

Spaces and Narratives of Integration and Intercultural Dialogue in Malmö, Sweden.

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Abstract

In today's Europe which is facing increased immigration flows and xenophobic attitudes, there is a growing pressure on creating integration policies which have the ability of dismantling negative attitudes.

As intercultural dialogue is believed to decrease these attitudes and create an inclusive society, the aim of this thesis has been to critically review the Swedish multicultural integration approach and focus on the possibilities for increased intercultural dialogue. I chose to focus on Malmö, a city which is believed to be extremely segregated, with the aim of mapping out the spaces and narratives of integration and intercultural dialogue. By doing so, I hoped to get an insight in what obstacles and opportunities there are for increased intercultural dialogue on a local level.

With the help of extensive material and personal interviews, I came to the conclusion that Malmö lacks good structures for integration and intercultural dialogue; and there are not sufficient spaces where intercultural dialogue can take place. Malmö also needs further measures in order to combat the societal problems which arise due to various value clashes. There is a need to develop the cultural understanding and open up for a debate which freely discusses the most controversial issues of integration.

Key words: Integration policy, immigration, diversity, intercultural dialogue, Sweden.

Words: 9 999

Table of contents

1	BACKGROUND.....	3
1.1	Thesis Question.....	4
2	METHODOLOGY.....	5
2.1	Case-Study Approach.....	5
2.2	Material.....	6
3	INTEGRATION THEORY.....	7
3.1	Background and Debate on Integration Theory.....	7
3.2	Integration Indicators.....	9
3.2.1	Social Connections Aspect.....	9
3.3	Intercultural Dialogue.....	10
3.3.1	Democratic Governance of Cultural Diversity.....	11
3.3.2	Democratic Citizenship and Participation.....	11
3.3.3	Learning and Teaching Intercultural Competences.....	12
3.3.4	Spaces for Intercultural Dialogue.....	12
3.3.5	Intercultural Dialogue in International Relations.....	13
4	BACKGROUND ON INTEGRATION IN SWEDEN AND MALMÖ.....	14
4.1	Background on Sweden's Integration Policies.....	14
4.1.1	Sweden's Actual Integration Outcomes.....	15
4.1.2	Integration Outcomes in Malmö.....	16
5	EMPIRICAL FINDINGS.....	17
5.1	Intercultural Dialogue in Malmö.....	17
5.1.1	Democratic Governance of Cultural Diversity.....	17
5.1.2	Democratic Citizenship and Participation.....	18
5.1.3	Learning and Teaching Intercultural Competences.....	19
5.1.4	Spaces for Intercultural Dialogue.....	21
5.1.4.1	Open Skåne.....	22
5.2	Immigrants' Experiences.....	23
5.2.1	Attitudes Towards Native and Immigrant Cultures.....	23
5.2.2	Part of Society.....	24
5.2.3	Spaces for Intercultural Dialogue.....	25
5.2.4	Narratives of Integration and Intercultural Dialogue.....	25
6	CONCLUSION.....	27
6.1	Further Research.....	28
7	REFERENCES.....	29
7.1	Oral Material.....	29
7.2	Printed and Internet Material.....	30
8	APPENDIX 1 – Segregation Map of Malmö.....	34

1 Background

The recent immigration trends into Europe have brought a prominent debate on how to best integrate migrants into the receiving countries. The policy challenges migration brings along became priority concerns of the European Union and simultaneously, the debate on immigration and integration is spreading beyond the political agenda onto the public sphere (Kaivo-Oja, 2014 p.66; Skey, 2011 p.92). According to the survey of the Swedish newspaper “Dagens Nyheter”; the question on immigration and integration has risen to be the second most important subject on the political agenda among the Swedish voters (Rosen and Olsson, 2015).

In connection with the rise in immigration, Europe is also observing a rise of xenophobic political parties who stand behind a politics aimed at halting immigration and closing the European borders for outsiders (Bohman och Hjerm, 2014 p.3). These parties’ attitudes impose a serious threat to the core principle of human rights which stress the value of each person’s equal rights and possibilities (Migrationsinfo, 2014). It is therefore of great importance to discourage these attitudes and work towards shaping societies that are looking out for each person’s potential. If immigrants are pointed out as illegal users of the wealth system, criminals or as threats towards cultural norms, it could result in feelings of powerlessness inducing the possibility of positive integration (Bohman and Hjerm, 2014 p.55). Integration policies must therefore act as a major force when it comes to fighting xenophobia and racism because a consequence of failed integration politics could result in the exclusion of immigrants and minorities from society (SOU 2012:74 p.11). The “White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue” presented by the Council of Europe, states that the common future of Europe depends on this ability to safeguard and develop human rights, democracy and the rule of law (Council of Europe, 2008, p. 4).

Countries have taken on different national approaches on how to deal with integration and numerous aspects are pointed out as having influence towards successful integration outcomes (Bertossi, 2011 p.1562). Sweden adopts a multicultural approach with the vision of shaping a society based on diversity respectful of the immigrants’ own cultural norms and values (Petersson, 2006 p.13). In reality however, this vision faces numerous obstacles in which some of them could be overcome by intercultural dialogue (SOU 2012:74 p.116).

1.1 Thesis Question

During my research phase I found that much research is focused on national integration strategies and on the multicultural approach that is believed to slowly disappear. It is as Perez argues, important to critically review the multicultural approach, put integration policies in relation to a politics of multiculturalism, and evaluate what is made practically and what results are achieved (2006 p.299). Many of the theories are further aimed at measuring education, labour market participation and housing conditions but, as Ersanelli and Koopmans claim, the socio-cultural integration is rather given insufficient attention (2011 p.209). In Scuzzarello's book, where she aims to examine the institutional opportunities and policy narratives that may favour an adoption of caring multiculturalism, which addresses diversity by exposing unequal power relations with an aim of fighting xenophobia, she sees a continuation of her study in examining how migrants themselves perceive the practice of integration policies (2010 p.280).

My thesis falls in between as I have aimed to present Sweden's immigrant integration from both policy and immigrant perspectives by giving an account of the integration outcomes, critically examine the country's multicultural approach, and emphasize the intercultural dialogue aspect which in theory breeds ground for an inclusive society.

I have in my thesis focused on the general Swedish experiences of integration; however, as integration takes place on the local level, my main empirical findings have been based on the local experiences of the Municipality of Malmö providing me an opportunity to gain a deeper insight of the challenges integration faces. My main question has thus been as following:

What are the spaces and narratives of integration and intercultural dialogue in Malmö, Sweden?

More precisely, I have tried to pin down different actors' approaches towards integration and intercultural dialogue by looking closer at the following questions:

What are the local actors' main approaches towards integration and intercultural dialogue and the main obstacles these face?

What are immigrants' own perceptions and experiences of integration and intercultural dialogue?

2 Methodology

2.1 Case-Study Approach

As I chose to focus on the municipality of Malmö, the most suitable approach for my study has been the case-study approach. By adapting historical and contemporary research to a relevant theory this approach is proven to be a good analysing tool that helps bringing forth explanations behind a case (Teorell and Svensson, 2007 p.236).

In my thesis, my ambition was to provide explanations for the multiculturalist approach and the intercultural dialogue aspect of integration by adapting these to relevant theories. By doing so, I have been able to put the theories to test and thus achieve a great amount of internal validity (Esaiasson et.al., 2012:89-90). Also, I complied with the claim of external validity as the thesis has importance from a social perspective point of view and closely relates to the lives of citizens (Teorell and Svensson, 2007 p.18).

One of the reasons I chose to focus on the Municipality of Malmö is that the city holds one of the highest share of immigrant population in entire Sweden and thus faces great challenges within the field of integration. Malmö is considered to be one of the worst integrated municipalities in Sweden and is often given the stamp as the most segregated city in the country (Boldt, 2008 p.24). As Malmö deviates from the Swedish average, both in immigrant share and in integration outcomes, it represents an unusual case with great explanatory possibilities (Yin, 2014 p.52). The single case can further confirm, challenge or extend a theory and represents thus a significant contribution to theoretical knowledge. The single-case study also has the possibility to capture circumstances and conditions of everyday situations by thus providing information about social processes related to theoretical interest (ibid. p51).

Another rather important reason behind my choice of Malmö is the city's geographical position. As Malmö is situated close to my place of residence I had the opportunity to perform in person interviews, which is known to be one of the most important sources in case-study methodology. Having interviews with those who are well informed not only provided me with important in-sights into the study, but also had the ability to guide me to other important sources of evidence. My interviews have been semi-structured and my questions have been put forward in an unbiased manner which has helped me to come around what otherwise seems to be the biggest challenge with this method (Yin, 2014 p.110-113).

2.2 Material

In order to answer my questions I have examined a great deal of secondary sources. Regarding my theoretical framework, I have first presented the wide research field of integration theories and later on emanated my main theory and indicators from Ager and Strang's Indicators of Integration (2008), in a combination of European Union's theories and recommendations found in "Eurostat: Indicators of Immigrant Integration" (2011) and Council of Europe's "White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue" (2008).

In order to account for the general Swedish integration policy, I have immersed myself into governmental and local integration documents by examining a great deal of sources in form of official statements, government proposals, and municipalities' records, policy plans, budget, and other officially published documents. Also, I have made use of various news stories which have added to a contemporary aspect on my research.

The main part of my empirical findings is based on the 20 interviews I performed. In order to get an all-around picture on the different actors' thoughts on integration and intercultural dialogue, I conducted interviews with representatives from: the Municipality of Malmö, the Migration Board, researchers, and civic organisations such as Somaliland; United Nations; Yallatrappan; "Träffpunkten"; "Malmö mot Diskriminering" and "Open Skåne". Further on, I interviewed immigrants with diverse backgrounds who came to Sweden at different point in time. By choosing this approach, instead of focusing on a homogenous group, I hoped to make clear for the various integration difficulties these people experience, and also map out what these have in common regarding the integration process, and also where they differ. I conducted interviews with people who somehow are connected to the civil society, in which people are generally more prone of intercultural dialogue, which could result in a one perspective narrative. However, as my interviewees reside in various parts of Malmö and meet people outside of the civil society, I managed to capture other perspectives as well.

3 Integration Theory

It is important to understand that there to this date exists no single accepted definition, model or theory related to immigrant and refugee integration (Ager and Strang, 2008 p.167). The concept often tends to be aimed at groups of immigrants, although the native people themselves experience difficulties in integration. It is however agreed upon that the core principle of integration is the quest for a society where different societal groups enjoy social closeness, trust, participation and equality (Boldt, 2008 p.11-13; Valenta and Bunar, 2010 p.466).

In this section, I have tried to get round the conceptual problems one collides with by first exerting the most important aspects of integration; account for the main integration indicators and finish off by presenting theories and thoughts on the intercultural dialogue aspect of integration.

3.1 Background and Debate on Integration Theory

The origin of the concept of integration dates back to the mid 1970's as immigration began to be conceived as a problem by European countries. (Arribas Lozano et.al., 2014 p.557-560). Today, the immigration to Europe is increasing with the accelerating number of refugees coming from conflict-torn societies causing a high rise in the asylum applications (Eurostat, 2014). In connection to these immigration trends, the debate on how to best integrate immigrants is enjoying increased attention spreading beyond the political agenda onto the public sphere and the media. Simultaneously, the policy challenges of integration have become priority concerns of the European Union (Kaivo-Oja, 2014 p.66; Skey, 2011 p.92).

Immigrant integration will most likely remain a highly politicized topic in the years to come as it raises some of the fundamental questions about the nation-state; citizenship and state sovereignty (Koopmans, 2005 p.233; Mulcahy, 2011 p.4). Integration will remain to be primarily a national concern in which countries have taken on different national integration models, the main being those of multiculturalism and assimilation (Bertossi, 2011 p.1562). In its extreme form, assimilation expects the immigrant population to give up their own identities, norms and values in favour of the host societies' value-system. Assimilation presupposes that the majority society is based on an ethnical national identity to which the minorities have a responsibility to adapt (Pettersson, 2006 p.13). Multiculturalism on the other hand respects immigrants' collective identities and, while the immigrants are expected to adapt to the constitutional frameworks of a society, the majority society's norms and values should not be the leading ones. In

multiculturalism, immigrants are presupposed to bring along their own cultural identities and ways of living into the new society and by thus foster a new diversity-based unity (ibid. p.13).

The national approaches are often contested by researchers and critics; and it is nowadays believed that multiculturalism is rolling down a down-hill slope as an increased number of countries are shifting their strategies towards an assimilation approach (Koopmans, 2010 p.3; Bertossi, 2011 p.1567-68). Joppke goes as far as to argue that: “The notion of national models no longer makes sense, if it ever did.” (2007 p.2). Joppke’s reasoning makes sense as in the meeting-point between multiculturalism and assimilation; we can find one of the most controversial debates. As explained, multiculturalism includes shaping a united social identity built upon citizens’ mutual values in a society among many different cultural values (Roth, 2006 p.95). In vision, the society is based on peoples’ diverse values while in reality; the societal values are as a rule shaped by the majority culture. This is because, in cases where minority’s values contradict those of the majority, the minority has to adapt to the majority (Wikström, 2009 p.96).

It is also important to lift out the fact that immigration and integration bring forth politics of identity. Often immigration has negative consequences in terms of xenophobic attitudes towards immigrants as they become perceived as a threat towards the nation-state, firstly as they are imagined to reap the country of its material benefits, and secondly as they constitute a threat towards the homogenous national identity and culture (Skey, 2011 p.92). When people’s own culture is threatened, they tend to search for certainty and safety in stable identities that are not influenced by constant change. Therefore, in times when a society experiences massive immigration by groups of other cultures and values, the own culture becomes more important as it has the capacity of providing safety and stability (Friedman & Friedman, 2006 p.71-75).

The key argument supportive of assimilation is thus that established national frameworks help in sustaining a stable identity and allows certain groups to feel at home (Skey, 2011 p.148). As long as there is a possibility to effectively manage the cultural differences by assimilating “the other”, immigration is not perceived as a threat. However, when these “others” no longer can be domesticated within the nation, the majority perceives a challenge to its status and raises issues around migration to the top of the political agenda (ibid. p.156). By creating an unstable socio-economic landscape, multiculturalism leads to further segregation and becomes itself a threat to the society (Perez, 2006 p.297).

However, removed from the banalities of everyday life, the wide popular belief is that engagement with other cultures is considered a public good providing the opportunity to look at things from a different perspective and develop new skills (Skey, 2011 p.129). In order to live up to the full potentials of multiculturalism, it is of importance to dismantle the exclusive mechanisms of assimilation policies. One way of accomplishing this goal is by engaging with people trying to access their lives from their point of view and make their lives meaningful and manageable. The political and local elites play an important role in making equality and social justice placed at the heart of policy-making (ibid.

p.64-67). It is true that when individuals are exposed to ethnic out-groups, they are liable to report more negative, xenophobic attitudes. However, in connection to the increasing diversity, people are exposed to greater inter-ethnic contact which, according to Laurence, indeed seems to disperse the negative effects of diversity (2013 p.1346).

3.2 Integration Indicators

In November 2004, the European Council adopted The Common Basic Principles on Integration which aimed at the need to “develop clear goals, indicators and evaluation mechanisms in order to adjust policy and evaluate progress on integration” (Eurostat, 2011 p.9). The European Union’s approach promoted integration as a “dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of the Member States”, with an emphasis on “frequent interaction between immigrant and Member State citizens, demanding the promotion of common forums and intercultural dialogue as a key element of a successful integration.” (ibid.p.9).

In 2009, the Stockholm Programme called for the “development of core indicators in a limited number of relevant policy areas for monitoring the results of integration policies” (Eurostat, 2011 p.9). The following examined policy areas were: employment, education, social inclusion and active citizenship and included indicators such as: employment and activity rates, highest educational attainment, share of low-achieving 15-year-olds in reading, mathematics and science; median net income, percentage at risk of poverty rate, health status perceptions, share of immigrants with acquired citizenship and permanent residence permit (ibid. p.9-10).

I further found indicators in Ager and Strang’s report for the United Kingdom’s Home Office from 2004 which correlate to the basic principles of the European Union. Ager and Strang divide 10 integration domains into 4 following themes: means and markers; social connections; facilitators and foundation. Besides the indicators presented above, the authors included indicators for social connections which more directly measure inter-ethnic contact in the society (Ager and Strang, 2004 p.2-3). The following indicators were included: proportion of refugees who report mixing with people from different ethnic backgrounds in everyday situations, reported public attitudes to refugees, perceived friendliness of local people, number of registered refugee community organisations and number of refugees employed by local council (ibid. p.18-21).

3.2.1 Social Connections Aspect

It is important to realize that most of the above presented indicators are to a greater or lesser extent interconnected and influence each other; employment promotes economic independence, allows individuals to plan for the future and

brings a sense of stability, creates meeting spaces across ethnical borders, and provides opportunities for further developing of language skills. Housing offers immigrants a sense of stability and deeply affects people's overall physical and emotional well-being. Further on, education is important as schools are experienced to be important places of contact with members of local host communities. Also, citizenship rights help diminishing the social cleavages in the society and help immigrants to live harmonious together with the rest of the community (Ager and Strang, 2008 p.170-172). Another rather important prerequisite of integration is cultural competence which includes being able to speak the official language and hold knowledge about a country's culture (ibid. p.181-184).

I chose to focus more explicitly at the social connections and facilitators as they, according to Ager and Strang, make up connective tissues between the principles of citizenship on one hand, and integration outcomes in sectors such as employment, housing, education and health on the other. The authors perceive facilitators and social connections to play the driving role in the process of integration at a local level and conclude that social connections with other groupings, whether based on nationality, ethnicity or religion, are essential to establish the 'two-way' interaction that lays at the heart of many integration definitions (Ager and Strang, 2004 p.18; Ager and Strang, 2008 p.177-178).

Social connections and dialogue also affect identity politics positively by diminishing the xenophobic attitudes which arise in relation to the increasing migration by giving the individual the possibility to see beyond the negative stereotypes (SOU 2012:74, p.116). Institutions also play an important role in changing the negative stereotypes and groups claim that institutional discourses have an impact on collective and individual identity formation in which the authorities possess a mediating function between the migrant groups and the majority society (Scuzzarello, 2011 p.3).

3.3 Intercultural Dialogue

It has all too often led to human catastrophe whenever there was a lack of openness towards the other. Only dialogue allows people to live in unity in diversity. (Council of Europe, 2008 p.16)

The importance of inter-ethnic contact has been recognized by the Council of Europe which is claiming that neither the multicultural nor the assimilation approaches are longer adequate in societies where the degree of diversity is growing (ibid. p.9). The process of increased inter-ethnic contact however requires long-term commitment and a great deal of efforts such as media campaigns, events, projects, policy changes and more. Among other things, there is a need to integrate diversity into a shared sense of identity (European Commission, 2010 p.54). Looking more closely, the Council of Europe

provides us with the following 5 policy recommendations which are believed to lay the ground for an inclusive diverse society and increased dialogue.

3.3.1 Democratic Governance of Cultural Diversity

The ground on which a political society which values diversity should be based on are the common values of democracy, human rights, the rule of law, tolerance, non-discrimination and mutual respect. A united society in contemporary Europe should not be one where “The Winner Takes it All”, but rather one which is balanced between the majority and minority groupings. Creating such a society demands an education system where critical thinking and innovation flourish, and where people are free to express themselves. Also the different societal actors, such as the police forces, politicians, teachers, and other professional groups should be prepared to operate in such an environment and the media has an explicit role in challenging the stereotypes (Council of Europe, 2008, p.25).

Besides granting rights to all societal groups, social policy measures should be taken to ensure that everybody holds access to their rights, with a particular aim at positive action measures to redress the inequalities stemming from discrimination. Intercultural dialogue needs a legal framework at national and local level which guarantees human rights based on the principles of democracy and rule of law, also including policies against discrimination based on the ground of sex, race, religion, national or social origin or any other base (ibid. p.38-39).

3.3.2 Democratic Citizenship and Participation

As already mentioned, citizenship provides the opportunity to participate in cultural, social and economic life together with others on the same premises. Citizenship is a key to intercultural dialogue as it creates inclusive discourses where we see others as equal fellows and citizens (Council of Europe, 2008, p.28).

It is important to highlight that citizenship rights come with certain responsibilities making the individuals’ active involvement in public affairs an important aspect. Public authorities should encourage active participation and provide immigrants with the possibility to vote in the local and regional elections. They should also closely cooperate with the civil society organisations, especially those who work with youth and persons belonging to minorities. Together they should be actively involved in developing an integration plan, design and deliver various projects and programmes, and continuously evaluate these (ibid. p. 40-42).

3.3.3 Learning and Teaching Intercultural Competence

For increased intercultural dialogue we need certain competences which are not automatically required but need instead to be learned, practised and maintained. It is the different actors such as public authorities, education professionals, civil-society organisations, religious communities, the media and all other providers of education, who play a crucial role in developing the key competences for intercultural dialogue which cover democratic citizenship, language and history (Council of Europe, 2008, p.30).

The schools constitute an important arena for young people to act as citizens and they should guide and support young people giving them the necessary tools and develop attitudes which are necessary in a society which values democratic life, human rights, diversity and is marked by openness towards other cultures. Through the voluntary nature of youth and sports organisations, these arenas are especially well designed to offer opportunities for intercultural dialogue. Also, the parents in their function as role models are capable of changing the mentalities and perceptions of their children (ibid. p.32).

Practically this means that a free qualitative education which promotes active involvement and civic commitment should be available for all. This also includes knowledge and understanding of the major world religions and non-religious convictions and their play in society (ibid. 45-46).

3.3.4 Spaces for Intercultural Dialogue

Spaces for intercultural dialogue is perhaps the most important point as intercultural dialogue is dependent of an arena open for all where dialogue can take place. These spaces can be found in physical spaces such as streets, markets, kindergartens, schools and universities, cultural and social centres, youth clubs, churches, synagogues and mosques, work places, museums, libraries or virtual spaces like the media. Also the urban town planning could encourage spaces for dialogue by being organised in such a manner that they enhance open-mindedness. A special focus should be added on spaces for youth, where these have an opportunity to meet their peers from diverse backgrounds, communicate and develop joint activities (Council of Europe, 2008, p.33-34).

Practically, the public authorities are responsible for organising the civic life and the urban space in a way which provides opportunities for an open intercultural dialogue. Particular attention should be given to public spaces such as parks, civic squares, airports and train stations. Civil organisations are important as they provide organisational frameworks for intercultural and interreligious encounters. Public authorities and non-state actors are encouraged to promote culture, arts and heritage which provide particularly important spaces for dialogue (ibid. p.46-47).

3.3.5 Intercultural dialogue in International Relations

The principles of intercultural dialogue are also important in the international sphere and the complex geopolitical situation. In this world view marked by migration, stereotyping, interdependence, easy access to media and new communication services; cultural identities are increasingly complex. Intercultural dialogue is responsive to this condition and contributes to conflict prevention and solution, supports conciliation and rebuilds social trust. Especially international non-governmental organisations, foundations or religious communities play a key role in the transnational intercultural dialogue and are somewhat of innovators within this field (Council of Europe, 2008, p.35-36).

4 Background on Integration in Sweden and Malmö

4.1 Background on Sweden's Integration Policies

When put in a European perspective Sweden has, ever since cross-national comparisons started back in 1995, managed to perform at top level in the field of immigration and integration (Koopmans, 2010 p.5). Today, Sweden holds the top spot in MIPEX¹ surveys which evaluate the following integration policy areas: labour market mobility; family reunion; education; political participation; long term residence; access to nationality and anti-discrimination (MIPEX, 2014). Sweden also holds the highest national legal equality between immigrants and natives in entire Europe (Eurostat, 2011 p.245).

What characterises the Swedish integration approach is that already back in 1968 the labour migrants were given the same conditions as the native population regarding the welfare state, what later on in the 1970-s came to form the fundamentals of the integration policy (Borevi, 2014 p.710). The foundation of the Swedish integration policies has since then been based on the three guiding words: equality, freedom of choice and collaboration (SOU 1997/98:16, p.21; Wikström, 2009 p.100).

The country has a clear multicultural approach which was taken on in 1975 when integration took turn from assimilation towards a policy supportive of immigrants' own ethnicities (Borevi, 2014 p.711). Immigrants were promised active state support to retain their language, develop their own cultural identities, and maintain contact with their country of origin (SOU, 1974:69 p.19-20). Reforms were made in 1976 giving immigrant children a possibility to have class in their parental tongue within the Swedish education system (Borevi and Strömblad 2004 p.11). A central feature of this approach added in 1986, was vigilance against every kind of discrimination (Regeringen 1986; Westin: 2004 p.208). In summary, Swedish vision of integration is to achieve a community based on diversity, characterized by mutual respect and tolerance in which everybody face equal rights, opportunities and responsibilities (Regeringen, 2002).

However, in line with Koopmans argument, easy access to equal rights, including unrestricted access to welfare state arrangements in combination with a

¹ MIPEX works as an integration policy evaluating tool stemming from the integration policies from almost all European countries, together with Canada, United States, South Korea and Japan (MIPEX, 2014).

multicultural integration approach, has unintended negative effects on the socio-economic integration of immigrants (Koopmans, 2010 p.2).

4.1.1 Sweden's Actual Integration Outcomes

Sweden's integration policy has failed. Far too many people stand outside the society and the labour market. Swedish education for newly arrived immigrants show poor results and many don't even participate. The cleavages in society are extending, both socially and economically (Regeringsförklaringen, 2006 [my translation]).

In line with the former Prime Minister Reinfeldt's statement from 2006, Sweden's integration outcomes do not match the integration ambitions. The labour market integration is considered failed as persons with immigrant background are subject to higher unemployment rates in relation to native-born people, a fact valid even for immigrants with completed language education and acquired citizenship (Westin, 2004 p.201). The employment rates have been far lower for foreign people than natives ever since labour market surveys started in 1998. Looking at the numbers of 2011, we can see that the employment rate for natives was at 82% and for immigrants at 57% (Swedish Statistics, 2013 p.47-48), placing Sweden at the bottom of OECD-countries in an international comparison (Borevi, 2014 p.719).

Also the issue of residential segregation in Sweden is gaining more ground in the political and media debate, and recent surveys show that segregation is increasing (Dagens Nyheter, 2015a). Segregation in Sweden dates back to 1970's as the suburbs started becoming ethnically diverse and consisted of a majority of residents with immigrant-background (Kamali, 2006 p.17). This kind of residential segregation has led to numerous problems, confirmed by the examples of the riots in the city district of Rosengård in Malmö 2008 (Sveriges Radio, 2014), or the riots in the Stockholm suburbs in 2013 (Borevi, 2014 p.719).

There is also a gap in primary school results between native and immigrant children where natives since 1998 have attained higher average results (Swedish Statistics, 2013 p.31). The relative gap between 15-year old natives and immigrants in reading, mathematics and science in Sweden, is among the highest when put in a European comparison (Eurostat, 2011 p.149-154). We can also see that there is a big gap in attained secondary education where a total of 51% of natives have secondary education while only 30% of foreigners do (ibid. 2011 p.127).

The relative low social position of immigrants, referring to income, residence and education positions, also results in living conditions that are strongly correlated to poor health (Malmökommissionen, 2013 p.30). Health surveys performed by Malmö show that health factors correlate with education, place of residence and place of birth, making the immigrant group exposed to greater health issues (ibid. p.39).

4.1.2 Integration Outcomes in Malmö

Similar tendencies can be observed in Malmö where the biggest issues are those of unemployment and segregation (Malmberg, 2015). Local circumstances of Malmö put high pressure on integration policies as 31% of Malmö's 313 000 inhabitants are born outside of Sweden, representing 178 different nationalities (Malmö Stadskontoret, 2014 p.11-12). Malmö is a so-called transit-city where people only tend to stay during a short period of time which further complicates the integration process (Malmökommissionen, 2013 p.45-46).

Residential segregation imposes great challenges in Malmö and while the number of people with foreign background² rises to 41%, we can see that many of these live concentrated in certain areas of the city. Some of these are Segevång where 52% have a foreign background; Seved with 62%, Lindängen with 68%, Holma-Kroksbäck 76%, and Herrgården with 95% (Malmö Stad, 2013 p.17).

The residential segregation coincides with income where research shows that people who during a longer period of time reside concentrated in an area together with their fellow countrymen develop a poor income curve (Malmökommissionen, 2013 p.71). In Malmö the employment rates are far lower in segregated areas compared to the city average; while employment rate for natives in Malmö lies at 75%, for people with a foreign background this number is at 43%. In the most segregated area of Herrgården, the employment rate reaches a low at 18% (Malmö Stad, 2013 p.51-52).

As for education, children who live in immigrant-dense areas of Malmö perform below average. Only 76% go on to finish the primary school, and in Rosengårdsskolan situated in Herrgården, roughly 26% managed to achieve pass grades in 2012 (ibid. p.29). Due to bad performance for consecutive years, the upper school of Rosengårdsskolan even got shut down during 2013 (SVT, 2014). The socioeconomic factors have a great influence over the student's results making the increased school segregation a big obstacle towards integration (Malmökommissionen, 2013 p.80).

Another rather major problem is the immigrants' language performance as the SFI-education³ shows poor results and has high drop-out rates. On national level, a total of 48% withdraw from their studies before finishing a course, and only 32% end up passing D-level which gives the individual the ability to commit to everyday conversations and includes knowledge about the Swedish society, norms and values (Statskontoret, 2009 p.31-32). In Malmö the results are even worse as only 52% manage to pass their courses on any level (Malmö Stad, 2014 p.89).

² People with foreign background include those who have one or both parents who are born abroad.

³ SFI stands for Svenska för invandrare, translated into Swedish for Immigrants.

5 Empirical Findings

5.1 Intercultural Dialogue in Malmö

After having made clear for the theory and background on the integration in Malmö and Sweden, in the following section I present the main actors' approaches on integration and intercultural dialogue based on the theory presented above and the Council of Europe's recommendations⁴. It is of importance to bear in mind that many of these recommendations are interwoven and influence each other.

5.1.1 Democratic Governance of Cultural Diversity

The municipality of Malmö formed in 1999 a plan with the guiding principles on integration and multiculturalism. In it, the role of communication and mutual understanding between people was acknowledged as important prerequisites for successful integration and emphasize was put on citizens' knowledge about each other's culture and societies (Malmö Stad 1999 p.7). Engagement in the third sector was seen important in order to achieve social, cultural and political integration and meeting spaces were promoted as means towards integration (Scuzzarello, 2011 p.14).

During my interviews with Irene and Javed, both employed by the Municipality, I found out that the policy plan from 1999 was out-dated and not been taken into account for several years. Although the principles of it still are valid today, the problematic part was that there existed no feed-back mechanisms on the integration plan and the projects the municipality put through (Malmberg, 2015, Akhtar, 2015).

I also found out that the concept of integration became replaced by participation. As Javed explains, there are no longer places at communal level where the questions on integration could be channelled but these are rather included in questions on discrimination and equality (Akhtar, 2015). In connection with this change in the policy approach, the municipality formed an anti-discrimination plan and initiated cooperation with numerous actors; among

⁴ I will exclude the point on Intercultural Dialogue in International Relations as it goes beyond the local narrative and thus stretches beyond the focus of my study.

them the organisation “Malmö mot diskriminering”⁵ (Malmberg, 2015). During my talk with Filippa Swanstein, the head of “Malmö mot diskriminering”, I learned that the organisation, besides providing legal protection for ordinary citizens, also holds educational days for different organisations and administrative authorities; and works with awareness-raising campaigns regarding discrimination and human rights issues (Swanstein, 2015). The municipality itself completes yearly follow-ups of the discrimination goals and has a network of anti-discrimination contact persons (Roodro, 2015).

The Municipality also developed a report on Malmö’s road towards a sustainable future in the areas of health, welfare and equality (Malmberg, 2015). The report covers extensive work and is the result of cooperation between the Malmö University, municipal professionals, civil society, the business world and other relevant actors. According to the report, participation includes more than one person - one voice, and is rather seen as involvement in societal decision making processes based on the knowledge people possess (Malmökommissionen, 2013 p.130).

A policy however also needs to be followed by those it is targeted at. Promotion of intercultural dialogue is as mentioned dependent on a political culture which values diversity, democracy, rule of law, tolerance, non-discrimination and respect. In my talk with Per Brinkemo, a journalist with knowledge of the Somali culture due to his involvement in the “Somaliland” organisation⁶, he points out that many of the immigrants come from societies in which democracy and the rule of law are non-existing. In such societies, the state possesses neither legitimacy nor right to intervene in other people’s personal lives which constitutes great challenge towards the implementation of different legal frameworks and policies (Brinkemo, 2015).

5.1.2 Democratic Citizenship and Participation

As mentioned, Sweden holds the highest citizenship rights in Europe which is explicitly pointed out and appreciated by the individuals I have interviewed. Also, in Sweden immigrants are eligible to vote in regional and local election as soon as they are granted permanent residence permission (Valmyndigheten, 2015). However, we can see that there exists a negative correlation between voter turnout and place of birth; in Sweden in general the voting turnout for natives is at 87% and for foreign-born this number is at 73% (Swedish Statistics, 2013 p.81). In Malmö there is an even greater difference which correlates with the levels of

⁵ Malmö mot diskriminering, translated into Malmö against Discrimination, is an independent non-profit organisation which works towards increasing the knowledge about, and preventing of, discrimination (Malmö mot diskriminering, 2015).

⁶ Somaliland is an organisation aimed at integrating people in the Swedish society by various means. The organisation has been praised for its methods and among other things, received the “Municipality of Malmö’s Integration Prize” in 2010 and 2013 (Somaliland Förening i Malmö, 2015).

segregation (Malmö Stad, 2015), a correlation which can be observed throughout the country (Dagens Nyheter, 2015a).

The public actors work hard towards engaging the citizens into the public sphere. The Malmö Commission has an idea of promoting governance by making various forms of participation possible through the development of a leadership that enables sustainable development; holistic control instruments; and through creating new and innovative measures on the societal development (Malmökommissionen, 2013, p.132-133). Another idea which Javed mentions, is the idea of building up a Contact Centre which would gather those employed by the Municipality in one building providing the citizens with the “One door in” principle, meaning they would only need to knock at one door in order to get to the person they wish to talk with. That way, citizens would find themselves much more closely related to the public authorities (Akhtar, 2015).

The Municipality also closely cooperates with the civil society to increase immigrant participation in society. Even though it is mostly an economic cooperation and the work division between the two is at times unclear, the municipality recognizes the civil society’s potential towards creating a socially sustainable Malmö (Akhtar, 2015). The civic organisations however express that the Municipality’s work is insufficient and there is a wish towards creating long-term commitments with each other rather than focusing on 1 year financial contracts (Malmberg, 2015). Surveys conducted by the collective organ for the non-governmental organisations in Malmö⁷, show that the civil society has indeed contributed towards creating understanding for democratic principles and increased the respect for peoples’ attitudes and values (Malmökommissionen, 2013 p.48).

5.1.3 Learning and Teaching Intercultural Competence

As Javed explained, the key to intercultural dialogue is that citizens feel encouraged in opposite of feeling discriminated against. He emphasises the fact that conversations must be based on mutual respect and on an equal ground, rather than on paternalistic attitudes (Akhtar, 2015). In her study, Scuzzarello shows that evaluations of various integration projects in Malmö show that these do not fully allow for the emancipation of immigrants and fail to challenge paternalistic attitudes (Scuzzarello, 2008, p.24). Javed speaks about the unbalance in the meeting between citizens and authorities and says: “There exists a power hierarchy, that, we cannot deny.” (Akhtar, 2015).

As Aje Carlbom says, a researcher focused on integration and Islam, there is a great need of challenging the structure in which the immigrants are put in a victim position and rather point at those places where societal structures provide us with great opportunities (Carlbom 2015). Yassin Ekdahl, a psychologist with long experience in working with migrants, explained that many second generation

⁷ “Malmö Ideella föreningars paraplyorganisation”.

youth immigrants in Sweden do not feel Swedish nor as a part of society. Instead, they often put themselves in an inferior societal position which leaves them further alienated from the rest of the society (Ekdahl, 2015). Carlbom explains that we must challenge this victimization of immigrants by countering it with reasonable arguments, both through dialogue and also through efforts within awareness rising (Carlbom, 2015). In the business world, as explained by the most influential business woman this year Azita Shariati, we need to recognize the competences every individual possesses and instead of thinking what we can do to help the immigrants, we should think: “What can the immigrants do for us?” (SVT, 2015).

When Brinkemo travels around Sweden to hold lectures on his book on the Somali culture, many of the Municipalities approach him and explain they have difficulties in reaching out to the immigrant groups. Brinkemo explains that integration often is seen from a discriminative point of view, although we rather should talk about intercultural understanding. When working in these circumstances, it is important to start off by asking the question: “Where does it clash?”. It is important to first recognize what kinds of society structures the immigrants come from and in the initiative phase work according to those premises. Through the “Somaliland” organisation, Brinkemo learned that in Somali culture it is not only important what is said, but also who it is that speaks. He also realised that the spoken word was valued more than the written word which causes obstacles in a paper based society. One way of getting around these cultural misunderstandings Brinkemo suggests, is by allowing immigrants themselves to introduce new arriving immigrants into the society (Brinkemo, 2015). Yassin mentioned a similar approach and said that care-givers in Sweden should be representing different backgrounds and have language and intercultural knowledge which could help in getting round the misunderstandings that arise as a consequence of e.g. insufficient language knowledge (Ekdahl, 2015).

In its role as a public opinion rising actor, the Municipality has conducted efforts in several areas in order to reach out to the host-community in which the cultural institutions play a great role. The City Theatre of Malmö holds appreciated anti-discrimination shows and visits various schools teaching anti-discrimination. They also initiated a project named “Borrow a Prejudice” where people are free to come to the city library and “borrow” a person of different culture, religion, sex or else, and get a chance to communicate to him/her in peace and quiet. The municipality is also sponsoring the “Anti-racist Moviedays” where the concept is to offer public viewings of educating anti-racist movies two weeks a year (Malmberg, 2015).

The most important part of intercultural competence, mentioned in the theory chapter and reinforced by my empirical finding, is the cultural and value shocks which arise during intercultural dialogue. In my talk with Carlbom, we came to the conclusion that there existed easier and more difficult cultural differences which we have to approach on different levels. One level is the personal one in which we have to address each other respectfully and learn about each other’s cultures. The other is the institutional level where Carlbom argues that we should work under unrestricted debate characterised by mutual respect,

where people feel free to express the most extreme issues of integration. Otherwise he claims; we risk developing an extremely sensitive society with strong censorship which could cause extremely negative consequences for a democracy (Carlbom, 2015).

In many circumstances religion has come to be an important part of integration, and one that contains most tensions (Malmberg, 2015). According to Carlbom, multiculturalism includes the alienation of different groups away from the society which breeds ground for conflicts. (Carlbom, 2015). Ahmed, an immigrant from Syria, noticed that Syrian people became much more religious in Sweden than in their home country. Because religion has strong values and Sweden is a secular country, he explains that some people isolate themselves voluntarily in order to raise their children in a traditional manner and protect them from the secular norms (Said, 2015). Noel, who came here as a student from India, was surprised to find that in Sweden there seemed to exist more religious tensions than in India where people could openly celebrate each other's religious holidays (Munigala, 2015).

As values represent the most difficult part of integration, it is important to map out where the values clash and where they are similar. One tool that provides us with a possibility to gain a better intercultural understanding is the World Values Survey which displays values worldwide and has been doing so for the past 30 years (World Values Survey, 2015).

5.1.4 Spaces for Intercultural Dialogue

Segregation represents a big problem in Malmö and studies show that segregation is increasing, exemplified by the maps included in Appendix 1. The common belief is that Malmö is a divided city with great spatial differences between the different groups (Akhtar, 2015) Rosengård, an area which is to 95% populated by non-natives, has become an exotic place for natives to go and shop and visits there are compared to going to a third world country (ibid. 2015). During my interview with Kadige who herself lives in Rosengård, she said in a humoristic way:

I want to look for Swedes but there are no Swedes (in Malmö), it is not fair. Here in Rosengård, Swedish people come as tourists, they look here, and they look there. Sometimes, I see groups of Swedish people coming here like they were on an excursion, even groups of university students. (Kassem, 2015 [my translation])

As Ahmed claims, the problem is that the host community does not prepare meeting places where natives and immigrants can meet (Said, 2015). In my interview with an employee at the Migration Board of Sweden, he explained that during the waiting time of their asylum application which is at a minimum of 6 months, immigrants are placed in different parts of Sweden where they have little possibility to get to know the native culture and have no, or very limited, possibilities to learn the language (Employee 1, 2015). This problem has recently been recognized by the Migration Board as they on the 16th of March announced

the initiation of the collaboration with other administrative authorities with the aim of improving the integration process (Migrationsverket, 2015).

As Ahmed also explained, there exists a kind of institutional segregation. He brought up a personal example explaining that although he himself is a person with a multicultural background and enjoys meeting people from all over the world, when he arrived to Sweden he found himself isolated from the rest of the society. He felt as if he was dragged into the Syrian community in which people after a while start feeling secure resulting in the fact that many choose to never leave (Said, 2015).

In his research on Muslim minorities, Carlbom found that segregation in some places has developed in terms of religious and ethnic instances forming minor societies within the society. Within these, segregation becomes an active choice where those with strong religious values are not threatened by secular norms (Carlbom, 2003 p.165-166). When people walk out of these areas and move in the public spaces of Malmö, they experience being treated with hostility (ibid. p.176). Whether imagined or real, discrimination in this aspect helps in sustaining a spatial and mental segregation which increases negative attitudes and legitimizes separated hierarchical structures (Kamali, 2006 p.17).

Another negative development is that of school segregation with a clear division between schools with majority of native children and schools with majority of immigrant children. Javed, whose wife is a teacher, explains that teachers in general try to escape schools where the majority of students are immigrants (Akhtar, 2015). As mentioned earlier, Rosengårdsskolan's upper school got shut down during 2013 due to unsettled environment. During February this year, another school in Rosengård named "Värner Rydénsskolan" got shut down due to unstable environment and raised public debate (Dagens Nyheter, 2015b).

The Malmö Commission does provide recommendation on how to increase meeting spaces in the city and proposes among other things that social consequences should be taken into account in connection to urban city planning, a point which is emphasised by the Council of Europe. More attention is put on creating environments where people can meet across different city structures and on the civic organisations which have great potential in creating such spaces (Malmökommissionen, 2013, p.73).

5.1.4.1. Open Skåne

One of the actors particularly aimed at promoting meeting spaces and intercultural dialogue is "Open Skåne", a project initiated in 2014 in which different actors cooperate with the aim of achieving an inclusive Skåne Region⁸. People representing the business world, municipalities, universities, citizens, religious instances and more are here invited to raise their voices and bring forth ideas of

⁸ Skåne is a region in Sweden in which Malmö is situated.

how to best achieve mutual coherence between the people of Skåne by opening up for dialogue through different forums, meetings, workshops and more (Open Skåne, 2015).

During my talk with Felix Unogwu, one of the project leaders, he said that “Open Skåne” during their pilot study found out that the citizens expressed a will to learn more about the on-going conflicts in the world and that there is a great pressure for talks about segregation, police violence and racism. Many defined religion, politics in general, and the recent political development in Sweden to be the main issues of the split society. In line with Carlbom’s earlier statement, many believe that we do not have sufficient dialogue on religious issues in today’s society and many expressed a desire for increased meeting spaces between different religions (Unogwu, 2015). The civil society is seen as the most important actor as they represent the connecting link between the people and the administrative authorities. The religious organisations play a particularly important role as many of the conflicts in the society have religious features which are why the religious organisations should take on responsibility in confronting and settling these conflicts in the society (ibid. 2015).

5.2 Immigrants’ Experiences of Integration and Intercultural Dialogue

In this section I have tried to pin down immigrants’ own experiences of integration and intercultural dialogue, including their feelings towards other cultures and the host society, and their perspectives on feeling as a part of society.

5.2.1 Attitudes towards the Native and Immigrant Cultures

In my interviews I found that the overall opinion on the native population was very positive. A woman from Somalia expressed:

Swedish people? Honestly, very good people, they don’t mind to see foreigners all around the country. Even though I am wearing a hijab I have never experienced anything bad (Anonymous 1, 2015).

In comparison to Belgium, Hannes feels that the Swedes are much less judgemental and more tolerant than Belgian people (Scheldemann, 2015). Another woman expressed that she found Swedish people to be very friendly. She mentioned that there were those who displayed racist opinions, but she has never experienced it herself. She also expressed a wish for having more Swedish friends (Kumairah, 2015). Ever since Kadige, a woman from Palestine, arrived to Sweden in 1986 she experienced that people have been very friendly towards her (Kassem, 2015).

Ahmed feels that the Swedish people are the nicest people of Europe but he adds that it takes long time to become friends with Swedes due to their character. Ahmed also mentioned that he has experienced discrimination and that there exists a cultural imperialism in which Europeans are put in a superior position, but it has never caused greater problems for him (Said, 2015). Noel and Patiance also mention the fact that it takes long time to make friends with Swedish people (Munigala, 2015; Mabhena, 2015). Patiance also claims that it is much easier to integrate with those people who have lived abroad or moved around within the country (Mabhena, 2015). A woman from Serbia described the Swedish character as either extremely cold or extremely nice, where the former often gave expression to xenophobic attitudes. However, in her work as an enrolled nurse, she said that some of those care-takers, who initiatively had negative attitudes towards immigrants, started changing their minds after having spent some time with her (Anonymous 2, 2015).

Tensions between different immigrant groups have also been brought up by the most interviewees. Kadige mentions that immigrants themselves often come from discriminative societies (Kassem ,2015). Many also find the cultural clashes to be unmanageable which was exemplified in my interview with the woman from Serbia. She said that she found it easier to make friends with other European immigrants as they were much more culturally related, but that she found it harder to communicate with people from countries further away due to the big cultural and value clashes. She was able to talk about different cultural traditions but rather avoided deeper contact (Anonymous 2, 2015).

5.2.2 Part of Society

Surveys conducted by the Malmö Commission show that there are big differences across different areas in Malmö regarding to what extent people feel as part of society (Malmökommissionen, 2013, p.77). When I asked my interviewees whether they felt as part of the society I received different answers; for some feeling part of the society was being able to speak the language, for others it included being able to work and contribute to the wealth of the society, and for some it was to attain the same legal rights as the rest of the society. Time was also mentioned as an important factor, as one woman explains; in the beginning she always wished to return but after having raised her children in Sweden she has nothing connecting her to her home country (Anonymous 3, 2015).

Patience said that although she does not feel at home in Sweden, through her engagement in the Red Cross and other activities she felt as part of the society (Mabhena, 2015). The civil organisations I visited indeed have proven to have positive influences on giving people an opportunity to participate in the society; as

explained by Fatme: “Yallatrappan⁹ provided us with the opportunity to get a job and become a part of society” (Ibrahim, 2015).

5.2.3 Spaces of Intercultural Dialogue

When I asked what the main spaces of dialogue were, some found the library to be an important area to meet people and others met people through work or spontaneously in the neighbourhood. Maria mentioned that she meets a lot of people because she lives in a student building (Naddour, 2015).

However, the major arena for intercultural dialogue and cross-cultural friendship was the SFI-education. All of those eligible for attending SFI, stated it to be the most common and natural arena for meeting people from all over the world. It was here many people came together regardless of the country of origin, demonstrated by my interviewees who had backgrounds from Serbia, Macedonia, Palestine, Syria, Zimbabwe, Somalia, Belgium and India.

The organisations I visited, Yallatrappan and Träffpunkten, provide people with the opportunity to meet others where these can share different cultural traditions on a deeper level. In both organisations, food was seen as a positive cultural experience which people could unite around. Also in projects like these, and Träffpunkten in particular, people could meet and together practice the Swedish language. In Yallatrappan the women got a chance to meet people from other immigrant cultures, but also a chance to come in contact with the natives as they come to Yallatrappan as customers. Yallatrappan also emphasises and celebrates different religious traditions and thus helps in uniting different religions (Ibrahim, 2015).

Outside of the projects however, it is more difficult to commit to dialogue with natives in Malmö because of the segregation. Fatme says that it was much easier for her and her family to make friends with natives when she lived in Sundsvall in Northern Sweden as most of her neighbours were Swedish. She also mentions that many of the immigrant communities want to stick together (Fatme, 2015). When I asked a woman from Macedonia whether she wished to have more contact with natives her reply was: “No, honestly. I am Muslim and I do not want to associate with others. With women of course, but I am not that comfortable with associating with different men” (Anonymous 3, 2015).

5.2.4 Narratives of Integration and Intercultural Dialogue

When I asked my interviewees to define what integration was for them I received answers which coincided with the theoretical frameworks on integration. For

⁹ Yallatrappan is a work integrative social business in Rosengård aimed at providing work opportunities and economic independence for immigrant women who are situated at the far end of the labour market (Yallatrappan, 2015)

some, it was having the same rights as the rest of the population as expressed by Ranim: “If I have all the same rights, what is it that makes me different from other people?” (Kumairah, 2015). Hannes from Belgium, who already found himself integrated at the social level, found work and language the most important part of integration (Scheldemann, 2015).

For others, integration stretched further towards knowing and understanding the language and the culture of the country you live in. However, as pointed out earlier, when values arouse to the topic of integration, I could once again find a point of disagreement. A woman from Somalia said that integration is to work as much as you can and thus benefit yourself and others, and also to respect each other. She however explicitly pointed out that integration was not to abandon your culture but rather live alongside the culture of the host society. She feels that she should be able to wear her hijab and expressed that she got angry when people generalized or misunderstood the Muslim society (Anonymous 1, 2015). Patiance on the other side claimed that one as an immigrant holds the responsibility to adapt to the society and that acceptance plays a big role. She experiences that many immigrants continue to eat their own food, listen to their own music, watch their own TV, and are indifferent in becoming a greater part of the society. She claimed that some groups in today’s society make values more important than they should be. Her thoughts are that Sweden cannot change rules as soon as new people arrive as it brings societal chaos in the long-term; instead immigrants themselves have a responsibility to adapt to the existing structures of the society (Mabhena, 2015).

Ahmed said that integration is being part of society and that good integration outcomes are dependent on the structures provided for integration, something which he believes is missing in Sweden. Ahmed is also doubtful of the fact that we can achieve complete integration and claims that we will achieve partial integration meaning people can be friends with another but are split around different values. He further claims that religion is one of the reasons a full integration cannot be achieved as religious values are those that stick around the longest (Said, 2015).

6 Conclusion

On the local policy level, we can see that the Municipality of Malmö switched their approach from integration towards participation putting a high emphasis on discrimination policy. Even though the policies seem promising, earlier experiences have shown that there are major implementation and evaluation difficulties around these policies. Also in line with Brinkemo's argument, the Municipalities should not lay all their focus on discrimination but rather work with intercultural understanding.

Further on, I found that the common perception was that the structures in today's society are not adapted to multiculturalism. Among other things, there is a lack of places where people can meet across ethnical borders and commit to dialogue, and there is insufficient intercultural knowledge in society. The segregation, whether self-elected or not, contributes towards creating a society marked by alienation which is extremely conflict-sensitive.

In places where intercultural dialogue takes place, as in the organizations I visited, people in general spoke positively of multiculturalism. However, an obvious point of disagreement emerged as the different cultural and religious values arose at the point of discussion. On one side, religious values were seen incompatible with a secular society, and on the other side secular norms were perceived as threats towards the religion and religion itself was believed to be misunderstood.

As Carlbom explains, we need to commit to intercultural dialogue on a personal level and learn how to respect each other, but above all, we need to engage in an open public debate which speaks about the most controversial issues of integration.

On the personal level, SFI-education proved to be the main arena where people from different backgrounds meet and engage in intercultural dialogue regardless whether they are active within the civil society or not. As this arena is not explicitly acknowledged as one important meeting space by the Municipality, my claim is that the Municipality and other actors should make use of the potentials that this existing structure holds, for example by promoting cultural celebrations; multicultural events; societal guidance; job opportunities; or other events.

On the public level, the project "Open Skåne" has great potentials of opening up for dialogue and debate through creating meeting places for different societal actors.

6.1 Further Research

As the civil society is a good arena for intercultural dialogue and integration in general, it would be of interest to map out the most successful methods on how to actively involve people within the civil society. Further on, it would be interesting to examine if there is a correlation of the degree an individual feels marginalized and discriminated, and the degree of active involvement within the civil society.

Lastly, as values represent an important part of integration; I find further research on this subject essential. Firstly, it would be interesting to see whether immigrants perceive their values to be an obstacle in the society, and if so during which circumstances; and secondly, it would be interesting to observe the changes in values over time within different immigrant groups. As those who have resided in Sweden for a longer period of time have learned to combine the value clashes, they also hold the answer of how we can create a society in which all people can live united in diversity.

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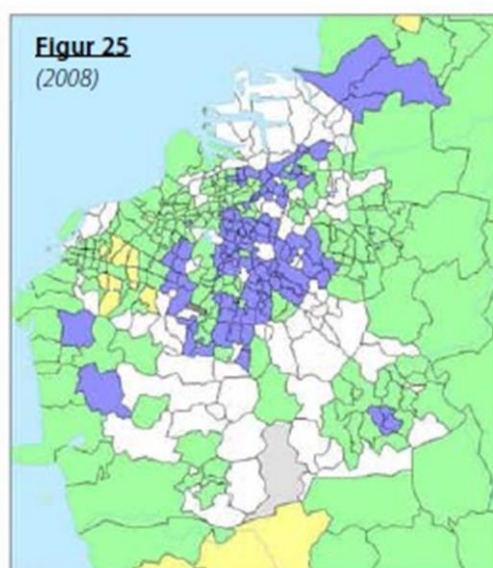
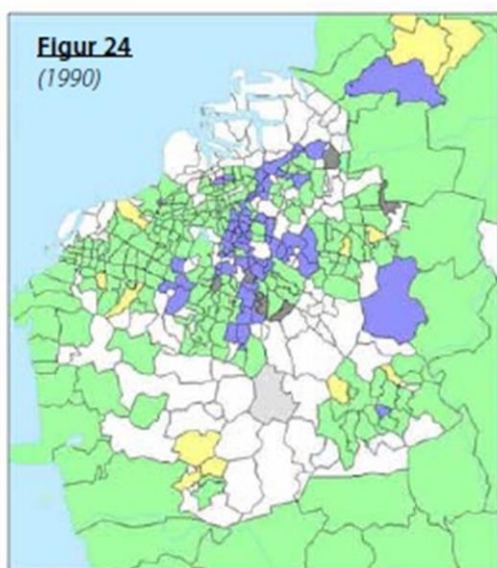
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8 Appendix 1

The following segregation pattern is based on income (percentage of low and high) and ethnicity (percentage of foreign-born outside of Scandinavian Countries and Western Europe and percentage of natives) 1990 and 2008 (Malmökommissionen, 2013 p.71).



-  Economically strong areas, majority of natives.
-  Mixed, integrated areas.
-  Economically poor areas, majority of foreign-born.
-  Economically poor areas, majority of natives.
-  Economically strong areas, majority of foreign-born.
-  Unclassified.