At the core of lifeworld and system

A socio-legal study of civil society organizations' role in refugee integration

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Abstract

The Swedish integration policies rely heavily on the establishment program, a measure taken as a consequence of the high unemployment rate among refugees after the "refugee crisis". The establishment program aims to tackle the gap in access to the labour market between native-born and refugees through economic imperatives. Civil society organizations step in to provide programs that target refugee integration.

This thesis in Sociology of Law implemented the Habermasian theories of civil society, lifeworld and system, and communicative action to scrutinize the role played by civil society in creating social integration of newly arrived refugees. The divergences between the objectives of law and the reality of the law create the space for civil society to enter the debate, which marked the starting point of this research. The aim of this thesis was achieved through the use of qualitative methods with a bottom-up perspective, including qualitative interviews with volunteers and professionals from civil society organizations, and participant observation during activities provided by civil society. Activities promoted by civil society organizations such as language skills, network, skills development, leisure activities, and mental health workshops have been considered as part of their strategy to create social integration of refugees and to bridge the gap between the objectives of the law and its reality in the lifeworld. Civil society is, thus, at the core of lifeworld and system and creates refugee integration through the activities offered.

Key terms: refugee, refugee crisis, civil society, Sweden, establishment program, lifeworld and system, communicative action, social integration, labour market

Table of content

1. Introduction

Sweden is one of the most inclusive countries in the world when it comes to international migration, with a history of humanitarian refugee reception that began in the 1940s, and continues nowadays (Valenta and Bunar, 2010). The year 2015 marked a difference in the Swedish reception system when the largest admission of asylum-seekers - a total amount of 160,000 incoming asylum seekers - took place during the so-called "refugee crisis" (Statistics Sweden, 2020; Puschmann et al., 2019).

The years following the refugee crisis have shown an increase in the unemployment levels of immigrants in general, and among new coming refugees specifically. Along with this, Sweden stands out in the EU figures with respect to the big disproportion in the employment levels between low-qualified refugees and the native-born active population with the same formal education (OECD, 2014). As a consequence, the Swedish government has taken measures to promote integration of new coming refugees in the host society. The most important measure was the implementation of the establishment program - etableringsprogram - provided by Arbetsförmedlingen (2020) - Public Employment Office -, which is conceived as a support during the first two years of resettlement of asylum seekers who have been granted refugee status.

1.1. Research problem

The purpose of the establishment program is to help refugees become self-sufficient as quickly as possible by accelerating the acquisition of language skills and providing tips on how to find employment (Ibid.). These activities are said to be adapted to the refugees' needs in combination with them actively seeking employment (Migrationsinfo, 2019). Despite the efforts of the Swedish government, a gap between the propositions of the integration policies and the actual integration process of the refugees is still existent.

This gap is represented by the large number of refugees that are currently not active in the labour market (Statistics Sweden, 2020). Civil society responds to this by providing programs that support integration. Undoubtedly, Sweden has a long history of civil society participation which started back in the 19th century as a part of popular movements (Wijkström, 2004). This tradition

continues active and even more present nowadays in the construction of an inclusive, democratic system (Micheletti, 2019). A proof of this are the initiatives of civil society organizations during the "refugee crisis" in 2015 when they would provide immediate help to refugees arriving at train stations (Törngren et al., 2018). Their support was not limited to offering first aid products and accommodation for the asylum seekers, long-term projects continued to be planned in sight of the large number of people seeking asylum in Sweden (Ibid.).

Elements such as Swedish language training, information about validation processes of academic degrees, and access to opportunities for supplementary education are highlighted by civil society. These points have been also mentioned in the reform of the establishment program (Government Offices of Sweden, 2015), however they do not seem to be consistently supported through the integration policies. The actions taken by the Swedish government towards creating ways for the newcomers to integrate in the host society have proven to be inefficient (Borevi et al. 2017). Not only are the integration programs long and tedious, but they also end up pushing newcomers to occupying employment positions below their level of expertise, which is contrary to the values and principles of the integration programs (Ibid.).

1.2. Delimitation

The gap between the propositions of the integration policies and the actual integration process of the refugees in the labour market will be the starting point of this thesis project. Subsequently, it will adopt a bottom-up perspective where civil society lies at the heart of the public sphere (Habermas, 1984). The time frame 2010 - 2020 is considered of relevance for this research because it represents the before and after of the refugee crisis and points out the changes in integration policies. Thus, a description of the integration laws and policies enacted by the Swedish government in the past 10 years and implemented by institutions such as Arbetsförmedlingen, and Migrationsverket will be presented as part of the background of this thesis.

The focus of this research will be placed on civil society, consequently, the targeted participants are civil society representatives and volunteers who work with refugees that have been part of the establishment program. The participants' experience and knowledge about the challenges that

refugees encounter when they intend to integrate in the host society are of great value for this research.

1.3. Aim and relevance

This research aims to scrutinize the role of civil society actors in creating social integration of refugees. The hypothesis of this research project is that civil society bridges the gap between the propositions of the integration policies - system - and the actual integration process of the refugees in the labour market - lifeworld - (Habermas, 1996). Integration in the labour market and the consequent economic independence of refugees are the main elements that ensure their incorporation in the host society (Ager and Strang, 2008).

The aim of this thesis is relevant to the area of Sociology of Law because it addresses the impact that legal propositions, such as the integration policies, have in the integration of refugees in the labour market (cf. Deflem, 2008; Webley, 2019). The divergences that exist between the objectives of law and the reality of the law create the space for civil society to enter the debate. Researching the divergences that exist between the objectives of law and the reality of the law is one of the most typical issues that Sociology of Law tries to cover (Deflem, 2008). Using the Habermasian theories of civil society, lifeworld and system, and communicative action (Habermas 1984, 1996; Fleming, 2000, 2002) to address issues of refugee integration add to the socio-legal perspective that this research pursues.

Empirically, understanding civil society organization's ideas, views, and feelings about the establishment program will help me analyze how civil society works about the gap between the integration policies and the refugees' real needs. Bringing up the refugee issue again, after the hype of the "refugee crisis" passed, this research visibilizes the economic gap between native-born and refugees, and provides insights on how civil society can be of help in promoting integration.

Research question:

In what ways do civil society organizations bridge the gap between the propositions of the integration policies - system - and the actual integration process of the refugees in the labour

market - lifeworld ? How do civil society organizations create successful social integration of refugees?

1.4. Outline

The thesis will be divided into five sections. Section 1, Introduction, described the aim and research questions. Section 2, Background, provides the context of the establishment program and the Swedish labour market. Section 3, Literature Review, will analyze previous academic research in the field of integration of refugees in Sweden. Section 4, Theoretical Framework, will describe the theories that will inform the framework for my analysis. Section 5, Methods, will explain the choice of data and sampling, discuss limitations, and describe the use of methodology in data analysis. Section 6, Analysis, will code and interpret the results obtained through data collection, and will describe the role that civil society plays in integrating refugees in the labour market. Section 7, Conclusions, will summarize, point to the findings, and critically discuss how these have come about through method, material, and theory.

2. Background

This chapter includes a description of concepts such as Swedish exceptionalism, refugee, refugee crisis, refugee unemployment, and the reception system in Sweden. All of these elements will be of use to understand the background of the current integration policies in Sweden.

2.1. Swedish exceptionalism

For many years, Sweden has had a relatively open migration policy and an integration policy based on equal rights (Valenta and Bunar, 2010). This made Sweden become an international model known for its state of exceptionalism, which refers to the country's historically unique combination of tolerance, equality, universalistic social policy, and inclusionary multiculturalism promoted by a welfare society (Scarpa and Schierup, 2018).

Among the characteristics of the exceptionalist model, are to be found a liberal family reunification, accessible conditions towards obtaining citizenship, and a large degree of openness towards asylum seekers who flee violence from areas ruled by authoritarian regimes, repression, economic marginalization, and conflict (Schierup and Ålund, 2011).

Due to its openness and egalitarian values, Sweden was one of the top choices for humanitarian migration, until recent years. An example of this is that since the beginning of the new millennium, Sweden has been the country with the most asylum seekers per capita in the EU, representing about ten times more than the EU average (Emilsson, 2018). According to Scarpa and Schierup (2018), by September 2013, Sweden had become the first country in the world to offer permanent residency to all Syrians seeking asylum. However, one year later, it was said that Sweden was unable to properly handle the number of refugees and that migration was becoming unsustainable for the system (Ibid.).

2.2. Refugee crisis

"In 2013 and 2014, Sweden experienced a major increase in the number of new coming refugees and migrants when around 54,000 people in 2013 and over 81,000 people in 2014 applied for asylum" (Gustafsson and Johansson, 2018, p. 989). Continuing this trend, the years 2014 and 2015 brought the largest admission of asylum-seekers per capita ever recorded in an OECD country. This was named the "refugee crisis" and it was present in many European countries' political debates at the time (Statistics Sweden, 2020). The large number of asylum-seekers coming from Middle Eastern areas such as Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, or African regions such as Eritrea and Somalia lead to changes in the reception system (Gustafsson and Johansson, 2018).

The status of exceptionalism has also been affected in the early 2010s. In the 2014 election, the Sweden Democrats - a right-wing party with a populist ideology - was elected as part of the parliament which, in combination with the "refugee crisis" made it clear that Sweden was not going to be an exceptionalist state anymore (Rydgren and van der Meiden, 2018). Temporary measures were taken and a U-turn in asylum policy occurred the same year (Scarpa and Schierup, 2018).

In this context, and according to the UN Convention, Swedish legislation and EU regulations,

> a person is considered a refugee when they have well-founded reasons to fear persecution due to race, nationality, religious or political beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, or affiliation to a particular social group. (...) A person who is assessed as a refugee will be granted a refugee status declaration, which is an internationally recognized status, based on the UN Refugee Convention as well as EU regulations.

(Migrationsverket, 2021)

10

The strict measures meant that the only way for non-relocated refugees to change their status from temporary to permanent became that of obtaining financial self-sufficiency through employment-related income (Scarpa and Schierup, 2018). This element not only put in the spotlight the importance of refugees becoming economically independent but also made Sweden less attractive for asylum seekers. The main objective of these decisions was fulfilled with a drastic decline in the number of asylum seekers applying for refugee status: from a peak of 156,460 in 2015 to only 22,410 in 2016 (Statistics Sweden, 2020).

On the one hand, this policy change shifted the internationally praised idea of Sweden as a welcoming country for asylum seekers and refugees (Scarpa and Schierup, 2018). Nowadays, out of the 162,877 asylum seekers that the refugee crisis in 2015 brought along, only 60,501 have received a permanent residence permit and refugee status. On the other hand, the strict measures together with specific characteristics of the Swedish labour market were reflected in the unemployment rate.

According to Statistics Sweden's latest available studies (2020), only 32,126 refugees over the age of 15 have a stable job, whereas 9,970 refugees live out of study grants, and 18,405 live out of municipal maintenance support (Statistics Sweden, 2020). In 2016, 111,979 persons received a decision and 69,682 received a residence permit (77%), but only 17,000 were recognized as refugees, the rest were regarded as eligible for subsidiary protection (Migrationsverket, 2017).

2.3. Refugee unemployment

The refugees that fled persecution in 2015 were the group that received the most attention in the debate about employment in recent years. Unemployment statistics show that there has been an increasing division in the Swedish labour market depending on the country of birth. In general terms, 15% of the foreign-born people are unemployed compared to only 4,4% of the Swedish population having, therefore, a difference of almost 11% between the two (Statistics Sweden, 2020).

Studies about unemployment in Sweden have shown that the proportion of unemployed people born outside Europe has increased from over 10% in the early 2000s to almost 50% in 2018. In the spring and autumn of 2020, however, the proportion of unemployed people born outside

Europe has slightly decreased. This can probably be explained by an increasing number of unemployed among domestic-born in the wake of the pandemic (Galte, 2021).

2.4. Reception system in Sweden

The Act SFS 1994:137 on the reception of asylum seekers states that the responsibility for the asylum procedure and reception of asylum seekers relies on the Swedish Migration Agency with support from municipal and regional authorities in the reception program (SFS 1994:137).

The next step after being granted refugee status is to be placed in a municipality that will take responsibility for resettlement and housing (SFS 2016: 38), along with other municipal and national institutions. The Act 2010:197 sustains that "a newcomer has the right to receive an establishment plan within one year after they were first registered in a municipality. This right does not apply to a newcomer who has a full-time job, goes to high school, or who is not able to participate in the establishment program due to illness or any other physical or mental issues."

The same Act prescribes that

> Arbetsförmedlingen and the newcomer are to design the establishment plan, that is to last up to 24 month, in collaboration with the municipalities, authorities, and organizations concerned. It must contain adult education in Swedish for immigrants or equivalent education for those who have the right to participate in such education, social orientation, and activities to facilitate and accelerate the newcomer's establishment in the labour market." During the resettlement period, Försäkringskassan is responsible for providing the new coming refugees with economic support to cover for accommodation and monthly expenses.

(SFS 2010:197)

2.4.1. Activation policies

The activation policies are an umbrella concept for the shift in the integration law compared to the previous passive policies (Breidahl, 2017). Through the economic integration of refugees, the government aims at providing an active labour market policy, and welfare to work (Ibid.). This shift is present in the stronger emphasis on "active citizenship and a citizen–welfare state relationship", meaning more duties than rights for the refugees, and the replacement of the equal

opportunity principle (Ibid., p. 2). The relevance that these activation policies have for refugee literature is the new era that they marked in the welfare state in the 1990s (Ibid.).

The establishment program, as a part of the activation policies, "is a support in the form of activities and education for newly arrived refugees" (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2020, p. 1). According to Arbetsförmedlingen (2020, p. 1), the aim is "to learn Swedish, find a job, and become self-sufficient as quickly as possible". Some of the activities performed under this program are language training - Swedish for Immigrants - for those refugees who do not have basic skills in Swedish, and information is provided about where to find courses for those people who need to develop or build on their skills (Ibid.). Information can be provided also about the labour market and about how to validate competencies developed prior to moving to Sweden (Ibid.).

Civic integration policies refer to a group of policy areas that are an expression of immigrant incorporation in the recipient country and which lie under the activation policies (Ahlén and Boräng, 2018). These include economic and political integration, "citizenship tests, naturalization ceremonies, language and civic-orientation courses, and modules for role-playing social interaction" (Goodman, 2014 in Breidahl, 2017, p. 3). The role of these elements is to emphasize the newcomers' individual commitment to the knowledge, norms, and traditions that characterize the host country (Breidahl, 2017; Ahlén and Boräng, 2018).

Even though the civic integration field focuses on citizenship and long-term residence permits, it is not restricted to them. Some elements that need to be highlighted here are the functional, individual autonomy promoted by the state in order to ensure that newcomers become 'good citizens', and the ongoing process in diverse policy areas of the welfare state such as civic education, childcare services, and labour market activation (Breidahl, 2017, p. 3). The aim of the civic integration strategies is not to promote cultural affinity or assimilation among the newcomers but to stress the importance of functional autonomy within the societal context (Ahlén and Boräng, 2018).

2.4.2. Civil society

Civil society is recognized by the Government Offices of Sweden (2015) as an important actor in the integration of new coming refugees. Not only is it said that civil society does a great deal

throughout the country to help new arrivals establish themselves, but it is also considered as one of the main pillars in the establishment program, along with the institutional policies (Ibid.). Civil society organizations are supported by the government in order to facilitate their contribution to dignify the reception of refugees through activities such as language cafés, workshops for the development of professional skills, and leisure activities (Ibid.).

Civil society played an important role in the reception of asylum seekers during the decisive period of the second half of 2015 and part of 2016 (Pries, 2018). The lack of response from state authorities was met by the civil society organizations (Ibid.). In a first instance, state authorities were not able to provide the protection asylum seekers needed, instead traditional groups of care, rescue, and assistance like the Red Cross or church communities, existing non-governmental organization (NGOs), new networks and associations as well as spontaneous volunteering and political campaigning organized the bigger part of offering protection to arriving refugees (Ibid.).

As mentioned before, Sweden has a long history of civil society participation which started back in the 19th century (Wijkström, 2004). Migration and integration issues have also been present in political debates on the civil society sphere ever since the early 1900s (Scaramuzzino, 2012). According to Scaramuzzino and Suter (2020), the civil society organizations in Sweden usually have an advocacy perspective, rather than service. The authors describe that the civil society organizations emphasize volunteerism, fostering citizenship, social relations, and strengthening democracy. Furthermore, they are often funded by members rather than by the government which led them to keep a strong collaboration with public authorities. Consequently, umbrella organizations represent many civil society organizations at local, regional, and national administrative levels (Ibid.).

A recent need of handling challenges linked to integration of refugees together with a trend to privatize public services, determined civil society organizations to start providing services on behalf of public authorities, marking a shift with the previous advocacy-oriented perspective (Ibid.). In this sense, in the fields of migration and integration, Sweden has a wide range of civil society organizations oriented towards ethnic issues, solidarity, religion, sports, adult education, and human rights (Scaramuzzino and Suter, 2020).

In conclusion, with the beginning of the "refugee crisis", the Swedish exceptionalism came to an end and elements such as a liberal family reunification, accessible conditions for obtaining citizenship, or openness towards asylum seekers have taken a U-turn. With this turn in policy emerged a high rate of unemployment among newly arrived refugees that the Swedish reception system tried to integrate by implementing integration policies. In this process, civil society has been present in different shapes and forms: from providing urgent assistance to ensuring the development of new skills required by the labour market. Civil society organizations covered for the lack of response from state authorities and are still active nowadays in ensuring refugee integration through non-institutional actions.

3. Literature review

The aim of this literature review is to provide the resources to understand and evaluate the most important published work, and analyse the background concerning the activity of civil society organization in the integration of refugees. Inspired by Banakar's work (2019), this literature review will provide a critical analysis of the previous studies which capture the central concern, agreements and disagreements among researchers interested in refugee integration, civil society, and Swedish policies. Moreover, it will provide the grounds for the theories and methods that have been used to conduct similar studies in the past. In turn, it enables me to identify and define some key concepts and to reflect on how to develop my theoretical framework.

In order to perform a relevant literature review for the selected topic, the selected methods are the boolean search method used in academic databases, followed by the snowballing method (cf. Webley, 2019). The selected databases were Jstor, Google Scholar and EBSCOhost among others. The Boolean search method uses the words **and**, **or**, **not** to combine keywords and thus narrow the search results (Samuels, 2016). For the boolean method, relevant keywords were selected, such as "refugee", "refugee crisis", "migration", "welfare state", "Sweden", "labour market", "work", "integration", "civil society", "civil society organization".

Once the boolean method had provided me with a significant amount of texts, the collection of texts was completed through snowball sampling (cf. Samuels, 2016). Skimming and reading the initially selected texts, provided me with an insight into the field. Furthermore, it allowed me to understand what other authors have written about refugee integration, what theories are relevant

around civil society, and lastly it allowed me to grasp the key concepts used in this field.

Even though the field of this thesis project is Sociology of Law, my research does not limit itself to one particular discipline. Instead, while doing the literature review, I collected the most relevant studies irrespective of their disciplinary origins (cf. Banakar, 2019). Precisely that is the strength of this research since its design appreciates and incorporates the insights gained by other disciplines. Thus, most of the texts come from disciplines such as Political Science, Social Work, Migration Studies, Economy, and Sociology, among others.

3.1. Civil society agents during the refugee crisis

Civil society in Sweden has been studied previously (cf. Svedberg and Trägårdh, 2006; cf. Micheletti, 2019), but little attention has been paid to the services provided by civil society organizations in an effort to bridging the gap between governmental policies of integration and the refugees' challenges.

The "refugee crisis" has been under the spotlight in academic literature about civil society and refugee integration due to its impact in public policy (Rydgren and van der Meiden, 2018). Most research has been done on the grass-roots initiatives of 2015 (Frykman and Mäkelä, 2020), organizational networks of civil society organizations during 2015–2016 (Pries, 2018), and the roles of local religious communities in emergency cases in the refugee crisis (Lundgren, 2018). Frykman and Mäkelä (2020) analyze the way in which the moral and political dimensions of cosmopolitanism are intertwined in pro-refugee volunteering and activism. They provide an insight on duties of global justice in order to protect the universal human rights, and to reform unjust systems so that they are in line with cosmopolitan moral principles. Lundgren (2018) proposes a third role on the common distinction among the types of civil society organizations. Additionally to the roles of advocacy - what is communicated - and service - what is delivered - the religious role has become important during the refugee crisis in supporting a faith identity that involves religious values (Ibid.).

Continuing to keep the refugee crisis under the spotlight, academic literature has been found from a compassion perspective. Here, researches that address the compassion and perceptions of volunteers' own privilege (Mårs, 2016) or others who address questions of motivation that

moved volunteers to help out (cf. Mäkelä, 2016; cf. Rescala, 2016) are to be highlighted. On the same topic, I considered an article that focuses on the cooperation of multi-religious actors in the initial integration process of refugees (Bowen and Owen, 2019). Finally, Ideström and Linde (2019) bring on the table the collaboration between the local authorities and the Church of Sweden in order to run temporary accommodation for young asylum seekers. The religious authority, thus, has a twofold identity because it solves social problems with ethical awareness, supporting the welfare state, and it channels voluntary engagement for "the other" as part of civil society (Ibid.).

These texts provided an understanding of the different roles and perspectives that civil society organizations can adopt in their aim of creating social integration of new coming refugees. Following these texts, my research will focus on the advocacy-service perspective, thus discarding the religious organizations. Furthermore, the previously mentioned authors have proved how important the refugee crisis was in moving the host society in starting to think of multicultural values, and human rights, and in becoming active supporters of civil society. This thesis project aims at going a step further and researching the actions taken by civil society in scrutinizing the role of civil society actors in creating social integration.

3.2. Integration and multiculturalism

The concept of integration has been largely researched in different fields and it has proven to be problematic. In political science, it refers to the process of settlement, interaction with the host society, and social change that follows immigration (Penninx and Garcés-Mascareñas, 2016). The problem that this definition brings is the fact that it emphasizes the process of integration rather than defining an end situation. As such, it does not specify beforehand the degree of or the particular requirements for acceptance by the receiving society (Ibid.).

From the field of Refugee Studies, integration is divided into cultural integration, residential integration, economic integration and social integration of immigrants and refugees. According to Valenta and Bunar (2010), these sub-processes of migrant integration rest upon the context of reception which includes three elements: "the host government's policies toward immigrants; society's attitudes and prejudices about immigrants; and the qualities inherent in the immigrant community itself" (Valenta, 2009, p. 179).

From the same field, Ager and Strang (2008) highlight that in Sweden, integration has been seen as a process where policies made in the welfare state, and the labor market are the main elements that ensure a newcomer's incorporation in the target society. Until the 1990s, assimilation used to be the way in which newcomers were supposed to become part of the host society (Haberfeld and Lundh, 2014). This had been the answer to how marginalized groups, whose 'unsuitable' way of life was regarded as an obstacle, should become part of the Swedish society and achieve equal living conditions to the rest of the population (Borevi, 2014).

The assimilationist model involved the absence of conflict and the toleration of ethnic groups (Ager and Strang, 2008). However, immigrants and refugees expected that their community would actively mix people from different groups. Many additionally identified 'belonging' as the ultimate mark of living in an integrated community, involving links with family, friendships and a sense of respect and shared values (Ibid.). Such shared values would not deny diversity, difference and one's identity within a particular group, but provided a wider context within which people had a sense of belonging (Ibid.).

On the opposite pole, there is the multiculturalist model proposed by Kymlicka (Banting and Kymlicka, 2006), which emphasized communal autonomy as an essential element in helping individuals feel secure and free to function as citizens. This model is valid nowadays in Sweden because its egalitarian values are at the core of the state principles (Ahmed, 2014). Thus, members of minority groups, who are considered to be disadvantaged, are entitled to certain special protections (Ager and Strang, 2008).

Being considered a multiculturalist state, Sweden's integration policies aim at acknowledging the diversity among the population, and promoting, from there, the participation of newcomers in the host society. The Swedish welfare state accurately identifies a difference between economic migrants and refugees which is reflected in the extant integration policies: there are specific laws and policies that promote the integration of refugees as an independent group from those who migrate in search of a better economic situation (cf. Government Offices of Sweden, 2015). However, an element that seems to be forgotten when these policies are discussed and implemented are the difficult experiences that most refugees have been through and that can bring along mental health challenges (cf. Wieselgren, 2017). Trauma, torture, separation,

insecurity and uncertainty are more common among the refugees than in the host population (Ibid.). Additionally, the turn of the policy towards a more restrictive one has intensified some of the mental difficulties (Scarpa and Schierup, 2018) and could hinder integration.

3.3. Labour market

Despite existing several areas in refugee integration such as education or housing, in line with Castles et al. (2020), employment constitutes one of the most researched areas of integration. Its relevance lies in the fact that it provides refugees with the opportunity to develop language skills and to enjoy economic independence. Furthermore, it restores self-esteem, encourages self-reliance to plan for the future, and it provides refugees with a space where to interact with members of the host society.

An internationally known indicator, the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX), measures integration through elements such as: "family reunification, permanent residence, labor market mobility, anti-discrimination, education, political participation, health, and access to nationality" (Puschmann et al., 2019, p. 30). This index compares the integration policies of the EU member states and other countries by using 167 policy indicators. The objective that this index pursues is to "create a multi-layered picture of migrants' opportunities to participate in their new environment" (Puschmann et al., 2019, p. 30). Sweden, with an overall score of 87 percent in 2014, and 86 percent in 2019, is the highest-scoring country in the index. When breaking down the overall integration policy score by policy area, we note that Sweden scores very high on labor market mobility (MIPEX, 2020).

"Key aspects in this regard are the fact that in Sweden migrants can look for employment from the day they arrive as there are no distinctions made between Swedish and non-Swedish citizens in labor market regulations" (Puschmann et al., 2019, p. 30). Furthermore, newcomers are not obligated to pass any integration or language tests in order to acquire a prolonged residence permit which makes the Swedish model of integration lean on state support and recognition of immigrants' access to certain fundamental rights rather than coercive features of the civic integration policies (Borevi, 2014; Ahlén and Boräng, 2018).

However, the labor market integration of refugees is more challenging than that of economically motivated migrants. In most cases, the argument for this lies on the fact that refugees arrive with skills less adapted to the receiving country's economic needs and are, thus, less conducive to self-sufficiency through economic activity (Brell et al. 2020). Elements such as the length and the uncertainty of immigration duration can lead refugees to lose interest in investing in skills specific to the receiving country's economy (Ibid.; Sarat, 1990). This leads to them being disadvantaged in comparison to economic migrants and even more to the native-born in terms of employment and wages. In Sweden refugees appear to mostly close the employment gap with other immigrants after a decade in the country (Brell et al., 2020).

From a local perspective, in the city of Malmö - one of the most ethnically diverse cities in Europe - socio-economic integration measures are aimed at the entire population and not specifically at migrants (Dekker et al., 2015). Refugees struggle the most to enter the labor market compared to other migratory groups, and are more likely to be unemployed or have temporary jobs with generally lower incomes (Bevelander and Pendakur, 2009). The reasons for this have been debated to be deficiencies in human capital, such as native language skills, less access to mainstream networks, and discrimination by the majority population (Ibid.). For these reasons, humanitarian migration is indeed targeted with specific measures in Malmö (Dekker et al., 2015). Specific policy measures aim to address in the introduction programs for humanitarian migrants legal-political and socio-economic issues (Ibid.). However, these measures have proven not to be efficient since the responsibility has switched several times from national to local and vice versa (Ibid.), and civil society organizations needed to hop on in order to fill the lack of response from state authorities (Pries, 2018).

This literature review has been useful in locating the advocacy and service-oriented civil society organizations as the actors who aim to integrate refugees in the Swedish labour market after the boom of the refugee crisis. Civil society organizations do this by protecting universal human rights, and implementing effective ways of becoming an active part of society in line with moral principles of the multicultural model (Mäkelä, 2016; Banting and Kymlicka, 2006).

Specific policy measures promote the integration of refugees as an independent group from those who migrate in search of a better economic situation (cf. Government Offices of Sweden, 2015).

These policies aim to address the legal-political and socio-economic issues of humanitarian migrants (Dekker et al., 2015). However, these measures have proven not to be fully efficient for several reasons. In the first place, the responsibility has switched several times from national to local and vice versa (Ibid.). In the second place, these policies usually do not take into account the difficult experiences that most refugees have been through and that can bring along mental health challenges (cf. Wieselgren, 2017).

These two elements, together with society's attitudes and prejudices about immigrants (Valenta and Bunar, 2010) can difficult refugees' integration. Civil society organizations hop on in order to fill the lack of response from state authorities (Pries, 2018) and to provide further and more specific support to refugees. Furthermore, by taking these actions, civil society opens the space for discussion about human rights, reaching common goals among individuals and promoting democracy.

4. Theoretical framework

Jürgen Habermas is the point of departure for understanding and analysing the research problem proposed in this essay. In this section, I will introduce Habermas' theoretical perspectives on lifeworld and system, communicative action, and civil society. These theories will help elucidate the role that civil society organizations play in the integration of refugees in Sweden.

Jürgen Habermas - born 1922 - is a German social philosopher, a follower of the Frankfurt School. Habermas is considered one of the most influential thinkers of the second half of the twentieth century (Deflem, 2013). His work became internationally renown in the 1960s and, ever since, it combined philosophical aspirations with sociological interests in developing a critical social theory in the late-modern age while retaining a critical attitude towards the problems that societies face (Ibid.). Habermas' starting point was the marxist social theory of historical materialism and economy, however his work evolved mainly towards sociological theory. He would write about dichotomies between, on the one hand, action-theory, communicative action, and lifeworld and, on the other hand, systems theory, strategic action, and system (Ibid.).

This chapter will explain, in the first place, the Habermasian perspective on civil society and its connection with the public sphere. In the second place, Habermas' lifeworld and system theory

will be presented to understand the gap between lifeworld and system and how civil society, rooted in the lifeworld, binds the two of them together. In the third place, the theory of communicative action, which is at the core of civil society, creates the space for cooperation, mutual targets, and coordinated action between individuals whose ultimate goal is to reach democracy.

4.1. Theory of civil society

Habermas (1996) proposed the theory of the public sphere from the communicative perspective. In his perception, the public sphere is a social phenomenon - not an institution, not an organization - composed of public spaces. "The public sphere is differentiated into levels according to the density of communication, organizational complexity, and range - from the episodic publics found in taverns, coffee houses, or on the streets; through the occasional or "arranged" publics of particular presentations and events" (Habermas, 1996, p. 374). In the public sphere, people gather to communicate information and points of view in a free and inviting atmosphere where individuals act as peers (Ibid.). This atmosphere opposes the systematizing effects of the state and creates the proper medium for a dialogue between individuals (Fleming, 2002).

The public sphere is a "communication structure rooted in the lifeworld through the associational network of civil society." (Habermas, 1996, p. 359). Habermas' concept of the public sphere refers to the intermediate area of institutions and practices that lie between the private interests of daily life in civil society and the domain of the institutional system (Fleming, 2002). The public sphere is free of coercion and of inequalities that lead to the development of individual autonomy and create a politically relevant public opinion (Ibid.). At the core of this public sphere, there is a civil society constituted by voluntary associations, protected by basic rights, outside the sphere of the state and the economy (Habermas, 1996).

Civil society is also described by Habermas (1996) as the locus that limits the power of the state and where "social power comes into play only to facilitate the exercise of civic autonomy and not to restrict it" (Ibid. p. 175). Following the Habermasian definition of civil society, this research understands civil society organizations as actors within the public sphere that not only present the needs of society, but that also mobilize counter knowledge. The actions taken by the

civil society organizations produce alternative rational forms of understandings in their process of bridging institutional policies and refugees' integration. The rationalities produced by civil society about the institutional policies, inspire political actors to take collective action against the status quo (Habermas, 1984).

Public sphere, as a communication structure, is rooted in the lifeworld through the associational network of civil society (Ibid.). Habermas' concept of the civil society switched from the Hegelian conception where only members of the bourgeoisie were allowed to participate having their own economic interest as an aim. Instead, Habermas sees civil society as "a network of associations that institutionalizes problem solving discourses on questions of general interest inside the framework of organized public spheres" (Habermas, 1996, p. 367).

4.2. Lifeworld and system theory

Rooted in the public sphere, we find the lifeworld that for Habermas represents "the whole of cultural values, social norms, and socialization patterns that are normally unquestioned among actors but that, in fact, enable interactions to take place" (Deflem, 2013, p. 80). The lifeworld forms the horizon for speech situations and the source of interpretations, while it in turn reproduces itself only through ongoing communicative actions (Habermas, 1996).

Some examples of what the lifeworld contains are family life, culture, and informal social interactions or any other type of association we share with others. In the lifeworld, the social and personal life are to be found (Habermas, 1996; Deflem, 2013). Due to the communicative nature of this sphere of interpretation we can communicate and comprehend each other on a ground of shared meanings and understandings (Habermas, 1984).

On the other hand, Habermas (1984) proposes the concept of system. System is the sphere of common patterns of strategic action that serve the interests of institutions and organisations. In this sphere, money and power are the driving elements to the point where individuals are invisibilized and are treated by the economy as consumers and human resources (Fleming, 2002; Habermas, 1996). In this sphere, individuals are manipulated through instrumental action in order to perform certain activities that do not necessarily fit their interests. Strategic actions are also present on this point because they aim at achieving certain specific ends (Ibid.). Following

Habermas' dual understanding of society, the public sphere is rooted in the lifeworld, where civil society is found. This is the sphere of meaning, familiarity, interpretation, social life, and shared values among individuals. In this space, built as a communication structure, civil society organizations' actions take place (Habermas, 1984).

On this point, Habermas proposes an integrated concept of lifeworld-system to understand modernity (Fleming, 2012). The two spheres cannot be understood independently from each other because, in certain circumstances, they interact and tangle into each other through a process that Habermas calls colonization, but other times they uncouple and can act independently too. This makes the system, constructed to serve the society's technical interests, invade the sphere of the lifeworld (Fleming, 2002; Habermas, 1996). The system, thus, intervenes in the processes of meaning-making among individuals and communities in everyday life.

4.3. Theory of communicative action

Habermas (1984) introduces the theory of communicative action from a constructivist perspective. As opposed to strategic action where individuals are guided by an individual interest, communicative action aims at reaching common goals among individuals. Communicative action begins with the interaction of two subjects capable of speech and action who establish interpersonal relations, and who use interpretation to negotiate definitions of the situation (Habermas, 1984, p. 86). In this sense, communicative action happens in the lifeworld and it promotes coordination through consensus among individuals forming the society (Habermas, 1998).

The theory of communicative action, based on concepts such as cooperation, mutual targets, and coordinated action, connects the sphere of lifeworld to the sphere of system (Habermas, 1984). This connection together with the pursuit of joint goals, are the source from which democracy emanates. However, democracy presents some deficits too, and here is where Fleming (2002) states that civil society operates. The government is not fully representative of the needs of the refugees or the host society. The gap between actual democratic practices and the ideal is bridged by civil society which has the dual function of ensuring that "those who exercise power do not abuse it and of transforming the system to regenerate more democratic practices" (ibid. p. 6).

In conclusion, Habermas' constructivist approach to civil society and democracy makes his work central to my thesis. His perspective provides me with relevant theoretical tools for scrutinizing the role that civil society actors play in creating social integration of refugees. The author's vision of civil society as an agent rooted in the lifeworld that bridges the gap between the sphere of system and the sphere of lifeworld through communicative action is central to achieving the aim of this research.

5. Methods

The aim of this chapter is to describe the methodological considerations that have informed the thesis and to present the way in which the data collection has been performed. The first part outlines the approach of the thesis project, and includes a description of the data collection methods, the access to the field, and the participants' profile. The second part explains issues of reliability and validity. The third part draws upon the ethical considerations and challenges that have been faced during the process of data collection.

5.1. Qualitative approach

This research project uses a qualitative approach that adopts a flexible and data-driven research design (Hammersley, 2013). The reason for which this approach has been chosen is that subjectivity plays an essential role, which gives voice to the civil society professionals. By studying a small number of cases in detail through a verbal form of analysis, the qualitative interview, this research has been provided with first-hand knowledge about the activities provided by civil society (cf. Hammersley, 2013). The data collected under this approach will inform the aim of this research and provide answers to the research questions.

On this note, the qualitative approach intertwines the objective and subjective meanings. Civil society professionals are 'meaningful' actors whose actions take place in between the lifeworld and the system (cf. Habermas, 1996). As an agent that acts between two spheres but rooted in the sphere of meanings and interpretations (Ibid.), the meanings of civil society organizations' actions are inspected in this thesis. Their alternative ways of understanding mobilize counter knowledge, and place them on the sphere of communication (Ibid.), for which reason I consider the use of the qualitative method.

The qualitative interview method has been supported by participant observation sessions carried at online activities organized by civil society organizations. These methods and their impact in reliability and validity will be further described below. Additionally, the four parts in which this chapter is divided will explain how data are collected, selected, analysed, and how these data serve as an appropriate and comprehensive evidence base for later conclusions (cf. Drisko and Maschi, 2015).

5.1.1. Qualitative interview

The first method used for this research is the semi-structured - or unstandardized - interview (cf. Atkinson, 2017). This type of interview does not follow a strict schedule, instead I have tailored an interview guide - Appendix I - with a list of different subjects that are important in answering the research questions and that needed to be covered with the participants.

A total number of 10 qualitative interviews were conducted during the months of March and April 2021 with 10 participants who occupied different roles in civil society organizations. The two main categories were volunteers and professionals. Due to the current pandemic situation and in line with the government's recommendations, the interviews took place online, through Zoom, which allowed for a more structured and efficient approach.

Each interview lasted around 30 - 40 minutes during which the questions from the interview guide were addressed and discussed. All of the interviews have been recorded and transcribed with the interviewees' permission, after they have read and signed the participant consent form. While performing the interviews, I have been taking notes of relevant information that was not being discussed in the interview. I have also taken notes of important elements that the participants said after the interview and that, with their permission, have been used for the analysis.

The interview transcriptions have suffered some modifications that do not alter their content. These changes have eliminated unnecessary words that are common in oral language - uh, erm, well, so, etc. - but that do not add content to the message transmitted. In two of the interviews it was necessary to make some more modifications during the transcription because participants were not used to speaking English regularly and made grammatical errors at times.

The interview guide presents simple questions and descriptions of the subjects to be touched upon, which provided freedom and flexibility to move through the subject guide as needed (cf. Atkinson, 2017). This allowed me to decide which of the questions needed to be asked, in what order, and if some new ideas needed to be spontaneously included that might not have been included on the list. Conversely, some questions were ignored during the interview process because they were not relevant to be discussed with a particular interviewee, prioritizing other ideas instead.

Furthermore, as the data was being collected, the interview guide suffered modifications after certain topics became more or less relevant. Sometimes, the interviewees' feedback made me realise that certain questions were not relevant, which would make me question my interview guide and, when necessary, remove some of the topics. Other times I would observe that information was missing from a previously done interview, which would lead me to adding a new question for future interviews, to make sure that all the relevant topics are discussed. Since the research places civil society in the subjectivity sphere, the interviewees' perspective and feedback were important for the ethics of this thesis. This feedback helped me focus on the issues that were relevant to the research questions, to the project, and ultimately to the civil society agents. In some cases, extra information was needed from the interview that had not been discussed during the allocated time. In that case, the participants have been contacted again and addressed two or three questions that were answered through email.

The qualitative interview posed questions that addressed the research questions and the aim of this thesis project. Discussing directly with professionals and volunteers from civil society organizations provided relevant information that led to the scrutiny of the role of civil society actors in creating social integration.

5.1.2. Participant observation

Participant observation is a predominant method of data collection in anthropological studies, particularly in ethnographic studies (Kawulich, 2005). This method is divided into three phases: participation, observation, and interrogation. The advantage that this method presents is that it provides the researcher with ways to check for nonverbal expression of feelings, determine who interacts with whom, grasp how participants communicate with each other, and check for how

much time is spent on various activities (Ibid.). Participant observation provided support to the qualitative interviews and allowed me to understand what and how are the activities that the civil society organizations offer, how refugees benefit from these, what they learn from these programs, and how is the interaction between the providers of the activities and the refugees.

The method of participant observation has been applied during two online activities organized by different organizations. One of the sessions was developed during a language cafe activity where two refugees practiced Swedish with a volunteer. The second session was a CV preparation where one refugee was guided by a volunteer on how to improve their resume.

Applying the participant observation method was useful in observing situations that informants have described in interviews. Getting a closer understanding of how the activities they offer are developed made me aware of possible distortions or inaccuracies in the description provided by those informants (cf. Kawulich, 2005).

5.1.3. Access to the field

In order to find professionals who have experience in the area of refugee integration and labour market, I have scanned online organizations that work with these issues and I reached out to them via email and phone calls. I have, as well, reached out to professionals through my own network and used the snowball method.

To facilitate the approach, I have sent an email of introduction describing the project, the importance of the individual's perspective, and highlighting the relevance that the project plays in the academic community, civil society, and refugee rights (cf. Adams, 2015). This short introduction aimed to add legitimacy, to save time that would otherwise have to be spent explaining and justifying the research, and ultimately to lead the way towards a meeting (Ibid.). Furthermore, this introduction email informed the participants about the approximate time that they would be required to spend for the interview. This time has been calculated based on the interview guide that helped structure the interview process and led the conversation towards answering the main topics to be touched upon (cf. Adams, 2015.).

While performing the interviews, I have been invited by volunteers from two different organizations to take part in the activities they offer, namely a CV preparation session and a

language cafe. This allowed me to use participant observation as a secondary method of data collection that would support the elements discussed during the interviews.

5.1.4. Participants

The targeted participants were professionals and volunteers from civil society organizations that work with refugee integration in the Swedish labour market and society. The total number of participants was 10 of both professionals and volunteers. Most of the participants worked also with economic migration, other issues related to integration, and some of them even with immigrants' children and unaccompanied minors. Very few had experience strictly with refugee integration, for which reason I considered involving professionals that had experience in similar fields too as long as they worked with refugee integration simultaneously.

I consider this a strength of the data gathered because having more voices from different angles brings up new perspectives on the labour market integration issue. Drisko and Maschi (2015) sustain that a sample becomes maximally informative when the researcher provides a variety of viewpoints and social positions. This strengthens and enhances the rigor of the content analysis and provides a relevant range of meanings.

The selected participants were of both genders, men and women, and were from different origins. The selected sample intentionally included participants with different backgrounds in order to obtain a more rich and comprehensive perspective on the refugee issue. Furthermore, most of the participants had first hand experience with migration: they were refugees themselves, or their parents have fled war to Sweden as asylum seekers, or they were immigrants and second generation immigrants. This element has not been intentionally picked for the sample, however it does show a bigger engagement and interest on the refugee issue by people who have experienced fleeing war or migrating themselves.

Due to data protection, I will not reveal here any information that could lead to exposing the participants' identity. Elements such as their name, the organization they work or volunteer at, the name of the projects they are part of in those organizations, their age, or their country of origin will not be disclosed here.

The targeted entities were international, national, and local non-governmental organizations. They were all located in the cities of Lund and Malmö. From these organizations, I have interviewed both workers and volunteers. All the workers had around 2 - 5 years of experience with refugees who migrated and settled in Sweden during and after the refugee crisis, while the volunteers had been active in the organization for at least one year.

The reason for which organizations in Malmö and Lund were important for this research is the large number of refugees they work with. Because of its proximity to the Danish border, Malmö received the largest number of refugees during the crisis in 2015 (Rescala, 2016; Mäkelä, 2016; Dekker et al., 2015). Due to the fact that Malmö is one of the biggest cities in Sweden, makes it a preferred destination for settlement and employment among refugees both before and after the refugee crisis (Bevelenader and Pendakkur, 2009; Lundgren, 2018). Lund is smaller than Malmö, however it attracts many refugees thanks to its proximity to Malmö, and the international atmosphere that the university creates.

Civil society organizations are very active in both Lund and Malmö, as a result of students' commitment and volunteering. While civil society organizations in Lund are active in the student sphere - they provide professional opportunities and networking for students - in Malmö they attract mainly activists and professionals, but students are very involved too.

The targeted civil society organizations work with refugees who have gone through the establishment program at some point in their resettlement process, therefore the professionals and volunteers have knowledge about the integration policies, and about the struggles that refugees face during resettlement.

Professionals from civil society organizations normally hold leadership roles. Their tasks, among others, are to network with other organizations, to write project proposals and apply for funding from governmental institutions, and to coordinate volunteers' activities. They have experience and knowledge about public policies and their impact in refugees issues. Volunteers have different tasks compared to the professionals, focusing mainly on developing monthly, weekly or daily activities proposed in the organisation's plans. Since the volunteers are in direct contact with refugees during the development of these activities, they have much knowledge about how these activities can be useful for them and in which ways have helped the refugees integrate.

5.1.5. Data analysis

The first step to analyze the collected data was to transcribe all the interviews. Transcribing helped recall the events and the context of the interview, and it started the process of analysis by making note of details (Blair, 2016). All the interviews were transcribed in one step, after which the coding process started.

The second step was to code the data in order to interpret it and make sense of it. I chose a thematic coding where I classified the data based on color codes of the services provided by civil society targeting refugees. During this decontextualization step, I separated the data from its original context and assigned codes that helped categorize the data into meaningful parts (cf. Blair, 2016).

The last step was to interpret this coded data, in other words, to assign meaning and interpretations based on the theory selected for this research.

5.2. Reliability and validity

Validity addresses whether the data was collected accurately and reflects the phenomena under inquiry (Hammersley, 1987). The use of two methods of data collection enhances the validity of the research findings. Thus, the examination of the actions taken by civil society organizations in refugee integration are observed and analyzed in a more comprehensive way through participant observation and semi-structured interviews (cf. Jordan, 2018).

Reliability focuses upon the reproducibility of the data produced by the research instruments involved (Hammersley, 1987; Jordan, 2018). However, interpretivist and qualitative based analysis does not necessarily seek generalization but rather transferability (Hammersley, 1987). This research focuses on specific cases and details that have to do with the actions taken by civil society organizations and their understanding of the role they play in refugee integration. Due to the high level of interpretation and subjectivity contained in this research, generalising my findings may not be possible from a quantitative point of view. However, by combining the use of two qualitative methods, this research adds extra depth beyond the sum of the research project's parts (cf. Jordan, 2018). For example, discussing with civil society representatives and volunteers the challenges refugees face provided a deeper understanding of what integration

elements are not covered by the integration policy. Furthermore, observing the activities organized at the NGOs provided knowledge on how specific can be the needs of refugees in certain situations.

Furthermore, this research does not rely on universal laws, but on the subjective meanings created by the civil society thus, subjective meaning is at the core of this knowledge (cf. Aspers and Corte, 2019; cf. Banakar and Travers, 2013). Another element of this thesis is that predictability is impossible due to the constant change in time and space of the studied community, which means that the outcome will have the form of specific cases and interviews from civil society agents (cf. Aspers and Corte, 2019).

5.2.1. Biases

One of the biases that could have influenced the study question, data collection, and data analysis is my previous experience volunteering in civil society organizations. The organizations where I volunteered were located in other countries and my experience involved mainly working with economic migrants and international students. However, refugees have specific needs and go through a different process of settlement compared to that of economic migrants or international students. The assumption that refugees could have similar characteristics in their settlement process or in their challenges could appear in the analysis of this thesis.

A second bias that could influence this research is my own experience migrating along with my parents during my childhood. Having a migrant background has been present throughout my life and it allowed me to be in contact with other migrant groups. However, most of my experience has been in migration within European countries. This could influence the research by having a distorted idea of the process of asylum seekers fleeing war from a different continent.

5.3. Ethical considerations

As discussed by Drisko and Maschi (2015), in qualitative content analysis, the researcher is the instrument of coding and analytic decisions are important elements of the research process. This part will discuss the use of the informed consent in my research project and the limitations or challenges encountered.

5.3.1. Informed consent

Prior to scheduling interviews with the participants, information about the research project has been provided in written format. The informed consent is an important part of performing qualitative research through participatory methods (Israel, 2015). The research participants need to understand, first, that they are authorizing someone else to involve them in the research and, second, they need to be aware of what they are authorizing (Ibid.).

For this purpose, information sheets have been provided to the participants that included the purpose, relevance, methods, and expected outcomes of the research, including whether and how results might be disseminated. These sheets were read and signed by the participants before proceeding with the interview, where they have been informed about anonymization of their identity and provided the time and space for any further questions. This procedure assured the autonomy, and voluntary participation of the interviewees who were fully aware that they were free to leave at any point and are not subject to any type of coercion or manipulation (Israel, 2015).

5.3.2. Limitations

In the first place, the current pandemic has created the limitation of not being able to meet in person. This did not allow for mixed methods or the use of any other method than interviews which have been performed through the online platform Zoom. The advantage of using this platform is that the interview process becomes much more efficient, on point and easy to record. However, the downside of this is that online interaction does not allow us to fully understand body language and the interaction lacks certain elements such as spontaneity.

In the second place, not being able to speak Swedish created a linguistic barrier for me. Even though most civil society actors speak English and were willing to perform the interview in this foreign language, I saw myself in the position where I could not interview one prospective participant because of the language barrier. On the other hand, some of the participants who agreed to be interviewed in English did not have the same level and confidence, thus I conclude that I might have missed certain elements of language that would have been present if the participants could have spoken Swedish. However, this linguistic barrier did not prevent me from reading and understanding academic articles and institutional policies in Swedish.

In the third place, some of the participants required access to the interview guide before acceding to perform an interview. Sending out the interview guide to these participants worked both as a limitation and as a strength. On the one hand, it was a strength because participants had the chance to prepare beforehand and to provide useful information that otherwise they might have not remembered on the spot. On the other hand, it came out as a limitation because some of the prospective participants decided not to take part in the research anymore because they considered not to have the knowledge to answer all of the questions on my interview guide, even though not all of the questions were going to be addressed necessarily. Furthermore, there was a lack of spontaneity among the participants that decided to continue with the interview process after they read the interview guide.

6. Presentation of material and analysis

This chapter will present the data gathered through interviews and participant observation, and provide an analysis based on the theoretical framework. Through the content analysis of the transcriptions of the interviews, the notes taken during the interview process, and the notes from participant observations, these are the topics that kept emerging in the role played by civil society in refugee integration:

1. System (in)efficiency

2. Language skills

3. Network

4. Skills development

5. Leisure activities

6. Mental health and wellbeing

These six categories of analysis have been highlighted due to their relevance during the interviews. The first category, system (in)efficiency was used to present an introduction of first-hand experiences of refugees who entered the Swedish system and have gone through the establishment program themselves. Even though this reality has been briefly described at the beginning of this paper, a description of participants' experiences was relevant to provide a

background for the need of the actions taken by civil society. This marks the starting point for the following analysis.

The above mentioned topics will be analysed and discussed in the following sub-chapters. Research has shown, so far, that elements that come in the way of refugees' integration process are, on the one hand, the fact that refugees arrive with skills less adapted to the receiving country's economic needs (Brell et al. 2020). On the other hand, the length and the uncertainty of immigration duration can lead refugees to lose interest in investing in skills specific to the receiving country's economy (Ibid.; Sarat, 1990).

Research suggests that most of the activities relevant for the integration of refugees and the development of useful skills are developed by civil society organizations (Government Offices of Sweden, 2015). Among others, there are language cafes, workshops for the development of professional skills, and leisure activities such as sports or cook-alongs for children and adults (Ibid.). The lack of response from state authorities towards the real needs of refugees is filled by civil society organizations one more time, following the same pattern as during the refugee crisis (Pries, 2018).

6.1. System (in)efficiency

The first point that has been highlighted during the interviews was the inefficiency of the integration policy and of the bureaucratic system. The duration of the reception and settlement process of new coming refugees can be long and uncertain, which often leads refugees to losing interest in investing in skills specific to the receiving country's economy (Sarat, 1990). The reason for which I considered it relevant to discuss this point as part of the analysis is that it has been mentioned in the majority of the interviews, and civil society agents are aware that the integration policies can be inefficient sometimes, which makes civil society step in.

The Act 2010: 197 states that the establishment program is meant to promote communication between the newcomer and an employment officer at Arbetsförmedlingen in order to plan together activities that best suit the refugee. The aim is for him/her to be able to learn Swedish and find a job as quickly as possible, in order to be independent (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2020). Some of the activities that this program is said to provide are language training for those refugees

who do not have basic skills in Swedish and information about where to find courses for those people who need to develop or build on their skills (Ibid.). Information can, supposedly, also be provided about the labour market and about how to validate competencies developed prior to moving to Sweden (Ibid.). After this step, a plan is said to be put together where the Arbetsförmedlingen officer mediates between the refugee and the labour market, trying to find a workplace for him/her based on the demonstrated abilities and the employment availability (Ibid.).

Fatima, who is a refugee herself and now works in an NGO in Lund, took part in the establishment program when she was granted the refugee status.

> I was involved in this sort of matching to search for a job. It was called Work for You and they (at Arbetsförmedlingen) were supposed to search for a job for me. Instead they did CV for me only, they didn't really help me find a job. I wasn't involved in activities where to search for a job. And then I had, I chose something different, I just left arbitrarily and I chose to study at the university.
>
> (Fatima, civil society organization volunteer)

From Fatima's interview it can be concluded that the expectations that the establishment program creates are not always fulfilled. After the interview, Fatima described her experience at Arbetsförmedlingen to have been impersonal and time consuming, since she needed to attend many appointments with different officers which did not necessarily lead her to finding a job nor learning the language. She sustains that, despite her negative experience seeking employment, the economic support provided by the establishment program was useful at the beginning of her stay as a refugee:

> (...) for the first two years, you get paid like almost 6000 kronor per month, or something like that, depending on the situation, and then it changes with time, it becomes less and less, depending on what you do, or how long you have been in the establishment program. I was happy to get this because at the beginning it is difficult if you don't know the language, so at least you have some time to find a job, but this money is not the solution.
>
> (Fatima, civil society organization volunteer)

Mohammed describes a similar experience to that of Fatima's about the establishment program, he especially emphasizes the feeling of wasting time:

I remember something: one time, I got an opportunity to join one course in Arbetsförmedlingen as part of the establishment program. When they described it to me everything felt amazing. Like I've got the opportunity to study at Lund University, something related to public administration. It was a long process which took nine months, I read some books and took many tests. We were 330 people applying to this and I was one of the 16 people who finished the program. The program, after nine months, didn't give me any credit. (...) I cannot say that I regret it but, you know, sometimes I feel like I wasted nine months in this program which gave me nothing at all in the end.

(Mohammed, civil society organization volunteer and professional)

Feeling the program to be a waste of time and experiencing frustration seem to be common among refugees who go through the establishment program. The program's agenda does not seem to be followed and it is not efficient in promoting refugee's integration into the society.

Farid's experience illustrates the volatility of the job market opportunities available to refugees:

I think that the Arbetsförmedlingen labour market department does not help apply to find a job, instead they refer the person who doesn't have education to send him to SFI to Komvux to study the language for two years. After two years, they give him two other years with less support with little guarantee of development. After that they will start to send that person to companies that help them to find jobs.

(Farid, civil society organization professional)

The extra tjänst contract aims to ensure refugees' integration in the labour market by paying their salary in exchange for their labour in an organization or company (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2020). Their job there is considered to be an internship where they have first contact with the Swedish labour market. Normally, these contracts last for up to two years and they are strategy within the integration policies to lower the unemployment number among refugees (Ibid.).

As described by Farid in his interview, the problems that this type of contract brings along are the low salaries, the lack of connection between the jobs and the refugee's background, and the unemployment that comes afterwards. The employer is normally interested in employing a refugee only as long as the government pays for their economic support. When the support finishes, the employer does not prolong that refugee's contract, and instead employs a new refugee who will also start with an extra tjänst contract. Even if the idea and aims behind the extra tjänst contract can be positive, the result can have the opposite effect in practice.

In the system rationality (Habermas, 1996) the extra tjänst contract is implemented to give refugees the chance to learn about the Swedish labour market and have a fresh start in a company

where they can grow professionally. The economic support is part of the integration policy but it only lasts while the refugee is considered dependent on it (SFS 2010: 197). There is an economic rationality behind it that aims at speeding up the integration in the labour market of refugees so they would stop relying on the state support as soon as possible. The principles of the integration policy emanate from this economic rationality where the refugees are seen as a load that all the tax contributors have to carry. The system motivates the refugees to become economically independent to shorten this load as much as possible.

On the other hand, in the lifeworld (Habermas, 1996), the extra tjänst contracts lead to unemployment and to low-paid jobs. According to the interviews, this type of contract seems to be beneficial only for the hiring company because they do not need to pay the refugee, instead the government pays for their salary and the company benefits from free labour. After the agreed period, the refugee will probably become unemployed again and will restart the cycle of integration in the labour market.

This is a proof that lifeworld and system are tangled (Habermas, 1996). In the system sphere, the extra tjänst contracts have been created by the government to cover a societal need. In the lifeworld, both employers and refugees benefit from the existence of this type of contract, however on different levels. Employers benefit from this contract by using an instrumental rationality to ensure free labour force for their company, while refugees accept this contract as a first step in the labour market. The disconnection between the aims of the extra tjänst jobs and the reality in the lifeworld points out a lack of communicative rationality between the two spheres.

Civil society tries to limit the power of the system (Habermas, 1984) by not seeing refugees only as a burden that can be exploited, but rather as human beings that have needs. The inefficiency of the system sphere is addressed by civil society through the programs they promote, and that will be described in the following paragraphs. Civil society operates from the idea that the government is not fully representative of the people, which creates a gap between actual democratic practices and the ideal (Fleming, 2000, p. 306). By lying at the core of the public sphere, it opens up the discussion about equality and access to services for all members of the society. "Civil society has the dual function of ensuring that those who exercise power do not

abuse it and of transforming the system to regenerate more democratic practices" (Fleming, 2000, 306). Through the programs it offers, civil society's aim is to oppose the systematizing effects of the state and to create the proper medium for a dialogue between individuals through communicative action (cf. Fleming, 2002; Habermas, 1984). It does this by bridging lifeworld and system through voluntary associations outside the sphere of the state and the economy (Habermas, 1996).

6.2. Language skills

Language skills are the most frequently mentioned element in all of the interviews and it is recurrent in the literature review as well. The integration policy focuses on providing refugees with access to Swedish language training through SFI (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2020; Government Offices of Sweden, 2015).

> Arbetsförmedlingen job office (...) refers the person who doesn't have education or Swedish language to SFI at Komvux to study language for two years. This is mandatory so they receive the economic aid. After two years, they give him two more years with less economic support.

> (Jamal, civil society organization professional)

Gunilla maintains that learning the target language is not only useful to find employment among adults but also to avoid overcharging their kids with tasks that involve translating and interpreting daily life situations for their parents.

> When you don't learn the new culture and the new language, children become parents for their own parents because they have to interpret as soon as you go to the doctor or if you have to be in contact with a social worker or whatever. The children are translating for their parents. And that's not fair for the children. They need their parents to learn Swedish to deal with adult situations themselves.

> (Gunilla, civil society organization volunteer)

Mohammed provides an insight on how tedious it can become to try to learn Swedish through the formal system, following the course Swedish for Immigrants provided by Arbetsförmedlingen:

> After three months normally students finish the SFI 1, and they want to go more and study Swedish more. These refugees I was working with, they discovered that the next course is going to start after four months, but they couldn't wait four months, it was such a waste of time.

<div align="right">(Mohammed, civil society organization volunteer and professional)</div>

Just as Mohammed described during the interview, many refugees find themselves in the situation where they need to queue for a long time. They continue to receive economic support from Arbetsförmedlingen, however the policy does not seem to accomplish its aim. The length of the queue to start participating in SFI and the long wait between levels, popularized language cafes, or språkcafe in Swedish.

> We have the language cafe, which is very successful, where refugees can practice any language, but now we have more demand for Swedish of course, and English sometimes.

<div align="right">(Eva, civil society organization volunteer)</div>

As noted during my participant observation session at the online language cafes, these language cafes provide the space for language learners to practice their target language in a distressed environment. Normally, there is a leader who brings up topics to talk about in the target language, and helps the learners whenever they need so. They are not formal classes, but rather gatherings of people who want to learn and practice a language with native and non-native speakers.

Fatima explains how immigrants practice the Swedish language at the language cafes:

> A big part of our activities focus on learning the Swedish language, and I feel that this is a good way to improve a language through going to a language cafe. There is an agreement with the schools and this organization sometimes, because some participants from SFI are taken to the language cafes. People learn to lose the fear of speaking with natives, and get to practice the language in a natural environment.

<div align="right">(Fatima, civil society organization volunteer)</div>

The naturality described by Fatima in her interview was supported by my own experience during the participant observation session. At the language cafe I attended, there were two participants led by one language facilitator. I have been informed that these groups can have different sizes, depending on the popularity of the language, the schedule, and the availability of the participants. Swedish was the language practiced by this group, and the session took place at a relaxed pace. The language facilitator would provide several topics to discuss and would assist

the speakers when they have difficulties in finding a word. The whole interaction would take place mainly in Swedish, however sometimes the facilitator would switch to English when the participants did not understand him. Visual material such as digital images or videos would be shown by the facilitator in order to support the topic of the conversation and to avoid the use of English as much as possible. Some of the topics of the conversation were hobbies, cultural shock in Sweden, and traditions from other countries. The participants seemed to be enjoying the conversation while sharing some of their experience and ideas. They were free to interact whenever they wanted to or to just stay quiet in case the topic was not necessarily interesting. The facilitator made sure that everyone was able to follow the conversation and provided supplementary descriptions when someone did not understand what was being discussed.

Being rooted in the lifeworld, language cafes offered by civil society organizations through communicative action, do not have teachers or grammar books (cf. Habermas, 1996). Instead, foreigners from all backgrounds - from refugees to international students - reunite to have some tea or coffee while they participate in informal conversations in a different language. As Eva said,

> English language cafes are very popular too, but they target mainly refugees because most of the time they did not learn it back home, but they need it here in Sweden. At almost every job interview they ask you to speak both English and Swedish, so refugees participate usually in both language cafes.

<div align="right">(Fatima, civil society organization volunteer)</div>

But English and Swedish are not the only languages taught at language cafes. Some of the interviewed associations also offer other internationally renown languages such as Italian, Spanish, French or Chinese. Furthermore, civil society organizations emphasize the importance of learning the language from the country of origin. Most adults know their language well, but some families relocated to Sweden when their kids were very young or who had kids after moving, and they did not learn the language before.

> We organize language cafes for people to practice mainly Swedish and English, but we also have a program for the small kids that focuses on teaching them their mother tongue. Small kids between 6 years old until 12 years old or 13 years old come to classes to learn their mother language which is Arabic and Farsi. (...) It is important that they have access to these classes to learn about their country of origin, and to talk with their parents and other relatives or friends in their own language.

(Jamal, civil society organization professional)

While Swedish and English are important to be learnt in order to find employment and to perform daily activities, civil society organizations perceive the mother tongue as equally important. Kids need to learn Arabic to communicate in their own language at home or when relatives visit. Furthermore, Arabic is used in certain programs to create cohesion inside the group and share information efficiently. Mohammed says that he

> created the Book Club project for the Arabic speaking people. My idea was because I felt so lonely, and I didn't have anyone to talk to and that affects me very much, so I thought about other people that can have the same situation. My idea was to create a space where people can feel comfortable using their own language to share information about the Swedish society, and read books together.

(Mohammed, civil society organization professional and volunteer)

He continued explaining how doing this led him to teaching the Swedish language to Arabic speakers by using Arabic as the teaching language. This proved to be very useful and well received by the refugees because even beginners could understand and follow the instructions. The group was thus much more committed to learning the Swedish language and learning about Swedish culture and society. Mohammed continues explaining that language is not just a sum of grammar rules:

> Refugees need Swedish to find a job in Sweden. Language is not about reading or writing, it's also about communicating with others, it's about practicing it nearly every day. So only knowing the language and its rules is not enough. It's very important to listen and see how Swedish people use it, and take recommendations and tips on how to use body language too.

(Mohammed, civil society organization professional and volunteer)

Although some employment positions accept Arabic speakers, these are quite rare and they are usually to be found only in retail. Linnea explains that

language is normally a barrier for refugees. It's easier if they know English or Swedish. Sometimes, of course, people can get work just by talking in their mother tongue, if they get work at a place where the boss is originally from the same country, but it's a bit more complicated. At Arbetsförmedlingen most jobs are for Swedish speakers and only some for English speakers.

<div align="right">(Linnea, civil society organization professional)</div>

Civil society has a pluralistic perspective on the way it addresses the language exchange where a few points are to be highlighted. In the first place, informality and naturality are the main characteristics of the language cafes. The fact that there is no use of manuals, books or grammar rules, but rather a focus on conversations shows the closeness of civil society to the sphere of lifeworld (cf. Habermas, 1984). In the lifeworld rationality (ibid.), Swedish skills are important in order to gain economic independence and autonomy to be able to plan for one's future. Plans such as investing in real estate or ensuring family reunification for their relatives back home are common among refugees (Schierup and Ålund, 2011; Puschman et al., 2019). Additionally, interaction with the host society and the establishment of a new social network in the host country is also desired by refugees and present in the lifeworld rationality.

In the second place, there is the idea of protecting refugees' human rights by including their mother tongue as a means to teach the new language(s) or to transmitting it to children. Arabic is the language in which many refugees feel comfortable and can express themselves, for which civil society organizations consider support in their mother tongue especially important at the beginning of their stay in Sweden. However, Arabic is not described only as a complement to refugees' integration, but as a language that needs to be preserved and that provides cohesion to groups. One of the roles of civil society, as an organization embedded in the public sphere is to protect human rights as a way of presenting the needs of society, and mobilizing counter knowledge (cf. Habermas, 1996).

In the system rationality, it is assumed that Swedish skills will be developed by refugees because of the economic incentives that make SFI courses a mandatory part of the establishment program (SFS 2010: 197). Furthermore, the knowledge of Swedish language is only seen in the system rationality as a way of ensuring refugees' economic independence from state support. These measures proved to be inefficient at times due to the long wait in queues to access the education and the lack of motivation to continue learning that language that the long waits produce among refugees.

In the third place, efficiency stands out as the reason why the language cafe programs were born. In an attempt to substitute the long wait in lines that refugees had to face to become involved in SFI programs, civil society organizations started offering language cafes. However, efficiency is not the only reason for this. Through communicative action, civil society pursues common goals among individuals (Habermas, 1984) and to infuse values such as solidarity and equality (Fleming, 2000). Here, civil society uses communicative action to get an understanding of what are the needs in lifeworld and system, and to bridge these two through a coordinated action. Language cafes came out as the result of the needs of refugees to develop language skills as a strategy to become economically independent - system rationality - and an active member in society able to establish a network - lifeworld rationality.

Lastly, language cafes are said to offer a program adapted to the needs and level of the participants. However, by using alternative methods of teaching where grammar rules or manuals are not used, language cafes end up relying heavily on conversational skills and are seen by the participants as a way to socialize and network. Communicative action is employed by civil society to understand the needs of refugees and to bridge lifeworld and system (Habermas, 1984).

Civil society organizations observed that refugees need access to language teaching because SFI courses are not sufficient. In order to cover this need, they released the language cafes that bridge the two spheres by meeting both ends needs: available and free of charge language training for refugees that lowers the load on the system sphere (Habermas, 1996). Consequently, refugees who develop this skill will have easier access to networking and to the labour market. The chance to network, or to develop technical skills are now integral parts of most civil society programs that began with language cafes. In the next parts of the analysis, these programs, along with their effect in society, will be discussed.

6.3. Network

Having a strong network is key to finding employment in Sweden, but new coming refugees did not have the chance to build it (Bevelander and Pendakur, 2009). Ethnic enclaves have proven to create opportunities for immigrants to become self‑employed (Andersson and Hammarstedt, 2015). Newcomers from a certain group have an advantage in serving the needs of customers

from their ethnic group (ibid.) however, this normally restricts refugees from accessing any other professional fields. One of the explanations for lower positions in the labour market among refugees compared to the native-born is the lack of access to social networks with valuable resources (Behtoui, 2008). Social networking becomes important for refugees from an early stage. This importance lies not only in them finding a job but also in avoiding social isolation and marginalization.

> I strongly believe that if you come to Sweden, you will not get the support that you need (from governmental institutions) because there is a belief that people should integrate by themselves, but then we don't give them the tools to do so, and then we're mad about that. Of course, we give them the opportunity to learn the language, but becoming part of a society is so much more than that. We need to make sure that refugees have social platforms to get to know people in their neighborhood, both from their country of origin and from Sweden. Otherwise, there is the risk for refugees to become marginalized.

(Amira, civil society organization professional)

The combination between language skills and the development of a network is crucial in the endeavour of finding a job. These two elements are supported and promoted at the civil society organization where Amira works:

> Our aim is to make sure that people have an opportunity to learn the language, an opportunity to talk to people. In that way, they will get a broader network which is vital in Sweden, you will not get a job if you don't know the language. So I think it's kind of filling in a void in that way, instead of maybe focusing only on the labor market. (...) Most of our projects are focused on what we can do in order to help integration or help people feel more secure in Sweden (...) and we help people connect through different activities.

(Amira, civil society organization professional)

Group support and success stories for newcomers proved to be a positive way of promoting the creation of networks between refugees, immigrants, and native-born. In Sweden, recruiters are known to use social media platforms often. Social media provides the space for employment seekers to share their skills and get noticed by companies that need those skills. The civil society organization where Eva volunteers, promotes the use of social media for this purpose and shows how it can be used in order to get noticed and, eventually, find employment:

> I'm responsible for a project where we discuss our experiences living in Sweden. We also have a speaker that can share his or her experience here, maybe if the speaker already has done many things, or found a job, or just to share some useful tips and advice. And the important thing is to connect. The easiest thing is to connect through social media platforms and build the network. Professional social media apps are widely used in Sweden, people search jobs there and employers search for workers.

<div align="right">(Eva, civil society organization volunteer)</div>

In Mohammed's experience as a volunteer, civil society offers refugees a good network that governmental institutions can not provide:

> I experienced that civil society has a better network, a functional network. Civil society representatives have concrete knowledge, this true image about reality about society. They know how the situation is in the work market. I experienced myself that people at Arbetsförmedlingen don't know a lot about the work market. Instead, people in civil society knew more about how to find the work and how to connect with employers. Civil society can give better tips and recommendations.

<div align="right">(Mohammed, civil society organization professional and volunteer)</div>

Network was one of the elements that has been discussed the most all over the interviews. Language skills are important for finding a job in Sweden, but having a strong network is vital. Sweden has a welfare system based on trust and reciprocity that is reflected in human interaction and consequently in the way of finding employment. Native-born tend to find employment through informal methods and tend to be much more successful doing it this way compared to immigrants (Behtoui, 2008).

In this regard, civil society aims at covering this lack of a network by providing different activities that can lead refugees to building a network. From specific activities, such as webinars or presentations where recruitment companies introduce the labour market options, to more general activities, such as language cafes or experience sharing panels where the refugees can come in contact with other immigrants or natives.

> We see it as an exchange where everyone has the opportunity to get to know people from another background. It is amazing because the two groups teach each other new things. I think it's about the Swedish society getting close to other people, welcoming other people, but also for them (the refugees) to have an open mind.

<div align="right">(Amira, civil society organization professional)</div>

In the system rationality (cf. Habermas, 1996), network is not mentioned as an element that would ensure integration. This can be due to two reasons. On the one hand, it is irrelevant

because the system sphere operates from an economic rationality, promoting refugees' economic independence from the state. On the other hand, it is difficult to create and implement a law that has networking as an aim.

From an economic perspective, building a strong network is key to finding employment in Sweden, a country whose welfare system is based heavily on trust and reciprocity (Bevelander and Pendakur, 2009; Behtoui, 2008). Through communicative action (Habermas, 1996), civil society links system rationality with the lifeworld sphere. The understanding of a need that can not be satisfied by the system leads civil society organizations to create programs that address both spheres (Ibid.).

On the lifeworld sphere, network is important from a social perspective. New coming refugees are exposed to the risk of isolation or even marginalization during the resettlement process. Feeling at home, having friends and acquaintances to socialize with, and understanding the host society culture become vital at the beginning of the resettlement. Civil society, as the locus that limits the power of the state and that affects the transformation of the political system (Habermas, 1984) promotes the creation of networks between refugees, and refugees and the host society.

The members of the host society also benefit from networking with refugees thanks to the intercultural exchange. The exchange of ideas, knowledge and language is beneficial for the native-born because it leads to normalizing the existence of foreign-born people and the society would ideally become more open-minded and welcoming towards other cultures. Additionally, from an economic point of view, the host society would learn through these networks what are the skills that refugees have that can be employed in the labour market and what labour availability there is among them. A negative effect that this could have on the refugees is that employers could use these networks to be on the lookout for cheap and easily exploitable workforce.

In this case, civil society creates something that does not exist in the system rationality but that appears as a need. Networking is not reflected in the integration policy however, it is needed to ensure its main aim which is refugee economic independence (SFS 2010: 197). Civil society is not only a bridge between the two rationalities but it is also an agent that offers alternative

rational forms of understandings that inspire political actors to take collective action against the status quo (Habermas, 1984). By putting on the table the need for programs that promote networking, civil society brings up the discussion about the efficiency of the integration policies. Again, elements such as democracy and solidarity are present in this debate when accessibility to a network is made available to refugees.

6.4. Skills development

Along with language and network development, civil society also provides support with developing other skills that can be useful for refugees' settlement in Sweden. In some aspects, the two societies - origin and host society - can be very different from one another. According to the interviewees, a large amount of non-educated refugees do not have computer skills or have never written a CV for a job application. Representatives at civil society organizations observed the need of teaching skills such as performing at a job interview and writing a CV and a personal letter:

> We used to offer only language training at the beginning, but then we included CV training, personal letter, interview practice, how to look for jobs, how does the whole job process work in Sweden. (...) Many refugees would come back to us, after taking a few language sessions, because they did not know where to look for jobs or how to apply. (...) During the introduction session with each refugee we ask them if they want to find a job or if they already have experience working in Sweden. Then (when they have not worked in Sweden before) we go through the pure basics, like what the job market is. We start off usually with looking at the CV structure and have everyone create a CV that we do together. Either they already have a CV that we can tweak or just some people don't have anything at all, so that we really start from the very basics.

(Federica, civil society organization volunteer)

Language skills are related to this skill too. Swedish or English are necessary for refugees before starting to apply for jobs:

> Once we have written the CV, we go to personal letters where sometimes it's been a lot of for example, if their Swedish is not so good, then it might be me writing quite a bit but I try really to make sure that it's still their words coming out. (...) but if they have no knowledge of either Swedish or English, then I've come to a place where unfortunately, I have to turn them down and tell them that it's important to first go to the Swedish lessons or English lessons before we work on their CV. (...) Sometimes they can find jobs in English too, but it is much better if they learn Swedish because they will need it for most jobs.

<div align="right">(Federica, civil society organization volunteer)</div>

This information has been contrasted through participant observation at one of the CV preparation sessions at the same organization where Federica volunteers. There I could observe that the sessions were focused on the participant since there was only one participant who was being supported by a volunteer. Together, they would go through the participant's CV and motivation letter and find together the best way to express the refugee's voice while adapting the documents to the specificities of the job.

The interaction would happen in Swedish, even though the refugee had limited knowledge of the language. Still, he was able to explain what had been his previous professional experience, and the volunteer would adapt this in the best way possible to a CV format. Some of his previous experience was different from regular job positions available in Sweden, which required further explanation and adaptation on the CV. After they wrote the CV, they did an interview role-play and the volunteer invited the participant for a next session to continue practicing and to have a follow-up on his case. Other associations also provide assistance with filling in administrative documents:

> In one of our ongoing projects, we give advice for the participants newcomers, we help them write CVs. But this is not enough because some of the refugees do not work right now and do not plan to do it in the next couple of years, especially those who are part of the establishment program. For those people who do not work at the moment, but who receive economic support from Arbetsförmedlingen we provide assistance. We help them fill in all the administrative documents of procedure for Arbetsförmedlingen job office and Försäkringskassan. After we show them once, twice how to do this, they learn and know how to do it on their own. This way they become independent.

<div align="right">(Jamal, civil society organization professional)</div>

Using the computer, social media, and different apps on our smartphone are a must nowadays, especially in Swedish society where most daily activities require having an email account or a Bank ID to be accessed. Activities such as booking an appointment at the doctor, studying or handing in a paper, and applying for a job require the user to have minimal knowledge operating

a computer or a smartphone. Jamal explains how this represents a challenge for many refugees that attend the organization where he works:

> Even if some of them can speak Swedish well they can't use the computer well. For this reason we also organize computer courses for the newcomers, to teach them how they can use computers. Well, we teach them the basics of computers, how to use the computer, how to turn on the computer, use Word, Internet Explorer or email system. (...) They do not know how to share information or how to apply for a job. Also we found out it is difficult for them to write, they don't know how to write CV so we help them to write a good CV. But every CV when you apply for a new job, you have to adapt your CV to this job. They don't know how to do this, so it takes time to be familiar with the Word program and they do not have the self confidence that they can change the CV by themselves and send it to the suitable job.

(Jamal, civil society organization professional)

From the interviews, I grasped the idea that civil society acts also as an agent of empowerment. By getting support from the organizations on performing certain tasks they did not have knowledge on before, refugees are more prepared and empowered. In the lifeworld rationality (Habermas, 1996), empowerment is important because it ensures refugees' access to information and proactivity. Consequently, this leads to benefiting also the system rationality which lies on labour market integration to achieve refugee economic independence.

Empowerment and proactivity together with a set of technical skills - operating a computer, writing a CV or a motivation letter, performing well during a job interview - makes refugees good candidates for the labour market. In the system rationality, the fact that refugees are more prepared and proactive to look for jobs is beneficial because the resettlement process will be accelerated and the refugees will rely less on the state.

Civil society bridges the spheres of system and lifeworld one more time through communicative action (Habermas, 1984) by providing activities that help developing technical skills. Communicative action is what allows the identification of a need, in this case developing hard skills for the labour market. Through communicative action, civil society organizations create programs that are adjusted to the needs of the refugees, to those of the government, and to the availability within the civil society organizations. Furthermore, the transmission of democratic values continues to be a constant in civil society by making available and accessible the development of new skills.

6.5. Leisure activities

As it has been proven in the literature review, Sweden has a long history of civil society participation that continues active and even more present nowadays (Wijkström, 2004; Micheletti, 2019). Consequently, civil society organizations also offer leisure activities to their participants. In the interviews, I could see that there are many leisure activities that the participants can choose from and that target different age groups. One of these activities is about learning how to ride a bike and going together on bike tours. Jamal explains how this activity was seen initially as leisure, but it has a threefold effect.

> Many people that come from the Middle East don't know how to ride a bike because it is not common there. When they arrive in Sweden, they can encounter difficulties moving around in their city. They become dependent on public transportation or on someone who has a car and can drive them around. Usually mid size cities or small cities are too big to walk everywhere, so we started offering the Bicycle School program for the newcomers who don't know how to ride a bicycle. They learn how to ride a bike, and how to fix it.
>
> (Jamal, civil society organization professional)

This type of activity empowers refugees by developing a skill they will need everyday. Furthermore, they learn what are the traffic rules, and what are the different transportation options so they can choose the one that suits them best. On this note, there is also a cultural exchange taking place because using the bike as the main means of transportation has to do with environmental awareness and sustainability, which are renowned values in Sweden. Finally, biking can be a social and leisure activity that binds people together and that provides the space for networking and socializing.

Lovisa described during the interview how important biking was for some of the participants, specifically for women.

> The biking project (...) seemed to have really enhanced the women's self confidence. I met one of them several times afterwards, when she had told me that the biking, learning how to bike can be the first step to opening up and thinking about, <<yes, I can do something else with my life, I can apply for this other labor market position and I can move on>>. And then of course, being able to move around the city on your own on a bike and getting physical active exercise and so on it's healthy.
>
> (Lovisa, civil society organization professional)

Biking is an activity promoted by several civil society organizations and these interviews provided a deeper understanding on why it is important. The civil society representatives who

proposed leisure time projects like biking aimed at providing useful tools to the refugees and creating a space for learning more about Sweden in an engaging way.

Lovisa continued describing the meaning that leisure activities have by saying that

> this project aims to bring people together and help those who are new in Sweden into the leisure time sphere of Sweden. In Sweden, people are usually members of a lot of NGOs, or associations and they spend at least part of their spare time there. For children, that's common, at least during middle school, and it's an important arena because it helps people grow. It is a space for cultural exchange where immigrants, refugees and Swedes have the chance to learn from one another. Biking is a good example of how participating in civil society gives people new networks, skills, and experiences that can be useful in their future. We're trying to, by different measures, help people to get into to find leisure time activities that they want to join, both for adults and children, but we also create some activities that are easier to find, and to attempt for specific target groups.
>
> <div align="right">(Lovisa, civil society organization professional)</div>

Aside from biking, Lovisa described other leisure activities that they are planning.

> We also used to have other leisure activities aimed not only at refugees, but that proved to bind very well refugees and Swedes. Sports clubs and cultural activities used to be very frequent, but now we stopped them temporarily due to the pandemic. We plan on retaking them whenever it will be possible.
>
> <div align="right">(Lovisa, civil society organization professional)</div>

Leisure activities are very common within civil society as they provide an engaging way of attracting new participants. Despite the pandemic, some civil society organizations decided to continue online with the activities they used to provide in person. Fatima describes some of the activities that would attract most people:

> we have a program for people who are new in Lund. We introduce people to each other, and a speaker presents what their challenges were when they first moved to Sweden. The idea of this program is to help people get to know new people, especially those who do not have the chance to meet anyone new because they do not work, or they are stay at home wives, and so on. After presenting some challenges that other newcomers encountered when they moved here, we also discuss about how they can overcome these challenges, and we allow the space for people to share their own experiences.
>
> <div align="right">(Fatima, civil society organization volunteer)</div>

Fatima continues saying that they organize specific activities for refugees too.

> There is also a part for refugees where we provide entertainment for the small children while the adults can participate at the language cafe. Another program we have is where we bake and cook together. Normally people like this a lot because they get to share their own recipes from different countries, people learn about other culture's cuisine (...), it provides a real cultural exchange and people are happy to learn and eat new dishes.

(Fatima, civil society organization volunteer)

Linnea provides insights on how relevant it is to create a safe space for refugees' children to play:

> We organize groups with the kids where they were able to play and not worry for their parents. We target children of refugees who have PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) as a consequence of the war they have been through, so it is necessary for these kids to have a space where they can play. The way we planned this activity is that the kids would be able to feel safe and play, and it was meant to create a safe space where kids could talk about feelings in a way in which they could express them, which is through games. (...) So the point of this activity was to teach kids to understand their feelings and express them and know that here they will always find a safe space to play.

(Linnea, civil society organization professional)

According to the interviewees, leisure activities have a very positive impact in the participants' development, settlement process, and overall health. Even if some of the leisure activities might not have an aim in themselves, others do. An example of this is learning how to ride and fix bicycles. In the lifeworld sphere (Habermas, 1996), having this skill is beneficial to refugees because they become independent to move around the city and become empowered.

Civil society understands leisure activities as an engaging way of binding people together and helping them network, practicing new and useful skills, exchanging cultural knowledge, and improving the refugees' overall health. Through communicative action (Habermas, 1984), civil society bridges the spheres of system and lifeworld. Communicative action allowed civil society organizations to understand that, even if leisure activities do not need to have an aim in themselves, they can still be beneficial in the lifeworld and system and can support the aims of other programs provided also within civil society. Finally, it has been observed that these leisure activities can also help improve mental health, which leads to the next point of analysis of this paper, which has to do with mental health and wellbeing among refugees.

6.6. Mental health and wellbeing

As it has been explained by Linnea, mental health is important for child development, especially when they or their parents have been through difficult life-changing experiences like war and forced displacement.

> The purpose of the program is to avoid kids getting secondary PTSD as a consequence of their parents experiences. Kids get the same feeling as their parents only by knowing what the parents went through. If kids grow up with this secondary PTSD it can become worse as they grow in age, and it can bring along many other secondary health issues. We want to prevent this by giving kids the tools to overcome it and to speak about their feelings. (...) PTSD can be a reason for which refugees need a longer time to learn a new language or new skills.
>
> (Linnea, civil society organization professional)

Addressing mental health issues is very important. As described by Linnea, PTSD or other mental health disorders can hinder refugees from integrating into society and they can encounter more difficulties in learning the new language and skills necessary to find a job. The establishment program provides economic aid for newly arrived refugees during the first two years, but it does not take into account mental wellbeing. Even though asylum seekers, once they have obtained the refugee status, do have access to general health care in Sweden, the integration policies do not mention anything related to specific mental health support for refugees.

Gunilla and her husband decided to become a foster family for an unaccompanied minor refugee. Gunilla's experience volunteering for more than 5 years with newly arrived refugees and minors inspired her into taking this decision. She describes that this minor whom they took under their guardianship was facing more challenges than they would have imagined:

> He had a lot of problems. He had ADHD and PTSD, and some other diagnosis which made it difficult because he refused to learn Swedish. Which also meant that I couldn't bring him into my family because no one could talk to him. In the beginning, the first year I always had to find translators. I always had an interpreter with me who spoke his language, but that became quite expensive, of course, and all of his friends learnt Swedish very quickly. So that was very difficult. But he didn't want to learn Swedish until he got the possibility to stay in Sweden, which he got after a year because of these diagnoses.
>
> (Gunilla, civil society organization volunteer)

Gunilla continues explaining that only being enrolled in formal education is not enough for kids to succeed, they normally need extra support, especially at the beginning.

One of the things we consider very important is that kids can continue to the next level if they want, or to go out and find a job when they become adults. To achieve this we provide support for the children with their homework, to make sure they understand what they study at school. Even if it is quite obvious that kids need this type of support, the government does not really provide much in this sense.

(Gunilla, civil society organization volunteer)

Mohammed, who has been an asylum seeker and a refugee himself before becoming a civil society representative, speaks about the loneliness and isolation that most refugees experiment at their arrival:

I had been so focused on learning the language that I didn't realize that after one year I haven't met anyone. When I came here to Lund, I didn't go to school, or to Komvux, and I haven't been in any place other than my apartment or my room. I didn't have the chance to meet anyone. I felt very lonely and isolated and after one year of living alone, I didn't know anyone. (...) So I started to search after different places, organizations, language cafes. And little by little, I started to be active in those places. These places have changed my life.

(Mohammed, civil society organization professional and volunteer)

Mohammed is one of the refugees who became active in civil society after he benefited from some of the programs offered for newcomers. As described by him, participating in these programs meant a breath of fresh air for him because he could meet other people, both refugees and native-born, and overcome the isolation. Feeling isolated is common among refugees, especially among those who have fled war on their own. The longing for their hometown or their family can become even stronger in those cases where the refugee applied for family reunification and needs to wait for his/her request to be processed and evaluated, which can take up to several years.

Lovisa, who has a background in public health, talks about the importance of civil society organizations from this perspective.

Activities that the NGOs or civil society offer are valuable in themselves but then, of course, they also have positive benefits. Getting to know new people will make it easier for refugees to get the job later on. An evaluation from the Swedish Agricultural University showed that health had improved for all of the participants in civil society organizations. That research shows that the kind of labor market program that we are trying to initiate is health-enhancing for the participants. It shows that people who work are healthier than people who don't work. (...) As it is now, there is no system sufficient from the public sector to fill the needs of a newly arrived refugee or an immigrant who needs lots of things to get started in the new country.

(Lovisa, civil society organization professional)

In conclusion, mental health among newly arrived refugees is often ignored in political debates and public policy. From system rationality (Habermas, 1996), the fact that the establishment program does not include any type of support on mental wellbeing for refugees during their settlement period shows that there is little to no awareness on mental health during the resettlement period. Not only have they been through a war, maybe have lost their home and family, and had to flee their country, but also they find new challenges in the target country when they try to integrate socially and economically. The nature of integration policies shows that in the system rationality (Habermas, 1996) mental health is not relevant.

From a lifeworld perspective, the need for good mental health is crucial not only for achieving economic independence but also for refugees to carry a regular lifestyle, to create networks, and to ensure wellbeing and happiness. Civil society takes over a big part of the mental health field by providing programs that target mental health directly or indirectly. As it has been described by the interviewees, the programs that target mental health directly help the participants identify their feelings, how to work with them, and what to expect during their resettlement process. Indirectly, by providing a large number of options for newcomers to engage in, civil society empowers refugees and helps them develop skills that will be necessary for daily life.

Civil society bridges the gap between the two spheres proposed by Habermas (1996) and promotes mental health awareness. Communicative action (Habermas, 1984) was used to identify this need and to implement useful programs targeting this issue. Being actively involved in these programs and keeping an active lifestyle proves to be healthy and provides a space for newcomers to communicate and to become part of society. However, these programs are just a support for refugees who present regular mental health issues such as PTSD or depression, but it

is still the healthcare system's responsibility to treat other more serious issues or to provide medication.

Civil society is not only a bridge between the two rationalities but also offers alternative rational forms of understandings that inspire political actors to take collective action against the status quo (Habermas, 1984). By putting on the table the need for programs that promote mental health, civil society brings up the discussion about mental health and wellbeing in the resettlement process.

In this chapter, Habermas' theories of civil society, lifeworld and system, and communicative action have been used in order to analyze the actions taken by civil society as a response to the lack of options provided by the institutional policies. Language skills, networking, development of technical skills, leisure activities, and mental health have been the most common elements that civil society organizations target in order to bridge the gap between system and lifeworld, and accelerate the integration process.

The results of this study show that economic imperatives are not enough to ensure the integration in the labour market of new coming refugees. The Swedish integration policies rely heavily on offering economic incentives as a means to promote integration. The economic support provided to all the newly arrived refugees (Act 2010: 197) is calculated for the first two years of resettlement, that is the time in which a refugee is thought to have adapted to the host society. However, the results of this study have shown two ideas: in the first place, two years is not necessarily enough time to be integrated into the labour market and society, especially when many steps that need to be taken in that direction are delayed due to bureaucracy (Borevi et al. 2017).

In the second place, promoting integration only through economic imperatives is not sufficient. Results have shown that the economic support is helpful to ensure a minimum living standard for newly arrived refugees, but integration in the labour market does not come as a consequence of this. Many elements are involved in integration, such as learning new skills, learning Swedish and English, or knowing how to perform at a job interview. Other elements can delay refugees' integration no matter how motivated they are. For example, mental issues related to the trauma from war or from leaving behind their family can have an impact on their performance learning

the language and adapting to the new environment. Thus, promoting integration through programs based on economic imperatives (i.e. economic support provided under certain conditions) but not addressing the systemic issues, may not suffice.

7. Conclusion

This research aimed to scrutinize the role of civil society in creating social integration of refugees. Civil society operates from the idea that the government is not fully representative of the people, which creates a gap between actual democratic practices and the ideal (Fleming, 2000, p. 306). In consequence, civil society is the agent that connects lifeworld and system (Habermas, 1996) and that aims at decolonizing the sphere of the system from that of the lifeworld by means of the communicative action (Ibid.; Fleming, 2000).

This thesis discussed the gap between the propositions of the integration policies and the actual integration process of the refugees. The aim of this thesis is relevant to the area of Sociology of Law since it addresses the impact that legal propositions, such as the integration policies, have in the integration of refugees in the labour market and in their resettlement process (cf. Deflem, 2008; Webley, 2019). Researching the divergences that exist between the objectives of law and the reality of the law is one of the most typical issues that Sociology of Law tries to cover (Deflem, 2008), and which has been addressed in this thesis. A lack of response from state authorities in the refugee issue has been met by the civil society organizations in different forms (Pries, 2018), which highlights the relevance of civil society in the lifeworld (cf. Habermas, 1996).

Additionally, this research visibilizes the economic gap between native-born and refugees, and provides insights on how civil society can be of help in promoting integration. Much attention has been given to the refugee issue during the "refugee crisis" in 2015, but as the hype passed the interest faded away (Rydgren and van der Meiden, 2018). In Sweden, integration has been seen as a process where integration policies are the main elements that ensure a newcomer's incorporation in the target society (Ager and Strang, 2008). This idea has been proved wrong in this thesis by highlighting the inefficiency of the current integration policies (Breidahl, 2017). Instead, the role of civil society has been emphasized here as an entity that ensures refugee integration by supporting the integration policies (cf. Habermas, 1996).

Using the Habermasian theories of civil society, lifeworld and system, and communicative action (Habermas 1984, 1996; Fleming, 2000, 2002), the main elements of integration targeted by civil society have been analysed. Using these theories to address issues of immigration of refugees, integration policies, and labour market make the aim of my thesis socio-legal. In the following paragraphs, I will summarize the main points that have been analyzed previously and that provide answers to the research questions.

In what ways do civil society organizations bridge the gap between the propositions of the integration policies - system - and the actual integration process of the refugees in the labour market - lifeworld?

Civil society organizations create the space for new coming refugees to learn the skills necessary to become attractive candidates for employers. They provide activities that address the lack of knowledge in certain domains, such as Swedish or English language, networking, biking, and CV writing among others. These activities provide the tools for refugees to develop hard and soft skills that lead to empowerment. Additionally to the development of skills, civil society organizations also target the improvement of and raise awareness of mental health issues. The rationale behind civil society organizations' initiatives is that empowered and skilled refugees have much better access to the labour market and are more likely to become active members in society.

Civil society bridges the sphere of lifeworld and the sphere of system through communicative action which aims at reaching common goals among individuals (cf. Habermas, 1984). Having as a starting point a shared understanding of the lifeworld and public sphere, the individuals aim to achieve cooperation, mutual targets and common understandings (Ibid.). In this regard, civil society organizations act as an accelerator for refugees to create a stable network, learn the Swedish language, and develop skills that will enable them to find employment. By addressing these issues, civil society organizations target the main goal of the integration policies: economic independence of refugees (SFS 2010: 197). Although civil society organizations do not ensure labour market integration, they do provide the means for refugees to become closer to it, bridging the sphere of lifeworld and that of system.

As it has been highlighted in the literature review and confirmed by the interviewees, the actions taken by the Swedish government towards creating ways for the newcomers to integrate in the host society are inefficient due to their length and tediousness. Economic integration of refugees is not achieved through these policies, which leads the government to rely heavily on civil society.

From a critical perspective, it is important to highlight that civil society aims at narrowing the economic gap between native-born and foreign-born, and it provides refugees with better access to the labour market; however, it can present some pitfalls too. Civil society can fall into reproducing the system rationality, therefore it is important not to romanticize civil society, since the state and dominant classes can impose and achieve their hegemony through the organizations of civil society (Fleming, 2000). For example, when providing language cafes or skills development programs, civil society makes these activities available to refugees but at the same time, it contributes to the economic rationality of the system. Networking activities can also contribute to this rationality by providing the space to employers to benefit from a cheap workforce among the refugees. Civil society organizations can be very different in nature and, while some of them promote integration and multiculturality, others can oppose these values. Some civil society organizations can promote ideas such as marginalization and discrimination of newcomers, however this thesis does not cover them.

How do civil society organizations create successful social integration of refugees?

The answer to the previous research question detailed how civil society organizations provide useful activities to refugees in order to tackle the lack of some skills. Without some of these skills, new coming refugees are pushed to occupy employment positions below their level of expertise or to remain unemployed for a long amount of time due to the lack of language skills, technical skills, or a stable network.

Additionally to this, in the space that civil society creates, members of the host society are also involved, which ensures a cultural and knowledge exchange that promotes inclusion, and solidarity in society (Fleming, 2000). Civil society organizations ensure social integration by bringing refugees closer to the labour market in sight of them becoming economically independent, and by providing a space for interaction with the host society. One of the elements

of successful social integration is economic integration (Breidahl, 2017; Valenta and Bunar, 2010), which is the main aim of civil society organizations. Furthermore, activities that target mental health and well-being support social integration because, as discussed during the interviews, the traumas that refugees face during war or during a forced displacement can make it more difficult for them to become active members of the target society.

From a critical point of view, it is also important to consider that refugees may have very different perspectives and desires about becoming socially integrated in the target society. While some may actively learn Swedish and see themselves living in Sweden in the future, others might not be interested in staying in the target country long-term, and see their stay in Sweden only as a waiting period until they can go back to their country of origin. This depends very much on personal views, and civil society organizations can not influence much on this aspect. The services and activities they provide are available for everyone from the target group, independently of their values or perspectives, but it is usually the refugees who wish to live in Sweden long-term those who approach civil society organizations.

The use of qualitative methods such as interviews and participant observation provided a perspective on what initiatives civil society takes to support refugee integration. These methods, in combination with Habermas' theories, have shown that civil society organizations are at the core of system and lifeworld, between policies and refugees. Even if this thesis may show a very positive side of the influence of civil society in refugee integration, some of the pitfalls that civil society can bring along have been discussed in this chapter.

Furthermore, this research does not cover cases where civil society organizations have supported racist ideas and discrimination. In the analysis, it has been mentioned that some programs implemented by civil society organizations can backfire, for example, spaces used for promoting networking can be used by employers to hire free labour under the idea that they are providing work experience. Additionally, some of the popular programs from civil society could not have the best quality. For example, language cafes are good for practising oral skills, but for a beginner they can be hard to follow and even counterproductive.

7.1. Recommendations for future research

Understanding how civil society organizations work with the gaps created by the integration policies, allows for further analysis on a broader perspective on how these policies can be improved, and adapted to the real needs of refugees.

Having the above mentioned elements about civil society in mind, this research can be used as a theoretical tool to improve empirical factors from civil society. Firstly, most civil society organizations seem to focus on very similar programs - language cafes, networking, and interview skills -, but learning about worker's rights can be equally important for refugees who will be part of the labour market. Secondly, it has been mentioned that some of the programs may not offer the best quality or can even backfire in their attempt of promoting integration. Civil society organizations can use this research to further improve the programs they offer and to adapt them even better to the needs of refugees.

From a theoretical perspective, this research has not touched upon systemic discrimination and racism in the labour market. Further research can be performed on this issue, including an intersectional perspective that focuses on the unequal access to the labour market between men and women. Elements such as a foreign name - particularly an arabic name -, wearing a hijab, or having a certain appearance and skin colour can considerably lower the chances of finding employment. In one of the interviews performed under this research, the participant has mentioned that his wife was not able to find employment in more than 8 years. Even if they do not know the exact reason why, they suspect that her Arabic sounding name and wearing a hijab have influenced the employer's decision.

Finally, this research starts with the assumption that integration is something desired and that refugees do everything there is in their hands to find employment and to integrate, however this might not be the reality in some cases. Some refugees might see their resettlement as waiting time to move back to their country together with their family once the war has ended. This can make them not want to integrate at all in the host society and to have no interest in learning a new language or finding employment. Future research can use this thesis paper as a starting point to analyze how the integration policies can lead to refugee clientization in Sweden.

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Appendix I - Interview guide

Before the Interview
a. Introduce the researcher
b. Thank for participation
c. Introduce aim of the study (terms and conditions, outcome)
d. Explain the interview procedure (audio recording, taking notes, participant can stop)
e. Signing consent form
f. Ask if there are any questions about the procedure of interview or the research
g. Use ice-breaking questions (weather/ hobbies) before starting the interview

Interview Questions

a. Background (Bachelor, specialist, Master...), field of specialization and organization they work for.
b. How long have you been working for your organization? How is a normal day at work for you?
c. Who are the refugees you support and in what ways do they benefit from the activities provided by your organization?
d. What skills do the refugees need when they move to Sweden? How does your organization help them develop those skills?
e. What is a success story? How did you help a refugee find his/her first job?
f. Have you observed any differences between men and women when it comes to landing their first job?
g. How did you solve a situation where a refugee could not find a job after participating in the establishment program and in your organization?
h. What happens after a refugee is not part of the establishment program anymore and does not receive funding from the government?
i. Have you been in contact with any state representatives? How did the interaction happen?
j. What relationship does your organization have with state representatives? Do you receive funding from the government for the projects you develop?
k. What are the projects that you have been involved in recently in your organization?
l. What is the most successful activity/program offered by your organization?
m. What jobs do refugees normally get after going through integration programs?
n. Is there anything else you would like to say?

Appendix II - Participant Consent Form

Study working title: Refugee Integration in the Swedish Labour Market

Purpose of the study: The purpose of this study is to get a deeper understanding of the laws around refugee integration in the Swedish labour market. The establishment program plays an important role in this context because of its aim to integrate refugees in the host society through the two years preparation in areas such as language skills and knowledge about the labour market. Particularly, I am interested in observing the challenges refugees who have been through the establishment program face when trying to settle down and find a job. This will lead me to understand the divergences that exist between the objectives of law and the reality of the law.

Your role: As a participant in this study, you play a very important role. You will be invited to an online interview where you will be asked to share your experience about working with refugees that have been through the establishment program and who are interested in finding a job in Sweden. Particular attention will be paid to your perspective as a civil society worker about the establishment program and the integration of newly arrived refugees.

About the interview: The interview will last around 45 minutes and you will be asked a few open-ended questions that will lead to a conversation about the rights of refugees and their integration in Sweden.

Researcher: Maria-Madalina Aldea

Research Participant's name (initials): _____

Thank you for consenting to be interviewed for this research project. Ethical rules of academic research require that participants clearly agree to be interviewed and agree to release the content of such interviews. This consent form is being given to you to confirm that you understand the purpose of your participating the conditions of your contribution.

Please, read and understand the following ethical considerations before signing:

1. I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

2. I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.

3. The notes from the interview will be analysed by Maria-Madalina Aldea.

4. Access to the interview notes will be limited to Maria-Madalina Aldea, her supervisor and the academic personnel with whom Maria-Madalina Aldea may consult as part of the research process.

5. I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.

6. I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for two years from the submission date of the master thesis.

7. If any change were to be required of the above conditions further clear approval from the research participants will be sought.

8. I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

I understand the conditions stated above and agree to be interviewed.

I agree to be cited honestly if my name is not published and a pseudonym is used instead.

I agree that the researcher may publish documents that contain quotations by me

_____ (signature/initials) Place & date_____

❏   I agree to the interview being audio recorded and accept that the researcher may take written notes.

Main researcher: Maria-Madalina Aldea, Master Student at the Sociology of Law Department at Lund University. Email: mariamad.aldea@gmail.com

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