MASTER OF SCIENCE IN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT

Integration in perspective

AN ETHNIC-BASED ANALYSIS TOWARDS UNDERSTANDING THE INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANTS IN SWEDEN

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Author: Fuad M.Sharif

Supervisor: Dr. Elsa Coimbra

Abstract

Previous research has uncovered that immigrants from Somalia are one immigrant group that have struggled to integrate in Sweden. In light of this, I employ an ethnic-based approach with the intent to understand the difficulties that immigrants from Somalia encounter in Sweden by examining their own perceptions of integration. The study utilizes a qualitative case study approach and draws on data collected through semi-structured individual interviews and focus group discussions. The analytical framework of this study is inspired by Toumas Martikainen's multi-perspective approach to integration in which integration is scrutinized from multiple angles and perspectives. Finally, the study puts forth that the subjective perceptions of Somali immigrants regarding integration could be better understood within the context of certain cultural and political features which provide explanations to the integration struggles and difficulties that Somalis face in Sweden. Finally, the findings of the research include that there is a clear deviation of understanding regarding the basic notion of integration among Somali immigrants that is contrary to that of the official Swedish government.

Keywords: Immigrants, Integration, Somalis, Multiculturalism

Word Count: 14 943

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List of Abbreviations

DNA – Deoxyribonucleic Acid

EU – European Union

FGD – Focus Group Discussion

MIPEX – Migration Integration Policy Index

OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PTSD – Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

SFI – Svenska för Invandrare (Swedish Language Course for immigrants)

UNRISD – United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

1. Introduction

At the World Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen in 1994, the concept of social integration was discussed as a way to improve the development and resilience of a society (UNRISD 1994). By ensuring that all individuals regardless of race, gender, geography or ethnic origin have equal rights and responsibilities and that they are enabled to have active participation within the social, political, and economic spheres of society was put forth as an overriding objective for sustainable development (Ibid). This is based on the explicit assumption that greater socio-economic inter connectedness, mutual trust, cultural tolerance, and the facilitation of the individual's self-fulfillment can serve to avoid social conflicts and contribute to the advancement of sustainable development. Moreover, integration as an essential prerequisite for sustainable development has also been endorsed by the European Union and the International Labor Organization (EU 2011; ILO 2004).

Sustainable development as a concept emphasizes three essential pillars namely, the social, environmental, and economical to be the fundamental perquisites for a healthy and long-term development (Rogers et.al.2008). Ostensibly Sweden is a developed country with currently one of the world's most comprehensive welfare system. Despite of this, the development that is studied in this paper refers to Sweden's sustainable development. In other words, as is usually the case in development-related research, there is no developing country involved. The notion of integration is usually placed within the social pillar of sustainable development, as the official Swedish government strategy for sustainable development clearly highlights (Regeringskansliet 2003; Framtidskommissionen 2013). The strategy emphasizes, among other aspects, that social cohesion and participation within the society are indispensable preconditions for the sustainable development of Sweden (Ibid). Moreover, the strategy is a reflection of the fact that during the past fifty years there has been an increasing influx of immigrants from all around the world that has settled in Sweden. Consequently, this has entailed prevalent cultural diversity within the country (Migrationsinfo 2012; Regeringen 2012).

Hence, one could argue that a dynamic and all-inclusive integration process is necessary in order to foster social cohesion and participation within the society. Integration is a multifaceted concept and comprises various aspects in diverse sectors such as the social, economic, and political spheres of life. However, in Sweden, there appears to be a tendency to over-emphasize the economic aspect of integration. For instance, in the academic discourse, discussions about the integration-labor market nexus have taken a center-stage within the field of integration (Mikkonen 2011; Bevelander 2000; Helgertz 2010).This study appreciates the significance of the labor market in the integration process and builds on from these previous studies. However, an analysis which concentrates too closely on the labor market may overlook the potential value of a whole spectrum of intricate factors that take social and political perspectives into consideration.

1.1 Rationale of this study

There is a widespread perception that certain ethnic groups in Sweden have experienced more difficulties in regards to integration than others. One of these groups is considered to be Somali immigrants (Carlson et.al. 2012; Carlson & Mohamed 2013; Integrationsverket 1999).

Unfortunately, the bulk of research that studies this aspect in a holistic manner is very constricted (Integrationsverket 2005; Nekby & Rödin 2007). Therefore within research there is an added value from bringing in an ethnic-based approach in so far as it highlights the diversity within the challenges of integration, more specifically providing some explanations to why certain immigrant groups lag behind in the integration process compared to others. This kind of approach appears to be rarely explored in the current academic discourse.

In theory, the integration process in Sweden is individual-based, meaning that the process is founded on the assumption that it is between the state and the individual (Carlson et.al. 2012). However, many specificities of individual behavior should be understood with the cultural frame in which the individuals have been socialized. In this regard, relations between the micro, individual level and the meso or macro state level are lacking specifically in research. Thus, the need to include a multi-scaled approach to governance and management is crucial in contemporary complex systems such as these (Kamali 2006).

What can be looked at from a micro, individual level can be integrated and enriched with a meso level perspective, taking into consideration that certain groups of people who share a common culture, traditions, language, history, social structures, geography and to some extent faced common hardships, arguably have a lot in common. Hence, in order to shed some light on what I consider to be an essential but hitherto neglected perspective, I attempt to utilize an ethnic-based approach towards a further understanding of the notion of integration. After watchful consideration, I chose to focus on Somali immigrants in Sweden. One of the reasons behind my choice is that Somalis have been identified to be severely struggling to integrate in Sweden and have even been labeled by some as "hard to integrate" (Johnsdotter 2009; Thörnquist 2011).

This is not to deny that Somali immigrants like any other immigrant group are a heterogeneous group composed of individuals from diverse socio-economic and educational backgrounds. However, I believe there is a gap when it comes to exploring the possibility that tailor-made group solutions could alleviate common shared problems regarding integration and hence facilitate the settlement process. As a result, further research is required to illuminate this gap and explore the notion that the integration process can and should combine both individual as well as group based approaches in order to foster successful integration.

1.2 Purpose statement

The purpose of this study is to provide a voice to one particular group of immigrants, namely the Somali immigrants in Sweden. This is done by hearing and analyzing their subjective perceptions and experiences of the integration process. By providing them this possibility, the objects of integration become the subjects and can therefore themselves assess their own integration with their own ideas and thoughts.

I believe that the barriers to integration that are facing Somali immigrants cannot be comprehensively discussed without bringing their own perceptions of integration to the academic discourse. Henceforth, I attempt to generate a better understanding of the reasons behind their struggles by putting forward their own perceptions of integration. Being a Somali immigrant myself with good knowledge and understanding of the cultural subtleties provides

me the opportunity to access certain privileged information to what could otherwise be difficult entrance to a foreign researcher.

1.3 Research Question

This thesis will attempt to answer:

> *How do Somali immigrants in Sweden perceive integration and how can their perception help us understand the difficulties they face in their path towards integration?*

1.4 Definitions

For the sake of clarity, it is crucial to explicitly define certain fundamental and frequently used terms. Firstly, *Integration* as a contextual framework is utilized according to the definition put forth by Toumas Martikainen (2005):

> The processes by which individual and groups of immigrants are incorporated into various social arenas and segments of the new host society. Integration is a two-way process whereby both the immigrants and the host society adapt new features as a result of their interactions.

Secondly, the term *Somali immigrants* is hereby referred to only first generation Somali immigrants that migrated to Sweden as adults[1]. This is because adults and children are believed to undergo different paths towards integration in Sweden and to some extent face different challenges (Åslund et.al 2009).

1.5 Disposition

This paper consists of six chapters. The first chapter presents the research topic and elaborates the aim and rationale of the research. The chapter culminates to present the specific research question that will be examined by the study. The second chapter expounds an empirical material in the form of relevant background about the research topic. The third chapter provides an overview of the methodological skeleton of the research in the form of a detailed description about the approach, design, and data collection techniques employed throughout the study. The fourth chapter puts forward the theoretical framework that will guide and frame the subsequent research analysis. The fifth chapter presents the results of the research and subsequently scrutinizes it by thoroughly discussing the results through the chosen theoretical framework. Finally, chapter six summarizes the findings and provides answers to the research question as well present recommendations for future research.

1.6 Limitations

As can be understood from the definition of integration presented above, the notion of integration is considered to be a relational phenomenon in the sense that one is referring to the interaction of at least two parties (Martikainen 2005; Alsmark 2007; Beckman 2011). Considering that, a more comprehensive output could be provided only when the perspective of the host society i.e. authorities as well as that of other immigrant groups are looked into in relation to the chosen immigrant group. Unfortunately time and space constraints did not

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[1] See Section 4.2 for more information

make this feasible as this research concentrates only on the perception of integration of one particular immigrant group. However, this study could be seen to set the foundation for the other perspectives to be followed up and studied in order to have the complete picture of the situation.

2. Background

2.1 Overview of Immigrant Integration in Sweden

Ever since the post Second World War, Sweden has been a destination for migrants mainly from European countries (Bevelander & Dahlstedt 2012:14). Immigration during 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s was dominated by labor force migration (Ibid). During this period, Sweden did not have any specific national strategy for the integration of immigrants, rather it was taken for granted that they should enjoy similar living standards as Swedish citizens (Regeringen 1997:15). Indeed, the Swedish government preferred neutrality in this regard by choosing not to set up any regulations that will impose immigrants to adjust. The government rather preferred to allow immigrants themselves to find equilibrium between their cultures and the Swedish culture (Ibid). The consequence of this approach was lack of clear regulations and goals created disorientation in how to best foster integration.

However, this changed 1975 when the Swedish government enforced a national integration strategy that was founded on three essential principles: equality, freedom, and collaboration (Kamali 2006:348). Equality meant that immigrants shall enjoy the same rights as the host society. The freedom principle bestowed immigrants the right to decide the degree of their interaction with the Swedish society and culture while the collaboration principle was viewed essential in the wake of developing a society built on tolerance and solidarity (Ibid). Even if the new strategy provided more rights to immigrants it followed the same neutral standpoint and failed to set clear goals.

During the end of the 1970s to 2000 and beyond, refugees from non-European countries such as Chile, Iran, Lebanon, Iraq, Somalia, Afghanistan as well as European refugees from Ex-Yugoslavia became the dominant feature of Swedish immigration (Nilsson 2004). Consequently, due to the increase in the number of immigrants settling in Sweden as well as their widespread cultural diversity, the Swedish government abandoned its former neutral stand towards integration and at the end of 1980s enforced a new state controlled integration policy that aims to generate social cohesion (Focus 2009:5). The new policy instituted systematic approach to integration and made it mandatory that immigrants attend Swedish language and culture courses (SFI). The local municipalities were appointed as the main implementing agencies of this new policy. A further step was taken 1997 when a separate national authority which coordinates and oversees the integration process was set up. The new authority called The Integration Board (Integrationsverket) had three goals to accomplish (Regeringen 1997:21)[2]:

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[2] Translated by the author

- Equal rights, obligations and opportunities for all regardless of ethnic and cultural background
- A community fellowship with social diversity as a foundation
- A Social development that is characterized by mutual respect in relation to differences within the limits of the society's fundamental democratic values to which all regardless of background shall be part of and responsible for

Furthermore, the Integration Board was entrusted with the task to educate the public about integration, as well as follow up and evaluate the progress of integration and provide support to the municipalities (Ibid). Subsequently, after 9 years in service, the Integration Board was dissolved in 2007. This came as a result of many evaluations undertaken during the period 1997-2006 which substantiated that the Integration Board did not achieve its set goals (Regeringen 2008:5). With this in mind the government undertook integration reforms in 2008. The reform which materialized in 2010 has four overarching goals[3] and coincided with constitutional amendments that officially endorse multicultural-oriented approach to integration (Ibid).

Unlike the previous strategy, the reforms recognized eradicating discrimination as a goal as well as articulated explicit policy areas[4]. Moreover, the highest responsibility of implementation was moved from the municipalities, who previously had their own local strategies, to the National Ministry of Employment (Bevelander & Dahlstedt 2012:22)

2.2 Integration in the context of Somali immigrants
The total collapse of the Somali state in 1990 resulted in large influx of Somali immigrants moving to Western Europe (Gundel 2002). Sweden has been one of the countries that took in a sizable number of these immigrants. In 2012, there were 43 966 immigrants born in Somalia living in Sweden (SCB 2012a)[5]. Furthermore, 10 000 Somali immigrants are expected to move to Sweden in 2013 due to family reunification (Migrationsverket 2013:5). As such, Somali immigrants are considered to be the fastest growing immigrant group in Sweden (Carlson et.al.2012).

However, there appears to be a consensus when it comes to that Somali immigrants struggle to integrate in Sweden, perhaps more than any other immigrant group. The assessment criterion for this aspect usually refers to their weak labor market attachment as well as shortage of skills and education (Carlson et.al. 2012; Selvi 2006; Integrationsverket 1999). Largely, immigrants from Somalia are poorly educated (Carlson et.al. 2012:30) which results in that they are not favored by the service-oriented Swedish labor market. To put this in perspective, in 1990s only 10% of Somali immigrants between ages 20-64 were active in the labor market. Even though the number of Somalis living in Sweden has more than doubled,

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[3] See Annex IV
[4] See Annex IV
[5] It is important to emphasize that this number does not include Somali children born in Sweden or asylum seekers

that figure increased to 23% between the years 2000-2010 where the difference between the genders being 27.7% for men and 18.4% for women (Ibid).

The Swedish parliament paid attention to these struggles and as early as in1998 alerted the Integration Board to look into the difficulties facing Somali immigrants in regards to integration and specifically to strive to (Integrationsverket 1999)[6]:

- Stimulate the integration process of Somalis
- Study and investigate the knowledge that the different authorities and municipalities have about the integration issues facing Somalis
- Investigate the situation of young Somali adults by examining their special needs and come up with solutions of how to help this specific group.

Unfortunately there has not been any documented improvement regarding the integration of Somali immigrants that could be tethered with this mission since it was never followed up.

3. Method and Methodology

3.1 Research design
Due to the nature of this study I chose to employ a qualitative method of research whereby my intention is to examine the Swedish integration from a Somali perspective. Ostensibly, qualitative research is carried out due to the need to understand complex social issues in detail (Creswell 2007:40). Studying perceptions requires understanding people's attitudes, beliefs, values, experiences, and opinions. Accordingly, qualitative research allowed me to put forward the human side of my research at the same time as it was effective to help me uncover intangible factors, such as social norms, socioeconomic status, gender roles, ethnicity, and religion, whose role in the research topic may not be readily evident (Mack et.al 2005:1). By employing a qualitative approach, I was able to undertake in-depth individual interviews and FGD with Somali immigrants with the intent to study the issue from the participant's social reality and outlook thereby composing a cohesive story through their collective lenses (Ibid).

In terms of ontological and epistemological stance, I attempted to approach reality from a social constructivist point of view. The reoccurring philosophical standpoint within constructivism is that of embracing the ontology of multiple perceptions of reality and the notion that knowledge is built within inter-subjective contexts (Moses & Knutsen 2007:194). At the same time, I was directed by the epistemological outlook of interpretivism in the sense that I was pursuing to comprehend my participants' subjective understanding and their construction of reality in regards to the issue in hand.

The research is conducted in the form of a case study. The nature of the research and the structure of the research question provides proposition in regards to the suitability of a case study research design. Robert Yin points out that 'how' and 'why' questions are more

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[6] Translated by the author

explanatory and mostly steer us to the utilization of case studies (Yin 2003:7). Furthermore, due to time and resource constraints, I decided to carry out a single instrumental case study concentrating on Somali immigrants in Malmö, Sweden. By doing this, I concentrated on the perception of my research participants regarding integration and hence utilized them as a form of bounded case to illustrate the issue (Creswell 2007:74).

Moreover, the study was conducted initially in an inductive approach whereby theoretical settings had very little influence in the first phase of the data collection process (Bryman 2012:27). The product of this process was later found to align well with already existing theoretical paradigms which also entailed further analysis and review of the data. However, as time went by, a retroduction approach which entails moving between data and ideas and between induction and deduction was utilized as a way of linking data and theory in a dynamic process (Ragin & Amorosso 2011).

3.2 Data collection
Field data was collected in Malmö from November 2012 to January 2013. Data was collected in two ways: first, through in-depth individual interviews and through a focus group discussion. Before every interview as well as the focus group discussion, I thoroughly explained to my participants the purpose of the study as well as other important aspects such as, confidentiality, anonymity, and reciprocity. Interviews were conducted in venues chosen by the participants themselves in order to make them feel as comfortable as possible. Most of them chose their own homes and some chose public venues such as libraries or cafeterias.

3.3 Methods of Selection
The fact that I am Somali possibly gave me some clues as to relevant social characteristics to incorporate that were necessary to understand the participants. In other words, my familiarity with the context allowed me to pursue the sampling according to possible suppositions or explanations made on the basis of limited evidence as a starting point for further investigation. Thus, sampling followed on one hand basic standards of purposive sampling ensuring variety (Bryman 2012:418). While on the other hand this variety met key characteristics relevant to the research question (Ibid). More specifically five variables were taken into account: age, gender, educational background, marital status, and length of residence in Sweden. Age was an important factor since I wanted to distinguish if there are different generational opinions and perceptions. It was essential to have both sexes represented in my sample given that I was interested to learn more about the transformation of gender roles within married couples since their migration to Sweden and how that affected their family lives. Hence, the sample contained both participants that were married and others that were single. The pre-migration educational skills as well as education acquired in Sweden were important factors as well since I wanted a mixture of people with different educational backgrounds.

Finally, the length of residence in Sweden was considered crucial since integration approaches and policies have evolved throughout the years. The sample comprises Somali immigrants who arrived in Sweden as adults (18+) after 1990. I chose this date because it is when the Somali state collapsed and the civil war that is raging to this date started. Prior to this date there was no significant number of immigrants from Somalia in Sweden

(Integrationsverket 1999:49). I also deliberately chose not to include Somali immigrants who came here as children since adults and minors go through completely different systems in regards to integration.

It is important to emphasize that I did not intend my sample to be representative of the whole Somali population in Sweden and therefore subject to statistical generalization. Bryman categorizes research generalization into analytical and statistical generalization (Bryman 2012:426-7). Hence, since I did not employ a probability sampling procedure which usually fits the quantitative method of analysis better and not to mention the fact that I am utilizing a single case study, I aim for contextual understanding. In other words, I attempt to generalize the particular set of results of this research to the already existing body of knowledge and broader theories that deal with immigrant integration in Sweden and more specifically to Somalis (Yin 2003:58).

3.4 Interviews

Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured form. The process commenced with conducting four exploratory interviews with no transcripts just to provide me extra clues of how to set up the semi-structured interview guide. This was highly informative experience and provided me some valuable information that I would otherwise have overlooked. I then proceeded to conduct ten face to face interviews. All the participants were Somali immigrants and possessed the characteristics described in the sampling strategy. The length of the interviews ranged from 41 to 76 minutes and was primarily determined by the respondents' mode of expressing themselves.

Qualitative semi-structured interviews have a succession of themes and categories to be encompassed and also have some pre-planned questions. However, there is flexibility to changes and modification of sequences and the structure of questions in order to follow up the gathered data and the stories conveyed by the respondents (Kvale 2007:82). I conducted the interviews with a basic awareness in mind; listening to my participants without imposing my preconceived ideas or perceptions on them. As time went by, new themes and patterns that were not part of the guide surfaced. These themes and patterns were then incorporated into the upcoming interviews and explored in detail. I conducted all the interviews in Somali.

The number of interviews required was determined by the principle of data saturation which emphasizes that the data collection process reaches a point of saturation when collecting more data does not necessarily lead to more information and most importantly when gathered information satisfies the aim of the research (Guest et.al. 2006). Hence, interviews were halted when clear themes and patterns emerged and the collected data was considered adequate to provide answers to the research question.

3.5 Focus Group Discussion

After the interviews finished I conducted one focus group discussion, again with the same sampling strategy as the interviews. Before the start of the focus group discussion, I thoroughly explained the purpose of the research as well as the aspects of consent, confidentiality and reciprocity. The session commenced with introduction and general

discussions about Somali poetry and sports in order to ease the mood and increase comfort of the discussants. There were six participants, three males and three females with an age range between 26 to 52 and the discussion lasted for over two hours. Contrary to the interviews however, the focus group discussion shed light on group norms and interactions and provided me a complimentary insight to the interviews (Mack et.al 2005:29). Moreover, I considered studying the group dynamics to be important since during interviews, interviewees were barely challenged. While in focus group discussions, participants argued and challenged each other's viewpoints (Bryman 2012:503).

The focus group discussion thus helped interviewees to get deeper insight to the issue and consequently helped to shed new light and further supplement to the outcome of the individual interviews. The environment was permissive and comfortable which allowed participants to share their personal feelings and experiences. However, it was at times hard to manage as participants would go out of the discussion themes or that some of them were more vocal than others. As a moderator I tried to always bring them back to the discussion themes and give the less vocal ones a chance to voice their views. To augment the credibility of the generated data, at the end of the discussion, I sought further substantiation through respondent validation by summarizing my notes and presenting to the discussants the opportunity to comment and clarify the gathered information (Bryman 2012:513).

3.6 Data Analysis
Part of the field data were recorded and later transcribed. However, not every participant consented to audio recordings. Usually, when Somali immigrants arrive in Sweden, they arrive without proper identifications due to the collapse of the central government in Somalia. Therefore, the Swedish Migration Board utilizes audio recordings as a way of identification for Somalis (Advokatsamfundet 2012). Based on their language fluency and their local dialects, the Migration experts could allegedly confirm or reject ones asylum claims. As such, some participants were highly suspicious of audio recordings. Hence, during such occasions extensive notes were taken by me in either Somali or English.

The first step of data analysis involved generally reviewing the unprocessed raw data from each interview as well the focus group. This review was undertaken multiple times. Secondly, the refined data from all the interviews and the focus group were compared and contrasted multiple times with the research question in mind in order to look for patterns and extract themes (Mikkelsen 2005:169). Thirdly, once patterns and themes were identified, I set out to generate conceptual categories that could be examined through the chosen analytical framework.

3.7 Trustworthiness
David Silverman (1997) put forward the notion of self-glorification or so called "halo-effect" in which research participants project themselves as the good side while possibly depicting others as the less good part. At times the author perceived as that respondents were critical of the host society while at the same time being less critical about themselves. Henceforth, being Somali myself meant being constantly self-reflexive in my double role as a researcher and Somali which is paramount in qualitative research. While my Somali background colors my

worldview, I considered it essential to keep a professional distance and attempt to detach myself from the issue as much as possible and triangulate the emerged data with the existing body of knowledge so that I can view it with a sense of detachment and objectivism. Accordingly, transparency is accentuated throughout the study by a comprehensive and detailed account of the research procedures as well as presenting the methodological as well as theoretical tools employed.

Moreover, it is my supposition that being ethnic Somali positively enhanced the trust of the participants as well as their level of openness. For instance, it was tangibly evident that many respondents were excited and open to share their perceptions with someone who they presume understands what they are talking about and what they are going through.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

In terms of ethics, I truly appreciated Bryman's comprehensive list on ethical issues to consider in relation to data collection and analysis (Bryman 2012:153). Accordingly, there were a couple of ethical considerations that were taken into consideration. Firstly, in terms of consent, as I explained earlier many of the participants were highly suspicious of audio recordings and signing documents, but gave their consent through oral means. This was ethically considered right since urging or pushing them to do otherwise would have been insensitive and possibly changed their views of the study. Moreover, as a researcher I made it explicitly clear that participation was optional and that any participant could withdraw parts or whole of their testimony if they so desire (Scheyvens & Storey 2003:166).

Lastly, Creswell points out that a research requires what he calls an ethical validation. This means that a research must question its fundamental moral assumptions as well as its political and ethical repercussions and at the same provide equal handling to its diverse sources. It should also lift up new possibilities and questions as well as generate new dialogue (Creswell 2007:205-6). Therefore, it is important to make explicit that my inspiration to conduct this research stemmed from my deep-rooted desire to stimulate integration dialogue and understanding between my ethnic community and my host country.

4. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical underpinnings of integration are complex and mostly founded on country-specific issues and analysis. Due to political and cultural variations among different societies, the national context has therefore been recognized as a significant determinant of integration (Fokkema & de Haas 2011). Hence, the variations regarding the concept of integration in different nation-states made it difficult to find well established over-arching theoretical frameworks that could easily fit my research structure. However, in this section I intend to pull together the concepts and theoretical discussions which will frame the data analysis of this research.

4.1 Integration through Assimilation or Multiculturalism?

According to Toumas Martikainen integration could be accomplished through various approaches, among them assimilation and multiculturalism (Martikainen 2005). Even though assimilation and multiculturalism significantly differ in terms of their approach and execution

they both involve normative ideas about the desired product of the integration process (Ibid). Assimilation is characterized by a system of homogenous mainstream society or culture to which all the immigrants has to assimilate to. This type of integration is one dimensional and requires that immigrants substitute their previous cultural identities to that of the host society. In other words, the objective is that differences between ethnic groups would eventually wear out and be absorbed into the host society (Martikainen 2005:3-5).

One of the tools employed by social scientists in order to measure assimilation has been to closely study the evolution of the socioeconomic status of immigrants, their spatial concentration, language assimilation, and intermarriages (Waters & Jimenez 2005:107-8). By studying these factors, scientists believe that one could observe the evolution and progress of assimilation in certain individuals or groups. However, assimilation as a model for integration has been criticized for being too static and overly dependent on the explicit assumption that there is a homogenous host society which immigrants could assimilate to (Martikainen 2005:3). Thus, in today's complex and globalized world, there are doubts whether there is such a thing as homogenous host society.

Conversely, multiculturalism entails the endorsement and protection of the cultural plurality of the mainstream society and that of the different minorities (Bloch 2002). Further, it recognizes the relevance of the cultural contributions of the various interacting groups while at the same time acknowledging their socio-cultural differences (Rosado 1997:3). According to some studies there has been an ongoing popular shift from assimilation to multiculturalism in western countries since 1960s (Martikainen 2005; Bloch 2002; Kymlicka 2012). This is to a large extent associated with the transformed nature of international migration which has resulted in increasing ethnic diversity in these societies (Martikainen 2005). Sweden is no exception as according to the constitutional amendments of 2010, the form of integration that is currently in place is founded on the principle of multiculturalism (SVT 2010).

Multiculturalism is, however, not without its critics. For instance, it has been pointed out that it gives too much emphasis on differences and thus encourages separation instead of social cohesion. Indeed, Macey argues that by facilitating and positively encouraging minority groups to maintain their culture and language there is a possible consequence of self-isolation and the import of certain cultural features which are alien to the host society (Macey 2012). Hence, an unintended consequence of this could be manifestation of fear among the host-society which could display itself in the form of increased xenophobia and racism (Ibid).

4.2 Integration as a multi-component phenomenon

Departing from a multiculturalist perspective, Martikainen deems integration to be a dialogical process which emphasizes the role of immigrants in the integration process as well as that of the host society and puts forward the notion that integration as a theoretical concept has three inter-related components. These are *cultural integration, structural integration, and political integration* (Martikainen 2005:3-4). Henceforth, these components of integration provide us an in-depth portrait of whether the integration of an individual or a certain group as such has been successful or a failure.

Figure 1.
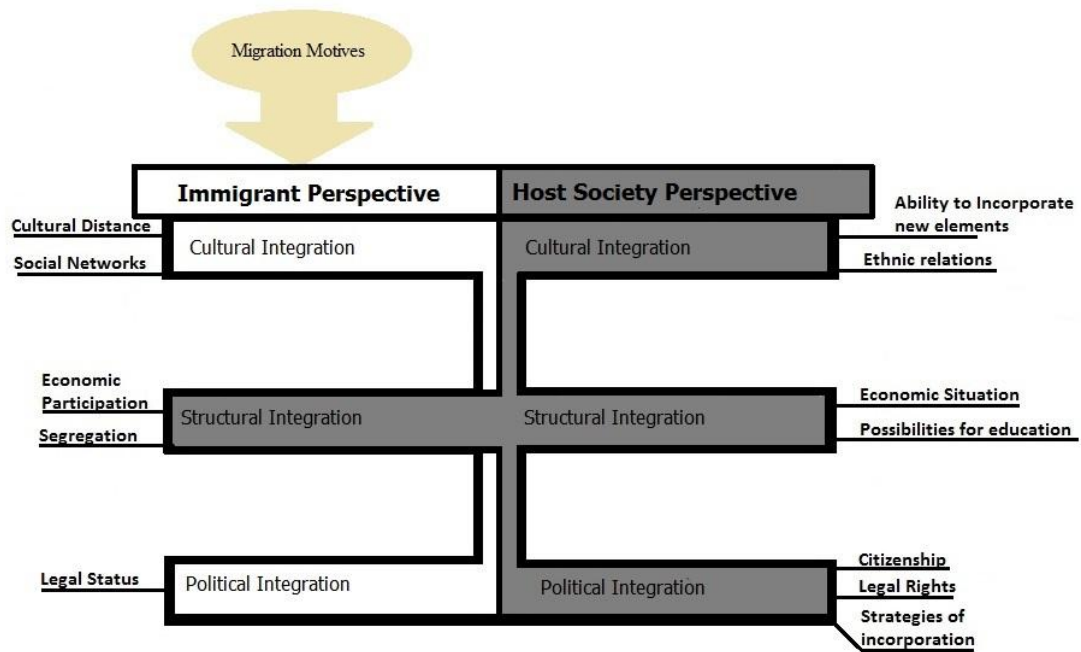
According to Martikainen, integration in this regard can be understood and scrutinized from two overarching perspectives, namely *the perspective of immigrants and that of the host society* (Martikainen 2005). Essentially this paper focuses only on the perspective of immigrants and particularly the chosen immigrant group. The two perspectives could in turn be examined with the help of three components in the form of *cultural, structural, and political integration*. Furthermore, each of these three components of integration has specific features which can be studied both separately and with other component's features. However, within this outlook, there is a common feature namely the *motives of migrants* which are considered to affect the perspective of immigrants as a whole.

It is my belief that these three components should not be taken as distinct impermeable fields, since there are matters that overlap or can be transferred from one category to another. Theoretically it seems to point to the complexity and holistic nature of the integration process, where diverse strands of social, structural, and political facets are woven together, much in the manner of what sociologist Marcel Mauss referred to as the "total social fact" (Hart 2007).

4.2.1 Cultural Integration
Cultural related issues could be crucial to integration due to their ability to unlock cultural discrepancies and offer deep insight and understanding to the integration process of immigrants. After all, culture is believed to affect people's way of understanding and interpreting information (Oyserman & Lee 2008). Thus, understanding the cultural viewpoints of Somali immigrants could foster sympathetic understanding among Somalis and the host society, as well as promote future integration dialogue.

Cultural integration is hereby referred to the way " *immigrants and their communities relate and adjust to local values, norms and behavioral patterns as well as the host society's reactions to aspects of immigrants' cultural life*" (Martikainen 2005:3). Initial endowments

such as the cultural differences between immigrants and the host society as well as the tolerance and willingness of both sides to accommodate each other are the central themes of cultural integration. Therefore, successful and positive cultural integration expresses itself in the shape of good ethnic relations (Ibid).

According to Masoud Kamali, the core paradigm of cultural integration is people's attitude towards each other. He notes that if immigrants are seen as helpless group that needs constant support, the result becomes a sense of "otherness" and discrimination instead of the desired harmonious intra-ethnic relationship (Kamali 2006:12). On the other hand, he warns against what he refers to cultural hegemony in which the host society views integration as an aspect that is solely the responsibility of immigrants. The consequence of this could entail an ethnic hierarchy where different ethnic groups occupy different positions (Kamali 2006:356). Indeed, Beckman agrees with this standpoint by stating that integration in this regard could be about maintaining the status quo of a society by forcing others to adjust and surrender to the current social structure in place (Beckman 2011:37-8).

An important aspect of cultural integration is considered to be the *social networks* of immigrants. Social networks are hereby referred to as the informal channels through which one could acquire social and economic information as well as psychological support from his/her own established community (Bloch 2002:90; Vertovec 2002:3). In fact, Alice Bloch argues that the integration of immigrants in a certain country could be positively influenced by the availability and accessibility to receive social and economic networks from their own communities (Bloch 2002:90).These networks do not only affect whether and to what extent immigrants integrate into their host societies but also maintain a connection to their home countries (Poros 2011). A newly-arrived immigrant could obtain information about the host society's social and economic structures, rules, regulations, and social codes from his community in a way he/she understands and could relate to. Hence, these networks could be considered a form of parallel institutions that could assist immigrants in their cultural integration.

The *cultural distance* between the host society and the immigrant is regarded to have either positive or negative impact depending on how little or large the distance is. For instance, arriving at the host country with basic knowledge of the local language and culture is considered a key positive factor to integration as Bloch discovered in an extensive research among different immigrant groups in the UK (Bloch 2002:103). This is not to claim cultural acquaintance automatically leads to better integration but rather that it facilitates the process since those who are familiar with the language and culture are more inclined to comprehend cultural codes faster and learn social norms sooner. This cultural gap or distance could manifest itself in different levels. For instance, it could affect individuals as well as the family as a unit or the community in general and encompasses a range of factors that include cultural norms and social structures.

4.2.2 Political Integration
Political integration concentrates on the approach in which the state incorporates the immigrants. The fundamental themes of political integration include the availability and path towards citizenship and other political rights necessary for full participation and membership

in the host society (Martikainen 2005). In this regard the state solely controls the opportunities for political integration (Ibid). Political rights are referred to taking part in the application of the decision-making political process to which voting in elections is the most essential (Mayr 2003:11). Full political rights are not commonly provided to immigrants instantly but are usually acquired in the form of citizenship through naturalization (Ibid). According to Bloch, *citizenship* "defines both rights and the set of institutions that define and guarantee rights" (Bloch 2002:85). Thus, restrictions to acquiring citizenship is considered a major threat to successful political integration.

Furthermore, institutionalized *discrimination* within the different sectors and institutions of the society is also considered as one of the biggest obstacles to political integration (Kamali 2006:357). Discrimination in this regard is referred to rules and regulatory frameworks that intentionally or unintentionally target and negatively affect a specific group by preventing them to enjoy the same rights and opportunities as other groups. In this regard, every policy regarding integration should aim to avoid creating a society that is divided into "we" who are already integrated and "them" who need to be integrated (Kamali 2006:20-21) but instead emphasize that integration is a relational phenomenon.

Furthermore, the Institute of Migration Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) which is based in England and studies the integration policies of 31 EU and OECD countries put forth seven policy areas that should be targeted in order to aim for successful immigrant integration (MIPEX 2010). While six of them draw some parallels with the Swedish government policy areas[7], there is one that has been overlooked by the Swedish government, namely the importance of *Family Reunification* to the integration process. MIPEX states that "Families who are successfully reunited together have the socio-cultural stability to participate in society" while on the other hand "an migrant who is kept apart from his or her family has fewer prospects to integrate in the community where he or she lives" (MIPEX 2010).

4.3 Migration Motives
Supplement to the essential components of integration is the aspect of the underlying reasons why immigrants left their countries of origin in the first place. It has been pointed out that the grounds or *motives* for migration are critical elements affecting the settlement process (Martikainen 2005:6; Bloch 2002:80). Here, aspects such as voluntary migration or forced migration can be important determinants. Voluntary migrants usually tend to be young, dynamic and motivated group who migrated for the purpose of bettering their economic and social status while forced migrants have diverse characteristics and origins. The majority of forced migrants had little to do with the decision to migrate and mostly leave their countries' of origin in a traumatic fashion as opposed to voluntary migrants (Martikainen 2005:7). Refugees, asylum seekers, and slaves are believed to belong to this category (Ibid).

In addition, aspirations for return migration are also believed to have connotations in the settlement process (Bloch 2002:159). For instance, the desire to move back home is considered to affect how immigrants view their stay in the host country i.e. a transitional

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[7] See Annex IV

period or a permanent home. In this regard, their view could influence their motivation, willingness and commitment to certain essential aspects of the integration process (Ibid).

In relation to Trauma, even though it is hard to pinpoint the degree that health related aspects such as trauma and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) affect integration, it is something that has received increasing attention lately and which some believe could manifest itself in the integration process (Carlson et.al. 2012:156). Common symptoms associated with PTSD are anxiety, depression, concentration difficulties, aggression, addiction, and a recurrent feeling of guilt (Angel & Hjern 1992:39). It is hard to argue against the fact that if someone is suffering from these symptoms it is going to negatively affect his or her integration process.

4.4 Operationalization

Reflecting on the theoretical concepts displayed above, the conceptual frame of the analysis will be the distinction of integration into three inter-related components namely, cultural, political and structural. It is fundamental to reiterate that these aspects will be studied from the perspective of the Somali immigrants. Cultural integration is analyzed in the form of two essential features, the *cultural distance of Somali immigrants and the Swedish host society* as well as the *social networks of Somali immigrants*. These two features will be scrutinized with the help of the themes and concepts that emerged from the data. In terms of political integration, the conceptual linchpin that will guide the analysis will be *the legal status and rights of Somali immigrants* which will be studied through the emergent themes and concepts. Furthermore, the *migration motives* of Somalis during their pre and post-migration periods will be analyzed in order to inspect if it has implications on their cultural and political integration.

Finally, it is crucial to emphasize that structural integration will *not* be studied in this paper. As a result, the *grey piece* of figure 1 is *not* utilized. While I acknowledge the significance of structural integration, it is my understanding that labor market incorporation and to some extent residential segregation has been the cornerstones of the Somali integration debate for some time. While cultural and political features of integration are many times overlooked, there is plenty of literature that provides an in-depth scrutiny of structural related aspects of integration in relation to Somali immigrants (See Carlson et.al.2012; Integrationsverket 1999; Selvi 2006).

5. Results and Analysis

In this section, findings are thematically presented and analyzed utilizing the theoretical lens of the chosen analytical framework.

5.1 Cultural Integration

5.1.1 Mistrust in Swedish institutions

Since the birth of the Somali republic in 1960, the Somali state has been either in political turmoil, under an oppressive military regime, or in a state of complete collapse (Clark & Gosende 2003). Hence, even though Somali people's stark divisions in terms of clan lineages has been presented in historical records long before the naissance of the Somali republic

(Lewis 2002), one could hardly claim that 52 years of national sovereignty has fostered any faith in governmental institutions. On the contrary, many years of state failure have strengthened and endorsed a society made up of informal structures which in many ways are more resilient than formal ones (Harper 2012). As one respondent eloquently put it *"it was always me, my family, my relatives, and my clan to rely on and no one else"* (IR- 1). On the other hand a century of economic development and absence of armed conflict has left Sweden in a very different state than Somalia. The contrast to Sweden becomes even more palpable considering that Somalia regularly tops the list of the world's most failed states attaining high on every social, economic, and political indicators of failure (Harper 2012:105).

Moreover, many Somali immigrants experience malpractices on behalf of the countries they pass through on their way to Sweden. Albadri who studied Somali immigrants on their way to the EU documented that many of them endure tortures, incarcerations, rapes, and blackmails at the hands of these countries (Albadri 2013:56). One respondent elaborates (IR- 7):

> First, I illegally crossed the border to Ethiopia where I was detained by the Ethiopian border authorities for 40 days. After they released me I continued my trip through Sudan and then to Libya where I was robbed of all my belongings by the police and detained for 4 months. I was released after my family paid $ 800 to Libyan prison guards. I then crossed the Mediterranean to Malta where I was detained for 8 months for being an illegal alien.

This type of experience was frequent and serves as an illustration that many of the respondents reached Sweden with no or bad experience of the rule of law. Accordingly, throughout this study a significant and recurrent theme has been the respondent's profound mistrust regarding the different Swedish institutions and authorities. The fact that Somali immigrants in Sweden are predominantly young, with an average age of 30, (SCB 2012b) reinforces the notion that the majority have not had any experience of a functioning government in their home country before embarking on the long journey to Sweden. Thus, comprehending the implications of state failure and institutional dysfunctionality on Somali immigrants is arguably essential to partly explain the difficulties of the respondents to trust Swedish institutions.

Alsmark points out that the socio-economic and cultural values that underlie Swedish society and institutions favors individualism, secularism and a smaller family structure (Alsmark 2007:89). Hence, while Somali society favors the social collective, extensive families and religious institutions as a source of security where formal institutions are lacking, Swedish society has formalized individual-centered approach to self-fulfillment. This might serve to alienate Somali immigrants who have found it difficult to submit to a system that bears little resemblance to their former informal social security network. Many respondents pointed out that it was not an easy transition to rely on governmental institutions on services previously provided by the extensive family or the clan. While they reiterated that depending on institutions per se is not bad, they highlighted the extensive bureaucracy one goes through in order to receive assistance from the state to be extremely complex to grasp for someone who has never experienced bureaucracy before (FGD 1). Obviously, this extensive bureaucracy could be associated with the comprehensive Swedish welfare system in place and its sizeable public sector (Alsmark 2007:81).

There appears to be a general perception among the respondents that Swedish authorities have profoundly inadequate knowledge regarding Somalia and Somali immigrants (FGD 1). For instance, respondents would frequently remark on that many Swedish authorities would command them to hand in certain identification documents from Somalia which are impossible to get hold of. In the words of one respondent "*it is as if they are not aware of that Somalia has been a failed state for a long time*" (IR- 7). This outlook constitutes to prevalent perception that has been acknowledged at the highest political level. A case in point could be the Swedish parliament's instruction to the Integration Board to closely study integration difficulties facing Somali immigrants and educate the public about their situation (Integrationsverket 1999). Another example could be the recent proclamation of the municipality of Västerås about their deficient knowledge regarding Somalis living in the municipality (Västeros 2010). This could serve as an illustration of lack or shortage of systematic information exchange and dialogue between Somalis and the Swedish authorities which accordingly appears to have negative effects on the trust of the respondents towards the institutions.

On the other hand, the mistrust towards Swedish institutions appears to be perpetuated by a feeling of rejection on behalf of the Swedish society. Respondents expressed that being Somali in Sweden is often associated with analphabetism, social welfare dependency and unemployment (FGD 1). Whether or not this perception corresponds to reality is hard to determine. However, the political rhetoric concerning Somalis often revolve around how to best help them get into the Swedish labor market or the moral obligation of Sweden to help Somalis that are fleeing war in their home country (Socialdemokraterna 2009; Folkpartiet 2012; Miljöpartiet 2013). In other words, little emphasis is put on presenting Somalis as an asset to Swedish society. In the eyes of the respondents there appears to be a general sense of feeling unneeded in Sweden. In this regard, respondents seem to place enormous positive value on being needed arguably not just of its socio-economic benefits but due to its symbolism as well. Being needed symbolizes that you are recognized as a valued member of society who is engaged in a give and take relationship. Alsmark argues that while aspects such as stable economy, education, and equality before the law are vital to successful integration, the importance of feeling needed should never be underestimated (Alsmark 2007:85).

5.1.2 Fear of losing identity

Throughout this study, respondents expressed their profound concerns regarding losing their culture and religion. Somalia's unique character of being one of very few countries in the world which has a homogenous population with the same ethnicity, religion, culture and language (Harper 2012) arguably has impacts on their ability to cope with a new multicultural society. Accordingly there appears to be confusion among the respondents regarding their perception of multiculturalism as the foundation for Swedish policies of integration. An explanatory factor regarding Somali people's alien experience towards cosmopolitan society lies within the Somali language itself. Linguistically, without further explanation the terms of integration and assimilation have similar meanings in the Somali language – "*Isdhexgal*". Hence, it was recurrent that respondents mix up these terms interchangeably during

discussions and individual interviews. While talking about integration, many respondents would utter assimilation features such as their perception that the government's strategy is absorb them culturally and religiously into the host society.

Such mix up could have relevant consequences in the sense that it perpetuates misunderstanding since it is multiculturalism and not assimilation that is the official integration approach of Sweden (SVT 2010). For many respondents, integration and assimilation are one and the same approach that represents something negative in the sense that one has to leave his/her cultural identity behind. While it might be hard to fathom that a respondent who has been living in Sweden for a long period of time not to have developed an understanding of the difference between integration and assimilation, it is plausible that newly-arrived respondents who rely on interpreters in their regular contacts with authorities get mixed impressions about integration through their interpreters. Nevertheless, one could argue that the respondents deficient trust in institutions, having no experience of multiculturalism, as well as their linguistic mix ups reinforce each other and have implications on their overall understanding of integration.

Overwhelmingly, for respondents who have children, their biggest concern pertained to making sure that their children could maintain their Somali identities. They pointed out that they are in a never-ending war with daycare and school establishments who they claim are disregarding their cultural preferences and teaches their children things that are contradictory to what they preach as parents. They reiterated that their children risk catching different values in regards to religion, sexuality, alcohol, as well as their behavior towards the parents (FGD 1). As an example, one respondent noted that she did not consent to her teenage daughter swimming with boys at school but that the school did it anyway (IR- 6).

There appears to be a common conviction that there is a conspiracy against Somalis as well as a lack of dialogue with authorities. Hence, among the respondents one gets the impression that there is *a fear* which is arguably exacerbated by lack of information about Swedish authorities. Suspicion, fear and anxiety can be deemed as hindering factors to the individual's ability to fully participate in the society (1177 Skåne 2012) which ultimately could affect the integration process.

When asked about their source of information regarding Swedish authorities, many pointed to a family member, friend, clan mate, or a countryman who arrived earlier than them. This approach of relying on other Somalis for information tends to increase disinformation and false rumors (Osman 2013:86). Being referred to as essentially an oral society by the social anthropologist I.M Lewis (2002) which up until very recently did not have its own written language, the exchange of news and information verbally is traditionally in line with Somali social traditions of discussing matters of importance in person. This reliance on personal accounts of information can arguably make that same information vulnerable to subjective interpretations. Consequently, one can wonder if a general perception or fear of losing cultural identity thus also colors the presented information in a way that makes the feeling of mistrust a reinforcing loop.

However, it is hard to distinguish if Somalis themselves reinforce the perception of being culturally and religiously threatened, whether the oral communication approach brings greater insight to the issue, or whether there are genuine reasons to feel threatened. The potency and consequences of oral communication and its impact on integration is a huge topic, which is hard to do justice in the scope of this research. One important issue to bear in mind, however, is that regardless of whether the respondents came here 20 years ago or 2 years ago, the sense of fear and mistrust remains. This could be explained as even though the individual arrived in Sweden in the 1990's and has during that time acquired a great amount of formal knowledge concerning the Swedish society, he or she is still engaged in circles wherein the sense of fear and mistrust often is collectively experienced.

5.1.4 Family transformation

The Somali perception of family is typically extensive and includes a large number of people from siblings, to cousins, to distant family members and goes all the way to the clan and is unsurprisingly regarded as the epicenter of the Somali society (Harper 2012). The bond between members of the extensive family is strong and provides all its members with comprehensive insurance towards unpredictable situations[8] much the same way as the musketeer philosophy, one for all and all for one.

In terms of decision-making the family is anything but egalitarian. For instance, within the core family there is a clear hierarchical structure with the patriarch, who is also the bread-winner, being reserved the decision-making authority (Osman 2013:87). The female head of the household is usually responsible for running the day to day chores of the household with the help of her daughters. The boys of the household then come third while the girls are in the bottom of the decision-making chain. Within this social structure, everyone in the family have a clearly defined role which they are accountable for (Lewis 2002).

However, the Somali civil war has during the last two decades somewhat challenged this social structure. Many women who have lost their husbands as well as those who were confronted by harsh economic difficulties were forced to abandon their "traditional" roles by joining the labor market in order to support their families (Saacid 2010). Men are thus no longer the exclusive breadwinners of the family in Somalia. This social transformation is visible in the streets of Somalia and there appears to be a sense of acceptance within the wider society (Ibid). However, one could argue that this acceptance is bolstered by the fact that even though men are no longer the lone breadwinners of the family they still enjoy the same social status of being the ultimate decision-makers and are hence not threatened by this transformation.

Migration usually involves an "uprooting" from the very foundation of family life that is entrenched in cultures of origin (Heitritter 1999:3). Hence, migrating to Sweden seems to have profoundly challenged the traditional Somali family structure in place (Integrationsverket

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[8] Johnsdotter 2009. Unpredictable situations could for instance be considered as accidents, draughts, conflicts, or any other need which require collective support. The support is usually given in the form of social and economic security as well as psychological support to those in need.

1999). Unlike the family transformation that has recently transpired in Somalia, the one in Sweden could be considered to touch the very foundation of the Somali family structure, namely the hierarchy. Consequently, respondents were in consensus that there has been a clear transformation in their family structures since moving to Sweden. However, their perception of this transformation has an interesting twist by mainly differing according to gender lines and to a lesser extent generational dynamics.

Male respondents of the age 35 or above asserted their loss of social standing and identity as the breadwinners and heads of the household. They affirm a new power struggle within the family between them and their wives as well as their children. They claim that they have little respect at home and no longer hold any authority to lead their families. One male respondent (IR- 9) speaks about the transformation of his family:

> Me, my wife and my children never had any arguments or fights before we moved to Sweden. I used to work as a salesman, she was a housewife and our children used to study at a Madrassa[9]. As soon as we moved to Sweden, the Social Services blended in our family telling my wife and children all sorts of things to disobey me. It also took long time before I could get an employment and I became depressed and addicted to Khat[10]

The opinion of this respondent echoed the primary perception of married/divorced men of age 35 or above in regards to their loss of identity and their hostile standpoint towards the Social Services. Many blame the Swedish institutions, mainly the Social Services, for constantly meddling with their families with the intent to isolate the father and empower the mother and children. Moreover, a common thread among male respondents has been that "*women became unreasonable in Sweden*" (IR- 2;9). They justify this by alleging that it has become hard to communicate with their wives. Interestingly enough, male respondents under the age 35, while sharing the rhetoric that women are difficult to deal with in Sweden, appeared less inclined to voice their loss of social standing and admit their willingness to some extent help out at home.

On the other hand, female respondents tend to view the family transformation as something positive and necessary. They maintain that the change of environment provided them an opportunity to challenge their husband's sole decision-making authority by demanding to be heard and listened to. They continue to claim that they have not overthrown their husbands but simply gained the right to have an equal say in the decision-making process of the family (FGD 1). One female respondent stated "*in Somalia there was the extensive family that constantly supports you, here we have only each other, me and my husband, therefore I think it is essential that we see each other as equals*" (IR- 8). This specific claim of equality also challenges another male privilege, namely polygamy which has been, regardless of women's outlook, a condoned phenomenon in Somalia (Hassig & Latif 2007:67). Female respondents pointed out that they have not started to reject polygamy now because it is illegal in Sweden, but that they have been against it all along. They just could not make themselves heard (FGD 1). One respondent stated that she "*will not hesitate for a second to kick her husband out and*

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[9] Religious school

[10] Amphetamine-classed stimulant that is popular in East Africa and Yemen which is mainly chewed by men. It is illegal in Sweden

demand divorce if he decides to take a second wife because I no longer depend on him economically" (IR- 3).

Overwhelmingly, Female respondents reiterated that Somali traditional gender roles no longer apply in Sweden. For the family to get by, the father has to help out at home and with the children while the mother has to also financially contribute to the family. Hence, many female respondents were in the process of saving money through the traditional Hagbad system[11]. In addition, unlike in Somalia, one cannot rely on the children to carry out domestic work since they have mandatory school attendance, thus making the father's contribution at home indispensable.

Furthermore, female respondents expressed how this transformation has affected their children both positively and negatively. On the positive side, children are now raised as equals whereby both the boys and girls go to school and help out at home equally. On the negative side, they claim that children are negatively affected by the increasing squabbles and fights between their parents.

One female respondent mentioned that Social Services stigmatize Somalis by having stereotypical based suspicions that all parents from Somalia perform genital mutilation on their daughters (IR- 8). Johnsdotter (2009), who has closely studied female genital mutilation in Sweden, concluded a recent study that there have been reported cases where Social Services without grounds and the parent's consent medically inspected if Somali girls have been circumcised. However, none of the respondents claimed to have suffered this fate although all of them stated to have heard some cases. In any case it is a serious issue that reinforces an already existing mistrust towards Swedish institutions.

Despite the fact that the changing structure of the family hierarchy may bring internal dispute and new forms of power struggles within the family, one can argue that the outcome of these struggles also shows some flexibility. For once, the fact that male respondents under 35 years appear less bothered by women's recent change of economic and social status can be an indication of this. It can also be argued that female respondent's climb up in the family's social hierarchy and her strife towards equality with her male counterpart proves that there is a great incentive for self -sufficiency. However, the loss of the role as the sole decision-makers of the family among male respondents above 35 cause many to fall into depressions and substance abuse and thus serves to further alienate them from the integration process.

5.1.2 Social networks
The importance as well as the role of social networks to the integration process has been significantly acknowledged in many studies (Bloch 2002; Vertovec 2002; Castles & Miller 2003). Indeed, it is believed that the social network of an immigrant, especially those of one's own group, could initially facilitate the integration process. This facilitation takes place in the form of offering psychological support, sharing valuable information and experiences regarding the host society, labor market, and accommodation with their newly-arrived counterparts (Vertovec 2002:3).

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[11] A group of women collectively save specific amount of money from all of its members. The money is then given to a member each month until all the members have received the same.

A reoccurring theme has been the respondent's complaints that they have not received much needed assistance from their countrymen when they first arrived in Sweden. Those who arrived during the past ten years, regardless of gender or age, voiced their lack of network and role models as a hindrance to their integration process. They put the blame on those who arrived at the beginning of 1990s for not providing valuable information about the host society in general and the labor market in particular. On the other hand they concede to have received psychological support in the form of sharing their experiences about the war or their long journey to Sweden as well as having a social life (FGD 1). One respondent (IR- 7) expressed that:

> The first generation that came here let us all down. When we arrived they were mostly unemployed and had difficulties with the language. Worst of all was they have not started their own businesses otherwise they would have hired us just like Arabs hire among themselves…

These sentiments were very common among respondents who arrived in 2003 and after. A frequent notion that came up several times during interviews is that many feel they lack role models. While other ethnic groups may have representation in politics, entrepreneurship and academia, the Somalis are generally underrepresented (Carlson et.al. 2012). The lack of role models may serve as discouraging by negatively affecting their self-esteem (Martikainen 2009) since it might appear that the path to these positions are difficult to pursue for the average Somali. Furthermore, it also takes away the possibility of individuals that could have served as "gatekeepers" for other Somalis by facilitating or inspiring others to enter the same sectors.

A regular method that Somali immigrants employ to acquire social network among their countrymen is through Somali community organizations (Carlson et.al. 2012:136). Even though Somalis are culturally and linguistically homogenous, during the writing of this paper, I counted that there were more than 10 Somali community organizations in Malmö and several others in neighboring municipalities. Except for few, it appears that they have been founded according to regional or clan lines (Sandberg 2011). Moreover, all of them had male chairmen.

Many female respondents were highly critical of the Somali community organizations and referred to them as exclusionist male dominated clubs. They claim that it is only men who hang out there and reap all of its social benefits (FGD 1). While they have not been forbidden to attend, they point out that the already tiny venues are overcrowded with men and rarely reserve women any space which forces them to meet at their own homes. One female respondent strongly recommended that if Somali women want to be truly equal to men they should start setting up their own organizations (IR- 6). The perception of this respondent is highly significant in the sense that community organizations are grassroots organizations that usually partner local and national authorities in multi-culturalist projects and policy-making (Martikainen 2005). Hence, for female respondents, being fully fletched members of community organizations means having a platform to express their opinions about integration to the local and national authorities. Thus, without a platform they are voiceless.

Conversely male participants referred to Somali community organizations as places of no benefits when it comes to gaining valuable social network. They maintain that these venues are just for socializing among themselves but they never lead to anything positive when it comes to integration since most of them are unemployed and discussions are more about Somali politics than Sweden. One respondent (IR- 1) expressed "*in order to get a job or be aware of what is happening around us we need Swedish networks, not unemployed Somalis. How I am going to get one? I go to SFI in the morning and hang out in here in the afternoon*". The perception of this respondent is supported by some studies which came to the conclusion that immigrants in Sweden more often get jobs through informal channels compared to ethnic Swedes (Integrationsverket 2005:38). Hence, one could claim that the soaring unemployment which reigns among Somalis appear to negatively affect their ability to utilize informal channels when it comes to acquiring jobs.

The fact that many Somali community organizations in Malmö are clan-based arguably exasperates the situation as it diminishes the chance of having a bigger intra-clan social network. Furthermore, the fact that female respondents pointed to having little or no role in these organizations also indicates a lack of inter-gender social networking. The consequence is multiple, small and fragmented organizations that are clan-based and male dominated, thus reducing the chances of providing support to each other in the form of social networks. In terms of Somali-Swedish networking, the majority of the respondents perceived ethnic Swedes as polite but reclusive and hard to socialize with. Moreover, most respondents lived either in Rosengård or Sofielund which are famous for being the predominant immigrant inhabited areas of Malmö. While living in an immigrant dominated area per se is not negative, problem arises when this negatively impacts the interaction and inter-relations of immigrants and the host society (Martikainen 2009). In this case, living in immigrant dominated districts, attending SFI schools and being unemployed makes the chance of acquiring Swedish networks a daunting task.

5.2 Political Integration

5.2.1 Immigration status
According to Bloch, immigration status is a determining factor of whether immigrants feel settled or not (Bloch 2002:143). However this appears to be irrelevant in this case considering that all the respondents had either permanent residence or Swedish citizenship. Hence, it was not a surprise that issues with residence permit in Sweden rarely came up during the interviews or the FGD. However, discussions have been dominated by other matters in the form of family reunification and discrimination. These aspects are according to respondents negatively affecting their integration process.

5.2.2 Family reunification
Family reunification has been an exceedingly recurrent and emotionally charged theme throughout this study. Half of the respondents claimed to have pending immigration cases to reunite with their core families while the rest either had pending cases that involved sponsoring extensive family members or had relatives or friends who were in such process. In short, all the respondents claimed to have been touched by a government ruling in 2009 that

made it almost impossible for Somali immigrants to reunite with their families in Sweden (Migrationsverket 2012c).

The ruling explicitly defined that all immigrants who are applying to reunite with their families in Sweden should present valid identification (i.e. passports, ID cards etc) that is recognized by Sweden if they are going to have their cases tried by Migration Authorities. Sweden does not recognize any Somali document issued after 1990 (Migrationsverket 2012a). Hence this creates a catch 22 situation for Somali immigrants who cannot provide any such documents. One respondent (IR- 9) noted:

> My wife and children were living in Kenya illegally for three years. They could not apply to reunite with me because they could not provide any valid and recognized documentation. This has had profound effect on me. I was constantly worried about them even sometimes depressed. I could not concentrate in school let alone look for a job.

The Supreme Migration Court has since then overturned the decision and set praxis that immigrants who do not have the possibility to present recognized identification could be identified through DNA tests (Migrationsverket 2012b). While this has been welcomed by the respondents, it appears to have solved only part of the problem as this particular respondent state "*me and my wife, who is currently in Ethiopia, have no children. Therefore we cannot take advantage of the new DNA test system*" (IR- 1).

Restrictions imposed on family reunification have allegedly caused respondents "*constant worries, depressions, concentration issues, insecurity towards the future, and economic difficulties since they are forced to take a huge economic burden while their families are living illegally in a third country*" (FGD 1). Whether or not the linkage between family reunification and integration has been adequately taken into account by the Swedish authorities could be further analyzed. However, the fact that respondents face a particularly challenging process in regards to reuniting with their families could be seen as a major problem in regards to Somalis being able to properly settle in the new environment. Studies have shown that a simplified family reunification mechanism could have positive effects on the integration process of immigrants (MIPEX 2010; Cholewinski 2002). In contrast, it could have negative consequences if there are strong restrictions on family reunification (Ibid).

A reinforcing factor to the perception of respondents regarding difficulties encountered due to restrictions on family reunification could be the collective nature of the Somali culture where one is defined by his/her collective belonging whether it be family or clan (Harper 2012). In this regard, restrictions on family reunification appear to have brought a degree of identity crises on the affected participants.

Interestingly, this demonstrates that the Swedish integration process is not only affected by things that occur within Swedish borders but that other aspects which take place outside of Swedish jurisdiction could may well be equally important. For instance, Martikainen (2005) is critical to the notion of studying integration within a nation's borders by claiming that integration is transnational in its consequences. In this context, a group of family members living in a refugee camp somewhere in Ethiopia or Kenya appears to be hugely important to one's integration process in Sweden.

5.2.3 Discrimination

An exceptionally recurrent theme which was perhaps the most frequent and persistent throughout the interviews and the FGD was the experience of discrimination among the participants. The issue of discrimination elicited a wide range of issues and involved a variety of sectors. The most recurrent features of discrimination were labor market discrimination, discrimination in citizenship regulations, and religious based discrimination. Respondents were strikingly in agreement in regards to that their entrance into the labor market is battered by deep-rooted color and cultural based discrimination. The absolute majority of the respondents claimed to have been discriminated because of their skin color or religious beliefs at least once.

Interestingly, interviews highlighted a gender element to discrimination. Female respondents were more likely to claim that they have been subjected to cultural related discrimination than their male counterparts and also more frequently mentioned the term discrimination than the male respondents. A broad view among the female respondents was that their dress codes as well as having many children, which is common among Somalis, results in that they are discriminated in different sectors of society. One female respondent (IR- 6) announced:

> I was once denied a job as a hotel maid because the management told me that they considered my Hijab unhygienic and unfit for this kind of job. The reality was that I worked as a hotel maid before with no problems at all and had even a recommendation letter from my former employer…

When asked if she had reported the employer to the Discrimination Ombudsman, she answered no, and continued that she did not know who to turn to but even if she did she would not have reported it (Ibid). This was agreed upon by the majority of the respondents in the FGD who stated they would not report it "*because nothing would happen anyway*" (FGD 1). Very few respondents believed that they would receive justice if they report acts of discrimination committed against them. This again takes us back to the issue of trust in institutions.

Female respondents asserted that they are constantly victimized in the political discussions and media more than their male counterparts. They believe that the Swedish society in general has the wrong perception that they are forced to dress up the way they do. All female respondents in the study reiterated to have chosen their way of clothing by themselves based on their cultural and religious beliefs but admitted to have heard cases where women were forced to have Hijab by their fathers and husbands albeit not in their circle of kin. One female respondent stated that "*whenever I hear these discussions, I get more determined to keep my Hijab*" (IR- 6). It is worth mentioning that there were young female respondents who were not wearing Hijab during the interviews and the FGD.

There is currently an extensive academic and political debate regarding whether the choice to wear the Hijab is actually voluntary or not (Laborde 2006; Zevallos 2009; Franks 2000). I can hardly do the topic justice in the content of this research as it is both a difficult and sensitive issue. The Hijab as a symbol can have religious, cultural, and individual motivations and is often something that can define a person's identity (Zevallos2009). In the context of this

research a question can be stated whether or not there may be subtle or unconscious pressures on the individual on behalf of that person's own community to conform to social expectations. In the Somali context, the Hijab symbolizes religious piety and a women wearing Hijab generally receives more respect than one who is not wearing it. However, how much social expectations weigh in this case is hard to distinguish. One thing that is clear is that all female respondents, regardless of if they were wearing it or not, appear to agree that they should not be victimized because of it (FGD 1).

Inspecting the perception of the respondents in regards to their claim of being exposed to religious-based discrimination requires understanding it in its context. Unlike many other Muslim immigrant groups in Sweden, Somalis are from a background of religious and cultural homogeneity where their religious and cultural beliefs were never questioned. Moreover, religion shapes many aspects of the personal and public spheres of life in Somalia (Lewis 2002) compared to Sweden were it is confined to the private spheres of life (Alsmark 2007). In this regard, all the respondents consider religion as one of their central pillars of identity. Hence, discrimination and public debates about their dressing styles are considered as an attack on their personal identities.

A recent study put forth that immigrants of African origin who also are Muslims, a description that fits Somalis, are particularly vulnerable to multiple discriminations due to their skin color as well as their religion in Sweden (Centrum mot racism 2011). Hence, while respondents in general emphasized being subjected to discrimination, it was no surprise that women were more prone to complain about it than their male counterparts due to their dress codes. Being exposed to attitudes of victimization in the public sphere could damage women's incentive to become integrated into the new society as she has to carry the burden of being perceived as oppressed and weak because of her cultural background. An important note is that the perception of being forced into a role that is limiting or oppressive is not something that the women in the FGD themselves could identify themselves with (FGD 1).

Respondents would take their difficulties in obtaining Swedish citizenship as an example of discrimination. Swedish citizenship law states that immigrants with permanent residence can apply for citizenship after lawfully residing in Sweden for a period of five consecutive years. However, the condition is that the applicant can prove his/her identity through documentation or otherwise reside in Sweden for a period of eight consecutive years (Migrationsverket 2012d). Since, most Somali immigrants cannot prove their identity through documentation they are obliged to embrace the latter option. Bloch argues that the principal concern of immigrants in regards to citizenship is not its precise content but instead the method it can be obtained through so that equal status under the law can be indemnified (Bloch 2002:87). Hence, there is a belief among the respondents that they are subjected to go through harder and longer naturalization process compared to most other immigrant groups. Consequently, one of the rights that some of the respondents have not yet obtained is the right to vote in national elections which is only reserved for citizens, even though they have been residing in Sweden for many years. In the process they see themselves as a disenfranchised group that is denied political impact on the highest level. Moreover, one could argue that citizenship has

beyond its legal rights, a symbolic value in the sense that it represents confidence, belonging and acceptance on behalf of the host society.

Both those respondents, who have already acquired citizenship and those who were hopeful of applying for it in the future, reiterated to have found this process unfair, discriminatory and a form of collective punishment on the Somali community. This impacts the integration process of the participants in a way that that they felt alienated and imprisoned since they are unable to travel around and visit their families and friends around the world, as well as restricting their chances of setting up businesses that require travel (FGD 1).

5.3 Migration motives

It is an acknowledged phenomenon that the motives and aspirations of an immigrant play a significant role in the integration process (Bloch 2002). In order to understand the significance of this aspect, some questions need to be asked: did the immigrant planned and opted to move to a specific location or not? Does the immigrant flourish in his/her new environment and aspire to settle down or does he/she view it as a transitional period in which he/she will move on from? It is noteworthy to find that each one of the respondents claimed to have come to Sweden by chance and not by choice. In the words of one respondent (IR- 1) "*I was not in a position to choose where I wanted to move to but took whatever opportunity the smuggler offered me*". The implications of this aspect should not be underestimated as if there is a choice involved in the migration process; migrants often have knowledge about their destination and have personal, cultural, or economic reasons behind their choice.

5.3.1 Psychological issues

The motives behind migration also play a significant role in regards to whether it was forced or voluntary migration (Martikainen 2005). However, at times the distinction is not clear-cut and in other cases there is no relevance whether migration is forced or voluntary as both motives may entail more or less degree of unwanted emotional and psychological baggage (Ibid). Most respondents claim to have left Somalia to neighboring countries in a traumatic fashion before ending up in Sweden, leaving behind family members. Some have lost family members, relatives, or friends while others claim to have been injured, kidnapped or tortured. Others state to have lost complete contact with their families (FGD 1). These are all critical incidents which could lead to psychological trauma and which subsequently could have severe ramifications on a person's ability to cope with everyday situations (Flannery 1999).

The Somali perception of a person's psychological state is dichotomized as you are simply either "sane" or "insane". The impact of this baggage may be exacerbated by the cultural stigma that is connected to psychological issues. This makes it extra difficult for a person that might suffer from psychological distress, such as PTSD, to actively seek help or receive any kind of medication as there is a general fear that this information will reach the Somali community and that the person will be categorized as insane (Dirie 2013). This was seen during the research as despite the fact that all of the respondents stated to have suffered severe traumas, such as witnessing violence and death among their family members as well as experiencing an arduous journey coming to Sweden, none of them admitted to seeking any form of psychological help from healthcare authorities.

The consumption of Khat is common in the Somali male community and seems to be on the rise with customs authorities reporting to capture between five to eight tons of smuggled Khat annually (Skoglund & Carlsson 2008). Chewing Khat could be seen as both a result of PTSD and as a way to self-medicate it. Khat has devastating consequences on one's integration process as it takes many hours, possibly between 12-14 hours of daily chewing (Ibid), thereby costing the individual precious time which could have gone to studying or working. Another impact is on the family where the father vanishes for many hours every day chewing Khat, at the expense of the family's economy. Overall, with Khat in the picture, the psychological issues of men seem to affect their integration process more compared to their female counterparts. However this could also be more likely a result of the fact that men were usually much more vocal about their problems than the female respondents. Hence, besides the indirect impact of the men's khat abuse, female respondents were reluctant to disclose whether they have their own ways of dealing with their psychological problems on a similar way as that of Khat.

5.3.2 Preferences

Asked where they would have moved to if they had a choice during their migration phase, all but one respondent stated Britain. Respondents expressed that language, culture, and economic incentives where the reasons behind their choice. They claimed to have been familiar with the English language as well as culture prior to their migration. Most of them illustrated their perception that in Britain people dress up according to their cultural and religious beliefs without being discriminated and that as a Muslim immigrant, there are more mosques and religious schools in Britain than in Sweden (FGD 1). Respondents were also in agreement that it is easier to start up a business in Britain than in Sweden, allegedly due to less bureaucracy.

According to Martikainen (2005), the historical links, in the form of trade, cultural connections and imperial-colonial relations between the country of emigration and that of immigration are crucial to the immigrant's preferences. Hence, Somali immigrant's inclination towards Britain comes as no surprise. Britain is the former colonial master of Somalia and is home to the largest group of Somali immigrants in Europe (Carlson et.al. 2012:61). There is a long contact and inter-relationship between Somalis and Britain which induces that Somali immigrants know what to expect if they move to Britain. A recent study demonstrated that Somali immigrants in Britain, including those who have moved from Sweden and settled in Britain, have a higher success rate of setting up businesses and as a result more self-sufficient (Abdirahman et.al. 2011). Moreover, Britain being a former colonial super power has a more multicultural society that is much older than that of Sweden.

The immigrant's perception of their new environment is also a crucial factor. In this respect, respondents were in consensus that their stay in Sweden is temporary and will culminate with their return to Somalia. In the words of one respondent (IR- 7) "*I am grateful to Sweden but I do not intend to stay here for long because every year that passes by I become more alienated from our culture and religion*". It is acknowledged that attitudes towards the new environment particularly the desire to permanently return to one's home country are believed to negatively

affect the settlement process (Bloch 2002:144). In a way respondents seemed to be more connected to Somalia than Sweden. This is demonstrated by the fact that most of the participants reiterated to listen, watch, and read news sites about the daily developments in Somalia and barely little or none about Sweden (FGD 1). A spontaneous observation was that whenever I arrived in any of the Somali Community Organizations in Malmö to conduct fieldwork, the first thing I heard was always heated political discussions about the events in Somalia. Hence, it is my supposition that most of the respondents were much more connected to Somalia psychologically, socially, and politically than to Sweden.

6. Conclusion

Understanding the notion of integration in its entirety is complex as demonstrated by Toumas Martikainen's outlook whereby many cultural, political and structural aspects are in play and need to be systematically studied (Martikainen 2005). By employing this theoretical approach as a guiding principle, I attempted to utilize the perspective of immigrants, more specifically the Somali immigrants in Sweden, as a way of generating deeper insight to their perception of the integration process. Hence, the quest to investigate how Somali immigrants in Sweden perceive integration as well as comprehending the difficulties they face resulted in the emergence of explicit themes and concepts that will possibly serve to widen our understanding of the issue at hand.

Emerging from the analysis is the perception that respondents overwhelmingly perceive integration within the lens of assimilation despite the official Swedish government's approach of multicultural-based integration. The research showed that the cultural distance between Somalia and Sweden could offer explanations as to how respondents perceive integration at large. Accordingly, general mistrust in Swedish institutions, which is believed to derive from the socio-cultural background of Somali immigrants, is deemed to be a significant factor. The social structures of Somali immigrants, who derive from clan-based nomadic society where formal institutions have been either fragile or completely non-existent throughout Somalia's existence, appear to nurture and strengthen an informal institutional network consisting of extensive family and clan. Hence, a sizeable gap seems to have ensued between the collectively-oriented informal structures of the Somalis and the formalized as well as individual-based social structures that prevail in Sweden.

Further, the research illustrated that there is a general fear among the respondents regarding losing their cultural and religious identities. Whether this manifestation of fear is the result of their perception of the Swedish integration or whether it is a general sentiment that stems from moving to a culturally distant country is hard to establish. However, one aspect stands clear. Somali immigrants come from a country that is ethnically, religiously, culturally, and linguistically homogenous and where informal collective institutions in the form of the clan-system and religion have a strong foothold in the daily spheres of life. In other words, where taking multiple cultures and religions into consideration was never pertinent. Hence, in the eyes of the respondents, their previous social structures are alien to and far from Sweden's, thus possibly fostering fear and the perception of being completely absorbed by the host-society. This is reinforced by the perception of Somali immigrants regarding their migration

motives and preferences. The respondents of this research were in accord that they came to Sweden by chance and not by choice and put forth their perception that living in Sweden is a transitional period which will culminate them moving back to Somalia.

The research disclosed that the difficulties facing the respondents manifested itself in the form of several cultural and political related features. These features include transforming family structure that has confronted the Somali family in Sweden which seems to have differing experiences on men, women and children. What is more, weak or non-existent valuable social networks, which are considered an essential prerequisite of integration, appear to complicate the integration of Somali immigrants. In this regard, widespread unemployment as well as social alienation among Somali immigrants themselves and among Somali immigrants and the host-society, seems to create impediments regarding establishing valuable networks which consequently generates difficulties in their integration process. Lastly, the research illustrates the perception of Somali immigrants regarding discrimination in the form of restrictions on family reunification, religious-based discrimination, as well as a prolonged path towards naturalization. All of these factors are consequently perceived as collective alienating sanctions that are supposed to specifically target Somali immigrants. This in turn appears to have negative impacts on their integration process.

It is crucial to emphasize that this research studied only one side of the coin as the chosen theoretical framework puts forth that integration is a relational phenomenon which could only be fully understood when there are two perspectives involved namely, the perspective of immigrants and that of the host-society i.e. authorities (Martikainen 2009). Hence, this study sets the foundation for such a holistic approach and recommends that the perspective of the host-society towards Somali immigrants should be looked into in order to fully present and understand the gap of perceptions as well as difficulties that have ensued between the Somali immigrants and the host society in relation to integration.

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8. Appendices

8.1 Participant profiles

Interview Nr. Gender, and Age	Marital status	Year of arrival in Sweden	Pre-migration Education	Education Acquired in Sweden	Occupation in Somalia	Current occupation	Date of Interview
IR-1 Male, 29 years old	Married with no children	2011	Elementary school	Studying the Swedish language	Truck driver	Student	27/11/2012
IR-2 Male, 41 years old	Married with 3 children	1992	Secondary School	Swedish language courses	Student	Self-employed entrepreneur	22/12/2012
IR-3 Female, 22 years old	Married with 1 child	2012	Secondary School	Studying the Swedish language	Student/ saleswomen	Student	19/11/2012
IR-4 Female, 38 years old	Married with 7 children	1994	Elementary school	Swedish language courses	Housewife	unemployed	11/01/2013
IR-5 Male, 26 years old	Married with 1 child	2003	Secondary School	Bachelor's degree	Student	Full-time employment	28/12/2012
IR-6 Female, 52 years old	Divorced with 3 children	1992	Primary school	Cleaner	Housewife	Unemployed	10/01/2013
IR- 7 Male, 35 years old	single	2004	Secondary school	Bachelor's degree	Money exchanger	Full-time employment	28/12/2012
IR-8 Female, 47 years old	Married with 8 children	1990	Secondary school	Municipality adult education	Housewife	Half-time employment	10/01/2013
IR-9 Male, 35 years old	Divorced with two children	2005	Elementary school	None	Store salesman	Full-time employment	13/12/2012
IR-10 Female, 28 years old	Single	2010	Analphabet	Studying literacy and the Swedish language	Unpaid domestic labor	student	16/01/2013

Date: Time: Interview/FGD number:

Introductory guidelines:
– Thanking participants
– Info about me, LUMID, and my research
– Confidentiality, anonymity, reciprocity

Background information
Name:
Age:
Sex:
Marital status:
Pre-migration Education:
Post-migration Education:
Occupation in Somalia:
Occupation in Sweden:
Year of arrival in Sweden:

Getting to know the person
1. Why did you move to Sweden in the first place?
2. If you could have chosen which country to move to prior to your migration to Sweden, which country would that be?
3. What are your goals and aspirations that you want to achieve here in Sweden?
4. Are there any obstacles standing in your way to realize your goals and aspirations?

The basic comprehension of Integration
1. In your opinion, what is integration to you?
2. What constitutes to a successful integration as well as a failed integration?

Integration as a framework
1. The Swedish government has a set of policies which specify how immigrants shall be integrated into the Swedish society, what do you know of these?
2. Regarding your own integration journey since you arrived in Sweden, what do you think are its strengths and weaknesses?
3. What do you find particularly empowering or disempowering in the government's approach to integrate you individually?

4. How do you think should be helped by the government to successfully integrate?
5. What do you think is your own responsibility when it comes to successfully integrate?
6. *Are there any individual factors that you think are negatively affecting your path to successful integration? If yes, how would you rank these factors?*

Socio-cultural aspects
1. Have you been able to maintain and practice your cultural and religious traditions in Sweden?
2. What similarities and differences do you see between your culture and the Swedish culture?
3. Are you an active member of a Somali community organization and what negatives or positives do that entail?
4. Have you been able to build up a social network among your own community in Sweden?
5. Have you been able to build up a social network among Swedes?
6. How do you spend your free time and with whom?
7. Where is your source of information regarding the daily events in Sweden?
8. How much do you think you are integrated with the Swedish host society?

Economical Aspects
1. Are there any sort of challenges and difficulties that you have personally encountered when searching for work?
2. What kind of assistance did you receive from the government?
3. What kind of methods or strategies have you utilized in order to get a job in Sweden?

Political aspects
1. Do you vote in national and local elections?
2. Are there any challenges or obstacles standing in your way when it comes to being politically active?

Psychological aspects
1. How has the migration to Sweden affected you both mentally and socially?
2. How has it affected you as an individual and as a family?

Thank you

8.3 Integration reforms 2008 (translated by the author)[12]

Goals:

- Equal rights, obligations, and opportunities for all regardless of ethnic and cultural background
- A community fellowship with social diversity as a foundation
- A Social development that is characterized by mutual respect in relation to differences within the limits of the society's fundamental democratic values to which all regardless of background shall be part of and responsible for
- A society free of discrimination

Seven strategically important areas have been identified in order to realize the goals:

- An efficient system for the reception and introduction of new arrivals.
- More migrants in work and more migrant entrepreneurs
- Better results and greater equality in schools
- Better language skills and more adult education opportunities
- Effective anti-discrimination measures
- Positive development in urban areas with widespread social exclusion
- Common basic values in a society characterized by increasing diversity

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[12] Regeringen 2008:5,34