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Migration, Education and Employment

Pathways to Successful Integration

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Chapter 1
Introduction: Integration in and Through Education and Employment

Marianne Teräs, Ali Osman, and Eva Eliasson

International migration is affected by various economic, environmental, political, and social factors. We use the concept migrant as an umbrella term to encompass people who have left their country of origin for different reasons, such as immigrants, asylum seekers, refugees, and so on (IOM, 2019). According to European Statistics, in 2021, 2.3 million migrants moved to the EU from non-EU countries and 1.4 million moved from one EU member state to another (European Statistics, 2023a). This makes a total of 3.7 million people who were on the move in Europe in 2021. Sweden received around 90,000 migrants, Norway around 53,000, and Switzerland around 144,000 migrants during year 2021 (European Statistics, 2023a). Integration covers the following areas: employment and education, social inclusion, housing, health, and active citizenship. From our point of view, the interesting figures relate to employment and education. It is not surprising that migrants' employment rates are lower and unemployment rates higher compared with nationals. In 2021, the employment of non-EU citizens was 70.0%, compared with 78.9% for nationals and 81.5% for citizens of other EU member states. The unemployment rate was 6.3% for nationals, 8.7% for citizens of other EU member states, and approximately twice as high (15.5%) for non-EU citizens (European Statistics, 2023b). When comparing education, European Statistics follows three topics: educational attainment, early leavers from education, and training and adult participation in learning. For example, tertiary educational attainment for nationals was 42.1%, 39.9% for citizens of other EU member states, and 32.2% for non-EU citizens. The share of early leavers was notably higher among citizens of other EU member states (23.3%) and higher still among non-EU citizens (26.0%) compared with nationals (8.4%). Whereas participation in adult education was slightly higher (11.4%) among non-EU citizens compared with citizens of other EU member states (9.7%), and nationals (10.9%) in 2021 (European Statistics, 2023c).

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This book is the result of a project examining ‘Successful integration of migrants in and through vocation and work’, which ran from 2020 to 2022 and was financed by the Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life and Wellbeing. The project aimed to follow skilled migrants’ pathways to their previous vocations in Sweden. We found that there were different pathways – some, like chefs, started working in their previous vocations after arriving in Sweden. Some re-entered their professions but on a lower level, such as nurses working as assistant nurses. Some had re-trained themselves in a new vocation, and some further trained and worked as teachers in their vocational areas. We could identify four common factors in their stories: Swedish language competence, strong motivation and agency, supporting networks/supporting persons, and structural opportunities (Eliasson et al., 2022).

In this book, our focus is on different aspects of education, employment, and integration of migrants in various contexts: Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland. We chose these countries because they have different migration and industrial histories as well as educational systems. While the chapters in the book approach these topics from various perspectives, they commonly focus on education, employment, and integration and what could be perceived as the relative success of integration processes. The chapters discuss the notion of ‘successful integration’ from different theoretical vantage points, perspectives, and aspects.

The integration of migrants into their new environments is a key focus in Europe. An action plan on integration and inclusion by the European Commission puts additional emphasis on, inter alia, inclusion for all through targeted and tailored support, enhancing migrant participation, and long-term integration. Some of the main interventions include skills recognition and the improvement of employment opportunities (European Commission, 2020). This is particularly important in relation to migrants re-entering their previous vocations in the new country.

The integration of migrants is a major political and academic issue that has captured the imagination and interest of different social actors in Sweden as well as other countries. The debate is often contentious across political, public, policy, academic, and civil society spectra. In Sweden, this debate has intensified due to the increase in the number of refugees and asylum seekers over the past few years, as was evident during the general election of 2022, and the new government, like many governments in other EU countries, is now adopting restrictive asylum and immigration policies, calling it ‘a paradigm shift’, even though the previous government had already begun to tighten immigration policy. The consensus among researchers regarding the position of migrants in the Swedish labour market is that they struggle to access a vocation that is on a par with their educational level. This is attributed to several factors, including discrimination, a lack of relevant social capital, and formal recognition of their qualifications and experience. Many studies focus on integration issues, yet there remains no universal accepted definition of integration, let alone a definition of what ‘successful integration’ entails. The book’s editorial board takes an eclectic view, hoping to start an academic debate about what ‘successful integration’ means. While discussions about the integration of migrants tend to focus on integration failures, there are millions of migrants in Europe and in the Nordic countries who have successfully integrated into their host societies.

Dodevska (2023), tracing the genealogy of the concept integration points out that since the 1800s integration has been conceived of as a matter of social order:

> (…) [T]he idea of integration still enacts a similar social utopia as in the late 1800s: a wholesome, cohesive society based on cooperation and order, where ethno-cultural-religious-racial differentiations remain entrenched (and even encouraged), but members are "united in diversity" (to use the EU's motto) through a universal acceptance of "common" (Eurocentric) values. This, of course, by default implies a major accommodation on the part of minoritized and migranticized populations, but only a minor sacrifice on the part of those that claim membership "by blood" in the national ingroup (Dodevska, 2023, p. 9–10).

Generally, social scientists from different disciplines have focused on making sense of institutional and policy aspects of integration and initiatives to facilitate the integration of migrants and then the consequences of these for the individual (e.g., Osman, 2006). Various disciplines understand and explain integration from different theoretical perspectives. Sociological theories describe the integration of migrants into the labour market of their host society. Some, through macro analyses, attempt to identify the cause of structural inequality – among these theories being the underclass thesis, the idea of racialised class fraction, segmented labour theory, and different types of globalisation theories. The common denominator being, however, that they all ignore "the efficacy of social agency" (Ratcliffe, 2004). One of the main explanations for the position of minorities, migrants, and refugees is direct or indirect discrimination through racism or racialised market relationships. These theories and analyses emphasise structural hindrances. Another theoretical perspective, while emphasising the importance of migrants' agency, stresses that they also suffer from various forms of lacks, or deficits. Put simply, they do not possess the social capital to compete effectively. This form of analysis takes a number of forms: language problem, the lack of appropriate skills, faulty job strategies (Ratcliffe, 2004, p. 98). Finally, the occupational position of migrants in the labour market in Sweden, but also in different countries is a consequence of positive social agency. The focus in this approach is on achievement rather than deficits, particularly how migrants and refugees transcend obstacles such as discrimination or their ability to mobilise cultural resources to access the labour market (Ratcliffe, 2004).

However, other perspectives can also be used to explain the position of migrants in the labour market – the socio-cultural perspective, for instance, popular in educational sciences, holds that we mediate the world through language, artefacts, and practices. This can be used to examine how skilled migrants and refugees can access their previous vocations in a new context. Sociocultural perspectives see vocational knowledge embedded in vocational communities of practice in specific contexts. By vocational practices, we mean interaction and communication in the workplace as well as the local rules, norms, tools, and technologies used in a vocation. A 'community of practice' is Lave and Wenger's (1991, p. 98) concept. They perceive it as a set of relations among persons, activity, and world. Community of practice refers to the relations, knowledge, and activity of a vocation in a workplace and participation refers to the process of 'becoming and being' accepted as a member of the community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In both processes, it is about acquisition of different types of cultural skills and competences as well as acceptance

from the community of practice. To access the previous vocation, the key is recognition of migrants' prior knowledge or skills. Migrants' struggles are about crossing boundaries and integrating the knowledge and skills acquired outside the new environment.

Chapters in the Book

The chapters in this book reflect education, employment, and integration from micro, meso and macro perspectives; some are based on interviews with migrants and people who work with them, others on documents and literature about migration. The book is divided into two parts; the first deals with the Swedish context and the second with the Swiss and Norwegian contexts.

The Swedish context starts with Ali Osman's Chap. 2: *Migrants Successfully Accessing Their Vocations in Sweden: The Significance of Labour Market Initiatives to Facilitate the Integration of Migrants and Refugees*. From the perspective of three migrants' experiences in Sweden the chapter provides an overview of how integration is conceptualised in Swedish integration policy and examines also how this shapes integration practices and measures. Osman shows how integration practices can function as a control mechanism to classify, categorise, and order immigrants' knowledge and competence, but more importantly, to inculcate into immigrants that their knowledge and competence is irrelevant, or only partly relevant, in relation to accessing their vocations in Sweden. The chapter stresses that successful practices are contingent not on the initiatives per se, but rather on serendipity, which seems to be a red thread running through informants' success stories.

Per Andersson's Chap. 3: *Understanding Recognition of Prior Learning as a Tool for the Labour Market Integration of Skilled Migrants* explores the process of recognising skilled migrants' prior learning and highlights three concerns. What is the object of the recognition process, the individual's formal and actual competence? Is the subject of the process, the migrant? The process of recognition could be seen solely as a matter of classification and assessment, but this misses the fact that the process should also entail a learning process for the individual. A successful recognition of prior learning process facilitates a migrant's access to the labour market.

Fredrik Hertzberg's Chap. 4: *Potential, Actuality or Vulnerability? The Importance of Recognition in Career Counselling for Newly Arrived Migrants* also focuses on the importance of recognition but here the emphasis shifts from labour markets to the work of study and career counsellors. According to his interviewees, while some recognition processes are unproblematic, others can lead to conflicts in counselling work. An example of the latter is the tension between recognition and inclusion, where recognition of previously established educational and career aspirations may not lead to inclusion into the workforce. Hertzberg's results show that successfully supporting newly arrived migrants' career paths is a complex part of counsellors' work.

In her Chap. 5, *Important Encounters for Education and Employment,* Eva Eliasson examines descriptions of skilled migrants' encounters in Sweden, and the meaning the migrants attribute to these encounters for their paths to employment. While some encounters led to direct access to education or workplaces, other encounters supported, encouraged, and strengthened the respondents' social identity, ultimately contributing to their inclusion in the labour market. One conclusion is that successful encounters may lead to successful inclusion into working life. Another factor that facilitates access to work is the ability to resist other people's negative constructions and to be persistent in job searching.

Åsa Broberg and Lázaro Moreno Herrera take a historical perspective on integration and development in vocational education in Chap. 6: *Education for Access to The Swedish Labour Market and Society: A Historical Comparison of Practices for the Integration of Immigrants in the 1960s and early 2000s.* They highlight some of the core features of this development while elucidating such questions as how perceptions about work, education, and integration have evolved. They present three cases, namely, tailored workplace experience, company training, and a professionally tailored language training programme. The chapter shows how integration has evolved and why, how, and what immigrants need to learn to attain successful integration into the Swedish labour market and society.

Marianne Teräs's Chap. 7: *Integration as a Conceptual Resource When Studying Skilled Migrants in the Workplaces* analyses the concept of integration in the literature, focusing on the integration of skilled migrants. The concept is contested, with both defenders and opponents. The literature review suggests that the concept of integration has not been clearly defined, with authors taking for granted that readers know what it means. Integration processes as well as multiple uses of the concept are highlighted. The author concludes that researchers need to be conscious of and transparent about their use of the term integration.

The eighth and last chapter in this first part of the book, Chap. 8: *Integration and the Art of Making a Society: The Case of Swedish Society* by Petros Gougoulakis poses the question: "Who is a Swede and how does one becomes a Swede?" He reflects on immigration and "Swedishness" in the light of the ongoing public debate on integration, ethnicity, and equality. Popular adult education – the experience of Swedish "*folkbildning*" for civic participation and integration – is used as an example of how to achieve social cohesion, reduce inequalities, and counteract discrimination and marginalisation.

The second part of the book provides an international dimension to the questions of education, employment, and integration, beginning with Barbara Stadler, Marlis Kammermann, Iris Michel, and Marie-Theres Schönbächler's Chap. 9*: Successful Integration of Refugees in Vocational Education and Training: Experiences from a New Pre-vocational Programme*. The authors offer an overview of the Swiss Integration Agenda before focusing on a specific educational programme: pre-apprenticeship for integration (PAI). The aim of this programme is to support refugees and temporarily admitted people in their endeavour to access vocational education and training in Switzerland. They explore the participants' learning environments in the workplace and school and identify factors contributing to participants' successful transition to accessing a regular apprenticeships programme.

Line Nortvedt, Astrid Gillespie, Kari Dahl and Ida Drange's Chap. 10: *'Open Sesame': Skilled Immigrants' Experiences with Bridging Programmes in the Validation Process in Norway* also examines a programme which prepares participants for the next step. They focus on skilled migrants – nurses, teachers, and engineers who have enrolled in bridging programmes. Their interest is in describing the migrants' experience of success factors for the maintenance and development of a professional habitus and for inclusion in the labour market. Success factors described are resilience, for example, being able to see professional downgrading as something temporary, being able to locate social and economic support for requalification, having a strong professional identity, renegotiating what profession means in a new cultural context, and recognition from colleagues and employers.

The eleventh chapter by Tatjana Bru Blixen, Kai Andre Fegri, and Ellen Beate Hellne-Halvorsen, Chap. 11: *Multicultural Perspectives in Driving Instructor Education and Driving Schools for Professional Drivers in Norway* examines how a multicultural perspective is integrated into driving instructor education and education of professional drivers in traffic schools in Norway. Many of the public transit bus drivers and drivers of other commercial motor vehicles are immigrants and second language speakers. The study centres on investigating the training experiences of teacher educators of driving instructors and teachers of professional immigrant drivers on how driving students attend training and gain a professional license. The perspective is on second language and cultural challenges within driving instructor education and schools for professional drivers. The researchers pointed out that learning a new traffic culture to ensure safety on the roads is vital to the successful inclusion of immigrant professional drivers.

In the final Chap. 12, *Concluding Remarks* Eva Eliasson, Ali Osman and Marianne Teräs state that the various chapters in the book show that integration via education and employment can be approached from different angles but what is understood as success varies according to context and the historical moment.

The chapters in the book are based on different empirical, theoretical, and methodological points of departure, examining education, employment, and integration of migrants. While the empirical contexts are diverse – Sweden, Switzerland, and Norway –these are all small European countries with strong welfare systems. In other words, the institutional frameworks of the welfare state impact not only on reception but also on initiatives to facilitate the integration of migrants. Because all countries have different migration histories and policies which shape the successful integration of migrants, the intention here is not to compare Sweden with other countries.

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Part I
The Swedish Context

Chapter 2
Migrant Successfully Accessing Their Vocation in Sweden: The Significance Labour Market Initiatives to Facilitate the Integration of Migrants and Refugees

Ali Osman

Keywords Integration policy · Establishment programme · Governmentality

Introduction

In the 1950s to the early 60 s, Sweden attracted labour immigrants from the Nordic countries. However, in the 1960s it was mainly labour immigrants from southern Europe, particularly Italy, Greece, and Yugoslavia. However, by the late 1960s, due to economic recession, the Swedish labour union lobbied the government and succeeded in curtailing labour immigration. Since the 1970s, asylum seekers have dominated immigration to Sweden. In the 1970s, refugees and asylum seekers came from Chile, Poland, and Turkey dominated person seeking protection in Sweden; in the 1980s it was persons, from Chile, Ethiopia, and were main groups of asylum seeker and asylum seekers. In the 1990s Asylum seeker were dominated by persons from Somalia, Iraq, and Yugoslavia (Bevelander, 2004, p. 8); and since 2000, from Afghanistan, Eritrea, Syria, and Somalia. Sweden became a popular destination for refugees which was so dramatically evident in 2015 that it led to Sweden adopting draconian policies to reduce this type of immigration. In Sweden today anybody seeking asylum is given temporary protection if their refugee status is recognised. From the onset, I would like to stress that there is t is still no universal consensus on the definition of immigrant. The International Organization for Migration defines a migrant as a person who has left their country of origin for different reasons (IOM, 2019). In this chapter, the term 'immigrant' refers to individuals from non-EU/ESS countries who have come to Sweden for different reasons. I exclude other immigrants from Nordic and EU countries because they have extensive rights due to their EU and Nordic citizenship. For instance, unlike other types of immigrants, the

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vocations of EU and Nordic citizens are automatically recognised in Sweden. In other words, an immigrant's country of origin is critical to their accessing their vocation in Sweden. In the study, I focus on the policy and intervention measures that define Swedish integration policy. Both policy and intervention measures reflect not only the intersubjective understanding of the 'problem' of integration of Swedish political-administrative actors (politicians and grassroot bureaucrats) but also how the problem ought to be dealt with. These policies and initiatives are programmes of action which are intended to mitigate the "problem" migrants encounter in the Swedish labour market. Although, within the EU, the Nordic countries, and Sweden, despite longstanding debate on the integration of immigrants and refugees, there is still no consensus on what characterises successful integration, while the term itself is pliable and is ascribed different meanings (Phillimore, 2020).

This chapter will address the following questions: (1) How is the problem of integration constructed in Swedish policy? (2) How do these constructions shape integration practice in Sweden? (3) What are the consequences for individuals subjected to these measures? The third question will be addressed in light of an empirical study that examined a project on "migrants who have successfully attained their vocation in Sweden". These national policies are constructed to facilitate the integration of refugees into the Swedish labour market and function as instruments for assessing, categorising, and classifying immigrants and refugees and constructing them as competent or incompetent in the Swedish context (Osman, 2006; Andersson & Osman, 2008). Many studies have shown that some immigrants are racialised (e.g., De los Reyes, 2022; Törngren, 2022) while others are not. In other words, there is an 'ethno–racial hierarchy' of immigrants in Sweden that affects their position in the Swedish labour market and in society. In addition, these racialised group(s) are to a large extent stigmatised in the everyday discourse of migration and integration in Sweden and are subjected to racism and discrimination. Historically, however, racialisation of groups has had a temporal dimension. For instance, the Irish, Italians, and Poles were racialised groups in the United States and UK.

> *Scholarship on racialisation has traditionally examined these processes in terms of the black/white racial binary. While centring the analysis of anti-black discrimination remains salient, researchers have increasingly attended to examining the experiences of exclusion of white racialised groups (Sime et al., 2022, p.4528).*

In other words, racism and racialisation as a source of exclusion can cover any category of people that is constructed as different from the dominant group, based on ethnicity, race, minority, biology, history, or migrant status (Sime et al., 2022). In addition, from a sociological point of view, the marginalisation of immigrants and refugees is often attributed to different forms of deficits, for example, language, relevant social and cultural capital, etc., and this shapes the policies and practices aimed at facilitating the integration of refugees.

Integration Measures as a Form of Governmentality

In the introduction, I stressed that the main objective of this chapter was to delineate the implicit and explicit knowledge of others embedded in the integration initiatives and their implications for the individuals targeted by these measures. Simply put, the endgame of these measures is to affect change and guide individuals towards a desired end. But in order to achieve this end, the initiative has to distinguish the 'problem' or the challenges afflicting a group and its individual members – which, in the case of refugees, is their exclusion from Swedish society. In other words, without this knowledge of the specific obstacles refugees encounter in Swedish society, it is difficult to create a policy and programmes to mitigate these obstacles. Thus, in order to make sense of the measures and to challenge the rationale on which they are based, it is not enough to simply delineate this knowledge of the 'other' embedded in the practices but also to understand the consequences of the measures for the person or groups the measures target.

Foucault's theoretical construct of governmentality is useful here. Foucault developed the idea of governmentality into a theory focusing on the practice of governing or govern-mentality. The notion of governmentality is examined from two vantage points, according to Edwards (2002, p. 356):

> *One is framing within which to analyze the practices through which governing in general takes place… the focus here… is the disciplinary power invested in nation states and their management of the economy and populations through the practices of health, education, housing and punishment. The second sense of governmentality is specific to the practices within advanced liberal democratic states. Here it is argued that governing is concerned less with disciplining the population than in enabling individuals to develop their capacities to look after themselves. (Edwards 2002, p 356)*

The second notion of governmentality, thus, is the approach I find most useful for making sense of the measures examined in this chapter. I view the measures as a site where refugees' subjectivity is shaped, and their competence recognised or misrecognised. In other words, it is through these measures that the self-regulating capacities of immigrants and refugees are shaped and normalised by so-called experts, constituting them as competent and experienced, or incompetent and, thus, as included or excluded.

To achieve this end, the policy and measures function as instruments for assessing, categorising, and classifying immigrants and refugees in relation to a norm. This norm can be the Swedish system of education or other norms in which the immigrant typically has a lack, etc. This process will be evident to the reader in the empirical sections. The differences and gaps identified in this process are then identified as deficits which are then used to rank – hierarchise – immigrants and refugees in relation to the norm and, thus, used to identify who is desirable. Furthermore, these measures identify what behavioural changes, norms, or values the targeted individuals ought to internalise to be integrated into Swedish society. This process of subjectification in the Foucaudian sense of self-making and being-made is a part of the power relations that bring into being recognition of embodiment of the

schema of relations such tastes, ways of being, etc., through systems of surveillance, discipline, control, and administration. The outcome, according to Bryant et al. (1997), is the constitution of the subjectivity of the other – that is, "one becomes the way one is identified and identifies oneself" (p.56).

The self-regulating capacities of individuals are shaped and normalised through institutional experts constituting the subject as competent and experienced or incompetent and, thus, included or excluded from the common good. These power relations or systems of discipline, control, administration, are essential in the construction of citizenship, whereby the state as a cultural project, through its moral mission of regulation homogenises what in reality is the multi-faceted and diverse experience of different groups in society (Corrigan & Sayer, 1985). Bryant et al. (1997), Mabille (2019), and Edwards (2002) stress that governing in advanced liberal democracies has little to do with social reform and more to do with inculcating a certain cultural ethos based on certain norms and values.

> *The norm provides the basis for sorting, classifying, creating boundaries and exclusion, and specific orderings of space-time… the power of normalization imposes homogeneity; but it also individualizes by making it possible to measure gaps, to determine levels, to fix specialties and to render the differences useful by fitting them to one another (Edwards* 2002*, p.362).*

Thus, the measures examined in this study are conceived as a form of governmentality to enhance and facilitate the employability of refugees within their areas of competence in the Swedish labour market. They are social technologies – instruments that both exclude and include refugees in Swedish society to create both a competent and an incompetent immigrant subject. My analysis of the measures is inspired by this understanding of governmentality. I use the following questions to interrogate the measures: Whose voices are heard and whose experiences are valued? Who is excluded and how? What are the effects of the measures on the individual and societal levels? These issues can be summarised by viewing the measures as forms of governmentality – a kind of patriarchy of the people, by some of the people, for some of the people.

The Swedish Policy of Integration: The Construction of the Problem of Integration

Before the 1970s, immigrants came to Sweden primarily to labour and were expected to return home once their contracts expired or when they retired, and there was no need to develop a policy and programme to integrate them into Swedish society. By the 1970s, however, asylum seekers began to outnumber labour migrants, changing the demographic character of Swedish immigrants, which led to the demand for integration policies and interventions (*integrationsåtgärder*) to facilitate the incorporation of refugees into Swedish society.

> *The 1980s is usually described as the decade when immigration to Sweden shifted to non-European and refugee immigration. This is also the decade when the Swedish government reformed the system for the integration of refugees. In Sweden, on both policy and operational levels, there is a distinct separation between the reception of asylum seekers and the integration of refugees and their families. While the reception of asylum seekers has always been the responsibility of the state, between 1985 and 2010 the reception of refugees was transferred from state to local authorities (Righard & Öberg. (*2020*, p.5)*

Thus, irrespective of the political and academic struggle over the meaning of the term integration, the policy target primarily refugee immigrants, and is also refer to or is an umbrella term for programs/project for different types of institutional activities intended to facilitate the social inclusion of immigrants in Sweden.

In Sweden, refugee and immigrant integration policy has shifted focus since the mid-1970s. The first policy had three core principles rooted in the Swedish welfare state model: equality, freedom of choice, and partnership. The policy is based on a corporatist perspective of 'welfare-state, and the notion citizenship'. Citizenship here aiming to inculcate belonging via social rights, which coloured the process of receiving immigrants. The core principles of this first policy (Swedish multicultural policy) are: (a) Equality, (b) Freedom of choice, and (c) Partnership. Schierup and Ålund (2011) noted that the Swedish multiculturalism policy was a rejection of the 'guest worker' strategy for importing labour and that the policy's objective was to ensure social equality among ethnic groups, respect for immigrants' cultures, and resources for immigrants and ethnic minorities to participate in the political life of the host society. Hammar (1985, p.33) sums up the core purpose of this multicultural policy thus: Equality in this policy meant immigrants' had the same standard of life as Swedish citizens. The goal of freedom of choice is that public policies and measures ensure that immigrants and ethnic and linguistic minorities have a choice between maintaining their cultural identities or assimilating. The goal of partnership is that immigrants, minority groups, and the native population benefit from working together. Tawat (2019) identifies several reasons why Sweden adopted a multicultural policy. The Swedish government wanted to align domestic immigration policy with their related foreign policies: those which enshrined the right of Swedish communities abroad to preserve their Swedish culture, and those which championed universal human rights and supported various civil rights movement around the world. Tawat also underscores the role of Social Democratic Party ally the Swedish Labour Union (LO), whose influence ensured that immigrants would be granted equality and the freedom to choose between assimilation and maintaining their own culture. It is worth noting that since the 1990s, the idea of multiculturalism had been declared dead by German chancellor Angela Merkel, UK Prime Minister David Cameron, and French president Nicholas Sarkozy, who all argued that multiculturalism had been a divisive force in previously coherent national societies (Faist, 2013). However, despite the abandonment and critic of multicultural policy the right for immigrant and refugees to practice their religions and cultural practices, mother tongue (the right to mother tongue assistance when engaging with authorities etc), religious burial grounds, participation in the political life of the host society (voting) was maintained (See Faist, 2013).

Policies targeting immigrants, according to Schierup et al., (2006), are inspired by the experiences of inclusionary[1] strategies and policies from the United States and other European countries. In the United States as well as in Sweden, the promoting of diversity is justified by a set of intertwined discourses, one of these being the discourse of competitiveness (quality) and profit. This discourse stresses how the 'problem' of integration is conceptualised by the different political administrative actors in the Swedish context. For companies to compete in a global market, they need to diversify their labour force. The assumption is that a diverse work force brings together people with different perspectives, which gives companies and organisations a competitive edge in the global market. The same raison d'être is found in diversifying the work force in public institutions. The discourse stresses the importance of delivering quality of service to multi-ethnic clients. A second discourse that commonly legitimises diversity is social justice and equality. However, the notion of diversity/multiculturalism is controversial and has been criticised by Appiah (1994), Brah (1992), and Mattsson (2001), among others. In Sweden, the policy was discredited in a number of intertwined discourses. For instance, according to Borevi (2014), multicultural policy was criticised on the grounds that it supported migrants' ethno-cultural identities, thus jeopardising their integration into Swedish society: "The discussion resulted in a declaration, in a government bill from 1986 that the immigrant policy 'does not aim at supporting immigrants as collective identities." (Ibid; 713–714). In 1997, the policy was replaced by one of integration, which according to Borevi (2014) was considered a paradigmatic shift. One of the changes in this policy was the rescinding of the policy the whole Swedish strategy and refugees were were given the option to move to any place in Sweden.

The main justification for the policy was that it would facilitate the integration of immigrants by making it easier for them to get a job and to adjust to Swedish society with the support of relatives and acquaintances who were already living in Sweden (SOU 1992:133). The policy change was expected to encourage asylum seekers to take greater responsibility for their lives. In addition, economic support was shifted to support resource-weak asylum seekers and new arrivals. However, the unintended effect of the change led to a large number of asylum seekers and refugees moving to the biggest cities in Sweden. Borevi (2014: p.714) says that the policy "constituted little more than a confirmation of the change in course that had already been made in the 1980s" and stresses that the policy did not rescind past practices but built on the measures introduced by the multicultural policy of the 1970s. For instance, mother tongue teaching, support for migrant associations (ethnic associations) and Swedish as a Second Language (SFI) which was introduced in the 1970s (Lgr 69, Suppl. 2, 1973), were not discarded.

Since 2010, the reception of refugees and their families has been the responsibility of the Swedish Employment Service, while the reception of asylum seekers is

[1] I am using the notion of inclusion and integration synonymously as policy concepts and not as analytical concepts.

still managed by the Swedish Migration Agency. In 2015, there was an extraordinary spike in the number of asylum seekers in Sweden. In practice, it created several challenges, such as organising their reception and housing, which forced the government to reduce the pressure on the system by restricting the number of asylum seekers. For instance, the border between Denmark and Sweden was closed for people without valid ID documents. In June 2016, to make Sweden less attractive for asylum seekers, Sweden introduced a temporary residence permit for refugees, and a more restrictive policy and practice on family reunion for individuals with refugee status. But this shift did allow asylum seekers the possibility of 'changing track' from being asylum seekers to being labour migrants, even though, to qualify, they had to be unionised or at least have a alary based on the norm negotiated by the union. In Sweden, until this reform, the core principle in Swedish asylum and integration policy was providing individuals with permanent residence permits and family reunification rights.

The shifts in integration policy shaped how integration practice was conceptualised and the focus of integration shifted to facilitating and shortening the time it took for migrants to access their vocations or find employment (Osman 2006; Andersson & Osman, 2008). To achieve this goal, the government introduced a battery of measures, such as The Establishment Programme (*Etableringsprogrammet*), The Short Way (*Kortavägen*), and The Fast Track (*Snabbaspåren*). The Short Way and Fast Track programmes were introduced during the 2015 'migration crisis'. Most of these programmes, however, (with the exception of The Short Way) target refugees and their families and are not available to other groups of migrants.

To summarise, the objective of Swedish integration policy has always departed from the idea of equal rights, obligations, and opportunities for everybody irrespective of their ethnic or national background (Emilsson, 2014). The policy emphasises individual obligations and self-support through employment (Borevi, 2014). In 2010, integration policy was sharpened through the development of programmes and practices to facilitate migrants' and refugees' employment.. Integration policy introduced a battery of measures to facilitate immigrants' and refugees' access to the Swedish labour market, and ultimately to facilitate their inclusion in their vocation in Sweden. Since 2015, all newly arrived immigrants (read refugees) are obligated to: register for Swedish language courses, register with the public employment services (PES), and register for the intensive, targeted Fast Track introduction programme to facilitate their reintegration into their vocation. The principal focus, explicit in the policy shifts, but also implicit in the structure of support that targets immigrants, is on facilitating the speedy integration of refugees into their previous vocations. In the polices and the practices of the various Swedish integration measures, inclusion and integration are synonymous with employment.

Societal Structure of Support for Migrants to Access Their Vocations in Sweden

Since the mid-1970s, Sweden has implemented several integration policies to facilitate migrants' access to their vocations, and these policies have changed over time. The shifts in general shaped various integration initiatives (the structure of support) where one of the main focuses was on expediating the process of accessing their vocations (Osman 2006; Andersson & Osman, 2008), and the government initiated a series of measures that will be briefly described, below.

The Establishment Programme

The objective of this programme is to provide newcomers with a quick introduction to Swedish working life, enable the conditions for their self-sufficiency, and strengthen their active participation in working life and society. The two-year programme, which targets adults between the ages of 20 and 65, has been mandatory since 2018. It is an individualised, tailored plan that the refugee develops with a public employment officer (PEO). This umbrella programme demands full time participation – 40 hours a week – and includes the following activities: language training through Swedish for Immigrants (SFI), a social orientation course, courses at different levels to develop or build on existing skills, work experience placement (practicum), job-seeking support, help and guidance to start a business, and validation of prior education (Andersson & Osman, 2008).

Once individuals are admitted to the programme, the employment officer maps their educational, training, skills, and work experience. The programme caters for both refugees with limited educational backgrounds and those with strong educational credentials. The latter have strong possibilities for establishing themselves in the labour market and are expected to enrol in programmes such as The Fast Track, which targets professions experiencing a shortage of qualified labour. The programme consists of activities such as Swedish for Immigrants (SFI), social studies, education at different levels, internships, support when applying for jobs, support and advice for those looking to start their own business, and validation of skills. Although the programme itself is flexible, some parts are not (Celik et al., 2020, p. 6). If the participant is unable to find work or continue with their studies, the PEO will recommend a relevant programme (Osman, 2006).

The Fast Track Programme

This programme was initiated in March 2015 as the result of a tripartite agreement between labour, employers, and government to identify the measures needed to effectively facilitate the inclusion of migrants into their vocations. The programme targets migrants and refugees with skills and education in vocational areas that require qualified personnel, and offers access to 40 vocations and professions such as teacher, doctor, nurse, and electrical and mechanical engineer.

The PEOs coordinate the programme by mapping prior skills, assessing and validating abilities, and recommending and organising compensatory education and/or training (Celik et al., 2020). The focus of the programme is, however, not training or education itself; it is on identifying what the individual needs to do to access their vocation in Sweden and how to apply for and secure a job. For instance, in 2016, the Fast-Track programme for teachers was introduced through an agreement between Almega (the Employers' Organisation for the Swedish Service Sector), SKR (Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions), The Teachers Association, The National Teachers Association, and the PES. Since its inception, only three Swedish studies have examined any aspect of this programme. One study by Bengtsson and Mickwitz (2022) looked at how refugees with a teaching background became qualified teachers. Economou and Hajer (2019) examined the integration of Syrian refugee teachers into the Swedish labour market and then how migrant teachers negotiated their new teaching identity. Reports and evaluations of the programme have been conducted by the PES, but these were not scientifically grounded.

The Short Way Programmes

This programme similarly targets refugees and migrants. To be eligible, one should (a) be registered with and assessed and certified the PES, (b) have at least two years' university-level education, and (c) have good Swedish language skills. The duration of the programme varies between 12 and 26 weeks. Participants are helped to identify and assess their academic skills, get a qualified internship (called *praktikplats*) at a company within their field, and improve their Swedish language skills through specialised Swedish courses. Professional coaching and shorter job-training programmes are also part of the offerings. Almost all Swedish universities participate as well as some private organisations such as *Academicum*, and associations such as *Folkuniversitet*. In general, the programme and admission to the various electives have a similar modus operandi. Participants are interviewed, and once admitted to a programme are informed of the various professional tracks and offered professional coaching and study guidance. This is followed by mapping and assessment of their academic competence. Career-specific Swedish language training proceeds at the academic level. Instruction is teacher led but there is also the possibility of studying Swedish during the workplace-based part of their course, where participants get an

idea of how their competence matches the needs of employers in the labour market. Participants are also provided with compensatory education or training to get their licence to practise. These compensatory courses are organised by relevant institutions. Accessing the compensatory course, however, is contingent on Swedish National Board of Social Affairs and Health confirmation that the degree is recognised, approved knowledge of Swedish in accordance with the provisions for basic eligibility (Swedish 3, with the lowest allowed grade E). At the end of the programme, the participants have to take a Swedish eligibility test to qualify for a Swedish nursing licence to practise.

In this context, it is important to stress that validation of prior learning has become a crucial practice in Swedish integration initiatives and leads to two primary outcomes: either (a) an individual's competence is misrecognised, which means that they must re-train from scratch, or (b) the institution that conducted the validation recommends compensatory training based on their interpretation of the results. For teachers, this is the Swedish National Agency for Education, for the health and medical sector it is the Swedish National Board for Health Welfare. These agencies do not recommend specific courses or content; instead, it is left to each university to tailor the compensatory programme according to their own specific admission criteria.

Temporality as a Mechanism for Classification and Construction of the Other as Competent or Incompetent

In this section, I will present the encounter of three trained nurses with Swedish integration initiatives and show how each initiative in combination with an educational institution can construct immigrants as competent or incompetent**.** Two of the nurses are from Eritrea and one from Iran. The two Eritrean women came to Sweden through the family reunion programme, while the Iranian woman came with her husband and applied for asylum. The Iranian couple spent six years in a Swedish refugee camp before being granted asylum. L is now a single mother. he three women (L from Iran, Asha from Chad and M and D are from Eritrea) had relatively extensive nursing experience from their countries of origin. M had also worked as a nurse in Sudan:

> *In Eritrea, I worked in the paediatric and emergency department for four years. In 2009 I moved to Sudan as an emigrant, and I also worked for seven years in different departments. In general ward, gynaecology for two years, and emergency department for the last three years before I moved here.*

L, like M, had had extensive experience working in different capacities in the Iranian health sector. After her training, she had to work as a nurse for two years, while she also worked as an administrator in the hospital procurement office.

(I): Why did you work in two different jobs?
(L): Because we didn't get a lot of money as a nurse and there are a lot of shifts. I have worked in a private hospital. But it was difficult for me. I worked in the hospital, the private hospital, and the procurement office in the hospital.

On the one hand, (D), one of the Eritrean women, had no working experience. She moved to join her husband after her nursing training.

(D): I came to Sweden as a recent graduate.
(I): Okay. You haven't worked in your home country?
(D): No.

As in any nursing education, (D) did her internship in various hospital departments.

D): I did internships in different departments in the hospital.
(I): Okay. And how long was the internship?
(D): I don't remember exactly but it was a very long time, I think. every year we have an internship. Two to three months.

All these nurses came to Sweden at different times. D came to Sweden in 2017, M in 2015, both through the family reunion programme. L and her husband came to Sweden in 2009. When they applied for asylum she said that "everything came to a stop with this process".

(I): Everything stops, what do you mean?
L): Yes, I couldn't work. I'm waiting for my residence permit…. And then I thought okay, I'll get my residence permit then I'll work as a nurse or join my vocation in Sweden. But it takes a lot of time and took a lot of time and I, maybe it was my fault.

(I): How long did you wait for a residence permit?
(L): Six years. Ah., it was the worst six years of my life because I can't sit and not work.
…After six years we got a residence permit and I started SFI. I completed SFI in six months. The Employment Agency decided that we should study on the Fast-Track course, The Short Way. I was enrolled in the programme from 2017 to 2018.

Despite different times of arrival and different circumstances, these women all experienced major barriers to their accessing their prior vocations in Sweden. D, L, and M were enrolled in the fast track programme, but not Asha (the programme was not available when she arrived). D and M joined the programme within two years of arriving and L after six years. M became pregnant shortly after arriving in Sweden but continued to study Swedish as a second language while on maternity leave. After her language programme, L applied for a supplementary programme at Karolinska Institute, but could not be admitted because she had not worked as a nurse for nearly seven years. Although both L and D had had substantial nursing experience, this experience was not taken into consideration. Here we see that when it comes to regulations governing enrolment in supplementary education, the time that has elapsed since the applicant worked in their vocation strongly influences their likelihood of being enrolled, which seems to work against the very purpose of the initiatives, and the work of PEOs. This is a clear example of how misaligned inter-institutional mechanisms can work to construct an immigrant as incompetent.

Language as a Mechanism of Constructing the Other as Incompetent or Competent

The narratives of the three women make it clear that learning Swedish was critical for accessing their vocation in Sweden and attaining a certain level of Swedish was a prerequisite for enrolling in the supplementary courses critical for accessing their vocation in Sweden. Certainly, working in healthcare requires the ability to communicate with patients, and D makes clear that this was a priority for The Establishment Programme:

> *As soon as I got here, after two weeks, I started studying SFI. I also got pregnant at the same time so after nine months I went on maternity leave. After two months of maternity leave, I started studying Swedish in the evening class. So yes, I completed my basic SFI [levels] C, B, D while on maternity leave.*

On the other hand, M was directly enrolled in The Short Way programme two weeks after she arrived.

> *(I): What training have you done?*
> *(D): I have done as I said The Short Way. Language training.*
> *(I): Is it SFI or?*
> *8D): No, it is not SFI.*
> *(I): Okay, you never did SFI?*
> *(D): I've done SFI maybe two weeks or something. So, I don't count it.*

Thus, Although D had the language credentials to apply for a supplementary programme, she enrolled in The Short Way programme whose focus is language training and providing immigrants with a sense of what it means to work in their previous vocation.

> *(I): How long is The Short Way programme?*
> *(L): One year. Almost a year, or a year test.*
> *(I): One year. So, you learned the language for a year?*
> *(M): Exactly.*
> *(I): It's just language and how to work as a nurse in Sweden?*

M stressed that "it is not the knowledge that is a problem but the language". D also maintained that in a language programme the focus should be on everyday language skills – communication with the patient – and not the formal academic language.

Knowledge Construction and Experience as a Mechanism for Inclusion and Exclusion

Integration initiatives, such as The Short Way do not themselves provide the supplementary offerings which are delivered by relevant educational institutions, which also have their own specific admission requirements (a point we will come back to later). In general, however, to enrol in the supplementary programme the candidate must fulfil the following: Swedish 3 or Swedish as a Second Language 3 from a

municipal upper secondary adult education programme (*Komvux*), or Swedish Level C1 in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Equivalent proficiency in Norwegian or Danish is also accepted (Socialstyrelsen 2020). Although the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare considers Iranian and Eritrean nursing education to be equivalent to a Swedish nursing education, qualified nationals from these two countries are nevertheless required to take an additional one-year course and pass the Swedish national examination for nurses in Sweden (*kunskapprovet*). In this context it is important to point out that different universities have different requirement to access their supplementary program. For instance, at Gothenburg University, applicants admitted to the supplementary programme must take a language placement test which consists of two parts, oral and written. Those who pass the oral test can then take the written test and if they pass both, receive the relevant credits which lead to a short training period. Those who fail the placement test are enrolled in a Swedish language programme, which focuses on professional Swedish for nurses (this also applies to those who do not take the placement test).

If an applicant lacks documentation of formal qualifications or believes that due to other merits they meet the qualification or prior knowledge requirements, for example, through other forms of education or professional experience, they are validated. Supplementary courses are only offered at certain higher education institutions, and only one, Luleå Technological University College, offers a supplementary distance course. This is a major limitation for immigrants, as L and D stress. L says:

In 2018, I applied (for the supplementary programme) at Kalmar University College, and I was admitted, but as a reserve. My situation was a problem – I have a daughter and she goes to school here. These programmes are only available in Stockholm, Kalmar, Gothenburg, and the only distance programme is Luleå Technical University College, and this year they have cancelled the programme. The course is only available in three places. Not everyone can move, everyone has family, children and they can't move, they can't commute.

She applied to a university in Stockholm, but despite her language credentials from *Komvux* being accepted by both Kalmar and Luleå, they were not accepted in Stockholm.

…when I applied for it in Stockholm and I found out that the course I had studied at university didn't work, I was surprised. Why was I at Komvux then? And the university would not accept the language course I took in Komvux. I thought I could start in Stockholm because I can commute to Stockholm.

Like L, D was a mother of two small children and she could not attend the supplementary programme in a town or city she could not commute to:

I have two children and I cannot commute to Stockholm or Kalmar, so, so I just thought that I should be able to take the distance programme at Luleå University. But the course was cancelled.

Family situation, different institutional regulations, and restricted sites of offering were real obstacles for some of our informants. M enrolled in the supplementary programme at Kalmar University College because, unlike L and D, she had no

children and so could move to wherever necessary in Sweden. During the interview, L seemed to have given up on accessing her vocation in Sweden.

> *I have a lot of experience as a nurse. Now I have not worked in my vocation for 10 years. 10 years without work, you forget a lot. Education is changing, new knowledge. They (PEO) won't help, only the first PEO we had, he was very nice and maybe because he was Persian, I don't know, he was the same. …he immediately found jobs for both of us, me and my husband. And that was the last support we received. Ah. And then I got no help, no support. …I got, ah, I got support to find a job here in the hospital as an assistant nurse .*

M was the only one of the women who went on from a short course to a supplementary programme; the only one with the experience of accessing her profession in Sweden. She maintains that the theoretical part of the supplementary programme was not difficult, and she passed easily. She suggests that the process could be made even shorter – instead of taking courses, it would be better if the supplementary programme became an internship:

> *You can reflect on your journey.*
> *(M) We have already studied the theory part but what we need is how the system works. We need to learn the routine in nursing wards. So why do we need to sit and study rules, regulations, and summaries and so on.*

In this context, what M is proposing is similar to what Asha experienced. Asha's prior knowledge was validated by Karolinska Institute, and then she took the examination and got her licence to practise. The experiences of accessing their vocations is shaped by several factors, one of which is the structure of opportunity they encounter, and particularly the rationale on which this structure is constructed. As evident in the experiences of these three nurses trained outside the EU/EES, the focus of the structure of opportunity is on the Swedish language and theoretical and practical knowledge. There are two dimensions related to the impact of language and the perception of language on the structure of opportunity – formal academic language and everyday communicative language. From the perspective of the three nurses, these initiatives generally focus on academic language to the detriment of communicative language skills. And they felt that the latter was critical in their everyday work and encounters with patients. This focus on language in the Short Path initiative reflects not only on academic actors' understandings, but also political and administrative actors' understandings of why some immigrants have problems accessing their vocations in Sweden. In other words, there is an intersubjective understanding among different actors in this regard, and this is reflected in the initiatives to facilitate the inclusion of skilled immigrants into their vocations. This intersubjectivity partly reflects the research on integration. In general, for instance, immigrants' difficulties accessing their vocations and the Swedish labour market are rationalised by a deficit model. But there is also body research that attributes the problem to discrimination and racism.

Discussion

Swedish integration policy and practice, as evidenced above, reflects academic and political administrative actors' intersubjective understanding of why the integration of immigrants (particularly those from outside EU/EES countries) is problematic**.** Simply put, the point of departure of the Swedish structure of opportunity is that immigrants lack the relevant cultural capital (Examina, language and network) to access their vocations in Sweden. This focus, I stress, ignores or at best underplays combinations of several of factors, including racism and discrimination, knowledge hierarchies, and discourses about immigrants, particularly in relation to non-European immigrants whereby they are constructed as a "problem". Another neglected aspect is immigrants' vocational experience, which in fact often works to their disadvantage when combined with the time it takes for asylum seekers to be granted residence permits, as in the case of D. It is also important to point out that the structure of opportunity does not take into account the family situation of young women with children. For instance, some of the informants could not participate in the supplementary programmes because they were reluctant to uproot their children to enrol in a compensatory programme in another city which they were unable to commute to. Where one lives and other individual circumstances, particularly with regard to young women with children can present insurmountable obstacles to entering programmes that could facilitate migrants' access to their vocations in Sweden.

None of the informants experienced difficulties meeting the knowledge and (academic) language criteria for enrolling in the supplementary programmes of various higher education institutions. However, implicit in the structure of opportunity is an intersubjective understanding of the context-specific knowledge and competence hierarchy which is evaluated according to the Swedish norm. This results in the validation, maintenance, and reproduction of a cultural capital hierarchy. More importantly, it privileges the cultural capital (examina) acquired in Sweden, the Nordics, and EU countries, reflecting prevailing global power relations. The process of accessing the structure of opportunity in itself is an assessment of the knowledge and competence of immigrants even before the structure of opportunity itself is reached (Fast Track, or The Short Way). And even if the PEO deems one sufficiently qualified to access these programmes, the institutions that offer the training can independently reject your application based on specific institutional entry requirements.

The structure of opportunity, as evident above, thus functions as a control mechanism for classifying, categorising, and ordering immigrants' knowledge and competence, but more importantly, for inculcating in immigrants the perception that their knowledge and competence is irrelevant, or at best only partly relevant in relation to accessing their vocations in Sweden. This is 'confirmed' to migrants since the assessments are conducted by so-called experts. The practice in other words creates exclusionary boundaries, which enforce homogeneity, but at the same individualise the exclusion or subordinate inclusion through 'objective validation' that measures

gaps in knowledge and competence. The mechanism of individualising immigrants' knowledge and competence through the structure of opportunity is not only a control mechanism but also a mechanism for disciplining and directing the individual to accept their inclusion or exclusion when trying to access their vocation. From the perspective of the informants, knowledge is not a 'problem'. All those who had the opportunity to validate their qualifications and take the Swedish nursing examination passed with little problem. However, some pointed out that language was a problem even once they had earned their licence to practise and had begun to work. They experienced difficulties in their everyday communication with patients, and stressed that while they understood that the focus on academic language had been necessary, a language programme focusing on everyday patient interactions was called for.

Serendipity seems to be a red thread running through the informants' narratives of how they accessed their vocations. All, in different ways, gave credit to individuals who supported them in their journeys. In the case of L, D, and M it was chance meetings. M was 'lucky' to have a supervisor at the local public employment office who helped her, while L and D were 'unlucky' to have a local employment officer who was unhelpful and unsupportive. To my knowledge, there is no research that has examined the significance of serendipity in immigrants' process of accessing their vocations in Sweden.

In conclusion, the structure of opportunity, particularly the intersubjective understanding of the challenges immigrants and refugees face when accessing their vocations in Sweden, is primarily a mechanism that controls rather than facilitates their inclusion. It functions as an instrument for assessing, categorising, and classifying immigrant and refugee competency and knowledge in relation to the Swedish norm; it is an instrument for identifying gaps in their knowledge and abilities. In other words, the abilities and competences acquired outside Sweden are judged in relation to Swedish educational norms with a focus on what they lack. This mechanism thus works to include or exclude them from their vocations in Sweden, encouraging them to accept their subordinate inclusion or exclusion. Where immigrants live also may impact negatively or positively on the integration process. Future studies must investigate how local resources impact on immigrants in different parts of Sweden.

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Chapter 3
Understanding Recognition of Prior Learning as a Tool for the Labour Market Integration of Skilled Migrants

Per Andersson

Keywords Recognition of prior learning · Integration · Skilled migrants · Labour market

Introduction

Sweden is a country that has received, and welcomed, high numbers of migrants since the 1970s. After the beginning of the Syrian war, the reception of refugees increased significantly. Sweden, Germany, and Austria were the three countries that received the most asylum applications in Europe. During the period 2014–2017, Sweden – with a population of ten million – received about 270,000 asylum applications, whereof about one third were from Syrian citizens, and granted about 140,000 residence permits. A substantial number of these migrants were skilled. Highly skilled migrants generally have a higher employment rate than migrants who are low skilled, but nevertheless these highly skilled migrants have lower employment rates than low-skilled native-born Swedes, even after 10 years in the country (Irastorza & Bevelander, 2017). This indicates that there is a lack of recognition of the skills of migrants in the Swedish labour market, and that it is important to understand and develop recognition processes to improve labour-market integration.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is a key factor in the integration of skilled migrants. The prior learning of migrants, be it from formal education or from informal learning in qualified positions in their prior labour market, should be central in determining the demand, inclusion, and integration of such migrants and their skills and competences into a new workplace, labour market, and society. Several initiatives have been taken in policy and practice to facilitate labour-market integration through processes aimed at the recognition of prior learning. The OECD (2016) has also highlighted RPL as an important measure for the integration of refugees and has identified factors that make recognition procedures particularly valuable for this

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group. For example, it is likely that both education and training and the labour market in their home country are more different from those in the host country than is the situation for other migrants, and it is also more likely that such refugees lack proof of their qualifications or have had their studies cut short by war. Thus, help with the assessment and documentation of skills and competences, and tailormade supplementary education, should improve labour-market opportunities and integration for refugees. However, there are also problems emerging in such processes. Problems and opportunities in recognition processes will be highlighted in this chapter, centring upon three key concerns: Firstly, the *object* of recognition, secondly the *subject* of the recognition process, and thirdly the very *process* of recognition. The objects of recognition refer to the skills, competences, and qualifications of the migrant, which are the actual and formal aspects of what should be assessed and recognised through RPL. However, there is always an individual, a subject, who possesses these "objects", and who experiences the process in a certain way. And this recognition process is in itself critical to the experiences and outcomes of RPL.

This chapter is a research review based on earlier studies of RPL,[1] mainly in Sweden, as well as theoretical perspectives and concepts that have been employed in these studies to understand and problematise different practices of RPL. The aim of the research review is to develop an understanding of the potentials and problems in the recognition of prior learning and a critical perspective on them, with a particular focus on RPL measures to facilitate the integration of skilled migrants into the labour market. The earlier studies do not concern this specific group alone, but they do provide relevant findings that contribute to our understanding and the present discussion.

Lack of recognition is also a problem identified by, for example, Bauder (2003). His interview study in Canada about the situation of South Asian and Yugoslavian immigrants, amongst whom half of those from the former Yugoslavia came as refugees, describes what is called "brain abuse". That is, migration does not only mean a "brain drain" from the country of origin, but also "brain abuse" in the sense of de-skilling and the non-recognition of credentials in the host country. Bauder discusses this problem from the perspective of Bourdieu's idea of cultural capital, identifying the importance of the national (in his case Canadian) origin of institutionalised cultural capital, the credentials, from which follows non-recognition of foreign credentials. This devaluation of institutional cultural capital results in the exclusion of migrants from regulated professions, which becomes a major barrier to employment. Bauder also reflects upon the informal category of cultural capital, which is local experience of the profession, "Canadian experience" in his case. Experience becomes another category leading to the non-recognition and exclusion of those lacking such local experience, particularly in less regulated occupations. The consequence is that migrants are appointed to less qualified positions and lower wages, compared to natives with similar qualifications and experience, which leads to the

[1] The abbreviation RPL is used when suitable to refer to specific activities that are organised to make prior learning visible and give recognition to such learning, to avoid confusion in relation to when the concept of recognition is used in a more general sense.

reproduction of a Canadian domination of the professions. However, in another study from Canada, Dietz et al. (2009) show how formal, official recognition of foreign credentials as equivalent to local credentials improves the situation. Such recognition processes reduce prejudice and is important for a fair treatment of migrant employees.

A comparative analysis of the integration of refugees in Austria, Germany, and Sweden (Konle-Seidl, 2018) also identifies the need to prioritise "assessment of skills and recognition of qualifications". There are certain initiatives taken at the European level to facilitate recognition, such as the online skills profile tool for self-assessment (European Commission, 2019). The particular challenge that is described (Konle-Seidl, 2018) concerns recognition in relation to the vocational education and training systems in Germany and Austria. Here, the focus on equivalence to reference qualifications or occupations – even in formally non-regulated occupations – is an obstacle. That is, the recognition process is expected to show the equivalence of refugees' skills to existing qualifications in the receiving country. The recognition of partial qualifications, where equivalence to the full qualification is not required, has been discussed as an option to avoid this obstacle.

In the German context, Brücker et al. (2018) also show the value of formal recognition of foreign occupational qualifications. Their study identifies substantial gains from occupational recognition for employment rates as well as wages among immigrants. In the Swedish context, RPL is one of the central measures for labour-market integration, as part of a two-year-long establishment programme organised by the national Public Employment Service (PES) (Arbetsförmedlingen), including primarily language and civic orientation courses but also RPL activities. Another initiative that builds upon prior learning and experiences are the fast-track programmes developed in cooperation between PES, social partners, and higher education to combine and facilitate professional Swedish language training, placement, RPL, additional professional training etc. for migrants with a background in shortage occupations such as teaching, nursing, or medicine (Andersson Joona et al., 2016; Konle-Seidl, 2017, 2018). A third initiative including RPL is the bridging programmes in higher education, targeting graduates who have a foreign qualification equivalent to a Swedish one (SUHF, 2016). The character of such initiatives in terms of RPL are discussed below.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) has developed in policy and practice around the world in recent decades, and it is also a developing research field. RPL is known under different names, such as accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL), prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR), or, in Sweden and some other countries, validation of prior learning (VPL; "validering" in Swedish). Initiatives in RPL are typically related to mobility in one sense or another. The target could be to stimulate mobility in the labour market, particularly during times of structural

change and unemployment, or of widening access to higher education, or of meeting recognition challenges related to migration and integration, which is the focus here (cf. Andersson & Fejes, 2010; Bucken-Knapp et al., 2019).

There is a certain variation, not only in concepts but also in RPL practices and contexts. However, the basic idea is still about giving recognition to prior learning wherever and whenever such learning has taken place. This idea is often enacted in formal assessment systems providing the basis for recognition, but also in more non-formal (organised but not legally formalised) and informal processes, where prior learning is made visible and gains recognition without a formal credential as the outcome. It should be noted that it is not the candidates' prior learning *per se* to which different institutions give recognition, but rather the results of their prior learning; that is, the formal and/or actual qualifications, competence, knowledge, and skills. These are assessed in different ways, for example, through methods such as interviews, portfolios, formal tests, and authentic assessments in workplaces. As indicated above, RPL is often related to processes of the transfer/mobility of knowledge – in place and/or time. People need to gain recognition for what they have learnt before, often in another context, to be able to use their knowledge and skills in a new context. It could be a matter of mobility between countries, or between workplaces, or from informal to formal learning contexts (from daily life/working life to education). A recognition process could include different methods and have different results. These results could be admission to education or to working life, credits/exemptions in study programmes, and/or formal/non-formal documentation of competence – degrees, certificates, CVs, etc. The demands on the assessment in RPL could be more or less strict – from equivalence to similarity compared to the formal demands of the educational system that typically define what is valid knowledge in the new context. On the one hand, if equivalence is required, applying exactly the same criteria and demands as in examinations in the corresponding educational programme makes it more difficult to give recognition to knowledge developed and situated in another (national) context. On the other hand, it is easier to give recognition when, instead, similarity is demanded, which allows a higher degree of flexibility with more variation concerning what proofs of skills and competences will be accepted (Andersson, 2010; Andersson & Fejes, 2010).

The demand for equivalence or similarity means a more or less strict and formal approach to recognition, which depends on the context and the aim of the process. In a formal context, and with a summative aim, there are probably greater demands for equivalence. The summative aim means that the result should be a documentation of competence, and hopefully formal credentials that are valid in the receiving country. On the other hand, a formative aim means that the recognition process is mainly expected to be a starting point for further study and learning. Then, the important thing is that the prior learning, and future learning needs, of the individuals are identified in a way that helps them to "start from where they are". These different aims and approaches also suggest that the process will be more or less convergent – targeting whether the individual knows certain things – or divergent – opening up opportunities for a wider spectrum of knowledge and skills to be made visible.

In other words, recognition of prior learning has to balance between standardisation and flexibility in approach. This is also a matter of how fairness, in assessment and in the use of outcomes, could be secured. In RPL, the starting point is an individual learning process and its outcomes, which could vary concerning where and exactly what has been learnt, and how this could be expressed. If the assessment of such individual learning outcomes is to be fair, this calls for flexibility in approach; for example, different methods adapted to individual ability. But if the results of RPL are to be used as the basis for comparisons between individuals, for example in the admissions to a professional education programme, or in recruitment for a job position, there is also a demand for fairness between individuals. Thus, there is also a need for standardisation, to be able to compare outcomes between individuals. Both these aspects of RPL are important, and the balance often poses a dilemma that has to be overcome in practice.

The Research Field of Recognition of Prior Learning

The research field of recognition of prior learning has developed significantly in parallel to the developments in policy and practice. A thematic overview shows different areas and central themes in RPL research (Harris et al., 2014). One central theme is the "prior learning assessment for immigrants in regulated professions", which is discussed from a critical theory perspective (Moss, 2014). This discussion focuses on the power relations between different stakeholders, and who has the power to decide what knowledge and competence should be assessed and given recognition in relation to regulated professions.

There are also overviews that are based on research from different countries, including national reviews (Harris et al., 2011), as well as certain empirical studies (e.g. Andersson et al., 2015). Different theoretical perspectives have also been applied to understanding RPL (Andersson & Harris, 2006; Harris, 2014), some of which will be employed in this chapter. Research on RPL provides perspectives and insights of value to the development of policy and practice in this area. In addition to this, the relevance of findings often goes beyond the specific topic of RPL, because in many cases they touch upon more general issues faced in educational research, as well as in other fields where educational issues are of interest, such as migration studies. Young (2006, p. 326) describes this relevance as follows:

> Questions about knowledge, authority, qualifications and different types of learning will always be with us. Once RPL is freed from its largely rhetorical role as the great radical strategy or the great solution to inequality, it offers a unique and very concrete set of contexts for debating the fundamental educational issues that such questions give rise to, and for finding new ways of approaching them.

This refers to matters such as how learning, knowledge and qualifications from different contexts are valued and included or excluded – in the educational system, in the labour market, and not the least in migration processes. Here, RPL offers unique contexts where assessment and evaluation of knowledge are more or less freed from

the contexts of learning, which gives the opportunity to approach these matters in new ways. The focus will now turn to a discussion of the three concerns in RPL introduced above: the object, the subject, and the process of recognition.

Competence: The Object of Recognition

The first concern is the *object* of the recognition process, the competence of the individual, the skilled migrant. In this chapter, "competence" is used as a broad concept that includes both theoretical and practical aspects of knowledge and skills, and the ability to apply them in practice. Competence, including actual knowledge, skills etc., is the outcome of the prior learning processes of the individual. One distinction to be aware of, which complicates the use of the concept of "competence", is the difference in connotation between formal and actual competence, which also needs to be clarified.

Formal Competence

There are recognition processes that focus on *formal competence*, which in our case is mainly formal credentials from higher education in another country, typically the country of origin, and the degree of equivalence between these "foreign" credentials and the credentials valid in the receiving country. This focus in a recognition process – formal credentials – will mean, in the best-case scenario, that the credential is accepted as equivalent to one in the new country. However, it is most likely that the recognition process will result in making visible what it is possible to get credit for, and what is lacking in relation to the requirements in the new country. This in turn will lead to demands for supplementary education and examination before a new formal credential is awarded. This could mean that the foreign credentials of immigrant professionals are not accepted, even though they were valid in the country of origin, and the recognition process becomes a barrier instead of a facilitator (Andersson & Guo, 2009; Bauder, 2003). In Sweden, this is typically the case in regulated professions, such as teaching, nursing, and medicine. Here, the Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket), and the National Board of Health and Welfare (Socialstyrelsen), are responsible for such recognition and licensing in their respective professional areas.

Alternatively, the outcome could be a non-formal certificate that indicates the degree of equivalence of the candidate's credentials compared to the qualifications that are valid and known in the receiving country. The latter is a more likely and acceptable outcome in non-regulated professions. In Sweden, the Swedish Council of Higher Education (Universitets- och Högskolerådet) is responsible for assessing such qualifications. In these areas, it is the employer who decides whom to employ and how to assess credentials and other proofs of competence. Thus, the employer has a more important role in labour-market integration in non-regulated areas, and

the degree of trust in different types of proofs could be crucial. Here, it should be noted that the extent of regulated and non-regulated professions differs between countries, with Sweden having a relatively low degree of regulated occupations in general (cf. Konle-Seidl, 2018).

Actual Competence

The other focus in terms of the object is the *actual competence*; that is, what the individual actually knows and is able to do. Professions with regulations (such as medicine) have to focus on the formal competence, even if the actual competence also needs to be ascertained for access to the labour market. Fast-track programmes are an initiative designed to also build upon the actual competence in order to facilitate recognition and integration in such professions.

However, there is greater potential for emphasising the actual competence in non-regulated professions (e.g., in the Swedish context, engineering). In this latter case, employers are more interested in the actual competence, which for example is demonstrated, at least in Sweden, in the tendency to employ engineering students even before they have received their qualifications, as long as their actual competence is assessed as valuable.

Thus, an initial question for understanding the approach of a certain RPL process is to ask whether the focus of the process is formal or actual competence, or both, which could lead to very different approaches. It should also be noted that we cannot take it for granted that employers in non-regulated areas will put their trust in the outcomes of non-formal recognition processes. The trust in students even before they have their qualification is based on trust in the educational institutions, and relations with students during, for example, periods of practicum or workplace-based projects. Non-formal recognition processes targeting the actual competence of such groups as foreign engineers have to earn legitimacy in the industry, if they are to help in labour-market integration. Another approach would be to leave the recognition in non-regulated areas to employers, who will still employ the workers they want. However, this would mean a withdrawal from the opportunities to facilitate labour-market integration that are available through RPL processes. And, furthermore, this would probably also lead to a higher risk of other exclusion processes developing, such as the emphasis on local work-life experiences described by Bauder (2003).

The Skilled Migrant: The Subject Experiencing Recognition

The second concern is the *subject* of the process, the migrant her/himself. Starting from the individual and her/his experience and competence implies a different process and results than starting from the professional regulations and labour-market needs of the new country.

In a recognition practice, starting from the subject's perspective means focusing on the importance of guidance and the mapping of prior learning and actual competence, before turning to the formal competence and qualifications. Even if the individual is highly skilled and qualified, we should not take it for granted that these qualifications provide the only path towards integration. Becoming a migrant is a turning point in life, and even if you are qualified you might not want to continue in the same direction as before in working life. That is, the individual has a personal history grounded in a context that she or he has left, and maybe had to leave as a refugee, and this background could mean that she or he, due to such factors as traumatic experiences, no longer wants or is able to work in the same profession as before. In such a situation, guidance could help the individual to identify and describe desires and plans for the future. Such guidance could also include the mapping of more general key competences (or key qualifications) that would be valuable and could help in labour-market integration, independent of the professional area from which the individual comes or wants to enter. A highly skilled person is very likely to have competences that will help in labour-market integration in a number of different areas.

Another aspect of the importance of starting from the subject, from the skills and competences of individual migrants, is that RPL has to target their specific backgrounds. If the choice of the object, the professional areas that RPL processes are developed for, is based solely on local labour-market needs, then there is an obvious risk that RPL is offered for professional areas that do not match the current target group. Thus, starting from the professional backgrounds of the present migrant group is necessary, but if their backgrounds do not fit specific labour-market needs, it might be more valuable for them to gain recognition for more general key competences that employers still need and ask for.

Experiences of RPL

It is also important to take the individual perspective when it comes to the experience of the recognition process *per se*. An interview study focusing on the experience of such a process (Andersson, 2006) reveals different types of experience that influence ways of relating oneself to the process. If the recognition process is experienced as *an opportunity for personal development*, this combines the awareness and refreshment of prior learning that comes from the very recognition process itself, with experiences of new learning opportunities, which in turn means a *developmental* relation to the process. On the other hand, if the recognition of prior learning is experiences mainly as *a matter of assessment and control*, the focus is solely on existing knowledge and competence, which means a *credit-exchange* relation to the process. A third way of experiencing the process of recognition was that it was "*only scratching the surface*". That is, the individual experience was that prior learning was only made visible to a limited extent, while there was more knowledge and skills that did not gain recognition. The result was a *critical* relation to the process, and the individual saw little personal value or exchange from it.

Thus, there is a problem if the expectations of recognition are not fulfilled, when the process is only “scratching the surface”. Such an experience could be the consequence of a lack of information concerning the object of recognition. If the migrant expects the process to make visible and formally recognise a broad spectrum of knowledge and skills, it is likely that he or she will be dissatisfied, as a recognition process typically focuses on a specific knowledge area, such as a profession and its required competence. But the study referred to above also identifies potential in the developmental relation to the recognition process, something that will be developed further in the next section on the process of recognition.

Concerning RPL targeting highly skilled refugees, Bucken-Knapp et al. (2019) show in their interview study that Syrian refugees in Sweden experience RPL (validation) as a lengthy and bureaucratic process involving a lack of recognition. Even if the refugees have a degree and work-life experience, this does not mean that they will gain recognition for this. On the contrary, the RPL process might take a long time and still result in the demand to undertake extensive supplementary education rather than providing access to the labour market. Another problematic experience is when different measures are not coordinated. For example, when the refugees’ skills are mapped by the public employment service as well as by educational institutions (Konle-Seidl, 2017).

RPL as a Divisive Practice

Another perspective that contributes to the understanding of problems and potentials in integration measures, such as recognition of prior learning, is to identify divisive practices and techniques of inclusion/exclusion (Andersson & Osman, 2008). In a study of labour-market integration programmes in Sweden, Foucauldian concepts are applied to interpret the integration practice of the recognition of prior learning. The analysis shows that the recognition of prior learning, in the programmes that were followed, acts as a *divisive practice* of in/exclusion. The programmes target certain vocations, based on labour-market demands, and the opportunities for further training differ. Observations and examinations of participating migrants and their skills are understood as *technologies of power* (Foucault, 1977), which – for those who are included in the programmes – result in a subordinate inclusion in society and the labour market, by which they are included but in a subordinate position compared to what could be expected. For example, such subordinate inclusion is the outcome for a qualified nurse who gains recognition for (part of) her knowledge and skills but only attains the position of assistant nurse. Such non/recognition has also been identified in a comparative study of the recognition practices in Sweden and Canada (Andersson & Guo, 2009), which states that the recognition practice “has become a technical exercise and a governing tool rather than a form of social transformation” (p. 423), in which the prior learning and work experiences of immigrants are discounted and devalued.

Intersubjective Recognition

However, we could also turn to perspectives that provide more positive potentials in relation to the individual subject. The *theory* of recognition developed by Honneth (1995, 2007) has been employed to theorise the *practice* of the recognition of prior learning (Sandberg & Kubiak, 2013). Honneth's theory describes a process of intersubjective recognition, including the development of self-confidence through love (in a broad sense) within family and friendships, the development of self-respect through public recognition as a person and a citizen with legal rights, and the development of self-esteem through the recognition of achievements, capabilities etc. in contexts such as workplaces and education.

A study of RPL processes among "paraprofessionals" in health and social care (Sandberg & Kubiak, 2013) identifies conditions for recognition, and the argument is that the RPL activity can support self-realisation and self-esteem through recognising the value of competence developed in the workplace. Salary and appreciation from colleagues could support such recognition and create the potential for self-realisation. One condition for this is mutual recognition in the relation between assessor and candidate in the RPL process. Thus, Honneth helps us to see the potential of recognition in a deeper sense through RPL processes, but also the problems that can arise concerning self-confidence and self-esteem if mutual recognition is lacking.

The Process of Recognition

The third and final concern discussed in this chapter is the *process* of recognition. Recognition processes could be seen solely as a matter of the classification and assessment of prior learning. But this misses the fact that the recognition process also means a learning process for the individual, who has to learn what is required, what she or he actually knows, and how to present this knowledge and competence in a way that is related to the requirements. If she or he does not understand these matters, the conditions for a valid RPL process do not exist.

The RPL Process as a Sorting Mechanism

Diedrich et al. (2011) examined RPL as part of a labour-market project in Sweden, targeting immigrants with the aim of improving integration into the labour market and society. However, they show that the recognition process becomes a procedure of classification, a sorting mechanism in relation to existing occupations in the Swedish labour market. The outcome is that many skills and qualifications remain invisible, something that could have been avoided with a more comprehensive understanding.

Communicative Action in RPL

To theorise this concern, we can turn to Habermas (1984, 1987) and the theory of communicative action. Then, the problem could be seen as a lack of understanding. For the participants or candidates (these two "labels" are used interchangeably for the people who take part in RPL to gain recognition of prior learning), the problem is to understand what is expected from them and how to show or present this; for the assessor, the problem is to understand the meaning of what is presented by the candidates. A lack of understanding within this process could in turn be the consequence of a lack of communication: if the assessor and the system do not manage to communicate their requirements in a reasonable way, they are difficult to understand; and if the candidates are not able to communicate the "proofs" of their knowledge and skills, it will be difficult for an assessor to identify them. This problem of a potential lack of understanding becomes particularly important when the RPL process is targeting migrants, where both language issues and differences in cultural contexts could influence the degree of mutual understanding. Another problem that is made visible through Habermasian theory is that the assessment practice could be characterised by strategic rather than communicative action. This is the case if the result of the assessment, for example recognition of a formal qualification, or a certain type of classification (cf. Diedrich et al., 2011), in itself becomes the aim of the process – instead of a focus on the individual's knowledge and skills, which should be made visible and, in the next step, developed.

The Habermasian perspective on RPL has particularly been employed by Sandberg (2010, 2012, 2014), who studied RPL in the healthcare sector, and by Sandberg and Andersson (2011) in a study of professional education. Sandberg shows how a "caring ideology" becomes a central aspect in the implementation of RPL in healthcare. This ideology creates a trusting relation between teachers/assessors and participants, and the process becomes more one of recognition of their personal qualities than an assessment of their knowledge and skills. Thereby, according to Sandberg (2010), a normative, subordinate discourse on what a good job means in this female-dominated caring vocation is emerging. The consequence for the assessment of knowledge is that the candidates do not fully understand what actually achieves recognition in the RPL process. This lack of understanding of the assessment and grading means that the strategic actions of the teachers – aimed at providing formal credentials to the participating women – are dominant, rather than communicative actions and mutual understanding between teachers/assessors and participants (Sandberg, 2012). Still, there is a potential for integrating critical discussions with the aim of understanding and learning from the process, which would mean the recognition and further development of prior learning and tacit knowledge (Sandberg, 2014).

Thus, communicative action is also a potential in RPL and assessment practices. Mutual understanding between candidate and assessor creates conditions for a fair and valid assessment (Sandberg & Andersson, 2011). In addition to this, true communication also increases the likelihood of the RPL process becoming not only a

matter of assessment but also a learning opportunity. However, it should be noted that this theoretical perspective presents a communicative "ideal", unlikely to be reached in practice, but it still provides valuable insights to assist in improving the practices of RPL. The value of mutual understanding is particularly important to keep in mind in RPL targeting migrants, where the extent of language skills is key and also a potential obstacle for a candidate to make skills visible.

The learning opportunities embedded in the recognition process are elaborated further in Andersson (2017), where three dimensions of the potential learning process are identified: firstly, to learn what you already know – in other words, to develop awareness of your prior learning; secondly, to learn what is required in the recognition process; and, thirdly, to learn how to present your knowledge in order to gain recognition. RPL is also discussed as either a separate activity, or as an intertwined part of the process of recognition and new learning. An important point is that it could be difficult to make a valid assessment in a process where the sole focus is on retrospective recognition. The argument is that the candidate probably needs learning in all of these three aspects to be able to present valid proofs of prior learning, and without such proofs the assessment will not be valid. This is important, not least in RPL processes targeting refugees and other migrants, who lack key knowledge of and experiences in the receiving country.

Discussion

Recognition of prior learning offers a unique context for discussions about fundamental educational issues concerning the value of learning and knowledge (Young, 2006) but also about issues extending beyond educational matters. In particular, this chapter identifies issues concerning recognition that are highly relevant for the integration of migrants into a new society and its labour market. Recognition of prior learning, and how credentials, qualifications, competences, knowledge, skills, etc. are valued in different contexts, is a critical aspect of such integration processes. Nevertheless, of even greater importance is probably the personal dimension of recognition, which means that you are accepted and included as a valuable individual in a new context.

With the focus here on the recognition of prior learning, competence, knowledge, and skills are foregrounded as the objects of recognition. However, an organised recognition process targeting migrants will mean very different things depending on whether the object is actual or formal competence. An assessment of what an individual can prove that she/he knows and is able to do here and now, the actual competence, is different from an assessment of formal proofs based on prior assessments made in (typically) educational institutions or by professional organisations in another country. On the one hand, assessment of actual competence provides the opportunity of proving your competence independent of formal qualifications and could give recognition to the outcomes of informal and non-formal learning. But here, the situated character of learning should be born in mind.

If an RPL process is built on the expectation that a migrant should fulfil all competence requirements in the new context, e.g., a vocation in the Swedish labour market, there is an obvious risk of failure. Actual competence from a different, but similar, context would probably be a good basis for entering and learning in the same vocation in Sweden, but further learning, situated in this new context, would most likely be needed to be fully qualified here. On the other hand, recognition of formal competence, qualifications from another country, could mean a faster track into the labour market. Here, the assessment of actual competence is already made, and the recognition process builds upon trust on the prior assessment and "foreign" qualifications, which could grant access to the labour market. However, there could be mismatch in the formal qualifications too, depending on how similar/different the vocation and its formal education/training are in different countries, which means that supplementary education and training most likely is needed even for migrants with formal qualification. Thus, RPL should not be expected to provide a "quick fix" but rather some pieces in the competence puzzle, and the challenge is to find and add the pieces that fit together.

But it is not only the competence that gains recognition. There is also a subject of recognition, the individual who could win recognition for her/his competence. Mutual recognition between the individual migrant and the assessor is a condition for recognition in the deeper, more personal sense. However, RPL could also act as a technology of power that devalues prior learning and work experience. Without a carefully designed RPL process, the outcome could thus be exclusion or subordinate inclusion, rather than actual recognition. These are also critical aspects to be aware of when trying to promote labour market integration through recognition of prior learning.

Conclusion

Therefore, the process of RPL is crucial for how recognition is experienced by the individual participant and how her/his actual and formal competences are assessed. Here, the studies referred to highlight the value of mutual understanding, communicative action, and a developmental perspective, as ideals to strive for in the recognition of prior learning. Participant and assessor have to understand both conditions and requirements – and each other – for the process to become successful and valid. Strategic actions might result in either of the parts being more successful in terms of formal outcomes such as qualifications, but then the price paid is a less valid outcome, in which the formally recognised competence does not correspond to the actual competence of the individual.

There are potentials and problems in the recognition of prior learning as a measure for the labour-market integration of skilled migrants. These problems must be addressed in order to employ the full potential of RPL initiatives. The present chapter particularly highlights that RPL is a key factor in policy and practice for labour-market integration. However, RPL is not a "one-size-fits-all" solution. There are

different approaches to RPL that need to be considered, depending on context and conditions, in order to reach its potential. The role and influence of formal requirements in RPL processes should be considered. Recognition of formal qualifications from a country of origin, and recognition of actual competence are different types of process. Likewise, there is a difference between RPL aiming to achieve the formal qualifications of the new country, or non-formal recognition in terms of descriptions of competence. The importance of the formal dimension depends on whether or not the process is targeting formally regulated professions.

RPL is a measure for individuals who have formal and/or actual competence stemming from prior learning and organising RPL should start from the individual's needs and conditions. The starting point should not be only the current needs of the labour market. The labour market needs cannot tell if there actually are individuals with competence that are matching those needs, and starting there would thus mean a risk of RPL initiatives without target group. Furthermore, disregarding individual needs also implies a risk that certain skills and qualifications remain invisible.

RPL is not only a practical arrangement for the assessment of competence. RPL that starts with the individual could lead to recognition in a deeper, more personal sense, extending beyond formal qualifications – recognition that could be crucial for integration. However, prior learning, competence, and highly developed skills in a certain professional area imply neither an immediate understanding of formal competence requirements, particularly in a new national and cultural context, nor the skills of presenting your actual competence in an assessment situation. Thus, the RPL process should be designed to develop mutual understanding and learning opportunities, to reach the full potential of recognition.

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Chapter 4
Potential, Actuality or Vulnerability? The Importance of Recognition in Career Counselling for Newly Arrived Migrants

Fredrik Hertzberg

Keywords Career guidance · Career counselling · Recognition · Refugee status · Migration

Introduction

The aim of this article is to describe and analyse the importance of recognition in school career guidance counselling, based on counsellors' own descriptions of how they work with this category of young people. Attention is primarily directed to the importance and value that the interviewees attribute to competencies and aspirations established outside the Swedish context, and how they relate to perspectives on education, work, professions and the future shaped in these contexts. What significance are they assumed to have for the career development (in the broad sense) of the counselled person in Swedish working life? What is their short and long-term significance, and what didactic strategies are developed to deal with them? The empirical material of the article is collected from interviews with career guidance counsellors who work mainly, but not exclusively, in the guidance of young adults, and the analysis is based on qualitative data.

The theoretical focus of this chapter is the concept of "recognition", and the adherence of this principle in the design of career guidance counselling practice. Focus is set on the recognition of competencies and aspirations, but I will also pay attention to other aspects of the principle of recognition will also be, as the chapter also describes the plurality of meaning attached to it. In many ways, recognition could be seen as essential for the fulfilment of integration and inclusion. In the theoretical tradition that stems from the philosophical anthropology of Hegel (Honneth, 1995), recognition is precondition for social integration. Denoting a fundamental interpersonal reciprocity and sociality, recognition is held to inevitable for the development of social identity and community. In reverse, misrecognition is held to

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be a social pathology and a cause of suffering, conflict, and, hence, disintegration (McQueen, 2020).

Hence, it could reasonably be said that the study of the prospects for recognition in the career guidance counselling setting also highlights the prospects for a reciprocal including process in the transition from school to work (or further education). The relation between recognition and inclusion will be continued below, in a longer yet tentative discussion of the concept of recognition, with particular attention to its importance in career counselling activities. The article begins, however, with a brief description of the content and objectives of career counselling. The introductory section of the article concludes with a description of the study's methodology and empirical material.

Study and Career Counselling

The Swedish National Agency for Education's *Allmänna råd för skolans vägledning* (2013) states that career guidance counselling is a pedagogical activity that aims to provide pupils with the prerequisites for dealing with issues relating to the choice of education and vocation. It is a comprehensive task that pupils have to tackle in a relatively short period of time, in a pedagogical activity that is rarely scheduled or given significant time resources. The wording is general but clear and describes the core content of the counselling. Pupils should, as far as possible, learn to choose their education and vocation independently. The "intended learning outcomes" of the counselling are thus broad – to give pupils introductory, general knowledge of how the education system works and what options are available given the supply and demand of the labour market, and to teach them to identify different courses of action and consider the consequences of these options, in order to decide as independent as possible.

The counsellor thus plays a central role in the education system. They guide pupils through a maze of options, possibilities, difficulties, rules, procedures and reservations. For most pupils, the "systemic landscape" of educational institutions and the labour market is new territory, and the need for guidance is great, both at the compulsory school level and the upper-secondary school level. Newly arrived students, with a short history in the receiving country, have an even greater need for guidance in this terrain (Yakushko et al., 2008; Sundelin, 2015), as the makeup of education and educational institutions varies considerably across countries and continents, as does the demand for labour, the content of different vocations and the forms of recruitment.

With a focus on the value of knowledge, skills and experience for an individual's further career development, some of the goal conflicts and paradoxes that counsellors face in their work also come to the fore. In particular, there is a recurring goal conflict in the practice of career counselling (Matsson, 1984), namely whether and, if so, how the interests of the individual should be reconciled with the demands and wishes of the labour market and working life during the counselling work. The

frequent divergence between the interests of the labour market and those of the counselee has often been highlighted and discussed in policy materials and other texts describing the goals of career counselling. In recent decades, the strongest tendency in Swedish educational policy and counsellor training has been to give priority to the interests of the individual, for both pedagogical and ethical reasons (Lovén, 2015). However, even if policy and pedagogy point in the same direction on this issue, the goal conflict is nevertheless alive and evident in the practice of counselling at educational institutions. There are often calls for counselling to take the interests of the labour market more into account; particularly at the local level (Lundahl & Nilsson, 2009). It is such practical conflicts that are highlighted below. However, the focus will not only be on the conflict between the interests of individuals and those of the labour market. In the analysis of these conflicts, the principle of recognition will be the primary focus.

Recognition

The concept of recognition will be used in this article as a "sensitising concept" (Blumer, 1954). It has been given a deliberately vague definition and draws attention to expressions that describe or question the relevance of skills and meaning-making established at a distance from Swedish contexts, and relates them in a theoretical framework based on justice as fairness. The deliberately vague definition establishes a polyvalent understanding of the term, and draws attention to all the expressions in the interview material that directly or indirectly discuss the skills and meaning-making in question, as well as their institutional management within the counselling framework.

In present-day ethical-philosophical accounts, the concept of "recognition" generally has two central dimensions, one normative and one psychological. If you recognise another person because they have a particular characteristic or quality (e.g. an independent, autonomous person), you are not just recognising that particular characteristic or quality. Recognition also implies that you commit yourself to having a positive attitude towards the person who exhibits the characteristic in question (e.g. because she is free and equal to others). But recognition also has a psychological side. Many theories of recognition argue that such an act is necessary for a person to develop a functional social identity (cf. Taylor, 1994; Honneth, 1995); we are dependent on affirmation from other individuals, and from society as a whole (McQueen, 2020).

Being a polyvalent concept, recognition has a somewhat varied scope among the philosophers and educators who highlight its importance. The object of recognition varies to some extent between the theories advocating the principle. For example, Charles Taylor (1994) highlights the importance of recognising the meaning-making and morality that is particular and specific to a group or individual. This becomes important in the context of the politics of difference, where the recognition of a minority's worldview, beliefs and ethos – what is often described by the term

"culture" – strengthens their position as full-fledged citizens. The fabric of culture is central to the individual's identity formation, Taylor argues; it is there that the notion of self and of being a self among others is established and shaped. If the meaning-making of the individual and the group is relegated to a second-rate position and assigned a lower value, they may develop a distorted (negative) perception of themselves, their agency and their activities (McQueen, 2020). In line with what was said by way of introductions, Taylor states that such acts of misrecognition cause suffering, conflict, and, in the end, disintegration (McQueen, 2020), and he advocates inclusion without demands for assimilation.

The object of recognition has a broader scope in Axel Honneth's (1995) formal ethics, in which the general conditions for a good life are stated, focusing on the social conditions for human self-realisation (cf. Heidegren, 2002). Drawing on Hegel's philosophy, Honneth postulates that human beings have a general need for love, justice and solidarity, and that these needs can and should be recognised within three corresponding social spheres – the family, the state and the civil society. The family can provide love, the state can establish status as a citizen and legal subject, and in civil society deference and respect are shown. In this chapter, recognition in the civil society is most important. During the conditions of modernity, Honneth claims, esteem and respect in the civil society includes esteem for skills, achievements and activities. Until proven otherwise, they should be regarded as a benefit to society as a whole, even if they are established in a distant community of practice. And his is not only a matter of neutral tolerance, Honneth (1995) points out. The principle of recognition also prescribes consent, encouragement and assistance (cf. Heidegren, 2002).

Although the civil society by definition is located outside the institutional sphere, it could be claimed that this particular attitude fits in educational institutions, where encouragement, assistance and the development of competencies are among the core activities. And the concept of recognition is well established in the history of pedagogical philosophy, in which it prescribes a particular ideal approach on the part of teachers/educators in their relationship with the student – the capacity to identify and encourage the abilities and possibilities of the students, above all their potential for self-formation. In this process, the reflective capacity of the student is held to be the foundation for a self-reforming dynamic and the development of autonomy (Björk & Uljens, 2009).

The relationship between pedagogy and recognition really requires a longer and more detailed account, but there is no space for such in this introductory section. But it is important to mention a central paradox that Björk and Uljens (2009), among others, have highlighted: in the pedagogical context, the principle of recognition can lead either to an affirmation of what the students/individuals are and know (their actuality), or of what they can become and learn in and through schooling and teaching (their potential). Different doctrines of recognition have different "objects" of recognition, but Björk and Uljens (2009) emphasize that some of them they are qualitatively different, and that both of the abovementioned aspects should be attended to in pedagogical practice. In particular, they claim that recognition should be subordinate to the pursuit of learning (cf. Sandberg, 2013).

The term "recognition of prior learning", RPL, denotes a procedure in competencies and knowledge established in distant and/or informal contexts is identified and attributed a value (Andersson & Harris, 2006). The basic idea is parallel to the ethics of Taylor and Honneth: a previously established instance of meaning-making should be confirmed and attributed a value, and constitutes a reason why the individual is assumed to be able to contribute to the common good. However, the act of validation is surrounded by a host of conditions – professional qualification requirements, third party (patient and client) interests, and other criteria for valid knowledge. In the latter case, the focus is not always solely on practical suitability but also on social suitability (Jenkins, 1986), and it has been argued that the validation process' pursuit of standardisation and criterion fulfilment has worsened the conditions for recognition, rather than the other way around.

Following the philosophical anthropology of G.W.F. Hegel, it could be said that recognition is fundamental for social inclusion. Above all, Hegel's anthropology draws attention to inclusion in three specific social spheres – the family, the state and the civil society (Honneth, 1995). Thereby, it diverges from many present-day policy accounts of social inclusion, above all liberal or neoliberal (Silver, 1995; Levitas, 1998) ones, in which inclusion into work-life and the labour market is foregrounded (Schierup et al., 2015). It is also important to note that the most influential contemporary philosophical elaborations on recognition, such as Honneth's (1995) and Taylor's (1994), have moved to the realm of ethics. Here, the conditions and constituents of a fair and decent inclusionary process is foregrounded, and the focus is quite often set on the rights of the outsider, i.e. the subject of inclusion. Social inclusion thence denotes a process of incorporation to a democratic society which provides the means for individual growth and self-fulfilment. Consequently, Honneth (1995, ch. 5) explicitly refers to the writings of T.H. Marshall (1950), where inclusion into society is equated with inclusion into a social citizenship, in which not only civil and political rights are granted, but also social rights, above all through the provision of unemployment and health insurance which safeguards citizens from poverty-struck and denigrating conditions. So, with focus the on recognition in this article comes a perspective on social inclusion which transcends the mere insertion in work-life and labour market participation, and pays respect to the end goals of mutual respect, social sustainability and personal growth.

Recognition and Career Counselling

In the methodology and pedagogy of career guidance counselling, the client-centred methodology of Carl Rogers (1989) has had a relatively great influence, both internationally and in Sweden (Lindh, 1988; Hägg & Kuoppa, 2007). One of the basic tenets of Rogers' psychology is that every person has an inner core, a potential and an opportunity to become something, which must be developed to full autonomy. A person is autonomous if their perception of themselves, the world around them and the relationship between themselves and others is characterised by

"transparency" – they know their abilities and desires, and how they are influenced and developed by other people. In Rogers' methodology, the person being counselled is given the right to define and describe her/his own situation. The counselling conversation begins with the counsellor listening uncritically to the person being counselled and how they describe their situation, which is thus recognised as reasonable and relevant. The person being counselled is thus not seen as a subordinate, but rather as a fellow human being who needs help with their development.

In this respect, Rogers' model departs from the previously dominant paradigm in counselling, where counselling was dominated by matching perspectives, and the counsellor was an authority who used tests and examinations to identify the counselled person's aptitudes and, on that basis, decided which education and which profession was suitable (Lovén, 2015). Rogers' methodology is a pedagogy of listening and recognition. The solution to the counselled person's dilemmas about educational and vocational choice is self-analysis, and the self-reflection of the counselee is at the centre of the counselling conversation. In this pedagogy, there is a clear parallel to the recognition pedagogy discussed above; the understanding and insight into (conditional) freedom of action becomes a tool for the development of an independent study or career choice. The insight into actuality leads to the realisation of potential.

The principle of recognition can also be seen as a solution to a professional dilemma. The concept has been defined as an effort to "guarantee universal social rights while recognising and accepting differences" (Pettersen & Simonsen, 2013, p. 20). This definition draws attention to the specific freedom of action or *discretion* of social and labour market professionals (Lipsky, 1980). This freedom is required when the professional has to define problems and devise situation-specific solutions on their own, without direct support from formal rules and instructions. They must instead balance different rules and principles, and deal with conflicts of rules and goals that may arise in the practice of professions. Ensuring universal social rights is a challenge for many professions, Pettersen and Simonsen (2013) point out, but the principle of recognition describes a way to achieve this by the individual professional, such as the career guidance counsellor, paying attention to the conditions and experiences specific to the group to which the client belongs, and taking them into account in the performance of the work.

Previous Research

In career guidance methodology it has often been argued that the pedagogical practice should observe an approach that in several respects parallels the principle of recognition. This approach is often referred to as "multicultural guidance" (Launikari & Puukari, 2005), and is highlighted as particularly relevant in the counselling of migrants and ethnic or racialised minorities. The term became an early umbrella term for the ambition to develop counselling models and practices that seek to

reduce the significance and effects of discrimination during and after the counselling process, and thus strive for social justice (Carter & Qureshi, 1995; Peavy & Li, 2003), and also take into account both minority norms, values and forms of communication (Palmer & Laungani, 1999; Launikari & Puukari, 2005; Ponterotto et al., 2010; Arulmani, 2014), and the difficulties faced by refugees when their lives are disrupted and they have to flee (Magnano et al., 2021; Sultana, 2021; Sundelin & Hertzberg, 2022).

However, there is a great deal of empirical research that draws attention to and provides evidence of more or less systematic departures from the principle of recognition in study and career counselling. One such deviation is the "cooling" of established vocational aspirations (Yogev & Rodity, 1987; Resh & Rachel, 2002). Another aspect is a lack of understanding of the experience of or fear of discrimination (Sundelin, 2015). A third aspect of deviation from the principle of recognition in career guidance counselling is a lack of understanding of the conditions under which refugees and other migrants live in the receiving society (Sundelin, 2015), and/or the impact of the formative experiences they have been forced to have due to flight (Magnano et al., 2021; Sultana, 2021). A fourth deviation is a lack of understanding of patterns of thought and action that differ from those that are commonly held and hegemonic in the receiving society (Arulmani, 2014; Sundelin, 2015). These research contributions highlight the importance of studying the conditions of recognition, or the prerequisites of recognition, in guidance and counselling – which is the focus of this article.

In previous research, I have discussed what the principle of recognition can reasonably entail in counselling work with newly arrived migrants (Hertzberg, 2015, 2017a, b; Hertzberg & Sundelin, 2014). The matter of recognition in counselling implies the recognition of plans for and meaning-making about future education and vocations that differ from the most common and normative ones in society (Hertzberg & Sundelin, 2014; Hertzberg, 2017a), as well as more collectivist approaches to important personal choices (Hertzberg, 2015) and previously established knowledge and experiences (Hertzberg, 2017a). As a development of these earlier research contributions, and using recognition as a "sensitising" concept for the analysis in this article, attention follows to how study and career counsellors draw attention to and manage skills, meaning-making and norms established in communities far removed from Swedish contexts, and their significance for opportunities, inclusion and future in Swedish society, as well as the influence of the institutional context which study and career counselling is part of.

Methodology and Empirical Data

The study presented here describes and analyses qualitative data. The method used to collect the data is semi-structured interviews. There were 11 interviewees, most of whom work as career guidance counsellors in the school system, with a focus on

youth and young adults; either in upper-secondary schools (D, F and G) or in municipal adult education (A, B, C, E, I and K). There are two exceptions, though: one interviewee works in project-based counselling with a municipality as employer (H), and one is a counsellor in compulsory school (J); the latter, however, has good professional experience of working with newly arrived youth and young adults. The interviewees work in municipalities of different sizes in Central Sweden, and almost half of them (B, C, G and H), work in metropolitan or suburban municipalities in Stockholm County. A common denominator is that the workplaces of all the interviewees received relatively large groups of newly arrived pupils from 2015 onwards (see below).

The sample of interviewees can be described as a sample of typical cases, a convenience sample and a snowball sample (Bryman, 2016). We sought study and career counsellors in schools/educational units that received many, in absolute or relative terms, newly arrived pupils from 2015 onwards (typical cases). The interviewees were sought from groups of study and career counsellors with whom I had previously had contact on educational and continuing professional development matters (convenience sample). These previously established contacts either chose to be interviewed themselves, or passed on the question in their local or regional professional networks (snowball sample). Using convenience and snowball sampling, I thus obtained a group of interviewees who can be described as “typical cases” of the category of counsellors whose views and interpretations I was interested in. The typical case was a study and career counsellor who, at some point during the years mentioned above, had experienced a sharp increase in the number of newly arrived pupils in need of study and career counselling, and where the increase changed the conditions under which the work was carried out. Each interviewee was informed of the ethical guidelines of the Swedish Research Council (2017), in particular the protection of anonymity and the option to withdraw from participation without giving a reason.

The interviews asked questions related to three overarching themes: “formal and informal learning outcomes”, “general professional considerations” and “the role of recognition in counselling”. The first step of the analysis was to identify and synthesise the interview sections that addressed the themes in focus here, with a focus on different understandings of the concept of recognition (cf. Taylor, 1994; Honneth, 1995; Björk & Uljens, 2009; Pettersen & Simonsen, 2013): (a) the identification and valuation of previously established skills; (b) previously established meaning-making about education, work and the future; (c) the significance of (a) and (b) for the implementation of guidance; (d) the significance of (a) and (b) for the opportunities of the counselled person in Swedish education and working life, and (e) other meanings of the concept of recognition.

The subsequent analytical step was reconstructive rather than deconstructive, and sought to emphasise coherence and rationality in the interviewees’ statements (cf. “principle of charity”, cf. Davidson, 1984); the focus was on finding the logic in what the interviewees said, by identifying the motives for their positions, reconstructing the coherence in their interpretations or situation descriptions, and

extrapolating the possible consequences of the positions, descriptions and interpretations. In the third step, the analysis was more critical and normative. The focus here was on clarifying the extent to which the interviewees' positions and descriptions were consistent with the principle of recognition, as expressed in any of the interpretations listed above.

Results

Recognition as a Pedagogical Principle

Several of the study and career counsellors I interviewed clearly expressed that the principle of recognition is given a prominent place in their pedagogical work. This was then not primarily about recognition of previously established skills or meaning-making about education, work and the future, but also recognition as a principle in the pedagogical interaction. Acknowledging, discovering and encouraging abilities was considered to have an intrinsic value, and to be part of the counselling work. An example comes from the interview with D. She emphasises the importance of highlighting the pupils' "strengths" in the counselling conversation, even if they lack longer schooling. Pupils should be able to "feel seen", and have an opportunity to "talk about their knowledge", and it is part of the effort of the counsellors to "push them" and "empower them". Already established skills are highlighted, as is the possibility of building on these, rather than the need to "start from scratch".[1]

In her description, D speaks in the first-person plural, of a "we" working in a particular way, with the plural form suggesting that she is speaking for all the study and career counselling staff in the school and expressing a pedagogical ideal that is shared by many. Interviewee B expresses a similar approach when, in describing her counselling work, she makes clear the importance of never becoming a "gatekeeper" and always being open to new solutions and ways of working, particularly when the previous knowledge and experiences of new arrivals is the topic of discussion; the counsellor must "never ever, like, trivialise and say 'that has no value'."

In these examples, the desire for recognition is relatively decontextualized. It is not directed at a situation or a defined "object of recognition", but rather expresses a general pedagogical principle. The counselees and their knowledge should be recognised, and before any clear reason to the contrary is given, the counsellor should assume that this knowledge can be valuable and useful also in a Swedish context. Nevertheless, this general pedagogical principle can sometimes conflict with other considerations in counselling work. In the following section, I will focus on this.

[1] All interview quotes have been omitted from the text and replaced with shorter summaries of the interviewees' statements. Anyone interested in reading the quotes on which the interpretations are based is asked to contact the author.

Recognition of Prior Knowledge, Experience and Aspirations 1: New Aspirations Are Established

Career guidance counselling is generally a pedagogical activity in which those involved look both forward and backward. The counsellor should help the counselee to choose an education and/or a career path based on scenarios of a desired, possible and probable future. But the choice often requires a retrospective view, which pays attention to what the counselled person has done and learned in the past, and what conclusions they draw based on these experiences. Can the trajectories expressed in past experiences be extrapolated into the future, and in what ways can previously established knowledge be used in future careers? What is the value of the past in the present, when planning for the future?

This retrospective task may relate to the general recognition pedagogical approach described above, but the object of recognition in this particular counselling element is usually somewhat more circumscribed and concrete. The educator should pay attention to the specific knowledge and meaning-making expressed by the pupil. What attention consists of and what it leads to, however, is an open question. In the material presented here we can see several different directions.

I, a counsellor working in adult education, and especially with young adults, describes a situation in which the importance of previous education is discussed, and how she as a counsellor relates to these previous experiences. She points out that previous work experience is already considered during the initial assessment, and the enrolled person is also asked to explain what they want from their education. And during the course of the education, these issues are continually raised, and there may also be a need to validate previous knowledge and experience. The pupil then realises: “but this is not possible. I have to have a completely new education here” or “my knowledge is good enough”. The interviewee, I, describes a procedure of identification, guidance and possible validation, in which attention is paid to previously acquired knowledge and (professional) experience. The person being counselled is given the opportunity to describe their previous experience and education, and to consider whether their future educational or professional career should build on this material.

Validation is the “official” assessment of education and professional experience acquired in other countries, and the judgement and possible recognition stemming from the validation procedure obviously outweighs the words of the individual counsellor (although some validation procedures have been criticised for devaluing rather than valuing knowledge and experience acquired abroad; cf. Andersson & Osman, 2008; Andersson & Fejes, 2010). The existence of different validation procedures helps to put the issue of recognition on the counselling agenda, and to make it concrete. In the counselling context, validation can be “framed” in such a way that it becomes part of a learning process as much as an assessment or classification process. The validation then encourages meaning-making about the future, learning and professional development (cf. Andersson, 2021).

To what extent the counselled person wants a future study and career path that builds on previously established knowledge experiences, and what practical relevance the recognition imperative thus has, is certainly an open question. Several interviewees draws attention to newly arrived who, for various reasons, wish to change direction in their career path. H, who counsels both older and young adults in a municipal project, highlights this very issue. Among highly educated refugees in particular, it is "quite common" to want to change career paths, she claims, and it is not uncommon for them to focus on shortage professions ("I want to become a nursing assistant. I've heard there are plenty of jobs in that field"). In this way, her current work differs from counselling in compulsory school, H reflects; for her counselling seekers, "the road is already paved". They have been referred to her project by Social Services, and have to apply for the jobs that are available.

Other study and career counsellors confirm the same experience – many new arrivals want to enter the workforce as soon as possible, and they orient themselves towards those professions or industries where such an opportunity exists. Those coming from upper-secondary education certainly do not have the same strong financial incentives, i.e. to avoid withdrawal of social security contributions, but concrete financial considerations seem to nonetheless be involved. Several interviewees also noted that many new arrivals have dependent care responsibilities in their home countries, which steers their career aspirations towards vocations and industries where there is the possibility of getting a job as soon as possible – something that has also been noted by previous research (Sundelin, 2015).

In addition, the so called "Upper-Secondary School Act" was in force at the time of the interviews. This act stipulated that upper-secondary young people without a residence permit could obtain a residence permit provided that the graduated, got a job and became self-sufficient – which obviously influenced the aspirations of the young people and the direction of the counselling (Linde et al., 2021). Several interviewees drew attention to this issue, explicitly pointing out that the principle of recognition of previously established aspirations and experiences became less important in these circumstances.

Recognition of Prior Knowledge, Experience and Aspirations 2: Long, Short and Broadened Perspectives

In the career guidance counselling pedagogy, short-term aspirations of this kind are rarely an end point. A central part of this pedagogy is to support the counsellee to develop new approaches to already established aspirations, while considering both knowledge about the self and the options of educational institutions and the labour market (Lovén, 2015; cf. OECD, 2004). In a Swedish context, this element is usually described as a *broadening of perspectives* (Lindh, 1988; Hägg & Kuoppa, 2007), and often entails the prioritisation of goals other than immediate entry into the labour market. The broadening of perspectives was a central issue for several

interviewees in our study, even when the principle of recognition was clearly acknowledged. Broadening could then be about taking into account that conditions for similar activities were different in Sweden than in the home country – even if previously established aspirations and activities were recognised.

Interviewee E described an example of this. She had a young adult applicant who had designed and sewn clothes in his home country. Once in Sweden, he wanted to continue on this path and pursue an education in design. Together they went through the range of possible courses, at different levels (folk high school, higher vocational education, university). But it turned out that the admission requirements were too high, and E tried to find an internship for the applicant with a tailor in the nearest big city. This proved unfeasible, so E offered him an internship in his home town, with a compatriot who ran his own shop. Although it was not in the right sector, the idea was for the applicant to gain insight into what it was like to run a business in Sweden ("and so they talked a lot about it, what it's like, what the climate is like in Sweden to start your own business, and things like that"). F points out that she "tries to draw on what they tell me, to the extent that they have knowledge from a professional field", but that "sometimes it's so difficult to translate it to our circumstances". The perspective broadening element thus entails modifying aspirations in relation to Swedish working life; not only its quality requirements and working methods, but also its conditions for self-employment.

With a concept of recognition that focuses strongly on actuality (Björk & Uljens, 2009), this broadening could be seen as a departure from the principle of recognition, as it implies adaptation to the new context, the Swedish labour market. But the perspective broadening element may also prescribe an *increased* consideration of personal interests and preferences. Here, a less pragmatic development of educational and career aspirations is encouraged, as well as meaning-making about work and future that is based on individual deliberation and introspection. In this sense, the broadening of perspectives may entail the recognition of deep-seated and previously established desires and interests, although the *development* of these is also envisaged.

The relationship between perspective broadening and recognition is clearly complex, as is evident in the interview with G, a study and career counsellor in municipal adult education with a focus on Swedish for Immigrants (SFI). On one hand, she points out that many new arrivals are "under a lot of pressure" – "they have a family to support and need to bring in money" – and that she has to "keep that in mind to some extent". The counselling must be adapted to the specific situation. On the other hand, she stresses that she "always has to bear in mind" that "you choose and compare things", and although she describes it as a "luxury perspective", she thinks that you should stick to that perspective. Everyone who receives counselling should be given the opportunity to compare different courses/programmes and professions to see which one(s) are the best fit – including new arrivals. "It can't be the case that everyone should become a nursing assistant, just because they are a newly arrived woman". So, she tries to maintain the broadening of perspective, but adds "I still have to respect their life situation".

G points out that the perspective broadening element implies a longer-term orientation, and that the issue of career development goes beyond immediate entry into the workforce. She points to the fact that recognition of actuchaality (what a person is) and potentiality (what a person can become) goes in different directions, and that there may be a case of informing the counselled person about the possibility of becoming something other than what she aspires to at the moment. This form of recognition is close to what Axel Honneth (1995) expresses in his theoretical elaborations of recognition as *social appreciation*. With reference to Mead's (2015) social psychology, Honneth argues that the "right to recognition" is a right to individual self-realisation (cf. Heidegren, 2002), which can be obtained, for example, by giving the individual the opportunity to develop (and thus achieve the certainty of possessing) skills that other members of society regard as valuable.

Here, it can be recalled that counselling practice exhibits a tension between recognition and inclusion (which is generally the primary objective in the societal reception of newly arrived migrants). In the context of career guidance counselling, a strict application of the recognition requirement may imply a recognition of previously established educational and career aspirations (Hertzberg & Sundelin, 2014; cf. Yakushko et al., 2008), whether or not they lead to inclusion in the workforce; the recognition requirement is then prioritised over inclusion in the workforce.

Recognition of Prior Knowledge, Experience and Aspirations 3: The Pursuit of Autonomy

The above-mentioned contradiction between recognition and inclusion was not commented on by the interviewees. However, in previous studies I (Hertzberg, 2015) noted that many counsellors identify another conflict between the desire for inclusion and the principle of recognition. This does not relate to the content of aspirations, but rather about how young people's aspirations take shape – when parents influence their children's educational and career plans in ways that are too overt and explicit, and it can be assumed that the parental role is clearly authoritarian. But excessive compliance with parental wishes is also seen as problematic, even when authoritarian influence is not evident. It is considered that career choice *must* be autonomous, not only as a matter of principle but also because freedom from influence makes new options and higher aspirations possible (Hertzberg, 2015).

Clear influence and compliance go against study and career counsellors' desire to teach independence or *autonomy*. Establishing an autonomous approach in relation to complex choice situations, such as choice of education and a future career, is an informal intended learning outcome for many counsellors (Hertzberg, 2015), as well as an objective in key target documents (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011a, b). The ability to act autonomously is one of the school's general intended learning outcomes, laid down in the curriculums for compulsory school (Lgr 11) and upper-secondary school (Lgy 11). Lgr 11 states "The school is

responsible for ensuring that each pupil on completing compulsory school /…/ can make well-informed choices regarding further education and vocational orientation" (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011a: 3f), while Lgy 11 states "The school's aim is for every pupil to /…/ be able to make a conscious decision about further study and vocational orientation based on accumulated experience and knowledge" (2011b: 13).

However, the pursuit of autonomy is negotiable. Several interviewees describe situations where circumstances require a different prioritisation, and where the requirement of autonomy can be put in parentheses. One of these is B, who works with counselling in adult education, mainly young adults. As her students often lack both broader knowledge of the range of courses and programmes offer and the possibility to get a reasonable idea of the desirable and appropriate options within a short time span, B feels that she has to "dare to show" what is the "smartest option". Her pupils should not have to "get to grips with the whole range of courses and programmes on offer" before taking the next step. For example, the support in question may lead to a course close to home being given priority over one further away, even if the latter course is slightly more appropriate in terms of content. This support reduces the risk of the counselled person becoming trapped in a vicious circle of failure, in B's view, as the counselled person has a better chance of finding a course that suits their circumstances and needs.

B describes a professional dilemma. On the one hand, the pedagogy of counselling and its pursuit of autonomy (Hertzberg, 2015) prescribes independent choice, without the influence of others. The counselled person should choose the most suitable educational location and not the closest one; the wishes of the family, the housework and the reluctance to leave her own residential area should not be the deciding factor for her. It should be the content of the education. On the other hand, the demands of the environment and of everyday life may be too great *at the moment*, and interfere with the possibility of studying in a district further away. Therefore, if the risk of dropping out is significant, it is better at this initial stage to choose an option where there is a greater chance of success. It is better to choose such an option, argues B, than to prioritise the principle of autonomy and, in this case, potentially create a failure, which becomes part of a vicious circle of failures in the Swedish education system. Creating conditions that foster experiences of school success is more important, B believes. She thus pays attention to the needs of the counselled person, given her life situation, and prioritises them over independence and autonomy.

However, it can be remembered here that the object of recognition – i.e. the desire to study close to home – may not have been established earlier, before arrival in Sweden. It could possibly relate a more traditional gendered division of domestic labour, but equally it could be a strategy for coping with the initial time in Sweden, where the relatively safe local environment is juxtaposed with the unfamiliar and less safe urban environment a good deal away from the home. The object of recognition in this case is an aspect of being a new arrival, not part of a culture (cf. Yakushko et al., 2008).

Refugee Status and Advocacy

It was mentioned at the outset that the concept of recognition can also be defined as an effort to guarantee universal social rights while recognising and accepting differences (Pettersen & Simonsen, 2013, p. 20), and that this definition can be related to the freedom of action of the social and labour policy professionals. It is a freedom that requires the identification and management of the rule and goal conflicts that may arise in the practice of the professions. In the previous sections, we could also see that the principle of recognition could run counter to counselling pedagogy's attention to perspective broadening and autonomy, as well as to the pursuit of inclusion that generally characterises educational, social and labour market policy considerations of the situation of newly arrived migrants.

One way of attempting to address the tension between universal rights and special needs is the ambition to shape the provision of the former with respect to the latter. This ambition was also expressed by several of the interviewees in this study, in different areas, not least the task of shaping counselling activities to the special needs that newly arrived migrants, in particular refugees, may be considered to have; a task that is obviously not only a matter of personal professional considerations, but also laid down in education policy target documents and general advice (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2013).

Some of the considerations described in the section above could be included in this definition of "recognition"; e.g. pedagogical considerations that takes into account refugee status and the conditions under which new arrivals live, and which shape the opportunities for learning. But knowledge on refugee conditions is also held to be relevant in other ways. This is pointed out by A, who is a counsellor at Komvux adult education and works mainly with SFI students. Having to flee one home country and experiences of this flight are often unpleasant, she points out, and the decision to flee requires that "they have thought about their human situation". If you are prepared to risk your life, then "you have really thought this through". A draws particular attention to vulnerability and experiences of difficult living conditions; conditions that apparently justify an escape in which the individual risks their life, and she expresses a willingness to understand living conditions that are radically different from their own.

A similar ambition is expressed by B, who counsels young adults in a municipal education policy project. She emphasises the fact that the counsellor knows the options, opportunities and obstacles of the education system and has a responsibility to guide the new arrival through this complex and difficult-to-understand system. This responsibility requires that the study and career counsellor make newly arrived aware of what they can actually help with. The counsellor should form an alliance with the counselled person, guiding them through the system in the best possible way, and act as their advocate in meetings with other actors in the system, such as the Swedish Board of Student Finance. B takes the counselled person's side, and tries to guide them through institutions and, if necessary, around regulations, making learning *about* the system is partially subordinate. She has developed a

professional approach that takes the particular circumstances of the newly arrived counselees into account. Without much knowledge of a system they have not experienced until recently, they need information and support to navigate through it.

The extracts from the interviews with A and B make clear an adherence to the principle of recognition. Both interviewees shape (parts of) their counselling practice while considering the conditions the newly arrived face, such as experiences of disruption and flight, and/or being a newly arrived and forced to adapt to a completely new context. Hence, the experiences and conditions specific to a particular social category and identity are considered, and the delivery of a their pedagogical "service" is are adapted to the particular needs that follows from a specific set of circumstances and life stories. Hence, these interviewees seek to "meet the other" within the context of a professional practice (Pettersen & Simonsen, 2013). It is also worth noting that the approach transcends the framework of pedagogy; counselling is not only career learning, but also advocacy that takes sides and pilots past obstacles.

The Limits to Recognition

So far, I have only presented and discussed empirical evidence that essentially considers and confirms different principles of recognition. With the vaguely defined concept of recognition as a moving searchlight, it has not been difficult to find these examples. But there are also examples of the contrary in my interview material – considerations, positions and examples from practice that describe the limits of recognition. To a significant extent, these are the interviewees' approaches to experiences and skills that are not in demand in the labour market. How does a study and career counsellor respond to this? To what extent can experiences and aspirations be validated, and to what extent can they not? What counselling pedagogical considerations follow from this? As shown above, these questions can be answered in different ways. However, other limits have also come to light. To clarify these, I allow a conceptual slide that brings us closer to Charles Taylor's (1994) understanding of this term. The object of recognition in Taylor's theory is summarised by him with the term "culture", in particular the cultures held to define ethnic groups. It is often a meaning-making process that encompasses key aspects of people's existence (beliefs, social outlook, interpersonal relations, sexuality, etc.) and creates a sense of belonging to the group(s) one wishes to belong to.

In the interview material, this perspective became particularly relevant in relation to norms, values and perspectives linked to general human issues such as sexuality, gender and beliefs. For example, interviewee D, who works in an upper-secondary school, is part of a professional network where she discusses such issues: "We have talked about LGBTQ. We have talked about violence, or honour-related violence … social exclusion, violence at home or honour-related. There are pupils who have disappeared after the summer too. And, yeah, they may have been married off." The network in which the interviewee participated has discussed many culture clashes,

and the knowledge and perspectives from this context will now form the basis for a new educational activity in her own school. The plan is to start a girls' group, and within this activity to discuss, manage and try to solve the problems that arise. The aim is to combat social exclusion, drop-out and violence. The underlying premise, which is only implied here, is that the problems can be combated if the newly arrived pupils are exposed to and gradually adopt the perspectives that are dominant and common in Swedish society.

Without criticising an activity that has not yet started, and without at all objecting to the legitimate criticism of violence, oppression and genital mutilation, it is nevertheless reasonable to note that the interviewee here marks a boundary to recognition and tolerance. On the other side of the boundary are values and perspectives which, in addition to their dubious moral standing, are seen as a source of exclusion. As many other researchers and philosophers have pointed out (Okin, 1998; Joppke, 2004), it is relatively common for multiculturalist recognition to extend to this very boundary. The patriarchal norms and practices of minorities are recognised and criticised by the institutions of the majority society. Gender oppression is not accepted by any group.

This is a very complex issue. There are critics who argue that the boundary-marking processes of the mainstream society quite often express idealising and self-affirming positions about the righteousness of their own society and group, without considering their own shortcomings (cf. Martinsson, Griffin & Giritli Nygren 2016). In this context, with its limited space, I will not contribute to this discussion. However, with reference to the purpose of the article, it is important to note that the clear boundary-marking of the interviewee, and her choice of theme when marking the boundary, is made in a context where she is working on a task that is partly outside the remit of study and career guidance. The clear rejection of the principle of recognition thus occurs in a professional context that lies beyond the "core tasks" of study and career counselling, although parts of the activities of the intended discussion group fall within the framework of what is called "career learning" (cf. Krumboltz, 1996; Law, 1996). In this specific case, for example, the subject matter could be described as "learning that facilitates inclusion into the workforce and labour market".

Conclusion: Summary and Discussion

In the above, I have described several of the circumstances that shape study and career counselling's approach to previously established knowledge, experiences and aspirations. These include the seemingly voluntary abandonment of previous educational and career aspirations by many new arrivals, the need for income and rapid inclusion in the workforce, and the contradictory relationship between the principle of recognition and the pedagogy of counselling, particularly as expressed in the latter's focus on perspective broadening and autonomy.

Initially, however, it was noted that several interviewees emphasised a recognition principle as a general approach in the counselling conversation. Regardless of the importance of previously established knowledge, experience or meaning-making in Swedish working life, it was important to acknowledge and confirm these in the counselling conversation. One should "never trivialise" or say "that has no value". The pupil should be given the opportunity to express themself, show their skills and be seen. The nature of the recognised object is not a deciding factor. The significance or value that the already established may have in the new context is not relevant in itself.

However, the question of the significance that previously established knowledge, experience and meaning-making may have for career development is more central in relation to the general purpose of counselling activities. Many interviewees highlighted the frequency with which newly arrived pupils wanted to change the focus of their studies and career plans. Continuing on a previously established path was not always considered to be relevant. The reason with the heaviest weight was time and money. They wanted to enter the workforce as soon as possible and become self-sufficient (and also be able to support others).

Nevertheless, there were examples of older students, especially in Komvux adult education, who wanted to continue in an already established direction. This raised the question whether or not previously established aspirations and skills met the requirements of the labour market. Obviously, the career guidance counsellors interviewed were trying to help the student reconcile the latter with the former. This "reconciliation" is close to the counselling pedagogical principle of perspective broadening (Lindh, 1988), which implies that the person counselled should be encouraged to look at themselves and their possibilities (in the labour market and in educational institutions) in a new way, and to adapt, develop or change their plans and aspirations if necessary.

This element of the counselling process may come into conflict with the principle of recognition, if we start from a strict interpretation of the concept formulated by Taylor, where ethos, assumptions and norms are at the forefront. Adapting to the new context can easily take precedence over maintaining what is already established. However, the broadening in question can be seen as an expression of an ability to reflect and a part of a self-reforming dynamic, as described by Björk and Uljens (2009) – the perspective on education, profession and future is broadened through reflection. In this way, the broadening of perspective is an aspect of a recognising pedagogy in which the career counsellor considers the counselled person's potential, malleability and possibility of self-formation (cf. Björk & Uljens, 2009). The ability to reflect and the self-reforming dynamic can also lay a foundation for the self-actualisation that, according to Honneth (1995; Heidegren, 2002), is a central aspect of recognition. Encouraging (self-)reflection on one's own interests and skills, and their possible space in relation to the opportunities offered by the labour market and educational institutions, can – at best – provide the individual with opportunities for self-actualisation *and* the development of skills that are valuable in the eyes of other members of society.

The interviewees' pedagogical practice is thus in line with the curriculum objectives for career guidance counselling, where the ability to make independent choices is an important intended learning outcome (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011a, b). However, the counselling of new arrivals can sometimes necessitate a departure from this principle. The new arrival's need to find their way in and through the education system could, as we saw above, motivate the counsellor to deviate from the counselling pedagogy and take on the role of an ally, who guides the counselled person past the institutional obstacles. These deviations and this advocacy were thus motivated by the particular conditions under which some new arrivals live, and the experiences they have sometimes been forced to undergo. In line with the arguments of Pettersen and Simonsen (2013), this professional approach can be seen as a form of recognition, as it seeks to guarantee universal social rights *and* at the same time identify, accept and acknowledge particular interpersonal differences. We can thus see that the scope of recognition depends on how we choose to delimit its object. The limits to recognition can be hard to detect, and the only things that are clearly detached are the norms, values and actions associated with so-called honour cultures.

It is fair to say that an attention to the principle of recognition in the context of career guidance counselling could pave the way for social inclusion. For example, the ambition to "push" and empower the counselees, and make them believe that their competencies can be of value and useful even in the Swedish context might foster an attitude which facilitates an entry into the labour. Moreover, the strive for independent choosing and development of counselee autonomy provides ideational tools for deliberate and sustainable career decisions, and upward mobility. On the other hand, recognition of the particularity conditions which are specific for newly arrived migrants allowed for deviations from strict interpretations of career guidance counselling pedagogy, above all the development of autonomy and independent choosing, in order to make experiences of school success possible in the near future, and/or assist the counselees in finding their way through the educational system. With the latter in mind, and considering the ways in which the interviewees generally motivated the design and content of their pedagogical activities, it seems that the end goal social inclusion was given priority over several objects of recognition.

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Chapter 5
Important Encounters for Education and Employment

Eva Eliasson

Keywords Encounter · Employment · Skilled migrants · Integration · Social identity

Introduction

Migrants arriving in a new country interact daily with different people in society. Contact with representatives of various authorities are already frequent from the beginning, followed by meetings with employers, teachers, study counsellors, and other professionals. Simultaneously, there are daily encounters with familiar and unfamiliar people in society. This chapter studies and analyses the encounters skilled migrants describe in interviews, aiming to illustrate how the encounters are perceived to be important for employment or choice of education. Although single or repeated encounters are part of a complex process of inclusion in the new society, they are nevertheless interesting to study, because the migrants themselves attach importance to them. These encounters can take place within existing networks, where a more stable relationship over time is described but can also be single meetings. Coletti and Pasini (2023) emphasise the reciprocity between migrants and host country citizens and suggest that individual recognition and reiterated interactions "may promote the exchange of beneficial behaviours over long-time periods" (Coletti & Pasini, 2023, p. 71).

In our analysis of migrant narratives (Eliasson et al., 2022), we found that support from other people was one of the key factors facilitating migrants' access to their previous vocational area and inclusion in workplaces in Sweden. Other factors were Swedish language skills and individual attitudes and actions. The facilitating factors were present on various levels: individual, organisational, and national. The main factors were also intertwined – individual attitudes and actions were affected by encounters with other people, in ways that both facilitated and hindered. For

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most of the migrants, it was easier to maintain a positive social identity when surrounded by people who constructed them in positive ways, which in turn increased their determination to fight on, for example, to conquer the language and make contact with people and authorities. Many of the migrants experienced threats to their social identity, including their professional identity, in their new country. It seemed important for them to maintain a positive self-image to be able to fight on for a return to working life (Eliasson et al., 2022). In this chapter, these interviews are examined to gain a deeper understanding of the importance of encounters for employment and inclusion.

Other studies of crucial factors for employment and inclusion of migrants have highlighted language proficiency (Johansson & Śliwa, 2016; Musgrave & Bradshaw, 2014; Ganassin & Johnstone Young, 2020; Knappert et al., 2019), personal agency and persistence in job seeking (Verwiebe et al., 2019;), cultural competence (Ganassin & Johnstone Young, 2020; Dehghanpour Farashah & Blomquist, 2020) and access to social networks (Granovetter, 1973; Montgomery, 1991). Social capital is a concept often used to analyse migrants' networks, (Behtoui, 2007; Gericke et al., 2018; Friesen, 2011). Dente and Coletti (2010) stress that the local level is crucial for the quality of service for migrants, and that national policies are not always easily implemented. Coletti and Pasini (2023) conclude that the relationships among migrants, local people, and public institutions are crucial, and that "dissatisfaction with the quality of the public services negatively influences social cooperation" (ibid, p. 84). Behtoui (2022) highlights, with references to Portes (1995), that government policies, attitudes in civil society, media, and public opinion are important for migrants' possibilities for inclusion (cf. Knappert et al., 2019). Attitudes in society also vary depending on migrants' country of origin (Loury, 2009; Behtoui, 2010), something that is visible in the interview material, and important in the analysis. To conclude, knowledge about important aspects of encounters that support migrants' inclusion in the labour market could be helpful for authorities where personal meetings with migrants are part of their assignment.

In this study, the encounters are analysed through the lens of theories about social identity construction (Jenkins, 2004). The theoretical concept of social identity is used as a tool to understand how the migrants construct themselves and are constructed by others in interactions. Identities are never fixed and stable but constructed in an ongoing process throughout our lives. Syed and Özbilgin (2009) state that individual identities, constituted in social interactions with others, include cultural values, negotiations, and role expectations. Another way to highlight the importance of environment in the identity construction process is to emphasise how other people's voices "become *part of* the way we speak and act" (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011, p. 314). Looking at the construction process this way, it becomes even clearer how other people's conceptions may become part of migrants' own identity construction and social identity.

Yuval-Davis (2006) argues that construction of identity is a combination of being and becoming, belonging and not-belonging. In line with Jenkins (2004), Yuval-Davis suggests that social identities emerge as a result of social practices (Dahlstedt

et al., 2017). Kurki et al. (2019) state that immigrant-ness is "becoming" and "doing" rather than "being".

In this text, the concept of social identity is used as an umbrella concept for identity as a whole, while concepts such as professional identity and personal identity are considered part of social identity. These latter concepts are sometimes used to analytically specify which part of social identity is primarily affected in the encounters. Another concept that has been useful in describing the social construction process that takes place in meetings is "positioning oneself" and "being positioned". These concepts make the duality of the identity construction visible.

Concepts such as gender, ethnicity, and class (based on educational level) are used when they are relevant for the analysis. By delving deeply into migrants' descriptions, it is possible to analyse how differences and similarities in country of origin, gender, and class can affect the encounters. It is also important to point out that the encounters are contextual and situational, which means that categorisations can be made in different ways in different contexts. As Koskela (2019, p. 313) states: "… each categorization has a different 'position' and meaning not only in combination with others but also in relation to the 'locations', or structures, within which they are valued." As an example, in Sweden the rhetoric of gender equality is strong, and the host citizens' conceptions of gender relations in foreign countries can affect encounters and sometimes lead to mistrust, regardless of how the individual views gender relations (cf. Kurki et al., 2019).) The construction of gender identities can be complicated when the host country's gender system differs considerably from the system in the migrant's country of origin, but the new system could also be embraced by migrants (Pajumets & Hearn, 2013).

The following questions are addressed:

- According to migrants' own understanding, how do encounters influence their access to working life?
- How do the encounters contribute to identity constructions and how can these constructions influence access to workplaces?
- How can the encounters be interpreted based on aspects of gender, ethnicity (race), and class?

Methodology

The material consists of 20 interviews, conducted in 2020 and 2021 with migrants who had a professional education from their home country and who had gained access to their previous vocational area in Sweden. Purposeful sampling was used to find the participants. Confidentiality was assured, informed consent secured, and the study was approved by the Swedish Ethical Review Authority (Dnr 2020-01139). Participants consisted of 14 women and six men from 17 countries representing Asia, Africa, and Europe. Time of arrival in Sweden varied from the 1980s to the 2010s. Reasons for migration included humanitarian, economic, family reunion, or

career (but not recruitment). Participants' vocational areas included health care, childcare, industry, the food sector, and finance. Ages ranged between 25 and 61. While some interviews were conducted face-to-face, most were recorded and conducted via video conferencing or telephone due to Covid-19 pandemic restrictions. The interviews lasted between 30 and 100 minutes. All but one conducted in English, were conducted in Swedish and transcribed verbatim.

All interviews were carefully read based on the intention of finding descriptions of encounters that were perceived as significant for migrants' pathways to work. There was no question about important meetings in the interview guide, but the descriptions appeared, for example, as part of their narrative or as an answer to the question about what facilitated their return to working life. During the reading, interactions that were clearly significant for their pathways to work were identified in 12 of the 20 interviews. Encounters representing nine of the interviewees were chosen (see Table 5.1). Similar interactions described by the three other respondents were excluded. The encounters were with persons in various spheres: relatives, friends, colleagues, managers, civil servants, study counsellors, etc. Further, the selected interaction was mostly a well-described meeting between the migrant and a person but could also sometimes describe similar, recurring treatment by different people, such as in migrants' employment interviews.

The text sections were copied into a common document and a qualitative categorisation of the encounters was made. Analytical questions asked of the material included how social identities were constructed in the selected interactions and the effect this had or could have had on further inclusion into working life. Other analytical questions were about whether the interactions were affected by conceptions of ethnicity, gender, and class. To deepen the understanding, the context in which the informant was at the time of the encounter was described in the result. When citation is used, the pseudonym, vocation, country of origin, and year when the person moved to Sweden are placed in parentheses after the citation.

Table 5.1 Participants of the study

Name	Country of origin	Year of arrival in Sweden	Profession	Reason for moving
Mario	Croatia	2016	Financial worker, teacher	Values, personal
Rita	Uganda	1982	Financial worker	Refugee
Olga	Russia	2016	Financial worker	Values, economic
Fatime	Chad	2009	Nurse	Asylum
Rose	Uganda	1991	Nurse	Refugee
Anush	Armenia	2012	Dental nurse, childcare worker	Economic
Anna	Lithuania	2000	Literary studies teacher, pre-school teacher	Personal
Arash	Iran	2015	Welder	Refugee
Mitra	Iran	2002	Physiotherapist	Family

Encounters that Influenced Employment and Educational Pathways

"The Angel": A Transformative Meeting

Sometimes, in the informants' narratives, encounters were described as a turning point. As a university graduate, Mario, a financial worker and teacher, had expectations that the Swedish labour market would open to him. Instead, his first years in Sweden involved low-skilled jobs in restaurants and hotels. He described it as "… go(ing) against yourself". He perceived that despite his previous career, people at the Swedish Public Employment Service were not interested in helping him, only in recommending cleaning jobs. The meetings with unhelpful authorities and "rude and unprofessional officials" negatively influenced his picture of Sweden. In the encounters, he was positioned in an undesirable way, not as a resource for society, but as a burden, which affected his self-identity.

One day, he met an unfamiliar woman at the hotel reception desk where he worked.

> *After a year working in reception, a woman came. She wanted to check in. And so, we started talking about life. About how important it is to educate oneself and so on. She asked: "What education do you have? So, what is your profession? Then I said I have a teacher's degree and she was just… "What are you doing here, why are you wasting your time, your talents, skills and so on, why can you not work as a teacher?" And then, you know? When you ... how do you say that? She was like an angel who came with… that I like, "boom", now it happens. […] So ... she said to me "but do you know that there are job coaches here? It's like a good start to your new career". And so, I went the same evening and googled and found about ten jobs in Stockholm as a job coach. And after that I wrote on my fridge, Mario, you will work as a job coach, and you will earn money. And after about two months, I got a job (as a job coach).* (Mario, Teacher, Financial worker, Croatia, 2016)

According to his description, the woman Mario met positioned him as a skilled person with options. She confirmed what he already knew and had experienced, that he was not in the right workplace. Besides positioning him as a competent, educated person, the woman gave him a concrete job suggestion, which got him started on the process of seeking a more suitable job. To be constructed as a well-educated person in another person's eyes strengthened his self-confidence and supported his job-seeking. Two months after the meeting, he got a job as a job coach. For Mario, the encounter with the woman, who both supported his identity as a competent person and gave him a concrete job suggestion, became a turning point. The woman did not open a door to a specific employer or a network, but for Mario the confirmation and the job suggestion were enough to spur him into acting independently. His class position, based on his education level, made it difficult for him to perform low-status jobs, but it also helped him to eventually get a job that better matched his skills. Mario also emphasises the importance of Swedish language skills for gaining access to the labour market. His European background as well as his gender could be seen as both a resource and an obstacle. Being ethnically similar to the native population and belonging to the male gender could be a resource but being an EU

immigrant did not elicit any particular support from the system, e.g., The Establishment Programme or the Fast Track programme. Even if Mario does not yet work as a teacher, he thinks that working as a job coach is a step in the right direction. He just has to finish his last course in "Swedish for second language speakers" before he can apply for a teacher's licence.

Meeting the Director: A Turning Point

Mario's meeting with the woman, described above, was a random yet serendipitous meeting with unforeseen consequences. It differs from another informant's meeting, a Bachelor of Economics graduate from Uganda with a university education from India, who described how she planned for a meeting that could lead to employment. Rita described how she attended a course in Sweden in the 1980s where a successful exam test after six months of study would give access to vocations such as mechanic, office administrator, or chef. Since she already had a higher education qualification, she decided to drop out of the programme, and contacted the Swedish Public Employment Service, who recommended a job as a cleaner. She started to clean hotels, but after some time she refused these assignments.

> *I stopped cleaning hotels, and I said; "No". And I said to my manager (at the Swedish Public Employment Service), "if you want me to clean you can send me to an office", because I had a strategy, I had a plan. And I knew it ... I knew that, if I came to an office ... and cleaned the office, then there would always be a finance department.* (Rita, Financial worker, Uganda, 1982)

The agency manager complied with her request and placed her as a cleaner in an office at the Swedish Social Insurance Agency. During her first year as a cleaner, she learnt to speak Swedish, since many of the other cleaners were native Swedes. One day she met the director who said:

> *"Come and tell me about yourself" and then I explained that I came from Uganda, had studied in India, and had a degree in Economics. She was very surprised, "but why are you cleaning?" [Rita replied]: "I don't know. They referred me here." She said, "no, no, no, no, no, that was not good".* (Rita, Financial worker, Uganda, 1982)

After a couple of months, the director told her that a financial worker position would be advertised in the finance department, and if she was interested, the director would speak to the finance manager. When she confirmed her interest, the finance manager sent copies of her qualifications and grades to Stockholm University for a quick evaluation. When the evaluation established that her qualification was equivalent to a three-year economics degree, the finance manager encouraged her to apply for the position.

> *I applied for the job, and there were 90 who applied but the boss said: "I want to give you a chance. I know you have never worked in Sweden. And 90 have applied, but I choose you. I want to give you a chance. And I will give you a job for six months and test you. If you can do it, then you will get permanent employment.*" (Rita, Financial worker, Uganda,1991)

The woman started her career as an administrative assistant in the planning and budgeting office and went on to work there for 17 years on various, and, over time, more advanced tasks. Unlike other informants from Africa, there are no descriptions of discrimination in Rita's narrative. She does not perceive that her migrant position or gender has influenced employment or treatment in workplaces, except that she was treated favourably because of her foreign origin when she got her first job. There may be several explanations for this, e.g. fewer immigrants were arriving in Sweden when she immigrated and attitudes to migrants and migration have changed since then. However, one can assume that the opportunity she was given influenced her social and vocational identity and strengthened her belief in her own abilities. Her subsequent encounters with managers and co-workers she perceived positively, and she also believes that she can make demands as a job seeker. Furthermore, her prior qualifications were evaluated and approved, another factor confirming her belief that her education was of high quality.

Encounters with Colleagues, Mentors, and Managers

Some of the informants perceived the process of looking for work to be difficult, especially when they did not get hired, and had to apply many times. Olga, a financial worker from Russia, highlights how important collegial support was for her to persist with the process. She had a placement at a company for some months, as a part of an internship programme. What was stressful for her was that she had a limited time to apply for employment internally before the position was advertised externally. She was well aware that the external competition would make it difficult for her as a migrant to get a job in her professional field. However, she met a supportive colleague in her workplace.

> *When we talk about the support I received during the internship... so it was one of the colleagues who said: "Don't be afraid, just apply, just apply", and I started... no, maybe I can't make it! ... I wasn't very self-confident. And that person, he was so... positive, he said: "Why do you think you can't make it? Just apply! It doesn't matter, if you apply, if you get an interview, just be yourself..." and so ... and I just... okay! I dared; I dared a little more.* (Olga, Financial worker, Russia, 2016)

It was not an easy path for Olga, who went to many interviews without gaining employment. At the same time, she describes the learning process and how she dedramatised the interviews.

> *And it was like that; I had to be interviewed several times, and I had to read a lot, I had to prepare a lot… I don't remember, I went to five or six interviews... and of course after the first interview I felt really bad when I got rejected... but then... the more I read, and... there is so much good material there, it says... how you prepare, and how you... what do you say, build that... "resilience" if you fail... how to think, how to use it... and... the more I went to interviews, the more confident I felt. Then I just thought... but it doesn't matter, I'll just pass by, I'll just talk one more time.* (Olga, Financial worker, Russia, 2016)

The other supportive person that Olga mentions as important is a mentor she met through the national project *Nema Problema*, where migrants were matched with native persons based on their specific requests. Olga said that she did not need someone who could help her to find companies or education, she just needed a friend. Just a few days before the jobs were to be advertised externally, Olga felt desperate and called her friend and mentor.

> *I thought, I can't just get in, I just took my phone, I called my dear Swedish friend and just cried on the phone, and said I can't take it, I can't do it... and I got so much energy, so much support, so much... understanding. What no one else could have given me...* (Olga, Financial worker, Russia, 2016)

She describes how her mentor and friend supported her, comforted her, and contributed to her determination to proceed.

Simultaneously, Olga gives expression to great strength in her contacts with employers.

> *I applied for a position, which I thought... "it's mine, I want it … I can do that, I will be passionate about it". And then I was rejected. And then I dared! And wrote to that boss, and asked, "I'd really like to get feedback, what do you think? […] can you give me feedback, so I can learn, what should I do next time... what should I think about?", and so... then I wrote to her... so then she recommended me to another manager ... then I had to go to another manager... and then I was also turned down. And then when I checked the advertisement again, I saw that the same manager was looking for... had posted the same advertisement... and then I dared, and wrote to her again... Yes! I texted her: "I'm wondering... is it the same ad, or do you need another person, I just want you to know that I'm still interested..." And then I had to come one more time, and then I got the job...* (Olga, Financial worker, Russia, 2016)

The quote shows how Olga dared to return to the manager who did not hire her after their first meeting. Her strategy was successful, she got the chance, and at the time of our interview, she had been employed there for 2 years. She believes that without the supporting persons, she would neither have had the strength nor the courage to apply for a job as a financial worker so many times, and she talks about how their support had given her "wings". She assumes that she would have been working in cleaning or care without their support, even though she is well aware of how it would have affected her. When asked what she thinks would have happened if she had taken any job whatsoever, she answers:

> *I think it would have been terrible. You lose all... confidence... Because you immediately start thinking that you are different...* (Olga, Financial worker, Russia, 2016)

She emphasises that the persons she appreciated did not give her access to networks or recommended her to managers. What they gave her was emotional support. They constructed her as a competent, educated person who was able to apply for and get a job as a financial worker. They gave her strength to maintain her vocational identity and helped her navigate through deep doubts about her abilities and possibilities. By succeeding in gaining employment in her former field of work, her belief in herself increased and she maintained the vocational identity she had built up in her former country through education and several years of professional activity.

Managers are also important people who can support entry into working life. Fatime contacted a human resources manager at the county council and told her that she wanted to validate her nursing education and that she needed an internship. Despite the difficulties associated with access to an internship before getting her nursing licence, the manager arranged it.

> *The person who arranged the internship for me all the time, I think about her a lot, sometimes when I see how good I've become at my profession... I have never forgotten her name; Lena is her name. And I think she has opened the bigger door for me, the biggest door for me. I got to get out and practise. I became even more motivated to improve my language and get my licence at the same time.* (Fatime, Nurse, Chad, 2009)

Fatime got a positive response when she contacted the manager who constructed her as a person valuable to the Swedish healthcare system. This feeling was reinforced by the fact that she got an internship and was allowed to work as a nurse, something that was not common for people whose validation had not been completed. Her access to the workplace motivated her and helped with the validation process.

However, respondents also describe difficulties getting suitable work. Rose, from Uganda, a specialist nurse in ophthalmology, came to Sweden in 1991. Her first career choice was to become a physician, but various circumstances led to her becoming a nurse instead. In Uganda she had worked with many other nationalities, including Europeans and Americans, and she had experienced this collaboration as fruitful and inclusive. She felt respected and appreciated in her work. When she describes her encounters in Sweden, it is obvious that she was not prepared for life in this new country.

> *When I came here, what struck me the most and in a negative way…was that I was worth nothing. If you are a Christian, we are, on biblical grounds, we are all worthy, equal. Like people. But pretty quickly I realised that I am at the bottom of the list.* (Rose, Nurse, Uganda, 1991)

Rose does not mention any specific situation or encounter that affected her, but her statement indicates a fairly consistent reception which made her feel degraded and less worthy than other citizens. It affected her so much that she stopped going to church and lost her faith in God, because she thought it was “contradictory if we all are considered equal but yet we are not”. Her entire world view changed, her social identity affected by the way she was constructed.

Despite Rose’s specialist qualification in ophthalmology from Uganda, she could not get any work in that sector, so she repeated the specialist ophthalmology training in Sweden. She then went on to earn a master’s degree in quality improvement and leadership. At the time of our interview, she was working as a specialist nurse, but it had not been an easy path.

> *I have been an eye nurse since 2001. But every time I applied for a job at the eye hospital, they didn't want to hire me. At the same time as they have constantly employed nurses who have not even furthered their education in the field.* (Rose, Nurse, Uganda, 1991)

Like Olga, the Russian financial worker, Rose went to many interviews that did not lead to employment and finally asked for reasons.

> *And when I was at the interview, I rehearsed: "please, I have applied many times here. And I know there are general nurses who work here, but if... if you see something that you think is why you haven't given me a job, then tell me. I want to know why." And then she (the manager) said she wanted to call my boss, because I was working on dialysis at the time.* (Rose, Nurse, Uganda, 1991)

Rose said she knew her boss would give her good references and suggests that perhaps the manager at the eye hospital had to hire her, not that she wanted to. In her story about her life in Sweden, exclusionary practices are a common thread, from her first encounter in the country to the present. She perceives that she has been treated a certain way because of her physical appearance, something that other African women in the study relate to.

When Rose was asked what she appreciated in Sweden in the beginning, she mentions gender equality.

> *What I thought was positive was gender equality, which I still appreciate. And I think that was what also helped me mentally. To compare, to be able to realise that maybe it's so in the whole world that if you do not fight against one thing, you have something else to fight against. Okay, maybe being a woman gives some value anyway, even if I don't get attention as an African woman.* (Rose, Nurse, Uganda, 1991)

She tries to consider aspects of Swedish society that balance her negative experience of racism. Although her race is an obstacle, her gender as a woman affords more advantages in Sweden than in her home country. In Rose's narrative, gender, class, and race intersect. As an African woman, she has to fight for her class position in Sweden, against preconceptions and mistrust of her knowledge. Her middle-class position and education level make it both easier and more difficult. Her argument is that you can be highly appreciated if you are a migrant and work at lower levels, but when you show that you have competence, it is more difficult to be accepted.

The Study Counsellors: Good Advisers?

In the interviews, there are two examples of the potential influence meetings with study counsellors can have. Anush, from Armenia, who was a dental nurse and who had also started to study to become a preschool teacher in her country of origin (an education she was unable to complete for financial reasons), thought that her previous studies could help her to get a job in Sweden.

> *I told her that I had studied dentistry in my home country and a bit of preschool teaching, and maybe if I could get my certificate here, then I could work as a dental nurse. But then she said: "yeah, but you know it's very common these days that people buy their qualifications from their home country and then come and present them here, so it's not guaranteed that it's your own qualifications; but you'll go there, buy your qualifications and then come to Sweden and present them as your own". I got very angry with that woman.* (Anush, Dental nurse, Childcare worker, Armenia, 2012)

The study counsellor's distrust influenced Anush's vocational pathway. She did not retrieve her certificates from Armenia and instead followed the advice to do the upper secondary school programme for adults to be certified as a childcare worker. Despite her frustration at first, because she felt that she already had substantial knowledge in the field, she also appreciated learning new theories and the professional language in Swedish. The internship during her studies also became a path to work, as she got work at the same pre-school when she had completed her education. However, the anger she felt about being positioned as a person who lied about her education affected her and she felt frustrated for a long time. This could have been accompanied by feelings of diminished self-confidence because both her professional and personal identity had been questioned in the encounter with the study counsellor. However, it is obvious that she was able to locate the problem with the other person and not herself, something that seemed to protect her professional and personal identity.

Anna, a literary studies teacher from Lithuania, came to Sweden first as an au pair on a sabbatical year, and then as a participant in a summer project for youths. After her bachelor's degree in linguistics, literary studies and pedagogy in 2000, she came to Sweden to "have some adventure". She had studied Swedish in Lithuania as an optional subject during her teacher education. After her arrival in Sweden, she worked in elderly care for some years, met a man, got pregnant, and applied for permanent residence. Searching for jobs without success, she realised that she needed a qualification from Sweden. The Swedish Higher Education Agency decided to credit one and a half years of her prior education if she attended a teacher training programme in Sweden. To this end, she met a study counsellor at the Teacher Training College to get some advice.

> *Then I got to meet the study counsellor there and asked the question: "What should I do? This is what I have. I don't want to study for a long time. I'm interested in studying as little as possible to get a job, because I can't get a job without some education." And I actually wanted to be a teacher of literature. I wanted to continue on the same track. But then the study counsellor thought, "no, this might be difficult for you. You haven't lived in Sweden that long and it will be difficult with the language. But how about becoming a preschool teacher?"* (Anna, Teacher, Pre-school teacher, Lithuania, 2000*)*

Anna was not disappointed with the choice of being a preschool teacher, and she has worked in that field for many years; at the time for the interview, she was the head of a pre-school. She has also gone on to complete further, related higher education studies. However, she still talks about her future career and about her literary studies and if she could pick up that thread again.

The study counsellor's assessment that her language skills would not be sufficient for becoming a subject teacher led Anna to choose the profession that was recommended. She was advised to take up a feminine-coded profession with younger children, which meant reinforcement of a traditional gender identity. Her position as a migrant was an obstacle for her to achieve a profession that matched the level of education she had.

Encounters with Teachers

In the material, many encounters with teachers are described, mostly positive but also negative. These people often function as gatekeepers and their actions can either open or close doors to employment and inclusion, something that makes it easy to understand why these people are included in the migrants' stories.

Anna, the Lithuanian pre-school teacher whose pathway to education was described above, had only lived in Sweden for 4 years when she started her teacher education. She struggled with the language and made her own word lists to develop her language competence. Because Swedish-Lithuanian dictionaries were so scarce, she sometimes used both Russian and German dictionaries. She experienced some difficulties during her preschool teacher education. One of the university lecturers questioned her career choice explicitly.

> *Yes, there was one time when I was very sad because a teacher of mine was going to fail my work, even though the work was good in terms of content, because I used adverbs in the wrong way in some sentences. And he expressed himself very disparagingly then, that "you should think about whether you should work as a teacher at all" and so on.* (Anna, Teacher, Pre-school teacher, Lithuania, 2000)

Language was very important to Anna, a linguist, which meant that she took the criticism hard. The teacher positioned her as a migrant with weak Swedish language skills, not suitable for the teacher profession, which affected her self-identity as an ambitious, highly educated student, and her confidence in the Swedish language was affected.

However, she mentions a bright spot during her studies where her language skills were confirmed.

> *When I studied language development, we had a test in grammar, Swedish grammar, phonetics, morphology, sentence formation. I'm basically a linguist. It was so simple then. And I actually think I was the only one out of 60 students who got a high grade.* (Anna, Teacher, Pre-school teacher, Lithuania, 2000)

Her success in the test meant much to her and increased her self-confidence.

Anush from Armenia also tells of a bad memory from her education in Sweden, when one of the teachers doubted that she had done her assignments by herself.

> *And then when I was graded in my pedagogy course, I got a D, and then I called the teacher after a week and asked her: "Why did I get a D? I got a C on the test. And all my assignments are at a higher grade than the one I got now as a final grade", and then she argued: "How do I know if you have done your assignments on your own or not?"* (Anush, Dental nurse, Childcare worker, Armenia, 2012)

Anush describes how hard she had worked on the assignments and how frustrated she felt when she was met by the teacher's doubt in her. She says that in Sweden, there is a lot of talk about the equal worth of people, and emphasises that she also wants it to be like that in real life. She means that a person born in Sweden would never be questioned in the same way. Her position as a migrant created certain expectations about her ability and when these did not match, the explanation was that she had not done the work herself. However, just as she did in her encounter

with the study counsellor, described above, she was able to locate the problem outside herself.

But teachers were also a highly valued group. Anush talks about a Swedish teacher who gave her critical feedback on her texts which she felt really helped her to develop. The fact that the teacher pointed out language errors did not get her down, but more engaged. Her resistance to discriminatory treatment and her ability to see criticism as positive, seemed to contribute to her more successful journey through education than those who express that criticism and unfair treatment undermined their self-confidence.

Another example is the welding teacher who helped his students make valuable contacts with employers. Both welders interviewed got jobs at the companies where they had done internships. One of them says:

> *To be honest, my welding teacher helped a lot, and I got in touch with this company and I got a job. […] And the teacher said I was very knowledgeable...I'm a good welder and I can do everything in welding, fabrication, and assembly.* (Arash, Welder, Iran, 2015)

In the migrants' encounters with the teacher, they were constructed as professionals, and she gave them access to her network of professional contacts. Furthermore, when one of the welders lost his job, he contacted the teacher, who gave him tips which led to a new job.

Sometimes, teachers were valuable when they gave advice for other, more appropriate courses, as in the example of Mitra.

> *I went to SFI (Swedish for Immigrants). And I only went there for a few weeks. We had very mixed backgrounds and educations and everything.... And I almost always sat a little restless and thought, "this is going way too slow. And why should we... I can do this, I've learned that. Can we move on?" And then this teacher noticed that... She asked me, "But what is your education? And what have you done?" And then I told them what I had done and so on. Or what I had read. And then she said: "But you shouldn't be here. You should go to another place, where they have professional Swedish for nursing staff."* (Mitra, Physiotherapist, Iran, 2002)

The teacher saw Mitra's capability, and gave her valuable information about language education courses for the vocationally trained. She positioned Mitra as different from the other language learners and confirmed her feeling that she was not in the right place. Other informants in this study confirm Mitra's experience of the heterogeneity in SFI groups. These informants often positioned themselves as different from the other students, portraying themselves as motivated and goal-oriented with a will to progress rapidly through their studies.

Discussion and Conclusions

Many of the encounters described are of the kind that led to internship, employment, or education. Access to internship is valuable and is described as a door that opens to the labour market, a place where you can develop language skills, establish

networks, and present yourself both as a person and as a professional (Eliasson et al., 2022; Lehtovaara & Jyrkinen, 2021). Despite these advantages, Lehtovaara and Jyrkinen (2021) state that internships do not automatically lead to permanent jobs, pointing out that the internship system can be exploited by companies who maintain a steady turnover of interns. However, this aspect is not mentioned by the migrants in this study.

In the migrants' descriptions, committed teachers and managers are key to their access to workplaces and suitable studies. The material also shows encounters that do not provide direct access or referral to workplaces or training, but are nonetheless regarded as supportive and encouraging, and which consequently contribute to the migrants' success. In these encounters, the migrant's competence and ability are confirmed by other persons: family members, teachers, foreign persons, mentors, and colleagues, who contribute to an improved self-image and enhanced power to act. One conclusion is that encounters with people who do not have access to a relevant network in the labour market can still be of such great importance that they contribute to employment that matches migrants' previous education. In summary, while an influential person can literally open a door to employment, another person may simply support the migrant to open it themself. Both forms of support are needed.

A common feature of all the encounters that were experienced positively and which bore the migrants forward is that the person they met showed interest and commitment and affirmed their professional identity and/or their potential to develop. Like the senior manager who said to the cleaner (financial worker), "(c) ome and tell me about yourself", and then became concerned when she realised that the cleaner was highly educated. Another example that stands out is the foreign woman who encountered Mario at the hotel reception desk. The support the informants talk about mostly concerns recurring interactions, but Mario's case is about one single meeting. Using Yuval-Davies' (2006) concepts, Mario and Rita were both constructed as "being" and "becoming", being a professional with potential to go further in working life, people "belonging" in society.

The migrant position is what everyone shares, a position that shapes the encounters in different ways. However, being a migrant does not mean everyone is in the same position. For some informants, their skin colour triggered immediate mistrust, underestimation of competence, and preconceived notions of professional accomplishment. Osman (2021) states that the black body is constructed as different, is stigmatised, and shapes everyday interactions. Koskela (2019) concludes, in her study of skilled migrants in Finland, that despite the migrants' own social identification based on their class position as a skilled worker, imposed categorisations related to ethnicity and race are a part of their daily social life. As Jenkins (2004) emphasises, a person's internal, chosen identification can conflict with classifications imposed from outside. In this study, some of the informants have struggled to maintain their social identity based on their class position against others' categorisations of them which focus on their ethnicity or race. As Aure (2013), who is interested in the emotions of skilled, job-seeking migrants, concludes:

> *For some migrants the loss of self is tied with their sense of being either somebody or nobody in society. When skills and knowledge are not recognised and the holder is not given an appropriate position in the host society, the situation deprives the holder of a presumed, preferred, or desired role, along with the rights and duties that follow from employment.* (Aure, 2013, p. 292)

However, resistance to other people's constructions is always possible and is visible in many of the informants' narratives (cf. Kurki et al., 2019). Verwiebe et al. (2019) highlights personal agency and persistence in job seeking as a success factor for gaining access to the labour market. The most striking examples of this are how Olga and Rose go to job interviews repeatedly and also confront, in a gentle way, the person in charge about why they are not being hired. Many people would not have the courage in such situations to insist in this way, because of the clear signals that they are not wanted. Their strategy led both to employment and permanent positions after the probationary period. Despite others' constructions about them not being sufficiently competent for the tasks, one can assume that their professional identity and belief that they would be successful if they just got the chance were one reason for their success. In line with this, Crul et al. (2017) state that migrants who have succeeded in getting top positions in the new country have made twice as much effort to get there than natives, and they have shown their capacity to succeed despite discrimination and racism.

Gender is the category that is least visible in the material. This could be understood to mean that gender does not constitute an obstacle in encounters and social constructions, since the informants do not deviate from native Swedes in the sense that they are working in traditionally masculine- or feminine-coded sectors and the only occupations held by both sexes are chef and financial worker. For a nurse or pre-school teacher, the female gender is not an obstacle, nor is becoming an industrial worker for someone of the male gender. It must nevertheless be emphasised that female migrants, especially those with low levels of education, have more difficulty establishing themselves in the labour market in Sweden than male migrants (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2020).

The financial worker from Uganda who received positive special treatment and who does not mention experiencing discrimination at work, contrasts with the other African women in the study who work as nurses. One may ask whether this has to do with the positive meeting that led to her employment and whether it in turn was due to the historical moment (early 80s) when significantly fewer migrants were coming to Sweden. Being an African nurse in Sweden could be challenging, since so many migrants work in lower positions in healthcare, and people expect them to be a part of that group. It is worth noting that filling these lower positions is presented as a solution to staffing shortages in the sector (SOU 2017:21). When colleagues expect their migrant co-workers to have substandard qualifications from their home countries, this is likely to constitute an obstacle to inclusion. In a Finnish context, Kurki et al. (2019) claim that migrants are constructed as ideal care workers and are directed to work as assistant nurses and care assistants due to labour market policy and the demands of the economy. Wrede and Nordberg (2010, in Kurki et al., 2017) suggest that the distribution of work is based on gender, race, and ethnicity,

which in turn leads to an acceleration of social and racialised inequalities in working life. They argue that instead of improving working conditions in the care sector, migrants fill the gap created by natives choosing other workplaces. However, positive emotions associated with having been selected for employment, (as was the case with our financial worker), could conceivably eclipse other more negative experiences.

Being interviewed about experiences and decisions is itself part of constructing a social identity (Eliasson, 2019). As Watson (2006, p. 525) states, telling stories is "doing identity work". Akkerman and Meijer (2011, p. 313) suggest that "(i)dentity can be considered as a narrative of ourselves." Constructing identities is a never-ending process and narratives are part of this process. In research on teacher identity, Schutz, Nichols and Schwenke (2018) argue that teachers construct their identities in relation to social historical contexts, e.g., how their goals and beliefs are similar or different to those of other teachers. In this study, comparisons with other migrants often appear in the narratives, which indicates that while interviewees identify themselves as part of the group 'migrant', they also contrast themselves with other individuals within the group.

This text focuses on how personal encounters influence pathways to education and work, which means that the focus is on the meso- and micro-level. However, it is worth pointing out that the migrants' descriptions also highlight the national measures intended to facilitate migrants' pathways into the Swedish labour market. Examples of such interventions include evaluation of previous education, validation of qualifications, internship programmes, mentor programmes, and language education at different levels. The migrants also gained access to general support functions such as the Swedish Public Employment Service and vocational guidance through study counsellors. All these measures can be seen as structures of opportunities, a space where encounters and individual actions can take place.

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Chapter 6
Education for Access to the Swedish Labour Market and Society: A Historical Comparison of Practices for the Integration of Immigrants in the 1960s and Early 2000s

Åsa Broberg and Lázaro Moreno Herrera

Keywords Immigration · Labour market · Integration

Introduction

The assumption that language skills are essential for integration is neither controversial nor new in policies and strategies to integrate immigrants into the labour market and society. From a historical point of view, it is natural to ask whether this always been the case and, if not, what the previous perceptions about work, education and integration were. Answering these types of questions extends the knowledge about the relationship between migration and societal change. In this investigation, the relationship between work, vocation and education is of particular interest, and specifically how its changing character can be understood as part of the idea structures of integration. Even though the study focuses on the Swedish context, it may be of relevance to other national contexts as many countries witnessed similar shifts in their labour markets from heavy industry to service sector, as well as a pervasive digitalisation of practically all sectors.

After immigration follow establishing discourses, which contain varying aspects and emphases according to time and different national contexts. Common aspects of establishing discourses are conceptions of learning the host nation's language and societal organisation, as well as a strong conviction that work leads to integration into society. Even though these aspects are common, they may vary in emphasis. This chapter investigates changes in the perception of (vocational) education, language and work as part of the establishing discourses in Sweden in the mid-1900s

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and early 2000s. It presents examples of the shifting emphases in the relationship between (vocational) work, education and integration. Two clear features of change in the Swedish case are identified: (1) education has become more important and related to the general education system, and (2) education in the twentieth century promoted local social integration and worker solidarity, while twenty-first century education promotes the individual's future prospects and social mobility.

Design of the Study

The study is comparative and aims to identify characteristics of establishing discourses from the 1960s and early 2000s. The underlying assumption is that the perceptions of education can reveal something about societal understanding of integration and what was needed to achieve it.

The first two parts of the chapter focus on each of the two time periods studied. These parts address the research questions: (1) What was a migrant initially expected to learn in the 1960s and early 2000s? (2) Why and in what form? In the third part of the chapter, the differences between the time periods are analysed and discussed using the questions: What differences can be identified in the perception of the role of education in relation to integration in the 1960s and early 2000s? In what way do these differences characterise different perceptions of integration? The chapter then brings in aspects relevant to the wider Nordic context, given that the welfare ideal, including integration, has commonalities throughout the region.

Historical research and archive material from trade and industry bodies are used to describe the relationship between migration, work and (vocational) education during the 1960s. The theoretical departure point is curriculum theory, where curricula are not only written documents, but what is agreed upon as important knowledge, ways of learning and overall aims of education. Sometimes they are written down, but the importance of knowledge and education can also be seen in the way education is organised and debated. In looking at different aspects of education, a curriculum code may be identified, i.e., an underlying principle directing content and educational form for a societal purpose – in this case, integration (Lindensjö & Lundgren, 2014).

Structural Changes

In order to better understand the developments of education in relation to integration in the studied historical periods, it is important to highlight the structural changes in the Swedish economy in those periods.

The development of the Swedish economy during those periods had a huge impact on the ways in which workplace education and the education system were structured. A study by Inge Dahlstedt (2017) provides a concise picture of the

evolution of the Swedish context in relation to the work market and education. According to him, the shift towards a globalised economy has been changing the premises of the Swedish labour market over the last three to four decades (Dahlstedt, 2017). The 1950s and 1960s were characterised by strong economic growth, but the economy slowed down at the beginning of the 1970s, which was the same time service production started to increase and industrial production of goods started to decline. In addition, there was a transition from Fordist production principles towards team-based production. These changes, together with the information technology revolution, created a labour market where the number of entry-level jobs (low-skilled jobs) decreased and the demand for employees with higher general competence and communication skills increased (Bevelander, 2011). This resulted in low-skilled groups losing their jobs to high-skilled groups, while newly arrived, young people and immigrants were having even greater difficulties obtaining employment, which created an employment gap between immigrants and natives.

The study by Dahlstedt (2017) and other research (e.g., Olofsson & Panikan, 2019) report that major structural changes in the Swedish labour market occurred, while the immigrants' country of origin changed. In the 1950s and 1960s, labour migration to Sweden was mainly from Nordic and other European countries. This inflow has shifted since the 1970s, which has led to a gradual increase of the employment gap between natives and immigrants. The following sections analyse aspects of how Swedish industry and the work of immigrants has evolved in the different decades in focus.

Swedish Industry and Workforce Immigration 1960–1970

The 1960s and 1970s were turning points for Sweden's heavy industry, labour market and immigration policy. It was an era when heavy industry had developed after the Second World War, and workforce demand peaked and troughed. It was also an era when workforce immigrants made up the majority of foreign-born groups, and refugees were a small minority. Beginning in the 1970s and into the 1980s, this situation reversed. Societal development (particularly labour market and economic changes) and immigration policy are closely related and studies show that liberal or restrictive immigration policy (especially concerning work permits) follows economic development (Lund & Ohlsson, 1994).

From the 1940s, large companies and trade organisations negotiated workforce immigration quotas with the trade unions and government agencies to recruit skilled workers. When the negotiations were done, recruitment offices were set up in different countries, depending on the geopolitical circumstances at the time, and teams were sent to evaluate applicants who wanted to come to Sweden for work. The visa processing and work permit were done before the worker came to Sweden, and often the worker started work the same week or even the same day they arrived (Lund & Ohlsson, 1994; Svanberg, 2005) During the 1960s, The Swedish Employer Association (*Svenska arbetsgivarföreningen* or SAF) representing trade and

industry, The National Association (*Landsorganisationen* or LO) representing labour unions, and government authorities like The National Board of the Labour Market (*Arbetsmarknadsstyrelsen* or AMS) cooperated in the regulated transfer of workers. Although this cooperation, according to the Swedish model, allowed for a substantial importation of labour, the reasons and arguments given by the parties differed. Research suggests that governmental authorities followed LO's recommendations in most cases. In 1972, for example, when the labour market was experiencing problems due to shifting demands and international competition, LO called for restrictions on workforce migration, which the government followed (Waara, 2012).

Even though immigrants in the 1960s were employed in some service sectors such as restaurants, the majority worked in the mechanical or textile industries (Lund & Ohlsson, 1994; Schierup & Paulson, 1994). Work permits were issued for employment only and the possibilities for foreigners to establish a private business were highly restricted. Immigrant workers were assets for companies and essential for maintaining industrial and technical development during an intense period of expansion. From a labour movement perspective, research shows that the immigrant workforce made it easier for Swedish workers to access jobs with better conditions and career prospects, while the immigrant workforce maintained basic production (Schierup & Paulson, 1994).

The workers who came to Sweden in this period were already trained workers, with usually one or more years of vocational education and training in their home countries. They started working as soon as they arrived and no one asked for language skills. During the recruitment process, communication was done through interpreters, but as soon as they started work, they were usually surrounded by other immigrants using their native language. It was generally assumed that the workers would learn Swedish at work or on their own initiative. Companies also organised language courses and education in safety regulations, while trade unions provided information and education in social sciences with a focus on labour law. In 1965, the Swedish government started providing free language education to all immigrants. The education was organised by study associations and volunteers (SAF, 1947–1987).

Language education for workers during work hours was regulated by agreements between unions and industry (Lund & Ohlsson, 1994). The provision of education was widespread but not a right for all immigrants, and access varied for different categories of immigrant. For those recruited abroad, AMS organised activities for introduction into society, but so-called tourist-migrants (e.g. migrants coming as tourists and found employment by own means) were not included (Lund & Ohlsson, 1994).

Education was offered to differing extents to different groups and there was a variety of providers. The main provider was AMS – a government organisation providing labour market education. Authorities connected to general education like The National Board of Education (*Skolöverstyrelsen*) had special courses like The Seminar of Swedish for Foreigners (*Seminariet Svenska för utlänningar*) and there was also a course provided by Stockholm University. A report from 1965 listed all

the study organisations providing a course called Swedish for Foreigners (*Svenska för utlänningar*), as well as the number of courses and participants. The organisers of this course were mainly private companies.

Previous research and SAF documents report that the interest from immigrants in attending such language education was generally low, and government documents from 1972 suggest making language education compulsory. In 1973, the government passed the first law requiring all companies to provide language education, thus making what had previously been regulated by agreement into a national requirement. It should be noted, however, that the compulsory aspect only pertained to the employer, not workers.

To summarise the structural elements so far: the initiatives for language and social science education were not compulsory or coordinated during the 1960s. This was when workforce immigration was at its peak and employers had the responsibility to provide and finance education for their immigrant workers. The article will now take a closer look at the education content.

At the beginning of employment, Swedish companies provided safety information written in the immigrant workers' native language or translated by an interpreter. This was the first educational activity for most workforce immigrants. Some societal information was also provided in different languages, and cards and phrase books were used by some employers to support vocational language learning (SAF, 1946–1974). Proper language education and sociocultural education was usually offered later. Language education was promoted for safety reasons, as well as for the well-being and establishment of the individual worker in the workplace and local community. Some companies also provided social events that included the workers' families. LO in particular was interested in the potential of language education for improving relations between Swedish workers and foreign workers. Interviews with migrant workers in the 1960s suggest union enrolment was something immediate, automatic and mandatory, although none of the workers seemed to be against it (Schierup & Paulson, 1994; Svanberg, 2005). But union membership alone couldn't guarantee harmonious relations between workers, and this was one reason the unions tried to persuade both employers and employees to advance education.

The content of course material from that time reveals what knowledge was judged to be important, and for whom. For example, the first passage in a course book for Yugoslavs is about the Swedish beer regulations and the three classes of beer according to alcohol level.

This type of education was an integration of language and sociocultural education promoted by both LO and SAF. LO especially argued for sociocultural studies as a basic condition for the "adaptation" of immigrants (as was the term used at that time). By sociocultural studies, it meant "how Swedish society worked" with a special focus on working life and the labour market. The unions also gave their Swedish members information about the immigrants (Lund & Ohlsson, 1994), so it could be described as a two-way education for integration. This approach was also featured in a Radio Sweden (SR) production from 1967 called *The Swedes and Their Immigrants* (*Svenskarna och deras invandrare*), which was recommended by SAF

to its members and spread among its companies' workers (SAF, 1946–1974). Thus, both LO and SAF had an interest in educating Swedish workers as a way of aiding integration for the benefit of the working environment. An effort of a more peculiar kind was the bingo game *Byllans Bingo* (SAF, 1964) provided by SAF as a learning and socialising activity. It was intended to be played by Swedish and immigrant workers together, and the cards were themed with pictures from both the workplace and everyday life, ranging from toilet rolls and tobacco pouches to diggers, sockets and chainsaws. Another example of this cooperative learning was the suggestion by SAF to educate supervisors of production about "foreign migrants' earlier life, about the political, cultural and religious conditions in the country of origin"(SAF, 1965–1968). Such information about "the other" was taken as objective and something for Swedish authorities to provide and co-workers to use in their interactions with foreign colleagues. It was produced both in Swedish and in the languages of major migrant groups. The majority of it concerns the individual's relation to the Swedish authorities, laws and labour market. In terms of this study, the absence of information about the Swedish education system is interesting. In most of the pamphlets it is not mentioned at all, and in some more extensive documents, compulsory education for children is the only reference to education (SAF, 1965–1968).

A report from SAF's foreign committee from 1966 lists the actions already taken to aid the "adaptation of foreign workers" and offers suggestions for companies to do the same. Information for companies is central in the report, as is information about safety and language education, but there is also a kind of practical social science education. This is because administrative departments in many companies provided personal help with social issues like tax declarations and for contact with authorities (SAF, 1965–1968) Another SAF publication from 1968 mentions a course on "Swedish housing conditions, how Swedes live, Swedish society and private economy", which was provided by a company and carried out by the YMCA (SAF, 1965–1968).

Safety information, language training for work and social interaction at work, and Swedes learning about immigrants (and vice versa) were all central to the establishing discourse of the 1960s. The employer had the responsibility to provide all this. The learning activities were closely linked to work, the workplace and the local community in the area of a particular company. The translated information and the contents of learning activities like *Byllans Bingo* (SAF, 1964), as well as the workplace phrase books and cards, made language and cultural learning locally situated and conditions for access to education varied greatly.

Cases of Labour Market Training for Immigrants in the 2000s

Three cases are presented below to illustrate a variety of ways in which education of immigrants has been organised since 2000. The cases are different in their particularities but all show a transition from the approaches of earlier periods.

Case 1: Tailored Workplace Education for Immigrants in Rural Sweden: Working with Resources and Deficit

In a study focusing on tailored education for migrants in rural Sweden, Malin Bernedal (2021) makes a contextualisation based on earlier research that is very helpful to frame the analysis in this chapter. According to Bernedal, Swedish integration policy has historically been characterised by adherence to the principles of diversity and multiculturalism, which has resulted in relatively strong provision and protection of the cultural and political rights of immigrants compared to other countries. However, Bernedal also argues that changes have occurred in Sweden in line with recent European trends. These trends include transformation of welfare systems based on state interventions through social policy measures, to 'workfare' systems rooted in competitive economic policies, shifting responsibility for employment and unemployment from the state to the worker. In this context, employment and social policies prioritising 'activation' have emerged, emphasising individuals' obligations and duties to become 'employable' (Qvist, 2016; Sultana, 2012, cited by Bernedal, 2021, p. 172).

According to Bernedal (2021, p. 172), newly arrived humanitarian migrants, or refugees, are enrolled (after receiving a residence permit) in an 'establishment programme' that normally lasts 2 years. The programme includes full-time Swedish language classes, provision of basic information about Swedish society, and activities to facilitate labour market integration. To be able to access social benefits, newly arrived migrants are expected to participate in educational activities prescribed by the Public Employment Service for the entire period. It is important here to mention the role of the committee of the Delegation for the Employment of Young People and Newly Arrived Migrants (DUA) (Bernedal, 2021). The DUA committee was established in 2014 to reduce youth unemployment at the local level by promoting and facilitating cooperation between relevant actors. In 2017, its role was extended to include 'DUNA' agreements, where government grants are used to encourage collaboration between municipalities and the Swedish Public Employment Service (SPES) to ease newly arrived migrants into the labour market. These agreements create work-related tracks that immigrants can take as part of their establishment plan, thus enhancing their preparation for work. Each track targets a prospective employer or employment sector, and each agreement generally covers multiple tracks.

In another study by Bernedal (2021), all the municipalities' perceived needs are identified to meet the challenges of recruiting staff, future retirements, and "the composition of the target groups". The education in the 'health and social care and service track' is provided through the child care upper secondary education programme in the municipality, and is thus focused mainly on child care. The healthcare element of the track has still not been created at the time of writing, i.e., almost 2 years after the agreement was adopted. In two other municipalities included in the study, a collaboration was established in 2017 with three other municipalities and local branches of the SPES, which is funded by the European Social Fund (ESF)

with a regional actor as project owner and leader. The motivation for the collaboration is that it would have been "very challenging" for the small municipalities to establish their own tracks, since they are comprised of "large areas, long distances and low population densities". Together, they have created two work-related tracks: one targeting cleaning and service, and the other health and social care.

Different actors provide the theoretical elements of the tracks, and the content varies, but they are constructed in collaboration with the providers of adult education in the municipalities. None of the tracks result in formal qualifications, as they are intended only to provide opportunities for immigrants to try out or prepare for employment in different fields.

The analysis of the motivation for the agreements shows that they are intended to solve the problems posed by the many low-skilled immigrants and the paucity of skilled labour in rural municipalities. The problem of low-skilled immigrants is represented in statements of participants about their lack of upper secondary education and "ability to socialise at work". Bernedal (2021) argues that these statements corroborate previous findings that immigrants are constructed as problematic learners and that 'adding' education is seen as a key solution. Thus, the low-skilled immigrants problem is related not only to the placement of immigrants in rural areas, but to their lack of capacity for action, since (as stated in the agreements and by interviewees) immigrants placed in these municipalities are generally less educated than the average immigrant.

The other problem is connected to the labour market and the difficulty of providing skilled staff. A lack of skilled labour, connected to demographic and geographic factors, is highlighted as a longstanding problem in these municipalities, with negative implications for future prosperity and the provision of welfare services. Immigrants are positioned as 'resources' that can potentially fill the gaps in the public and private sectors, for example by covering future retirements (Bernedal, 2021, p.175).

In the study Bernedal (2021) finds that immigrants are sometimes described as bearers of another culture, which is a description often presented positively. In two of the municipalities, for example, the ECEC unit managers describe the immigrant staff's heritage as a valuable resource for teaching about different cultures. Immigrants are also seen as bearers of other cultures in terms of their care of the elderly; one of the interviewees in Bernedal's study (2021, p. 176) stressed that "many newly arrived … have a different/ … /cultural approach to older people. Or care of the elderly. You see it in reverence and desire to help the elderly … I don't really know how to put it into words. You feel a more natural way of caring for the elderly" (Spruce, manager, elderly care unit).

Immigrants here are presented as resources, which very much determines the design of both language training and labour market integration. Bernedal's (2021, p. 179) analysis concludes that the collaborative agreements in the municipalities illustrate how political intentions to quickly incorporate immigrants' into the labour market are constructed and formed, as well as how local contexts and their histories and conditionalities shape the possibilities of what can and should be done.

Case 2: A Company Training Experience

It is possible to trace a wide diversity of cases of company training. One example that illustrates particularly well how this vocational education and training provision is organised is the pilot training programme jointly organised by Volvo Cars Torslanda, a senior secondary school (*Göteborgsregionens Tekniska Gymnasium*), an adult education organisation (ABF), a trade union (*Metall*), and the City of Gothenburg. In the following core aspects of this pilot training program are presented based on the documentation disseminated by information department at volvo (c.f. Volvo Cars, 2002).

The academic tuition is provided by *Göteborgsregionens Tekniska Gymnasium*, which is owned by Volvo Car Corporation, AB Volvo and the City of Gothenburg. Volvo Cars Torslanda has a long tradition of employing immigrants, so its workforce has a high degree of cultural diversity. Welcoming skilled immigrant workers has played an important part in the development of the plant. "Having staff with highly diverse skills and backgrounds is something we see as a real asset. It's important to us as a competitive company and an attractive employer, " explains Anna Fredriksson, the process manager for recruitment and diversity at Volvo Cars Torslanda.

Newcomers to Sweden, including a number of refugees, have started a practical work experience component via a new course organised at Volvo Cars' Torslanda plant in Gothenburg (Room, 2002). The course, devised for refugees and other immigrants who have not been long in Sweden, is a pilot project that began in April. Now, the practical work experience component of the course has got underway at Volvo Cars' Torslanda Plant. "At the end of the course, the students will be well-prepared for work in car assembly, but also for other challenges in the Swedish job market, " argues the course's main organiser. The complete course was designed for a period between 2 and 4 years to complete, depending on the extent of the earlier education of the participants. Besides practical experience of car assembly, tuition includes the related theory, and studied Swedish, civics, mathematics and English at senior secondary school level in the classroom. The selection process includes interviews and practical tests, given that recent immigrants to Sweden are an increasingly important recruitment base for Volvo Cars (Volvo Cars, 2002, p.1).

For their work experience in the Torslanda Plant, each student is assigned a personal mentor. In some cases, the mentor will be someone from the same country as the student. According to the course organiser, "With a mentor, the student is able to learn more about life and work in Sweden from someone who's already familiar with the cultural differences". The benefits of this training scheme are various, as mentioned by one of the participants, 29 years old, arriving in Sweden from the Middle East: "This course is a fantastic chance to get a job quickly, but it could also be a stepping stone to other studies. We are learning Swedish, and about how Swedish society works, " he says. The situation in his home country meant that he never finished his secondary schooling there. He hasn't ruled out the possibility of going on to university later: "But that's a question for the future. Right now, I'm

concentrating on completing this course and starting work at Volvo. I do like working with cars, " he says (Room, 2002, p. 2).

Once a student obtains the level that Volvo requires for its car assembly workers, including a senior secondary school qualification in the core subjects and a knowledge of Volvo's quality objectives and strategies, he or she will initially be offered employment for a trial period. All being well, this can later become a permanent job. Relevant to the focus of this chapter is the question of what promotes labour market integration: what policies and practices are viable?

Case 3: Regional Collaboration for Integration and Competence-Development of Immigrants: The Case of Swedish for Immigrants with Previous Professional Training (SFX)

Studies conducted by Petros Gougoulakis and Katarina Lagercrantz All (2020, 2022) illustrate how local authorities engage with the integration of immigrants and the development of their competences. The aim of the studies was to map existing cooperation for the Swedish for Immigrants with Previous Professional Training (SFX) programme in the Stockholm region. The aim of the SFX programme is to shorten the time it takes for immigrants to find employment or start a business in a familiar field.

Responsibility for the establishment of newly arrived immigrants is divided between several state, municipal and civil society actors. The municipalities provide Swedish language education for immigrants and orientation to society, as well as other initiatives to facilitate establishment in the labour market. The County Administrative Board's task is to promote collaboration on establishment initiatives between municipalities, authorities, enterprises and organisations.

SFX is one such initiative, developed two decades ago in the Stockholm region for immigrants with previous professional training (see https://sfx.se/). It is a programme of education for adult immigrants, with a focus on Swedish language for professionals. It is organised as a collaboration by all the municipalities in the Greater Stockholm Region and the Stockholm County Administrative Board (Gougoulakis & Lagercrantz All, 2020, p. 143).

At present (2023), there are SFX programmes for eleven different occupations. In addition to vocational language instruction, the programmes include study visits, external lectures and work-based training or mentoring in some programmes. SFX is now part of the region's infrastructure for adult education and competence development and is a common concern for all the municipalities in Stockholm County (*Stockholms län*), the County Administrative Board in Stockholm (*Länstyrelsen I Stockholm*) and the Municipal Association of Stockholm County (*Storstockholm*). The intention behind SFX is to emphasise the professional identity of the participants when learning Swedish for Immigrants (SFI). Evaluations have shown that

SFX, in contrast to SFI, is greatly appreciated by the participants and facilitates their establishment in the labour market. Sixty percent of all SFX participants have employment within 2 years after completing their education and 7% continue their studies (Gougoulakis & Lageckrantz All, 2020, p. 143).

The case of one participant in the study is now presented here to illustrate the importance of considering the background knowledge of immigrants in the process of integration into the work market and society. Right after his arrival in Sweden, Fernando went to enrol in SFI where he lived. There, he saw information about a special language course for newly arrived engineers offered by *Järfälla komvux* in cooperation with KTH Royal Institute of Technology (Gougoulakis & Lageckrantz All, 2022).

After 2 weeks in a regular SFI class, Fernando started Swedish for Engineers (SFX) and he considered it a great opportunity due to the motivation of the participants and commitment of the teachers. After 6 months of language studies, he was given the opportunity to choose from courses in Swedish at KTH to complement his previous education. He also emphasised the status given by his new position as student of a prestigious university: "There is a big difference if you are going to do an internship. If you're just a new immigrant here, it's really hard for a company to bring you in as an intern…it's a bit hard to justify. But if you are a KTH student, then you are absolutely welcome" (Gogougolakis & Lagercrantz All, 2022, p. 419).

Fernando appreciated being treated as an academic at KTH, as he had previously studied agronomy at a prestigious university and was now studying further: "Then I came back to who I was, what I could do and what I was passionate about. At least they saw me as an engineer from Brazil and not as an immigrant" (Gougoulakis & Lagercrantz All, 2022 p. 419).

Concluding Remarks

The analysis of earlier historical periods and the cases presented above shows the changing perceptions of how, what and why immigrants should learn in order to successfully integrate into the Swedish labour market and society. It also reveals differing conceptions of what integration means. Curriculum theory frames this study, and its specific frame factors help uncover the changes in Sweden in the function and dynamics of the labour market.

The various aspects presented above indicate a shift in the perception of the role education and different stakeholders can play in integrating immigrants into the work market and society. One of the key factors in this shift is the understanding of language education as the cornerstone of integration. In earlier decades, language education per se was considered the key to the process, but more recent developments indicate that vocational language education has become the primary focus.

The new challenges of integration are varied and, according to this study, one of the core issues has do with the new type of immigrants coming to Sweden. To meet this challenge, there must also be a shift in approaches to learning. Considering that

the concept of lifelong learning was established during the 1980s, and therefore not in use in the 1960s, it can be argued that the earlier period's view of integration was more static in relation to education. That is to say education provided by employers in the 1960s facilitated only local integration and an attachment to the company. More recent developments indicate a need for a holistic education focused on relevant skills for the labour market and career possibilities.

Case 2 above shows the company offering education to immigrants that focuses on further education while, in the 1960s, skills related to work were the main priority. This is a huge change that has had an impact on how integration is conceptualised and enacted. It is a case of 'same but different' in terms of the aim of the company in different historical periods, which is the need to secure a qualified labour force. This shift also has to do with workforce adaptation and transition to new technological developments.

In this paradigm shift, education has become more important and related to the general education system and access to higher education. Education for immigrants in the twenty-first century must continue to better individuals' conditions and future prospects. Although this is a major shift in the relationship between education and integration from the mid-twentieth century, there is not, as the three cases illustrate, a one-size-fits-all solution and the pathways connecting work, education and integration differ to a large extent. These differences pertain to the immigrants' prior vocational and educational merits. However, the main aim of the different roles education plays in the integration process is the same, i.e., it gets immigrants access to the labour market, which is perceived as being almost the same as integration into society. In the 1960s, with immigrants already in the workplace, education was needed more for integration into society – even if it was just the local community.

Findings of this this study suggests that steering people into areas of labour shortage as part of integration and labour market policy opens doors to the engagement of different stakeholders. The examples given in this study indicates that trade unions had a strong influence in the 1960s and1970s, but that today there is a wider diversity of actors making the process of integration more inclusive.

An in-depth historical comparison of the educational practices to integrate immigrants into the Swedish labour market and society is a complex but necessary research challenge. It is hoped this chapter will help motivate researchers to do the work that is still needed.

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Chapter 7
Integration as a Conceptual Resource When Studying Skilled Migrants in the Workplace

Marianne Teräs

Keywords Conceptual analysis · Concept of Integration

Introduction

In the context of migration, academic, public and political discussion are deeply embedded in various historical, social and political circumstances and visions of society. There are three intertwined discourses around the integration of migrants: public, political and academic. In the Swedish context, some public voices claim that integration is 'broken' or unsuccessful. For example, Ali Shafiei, an interpreter, claims in his article in *Aftonbladet* (April 18, 2021) that the idea and goals of integration programmes (called 'establishment programmes' in Sweden) are good in theory but not working in practice. Also, in their article in *Dagens Nyheter* (October 6, 2022), researchers Jonsson and Mood claim that the public debate on integration has gone astray. Discourses focus especially on rapid, mandatory establishment and integration through employment as the key to success The political parties of Sweden, however, have different approaches to multiculturalism (emphasising either respect for migrant cultures or adaptation to the host culture), language and education (as key to successful integration), social cohesion (as promoting equality), and in recent years migration as a security issue and the relationship between migration and crime (e.g., Cetrez et al., 2020).

Academics have also fervently discussed integration, acknowledging it as a contested concept. Grillo (2011) calls integration a 'fuzzy' concept with multiple interpretations, and Schinkel (2018) describes discussion about it as a 'conceptual quagmire'. In its narrow meaning, integration means migrants must conform to the norms and values of the dominant majority. However, this view has been sharply criticised by Penninx and Garcés-Mascareñas (2016), who call for a broader definition of integration where migrants are engaged in multiple fields or systems. They

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observe that, in migration studies, "the term integration refers to the process of settlement, interaction with the host society, and social change that follows immigration" (Penninx & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2016, p. 11). Researchers are, then, asserting the procedural and non-normative nature of integration by not specifying its meaning or requirements.

Even though there is no uncontested definition of integration, all definitions have something to contribute to this complex phenomenon. Thus, researchers need to be transparent about the concepts they use, and explain them fully in their studies. The use of concepts is highly contextual and academic, and public and political discourses are connected. Some concepts are more related to structural and institutional conditions, such as labour markets, while others are more related to individuals, such as skills and competences. Sometimes, it seems that public and political discourses can strengthen the narrative that integration has failed. Therefore, to identify and understand the concepts used in various discourses (especially in academic research), it is necessary to examine what concepts are, from which perspective they come, and how best to use them.

The aim of this chapter is to explore the concept of integration and examine its uses in migration research by focusing on skilled migrants' integration into the workplace. Skilled migrants are those with a vocational or professional education and/or work experience from their countries of origin. The analysis of this chapter seeks to answer how the concept of integration was defined, described and used in the selected studies.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. After the introduction, various approaches to concepts in academic research are presented. The following section explains the method of analysis, which was inspired by conceptual analysis (CAM). Thereafter, the results of the analysis are presented. Finally, there is a discussion about the approaches to the concept of integration and how they were used in the studies.

Definitions and General Meanings of the Concept of Integration

Etymologically, the word 'integration' stems from the Latin *integer*, meaning 'unscathed whole'. It is defined in the Oxford Learner's Dictionary of Academic as "the act or process of combining two or more things so that they work together" or "the act or process of mixing people who have previously been separated, usually because of colour, race or religion" (Oxford Learner's Dictionary of Academic, n.d.). The Merriam-Webster Dictionary sees integration as "the act or process or an instance of integrating" or the "incorporation as equals into society or an organization of individuals of different groups" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, n.d.). Both definitions see integration as an act or process. The word 'act' can be a noun, referring to a thing someone does or an act of something, or it can be a verb, referring to

someone doing something or behaving in a particular way. The word 'process' refers to a series of actions someone does to achieve a particular result (Oxford Learner's Dictionary of Academic, n.d.).

Both definitions also include 'combining' in order to work together, 'mixing' people who have been separated, and 'incorporating' them as equals into society. So, as a general term, integration means an amalgam and an activity or process to achieve the goal of incorporating at least two different parties. There is thus the definition that describes the condition as an amalgam and then there is this goal-oriented, value-laden definition of incorporating as equals. Traces of this meaning can be detected also in academic discussions and definitions in the area of migration research, as Penninx and Garcés-Mascareñas (2016) characterisation shows. Schinkel (2018) states integration as neo-colonial knowledge production and reminds us that the history of the concept [of integration] lies on an organicist tradition in which the social was conceived as an integrated body. Integration, in that sense, had to do with the internal adjustment of the parts of a whole, but it was ultimately a property of the whole.

Approaches to Concepts

As Havila and Tähtinen (2019) assert, concepts in research are theory-, domain- and context-related. They also state that conceptual clarity is needed for theory building and to avoid conceptual confusion in research. Knuuttila (2005) points out that scientific models and concepts are epistemic artefacts and tools for researchers. Therefore, it is important to look at what kinds of tools concepts are and how they are formed.

Vygotsky (1934/1987) studied concept formation and thinking and speech in childhood, highlighting two types of concept: *spontaneous* or everyday concepts with direct connections to a child's experiences, and true or *scientific* concepts that do not come from direct experience in a child's everyday life, but are learned as a result of instruction. In addition, everyday concepts can become scientific concepts and vice versa.

The public discourse uses the concept of integration as an everyday concept like Shafiei, who had direct experience with it when working as an interpreter for different authorities. This everyday concept is something visible in daily life, in neighbourhoods, schools and workplaces, but researchers use it as a scientific concept. It is interesting to note that Vygotsky (1934/1987, p. 224, 226) also wrote about a 'system of concepts' or relationships between concepts, stating that "Scientific concepts have a unique relationship to the object. This relationship is mediated through other concepts that themselves have an internal hierarchical system of interrelationships" (p. 188). In relation to integration, for example, the concept of inclusion is used – sometimes even as a synonym.

Taking this idea of the system of concepts and hierarchies a bit further, and away from the development of concept formation in childhood, one of the problems with

the concept of integration might be that it is part of different systems of concepts, and even part of different practical activities. A concept, according to Blunden (2012, p. 279), "is only really understood when we can identify its source, and the relation of all the actions by means of which it is realised will make sense." For example, the concept of integration is part of a scientific system of concepts and part of scientific activities in various disciplines in research, academic debates and scientific publications. It is also part of a political system of concepts and political activities, part of an educational system of concepts and educational activities in various training programmes, educational discussions and publications, or part of a journalistic system visible in the media, just to name a few systems and related practical and social activities. It is not always clear in discussions from which perspective and system of concepts integration is being looked at, which adds confusion in debates.

Greeno (2012), following Vygotsky's work on concept formation, divides concepts into formal concepts (formal uses of concepts) and functional concepts (functional uses of concepts). Formal concepts refer to "a cognitive entity that has a reference class that is determined by an explicit definition and that is used in a system of formal deductive reasoning", whereas functional concepts are "a cognitive entity that has meaning in a kind of activity, in which it contributes to the way participants organize their understanding of what they are doing" (Greeno, 2012, p. 311). Following Greeno's suggestion and looking at the concept of integration, both formations are visible, i.e., as a formal concept, researchers may offer a definition of it, and as a functional concept they may describe the uses of it. However, the use of concepts in academic research is not only connected to discourses, but especially to theoretical approaches and frameworks used in studies.

The Concept of Integration in Migration Research

Traditionally, integration has been seen as a two-way process between the migrant and the host society. However, in recent studies, a three-way process has been acknowledged, involving the country of origin as a third party (Penninx & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2016; Osman, 2012). There are other terms and concepts used to illuminate this phenomenon, such as "adaptation, acculturation, and assimilation have tended to be focused on the cultural dimension of immigrants' settlement, others, such as accommodation, incorporation, and inclusion/exclusion, have shifted the focus to the host society and concentrated on the legal-political and socio-economic dimensions" (Penninx & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2016, p. 12) These researchers go on to say that all these concepts and approaches are highly contested in academic debates and that the concept of integration is used in different ways, for example, as culturation, identification or belonging. From this perspective, the integration dynamics and tempos are different for each dimension, and processes of structural marginalisation and inequality become key.

Rytter presents a critical reflection on the use of the concept, concluding that "Integration is not the solution, it is a significant aspect of the problem" (2019, p. 691). He further points out that integration is used differently in different contexts and that it is closely related to the vocabulary of the nation state. He continues that the concept "is based on and promotes specific perspectives on the nation, migration and the relationship between majorities and minorities" (Rytter, 2019, p. 680). Rytter further argues that, because integration is embedded in specific national social imaginaries, it needs to be studied as such. "Integration may refer to anything from social integration in certain neighbourhoods or educational institutions to economic integration understood as participation in the labour market; political integration seen as participation in general elections and local associations; and cultural integration measured by the extent to which migrants and refugees have maintained traditions, identity or notions of belonging connected with their first homeland" (Rytter, 2019, p. 681).

Spencer and Charsley (2021) summarise the recent critique of the concept of integration into five core areas: normativity, negative objectification of migrants as 'other', outdated imaginaries of society, methodological nationalism and a narrow focus on migrants in the factors shaping integration processes. They propose an alternative view and a heuristic model of integration (2021, p. 15), taking into consideration wider aspects of integration and state: "We cannot separate integration processes from the complexity of broader socio-economic processes of change, nor from their historical, spatial, temporal and transnational dimensions". They go on to propose the following definition of the concept, taking into account the five abovementioned critiques by focusing on the processes of integration: "Processes of interaction, personal and social change among individuals and institutions across structural, social, cultural and civic spheres and in relation to identity; processes which are multi-directional and have spatial, transnational and temporal dimensions" (p. 16). Furthermore, they offer a heuristic model of integration, both for theoretical reflection and empirical analysis. The model consists of five dimensions in which integration takes place (social, structural, cultural, civic-political and identity), and it depicts five sets of what they call 'effectors', which have an impact on integration processes (individuals, families and social networks, opportunity structures in society, policy interventions and transnational effectors) (pp. 16–17).

The Conceptual Analysis Method

The conceptual analysis method (CAM) is a tool to systematically analyse concepts and terms used in research. It is especially useful for looking at concepts used in multiple ways, or those from emerging research areas. It is carried out through a systematic literature review, but focuses only on concepts or terms and how they are defined and used in studies (Tähtinen & Havila, 2019). Researchers state that CAM underlines the importance of conscious conceptual language (ibid., p. 353). Tähtinen and Havila (2019, p. 538) propose six steps for CAM analysis: (1) collecting the

data, (2) evaluating the conceptual status in the studies, (3) categorising the meanings and boundaries of the concept, (4) tracing the theoretical roots of the concept, (5) outlining the conceptual map, and (6) deconstructing the concept.

The CAM method was chosen here because it allowed a focus on the concept of integration and offered a toolbox for the analysis. The steps followed in this study are described next. The literature search was conducted by trying different search word combinations (integration, inclusion, migration/migrants, skilled) in the EBSCO host database, which resulted in several thousand hits. The following combination was used in the review: search words in the subject terms: integration and migra* or immigr* and skilled and workplace. The inclusion criteria were: fit to search words, published in peer reviewed academic journals in English during the years, 2012–2022. This resulted in 15 articles (Appendix 1). One of these articles (Pesch et al., 2023) was in press at the time of the data collection but is now available with exact reference and shows year 2023.

The next step in the analysis was reading the articles thoroughly to form an overall picture of each and evaluate how they defined and used the concept of integration. Also identified were the author(s), country, year of publication, name of the journal, and context of the study (see Table 7.1). The next step was to categorise the concept of integration used in each article by establishing the focus of the integration, who were supposed to integrate, and what means of integration were proposed in the study (see Table 7.2). The last step was to form an overall picture of how the concept of integration was used in the study, which is shown in the results section of this chapter.

Regarding the limitations of the analysis, the sample was very focused and it should also be acknowledged that the review method had its limitations (Snyder, 2019). A small sample may offer a narrow view of the concept of integration. Another limitation was that concepts are very context dependent in different disciplines and their meanings change over time, and this review focused only on the years 2012–2022. The last limitation is that the steps of CAM were not followed rigorously, but were used as a structure and inspiration for the analysis. This was because additional information was required, such as who was the focus of integration and what kind of measures were offered in the studies to promote integration (see Table 7.2).

The Concept of Integration in the Reviewed Studies

All the studies were based on empirical material. Four of them related to Australia, one to Brazil, Japan and Israel, and all the others were done in Europe (one each in Sweden, Germany, Ireland, United Kingdom, France, Norway, Finland and Spain). This showed that skilled migrants were working in many different countries. The context of use of the concept of integration was mostly for workplaces such as hospitals or small and medium enterprises. The concept was also used to reflect integration into professional practice such as nursing, into labour markets, and into host

Table 7.1 Reviewed articles and the context and concept of integration

Author/s, year, country	Journal	Context of use	Integration
Pesch et al. (2023) Germany	Organizational Dynamics	Workplace	Integration as employment, social integration into workplace
Farivar et al. (2022) Australia	Personnel Review	Workplace	Integration as social embeddedness
Tran et al. (2022) Australia	Journal of Critical Realism	Workplace, labour market, host country	Integration as a dynamic process
Finotelli (2021) Spain	Migration Studies	Hospital, organization, host society	Integration as a process of inclusion
Versiani and Neto (2021) Brasil	Cadernos.Ebabe.fr	Small and medium enterprises, another society, labour market	Integration as a dialectical process, becoming part of the receiving country
van Riemsdijk and Basford (2022) Norway	Journal of Int. Migration and Integration	Workplace	A multidirectional process with several actors
Hof and Tseng (2020) Japan	Asian and Pacific Migration Journal	Workplace	Integration as adaptation, assimilation, localization
Li (2020) France	Journal of Chinese Overseas	Labour market, Workplace, society	Integration as getting access to labour market and to employment
Alaraj et al. (2019) Sweden	Journal. of International Migration and Integration	Internship	Integration as experience of knowledge transfer and development in an organization.
Kushnirovich (2019) Israel	Journal of International Migration and Integration	Labour market	Integration as an employment and earnings, employment conditions, autonomy at work, socio-cultural integration host country language skills
Bobek and Devitt (2017), Ireland	Employee Relations	Hospital	Workplace integration
Rajendran et al. (2017) Australia	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An international Journal	Workplace	Structural and sociocultural integration, social capital/networks
Webb (2017) Australia	Studies in the Education of Adults	Workplace, society	Integration as adaptation and transformative learning, informal learning, life-long learning, social inclusion
Al-Hamdan et al. (2015), United Kingdom	Journal of Clinical Nursing	Nursing practice, new country/ society	Integration as transformation
Lahti (2013) Finland	Nordic Journal of Working Life Studies	Workplace	Integration as a learning process

Table 7.2 Who is in focus and means to facilitate integration

Who was in focus (Author/s, year)	Measures/means to facilitate integration
Refugees (Pesch et al., 2023)	Managers' lenses/frames how they see refugees (vulnerability or/and capability). Skills and talent identification. Support for refugees' self-reliance. Career growth.
Skilled immigrants (Farivar et al., 2022)	Employer's support. Workplace wellbeing and job satisfaction organizational respect.
Skilled migrants (Tran et al., 2022)	Help to design CV as locals. Talk positively about ones' achievements. Accept 'survival' jobs such as distributing leaflets, work in nail shops etc. Strong desire and resilience. Learning informal and unwritten expectations. Networks. Advertise on social media. Start with an entry-level job.
Migrant health care workers (Finotelli, 2021)	Support to language learning. Creation of stabilization by assessment of professional qualifications. Diversity management. Adaptation to cultural practices. Professional assimilation to the culture of the hospital. Reducing stereotypes.
Refugees (Versiani & Neto, 2021)	Fruitful exchange about cultural knowledge. A managerial incentive for different forms of communication is necessary. Seeking ways to break the language barrier. Using different communication methods: drawings, mimicry, gestures like applause and through tools available on the internet for instant translation. Inclusive management. Awareness of cultural knowledge and of ethnic and racial discrimination.
Highly skilled migrants (van Riemsdijk & Basford, 2022)	Different level actors have different measures: international (EURES), jobfairs, government: migration/labor policies, center for foreign worker/agencies offer practical assistance, voluntary organization socialization, information, companies onboarding, buddy programme, managers and co-workers practical assistance, acculturation strategies.
Asian and European locally hired employees in Japanese firms (Hof & Tseng, 2020)	Fulltime boot camp training for several weeks together with new Japanese recruits (cultural practices of the company, teamwork, hierarchies etc.). After that on-the-job training period in an assigned division with a mentor (first months of employment). After work socializing.
Chinese graduates (Li, 2020)	Omitting structural barriers. Decreasing discrimination and racism.
Newly arrived academic immigrants, refugees (Alaraj et al., 2019)	Internships
Immigrants from Europe, America, Former Soviet Union (Kushnirovich, 2019)	Language skills. Time and social adaptation.
Foreign-born health care professionals (Bobek & Devitt, 2017)	Diversity management. Hiring a cultural diversity officer.

(continued)

Table 7.2 (continued)

Who was in focus (Author/s, year)	Measures/means to facilitate integration
Skilled migrants (Rajendran et al., 2017)	Informal peer mentoring. An "empathetic" supervisor. Migrants' self-help strategies such as deciding to make it work; actively seeking information and support; working hard to be valued as workers; and socialising with co-workers in formal and informal ways. A formal introduction programme introducing organisational norms. Establishing a diversity committee. Supporting key skills development. Setting an example by the manager and mentoring through networking.
Skilled migrants (Webb, 2017)	Work based learning. Learning in voluntary organizations. Supportive managers. Emotional work: transformation of perspective.
Migrant nurses (Al-Hamdan et al., 2015)	Personal, professional, socio-cultural transformation
Female Russian professionals (Lahti, 2013)	Comparison and adaptation. Language skills and cultural knowledge. Facilitating intercultural learning

societies and new countries. The idea was that, through workplace integration, integration into labour markets and societies also occurred. Finotelli (2021) reported that the context was organisational level, while Alaraj et al. (2019) explored the use of internships for integration into the university workplace. Since the aim of this review was to focus on skilled migrants, it was not surprising that the workplace was the most common context and that integration was a multilevel phenomenon occurring on the meso and macro levels.

The articles approached integration in different ways, and not all of them presented a clear definition of it. Tran et al. (2022) wrote that "We also understood that migrants' workplace integration in the host country is a dynamic process involving multi-disciplinary factors" (p. 338). Describing their idea of integration, Versiani and Neto (2021) explained: "The term integration here is seen as the process experienced by subjects of foreign origin (refugees) within another society (from the sociological point of view)" (parentheses in original, p. 253). The process perspective was used in almost all the studies, and the authors referred to integration in many ways, such as 'social embeddedness' (Farivar et al., 2022), 'inclusion' (Finotelli, 2021), 'a process of mutual accommodation between migrants and the host society' (van Riemsdijk & Basford, 2022), 'experience of knowledge transfer and development in an organisation' (Alaraj et al., 2019), 'transformation' (Al-Hamdan et al., 2015), 'a learning process' (Lahti, 2013), and 'employment' (Pesch et al., 2023). Thus, in the studies, the concept of integration was seen as a multidirectional, complex process through which skilled migrants become part of the workplace, labour market and society.

The Use of the Concept of Integration in the Reviewed Studies

In terms of the subjects of integration (Table 7.2), i.e., who was the focus of the studies, it was mostly skilled migrants being referred to as ‘humanitarian and labour force migration’. Versiani and Neto (2021), Pesch et al. (2023) and Alaraj et al. (2019) all studied refugees, Li (2020) studied Chinese graduates, and several others studied health care professionals (e.g., Bobek & Devitt, 2017; Finotelli, 2021). Some authors took into account in all workers at workplaces, such as Al-Hamdan et al. (2015) who looked at native workers. van Riemsdijk and Basford (2022) used the term ‘host society’. In the studies, integration was depicted as a two-way process but mostly directed at skilled migrants who needed to integrate.

Most of the authors focused on workplace integration at the micro and meso levels. Taking the organisational focus into account, Finotelli (2021) emphasised the role of the work community in the integration process. Some of the authors observed that, through micro- and meso-level integration, the skilled migrants were getting access to the host society and the new country (Al-Hamdan et al., 2015).

The authors suggested several means of integration (see Table 7.2). Some focused on supporting individual skills and competences such as language learning (Finotelli, 2021), cultural knowledge, and how to apply for jobs (Tran et al., 2022). The authors also mentioned organisational means such as diversity management, employer support to migrants, hiring cultural diversity officers (Bobek & Devitt, 2017), and awareness of ethnic and racial discrimination (Versiani & Neto, 2021). Pesch et al. (2023) also highlighted skills and competence identification, and support for refugees’ self-reliance and career growth. Van Riemsdijk and Basford (2022) reported that actors dealing with integration operated at different levels and they had different measures: international job fairs (e.g., EURES) at the international level, various migration policies at the national government level, employers offering various mentor programmes at the meso level, and co-workers offering practical assistance at the individual level. The studies also suggested several other practical measures for workplaces on how to promote skilled migrants’ integration.

Looking at what was missing from the reviewed studies, it would be reasonable to ask whether there was a direct connection between integration, workplace, labour market and society; all authors assumed that there was such a connection. On the one hand, if one has a job, one is on the labour market and is a productive member of society. On the other hand, one can question whether that is what integration really is, i.e., getting a job and working. While getting a job can be the *start* of integration, many authors thought of integration as a process – sometimes a lifelong process. Another thing that was missing from the reviewed studies was a critical stance on the concept of integration, or alternative conceptualisations. Some studies equated it to inclusion, but more frequently the concept of integration was given multiple meanings.

Discussion

This section will reflect the results of the literature review in relation to concepts generally, and to the concept of integration used in the migration research presented in previous sections. The results suggest, from a conceptual point of view, that the concept of integration was used in the studies in multiple ways and, to use Vygotsky's (1934/1987) terms, as kind of an intermediate concept between an everyday concept connected to our experiences and a scientific concept connected to formal education. The concept was not directly defined in the studies, as the authors assumed the meaning was self-evident to readers. The concept was also used as a part of a conceptual system, in this case as part of the various working activities and actions, but also as a part of a scientific system as a focus of research actions. As it was not clearly defined in the studies, one cannot say whether it was treated as a formal concept or a functional concept, i.e., it found its meaning through various activities (Greeno, 2012). This could be due to one of two explanations, i.e., whether the concept of integration is seen as an overall or a 'fuzzy' (e.g., Grillo, 2011) concept, which can be understood as it meaning what the researchers want it to mean. Another explanation may be that different disciplines approach concepts in different ways. For example, in sociological studies, integration may be understood and used in a different way than in educational studies. Therefore, researchers need to be transparent with the concept and explain fully what they mean by it.

When examining migration studies in relation to in this review, it was clear that treating integration as a process of settlement and interaction into the new environment was the dominant approach (Penninx & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2016). Rytter (2019) points out that integration can refer to social, educational, economic and political processes of integration. This was also visible in the viewed material, even though the main focus was on workplace integration.

Referring back to Spencer and Charsley's (2021) five types of critique in relation to the concept of integration, the normative use of the concept was found in the reviewed studies, where workplace integration was seen as a positive aim and outcome of integration. The objectification of migrants as 'other' and a narrow focus on migrants as needing to integrate with the majority were also identified in the studies. Imaginaries of society, however, were not found. Some studies focused on one national group of skilled migrants, which may support methodological nationalism. However, while aspects of Spencer and Charsley's (2021) heuristic model can be identified in the reviewed studies, the model is more comprehensive than the concept of integration used in the studies, and would be an interesting framework for future studies of integration of skilled migrants into workplaces.

In conclusion, the concept of integration is described and used in multiple ways in the reviewed studies. Therefore, researchers need to be more careful in their definition and use of concepts generally (not just integration), and be open with readers about what is meant by them and how they are being used.

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Chapter 8
Integration and the Art of Making a Society: The Case of Swedish Society

Petros Gougoulakis

Keywords Folkbildning · Succesful integration · Ethnicity · Globalisation · Study circles

Introduction

Immigrants are part of Swedish society, but their social position is often more vulnerable than that of ethnic Swedes in terms of influence and power over their own living conditions and the development of society. To a degree, this can be explained by the relatively short length of time they have been in the country, their lack of language skills, and their inability to cope with the dominant cultural patterns of meaning-making and communication (UKÄ, 2019; Joyce, 2018; Osman, 2012; Vesterberg, 2015). However, it is unsustainable and unacceptable for immigrants to remain on the margins of social, political and cultural life after several years in the country. Several surveys and government inquiries about structural discrimination confirm this to be the case (e.g., de los Reyes & Kamali, 2005; SOU, 2005:56), though the focus and interpretation of the situation varies, depending on the theoretical, ideological and experiential premises of the interpreter. Nevertheless, it is important to stress that the government is continually developing miscellaneous initiatives to facilitate immigrants' integration in Sweden. Immigrants are not a homogeneous group, but consist of communities with different social, cultural and political backgrounds and experiences. In other words, they are carriers of ethnically specific mentalities.

In the autumn of 1997, Sweden's immigration policy changed to focus more on integration (Proposition, 1997/98:16). The change was a reaction to the critic of the Swedish multicultural policy. The parliamentary decision meant that the policy up to that point was designed to preserve ethnic and cultural diversity rather than shaping a cohesive Swedish society. Consequently, special solutions for immigrants

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would in future only pertain to their initial period in Sweden. Furthermore, the policy shifted from the previous immigration policy, which was based on the central goals of equality, freedom of choice and cooperation in a spirit of tolerance and solidarity between immigrant groups and Swedes (SOU, 1974:69), to labour market integration. In a publication from 2001 titled Integration Policy for the twenty-first Century (Regeringens skrivelse, 2001/02:129), the government stated that the society was characterised by ethnic and cultural diversity, and that the shift in policy would help counteract a trend dividing the population into 'us' and 'them'.

According to the government, the previous policy had increased exclusion in Swedish society because it treated all immigrants as a single group, so a policy focusing on integration was needed in the interests of the whole population. Sweden has been considered one of the most migrant-friendly European Union (EU) member states and one of the most diverse European societies, long known for its relatively generous immigration and refugee policy, with the objective of ensuring sustainable immigration that safeguards the right of asylum and promote a demand-driven labour migration (see Hajighasemi & Oghazi, 2022).

In 2015, more than 160,000 people applied for asylum in Sweden, which was the highest ever total (Abdelhady et al., 2020) due to the ongoing global refugee situation. Because other EU countries were unable to jointly share this responsibility, Sweden eventually had to reform its immigration policy in order to reduce the number of people seeking asylum. The official goals of Sweden's current integration policy are to ensure equal rights, obligations and opportunities for everyone, regardless of ethnic and cultural background, to facilitate the establishment of newly arrived immigrants into society, and to strengthen equality so that women and men have the same power to shape society and their own lives. The responsibility for the establishment of newly arrived immigrants is divided between several state, municipal and civil society actors.

The objective that Sweden's parliament set for immigration and asylum was "*to ensure a long-term sustainable policy that safeguards the right of asylum and that, within the framework of regulated immigration, facilitates cross-border mobility, promotes needs-based labour immigration, safeguards and takes into account the development effects of migration and deepens European and international cooperation*" (Regeringskansliet, 2015).

However, under the influence of the nationalist political party The Sweden Democrats (Sverigedemokraterna), the current (2023) conservative minority government has tightened its immigration policy on the grounds that Sweden has received too many immigrants to integrate. An example of the rhetoric and reasoning around this failure of integration is a motion (2021/22:4033) presented in parliament by Ulf Kristersson, the leader of the Moderates (Moderata samlingspartiet), who since autumn 2022 has been the prime minister in the governing coalition:

> Swedish politicians have never taken integration problems seriously and therefore have not made the necessary political decisions. The result is a deep sense of alienation among many immigrants. A completely new integration policy is now needed (...).
>
> For a long time, Sweden has failed with integration at the same time as more and more people have been coming here: today, every fifth person is born abroad, and in the last ten years alone, more than 400,000 asylum-related residence permits have been granted. For

decades, politicians have been hoping that everything will work out well, but have not been acting as required. The result is a dangerous alienation among many immigrants.

Figures from the Parliamentary Investigation Service produced by the Moderate Party show that 675,000 adult immigrants are not self-sufficient but dependent on benefits for their livelihood. This leads to a life of exclusion, with children who never see their parents go to work and women who never become independent.

The failure of integration affects our entire society in terms of housing segregation, unemployment and benefit dependency. It is also a major cause of poor school results, gang crime, honour-based oppression and radicalisation.

The motion states that successful integration requires immigrants to have employment, to learn and speak the language because "*in Sweden one mainly speaks Swedish*", and "*to respect Swedish law, to understand values that many Swedes share, as well as the norms of the majority society and to largely adapt to these*".

One year after this motion was presented, during the formation of the current coalition government, an agreement was negotiated on key policy areas that the new government committed to implement. Immigration and integration policy was one of the main areas of the agreement, with concrete policy proposals to be developed to tackle "Sweden's most important social problems":

The aim is to:

- Create a paradigm shift in the approach to reception of asylum seekers, so that the starting point is protection for those fleeing a conflict or crisis and for those fleeing Sweden's neighbouring area, should be offered temporarily. In no respect should Sweden be more generous in its attitude to asylum than what follows from obligations pursuant to EU law or other legally binding international treaties.
- That migration policy should otherwise be responsible.
- To introduce a requirement-based integration policy, whereby those who are in Sweden for a long time must take responsibility for becoming part of Swedish society.
- Getting to grips with the shadow society." (Tidöavtalet, 2022, p. 29)

Although the issues of immigration and integration are constantly present in the public debate, it is only in recent years that they are being discussed in predominantly negative terms. The change of discourse on immigration started with the electoral success of the nationalist party The Sweden Democrats. As a result, even more established parties are increasingly describing immigration as a problem. In the following section, immigration is discussed in the light of globalisation, and integration is discussed as a matter of general popular education (*folkbildning*) for an inclusive society.

Internationalisation, Immigration, Integration and Pedagogy for Inclusion

Pedagogy is the communication of ideas and beliefs about the world and the conditions of human existence in the world. It deals with all those processes that aim to make the individual part of a culture and civilisation, i.e., concrete educative activities and technologies through which human collectives exercise social control over

life (Lundgren, 1984; Bernstein & Lundgren, 1983). Pedagogy, in a broader sense, is concerned with the becoming of the human being, with the nurturing of sociality, and with the formation and shaping of identities through more or less deliberate arrangements for learning. Through communication and encounters, people create culture and are able to see themselves and their lives embedded in time, space and culture. Communication constantly renegotiates the social contract that regulates obligations, rights and relationships within the collective. The aesthetics of the social contract are shaped by certain values, ways of thinking, and knowledge (see Gougoulakis, 2016a). Our cultural aesthetics are also the form through which communication, educational processes and the quality of society are moulded and impact on well-being and quality of life.

Beneath these underlying descriptions of society are ideas about what a viable society is or should be. A good society is an integrated and cohesive society, which is understood as well-functioning and healthy, and never as a society in crisis. Even the earliest sociologists, such as Comte and Durkheim, emphasise in their analyses that cohesive societies are made up of individuals who share common beliefs (see Aron, 2017). Nonetheless, this is also true when what is shared in common outweighs what keeps members of a society apart or in conflict with each other. Most likely, though, total cohesion exists as a theoretical ideal construct and one might even wonder whether a society would thrive if all its members believed the same things and agreed on everything.

Moreover, in order for a society to be cohesive (i.e., integrated), certain common values must be shared by a sufficient number of people. But what are these values that can act as the glue that holds society together? Long before the advent of industrial society and the rationalism of the Enlightenment, a theocratic world order provided society with security, stability and cohesion. In times of profound value shifts, such as when the scientific world order began to replace religious beliefs, a state of 'social anomie' emerges, which is characterised by moral confusion due to society's shared values and norms being challenged and rejected (Besnard et al., 2015; Bernburg, 2019). During such periods of transition, historically speaking, it is likely for social stability to be jeopardised. The classical sociologists realised that when a traditional 'belief' that binds a community together is emptied of its content, the community needs to replace it with another to maintain its structure and cohesion.

Throughout history, societies have invented and used different value systems to guarantee the cohesion of the collective. Shared stories, myths, traditions and ceremonies have always generated feelings of belonging, community and identity. Ethnicity, nation and state are examples of identity-building beliefs that take concrete mental and material forms. But, above all, these beliefs give rise to social practices through which individuals (agents) exercise agency. According to structuration theory, these practices shape society and consolidate its structures, which in turn shape individuals (Giddens, 1991a, b; Hardcastle et al., 2005). While individuals act with intention and can understand and explain the basis of their behaviour thanks to their capacity for reflection, they also act under conditions they do *not* understand and therefore may face unintended consequences. But at the heart of structuration theory is the notion that the practice of the acting individual takes

place in a context, and that the action is fundamentally motivated and therefore more or less rational. In the framework of structure, agents' meaning-making is coded into the practice of language and discourse, and is legitimised in specific contexts consisting of certain power relations and normative perspectives embedded as societal norms and values.

Societies are held together by their 'collective consciousness', i.e., the collective beliefs and feelings shared by the majority of their members. In societies with a low degree of specialisation, the collective consciousness dominates individual existences, which are subject to its power. In highly differentiated societies, on the other hand, the strength of the collective consciousness is negotiable and subject to 'contracts' between individuals. Peaceful coexistence is thus based on rationally dictated interaction.

However, the precondition for a differentiated collective of individuals to coexist in any kind of harmony is to socialise and communicate with each other. The better the communication in a society, i.e., the degree of 'moral density' in Durkheim's terminology (Aron, 2017), the greater the degree of organic incorporation into community life and commitment to shared values and rules. When social rules are established in a democratic manner, from which no member is excluded, favourable conditions are created for a just, equal and inclusive society. On such a basis, common values and beliefs can be built so that a viable society can develop; otherwise, social life is threatened with *disintegration.*

Globalisation and Migration

Western societies today are challenged by two largely intertwined processes, i.e., globalisation and immigration, which are shaking the foundations of the nation state.

Undoubtedly, globalisation is the most distinctive movement of our 'post-national' era. It is redrawing the geopolitical map and creating new winners and losers. It is also transforming the grammar and aesthetics of resistance, engendering feelings of resignation and uncertainty, as well as new hope that a new world is possible. The relationship between the individual and the collective, between private and public, and between the local and the global is being reconsidered and assigned new meaning. It is increasingly being recognised that a few resource-rich countries are benefitting at the expense of the most economically weak countries. The same can be said even at the national level; while some groups and individuals benefit, others are 'left behind' (Held & McGrew, 2007; Steger et al., 2014).

Globalization has many implications: it is reflected in popular culture and language, in the physical environment, in the economy, in politics and in aesthetics – it affects everything and everyone. New global information and communication technologies are one manifestation of this process, new patterns of economic activity are another, and the diminishing importance of physical national borders are a third. The 'Polish plumber' is not a fictional story but a challenging reality whose ultimate consequence will be reconsideration and adaptation. (cf Meardi, 2007; James 2016).

Globalisation is also associated with large migration flows of people. While migration has always taken place, the scale and intensity of this is new, with the accompanying strains on economic, political, social and cultural structures in societies that until recently were relatively homogeneous. The current debate on integration, refugee and labour immigration, not only in Sweden, is an expression of this.

Structural Discrimination

Immigration affects the ethnic and cultural composition of countries. Each country's ability to deal with the unfamiliar is reflected in its immigration and/or integration policy, which is also an expression of a country's ambitions, self-image and level of education.

Many immigrants describe their first encounter with Sweden in positive terms and are overwhelmed by the planning, efficiency and hospitality of the authorities. After a while, however, a different narrative emerges of the limited opportunities for foreigners to manage on their own, of not being able to show what they can do, and of feeling invisible when their knowledge, experience and uniqueness are not recognised.

Thus, the euphoric feeling of the introductory period changes when they later are confronted with the housing market, working life, education, trade unions and politics. Unfortunately, too little 'integration' and too much 'politics' result from the very costly integration policies that have been implemented. Numerous reports provide evidence of an action mentality that disempowers immigrants (e.g., de los Reyes & Kamali, 2005; SOU, 2005:56). They appear as passive objects rather than as active subjects with their own responsibilities, specific needs and valuable experiences. They have no voice, limited representation and are therefore denied influence over their own lives (cf. Amin et al., 2002). This may seem paradoxical if we consider Sweden's long tradition of popular education and democratisation and the changes in values in society as a result of increasingly intense internationalisation. The legacy of a vibrant, liberating Enlightenment tradition comes to the fore, which sees "man's emergence from his self-imposed immaturity" (Kant, 1784/1992) as its essence.

If the concept of integration is to be meaningful, it may require a progressive social policy process that invites people into the Swedish community and transforms it.

The Problematic Ethnicity

Trying to define the concept of ethnicity is a very complex, value-laden and therefore extremely controversial endeavour. The lack of a universally accepted definition is due to the different approaches researchers take to the concept. Ethnicity can be studied as a political ideology, as a theory with philosophical principles, as a

discourse reflected in a range of collective or individual activities (such as art, politics, sport and religion), as a mentality characterising the dispositions and orientation of a national group, or as a movement and from different theoretical perspectives. These different perspectives can be alternatives to each other or complement each other. For this reason, and in view of the profound changes taking place both globally and locally, it is meaningful to understand ethnicity as a relational concept, which is changeable and situational, and that ethnicity involves categorisation, inclusion and exclusion.it would be better to refer to different ethnicities rather than one (Deniz, 1999; Wikström, 2009).

The issue is further complicated when ethnicity is related to another concept, namely nationalism. As a category, nationalism is closely associated with other conceptualisations such as *ethnos*, *patris*, *ethnic identity*, *national interest*, etc. At the same time, new categories have emerged that characterise a new historical condition, such as *multiculturalism*, *globalisation*, *post-ethnic society*, etc.

While ethnicity is a constitutive element of modernity's social and state formation, it seems to be very much alive in the so-called postmodern era. When treated as a political ideology, ethnicity highlights and maintains principles of inclusivity and exclusivity in the creation of collective state organisations. Tradition, language and religion are criteria for belonging to a collective and enjoying certain privileges. Equality before the law and entitlement to welfare in a society organised on the basis of a dominant ethnic principle is reserved for individuals belonging to that ethnic group. Ethnicity is then used as the legitimising principle on which the nation state asserts a universal national interest. Citizenship is then attached to a particular ethnicity.

On a symbolic level, ethnicity is ascribed meaning through a process of partly selective and partly fabricated narratives that correct, construct and reconstruct previous identities, experiences, memories and actual events for the purpose of meaning-making. Ethnicity may thus be said to be a construction of an imaginary social entity that is morally binding. In an institutionalised political form, it also constitutes a material/factual 'history-generating' and identity-creating force.

Social science's interest in ethnicity is indisputably linked to changes in society and in traditional/established/prevailing social and ethnic relations. Globalisation, the changing role of the state, immigration with its impact on the cultural character of society, and the awakening of repressed collective identities are forces that characterise a new phase of social transformation. These changes necessitate the search for new concepts and the redefinition of old ones in order to make social reality comprehensible by critically examining and exposing the ethnocentric and nationalist underpinnings of established theories (see e.g., Deniz, 1999; Ålund, 2002; Wikström, 2009).

A constitutional democracy, according to Habermas as quoted by Gutman (1994), presupposes laws that apply to all citizens. However, the viability of such a democracy depends on whether citizens perceive themselves as the founders/the creators of these laws, which are intended to bind citizens together. Common rights and obligations in a constitutional democracy tend to 'turn a blind eye' to different living conditions or cultural differences that exist in a society:

> What counts as equal rights for women or for ethnic and cultural minorities cannot even be fully understood until the members of these groups 'articulate and provide the basis for what constitutes equal treatment in typical cases through public discussion in advance'. Through democratic discussion, citizens can also clarify 'what traditions they want to carry on or break, how they want to deal with their historical destiny, how they want to treat nature, etc'. (op. cit., 1994, p. 9).

Habermas distinguishes between culture that does not need to be shared by everyone and *political* culture that should be common and characterised by mutual respect for each other's rights as citizens of the same state. Equal rights to coexistence, according to this view, can never be collective but individual, because if they are collective then it means the state has taken a stand for the survival of a certain culture:

> The political project of preserving cultures as if they were endangered species robs cultures of their vitality and individuals of their freedom to reevaluate and even reject their inherited cultural identities. (op. cit., p. 10)

Immigrants and Integration

The discourse about Sweden's failed integration policy has been used for purely political purposes by some groups. And in no way is it about pursuing a more effective policy by targeting the causes of the structural exclusion that many immigrants face (Camauër & Nohrstedt, 2006). Among the proposals to address the consequences of failed integration, drastically reduced immigration and support for voluntary return dominate. That said, Sweden will remain a recipient country of immigrants, not least because the Swedish labour market needs imported skills. It is, therefore, a serious societal problem if integration does not work. Exclusion in the long run risks undermining Swedish welfare.

Some immigrants to Sweden may find themselves defending their own identity, which can be subject to suspicion, devaluation and questioning, while also having to master the codes to understand the rituals and symbols through which values are given meaning in the new society (cf. Phinney et al., 2002). The establishment of immigrants in the new society begins with the acquisition of the native language through interaction with others in different social contexts. In encounters across ethnic, social and cultural boundaries, one is confronted with foreign and often incomprehensible customs that challenge one's thinking and give rise to either better self-awareness or new conflicts, which ultimately constitute an educational challenge.

Integration as a goal permeates the entire state apparatus, all public institutions, and large parts of civil society. One of these is *folkbildning* (Popular Adult Education), which is regulated by ordinances that identify immigrants as a priority group (Proposition, 1997/97:115). The strong expectation is that folkbildning will contribute to integration by offering meeting places for people from different backgrounds, but who have similar interests.

Folkbildning, the Study Circles and Sweden

The forms of public discourse in different arenas have a major impact on the ideas that can be expressed in them. The ideas that are most easily expressed tend to constitute the culture's most central content. Based on this hypothesis, it is possible to understand a society's culture by studying the means of communication it uses. Different arenas of public dialogue promote certain social activities and exclude others, as well as shape particular hierarchies of social, cultural and intellectual interests. The study circles of Swedish folkbildning constitute such public arenas with their democratic and free environment, dialogue and meetings. 'Media' are metaphors that reinforce people's ideas about themselves and the world. Media thus create content and meaning in our culture and shape our mentality. Olof Palme used the study circle as a metaphor to describe Swedish democracy:

> Sweden is, basically, a study circle democracy. By means of study circles, generations have exercised themselves to make critical analyses to achieve reasonable decisions by working together without giving up their ideals in that process. It is often in study circles where proposals for changes in society have been formed.[1]

Swedish folkbildning emerged in a time of national (re)awakening. It was an era of revolutionary changes in production and cultural life that completely redrew the country's social and political landscape. Swedishness, class, temperance and the free church were collective social identifications linked to the nation state. The modern nation state of Sweden was as much a political as a popular education project based on the principles of democracy and social justice (Gougoulakis, 2001, 2016b, 2022). Dialogue, openness and compromise were inherent parts of the Swedish model of democracy, whose purpose was to create a functioning society for all. The political culture of this model had certain traits, including a respect for the other party's arguments and needs, a strong willingness to negotiate, and a high regard for unity and social peace (see Aronsson, 2000). This political (bargaining) culture materialised in a range of institutionalised activities and traditions, such as strong local self-government, social movements, decision-making based on investigation and consultation, and a unique participatory democratic approach with corporatist features that began in the early twentieth century:

> It is based on a relatively homogeneous social structure and a uniform culture, a desire for "peace" that has proved economically and socially successful in stable circumstances. The conditions for this culture of negotiation change over time and are different in different places. Options for action can become unclear when conflicts and explicit disagreements are avoided, which should lead to difficulties in rapid changes. It should be difficult for new groups to enter a complicated and hidden bargaining game, exposing it to the tensions of integrating globalisation, increased mobility and immigrants. How will the integration task be solved in the future? (op.cit., p. 6)

[1] Quotation of former Prime Minister Olof Palme's speech at the Congress of the Swedish Social Democratic Party, 1969. Cf. also Larsson (2010).

Study circles are a typically Swedish cultural expression. They were initially formed to help social movements educate and gain political power. Study circles have become a culturally accepted meeting place for socialising and studying, and participation in them is part of the lifestyle of many Swedes. Study circles are based on the ethos that every person is the bearer of valuable knowledge, that they are capable of learning when they are given the opportunity to put information into context, and that learning happens when meeting others with the same interests and sharing each other's experiences.

In Swedish study circles, citizens who define themselves as 'Swedish' are educated in the values that hold society together and common values are consolidated. Participation in associations, studies and cultural activities arranged by folkbildning provides access to a community of values. The more people share the same experiences and norms, the more homogenous and integrated a society will become. It is tempting to conclude that, if new members of Swedish society were to join 'Swedish' study circles, the integration problem would be solved. However, participation in them is not a natural integration strategy for individuals shaped by other social, political and cultural contexts. In other words, one needs to understand the mentality and mindset that govern the behaviour of individuals and groups, as well as the entire social system.

Mentalities are understood as mental and emotional structures, shaped by the ideas, habits and practices of previous generations (which are hardly anchored to their original functions), by latent unarticulated collective moods (feelings and intuitions), and by schemes of thought that fabricate intentions and orchestrate actions. At both the individual and collective levels, the operative forces of mentalities are 'crystallised' in what Bourdieu describes as *habitus*[2]:

> (A) system of enduring and transferable attitudes (dispositions), which, while integrating all the individual's past experiences, at any given moment serves as a matrix for the individual's way of perceiving, evaluating and acting. (Berner et al., 1977, p. 53)

Bourdieu and Passeron locate this 'system of dispositions' in primary socialisation, without excluding the role of later experiences in shaping the habitus:

> The relationship is rather to be understood in the sense that these later experiences are constantly experienced, interpreted and incorporated into the individual's imagination according to certain principles incorporated in early childhood. (op.cit. p. 54)

Mentalities are culturally shaped but also shape culture. They operate in communication, are refined in communication and are manifested in both individual and collective patterns of behaviour, in actions, in decisions, and in ways of thinking. The essence of communication is to make an impact (Ödman, 1995).

Since communication between people plays a fundamental role in shaping mentalities and society, it is essential for individuals to be familiar with the means of public communication if they are to have any chance of being heard. This is what

[2] Here, *habitus* refers to the attitudes of individuals and the mentality of the collective psychosocial structures of beliefs, attitudes and experiences that explain (and justify) the behavioural dispositions of groups.

distinguishes a political culture based on participation, meetings, dialogue and consensus from other more conflict-oriented political cultures.

This influence is distinguished by a specific view of knowledge and educational aesthetics that is connected to what is perceived as important and meaningful learning. The difference is that there are different conceptions of knowledge and thus different aesthetic forms of expression based on different educational traditions and projects that are often in competition with each other. What is at stake is the right to define oneself and the other in evaluative terms. The claim is clear: one's own education and aesthetics are almost always presented as better and more noble than that of 'the other'. When the transmission of cultural heritage is organised by "narrow-minded" educational institutions, cultural simplicity thrives. The opposite is a culture with a greater openness, curiosity and willingness to broaden the horizon of understanding and educational experience – a culture that enriches, includes, does not separate, wants to understand, and does not fear communication across 'borders'. The Swedish study circle can be such a cross-border communication arena for mutual influence. Its pedagogical aesthetics and democratic interaction have great potential to be integrative and inclusive.

However, integration is not a simple matter of giving people from different countries the chance to meet in a study circle (see Eriksson & Osman, 2003). At the same time, it should be stressed that integration is *partly* about the opportunity to meet, socialise and learn from each other in a forum characterised by democratic openness, curiosity and mutual respect.

Between the Particular and the Universal, or on Bildung and the Art of Being Human with Other Humans

The principle of the equal value of all human beings, for example, transcends differences in living conditions and lifestyles, which belong to the realm of the peculiar and the particular. The assertion of universal principles has its appeal for many people, but only when these principles are confronted with the relentless tangibility of reality that compels the recognition of the dominant particular. This brings to mind today's refugee and migration flows and how they challenge worldviews and identity, i.e., personally, collectively and nationally. What does 'belonging' mean and who is excluded from a collective context? Do people have the right to choose a life? Why do people choose to stay in a place that others flee? And how should people relate to those who seek their protection, appeal to their solidarity, and claim their welfare? These and many other questions are addressed through pedagogical actions, knowledge, and the ability to think, express, reflect, and rethink. Is this all a matter of education? If so, in what way? And does education belong to the domain of the particular or the universal?

Since antiquity, the question of education has been closely linked to notions of evolving human nature beyond its animal state (cf. *Paideia*). The ideal was to mould

the good, beautiful and virtuous citizen (a πολίτης/politis, citizen) who actively participated in the affairs of the city, as opposed to the opposite type (ιδιώτης/[idiot]is) who was only concerned with his own interest. Since then, various ideas about the formability of human disposition have underpinned educational programmes within well-defined and ethnically and culturally homogeneous spaces.

Statements such as *'We live in a multicultural country'* and *'Living in a multicultural society is a privilege'* are common in public discourse and especially in official political texts. But what exactly do those statements mean and for whom is the multicultural society an asset?

The multicultural element in Swedish society is blatant and tangible. Positive descriptions and normative statements appear in texts from governmental and societal institutions, but the core of the issue is rarely discussed. The actual meaning of multiculturalism remains obscure and is left to the addressee to make "politically correct" interpretations. In addition, the issue of multiculturalism has become controversial in recent years and, from a nationalist perspective, is perceived as an anomaly.

Nevertheless, the multicultural composition of society is a fact that challenges the functioning of traditional institutions and obliges them to rethink and reorient themselves. In particular, the role of the education sector in promoting integration and cohesion needs to be highlighted and problematised in light of the profound changes in demographics, the economy, politics, and the labour market. What is required is a new concept of education that develops our (co)humanity and cohesion.

Communities are defined and labelled in slightly different ways. Even in ancient times, people struggled to figure out their own belonging and identity. A classic example is Isocrates'[3] attempt to determine who was a *Hellen* (Greek) and what made one a Hellen. For the record, it should be noted that the city-states of Ancient Greece were deeply 'racist' societies judged by today's standards. In Athens, immigrants (*metoikoi*) could not acquire the rights of an Athenian citizen no matter how many years they lived in Athens, while also paying heavy taxes. The term 'barbarian', which was often used by the Greeks, was in itself 'racist' as it denoted a political separation between Greeks and other ethnicities.

The search for identity is an issue for every society, as individuals are in need of a common basis for belonging and security. National or ethnic identity can be that solid foundation, but the former is a political identity and the latter a cultural one. These two identities are usually closely intertwined and one becomes the prerequisite for the other, but only in cases where an ethnic identity is allowed to flourish within a nation state. Then, an identity is created that is both cultural and national, state-based and political at the same time. Such an identity gives rise to the modernist sentiment and quest for territorial supremacy. As a concept, identity refers to something stable, intimate, home-like and familiar. With globalisation and ever-increasing social acceleration and mobility (Rosa, 2015), the foundations of this

[3] Isocrates, (436–338, BC), ancient Greek orator, rhetorician, and teacher whose writings are an important historical source on the intellectual and political life of the Athens of his day.

identity are being shaken. The reasonably stable national identity belonged to modernity and went along with a certain economic order and lifestyle. In this post-modern era, there is a challenge and imperative to rethink and redefine everything that was previously taken for granted. The world is being forced into a journey, which can be positive, but this journey also entails unpleasant rootlessness and identity confusion. The way out is a constant restructuring of identity in relation to that of the past. This identity creation is expressed in a variety of ways by different individuals and groups. Nationalists struggle in vain to recreate something that may never have existed in an attempt to cope with the grief of a lost security through emotional reactions, projections and sometimes physical violence. For all others, the search for identity assumes the character of awareness-raising through knowledge and insight into the dynamics of change, as well as an ontological adaptation to an evolving reality.

But let us return to Isocrates' panegyric speech, which he delivered at the 100th Olympiad in 380 B.C., where he emphasised education [παιδεία – paideia] and democracy (δημοκρατία – Athenian democracy) as two necessary conditions for someone to be called *ellinas politis* (a Greek citizen):

> So far has Athens left the rest of mankind behind in thought and expression that her pupils have become the teachers of the world, and she has made the name of Hellas distinctive no longer of race but of intellect, and Greeks are therefore called all those who take part in our education [paideia] and not those who have the same origin.[4]

Apart from praising Greek/Athenian education – according to Thucydides, Athens was the "Hellas of Hellas", the centre of Greek civilisation – Isocrates' speech attempted to elevate Greek *paideia*, for the first time in history, as a common reference point for Greeks of all cities. Another issue he sought to address was whether the children of non-Athenian Greek citizens (e.g., Persians) born in Athens were Greek citizens or whether they had the right to call themselves Greeks. Isocrates' statement has given rise to different interpretations. Most contested by nationalists has been the downplaying of ethnic Greek origin in the characterisation of who is Greek. However, all agree on the importance of education for belonging to a cultural community. This reasoning also applies in a Swedish context when the question of who is a Swede comes up. Based on the premises set out by Isocrates, the answer is simple: it is not primarily biological or geographical origin that determines whether someone is Swedish, but rather participation in and adoption of a Swedish education/culture. In other words, a foreigner who has received a Swedish education and is educated (*bildad*) deserves to be called a Swede more than an ethnic Swede who has not. Moreover, in cases where ethnic origin and education do not coincide, the

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[4] The quotation in its original reads: *Τοσοῦτον δ' ἀπολέλοιπεν ἡ πόλις ἡμῶν περί τό φρονεῖν καὶ λέγειν τοὺς ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους, ὥσθ' οἱ ταύτης μαθηταὶ τῶν ἄλλων διδάσκαλοι γεγόνασιν, καὶ τὸ τῶν Ἑλλήνων ὄνομα πεποίηκεν μηκέτι τοῦ γένους, ἀλλὰ τῆς διανοίας δοκεῖν εἶναι, καὶ μᾶλλον Ἕλληνας καλεῖσθαι τοὺς τῆς παιδεύσεως τῆς ἡμετέρας ἢ τοὺς τῆς κοινῆς φύσεως μετέχοντας*. Se Dimitrios Papagiannakis." Είναι Έλληνες όσοι είναι «μετέχοντες της ελληνικής παιδείας»; [Are all who "take part in Greek education" Greeks?]. https://blogreco.wordpress.com/2012/11/22/είναι-έλληνες-όσοι-είναι-μετέχοντες/

individual should be free to decide what identity she/he wants to have, regardless of what the country's regulations prescribe. Who has the right to question the self-determination of one's identity? Laws are human constructions and expressions of the current level of cultural development. While culture can be halted, it can never stop developing, unlike nature, which follows its own laws as long as human culture does not disrupt them. And how is it possible for a culture to evolve if it narrows its horizons and disregards outside influences?

Epilogue: "Do You Want to Go Forward? Then Go in a Circle!"

"Do you want to go forward? Then go in a circle!" This was a marketing slogan used by a popular Swedish adult education organisation. To understand the message, the recipient must be familiar with the Swedish cultural phenomenon of the study circle and the communicative/pedagogical approach associated with it. Recognition of it implies an acquired ability to decode and orientate in the sociocultural reality in which the study circle operates. Study circles are culturally conditioned public spaces for communication and learning, and are characterised by a certain view of man and knowledge. They are an accessible environment for self-directed learning with the freedom to make choices and exert influence on learning content and working methods. However, study circles are not only places for study but also for socialising. They represent an outstanding combination of free and meaningful learning with others. Participation in a study circle allows individuals to expand their social contacts and social capital. It also provides an opportunity for personal development and improved skills for an increasingly specialised, knowledge-intensive and rapidly changing labour market. From a sociopsychological point of view, participation in a study circle can help to reduce many of the risks that everyone may face, such as unemployment, alienation and isolation.

As stated earlier, the pedagogy of the study circle is based on the assumption that each individual is the bearer of valuable knowledge and that everyone is capable of learning and developing. This is facilitated when participants are given the opportunity to contextualise the information they receive with others who have the same interest, sharing each other's experiences. Knowledge for popular adult education is not exclusively defined and transmitted by a specialist, but can be created when people with different experiences and abilities interact with each other. This means that each individual has something of value to contribute to the study group. The basic prerequisite for this to work is that people trust each other, which in turn strengthens trust in society at large.

In the democratic dialogue environment of the study circle, all participants' voices are equal and heard. They are encouraged to believe in their own ability to take responsibility for their life choices without depending on any authority, and to develop skills to meet the demands that a deliberative democratic society places

upon them. A mutual respect for the opinions of others makes people more inclined to compromise when dealing with common concerns. This propensity is witnessed as a mentality trait that contributes to the emergence of a specifically Swedish political culture.

But if Swedish popular education (*folkbildning*) is a uniquely Swedish cultural expression, how do people with other backgrounds relate to it? Unfortunately, there is a lack of systematic knowledge about the relationship of non-Swedes (new immigrants) to Swedish popular adult education. There is also a lack of research on other ethnic groups' culture-specific '*folkbildning* traditions', which undoubtedly exist. However, immigrants are prioritised by popular education institutions (*Studieförbund* and *Folkhögskolor*), which run extensive activities that are tailored to them. The importance of popular education for integration work is undisputed, especially in times of increasing geopolitical and economic uncertainty, and migrant flows. This new condition of society also presents new challenges for Swedish popular education, its content, organisation and working methods. For it to continue to positively impact the country's political culture and social development, it needs more than ever to develop an integration strategy. The story of *folkbildning* needs to be narrated by several voices and not only by those who talk about the education and integration of 'others'. Above all, there is a need for a new narrative about the 'new Sweden' that builds on the country's valuable political and cultural heritage, and continues ensuring conditions for citizens to keep active and equipped to influence their own and others' living conditions.

Self-actualisation and political empowerment will emerge as self-evident civic virtues and will therefore be at the heart of people's education – an education that will characterise the integrated society based on the idea that *a new enlightenment and humanity is possible,* with compassion, creativity and peaceful coexistence.

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Part II
The Swiss and Norwegian Contexts

Chapter 9
Successful Integration of Refugees in Vocational Education and Training: Experiences from a New Pre-vocational Programme

Barbara E. Stalder, Marlise Kammermann, Iris Michel, and Marie-Theres Schönbächler

Keywords Refugees · Integration · High-quality vocational education and training · Pre-apprenticeship

Introduction

The Swiss labour market is highly structured and relies on standardised vocational education and training (VET) qualifications. Generally, a Federal VET diploma (three- or four-year apprenticeship) or a Federal VET certificate (two-year apprenticeship) is a basic requirement for taking up qualified work. Asylum migrants, and in particular refugees and temporarily admitted persons (RE/TA) without a recognised qualification, thus struggle to find employment, and even several years after their arrival, their employment rate is lower than those of Swiss citizens and other migrants (Aerne & Bonoli, 2021; Spadarotto et al., 2014). Including RE/TA, first, in vocational education and training is, therefore, a key strategy to accelerate their employability. However, the implementation of this strategy is challenging. Research consistently shows that adolescents and young adults with migration backgrounds and learners with special education needs struggle to transition to

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upper secondary education and stable jobs (Kammermann et al., 2011; Scharnhorst & Kammermann, 2020). Such difficulties in accessing vocational education and training are more pronounced for RE/TA, as they often do not fulfil the prerequisites for beginning an apprenticeship, such as the necessary language skills or sufficient knowledge of local culture, norms, and values (Barabasch et al., 2021; Schaffner et al., 2022). Moreover, many refugees and temporarily admitted persons come from countries with low-standing VET pathways. Hence, they are unaware of the importance and meaningfulness of VET as a successful way to employment (Billett et al., 2022). All these findings highlight the importance of pre-vocational measures to support RE/TA in finding access to initial VET programmes. The "pre-apprenticeship programme to support integration" PAI, examined in more detail in this chapter, is one of those measures.

Integration Agenda Switzerland

As in many other European countries, significantly more refugees arrived in Switzerland between 2015 and 2017 than in the years before. Hence, the federal government, the cantons, and municipalities decided to increase the measures to support the integration of recognised refugees and temporarily admitted persons. Since 2019, asylum procedures have been accelerated, and integration measures are carried out as part of the *Integration Agenda Switzerland* IAS,[1] which serves as a framework to jointly improve the conditions for integrating RE/TA. The integration measures are intensified and start earlier than before while still considering the specific needs, age, and background of RE/TA. Integration provisions focus on initial personal information, identifying and using RE/TA's potential, rapid language learning shortly after arrival, targeted accompaniment and support, consistent encouragement and challenge, and the possibility to familiarise with the way of life in Switzerland. Young refugees should be prepared for post-compulsory education; adults should be supported to acquire the skills to enter working life.

The measures of the *IAS* are regularly reviewed for their impact. Binding impact targets include (Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft et al., 2018), that

1. three years after entry, all recognised refugees and temporarily admitted persons have a basic knowledge of a national language (at least level A1);
2. at the start of compulsory schooling, 80% of children from the asylum sector can communicate in the language spoken in their place of residence;
3. five years after entry, two-thirds of all RE/TA aged 16 to 25 are in post-compulsory education;
4. seven years after entry, half of all adult RE/TA are sustainably integrated into the primary labour market;

[1] https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/de/home/integration-einbuergerung/integrationsfoerderung/kantonale-programme/integrationsagenda.html

5. seven years after entry, foreign nationals are familiar with the Swiss way of life and have regular social contact with the local population.

Target 3 addresses adolescents' and young adults' integration into vocational education and training. It specifies that 95% of all young RE/TA who have "educational potential" (i.e., those able and capable of engaging in VET and not hindered by health problems, difficult family situations or other personal reasons) should be in upper secondary education.

The Pre-apprenticeship Programme to Support Integration

The "pre-apprenticeship programme to support integration" PAI has been launched in accordance with the IAS, and the therein agreed integration strategy (Bundesrat, 2015; Scharnhorst & Kammermann, 2019). The PAI (German: Integrationsvorlehre INVOL; French: pré-apprentissage d' intégration PAI; Italian: Pre-apprendistato di integrazione PAI) is a one-year pre-vocational training programme, which targets refugees and temporarily admitted persons aged 16 to 35 who are able and willing to achieve a vocational qualification at the upper secondary level. Since 2021, the programme is also open to late migrants from the EU, EFTA, and third countries with a similar educational need as the RE/TA (target group PAI+).

The PAI has two main goals: First, it aims to prepare the participants to take up a regular apprenticeship and acquire a VET certificate or diploma. Second, it should allow employers to find a new workforce, especially in fields lacking qualified workers. The programme thus aims to create a win-win situation: Companies gain motivated employees, and refugees and temporarily admitted persons are offered positive career prospects (Aerne & Bonoli, 2021).

Since 2018, PAI programmes have been established in several occupational fields in the service sector, the industry and manufacturing sector, and agriculture (Kammermann et al., 2022). All programmes are based on the national framework and benchmarks set by the State Secretariat for Migration (Staatssekretariat für Migration SEM, 2020a, b). Benchmarks stress, for example, the inclusion of placement in the primary labour market in the corresponding occupational field of at least 8 weeks and the acquisition and improvement of language, academic (e.g., mathematics, digital skills), practical, and transferable skills (methodological, social, and self-competencies). The learned competencies are related to the chosen occupational field and focus on vocational and cultural know-how. Competence profiles, derived from the profile of the corresponding two-year apprenticeship, are developed for each occupational field and serve as a guideline for employers, teachers, and participants. The PAI also includes guidance and support for the participants and employers, which specialists provide. Admission to the PAI is based on a potential assessment, which verifies the work and school experience of the RE/TA and evaluates whether the RE/TA meets the PAI's learning requirements. At the end of the PAI, participants receive a confirmation of participation, which documents their

learning outcomes referring to the competence profile and provides information on performance and behaviour at the workplace.

Within the national framework, the cantons are responsible for implementing the programme. They decide, for example, in which occupational fields they want to establish PAI programmes, how school-based and work-based learning parts are organised, and how/by whom participants are supported (e.g., a coach or a teacher). Most cantons have established PAI programmes where teaching, training, and learning are structured similarly to the two-year apprenticeship (Stalder & Schönbächler, 2020). Common to all programmes is the strong involvement of employers, who offer company-based practical training in an occupational field, and education at a vocational school. Some programmes also include learning in inter-company courses.

The Accompanying Research Project

The introduction of the PAI pilot programme is accompanied by a research and evaluation project, which began in 2019. The project assesses and evaluates the implementation and impact of the programme and elaborates recommendations for development. Research questions focus on the participants' training and education quality and career outcomes. Following findings from resource theory (e.g., Hobfoll et al., 2018), training quality and career success in VET (Stalder & Carigiet Reinhard, 2014; Stalder & Schmid, 2016), we postulate that the success of PAI participants depends on the quality of the learning environment in the workplace and school (e.g., learning opportunities, support from trainers, teachers, and coaches), and their individual and social resources (e.g., language skills, self-efficacy, housing, support by significant others). Success is measured by objective (e.g., successful entry into initial vocational education and training) and subjective (e.g., satisfaction) criteria (see Stalder et al., 2021).

The project uses a multi-source, mixed-method design (Fig. 9.1). We interview cantonal programme officers and survey PAI participants, teachers, and in-company trainers. In six case studies, we deepen the quantitative findings to gain more information about the opportunities and challenges of the programme for the actors involved. The cantons provide individual data about each participant, for example, regarding their language skills and practical and transferable competencies. They also indicate whether the participants have completed the PAI and inform about the participants' educational pathway after the PAI. Register data provided by the federal statistical office are used to investigate whether participants who have secured a regular apprenticeship at the end of the PAI also complete the apprenticeship.

	Interview programme officers	Survey participants	Survey trainers and teachers	Educational data on participants	Case studies	Register data on participants' pathways
Cohort 1 2019 Year 18/19	●	●	●	●		
Cohort 2 2020 Year 19/20		●		●		
Cohort 3 2021 Year 20/21		●		●		
Cohort 4 2022 Year 21/22	●	●	●	●	●	
Cohort 5 2023 Year 22/23		●		●		●
Cohort 6 2024 Year 23/24				●		

Fig. 9.1 Research design

Experiences from the First Programme Year

Results from the first cohort show that the PAI has made a promising start: In 2018, 18 cantons provided 77 PAI programmes, covering 12 different vocational fields and about 750 participants (Kammermann et al., 2022; Stalder & Schönbächler, 2019). Four out of five participants completed the programme, and three-quarters of the completers had found an apprenticeship place.

In general, the cantonal authorities, the participants, the in-company trainers, and the teachers were highly satisfied with the PAI. The participants could improve their language abilities and develop good practical skills. They were satisfied with the training in the company and the education in the vocational school. Most of them felt well-supported and accompanied. Employers and teachers were highly engaged in offering participants suitable learning environments. They supported them well in their learning process, and many were also available when participants needed help in their private life.

For the teachers, dealing with the participants' heterogeneous learning requirements and cultural differences was challenging. In-company trainers and teachers emphasised that insufficient language skills among the participants pose a problem. A one-year programme might not be enough to reach the language skills necessary for a regular apprenticeship. Both stressed that close guidance and support of the participants is essential and proposed intensifying existing measures to accompany them. Some teachers and employers deplored that the cooperation between workplaces and schools is insufficient. The programme officers observed different exchange practices between companies and schools. In general, the three actors suggested intensifying the cooperation such that participants can better transfer learning between the workplace and school and are better supported in their learning.

Key Factors Contributing to Successful Transitions

This study builds on the experiences of the first programme years. We investigate the quality of the learning environment in the PAI, individual characteristics of the RE/TA and their social environment in more detail and examine their relation to participants' pathways after the PAI.

Participants' Learning Environment in the PAI

Providing learners with high-quality education and training is crucial for developing vocational competence, well-being, and positive career development (Lüthi et al., 2021; Stalder & Lüthi, 2020). High-quality learning environments are characterised by meaningful workplace tasks and lessons that stimulate learners' motivation and interest, sufficient guidance by trainers, teachers, and colleagues, and the possibility of becoming an appreciated member of the community of practice (Böhn & Deutscher, 2020; Lüthi et al., 2021). Research with academically weaker apprentices shows that close guidance, support, and instructional approaches adapted to the learners' needs promote learning and a successful transition to higher-level VET programmes (Hofmann et al., 2014; Scharnhorst & Kammermann, 2020). Notably, it is essential to ensure that learning contents align across different learning locations. Building bridges between the workplace and school is crucial for developing vocational competence (Aarkrog, 2005; Aprea & Sappa, 2020) and establishing a vocational identity (Klotz et al., 2014). Refugees might need and profit particularly from supportive teachers and trainers. Workplace and school educators can help them link learning experiences from different contexts – not only between school and work but also in relating the PAI to learning experiences from their birth country (Choy & Wärvik, 2019).

Participants' Individual Characteristics

Effective learning is only possible if learners are motivated to engage in learning activities in the workplace and school and capable of using the various opportunities for learning (Billett, 2001). Research shows that learners with higher individual resources (e.g., higher prior educational attainments and more work experiences, better language skills, higher motivation, confidence and persistency) have better learning outcomes and more favourable careers (Nägele & Stalder, 2019). Evidence from the first PAI cohorts shows, for example, that participants' language levels at the beginning of the PAI were closely related to the proficiency level they reached by the end of the programme (Stalder et al., 2021). To ensure participants' success, the RE/TA granted access to the PAI programme are carefully selected for their

motivation and readiness to engage in a regular VET programme rather than directly looking for paid work. It is also examined whether RE/TA have sufficient language and academic skills and the potential to learn to follow the PAI and cope with its requirements (Stalder & Schönbächler, 2020). Also, promoting and further developing such individual skills and resources during the PAI is essential to the programme.

Participants' Social Environment

Learning processes are scaffolded by significant others outside of the workplace and school, with whom learners can exchange their experiences and ask for advice and support. The provision of targeted support is important for young people with learning or multiple difficulties (Hofmann et al., 2014; Scharnhorst & Kammermann, 2020) and even more so for migrants who have no family ties in their destination country (Gei & Matthes, 2017; Schaffner et al., 2022). RE/TA need more support in educational matters and multiple forms of support in private life, such as searching for accommodation and childcare or dealing with authorities. Findings from the first PAI cohort highlight that many RE/TA live in difficult housing situations, where they have limited opportunities to withdraw, find a place to relax and do their homework (Stalder & Schönbächler, 2020). Having to "sort out" life outside of the PAI might thus "draw them away" from education and learning. Moreover, RE/TA sometimes do not know whom to address and ask for support. Especially for those who cannot rely on family members, building a social network is a challenge. The PAI programme thus stipulates that each participant is accompanied by a specialist who is there and helps when needed.

Research Questions

In this study, we posit that the quality of the learning environment in the PAI, individual characteristics of the RE/TA, and their social environment influence participants' career prospects after the PAI.

We first describe the PAI, participants' individual characteristics and their social environment in general, and ask:

- How do participants perceive their learning environment in the workplace and school, and how do they describe themselves and their social environment?

We second investigate core elements that characterise successful careers after the PAI and compare more and less successful participants:

- What key characteristics distinguish participants who could secure a regular apprenticeship from those who did not?

More specifically, we explore whether participants, who found an apprenticeship place, a) experience their workplaces and schools as better linked and conducive to learning and feel more supported by trainers and teachers, b) are more able and willing to engage in learning and have better learning outcomes at the end of the PAI, and c) find themselves in more favourable social environments than participants whose career after the PAI is still uncertain.

Data and Measures

To address the research questions, we report and elaborate on data from the participants' survey of the fourth PAI cohort (2021/2022, N = 432) and complement them with findings from the employers' survey (N = 184) and the six case studies. The surveys with participants and employers took place in May/June 2022, 2–3 months before the end of the PAI. The participants filled in the questionnaire during one lesson, assisted by their teachers. The teachers had received the questionnaire and supplementary documents beforehand to better support the participants with limited language skills. The case studies included semi-structured interviews with trainers, teachers, and coaches in January/February 2022 and interviews with participants in May/June 2022. The interviews were conducted on-site and lasted between 45 and 60 minutes each. They were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim.

Samples

Participants enrolled in the PAI programme in the German (61.6%), French (32.4%), and Italian-speaking (6.0%) parts of Switzerland. The PAI covered 19 occupational fields, with most participants trained in a programme in the service sector (78.8%; industry and manufacturing: 21.0%; agriculture: 0.2%). Participants came from Eritrea (35.3%), Afghanistan (15.3%), Syria (9.5%), other Asian (16.0%) and African countries (11.8%), and from Europe (9.7%) and South America (2.3%) (target group PAI+). The mean age was 26.4 years (SD = 6.2), and 61.5% were male. 30.1% were married, and 30.3% had children.

Of the 450 employers contacted, 184 filled in the whole questionnaire. Most had one (72.8%) or two (13.6%) PAI participants. About half were small and medium-sized firms with up to 49 employees (54.3%) located in the German (55.4%), French (42.9%), and Italian (1.6%) parts of Switzerland. Employers have been engaged in the PAI since 2018 (32.9%), 2019 or 2020 (26.9%), or for the first time in 2021 (40.2%). Most companies also had learners in two-year (51.6%) and three-/four-year apprenticeships (74.5%). The majority of in-company trainers had several years of experience, and 59.2% were male.

The case studies included two female and four male participants and their trainers, teachers, and coaches in two German-speaking and two French-speaking

cantons. Participants were 16 to 36 years old and came from Afghanistan, Eritrea, Tibet, Sudan, Ecuador, and Italy. They completed their PAI in the health, automotive, construction, logistics and sales sectors.

Measures

Measures in the participants' and the employers' survey used for this study are presented in Table 9.1.

The participants' survey covered the learning environment in the PAI, participants' individual characteristics, their social environment, and their career prospects. The *learning environment* focused on the workplace and school and the possibility of transferring learning contents from one location to another. To assess the learning environment, we used scales and items validated in the IVET context (Stalder & Lüthi, 2020; Stalder & Schmid, 2016; TREE, 2016). Since most RE/TA had limited language skills, we simplified item wordings. The items assessing motivating work/lessons, guidance and support, and building on previous skills were strictly parallelised for the two learning contexts. All items were measured on a five-point scale from 1 (almost never) to 5 (almost always). Participants' *individual characteristics* included effort and performance in the workplace and school (self-assessed), using a 5-point scale from 1 (almost never) to 5 (almost always) for effort and a seven-point scale from 1 (very poor) to 7 (very good) for performance. Participants also self-rated their language skills in comprehension, reading, and speaking on a 5-point scale from 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good) and indicated how important it is for them to learn a trade (five-point scale from 1, not true at all, to 5, very true). Items to measure *participants' social environment* included their housing situation, the support in private life, and the number of close friends. Finally, to measure career prospects, participants indicated, what they shall do after the PAI, and how they perceive their career and future in general (five-point scale from 1, not true at all, to 5, very true). The PAI research team developed items assessing participants' individual characteristics, social environment, and career prospects.

The employers' survey covered the same concepts and used the same items as the participants' survey. The item wording was changed such as the employers self-assessed, for example, the support they provided to their learner (e.g., "I' m there for him/her when he/she needs me") and judged the participants' learning behaviour (e.g., "In the workplace, he/she gives his/her best"). Employers who trained more than one PAI participant filled in the questionnaire for the learner with whom they worked the most.

Questions in the case studies focused on the participants' individual characteristics (e.g., for participants, "Do you have to do homework for school in the evenings or during the weekends? If yes: Do you have enough time to learn after school or after work? How do you learn?"), their learning environment (e.g., "What work do you do in the workplace? Can you give an example of something you learned in the workplace last week? Do you understand when the teacher explains something?

Table 9.1 Measured used in the two studies

	Participant survey	Employer survey	
	Number of items	Number of items	Sample items (participants' wording)
Participants' learning environment (PAI)			
Workplace			
Motivating work	3	2	In my work, I can learn a lot of new things.
Guidance and support by the in-company trainer	3	3	My boss is there for me when I need him.
Social integration in the team	3	3	My colleagues are there for me when I need them.
Building on previous skills	1	1	I can use what I already know and can do.
School			
Motivating lessons	3	3	At school, I can learn a lot of new things.
Guidance and support by teachers	3	3	My teachers are there for me when I need them.
Building on previous skills	1	1	I can use what I already know and can do.
Transfer of learning			
Workplace to school	2	3	What I learn at work, I can use well at school.
School to workplace	2	3	What I learn at school, I can use well at work.
Participants' individual characteristics			
Workplace-related			
Effort	1	1	At work, I give my best.
Performance	1	1	How good is your performance at work?
School-related			
Effort	1		At school, I give my best.
Performance	1	1	How good is your performance at school?
General			
Language skills	3	3	How well can you understand (read, speak) high German (French, Italian)?
Importance of learning a vocation	1		I think it is important that I learn a vocation.
Participants' social environment			
Housing situation	2		Do you live alone? Together with family members?

(continued)

Table 9.1 (continued)

	Participant survey	Employer survey	
	Number of items	Number of items	Sample items (participants' wording)
Support in private life	3	1	Who does support you when you need help in your private life?
Friends	2		How many friends do you have that are Swiss?
Participants' career prospects			
Educational situation after PAI	5		What do you do after the PAI?
Perception of career prospects	2		I'm able to complete an apprenticeship.
Positive attitude towards future	1		When you think about your future, how satisfied are you?
Staying in/leaving the company after the PAI		3	Does the PAI participant continue with an apprenticeship in your company? (employers' wording)

Can you use at work what you learn at school?"), and their social environment (e.g., "Where do you learn? With whom do you learn? Do you have a room where you can learn without being disturbed? Who does support you when you need help in your private life?"). Also, participants were asked to share their plans and career prospects (e.g., "What do you do after the PAI? If you could freely choose an occupation, which would you like best? What will you do in 10 years?").

Results

The findings are reported in four sections. The first section describes the career prospects of the participants. The second focuses on the learning environment in the PAI, the third on participants' individual characteristics and the fourth on their social environment. We present results and contrast participants who had managed to secure a regular apprenticeship at the time of the survey (i.e., the "successful ones") with participants whose pathway after the PAI was still uncertain (i.e., those who did not know what they would do).

Career Prospects

Participants reported whether they would start with a regular apprenticeship after the PAI and, if yes, indicated whether they had already secured an apprenticeship place (apprenticeship contract signed or promised). Results are presented in Fig. 9.2.

Nearly two-thirds (62.7%) of participants said they had already found an apprenticeship, either in a two-year programme aimed at more practically gifted learners (45.8%) or in a three or four-year programme that is academically more demanding (16.9%). Another 14.6% of the participants indicated they plan to start with an apprenticeship but have not yet found an employer. The remaining 22.8% did not anticipate engaging in an apprenticeship. Some planned to take up an additional short-term education (3.5%, e.g., bridge year, language courses, short-term practical training), while others planned to start working (4.9%). For 14.4%, the future career was uncertain; they said they did not know what to do after the PAI.

From the participants' survey, we do not know whether those who indicated they had secured an apprenticeship will remain in the company where they did the PAI. We asked, however, the employers whether their PAI-participant would start a regular apprenticeship in their company after the PAI. Of the 184 employers surveyed, 122 (66.3%) confirmed that the PAI participant would take up an apprenticeship in their company; 48 (26.1%) said that the participant would leave the company, and 14 (7.6%) did not know yet. According to employers, reasons for a discontinued engagement were manifold, such as, for example, insufficient language skills, no interest in learning the occupation, continuing health problems, or difficulties arranging childcare.

Participants were asked whether they thought they could successfully complete an apprenticeship and find a good job later. Most of them had a positive view of their

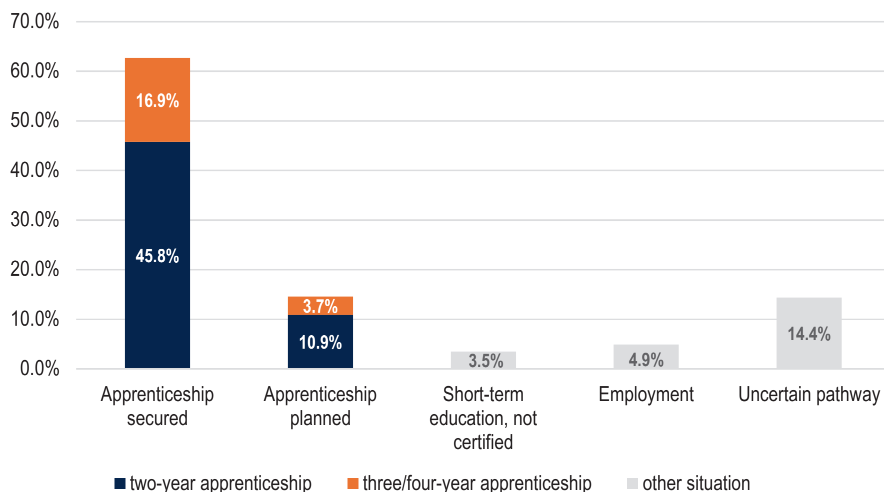

Fig. 9.2 Educational pathways after the PAI

future. They were convinced they could manage the apprenticeship (M = 4.3, SD = 0.95) and find a good job (M = 4.5, SD = 0.81). Participants with uncertain pathways after the PAI were the least confident and significantly less optimistic about their future than those who had secured an apprenticeship place.

Many participants who had secured or planned an apprenticeship had plans for the time once they had finished it. They spoke about continuous training and projected a working career allowing them to lead a self-determined and independent life.

As one of the coaches stated:

> C: Although his finances are very tight, he wanted to become financially independent. He does not want to live on social welfare... [D, Coach]

Or with the words of a participant:

> P: That doesn't mean money comes from the municipality anyway and always stay with social and my […] I say self-employed is I finish my apprenticeship and do my own work and earn money, and that I mean self-employed. [C, participant]

The Learning Environment and Educational Pathways

Participants were asked to evaluate their workplace and school learning environment and the possibility of transferring what they learned from school to the workplace and vice-versa. Table 9.2 shows the results for all participants and contrasts the perspectives of participants who had secured an apprenticeship place with those whose pathway after the PAI was still uncertain.

Table 9.2 Participants' learning environment

	All participants	Apprenticeship secured	Uncertain pathway	
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	p
Workplace				
Motivating work	4.3 (0.70)	4.3 (0.69)	3.9 (0.77)	<.001
Guidance and support by the in-company trainer	4.2 (0.83)	4.3 (0.78)	4.0 (0.84)	.067
Social integration in the team	4.2 (.82)	4.3 (0.79)	4.0 (0.89)	.039
Building on previous skills	4.2 (.95)	4.0 (0.98)	3.9 (0.95)	.249
School				
Motivating lessons	4.3 (0.70)	4.3 (0.69)	3.9 (0.77)	<.001
Guidance and support by teachers	4.5 (0.69)	4.5 (0.70)	4.4 (0.70)	.658
Building on previous skills	4.1 (0.89)	4.0 (0.9)	4.1 (0.91)	.728
Transfer of learning				
Workplace to school	3.5 (1.13)	3.5 (1.08)	3.2 (1.24)	.024
School to workplace	3.8 (1.05)	3.9 (0.99)	3.6 (1.18)	.044

Note: Answer scales: 1–5. Analyses of variance based on five groups, as indicated in Fig. 9.2, with planned contrasts (simple)

Overall, participants positively evaluated their workplace and school learning situation. They perceived their work as very motivating and interesting and said they could learn a lot. Most of them felt well supported by their trainers and even more so by teachers: Trainers, teachers, and colleagues at work had time for them when they needed help, were there to answer questions, and gave positive feedback. As one of the participants in the interview outlined:

> I: If you don't understand something, who are you asking?
> P: To my colleagues […], I ask my colleagues and R. [the trainer], also to everybody.
> I: And do people take the time to answer you?
> P: Yes, they answer me because they always believe in me and my abilities. Yes, if I ask for something, they answer me right away. [B, participant]

The participants were a bit more critical of the learning transfer, and results suggest that the transfer from school to work is better established than the transfer from workplace to school. Results from the employers' survey confirm that the cooperation between workplaces and schools remains an issue. While 57.7% of the trainers in the company were satisfied with the cooperation with the VET teachers, 20.2% were only partly satisfied, and 22.0% were not satisfied. Some criticised that they were rarely and insufficiently informed about participants' learning progress (15.0%) and potential problems (28.8%) at school. Most of them, however, acknowledged the usefulness of school learning for the workplace and vice versa. In sum, linking workplaces and schools and relating learning contents across learning locations is valuable but challenging, not only for participants but also for employers and teachers, such as one teacher stated:

> T: We are human beings, and with human beings, it depends on [how great the willingness for exchange/cooperation is]. Who is here, what is the willingness? So that you can build up and maintain the exchange. For example, also through company visits. I experience that as something very valuable. When I get an insight into a company, it gives me a lot of direct references that I can incorporate into my teaching. Even just mentioning things gives me a picture in my head later on. Where is this learner four days a week? And that is also part of it. [C, teacher]

Contrast analyses revealed that participants who had secured an apprenticeship found their work and lessons more interesting and motivating than participants with uncertain pathways. They were better integrated into the work team and felt better supported by colleagues. It is also noteworthy that the more successful participants evaluated the learning transfer between school and work more positively.

Individual Characteristics and Educational Pathways

Participants were asked how much effort they put into their work and school tasks. They self-assessed their performance and language skills and specified how important it is for them to learn a trade (a vocation, German: "*Beruf*"). Results are presented in Table 9.3.

Table 9.3 Participants' individual characteristics

	All participants	Apprenticeship secured	Uncertain pathway	
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	p
Workplace-related				
Effort	4.6 (0.60)	4.7 (0.55)	4.4 (0.71)	<.001
Performance	6.1 (0.91)	6.3 (0.81)	5.8 (1.07)	<.001
School-related				
Effort	4.4 (0.74)	4.4 (0.75)	4.2 (0.80)	.035
Performance	5.8 (1.08)	5.9 (1.00)	5.6 (1.15)	.076
General				
Language skills	4.2 (0.59)	4.3 (0.58)	4.2 (0.56)	.351
Importance of learning a trade	4.8 (0.57)	4.9 (0.38)	4.5 (0.88)	<.001

Note: Answer scales performance and importance of vocation: 1–5; effort 1–7. Analyses of variance based on five groups with planned contrasts (simple)

Participants self-evaluated their learning effort and performance positively. Most said they "do their best" at work and school, and most reported performing well in the workplace and school. The majority of participants also acknowledged that learning a trade and obtaining a VET certificate is essential in Switzerland. As one of the participants summarised:

> P: I also have to graduate and then because in Switzerland, for sure, they have helped us so much, and eh, I also have to thank Switzerland. Thank for example they gave us school, they gave us many chances in life […] Important rules and so in Switzerland […] and pay taxes and so that's why I have to do education because without education here it's very difficult to live even if I might have lost job […], without education, I couldn't find a job quickly because I have no degree. But if I have degree, I could find job quickly […]. Maybe if I lost a job, for example, with education, you can find a job quickly. [D, participant]

Participants who had secured an apprenticeship differed significantly in their self-evaluation from those with uncertain pathways. Those with an apprenticeship were more engaged in the workplace and school and outperformed participants without secure pathways. Interestingly, in their self-assessment, the two groups did not differ regarding their language skills – both said their language level was good to excellent. However, those about to start an apprenticeship found it more important to learn a trade than those with an uncertain career. Additional analyses were run to explore whether contrast groups differed in age, educational experience (years in education), and the number of years they had been in Switzerland. The two groups did not differ in those characteristics.

The employers shared a positive appraisal of participants' efforts and learning outcomes. Most of them highlighted that their PAI participant was hard-working and engaged, and more than 80% rated participants' performance in the workplace as good or very good. In the interview, an employer added:

> E: And yes, in a way, I think they have more desire to succeed than local people. [B, employer]

Employers evaluated, however, participants' language skills more critically (M = 3.71, SD = 0.87) than participants themselves (M = 4.2, SD = 0.59). Many of those who did not offer their PAI participant an apprenticeship place stressed that the participant just lacked the needed language and other academic skills to start a two-year apprenticeship.

Individuals' Social Environment and Educational Pathways

Participants described their housing situation, indicated from whom they receive support when they need help in their private life, and reported how many close friends they had. Results are presented in Table 9.4.

General results suggest that participants were in diverse living and housing situations. More than half of them lived with family members, one quarter lived alone, and others shared a flat with colleagues or were in another housing situation. Three-quarters had a room for themselves to relax and study without being disturbed.

A total of 44.2% of the participants reported they could rely on a coach or mentor when they needed help with private matters. More important were close friends, who supported 60.2% of the participants. Most participants had several close friends, both Swiss and non-Swiss. Additional analyses showed that most had at least one person to turn to in case of arising problems. Again, the participants were in diverse situations. One-third had a broad supportive network, including a coach or mentor, family members and friends. In contrast, one out of six participants (17.2%) indicated they had neither a coach nor a family member nor a friend who could provide support. Comparing participants with secured and uncertain pathways revealed no differences between the two groups.

Participants also had other forms and resources of support than those outlined above. Some employers emphasised, for example, that they not only guided their PAI-participant in the learning process but also provided advice and support when participants had troubles in their private life. They also tried to be flexible with working arrangements, as one participant stated:

> P: Yes, because R. [the trainer] – we talked, I have two children, and on Tuesday I' m already finished at 5 p.m. because I have to pick up the children and then, a few days I have to – I can't work until the end because he told me that' s fine, I can stay alone, or the others can stay. He has helped me so much. [F, participant]

Also, teachers supported the participants when some schools opened their doors for learners who did not have a quiet place at home to learn. These participants profited from the possibility of staying in school until late:

> P: Normally I do the homework at the school. When we finish school. There is a study room. I do my homework there. At the home in the room, I don't have a possibility. I asked my assistant [support person/coach]. He told me that there is a study room. If you ask someone to open it, they open it. [A, participant]

Table 9.4 Participants' social environment

	All participants	Apprenticeship secured	Uncertain pathway	
	Percent	Percent	Percent	p
Housing situation Lives				
… alone	25.0%	25.8%	25.8%	.787
… with family	57.4%	55.0%	62.9%	
… with colleagues	6.7%	6.6%	6.5%	
… with other persons	10.9%	12.5%	4.8%	
Has a room for herself/himself (yes)	73.1%	77.5%	61.3%	.083
Support if help is needed in private life (yes), by				
… coach, mentor	44.2%	46.1%	38.3%	.660
… family member	44.9%	41.6%	50.0%	.254
… close friend	60.2%	61.8%	50.0%	.150
Close friends Swiss				
… none	19.4%	18.8%	21.0%	.216
… 1–3	43.4%	48.3%	37.1%	
… more than 3	37.3%	32.8%	41.9%	
Non-Swiss				
… none	13.7%	14.0%	21.0%	.336
… 1–3	27.3%	26.6%	24.2%	
… more than 3	59.0%	59.4%	54.8%	

Note: Chi-square tests based on five groups, as indicated in Fig. 9.2

Discussion

Making refugees "fit" for vocational education and facilitating their transition to a regular apprenticeship is one of the main goals of the pre-apprenticeship for integration. In this study, we argued that the quality of the learning environment in the PAI, individual characteristics of the RE/TA, and their social environment influence participants' educational pathways after the PAI.

General results suggest the PAI programme has met its primary goal, with almost two-thirds of the participants having secured an apprenticeship 2 months before the end of the PAI and the other 14% planning to start with IVET. The IAS (Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft et al., 2018) stipulates that two-thirds of all RE/TA aged 16 to 25 should be in post-compulsory education 5 years after they enter Switzerland and specifies that 95% of all young RE/TA with educational potential should be in upper secondary education. According to the 95%-target, the rate of PAI participants who transition to an apprenticeship might not yet be satisfied. However, the results of this study must be interpreted with caution. It is unclear, for example, how many of the participants with an uncertain pathway have the

educational potential to begin an apprenticeship or why those who chose employment over education made that decision. Also, participants may find their way into an apprenticeship between the time of the survey and the remaining months before the school year starts. Results from the first cohort suggest that some participants can secure an apprenticeship at short notice (Stalder & Schönbächler, 2020).

PAI participants were very positive about their learning environment in the workplace and school and the support they received from trainers and teachers. Also, they reported being highly engaged in learning and performing well. The outstanding evaluation might be puzzling – is it too good to be true? A possible explanation could be that RE/TA might not be used to sharing their critique or might not want to show their feelings openly to others. However, findings from the employers' survey and case studies primarily support the validity of participants' positive evaluations. Employers and teachers agree about participants' high motivation and good performance – especially concerning practical competencies. Many employers also emphasise the latter, offering participants to remain in the company and continue with an apprenticeship. Note also that the PAI learners who participated in the study are a highly selective group. They were admitted to the programme based on a potential assessment (Staatssekretariat für Migration SEM, 2020a, b). They stayed in the programme until the end, while others dropped out early (Stalder & Schönbächler, 2020). The PAI participants in our survey thus proved to have high educational potential. They had been resilient and adaptive and managed to cope with the requirements of the workplace and school.

Concerning language skills, the perspectives of participants and employers diverge. While participants self-evaluated their proficiency level as good to excellent, employers were more critical. This finding is not new and has already been reported for the first cohort (Stalder & Schönbächler, 2020). It is plausible that participants have a different reference frame when self-assessing their language skills than employers. Participants might see the progress they have made. They possibly compare themselves with peers or family members not enrolled in an educational programme. In contrast, employers know better what language skills are required to start with an apprenticeship. They might thus compare participants with learners in regular apprenticeships.

The PAI benchmarks state that learning contents in the workplace and school should build on each other and be mutually relevant (Staatssekretariat für Migration SEM, 2020a, b). Results reveal that the trainers and teachers perceive the other learning locations as an important part of the PAI programme. However, time is limited, resources are rare, and cooperation is demanding. These findings align with previous studies that consistently describe the cooperation between schools and workplaces as a significant challenge of dual apprenticeships (Aarkrog, 2005; Aprea & Sappa, 2020).

Based on previous research and the PAI benchmarks, we posited that RE/TA and, thus, PAI participants need specialists' support (Gei & Matthes, 2017; Schaffner et al., 2022). It might be irritating to see that more than half of them reported that they do not have a coach supporting them when they need help in their private life. From the programme officers' interviews in 2018, we know that the cantons organised participants' coaching, guiding and support differently (Stalder & Schönbächler, 2020). While some

participants are closely accompanied by coaches and other specialists outside of school, other cantons chose approaches where teachers play the role of a coach. Whether different coaching models contribute differently to participants' transition success remains open.

We assumed that participants with secured and uncertain pathways differ in their learning environment, individual characteristics, and the social environment outside the PAI. Our results confirm these assumptions for the learning environment in the workplace and school and the individual characteristics but not regarding participants' social situations outside the PAI. Participants with an apprenticeship found their work and school more interesting and were better integrated into the work team than participants with uncertain pathways. Moreover, in line with findings from apprenticeship research (Messmann & Mulder, 2015), the successful participants also saw a more significant potential to transfer their learning between school and the workplace. They might have better understood the concept of 'dual VET' than participants with uncertain pathways, and the cooperation between teachers and trainers might have been better established. The two groups differed clearly in effort and performance. Those with a follow-up solution tried harder and performed better, corroborating previous research emphasising the importance of learners' engagement (Billett, 2001; Stalder & Schmid, 2016). Interestingly, most participants with a secured apprenticeship considered learning a trade and having a vocational degree essential. This might be a sign of positive integration and confirms the importance of PAI's explicit focus on familiarising participants with the norms and values of Swiss culture.

Conclusion

Four years after its introduction, the pre-apprenticeship programme to support integration has proven valuable in supporting refugees and temporarily admitted persons' successful pathways into vocational education and training. The PAI is highly appreciated not only by the participants but also by the employers who decided to engage in the programme. The goal of creating a "win-win" has been achieved for most involved actors. Employers benefit from the programme by securing skilled workforce and participants through integration into VET and employment. Success factors illustrate the high commitment of different actors to developing, conceiving, and implementing the PAI. The joint responsibility in the sense of a "public-private partnership" is a core characteristic of the Swiss VET system. The occupation-specific development of practical, academic and transferable skills, the transfer of learning between work and school, and the targeted support for learners are part of the dual system and are, therefore, well introduced to vocational education and training actors. The PAI builds on this tradition and expands it to include more partners from outside VET. It remains to be seen whether the PAI programme will be successful in the longer term and remain a significant educational offer for refugees and temporarily admitted persons. For now, the Swiss Federal government and the cantons have initiated the continuation and consolidation of the PAI.

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Chapter 10
'Open Sesame': Skilled Immigrants' Experiences with Bridging Programmes in the Validation Process in Norway

Line Nortvedt, Astrid Gillespie, Kari Dahl, and Ida Drange

Keywords Bridging programmes · Internationally educated teachers (IET) · Internationally educated nurses (IEN) · Internationally educated engineers (IEE) · Resilience · Identity

Introduction

Many Western countries have developed bridging programmes requalifying skilled immigrants from various professions. In Norway, the increase in the number of refugees in 2015 due to the Syrian war accentuated the need for programmes to give skilled migrants an opportunity to obtain adequate qualifications to re-enter the teaching, nursing, or engineering profession. The intentions of these programmes must be seen as multidimensional: First, the shortage of trained teachers and nurses in Norway is widely debated, and these programmes can facilitate the use of immigrants' prior learning and skills to address this shortage. Second, these programmes aim to increase participation in the labour market because employment is essential to the successful integration of immigrants and is a prerequisite for leading an independent life in the destination country. Third, these programmes aim to increase immigrants' opportunities for job–skill match and thus maintain their professional identity in a new country context. For highly skilled immigrants, this can be decisive for the perceived success of migration (Remennick, 2013). It is important to

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clarify that Norway has, through agreements (ICN, 2019), undertaken not to recruit health personnel from countries that lack such personnel.

The backdrop of bridging programmes is that deskilling, and underemployment are common experiences among highly skilled immigrants in new country contexts (Brell et al., 2020; Elo et al., 2020; Zwysen, 2019). Many foreign-trained immigrants remain in low-status, low-paid jobs after migration due to difficulties in human capital transference and to language and cultural barriers. Successful occupational integration, on the other hand, is less explored. Regaining professional status after migration is conditional on the complexities of economic and institutional arrangements, but individual factors also play a key role (Remennick, 2013). In this chapter, we aim to place emphasis on how non-European educated immigrants experience *professional identity* and *successful professional integration* in a new cultural context. More precisely, we use the theoretical concepts of resilience and professional identity to investigate how these factors can be a resource for foreign-trained nurses, teachers, and engineers enrolled in bridging programmes. A common denominator among these professionals is that their former education and training have not been recognized by authorities and employers. The bridging programmes are a promising avenue to regain a job position that corresponds to their subjective identification as a nurse, teacher, or engineer, but the programmes are also the most formal non-recognition of prior education (Terhart, 2022). In this study, we explore professional identity as a resource and a protective resilience factor. Many professionals drop out of their studies, but we look at what characterizes those who succeed. Through the narratives, we gain insight into the choices, motivations, and sacrifices of highly skilled migrants on the course to occupational reintegration and into the role of bridging programmes in this endeavour.

The chapter has the following structure: First, we outline occupational regulations and the features of bridging programmes in Norway. Next, our theoretical lens is described, and prior research on bridging programmes for internationally educated teachers, nurses, and engineers is introduced. Thereafter, the data and methods are presented. Subsequently, we present and discuss findings from interviews and, finally, a conclusion.

Occupational Regulations and Bridging Programmes in Norway

Immigrants who would like to engage in a regulated occupation in Norway need to apply for a licence from the sectorial authorities. The authorities' evaluation of prior learning and experience can lead to full recognition, partial recognition, or no recognition. For those immigrants educated outside the EU, partial recognition of prior learning and experience is common because educational systems and content are so different (EU Directive, 2013). Partial recognition implies that the immigrant requires additional education and training to become licensed. A bridging programme is often the best option for non-European immigrant professionals who seek to reconnect with their pre-migration occupation. These bridging programmes

usually come last in a chain of requirements which include residence permits, language skills, and assessment of former education. Hence, this route can be time-consuming, costly, and unpredictable, but once one is admitted, these programmes constitute a 'fast track' to occupational reintegration as they both formalize skills and contribute to occupational socialization.

Bridging programmes are quite new in the Norwegian education system. Upon request by the Ministry of Education and Research, in 2017, Oslo Metropolitan University (OsloMet) established 60 ECTS[1] bridging programmes for teachers, engineers, and nurses educated outside the EU/EEA. The objective of each programme was to qualify refugees and migrant workers through further education to work in the Norwegian labour market. Foreign-trained teachers and nurses need accreditation before they can obtain employment in the educational or health sector in Norway, whereas engineers have no statutory requirements to take supplementary education but may lack knowledge of Norwegian law and regulations, which can hamper employment opportunities.

Admission Criteria and Course Content

The bridging programmes give priority to refugees, and other qualified applicants compete for the remaining places. All programmes require a residence permit for acceptance. Nurses need to document a nursing education in their country of origin and a decision from the Directorate of Health; teachers need to document a teacher education in their country of origin and to obtain approval from NOKUT (the *Norwegian* Agency for *Quality* Assurance in *Education*); and the engineering course is primarily for engineers with a documented professional background in construction, machinery, or electronics. The language requirements are Norwegian at the B1 (engineers and teachers) or B2 (nursing) level based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2019).

Figure 10.1 describes the course content and training requirements. The bridging programme for teachers diverges from the other two in length. The teaching programme was revised and re-established with significant changes after academic staff at the university observed that the programme was too challenging for students. The main challenge concerned only 20% of students passing the B2 language test. This is perceived as the minimum level required for employment in schools. Further, the students appeared to have insufficient pedagogical content knowledge for the subjects from their initial teacher education, and some students had been studying/teaching only one subject. Because of this, the teacher bridging programme was prolonged from 60 ECTS to 120 ECTS, and changed the language requirement to B1.

[1] ECTS: European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System – a standard means for comparing academic credits.

Engineering	Nursing	Teaching
1st term Engineering subject in Norwegian (10 ects) Norwegian working life and communication I (10 ects) Volunteer engineering subject (10 ects) **2nd term** Norwegian working life and communication II (10 ects) Praxis (20 ects)	**1st term** The scientific and social foundation of nursing (15 ects) Pharmaceuticals (2 ects) Praxis in geriatrics (13 ects) **2nd term** Bachelor assignment (15 ects) Praxis in psychiatry (15 ects) Skills test (0 ects)	**1st term** Professional Norwegian (10 ects) **2nd term** The teaching profession in Norway and Norwegian for teachers (20 ects) **3rd term** Practice (0 ects) Child behaviour (0 ects) Volunteer subject (30 ects) **4th term** Diversity in schools (15 ects) Teaching, language, and communication (15 ects) Practice (0 ects) **5th term** Practice (0 ects) Volunteer subject (30 ects)

Fig. 10.1 The course content and training requirements

Theoretical Lens

We engage two theoretical concepts to investigate experiences of successful professional integration, namely resilience and professional identity.

The concept of resilience derives from the Latin verb "resilire", which means "to leap or spring back". There are different conceptualizations of resilience across research areas and whether it is defined as, for example, an individual trait, a process, an outcome, a dynamic developmental process, or all these (Niitsu et al., 2017). In this chapter, we use an ecological framework of resilience inspired by Ungar (2011).[2] Ungar emphasizes the interaction between a person and the wider society as being composed of interactions between system levels. The following is Ungar's definition:

> In the context of exposure to significant adversity, resilience is both the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that sustain their well-being, and their capacity individually and collectively to negotiate for these resources to be provided and experienced in culturally meaningful ways (Ungar, 2008: 225).

[2] This definition of ecological resilience is inspired by Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Ungar, 2015).

The resources or protecting factors described by Ungar are individual, relational, or collective, and the contextual protecting factors are dependent on family influences that are both environmentally and genetically mediated (Ungar, 2011, 2015). The important element is that resilience requires the capacity both to navigate and to negotiate. To navigate requires personal agency, motivation, and the ability to locate resources, such as social networks or bridging programmes. To negotiate requires that actors, individually or in collectives, give meaning to these resources (Ungar, 2011). In our context, this can imply assigning meaning or value to the ability to contribute to individuals or to society, for example through professional work.

According to Day (2018: 68), professionals need to have and sustain a positive sense of professional identity to succeed over time. The development of professional identity takes place both during education and continuously throughout professional life, and it requires an actively reflective attitude (Giddens, 1991). The awareness of one's own competence as well as participation in and development of roles and positions in the community of practice also contribute to shaping this identity (Wenger & Nake, 2004). Successful maintenance of a positive professional identity, however, depends on the identity being linked to efficiency, action, emotions, and resilience (Day, 2018). Day (2018) further claims that resilience can be seen as a capacity rather than a fixed characteristic and that it can vary according to will, commitment, and the ability to succeed based on the strength of one's inner commitment to work tasks and partly on interaction at the workplace. A professional's capacity for resilience can thus be associated with both their inner strength of purpose and relationships in the workplace (Day, 2018: 67).

This perspective of resilience and identity as an interactive person–environmental process is used here to explore success factors in the individual, structural, and political experiences of migrant teachers, nurses, and engineers.

Prior Research on Bridging Programmes

In this literature review, we give a brief overview of research related to bridging programmes for teachers, nurses, and engineers. Research on bridging programmes for internationally educated teachers (IETs), nurses (IENs), and engineers (IEEs) has been undertaken in Canada (all professions), Germany, Norway, and Sweden (teachers and nurses), and the UK and Australia (nurses), among others. In the case of IEEs, the research appears more limited except for some studies conducted in Canada.

The IETs enrolled in bridging programmes are diverse. In European countries like Sweden and Germany, students in most cases have a refugee background (Malm, 2020; Niesta Kayser et al., 2021; Terhart, 2022). Canada's bridging programmes, on the other hand, seem to include teachers with more diverse country backgrounds and immigration reasons, but East and South Asia, South America, and Eastern Europe are mentioned (Marom, 2017, 2018, 2019). IENs from the UK, India, and the Philippines are top of the list of those entering Australia, while

numerous nurses from Poland and Turkey immigrate to Germany, and Indian and Filipino nurses mostly migrate to the UK (Smith et al., 2022). Canadian research shows that most engineers are from the Philippines, Ukraine, India, China, Pakistan (Friesen, 2015), and France (Bedard & Massana, 2018).

Students' General Perceived Challenges and Barriers

In the case of IETs, research shows that while children's behaviour and subject matter content are to some extent similar regardless of country, the shift to a more student-centred mode of instruction is brought up by many and described as a difference that makes them reflect on their role as a schoolteacher (Economou & Hajer, 2019; Hajer & Economou, 2017; Terhart, 2022). Further, some studies report that IETs feel that their previous experience and education were devaluated (Marom, 2017, 2019; Terhart, 2022) and that they also face challenges related to social, financial, and cultural matters. In relation to labour market opportunities, discrimination and racism are widely discussed as challenges (Block, 2012; Niesta Kayser et al., 2021; Othman, 2022).

Nurses who migrate experience challenges in countries of destination as well as with cultural exclusion, loneliness, privation, and language barriers (Dahl et al., 2017; Nortvedt et al., 2020). Moreover, experiences of lack of professional development and, as with teachers, under-rated competence and skills are reported. For IENs, a study in Sweden revealed challenges connected to being a student again and being in a different student role with higher demands related to self-regulated learning (Högstedt et al., 2021).

A study with 18 foreign-born engineers from South America, Africa, Central Europe, and Asia revealed challenges involving tension, anxiety, and uncertainty after receiving the engineering licence as well as worry of whether they were sufficiently prepared to live up to the responsibilities (Friesen, 2016). Even after obtaining a Canadian licence, an IEE may find that employers are sceptical of hiring them and that managers expect applied engineering theory, practical engineering experience, management of engineering projects, communication skills, and an understanding of business practices (Girard & Bauder, 2007). Similar findings were reported in a study with French engineers in Quebec (Bedard & Massana, 2018), in which the IEEs underestimated differences in academic training, the context of professional practice, and work regulations. Moreover, Mutual Recognition Arrangements do not provide measures to facilitate social integration into Canadian society for the partners and children of these engineers, which may change original plans to migrate to Quebec.

Language: A Main Challenge

Research shows that internationally trained professionals find the acquisition of sufficient language skills demanding (Terhart, 2022; Hajer & Economou, 2017; Dahl et al., 2021; Magnusdottir, 2005; Nortvedt et al., 2020; Friesen, 2015; Lum et al., 2016). Among IEEs attending a qualification recognition programme in Canada, with participants originating from more than 30 countries (with the majority from the Philippines, Ukraine, India, China, and Pakistan), some of the main challenges in the programme were language and communication (Friesen, 2015). IETs in bridging programmes in Sweden reported that they found it challenging to read course literature in Swedish (Hajer & Economou, 2017). Researchers investigating IENs have reported similar experiences (Dahl et al., 2021; Magnusdottir, 2005; Nortvedt et al., 2020). Lum et al. (2016) explored IEN perceptions of English-language and nursing communication in a bridging programme in Canada with nurses originating from the Philippines, Nigeria, and several European countries. The results showed academic literacy challenges and learning therapeutic communication skills were unexpected challenges, partly because of conflicting ideas about what constitutes culturally appropriate interaction. For IEEs attending a qualification recognition programme in Canada with participants originating from more than 30 countries (with the majority from the Philippines, Ukraine, India, China, and Pakistan), main challenges were language and communication. Additionally, lost employment income and understanding how to do networking and to find mentorship opportunities in Canada were highlighted (Friesen, 2015).

Perceived Success Factors

In the research we have reviewed, less attention is given to success factors. However, one can argue that the willingness and ability to develop a bridging programme is one key to successful requalification for all professions (Wimmer et al., 2019). Chassels (2010) investigated how internationally educated migrants enrolled in initial teacher education valued courses explicitly designed for internationally educated student teachers. The programme was characterized by small groups and guided observation experiences. Supportive peers and opportunities to engage in discussions with students in the same situation and facing the same challenges were considered rewarding and beneficial. The importance of fellow students in the same situation is also discussed by Block (2012).

In line with Ungar (2015), Terhart (2022) developed a theoretical scheme wherein she identifies six aspects perceived as important to keeping the hope of re-connecting to the teaching profession: (1) emphasizing the universal similarities of working with children; (2) highlighting existing long-term experiences as a teacher; (3) referring to similarities in subject content in the different national school systems; (4) To have faith that you can improve your language skills; (5) taking on and

shaping the role of a multilingual refugee teacher; and (6) supplementing existing professional pedagogical knowledge.

IENs who completed a bridging programme in Sweden particularly benefited from a structured programme with content adapted to their situation and needs, which meant that they gained sufficient knowledge and security to practice in the Swedish healthcare system and that previously acquired knowledge was reinforced (Högstedt et al., 2021). The value of strengthened cultural competence (Neiterman & Bourgeault, 2013), sufficient opportunities to learn what constitutes quality in nursing in a new country, perceived leadership competence, and communication skills have also been highlighted by IENs in a bridging programme (Aggar et al., 2020). Furthermore, research with IENs has shown that an important reward factor is support from fellow students, teachers, and instructors (Högstedt et al., 2021). Likewise, a bridging programme helped and challenged IEN integration into the nursing profession (with help of social support systems) and was a tool for the transition to working life in a new country (Hadziabdic et al., 2021). Additionally, experiences from nurses who received authorization after completing a bridging programme showed that motivation and determination as well as support from managers and networks are crucial for success (Högstedt et al., 2021).

A Rapid Evidence Assessment indicates that bridging programmes are highly valued by both IENs and healthcare employers, and the importance of cooperation across authorities is highlighted (Smith et al., 2022). Structured integration programmes improve the health, well-being, and belonging of nurses, which in turn contribute to better recruitment and retention. They can increase success rates and improve nurses' experience and integration within an unknown healthcare framework (Smith et al., 2022).

A Canadian study with 360 IENs who completed a bridging programme showed that it helped them 'fill in' cultural, practical, and theoretical knowledge and that they developed professional language skills (Covell et al., 2018). However, IENs from low-income countries such as India and the Philippines reported significantly higher benefit scores for all scale items compared with IENs from relatively higher income countries such as France, the UK, and Romania (Covell et al., 2018).

A study with 18 foreign-born engineers from four continents considered their immigration mostly successful and related to feelings of inclusion and belonging enabled by attainments in professional registration, employment, and career development. Furthermore, a widened understanding of their role as professional engineers and progression in engineering practices were described (Friesen, 2016).

Although a restrictive temporary work permit was limiting for French IEEs in Quebec, they experienced benefits such as a labour market characterized by greater flexibility and mobility than in France, higher wages, less hierarchy in the workplace, and greater opportunities for career development (Bedard & Massana, 2018).

On the other hand, as noted by Terhart (2022), a phenomenon of bridging programmes is formal non-recognition of prior education, which can serve as a 'bottleneck' in re-entering the profession, particularly when there is no job guarantee after completing the programme. Thus, a bridging programme can be seen as a door opener but also as a gatekeeper.

Data and Methods

Participants

To explore bridging programme students' narratives and how they experience professional identity and successful professional integration in a new cultural context, a purposive sample of participants (Table 10.1) affiliated with a university in Oslo was included. The participants were recruited through the university's student administration staff and teachers in the bridging programmes. About 70 students were informed orally in class, and written information was distributed on their learning platform. Of these, 4 men and 18 women from eight countries volunteered for the study. The sample of 22 participants represented country backgrounds from Asia, Africa, and Europe and covered immigration reasons including family reunification, employment immigration, career aspirations, or humanitarian reasons. The three occupational areas were engineering, teaching, and nursing. We conducted one interview with each participant, and none of the participants dropped out during the study.

Data Collection

Data was collected between 2021 and 2022 in Oslo. The four researchers in the project interviewed the informants individually in Norwegian or in English as preferred, and the interviews were digitally recorded and professionally transcribed. An interview guide was used, which built on themes from prior research on bridging programmes and internationally educated professionals. The interviews were between 30 and 100 minutes in duration. Most were conducted face to face, and some were performed via Zoom, in line with what was most convenient for the student.

Table 10.1 Demographics

Education background	Country of Education	Migration background	Mean age (years)	Residence in Norway (mean duration)
Teaching (9)	Turkey (3) Philippines (2) Pakistan (1) Bosnia (1) Ukraine (1) China (1)	Refugee (3) Family reunification (1) Labour immigration (5)	40	6 years
Nursing (11)	Philippines (9) Australia (1) Bosnia (1)	Labour immigration (10) None (1)	33	8 years
Engineering (2)	Syria (1) Turkey (1)	Refugee (2)	38	3 years

Analysis

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was used to identify topics. NVivo software was used in the analysis (NVivo, 2018). First, all authors read the dataset several times and noted preliminary ideas. Secondly, we coded participant statements and looked for patterns and recurrent themes. Themes about the experience of successful academic integration became clear. The preliminary themes were reviewed and assessed in comparison to the research question, overlapping codes or themes were assessed, and themes were given descriptive names. The review also highlighted the connection between the various themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The following themes emerged: motivation for entering a specific profession, professional identity, motivation for migration, information flow about supplementary education, and prerequisites for completing supplementary education. Finally, we selected informative quotes to support our findings.

Ethical Considerations

The study was registered with the Norwegian Social Science Data Service (NSD) (project no. x). Confidentiality was assured in all aspects of the research process, and only the four researchers and the transcriber had access to the recordings and transcripts. The participants were informed about the aim of the research, the researchers' professional background, and what participation would entail and that they could withdraw consent at any time. It was emphasized that they should not feel any fear that the interview could have negative consequences for their study progression or credential recognition.

Findings and Discussion

A simple way of looking at our findings is as a U-shaped curve: It begins as a story about motivation, self-confidence, and developing a professional identity in the country of origin. It then becomes a story of adversities, where the participants lose professional affiliation and status as well as encounter difficulties in being professionally recognized in Norway. Finally, it becomes a story about motivation for recognition, authorization, and qualification within complementary education systems. The analysis generated the following seven themes: (1) motivation for entering a specific profession, (2) professional identity in the country of origin, (3) motivation for migration, (4) authority requirements, (5) professional identity – both strengthened and weakened in a new country, (6) information flow about the bridging programme, and (7) prerequisites for completing the bridging programme: (a) motivation for study and (b) personal requirements.

Motivation for Entering a Specific Profession

According to Resnick (2018), motivation is related to resilience in that it requires motivation to be robust. She claims that, like resilience, motivation is influenced by inheritances, intrinsic qualities, and environmental factors such as social setting and social support, the physical situation, and policies. Everyone has the ability to be resilient and/or motivated, and choices are made when one experiences predictable and challenging situations (Resnick, 2018). For the engineers in our study, the background for choosing the profession was merely professional interest, in addition to good opportunities for work in their country of origin. For one of the teachers and several of the nurses, the original goal was to become a doctor. However, some did not get into medical school, and for many informants the high costs of longer study were not consistent with available financial support from their family. Another common characteristic for the teachers and nurses was that family members were of great importance for the choice of and motivation for the profession. Several also mentioned that it was crucial that the choice of education give them opportunities to work abroad. One of the nurses said:

> Initially, it was not my choice to be a nurse, it was just my dream to have a better life and better finances, that I can get a job abroad, for example in the USA or Europe… I had never heard about Norway before, but my goal was to go to the USA and work there, so instead of accounting studies, I chose nursing to have a better life and job in the USA and migrate. (N6)

The dream of a life with better finances abroad was an expressed aim for several, while a nurse with a background in the Catholic Church experienced being led by God in choosing the profession. Quite a few informants also said that they wanted to contribute to society through their profession and that they had a particular interest in the subject. One of the teachers illustrated this as follows:

> Yes, I think that desire came to me very early… I've always been very fond of children… there was never any doubt that I wanted to do teacher training… In a way being in children's lives, to change lives for the better. (T8)

Choosing training as a teacher because you love children and wish to contribute to improving children's lives seems meaningful. Resnick (2018) also talks about meaningfulness as reinforcing resilience in addition to preserving hope, positive thinking, and being involved in society. One of our informants highlighted a teacher she herself had as a child who believed in and supported her and became an important role model, and she herself therefore chose to become a teacher. In this regard, Resnick (2018) mentions introductions to role models as motivating for a successful accomplishment of education.

One of the nurses emphasized opportunities for specialization, leadership positions, and research as motivation for choosing the profession, thus referring to goals and dreams for the future. In summary, the choice of entering a specific profession was motivated by determination, work opportunities, dreams of a better life, support from family, and the meaningfulness of contributing to society. This might be seen

in relation to Ungar's (2015) theory about how people's ability to navigate encompasses their motivation to succeed, personal values, and personality traits. For the labour immigrants, lack of work in the country of origin could hinder their success even if they were motivated to study, but instead they saw possibilities abroad.

Professional Identity in the Country of Origin

A powerful identity is identified by Ungar (2015) as a protective factor. Regarding professional identity in our participants' country of origin, all three professional groups stated that they had great professional responsibility there and that they (as members of a professional group) were respected in society but that this did not correspond to salary levels. A teacher from South Asia highlighted the status and respect associated with her profession in her country of origin, saying:

> For example, when I get on the bus at the same time as my teacher, I would prefer that my teacher gets a seat. I will stand if my teacher stands. And I don't want to sit next to my teacher, because there is a lot of respect [chuckles a little], so they are always mentors. And it is teachers who decide, so they have more power. (T6)

This informant shows she expected to be respected and listened to as a successful teacher. According to Ungar (2012: 38), respectability is a core facet of psychosocial resilience. Becoming a respectable person in society so that others (e.g. parents) can be proud can contribute to strengthening identity.

Several of the nurses said that the healthcare system in their country of origin was characterized by the family taking care of the patient around the clock when hospitalized. The nurses' everyday work consisted largely of technical nursing procedures, where, however, they could not make professional decisions alone (as one can in Norway) but that the doctor gave orders. One of the nurses also pointed out that there are no nursing homes in the Philippines, that he was well drilled in various nursing procedures, and that he had little time to talk to individual patients due to low staffing. He went on to say:

> Actually, I like working in the operating room the most. That's the best part of it. Because it's just a matter of routines. If you know the routines, that's fine. And there's a team there, you're not alone… And drug management and all the nursing skills like wound care, except [basic] care, except if it's really needed. (N5)

This quote emphasizes the nurse's high level of competence in technical procedures. On the one hand, nurses pointed out that their profession had low status in their country of origin, compared to other professions, and that working as a nurse there is about passion. On the other hand, they described having left meaningful careers in their country of origin, which might be interpreted as hardiness. Seen in the light of Ungar's (2012) theory, meaningfulness guides the decisions people make regarding which opportunities they value and have access to. For the nurses, the importance they attached to aspects of their future socially and in terms of work in a new country may have helped shape the opportunities they created.

Motivation for Migration

Five of the informants came to Norway in flight, while the others came either on a tourist visa, as an au pair, for family reunification, or as a migrant worker (see Table 10.1). Those who fled highlighted human rights, a good legal system, democracy, freedom of expression, and security as reasons for choosing Norway as a migration country. One of the teachers said that she and the rest of her family found information about Norway on the internet and pointed out the following:

> I've heard from my daughter: The world's happiest children live in Norway, and the world's best education system is in Norway. (T5)

Among the other participants, who came to Norway on a more voluntary basis, many reported that they knew very little about the country before they arrived. They had relatively superficial knowledge about a cold climate, clean water, the midnight sun, the northern lights, and polar bears, though some had information about the structure and organization of the school or healthcare system, which they had received from friends and family. It requires courage to leave one's social network and surroundings both for labour immigrants and for refugees, which, according to Ungar (2012), is a protective factor. For labour immigrant nurses, this has also been shown in earlier research as a strong expression of not giving up when meeting challenges, in learning a new language and finding a new network, and getting a job as a nurse (Nortvedt et al., 2020).

However, what several of our participants were uninformed about was not having the opportunity to work as a nurse in a hospital. One nurse said:

> Before we came here, we applied for authorization as auxiliary nurses, so straight away, we worked as auxiliary nurses. I knew we must look after people. But I didn't know that we weren't supposed to work in a hospital… It was home based. We don't have home care in the Philippines. I also didn't know that most patients or users are old people. (N9)

This nurse chose her education because she wanted to work abroad, and the choice of Norway was for the reason that she knew a woman in the Philippines who ran a recruitment agency. This recruitment channel is not uncommon, and several other nurses also used agencies or agents to get assistance with the moving process and even to get a job in Norway. Nevertheless, it turned out that neither nurses, teachers, nor engineers got a job within their profession after arrival in Norway, and they had to be flexible and adapt to other work if they got a job at all. This form of adaptation also reflects resilience, which Ungar mentions as adaptation under adversity (2012). However, despite the lack of authorization as nurses, they were quite quickly approved as auxiliary nurses after arriving. This was not the case for teachers and engineers, even if some teachers worked as assistant teachers. According to Ungar's (2008) definition of resilience, we can assume that the approval the nurses received as skilled workers can support resilience. The ability to locate resources, such as social networks or bridging programmes, can be strengthened, as auxiliary nurse approval gives them access to positions within the health sector where they can make contacts and meet employers who might help them through the authorization

process. At the same time, it is a clear step backwards in terms of career, which can negatively affect motivation and thus resilience.

Authority Requirements

Participants representing the legally regulated professions, namely nurses and teachers, had to apply to the Directorate of Health, NOKUT and the Directorate of Education, respectively, to obtain Norwegian authorization. For some, especially those who had lived in Norway for approximately 10 years, experienced a long and unpredictable process towards authorization. Teachers who had lived in Norway for several years worked in everything from petrol stations to kindergartens during the process of applying for authorization. All the nurses worked as an auxiliary nurse at the time of the interviews but had previously worked as either cleaners or au pairs. This is in line with other research shows that immigrant teachers and nurses in particular often work as unskilled in their own or another trade after living in Scandinavia for a while (Dahl et al., 2021; Economou & Hajer, 2019; Hajer & Economou, 2017; Røed & Elena, 2022).

Informants who had arrived in 2017 or later were referred to bridging programmes by authorization authorities or by an aid agency or social network if one was informed of the possibility.

Some teachers were very satisfied with the information they received about the application process to NOKUT and the Directorate of Education at a course in Norwegian, at an asylum reception centre, and via NAV (the Norwegian labour and welfare organization). The facilitation of well-founded decisions can, according to Ungar (2012), be considered a structural protective factor such that the information the participants received helped strengthen their resilience and a successful trajectory.

Several teachers also said that they received a relatively quick response to the assessment of their education in the country of origin, but one teacher learned that it took over a year to receive a response. She called for a more efficient system:

> … perhaps easier solutions, that one can enter studies and work as a teacher… You don't have to work as a mathematics teacher right away, but you can start as an assistant teacher or supply teacher… Many children need to see role models. They need to see immigrant teachers teaching. If we lose this resource, we also lose resources on behalf of the children's future. It not only steals from us, but it also steals from the public purse. (T1)

This teacher believed that many immigrants give up on getting their teaching training approved and instead start a completely new education, so that they waste both their own time as well as skills that could instead benefit society. However, the teacher in the quote above had not given up despite hardships and demonstrated resilience in her endurance (Ungar, 2012).

Many informants were also disappointed and felt it was unfair that they did not receive credit for all their previous education – only parts of it. One of the nurses had fought for 8 years for authorization and was upset because nurses with the same

qualifications in the same country of origin received different decisions from the Directorate of Health:

> I'd only hoped that the Directorate of Health would be fair when processing our application. That it, is the same decision for everyone. Also… that the other gets a better decision, that only he gets to go to practice and become a nurse immediately after that, while the other has received refusal, and refusal and refusal. (N6)

The hope of this nurse might be classified as a political hope (Terhart, 2022). The fighting spirit and the desire for fairness for all professionals with the same qualifications refers to a hope for authorization authorities to administer a fairer, more consistent system. This points to a more predictable regulatory framework, which optimally could function as a system that facilitates resilience.

Professional Identity: Both Strengthened and Weakened in a New Country

All the nurses worked as health professionals at various institutions in Norway at the time of their interview. As colleagues were informed that they had training as nurses in their country of origin, other nurses often asked them for advice. It was perceived as both appreciative but also indefensible, as their colleagues represent a knowledge background from a different country.

The informants said that they pointed out incorrect administration of drugs, and that they witnessed nursing colleagues forgetting procedures because they were conducted too rarely. One nurse stated that he was asked to carry out nursing procedures by insecure nurses. He further said:

> … if there is a new nurse at work and they don't know how to do it, they ask me. I said: 'okay'… Sometimes I said, 'I'll explain to you how to do it, and then you have to do it because I'm not allowed'… [Then] they ask me: 'Maybe you can show? Right? Then I will. (N5)

He pointed out that it could provide security for his colleagues that he was at work, as they could trust him to handle most of the nursing work that needed to be done, and he could ask if he was unsure of anything, as he had insight into the patients' needs. In other words, these nurses demonstrated that they maintained their professional identity despite being employed at a lower level as health professionals. A nurse observed that the bridging programme might perhaps help strengthen their identity as a Norwegian nurse.

For the engineers, the situation was slightly different, as they had no official requirement to complete supplementary education. One demonstrated a strong professional identity by applying for a job as an engineer in his first month in Norway. However, he did not get the job, assumed that his own education was out of date, and therefore wanted to update his skills at a Norwegian university. For this highly competent engineer, this was crucial to retaining his professional status and identity and critical for his perceived success and further developing his skills (Remennick, 2013), which are important for strengthening resilience (Theron et al., 2022).

At the same time, representatives from the authorized professions expressed doubts as to whether being authorized necessarily meant that their professional identity was maintained. One of the nurses said:

> Qualified, yes, but do you have your identity intact, after all these roller coasters of ours? That is one of my questions. (N4)

Another nurse supported this question by saying that he was afraid of forgetting acquired knowledge and therefore wanted to work in a hospital in the future, as opposed to doing what he called "simple nursing tasks" in a nursing home. After many years as an auxiliary nurse in Norway, one of the nurses also felt unsure whether she would master the role of a nurse, as she forgot that she was a trained nurse. The fear of failing could have put a stop to their applying for the bridging programme, but our participants did so anyway, which indicates strong professional identity and sufficient self-esteem in line with resilience (Ungar, 2012).

One of the teachers stated that she could do the teaching job better than her Norwegian colleagues because she had two bachelor's degrees and 5 years of experience as a teacher in her country of origin. She was frustrated by the low assistant salary she received for teaching special education and missed the attention and sense of belonging in the classroom that teachers normally have. She went on to say:

> Missing the language, missing that confidence, that yes, they [the teachers] are standing there teaching, even if they are not 'perfect', although I know we can do it in a different way, but those are the things that you see… one compares. That I have more education, but the assistant is completely like somewhere zero... It's always the teacher who is a main character in the classroom. (T6)

Holding on to a strong identity from the home country, she struggled with not being recognized in the educational system in Norway, which is in line with Røed and Tkachenko (2022). Another teacher also highlighted a feeling that her education was worth nothing, and she feared that she would have to study everything again. Several nurses also described that they lacked self-confidence and the courage to speak up about things that are not professionally correct, and one nurse said that "being nothing" and not getting recognition for one's professional identity in Norway eroded self-confidence and was experienced as being completely uneducated. Furthermore, the nurses said that they continuously made professional assessments even though, formally speaking, they could not carry out nursing procedures. At the same time, they were afraid of doing something that was not legally sustainable for fear of not being granted a Norwegian nursing authorization.

Information Flow About Bridging Programmes

The informants received information about the supplementary education offer in various ways. For several of the nurses, they applied to the Norwegian Directorate of Health for authorization, after which they received a recommendation to apply

for the bridging programme for nurses. Some teachers received information from the Directorate of Education or via NOKUT. Certain of the informants, who had refugee status, heard about supplementary education at the asylum reception, in the introduction programme, or in NAV, and many found the necessary information on OsloMet websites or made telephone contact with career counsellors at the university. One of the teachers, who for a period received psychological assistance, collected information about educational opportunities from the psychologist. She said:

> … when I didn't get a job at school I became very depressed. Then I went to a psychologist, and it was the psychologist who helped me. He is the one who started the search, and I used his contact details and references to find out what to do. So, he is the one who sent me to both BI and OsloMet, so I booked an appointment at both places to get guidance. (T6)

The information that our participants received via public channels can be classified as structural support and contributed to the participants becoming empowered by being able to make informed decisions (Day, 2018).

Informants also stated that they heard about bridging programme offers via colleagues and friends who had already completed such education or from their diaspora network. A nurse also said that his employer encouraged him to apply for additional education:

> So, I work 100%, but I get leave of absence when I have lectures. Actually, it's from them [employer], they're the ones who told me that it's a programme from OsloMet and the county council, so I learned it from them… they're the ones who actually arranged it… So, I have a lock-in period after I've completed the education. (N5)

He was one of few got support from his workplace. Some of the informants felt it was unfair when they discovered that refugees were prioritized for the supplementary study. When they read the information on the university's website, they were unsure whether they could apply as migrant workers or would even be offered a place.

Vandeyar and Vandeyar (2017) associates information flow as a well-oiled machine or as a well-managed institution, whereas unclear information can be perceived as unfair prioritizing, as in the case above. As Ungar (2015) states, when well informed, one is better prepared. Covell et al. (2016) point out that is crucial for professional integration and licensing processes that internationally educated health professionals receive sufficient information about the programmes and resources available. Blythe et al. (2008) asserted that relevant information about the authorization process and about bridging programmes would increase the likelihood of migrants re-entering the workforce as professionals in Norway.

Prerequisites for Completing Bridging Programmes

The informants expressed pleasure in having entered the various bridging programmes but had different prerequisites for completing their studies.

Motivations

For the three professional groups, their main aspirations were to obtain a position in their field. In terms of success and resilience, and as highlighted by the Institute of Public Health, work is important for health, as it can provide access to social relationships, identity, personal growth, financial security, and other health-promoting recourses (Folkehelseinstituttet, 2022).

The engineering students in our study saw the complementary education quite specifically as an "entrance ticket" to work networks, and they looked forward to internships in companies in the second semester. At the same time, they expressed that they would leave the bridging programme if they received a job offer. For the other two professional groups, the motivation for practical studies was also great, even if some of the teachers doubted their own language competence when it came to disseminating the subject matter well enough in teaching situations. At the same time, they conveyed an attitude that "*teaching brings joy*" and a desire to work hard to complete their studies, as well as to get the job they wanted. One of the teachers said:

> So, I'll just see how long my body can take it. Right? I can take, you know, when you have hope, you can work a lot extra, because you are very motivated. That, yes, I can do that… I must do it, right? You have an invisible pressure on yourself. But how long my body can take it, I don't know. (T6)

Some teachers were worried about whether they would get a job after the bridging programme, as they had heard of students who had completed their studies without getting a job. Other teachers had already received job offers and were thereby motivated to complete the programme. A student teacher experienced being relieved, confident, and goal-oriented by getting a place in the bridging programme, and she found it inspiring to meet and talk to fellow students. Although the participants described it as both strange and very different to be a student again as an adult at a Norwegian university, they also experienced it as exciting and useful to learn different theories in Norwegian. The teachers looked forward to having an important role in society and to becoming a central role model for children and young people. When asked about satisfaction with the education, one of the teachers answered: "Yes, very much. I feel like I've won a big battle" (T5).

Even if the participants were motivated, some were quite unsure about what the bridging programme could lead to. For the nurses, it was certain that they would get a job as a nurse as soon as they were authorized. For the two other professional groups, however, it was more dubious, which affected their motivation to complete the study, especially for the engineers.

Several informants in all three professional groups mentioned that, in the long term, they wanted a master's degree, and a few nurses wanted to further their education in cancer nursing, cardiology, intensive care, anaesthesia, or midwifery. Furthermore, the nurses were satisfied that the supplementary education gave them a refresher on their own knowledge and renewed their competence. One nurse mentioned that a strong motivating factor was that she would receive authorization as a

nurse in Norway after completing the programme. Another nurse said the following about coping with her own role in practice:

> I just want to practice the nursing profession here in Norway and do the tasks I think I'm good at. (N7)

The hope and joy of mastering tasks as a nurse in Norway was great and something everyone looked forward to after completing the bridging programme.

In summary, we see that the delight of having been given a place and successful coping with both the student role and the professional role are in line with protective factors that strengthen resilience (Ungar, 2015). At the same time, several of our participants struggled with keeping up the hope of employment after the bridging programme, as the teachers in Terhart's (2022) study also expressed, where the hope implied a pressure. However, another study with Filipino nurses underscored a hopeful attitude towards getting a nursing job in Norway; the nurses showed resilience in not giving up but striving for a future as a certified nurse in Norway (Nortvedt et al., 2020).

Personal Requirements

In addition to being motivated, the informants had various other personal and structural prerequisites for entering the bridging programme, whether in terms of finances, family obligations, language, geography, or workplace arrangements.

In all three student groups, most worked (some even took extra shifts) alongside their studies, and more than half of the participants had children. Some students found it exhausting to share energy and attention between work and studies. One teacher described how she tried to find a demanding balance between time and energy for family, work, and her studies:

> I don't earn so much that we can have a 50/50 split. But 50/50 distribution is that he [the spouse] is responsible for finances. He is responsible for the things he can do outside. And I'm responsible for the things that I can do at home. So, when he gets home, he doesn't have to think about food… picking up my girl or making deliveries or going to leisure activities. But here comes a limit as well. Because I get up early, I get my daughter ready, send her to school, then get to work myself, come home, work on homework… It becomes a lot. (T6)

She went on to say that she used late evening and night hours for her studies after her daughter had gone to sleep. She attended lectures 2 days a week and worked the other 3 weekdays. Others found that it became too demanding to work alongside full-time studies. Several had, however, applied for a student loan and been turned down because they had not held a full-time job, so they still had to work a bit alongside their studies. A student teacher said that she and her spouse also had to finance their adult daughter's education abroad; consequently; it was necessary that they both have an income even if she was studying.

Most of the students had a relatively short commute to the university, but one student was a weekly commuter, and two students said that they travelled for up to two and a half hours to and from school. However, one student used the time on

transport for something positive, while at the same time she was worried that it would become more challenging in terms of time with more school days in the coming semesters:

> It's going really well now because I get some alone time on the train… I can listen to something, or I can read something. It's very good now, but if it becomes four days a week, I don't know what I'm going to do. My husband helps a lot with the children. He delivers and picks them up, or he makes food parcels. (T4)

While students who had children described family as a time-consuming commitment, family was also portrayed as a source of energy:

> Actually, it's my family that's the driving force behind me. That, I'm doing this not only for myself, but for my family as well. (N1)

This nurse went on to say that her mother had recently moved to Norway, so she had a lot of help with the children. Others thought it was essential to have support from family. One nurse said:

> The support I get from my family is also a big help. That there is someone who believes in me, in a way, that I can complete my education. (N8)

Despite the hardships, several participants mentioned being a student and at the same time working and/or having children to take care of, and family was highlighted as a contextual protective factor (Ungar, 2015). As many of the participants had paid work, one might expect that they would mention supportive colleagues, which they did not. However, encouraging colleagues are mentioned by teachers in Chassels' (2010) study and by nurses in studies by Smith et al. (2022), Dahl et al. (2022), and Covell et al. (2017).

Conclusion

In this study, we explored the experiences of migrant nurses, teachers, and engineers as they seek to achieve successful professional integration in a new cultural context. We have used the theoretical framework of ecological resilience to shed light on the interplay between individual, social, and institutional resources for occupational reintegration. At the individual level, resilience is conceptualized as the capacity to withstand difficulties (Ungar, 2011). In this regard, resilience is a personal trait with the capacity to navigate resources and negotiate for their meaning (Ungar, 2011). As we have documented, highly skilled migrants exhibit resilience in the face of professional degradation after migration. Yet, their capacity increases if they can expect the situation to be temporary, if there are clear avenues to skills upgrading (e.g., language courses and bridging programmes), and if they can locate social and economic support for their requalification.

A strong professional identity and the belief that they have skills and competencies to offer Norwegian society were key sources of resilience. Yet, the licensing authorities' devaluation of their former education challenged their identity and

self-confidence as professionals. To reduce this threat, they needed to renegotiate what it means to be a professional in a different cultural context. Recognition from colleagues and employers and comparisons with Norwegian colleagues strengthened their confidence that they would master the job as well as their trust in their pedagogical, clinical, or technical skills. With this part of their identity intact, it became easier to accept the need to acquire 'Norwegian' ways of being a professional to achieve full professional integration.

The three professional labour markets exhibit important differences in "resilience structures". The migrant nurses got both LPN (Licenced Practical Nurse) authorization and recognition from colleagues, which validated their professional identity in the absence of formal recognition. Yet, the lack of a clear qualification route led to futile attempts for authorization. The establishment of the bridging programme provided these migrant nurses with a structured pathway for requalification, authorization and, finally, employment. The teachers and engineers also found the bridging programmes to be providing resources necessary for employment in Norway, such as practical training and language training. The bridging programmes support resilience, as completion carries hope for professional reintegration. Yet, compared to the nurses, the teachers and engineers were further from their professional labour market upon entry into the programme and were also made aware that the programme gave no guarantee of a job after completion. This uncertainty implies that they continuously negotiated the worth of the bridging programme against employment opportunities, health, and effort.

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Chapter 11
Multicultural Perspectives in Driving Instructor Education and Driving Schools for Professional Drivers in Norway

Tatjana Bru Blixen, Kai Andre Fegri, and Ellen Beate Hellne-Halvorsen

Keywords Driving instructor education · Professional drivers · Multilingual · Multicultural

Introduction

A driving instructor trainer has following considerations from the field of training professional drivers and sums it up in this way:

> People in the industry have been spilling the tea for some time now about how challenging and tiring it is to work with multilingual driving candidates. It is difficult for them to reflect, share their thoughts and explain actions. We are fortunate to have students [driving instructor candidates] of immigrant background in our own classrooms. Otherwise, we might have forgotten about it a little bit, and then we'd have a little worse driving instructors in the labor market.

Could this discourse be explained by the lack of multicultural tools for driving instructor trainers and driving instructors who train professional drivers with an immigrant background? According to this driving instructor trainer, however, positive experiences in their encounters with the multicultural environment are undoubtedly useful and highly appreciated.

Professional drivers of heavy vehicles, such as buses and trucks, are expected to have much more than just high-quality driving skills. They ought to have knowledge and understanding of modern vehicle dynamics, risk management, necessary social etiquettes, local geography, relevant laws and regulations, personal and public safety measures. Aptitude for customer service, an ability to communicate well with others as well as plan a route for comfort, efficiency and safety are also among the

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essential requirements imposed on professional drivers (Norwegian Road Traffic Department's Manual V858, 2005).

Over the last few decades, the age of globalization and increased human mobility have brought new challenges and demands to the role of not only drivers, but also driving instructors and their trainers. A growing number of those who receive driving education and training in Norway, includes recent immigrants of diverse cultural backgrounds who do not have Norwegian as a first language. Due to the low levels of language proficiency, they may require additional support and resources to help them better understand and apply traffic rules and regulations in their new country and adapt to the local driving environment (Krogstad, 2007).

However, there are no official training programs, teaching materials or courses designed specifically for immigrant professional drivers that would focus on cultural differences, language barriers and variations in traffic laws, road conditions, learning or communication styles. The driving instructor's role has thus become much more complex and demanding than simply teaching people to change attitudes and understand the requirements for becoming a professional driver. In order to deal with the unique challenges faced by immigrant driving candidates, driving instructors need intercultural competence. This kind of competence rests upon the educational content they receive through driving instructor training programs.

In this study we set out to investigate how immigrant pre-service professional drivers are integrated into the education and training in driving schools. The perspective lies both with institutions that educate driving instructors and those who work as driving instructors in driving schools and train pre-service professional drivers. As understandings of interculturality and multilingual matters in relation to teachers' and trainers' competences continue to develop (Byram, 2021), we wish to discuss and emphasize the importance of their adaptation to a specific cultural context, namely, education of immigrant professional drivers. There is a range of questions arising from the apparent contradictions between learning of respect for otherness, tolerance and ambiguity on one side, and appropriation of a strict and seemingly monocultural view of behavior in traffic on the other. However, our study centers on those questions (outlined below) that we believe will generate a discussion which has a bearing on the prospective driving instructor education in Norway:

1. What experiences do driving instructor trainers and driving instructors have in training students and candidates of immigrant backgrounds?
2. How are cultural and linguistic diversity emphasized and dealt with in theoretical education and practical training?

Driving Instructor Education and Professional Driver Education in Norway

In this chapter we will outline a description of driving instructor education and professional driver education in Norway. Both driving instructor trainers and driving instructors have a main task to educate on how to safely operate a vehicle in traffic. This includes teaching driving instructors and prospective drivers about traffic rules and regulations, cooperation in traffic and reasonable attitude towards traffic safety and driving behavior.

Driving instructor education typically involves learning about traffic laws, regulations, and best practices for controlling and directing vehicle and pedestrian traffic. It is a two-year full-time study program at a university level that offers a combination of theoretical (3 days a week) and practical (2 days a week) training, in form of both classroom instruction and supervised behind-the-wheel sessions. The program covers the following courses and themes: Road Safety and Risk Assessment, Traffic Rules and Legislation, Driver Training, Communication and Customer Service, Vehicles and Technology, Pedagogy and Teaching Techniques, Psychology and Behavior and Practical Training and Exercises. Once they are certified, driving instructors become eligible for training candidates for ordinary (category B) driving licenses.

After 2 years of basic training, a fully qualified driving instructor, can apply for an additional 6 month-study program which is required in order to become a driving instructor of heavy vehicles and train professional drivers. Professional Driver Skills includes 280 h of training. The curriculum that is relevant for both professional drivers and driving instructors of heavy vehicles, covers the following topics and themes: Basic Driving Skills, Transportation of Passengers and Goods, Laws and Regulations, Economic and Environmentally Friendly Driving, Customer Service and Communication, Health, Safety and Ergonomics, and Crisis Management and First Aid.

Professional driver education in driving schools in Norway is a type of training program that provides individuals with the skills and knowledge needed to obtain a commercial driver's license. The program typically includes both theoretical and practical components and covers topics such as driving regulations, vehicle maintenance, and safe driving practices. The professional driver is the professional road user and practitioner. For this reason, greater demands are placed on professional drivers than other road users. They follow the same training model for driver-oriented education, but drivers of vehicles over 3500 kg must have a vocational education in addition to a driving license. The education of professional drivers has a duration of 10 weeks in addition to education for a driving license for heavy vehicles. Both theoretical and practical tests are conducted in Norwegian. The curriculum in driving schools for both ordinary driving license and professional drivers, provides guidelines for the candidates, who are, through active participation, expected to develop an ability to reflect, take the perspective of others and practice cooperation in traffic. The curriculum is based on the Goals for Driver Education

matrix (see Table 11.1 GDE-matrix) consisting of five stages (Norwegian Road Traffic Department's Manual V858, 2005). It serves as a comprehensive guide for driver education programs, outlining the key components that are included in the

Table 11.1 GDE-matrix (simplified version)

Level	Knowledge and skills to master	Awareness of risk-increasing factors	Self-evaluation
Level 5 Social environment	*Knowledge of and control over* cultural and sub-cultural issues, work-related issues, group goals, values and motives, social environment	*Risks related to* cultural or work issues impacting on driving or context of journey	*Self-evaluation and awareness of* how culture or work issues impact on driving decisions and judgements, how placement within social group or work environment influences choices
Level 4 Personal goals and skills for life	*Knowledge of and control over* how life goals and personal behaviour, motives, competencies, lifestyle, values and ambitions influence driving	*Risks related to* acceptance of risk, self-enhancement through driving, high sensation seeking, susceptibility to social pressure, use of alcohol or drugs, personal values and attitudes	*Self-evaluation and awareness of* personal skills for impulse control, attitude towards risk, introspective competence, risky tendencies and habits, safety-negative motives
Level 3 Goals and context of driving	*Knowledge and skills concerning* purpose of the journey, route planning, evaluation of required driving time, evaluation of necessity of journey, safety and control of passengers	*Risks connected with* driver's physiological condition, purpose of the journey, driving environment such as rural/urban or day/night, social context and in-vehicle company	*Self-evaluation and awareness of* own physiological condition, journey planning skills, typical journey goals or expectations, typical risky driving motives, self-critical thinking skills
Level 2 Mastery of traffic situations	*Knowledge and skills concerning* traffic rules, observation, signals, anticipation, speed adjustment, safety margins	*Risks caused by* wrong expectations/ assumptions, vulnerable road users, disobeying rules, unpredictable behaviour, information overload, difficult conditions such as darkness	*Self-evaluation and awareness of* ability to deal with a variety of traffic situations, observational skills, planning and anticipation, personal driving style, personal safety margins
Level 1 Vehicle control and manoeuvring	*Knowledge and skills concerning* control of direction and position, technical aspects of vehicle, physical handling when cornering, accelerating and braking	*Risks associated with* insufficient skills, poor speed adjustment, difficult road conditions, improper use of seat belt, head restraint, under-inflated or worn tyres	*Self-evaluation and awareness of* understanding of essential knowledge and skills, strengths and weaknesses of basic vehicle control, ability to control the vehicle in challenging conditions

curriculum. To achieve those goals, the candidate must become familiar with the content of the matrix through theory, communication and practice, all related to the awareness of risk-increasing factors and self-evaluation.

The GDE-matrix shows that, in order to improve road safety, drivers need to possess not only knowledge and skills relating to the actual driving task or the physical and mechanical skills of driving (Level 1) and negotiating through traffic (Level 2) but, more significantly, the skills to self-evaluate personal risks associated with individual journeys (Level 3) and the personal values and goals that influence their behavior in traffic (Level 4). The matrix points out the influence social environment can have on the driver (Level 5). The overall aim of the matrix is to understand how attitudes, beliefs and behaviors influence both competence and performance of a driving style.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of the study is multifaceted. It is based on vocational pedagogy and didactic strategies with special emphasis on the connection between theory and practice. Furthermore, it focuses on students` learning processes in connection to their ability to reflect on learning outcomes and driving instructors' mentoring in both classrooms and practical driving sessions. Due to the multicultural perspective, we employ theories on second language acquisition and learning as well as theories on intercultural competence and culturally responsive teaching.

While there is a significant body of research about how second languages are learned and taught (Lightbown & Spada, 2006), how aspects of culture are integrated into second and foreign language acquisition and learning (Arabski & Wojtaszek, 2011), as well as about intercultural communication in education and its transformative potentials (Byram, 2021; Gay, 2010; Nieto, 2018), there is significantly less that explores the intersections among language, culture and professional drivers' education and training, both internationally and in Norway.

Interrelated Elements in Vocational Didactics: Reflection, Self-Regulation and the Eighth Variable

Vocational Teacher Education (VTE) and Vocational Education and Training (VET) are well known for a dual system that combines theoretical and practical studies in one course. The main purpose of (VTE) and (VET) is to prepare individuals both socially and professionally to acquire an occupation and to cope in the lifelong learning process (Sylte, 2019). There are several differing approaches to mentoring students both in classrooms and practical situations and contexts. Traditionally, a didactic relational model has been used in Norway since 1978, building upon six

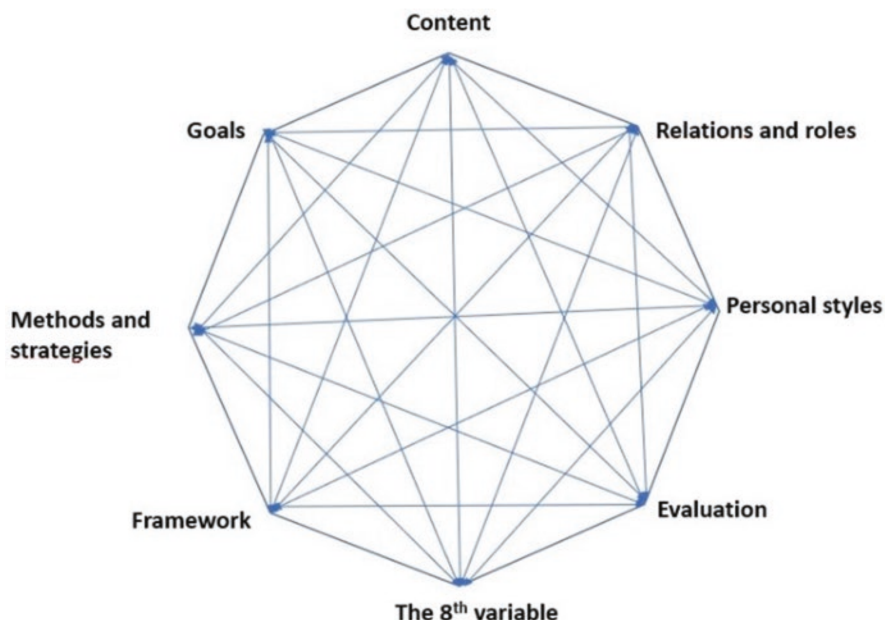

Fig. 11.1 Revised didactic model

interrelated elements that can help teachers plan and conduct lessons and mentoring sessions (Hiim & Hippe, 2019). Of all the approaches we have encountered, the one created by Mathisen and Høigaard (2021) seems both thoroughly grounded in the existing relational model and extended by a couple of new factors that we find relevant for the context of professional drivers in a multicultural perspective. The key variables covered in the model comprise: content, goals, methods and strategies, frameworks, assessment, relations and teacher/student roles, personal styles and the eighth variable (see Fig. 11.1). According to Mathisen and Høigaard (2021), the 8th variable is an unfixed category that can be adapted to purpose and aim of teaching and learning. In regard to our study, we find it reasonable to contextualize this eighth variable to learners' diverse linguistic and cultural background.

What underpins most pedagogical practices in the field of adult education and training is also a widely applied model of *experiential learning* (Kolb, 1984). The basis for this model is learners' own experience and practice of new skills, which is then reviewed, analyzed, and evaluated systematically in three additional stages: reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. The trainer's role as facilitator is important during each phase of the cycle. All the stages combine theory and practice as well as they include the following questions to be answered by the practitioners: What was my concrete experience? How did it go? What could I have done better or differently? How can I improve? The experiential approach is learner-centered and allows the individual participants to manage and share responsibility for learning with their trainer.

Reflection refers to the act of thinking deeply about something, often with the intention of gaining new insights or understanding. This can involve self-reflection, where an individual thinks about their own thoughts, feelings, and experiences, or it can involve reflecting on external events or ideas. Reflection is a key part of personal growth and development. By reflecting on their progress and considering their causal attributions, learners can discover how they improved in relation to their goals and expectations and use the actual experience to improve performance in future tasks (Schön, 1983).

Self-insight and self-regulation refer to one's own understanding and perception of own learning styles, thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and personality. It includes being aware of one's own strengths and weaknesses, understanding how one's actions affect others, and having the ability to put oneself in someone else's place. Self-evaluation can be a tool to raise awareness of one's own work performance and identify areas that need improvement. It can also help boost motivation and self-esteem and help a person plan their career path (Jossberger et al., 2020; Mathisen & Høigaard, 2021).

Ability to reflect on own practices along with an ability to self-regulate learning, personal styles, roles and goals, to communicate in a language of instruction and summarize the experienced content into concise statements and generalizations are among the most necessary prerequisites for learning through Kolb's (1984) *practice – theory – new practice* approach.

VTE and VET strive to foster independent and self-directed learners. Hence, self-insight, reflection on and self-regulation of cognitive and affective processes during practical task performance in learning for the professions, are crucial for helping students effectively learn and master independence (Jossberger et al., 2020).

Second Language Pedagogy

The ability to use a language is not limited to the knowledge of vocabulary and grammatical rules, but it also requires the ability to use language appropriately in particular situations and settings. The sociocultural theory of second language acquisition (SLA) focuses on second language learners' identity and on language acquisition understood as becoming a member of a given language community. Many users of second languages are oftentimes disadvantaged in monolingual educational contexts because they face the double task of learning a new language and new subject content simultaneously (Alver, 2015; Gibbons, 2006).

Several factors influence the speed and trajectory of a second language development, including supportive communities, socioeconomic status or high teacher expectations, and there is considerable variation among individuals in the way this process occurs. However, a primary external influence is undoubtedly language instruction – both explicit instruction in all text-level skills (from words and sentences to textual and discursive practices) and implicit instruction associated with providing facilitative language- and literacy-rich environments (Ellis, 2002; Lightbown & Spada, 2006; Snow, 2012). According to the sociocultural theory of

SLA, learning *about* language is most meaningful when it occurs in the context of actual language use (Gibbons, 2006). Moreover, oral language proficiency is closely connected to the development of both reading and writing skills in second languages (Monsen & Randen, 2022; Snow, 2012). However, culturally and linguistically diverse students may often struggle to fully convey their intellectual abilities or genuinely understand teachers and learning tasks due to the absence of shared communicative frames of reference, procedural protocols, rules of etiquette and discourse systems (Gay, 2010).

Language, Culture and Intercultural Communication

There is no single definition of "culture", but according to a common constructionist view it is more a process than a static entity – something that "we do" rather than something "we have or belong to". It is understood as a dynamic, rule-governing system that defines the forms, functions and content of communication. Different cultures entail different communication practices and behaviors (Gay, 2010). Our focus is first and foremost on (a) culture as challenge (dealing with interpersonal relationships, cooperation and communication styles), (b) culture as a citizenship (consisting of various practices that may function as a basis for discrimination, such as ways of speaking a language) and (c) culture as a national asset encompassing rituals, folklore or belief systems (Piller, 2017). Culture is, regardless of the content which includes some people and excludes others, embedded in context, created, socially constructed and, equally important, dialectical and learned (Nieto, 2018).

Similarly, language itself is not a static and constant system, but a social and functional process, continually altered and influenced by individuals (Halliday, 1973). It is deeply implicated with culture and an important part of it (Nieto, 2018). According to Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (Sapir, 1968), language is not a mechanical instrumental tool for transmitting information, but a way of defining experience, thinking and knowing; it is a guide to both social reality and culture, expressing and describing, but equally important recreating our worldviews, beliefs and values. Intellectual growth and reflection are contingent on the mastery of language as a social means of thought. Language is always at the very heart of teaching, and understanding connections between language, education and culture is thus critical to improving all kinds of interactions, as "who we are in intercultural communication is to a large extent a function of our linguistic proficiency" (Piller, 2017, p. 73).

Multiculturalism, as a celebration of cultural diversity, has a strong foothold in education (Teräs, 2019). *Culturally responsive teaching* (Gay, 2010) and *intercultural communicative competence* (Byram, 2021) are some of the rich theoretical insights into and eloquent contributions to the subject of culturally sensitive pedagogies. They provide knowledge about ways to improve learning and achievement of linguistically and culturally diverse students through empowering teachers' competences on how to embrace diversity, value the cultural heritages of minority groups, question own positions and stimulate inquiry, critique and analysis. These

approaches are emancipatory, transformative and promote the idea that "students are obliged to be productive members of and render service to their respective ethnic communities as well as to the national society" (Gay, 2010, p 36). Yet, intercultural communication in education has often been criticized for a) its lack of explicit language teaching, b) poor attempts to systematically develop teachers' skills for incorporating cultural diversity into instruction and c) for failing to counteract monolingual and monocultural mindsets, resulting, in turn, in cultural stereotypes and banal nationalism (Gay, 2010; Gibbons, 2006; Piller, 2017). A growing body of research, nevertheless, along with constructed theories that generate teaching implications, continue to provide evidence on the benefits of engagements in culturally sensitive pedagogies that encourage students to find their own voices, new ways of knowing and to become more active participants in shaping their own learning (Gay, 2010; Nieto, 2018; Shor, 1992).

None of the previously mentioned concepts of multicultural education is expected to consist of an extra, additive content, but rather of structural changes in content and process (Nieto, 2018). Hence, both "methods and strategies", "personal styles", "the 8th variable", "relations and roles" "self-regulation" and "reflective practices" represented in various didactic models, can be associated with teachers' and learners' active engagement in intercultural communication in which both language and culture play a vital, fundamental role.

Method

The study seeks knowledge about how driving instructor trainers and driving instructors in driving schools include multicultural perspectives in their teaching and training of prospective driving instructors and professional drivers. This study is based on qualitative interview data of both groups of informants.

Qualitative Interviews

Qualitative interviews are characterized as professional conversations that seek information and knowledge about the informants' experiences related to a phenomenon or a thematic area. Research centered on meanings and understandings of phenomena as experienced by participants, demands a qualitative approach (Creswell, 2007). The informants that were selected in this study were divided into two groups: driving instructor trainers (T) in the two-year basic education of driving instructors and driving instructors (DI) in driving schools. Interviews were conducted as professional conversations where we sought information about their experiences with education of multilingual and multicultural students and pre-service professional drivers, respectively. The interviews were carried out digitally and individually, according to a semi-structured interview guide. The questions in the

interview guides for the two groups of informants corresponded thematically. The questions were related to (a) both linguistic and cultural aspects of the trainers' experiences with multilingual and multicultural students and pre-service professional drivers, (b) trainers' pedagogical adaptations in classrooms and practical training, and (c) their general experiences with learning and training. In other words, it is information about what driving instructors and driving instructor trainers say they do in their training. We do not get to know what they actually do or do not do.

In total, eight interviews were conducted: three of them with driving instructor trainers from a university (T) and five with driving instructors (DI) from three different driving schools. All the informants are certified driving instructors in the age range from 27–60 years. All are men and two of the driving instructors (DI) are immigrants and bilingual. The driving instructors work as trainers of heavy vehicles, such as heavy-duty trucks and buses. All of the driving instructor trainers (T) have previously worked as driving instructors in driving schools. It is worth to notice that neither (T) nor (DI) have formal competence in multicultural education or second language studies, but they all have experience in working with multilingual students and pre-service drivers.

Ethical Considerations

Fully informed consent forms containing the purpose of the study, were obtained from all the participants. Driving instructors and driving instructor trainers agreeing to participate in interviews, had the right not to take part or to withdraw from research at any time. They were also informed about the instruments involved (only audio- and no video-recordings) while anonymity and confidentiality were ensured. The study has been registered with the Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research (Sikt) under a project number 489618. The recordings were stored safely, on the researchers' individual computers. These were deleted at the end of the project.

The driving instructor trainers who were interviewed in the study and who make up a part of the data base, are our colleagues. This can have certain implications due to our close relationships as colleagues in the workplace. But in this case, two of the researchers, who are philologists, represent a different subject area than the informants, so that the likelihood of a bias in the research process is smaller even though qualitative research can never be value free. However, there is no reason to reject the validity of the data, according to Hammersley and Atkinson (1996, p. 151). The collected data expresses experiences and experienced practices of both informant groups who teach multilingual and multicultural students and candidates in an overall inclusive perspective. The data base reveals knowledge about a phenomenon and as such is considered to be both valid and reliable.

Finally, we acknowledge that diversity and interculturality, at times, are quite sensitive to talk about (Itkonen, 2020). It brings about personal passion and

conviction, but also unease and concerns about stereotypical divisions of the world into more or less developed cultures, regions or other societal groups.

Results

The study seeks knowledge about how driving instructor trainers (T) and driving instructors (DI) include multicultural perspectives in their teaching of prospective driving instructors and professional drivers. The study is based on qualitative interview data of both groups of informants. Both theory-driven (deductive) and data-driven (inductive) stages of analysis are used to generate themes from the response codes. Themes and sub-themes are related to culture, instructional approach and language skills.

Culture

Learning Culture

The increasing diversification of not only the field of professional drivers, but also the driving instructor education, has created a new discourse among trainers about the general "other" learning culture which has shaped and influenced their students, pre-service driving instructors of immigrant background. It is understood as a banking model of education (Freire, 2001) where knowledge is simply transferred to the learners who, thus, have no sufficient autonomy, critical curiosity, or creative engagement in self-regulated, reflective practices:

> Some of my non-native students are rather fluent in Norwegian, but still struggle with the learning culture. When I say that I don't have the answer and that they need to discuss or analyze a case, I'm being too vague for them. They can even get a little annoyed with me because I'm unable to give them very clear commands or answers along the way (T1).

Another trainer uses the term "a challenging pedagogical culture" where learners expect to get the correct answers from their teachers, and points out that: "The students themselves know what they're struggling with and what they have to improve […], reflection and self-insight, but they do make an apparent progress during the course of their studies, […] which, I must say, generally is a good thing" (T2). It is during the practical behind-the wheel-training with their own candidates that students of immigrant background reveal certain weaknesses in inciting reflection as a pedagogical tool: "It is in practical situations they experience that a pedagogical culture is quite different. [..] to make others reflect on their choices is challenging [as] you have to penetrate deeper into the language than just being able to read and write" (T2).

The lack of immigrant students' ability to reflect or self-regulate learning is accompanied by other consequences of the banking educational system they

attended in the past. They are perceived as silent and withdrawn, but also exceptionally respectful of the lecturers, as "they don't' ask any questions" and can even get "kind of disturbed when the other students start protesting or giving their own opinions in the classroom" (T1).

When discussing "the other" learning culture, trainers emphasize that it is important that students are involved in practical training, as "that is where they face the real challenges" and have to deal with the prospective heavy vehicle drivers who are difficult to reach due to their inability to reflect. The experiential learning is mentioned as the primary source of knowledge about immigrants' – both students' and professional drivers' – performance and learning styles in connection to the reflective practices, that all trainers find to be insufficiently addressed in the curriculum, and less covered theoretically in their lectures: "We talk about it in a very general way in the classroom. We do what we can, but we don't have a special program for it. […] They [students] experience most things in practice. […] I wish [multicultural issues and reflection were] more clarified in the curriculum" (T3). Reflection is a common way of acquiring knowledge, but the immigrant students and candidates seem to be struggling with this learning approach. "They expect to get the right answers. [They do not think] their reflections and thoughts are worth anything. It is the same for our non-native students, but to a much lesser degree" (T2).

Driving instructors have similar experiences with the candidates' learning culture from their home country. One of the informants talks about how the candidates react to reflective questions from the instructors: "Why do you ask me? You're the teacher, they say. They're not used to it" (DI2). Reflection is emphasized as essential for the students' self-awareness, which, in turn, should make them safe drivers for passengers and goods, and prevent risk to themselves and others in traffic. Challenges with self-awareness also mean "seeing their own mistakes, making them admit that they have made mistakes. And then they lose their honor" (DI5), says one of the informants, who is an immigrant from Asia himself. However, most candidates see the purpose of this kind of training, are motivated to get a job and become independent professional drivers. One of the informants points out that for some candidates, the driving profession entails "avoiding the feeling of not being integrated" (DI2) as one is mostly alone at work.

Traffic Culture

All informants are incontestably concerned with teaching students and candidates about how to behave properly in practical driving situations in traffic. The traffic rules in Norway comprise certain attitudes, ethical codes, cooperation with and respect for others. The informants experience it as a challenge, but they also emphasize the importance of helping students develop competence in current driving rules and intercultural communication in order to become successful driving instructors for professional drivers, prevent accidents and improve traffic safety. Hence adjustments and adaptations are absolutely necessary. Those candidates who understand that the driving culture in Norway is different from the one they are used to, adapt

much faster and more effectively. They also realize that there is a purpose to the driving culture they will now learn. Then "language is no longer a problem" (T3). This is related to the candidates' period of residence in the country and "the degree of how much you have involved yourself and been employed"(T2).

At the same time, in order to be included, attitudes and behavior patterns are emphasized in learning processes, especially in practical situations. This seems to be just as important as language skills, because "it doesn't help if you are proficient in language, if you don't have the right attitude," says the same informant. He goes on to say that if professional or any other kind of drivers stand out "by being thugs" in traffic, they will be stigmatized, and it will have consequences for the inclusion. This will also threaten the traffic safety and cause material damage to vehicles. At the same time the informant finds it interesting to challenge these candidates and make them question the culture that they are accustomed to from the countries of their origin. The informants emphasize the importance of making prospective driving instructors aware of the new driving culture and teaching pre-service professional drivers about the right attitudes that will apply to the traffic culture and constitute a fundamental prerequisite for inclusion.

An important aspect of driver training can be summarized with the concept of consequence understanding. The informants place particular emphasis on the fact that prospective professional drivers must keep agreements, act ethically and show respect towards passengers, employers and customers, pay attention to and follow traffic rules. If a professional driver does not consider the consequences of his or her own behavior and attitudes, it could have, among other things, economic implications. One of the informants says: "If a driver wants a good reputation, then they are obliged to do a good job" (DI4).

Instructional Approach

Both driving instructor trainers (T) and driving instructors (DI) teach multilingual and multicultural groups of students and candidates. In line with the curriculum for training (cf. Chap. 1), students and candidates must develop knowledge, skills and attitudes, related to specific learning outcome descriptions. They must, among other things, participate in learning processes in interaction with others, develop the ability to conduct self-assessment, reflect on own learning and think critically. We wanted to gain insight into the informants' general experiences with multicultural students and candidates in training situations with an emphasis on both challenges and opportunities, subject matter and pedagogical content knowledge. We have perspective on each of the two training contexts.

Cooperative Work in Classrooms

How trainers facilitate learning in classroom situations, is largely influenced by their competence in the multicultural field. Working with a rather complex group of students and candidates with different mother tongues and religious practices, different attitudes to gender and different understandings of the new traffic culture, seems to make trainers inclusive and tolerant in training. One of the informants says the following: “I have to be very careful when I train others, so that I do not harass or give feedback based on their gender, skin color or religion” (T2). The same informant emphasizes that he is lacking insight into different religions and cultures, and that “there are big differences”. In this context, it refers to the curricula which are very general and say nothing about different religions and attitudes that are important for driving and learning cultures. The informant concludes the following: “I will be tolerant of your attitudes and respect what you stand for, but at the same time I have to be determined and let you know what exactly it is you need to know for the job you will be doing” (T2).

The curriculum for driving instructor education (cf. Chap. 1) combines teaching of theory, 3 days per week, and guided practical training at a driving school for 2 days. During this two-year program, students are expected to develop competence within four key subject areas: traffic specialist knowledge, traffic pedagogy and didactics, personal and social competence, and change and development skills. But the multicultural dimension is insufficiently covered in the curriculum, despite the fact that there is an increasing number of students with Norwegian as a second language who receive training in order to become driving instructors. It is precisely this fact that “makes it very important and applicable that we have to deal with it”, and the same informant goes on to say that “had we not had them as students, we might have forgotten that a little bit and we would have had slightly worse driving instructors in the labor market” (T1). He refers here to both the arrangement of the training and to “the intention of the curriculum that is difficult to reach”. Therefore, this informant believes that this pushes forward changes in the curriculum.

The differentiation in training is highlighted as an important pedagogical practice. The rationale the informants give for this, is that the multicultural students have insufficient knowledge on traffic culture in Norway and weaker language skills. One of the informants believes that “these students seek additional information, they demand more from you as a lecturer”, and emphasizes that “this is a very good situation, because then I can respond to the need” (T1). The same informant calls attention to various ways in which he differentiates teaching to meet the students’ needs, such as (a) simplifying the language he uses in teaching, (b) preparing material before the actual teaching (*flipped classroom*) or (c) stimulating students to make audio recordings of the lectures for repetition and further processing. But the same informant says that “I’m afraid it doesn’t happen to a very large extent” (T1), while another teacher educator says that “we [try to facilitate] as best as we can, but there is no special program” (T2). The educational program provides training for a practical profession, but it is the theory that can be challenging for the students. The informants promote and support inclusion of immigrant students and claim that

"they are not discriminated against" (T3), but the main prerequisite is that they show an open interest and contribute actively to the learning processes.

Learning activities are largely based on inquiry, problematization of subject matter and student-active methods, such as reflections, discussions and group work. According to the informants, to what extent the multicultural students participate in such learning processes, depends on how long they have been living in the country and whether they have parts of their schooling from Norway. Reflection and self-insight are seen as the greatest challenges for students who have no "depth in the language" (T2), as one of the informants says. "Self-insight and reflection are very challenging for many. […] it is difficult to work with the non-native students" (T3), says another informant because they are not used to this way of learning. The informants point out that the students' learning culture is to a large extent influenced by their previous schooling practices, as illustrated in the following example:

> Many come from cultures where they have gone to schools with a lot of teacher talk. It is difficult for them to create reflection. […] We probably notice that some of those who struggle with language are more instructive than reflective in their teaching. But I think it's because the language becomes a little simplified, and you don't have the opportunity to use the whole language repertoire (T2).

Facilitation in Practical Training

Both driving culture and learning culture are different from what the learners are used to. All informants confirm that the population of candidates in driving schools consists of approximately 60–80% of learners of different language and cultural backgrounds. In driving schools, driving instructors train prospective drivers in both theoretical driving topics and practical driving skills. What they have in common is that they train professional drivers of heavy vehicles, such as buses and trucks, and they have all worked as professional drivers themselves before.

One of the requirements is that candidates must have technical knowledge of the vehicle and learn how to handle a vehicle in a technically proper manner. This requires familiarizing oneself with the technical instructions when reading. The instructors' main impression is that many of the candidates lack this insight and prefer that the teachers show and tell how the technical part works. This could be partly explained by deficiencies in language skills, but also by the fact that many of the multilingual candidates come from different cultures and have different experiences in understanding the technical characteristics of a vehicle, that in turn are important for how the vehicle should be handled in traffic.

The instructors see challenges in training candidates of immigrant background to become good professional drivers. Even though they have several years' experience in working with this group of candidates, they have no formal competence in second language or intercultural pedagogy. In order to solve certain difficulties and make up for deficiencies in competence, they seek cooperation and advice from colleagues. One of the instructors explains: "Sometimes I ask other teachers to join me in a practical training session and watch me supervise a candidate, and then we sit

and talk about it afterwards" (DI1). Another informant finds it entertaining to work with immigrants who have weak language skills and are not acquainted with the Norwegian driving culture. It inspires instructors to be creative and find other solutions than simplified linguistic explanations, such as using drawings, pictures, videos, or demonstrations. As another instructor confirms: "Too many words, it's no use"(DI4). In theoretical teaching, the emphasis is placed on learner-active methods so that all candidates are included: conversations and pair or group work. One of the driving instructors says he has good experience with arranging groups where "one who is linguistically strong and one who is weak work together" (DI3). This is how they learn from each other and become integrated into the training.

Combining communication and reflection with candidates in practical training, seems problematic. "If a candidate is unable to talk while driving, I don't interfere," says one of the informants (DI5). The didactic strategy is to do one thing at a time, which involves repeated stops and breaks during practical training in order to get the student to reflect and justify their actions and choices. Driving instructors also use video demonstrations to stimulate self-awareness and reflection. They see the importance of this teaching technique because many of the candidates have challenges with using reflection as a learning strategy.

Language Skills for Education and Working Life

Driving instructor education and driving schools require students and candidates to relate to language and texts, either through reading of theory, regulations and laws, or communication in writing and oral language use with fellow students/candidates, teachers and prospective job-related work tasks in general. Language skills are important for education and working life, for mastering work tasks and being included in the society. This is emphasized in the training, while the teachers experience that many students and candidates of various cultural backgrounds, face linguistic challenges.

Competence goals in the curriculum for driving instructor education consist of various student-active learning methods, such as group discussions, reflections and cooperative learning. Driving instructor trainers notice that it entails a linguistic challenge for many, as "they see it as a hindrance and that it affects their feeling of pride" (T1). Language-impaired students often become passive and participate little in such learning sequences. During training, it is common that trainers attempt to simplify their language, speak slowly, and repeat the most important information in the subject matter. It is especially the abstract concepts that are challenging, but also common words that take on a special meaning in the field. The informants point out that the students must have "a conceptual framework at the bottom of their competence", and that this is even more important for professional drivers "in order to be able to handle a profession […] They are not supposed to merely drive around in a car, but they will practice a profession and that, indeed, requires certain language skills" (T2).

We asked the trainers which skills they found to be most challenging for their students and candidates; writing, reading or oral language use. Regarding writing, the informants pointed out that it could be challenging for all students, regardless of culture and language background, but that the writing "generally goes smoothly", because the writing process itself entails "that they can think twice before writing and can correct any potential deficiencies" (T2). Furthermore, several informants point out that students might receive help with their writing work from "spouse, cohabitant or friends outside our academic classroom who help them write" (T1). Therefore, it is difficult to assess students' writing skills, the trainers say. Reading with understanding can be challenging, depending on what kind of texts the students read, but the informants claim that "there really isn't much difference from the ethnic Norwegian students" (T2).

When it comes to oral competence and communication skills, it seems to be an essential skill for driving instructor education, as they train driving instructors for prospective professional drivers. Driving instructors communicate the traffic subject and traffic conditions, both through theory teaching in school contexts and in practical driving training. As one of the informants brings out; "as a teacher, you have to convey something, and in our subject, it is mostly done orally" (T1). Another driving instructor trainer argues that it is difficult to have conversations about, for example, speed adjustments, attitudes and practical driving skills if language competence is weak.

The trainers believe that "a minimum of language competence" is a prerequisite for inclusion and point out that this also indicates an understanding of the attitudes and values that they believe are important for a prospective driving instructor and for the driving culture. At the same time, they emphasize that it is positive to have driving instructors "who speak another language" (T3) on the basis that many of their future students come from a different culture.

Driving instructors (DI) seem to place great emphasis on language skills. They are closer to the practical part of training candidates for a future profession. As a professional driver, you must not only understand and communicate traffic information, but also communicate with other clients and managers, with passengers on buses, and with recipients of goods. "Professional driving is a service profession", claims one of the driving instructors (DI1). Several informants emphasize that the candidates do master the practical driving and manage the theoretical part of the training, but they have challenges with communication – "When it comes to communication, they struggle" (DI5). To be a professional bus driver, for example, they have to cope with passengers and their everyday life. Driving instructors have received complaints saying that fully trained professional drivers are not good enough in Norwegian and refer to episodes where passengers ask if the bus goes there or there, and they are not even able to answer. […] Improving their Norwegian language skills makes the drivers more competent, […] their training goes easier, and they do a better job afterwards" (DI4).

During the training, driving instructors expect the candidates to speak and actively use Norwegian language. They refer to the plan and curriculum for training where it is stated that "it [the training] is to be conducted in Norwegian" (DI1). The

teachers usually carry out a language competence test already at the beginning of the training. As a result, candidates with poor language skills may be rejected and thus become unable to complete their training. “In the classroom, we speak Norwegian [...], we don’t speak foreign languages with each other. When you speak Norwegian, you show respect for others”, says one of the informants, pointing out that the group of candidates represents several foreign languages and that many may become insecure or feel excluded if communication takes place in languages that they are not familiar with. In addition, it can promote language learning: “If everyone speaks Norwegian, we all learn Norwegian” (DI4), says one of the informants. The same teacher refers to a company that had a poster on its door that read: “At work we speak Norwegian” and believes that a similar one should be presented at his own driving school.

The informants say they work with the language skills, and especially key concepts. These concepts are closely related to cultural traffic conditions. One of the instructors refers to concepts such as *attitudes, interaction, ethics* and *moral*. What meaning should such concepts be given? One of the informants says that “we do discuss such concepts in the classroom. We must all build an equal understanding […] that is in line with the driving culture and legislation in the country” (DI3). Several of the driving instructors point out that such central concepts “are lost in other cultures that they [the candidates] come from” (DI2). In other words, there is a connection between language comprehension and cultural understanding, which is essential in the training of drivers in general and particularly professional drivers.

Discussion and Conclusion

Drivers in Norway, both ordinary and professional ones, represent a linguistically and culturally diverse group of individuals stemming from other learning and traffic cultures. When it comes to Norwegian traffic conditions, these are characterized by unambiguous regulations and laws that may diverge from other countries’ traffic regulations and traffic culture in both theory and practice. The aim of our study is to explore how a multicultural perspective is implemented in the training of traffic conditions in Norway for prospective driving instructors and professional drivers of an immigrant background. For professional drivers, following the country’s adopted laws and regulations is a necessity with regard to, among other things, road safety. A key question is whether the training allows for intercultural approaches or whether it reveals a monocultural character (Gay, 2010). This question is conditioned by both traffic and multicultural competence of teacher educators and teachers in the traffic field, who in this study belong to two educational contexts; driving instructor education at a university level and driving schools for professional drivers.

The study is based on two research questions, one of which seeks knowledge about driving instructor trainers’ and driving instructors’ experiences with training immigrant students and candidates: *What experiences do driving instructor trainers and driving instructors have in training students and candidates with immigrant*

backgrounds? Both informant groups emphasize that curricula provide little support for their training as it does not take into account the challenges faced by multicultural and multilingual learners. This may indicate that driving instructor trainers and driving instructors do not need to adapt the training either professionally or pedagogically and take a multicultural perspective.

Moreover, all our informants say that they do not have the multicultural expertise. This may be interpreted as if training does not take into account the learning cultures and cultural backgrounds that immigrant learners carry with them. Despite this, the informants in our study show that they are aware of both challenges and opportunities in their training. First and foremost, working with immigrants provides informants with knowledge and understanding of different cultural expressions. It is particularly related to the awareness of various learning traditions in other cultures and the fact that they are being challenged on their own attitudes when encountering different ways of being (Byram, 2021).

Based on new insights from our informants, we conclude that there are certain didactical adaptations in their trainings that take into account the immigrants' previous learning culture, which in turn can be anchored in the eighth variable (Mathisen & Høigaard, 2021). In the interviews, the informants state that they employ alternative methods in order to increase the learning outcomes, both in practical driving training and in theoretical classroom instruction. However, it seems that this is being enacted in slightly different ways. Driving instructor trainers are mainly recognizing the challenges and differences they observe, such as immigrants' previous learning culture, but without mentioning concrete didactic strategies for a further development of students' cognitive skills and learning styles (Gay, 2010; Piller, 2017). Driving instructors, on the other hand, can seek advice from colleagues when encountering and dealing with certain pedagogical constraints. They seem to work more purposefully with immigrants' challenges, especially related to the practical driving training, by for instance explaining concepts such as attitudes and ethical considerations in traffic (Gibbons, 2006). This can be explained by the fact that driving instructors are much closer to the field of practice and consequently learn from hands-on experiences. Nevertheless, it must be argued that an adapted didactic approach in training is sporadic and random, and to an extent it does occur, it seems to vary from one to another informant in the study (Nieto, 2018; Piller, 2017). The informants say, thus, little about whether the special adaptations have an effect on immigrants' learning outcomes. In a broader perspective, this could have implications for immigrants' driving skills as professional drivers and requires further research.

The second research question on which the study is based, is how cultural diversity and language skills are emphasized in the training of future driving instructors and professional drivers: *How are cultural and linguistic diversity emphasized and dealt with in theoretical education and practical training?* A significant challenge in connection to achieving goals for the curriculum's intention, are barriers regarding language and culture. Both driving instructor trainers and driving instructors are mostly concerned with the development of oral language proficiency. According to the informants, multicultural students and candidates do not seem to significantly

differ from monocultural learners in regard to reading and writing skills. On the other hand, both driving instructor trainers and driving instructors are persistent in their claims about learners´ deficit in language skills. This might be explained by the informants´ possible lack of awareness of and explicit knowledge in second language pedagogy (Gibbons, 2006).

Culturally and linguistically responsive teaching seems to be a muddy terrain in the field of traffic education for professional drivers and pedagogical training of their driving instructors. Attitudes about cultural and linguistic varieties other than the mainstream language and national traffic culture, oscillate between tolerant acceptance and outright exclusion. Questions about other cultural practices in both traffic and everyday lives of immigrant students' and candidates' past experiences, are sporadically brought up for the purpose of discussions and comparisons, but mostly in order to maintain and strengthen the position of the dominant culture. This is being done with a purpose of preserving the unique and solid Norwegian traffic culture as well as other social regulations, customs and norms.

Many of those who grew up abroad, with different schooling practices, struggle to understand the meaning and usefulness of the teaching and learning methods used in Norwegian schools, such as *reflective observation* and *self-assessment* (Lindboe et al., 2015). This does not necessarily mean that teachers should change learning strategies, but that they may have to spend more time explaining and deepening the background of what they are doing, or why, for instance, *reflection* and *self-assessment* are among the most essential pedagogical tools in training. It is through cooperation, connectedness, stronger language skills and community that trainers' and instructors' intercultural competence can build bridges of meaningfulness and success between pedagogical abstractions (e.g. reflective observations or self-regulations) and lived sociocultural realities. In order to enhance learning and understanding of culturally diverse student groups, teachers are expected to create new ways and reinvent a new common culture based on engagement, interaction and service to the common good (Piller, 2017; Teräs, 2019). Driving instructors and driving instructor trainers in our study do confirm that they collaborate on common linguistic and cultural challenges, and are involved in finding adequate solutions, even though they vary between the teachers.

On the other hand, both groups of informants seem to be insufficiently engaged in developing their competence and expertise in multicultural issues, especially in explicit language instruction. This could, however, strengthen not only the receptive, but equally important productive language skills related to reflective practices and active participation in learning and working life of professional drivers. The teacher education does not seem to explicitly highlight the importance of development of intercultural competence, that is, the interrelated relationship between explicit language instruction and recreation of a learning culture as a main prerequisite for inclusion of immigrant professional drivers into the working life and society in general. According to all informants in the study, the overall aim of education and training seems to be that professional drivers must adapt to the governing traffic regulations and culture in the country in order to be included. The pervasive attitude is that it is neither acceptable nor justifiable "to drive as we are" (T1) and let the

personal style and cultural background dominate the practicing of profession. Driving instructor educators explain this by the fact that the syllabus for driving instructors' educational program is without a multilingual and multicultural perspective, which is the core competence driving instructors need for training their candidates, that is, prospective professional drivers. Therefore, according to the trainers, the driving instructor education is now actively working on implementing these themes into the new curriculum, in an attempt to further develop the intercultural competence of pre-service driving instructors and broaden their understanding of diversity in the field of traffic education. The overarching goal is to contribute to a greater commitment to advanced and successful inclusion of immigrant professional drivers into a new traffic culture.

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Chapter 12
Concluding Remarks

Eva Eliasson, Ali Osman, and Marianne Teräs

The title of this anthology *Migration, Education, and Employment - Pathways to Successful Integration* indicates that there is a connection between education, employment, and integration and that this connection can facilitate successful pathways for migrants into their new societies. The studies in different chapters tackle and depict these various pathways. However, the meaning of integration in relation to the labour market and to society have been articulated differently over time, as shown in Broberg and Morreno Herrera's Chap. 6. Osman argues in Chap. 2 that the Swedish policy of multiculturalism was prevalent in the 70s, which can be understood as a rejection of the previous 'guest worker' strategy for importing labour. Due to this multicultural policy, migrants were not only seen as useful for fulfilling labour needs, but also as individuals with equal rights in the society and the right to maintain their own culture. There are substantial differences compared with current Swedish policy where the focus is on employability and fast tracking into the labour market is emphasised. There are also stricter requirements for developing Swedish language skills and for attending national language and establishment programmes. As Osman writes, "(i)nclusion or integration is synonymous with employment in the policies …", where the Swedish policy of multiculturalism seems to have been the only exception. In other words, successful integration is often synonymous with gaining employment. Despite the way policy documents describe integration, there are also other perspectives. Teräs (Chap. 7) claims that researchers are not always consistent and transparent in their use of the concept of integration. In light of the discussion of policy above, one may ask whether authors presume integration means 'being employed' or whether they understand integration in a wider sense.

Without neglecting other aspects of successful integration, gaining employment is important, not least when migrants already have vocational education, skills, and competences from their country of origin. Those who have developed a vocational

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identity are often vulnerable in the new country when their skills and competences are not recognised. Recognition of prior learning and competence is a crucial factor for skilled migrants' access to working life, but as Andersson points out in Chap. 3, this process is complex, and presents challenges for study and career counsellors, as Hertzberg's study in Chap. 4 suggests. In Chap. 8, Gougoulakis reflects on how it is not only the recognition of their competences but also their recognition as citizens that is important.

What defines a skilled migrant's successful pathway to employment? Previous research has identified that facilitating factors for gaining employment in their previous vocational area include managing the new language, having their own ambitions and agency, and receiving support from persons, networks, and societal frames (Eliasson et al., 2022). Bru Blixen and colleagues (Chap. 11) examine new competences from a multicultural perspective, and state that it is important for integration into traffic schools in Norway. In Chap. 5, Eliasson highlights how even chance meetings can be important turning points on pathways to education and employment, but also for integration in a wider sense, which is about being constructed as a competent individual in the eyes of other people. However, while being constructed as a competent individual is often a prerequisite for having the confidence to persist with job searching, there will always be challenges, so resilience against others' negative constructions as well as complex new rules and structures is also necessary for successful integration. Nortvedt and colleagues (Chap. 10) use the concept of resilience to understand skilled migrants' pathways in Norway. In line with Eliasson (Chap. 5), they claim that a strong professional identity and the belief that they have skills and competencies that are useful in the new society, are key sources of migrants' resilience. Understanding that any professional downgrading is temporary and being able to identify pathways to upgrading skills – for example, language courses and bridging programmes – seem to be key to strengthening resilience. Stalder and colleagues (Chap. 9) examine a pre-apprentice bridging programme that supports the transition to vocational education and training.

In conclusion, the various chapters in the book show that integration via education and employment can be approached from different angles but what is understood as success varies according to context and the historical moment. Then, one can of course ask whether prescribed measures facilitate (or hinder) successful integration and from whose point of view one perceives success. Some integration measures may even result in exclusion; for example, the status of migrants determines which integration measures they are allowed to access. Kyeremeh et al. (2021) interviewed migrants about how they perceived integration and understood successful integration. They found that successful integration meant, for example, personal growth and development in a context in which migrants had options and opportunities. Their results also suggested that achieving pre-migration aspirations played a role in the integration process.

In the chapters of this book, empirical material is diverse and the voices of the migrants themselves are strong, but other's voices can also be heard, especially of the people who meet and work with them. Multiple methods and perspectives are required for understanding what successful integration entails and for capturing the nuances of this complex phenomenon.

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