Bachelor’s Thesis Pro Memoria

*Education and Integration: A Study of Somalians in Sweden*

Peace and Development Studies
Research Methods in Peace & Development

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ABSTRACT

This topic investigates the perceptions and experiences of first-generation Somali individuals residing in Sweden, regarding the impact of education on their livelihood and social integration. This thesis aims at contributing to both policy and practice by providing insights into the real-world impact of education on the Somali diaspora. Furthermore, this thesis aligns with the field of peace and development studies by investigating how education shapes the economic well-being and integration of immigrants. By understanding how education affects the lives of Somali immigrants, we can see how it connects with the bigger picture of peace and development.

Drawing on the human capital theory and social acculturation concept forms the core structure of my methods and approach to study the relationship between education and the socioeconomic well-being of Somali immigrants in Sweden. Narrowing its focus to the Somali community in Sweden, the study employs a qualitative research strategy, primarily relying on in-depth interviews to capture the diverse and unique stories of Somali immigrants. This approach allows for a nuanced exploration of the perceptions and effects of education on their lives, economic prospects, and overall integration.

The findings underscore the dynamic relationship between education and employment outcomes, revealing diverse trajectories among participants. While some experienced seamless transitions, leveraging practical experiences gained during their academic journey, others faced challenges in a competitive job market despite strong educational backgrounds. The study delves into the complexities and opportunities within the evolving job market, emphasizing the significance of adaptability, networking, and strategic career planning.

I believe that this approach allows for more nuanced exploration of the chosen topic. The university experiences, as described by participants, are akin to a journey of self-discovery, a "toolbox" for effective communication, a confidence booster for navigating the intricacies of societal interactions. In essence, education not only serves as a pathway for better job opportunities but also as a transformative journey for personal growth, improving societal integration and bettering their lives.
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1. INTRODUCTION

In an era characterized by global migration and the perpetual quest for an enhanced quality of life, the profound impact of education on the well-being and societal integration of immigrant communities is undeniable. One such community that exemplifies this dynamic is the Somali diaspora, a dispersion across the globe precipitated by conflicts, insecurities, and economic disparities in their homeland (Boothby & Madar, 2018). Notably, the Somali diaspora in Sweden has experienced significant growth, with an estimated population of approximately 70,000 individuals as of 2022 (Statista, 2022). Within this context, Somali immigrants in Sweden encounter a spectrum of challenges and opportunities that have influenced their lives immensely.

The historical narrative of Somali migration to Sweden spans several decades, propelled by many push, and pull factors in Somalia and attracted by the promises of better opportunities in Europe. As Sweden's Somali population grew rapidly, so did the complexities of their socioeconomic integration, with many immigrants emphasizing the pivotal role of education in shaping their well-being and prospects. The growth of Sweden's Somali population over the years mirrors not only numerical expansion but also the intricate layers of challenges and hurdles faced by the Somali community. It's not just a statistical trend but a lived experience of resilience, adaptation, and the pursuit of a brighter future. The decision to focus on this specific community stems from a desire to unravel the nuances within this journey and contribute to a richer understanding of their narratives.

To be more specific, the decision to focus on this intricate relationship between education and the economic well-being of Somali immigrants is deeply rooted in the belief that their stories hold an explanation to understanding the influence of education. Each narrative becomes a brushstroke, contributing to the larger portrait of a community forging its identity in a new cultural milieu.

In this exploration, my aim is not only to analyze trends and patterns but to amplify the voices of individuals whose journeys have been shaped by the transformative force of education. It is a dedication to humanizing data, recognizing that behind every statistic, lies a personal odyssey of challenges, obstacles, and the deep impact of education on their lives.

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Therefore, emphasising the role of education and its role in equipping individuals with fundamental skills, knowledge, and experiences for not only for employment but for better future. Furthermore, utilising theories such as HTC and Social Acculturation concept will better aid in understanding the significance of education in shaping their lives. Drawing on the human capital theory proposed by Becker (1964), assumes a central role in the pursuit of better livelihoods and social cohesion for Somali immigrants in Sweden. Becker's theory posits that education is an investment in human capital, enhancing an individual's productivity and contributing to overall societal advancement.

In addition, the concept of social acculturation plays a crucial role in understanding the intricate dynamics of Somali immigrants' integration in Sweden. The work of (Berry 1997) on acculturation strategies provides valuable insights into how individuals navigate the process of adaptation to a new cultural environment. For Somali immigrants, education serves not only as a means of acquiring knowledge and skills but also as a tool for cultural adaptation, facilitating smoother integration into Swedish society.

Ultimately, this thesis delves into the intricate relationship between education and the economic well-being of Somali immigrants in Sweden. This research primarily focuses on the perceptions of Somali immigrants with bachelor's degrees or higher levels of education, aiming to discern the significant impact of education on their lives. Therefore, to ensure a diverse and comprehensive perspective, participants with a high-school degree and a range of educational backgrounds have also been included. The focus is on participants with a bachelor's degree, examining whether they secured employment post-graduation and exploring its effects on their, socioeconomic status, integration, and overall well-being.

The central theme revolves around the importance of education, probing whether a higher level of education necessarily leads to better job opportunities, enhanced well-being, and smoother integration for Somali immigrants. This approach aims to delve into the nuanced interplay between education, employment/ socioeconomic status, and the ease of integration into Swedish society.

Moreover, remaining unbiased in this research has been an ongoing commitment, and it's a fact that resonates deeply with me. Being an integral part of the Somali diaspora, sharing a cultural background with the participants, naturally brings a unique perspective to the research. It is essential to acknowledge that my personal background could potentially shape my interpretation of the findings. However, this awareness has been an asset, driving me to adopt a meticulous approach to mitigate any unconscious biases that might arise.
1.1 Research Objectives

The central aim of this research project is to explore the intricate relationship between education and the socioeconomic aspects of Somali immigrants in Sweden. This exploration seeks to fill a critical void in current knowledge by exploring the nuanced ways in which education shapes the livelihoods of Somali immigrants in a foreign context, thereby making a direct and meaningful contribution to the field of peace and development.

This research objective aligns seamlessly with the identified gap in existing literature. While prior studies have illuminated the challenges encountered by Somali immigrants and underscored the pivotal role of education in the integration process, there is a persisting gap of empirical evidence to substantiate these theoretical claims. In response to this gap, this thesis endeavors to contribute substantiated perspectives on how education, including factors such as access to quality education and support systems, intricately influences the well-being of Somali immigrants in Sweden.

In undertaking this task, the research aspires to foster a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences and perspectives of the Somali community. By providing tangible and context-specific insights, this study not only advances academic discourse but also lays the groundwork for evidence-based policy recommendations and tailored community support programs. The goal is not just to generate knowledge for the sake of academic discourse but to actively contribute to societal betterment.

Through empirical exploration and thoughtful analysis, this research aspires to serve as a catalyst for positive change, informing policies and interventions that enhance the educational experiences and, consequently, the overall well-being of Somali immigrants in Sweden.
1.2 Research Questions

To unravel the intricate relationship between education and the economic well-being of Somali immigrants in Sweden, my exploration will be guided by the following set of research questions. These questions serve as the compass directing my inquiry into the lived experiences and perspectives of this community, seeking to encapsulate the human dimension of their educational journey. By choosing questions that delve deep into personal experiences, my intent is to bridge the gap between the academic and the human.

Thus, providing a platform for voices that have often been marginalized in broader discussions, which is why I chose to frame these questions. The main research question is:

• How does the educational experiences of Somali immigrants in Sweden contribute to their well-being?

The subsidiary research question is:

• What role does access to quality education play in shaping the integration of Somali immigrants into Swedish society?

Each question represents a doorway into the personal narratives of Somali immigrants, shedding light on the unique journey’s individuals undertake in pursuit of education and its profound implications on their livelihoods. As Instances abound, from tales of resilience overcoming language barriers to narratives of academic achievements unlocking doors to economic opportunities. These research questions serve as the compass guiding our exploration into the intricate dynamics of education's role in the lives of Somali immigrants in Sweden. In this context, well-being encompasses economic prosperity, personal fulfillment, and successful integration into Swedish society. This comprehensive approach aims to capture the multifaceted impacts of education on the lives of Somali immigrants. By addressing these queries, I aspire not only

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to contribute academically but also to give voice to the narratives that often remain obscured behind statistical trends, fostering a richer understanding of the human experience within the context of education and immigration.

### 1.3 Limitation & Delimitation

In the pursuit of unravelling the intricate relationship between education and the lives of Somali immigrants in Sweden, it is crucial to acknowledge the boundaries within which this study operates.

The contextual scope of this research is narrow focusing on the experiences and perceptions of the Somali immigrants in Sweden. While this focus provides depth and insights, it comes with limitations, such as the historical, social, and cultural factors that influence the lives of Somali immigrants may not mirror or align with other Somali communities. Since the interviews are conducted on small scale it may not fully represent the whole community, instead, it captures glimpses, thus offering shared experiences as well as principles.

Another limitation is the linguistic side of this research, even though the research is conducted in English, the study will be mostly conducted in Swedish or Somali and efforts will be employed to ensure accurate translations and interpretations. However, there’s a potential that certain meanings and perspectives will be lost in the process of encapsulating the full richness of the participants narratives. Since using transcription services has its benefits, offering conveniences as well as efficiency, the downsides are its inaccuracies and lack of precision which can have significant effect on the findings.

Moreover, the dynamic of participant selection introduces bias to the study, as most individuals are not randomly chosen but rather self-selected to engage in this study. There are few participants that are randomly selected to ensure diversity in perceptions thus enhancing the research using snowball sampling method. But nonetheless, it introduces a possibility that these chosen participants possess distinctive perspective and experiences compared to those who opt not to participate. Ultimately, the study operates within the confines of this snowball sampling method or in another word, friend through a friend acknowledging that the pictures that are painted of Somali immigrant’s experiences is mainly crafted by those who are willing to engage and step forward.
As the findings contribute to rich insights into the educational experiences of Somali immigrants. By acknowledging the boundaries of this research study, this study aims to provide a nuanced exploration while considering the challenges.

1.4 Scope of the Thesis

This thesis focuses its lens on the unique narratives within the Somali community. Through qualitative research methods, particularly in-depth interviews, I aim to uncover the diverse stories that unfold at the intersection of education, livelihoods, and social integration.

The thesis is structured as the following and the journey through these chapters is guided by the voices and stories of Somali immigrants, aiming to contribute not only to academic discourse but, more importantly, to the lived reality of this resilient community in Sweden.

The first chapter which is introduction, sets the stage by articulating the research objectives, questions, limitations, and the overarching scope of the thesis. It provides a roadmap for the reader to navigate the exploration of the Somali immigrant experience. Chapter 2 delves into existing scholarly work, exploring the multifaceted dimensions of the socioeconomic integration of Somali immigrants in Sweden. It justifies the study by drawing on the insights provided by scholars, framing the context for the subsequent chapters.

Chapter 3 introduces and discusses the Human Capital Theory and Social Acculturation Theory, forming the theoretical lens through which the research project interprets the intricate relationship between education and the socioeconomic well-being of Somali immigrants. Moreover, chapter 4 outlines the chosen qualitative research strategy, with a primary focus on in-depth interviews. Ethical considerations are emphasized, recognizing the sensitivity of the topic, and ensuring the dignity and privacy of the participants.

Moving on, chapter 5 presents the rich narratives and insights gathered through in-depth interviews, offering a qualitative exploration of how education influences the economic well-being and livelihoods of Somali immigrants. Additionally, chapter 6 analyses the findings in the broader context, drawing connections between the lived experiences of Somali immigrants

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and the theoretical frameworks, providing a deeper understanding of the implications of education on their lives.

Lastly, chapter 7 concludes the thesis by summarizing key findings, reflecting on the implications for policy and practice, and offering recommendations for future actions and research.

2. INDUCTIVE LITERATURE REVIEW X

The literature surrounding the socioeconomic integration of Somali immigrants in Sweden is multifaceted and offers a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics involved. Scholars have explored various dimensions of this topic, shedding light on key aspects that provide a foundation for this research.

2.1 Integration & Education

One of the central research themes in this area has been on the influence of education on immigrant integration. Scholars such as Heath and Brinbaum, where they explored educational policies, illuminate the transformative potential these policies hold. Other scholars such as Portes and Rumbaut have delved into the immigrant’s integration process from various dimensions, shedding light on key aspects that provide a foundation for this research. Many others literature have nuanced and supported the scholars who gave comprehensive and well-structured literature review, diversifying and discussing it from different dimensions.

One of the central research themes in this area has been on the influence of education on immigrant integration. Scholars such as such as Portes and Rumbaut have introduced the concept of the “immigrant paradox” which refers to the phenomenon where the children of immigrants tend to perform better in educational and socioeconomic terms compared to their peers (Diemer, M.A. and Rogers-Sirin, L. 2014 pp. 47-54). This paradox stems from the protective role of strong family values, which are common in many immigrant households (Portes, J. and Rumbaut R.G. 2001 pp. 83-99).
This concept was further expounded by Zhou and Bankston, who posited that the immigrant paradox is not a uniform experience across all immigrant communities. One of their studies encompassed Chinese and Vietnamese immigrant children in the United States, which suggested that the positive correlation between immigrant status and educational achievement was due to various factors such as cultural capital, community resources and many more (Zhou, M., and Bankston, C.L. 1998). Their work not only found holes but also addressed the issue, stating that immigrant paradox due in fact stem from strong family value but it’s also due to numerous factors that forms the concept.

One study explored the pattern wherein first-generation immigrants in United States demonstrated higher academic performance than second generation. Furthermore, it was interesting, since the expectations were that the second generation would outperform the first generation, who had more time to adjust to the myriad challenges (Diemer, M.A. and Rogers-Sirin, L. 2014 pp. 47-54). The results didn’t go as they expected it, the results showed that first generation immigrants outperformed the second generation in studies and everything else, even though they had less time to adjust to the educational system. Although Portes and Rumbaut’s work does not specifically address the Somali context, it gives us insights as whether that’s the case outside of the United States. It is therefore highly relevant as it provides a theoretical framework to understand the potential positive impact of education on Somali immigrants’ livelihoods in Sweden.

Furthermore, literature has emphasized the importance of host countries educational policies and practices in shaping the integration process. Educational institutions play a pivotal role in either facilitating or hindering the integration of immigrant students. Researchers like Heath and Brinbaum have examined how educational policies can either empower or marginalize immigrant youth in schools Heath, A.F. and Brinbaum, Y. (2007). This aspect is particularly relevant to this study, as it will enable the investigation of Sweden’s educational system and its impact on Somali immigrant students. Heath and Brinbaum, in their analysis of educational policies, drew attention to the profound structural dimensions that intricately shape the experiences of immigrants. Their scholarly endeavor illuminates a crucial argument, asserting that education serves as a pivotal gateway fostering both societal integration and economic mobility within the immigrant community (Heath, A., & Brinbaum, Y. 2007 pp. 291-304).
This perspective is relevant to this study as it offers different pathways to explore the intricacies of Sweden’s educational system. Heath and Brinbaum posited that educational policies play a crucial role in shaping the experiences of immigrant students within the educational of the host country (Heath, A., Brinbaum, Y. 2007 pp. 291-304). It states that institutions that actively foster inclusivity and provide targeted support contribute to integration. While on the hand those lacking in such tools hinder the integration of immigrant students (Diemer, M.A. and Rogers-Sirin, L. 2014 pp. 47-54). As there are many literatures that has delved into the connection between education, well-being, and integration process, showing a positive correlation between. thus, illuminating the fact that education due in fact have an impact of individuals well-being, socioeconomic status, and integrational aspect of their lives.

This is further supported by Makrooni and Ropo, where they explored the educational experiences of first-generation immigrants. Their study investigated the experiences of foreign born and migrant background students (FGMFS) in Finnish educational institution. The research was conducted through in-depth interviews with 15 participants, mainly focused on their academic as well as social integration (Makrooni, G. and Ropo, E. 2021 pp. 85-106). Some of the participants shared their struggle with the Finish language, both in academic and social contexts, not only impacted their social interactions but father contributed to sense of isolation. Their study also revealed a diver’s experiences regarding the relationship between students and teachers, ranging from positive interactions to negative complaints about inadequate of support (Makrooni, G. and Ropo, E. 2021 pp. 85-106). Furthermore, the participants generally described a positive academic climate marked by high quality, developing strong work ethic, and cultivating self-efficacy highlighting the potential for fostering inclusivity.

Similarly, Alejandro Portes, who emerged with a profound contribution, introduced the concept of social capital (Portes, A. 1998 pp. 1-24). Portes proposes that social capital, encapsulating the networks and relationships woven by immigrants, plays a pivotal role in their assimilation into the fabric of society. According to Portes, education serves not only as a catalyst for individual economic prosperity but also as a facilitator for the intricate fabric of social connections (Portes, A. 1998 pp. 1-24). Which is an indispensable tool for the successful integration in the context of Somali immigrants within the intricate societal landscape of Sweden.

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Portes' concept of social capital fundamentally suggests that the journey of integration extends beyond the acquisition of economic resources (Portes, A. 1998 pp. 1-24). It underscores the importance of the network’s individuals establishes, emphasizing the relational aspects inherent in the process of societal assimilation. It highlights that education beyond being a small avenue for individual economic upliftment, becomes a cornerstone for building social bonds. These networks, forged through educational pursuits, serve as bridges that brings together the Somali immigrant community and the Swedish society. This fits well with studying the Somali immigrant experience in Sweden, showing how education serves as a path for both economic empowerment and building social connections that go beyond cultural and societal differences (Times, T.F.E. 2023). Portes perspective serves as a guiding compass, emphasizing its role in fostering a sense of community and interconnectedness within the broader Swedish society. Therefore, these scholars’ perspectives align with the thesis theoretical framework, along with Human Capital Theory and Social Acculturation Theory, thus creating a robust foundation.

This thesis not only focuses on the educational aspect, but it also focuses on the integration aspect to give this study a holistic view and create a bigger picture. As Portes social concept explored the network aspect of education in being the key that brings the two communities together, another perspective to cement the arguments is necessary to strengthen this study. Many scholars have delved into different aspects of integration, each emphasizing key components that’ll bridge together the Somali community and the Swedish community. Boothby and Madar as well as Sharif, F have explored the integration aspects and found interesting discoveries. Boothby and Madar explored the challenges faced by Somali immigrants in Sweden, encompassing issues of transnationalism, employment, cultural adaptation, and political participation. The results highlighted intricate communication problems within the Somali community and insufficient work experiences. Their exploration on the cultural adaptation was explored, revealing conflicts between generations within the Somali community in Sweden (Boothby, H. and Madar, H. 2018). Parents and children often have differing perspectives on integration, with young people eager to assimilate into Swedish society, while parents advocate for the preservation of Somali culture (Sharif, F. 2013). Furthermore, in their study they highlighted one aspect which contributed to the lack of integration of the Somali immigrants. This being communication issues within the Somali community and a lack of information about Swedish society are identified as crucial problems. (Sharif, F. 2013) Their study
emphasizes the role of transnational networks and global media in sharing success stories and positive experiences to counteract negative stereotypes and facilitate integration (Boothby, H. and Madar, H. 2018).

Furthermore, Sharif, F explores the challenges faced by Somali immigrants in Sweden, focusing on social and political integration. The core themes include the impact of state failure in Somalia, mistrust towards Swedish institutions, fear of losing cultural identity, family transformation, and social networks. The results highlighted Somali immigrants harboring deep concerns about losing their cultural and religious identity in the process of integration (Sharif, F. 2013).

As the struggle to reconcile multiculturalism in Sweden with the homogeneous nature of Somali society adds to the complexity of the identity preservation challenge. Migration to Sweden has led to a significant transformation in traditional Somali family structures (Boothby, H. and Madar, H. 2018). Older male respondents express a loss of social standing and identity as the traditional breadwinners (Sharif, F. 2013). Female respondents, on the other hand, view the transformation more positively, emphasizing newfound opportunities for equality in decision-making (Boothby, H. and Madar, H. 2018). This shift in family dynamics has both positive and negative implications for the integration process. Another discovery was, establishing social networks in Sweden proves challenging for Somali immigrants. The Somali immigrants felt that limited networking opportunities with ethnic Swedes, coupled with immigrant-dominated living areas, hindered integration efforts and access to formal support networks (Sharif, F. 2013).

These frameworks emphasize education multifaceted impact, acknowledging its role not only in economic advancement but also in building social connections and navigating diverse identities within the Somali immigrant community in Sweden. In examining the Somali context, these scholarly perspectives collectively emphasize the need for a holistic analysis that considers the intricate interplay between family values, educational policies, and individual experiences. The immigrant paradox, as elucidated by Portes and Rumbaut, becomes a lens through which becomes easy to comprehend the potential positive impact of education on the lives of Somali immigrants. Heath and Brinbaum emphasis on the structural dimensions of educational policies further illuminates the societal and economic implications, underscoring education as a transformative force within the immigrant community.
Furthermore, the emphasis placed by Heath and Brinbaum as well as Zhou and Bankston on the structural dimensions of educational policies adds a layer of insight that extends beyond individual experiences. Their scholarly scrutiny illuminates the broader societal and economic implications of education, positioning it as a formidable force within the immigrant community. Education, according to this perspective, transcends its conventional role as a pathway for individual advancement; it becomes a catalyst for societal transformation and economic mobility.

Heath and Brinbaum exploration of educational policies draws attention to the systemic factors that either empower or marginalize immigrant youth within the educational landscape. This emphasis aligns seamlessly with the call for a holistic analysis, emphasizing the need to consider not only the immediate individual outcomes of education but also its far-reaching societal consequences. The structural dimensions they highlight underscore that education is not merely a personal endeavor; it is a cornerstone for shaping the broader socio-economic landscape within the immigrant community.

In essence, this diversified perspective reinforces the idea that the impact of education on immigrant integration is not uniform but varies across different immigrant groups. It acknowledges the intersectionality of factors such as generational status and cultural background, emphasizing the need to move beyond a monolithic view of immigrant experiences. By recognizing education as a transformative force, not only on an individual level but also within the broader societal context, we gain a more comprehensive understanding of its role in the complex journey of Somali immigrants in a new cultural landscape.

2.2 Research Gaps
However, despite the comprehensiveness of available research in this field, a noticeable research gap emerges. As the literature mainly focuses on the experiences of second-generation immigrants, particularly concerning the challenges they face in adapting to a new educational system and society. As most of the scholars above such as Heath &amp; Brinbaum, Portes and Rumbaut have delved into the challenges the second-generation faces in education and society wise. Another of the research gaps identified in this study is the scarcity of academic exploration that delve into the intricacies of Somali immigrants in Sweden. Although, there are numerous studies that explore the Somali immigrants more broadly, there’s a lack of in-depth exploration of first-generation Somali immigrants in Sweden (Makrooni, G. and Ropo, E. 2021 pp. 85-106).

Furthermore, the crucial transition from education to livelihood of the first-generation immigrant is another research gap in this study as many of these scholars mainly focused of second and third gen, which made it harder to find articles and literature regarding the specifics (Portes, J. and Rumbaut R.G. 2001 pp. 83-99). Few studies have also delved into the socioeconomic outcomes of education for immigrants and more specifically, for Somali immigrants in Sweden students (Diemer, M.A. and Rogers-Sirin, L. 2014 pp. 47-54). Thus, the gap in the literature becomes evident when seeking to understand the direct connection between education and the livelihoods of first-generation Somali immigrants and their role in Swedish society.

Makrooni and Ropo briefly touched on the experiences of first-generation immigrants in the Finnish educational system, shedding light on challenges related to language and support. Highlighting issues related to language proficiency and support systems, indicating that these factors significantly impact the academic and social integration of foreign-born and migrant background students (FGMFS) (Makrooni, G. and Ropo, E. 2021 pp. 85-106). Drawing parallels between the Finnish and Swedish contexts, where both countries share certain socio-cultural and educational similarities, provides a foundation for anticipating potential challenges faced by Somali immigrants in Sweden (Makrooni, G. and Ropo, E. 2021 pp. 85-106). For instance, language proficiency emerges as a recurring theme. In Finland, participants in Makrooni and Ropos study expressed struggles with the Finnish language, impacting both academic performance and social interactions. Considering that language is a pivotal element in the educational integration process, it becomes essential to inquire how language challenges manifest among Somali immigrants in the Swedish educational system. Diemer and Roger are another scholar that have explored the challenges

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of first generation navigating not only the educational terrain but also the integration aspect. For instance, they unearth the disparities between the academic performance of first-generation immigrants and their second-generation counterparts in the United States (Diemer, M.A. and Rogers- Sirin, L. 2014 pp. 47-54). Therefore their deep exploration can be used to fill the research gaps thus aligning with the study.

Moreover, the existing literature predominantly takes a quantitative approach, relying on statistical analyses to examine large datasets (Portes, J. and Rumbaut R.G. 2001 pp. 83-99). While this approach yields valuable insights, there is a scarcity of qualitative studies that provide in-depth narratives and personal experiences. Thus, the proposed research aims to contribute a qualitative dimension to the existing body of literature by engaging directly with the Somali community and examining their experiences, perceptions, and aspirations. For instance, human stories within scholarly discourse are noticeably absent in this study. Because there is a scarcity of qualitative research that captures the lived experiences, aspirations, and challenges of individual Somali immigrants in Sweden. As personal narratives that humanize the integration process are crucial for developing a comprehensive understanding of the Somali immigrant experience. By neglecting these narratives, the current academic landscape fails to provide a holistic view of the daily struggles and triumphs faced by Somali individuals as they navigate the complexities of integration in Sweden.

Another research gap is the limited literature on the integration aspect. There are some literatures that delve into the integrations process of Somali immigrants in Sweden, however those are missing in depth explorations into the intricacies of the integration aspects of it. The available literature tends to provide a surface level understanding, lacking depth required to comprehensively analyze the multifaced dimensions of integration. Therefore, exploring these aspects could potentially offer nuanced insights. It could also contribute deeper insights into their lived experiences as well as the challenges they encounter during the integration journey.

In essence, the research gap identified in this literature review serves as the focal point for the thesis, guiding it into uncharted territory where theoretical insights meet the lived experiences of Somali immigrants. As this study aligns with the thesis overarching goal to unravel the complexities of Somali immigrant integration in Sweden. It becomes clear that addressing this void is not just an academic pursuit but a necessity for informed policymaking. Therefore, by closing this gap, the thesis aspires to contribute a comprehensive understanding of how education shapes the lives of Somali immigrants in Sweden and, in doing so, offers pathways to informed policymaking.
3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The primary theoretical framework guiding this research project is human Capital Theory, which is closely linked to the concept of social Integration. This framework forms the core structure of my methods and approach and provides a lens through which to study the relationship between education and the socioeconomic well-being of Somali immigrants in Sweden. In addition, I also wish to use the social acculturation theory guiding this thesis in understanding the intricacies of how education leads to integration in society.

3.1 Human Capital Theory

Human Capital Theory (HCT) developed by Gary S. Becker in 1964, is a foundational theory that serves as a backbone for understanding the intricate dynamic between education, employability as well as socioeconomic well-being (Teixeira, P.N. 2014). According to Becker, education is an investment in an individual’s human capital which is comparable to, for example, investing in machinery or equipment (Teixeira, P.N. 2014). As per Robinson, C. and Pope, R., the theory as described is straightforward, the more education an individual receives the more productive and valuable they become (Robinson, C. and Pope, R. 2011). Thus, leading to increased income as well as improved employment prospects. This foundation has been imperative in framing discussions on education's role in fostering economic prosperity and the well-being of people (Robinson, C. and Pope, R. 2011 pp. 244-250).
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Humans are viewed as assets and education is seen as a mechanism to enhance the productive capacities of these assets (Almendarez, L. 2010). This has sparked a lot of debates as to the crucial part of education as HTC suggests that education plays a pivotal role in shaping an individual’s productivity. As stated by Gary Becker “Human capital is the most valuable asset individuals possess” which refers to the knowledge, skills, and experiences that individuals acquire through education, training as well as personal development (Becker, G.S. 2002). He states that these assets empower individuals to secure employment opportunities and create positive impact on society. Human Capital Theory is a long-term investment allowing individuals to adapt to changing circumstances, therefore highlighting that nurturing one's human capital is vital for personal and profession (Becker, G.S. 2002). It’s evident that education becomes not only a personal enrichment tool but a means to acquire skills and knowledge that are directly transferable to the labor market (Teixeira, P.N. 2014).

While it is essential to acknowledge the evolving discourse around HTC and that Becker laid the theoretical foundation, contemporary scholars have nuanced and critiqued the theory. Recent scholars such as James Heckman, Theodore W. Schultz and Erik Hanushek have contributed to the ongoing dialogue by exploring the complexities as well as limitations of HTC in divers’ socioeconomic contexts.

James Heckman's work has been crucial in expanding HCT beyond a mere focus on cognitive skills. He emphasizes the significance of non-cognitive skills, arguing that traits such as perseverance and sociability are equally pivotal (Little, K. (2015). He stated that the inequalities experienced by families are due to insignificant level of human capital development, specifically inequity in non-cognitive abilities. Highlighting the phrase "skill begets skill" which is used to describe the long-term functional relationship between early development of socio-emotional skills and later success (Little, K. (2015). This nuanced perspective broadens the traditional understanding of human capital, acknowledging the multifaceted nature of skills contributing to economic success.

Schultz's Emphasis on Education for Long-Term Economic Growth (Schultz, 1961). He further emphasizes the importance of investments in education for long-term economic growth (Schultz, T.W. 1961 pp.1-17). He acknowledges that education is one part of the whole picture, stating that health, practical skills gained through experience are parts of the individual's human capital. Schultz view not only broadens the understanding of what investments contribute to an individual’s economic but also about the range of factors that

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enhance a person’s overall capacity to be productive and economically valuable (Schultz, T.W. 1961 pp.1-17).

Furthermore, Scholars such as Anna Valero, E. A Hanushek and L. Wöbmann have delved into the correlation between education and economic growth and well-being. Showing that there's a positive correlation between them (OECD 2023). According to Valero, she highlighted an endogenous perspective on growth, emphasizing the role of human capital, more specifically cognitive skills in driving economic growth which is backed by Heckman (Little, K. (2015). She proposed two ideas, the first one is that human capital is a factor of production influencing growth through individual educational investment choices. Second, human capital is seen in research aspect as generating new ideas and technologies which contributes to economic growth (Valero, A. 2021). Both Hanushek and Wöbmann have emphasized the positive effect of the quality of education on growth. Their early studies focused on the quantity of education, found a positive association between educational quantity and economic growth. They also highlighted the importance of cognitive skills indicating a positive connection, demonstrating significant long-term benefits (Hanushek, E.A., and Wößmann, L. 2010).

Lastly, Erik Hanushek contributed significantly to the Human Capital Theory by scrutinizing the quality of education. While Becker posits that more education inherently leads to higher productivity, Hanushek’s work challenges this assumption. He states that not all education is equally productive, and that the quality of education plays a pivotal role in determining its impact on human capital (Hanushek, E.A. 2013 pp. 204-222). This is also a critique that many scholars have gone into in-depth and challenged Becker’s assumptions. Scholars such as Ledger Woessmann who have argued that the quality of education significantly influences its impact on human capital (Hanushek, E.A. 2013 pp. 204-222). Highlighting global context where many discrepancies in educational quality exist, challenging the universal applicability of HTC. (Korres, G.M. and Tsamadias, C. 2008). Thereby prioritizing the quality of the education rather than the quantity in enhancing the individual productive capacities.

Another critique is the oversimplification of the theory, as it treats individuals as rational agents who make decisions solely based on maximizing their economic gains (Schuller, T. 2016). Therefore, this simple view ignores the complex interplay of societal, cultural, and

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psychological factors that influence educational choices and outcomes. For instance, cultural expectations could influence whether an individual pursues higher education or enters the workforce directly (Little, K. (2015). While societal structures and expectations can impact the accessibility and nature of educational opportunities for different groups, genders etc (Hanushek, E.A. 2013 pp. 204-222). Moreover, psychological factors, such as individuals’ aspirations, motivations and role models contribute notably to the complexities of educational choices (Schuller, T. 2016). These factors such as prioritizing non-economic goals, personal fulfilment or contributing to community development challenge the simplistic economic rationality assumed by the Human Capital Theory.

3.2 Social Acculturation Theory

Moving on to the social acculturation concept, which is fundamental to the understanding of how individuals integrate into new society. The process involves active participation in economic, social, and cultural dimensions fostering a sense of belonging and connection within the host community as stated by (Berry 1997). While rooted in the fundamental idea of adapting to a new sociocultural environment, contemporary scholars have expanded and nuanced the concept, offering insights into the intricate dynamics of identity formation, belonging, and the reciprocal influences between the individual and the host society (Worthy, L.D., Lavigne, T. and Romero, F. 2020).

This concept was introduced by John W. Berry in the 1960s, laying the groundwork for its subsequent development. Berry proposed a bidimensional model that considers the maintenance or relinquishment of the heritage culture and the adoption or rejection of the new culture (Worthy, L.D., Lavigne, T. and Romero, F. 2020). This framework, known as the acculturation strategies model, marked a shift from viewing acculturation as a unidimensional process to recognizing the multifaceted nature of cultural adaptation.

Berry's Acculturation Strategies are divided in the following:

His strategies provide a framework for understanding how individuals navigate the process of acculturation or the adaptation to a new culture. These strategies showcase the diverse ways
individuals manage the coexistence of their heritage culture and the culture of the new society they find themselves in.

- **Integration**: this section posits that individuals maintain their heritage culture while also adopting aspects of the new culture. Engaging with and embracing the customs, traditions, and values of the new culture. This dual culture is visible in their daily lives, showing harmonious blend of both cultures.

- **Assimilation**: Individuals adopt the new culture while relinquishing aspects of their heritage culture. They may gradually distance themselves from their heritage culture, embracing the new culture as their primary identity.

- **Separation**: Individuals maintain their heritage culture and reject aspects of the new culture. Furthermore, exclusively associate with members of their own cultural group, resisting adopting new customs, and avoiding interactions with larger community.

- **Marginalization**: Individuals neither maintain their heritage culture nor adopt the new culture. These individuals feel a sense of alienation, struggling to integrate into their cultural sphere. This often results in feelings of isolation and disconnection from both their cultural roots and the broader societal context.

However, it's imperative to note that individuals may not adhere to a single acculturation strategy throughout their lives due to various factors. Factors such as events, societal attitudes as well as personal development can influence shifts in acculturation strategies over time. Additionally, due to the nature and complexity of the acculturation process, understanding Author: Ibrahim Mohamed

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these strategies is crucial for this study. By understanding the strategies and use it to interpret how Somali immigrants navigate the integration aspect and the challenges they face on the daily basis.

Contemporary researchers, such as Paul G. and Florian Schmitz, have expanded on Berry's model by emphasizing the contextual nature of acculturation. Paul and Florian underscore the pivotal role of social support in the acculturation process (Schmitz, P.G. and Schmitz, F. 2022 pp. 875-916). Their work acknowledges that individuals do not navigate acculturation in isolation but are profoundly influenced by the networks of support available to them. They stated that the presence or absence of encouragement from family, peers, and community significantly molds the choices individuals make regarding the maintenance or adaptation of their cultural heritage (Schwartz, S.J. 2010 pp. 237-251). Thus, this contextual lens recognizes the agency of individuals in actively seeking or resisting acculturative changes based on the relational dynamics within their social spheres. In essence, the contextual dynamics proposed by Ward and Ponterotto invite a holistic exploration of acculturation, where individual stories are situated within the broader context of social relationships, discrimination, and personal motivations.

In counterargument, there have been critics around the oversimplification of acculturation model. The idea that individuals must choose between maintaining their heritage culture or adopting the new culture may neglect the reality of hybrid identities and the coexistence of multiple cultural affiliations. Many scholars like Ghassan Hage and Stuart Hall have explored the fluid and dynamic nature of identity, challenging static categorizations inherent in some acculturation models (Hage, G. and Hall, S. 2014).

The argument is that it questions the balance between individual agency and structural constraints within the social acculturation paradigm. While individual choices and motivations are acknowledged, there is a need to further explore how broader structural factors, such as institutional discrimination and systemic inequalities, shape the acculturation experiences of marginalized groups (Schwartz, S.J. 2010 pp. 237-251). Scholars like Edward Said and bell Hooks have critiqued acculturation theories for often neglecting power dynamics and the potential imposition of a dominant culture on marginalized groups. Therefore, the concept of cultural imperialism underscores the unequal power relations between the dominant and subordinate cultures, questioning the assumed agency and autonomy of individuals in the acculturation process (AbiHanna, R. 2014 pp. 37-42).

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In conclusion, the investigation into the dynamics of Human Capital Theory (HCT) and the social acculturation concept within the context of Somali immigrants in Sweden introduces crucial criteria for a comprehensive understanding of their experiences. The application of HCT unfolds a framework that emphasizes the significance of education in shaping human capital accumulation. The criteria for assessment include an exploration and assessments of their level of education, skills/knowledge and work experience acquired through education. Thus, allowing for a nuanced evaluation of their impact on employability, income levels, and overall economic integration. This tailored approach guides the formulation of interview questions, ensuring a focused examination of how education shapes the economic trajectories of Somali immigrants in Sweden.

Similarly, the incorporation of the social acculturation concept broadens the scope of investigation beyond economic indicators. By utilizing this comprehensive framework, the study aims to capture the multifaceted nature of integration experiences. This lens enables an exploration of how education, as a component of social acculturation, influences the accumulation of human capital among Somali immigrants. The criteria include an examination as well as evaluation of participants social network both within and outside of their community, their involvement in social institutions and cultural integration/adaptation. So, by assessing and evaluating participants based on these criteria, we can understand a little bit better of the dynamic interplay between education, meaningful employment, and financial well-being.

Moreover, the theoretical triangulation lies in recognizing education as a catalyst for both economic and social integration, which collectively contribute to overall well-being. By operationalizing these theories, researchers can examine how educational experiences shape not only individuals' economic prospects but also their social networks, cultural adaptation, and sense of belonging in the host society.

In essence, the outlined criteria provide a great foundation for a holistic exploration of the intricate relationships between education, human capital, and social acculturation within the specific context of Somali immigrants in Sweden.
4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As stated above, I’ll be researching the intersection of education and livelihood amongst Somali immigrants in Sweden, by employing a qualitative approach. The research design primarily adheres to a qualitative approach, which allow for a profound exploration of individual experiences, motivations, and perceptions, essential in understanding the influence of education on livelihoods.

4.1 Methodological Framework

This study adopts abductive method, which is integral to the dynamic exploration of the complex relationship between education and the socioeconomic well-being of Somali immigrants in Sweden (Dudovskiy, J. 2012). The reason I chose abduction is because it aligns well with the overarching aim of this study, which is to unravel the intricate dynamics of how education shapes the lives of Somali immigrants within the context of Sweden.

In navigating the intricate terrain of understanding how education shapes the lives of Somali immigrants in Sweden, this study embraces an abductive qualitative research strategy. Abduction, a term coined by philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce, refers to a form of reasoning that moves between theory and data, allowing for the exploration of unexpected connections and the generation of new insights (Heckmann, C. 2020). By employing an abductive approach, this research acknowledges the dynamic interplay between existing theories and the narratives of the Somali immigrants, aiming to unravel the nuanced impact of education on their socioeconomic well-being. The qualitative nature of this study is akin to embarking on a journey of discovery, opting for in-depth interviews to capture the authentic voices and experiences of the participants Dudovskiy, J. 2012).

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Abductive reasoning is particularly apt for exploring complex social phenomena where existing theories might not fully capture the intricacies of lived experiences (Heckmann, C. 2020). By blending theoretical insights with the narratives of participants, this methodological choice enables the discovery of patterns and connections that might not be immediately evident. The abductive reasoning process involves a constant interplay between theory and emerging themes from the qualitative data. As the study progresses, adjustments to the initial theories may be made, and new hypotheses may emerge based on the richness and diversity of participant narratives. This iterative process ensures a nuanced exploration that goes beyond theoretical frameworks, capturing the complexity of real-world experiences within the Somali immigrant community in Sweden.

This methodological framework not only aligns with the overarching thesis but also ensures that the research remains dynamic and responsive to the multifaceted nature of the research topic. The abductive approach, rooted in both deductive and inductive reasoning, serves as a methodological bridge, allowing for a holistic understanding that reflects the intricate relationship between education, socioeconomic well-being, and integration among Somali immigrants in Sweden (Heckmann, C. 2020).

Simultaneously, the inductive reasoning component of abduction acknowledges the limitations of solely adhering to existing theories. By allowing for the emergence of new insights from the qualitative data, the research aims to uncover the lived experiences and perceptions of Somali immigrants that may not fit neatly into established frameworks (Webster 2023). This methodological choice is in line with the overarching objective of providing a comprehensive understanding that extends beyond theoretical boundaries.

4.2 Semi-qualitative Structured Interview

This study used semi-qualitative structured interviews to get rich insights and perspectives as to know whether education has had effect on their well-being, socioeconomic status as well as integration process (Jamshed, S. 2014). I chose a qualitative research method over
quantitative because I sought to capture the nuanced and multifaceted experiences of Somali immigrants in Sweden. I believed that qualitative data would provide a deeper understanding of their stories, motivations, and challenges that quantitative data might overlook.

The selection of the semi-qualitative-structured interview as the primary data collection method aligns with the end goal of this thesis which is to gain an in-depth understanding of the perceptions of Somali immigrants in Sweden. This methodological choice is not arbitrary but rather a deliberate effort to delve into the complexities of individual narratives while maintaining a systematic and focused approach.

The interview protocol is meticulously crafted to reflect the key themes identified in the literature review and theoretical framework (Jamshed, S. 2014). Commencing with broad inquiries about participants' educational journeys, the structured questions gradually navigate toward specific aspects, such as challenges encountered, opportunities seized, and the perceived influence of education on various facets of their lives.

The sequence of questions is intentionally designed to create a conversational flow, enabling participants to share their stories as stated by Buckley and Chiang (Jamshed, S. 2014). By starting with more general inquiries and progressively delving into more specific domains, the interview seeks to establish rapport early on, fostering a comfortable environment for participants to articulate their experiences with depth and nuance.

Within the structured framework, strategic probing techniques are incorporated to encourage participants to elaborate on their responses. Probing is an essential aspect of the interview process, as it allows for the exploration of unexpected insights and ensures a comprehensive examination of participants' perspectives (Singh, H. and Shareef, S. 2022). Probes are thoughtfully integrated into the interview flow, balancing the need for detailed exploration with the overall structure of the conversation. Furthermore, the interviews will include opportunities for participants to share anecdotes or examples, adding a qualitative layer to the responses (Singh, H. and Shareef, S. 202). This approach aligns with the qualitative nature of the research, aiming to capture the richness and uniqueness of individual experiences. Probing, therefore, serves not only as a tool for deeper exploration but also to uncover the diverse and multifaceted dimensions of the participants' lives.

To capture the nuances of participant responses, the interviews will mostly be audio-recorded with explicit consent from the participants. This recording method is chosen to preserve the authentic tone, emotion, and context embedded in their narratives. The audio recordings will

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be transcribed, retaining the and expression that might be lost in written transcripts (Singh, H. and Shareef, S. 2022).

In summary, the semi-qualitative-structured interview method is carefully aligned with the overall thesis objectives. Its structured yet flexible nature accommodates the multifaceted experiences of Somali immigrants, providing a rich and detailed exploration of the impact of education on their lives in Sweden. Through strategic questioning and probing techniques, this method aims to capture the depth, diversity, and uniqueness of individual narratives, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

4.3 Participant Selection

Participants for this study will be selected using a non-random sampling method commonly known as "friend through a friend" or snowball sampling method (Bhat, A. 2018). This approach relies on existing connections to access participants within the Somali immigrant community. Initial participants, known to the researcher either directly or through mutual acquaintances, will be approached with the aim of expanding the participant pool through referrals (Bhat, A. 2018).

The snowball sampling method is particularly advantageous for this study as it facilitates access to a hard-to-reach population. Somali immigrants, like many immigrant communities, may be hesitant to engage with researchers due to trust and cultural barriers (Bhat, A. 2018). Utilizing existing connections helps establish trust, making participants more likely to share their experiences authentically.

In this research, I chose participants who are comprised of diverse geographics, including graduates navigating the job market, professionals with established occupations and participants who opted for workforce entry directly after high school. The reason I chose to include participants with high school background is to provide a comprehensive and inclusive understanding of the economic trajectories and integration. Because solely focusing on individuals with bachelor's degrees or higher might have overlooked a significant portion of the community with diverse educational backgrounds and findings would've been biased as well.

Therefore, incorporating high school graduates, the research recognises the varied pathways these individuals choose based on their circumstances, motivations, and considerations. It shows that not everyone choses to pursue higher education immediately and that varied factors play a crucial role in shaping their lives.

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However, it is essential to acknowledge the potential limitations of this sampling method, such as the risk of creating a homogeneous participant group and potential bias in the referral process. To mitigate this, efforts will be made to include a diverse range of participants, ensuring a more comprehensive exploration of the research questions.

### 4.4 Ethical Consideration

Furthermore, ethical considerations are paramount in this research. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants, assuring them of anonymity and data confidentiality. Particular attention will be paid to protecting participants, recognizing their vulnerability as immigrants. Ethical guidelines will be strictly adhered to, and the research process will aim to minimize harm while prioritizing the welfare and dignity of the participants. Ethical considerations are at the forefront of this research, recognizing the paramount importance of ensuring the well-being, autonomy, and privacy of the participants.

Prioritizing the principle of voluntary participation, informed consent will be diligently sought from all participants. Participants will receive comprehensive information about the research purpose, procedures, potential risks, and their right to withdraw at any stage without consequence. The informed consent process underscores the participants' autonomy, ensuring they make an informed decision to contribute to the study. Confidentiality is a cornerstone of ethical research practice, as all participant information will be treated with the utmost confidentiality, and any data shared during interviews will be anonymized to protect participants' identities. Pseudonyms will be used in reporting findings, ensuring that individual responses are not attributable to specific participants. This commitment to confidentiality aims to create a safe space for participants to share their experiences openly.

Moreover, remaining unbiased in this research, as the investigator, I recognize the significance of maintaining objectivity throughout the study. It involves consciously setting aside personal opinions and preconceptions to ensure that the data collected, and the subsequent analysis accurately reflect the voices and experiences of the Somali immigrants in Sweden. Being unbiased allowed me to interact with participants in a manner that was neutral and non-judgmental. It fostered an environment where participants felt comfortable sharing their experiences openly, contributing to the authenticity and richness of the data collected.

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However, remaining unbiased was not without its challenges even though I have the same background as the participants, it was hard not to include my own perspectives in question formulation or interpretations but nonetheless it came out the way it was intended to. Ultimately, transparency is integral to ethical research. Participants will be provided with a clear overview of the research process, from data collection to analysis and dissemination of findings. This transparency builds trust and ensures that participants are well-informed about how their contributions will be utilized. Any potential conflicts of interest or affiliations will be disclosed to maintain openness and honesty in the research endeavor.

5. RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter unfolds the compelling narratives drawn from participant interviews, offering insights into their diverse journeys. Highlighting the dynamic relationship between education and employment results, these narratives shed light on various aspects, including smooth transitions, strategic career planning, and navigating the intricacies of a competitive job market.

5.1 Findings

Following the interviews with participants, the findings proved intriguing, revealing a commonality in their journeys and responses to the posed questions. While some experienced outcomes different from their initial aspirations, others were fortunate enough to achieve their desired results. This research incorporated a participant pool comprised of 12 individuals with different educational backgrounds, each contributing useful insights into the socioeconomic integration aspect. The participants are comprised of diverse geographic, including recent graduates navigating the job market, seasoned professionals with established

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occupations and participants who opted for workforce entry directly after high school. These diverse and rich perspectives facilitated a nuanced exploration of the challenges and opportunities at different stages of their educational and professional journey within the Swedish society.

Participant 1's journey in the realm of economics serves as an illustration of a seamless transition from academia to the professional sphere. She engaged with the subject both in high school and at the School of Business at Gothenburg University. She did not only amass a solid theoretical foundation but also actively applied her knowledge through internships and various projects. The participant highlights the pivotal role of practical experiences gained during her academic journey. Internships and projects in the field of economics provided not only an avenue for applying theoretical knowledge but also a unique insight into the intricacies of real-world economic practices. This hands-on approach not only enriched her skill set but also positioned them favourably in the job market.

The immediate employment achieved by Participant 1 prompts an exploration into whether this trend extends to other participants who share a similar trajectory.

- I would say that my education has been like a toolbox for me when it comes to communicating and being part of society. By learning new ways of expressing myself, I’ve become better at understanding. I can now participate in conversations in a more confident way and share my own thoughts and opinions about things. University life has contributed for me the chance to get to know different persons with different perspectives, this made me be more open and tolerant. For me it was about more than learning economics and how the world works, it has also helped me grow up like a human being. I’m acting now in a better way than I did before (Participant 1).

Participant 2 & 3 and 4 narrative introduces the dimension of strategic career planning within the competitive landscape of sociology, political science as well as Otomicroscopy. Recognizing the intensifying competition within the job market, these participants envision pursuing higher education at the master level as a means of securing a competitive edge. As this decision to pursue a master’s degree is framed as an investment in future job opportunities. They anticipate that advanced education will not only enhance their competitiveness but also open doors to higher-paying positions. They also expressed the crucial role of internship gained during their academic journey, highlighting the impact it had and opening doors for them. The network established in the

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Internship job created a social network which made it easier for them to return to the same job after graduation. Not only is pursuing higher education important but also creating social networks through internship has helped them land in a better position or helped them as a stepping stone.

However, participant 5 & 6 narrative introduced the complexities and challenges inherent in the modern job market within the field of integration & diversity study as well as civil engineering. Despite holding an education in integration & diversity study, she found herself navigating the intricate web of job seeking in a competitive environment yet demanded in today's predicament. Having bachelor's degree on many programs such as integration and diversity study, economics and many more, but found it hard to find a job. Even though she did plenty of internship at many workplaces and created social networks, she found herself lost, unable to find a job even at the places they worked. During the interview, I asked participant 4 why he found it hard to find a job despite having good educational background, he answered.

- I felt that with strong educational background and doing internship in many different places, creating plethora of social networks as not enough, I found it shocking. After graduation, I contacted the places I did internship but to no avail, they didn’t have a position for me. I don’t know whether it's because I didn’t leave a good impression on them or something else, I felt heartbroken knowing that I have a good CV and strong educational background yet no job (Participant 4).

The same could be said for participant 5 who have studied civil engineering, expressing the competitiveness of the job market. But also, he expressed the lack of internship which he stated that would’ve helped in landing him a job. He works now as a taxi driver and is still looking for a job. Therefore, knowing the competitiveness of the job market and considering the engineering program the participant studied, there could be various of reasons as to why he didn’t land a job.

- I believe that having the opportunity to do an internship would not only have potentially made things easier in terms of gaining practical experience, but also would’ve facilitated building a valuable social network within the industry. I searched many places but to no avail, which made it harder for me to secure experience and practical skills in my chosen field (Participant 5).

Changing the perspective, during the interview, participants 7 & 8 and 9 had different views as they only had college level education and work within warehouse. They expressed a strong feeling of regret because they didn't focus on school unable to find a good job thus leading to low socioeconomic status. Both highlighting the significant and crucial role of education in

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enabling them to get better jobs thus translating to their wellbeing. They also expressed the impactful role of education in facilitating the integration, creating network thus creating harmony in society.

- At that time, we didn’t know that importance of education and what role it would have in our future. If we could go back in time, we would’ve focused more on our education and maybe gotten better job, higher position maybe and our lives would’ve been better as well. We chose to focus on the moment not caring about the ramification and how it would affect our lives. But now we study while simultaneously working to better our lives (Participant 8).

The last two participants that I had the opportunity to interview who also studied med school and bachelor of economics had similar responses as participant 2 and 4. They expressed the same intention on further studying thus securing better competitive edge over others. Really highlighting the importance of education not only affecting their socioeconomic status but also their integration process. These participants have had the same response and the consensus of these three participants was.

- For me, as a person who comes from Somalia and lives in Swedish society, education has played an important role in terms of my sense of belonging and acceptance. By investing in my education, I have been able to bridge cultural differences and create common ground with people around me. The university have given me tools to understand and participate more actively in social issues, which in turn has strengthened my sense of being part of Swedish society (Participant 10).

However, Participant 11's educational and professional journey presents a compelling narrative that encapsulates the challenges and opportunities inherent in the pursuit of a career in a new country. With a background as a lawyer in their home country, His trajectory takes unexpected turns upon arriving in Sweden. A qualified lawyer in their home country, they faced hurdles upon arriving in Sweden, leading to a stint as a taxi driver. However, a pivotal shift occurred when he secured a role within Växjö Kommun, providing stability and networking opportunities. Therefore, their story contributes valuable insights into the immigrant experience, emphasizing adaptability, resilience, and the potential for meaningful career growth outside one's original field of study.

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5.2 Exploring the Impact of Education

Their stories underscore the evolving nature of the job market, emphasizing the significance of practical experience and networking. The participants reflection on the need for adaptability in response to market dynamics prompts an exploration into the experiences of other participants currently engaged in job searches. Understanding the strategies, challenges, and reflections of individuals navigating a competitive job market contributes to a nuanced portrayal of the realities faced by those seeking employment. This narrative underscores the evolving nature of job searches and the importance of aligning strategies with the dynamic demands of the employment landscape.

Interviewing participants who expressed similar intentions of pursuing higher education post-bachelor’s degree unveils a shared perspective on education as a strategic career move. Unpacking their motivations, expectations, and perceived benefits provides a comprehensive understanding of how participants view advanced degrees as transformative elements in shaping their employability and career trajectories thus affecting their well-beings. Furthermore, conducting interviews with participants in a similar position as Participant 3 allows for a comprehensive examination of the challenges and strategies associated with job searching. Understanding the participants perspectives on the evolving nature of the job market, the significance of networking, and the adaptation of strategies in response to competition contributes to a nuanced portrayal of the complexities surrounding post-graduation job searches.

Participant 2 and 3's inclination towards higher education as a strategic move for gaining a competitive edge prompts an intriguing investigation into the motivations, expectations, and perceived benefits that underpin this strategic approach. To shed light on this phenomenon, it is imperative to delve into the individual stories and aspirations of participants who share a similar trajectory.

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For example, Participant 2, driven by a desire to specialize further in project management, envisions a master's degree as a pathway to acquiring advanced skills that set them apart in the job market. His motivation stems from a recognition of the evolving demands of the sector and a belief that a specialized degree will enhance their employability. Participant 3, on the other hand, sees a master's degree as not only an educational pursuit but as an investment in future job opportunities. His expectation is rooted in the belief that an advanced degree will not only deepen his knowledge but also broaden his career prospects, potentially leading to higher-paying positions. This perspective aligns with the broader narrative of participants recognizing the competitive nature of the job market and strategically positioning himself through higher education.

The participants' unanimous acknowledgment of the highly competitive job market within the field of economics opens a gateway to exploring the intricate challenges faced by those seeking employment and the adaptive strategies employed. For instance, Participant 5's journey reflects the advancing nature of the job market. Despite holding an education in engineering, he navigates the complexities of job searching, emphasizing the importance of adaptability. In this context, challenges may range from the need for specialized skills demanded by employers to the evolving dynamics of job application processes. For instance, participants may find that certain sectors within engineering require specific technical skills, prompting them to adapt by pursuing additional certifications or training.

Concurrently, strategies employed by participants may involve totalising network platforms, such as LinkedIn, to connect with industry professionals or engaging in informational interviews to gain insights into the current trends and requirements in the job market. For instance, Participant 6, currently on the job hunt, actively utilizes networking events and online platforms to establish connections and stay updated on job opportunities within her field.

For example, Participant 12's internship at Tax Agency not only provided them with practical skills but also served as a direct gateway to employment. The exposure gained through hands-on projects enabled him to showcase his capabilities, making him a desirable candidate in the eyes of employers. This narrative underscores the profound impact that practical experiences can have on participants' ability to secure employment. Networking, as highlighted by several participants, extends beyond mere social connections.

Participant 11 have had the same response as participant 12 in terms of education and creating social network. The participant who previously worked within insurance fund, said that due to

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meeting new people and communicating with different people opened a lot of doors for higher position, better socioeconomical status and so on. His journey has led to better position than he anticipated, thus advocating for social network.

Participants acknowledging the diverse job outcomes within the field of economics prompts a comprehensive examination of the factors influencing successful employment and the challenges faced by those still in the job market. For instance, Participant 4's swift employment after graduation can be attributed to a combination of his strong academic background, practical experiences gained through internships, and a well-established professional network. On the other hand, Participant 6, still navigating the job market, faces challenges that may include increased competition for entry-level positions or a mismatch between specific job requirements and their skill set. Therefore, understanding the intricacies of these diverse trajectories will uncover valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of career development within the field of economics, offering a nuanced perspective on the factors that contribute to successful employment outcomes and the challenges faced by participants still on their job-seeking journey.

Expanding our exploration to include the narratives of individuals with high school degrees, brings forth an additional layer of complexity to our analysis. The inclusion of these perspectives broadens the scope of our study, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the diverse economic trajectories within the Somali immigrant community in Sweden. The narratives of individuals with high school degrees employed in warehouse settings offer insights into alternative pathways within the economic landscape. For instance, Participants 7, 8 and 9, all with high school degrees (gymnasium), provide narratives that diverge from the trajectory of pursuing higher education. Their experiences shed light on the feasibility of securing employment in warehouse roles with a high school education.

These participants highlight how their decision to enter the workforce directly after high school was influenced by familial responsibilities and the need for immediate financial stability, illustrating the influence of personal circumstances on individuals' career choices. This perspective challenges the predominant narrative of strategic higher education pursuits, underscoring the varied motivations and considerations that individuals navigate in shaping their economic paths. Their story also underscores the diverse motivations and considerations that individuals navigate when shaping their economic paths. It highlights the need for a more inclusive narrative that recognizes and respects the varied trajectories individuals may choose based on their unique circumstances. This perspective contributes to a broader understanding
of the factors influencing career decisions within the Somali immigrant community in Sweden, emphasizing the importance of considering individual contexts and motivations in the discourse on economic trajectories.

Their experiences will shed light on the strategies employed, challenges faced, and reflections on the changing nature of the job market within the realm of economics. In weaving through the diverse narratives of participants within the field of economics, the interplay between education and career outcomes becomes intricately nuanced. Whether participants swiftly secured employment, strategically pursued higher education for a competitive advantage, or faced challenges in the competitive job market, each story provides a unique lens into the dynamic relationship between education and employment. This exploration sets the stage for further research, emphasizing the need to consider individual trajectories while drawing connections to broader themes within the economic landscape.

5.3 The Impact of Education on Integration

All participants interviewed have had strong understanding of the imperative role and in terms of integration aspect. Some of the participants discussed the issues and challenges surrounding the integration aspect and why it's hard for Somali immigrants to be part of the

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society. Many stated that they saw a correlation between education and fitting into society, by investing in education, they have been able to bridge the cultural differences thus creating a common ground with the people around them. However, it's not necessary for one to invest in education to integrate into society, but it’s a useful tool that will bridge the gap between the two cultures.

According to participant 11 who currently works within Växjö Kommun has expressed that not only has education facilitated integration but also the job opportunity he got has further helped in the integration process. Further highlighting the correlation between the two and how it leads to better living standard, socioeconomic status and so on.

- Through this job, you have contact with people all the time, I think it's because we have contact with different departments. We also have contact with authorities which made it easier to be a part of society. Meeting these individuals' and communicating with them daily has made it easier for me to smoothly enter society and create social network (Participant 11).

- Of course, you don't necessarily have to go to university to feel like you belong in a community, and it shouldn't be a requirement either. But it is the case that education can be a way to build bridges for the future. I believe that education is the key to this. There is a Somali proverb that says "aqoon la'aan waa aqoon la'aan," which means that a lack of knowledge is a lack of light. This saying has stuck in my mind and has driven me to be eager to learn more and increase my understanding of the world around me. It is this view of education that has helped me not only to shape my own future but also to feel more rooted and involved in Swedish society (Participant 8).

Participant 10 echoes the sentiments of Participant 8 regarding the pivotal role of social networks in facilitating the integration process. The participant underscores the advantages of education in accelerating the integration process both in terms of speed and social cohesion. Acknowledging the potential for job opportunities with a high school education but emphasizes the increasing ease as one ascends the educational ladder.

- Of course, you build a network in different ways also, if you don’t have education, but having the opportunity to socialise and make contact is what's makes it easier to be a part of society. The education makes it a lot easier in terms of speed and adaptation. I mean that its good if you can read a post-secondary education, because that’s what makes it easier to get a job in Sweden. Of course, you can get a job with high school education, but it's harder, the further up your climb, the easier it gets (Participant 10).

- I think its extra important for our young people today to know that it's important for not only Somalis but everyone, both Swedes and foreign born to study a post-secondary education, it makes it easier quite a lot (Participant 11).

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Similarly, Participant 2 and other participants who pursued higher education and subsequently secured immediate employment share the same sentiments. Participant 1 describes education as a transformative journey that shapes not only intellectual development but also contributes to personal growth. She highlights the enriching aspect of education through interactions with diverse individuals and diverse perspectives. This exposure to various opinions and viewpoints is seen as a valuable contribution to understanding and broadening one's worldview.

- Education has been like a journey that has shaped me not only intellectually, but also as a human with increased insight and ability to act in a positive way. Through interaction with different people and within the framework of education, one evolves of course, and each person contributes something unique. This is good because you get lots of different opinions and perspectives, enriching your understanding and broadening your view of the world (Participant 2).

However, there has been plenty of challenges that surrounds the integration process especially when it comes to Somali immigrants, issues such as losing cultural identity, network, and multiculturalism. Further analysis reveals multifaceted reasons behind the employment struggles of well-qualified individuals. Factors such as the competitiveness within specific fields, the overall economic climate, and the demand for skills and experiences contribute to the complex landscape of employment. Which becomes evident that an oversaturation of degree holders in a particular field can lead to increased competition and fewer job opportunities, necessitating a broader job search strategy.

- You know, even having strong educational background and having degrees, it didn’t make it easier for me to find a job. It's been difficult, especially with some authorities as their demands and standards are very high (Participant 11).

- There are plenty of reasons as to why it is hard for individuals getting employment even though they have a lot of qualifications and educational background. Some of these factors include the level of competitiveness for jobs in the individual's field, the overall state of the economy. Other factors include experience, skillset which can play a big role in determining whether the person gets a job, so the bottom-line is the balance between supply and demand. For example, if there are too many degree holders in your field, then there are many more competitors and fewer job. Therefore, it's imperative to always widen your search and look elsewhere if that’s possible (Participant 3).

In contrast to these challenges, some participants expressed a positive outlook on their job-seeking experiences. One participant highlighted the advantage of a foreign background,
stating, "Having a foreign background is not a disadvantage; in fact, I consider it an advantage in my profession as a sociology." This perspective challenges the notion that foreign origins inherently hinder employment prospects. The participant identified skills and qualifications as key factors in job market success, emphasizing that, personally, no obstacles impeded their employment journey.

- I think it's clear that having a foreign background is not a disadvantage, it is even an advantage in my profession as a coordinator. There are obstacles in the job market, some people missing skills, experience, or a qualification but I have not met any obstacles or something that would make me unable to get employment or anything (Participant 2).

In conclusion, the integration process for Somali immigrants involves navigating a complex landscape marked by challenges such as cultural identity loss and employment hurdles. The varying perspectives of participants underscore the importance of individual experiences and the dynamic interplay of factors influencing the successful integration of immigrants into the workforce. On the one hand, outright discrimination poses a significant barrier, as some immigrants may face prejudiced attitudes that hinder their access to job opportunities. On the other hand, the personal challenges related to the individual's personality, communication skills, or cultural adaptation may also contribute to difficulties in securing employment. These dual aspects highlight the multifaceted nature of the obstacles faced by Somali immigrants in their quest for successful integration into the job market.

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6. ANALYSIS

The culmination of interviews and participant input provided a rich tapestry of insights that significantly contributed to understanding the intricacies of the topic. Through a comprehensive analysis, this section aims to interpret the findings in the context of the research problem and questions posed at the outset, providing a nuanced understanding of the phenomenon and its broader implications. Based on the criteria's chosen in alignment with Human Capital Theory and the Social Acculturation concept, the analysis of the culmination of interviews and participant input provides a profound exploration of the intricate dynamics at play within the Somali immigrant community in Sweden.

The primary focus of this research has been to unravel the intricate perceptions of Somali immigrants in Sweden regarding the impact of education on their economic well-being and livelihoods. The analysis of participant responses brings to light a tapestry of narratives, allowing for the identification of common themes and patterns. In my exploration, certain recurring themes emerged, which is education which was consistently portrayed as not merely a pathway to employment but as a catalyst for broader social integration. Participants underscore the multifaceted role of education, emphasizing its instrumental role in fostering social cohesion within the Somali community and facilitating a more seamless integration into Swedish society. The exploration of diverse motivations influencing career decisions, such as familial responsibilities, immediate financial needs, and the pursuit of strategic higher education, brings forth a crucial dimension (OECD 2023).

One of the central themes that emerged from the research is the pivotal role of education in facilitating the integration of Somali immigrants into Swedish society. This aligns closely with the theoretical framework, particularly the human capital theory, which posits that education is an investment in an individual's skills and abilities, contributing significantly to their employability and economic integration (Valero, A. 2021). Participants consistently highlighted how education, particularly at the university level, significantly contributed to the development of their communication skills and confidence. This aligns Almendarez perspective, about education becoming not only a personal enrichment tool but a means to acquire skills and knowledge that directly transferable to the labor market (Almendarez, L. 2023).

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Education in this context, is seen not only as an academic pursuit but as a holistic experience that fosters personal growth. For instance, Participant 1 expressed how university life acted as a "toolbox" for effective communication, enabling her to navigate societal interactions with confidence. This dimension of education goes beyond the acquisition of formal knowledge; it encompasses the development of soft skills crucial for integration.

Another central theme these individuals had in common was the pursuit of higher education in bettering their job opportunities, well-being, and integration aspect of their lives. The pursuit of higher education was not merely perceived as an academic credential but was deeply intertwined with the participants' aspirations for enhanced job opportunities, overall well-being, and a smoother integration process into their adopted society.

This directly aligns with Hanushek and Woessmann, who have stated that the quality of education significantly influences its impact on human capital. Not all education is equally productive, and the quality of education plays a pivotal role in determining its impact on human capital (Hanushek, E.A. 2013 pp. 204-222). Therefore, in the context of the individuals mentioned earlier, their drive to obtain higher education reflects a conscious choice to invest in themselves. Moreover, the pursuit of higher education contributed significantly to their overall well-being, as they acquired not only specialized knowledge but also critical thinking skills and adaptability in today’s world.

Therefore, the notable interconnectedness of education, socioeconomic factors, and well-being is evident. According to Hanushek and Wößmann, argue that education not only contributes to economic growth but also plays a vital role in enhancing overall well-being. Hanushek and Wößmann's emphasis on the importance of cognitive skills acquired through education aligns with the broader understanding of education as a determinant of well-being. The theoretical mechanisms linking education to economic growth, such as increased human capital and innovation capacity, also contribute to improved socioeconomic conditions and individual well-being (Hanushek, E.A. and Wößmann, L. 2010 pp. 244-52). According to GGI Insights, which posits that’s education serves as a cornerstone for developing human capital, encompassing knowledge, skills, and abilities that contribute significantly to economic growth.

The narrative emphasizes the positive correlation between a well-educated population and increased productivity and innovation, which, in turn, fosters economic prosperity.

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Furthermore, the connection between education and economic development is elucidated, both directly through employability and indirectly through positive externalities like innovation and entrepreneurship. The discussion extends to the role of education in creating a more equitable society, reducing wealth gaps, and empowering individuals to navigate systemic challenges.

Furthermore, the analysis delves into the Social Acculturation concept, highlighting the role of education in fostering social cohesion within the Somali community and facilitating a seamless integration into Swedish society. Several participants highlighted the profound impact of education in bridging cultural differences and fostering a sense of common ground with the Swedish population. The integration of cultural knowledge through education was regarded as instrumental in overcoming barriers to integration. This aligns with Berry’s acculturation strategies, more specifically integration concept where individuals maintain their heritage culture while also adopting aspects of the new culture. As James Heckman phrased it “skills beget skills”, which is used to describe the long-term functional relationship between early development of socio-emotional skills and later success.

For instance, Participant 10, who posited that education is viewed as a tool to build bridges for the future, engaging with and embracing the customs, traditions, and values of the new culture. Furthermore, this connection between education and acculturation strategies highlights the dynamic nature of cultural adaptation. Therefore, individuals, particularly Somali immigrants in this context may utilise various acculturation strategies throughout their lives. Such as events, societal attitudes, as well as personal development. This dimension of education is not only about individual adaptation but contributes to the creation of shared understanding and harmony within a multicultural society.

However, in my exploration of the challenges faced by individuals struggling to secure employment, a notable observation emerged during interviews with participants who found themselves unable to find a job. The interviewees with job seeking revealed a noteworthy absence of references to discrimination and other factors influencing their unemployability. This observation aligns with the argument that questions the assumed agency of individuals within the acculturation process. While individual choices and motivations were acknowledged, the need to delve deeper into the impact of broader structural factors, such as institutional discrimination and systemic inequalities, surfaced during the analysis.

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Scholars like Edward Said and bell Hooks have critiqued acculturation theories, shedding light on the oversight of power dynamics and the potential imposition of a dominant culture on marginalized groups. This perspective resonates with the exploration of job-seeking individuals who, despite facing challenges, did not explicitly attribute their struggles to discrimination or other structural factors. The interconnected themes highlight the necessity of considering both individual experiences and broader structural influences when examining issues such as unemployment.

Social capital, a concept explored by Alejandro Portes, sheds light on the role of social networks in immigrant integration (Portes, A. 1998 pp.1-23). The experiences of Participants 2, 3, and 10 underscore the literature's assertion that strategic career planning through internships contributes to the accumulation of social capital. Building on Portes notion of social capital as a valuable resource, these participants strategically leveraged their networks to secure employment and enhance their career prospects. The literature supports the idea that bonding and bridging social capital are integral to immigrants’ improved employment outcomes and community integration.

Internships, projects, and academic collaborations during the educational journey were emphasized as key contributors to the formation of social connections. These networks, as seen in the experiences of some of the Participants, extended beyond mere social interactions as they played a crucial role in securing employment and navigating the complexities of the job market. Education, therefore, acts as a dual agent, enhancing both human capital through formal education and social capital through networking opportunities. Beyond the instrumental aspects, participants viewed education as a transformative journey contributing to personal growth.

The university experience was described as a process of evolution, where interactions with diverse individuals and exposure to varied perspectives enriched their understanding of the world. This aspect of education aligns with the holistic nature of integration, emphasizing that the benefits extend beyond immediate economic outcomes to encompass personal and intellectual development.

In essence, the analysis serves to close the circle by connecting the initial research problem and questions with the nuanced narratives and experiences shared by the participants. The theoretical framework and literature interpretation enhance the depth of this connection,

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providing a comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay between education, career trajectories, and social integration. This closing of the circle not only contributes to academic knowledge but also holds practical implications for policymakers, educators, and organizations involved in immigrant integration.

By recognizing the diverse motivations, challenges, and successes within the Somali immigrant community, stakeholders can tailor support systems that address the unique needs of individuals navigating career paths in a new cultural context. The analysis, therefore, not only offers insights into the experiences of Somali immigrants in Sweden but also enriches the broader discourse on immigrant integration and the role of education in shaping diverse career trajectories.
7. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

In wrapping up this exploration, it's clear that the stories shared by Somali immigrants in Sweden paint a vibrant picture of how education intertwines with their lives, well-being, and integration. Digging into the heart of the matter, education for these individuals isn't just about landing a job. It's a key that unlocks doors to social connections and a smoother blending into Swedish society. The participants echoed a sentiment that education isn't just textbooks and exams; it's a toolbox for effective communication, a confidence booster for navigating life in a new culture.

In the context of Somali immigrants' experiences, we find ourselves immersed in a rich tapestry of narratives that intricately interweave education, well-being, and integration. It is essential to emphasize, however, that these narratives are not a comprehensive representation of the entire Somali community but rather an approximation of diverse experiences within this demographic.

Addressing the first question on how educational experiences contribute to well-being, the stories shared by participants transcend the conventional narrative of education solely to secure employment. Instead, education emerges as a holistic journey, a transformative process that extends beyond the confines of textbooks and classrooms. Higher education stands out as a powerful force, not only equipping individuals with practical skills but also acting as a catalyst for personal growth and empowerment.

The university experiences, as described by participants, are akin to a journey of self-discovery, a "toolbox" for effective communication, a confidence booster for navigating the intricacies of societal interactions. It's a process that goes beyond the acquisition of formal knowledge, encompassing the development of soft skills crucial for integration. The participants consistently highlight the multifaceted role of education in fostering social cohesion within the Somali community, emphasizing its instrumental role in facilitating a seamless integration into Swedish society.

Furthermore, the subsidiary research question about the role of quality education in shaping integration, education, particularly at the university level, is portrayed as a bridge-builder, fostering a more profound connection within Swedish society. The acquisition of

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communication skills, confidence, and critical thinking through education is not just a means of economic empowerment but a catalyst for social integration. It becomes a force that not only enhances an individual's employability but also contributes to the broader goal of building a cohesive and harmonious multicultural society. As stated by the participants, education helped them not only bridge the gap between these cultures, but also made them feel like they're part of society.

Yet, amidst the success stories, it's essential to acknowledge the challenges faced by those navigating the job market. The absence of explicit references to discrimination among job seekers prompts us to look beyond individual agency and consider the impact of broader structural factors such as institutional discrimination and systemic inequalities. This observation challenges assumptions about the acculturation process and underscores the need to delve deeper into the complex interplay between individual choices and societal structures.

In my opinion, future research should focus on understanding and addressing the systemic challenges faced by immigrants in the job market, exploring avenues to mitigate institutional discriminations. Additionally, there is a need to examine the long-term impact of education on the well-being and integration of Somali immigrants, considering factors such as generational changes and evolving societal dynamics.

Education, therefore, takes on a multifaceted role, acting as a catalyst for not only individual growth and economic empowerment but also as a vital component in the intricate process of immigrant integration.

In essence, my exploration into the lives of Somali immigrants in Sweden mirrors my own journey in many ways. It's a dynamic and complex portrait, not confined to academic curiosity but reflecting profound personal experiences. Recognizing the diversity of motivations, challenges, and successes within this community resonates with the varied chapters of my own life. This analysis, rather than providing a definitive answer, becomes a personal reflection on the transformative power of education and its role in shaping lives in multifaceted and profound ways.

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Appendix 1: Information for interviewees

Hello, my name is Ibrahim Mohamed, and I am currently pursuing my studies at Linnéuniversity. I am conducting a thesis on "Education and Integration: A study of Somalis in Sweden." The focus is on understanding the perceptions of Somali immigrants regarding the role of education in enhancing their lives, economic well-being, and overall integration. As part of this project, I am seeking formal consent to interview individuals and gather insights that will contribute to a better understanding of these dynamics and ultimately contribute to improvements.

The criteria for participating is as follows:

- That they are first generation immigrants.
- Educational level to understand their perspective and as a baseline.
- Skills and work experience, understanding the skills and knowledge gained through education relevant to their field of study, as well as any work experiences such as internship and how these contribute to HCT
- Social network both within and outside of participants community
- Integration experiences and cultural participation to better understand their experiences in integrating into Swedish society and their engagement with cultural activities and events in Sweden.

As stated before, these criteria will aid in analyzing the participants experiences and perspectives through the lenses of Human Capital Theory as well as Social Acculturation concept. This will better help in understanding as to how education, skills and social network influences their integrational aspect and career outcomes.

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Appendix 2: Interview guide

Introduction

Hello, my name is Ibrahim Mohamed, and I am currently pursuing my studies at Linneuniversity. I am conducting a thesis on "Education and Immigrant Success: A study of Somalis." The focus is on understanding the perceptions of Somali immigrants regarding the role of education in enhancing their lives, economic well-being, and overall integration. As part of this project, I am seeking formal consent to interview individuals and gather insights that will contribute to a better understanding of these dynamics and ultimately contribute to improvements. I formally request your consent to conduct this interview before we proceed.

Opening Questions:

1. Can you introduce yourself?
2. Can you share a bit about your educational background and highest level of educational attainment?
3. How has your educational journey been since you arrived in Sweden? Why?

Main questions

1. How do you think education has played a role in shaping your opportunities and experiences in Sweden?
2. Can you explain how your education in Sweden has affected your job prospects?
3. To what extent do you think your education has contributed to your financial well-being and overall well-being?
4. Can you share specific instances where your education influenced your ability to get a job and earn income?
5. In your opinion, how valuable is education in improving economic opportunities?

Challenges and Opportunities:

1. Can you give examples of skills or knowledge from your education that you believe boosted your employability?
2. Have you faced any challenges or opportunities in the job market related to your education?
3. If comfortable, could you discuss challenges you've encountered in the Swedish education system or job market?

Main Theme 2:

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1. How has education affected your ability to connect with others and be part of the community?

2. What's your perception of the relationship between education and your sense of belonging or acceptance in the Swedish community?

Closing Questions

1. Is there anything else you would like to share regarding this topic?

Appendix 3: List of interviewees

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