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Veiled Muslim women´s position and situation in the Swedish labor market

A socio-legal study on potential marginalizing structures within the Swedish labor market, and the role of law in facilitating the continued reproduction of these

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Abstract

Previous research illustrates that Muslim minorities struggle to establish themselves in the European labor market. Veiled Muslim women appear to be a particularly disadvantaged group. Research regarding veiled Muslim women's position and situation in the Swedish labor market is almost nonexistent. This study attempted to fill this knowledge gap. The aim of the study was to examine how veiled Muslim women's situation and position in the Swedish labor market is perceived, both by Swedish employment agency officers as well as by veiled Muslim women themselves. The aim of the study was also to illuminate the potential structural consequences of the justifications for differential treatment provided by chapter 2, section 2 of the Swedish discrimination act.

The empirical material consists of five interviews with Swedish employment agency officers and six interviews with veiled Muslim women. Several of the interviewed veiled Muslim women expressed that they, due to their ethnic origin and the veil had experienced negative treatment, either by employers or by colleagues, bosses, or clients. Their representations of their position and situation in the Swedish labor market indicates that their religious identity, as well as their ethnicity, potentially affect how others treat them within the field. Moreover, their experiences indicate that Swedishness is a crucial symbolic capital in the field of the Swedish labor market. The results suggest that the Swedish discrimination act lacks in normative power and is insufficient to protect veiled Muslim women from discrimination and harassment in the labor market.

The representations of both veiled Muslim women and Swedish employment agency officers contain signs of symbolic violence, by which potentially marginalizing structures within the field of the Swedish labor market are concealed, naturalized, and reproduced. The results suggest that the Swedish discrimination act lacks in normative power and is insufficient to protect veiled Muslim women from discrimination and harassment in the labor market.

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1.Introduction

Freedom of religion is a human right protected under both international law¹ and European law². So is the right not to be discriminated against³. An EU-directive regarding equal treatment in employment and occupation was issued in 2000, to improve the position of vulnerable groups (including religious minorities) at the labor market. (2000/78/EG) Despite this, recent reports indicate that Muslim minorities in Europe face discrimination in several areas of their everyday lives, including when working or applying for work. Muslims wearing visible Muslim symbols, such as religious clothing, appear to be mainly targeted. (European Union Agency for fundamental rights 2017)

In a report from 2017, the European Agency for fundamental rights present results showing that many Muslims in the EU have felt discriminated against in the labor market. The report, which is based on survey-material from a total of 10, 500 Muslims in 15 EU-member states (including Sweden), showed that 44% of the respondents who had been looking for work during the last five years had felt discriminated against because of their first or last names while doing so. Out of those who currently were employed, 43% had experienced feelings of being discriminated against because of their skin color or physical appearance. (European Agency for fundamental rights 2017, p.11) Feelings of being discriminated against were particularly apparent among Muslim women. (ibid) Furthermore, another report by the European Agency for fundamental rights (2019, p.13) illustrates that more Muslim women than Muslim men report experiences of harassment or violence due to their religion. These experiences were particularly articulated among veiled Muslim women. (European Agency for fundamental rights 2019, p.37) The study indicates that the wearing of Muslim veils potentially triggers islamophobia and harassment. The study also showed that many Muslim women experience discrimination in the labor market. (ibid) These insights have guided this thesis, which aims at looking more closely into veiled Muslim women's experiences in the Swedish labor market.

Furthermore, criticism has been directed at the architecture of EU anti-discrimination laws. The focal point of the criticism relates to the justifications for differential treatment inscribed

¹ The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 18.

² The 1950 European convention on human rights article 9. The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights article 10 and article 21.

³ The 1950 European convention on human rights, article 2 and 7. The 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights article 26. The Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief. The 1950 European convention on human rights article 14. Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union article

by the EU-directive (2000/78/EC) on equal treatment in employment and occupation. The directive sets out two conditions under which negative differential treatment may be justified; the rule or practice that causes differential treatment must have a legitimate aim (caused by a genuine and determining occupational requirement), and the measure which has led to the differential treatment must be proportionate and necessary to reach that aim. (2000/78/EG article 4, section one) The legal framework offers no comprehensive description of how to determine whether a case of differential treatment is to be defined as necessary and proportionate. The vagueness of the concept causes legal uncertainty concerning whether a case of differential treatment is to be considered justified or not, which may have negative consequences for the law's normative function. Scholars have thus expressed that the directive, due to its vagueness, fails to deliver adequate legal protection against discrimination in European labor markets. This criticism suggests that the architecture of the law, indirect, may enable discriminatory and marginalizing structures at the labor market to prevail. (Cinneide 2011; Makkonen 2012)

The EU-directive (2000/78/EG) on equal treatment in employment and occupation has been integrated into Swedish law through the implementation of the Swedish discrimination act (2008:567). The act's justifications for differential treatments align with those provided by the EU-directive. Therefore, one may argue that the criticism directed at the European legal framework on discrimination in the labor market may apply to the national legal framework of Sweden as well. Hence, this thesis also aims to theorize on the role of law (the Swedish discrimination act, and the justifications for differential treatment prescribed by it in specific) in maintaining and reproducing potential marginalizing and dominating structures facing veiled Muslim women in the Swedish labor market.

1.1 Aim and Research questions

The aim of this study is to examine how veiled Muslim women's situation and position⁴ in the Swedish labor market is perceived, both by Swedish employment agency officers and by veiled Muslim women themselves. The study is thereby focusing both on veiled Muslim women's experiences regarding being a veiled Muslim woman in the Swedish labor market, as well as Swedish employment officer's view on veiled Muslim women's employability. The

⁴ The concept of "position" is used to discuss where veiled Muslim women are situated within the labor market, and to highlight potential structural constraints that may impede on their opportunities at the labor market. The concept of "situation" refers to the experienced situation facing veiled Muslim women at work, such as treatment by bosses, colleagues, and clients.

aim of the study is also to illuminate the potential structural consequences of the justifications for differential treatment provided by chapter 2, section 2 of the Swedish discrimination act.

The objection of the thesis is to answer the following research questions:

-What does the data generated in this study tell us about the structural facets of the Swedish labor market, and its potential impact on veiled Muslim women's situation and position in the Swedish labor market?

-How are these structures reproduced or challenged in the interviewee's representation of veiled Muslim women's position and situation at the Swedish labor market?

-What socio-legal insights can be drawn from the data generated in this study?

1.2 Socio-legal relevance

The field of sociology of law aims at bringing insights about the normative dimensions that guard human behavior. Socio-legal studies treat the law as one of many normative systems, but also pays attention to informal norms that affect both how social actors behave in general but also how they perceive and employ the formal law. (Banakar 2019)

The purpose of adopting a socio-legal perspective in this study is dual. Firstly, it enables a discussion on the norms and structures that prevails within the field of the Swedish labor market and helps illuminate how these affect the interviewee's representations. Secondly, it enables a discussion on the role of law in facilitating the situation and position facing veiled Muslim women at the Swedish labor market, as well as lays the foundation for an examination of potential latent functions of the justifications for differential treatment prescribed by law. Adopting a socio-legal perspective in this study may thus provide valuable insights concerning the linkages between the situation facing veiled Muslim women at the labor market and the structural facets of the Swedish discrimination act.

1.3 Background

This chapter aims at presenting a few key concepts and to explain their relevance to this thesis. It also aims at presenting the legal framework attached to the issue.

1.3.1 Conceptualization of "Muslim veil" and "Muslim veiling"

Veiling is not an explicit and definite requirement in Islamic texts, and whether veiling is a religious obligation for Muslim women or not is thus a controversial topic. (Amer 2014, p.37)

So is the issue of what type of cover that is required, and what type of veiling style that is requested. There are multiple ways of practice Muslim veiling, and several different types of veils are adopted within the Muslim community. (Amer 2014, p. 12-13) In this thesis the concept of “Muslim veils” is used as a generic term for Muslim female coverings, whereas “Muslim veiling” is used as a generic term for Muslim veiling practices. A distinction is made between face veils (such as Burqa, Niqab, and Chador) and headscarves (different variations of Hijabs) when needed to capture nuances in Muslim women’s experiences.

1.3.2 Conceptualization of the labor market as a field

Previous research illustrates several examples of studies in which the field concept has been adapted successfully to analyze various aspects of the labor market. Some of these studies have focused on how access to certain forms of resources (capital in Bourdieusan terms) affect labor market outcomes. For example, Behtoui (2015) and Andersson (2017) have used the concept to study how access to social capital affect the labor market outcomes of certain groups in Sweden. Other studies have focused more on oppressive and unequal structures within the labor market. These types of studies generally add Bourdieu’s concept of symbolic power and symbolic violence into the analysis to analyze how modes of oppression reproduce and legitimize itself within the field. In one such study, Rootham and McDowell (2015) used the concept to analyze underemployment (educational qualifications not fully realized into labor market outcomes) among working-class men in Britain. They found that ethnic minority men were disadvantaged in the labor market, due to negative stereotypes about them. They used the concept of symbolic violence to analyze the continued reproduction of the underlying structures behind the underemployment among these men. (ibid)

Based on the concept’s proven applicability for research related to the labor market, the field concept has been adopted as an analytical starting point for this thesis. This means that the Swedish employment market will be depicted as a major field⁵, with several subfields (consisting of different industries) within it. The specific values and capitals may differ between different sectors, but it is all organized under the general logic of the broader field of the labor market. The field concept will be utilized in a similar manner as outlined in Rootham and McDowells (2015) study and will thus be adopted as a theoretical tool to help illuminate structural inequalities within the field and their continued reproduction.

⁵ A more comprehensive presentation of the field concept and its relevance for this particular project is presented in the chapter “theoretical framework”.

1.3.3 The role and social authority of Swedish employment agency officers

Veiled Muslim women's experiences have been included because it produces insights into the subjective experiences of veiled Muslim women themselves.

The purpose of including perceptions and experiences of Swedish employment officers into the study was twofold. Firstly, it aimed at providing expertise regarding the logic of the field/fields of the labor market, and to provide insights into veiled Muslim women's situation and position in the labor market. The idea was that Swedish employment officers (due to their experiences of meeting and collaborating with employers in their professional role) would be able to provide insights regarding the preferences and views that prevail among employers. Secondly, the Swedish employment agency was assumed to enjoy a specific authority within the field of the labor market. This authority supposedly stems from the fact that the agency is a public authority which functions under the Ministry of labor. The Swedish Employment agency has been designated the outermost responsibility for public employment services and labor policy activities in Sweden. (The statute 2000:628 on labor market policy activities, section 9). The Swedish Employment Agency has thus, through its responsibility for preparing labor market policy programs, the power to create and legitimize definitions of social problems within the field. Street-level bureaucrats within the agency (i.e., employment agency officers) are therefore having a specific authority, which gives unique legitimacy to their representations. They may thereby be in a favorable position to impose their views concerning veiled Muslim women's assumed situation and position in the labor market onto other agents. Hence, it was considered to be of relevance to include their representations of veiled Muslim women's position and situation into the study as well.

1.3.4 The Swedish discrimination act (2008:567)

The Swedish discrimination act (2008:567) aims at counteracting discrimination based on any of the following characteristics: sex, transgender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation, or age. (The Swedish discrimination act chapter 1, section 1.) The law prohibits three forms of discrimination: direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, and inadequate accessibility. (op.cit. chapter 1, section 4) The latter is relevant only for persons with disabilities and will thus not be applicable for this thesis.

The act presents the following definition for direct discrimination:

That someone is disadvantaged by being treated less favorably than someone else is treated, has been treated, or would have been treated in a comparable situation, if this disadvantaging is associated with sex, transgender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation or age. (op.cit. chapter 1, section 4)

Indirect discrimination is defined as situations in which:

Someone is disadvantaged by the application of a provision, a criterion or a procedure that appears neutral but that may put people of a certain sex, a certain transgender identity or expression, a certain ethnicity, a certain religion or other belief, a certain disability, a certain sexual orientation or a certain age at a particular disadvantage, unless the provision, criterion or procedure has a legitimate purpose and the means that are used are appropriate and necessary to achieve that purpose. (ibid)

The act also prohibits harassment and degrading treatment at the workplace due to, for example, religion or ethnicity. (ibid)

Chapter two of the act set out specific discrimination rules applicable to the working life in specific. The section clarifies that employers are prohibited from discriminating against employees as well as job applicants. The discrimination prohibition is also applicable in relation to trainees/interns and temporary labor. (The discrimination act, chapter 2, section 1)

One important distinction that appears in the segment is the one between discrimination and negative differential treatment. Negative differential treatment appears in situations where a person is disfavored (rejected a job, promotion or training, etc.), due to any of the seven characteristics comprised by the discrimination law. Negative differential treatment is not prohibited, provided that the differential treatment is required due to the “the nature of the work or the context in which the work is carried out.” These requirements must have a legitimate purpose, and the requirement must be necessary to reach that purpose. Negative differential treatment may thus, under certain conditions, be justified if it is considered to be legitimized due to the nature of the work. (op.cit. chapter 2, section 2)

2. Previous research

The objection of this chapter is to present and discuss previous research related to veiled Muslim women's position in the labor market in Europe in general, and in Sweden specifically. The initial section of the chapter aims at providing the reader with a general overview of how the practice of Muslim veiling is conceptualized and portrayed throughout Europe. Central discourses in the debate and their potential impact on the general European understanding of veiled Muslim women are discussed. The second section aims at discussing Muslim veiling from the perspective of veiled Muslim women themselves. This part elaborates on potential motives and meanings embedded into the practice of Muslim veiling. The third section focuses on the position of Muslims in general and Muslim women in specific, at the labor market. Muslim veiling's potential implications for women's employability is also discussed. The fourth and final section of the chapter presents some concluding remarks concerning the state of research related to the issue and outlines a research gap.

2.1 Muslim veiling in a European context

Muslim veiling has become a politicized issue in Europe. This section aims at discussing the potential implications of two of the central discourses used in the debate, namely the clash of civilization discourse and the gender equality discourse (Bilge 2010).

2.1.1 The clash of civilization discourse

The clash of civilization discourse emphasizes the assumed cultural difference between "us" (non-Muslims in the western world) and them (Muslims). Proponents of this perspective tend to portray Islam as retrogressive, old fashioned, traditional, and oppressive. Muslims are thus depicted as cultural or religious others in need of transformation. (Amer 2014, p.105; Bilge 2010; Castles, Miller 2009 p.265; Minkenberg 2007) Religions clothing, such as Muslim veils, is perceived as a sign of otherness and do thus evoke hostility. (Castles, Miller 2009 p.273) Minkenberg (2007) proposes that the growing fear of radicalism following 9/11 and other terror attacks have reinforced the perceived cultural distance between the Western and the Muslim world and reinforced images of Muslims as a group of "religious others." Consequently, Minkenberg argues, the hostility and suspicion directed against the Muslim community have increased. (ibid)

A core element in the clash of civilization discourse relates to the fact that the secular tradition remains strong in large parts of Europe. Western Europe is highly secularized, and the prevalence of visible religiosity may thus be perceived as a threat of secularism and secular values. (Minkenberg 2007) Another commonly used argument within the clash of civilization discourse is that Muslim veiling, due to its assumed incompatibility with western values, hinders “successful integration.” (Woodhead 2009) Furthermore, Muslim veiling is often linked to Islamic extremism and thus perceived as a security issue. (Baehr, Gordon 2013; Lettinga, Saharso 2014; Woodhead 2009)

2.1.2 The gender equality discourse

The gender equality discourse resembles the clash of civilization discourse in the sense that it also emphasizes the assumed cultural differences of Muslims and the western world. However, it does so by focusing on the value of gender equality in particular. The discourse builds on an assumption of the Western world as gender-equal, democratic, and fair, whereas the Muslim world is framed in oppositional terms. These images tend to result in essentialist representations of Muslims, by which all Muslims are believed to have internalized the assumed patriarchal and sexist structures of Islam, regardless of the cultural context in which they live. (Bilge 2010) A common argument among those who advocate for the gender equality discourse is that women are forced to veil themselves. Muslim veiling is, from this perspective, viewed as a symbol of gender inequality and subordination. This type of argument is sometimes undertaken as part of a feminist agenda. Feminist veiling opponents often proclaim the need to deliberate the “oppressed Muslim woman” from her veil. A focal argument in this feminist approach is that the veil assumingly is used by Muslim men to “keep women in place.” Muslim veiling is also assumed to be an expression of patriarchal structures in which women are held accountable for keeping both their own and men’s sexuality in control. Muslim veiling is thus assumed to be stigmatizing women’s sexuality and for reproducing their subordinated position. (Bilge 2010; Hasan 2012; Ouis, Roald 2003 p.190-191; Woodhead 2009)

2.1.2 Criticism of the debate and potential implications of the discourses enforced by it

Europe’s politicization of Muslim veiling has received significant criticism in the scholarly debate. A focal point of the criticism relates to the assumed prevalence of Islamophobia and racism facing Muslims in Europe. (Doyle 2011; Howard 2012; Zempi 2019) The debate has

also been subjected to postcolonial critique. Proponents of this postcolonial perspective claim that the clash of civilization discourse for fueling into orientalist images of Muslims as retrogressive, uneducated, and traditional. Many of them view the discourse as a power mechanism that reproduces the marginalization of Muslims by framing “them” (Muslim minorities) as fundamentally different from “us” (the western non-Muslim majority). This type of “othering” is assumingly used to legitimize domination of the Muslim population by normalizing stereotypical images of Muslim women as either oppressed victims in need of a savior or as dangerous terrorists and Muslim men as patriarchal oppressors/terrorists. (Bilge 2010; Hasan 2012; Mohanty 2003; Gohir 2015)

Some researchers have raised concerns regarding what, from their perspective, appears to be a hidden agenda of the debate. Bilge (2010) argue that the debate’s exclusive focus on gender roles and patriarchal structures within Islam redirects attention from structural problem and forms of oppression facing minority groups in Western societies. Other scholars propose that the debate is a reflection of anti-Muslim sentiments in Europe. These scholars are criticizing the debate for reproducing islamophobia and fears of radical Islamism.(Amer 2014, p.111; Doyle 2011; Howard 2012; Ouis, Roald 2003; Zempi 2019)

Several scholars emphasize that the debate has gendered implications. Hasan (2012) and Gohir (2015) claim that the debate is an expression of “gendered islamophobia.” They suggest that the discussion continue to produce stereotypical images of veiled Muslim women as a monolithic group of passive victims. (Hasan 2012; Gohir 2015) A potential consequence of these types of negative images is that it puts veiled Muslim women at risk of having to face hatred, violence, and harassment in their everyday life. (Zempi 2019; Ouis, Roald 2003 p.191) Others have problematized that the voices of veiled Muslim women themselves have been largely dismissed throughout the debate. These scholars criticize the debate for being essentialist and for ignoring alternative experiences of Muslim veiling. The consequences of this are supposedly that a comprehensive understanding of the variety of potential motivations and understanding of Muslim veiling is being left out of the analysis. (Roald, Ouis 2003 p.206-210; Howard 2012; Amer 2014 p.109-110) This thesis attempts to counteract this type of essentialist representations of veiled Muslim women by making the voices of veiled Muslim women heard, and by acknowledging the multiple experiences and motivations of Muslim veiling. The next section will thus present research that looks at Muslim veiling from the perspective of veiled Muslim women themselves.

2.2 Veiled Muslim women about their veiling practices: motivations, meaning and experiences of Muslim veiling

Veiling is not a monolithic practice, and its meanings vary both at a local and cultural level, as well as at an individual level. Many have thus called for a more nuanced understanding of the practice of Muslim veiling. (Alghafli, Marks, Hatch, Rose; 2017; Amer 2014; Feder 2013; Shirazi, Mishra 2010; Ouis, Roald 2003; Siraj 2011) The section aims to enable a more nuanced and non-essentialist understanding of the multiple meanings and experiences, as well as motivations for, Muslim veiling.

Although the narratives of veiled Muslim women are mostly missing in the public debate, several researchers have shown efforts to understand the issue from the perspectives of veiled Muslim women. These studies are usually based on qualitative methodologies. These qualitative studies have focused on veiled Muslim women's personal views on the meaning of the veil, their motivations for using it, and their experiences on the veil's impact on their everyday life. Although most of the material consists of qualitative data, there is some quantitative data (usually collected through surveys) on the topic as well. (For example Westfall, Welbourne, Tobin, Russel 2016)

One important aspect of Muslim veiling applies to the fact that the practice of it is contextual and largely depends on the political, cultural, and social context in which it is adopted. (McCrea 2014; Ruby 2006; Siraj 2011) Amer (2014, p.59-62) makes a distinction between veiling in Muslim-majority societies and Muslim-minority societies in the global north. Amer emphasizes that the experiences and underlying motivations for taking up the practice of Muslim veiling will differ greatly in different contexts. (ibid) This section will thus only look at research on Muslim veiling in the global north in countries where Islam is a minority religion. A large piece of the material amounts to research on veiled Muslim women in North America⁶, but some of the material has been collected in a European context⁷.

The literature yields two main perspectives. The first perspective emphasizes the agency of the veiled Muslim women and frames veiled Muslim women as conscious actors who had chosen to put on the veil by themselves. The other perspective view veiled Muslim women

⁶ Four of the articles is based in a Canadian context and nine of them in a US-context.

⁷ Four articles apply to veiled Muslim women in the UK, two in the Netherlands, one in France and one in Sweden.

less as actors and rather emphasizes the structures that may have forced them/or, at least strongly impede their ability to resist, from having to veil themselves. A common theme in the material looked upon in this section is that it adopts an "insider perspective" by focusing on the actual experiences, meaning, and motivations of veiling among veiled Muslim women. The material usually depicts veiling as a choice, and veiled women are framed as active actors. Just a few of the articles adopt the "veil as oppression-narrative." (Cole, Ahmadi 2003; Siraj 2011) Some of the articles adopt an in-between option by framing veiling as a primarily voluntary practice, but also emphasizing that pressure by the parents and other relatives may have an impact on the decision as well. (Eid 2015; Ruby 2006)

Four main broad categories of incentives for adopting the veiling practice are highlighted in previous research: religiously motivated veiling, veiling as an expression of identity, veiling as a source of empowerment/resistance and, culturally motivated veiling. These categories will be closer presented in the following sections.

2.2.1 Religious motivated veiling

Research suggests that veiled Muslim women first and foremost tend to emphasize their religious motivations for veiling. The respondents often portray veiling as a religious obligation of Islam and emphasize that veiling is a sign of modesty and religious commitment. (Alghafli m.fl. 2017; Mansson McGinty 2014; Rahmath, Chambers, Wakewich 2016) Given the status prescribed to the concept of modesty within Islam, many veiled Muslim women describe veiling as a tool to become a "good Muslim" (Droogsma 2007; Hoekstra and Verkuyten 2015) Several researchers propose that the practice of Muslim veiling functions as a form of behavior check. The idea is that since the adoption of the veil makes Muslim women's faith/identity visible, it also turns veiled women into representatives for Islam and the Muslim community. This may pressure women to align their behaviors with their religious faith and keep them from engaging in "immoral activities" such as visiting pubs, strip clubs, or act promiscuous. (Droogsma 2007; Eid 2014.; Litchmore, Safdar 2016; Rahmath et.al. 2016; Ruby 2006)

2.2.2 Veiling as an expression of identity

Muslim veiling may also function as a form of identity construction. Many veiled Muslim women put pride in displaying their religious identity through veiling. (Furseth 2011; Litchmore, Safdar 2016; Mansson McGinty 2014; Ruby 2006) Furthermore, veiling may be

an expression of belonging and solidarity to the Muslim community. (Afshar 2008; McGuinty 2014;) A strong religious identity and close ties to the Muslim community may in some cases become a coping mechanism to manage experiences of marginalization, discrimination, and stigmatization following racist and Islamophobic sentiments of western societies. (Afshar 2008; Mansson McGinty 2014; Naderi, Vossoughi 2017)

Within the circle of Muslims that believes that veiling is a religious obligation, veiling is seen as a prestigious practice. Veiling may thus be adopted as a strategy to improve one's status within the Muslim community. (Droogsma 2007; Rahmath et al. 2016)

2.2.3 Veiling as a form of resistance

Some women report that they have taken up veiling as a form of resistance. Contrary to the image of veiled Muslim women circulating in the European debate, these women emphasize veiling as something liberating and empowering. In several studies, women emphasize that veiling has liberated them from western ideals of beauty. These women express that they feel liberated by not having to think about their appearance and clothing. (Al Wazni 2015; Alghafli m.fl. 2017; Droogsma 2007; Furseth 2011) Others emphasize that veiling is a form of resistance against the sexist structures assumed to permeate western societies. For these women, veiling becomes a strategy to avoid unwanted attention and sexual objectification. (Droogsma 2007; Eid 2014; Rahmath et.al 2016)

2.2.4 Veiling as a culturally motivated practice

One factor that received great attention among those researchers who view veiling as a result of structures rather than as a result of a free decision applies to the role of culture and cultural pressure. This perspective highlights that Muslim women may be pressured by family and friends to veil themselves. (Cole, Ahmadi 2003; Eid 2014; Ruby 2006; Siraj 2011) Eid (2014) found that although none of the respondents in his study reported that they had been forced to veil, some of them said that their decisions had been influenced by their family. This does however not mean, Eid emphasized, that veiling shall be reduced to a tradition forced upon Muslim women. Eid is critical against the type of narrative that depicts Muslims as solely motivated by cultural and religious traditions. This type of cultural essentialism does, according to Eid, create a false image of Muslims as incapable of engaging reflexively with cultural norms, whereas Western people are assumed to not be under such pressure. (ibid)

The abovementioned studies illustrate that Muslim veiling is a multifaceted practice, with varying meanings for different women. Reducing Muslim veiling to merely an oppressive activity may thus create a false image of the Muslim veiling practice. This may hinder a thorough understanding of the veil's multiple meanings and the variety of experiences of it. It is therefore important that veiled Muslim women are allowed to make their voices heard in both the political as well as the scholarly debate. The pieces of research outlined above illustrate successful attempts to include the narratives of veiled Muslim women in research. A large percentage of the material is however based on a North American context. In terms of the Swedish context, research regarding veiled Muslim women's motivations, experiences, and understandings of Muslim veiling are almost nonexistent. Given that previous research has found that veiling has contextual meaning, the material may be insufficient to fully understand the practice from a Swedish, or even European, context. More research that focuses on the narratives of veiled Muslim women in Sweden is thus well needed.

2.3 Veiled Muslim women's position/situation at the European labor market

The objection of the following segment is to, based on previous research, shed light on veiled Muslim women's position and situation in the European labor market. The initial section introduces previous research on Muslims position at the European labor market in general, and in the Swedish labor market specifically. This section has no specific gender focus but aims at illustrating some of the problems and issues facing the general Muslim population in the European and Swedish labor market. The section discusses key concepts from previous research, such as: the Muslim employment gap, human capital, and family structure theories, islamophobia, ethnic discrimination/ethnic penalties, religious discrimination/religious penalties, and the separation problem. The next section applies a gendered understanding by discussing research on Muslim female labor market participation. Extra focus is given to studies concerning veiled Muslim women. The section discusses key concepts such as gender ideology, human capital, headscarf penalty, and gendered islamophobia. The chapter is finalized by some concluding remarks regarding the state of research in terms of veiled Muslim women in the European labor market. These remarks will enable further discussions regarding potential gaps in previous research as well as an opportunity to declare recommendations for future research.

2.3.1 Muslims at the European labor market

Previous research suggests that Muslims struggle to establish themselves in the European labor market. An employment gap reflected in differences in levels of unemployment and wages between Muslims and non-Muslims has been identified in several countries, such as the UK⁸ and France⁹. Connor and Koenig (2013) claim that the Muslim employment gap is an issue that characterizes the EU's labor market as a whole. They based their statement on a study in which they, by analyzing employment data from the European Social Survey, found that Muslims were disadvantaged irrespective of their access to human capital (such as education, previous labor market experience and language sufficiency), migration status and values were economically disadvantaged in European labor markets. (ibid)

In several of the studies that have outlined the existence of an employment gap between Muslims and non-Muslims, these differences have persisted even after controlling for differences in education level, language skills and, number of years living within the country. Researchers have thus concluded that access to human capital is insufficient to explain the Muslim employment gap, suggesting that structural mechanisms (such as discrimination) account for some of the disadvantages facing Muslims in the labor market. (Connor, Koenig 2015; Heath, Martin 2013; Khattab, Johnston, Manley 2018; Khattab, Modood 2015)

The Muslim employment gap is a quite recently developed concept. The research was up until recently mainly occupied with studying the effect of ethnicity and race. The disadvantages of ethnic and racial minorities in the European labor market is however a well-researched phenomenon. Several research projects have observed an ethnic employment gap in countries such as the UK¹⁰, France¹¹, Norway¹², and Sweden¹³. This type of research, which mainly is based on quantitative comparisons of different ethnic groups labor market outcomes, have established that ethnic minorities are more likely to be unemployed, to have low-status jobs and to earn less money. These disadvantages seem to persist even after controlling for differences in socioeconomic factors and differences in human capital, leading the researchers

⁸ See for example; Blackaby et al. 2012; Heath, Martin 2013; Khattab, Johnston 2013; Khattab and Modood 2015; Lindley 2002; Longhi, Nicoletti, Platt 2013

⁹ See for example; Adida, Laitin, Valfort 2010; Karimi 2018

¹⁰ See for example; Berthoud 2000; Carmichael, Woods 2000

¹¹ See for example; Silberman, Alba, Fournier 2007

¹² See for example; Midtbøen 2014

¹³ See for example; Eriksson, Johansson, Langenskiöld 2017; le Grand, Szulkin 2002; Rooth, Carlsson 2007

to the conclusion that ethnic minorities are facing ethnic/racial penalties at the European labor market. (Berthoud 2000; Carmichael and Woods 2000; Heath, Cheung 2006; Silberman, Alba and Fournier 2006; Luthra 2013)

The impact and extent of ethnic discrimination have been measured in several field experiments. For example, Kaas and Manger (2012) examined discrimination in Germany's labor market by adopting a so-called correspondence testing technique. Kaas and Manger sent out job applications to 528 advertisements for student internships. The applications were identical except for one variable; in half of them, the applicant had a German-sounding name, in the other half, the applicant had a Turkish sounding name. The researchers concluded that a German name raised the average probability of a callback by 14%. Kaas and Manger interpreted the results as evidence of the prevalence of ethnic discrimination in the German labor market. (ibid) Midtbøen (2012) adopted a similar research design in their study on Pakistani immigrants' position at the Norwegian labor market. He found that applicants with Pakistani names were severely disadvantaged compared to equally qualified majority applicants. (Ibid) In the context of Sweden, Le Grand and Szulkin (2002) found evidence of discrimination of immigrants from "non-western countries" in Africa, Asia and, Latin America by analyzing Swedish labor market data from 1995. They concluded the labor market outcomes of ethnic minorities market is negatively affected due to mechanisms of ethnic discrimination. The potential impact of religion/religious discrimination was however left out of the analysis. The potential effect of religion was also ignored Carlsson and Rooth's (2007) study on how "middle eastern-sounding names" affected an applicant's probability of getting called for an interview. After conducting a correspondence testing experiment (in which they sent out identical applications, apart from the names of the applicant, to Swedish employers), they concluded that people with "middle eastern-sounding names" were 50% likely than people with "Swedish-sounding names" to be called for an interview. Although these studies provide some evidence of the impact of ethnic discrimination in the Swedish labor market, one may question their relevance for the situation of today. Also, both studies omit the effects of religion from the analysis, thereby potentially missing mechanisms of importance to explain the difficulties facing certain groups in the labor market.

There are, however, some more recent studies that have focused more in detail on the particular disadvantage facing Muslims in the Swedish labor market. Eriksson, Johansson, and Langenskiöld (2016) carried out a stated choice experiment in which employers were

asked to rate the employability of applicants that differed in regards to certain individual characteristics (such as ethnicity, religious beliefs and family situations) but with otherwise similar characteristics (i.e., similar education, previous experience, etc.). Through this experiment, they concluded that the employers were 29% less likely to hire a Muslim than a Christian applicant. (ibid) This may be perceived as an indication that Muslims potentially are particularly disadvantaged in the Swedish labor market. Stated choice experiments of this type do however have some methodological issues that potentially could make them insufficient for saying much about the actual situation facing Muslims in the labor market. The first point of criticism relates to how the experiment setting tends to differ from the real-life setting, which potentially could result in biased results and a lack of validity. In this case, the employers were aware that they participated in an experiment, and they were not going to actually hire someone. In a real situation, the employers have much more to lose if they hire the “wrong candidate” which potentially could make them less prone to take risks and more inclined to reject applicants that, due to stereotypes, are viewed negatively. It is also possible that the employers that participated in the experiment adjusted their answers in a way that would prevent them from appearing as racist or Islamophobic. This means that Eriksson, Johansson, and Langenskiöld’s study in actuality may be insufficient to give valid information about the true extent of the discrimination facing Muslims in the Swedish labor market.

Since the majority religion among many of the groups that appear to be disadvantaged due to ethnic/racial reasons is Islam, several researchers have pointed out that religious discrimination and islamophobia might be the actual underlying mechanism of the phenomenon. (Connor and Koenig 2015; Heath and Martin 2013; Khattab and Johnston 2013; Lindley 2002) The fact that religion and ethnicity often coincide makes it hard to distinguish between the effects of religion and ethnicity. This issue is sometimes called “the separation problem.” Several researchers have however tried to tackle the separation problem by comparing labor market outcomes among individuals with different religious faiths but with the same ethnical background, or among individuals from the same religious group but with different ethnicities. Some of these studies have found evidence that suggests that Muslims are being more disadvantage than the other religious groups with the same ethnicity. The common conclusion in these studies is that Muslims are being targeted by a specific “Muslim penalty” throughout the recruitment process. (Heath and Martin 2013; Khattab and Modood 2015; Lindley 2002; Longhi et al. 2013; Pierné 2013)

Several researchers emphasize that Muslims may be penalized differently based on their ethnicity. Race and ethnicity seem to affect the extent of the Muslim penalty, which indicates that it is an ethnoreligious penalty rather than just a religious penalty. (Connor and Koenig 2015; Khattab and Modood 2015; Longhi et al. 2013; Cheung 2014) These observations underline the need to look at the Muslim employment gap from an intersectional perspective that acknowledges that race, ethnicity, and religion affect Muslim's position in the labor market.

2.3.2 A gendered dimension of the Muslim employment gap

Much of the research on Muslim's position in the labor market focuses on either men or have not analyzed women and men separately. Consequently, potential gendered aspects are left out of the analysis. There are, however, some studies that look at the gendered dimension of the issue by focusing on Muslim women in the labor market explicitly. Much of this material focuses on the British¹⁴ labor market, but there are also a few examples from the French¹⁵, Dutch¹⁶, and the German¹⁷ labor market. Two categories of research emerge in the material: quantitative studies that explore issues related to Muslim women's labor market outcomes (economic activity, to what extent they obtain salariat jobs and their earnings from work), and qualitative studies that explores Muslim women's own experiences and views on their position in the labor market.

A major contribution of the quantitative studies is that they have helped to measure whether females are equally affected by the so-called Muslim employment gap that has been outlined in previous research. Several British studies have, based on large sets of quantitative data withdrawn from census data or labor force surveys, compared labor market outcomes of different ethnoreligious groups. These studies conclude that Muslim women tend to have a lower degree of labor market participation, higher unemployment, and earn less money than British non-Muslim women. (Khattab, Hussein 2017; Khattab, Miaari, Johnston 2019; Khattab, Modood 2015 Berthoud, Blekesaune) Studies with this type of research design have also been conducted in the Netherlands (Khoudja, Fleischmann 2015), France (Naseem, Adnan 2019), and Germany (Diehl, Koenig, Ruckdeschel 2009) with similar results. There

¹⁴ See for example: Berthoud, Blekesaune 2007; Dale, Ahmed 2011; Khattab, Hussein 2018; Khattab m.fl. 2018; Khattab, Modood 2015; Peach 2006; Tariq, Syed 2018

¹⁵ See for example: (Naseem, Adnan 2019; Rootham 2015)

¹⁶ See for example: Batum 2016; Khoudja, Fleischmann 2015

¹⁷ See for example: Diehl, Koenig, Ruckdeschel 2009

are also a few studies that have used data from cross-cultural surveys to identify patterns applicable on a more general European level. In one such study, Koopmans (2016) found large gaps between ethnic natives and Muslim ethnic minorities in six west European countries: Germany, France, the UK, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Switzerland. Abdelhadi and England (2019) came to the same conclusion when analyzing worldwide data from the World Values Survey. These studies indicate that the Muslim employment gap is evident among the female population as well.

In similarity with the general Muslim employment gap, the differences between Muslim and non-Muslim women seems to persist even after controlling for differences in human capital and household condition (marriage patterns and presence of children) Some evidence suggest that education, language proficiency and being born within the country (i.e., not being a first-generation migrant) could help mediate for some of the penalties but not remove them. Muslim women seem to be penalized irrespectable of their education, language proficiency, and whether they are born within the country. This observation has led several scholars to the conclusion that Muslim women's low degree of labor market participation is due to discrimination. (Khattab, Hussein 2017; Khattab, Miaari, Johnston 2019; Khattab, Modood 2015; Berthoud, Blekesaune 2007; Cheung 2011)

Others are more reluctant to attributing the female Muslim employment gap to structural discrimination, suggesting that sociocultural differences between Muslim and non-Muslim women explain the gap. One such argument is that Muslim women tend to hold less gender egalitarian values and more traditional gender norms than non-Muslim women. This may, supposedly, make Muslim women less prone to engage in paid work. Researchers who adopt this perspective tend to portray the gendered Muslim employment gap as a result of an assumed disinterest in participating in paid labor among many Muslim women, rather than the effect of discrimination. (Peach 2006; Dale, Ahmed 2011; Khoudja, Fleischmann 2015)

The gender ideology and cultural norm explanatory model for the employment gap has however received criticism. As Abdelhadi and England (2019) compared data from the World Values in 47 countries they found no evidence that supports the idea that gender ideology would be the underlying mechanism behind the female Muslim employment gap. They concluded that although Muslim women, in general, expressed slightly fewer egalitarian beliefs than other women, these values did not have a significant effect on the employment

among Muslim women. (ibid) Their research results indicate that the gender ideology and cultural value model is insufficient for explaining the Muslim employment gap among females and suggests that structural explanations provide a more accurate description regarding the issue.

There is some evidence suggesting that religious visibility affects Muslim's situation in the labor market. Several studies emphasize that employers seem to be less prone to hire people with names or attributes associated with Islam.(Adida et al. 2010; Eriksson et al. 2017; Khattab et.al 2018; Midtbøen 2014; Pierné 2013) This puts veiled Muslim women (as wearers of visible markers of their Muslim identity) at risk of facing discrimination throughout the recruitment process. Several studies are supporting this conclusion, by providing evidence which indicates that veiled Muslim women are extra likely to experience discrimination in the labor market. (Khattab et al. 2018; King and Ahmad 2010; Leckcivilize and Straub 2018; Weichselbaumer 2016) There are several studies that focus on the outline of the current European legal framework, which they criticize for fueling institutionalized discriminatory laws/rules. Karimi (2018) claims that veiled Muslim women in France are forced into entrepreneurship due to the increased usage of “neutrality policies”¹⁸ which enables employers to demand employees to remove religious symbols while working. Several scholars claim that the 2017 CJEU ruling will lead to discriminatory and excluding practices, and thereby aggravate Muslim women's vulnerability on the labor market(Adams, Adenitire 2018; Bell 2017; Howard 2012; McCrea 2014)

Abdelhadi and England (2019) found that British employers are under the influence of “the hijab effect” and thereby are less prone to hire veiled Muslim women than non-veiled women. Similar results were founded in a research project conducted in 2015 by the European network against racism. In the project, researchers found that veiled Muslim women in eight European countries (Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden,

¹⁸ . A neutrality policy is a policy that prohibits religious, political or philosophical symbols at work. In 2017 the CJEU ruled that these policies don't constitute direct discrimination, as “it addresses all manifestations of different beliefs indifferently” The ruling allows employers to, under certain conditions (for example in situations where it appears to be of a particular interest of the employer to preserve neutrality towards clients and customers, such as for works which involves direct contact with customers) adopt these policies as a mean to ensure neutrality at the workplace. (CJEU 2017, Achbita v G4S Secure Solutions)

and the UK) were subjected to a “headscarf penalty” making them multiple disadvantaged in the labor market. (Šeta 2016, p.17-20). The material varies in each national study, but generally includes secondary quantitative data from previous reports, plus interviews with Muslim women, representatives of governmental institutions as well as the police, equality bodies, and civil society organizations. The report does in other words, provide some qualitative material, and some insights into veiled Muslim women’s experiences in the labor market. Abdullahi (2016), who wrote the national report for Sweden in ENAR: s project claims that veiled Muslim women in Sweden continuously are having their agency and competence questioned by both potential employers, employers, and colleagues. The negative treatment of veiled Muslim women is, according to Abdullahi, founded on negative stereotypes of Muslim women as oppressed victims or as dangerous threats. (ibid)

2.4 Conclusions: the current state of research and identification of a research gap

Previous research illustrates a well-documented employment gap between Muslims and non-Muslims in the European labor market. It remains unclear whether Muslim disadvantages are caused by religious or ethnic penalties, but it seems like both factors affect the extent of Muslim’s disadvantages. Other factors, such as gender, religious visibility, access to human capital, and the number of years lived within the country, also affect Muslim’s position in the labor market. Research on Muslim’s position in the labor market must thus acknowledge the multiple dimensions at place and acknowledge that not all Muslims are equally disadvantaged. Adopting an intersectional perspective is thus fundamental to avoid descriptions that reduce all Muslims to a homogeneous mass of equally disadvantaged people.

Much of the research that has looked at Muslim’s position in the labor market emerges from a British context, whereas there is a general lack of material from other national contexts (including Sweden). One may however, since Muslims in many European countries (including Sweden) report feelings of being discriminated against in the labor market, suspect that the Muslim employment gap and the penalization of Muslims potentially are apparent on a more general European level. This is however an issue that needs to be further examined.

Much of previous research related to Muslim’s position in the labor market derives from a quantitative methodology, and many of them use statistical data on employment rates or

experimental designs to illuminate the gap between the analyzed components. The actual experiences of Muslim women are to a large extent excluded from the analysis. Those that do have an explicit focus on Muslim women have mostly used quantitative methods, and thus been unable to grasp the actual experiences and views of Muslim women themselves. A more qualitative focus and the usage of methods such as qualitative interviews or observations would thus probably be advantageous for the understanding of the phenomena. The lack of qualitative data is particularly evident in Sweden. As previously mentioned, Swedish studies have focused on ethnicity and to examine the extent of ethnic penalty through experimental studies. These studies have not only ignored the potential effects of religion and religious visibility, but they also ignore the lived experiences of the minorities that are being studied. Their experienced position and situation may potentially not match the measurable effect of having a visible Muslim identity. Previous Swedish studies are also ignoring the gendered effects of the issue. Knowledge regarding the specific situation facing veiled Muslim women in the Swedish labor market is thus largely missing. Looking at the discourses in the public debate and the stereotypes it reproduces (images of veiled Muslim women as oppressed victims or dangerous threats), this becomes problematic. By not challenging these stereotypes and letting veiled Muslim women take an active role in the research, these stereotypes remain unchallenged. More research that attempts to make the voices of veiled Muslim women heard is thus needed.

Abdullahi (2016) is one of the few who, based on a qualitative methodology, looks at Muslim women's actual experiences in the Swedish labor market. The study contributes with some insights into the experiences of discrimination in the workplace, but due to the study's explicit focus on experiences of discrimination, other potential experiences are being left out. Furthermore, only experiences from the actual workplace are discussed, whereas experiences related to the recruitment process are omitted from the analysis. The report does thus not provide a deeper understanding of how veiled Muslim women perceive their overall position and situation in the labor market.

3.Methodology

This chapter will explain the methodological considerations that have informed the thesis. The chapter also aims at presenting the data collection process in a transparent manner. The chapter commences with a brief outline of the epistemological and ontological presuppositions that have informed the format of the study. A second section focuses on the project's research design and elaborates on the methodology, the empirical material, data collection methods, and data analysis strategy that have been adopted. The third and final section brings up a few methodological and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research approach

The ontological position that has informed the research may be described as mind-world monist. This means that social reality is assumed to be a mind-dependent entity that is socially produced. (Jackson 2016, p.126-127) Furthermore, a reflexive constructivist epistemology has informed the project. This means that it is assumed that our knowledge about the social world at best can be an interpretation of reality, not an objective reflection of it. Moreover, humans are viewed as co-producers of the social reality, and subjective experiences are assumed to have constructive power over this reality. (Bourdieu 1998, p.12-13)

3.2 A qualitative methodology

The objective of this thesis is to measure the subjective experiences and perceptions of veiled Muslim women and Swedish employment agency officers. This type of research requires the collection of qualitative data and in-depth analysis rather than the general understanding provided by quantitative data. Qualitative data will not produce general laws or universal truths, but a contextual and in-depth understanding of a certain phenomenon. (Della Porta, Keating 2008, p.26-27) Given the thesis focus on subjective factors, the qualitative methodology was considered to be best suited for the project.

3.2.1 Data collection method

The empirical material was collected through qualitative interviews. This method is suitable for collecting data on complex issues related to opinions, personal views, and experiences of the interviewees. (Denscombe 2016, p.265) Two sets of data were collected: qualitative

interviewees with veiled Muslim women, and qualitative interviews with Swedish employment agency officers.

A semi-structured interview technique was adopted throughout the interviews. Semi-structured interviews encourage the interviewees to speak freely and elaborate on their ideas and reasoning. Therefore, they tend to produce more in-depth and reflective answers compared to a more structured interview style. (Denscombe 2014, p.266)

3.2.2 Interviews with veiled Muslim women

Following themes were included in the interview guide that was prepared before the data collection was initiated¹⁹ : Their decision to veil, experiences from recruitment processes/applying for work, experiences in terms of treatment and cooperation with colleagues and managers, experiences in terms of treatment of customers/clients, general experiences of discrimination and islamophobia, and their views on/ potential experiences of so-called neutrality policies. An introductory theme with questions regarding personal characteristics was also included.

The interviewees were sampled from two of the biggest Facebook groups for Muslims in Sweden. The administrators of each group were initially contacted to retrieve permission to recruit interviewees from these groups. Both groups agreed to publish a post with some information about the project on their Facebook page. Seven women expressed interest in participating. Four of these met the selection criteria (being a Muslim woman, being economically active²⁰, being aged between 20-64 years old, and wearing some kind of Muslim veil/headscarf). Two other respondents were recruited through a so-called snowball sampling method, by which new interviewees were recruited among the acquaintances of already recruited interviewees.

An information and consent letter was sent to all six women to ensure that all interviewees were given enough information to be able to provide informed consent for participation. All of the women that had expressed their interest in participating agreed to participate. The interviews were conducted via telephone. Each interview took 40-70 minutes to conduct, and

¹⁹ For a more thorough description of the interview guide, see appendix 1.

²⁰ Being economically active was in this essay defined as being either employed or registered as unemployed and looking for work.

the women were allowed to speak freely based on the themes that were introduced during the interview. The interviews were recorded to enable transcription of the interview material. The interviews were conducted in Swedish, and the quotes presented in the analysis have thus been translated into English.

3.2.3 Interviews with Swedish employment agency officers

A semi-structured interview guide with following general themes was initially prepared; Their view on Muslim veiling's potential impact on women's employability, neutrality policies, and their perception of veiled Muslim women's general position. An introductory theme with questions regarding personal characteristics was also included²¹. Five Swedish employment officers were sampled from offices located in three different Swedish cities. The interviews were recruited through a so-called snowball sampling method, by which new interviewees were recruited among the acquaintances of already recruited interviewees. An information and consent letter was sent to each interviewee before the interview was conducted, to ensure that all interviewees were given enough information to be able to provide informed consent for participation. Telephone interviews were conducted with all of the interviewees that had agreed upon participating. Each interview took between 35-60 min, and the interviewees were allowed to speak freely based on the themes that were introduced to them throughout the interview. The interviews were recorded to enable transcription of the interview material. The interviews were conducted in Swedish, and the quotes presented in the analysis have thus been translated into English.

3.3 Data analysis strategy

The interview transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis. The analysis of the data was initiated by a synoptic review of the material. The aim at this stage was to become familiarized with the material and to gain a general idea of the content. Thereafter the material was read more closely, and contrasting and reoccurring segments in the material were marked as themes. Twenty-five themes were identified in the interviews with the Swedish employment agency officers, whereas 33 themes were found in the interviews with the veiled Muslim women. The emerging themes were thereafter conglomerated into wider thematic categories aimed at capturing central ideas, perspectives, and concepts within the material. At this stage, the themes found in the interviews with Swedish employment agency officers were

²¹ For a more thorough description of the interview guide, see appendix 1.

organized into four thematic categories: Veiled Muslim women's position and situation at the Swedish labor market from a non-structural perspective (individual-based explanation), veiled Muslim women's position and situation at the Swedish labor market from a structural perspective, disadvantaging preferences among employers from an uncritical point of view, and disadvantaging preferences among employers from a critical point of view. The themes found in the interviews with the veiled Muslim women was organized under following five thematic categories: meanings of the veil, experiences of negative treatment by strangers in everyday life, reported VS no reported experiences of discrimination in the recruitment process, experiences of negative treatment at work, and Veiled Muslim women perceived as an overall disadvantaged group VS veiled Muslim women not perceived as an overall disadvantaged group.

The analysis process was carefully documented to ensure the transparency of the process. For a more detailed description of the process and the themes identified in the material, see appendix 2 plus appendix 3.

3.5 Methodological and ethical considerations

This section aims at discussing some methodological limitations and ethical issues related to the project, as well as elaborating on how these were tackled.

3.5.1 Trustworthiness of the produced knowledge

The knowledge produced in qualitative research requires the researcher to take an active role in interpreting and making sense of the results. Qualitative research is thus sometimes criticized for being too subjective, too difficult to replicate, and for lacking in terms of generalization. (Bryman 2016 p.398-399) Due to the reflexive constructivist epistemology that has informed the study, it must be acknowledged that the results will be colored by the researcher's "point of view." The researcher must be transparent concerning how their personal experiences, perspectives, and theoretical considerations may have impacted on the results. (Bourdieu 1998, p.13) The following segment will thus discuss how the perspective and identity of the researcher may have impacted on the results, and present the measures taken to limit the risk of biases.

The quality of qualitative data is measured in relation to how trustworthy the data is and whether it has been collected in a reliable way. (Bryman 2016 p.385; Denscombe 2014, p.411) In terms of trustworthiness, a central issue at hand in this particular study is whether the researcher, as an unveiled and non-religious woman, will be able to present veiled Muslim women and their experiences in an accurate and unbiased way. To alleviate the risk of biased and invalid representations, a method of respondent-validation was used. The interviewees were thus, in cases of ambiguity, contacted for feedback on the interpretations in the text to ensure its accuracy. This method may, according to Bryman (2016 p.353), reduce the risk for invalid and biased interpretations of the interview material. Moreover, in each interview, the interviewer asked attendant questions when needed for the sake of clarification.

Denscombe (2014, p.412) propose that qualitative research need to adopt a high degree of transparency throughout the presentation of the research. The decisions and interpretations that have informed the research need to be documented and presented clearly so that others can judge whether the results are trustworthy. (Denscombe 2014, p.412) Detailed descriptions of the research process are thus presented in this thesis to ensure the research's transparency and thereby increase its trustworthiness. Transparent documentation of the research process may also help others to determine whether the material has been collected in a reliable and unbiased manner. (Bryman 2016, p.384; Denscombe 2014, p.413)

Precautions must be taken with the language used in the interviews since leading questions can cause biased results. The researcher must also be careful in wording the questions in a way that makes the interviewees sort out information that they assume are of no relevance. (Bryman 2016, p.384-385) To limit the risk of asking leading questions, the research guides followed in this study were based on open-ended questions. These questions were worded carefully, to limit the risk of biased results. For example, potentially leading words such as "discrimination" were avoided and replaced by more general wording such as: "how would you describe the situation facing veiled Muslim women in the labor market?". This reduced the risk of affecting the interviewee's answers or making them sort out experiences not matching their perception of discrimination.

3.5.2 Methodological limitations

The research design has some methodological limitations worth taking into consideration. The first of these limitations relate to the sampling strategy that was adopted to recruit veiled Muslim women. Sampling interviewees from social media platforms (in this case, Facebook)

may result in a biased sample, as the members in these groups not necessarily reflect the broader research population. The veiled Muslim women that were interviewed in this study hold quite similar characteristics; they are quite young, well-educated, and have lived in Sweden for most of their lives. The lack of differentiation among the interviewees could potentially be a result of a homogeneous composition of the group members in the Facebook-groups used to recruit the interviewees. Using only these groups to sample interviewees would in that case disqualify certain groups, such as older people who possibly do not use Facebook, people who arrived in Sweden more recently, and so on. Other sampling strategies were considered to ensure a broader representation, such as contacting mosques and Muslim women organizations. Much of these organizations' activities have however stopped or become limited due to the ongoing situation with COVID19. These attempts did thus not result in the recruitment of more interviewees. It would have been beneficial if not only well-educated and employed but also low-educated and unemployed veiled Muslim women would have participated since they may encounter other difficulties in the labor market.

Moreover, although this study attempted to gain an overall picture of veiled Muslim women's position and situation at the Swedish labor market in general, the sample ended up becoming unrepresentative for the whole Swedish labor market. All interviewed veiled Muslim women come from a particular area of Sweden, and their experiences may potentially not match those of veiled Muslim women in other parts of the country. To avoid the risk of biased and non-representative results implementing a specific geographical focus was considered (including the interviews with the Swedish employment agency officers). This was however not perceived as an option due to both anonymity reasons and the difficulties in sampling enough interviewees within one specific city. The lack of geographical focus was thus believed to be justified since it was the only way to ensure that empirical data could be collected.

Furthermore, although the study intended to contribute with an understanding of veiled Muslim women's general position and situation at the labor market, only veiled Muslim women within the health care industry ended up participating in the study. Their experiences may potentially reflect the specific logic of the health care field and may perhaps not be applicable to the Swedish labor market as a whole. Although many of the interviewees included previous experiences from other sectors, a greater variation among the occupational categories that were represented among the interviewees would have been desirable.

Another point of criticism relates to the way the interviews were conducted. All of the interviews were conducted by phone. Although phone interviews are convenient, they put the interviewee at risk of missing the visual signals, and body language often provides additional information. Conducting the interviews via phone also makes it hard to establish a natural conversation setting, to establish rapport between interviewer and interviewee and to provide support naturally at times when the interviewee gets upset. To travel to the interviewees was, however, due to the ongoing situation with COVID19, not considered to be an option.

3.5.3 Ethical considerations

In their guidelines for humanistic and social science research, The Swedish research council (2002) emphasizes that the researcher must weigh the need for knowledge in regard to the research problem at hand, to the potential risks the study may cause for the participants. The council states that the need for knowledge weighs heavily in research regarding “the mechanisms behind human and social suffering” and argues that it would be “uppermost unethical” to refrain from such research. (The Swedish research council 2002, p.5) This project had the potential to shed light on important societal problems and potential marginalizing structures, and the need for the knowledge aimed at by it was thus considered to be high. Such research is, according to The Swedish research council, ethically justified if enough precautions are taken regarding the safety of the interviewees and the research population.

The Swedish research council (2002) sets out four core principles that need to be fulfilled to limit the risk of harming the interviewees or the research population. Firstly, the interviewees must be informed about the conditions for their participation and their right to disrupt their participation at any time. Secondly, the researcher shall make sure to obtain informed consent of the participants before collecting the empirical material. An information letter were thus sent to the interviewees beforehand, together with a written consent form. The interviews were conducted by phone, which complicated the process of retrieving written consent. Consent was thus collected verbally by reading up the consent letter and asking the interviewees whether they consented to participate before starting the interviews.

The third ethical principle mentioned by the Swedish research council relates to confidentiality and the need to preserve the anonymity of the interviewees (ibid). The names of all interviewees were thus pseudonymized, and details that would make the interviewees

identifiable were removed. The final principle that the research council sets out is that the collected material cannot be used for commercial or other unscientific purposes (ibid). The material collected through this study will only be used for the purpose of this thesis.

The main ethical concern in this project was the chance of putting the interviewees at risk of facing reprimands due to their participation. This risk was particularly evident in relation to the Swedish employment agency officers. The participants may be worried to express themselves in a way that will make them personally, or their workplace, appear as discriminatory or Islamophobic. To ensure the confidentiality of the participants, and thereby limit the risk of harming individual employment agency officers or offices, the cities where the agency officers were located was removed. However, some ethical issues remained despite these precautions. Firstly, the critical interpretation of the interviews with employment agency officers may be a cause of dissatisfaction among the interviewees. The particular focus on the reproducing effect of their representations was not intended at first but emerged inductively throughout the research process. However, the interviewees were informed that the theme for the interviews was their personal views and experiences regarding veiled Muslim women's employability and that it would be used as material for a master's thesis beforehand. The description sent to them matches how the material was used, and they were thus not misleading in any way. Furthermore, as mentioned before, precautions were to ensure the anonymity of the interviewees, and it was thus deemed to be safe enough to implement critical interpretations into the material.

Moreover, using social media (Facebook) for the recruitment of veiled Muslim women caused some ethical issues in terms of privacy and confidentiality of the interviewees. To ensure the privacy of the interviewees, only closed Facebook groups were used. Only groups which gave me admission to join the group as a researcher with a specific aim to recruit interviewees for a master's thesis were used. A method of passive recruitment (a post at the Facebook page where people were asked to send a private message if they were interested in participating) rather than a method of active recruitment (for example contacting specific members of the group directly) was used to limit the risk of interviewees feeling targeted and uncomfortable. Only Facebook-groups with a considerable number of members were chosen to limit the risk of identification of the interviewees by other members in the group. The women's domicile is not mentioned due to anonymity reasons. Their answers were also anonymized by using pseudonyms and by removing details that would make them identifiable. Due to the data

protection measures taken plus the fact that Facebook recruitment was the only option left since all other recruitment options (contacting Muslim women organizations and Mosques) had been unsuccessful due to the situation with COVID-19, it was considered to be ethically justified to use Facebook for interviewee recruitment.

4.Theoretical framework

Much of the research outlined in the chapter of “previous research” indicates that Muslims in general, and veiled Muslim women in specific, are facing structural disadvantages in several European labor markets. These results underline the need for incorporating structural mechanisms into the discussion on veiled Muslim women’s position and situation in the labor market. Bourdieu’s theoretical framework was deemed to be suitable for the thesis, due to its capability of shedding light on structural mechanisms that manifest through the interviewee’s representations. Hence, Bourdieu’s concept of field, habitus, and capital will be used as analytical tools to illuminate the objective structures that manifest through the interviewee’s representations. These insights lay the foundation for a discussion on how veiled Muslim women are affected by the potential dominating and marginalizing structures of the labor market. The concepts of symbolic power and symbolic violence will be used to scrutinize how the representations of the interviewees facilitate or counteract the structures outlined in the material, thereby highlighting the [re]productive power of their representations. Furthermore, to add a socio-legal dimension to the analysis, the concept of symbolic violence will be put in relation to the discrimination law. This part of the analysis aims to critically examine the architecture of the law, to bring out the law’s potential latent functions in regard to veiled Muslim women’s position and situation in the Swedish labor market. At this stage, the concept of legal violence is used to highlight the symbolic violence that potentially is enforced by justifications for differential treatment that are prescribed by the law. A more detailed description of the theoretical framework and the function of each theoretical concept will be presented in the remaining sections of this chapter. The chapter is finalized by a discussion on the socio-legal implications of the constructed theoretical framework.

4.1 The foundations of Bourdieu’s theoretical approach

The field of social sciences is, according to Bourdieu, divided by two opposing modes of theoretical knowledge; the phenomenological/subjectivist and the objectivist mode of

knowledge. (Bourdieu 1973; 1987; 1989) Subjectivists claim that objectivist researchers ignore that social reality will have a specific meaning for different individuals who act within it, including the researcher him/herself. They emphasize that researchers bring with them common-sense assumptions and previous knowledge into the field. This will affect the object they choose to study, how they classify their observations and, how they interpret the results. Not acknowledging their subjective influence over the results may thus, according to subjectivists, put researchers at risk of incorporating common-sense assumptions into their research in an unreflective way, and thereby turn their research into “constructs of constructs.” (Bourdieu 1989, p.15) On the other hand, objectivists criticize subjectivists for reducing the social world to the representations that agents have of it, turning social science into merely producing “account of accounts.” (Bourdieu 1989, p.15)

Bourdieu claims that the dichotomy between these modes of knowledge is founded on false premises. According to Bourdieu, there is a dialectical relationship between objective structures and subjective experiences. The objective structures are assumingly incorporated and internalized by social agents, but also reproduced and constructed by these agents. Subjective presentations of the world are thus not only a valuable resource for understanding the structures that conditionalize these perceptions, but they also provide key insights on how these structures are socially retained and reproduced. Bourdieu is thus proposing an alternative mode of knowledge, praxeological knowledge, aimed at bridging the gap between social agents' subjective knowledge, and those objective structures that permeate their experiences. The praxeological mode of knowledge uses subjective representations of the world as a tool to measure the objective structures that permeates these representations. The idea is that the researcher, through the search of collective representations among the social subjects of a particular field, will be able to illuminate classes of positions (informed/shaped by the prevailing objective structures) and dispositions (social habitus) within a particular field. These insights lay the foundation for structural analyses of how social positions and dispositions are maintained and produced within the field. (Bourdieu 1989; Bourdieu 1987, Bourdieu 1973)

Adopting Bourdieu's theoretical framework means breaking with the schism between objectivism and subjectivism. This enables the researcher to incorporate subjective experiences as a valuable resource, at the same time as the influence of structural mechanism

are acknowledged. This also allows the researcher to put their empirical observations into a broader, structural perspective. (Bourdieu 1989; 1987, 1973)

4.2 Field

Bourdieu views the social world as a multidimensional social field, with smaller subfields within it. A social field is a social setting occupied by a specific group of social agents and institutions competing for the resources that are valued and lead to recognition within the field. (Broady 1991, p.270) Social actor's success in the competition for recognition will be determined by their ability to play by the specific norms and rules of the field. (ibid)

Broady (1991, p.271) suggests that a social field, in short, may be described as a “system of relations between different positions.” In this thesis, the Swedish labor market will be viewed as a broad field in which job applicants compete to be recognized as employable, qualified, and competent. The purpose of adopting the field concept as an analytical tool in this thesis is dual. First, it lays the foundation for an understanding of both the normative structures that affect the interviewee's perceptions of veiled Muslim women's position and situation in the field, as well as it enables a discussion on the structural implications of these perceptions. Second, it helps to uncover structures and power dimensions embedded into the labor market, which opens up for a discussion on these structures' potential implications for veiled Muslim women's situation and position at the Swedish labor market. However, neither of these purposes will be fulfilled without bringing the concepts of habitus and symbolic capital into the analysis.

4.3 Symbolic capital

The position occupied by a social agent within the field is determined by their access to capital. Bourdieu defines capital as “accumulated labor” that may be either materialistic (access to money or other material resources or incorporated/embodyed capital) All social agents and institutions of a field compete for the reproduction of capital, as the generation of capital helps strengthen or conserve one’s social position within the field. (Bourdieu 1986, p.15) Bourdieu distinguishes between three main categories of capital; economic, cultural, and social capital. Economic capital consists of money and financial resources. Cultural capital may either take the form of embodied cultural capital (long-lasting dispositions

incorporated into the habitus²² of the social agent, such as accent, dress, taste, posture) objectified cultural capital (access to cultural goods) or institutional cultural capital (educational qualifications, certificates and similar). Social capital consists of social networks, relationships, and membership in social groups. Both social and cultural capital can, under certain circumstances, be converted to economic capital. (Bourdieu 1986 p.16-17)

Different fields value capital differently, and not all forms of capital have equal value within all fields. Bourdieu uses the concept of symbolic capital to highlight the relative value of capital. Symbolic capital are capitals that has a legitimate value within the field. They may either be social, cultural, or economic in nature. Access to symbolic capital leads to recognition, and social agents can, through the accumulation of symbolic capital, improve their position within the field. (Bourdieu 1986, p.27) Each field is thus characterized by a continuous struggle between different agents and groups, in which each of them attempts to preserve or increase the value of their capital. The struggle for symbolic capital is reflected in a variety of conscious and unconscious strategies by which agents try to increase the value of their capital. These strategies include both attempts to convert one capital into one with symbolic value within the field (for example through converting educational capital into economic capital) and strategies of reproduction (attempts to reproduce and increase forms of capitals they already possess (for example by marrying someone from a certain social class). (Broady 1991, p.181-182)

Bourdieu proposes that cultural capital is predisposed as a symbolic capital” in all the markets in which economic capital is not fully recognized.” (Bourdieu 1986, p.18) Bourdieu derives the exceptional position of cultural capital (i.e., its symbolic status) to the fact that its social conditions of transmission are more disguised than those of economic capital. Cultural capital is thus not recognized as capital, but as “legitimate competence.” (ibid) This study will thus focus on the impact of cultural capital in relation to veiled Muslim women’s position in the labor market. The capital concept will, in this thesis, be adopted as a means to highlight the forms of resources that may be mobilized by veiled Muslim women to improve their labor market outcomes. The idea is that these insights will enable an intersectional understanding of the structural factors that affect veiled Muslim women’s position in the labor market, at the same time as the differences between the women (depending on their access to capital) will be

²² A more comprehensive conceptualization of Habitus is presented under the subsection marked “Habitus”

accounted for. This will hopefully help to limit the risk of reducing veiled Muslim women to a homogeneous group.

4.4 Habitus

The concept of Habitus may be utilized to describe how the objective structures are internalized by agents but also to highlight how these structures, under certain conditions, may be challenged and transformed. (Broady 1991, p.228) Bourdieu defines habitus as “a subjective but not individual system of internalized structures, schemes of perception, conception and action common to all members of the same group or class” (Bourdieu 1990, p.108) Habitus may thus be viewed as a system of social dispositions that affects how agents perceive, act and resonate within the social world. Habitus imposes a common worldview within a group or class. This worldview prescribes legitimate modes of values, ways of acting, and representations of the world within the field. This worldview will become incorporated and embodied by individual agents, leading to homogeneous views and practices among members of a specific group or class (ibid) Bourdieu emphasizes that habitus is producing both “a system of schemes of production of practices and a system of perception and appreciation of practice.” (Bourdieu 1989, p.19) The concept of habitus will thus be adopted as an analytical tool to organize the interviewee’s representations of the social world that emerges in the empirical material. The patterns that emerge in these different types of representations will then be analyzed to illuminate the objective structures that permeate the labor market.

Furthermore, habitus is also a set of cultural dispositions that may or may not (depending on prevailing norms and rules of the specific field) be a form of capital itself, an embodied capital. (Bourdieu, 1998, p 25) Bourdieu describes habitus as a “feel for the game,” a practical sense of what to be done in a given situation. The idea is that agents, by incorporating this “feel for the game” into their habitus, learn to organize their way of acting in line with the rules prescribed by the field. (Bourdieu, 1998, p 25) When moving from one field to another field, agents bring this practical sense with them (internalized into their habitus). The practical sense that they bring with them may however not match the logic prescribed by the new field. Each field has its own Doxa (i.e., a set of fundamental, unquestioned common-sense beliefs within the field), which prescribes a set of unwritten “rules of the game.” The Doxa sets boundaries concerning the recognition of symbolic capital, by imposing common-sense assumptions about what is to be considered desirable, normal, and valuable. Success

within the new field requires some degree of correspondence between the individual's habitus and the norms imposed by the Doxa. Correspondence between habitus and the Doxa of the field enables the agents to convert their embodied capital (habitus) to symbolic capitals, and to reproduce new capitals. Social agents' ability to convert and reproduce capital will however be limited in those cases where their habitus clashes with the Doxa of the field, thereby affecting their position within the field negatively. (Grenfell 2012 p.57-60) The concept of Habitus will thus also be adopted to analyze how veiled Muslim women's habitus affect their position within the field of the labor market.

4.3 Symbolic power and symbolic violence

Bourdieu emphasizes that different agents and groups will perceive and experience the social world differently. Their perceptions will be structured both by their embodied habitus (and the specific worldview imposed by this habitus), as well as their position (and in line with the interests associated with it) within the field. Bourdieu views perceptions and representations of the social world as a result of processes of "double structuring" (Bourdieu 1989, p.20). These processes of double structuring results in a plurality of visions of the world. The plurality of visions of the world fuel symbolic struggles by which different agents fight for the authority to impose their particular view as the "legitimate vision of the world." (ibid) Those who have been granted sufficient recognition within the field (by being recognized as holders of symbolic capital) are also holders of symbolic power, i.e., has the power to impose their world view as the legitimate one. Bourdieu (1989, p.22) describes symbolic power as a "power of world-making." This "power is allegedly exercised through the production of social classification (of the worlds and agents/groups within it) that help "organize the perception of the social world and, under certain conditions, can really organize the world itself." (ibid)

Symbolic power may be either transformative or preservative, depending on how it relates to dominating representations and Doxa within the field. When it is exercised through representations that are coherent with current dominating classifications, it makes existing classes appear as self-evident and natural. The symbolic power will, in these cases, reproduce prevailing structures by making them appear natural and legitimate. Symbolic power may, however (when exercised through representations that question the naturalness in prevailing classifications) also be transformative. (Bourdieu 1989, p.20-23) Access to symbolic capital enables eminent persons with great access to symbolic capital to impose views that naturalize

economic, political, and social structures that work in favor of their position. By naturalizing the power relations and social stratifications embedded in their vision of the world, they also naturalize those social inequalities embedded in it. The social inequalities produced by these structures are thereby concealed, and social stratifications are misrecognized as fair and legitimate. These representations will, if they are accepted as natural and legitimate by other agents, become internalized into their individual world views, even by those who are suffering from the marginalization due to these structures. This results in what Bourdieu calls symbolic violence, i.e., “a gentle violence imperceptible and invisible even to its victims exerted for the most part through the purely symbolic channels of communication and cognition “ (Bourdieu 2001, p.2) The violence exerted through these representations will not be perceived as violence, since it has become naturalized. As the violence becomes internalized by agents, these become coproducers of marginalized structures and thereby conduce the marginalized positions attached to it. (ibid)

The concepts of symbolic power and symbolic violence will in this thesis be used as means to illuminate the reproductive or challenging power of the interviewee's representations of veiled Muslim women's position and situation in the Swedish labor market. This part of the analysis aims at illuminating the potential structural implications of the interviewee's perceptions. The concept of symbolic violence will also be used to highlight the potential structural effects of the architecture of the Swedish discrimination act, focusing in specific on the effects of the justifications for differential treatment inscribed into the act.

4.4 Socio-legal implications of the Bourdieusan theoretical framework

Rather than treating the law as a sealed system, socio-legal scholars view the law as “an empirical entity which mediates between facts and norms, giving rise to juridical experiences of different communities and groups of people.” (Banakar 2019, p.3) The socio-legal perspective is thereby acknowledging that the law is a social product with societal and structural effects. The perspective is compatible with Bourdieu's conceptualization of the role of the law. Bourdieu views the juridical field as a field, in which agents compete for “monopoly of the right to determine the law” (Bourdieu 1987, p.817). Bourdieu emphasizes that the law has strong ideological effects, as it is framed as neutral and impartial which makes the vision of the world that is imposed by it appear as particular legitimate. The law is

reproductive in the sense that it imposes a specific view and set of norms onto society as a whole, making them universal. The law will, however, like any representation of the world, be structured by the position and habitus of those with enough symbolic power to have a say in the construction of it. The law is thus likely to contain elements that reproduce structures that are favorable for the dominant social agents of the field, thereby preserving and producing the inequalities that come with it. (Bourdieu 1987)

Many socio-legal scholars with critical inquires have used Bourdieu's critical perspective to pinpoint the structural and ideological effects of the law. For example, the concept of legal violence has been used to highlight the specific form of symbolic violence exerted by the law. Menjvar and Abrego (2012) conceptualize legal violence as “the normalized but cumulatively injurious effects of laws that can result in various forms of violence” (Menjvar, Abrego 2012, p.1380). The researchers utilized the concept to analyze how central American migrants in the U.S. are affected by the implementation of the country's immigration laws. By using the concept, they managed to shed light on the dominating and marginalizing effects facing central American migrants in the U.S. due to the law's criminalization of immigration. (Menjvar, Abrego 2012) This thesis has been inspired by Menjvar and Abrego's study in the sense that it aims at using Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence to illuminate the structural facets of the law. The concept of legal violence will thus be used to analyze the justifications for differential treatment inscribed into the Swedish discrimination act as a potential form of symbolic violence.

As outlined in the introduction of this thesis, research on EU's legislation on discrimination in the labor market suggests that justifications for differential treatment creates legal uncertainty and thereby potentially are ineffective for counteracting discrimination in the labor market. Research on the implications of such justifications in the Swedish discrimination act is however missing. Also, overall, research on the effect of such justifications for veiled Muslim women in specific is missing. Due to previous research, which indicates that veiled Muslim women may be particularly disadvantaged and discriminated in the labor market, particular attention needs to be directed to how justifications for differential treatment effect these women in specific. Hence, using Bourdieu's theoretical framework for this type of socio-legal research may contribute to both the general legal debate on the implications of justifications for differential treatment for veiled Muslim women in the labor market, as well as it may

bring insights concerning the normative structures that dictates the conditions facing veiled Muslim women in the Swedish labor market.

5. Empirical findings

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results of the analysis of the two sets of data. The presentation of each data set is precluded by a short presentation of the interviewees, to contextualize the results. Each data set is thereafter presented, based on the themes and the thematic categories that were identified in the thematic analysis.

5.1 Interviews with Swedish employment agency officers

The five interviewed Swedish employment agency officers were based in three different offices, located in three different cities in Sweden. The interviewees were aged between 33-47, and all except one (Mergim) were females. All but one of them (Karin) had post-secondary education. Karin, Marie, and Greta are ethnic Swedes. Mergim has a middle eastern background, and Esmaralda has southern European origin. Esmaralda is Muslim and wears a veil.

All interviewees emphasize that (some) veiled Muslim women face specific difficulties in the labor market, but the explanatory model adopted to make sense of these difficulties varied between different interviewees. Two conflicting perspectives appeared in the material; one that derived the difficulties facing veiled Muslim women to individual characteristics (lack of language proficiency, internalized traditional gender roles, lack of education and previous work experiences), and one that emphasized structural rather than individual factors.

5.1.1 A non-structural perspective on veiled Muslim women's position and situation in the Swedish labor market

Karin and Marie focused on individual characteristics throughout their representations of the position of veiled Muslim women. Both explained that from what they know, employers attach no importance to whether a job applicant or employee wears a veil or not. Karin stated that "*it is their qualifications that matter, not the way they dress.*" Marie explained that "*much is up to each individual, how committed they are.*" Both Karin and Marie emphasized that

Muslim veiling is so commonly occurring that it has become normalized, allegedly increasing the acceptance towards veiled Muslim women at Swedish workplaces. Karin expressed that she had encountered situations in which women had expressed frustration over perceived disadvantages or discrimination. These experiences were, however, from her interpretation, most likely a result of miscommunication rather than actual disadvantages.” She stated that;” *I think that it is up to both the employee and the employer to ensure that they communicate about these things.*”

Another interviewee, Greta, partly acknowledged that veiled Muslim women might be targeted by disadvantages in the labor market. However, since she attributed these disadvantages to individual employers rather than structural mechanism, she was classified as a proponent of the non-structural perspective. Greta depicted the disadvantages as a result of a two-sided issue; “*if you wear a veil, you may not think you get a job, and employers may have experienced some doubts about hiring veiled women.*”

Despite rejecting that the veil itself has any effect on women’s employability, both Karin, Marie, and Greta proposed that certain groups of veiled Muslim women may experience difficulties in the Swedish labor market. All of them referred to first-generation migrant women in specific. They claimed that these women to some extent might experience difficulties in the Swedish labor market, not because of discrimination but because of their cultural background, plus lack of education and previous working experiences. They proposed that these women often were influenced by traditional gender roles, which assumingly, affected the types of jobs and hours they were willing to work in. All of them stressed education, experience, commitment, motivation, language sufficiency, and cultural factors (gender-egalitarian norms) as factors of importance for veiled Muslim women’s situation.

5.1.2 A structural perspective on veiled Muslim women’s position and situation in the Swedish labor market

Mergim and Esmaralda believed that the veil potentially harms women’s employability. They proposed that societal stereotypes and prejudices reinforces a negative image of veiled Muslim women and thus potentially reduce employers’ willingness to hire these women. Both accentuated that the attitudes towards veiled Muslim women differ depending on the specific context and that veiled Muslim women’s experiences thus most likely differ within different sectors and geographical areas. Mergim and Esmaralda stated that many of these prejudices

might be hard to distinguish, due to how widespread and socially accepted they are. Mergim claimed that he thought that many of his colleagues had internalized the stereotypes about veiled Muslim women, thus making them less behold of the prejudices among employers. Cultural diversity within the organization is thus, according to him, a must as people with other ethnic backgrounds brings with them *“an understanding, from their experiences of being subjected to prejudices.”* Mergim proposed that this understanding enabled him and others with other ethnic backgrounds to discover signs of prejudices and disadvantages that ethnic Swedish colleagues would miss.

Both Mergim and Esmaralda brought up several of stereotypes that they had encountered when meeting employers. One example of such a stereotype applies to the image of veiled Muslim women as oppressed victims. Mergim expressed that many employers assumed veiled Muslim women to be *“[...] somewhat oppressed and a bit timid. That they haven’t been out in the open so to say”*. He continued by arguing that another stereotype of veiled Muslim women is that *“they only are staying at home and giving birth to loads of children.”* Mergim explained that he thought that employers, due to these stereotypes, automatically assume that veiled Muslim women are incompetent, ignorant, and lack relevant professional experience. Esmaralda explained that the most common prejudice that she encountered as a veiled Muslim woman, both among colleagues but also in general, applied to the assumed coercion embedded in the practice of veiling. Esmaralda described how this stereotype was reflected in the type of questions she experienced at her workplace. Although she never took these types of questions personally or found them disturbing in any way, she emphasized that they illustrate the prejudices caused by widespread stereotypes.

Several possible explanations concerning the stereotypes and prejudices were discussed in the interviews. Both Mergim and Esmaralda did, for example, suggest that the stereotypes and the prejudices enforced by them were a byproduct of medias representation of veiling and veiled Muslim women. Esmaralda said that: *“I think that media, in general, tend to enhance wrong focus and thereby reinforce these stereotypes, and when you reinforce these stereotypes it obviously will affect the situation in the labor market as well.”* Esmaralda proposed that Muslim veiling for some people may be perceived as something foreign, and that veiled women because of that, for many appears to be different. She also proposed that employers’ prejudices against veiled Muslim women sometimes may be a reflection of them being *“[...] nervous regarding what’s new for them”*. Prejudices and negative attitudes

towards veiled Muslim women are thus, according to Esmaralda, most likely more established in contexts imprinted by cultural homogeneity, compared to culturally diverse contexts.

5.1.3 Disadvantaging preferences among employers- a matter of discrimination or legitimate negative differential treatment?

None of the interviewees reported that they had heard about employers who had enforced neutrality policies at work. However, all interviewees but Marie ²³stated that they had experienced situations in which employers had expressed preferences with a potential disadvantaging or disqualifying effect for veiled Muslim women. All of them mentioned that certain industries, such as the health care, manufacturing, and certain workplaces, which has some kind of uniform, sometimes had dress codes that prevent women from wearing their veil at work. Hygiene (often occurring within the health care²⁴) and safety (usually within industries that requires certain forms of safety requirements) were declared to be the most frequently occurring arguments for these dress codes. Greta, Mergim, and Esmaralda explained that they, among some employers, occasionally had experienced subtle signals of dislike or disinterest in a particular job applicant after realizing that she was veiled. Moreover, Mergim stated that he repeatedly had witnessed employers reject a veiled Muslim woman a job or trainee post, with the motivation that the veil is incompatible with the values and beliefs of the clientele of the workplace.

The interviewees (all but Marie) are thereby agreeing upon that preferences with disadvantaging effects for veiled women circulate in the Swedish labor market. The type of negative differential treatment that they refer to is, since it is a matter of disadvantages due to religion, covered by the Swedish discrimination act. If the interviewee's experiences of subtle signals of suspicion and dislike toward veiled job applicants would be correct, i.e., the applicant did not get the job due to her veil, it would be a matter of direct discrimination. Dress codes that disqualify veiled Muslim women from working there is a form of indirect discrimination. However, whether the disadvantage/indirect discrimination is legal or illegal is determined by whether there is judged to be a legitimate reason for this or not. Concerning this question, however, the interviewee's views appeared to be a bit split. Karin, Greta, and Marie depicted the preferences as legitimized and necessary due to safety and hygiene

²³ Marie does not work directly with employers and stated that she thus not had insight into the preferences that flourish among employers.

²⁴ It is often not the veil itself that is perceived as problematic, but the modest clothing that often comes with it, such as long-sleeved t-shirts or similar.

requirements. Karin described explicit requirements not as a matter of discrimination but a “*matter of being clear with what is expected.*” Mergim and Esmaralda had a more critical position in terms of the necessity and legitimacy of these preferences. Mergim interpreted the preferences as a matter of “*being anti against veiled Muslim women.*” From his point of view, employers sometimes used dress codes to legitimize preferences that exclude veiled Muslim women from work, even though the veil would have had no impact on their ability to carry out the work tasks required. Esmaralda stated that although dress codes sometimes could be legitimate due to safety health/hygiene requirements, they could also partly be a result of the employer’s inflexibility and lack of will to find alternative solutions. Esmaralda emphasized that she thought that it in many cases would be possible to ensure that women can wear the veil and the modest clothing that usually is combined with it without having to give up on the safety and hygiene requirements. She suggested disposable sleeves for veiled women in the health care industry as one such potential solution.

Although Mergim and Esmaralda were critical of dress codes and other types of preferences that disadvantages veiled Muslim women, both said that they thought that the disadvantages facing veiled women were a result of unconscious stereotypes rather than outright discrimination. Mergim stated that “*it is a very fine line between prejudices and discrimination.*” Esmaralda proposed that sometimes preferences that may appear as a matter of discrimination rather is a result of people’s general tendency to be attracted to what they are used to.

5.2 Interviews with veiled Muslim women

The oldest participant was 38, and the youngest was 25 years old. The respondents differed in terms of ethnic background and nationality. Nora is a Swedish convert; Rebecca is half Swedish/ half Moroccan, and Amira is Iraqi. Alisha, Najma, and Mariam are Somali.

Amira, Najma, and Mariam do have a migrant background but have lived here since they were kids, whereas Rebecca, Nora, and Alisha are born and raised in Sweden. All of the respondents speak Swedish with no or with an insignificant foreign accent. All of them have a post-secondary education. Rebecca, Najma, Mariam, and Amira are currently working within the health care industry. Nora is a veterinary, and Alisha is currently working as an administrator at a municipality office. Several of the interviewees had previously been

working within other industries, such as childcare, the service sector, and within the retail industry. All but one of the respondents wears a headscarf, a so-called hijab. Rebecca is currently wearing a Jilbab (a full-body veil that covers all but the hands and face) but has not yet worked or applied for a job wearing the Jilbab, and most of her experiences relate to the time when she was wearing a headscarf.

5.2.1 The meanings of the veil

All of the interviewees portrayed veiling as a matter of a personal choice and stated explicitly that no one had forced them to adopt the practice of veiling. Alisha, Mariam, Najma, and Amira started to wear the veil as kids. They portrayed the decision to take on the veil as a natural thing to do for them. Rebecca and Nora took on the veil as adults. Both described the decision to take on the veil as a result of a strong internal drive to fulfill their religious obligations.

The interview material illustrates a broad spectrum of meanings of the veil. All of the interviewees depicted veiling as a religious obligation, and most of them emphasized this as their main motivation for wearing it. Nora, Rebecca, and Alisha described that, due to their religious faith, veiling “*appeared to be the right thing to do*” for them. For several of the women, the veil appeared to be a marker of identity. Amira expressed that the veil “[...] *symbolizes a million of things. That I am proud of who I am. That I follow my religion, and that I believe in my religion and what is written in its religious texts*”. She concluded that the veil helps her to align her behavior in accordance with her values and principles. Najma explained that the veil “[...] *means a lot to me because it is part of me. It is part of who I am as a person, and it is my safety.*” Mariam claimed that she felt “*naked*” and insecure without her veil. For Amira, veiling also appeared to be a source of empowerment, and as a way to protect her body from unwanted looks/gazes. Amira emphasized that, despite the stereotypical image of the veiled Muslim woman as suppressed and limited, veiling served the very opposite purpose for her. She explained that; “[...] *if anything, it is a matter of me taking power over myself and my body. It is a way for me to acknowledge myself value*”. All of the interviewees punctuated that due to the importance they attach to the veil, they would never consider taking it off to increase their chances at the labor market.

5.2.2 General experiences from everyday life

The interviewees were also asked to describe whether they felt that the veil had an impact on how people, in general, approached them. The purpose of the question was to contextualize the perceived situation and position of veiled Muslim women, by putting it into relation to the experiences they encountered in their everyday life. This provided valuable information on what type of treatment they considered to be normal and a natural part of life.

All of the participants mentioned that they encountered negative reactions from strangers due to their veil in their everyday life. Irritated eyeing, angry mumbling, or unwillingness to sit next to them at the bus or at the metro appeared to be commonly occurring. Alisha and Mariam described that strangers automatically would address them in English. Rebecca and Alisha described how they, although they had been living in Sweden for their whole life, frequently were praised for *“speaking such good Swedish.”*

The women themselves described negative reactions as *“part of life,” “unavoidable”* and *“something that you have to learn living with.”* Alisha described the racism she encountered in her everyday life was so subtle that it required her to put on her *“voce glasses”* to see it. When she was particularly attentive, however, she could see that strangers treated her differently because of the veil and her skin color.

5.2.3 How veiled Muslim women perceive their situation and position throughout the recruitment process

To examine the interviewee’s perceived position at the labor market and to clarify how the women themselves interpreted these experiences, the interviewees were asked if they, at some stage of their professional life they had experienced disadvantages or different treatment throughout the recruitment process. None of the six interviewees had been rejected a job due to a neutrality policy, but apart from that, they all had mixed experiences. Alisha, Mariam, and Amira had experienced a continuum of disadvantages throughout the whole recruitment process, whereas Nora, Rebecca, and Najma reported no such experiences. Nora and Rebecca would, however, at a later point of their interview, recall a situation in which they suspected that they didn’t get a job due to their veil. Both of their experiences were related to a job interview in which they were asked several non-work-related questions regarding the veil, such as why they wore it and whether they wore it voluntarily. Both Rebecca and Nora emphasized that they founded their suspicions on subtle signals, and thus not could be sure

whether it was the veil that determined why they did not get the job. They did thus not want to classify their experiences as a matter of discrimination. Rebecca also stated that although she had never experienced discrimination due to her veil, she had decided not to have a portrait in her CV as she feared that it would reduce her chances of getting a job.

Mariam, Amira, and Alisha claimed to experience continuous disadvantages through the recruitment process. The reported disadvantages ranged from experiencing a low callback rate in job applications, being called for an interview but not getting the job despite having the right qualifications, and in a few cases mentioned by Amira and Mariam- being told that they are required to take off their veil at work to get hired. The interviewees claimed that their qualifications were continuously devalued throughout the process. All of them attributed some of these disadvantages to their foreign-sounding names, which they thought greatly reduced their chances of being called for an interview. They stated that many employers automatically sort out interviewees assumed not to be ethnic Swedes, regardless of their qualifications and competence. Alisha stated that although employers often claimed to be aiming for cultural diversity, they often were less prone to hiring people with a migrant background. None of these interviewees had a portrait of themselves at their CV and did thus not think that it was the veil, but their names that caused the discrimination at this stage of the recruitment process. However, Amira stated that not having a portrait of herself in her CV was a conscious decision, as she was convinced that this would reduce her chances of being called for interviews even further. She also used another name than her real one in Facebook, to reduce her traceability and thereby to reduce the risk of employers to find out that she wears a veil beforehand.

Although the interviewees attributed most of the disadvantages to their foreign-sounding name, both Amira and Mariam mentioned that they had experienced that employers sometimes changed the attitude against them when realizing that they are wearing a veil. Moreover, both mentioned that they in several interviews had been asked whether they would consider taking off the veil while working. Amira and Mariam explained that having a nice personality and being particularly qualified and competent was portrayed as factors that sometimes would make employers “*disregard the veil.*” However, in Amira’s case, this appeared to be insufficient for overcoming the disadvantages facing her in the labor market. Amira explained that she often had been forced to reduce her salary requirements well below

what she actually would have been entitled to due to her qualifications, in order to overcome the disadvantages.

5.2.4 Experienced treatment by bosses, colleagues, and clients at work

The interviewees were asked to describe the treatment they experienced at the workplace. The purpose of this question was to gain insights regarding the veil's potential effects on the interviewee's relationships with bosses, colleagues, and clients at work.

All interviewees, except Nora, reported having experienced negative treatment due to their veil/appearance at the workplace. Nora, however, emphasized that it is her competence, language ability, and personality that matters at work, and she felt that both clients and colleagues recognize her competence. Nora underlined that she is "*privileged*" in the sense that she is Swedish looking, Swedish speaking, and well educated. She thinks that these factors help to mitigate the potential negative effects of the veil. Remaining interviewees had at least at one point, and sometimes repeatedly, experienced negative treatment at the workplace. The most commonly reported experience amounted to feelings of having their competency questioned by colleagues/bosses or by clients. Amira mentioned that her colleagues repeatedly had asked questions such as; "*Are your faith really compatible with your work tasks? How will Ramadan affect your work capacity?*" Rebecca, Najma, and Mariam had experienced that colleagues talked about them behind their backs, and sometimes made complaints about their clothing or praying habits to their boss. Najma described that she felt that her colleagues scrutinized her language sufficiency behind her back. Rebecca, Mariam, and Alisha expressed that they felt that their colleagues had problems accepting that they wear the veil by their own will, and frequently implied that they thought that they had been forced to wear it. The interviewees perceived these questions as uncomfortable and annoying as they felt pressured to share private details about their veiling practice.

Others described experiences of unfair and degrading treatment by bosses. Mariam described a situation in which her boss at that time refused to provide her with special veils to use while working. The boss decided that she instead should wear a surgical drape as a cover while working, despite the women's protests (she could barely hear anything while wearing it). Mariam describes the situation as "*terrible*" and that she felt "*rubbished*" by her boss. The relation between her and her boss was after this situation strained up until the point that Mariam decided to change to another job. Another interviewee, Rebecca, described how she,

at her first job after putting on the veil, got scolded by her boss when she showed up at the workplace with her veil. The boss claimed that she had tricked him by concealing the fact that she was veiled during the interview (although she had not yet decided to put the veil on at that point). As a consequence, the boss stated that she " [...] *only would get one more chance*". The boss's reaction made her sad and worried about her future chances of getting a job while wearing the veil. Rebecca did not feel comfortable staying at the workplace after the reaction of the boss and decided to quit soon thereafter.

Many of the interviewees also stated that they experienced negative reactions from the clients they get in touch with through work. Rebecca, Alisha, and Amira had experienced verbal pounces, such as threats, being called "*Easter witch*" or being asked to "*take off that ugly kerchief.*" The interviewees did however portray these outspoken attacks as less stressful than the subtle special treatments that they sometimes encountered among clients. The special treatment outlined by the interviewees applied mainly to experiences of being ignored by clients at work. Some of them said that it sometimes was obvious that the clients to speak with their unveiled colleague rather than with them. Najma described how the clients at her work " [...] *automatically assumed that I couldn't speak Swedish. They would assume that I was some kind of trainee, someone who was there on an establishment activity or similar*". Alisha and Mariam said that they could sense that the clients preferred to talk to her unveiled colleagues. They based this reflection on the fact that clients sometimes would walk past them in order to talk with their colleagues instead.

The interviewed women described that the negative treatment at their workplaces has harmed their self-esteem. Amira described how she, after experiencing that colleagues and bosses questioned her competence, started to question her capacity: "*I have really questioned myself, I have actually been thinking that I may be a stupid person for real, without knowing it.*" Najma explained that she, due to colleague's treatment, become self-conscious about the way she talked: "*I think it was the first time in my entire life since I moved here when I was nine that I started thinking about how my Swedish pronunciation and the way I talked.*"

5.2.5 Views on veiled Muslim women's general position in the Swedish labor market

This section aims at highlighting the interviewee's representations of veiled Muslim women's general position in the labor market. The section focuses on pinpointing the potential

structural mechanisms that, from the interviewee's perspectives, affect veiled Muslim women's position at the labor market.

One of the interviewees, Nora, expressed that she thought that the image of veiled Muslim women as a disadvantaged group to some extent, is exaggerated. Nora meant that although some Muslim women indeed may be subjected to discrimination in the labor market, she felt that veiled Muslim women's fears of being discriminated against sometimes were illegitimate. Nora emphasized that "*Competence, language, and personality is what matters.*". Except for Nora, all of the interviewees, including those that stated that they did not feel disadvantaged themselves, agreed that veiled Muslim women as a group were subjected to discrimination throughout the recruitment process. Alisha said that she "*[...] definitely don't think that the veil is an advantage. Unless they are going to tick off this cultural diversity factor*". Amira claimed that middle-aged people, in general, had very negative attitudes towards veiled women. She stated that; "*I feel like the younger people, 20 years and younger, they don't really show any reluctance against the veil. But those that are around 30 to 60 years old, they can really show their aversion against it.*" The interviewees also thought that negative treatment by colleagues and clients also was a widespread problem.

All interviewees except Nora stated that veiled Muslim women often were assumed to be uneducated and unskilled, and proposed these prejudices as a probable underlying mechanism of the differential treatment experienced by them. Mariam expressed that she often felt that people automatically assumed that veiled Muslim women "*don't know anything, and can't do anything.*" Najma and Rebecca, who had not experienced discrimination themselves, stated that this was due to "*luck*" and because of their language sufficiency. Najma described the effect of language by stating that: "*I think that it is with the combination of having veil and having issues with the language that the problems begin, that's when the disrespect kicks in.*" Several of the interviewees also mentioned that they thought that the level of disadvantaged varied depending on the type of veil that was used. Amira proposed that in her case, the disadvantages would have been less severe if the veil would have been worn more as a small "*[...] accessor, rather than as an accentuate religious symbol.*" Rebecca expressed that she fears that her chances of getting a job will be severely reduced now that she has changed from the typical headscarf to a more covering version (Jilbab).

Another issue that was mentioned at various points in the interviews applies to the relationship between cultural homogeneity and prejudices and negative attitudes towards veiled Muslim women. Many of the interviewees emphasized that they had far fewer positive experiences from workplaces characterized by a low degree of cultural diversity. Both Amira and Mariam expressed that they thought a large part of this was because “*things that are foreign are perceived to be frightening.*” They suggested that working in an immigrant-dense community or company reduces the negative effects that may come with the veil. Najma described that as a veiled woman, one feels more “*at home*” in immigrant-dense areas, both because the veil is more “*normalized*” in these areas, but also because the people in these areas are more open towards people with a non-Swedish cultural background.

6. Analysis

This chapter analyzes the results through the theoretical framework, in order to answer the research questions. The first section focuses on outlining the structural facets of the labor market and elaborates on the implications of these structures for veiled Muslim women’s position and situation in the Swedish labor market. This part of the analysis is based on Bourdieu’s concepts of field, habitus, and symbolic capital. Veiled Muslim women’s strategies to retain more capital and thereby change their position will also be discussed. The second section targets the [re]productive power of the interviewee’s representations. Bourdieu’s concepts of symbolic power and symbolic violence will be used to highlight the power dimensions embedded into the interviewee’s representations. The third and final section aims at outlining the socio-legal insights that can be drawn from the data. The concept of legal violence is used to illuminate the potential structural consequences of the architecture of the Swedish discrimination act.

6.1 The structural facets of the Swedish labor market and its implications for veiled Muslim women’s position and situation

The interviews with veiled Muslim women illustrated a plethora of negative experiences encountered, both in relation to the perceived treatment of employers, colleagues, and clients at work. Some of the interviewees also described experiences of discrimination throughout the recruitment process. Others refuted having experienced discrimination themselves but emphasized that structural discrimination is a problem facing many veiled Muslim women in the Swedish labor market. Their experiences indicate that veiled Muslim women in some instances are unable to fully mobilize their capitals (education, experiences, and other qualifications) to gain advantages at the labor market. The inability

to mobilize their capital will, from Bourdieu's (1986) perspective, have a negative impact on their position within the field. Limited access to capital will also reduce their chances of being recognized as competent, and thereby limit their ability to accumulate new capital. The interrelation between capital and position puts those veiled Muslim women who are unable to mobilize their capitals at risk of being caught in a marginalized position and stagnates their ability to acquire enough capital to improve their situation. (Bourdieu 1986)

Although not all of the interviewed veiled Muslim women classified themselves as discriminated, their descriptions suggest that they may have been exposed to things that, in the legal sense, would be defined as direct discrimination. Five out of six interviewees had, during an interview been asked non-work-related questions regarding their veil, mostly related to stereotypical images of veiled Muslim women as oppressed. The fact that these women reported that they did not get the job after these interviews could potentially indicate that they had been subjected to discrimination due to these stereotypes. Also, three of the interviewees reported experiences of underemployment. These women stated that they, despite having the right educational background, previous labor market experiences, and personal traits, was rejected jobs they had applied for. Several of the interviewees (both veiled Muslim women as well as Swedish employment agency officers) claimed that veiled Muslim women often were assumed to be incompetent and oppressed, thus making employers unwilling to hire them. Their representations could potentially indicate that others, due to stereotypes of veiled Muslim women, tend to inscribe a specific meaning into the habitus of veiled Muslim women by which these women continuously are assumed to be incompetent, socially maladjusted, and non-Swedish speaking. Whether the interviewees subjective experiences are a reflection of broader disadvantaging and discriminatory structures facing veiled Muslim women at the Swedish labor market is not possible to determine based on the empirical material (since it is not measuring the actual discrimination of veiled Muslim women, but their perceived situation and position). However, since several of the interviewees suggests that veiled Muslim women are targeted by these negative stereotypes and prejudices, it is possible that their experiences reflect broader structures, by which veiled Muslim women's capital continuously are devalued due to prejudices about them.

Access to capital determines how the structures affect individual social agents. The negative effects of certain structures may be mitigated if the agent have access to other forms of capital and have adopted successful strategies to transform these into capitals with a symbolic value within the field. Those with great access to capital, symbolic or not, are thus more likely to succeed within a field. The social hierarchy within a field are thus tightly interlinked to broader societal structures and power dimensions. Members of resource-rich classes can often partly overcome the strains imposed on them

by the structures of the field, whereas marginalized groups with fewer resources are left with few means to improve their position. (Broady 1991, p.214-215) The empirical results of this study provide some evidence in regard to the suggested relationship between an individual's overall access to resources and their trajectories within a field. Interviewees from both groups (employment agency officers and veiled Muslim women) suggested that language sufficiency was a factor that would improve veiled Muslim women's employability. Some of the interviewed veiled Muslim women proposed that personal characteristics such as social or professional competence could be used to refute others (employers, colleagues or clients) negative prejudices about them. This could, the women claimed, help mitigate the negative effects of their appearance. These reflections suggest that language sufficiency, social capacity and professional competence may be mobilized as capital to improve their position and situation. Those who are lacking these resources may however potentially have issues overcoming these structural hindrances, and thereby have limited abilities to accumulate capital (such as economic capital) needed to improve their position in society as a whole. As a result, the vulnerability of already marginalized groups becomes reinforced. (Bourdieu 1986) From this perspective, it seems reasonable to suggest that veiled Muslim women who speak limited Swedish or are unable to prove that they are social and professionally competent, may face additional difficulties in the labor market.

Moreover, abovementioned strategy seems to be only partially successful since some of the women face continuous disadvantages in the field, and many of the women's experience that they are not fully recognized as competent at work (by colleagues, bosses or clients). The reason for this could perhaps be explained by the symbolic value of cultural capital. (Bourdieu 1986, p.18) When it comes to the veiled Muslim women interviewed in this study, it seems like access to institutionalized cultural capital (education and professional qualifications) are insufficient to reach full recognition within the field. It seems like their embodied cultural capital (the cultural dispositions inscribed into their habitus) are of great importance for their position and situation within the field. The empirical material indicates that "Swedishness" is predisposed as a cultural capital that plays a great role in determining the position of agents within the field. The importance of Swedishness becomes evident when looking at some of the interviewed veiled Muslim women's descriptions of how they, as a result of visual markers that signal a non-Swedish identity, such as skin color or foreign-sounding names, experienced disadvantages throughout the recruitment process. That the veil often is perceived as a symbol of a non-Swedish identity is apparent in both the interviews with some of the Swedish employment agency officers, as well as in many of the interviews with veiled Muslim women. Three of the interviewed Swedish employment agency officers presented the situation of veiled Muslim

women analog to that of first-generation migrants. This appeared to happen in a quite unreflective manner since the interviewees several times referred to the general group of first-generation migrant women when asked questions about veiled Muslim women. It could potentially be a reflection of the group of veiled Muslim women they come in contact with at work, but it could also be a result of them being affected by stereotypical images of veiled Muslim women. Moreover, the interviews with veiled Muslim women illustrate that several of them regularly encountered situations in which people would assume that they couldn't speak Swedish. Taken together, this data indicates that the veil may be perceived as a symbol/signal of a non-Swedish identity. The symbolic value of Swedishness could perhaps explain why Nora (the only person with a Swedish ethnicity among the interviewed veiled Muslim women) was the only of the interviewed veiled Muslim women that expressed that her appearance not affected her ability to be recognized as competent by neither potential employers (in the recruitment process) nor by colleagues, bosses or clients.

To bring this section to close, one can conclude that the data generated in this study indicates that the labor market contains structures that potentially disadvantage veiled Muslim women. It's difficult to assess whether or not actual discrimination has taken place based on the subjective experiences of the interviewed women. But taken together they certainly argue that Swedishness is a very important symbolic capital in the field of the labor market. Lacking in symbolic capital may, according to Bourdieu's theoretical framework, put social actors at risk of having their capital devalued and thereby not being recognized as competent within the field. The experiences of the veiled Muslim women who participated in this project could perhaps be read as a practical example of how lack of symbolic capital also leads to a devaluation of their capital (i.e. education, previous labor market experience, and general qualifications) by employers, colleagues and clients. This puts veiled Muslim women at risk of being disadvantaged, and thereby reinforce marginalizing structures. However, the empirical material of this project aims only at discussing the perceived position of veiled Muslim women but is insufficient to say anything about the actual position of veiled Muslim women. Drawing any conclusions regarding the actual impact of Swedishness as a symbolic capital would thus require additional measurements.

6.2 The [re]productive power of the interviewee's representations

The representations of the interviewees that participated in this study provides a mixed picture of the position and situation facing veiled Muslim women in the Swedish labor market. An important pattern is however emerging in the data- those with a Swedish ethnicity are unwilling to attribute the perceived situation and position of veiled Muslim to marginalizing structures within the field. Nora

(the only of the interviewed veiled Muslim women with a Swedish ethnicity) proposed that veiled Muslim women's fears of facing discrimination in the labor market was partly illegitimate and exaggerated, and the ethnic Swedish employment agency officers denied that Muslim women faced structural disadvantages in the field. Their representations diverge from the representations of the interviewees with a non-Swedish ethnicity in the sense that the latter group acknowledges that veiled Muslim women at a structural level are being targeted by negative stereotypes and marginalizing structures in the labor market. The differences between the interviewee's perceptions of the situation and position facing veiled Muslim women can most likely be explained by what Bourdieu refer to as the structuring effects of habitus, meaning that cultural dispositions affect how individuals interpret and describe the social world. (Bourdieu 1989, p.20) The fact that the ethnic Swedish interviewees do not see the structures that appear to disadvantage Muslim women in the labor market could thus have to do with the fact that their habitus does not allow this kind of view.

All of the ethnic Swedish interviewees framed competence, language and personality as the determining factors for veiled Muslim women's position and situation in the labor market. Difficulties in the labor market are thus not recognized as the result of structural disadvantages, but rather of women's individual shortcomings (lack of language sufficiency, cultural norms, lack of education, and lack of previous work experience). The marginalizing structures that are highlighted in the experiences of the interviewed veiled Muslim with a non-Swedish ethnicity are concealed as veiled Muslim women are partly blamed for the disadvantages facing them. As the representation of the ethnic Swedish interviews don't acknowledge these inequalities, they are at risk of naturalizing marginalizing structures embedded into the field. (Bourdieu 1989 ;2001)

Considering the social authority and symbolic power of Swedish employment officers, the tendency (among employment officers with a Swedish ethnicity) to misrecognize the potential structural inequalities within the field appears to be particularly serious. In light of the experiences of veiled Muslim women, the non-structural perspective employment agency officers may be read as a form of symbolic dominance, since their representations conceal the structural disadvantages facing veiled Muslim women. Moreover, as their representations contain elements of those stereotypes causing the negative treatment of veiled Muslim women in the first place, they may naturalize the image of veiled Muslim women as foreign, culturally different, and uneducated/unskilled, thereby potentially reproducing the marginalizing structures these stereotypes seem to cause. (Bourdieu 1989; 2001)

Another pattern that emerges in the material is that of the Swedish employment agency officer's general unwillingness to define the differential treatment facing veiled Muslim women (due to dress codes or other preferences that disqualifies veiled Muslim women from employment) as a matter of

discrimination. This could potentially derive from the position they enjoy in the field of the labor market (as street-level bureaucrats) and the interests that come with this position. The mission of the Swedish employment agency includes a responsibility to counteract discrimination in the labor market. To refute the difficulties facing veiled Muslim women as a matter of discrimination may thus be a result of an attempt to avoid being accused of having failed their mission. This conclusion is supported by Bourdieu's thesis on the structuring effect of social agents' position. Bourdieu propose that social agents usually not are inclined to present the world in a manner that disadvantages them. (Bourdieu 1989, p.19-20)

Although those officers who have a non-Swedish ethnicity appear to be more inclined to acknowledge that these are problematic and, in some instances, unnecessary, they seem to be equally prone to frame it as a non-legal issue as their Swedish colleagues. The representations of those officers who advocated for a structural perspective on veiled Muslim women's position and situation may thus also be perceived as a form of symbolic violence. In their representations, having prejudices about people "different from the norm" is depicted as natural, it is believed to be in the human nature to do so. One could argue that these representations normalizes the marginalization of veiled Muslim women and reproduces the division between us (non-veiled ethnic swedes) and them (veiled Muslim women, assumingly foreign and different from the norm). By misrecognizing the difficulties facing veiled Muslim women as an unavoidable fact, rather than a legal issue the structures causing these difficulties remain intact and reproduced. (Bourdieu 2001)

The representations of the veiled Muslim women themselves indicate that negative differential treatment to some extent has become normalized for them. Some of them refuted having experienced discrimination or negative treatment in the recruitment process, despite their experiences of having been treated differently due to their veil in interviews and so on. Others described how they, due to colleagues and clients degrading treatment had started to question themselves and their own, i.e. that they had started to internalize others prejudices about them. When asked questions about people's treatment of them in their everyday life, most of the veiled Muslim women portrayed the negative treatment the experienced in their everyday life as fairly unproblematic. The women themselves typically described negative reactions (such as irritated eyeing at them, angry mumbling or unwillingness to sit next to them at the bus or in the metro) as "part of life", "unavoidable" and "something that you have to learn living with". This indicates that negative treatment due to the veil to some extent have become normalized and accepted for these women. The normalization of differential and negative treatment could be read as an indication of the prevalence of symbolic violence. The danger of such symbolic violence is that it conceals the structural inequalities that

permeate the field of labor market, thereby reproducing the marginalizing structures facing veiled Muslim women. (Bourdieu 2001)

6.3 The socio-legal insights provided by this study

The Swedish discrimination act establishes that all forms of negative differential treatment (caused by factors such as ethnicity or religion) in the recruitment process or at the workplace is prohibited, as long as the differential treatment aren't required due to the "the nature of the work or the context in which the work is carried out". (2008:567) The data generated in this study is, however, indicating that employers use dress codes and other disqualifying preferences, in situations where it in fact not is necessary or required by the nature of the work. The generated data is moreover also suggesting that this form of differential treatment to some extent have become normalized and accepted, both by Swedish employment agency officers and veiled Muslim women themselves. The results of this study indicate that veiled Muslim women potentially face both discrimination and harassment in the labor market at a structural level, despite that the Swedish discrimination act aims to prevent both of these issues. One may thus suggest that the Swedish discrimination act fails to provide an accurate protection to veiled Muslim women, thereby allowing potential marginalizing and dominating structures to remain.

Both the interviewed Swedish employment agency officers and many of the interviewed veiled Muslim women were unwilling to define their experiences as a matter of discrimination. There seems to be an uncertainty in regard to what forms of differential treatment that is to be considered illegitimate contra justified. This may be a reflection of the criticism of the legal uncertainty that was outlined in the introduction of this thesis. The lack of clear guidelines in regard to how to apply the justifications is, according to the criticism, reducing the law's normative function which reduces its protective power for marginalized and vulnerable groups. (Cinneide 2011; Makkonen 2012) Although this criticism was directed at EU's legal framework in specific, the results of this thesis suggests that the criticism may be applicable for the Swedish discrimination act as well. From a socio-legal standpoint, this appears to be very problematic. A law that has limited normative power will not be able to contradict those informal norms and taken for granted assumptions that flourish in the society. (Banakar 2019) Since it appears like negative stereotypes about veiled Muslim women is strongly established within the field of the labor market, this also means that the law probably will be unsuccessful in prevent people from acting discriminatory in regard to veiled Muslim women due to these stereotypes.

The data provided both by Swedish employment agency officers and veiled Muslim women indicates that the field of the Swedish labor market is characterized by a doxic assumption, namely that some

differential treatment of veiled Muslim women in the labor market is unavoidable due to people's tendencies to have prejudices about veiled Muslim women. Together with the assumingly weak normative power of the discrimination act, this doxic assumption is likely to result in a situation where social agents of the field accept the marginalizing structures that the law intend to contradict. This could possibly facilitate the continued reproduction of the symbolic violence that normalizes the disadvantages that appears to face veiled Muslim women in the field of the labor market. From this perspective it seems to be reasonable to argue that the justifications for differential treatment provided by the Swedish discrimination acts, itself may be described as a form of legal violence.

7. Conclusion and discussion

This chapter situates the results of this study in the broader field of research related to veiled Muslim women's position and situation in the labor market. The chapter is also highlighting the new insights fostered by the study's socio-legal perspective and the application of a Bourdieusan theoretical framework. The chapter is finalized with some recommendations for future research.

The first aim of this thesis was to examine how veiled Muslim women's situation and position in the Swedish labor market is perceived, both by Swedish employment agency officers and veiled Muslim women. The empirical material consists of conflicting perceptions regarding this issue, as the interviewee's representations appear to be structured both by their position within their field and their habitus. Considering the image that appears in the description of the interviewees with non-Swedish ethnicities (both employment agency officers and veiled Muslim women), it appears like veiled Muslim women with non-Swedish ethnicities are penalized in the Swedish labor market. The data provided by this group of interviewees also indicates that the veil, as a visible symbol of a non-Swedish identity, triggers negative stereotypes that harm veiled Muslim women's situation and position in the Swedish labor market. These findings are compatible with a pattern which, in previous research, has been called "the hijab effect" or "the headscarf penalty."

Scholars have raised concerns regarding the potential marginalizing effect of the penalization of veiled Muslim women. The structures behind the penalization of veiled Muslims may, according to the criticism, harm their labor market outcomes and, at worst, potentially wholly exclude them from the labor market. This process appears to be particularly problematic if one takes into account the accumulative power of capital. Without sufficient economic capital and lack of cultural capital, agents lack two forms of capital that often can be transformed into symbolic capital. Lacking these capitals are thereby leaving agents with few means to improve their position in other social fields. Hence, structural penalization of veiled Muslim women in the labor market is a pressing issue since it may

put these women in an economically disempowered position and thereby impose a vicious circle of marginalization in various aspects of life.

The results are also indicating that social agents within the field are influenced by those discourses that appear to be central for the European debate on Muslim veiling. Both the experiences of the veiled Muslim women themselves and the Swedish employment agency officers with a non-Swedish ethnicity witnessed that veiled Muslim women often are poorly treated by potential employers, bosses, clients, and colleagues due to stereotypes about them being oppressed, retrogressive and culturally fundamentally different from non-Muslim ethnic Swedes. These stereotypes match the clash of civilization discourse (which depicts Muslims as religious others) and the gender equality discourse (which frames veiled Muslim women as oppressed victims). These discourses seem to be apparent among the ethnically Swedish employment agency officers, as they frame veiled Muslim women as a group of foreigners under the influence of gender-egalitarian norms. These discourses have previously been criticized for reproducing images of veiled Muslim women as “religious others” and by that put these women at risk of being targeted by harassment, violence, and discrimination in various aspects of life. The representations in the material that are coherent with these discourses are preservative and reinforces the stereotypes inherited in it, thereby reproducing the power structure that comes with it. Considering the criticism directed at these discourses, and the assumed symbolic power of Swedish employment agency officers, the essentialism embedded into their representations of veiled Muslim women might reinforce a “gendered Islamophobia” within the field of the labor market. This may potentially reduce the employability of veiled Muslim women even more and put them at increased risk of facing further marginalization.

The results of this study are compatible with the image of Abdullahi's (2016) and the European Agency reports (2017, 2019) studies on discrimination of veiled Muslim women in the Swedish labor market. In similarity with these results, this study illustrates that veiled Muslim women in Sweden are at risk of having agency and competence continuously questioned by both potential employers, employers, and colleagues. However, the study is bringing additional insights, which seems to be neglected in previous research on the topic. First of all, the study illuminates how the field's structures affect veiled Muslim women in various aspects of their working life, including at the actual workplace and in the recruitment process. Moreover, the study is not limiting itself to experiences of discrimination. An explicit focus on experiences of discrimination seems to be self-limiting since it rules out an understanding of the normalized experiences of negative treatment and the internalized marginalizing structures outlined in this study. Moreover, adopting Bourdieu's theoretical framework helped to bridge the gap between the broader structures of the labor market, and veiled Muslim

women and Swedish employment officers' subjective experiences. This enabled insights into the structural mechanisms at play within the Swedish labor market and helped illuminate marginalizing and oppressive elements of these structures. Another important contribution of the study is that it brings religion into the analysis. Although previous research conducted in other European countries indicates that Muslims are targeted by religious penalties at the labor market, the impact of religion has however been largely omitted in previous Swedish research, thereby compromising our ability to fully understand the mechanisms that lead up to structural disadvantages and discrimination at the labor market. This study has provided new insights in regard to this issue.

The second aim of this study was to illuminate the potential structural consequences of the justifications for differential treatment provided by chapter 2, section 2 of the discrimination act. In regard to this issue it appears that the legal framework, by not providing clear guidelines in regard to what forms of differential treatment that is justified, opens up for a misuse of dress codes and other preferences that disqualifies veiled Muslim women from employment.

Previous research illustrates that veiling has multiple meanings, and for many have a significant value for their identity. This picture is in line with the meanings that was outlined by the interviewed veiled Muslim women in this study. All of them inscribed great importance into their veil. The very strong motivations and meanings attached to the veil made them continue to carry it, despite that it in some respects has brought disadvantages for them at the labor market. Considered the great meaning that many women attach to their veil, it is important that the legal framework is functional and successful in protecting them from structural disadvantages, so that they can exert their right to manifest their identity and religion freely without being at risk of becoming excluded and marginalized. This study contributes to the socio-legal debate by putting the risks of legal justifications of differential treatment (that have been outlined in previous research on EU's legal framework) into a Swedish context, plus discussing its potential consequences for veiled Muslim women in specific. The results of the study suggest that the Swedish discrimination act potentially needs to be revised, to achieve a better protection for vulnerable groups in the labor market.

7.1 Recommendations for future research

This study focused on the experienced situation and position of veiled Muslim women in the labor market. However, the actual effects of Muslim veiling were not measured, nor was the extent of the discrimination facing veiled Muslim women. To establish an understanding of the actual consequences of the structures observed in this study, additional supplementary measurements are needed. Guidance for suitable research designs for this type of inquiry may be provided by previous

studies that have attempted to measure the effects of a visible Muslim identity/having a veil in other European countries. Most of these studies have, however, used quantitative labor market data (by comparing labor market outcomes for Muslim women VS non-Muslim women, veiled women VS unveiled women, etc.), which makes the design ill-suited for the Swedish context. Sweden does not register people by religion since they consider it to be at odds with religious freedom. Also, this type of study would only provide insights into the situation facing veiled Muslim women throughout the recruitment process, whereas the situation facing them at the workplace would be omitted from the analysis. A more feasible and suitable option would be to extend the research design outlined in this paper by broadening the sample size and ensuring a broader representation among the participants. Broadening the sample would enable a more structural analysis of the different cultural dispositions that brings out the negative experiences outlined in this study. The patterns that appear, that is, if certain groups of individuals appear to be more disadvantaged than others, can then be used to discern the driving mechanisms behind the disadvantages and negative experiences facing veiled Muslim women at the labor market. One way to investigate the effects of the veil could perhaps be to include non-veiled women with the non-European origin and then to compare their experiences with those experienced by veiled Muslim women of a non-European origin. Also, comparing the experiences of veiled women with a Swedish origin with those of veiled women of non-Swedish origin would be helpful to distinguish between the effects of a visible religious identity versus the effect of ethnicity.

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Appendix 1-interview guides

Interview guide- Veiled Muslim women's perceived situation and position at the Swedish labor market

Personal information:

- Age?
- Ethnicity?
- Religious faith, how long have they been practicing Islam?
- Migrant background, and number of years living in Sweden?
- Educational background?
- Occupation?
- Previous labor market experiences?

Theme 1: Motivations and meaning of the veil

- What type of veil do they wear?
- In what contexts do you wear the veil?
- When did you start practicing Muslim veiling?
- What meaning do the veil have for you?

Theme 2: Experiences in regard to applying for work as a veiled Muslim woman

- Have you experienced that the veil affect how you are treated in the recruitment process?
- If you have experienced negative treatment- how have you handled this? Do you have any strategies to counteract potential negative treatment? What feelings do such treatment cause?
- Do you think that the veil affects your chances to be called for an interview?
- If you have experienced that the veil affects your chances to be called for an interview- how have you handled this? Do you have any strategies to counteract potential negative treatment? What feelings do such treatment cause?
- Would you consider taking of the veil while working in order to enhance your chances of getting a job?
- Your general image- Do you think veiled Muslim women are facing disadvantages or discrimination in the recruitment process, or do you think that they face no such disadvantages?

Theme 3: Experiences from workplaces- Treatment by colleagues, bosses and clients

- Do you think that the veil affect how you are treated by your colleagues and bosses?

-If you have experienced that the veil affect how you are treated by your colleagues and bosses- in what way, how have you handled this? Do you have any strategies to counteract potential negative treatment? What feelings do such treatment cause?

-Do you think that the veil affect how you are treated by clients at work?

-If you have experienced that the veil affect how you are treated clients at work- in what way, how have you handled this? Strategies to counteract potential negative treatment? What feelings do such treatment cause?

Theme 5: General experiences of treatment in other social contexts

-Have you experienced harassment, violence or negative comments when meeting strangers?

-Do you think that the veil affect how you are treated by strangers out in public?

-If you have experienced that the veil affect how you are treated by strangers- how have you handled this? What feelings do such treatment cause?

Theme 6: Neutrality policies

-Have you ever been asked to take of your veil, or been rejected a job due to your veil, due to a workplace's neutrality policy?

-What's your general view on these types of policies?

Interview guide- Swedish employment agency officers' perception on veiled Muslim women's position at the Swedish labor market

Personal information:

-Age?

-Ethnicity?

-Religious faith?

-Their role and tasks within the Swedish employment agency?

-Number of years within the agency?

-Educational background?

-Previous labor market experiences?

Theme 1: Their views on the veils impact on Muslim women's employability

-Do you think that veiled Muslim women face specific disadvantages or difficulties in the Swedish labor market?

-Do you think that Muslim veils affect a person's employability?

-Have you experienced situations in which an employer has had preferences that disadvantages veiled Muslim women? If so- what type of arguments do the employers use to legitimize these types of preferences?

Theme 2: Neutrality policies

-Does it, from your experience, happen that veiled Muslim women are denied work due to neutrality policy?

- What if someone refuses to work because they do not want to agree to the workplace's requirement to remove the veil? How does the agency handle these situations?

Theme 3: Their general view on veiled Muslim women's position at the Swedish labor market

- What is your overall picture of the situation of veiled Muslim women in the labor market? Do you think that they face discrimination or are in some kind of vulnerable position in the labor market?

-If you feel that they are discriminated against or vulnerable, what do you think should be done to improve their situation?

Appendix 2- Thematic analysis of interviews with Swedish employment agency officers

Identified themes:	Observed in the following interviews:	Organized under following thematic category:
Employability-not affected by Muslim veiling	Karin, Marie	Veiled Muslim women's position and situation at the Swedish labor market from a <i>non-structural perspective</i> (individual-based explanation)
Focus on qualifications	Karin, Marie	Veiled Muslim women's position and situation at the Swedish labor market from a <i>non-structural perspective</i> (individual-based explanation)
Focus on commitment	Karin, Marie, Greta	Veiled Muslim women's position and situation at the Swedish labor market from a <i>non-structural perspective</i> (individual-based explanation)
Veiling as normalized/accepted	Karin, Marie	Veiled Muslim women's position and situation at the Swedish labor market from a <i>non-structural perspective</i> (individual-based explanation)
Perceived discrimination as a matter of miscommunication	Karin	Veiled Muslim women's position and situation at the Swedish labor market from a <i>non-structural perspective</i> (individual-based explanation)
Highlighting veiled Muslim women's own responsibilities for their situation and position	Karin, Marie, Greta	Veiled Muslim women's position and situation at the Swedish labor market from a <i>non-structural perspective</i> (individual-based explanation)
Employability-occasionally affected by Muslim veiling (among individual employers)	Greta	Veiled Muslim women's position and situation at the Swedish labor market from a <i>non-structural perspective</i> (individual-based explanation)
Focus on delimiting beliefs among veiled Muslim women	Greta	Veiled Muslim women's position and situation at the Swedish Labor market from a <i>non-structural perspective</i> (individual-based explanation)
Veiled Muslim women Equated with first-generation immigrant women.	Karin, Marie, Greta	Veiled Muslim women's position and situation at the Swedish labor market from a <i>non-structural perspective</i> (individual-based explanation)

Employability- potentially affected by Muslim veiling	Mergim, Esmaralda	Veiled Muslim women's position and situation at the Swedish labor market from a <i>structural perspective</i>
Headscarf penalty occurring due to negative stereotypes about veiled Muslim women	Mergim, Esmaralda	Veiled Muslim women's position and situation at the Swedish labor market from a <i>structural perspective</i>
Attitudes towards veiled Muslim women- context specific	Mergim, Esmaralda	Veiled Muslim women's position and situation at the Swedish labor market from a <i>structural perspective</i>
Internalized stereotypes among Swedish employment agency officers	Mergim	Veiled Muslim women's position and situation at the Swedish labor market from a <i>structural perspective</i>
Cultural diversity- mitigates effects of headscarf penalty	Mergim, Esmaralda	Veiled Muslim women's position and situation at the Swedish labor market from a <i>structural perspective</i>
Cultural homogeneity- reinforces headscarf penalty	Mergim, Esmaralda	Veiled Muslim women's position and situation at the Swedish labor market from a <i>structural perspective</i>
Stereotype- veiled Muslim women assumed to be oppressed and forced to wear the veil.	Mergim, Esmaralda	Veiled Muslim women's position and situation at the Swedish labor market from a <i>structural perspective</i>
Stereotype- veiled Muslim women assumed to be housewives.	Mergim	Veiled Muslim women's position and situation at the Swedish labor market from a <i>structural perspective</i>
Stereotype- veiled Muslim women are assumed to be incompetent, ignorant and lacking professional experience.	Mergim	Veiled Muslim women's position and situation at the Swedish labor market from a <i>structural perspective</i>
Mechanisms behind	Mergim, Esmaralda	Veiled Muslim women's position and situation at the Swedish labor market from a <i>structural perspective</i>

stereotypes- medias representations.		
Mechanisms behind stereotypes- veiled Muslim women perceived as foreign and different	Esmaralda	Veiled Muslim women's position and situation at the Swedish labor market from a <i>structural perspective</i>
Clothing requirements due to safety requirement – a legitimate form of differential treatment	Karin, Marie, Greta	Disadvantaging preferences among employers from an <i>uncritical point of view</i>
Clothing requirements due to hygiene requirements- legitimate form of differential treatment	Karin, Marie, Greta	Disadvantaging preferences among employers from an <i>uncritical point of view</i>
Dress codes as matter of being anti veiled Muslim women	Mergim	Disadvantaging preferences among employers from a <i>critical point of view</i>
Dress codes partly over-used, and a result of inflexibility among employers	Esmaralda	Disadvantaging preferences among employers from a <i>critical point of view</i>
Differential treatment of veiled Muslim women due to disadvantaging preferences among employers- not a matter of discrimination, but unavoidable prejudices	Esmaralda, Mergim	Disadvantaging preferences among employers from a <i>critical point of view</i>

Appendix 3- Thematic analysis of interviews with veiled Muslim women

Identified themes:	Observed in the following interviews:	Organized under following thematic category:
Veiling as a personal choice	Rebecca, Alisha, Mariam, Najma, Amira, Nora	Meanings of the veil
Wearing the veil since kids	Alisha, Mariam, Najma, Amira	Meanings of the veil
Starting to wear the veil as adults	Rebecca, Nora	Meanings of the veil
Meaning: religious obligation	Rebecca, Alisha, Mariam, Najma, Amira, Nora	Meanings of the veil
Meaning: marker of identity	Amira, Najma	Meanings of the veil
Meaning: source of empowerment and tool to prevent unwanted looks at the body	Amira	Meanings of the veil
Irritated eying, angry mumbling and unwillingness to sit next to them at bus or metro	Rebecca, Alisha, Mariam, Najma, Amira, Nora	Experiences of negative treatment by strangers in everyday life
Assumed not to be speaking Swedish	Alisha, Mariam, Rebecca, Alisha	Experiences of negative treatment by strangers in everyday life
“voce glasses” needed to see subtle racism	Alisha	Experiences of negative treatment by strangers in everyday life
Non-working related questions about veil in interview- do not define these as discrimination	Nora, Rebecca	Reported VS no reported experiences of discrimination in the recruitment process
Have never experienced that the veil has impacted the employer’s impression of her	Najma	Reported VS no reported experiences of discrimination in the recruitment process
Strategy to avoid discrimination: no portrait in CV	Rebecca	Reported VS no reported experiences of discrimination in the recruitment process
Experiencing low callback rate in job applications	Mariam, Amira, Alisha	Reported VS no reported experiences of discrimination in the recruitment process
Being rejected jobs despite having the right qualifications	Mariam, Amira, Alisha	Reported VS no reported experiences of discrimination in the recruitment process
Required to take of the veil in order to get hired	Amira, Mariam	Reported VS no reported experiences of discrimination in the recruitment process
Qualifications devalued throughout the recruitment process due to their foreign sounding names	Amira, Mariam, Alisha	Reported VS no reported experiences of discrimination in the recruitment process
Strategy to avoid discrimination: no portrait in CV	Amira	Reported VS no reported experiences of discrimination in the recruitment process
Strategy to avoid discrimination: using another name at Facebook to reduce her traceability	Amira	Reported VS no reported experiences of discrimination in the recruitment process

Strategy to avoid discrimination: reducing salary requirements	Amira	Reported VS no reported experiences of discrimination in the recruitment process
Strategy to avoid discrimination: having a nice personality and being particularly qualified and competent	Amira, Mariam	Reported VS no reported experiences of discrimination in the recruitment process
Colleagues talking behind their back	Rebecca, Najma, Mariam	Experiences of negative treatment at work
Colleagues assuming that her religious faith would impede on her capability to fulfill her work tasks	Alisha	Experiences of negative treatment at work
Colleagues questioning their choice to wear the veil	Rebecca, Mariam, Alisha	Experiences of negative treatment at work
Unfair and degrading treatment by the boss	Mariam, Rebecca	Experiences of negative treatment at work
Negative treatment by clients at work-verbal pounces	Rebecca, Alisha, Amira	Experiences of negative treatment at work
Subtle special treatment by clients at work	Rebecca, Alisha, Amira, Najma	Experiences of negative treatment at work
Harmed self-esteem due to negative treatment at work	Amira, Najma	Experiences of negative treatment at work
The veil= a disadvantage in labor market	Rebecca, Mariam, Amira, Alisha, Najma	Veiled Muslim women perceived as an overall disadvantaged group VS veiled Muslim women not perceived as an overall disadvantaged group.
Head scarf penalty- veiled women assumed to be uneducated and unskilled	Rebecca, Mariam, Amira, Alisha, Najma	Veiled Muslim women perceived as an overall disadvantaged group VS veiled Muslim women not perceived as an overall disadvantaged group.
Headscarf penalty: mitigating effect of language sufficiency	Rebecca, Najma	Veiled Muslim women perceived as an overall disadvantaged group VS veiled Muslim women not perceived as an overall disadvantaged group.
Headscarf penalty: mitigating effect of wearing a less covering veil	Rebecca, Amira	Veiled Muslim women perceived as an overall disadvantaged group VS veiled Muslim women not perceived as an overall disadvantaged group.
Headscarf penalty: mitigating effect of cultural heterogeneity	Amira, Najma, Mariam	Veiled Muslim women perceived as an overall disadvantaged group VS veiled Muslim women not perceived as an overall disadvantaged group.
Personality, language sufficiency and competency as determining factors for position in labor market	Nora	Veiled Muslim women perceived as an overall disadvantaged group VS veiled Muslim women not perceived as an overall disadvantaged group.

