian migrants in Sweden is presented in a 2011 study by Bevelander. Acknowledging that most studies investigate the economic integration of immigrants by country of birth while ignoring differences within and between groups and across categories, Bevelander instead investigates employment outcomes by admission status. Examining results for resettled refugees, approved asylum claimants, and family reunification entrants, he finds that family reunification migrants experience the fastest integration into the labour market, while asylum seekers outperform resettled refugees. Bevelander attributes the success of family reunion migrants to their use of existing social networks, while the success of asylum seekers relative to resettled refugees is attributed to their ability to learn skills specific to the Swedish labour market before their residency is granted. Bevelander thus concludes that ‘admission status ... has a substantial impact on employment integration in Sweden’, and ‘selection processes, [including] self-selection as well as selection through policy mechanisms, and networks, are important factors explaining the employment integration of immigrants’ (2011: 43). In a later study comparing workforce participation outcomes by entry category between Sweden and Canada, however, Bevelander and Pendakur (2014) oppose the results of Bevelander’s 2011 study when they find that the differences in the respective employment rates across intake categories are much smaller in Sweden than Canada when controlling for migrants’ country or origin. This leads the authors to downplay the significance of intake category on employment probability and earnings for immigrants in Sweden (Bevelander and Pendakur, 2014: 705).

3.2.2 Human capital of Sweden’s immigrants on arrival

Another important factor that is relevant to human capital theory and which may limit or constrain the workforce participation of Sweden’s immigrants regards the skills and capacities that they bring with them on their arrival to Sweden. These skills and capacities, which can be succinctly summarised as immigrants’ human

capital, include their language proficiency, as well their educational attainment, qualifications, and other skills and experience.

Rooth and Saarela (2007) undertake an important study on the influence of language proficiency on workforce participation in Sweden by comparing the employment outcomes of Finnish migrants who have Swedish as their mother tongue with those who have Finnish as their mother tongue. This study makes an important contribution to the literature as the two groups under examination have a shared ethnic and cultural identity, which permits any observed differences in the labour market outcomes between the groups to be explained in terms of language proficiency. Their results show that ‘newly arrived Finnish men with “perfect” Swedish language skills had an employment probability that was 23 percentage points higher than those with “imperfect” language skills, [while] the corresponding number for women was 11 percentage points’ (Rooth and Saarela, 2007: 217–218). These findings lead Rooth and Saarela to conclude that ‘language skills are even more important for immigrants’ success than earlier analyses have suggested’ (2007: 218), and ‘more public attention should be focused on increased language training and efforts to enhance individuals’ interest in learning languages’ (2007: 219).

In addition to language proficiency, the human capital of Sweden’s immigrants depends on the ability to transfer the skills obtained in their countries of origin to Sweden. Although human capital theory proclaims the importance of educational attainment for immigrants’ labour market outcomes, the country in which that education has been obtained can also have significant consequences for their economic integration. Often, problems arise when employers hold concerns about the level and type of education obtained from foreign institutions, particularly in cases where the countries in which those qualifications are obtained have little in common with Swedish society and the local economy (Bevelander, 1999: 448).

One study that investigates the significance of the transferability of skills is that presented by Dahlstedt and Bevelander (2010). Their research examines whether the country where the education is completed—either in Sweden or at a foreign institution—and the type of education obtained—either general or vocational—affects the employment integration of immigrants into the Swedish labour market. The authors find that high levels of human capital do provide an advantage in the labour market—for immigrants and the native-born—and that a gap exists between the two groups even after controlling for demographic and human capital characteristics (Dahlstedt and Bevelander, 2010: 177). Their study also reveals that ‘[p]rofessional education from a university gives a premium in higher employment odds relative to general university education’ (Dahlstedt and Bevelander, 2010: 177), though it produces mixed results regarding the significance of where the education is completed. This suggests that obtaining an education in Sweden can provide an advantage for job seekers in the Swedish labour market, although perhaps not as significantly as previously expected.

Another study relating to the transferability of migrant skills is that conducted by Andersson and Osman (2008). This study applies the Foucauldian concepts of order of discourse, dividing practice, and technology of power to investigate validation processes in Sweden. It finds that these processes are used not simply to include or exclude immigrants, but also certain forms of knowledge (Andersson and Osman, 2008: 57). Accordingly, the validation of immigrants’ skills is found to be less about the integration of immigrants, and more about the construction of the ideal immigrant subject. Moreover, the validation or approval of immigrants’ competence is often determined not just by their technical skill, but by their Swedish language proficiency and social skills. This frequently leads to the discrimination and exclusion of immigrants from professions with high levels of unemployment, followed by their redirection into professions with current or anticipated labour shortages (Andersson and Osman, 2008: 58).

Another study to examine the role of human capital on immigrant employment outcomes in Sweden is presented in the work of Nekby, Vilhelmsson, and Özcan (2008). Their study investigates the importance of investing in local, or country-specific human capital by following a cohort of students containing native-born residents, and first- and second-generation immigrants, for a 14-year period following their completion of compulsory schooling. Examining students from the same cohort allows the authors to control for changing economic conditions. Thus, when the respective labour market outcomes for each of the members of the cohort are compared, they should differ by educational achievement rather than migrant status. Instead, the authors find that after the first seven years following the completion of compulsory schooling, ‘non-Europeans are significantly more likely to be in labour market programs, unemployed, in school and out of the labour force rather than being employed in comparison to those with Swedish backgrounds. These estimations control for, among other characteristics, a teacher-assessed measure of Swedish language proficiency, immigration before or after school start, and a measure of parental education levels, some of the most commonly forwarded explanations for immigrant–native youth disparities in labour market outcomes’ (Nekby, Vilhelmsson, and Özcan, 2008: 188). While the employment gap between immigrants and those with a Swedish background closes slightly after 14 years, it does not disappear unless tertiary education is obtained. These results lead the authors to conclude that higher education in the host country does not resolve the employment gap, and prompts them to call for further studies to determine whether the gap that remains after higher secondary education is due to discrimination or other factors.

3.2.3 Cultural distance

One final “supply-side” factor that has been used to account for the low levels of workforce participation among Sweden’s immigrant population in recent years concerns the concept of cultural distance. Cultural distance is a term that has emerged from the international business literature, and essentially refers to an

arbitrary measure that is used to determine the extent to which two or more cultures are similar or different (Shenkar, 2001: 519). When applied to the study of immigrant employment outcomes, cultural distance is used to explain why immigrants who originate from countries that have a vastly different culture to that which exists in their new host country experience much greater difficulty when seeking to enter the workforce. The influence of cultural distance on immigrant employment outcomes in Sweden is revealed in a recent study by Lundborg (2013), who finds that '[r]efugees from Iran, Iraq, and Horn of Africa face the largest initial problems in entering the labour market,' while '[r]efugees from Muslim countries fare the worst in terms of "adjusted" employment during the first 20 years in Sweden' (2013: 230). Similar results are also found in an earlier study by Behtoui (2004), who examines the employment outcomes for young people in Sweden with an immigrant background. Comparing the youth of families who have their roots in Western countries (Western Europe and North America) with the youth of those whose family originated in any other part of the world, Behtoui finds that having a non-Western background reduces the relative chance of finding employment 'by between 50 and 35 per cent' (2004: 651).

At the conclusion of this discussion regarding the influence of cultural distance on immigrant employment outcomes in Sweden, it is important to add that explaining differences in the employment outcomes of immigrants by country of birth in terms of cultural distance is not entirely unproblematic, as it has been acknowledged that the term "cultural distance" is plagued by hidden assumptions 'that largely go unnoticed [and] are not supported by either logic or empirical evidence' (Shenkar, 2001: 522). Consequently, it is perhaps unsurprising that some authors have not sought to explain differences in employment outcomes by country of birth in terms of cultural distance, instead suggesting that it is evidence of discrimination (Lundborg, 2013: 230; Bevelander and Nielsen, 2001: 467; Bevelander, 1999: 461), a factor which will be discussed in the following section.

3.3 Demand-side factors: Socioeconomic conditions in Sweden

As noted previously, the workforce participation outcomes for Sweden's immigrants are affected not just by supply-side factors, but also demand-side factors. Demand-side factors refer to any of the factors that influence immigrant employment outcomes that have been brought about by the specific social or economic conditions present in the host country. Accordingly, the following discussion begins by exploring the role of changes in economic growth on immigrant employment outcomes in Sweden.

3.3.1 Decline in economic growth

One of many “demand-side” factors cited as reason for the declining levels of immigrant employment in Sweden since the 1970s is a decline in economic growth (Bevelander and Nielsen, 2001: 456; Bevelander, 1999: 447). A particularly helpful case for highlighting the effect of a downturn in economic growth on immigrant employment in Sweden is found in the 1990s, a period in which Sweden experienced a major economic crisis and suffered substantial job losses. Lundh (2010: 63–64) shows that although the rate of employment for foreign-born men had been in a steady state of decline relative to native-born men since the 1970s, the financial crisis that hit in the 1990s disproportionately affected foreign-born men such that their rate of employment fell well below 50 per cent, or approximately 25 per cent lower than that for native-born men. Furthermore, while the unemployment rate of foreign citizens had been rather stable—albeit high—at twice the rate of Swedish citizens since the mid-1970s, once the economic crisis hit the unemployment rate jumped to three-times that of the Swedish citizens (Lundh, 2010: 65–66). Although the labour market situation for Sweden's immigrants has slightly improved since the crisis struck, the gap in employment between the native-born and the foreign-born is yet to return to pre-crisis levels (Lundh, 2010: 65).

3.3.2 Structural changes to the Swedish economy

A second factor to influence immigrant employment outcomes in Sweden regards structural changes to the national economy. Since the 1970s, global market trends and international competition have prompted a transition to a more open and service-oriented economy in Sweden. This transition largely took place at the expense of the industrial sector, disproportionately affecting Sweden's immigrants, who were more concentrated in manufacturing and similar low-skilled professions than the native-born population (Lundh, 2010: 69; Rauhut, 2010: 110–112; Knocke, 2000: 363).

Although the structural changes to have taken place within the Swedish economy are difficult to dispute, the effects of such changes on employment have been contested, as a recent survey on the effects of international trade, capital mobility, and labour mobility on the Swedish labour market suggests that the link between macroeconomic changes and a decrease in employment opportunities in the industrial sector is less clear. While Savvidou (2007) points to Hansson's (2005) study of production transfer and skill upgrading within Swedish multinationals when declaring that an increase in Swedish imports from low-skilled countries has not yet led to 'an appreciable reduction of demand for low-skill labour in Sweden' (Savvidou, 2007: 71), she also finds evidence from Ekholm and Hakkala's (2005) study to support the claim that outward direct investment in low-income countries contributed to a shift in demand from lower-educated to higher-educated labour in Sweden during the 1990s (Savvidou, 2007: 72).

An important study that helps explain the link between structural changes to the Swedish economy and a decline in immigrant employment outcomes, whilst also accounting for the disparities presented in Savvidou's survey, is provided in the work of Bevelander (1999). Bevelander argues that the decline in employment of Sweden's immigrants occurred not as a result of the transition in the Swedish economy per se, but rather, from a shift in employer demand. He claims that

technological advances concomitant with globalisation have led to ‘more information- and communication-intensive working procedures ... in both the industrial and service sectors’ (Bevelander, 1999: 447), before adding:

These economic developments increased the demand for employees with a higher level of general skill, while unskilled members of the labour force were made redundant by efficiency improvements. Without reducing the importance of formal competence and skills, the importance of informal competence increased. This informal competence includes, for instance, culture-specific proficiency, language skills, and the understanding of different patterns of expected behaviour. (Bevelander, 1999: 447)

After examining a wealth of economic and demographic data, Bevelander shows that the structural economic changes that took place in Sweden from the 1970s onward did indeed produce a shift in labour demand towards more high-skilled workers with specialised language and socio-cultural skills, and this proved to be to the detriment of immigrant job seekers, as it created a preference for native-born workers among employers (Bevelander, 2000: 188; 1999: 461). These results have received substantial attention within the migration literature, and similar conclusions have now been drawn from subsequent studies (Rosholm, Scott, and Husted, 2006: 336; Bevelander and Nielsen, 2001: 467).

3.3.3 Immigrant rights and the Swedish welfare state

Another important issue to have received attention in the academic literature in recent years, which is of great significance to the workforce participation of Sweden’s immigrants, regards migrant rights. According to Ruhs and Martin (2008), there is always a trade-off between migrant numbers and migrant rights in migrant-receiving countries, such that demand for migrant labour is inversely related to the set of rights those migrants are afforded. Consequently, in countries where migrants enjoy full and equal rights to native-born residents, the cost of

migrant labour for employers rises, resulting in lower demand and fewer work opportunities (Ruhs and Martin, 2008: 254–255). Although this hypothesis has been developed with reference to labour migrants, it is also applicable to humanitarian migrants, as increased rights often translate to increased costs for employers and thus lower demand for all immigrants. Given that all immigrants employed in Sweden are guaranteed the same working rights as those enjoyed by their native-born peers (Billström, 2014; MIPEX, 2014; Regeringskansliet, 2009c: 2), the cost of employing immigrants in Sweden is equal to the cost of employing native-born residents, thereby forcing immigrants to compete with native-born residents in a congested labour market.

An additional factor that is closely related to the issue of migrant rights regards the welfare state model and its effect on immigrant employment outcomes. Faist (1996) was among the first to argue that ‘the type of welfare state has a significant impact upon the integration of immigrants’ when he noted that countries with a high level of social rights often maintain a high degree of labour market regulation, while countries which afford fewer social rights tend to have less labour market regulation (1996: 232). Hjerm (2005) further explains the effect of labour market regulations on immigrant employment using the Swedish case as an example. He states:

In countries with few labour market regulations the problems related to integration will be related to the risks of economic deprivation where newcomers will end up in low-paid jobs. Extensive labour market regulations combined with a comprehensive welfare state, as in Sweden, yields different effects. The risks for newcomers to end up in economic deprivation will be less, but the risk of not being able to access the labour market will be greater. (Hjerm, 2005: 118)

Faist's theory is empirically supported by a number of studies: in her comparison of immigrant employment outcomes among a variety of welfare regimes⁶, Morissens (2006) finds that immigrants enjoy a higher level of labour market participation in liberal welfare regimes with lower levels of labour market regulation than they do in social democratic regimes characterised by high levels of labour market regulation. On the other hand, immigrants in liberal welfare regimes are more likely to be exposed to poverty than those who migrated to social democratic regimes, which suggests a trade-off between poverty and employment (Morissens, 2006: 194). A second study, performed by Hansen and Lofstrom (2003), investigates welfare utilisation by migrants and natives in Sweden in the 1990s. In this study, it is revealed that immigrants rely on welfare to a greater extent than native-born Swedes, and that 'approximately 50 per cent of the observed increase in welfare utilisation in Sweden in the 1990s can be attributed to the increases in unemployment and immigration' (Hansen and Lofstrom, 2003: 97). Taken together, these results verify the influence of welfare regimes and labour market regulations on immigrant employment outcomes, and lend support to Hjerm's (2005) conclusion that contrary to popular belief, the Swedish welfare state has been unable to deliver the social equality to which it aspires, as it has instead contributed to the social and economic exclusion of Swedish immigrants (2005: 135).

3.3.4 Settlement and dispersal policy

Another factor to have influenced immigrant employment outcomes in Sweden is the settlement policy that Sweden implemented in the mid-1980s. Initially, Sweden's settlement policy sought to reduce the concentration of immigrants in urban areas by distributing new arrivals among those municipalities that could offer suitable educational and employment opportunities. Following a sharp increase in the number of arrivals in the late 1980s and early 1990s, however,

⁶ Morissens utilises the same typology of welfare regimes as that employed by Esping-Andersen in his famous study, namely the liberal regime type, the corporatist welfare regime, and the social democratic welfare regime. For more information, see Esping-Andersen (1990: 26–29).

immigrants came to be settled among 277 of Sweden's 284 municipalities, with housing availability the primary factor to determine settlement location (Edin, Fredriksson, and Åslund, 2004: 136). Although the policy formally ended in 1994, it had a marked impact on immigrant employment outcomes, as it was revealed that by weakening their links to the labour market, the relative income levels of Sweden's immigrants fell substantially, while idleness and welfare dependency increased (Edin, Fredriksson, and Åslund, 2004: 149–150).

3.3.5 Informal recruitment methods

The tradition of informal recruitment methods among Swedish employers is another factor to have influenced the workforce participation outcomes of Sweden's immigrants. In his study on the use of informal methods and social networks by natives and immigrants, Behtoui (2008) finds that immigrants are less likely to find employment through informal methods than native-born Swedes, and moreover, that under higher levels of unemployment and tighter labour market conditions, the importance of informal methods for finding employment increases (2008: 425). Given the higher level of unemployment among Sweden's immigrants, and the tight labour market conditions that continue to persist, the use of informal recruitment methods does help to account for the immigrant employment outcomes observed in Sweden.

3.3.6 Discrimination

The final factor to limit or constrain the workforce participation of immigrants in Sweden regards discrimination in the labour market, particularly with regard to hiring practices. This issue has received a lot of attention in the literature, and as a result there is a wealth of research which indicates that the discrimination of both first- and second-generation immigrants is widespread in Sweden. Arai and Vilhelmsson (2004) point to discrimination to explain the increased unemployment risk for immigrants, and particularly non-European immigrants, in

Sweden. Hedberg (2009) finds that Sweden's labour market 'is highly structured on the basis of ethnic belonging', cautiously adding that '[s]tructures of discrimination, unfavourable social capital and segmentation might work both to exclude the foreign-born population from the labour market and also to explain the high turnover of international migrants in the labour market' (2009: 2442). Focusing on hiring practices, Carlsson (2010) examines application outcomes for job-seeking first- and second-generation immigrants with a Middle-Eastern background. Expecting that second-generation immigrants will receive more job offers than their first-generation peers, Carlsson instead finds that there is no difference between the groups, thereby demonstrating that immigrants with a Middle-Eastern background are not discriminated on the basis of their birthplace, their native language, or even their education, but simply their ethnicity (2010: 272). Ethnic discrimination also appeared to be a key factor in a similar study by the ILO (2006), where it was found that job seekers with traditional Swedish names were more likely to receive an invitation to submit an application for a position, and later to an interview, than similarly qualified job seekers with a Middle-Eastern background. Taken together, these studies clearly demonstrate that discrimination is a key factor to limit and constrain the workforce participation of Sweden's immigrants.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a comprehensive review of the existing academic literature, examining the variety of factors that limit or constrain the workforce participation of Sweden's immigrants. These factors were categorised as either supply- or demand-side factors, which reflects not just the nature of the discussion within much of the academic literature, but also the understanding that integration is a two-way process requiring adjustment and change from both the immigrants and their hosts. All of the factors have been discussed with reference to recent empirical studies from Sweden, while two of the supply-side factors were also connected to a relevant theory—the human capital theory of migration. Equipped

with a better understanding of the multiple factors that limit or constrain the workforce participation of Sweden's immigrants, the next chapter provides a more detailed description of the Establishment Reform, including a summary of how the reform intends to assist newly arrived immigrants to overcome many of the factors discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 4 – Overview of the Establishment Reform

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive overview of the Establishment Reform, including its key features, and its design and intended operation. This is a crucial component of the research, as a detailed understanding of the reform fosters a greater awareness of its strengths and limitations, and enables a more thorough evaluation of how it is operating. The first section describes the process by which the Establishment Reform was introduced; its key features; and the main changes that it has initiated compared to the previous system for the reception of newly arrived refugees, asylum seekers, and their dependents, including the new roles for each of the actors involved in the delivery of the reform. The following section presents a concise review of a number of studies that help to provide empirical support for reform's design, before the final section presents the theory of change for the Establishment Reform. This final section is of particular importance to the evaluation, as understanding the reform's theory of change fosters a greater awareness as to how the Establishment Reform intends to assist newly arrived immigrants to overcome the barriers that limit or constrain their workforce participation in Sweden.

4.2 The Establishment Reform: What is it?

The process to introduce the Establishment Reform can essentially be traced back to April 2007, when the government commissioned an investigation into the system by which newly arrived immigrants are received in Sweden (see opengov.se, 2008). The purpose of the investigation was to review the system of immigrant reception that existed in Sweden at the time, and to make recommendations regarding the future design, responsibilities, and financing of the system and any related services in order to facilitate a more rapid entry into

the labour market for newly arrived immigrants (Röttorp et al., 2008:25). The resulting report, *Individual Responsibility – with professional support (SOU 2008:58)*, was presented to the government in June 2008 (Röttorp et al., 2008: 4).

Upon being presented with the report, the government proposed a new bill to establish rules ‘about the responsibilities and actions that aim to facilitate and accelerate the establishment of certain newly arrived immigrants in working and social life’ (Olofsson and Sabuni, 2009: 1—*own translation*). It was this bill that led to the introduction of the Establishment Reform, officially entitled the ‘Labour market introduction of newly arrived immigrants – individual responsibility with professional support’ (see Regeringskansliet, 2009a).

The key features of the Establishment Reform include:

- Transferring responsibility for the coordination of introduction activities from the municipalities to a central government organisation, that being the Swedish Public Employment Office (SPEO)/*Arbetsförmedlingen*;
- Improving settlement services by situating newly arrived immigrants in municipalities that are likely to offer the greatest employment opportunities, based on matching migrant skills with industry demands;
- Introducing individualised introduction plans—to be based on previous education and experience, and which include compulsory language training, civic orientation, and employment preparation activities—to increase the potential for improved integration outcomes;
- Providing an individualised, common, and centralised social benefit payment that promotes gender equality and encourages active participation in both introduction activities and employment;
- Introducing civic introduction activities that foster an understanding of Swedish values, such as democracy and equality, and the rights and responsibilities of individuals in Swedish society; and,

- Introducing a new actor, an introduction guide, to assist newly arrived immigrants in developing their introduction plan and supporting them in their pursuit of employment or higher educational programs (Regeringskansliet, 2009a: 1–2).

Although the key responsibilities for the delivery of introduction services were transferred to the SPEO following the introduction of the Establishment Reform, a number of organisations continue to be involved in the delivery of the Establishment Reform. These organisations, and their responsibilities, are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 – Organisations assisting in the delivery of the Establishment Reform and their key responsibilities.

(Source: Gustafsson, 2012: 35–36, 72—own translation)

Organisation	Responsibilities
The Swedish Public Employment Office/ <i>Arbetsförmedlingen</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate introduction activities; • Ensure that employment activities are to take priority over other considerations; • Coordinate the establishment of the introduction plan in collaboration with the newly arrived immigrant and the introduction guide; • Show initiative and support in collaboration with partner organisations; • Calculate and determine social benefit payments for newly arrived immigrants and assign appropriate settlement locations; and, • Establish agreements with introduction guides that plan to give newly arrived immigrants individually adapted support and job coaching.
The Swedish Migration Board/ <i>Migrationsverket</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate the reception of asylum seekers by way of offering them introduction and society information and providing them with short-term accommodation; • Coordinate the provision of housing for quota refugees and all other households that are not eligible to participate in the Establishment Reform; and, • Determine residency permits and government compensation to the municipalities and counties for the reception of refugees.

<p>The Swedish Tax Agency/<i>Skatteverket</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register the newly arrived immigrant in the national population register and provide the individuals with a state-issued personal number or coordination number in a timely fashion so that they can participate in the introduction program and begin receiving their social benefit payments.
<p>The Swedish Social Insurance Agency/<i>Försäkringskassan</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer the social benefit payments to those individuals covered by the reform; and, • Determine the right to supplementary benefits within the framework of the reform while simultaneously testing and determining an individual's right to other benefits within the Swedish Social Insurance System.
<p>The County Administrative Boards/<i>Länsstyrelserna</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to ensure that the municipalities have the preparedness and capacity to receive newly arrived immigrants; • Enter into agreements with the municipalities within the county regarding the provision of housing; • Work to establish regional cooperation between the municipalities and public service providers regarding the planning, organising, and delivery of introduction activities for newly arrived immigrants; and, • Follow how the introduction activities for the newly arrived immigrants are organised at a regional and at a municipal level.
<p>The Swedish Authority of Local Associations and Regions/<i>Sveriges Kommuner och Landsting</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer health examinations, with the intention of preventing any health problems that may influence participation in the introduction activities negatively.
<p>The Municipalities/<i>Kommunerna</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver 'Swedish for Immigrants' (SFI) language classes and social orientation programs; • Provide accessible childcare and schooling for newly arrived children and adolescents in order to permit their parents to pursue their introduction activities; and, • Develop strategies to enable the reception of newly arrived immigrants without reinforcing segregation.
<p>The Introduction Guides/<i>Etableringslotsar</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide professional support during the establishment of newly arrived immigrants, and help ensure that they: • Make contacts and create networks necessary for their transition into working life in Sweden; • Receive orientation to the general conditions and requirements of Swedish working life; and, • Gain access to social support regarding housing and other healthcare and family needs.

In addition to the key features of the reform and the respective responsibilities for each of the organisations described above, a number of supplementary measures have also been introduced. These include general improvements to promote job creation and support immigrant entrepreneurs, and further changes to enhance educational attainment and equality in Swedish schools. Another important inclusion among these additional measures are step-in jobs, which assist newly arrived immigrants in combining language courses with work experience in Swedish workplaces by subsidising employers' wage costs by up to 75 per cent (Regeringskansliet, 2009d: 2). Given that the key aim of the Establishment Reform is to facilitate and accelerate the introduction of newly arrived immigrants into working and social life in Sweden, and one of the important means to achieving this is by ensuring that they come into early contact with the Swedish labour market (Röttorp et al., 2008: 234—*own translation*), step-in jobs constitute a crucial component of the reform.

As a result of the many changes introduced by the Establishment Reform, it is hoped that 'on the basis of their own circumstances, each new arrival will be given professional support to, as quickly as possible, learn Swedish, find a job and support him or herself' (Regeringskansliet, 2009a: 1). To better understand some of the changes introduced by the Establishment Reform, the following section reviews a number of studies that provide empirical support for the program design.

4.3 Empirical support for the reform

As mentioned previously, one of the key changes of the reform is to ensure that newly arrived immigrants come into early contact with the Swedish labour market, and in Sweden, there is a wealth of research pointing to the importance of early contact with the labour market for improving newly arrived immigrants' workforce participation outcomes. Perhaps the earliest study to confirm that early contact with the labour market has a more positive effect on employment than

investment in education is presented in the work of Rooth (1999). He finds that ‘formal schooling, both foreign and Swedish, has little or no effect on attachment to the Swedish labour market’, and, ‘ceteris paribus, a longer time employed has a positive effect, and a longer time not employed a negative effect, on the probability of being employed and having a high income’ (Rooth, 1999: 190).

In a later study performed by Delander et al. (2005), the authors present an evaluation of the Sesame project, a pilot scheme similar in nature to the Establishment Reform. Comparing results for unemployed immigrants that participated in the activities of the scheme—work placement programs that enabled the development of language and employment skills simultaneously—with a control group that did not, the researchers found that ‘the transition rate to employment was higher in the intervention group than in the comparison group at the end of the observation period’ (Delander et al., 2005: 37). This indicates that experience with Swedish employers through work placement activities is more beneficial for improving employment prospects than other forms of education or vocational training.

Another study that provides empirical support for the design of the Establishment Reform is Svantesson and Aranki’s (2006) investigation of the impact of various introduction activities on immigrants’ employment probability. This study, which is cited among the documentation that led to the introduction of the reform, also found that contact with the labour market through organised workplace activities has ‘a significant positive effect on immigrants’ employment probabilities’, while language practice ‘does not significantly affect the probability of getting employed’ (Svantesson and Aranki, 2006: 18).

Finally, in another related study, Andersson Joonas and Nekby (2012) found that intensive coaching of newly arrived immigrants by SPEO staff had a significant positive effect on the immigrants’ employment probability (2012: 594). Taken together, these studies show that less emphasis on language education, and more

focus on work-based activities, including intensive workplace training and practical experience, is vital to improving the workforce participation of Sweden's immigrants.

4.4 The Establishment Reform's 'Theory of change'

The final consideration important for understanding the reform regards its "theory of change", alternatively understood as 'the theoretical premises on which the program [or reform] is based' (Weiss, 1998: 55). Understanding the program's theory of change is important as it enables the research to reveal what it is that makes the program—in this case the Establishment Reform—successful or unsuccessful. As Weiss (1998: 55) explains, it exposes the 'set of hypotheses upon which people [have built] their program plans. It is [thus] an explanation of the causal links that tie program inputs to expected program outputs.' Based on the details presented in the preceding sections of this chapter, the theory of change for the Establishment Reform is presented in Figure 4.1.

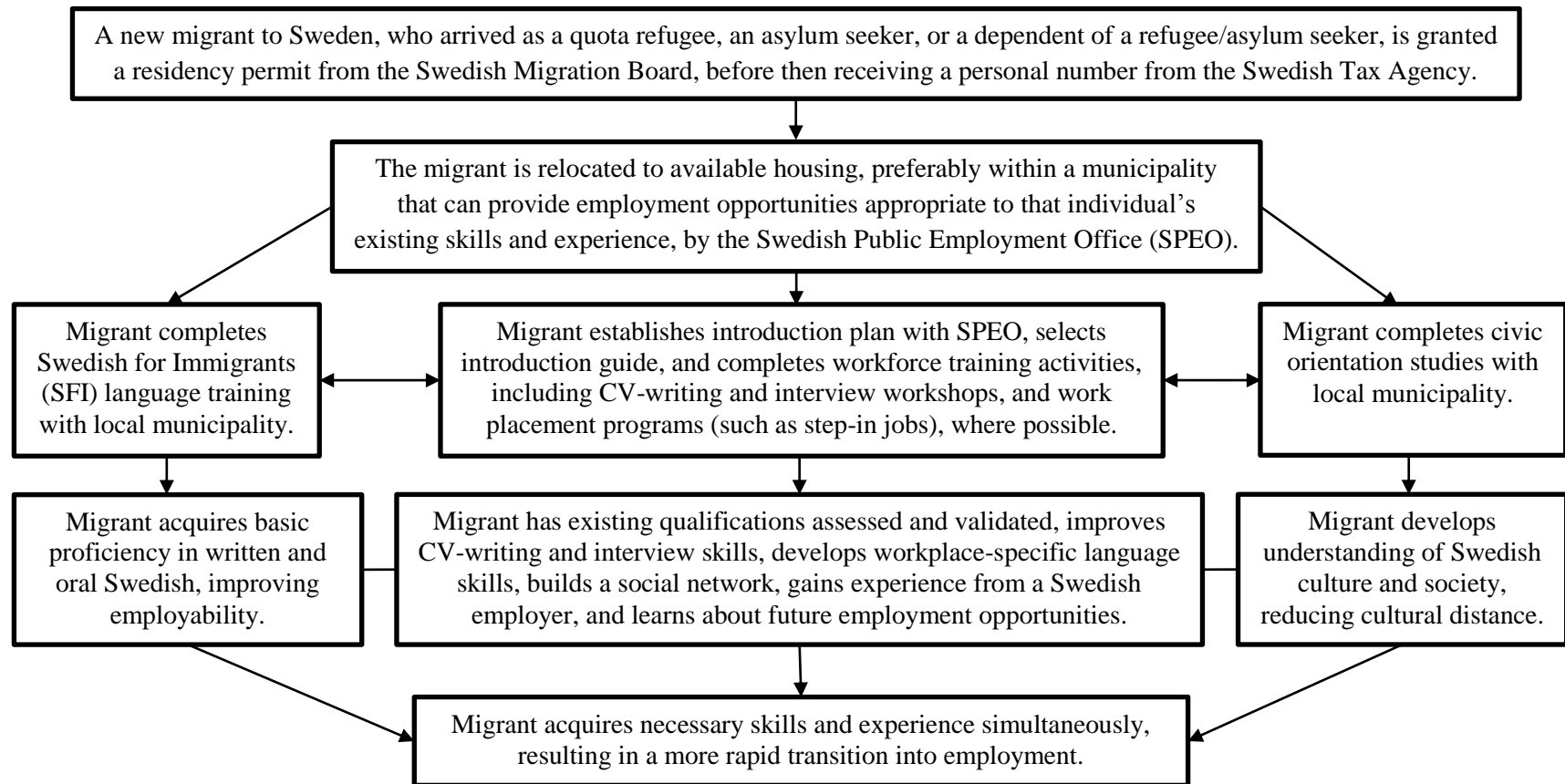


Figure 4.1 –Theory of change for the Establishment Reform.

As Figure 4.1 shows, a key feature of the Establishment Reform is that it provides newly arrived immigrants with the flexibility to move between the different activities that together comprise their introduction plan in a non-linear fashion. This ensures that the participants are able to make contact with the local labour market by way of participating in job-training and work placement activities as soon as possible, without compromising their ability to continue their other introduction activities, such as language training or civic orientation. The flexibility of this arrangement clearly encourages early contact with the labour market, which is consistent with the findings of the studies discussed in the preceding section. Accordingly, the ways in which the Establishment Reform seeks to address the factors that limit or constrain the workforce participation of Sweden's immigrants, which were reviewed in Chapter 3, are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 – Contrast of the factors that limit or constrain the workforce participation of Sweden’s immigrants with measures to combat them.

(Source: Regeringskansliet, 2009d)

Factors that limit or constrain the workforce participation of Sweden’s immigrants	Measures to combat the limiting or constraining factors as part of the Establishment Reform
<i>Supply-side factors</i>	
Humanitarian and other non-economic migrants	N/A
Human capital of Sweden’s immigrants on arrival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced quality of teaching at SFI through improved teacher training; • Introduction of monetary incentives to complete language training efficiently and effectively; • Increased opportunities to develop language skills through work placement activities; • Improved opportunities to validate and transfer existing skills; and • Improved pathways into vocational education and training.
Cultural distance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of civic orientation training.
<i>Demand-side factors</i>	
Decline in economic growth	N/A
Structural changes to the Swedish economy	N/A
Immigrant rights and the Swedish welfare state	N/A
Settlement and dispersal policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organised resettlement in non-metropolitan municipalities, with a focus on matching newly arrived immigrants’ skills and competencies to local labour needs.
Informal recruitment methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work placement activities to help newly arrived immigrants make contacts and build a social network in the local labour market.
Discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No significant changes to immigrant rights since the introduction of new Anti-Discrimination legislation in 2009.

Table 4.2 shows that despite the numerous measures to combat the various factors that limit or constrain the workforce participation of Sweden’s immigrants, a number of factors remain beyond the scope of the reform. This already constitutes an important finding of the research, as it fosters a greater awareness of the capacity of the reform to achieve its stated aim and necessitates a more cautious interpretation of the outcomes it delivers.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a detailed account of the Establishment Reform, facilitating an increased understanding of its design and its key features. This understanding is crucial for evaluating the reform, as it enables the researcher to assess whether the program is operating in accordance with the theoretical premises on which it is based, and furthermore, to determine whether any difficulties encountered in achieving the desired outcomes are due to problems with the design of the program, or the context in which it is being delivered. Given that all of the background information to the research has now been presented, the next chapter presents the methodology for the research.

Chapter 5 – Methodology

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed description of the research methodology used to conduct this evaluation of the Establishment Reform. This methodology has been carefully constructed with consideration to the ontological foundation on which the research rests, the nature of the evaluation to be conducted, and the methods to be employed. It makes use of both quantitative and qualitative data—obtained from primary and secondary sources—and provides an important opportunity for the perspectives of Sweden’s immigrants to be heard on an issue that is of crucial importance to their future in the country.

The chapter begins with an outline of critical realism, the scientific philosophy that provides the ontological and epistemological basis upon which the research is built. The chapter then discusses the key issues to have informed the design of the evaluation, including the demands placed on the research by adopting a realistic approach, and the type of information desired—and the intended use of that information—at the conclusion of the evaluation. The next section describes both the selection and implementation of the chosen research methods, including the analysis of existing reports and policy documents relating to the reform, and the use of semi-structured interviews and a short answer survey. The chapter ends with a brief conclusion.

5.2 Critical realism: The ontological and epistemological footing

A crucial starting point in the design of a research methodology regards the ontological and epistemological assumptions on which it is built. These assumptions are important for quality research design, as the ontological and epistemological positions that researchers adopt—consciously or

subconsciously—have significant consequences for the type of knowledge that that research will produce, and the way in which the data for that research ought to be collected (Sumner and Tribe, 2008: 55). Accordingly, it is important that researchers demonstrate an awareness of these issues and declare their ontological and epistemological positions in order to establish a clear ‘scaffold of learning’ (Crotty, 1998: 1–2).

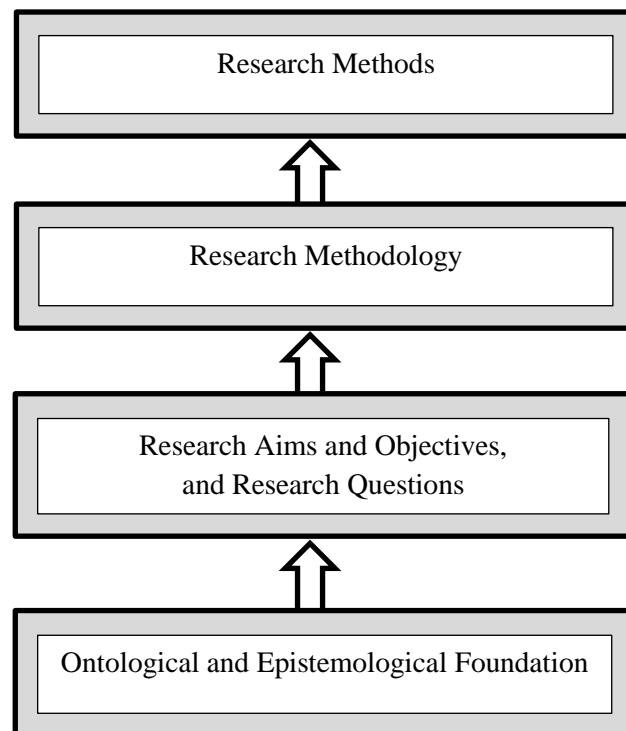


Figure 5.1 – The ‘Scaffold of Learning’.

(Adapted from Crotty, 1998:2–5, and Sumner and Tribe, 2008: 55)

Given the significance of the ontological and epistemological position of the researcher to the research process, the current section presents a brief discussion of critical realism, the philosophy of science that provides the foundation on which this research is built.

Critical realism, which emerged primarily through the work of Roy Bhaskar, is the philosophical approach ‘committed to unfettered reasoning, to a belief that

science can give us real insights into the nature of things, and to an interest in the potential of reason and science for human emancipation' (Collier, 1994: ix); it seeks to stake out the middle ground, between the positivist or empiricist ontological understanding on the one side, and the relativist or constructivist understanding on the other (Sumner and Tribe, 2008: 58).

One of the defining features of critical realism is its use of a 'stratified ontology' to understand or explain the world (Sayer, 2000: 12). This stratified ontology is comprised of three realms: the real, the actual, and the empirical. The first level, the real, consists of 'whatever exists, be it natural or social, regardless of whether it is an empirical object for us, and whether we have an adequate understanding of its nature ... the real is the realm of objects, their structures and powers' (Sayer, 2000: 11). These objects and structures are imbued with causal powers that equip them with the capacity to behave in certain ways, and to induce certain kinds of change (Sayer, 2000: 11).

When the causal powers that exist in the realm of the real are activated, their effect is produced in the realm of the actual. The actual thus refers to 'what happens if and when [causal] powers are activated, to what they do, and what eventuates when they do' (Sayer, 2000: 12). A helpful example for distinguishing between the real and the actual is found in the Marxist distinction between labour power and labour: while the workers, the means of production, and many other mental and physical structures that provide the workers with the capacity to work belong to the realm of the real, the domain of the actual is not reached until workers engage in productive activity—that is, commence working—such that their causal powers are activated and some effect is produced.

Lastly, the empirical refers to the domain of experience, or the observable. Owing to the existence of the real and the actual, critical realists argue that while objects and effects that are observed in the domain of the empirical make humankind more confident about what exists, 'existence itself is not dependent on [human

observation and experience]’ (Sayer, 2000: 12). This is what leads critical realists to develop a causal criterion for existence, one which is transfactual, in that it ‘maintains the possibility of knowing things about in-principle unobservables’ (Jackson, 2011: 36). A suitable example of such an unobservable object or structure is patriarchy, which is not observable materially, but through its effects.

The possibility to develop knowledge of in-principle unobservables stems from the operation of causal (or as Bhaskar called them, generative) mechanisms:

Such mechanisms combine to generate the flux of phenomena that constitute the actual states and happenings of the world. They may be said to be real, though it is rarely that they are actually manifest and rarer still that they are empirically identified by men [sic]. They are the intransitive objects of scientific theory. ... They are not unknowable, although knowledge of them depends upon a rare blending of intellectual, practico-technical and perceptual skills. They are not artificial constructs. But neither are they Platonic forms. For they can become manifest to men in experience. Thus we are not imprisoned in caves, either of our own or of nature’s making. We are not doomed to ignorance. But neither are we spontaneously free. This is the arduous task of science: the production of the knowledge of those enduring and continually active mechanisms of nature that produce the phenomena of our world. (Bhaskar, 2008: 47)

Hence, according to the ontological understanding of the world held by critical realists, it is causal mechanisms, which are generated by the activation and interaction of causal powers—held in-turn by the objects or structures that exist in the domain of the real—that produce the phenomena of our world. These mechanisms may be activated without being fulfilled or actualised, but they may also be fulfilled or actualised without being perceived (Bhaskar, 2008: 50). This is what leads Bhaskar (2008: 50) to state: ‘it is by reference not just to the enduring powers but the unrealised activities or unmanifest (or incompletely manifest) actions of things that the phenomena of the world are explained.’ To this, Sayer

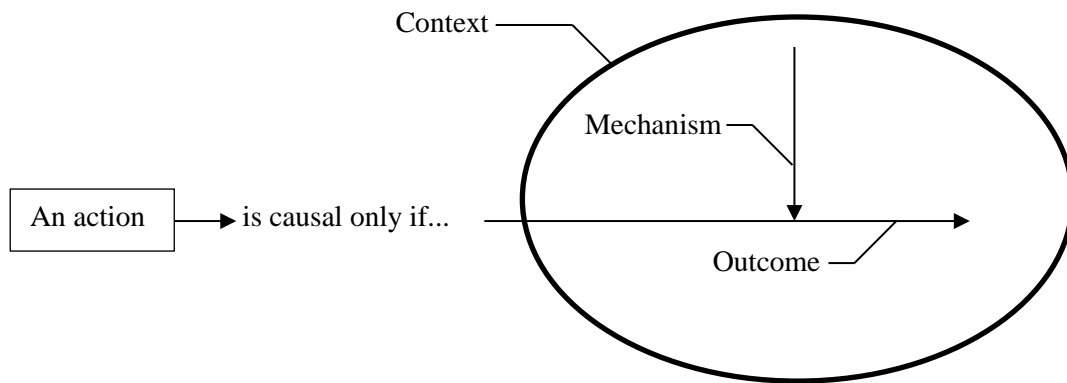
(2000: 12) adds ‘hence ... what has happened or been known to have happened does not exhaust would could happen or have happened. The nature of real objects present at a given time constrains and enables what can happen but does not pre-determine what will happen.’

Given their significance to critical realism, the activation-, interactions-, and effects of causal mechanisms form a key component of critical realist research, and they are regularly used in attempts to understand or explain the phenomenon under investigation. The following section builds on the understanding of critical realism and causal mechanisms established in this section by discussing the realistic approach to evaluation, in addition to other important considerations that have informed the design of this evaluation.

5.3 Designing the evaluation: Important considerations

Consistent with the critical realist understanding of the world discussed in the preceding section, this research takes a realistic approach to the evaluation of the Establishment Reform. In doing so, it aims to constitute ‘a form of applied research, not performed for the benefit of science as such, but pursued in order to inform the thinking of policy makers, practitioners, program participants and public’ (Pawson and Tilley, 1997: xiii).

An important starting point for conducting a realistic evaluation regards developing an understanding of generative causation. As demonstrated in Figure 4.2, generative causation is to be understood as the outcome generated by a causal mechanism acting in a context.



...its outcome is triggered by a mechanism acting in a context.

Figure 5.2 – Generative model of causation.

(Source: Pawson and Tilley, 1997: 58)

For a social program, such as the Establishment Reform, the program operates like a social system: it is comprised of ‘the interplays of individual and institution, of agency and structure, and of micro and macro social processes’ (Pawson and Tilley, 1997: 63). This means that the social mechanisms that trigger the causal outcomes are influenced as much by individuals’ choices as they are by wider structural conditions and constraints (Pawson and Tilley, 1997: 66).

Understanding the significance of structural conditions to the causal outcomes of a social program introduces the matter of context, for as Sayer states, ‘the relationship between causal powers or mechanisms and their effects is not fixed, but contingent’ (Sayer, 1992: 107). Pawson and Tilley (1997: 70) elaborate on the importance of context in the delivery of social programs when they state:

All social programs wrestle with prevailing contextual conditions. Programs are always introduced *into* pre-existing social contexts and ... these prevailing social conditions are of crucial importance when it comes to explaining the successes and failures of social programs. ... Programs work by introducing new ideas and/or resources into an existing set of social relationships. A crucial task of evaluation is to include (via hypothesis making and research design) investigation of the extent

to which these pre-existing structures ‘enable’ or ‘disable’ the intended mechanism of change.

Accordingly, in committing to undertake a realistic evaluation of the Establishment Reform, it is necessary to consider not simply the mechanisms by which the reform is intended to achieve its stated aim—that being to facilitate and accelerate the establishment of newly arrived immigrants into working and social life in Sweden—but also the contextual conditions into which it has been introduced. This enables the evaluation to assess whether the contextual conditions are suitable for ensuring that the causal potential of the social mechanisms introduced by the reform can lead to the desired change/causal outcome (Pawson and Tilley, 1997: 69).

A helpful diagram for explaining the intended change desired by the reform is presented in Figure 5.3.

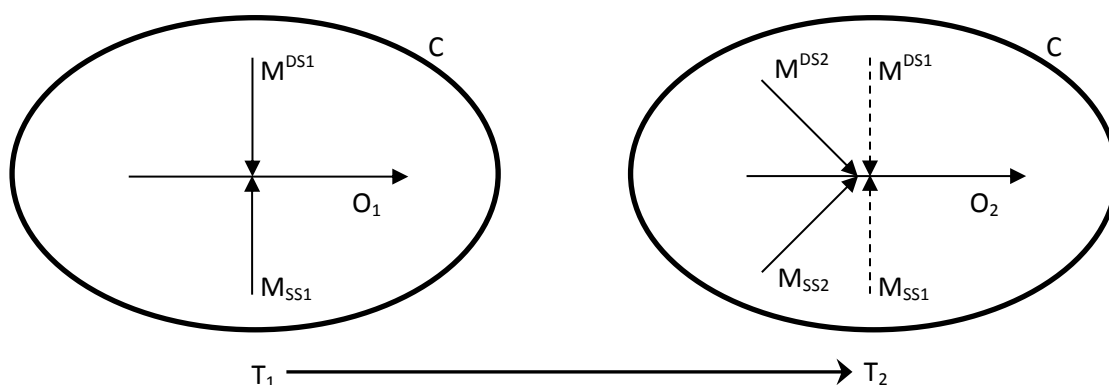


Figure 5.3 – Model of change desired by the Establishment Reform.

(Adapted from Pawson and Tilley, 1997: 74)

In Figure 5.3, the period preceding the introduction of the Establishment Reform is depicted at time point T_1 . At this point, the various supply-side (M_{SS1}) and demand-side (M^{DS1}) factors (or mechanisms) described in Table 4.2 (see p. 41) interact, leading to outcome O_1 . Outcome O_1 is undesirable, due primarily to the median time it takes for newly arrived immigrants to find work being seven years.

As a result, the government introduces the Establishment Reform at time point T_2 , and it is expected that the respective supply-side (M^{SS2}) and demand-side (M_{DS2}) mechanisms introduced as part of this reform will effectively negate or overcome the factors/mechanisms M_{SS1} and M^{DS1} —now depicted as dashed lines—and result in a new outcome O_2 . In outcome O_2 , the entry of newly arrived immigrants into the labour market has been facilitated and accelerated, such that more immigrants are working in Sweden, and sooner. It is important to note that the context (C) does not change between time points T_1 and T_2 , as the reform does not intend to change the broader social or economic conditions in which the reform has been introduced. This point was also raised in Table 4.2 (see p. 41), where it was revealed that changes to the composition of the migrant intake; changes in economic growth or the structure of the domestic economy; and changes in the rights afforded to Sweden's immigrants, or to Sweden's welfare regime, were beyond the scope of the reform.

Another important consideration to have informed the design of this research regards its intended use and purpose. As stated previously, a key aspect of realistic evaluation is that it serves some practical purpose, and is not simply performed for the benefit of science. Accordingly, while accepting that this evaluation may not come to be used to inform decisions regarding the reform, it retains the ambition of being suitable for use in informing midcourse corrections to the program. It has already been stated previously that given its task, and the short period of time that has passed since its introduction, it is too early to make conclusive judgements regarding the success or failure of the reform. Instead, this evaluation is intended to be used to provide practical feedback to policymakers and other decision-makers, thereby providing an empirical basis from which any potential amendments to the reform can be directed. This evaluation thus constitutes a formative evaluation, which differs significantly from a summative evaluation in that it is not intended to be used to inform such a decision as cutting back or abandoning the reform altogether (Weiss, 1998: 31; Patton, 1987: 28).

An additional purpose to the evaluation, which also ties closely with the realistic approach to evaluation, regards the ambition to increase our understanding of social intervention. The link between adopting a realistic approach to evaluation and improving our understanding of social intervention is plainly expressed by Weiss (1998: 28), who states:

[E]valuations provide a first-rate opportunity for studying the consequences of social interventions. The study of policies and programs in action presents a chance to study the stimuli that lead to change and the environmental conditions under which change is likely to occur.

Substituting the words “causal mechanism” for “stimuli”, and “context” for “environmental conditions”, the link between realistic evaluation and understanding social intervention becomes palpable. Consequently, although improving our understanding of social intervention may appear as an ambitious purpose for the evaluation, it is an intrinsic part of the realistic approach, and ‘even modest advances can help improve the efficacy of policy and program design’ (Weiss, 1998: 28).

5.4 Research methods: Selection and implementation

When it comes to the selection of the research methods, one of the advantages of adopting a critical realist approach is that it privileges neither quantitative nor qualitative methods; instead, critical realists and realistic evaluators argue that the selection of research methods is to be tailored to the specific research aims and questions of the topic under investigation—they even support combining quantitative and qualitative methods where appropriate (Iosifides, 2011: 128; Sayer, 2000: 19; Weiss, 1998: 82–84). Given the research aims and objectives of this evaluation, this study makes use of both quantitative and qualitative data, and follows a more intensive, as opposed to extensive, research design.

The debate regarding intensive and extensive research designs resembles that which continues between quantitative and qualitative methodological approaches (Iosifides, 2011: 129). The difference between intensive and extensive research is that intensive research is more explanatory, while extensive research is more descriptive. Accordingly, ‘extensive research shows us mainly how extensive certain phenomena and patterns are in a population, while intensive research is primarily concerned with what makes things happen in specific cases’ (Sayer, 2000: 20). Understanding that a central aim of this research is to develop a better understanding of the efficacy of the Establishment Reform in assisting newly arrived immigrants to overcome the barriers that limit or constrain their workforce participation in Sweden, an intensive research design is far more suitable than an extensive one, because, unlike extensive research, ‘intensive research is strong on causal explanation and interpreting meaning in context’ (Sayer, 2000: 21). As Sayer explains:

What causes something to happen has nothing to do with the number of times we have observed it happening. Explanation depends instead on identifying causal mechanisms and how they work, and discovering if they have been activated and under what conditions.
(2000:14)

Thus, it is necessary to understand and explain not just the mechanism behind a causal outcome, but also what it is about the context in which that mechanism has been applied that enabled it to be successful or otherwise (Sayer, 2000: 26).

Given the demands of an intensive, realistic research approach, this evaluation utilises a combination of methods to investigate both the outcomes and mechanisms of the Establishment Reform and the context in which it is applied. In selecting a combination of methods, the evaluation engages in what is termed between-method methodological triangulation (Flick, 2009: 444). The advantage of methodological triangulation is that it ensures that the limitations of one method are effectively compensated by the other; this also leads to the collection

of different kinds of data that together help to provide a richer and more detailed understanding of the object of the investigation (Flick, 2009: 444–445).

5.4.1 Document analysis

The first method of data collection employed for this evaluation involved the review of an array of public documents relating to the reform; this included the directive issued by- (opengov.se, 2008), the ensuing report submitted to- (Röttorp et al., 2008), and the resulting reform proposed by the Swedish government (Olofsson and Sabuni, 2009), as well as a number of government-issued fact sheets and press releases (see Regeringskansliet 2009a, 2009b, 2009d, 2009e). This data was complemented by published conference proceedings (Granbäck, 2010); related research findings and similar documents (Andersson Joonas and Nekby, 2012; Åslund, 2012; SCB, 2009; Lemaître, 2007; Svantesson and Aranki, 2006; Delander et al., 2005; Landell, undated); and finally, the resulting law of the reform (Sveriges Riksdag, 2014a), all of which proved useful for informing a comprehensive understanding of the Establishment Reform and developing the program theory presented in Figure 4.1 (see p. 39). In addition to these documents, a number of documents regarding the early implementation and results of the reform were analysed. These included a report from the Swedish Agency for Public Management/*Statskontoret* (see Gustafsson, 2012); a number of studies and policy papers (Rosenqvist, 2011, 2012; Chin, 2011; migrationsinfo.se, 2013); government-issued media releases (Regeringskansliet, 2014, 2013); and a series of reports from the SPEO (Nylander, 2013, 2012, 2011). Among these documents, the report from Nylander (2013) received particular attention, as it provides much of the quantitative data that is presented in the following chapter, such as the number of newly arrived migrants to have participated in the activities introduced by the Establishment Reform, and the preliminary outcomes of those who have completed their introduction plans. The use of secondary data to obtain these results was necessitated by the unavailability of more recent data from Statistics Sweden, which only makes data accessible at

set intervals, and only then following a lengthy and costly application process that was beyond the resources available for this research.

5.4.2 *Semi-structured interviews*

The second method employed by this research was semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews were selected as they permit a degree of flexibility that enables the researcher to clarify participants' responses and invite further elaboration when required; this aids in the collection of more detailed and informative data (Dunn, 2005: 80; May, 2001: 123).

In any interview process, it is crucial to consider whom and what to ask. Typically, research methods are data-driven. This is problematic, as it effectively builds on the assumption that the interview subject, and the subject of the interview, are one and the same. A realistic approach to data collection requires that the data collection be theory-driven, such that '*the researcher's theory is the subject matter of the interview, and the subject (stakeholder) is there to confirm, to falsify and, above all, to refine that theory*' (Pawson and Tilley, 1997: 155—*authors' own emphasis*). Accordingly, the theory that functions as the subject matter of the interviews for this evaluation is the 'Theory of change for the Establishment Reform' (see p. 39), and the subject or stakeholders to be interviewed are all those actors or organisations that share a degree of knowledge or expertise about that theory. Adopting a theory-driven approach to data collection thus helps to inform whom to ask, yet the matter of what to ask remains. This issue is resolved by applying the understanding of generative causation depicted in Figure 5.2 (see p. 48).

Acknowledging that an action is causal only if its outcome is triggered by a mechanism acting in a context, it is important that questions pertaining to the context, mechanisms, and outcomes of the theory of change for the Establishment Reform be directed to the relevant stakeholders. In this sense, newly arrived

immigrants who have participated in the introduction activities introduced by the reform are best placed to respond to questions about the mechanisms of the reform, as they are able to comment on the effects of the various introduction activities on their own skills and experiences, and thus their capacity or preparedness for employment. On the other hand, program participants are less-suited to commenting on the outcomes or context of the reform, as their experience is largely limited to the individual level (Pawson and Tilley, 1997: 160). Conversely, the various practitioners responsible for delivering the various activities as part of the program are able to draw on a much wider array of accounts and experiences, and are thus better equipped to respond to questions about the outcomes of the reform. Program practitioners are also well placed to comment on the context in which the activities are conducted. Lastly, program practitioners may have a limited understanding of specific mechanisms within the program for which they are responsible, which can be helpful for comparing and contrasting with the accounts provided by the immigrants who have participated in the activities and thereby improving the reliability of the research findings. Thus, adopting a theory-driven approach to data collection and applying the model of generative causation discussed previously enables the evaluation to gather specific data relating to the context, mechanisms, and outcomes of the reform from each of the respective stakeholders. This effectively resolves the problem of whom and what to ask, whilst avoiding the problem of construing interview subjects with the subject of the research.

The organisations invited to participate in the research include the SPEO, the Swedish Migration Board (SMB), the County Administrative Board (CAB) of Skåne, and the municipality of Malmö, in addition to a number of introduction guides located in central Malmö, including Abl Konsult i Malmö AB, Academedia Eductus AB, Eden Utveckling AB, Competens Utbildning AB, Lernia Utbildning AB, Lönn-Sulic Mångfaldsmodeller AB, and Miroi AB. These organisations were contacted on the basis of their role in the delivery of the Establishment Reform: specifically, whether they have a responsibility to meet

with newly arrived immigrants in order to provide services related to their arrival in Sweden or their introduction plan. On this basis, the Swedish Tax Agency (*Skatteverket*), the Swedish Social Insurance Agency (*Försäkringskassan*), and the Swedish Authority of Local Associations and Regions (*Sveriges Kommuner och Landsting*) were not invited to take part in the research.

In the case of the SMB and the SPEO it was possible to conduct interviews with two separate employees. On these occasions, one interview participant was selected on the basis of his/her contact with the newly arrived immigrants to Sweden, while the second participant was selected on the basis of his/her role as the leader or coordinator of a team. The motivation for selecting a more senior or managerial employee as the second participant from an organisation was based on the expectation that he/she would be able to offer insights based on the experiences of a number of employees within a group, as opposed to a more focused account from one individual.

The research was conducted exclusively in the municipality of Malmö, as according to the latest available data it contains the largest number of immigrants within the county of Skåne (and the third largest in Sweden) currently completing an introduction plan (Nylander, 2013: 62); this ensures a greater pool of newly arrived immigrants to invite to participate in the research, while also ensuring that the public authority research participants have a greater set of experiences relating to the provision of services to newly arrived immigrants to draw upon.

The organisations invited to take part in the research were first contacted by telephone, in order to ascertain which member of staff was required to provide organisational consent to the researcher. Those individuals were then contacted by email, and provided with a full description of the research aims and questions, as well as information relating to the interview procedure, including ethical considerations such as the protection of their identities. For those organisations that agreed to take part in the research, written consent in the form of a reply

email was accompanied by a short list of employees most suitable for participation in the research. Those employees were also provided with a full description of the research, as well as a draft set of interview questions, before a date and time for the interview was agreed upon. On the day of the interview, the research participants were again informed of their rights, at which point the verbal consent of the participant was provided and the interview commenced.

A total of nine interviews were conducted with participants from six different organisations. All of the public authorities provided at least one participant, while the SMB and SPEO provided two. The interviews conducted with the SMB and the CAB of Skåne were undertaken first, using an interview schedule that differed slightly from that used with the other public authorities. These interviews were conducted first in order to obtain a deeper understanding of the reform and the conditions in which it is operating; it also enabled the information obtained from these interviews to be used in the subsequent interviews with the SPEO, the municipality of Malmö, and the introduction guides. The separate interview schedule adopted for these interviews was created on the basis that the SMB and the CAB of Skåne are not responsible for the provision of services essential for improving the employability of the newly arrived immigrants currently completing an introduction plan; thus, questions pertaining to the mechanisms and outcomes of the reform were excluded. A copy of the interview schedule employed for these interviews is available in the Appendix (see Interview Schedule A).

Interviews were also conducted with one employee from three of the introduction guide companies contacted. The introduction guide companies were located using an online search function on the website of the SPEO. Organisations operating in central Malmö were sought, before being contacted and invited to an interview on the basis of being able to assist immigrants in finding work in a greater number of industries, and in being able to offer their services in a greater number of languages. Many of the companies contacted indicated that they were not

interested in participating in the research, owing either to a lack of available staff, or on the basis that the company was in the process of shutting down. The interview schedule employed for the interviews with the introduction guides was the same as that used with the participants from the SPEO and the municipality of Malmö, and focused on the various activities (or mechanisms) of the introduction plan and their respective outcomes. A copy of the interview schedule employed for these interviews is also available in the Appendix (see Interview Schedule B).

Lastly, all of the interviews conducted were recorded with the consent of the participants, and were later transcribed, and where necessary, translated.⁷ All of the interview participants who participated in an interview in English had a high level of English proficiency, while all of the interview participants who participated in an interview in Swedish were accommodating of the author's intermediate level of Swedish proficiency. All of the interviews ranged between 30 and 60 minutes duration, depending largely on the interview participants and the need to clarify or elaborate upon the questions and responses. Based on the informative responses received during the interviews, no further interviews were deemed necessary with either the employees of a public authority or an introduction guide.

5.4.3 The short answer survey

For the newly arrived immigrants, it was necessary to adapt the method of data collection in order to suit their needs and abilities. This decision was taken on the advice of one of the introduction guides, who reported that her clients did not feel comfortable participating in an interview with the researcher, in either Swedish or English, due to fears about their language proficiency. Accordingly, a short answer survey was created, and the newly arrived immigrants were invited to

⁷ Of the nine interviews completed, five were conducted in English and four in Swedish. Of those Interviews conducted in Swedish, one was with the employee from the CAB of Skåne, one was with the senior member of staff from the SPEO, and two were with employees from introduction guide companies.

participate in the research using snowballing (Patton, 1987: 56): each of the introduction guides were sent a copy of the survey and encouraged to pass them on to potential research participants. The survey was written in basic Swedish in order to make the questions clear and easy to follow, and to make it accessible to immigrants with a wide range of language proficiencies. Owing to the requirement to present the research in English, all of the survey responses were later translated into English by the author. The survey required responses that closely reflected the intended interview questions about each of the respective introduction activities, namely SFI, civic orientation, and workplace preparation activities, in addition to some basic demographic questions in order to ascertain the participants' sex, age, country of origin, time spent in Sweden, and the length of time for which they had been completing their introduction plans. The survey participants were then asked to indicate whether they had participated in each of the introduction activities, and for how long they had participated, before indicating on a five-point Likert scale how satisfied they were with the outcome of that activity with respect to its anticipated utility for improving their employability. The use of a five-point Likert scale was motivated by the desire to permit a greater range of responses among the participants, and thus to elicit a more accurate set of results.

Finally, while the use of a short answer survey did allow for a greater number of participants to take part in the research, an increased sample size is often desirable only in extensive, as opposed to intensive, research designs. Accordingly, the use of a short answer survey would not otherwise have been suited to this evaluation, as it does not provide the same wealth of data that can be obtained through interviewing. In total, 10 newly arrived immigrants from two of the three introduction guides that participated in the interviews completed the survey. Although a minimum of 20 participants was initially desired, it was not possible to obtain such a sample, owing to the difficulties in accessing such participants, in addition to the time constraints imposed on the research. A sample of the short answer survey is available in the Appendix (see Short Answer Survey).

5.4.4 Data analysis

Given the wealth of data obtained as a result of combining document analysis, semi-structured interviews, and the survey, and the limited space in which the results could be presented, the results were analysed by focusing on any data pertaining to the context, mechanisms, or outcomes of the reform, as well as points of connection and disconnection in the data between the various participants and/or methods. Regarding the survey responses, the demographic data was first aggregated in order to develop an understanding of who had completed the surveys. The results of the Likert scales were then compiled in order to provide a general picture of the participants' assessment of each of the introduction activities. Finally, the qualitative responses obtained from the surveys were examined in order to include statements from the participants that clearly complemented or contrasted with the quantitative data obtained from the surveys.

An important consideration when analysing the results arose from the acknowledgement that all of the quantitative data obtained from the SPEO report was collected up until the end of September 2013, while the data obtained from the interviews and the short answer survey was gathered up until May 2014, creating a minor disjunct between the different data sets. Consequently, it is necessary to declare that minor amendments were made to the reform between September 2013 and May 2014, although it is anticipated that these changes will cause no major effect on the findings. The first of these changes was a statute (*SFS 2013:1083*) to the law of the Establishment Reform (*Lag 2010:197*) regarding who is to be included in the reform, which came into effect in January 2014 (see Sveriges Riksdag 2014a). The second change was a statute (*SFS 2014:102*) to the regulation regarding the introductory meeting and introduction activities of the reform (*SFS 2010:409*), which changed the timeframe in which

the introductory meeting is to be held as well as the circumstances⁸ in which an introduction plan is to be prepared; this change came into effect in April 2014 (see Sveriges Riksdag 2014b).

Emphasising the links between the research aims and objectives, and the respective methods, it is clear that the qualitative data gathered from the review of public documents enables the evaluation to achieve the third research objective, while the quantitative data relating to the preliminary results of the reform helps to realise the fourth objective (see p. 6). In addition, the semi-structured interviews and the responses to the short-answer survey provide valuable data necessary for achieving objectives four, five, and six, and, taken together, each of these objectives help to fulfil the third and final aim of the research (see p. 5).

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the research methodology used to conduct this evaluation of the Establishment Reform. It began by highlighting the importance of declaring the ontological and epistemological foundation on which the research is built, before introducing the philosophy of critical realism. The following section built upon this understanding by discussing the realistic approach to evaluation, including some of the demands placed on the researcher when designing a realistic evaluation. In the final section, the discussion turned to the particular methods used to conduct this evaluation, namely document analysis, semi-structured interviewing, and the short answer survey. This section began by discussing the intensive research approach and the use of methodological triangulation, before describing the implementation of each of the chosen research methods and highlighting their relevance to the research aims and objectives. As a result, this chapter has demonstrated the clear and consistent link between the

⁸ Under the changes, the SPEO is not required to begin preparing an introduction plan until such time as the newly arrived immigrant has transferred from temporary public housing into private housing.

ontological and epistemological position on which the research is founded; the research aims and objectives; the methodological design; and the selected methods of data collection, and in doing so, it has constructed a complete scaffold of learning.

Chapter 6 – Results

6.1 Introduction

The following discussion presents the results for this evaluation of the Establishment Reform. These results are divided into three distinct sections: the preliminary outcomes of the reform, in the form of quantitative data taken from the SPEO's latest report by Nylander (2013); the results of the short answer survey, which was completed by the newly arrived immigrants; and the results of the interviews, which were conducted with actors from the various organisations responsible for the delivery of the reform. This final section is further divided into two subsections in order to distinguish between the responses received from those participants employed in a public authority, and those who are employed with an introduction guide. All of the results are then summarised in the conclusion, to be further analysed and discussed in the succeeding chapter.

6.2 Quantitative data: The preliminary outcomes of the reform

Following the introduction of the Establishment Reform in December 2010, a number of reviews and reports have been completed in order to monitor and evaluate its progress and the outcomes it has achieved. One of these reports, which is of particular use for this investigation, is that published by Nylander (2013) for the SPEO. This report is significant in that it presents the latest statistical data⁹ pertaining to the outcomes of the reform—including the number of people to have completed an introduction plan, as well as the employment situation for each of those people to have completed their introduction plans—since its commencement in 2010. As stated in the preceding chapter, this information is crucial to this evaluation, as more recent data is not yet available.

⁹ It is important to recall that the data presented in the Nylander (2013) report was current up to and including the end of September 2013, and is thus almost one year old.

Since the introduction of the Establishment Reform in December 2010, a total of 5,098 newly arrived immigrants across Sweden have completed their introduction plans (Nylander, 2013: 8). In order for an individual to complete his/her introduction plan, he/she must have worked full-time for six months, commenced full-time post-secondary study, or have been engaged in introduction activities for the maximum term of 24 months (Nylander, 2013: 16). Table 6.1 presents the status of each of the individuals to have completed their introduction plan one day after completion, while Table 6.2 presents the same data taken 90 days after the completion of their introduction plan. It is important to note that due to the method by which the data is recorded, only 4,199 individuals are considered to have passed one day since completing the reform, while 3,140 individuals have reached 90 days after having completed the reform.

Table 6.1 – Status of newly arrived immigrants one (1) day after completing their introduction plan.

(Source: Nylander, 2013: 14)

Status upon completion of introduction activities (after one day)	Percentage (%)	Number
Engaged in work or study	24	987
- of which is work with support	5	221
- of which is work without support	5	214
- of which is a new start job ¹⁰	9	390
- of which is full-time study	4	162
Engaged in labour market program	44	1840
- of which is the job and development program ¹¹	32	1341
- of which is the youth job program ¹²	4	175
Unemployed	16	677
Hindered from taking immediate work	7	303
Other	9	292
TOTAL	100	4199

¹⁰ A new start job provides financial compensation of over 30 per cent of the employment cost to employers. For newly arrived refugees this payment is valid for a period of three years (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2014a: 2).

¹¹ The job and development program provides job coaching and job search activities, in addition to work experience and specialised job training (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2014b: 1).

¹² The youth job program is for job seekers aged 16–24. In addition to many of the activities provided in the job and development program, it includes detailed job assessments, study and vocational guidance, and employment rehabilitation (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2013: 1).

As Table 6.1 shows, 24 per cent of the newly arrived immigrants had entered into some form of work or study upon completion of their introduction plan, although only 5 per cent had successfully entered a form of work without support. An additional 5 per cent were engaged in work that required some form of support, such as the step-in jobs discussed previously (see p. 36), while a further 9 per cent had commenced a new start job, and 4 per cent had commenced full-time studies. Of those immigrants who had not commenced work or study, 7 per cent were hindered from taking immediate work due to illness or parental leave; 9 per cent ceased their plan and made no further contact with the SPEO; 44 percent were engaged in some type of labour market program, which is intended to provide vocational training corresponding to current labour demand (Nylander, 2013: 25); and 16 per cent remained unemployed.

Table 6.2 – Status of newly arrived immigrants ninety (90) days after completing their introduction plan.

(Source: Nylander, 2013: 14)

Status upon completion of introduction activities (after one day)	Percentage (%)	Number
Engaged in work or study	25	800
- of which is work with support	4	132
- of which is work without support	5	171
- of which is a new start job	11	331
- of which is full-time study	5	166
Engaged in labour market program	45	1428
- of which is the job and development program	37	1164
- of which is the youth job program	5	152
Unemployed	8	242
Hindered from taking immediate work	7	232
Other	14	438
TOTAL	100	3140

Table 6.2 shows that for those newly arrived immigrants who have gone 90 days since completing their introduction plans, there is an improvement in their employment outcomes, albeit slight. After 90 days, 25 percent of immigrants are employed or engaged in full-time study, the majority of which is still through a new start job. Slightly fewer immigrants are engaged in work with support, although a similar increase can be observed in those immigrants now engaged in

full-time study. Perhaps the greatest change is in the number of immigrants counted as being unemployed, although it must be acknowledged that a greater number of immigrants are also unable to be accounted for after 90 days.

In addition to the 5,098 newly arrived immigrants who have already completed their introduction plans, there were a further 23,216 individuals engaged in introduction activities at the end of September 2013 (Nylander, 2013: 8). Table 6.3 presents the distribution of these individuals across Sweden’s three largest cities, while Table 6.4 presents data pertaining to the activities in which these individuals have participated after more than 18 months with an introduction plan.

Table 6.3 – Number of newly arrived immigrants currently completing an introduction plan—Sweden’s three largest municipalities.

(Source: Nylander, 2013: 58–69)

Municipality	Number of immigrants
Stockholm	1258
Gothenburg	1261
Malmö	841

Table 6.3 shows that Stockholm and Gothenburg have an almost equal share of newly arrived immigrants currently completing an introduction plan. Although Malmö has a much smaller share, it does have the third highest concentration of newly arrived immigrants currently completing an introduction plan in Sweden, which helps justify its selection as the focus site of this evaluation.

Table 6.4 – Proportion of newly arrived immigrants to have participated in an introduction activity after more than 18 months with an introduction plan.

(Source: Nylander, 2013: 20)

Introduction activity	Proportion of newly arrived immigrants to have participated (%)
Work preparation activities ¹³ or labour market program	96
Civic orientation training	41
Swedish for Immigrants (SFI)	95

Table 6.4 shows that the vast majority of newly arrived immigrants have been able to participate in SFI language classes, while access to civic orientation training has been limited. A significant proportion of immigrants has also been able to participate in work preparation activities, however this figure can be broken down into finer detail: after more than 18 months into their introduction plans, 87 per cent of newly arrived immigrants have participated in work preparation activities; 21 per cent have participated in a labour market program; and 21 percent have participated in a work experience activity (Nylander, 2013: 24). In addition to these training activities, 13 per cent of immigrants have gained experience through a step-in job; 6 per cent have worked in a new start job; and 6 per cent have managed to engage in work without support (Nylander, 2013: 27). It is important to note that these percentages cannot be aggregated, as it is possible that an immigrant has participated in more than one activity as part of their introduction plan.

6.3 Survey data: The perspectives of the newly arrived immigrants

As stated previously, the short answer survey was completed by ten (10) newly arrived immigrants. Of these participants, there were six men and four women. The majority of these participants had arrived from the Middle East (Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Palestine), while one was from Afghanistan and one did not specify.

¹³ The most common work preparation activities include CV-writing and interview technique workshops, as well as preparations prior to the assessment of foreign qualifications (Nylander, 2013: 21).

Four of the participants were aged 18–25, three were aged 26–35, and three were aged between 36 and 65, which makes the majority of the participants relatively young.

The first topic of the survey related to the immigrants' participation in SFI. It should be noted that three of the immigrants had participated in SFI for less than 6 months, two had participated for less than 12 months, four had participated for over 1 year, and one was yet to commence study. For those immigrants still studying at SFI, one was studying at the highest level (D), three were studying at level C, and two were studying at level B, while all 3 of the immigrants to have completed their studies had completed level D. When asked to rate the importance of their attendance to SFI for their acquisition of the Swedish language on a scale of 1–5, five of the participants responded that it was “4 – Important”, while the other four rated it as “5 – Very important.” Elaborating on the importance of SFI for finding a job, “Participant B” declared that ‘The Swedish language is the first competency in order to find a job’ while “Participant H” stated that ‘You have to know the Swedish language in order to find a job.’

The next topic of the survey related to participation in the civic orientation courses. All of the participants surveyed had participated in at least one of the courses, with four having completed less than 20 hours, two having completed more than 20 hours, and four having completed the courses altogether. The participants' assessments of the civic orientation courses were much more mixed, and not as positive as they were for SFI, as one participant rated it “1 – Not important at all”, one rated it “2 – Not particularly important”, two rated it “3 – Neither important or unimportant”, four rated it as “4 – Important”, and two rated it as “5 – Very important”. Moreover, only five of the participants considered that the civic orientation courses would be useful for their job-searching in Sweden, while four said that they would not be helpful, and one was unsure. These divergent assessments are also reflected in the comments, as “Participant F” stated that ‘It was mostly about society, not the labour market’, whereas “Participant J”

stated that there was ‘Good information about Swedish society and the labour market’, and “Participant I” asserted that ‘[You] got to learn what rights and responsibilities you have when you get a job in Sweden.’

The third topic of the survey addressed the immigrants’ participation in work preparation activities. In this regard, all of the participants had participated in at least one activity—the cover letter-writing workshop, and all but one had participated in the CV-writing workshop. In addition, five participants had participated in interview training, five had earned work experience, and two had been employed in a step-in job. When asked to rate this component of their introduction plans, two of the participants rated it as “3 – Neither important nor unimportant”, six rated it as “4 – Important”, and two rated it as “5 – Very important”.

The final topic of the survey addressed the participants’ feelings about their expectations for finding a job in Sweden, and the significance of their introduction plans for helping to improve their employability in Sweden. Despite the many positive responses to the various activities of the reform, five of the participants felt that they were “2 – Uncertain”, three felt “3 – Neither certain nor uncertain”, and one felt that he was “4 – Certain” about finding employment at the conclusion of the introduction plan. The final participant, “Participant I”, indicated that he already had a job, adding that ‘You have to struggle on your own in order to find a job, as it is the most contacts that matters in Sweden.’ Among those participants who had not yet found a job, “Participant C” stated that she ‘needs more time’; “Participant E” called for ‘more job focus’; while participants “H” and “J” agreed that ‘more recruitment seminars’ were required in order to help more newly arrived immigrants to find work.

6.4 Interview data

The final set of results to be included in this evaluation is from the semi-structured interviews. The first set of interview data to be presented are from the six participants who are employed with a public authority, while the second set of data is from the three participants employed with an introduction guide.¹⁴

6.4.1 *The perspectives of actors from the selected public authorities*

During the interviews with the six research participants from the four different public authorities, one of the key concerns—raised by five out of six participants—related to the matter of housing. As “Participant P” explains:

The problem for the SMB is we have about 35,000 beds available and about 10,000 of those are occupied by people with residence permits that we’re not able to get out of the system. Our goal is to, or we would like, as soon as a person has received his or her residence permit, is that they move out. Due to the fact that we have a *lot* of asylum seekers coming at this point in time we have difficulties housing everybody, because they’re occupied. [*Participant’s own emphasis*]

To help understand these numbers, “Participant P” adds that since the decision to accept all asylum claimants from Syria was made, there have been ‘about 2000 people applying for asylum every week—one day we had 400 people applying just here in Malmö.’ Furthermore, the shortage of available housing is not just limited to the temporary accommodation with the SMB, as participants “Q” and “S” note:

¹⁴ The interviews with participants “Q”, “T”, “Y”, and “Z” were conducted in Swedish, and so have been translated into English by the author. All other interviews were conducted in English and are thus presented in the words of the respective research participants.

The challenges faced? That is housing. Because the SPEO was also given the task to take responsibility for those interested in help finding housing, to offer this somewhere in Sweden. And that has not been very successful yet... Housing is a big challenge. (Participant Q)

And then it's this process of, this is important—very important of course—where should the refugee live? And the situation when it comes to the housing market. I think this is a big, big problem, and maybe something really drastic has to be done about it. (Participant S)

It was further reported that the shortage of private housing has caused some immigrants to take desperate measures, such as obtaining a false or temporary address in order to enable them to move out of the temporary housing facilities. This can have significant consequences, as the following statements reveal:

It's this big problem with housing, and I know lots of people meet people here where this housing issue is a disaster and it's destroying their opportunities to establish themselves. Maybe people sleeping in cars, living in cellars, and so on. (Participant S)

Housing is important. If you don't have an address, we have people who have lived in cars and in bus shelters, and there have been twenty people in an apartment; it is self-evident that it is hard to study at SFI if it looks like that. (Participant T)

A second topic to draw a near-consensus among the public authority research participants related to the significance of language proficiency and other skills and qualifications for newly arrived immigrant job seekers. A suitable example is that provided by “Participant T”, who, when responding to a question regarding the barriers to employment for newly arrived immigrants, states:

The language. Yes, that is the big problem. The language and then sometimes the level of education; being a hairdresser in Thailand is not the same as being one in Sweden.

This view is supported by participants “R” and “U”, who, when responding to the same question, replied:

One thing is probably the language, and difficulties being accepted into the labour market if you do not speak very well. ... I imagine it could also be the possibility to validate your previous work experience, or diplomas from previous universities, especially if you don't have your paperwork with you, which a lot of people don't if they have fled, for various reasons. (Participant R)

I think the number one is the language difficulties. If they can communicate in Swedish it opens so many doors and it's so much easier to get training or an internship or employment. It changes a lot, so the language is the main obstacle I think. Also, we have started a program here at the SPEO to better validate people's previous experiences, because many people have work experiences but they aren't... they don't have any diplomas or exams on paper to show that. (Participant U)

Another issue that was emphasised by the research participants from public authorities in Sweden was the importance of creating and establishing networks, as exemplified in the following examples:

You never get away from the fact that you need networks when it comes to finding employment in Sweden, and that is, it is this subtle thing that you cannot pin down. But it is a challenge. (Participant Q)

Try to connect with people. Maybe the Swedish population is not the most outgoing in the world, but I can see in many cases that people who seem to establish faster, who seem to learn the language faster, are people

who are getting connected in networks with Swedish people, so if that's possible that would be a very good thing. (Participant S)

The final issue for which there was a shared concern among the public authority research participants related to the matter of discrimination in the labour market. This issue was raised by three of the six research participants, as demonstrated in the following examples:

Discrimination in the labour market also plays a role, depending on your name, or your appearance, and that's something which is not being discussed very openly maybe... I wouldn't be surprised if a lot of people have that feeling of being set-aside, or not being called to interviews, or having to face harder requirements than someone who is born and raised in Sweden with an ethnically Swedish name. (Participant R)

Then it's discrimination. You can see maybe different sectors, but in some sectors of the labour market there are no Muslims. Why? Well of course no-one lets them in. So that's also a factor. (Participant S)

Structural discrimination of the society, of course. Unfortunately I think that's a barrier that we have to struggle with and continuously work to break down. (Participant U)

Although a variety of further issues were identified by the practitioners involved in the delivery of the reform during the course of the interviews, these issues were not as widely reported. This lack of consensus perhaps related to the specific insights the various participants have into the operation of the Establishment Reform through their respective roles. Some examples of the additional issues identified are presented below:

A newly arrived refugee within the Establishment Reform will meet a very large amount of public servants within a short time-frame and from an individual perspective that is not very good. It must simply be very confusing. So that is something that needs to be improved. Another aspect to be improved is that when there is this many actors involved not to forget the individual, not to generalise and formulate, [or] make it so formal that you forget the individual solutions. (Participant Q)

Another thing that we take care of in this office is the financial support for the refugees, because this is actually, it's a mistake you could say. They didn't think about everything when they drew up the plans for this reform, and one was—I think it's a mistake—as long as the refugees or asylum seekers, they get some money to pay for food and so forth from the SMB, and then when they get their residence permit, the SMB, well leaves them and they're supposed to go to the SPEO and start with their establishment ... But there will be a gap between the money from the SMB and the SPEO. And then in between there, there is the social legislation that's for everybody that says that the municipality has to take responsibility ... should help them with some financial aid. And then we do that, so maybe for one month, some cases two or three months, we have to support the refugees before they can support themselves through the Establishment allowance. (Participant S)

One thing is health problems—some refugees have very bad health, and they have these sorts of problems, they struggle when they meet the healthcare system. And it's difficult for the healthcare system to meet them and help them. (Participant S)

Despite the numerous issues confronting the different practitioners in their delivery of the reform, many of the participants were appraising of the changes it has introduced, as demonstrated below:

I think it's going good actually. We have 27 per cent ... I think that's a good number, when you think about the people that are coming. Many of those who come now are from Syria; they're traumatised by the war. More and more people are not ready to enter the labour market when they come because they're very traumatised and sick. ... So with that in mind I think 27 per cent is a good number and a good achievement. (Participant U)

Maybe the government or the people behind this reform thought that "Ok, now everything will be much better." But from what I have heard, it's pretty much the same, because, of course, the same difficulties are still there, with the structure of the work market, people's lack of education, health problems, and things like that. They don't disappear because of a change from the municipality to the government. ... But I am positive anyway to this reform, because the SPEO, they have more resources than the municipality had. They belong to the government, they have more money, and I think in lots of cases it's very good that the SPEO starts to work with people early. That's one thing we were complaining about before, that from time-to-time, the SPEO had an attitude like "Well, come back when you speak perfect Swedish." And now they have a completely different attitude. Now they start working with people from day one. ... I think it could be a better chance for a positive result then. (Participant S)

Moreover, the positive feedback for the reform was not just limited to the program in general, but also specific features, as participants "S" and "U" add:

I think that a part of the Establishment Reform, is that those step-in jobs, I think, have been quite a big factor. That's a way of making immigrants and refugees attractive on the labour market; it's to pay almost all of their salary—they pay 80 per cent of the salary when you get a step-in job, and lots and lots of people have gotten those jobs. When the motivation [for the employer] goes away, maybe the job goes away, but anyway, I think it's, I'm mostly positive to this because in many cases the first job is the most difficult one to get and a lot of people learn a lot when they have this first job, so I think it's a good thing, really. (Participant S)

I think it [civic orientation] is good. I think they cover a lot of the most important things they need to know when they come here. (Participant U)

Given the positive attitudes towards the reform, it is perhaps unsurprising that when questioned whether they would change anything, all of the participants suggested only minor changes—although it is worth adding that many felt unsure about how to address the housing issue. Some of the suggested changes were as follows:

To prolong to three years instead of two years. I think two years is a short time to come to a new country, to learn Swedish, [and] to be able to get a job when you think about what these people have been through, many of them at least. They have to process this at the same time as they're going to learn a new language ... and to find a place to live, to get their family here, and also to get a job. It's very much to do in two years. ... [and] of course to improve the quality of the introduction guides. ... Higher quality of the introduction guides would help a lot. It would help us do our work. That's the two main things. (Participant U)

It would be good if you could solve this problem with this economic gap [when moving from the SMB to the SPEO]. It's really stupid that the municipality has to support people; it's a complicated administration, and it's very difficult for the refugees to understand what is happening, so if you could get rid of that it would be good. (Participant S)

As a final note to this section, it is important to recall that facilitating and accelerating the introduction of newly arrived immigrants into working and social life in Sweden presents a challenging task, as “Participants T” acknowledges:

We can never control the influx. We don't control that but it is always external factors affecting this, and it can be hard to get it to add-up when you have pre-made budgets and such in a public authority. ... Very hard to predict. And it can also, when it comes to the content of

our programmes, it has varied over time from having been adjusted for illiterate people, who still come, to those who are tertiary educated. So it is a very large spectrum of people who come and the activities based on it ... have to be adapted to the individual. So it can be; it is a challenge to execute.

6.4.2 The perspectives of actors from the introduction guides

While the public authorities play an important role in the organisation and delivery of introduction activities introduced by the Establishment Reform, it is the introduction guides that meet with the newly arrived immigrants most often and help ensure that they are fulfilling the goals set out in their respective introduction plans. This important role enables the introduction guides to provide a broad and unique set of perspectives regarding the delivery of the reform, which are helpful for comparing with the responses presented above.

Firstly, it is important to note that while the issue of housing did not constitute the biggest concern for the introduction pilots, it did have an influence on their work, as the following statements reveal:

It sounds easy because it's a CV, a cover letter, and then just a bit of coaching, but it's not that. When they come here, they have issues that are stopping them from sitting still or concentrating, so the introduction guides do a lot of things that aren't mentioned in the original contract, so to say. It's everything from, if they don't have a roof over their head, trying to find somewhere for the client and his family to live. ... There are lots of registrations, all of that has nothing to do with work, but it has to do with establishing the client into Swedish society. (Participant X)

We have enormous amounts of administration related to people. That is, people need help with their papers from the SMB to find kin. Problems with relatives in another country, and such things that may not be explicitly stated, but if we didn't help people with these things then

we would not be able to get them to enter the labour market, because that is what they are thinking about. ... The SPEO centrally can say that you shouldn't do that, but if you don't work with these different things, for example, housing, of course we have to help people sign-up with different queues and things like that—they cannot live on the street—but at the same time, it is important that you have this labour market focus; that is, we continually have to produce results. (Participant Z)

Although all of the introduction guides acknowledged that they are regularly forced to deviate from the instructions contained within the introduction plan, aware that this is against the wishes of the SPEO, they each felt it was necessary in order to improve the focus and employment prospects of their clients in the future. Moreover, despite the official instructions, this appeared to be a practice with which the SPEO was comfortable, as one of the participants from the SPEO stated:

As long as the introduction guides discuss with us what their plans are, if they have to take one step back in order to take two steps forward, it's ok ... It's important that the introduction guides help them with all the practical things ... We often write that in the first introduction plan, because we know that all of these things have to be settled in order to be able to get a job, or even think about a job. (Participant U)

Understanding that the issue of housing was not as significant to the introduction guides as it was for the public authorities, it was revealed that the biggest concern for the introduction guide participants was the level of competition between the introduction guide companies in Malmö, and the disingenuous marketing techniques adopted by some companies in order to attract new clientele, as demonstrated in the following statements:

It [the competition] is fierce with the amount of introduction guides. And it is optional so they [the immigrants] can change from one day to another. So it's their choice basically, and the whole assignment from

the SPEO, it's very loose, so basically you have introduction guides [operating] from apartments—they're not even registered, people that aren't even, they don't even have a college degree, they're just in different kinds or lines of work. ... The competition, it's not about the quality of the guides. It [the competition] is sometimes, but it's mostly the gifts they get. ... They do answer the phone at midnight, and they do take their car privately and drive these people. This is not in the job description, and they do these things so people should choose them. (Participant X)

[There are] almost 45 introduction guide companies working here in Malmö, and those companies, it may be half of them are not serious. They try to accept as many of them as possible, and offer them laptops, iPhones, tablets, and I have actually raised this at the latest meeting with the SPEO that this is not proper marketing: if you want to market yourself you should market on the basis of how good you are at getting work, work experience for your participants, because the aim for that assignment is work experience. Work and language training, nothing else. (Participant Y)

The fierce competition between introduction guides, and the marketing techniques employed by those companies accused of being less serious, appeared to be taking a significant toll on those guides who insist they are more job-focused. Subsequently, there is a risk that those guides who are unable to compete with the disingenuous marketing strategies of their competitors may be driven out of business, as “Participant Y” suggests:

We are a big company, [but] we actually do not care anymore about the guide mission, because there is less money—we can't offer them a laptop or anything like it, so it's screwed. It's just the participants I have now; they have been with me for almost a year and a half, then there are only six months, five months until they finish the introduction guide mission.

A second similarity between the research participants from the introduction guides and the public authorities relates to the significance of language and skill

recognition for the immigrants' job prospects. According to "Participant Z", the issue of getting Swedish employers to recognise foreign qualifications can actually make it harder for educated immigrants to find work than for less-highly educated immigrants:

It's the language, of course. Plus the fear of competence other than Swedish competence. That is, there is a lot of talk of using unutilised competence and such but it is much, much harder to help an immigrant academic than an illiterate, which is totally ridiculous—just because you don't have an education from Lund or Chalmers or something similar, and that is nonsense, because there must be some other reasonable education in this world other than Swedish tertiary education.

Once more, however, the participants from the introduction guides confirmed that they were positive to many of the changes introduced by the Establishment Reform, and despite the many challenges, each of the components—SFI, civic orientation, and the work preparation activities—are helpful and generally well-received by the immigrants:

The actual SFI helps participants a whole lot.
(Participant Y)

I think it is good. We have a lot of people doing SFI and working at the same time. And that combination was barely feasible before the reform because then you had to have finished SFI before you were allowed to [work]. Civic orientation in Malmö is very, very good as well.
(Participant Z)

When it comes to this civic orientation course, it is really good that they get all the information about society, about Swedish society ... All these different themes that they have, it is great for them. (Participant Y)

Finally, when each of the research participants were presented with the opportunity to suggest potential amendments to the reform, the response was

unanimous: changes are required in order to regulate the quality of introduction guide companies in the market, while the system of free movement between the guides also needs to be addressed, as the following statements demonstrate:

The introduction guides' client has to stay with the same guide for at least three months ... because, the thing is, we start at the beginning, and the workload is a lot, because of all the registrations. ... Also, I would regulate the amount of companies in one city ... Just regulating the amount so you can't run an introduction company from your car. They should look into the education of the guide, that's how I would improve it; just regulate the amount. (Participant X)

To reduce the guide companies that are totally not serious, that is the first. To let the guide companies that work and market themselves in a nice way, not just use people who want a laptop or an iPhone or tablet. ... To hire people at the SPEO and at the guide companies who really can work as guides. It is a tough assignment; it is not very easy at all ... They should have the right to change their guide, but it should be a three-part conversation, together with the guide, the participant, and the SPEO, to agree on why you want to change. (Participant Y)

I would change this law about free choice. I think it's good with private actors, I think it's a vital injection, but—and it's not just here—you know yourself about the free choice of guides: you bribe the students with new laptops, all kinds of things, then, when the school isn't going well ... who bears the brunt of it? The students. And the municipality has to take care of it. In what ways you can become a guide and the low competence you can have in your staff at a guide company—that I think is a large problem. (Participant Z)

The similarities in the responses gathered from the research participants employed with an introduction guide suggests that the quality of introduction guides is a significant issue worthy of further discussion. Consequently, a more detailed

analysis of the issue, along with the results here presented, is provided in the following chapter.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the wealth of quantitative and qualitative data gathered from both primary- and secondary sources for this evaluation of the Establishment Reform. It has shown that at the conclusion of the introduction activities, approximately 25 per cent of all newly arrived immigrant participants have entered into some form of work or full-time study, although as little as 5 per cent are engaged in work without some form of government support. In addition, it has shown that the level of participation in SFI and work preparation activities among the newly arrived immigrants is high, although access to civic orientation training has been limited.

Regarding the survey of the newly arrived immigrants, it was revealed that many of the participants were positive about their experiences in the various introduction activities—particularly SFI—although the benefits of civic orientation training seemed to be less clear. In addition, the immigrants indicated that despite their appraisal of many of the activities in their introduction plans, they were still uncertain about their employment prospects, believing that more time to complete their activities and a greater job focus would improve their confidence and enhance their employability.

In the final section, which presented the results of the interviews, a number of findings emerged. Chief among these was the issue of housing and the shortage of suitable accommodation—in both public and private housing—as well as the significance of language proficiency and other skills and qualifications for immigrants' employment prospects. A range of other issues, including the importance of networks, and the presence of discrimination in the Swedish labour market, were also discussed. Despite each of these challenges, many of the

participants were positive to the program, and suggested only minor amendments to the reform. Lastly, the results obtained from the introduction guide participants were quite similar to the results of the other interview participants, with the exception of the issue regarding the level of competition between-, and quality of certain introduction guide companies. These results are analysed and discussed in closer detail in the following chapter, the discussion.

Chapter 7 – Discussion

7.1 Introduction

The results obtained by this evaluation of the Establishment Reform and presented in the previous chapter reveal a great deal about how the reform is operating, including its strengths and weaknesses. In order to better understand these results, however, it is important that the data is analysed and interpreted in relation to the generative model of causation (see p. 48), which has been central to the design and implementation of this research. Hence, the following discussion analyses and interprets all of the research results in relation to each of the three components of generative causation: the context, the mechanisms, and the outcomes. This analysis helps develop a better understanding of the reform, while also revealing which aspects of the reform can be effective in facilitating and accelerating the workforce participant of Sweden's newly arrived immigrants, and which areas may require amending in order to improve the outcomes achieved by the reform.

7.2 The Establishment Reform: Context

One of the key findings of the evaluation, which was widely reported by the interview participants from both the public authorities and the introduction guides, related to the issue of housing. Based on the results obtained, it is clear that the current lack of housing, in both the public and private sector, is a key factor that is affecting not just the operation of the reform, but also the outcomes it is able to achieve.

Firstly, participation in the introduction activities while residing in the temporary accommodation of the SMB is problematic, as it is an insecure form of accommodation: a newly arrived immigrant is liable to being informed at any time that a permanent residence has been located for them in another municipality and

that he/she must vacate his/her temporary accommodation at short notice. This can be a highly disruptive process, as it interferes with the individual's participation in any one of the various introduction activities, whilst also causing further distress by moving the newly arrived immigrant away from an environment in which he/she may have begun to feel comfortable and establish a network. Although this problem no longer remains due to the statute (*SFS 2014:102*—see pp. 60–61) introduced in April 2014, which stipulates that a newly arrived immigrant is not to begin his/her introduction plan until such time as he/she has been transferred to private accommodation in a municipality, the recent changes will result in significant delays due to the shortage of available housing in the municipalities, thereby constraining the ability of the reform to accelerate the introduction of newly arrived immigrants into working and social life in Sweden.

In addition to the issues caused by the housing shortage for those immigrants temporarily residing in public housing, problems are also likely to arise for those immigrants who have transitioned into unsuitable private housing. This issue was made clear by the reports of immigrants acquiring false addresses in order to leave the temporary housing facilities only to take up residence in cars, overcrowded apartments, and the street. Living under such conditions is clearly not suitable for completing a highly demanding introduction plan, and it was reported that the ability for newly arrived immigrants to focus on their various introduction activities can be severely compromised as a result. Accordingly, if the Establishment Reform is to be effective in facilitating and accelerating the entry of newly arrived immigrants into working and social life in Sweden, it is imperative that the government commit more resources to increasing the availability of suitable housing, particularly in the private sector.

Another important contextual factor believed to influence the workforce participation outcomes of Sweden's newly arrived immigrants is discrimination in the labour market. This was also an issue that was reported by many of the participants from the public authorities, while also being loosely referred to by

some of the introduction guides. Although the issue of discrimination can be difficult to address, it is important to note that it continues to affect the workforce participation of Sweden's immigrants. As a result, if the Establishment Reform is to achieve its desired outcomes, more actions to reduce the prevalence of discrimination in the labour market, and to boost the profile of the skills and capacities, and qualifications and experience, of Sweden's foreign-born population, are required.

In addition to the results presented in the preceding chapter, it is also important to recall each of the factors presented in Chapter 3, as well as the information presented in Table 4.2 (see p. 41). At this point in the evaluation, it was revealed that Sweden combines two factors that each has a significant influence on the workforce participation of immigrants, that being a migrant intake that is focused primarily on humanitarian or non-economic migrants; and a welfare regime that affords a high level of rights, but which is also characterised by a high level of labour market regulation. Given that both of these factors are beyond the scope of the Establishment Reform, neither of these issues have featured prominently in this evaluation; nevertheless, the influence of these factors on the workforce participation of Sweden's immigrants should not be underestimated, as both of these factors can be expected to have a significant influence on the context in which the Establishment Reform has been introduced and thus the outcomes it is likely to achieve. Accordingly, Sweden may have to consider making changes to the composition of its migrant intake, and/or deregulating its labour market and amending its welfare regime, in order for the Establishment Reform to achieve its stated aim, although further empirical studies would be required before such changes could be supported.

7.3 The Establishment Reform: Mechanisms

This evaluation collected a wealth of data pertaining to the mechanisms by which the Establishment Reform is intended to operate, from each of the various

participants who took part in the research. This data is crucial for understanding the strengths and limitations of the reform, and is therefore analysed and explored in further detail below.

Based on the responses received from the public authority-, introduction guide-, and newly arrived immigrant participants, the issue of language acquisition and the transferability of skills appears to be key to the success of the reform. Firstly, of all the various activities in which the immigrants participate, the survey responses indicated that the newly arrived immigrants clearly and consistently rated SFI and language acquisition as the most important feature of their introduction plan. The significance of language acquisition to immigrants' employment prospects was also acknowledged by the various participants from the public authorities, who suggested that language skills are important for improving immigrants' confidence, their networking skills, and ultimately, their employability. Furthermore, both the public authority and introduction guide research participants agreed with the immigrants that SFI is a vital component of the introduction plan, and despite some variation between providers, it is generally well run.

A second issue that is closely related to the matter of language acquisition regards the transferability and recognition of immigrants' existing skills. Although this was commonly described as a barrier to employment for Sweden's newly arrived immigrants, it was also reported that the SPEO was implementing a program to help recognise immigrants' skills and improve their transferability. As a result, it is unclear whether this issue will persist; even so, it appears that the employment prospects of Sweden's immigrants could be further improved by promoting trust in foreign skills, experiences, and qualifications among Swedish employers.

Another factor that was listed as being important for the employment prospects of a newly arrived immigrant was networking. In the Establishment Reform, the ability for immigrants to develop and expand a network is best achieved through

workplace activities such as work experience, step-in jobs, and new start jobs. The results from the Nylander (2013) report revealed that up to 21 per cent of immigrants had participated in work experience, while 13 per cent had participated in a step-in job and 6 per cent in a new start job. While these figures are encouraging, it is important that more immigrants continue to participate in these activities and begin to build networks that will facilitate their entry into the Swedish labour market.

The final major issue significant to the operation of the Establishment Reform related to the level of competition between the introduction guides, and perhaps more importantly, the quality of service and/or expertise provided by each respective guide company. Although it is possible to speculate that there may have been ulterior motives to these reports, it is crucial that this issue be further investigated, as according to the feedback received by one of the introduction guide participants, this issue could have major ramifications for the success of the reform. This was made clear when it was revealed that those guides accused of having more resources than competencies could drive those guides claiming to be more professional and job-focused out of business. Such an outcome has the potential to significantly compromise the quality of guidance the newly arrived immigrants receive, and subsequently, the capacities that they must develop in order to enter into employment. Accordingly, it is essential that each of the introduction guide companies be subjected to regular monitoring and evaluation, and furthermore, that a system to regulate the quality of introduction guides be introduced if significant variations are observed between the skills and qualifications of the respective companies and the outcomes that they produce. Given the significant role the introduction guides play in the delivery of the reform, these changes are critical to ensuring that the guides meet their obligations to the SPEO and the immigrants, and that the reform functions as it is intended.

In addition to these changes, it is also necessary to restrict the movement of immigrants between introduction guides for a short period at the beginning of

their introduction plans until all of the information necessary for finalising their introduction plan has been acquired. This would help reduce the loss of time and other resources that occurs when immigrants switch between guides at the beginning of their introduction plans, and help improve the efficiency and output of the introduction guides, as well as the broader functioning of the reform.

The remaining issues relevant to the mechanisms by which the reform is to operate, which are perhaps less significant than those described above, include healthcare, administration, and the length of time in which immigrants are to complete their introduction plans. According to the responses received by the public authority research participants, these issues may simply constitute minor problems that were unforeseen when the reform was first designed and implemented.

Firstly, as regards healthcare, it was revealed that the mental and physical well-being of the immigrants has a significant influence on their ability to participate in their introduction activities. Although it was reported that this issue was now being addressed in the county of Skåne, it is unclear whether similar problems remain in other parts of Sweden. Consequently, it is important to ensure that all newly arrived immigrants are provided with access to appropriate health services prior to receiving, and throughout the completion of, their introduction plans in order for the Establishment Reform to operate effectively.

Secondly, it is possible to improve the efficiency of the reform by amending the payment system. This would also help to reduce confusion among the immigrants, while reducing the amount of administration for the municipalities, who in some cases are forced to provide financial support in the period between leaving the payment system of the SMB and entering the system of the SPEO.

Finally, based on the responses provided by some of the newly arrived immigrants and the public authorities, the possibility of extending the introduction plan by

one year in certain cases ought to be investigated and implemented if deemed necessary. This has the potential to improve the employment prospects for those immigrants who require more time to establish themselves in Sweden, which can be required for a variety of reasons.

Although much of this section has focused on areas in which changes may be required in order to improve the outcomes of the reform, it is important to recall that overall, many of the participants indicated that the various activities (or mechanisms) of the reform were indeed helpful and therefore functioning as they were intended: SFI was widely appraised for improving the language proficiency of Sweden's newly arrived immigrants; the civic orientation activities were also reported as being quite beneficial—although reducing delays in participating in this activity due to difficulties in accessing the training would certainly improve its utility; and the various workplace introduction activities were also generally lauded—particularly the step-in jobs. In addition, the flexibility to combine each of these activities and move between them freely was found to constitute an important change from the previous system. Consequently, it is anticipated that the Establishment Reform can be effective in facilitating and accelerating the introduction of newly arrived immigrants into working and social life in Sweden, provided that all of the mechanisms are able to function appropriately, and are not constrained either by not being suitably implemented, or by being implemented in a context that is not conducive to their operation.

7.4 The Establishment Reform: Outcomes

It has been acknowledged throughout this thesis that the outcomes of the Establishment Reform presented in this evaluation are preliminary only. This is due to the short period of time that has passed since the reform was introduced, and the variable length of time it takes for immigrants to integrate into a society and establish themselves within the labour market. Understanding that the results relating to the outcomes of the reform presented in this evaluation are preliminary

only, it is not yet possible to conclude whether the reform has been successful in facilitating and accelerating the introduction of newly arrived immigrants into working and social life in Sweden. It is also not feasible to conclude whether the reform will be successful in achieving its stated aim; nevertheless, it is clear that prior to the introduction of the reform it took seven years for 50 percent of Sweden's newly arrived immigrants to enter into work or full-time study. Given that the Establishment Reform has been able to assist 25 per cent of Sweden's newly arrived immigrants into work or full-time study after just two years, it would certainly seem that the desired aim of the Establishment Reform is within reach. Accordingly, in order to help achieve the desired outcomes, it is important that more immigrants make the transition into the Swedish workforce by successfully moving from study, labour market programs, and new start jobs into work without support.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the strengths and limitations of the Establishment Reform, using a combination of quantitative and qualitative data obtained from primary and secondary sources. It has revealed that each of the respective components of the immigrants' introduction plans, namely SFI, civic orientation, and workplace introduction activities, are indeed important for improving the employment potential of Sweden's newly arrived immigrants.

In addition, this chapter has argued that in order to optimise the operation of the reform and increase its capacity to achieve its stated aim, it must be implemented in an appropriate context. More specifically, this involves resolving the issues caused by the current shortage of housing, working continuously to combat and reduce discrimination in the labour market, and giving consideration to the influence of the composition of Sweden's migrant intake and its welfare regime when interpreting the outcomes that the reform achieves. It is also important to ensure that the immigrants are able to transfer their existing skills, experiences,

and qualifications into the Swedish labour market, and moreover, that they receive the best possible support and guidance from their introduction guides. In order to achieve this final point, it may be necessary to introduce a system to regulate the quality of companies offering introduction guide services, and to commit the immigrants to their introduction guide for a set period of time at the beginning of their introduction plans in order to improve the operation and efficiency of the reform. An improved payment system when transitioning between public authorities, and the possibility of extending the time in which an immigrant is permitted to complete his/her introduction plan, may also help to improve the efficiency of the reform and the outcomes that it achieves.

Chapter 8 – Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

This thesis has presented a comprehensive evaluation of the Establishment Reform, a policy that was introduced in December 2010 in order to facilitate and accelerate the introduction of newly arrived immigrants into working and social life in Sweden. It includes a short history of Swedish immigration, including a summary of the level of workforce participation achieved by successive generations of immigrants to Sweden; a detailed review of the academic literature, which described the various factors that limit or constrain the workforce participation of Sweden's immigrants; and a concise summary of the Establishment Reform, including its key features and the theory of change by which it is intended to operate. This thesis has also described the design and implementation of the research methodology, before presenting the results of the realistic evaluation. These results have provided some important new insights, identifying not just the strengths and limitations of the reform, but also describing how it can be improved. Having analysed these results in the preceding chapter, the following discussion summarises the key research findings, acknowledges the limitations of the research, and suggests some future research opportunities that have emerged as a result of the work presented in this thesis.

8.2 Summary of the research findings

In order to summarise all of the research findings, it is helpful to return to the research aims and objectives, as well as the research questions put forward at the beginning of the investigation (see pp. 5–6).

Firstly, the short history of Swedish immigration presented in Chapter 2 revealed that although Sweden began the 20th century as a country of emigration, the

number of migrants entering Sweden began to exceed the number leaving Sweden in the early 1930s. Towards the end of the Second World War, the number of immigrants to Sweden increased sharply, and continued to rise steadily from the 1950s up until the beginning of the 1970s, as large numbers of economic migrants came to work in Sweden's booming industries. Consequently, the immigrants arriving to Sweden in this period enjoyed high levels of workforce participation that actually exceeded the rate of employment for native-born Swedes. From the mid-1970s onwards, however, this situation changed drastically, as Sweden's migrant intake was restricted to humanitarian and family reunification entrants, and the levels of workforce participation began firstly to decline, before plummeting at the onset of the economic crisis that hit Sweden in the beginning of the 1990s. Although the employment rate for Sweden's foreign-born population recovered slightly during the first decade of the 21st century, it remained 20 per cent lower than the rate for the native-born population in 2010.

The following chapter explored the range of factors identified as having limited or constrained the workforce participation of Sweden's immigrants by reviewing a wealth of empirical studies from the academic literature. This discussion was bifurcated into supply-side factors, which relate to the composition and characteristics of the different migrant groups to have entered Sweden, and demand-side factors, which relate to the broader socioeconomic conditions in Sweden. It was thus revealed that a combination of supply-side factors—including changes in the status of Sweden's immigrants on their arrival; the human capital that the immigrants bring with them; and the cultural distance between Sweden and their country of origin—and demand-side factors—including changes in Sweden's economic growth; structural changes to the Swedish economy; immigrant rights and Sweden's welfare regime; Sweden's settlement and dispersal policy for newly arrived immigrants; informal recruitment methods; and discrimination—have at various points combined in order to limit and constrain the workforce participation of Sweden's immigrants.

After describing the key features of the Establishment Reform and presenting its theory of change, and detailing the design and implementation of the research methodology for the evaluation in the following two chapters, the results of the evaluation were provided. Here, it was revealed that following the completion of their introduction plans, 25 per cent of newly arrived immigrants had entered into some form of employment or full-time studies. An additional 45 per cent were engaged in a labour market program, while a mere 8 per cent were classified as unemployed. These results were complemented by data obtained through the use of a short answer survey with newly arrived immigrants currently completing an introduction plan, and semi-structured interviews with employees of public authorities and introduction guides engaged in the provision of services pertinent to the reform. Based on the assessments of the reform received by these research participants, who acknowledged that the various activities of the reform—SFI, civic orientation, and workplace introduction activities—did indeed improve the employment prospects of Sweden’s newly arrived immigrants, it was concluded that the Establishment Reform can be effective in assisting newly arrived immigrants to overcome the barriers that limit or constrain their workforce participation.

Finally, upon analysing the results of the evaluation, a number of strengths and limitations of the Establishment Reform were identified. The key strengths of the reform included SFI language training, as well as the workplace training activities—particularly work experience and step-in jobs. The flexibility to move between different introduction activities, and the earlier contact with the SPEO and the Swedish labour market, are also important strengths of the reform. Among the limitations of the reform, the shortage of private housing, and discrimination in the labour market—including difficulties in recognising foreign skills and qualifications—were highlighted as contextual factors responsible for constraining the capabilities of the reform, while the composition of Sweden’s migrant intake, and Sweden’s welfare regime were identified as additional factors capable of constraining the capacity of the reform to achieve its aim. Further

limitations pertaining to the mechanisms of the reform were also identified, chief of which were concerns relating to variation in the quality of services provided by the introduction guides. A related issue regarded the ability for immigrants to switch between introduction guides before all of the information required for finalising their introduction plans was acquired; along with problems in the administration of payments. This issue was recognised as a limitation to the reform in that it may limit the efficiency with which the reform might otherwise operate. It is expected that all of the strengths and limitations of the Establishment Reform highlighted by this evaluation can be used to help inform potential amendments to the reform.

Having successfully achieved each of the objectives described at the beginning of the thesis, this evaluation has also fulfilled the aims of the research and responded to each of the respective research questions: it has completed a realistic evaluation of the Establishment Reform; it has helped to develop a better understanding of the key factors that limit or constrain the workforce participation of Sweden's newly arrived immigrants; it has resulted in a better understanding of the efficacy of the reform by reporting some of its preliminary outcomes; and it has also provided important feedback relating to the strengths and limitations of the reform that can be used to inform future amendments to the reform. Having summarised the key findings of this evaluation, it is now necessary to consider the limitations of the research, as well as any future research opportunities to have arisen as a result of this evaluation.

8.3 Limitations of the research

Though the clear and consistent link maintained between the ontological and epistemological foundation of the research, the research aims and objectives, the research methodology, and the selected methods constitutes one of the main strengths of this thesis, there nevertheless remain a number of limitations that are important to consider. Firstly, the results presented in this evaluation should be

viewed as being demonstrative of some of the key strengths and limitations of the reform in the city of Malmö, and not misconstrued as being representative of all of the issues pertaining to the reform across Sweden. This point was recognised previously in the methodology, where it was declared that this evaluation constitutes an intensive, as opposed to an extensive form of research (see p. 52). In order to gain a more complete understanding of the strengths and limitations of the reform across Sweden, it is necessary to conduct similar evaluations in Sweden's other major cities, namely Stockholm and/or Gothenburg, as well as some of its less metropolitan towns and rural areas.

Another limitation of this research is that it has not explored the perspectives of perhaps the most significant actor relating to the workforce participation of Sweden's immigrants, that being Swedish employers. This constitutes a significant gap not just in this evaluation but also many similar studies in the field. Consequently, in order to evaluate the efficacy of the reform, it is important that future investigations invite the perspectives of those actors whose opinion matters most for the success of the reform—Swedish employers.

A final limitation of this research acknowledged herein is that this evaluation is quite broad in its focus, and has not sought to distinguish differences in the strengths and limitations of the reform, or the outcomes it delivers, based on the participants' sex, age, marital status, entry status on arrival to Sweden, or country of origin. This limitation arises as a result of the constraints imposed when completing a Master's thesis, including the time in which the research is to be completed, and the space in which the results are to be presented. Thus, it is important to acknowledge that the results presented in this thesis are quite general, and further strengths and/or limitations of the reform may be identified by focusing on different sub-sets of Sweden's newly arrived immigrant population. Moreover, it is important to recall that in evaluating the Establishment Reform, the findings presented in this thesis relate primarily to those immigrants who have arrived during the period since the reform was introduced, and little attention has

been directed to the significant volume of immigrants who remained out of employment prior to the introduction of the reform.

8.4 Future research opportunities

Based on the limitations of this evaluation discussed in the preceding section, a number of future research opportunities have arisen as a result of the work presented in this thesis. Firstly, there is an opportunity to conduct similar evaluations in other locations across Sweden, which could be compared and contrasted with the findings of this evaluation and used to inform a more detailed understanding of the Establishment Reform. These additional evaluations could vary in terms of their temporo-spatial setting, and/or in terms of the group of immigrants investigated—divided by sex, age, country of origin, and level of education. If possible, it would also be useful to conduct an investigation into the costs and benefits of extending the reform by an additional year in certain cases using a pilot study.

Another future research opportunity important for interpreting the outcomes of the Establishment Reform involves investigating the significance of Sweden's migrant intake and welfare regime on the workforce participation of Sweden's immigrants. Although a limited number of empirical studies already exist in this regard, it is an area that requires further attention; thus, it is expected that further comparative studies of these issues would help to provide a more solid foundation from which the outcomes of the Establishment Reform could be interpreted, while also making an important contribution to the academic literature.

Finally, it is crucial that more qualitative studies are undertaken in order to investigate the perspectives of Sweden's employers. Hitherto, much of the research focusing on the role of Sweden's employers in relation to the workforce participation of Sweden's immigrants has consisted of quantitative studies in which employers are surreptitiously subjected to fake job applications and

interviews in order to determine the level of discrimination in the labour market between Swedes with a traditional name and/or appearance, and first- and/or second-generation immigrants, based on variations in the outcomes between the respective applicants. Such studies fail to question the motives of the employers directly, which draws into question the viability of the results. Consequently, it is necessary to undertake more qualitative studies with Swedish employers in order to help understand the differences in the employment outcomes between the native- and the foreign-born in Sweden, as even though it must be acknowledged that discrimination continues to influence these outcomes—and it is unlikely that this is something to which the employers will confess—it may be possible to identify some additional factors that limit or constrain the workforce participation of Sweden's immigrants.

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Appendix

Interview schedule A

Interview questions for the research participants from the Swedish Migration Board and the County Administrative Board of Skåne.

- 1) Can you tell me about the role of (*insert organisation name*) in the Establishment Reform? What are the key tasks and responsibilities of the organisation under the reform?
- 2) What about your role and what you do? For how long have you worked with (*insert organisation name*) in the delivery of the Establishment Reform, and what are some of the duties you perform?
- 3) What, in your view, is the key aim of the Establishment Reform? Do you think this is being achieved? Why/why not?
- 4) Can you recall any positive changes or experiences that you have witnessed in your work following the introduction of the reform? They might be related to an improved outcome, increased efficiency, more streamlined or better collaboration between public authorities, or even just a particular case.
Follow-up/probe: What about negative changes or experiences?
- 5) What do you think are the greatest barriers to newly arrived immigrants finding employment in Sweden today? Do you believe that the Establishment Reform will be effective in assisting immigrants to overcome these barriers, based on your experience?
- 6) Imagine I am a new immigrant to Sweden. What advice would you offer me to help me settle into my new life in Sweden and find a job?
- 7) If you could make any changes to the Establishment Reform in order to improve it, what would you do? Why?
- 8) Is there anything you would like to add, or do you have any questions?

Interview Schedule B

Interview questions for the research participants from the Swedish Public Employment Office, Municipality of Malmö, and Introduction Guides.

- 1) What is the key aim of the Establishment Reform? What does it hope to achieve?
- 2) What is the role of your organisation in the delivery of the Establishment Reform? What are the key tasks and responsibilities of the organisation? And what do you do?
- 3) What are some of the positive or negative experiences (or outcomes) that you have witnessed following the introduction of the reform?
- 4) What, in your view, is the key aim of the Establishment Reform? Do you think this is being achieved? Why/why not?
- 5) What do you think are the greatest barriers to newly arrived immigrants finding employment in Sweden today? Do you believe that the Establishment Reform will be effective in assisting immigrants to overcome these barriers, based on your experience?
Follow-up/probe: What do you think about SFI? Civic orientation? The workplace introduction activities?
- 6) Imagine I am a new immigrant to Sweden. What advice would you offer me to help me settle into my new life in Sweden and find a job?
- 7) If you could make any changes to the Establishment Reform in order to improve it, what would you do? Why?
- 8) Is there anything that I have missed that you feel that you would like to add? Or is there anything that you would like to ask me?

Short answer survey

Sample of the short response survey provided to the newly arrived immigrant participants.

**Undersökning om etableringsinsatser
för nyanlända invandrare**

(Vänligen markera bara en till varje fråga, såvida inte annat sägs)

1) Kön:

Man

Kvinna

2) Ålder:

16-25

26-35

36-45

46-55

56-65

3) Vilket land kommer du ifrån?

4) När kom du till Sverige?

2010

2011

2012

2013

2014

5) Hur länge har du haft en introduktionsplan?

0-3mån

3-6mån

6-9mån

9-12mån

12-18mån

18-24mån

24+mån

6) Har du deltagit i SFI?

Ja

Nej

7) Om du går på SFI, hur länge har du gått till SFI?

- Ingen SFI 0–3 mån 3–6mån 6–9mån
 9–12mån 12–18mån 18–24mån 24+mån

8) Om du fortfarande går på SFI, vilken nivå läser du på?

- Ingen SFI nu/längre
 A B C D

9) Om du har klarat SFI, vilken nivå läste du till?

- Ingen SFI/inte klar än
 A B C D

10) Om du tänker på hur viktigt SFI är/var för ditt lärande av svenska, skulle du säga att det var...

- 1 – Inte alls viktigt
 2 – Inte särskilt viktigt
 3 – Varken viktigt eller oviktigt
 4 – Viktigt
 5 – Mycket viktigt

11) Tror du att det som du lärde dig på SFI kommer att hjälpa dig att hitta jobb i Sverige?

Ja

Varför?

Nej

Varför inte?

12) Har du deltagit i samhällsorienteringskurser?

Ja

Nej

13) Om du har deltagit i samhällsorienteringskurser, ungefär hur många timmar har du slutfört?

0t

1-10t

11-20t

21-30t

31-40t

41t+

14) Om du tänker på hur viktig samhällsorientering är för att lära dig om svenska samhället, skulle du säga att det var...

- 1 – Inte alls viktigt
- 2 – Inte särskilt viktigt
- 3 – Varken viktig eller oviktigt
- 4 – Viktigt
- 5 – Mycket viktigt

15) Tror du att det som du lärde dig på samhällsorienteringen kommer att hjälpa dig att hitta jobb i Sverige?

Ja

Varför?

Nej

Varför inte?

16) Vilken av följande aktiviteter har du deltagit i som en del av din introduktionsplan? (Markera dem som du har deltagit i)

- Följebrev skrevande aktiviteter
- CV-skrevande aktiviteter
- Intervjuträning
- Praktik
- Instegsjobb

17) Om du tänker på hur viktiga dessa arbetsförberedande aktiviteter är för att hjälpa dig utveckla kunnskaper och erfarenheter för den svenska arbetsmarknad, skulle du säga att dem var...

- 1 – Inte alls viktiga
- 2 – Inte särskilt viktiga
- 3 – Varken viktiga eller oviktiga
- 4 – Viktiga
- 5 – Mycket viktiga

18) Har du någonsin bytt etableringslots, och om du har, hur många gånger har du bytt etableringslots?

- Jag har aldrig bytt etableringslots
- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4+

19) Om du har bytt etableringslots, varför gjorde du det?

20) Hur säker är du på att du kommer att hitta jobb i Sverige efter att du har slutfört din introduktionsplan?

- 1 – Inte alls säker
- 2 – Osäker
- 3 – Varken säker eller osäker
- 4 – Säker
- 5 – Väldigt säker

21) Tycker du att din introduktionsplan eller dina etableringsinsatser saknar något viktigt som kan hjälpa dig att hitta jobb i Sverige?

Ja

Vad?

Nej

Varför inte?

22) Har du något som du skulle vilja tillägga?

Varmt tack för din medverkan i denna undersökning!

