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"I can speak Swedish I learnt it from a boooook!!"

A study of determining factors that influence immigrants entering The Labour Market in Skellefteå Municipality

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Acknowledgement

This paper is started on a beautiful sunny day in Johannesburg South Africa, one month before I moved to Sweden almost 7 years ago. I have a discussion with my best friends about my plan on what to do when I had to follow my Swedish husband to Sweden. I have decided then I wanted to speak Swedish and go to university here, and of course none of my friends believed that it would happen as most believed that I would not last in Sweden for 7 months never mind 7 years! And here I am nearly 7 years later, still here in Sweden, can speak Swedish and of course writing my bachelor thesis.

This paper could not be completed without all the help from all the people who granted me an interview. I would like to thank you all for finding a spare time in your busy schedule to share your viewpoint and showed full interest and enthusiasm in the subject. “Tack så mycket”.

I am also would like to thanks my supervisor Kifle who has been super throughout this process. Thank you.

Skellefteå
21-05-2007

Weena
Abstract

Sweden is today, one of the most industrialised nations of the world, and as such, one of the most ethnically diverse countries in terms of immigrants. Of a total population of just over 9 million people, 12% of the population was born in another country other than Sweden. At the turn of the previous century, a national census in 1900 showed the population of Sweden was 5.1 million, of which 36,000 were foreign-born. It was a mere 100 years later, in the year 2004 where the population of Sweden had passed the 9 million mark and the number of foreign-born people in the population had increased dramatically from 1 percent in 1900 to 12 percent in 2004.

In the Skellefteå Municipality, the unemployment situation among immigrants also does not look promising. The unemployment figures that were released by the Swedish Job Centre and published in the local newspaper dated 7th April stated that of the total registered unemployment figure in Skellefteå is 5670 of which 1500 are regarded as “öppet arbetslösa”, 624 people are foreign-born, which is totally disproportionate when considering the total number of Swedish inhabitants to the immigrant population. Figures show that it is nearly half of this group of 1500 that are immigrants.

Due to the high percentage of unemployment among immigrants in Skellefteå Municipality, this leads to the research question:

“Factors that can prevent the diversifying process for immigrants entering the labour market in Skellefteå Municipality!”

The results show that the organisation will look at the benefits of having immigrants as employees in terms of immigrants’ ability to speak a language that the organisation considers useful for its customers. It is also looking to benefit from the knowledge that immigrants may have on knowledge from other cultures that he or she came from.

If, however, the organisations deems it to be unnecessary to have immigrants for a job that requires his or her a certain special skill, an immigrant job application will have to go through the normal recruitment process and measure up to the organisation’s concept of “The Best person for the job”.

In addition to going through a normal process of “The Best Person for The Job” concept in the recruitment stage, immigrants will have to overcome three common factors that can prevent them from finding a job. These have become evident during this study:

1) The Swedish language: All organisations in this study require immigrants to have a certain proficiency in the Swedish language. Organisations that are customer-orientated require high proficiency levels in the Swedish language.
2) Education: Very few organisations received job applications from immigrants, but those who have, stress a concern they have, about the qualification criteria of an immigrant’s application.
3) Unknown factor: uncertainty of how to handle people from another culture.
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1. INTRODUCTION

This section presents a background of a subject, problem finding, research question and purpose of this paper.

1.1. Population of Sweden

Sweden is today, one of the most industrialised nations of the world, and as such, one of the most ethnically diverse countries in terms of immigrants. Of a total population of just over 9 million people, 12% of the population was born in another country other than Sweden.¹ At the turn of the previous century, a national census in 1900 showed the population of Sweden was 5.1 million, of which 36,000 were foreign-born. It was a mere 100 years later, in the year 2004 where the population of Sweden had passed the 9 million mark and the number of foreign-born people in the population had increased dramatically from 1 percent in 1900 to 12 percent in 2004.² The proportion of the population that is divided by background can be illustrated in figure 1.

![Figure 1. Population in 2005 by background³](http://www.integrationsverket.se/Tpl/NormalPage___2480.aspx (2007-04-01) 22:15)

Figure 1 shows the population in 2005 divided by background. The proportion with a Swedish background is 83.5%, foreign-born 12.5% and native Swedish with two foreign-born parents is 4%. To explain why the foreign-born figure has dramatically increased in comparison to the population who have Swedish background, (from 1 percent at the turn of the century in 1900 to 12.5 percent in 2005) can be illustrated in figure 2.


² “Pocket Facts – Statistics on Integration” © Integrationsverket, 2006

³ “Pocket Facts – Statistics on Integration” © Integrationsverket, 2006
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Figure 2 shows grounds for settling in 2005 which excluded Nordic citizenship. Nordic citizens who immigrate do not require a residence permit and therefore do not state their reasons for settling. The most common reason for settling in 2005 was family ties of 54, 50 percent for ground of studies, followed by work which was 12, 50 percent, reason for need of protection was 7, 50 percent and lastly no data and other classification of 4, 50 and 3 percent accordingly.

The following are brief facts about foreign-born nationals in general. (Information is compiled by Swedish Integration Board):

- More than one in ten inhabitants were born abroad
- A further 800,000 persons born in Sweden have one or both parents born abroad.
- More than two in ten inhabitants are people of foreign extraction.
- Sweden has inhabitants from 203 countries
- The majority of Sweden’s immigrants have lived in the country for at least ten years
- More than 60 per cent of those who have migrated to Sweden have Swedish citizenship.

The figures for foreign-born statistics are set to increase as Sweden are continuingly taking refugee-quota and more of those have been granted permanent residence on the grounds of family ties and other reasons. The following are the figures compiled by Swedish Migration Board on the numbers of foreign-born that have been granted permanent residence in 2005:

- A total of 62,463 persons were granted residence permits in Sweden in 2005. 8,076 of those as refugees or on other protective grounds and for humanitarian reasons. 1,263 persons were brought to Sweden within the so-called refugee-quota.

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4 “Pocket Facts – Statistics on Integration” © Integrationsverket, 2006
5 “Pocket Facts – Statistics on Integration” © Integrationsverket, 2006
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- Residence permits were granted to 21,908 persons because of family ties. Permits granted to visiting students were 6,837 persons, and permits on grounds of adoption granted to 805 persons. Residence permits under the EU/EEA agreement were issued to 18,069 persons.
- Altogether 17,530 persons requested asylum in Sweden during 2005. The largest group consisted of citizens from Serbia and Montenegro (2,944 persons). The second and third largest groups came from Iraq (2,330 persons) followed by Russia (1,057 persons).

1.2. Background to Post-war Labour Immigrations

The idea behind post-war immigration of labour was started in 1946 from the Social-Democratic government, which was in agreement with the employers’ association (SAF) and the more cautious Confederation of Trade Unions (LO), the three parties decided that immigration would be the best option to solve Sweden’s urgent labour shortfall. Foreign workers were in demanded for jobs in an ever-expanding industrial sector, as well as, in the fast growing public services sector in the 1960s.9

From the start and until the early 1980s, there were skilled workers with good educational backgrounds; in fact, it was the policy of trade unions to only accept recruitment of skilled workers.10 Despite high educational requirements from trade unions, a majority ended up in low-skilled jobs on the ethnically and gender-segregated labour market in the area of jobs that needed to be done and where no Swedish workers were available. Immigrant workers had no choice but to accept what was on offer, and they may not have seen it as a problem to accept these assignments as a first job.11 As time moved forward, these immigrants have been trapped in these low-skilled jobs and ethnically segregated “work-ghettos”.12

Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) had put a stop to the immigration of non-Nordic workers who mainly came from Italy, Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey in February 1975 due to a strained labour market. Inflows of immigrants have, since then, consisted of family reunions and, in the 1970s, Eastern European and Latin American refugees. From the early 1980s, immigrants have mainly consisted of political and humanitarian refugees and humanitarian refugees from the Middle East, Asia and the African continent, and in the early 1990s, refugees from the former Yugoslavia.13

1.3. Immigrants and Unemployment

In comparison to many other EU member states, employment rates in Sweden are low for citizens who came from countries outside of the European Union. In Sweden, the employment rate for this group was 50 percent in 2002. The employment rates for the immigrant population in different regions of Sweden differ from the national average. A comparison of

13 Ibid. p.363
the major metropolitan regions shows that the highest employment rate in terms of both the total population and the immigrant population is in the Stockholm region.\textsuperscript{14}

Bäcklund suggests of three factors that have an influence on immigrants in the Swedish labour market. These are a lack of human capital among immigrants, a negative attitude towards immigrants among the majority of Swedes and finally a changing of job structures and recruitment procedure.\textsuperscript{15}

\section*{1.4. Finding Solutions}

At the end of the 1980s when the economy flourished and labour was in short supply, social imagery depicted ethnic minorities as a ‘resource’. As observed by Schierupp,\textsuperscript{16} the positive discourse turned into its opposite as soon as the market started deteriorating, speaking about immigrants in terms of ‘problem’ and ‘a burden’. But this so called ‘problem’ or ‘burden’ as referred to by Schierupp is no longer an ‘immigrant problem’ according to Knocke.\textsuperscript{17} Knocke explained further that immigrants, refugees and their children are no longer just immigrants, but settled inhabitants and they are part of the Swedish population. Knocke has argued that low labour force participation, high unemployment rates, dependence on social welfare benefits and social exclusion can no longer be defined as an ‘immigrant problem’ or could be explained on the ground of cultural differences, and it would need to be addressed and solved by Swedish society in cooperation with representatives from immigrant populations.\textsuperscript{18}

The traditional Swedish way to take care of the unemployed and to improve their job chances is active labour market measures. In 1994 there were 20 000 non-Nordic immigrants who were involved in such programmes, six months after completing training, 10 percent fewer foreign than Swedish participants had managed to get a job.\textsuperscript{19}

“Immigrants to Sweden don’t get effective help to integrate into society. The disproportionately large number of immigrants who do not have a job should be given better support to find regular employment.” according to Stefan Eriksson who was commissioned by the government to find changes to help newcomers and their families settling in Sweden. Stefan Eriksson considered the situation with many immigrants to be bleak in which only 62 percent aged between 16 and 64 are in employment or education, compared to 76 percent of people who are born in Sweden.\textsuperscript{20}

In the Skellefteå Municipality, the unemployment situation among immigrants also does not looking promising. The unemployment figures that were released by the Swedish Job Centre and published in the local newspaper dated 7\textsuperscript{th} April stated that of the total registered unemployment figure in Skellefteå is 5670 of which 1500 are regarded as “öppet arbetslösa”, 624 people are foreign-born, which is totally disproportionate when considering the total

\textsuperscript{17} Knocke, K. (2000)
\textsuperscript{18} Knocke, K. (2000)
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid p.369
\textsuperscript{20} http://www.thelocal.se/6474/20070220/ (24-02-2007)
number of Swedish inhabitants to the immigrant population. Figures show that it is nearly half of this group of 1500 that are immigrants.\textsuperscript{21}

This paper will focus on the Skellefteå Municipality and how it is helping immigrants to enter the Swedish labour market (the term “immigrants” in this paper otherwise stated will include all foreign-born nationals regardless of the conditions under which they were granted permanent residence).

1.5. Skellefteå

By an agreement with the Swedish Integrations Board, Skellefteå Municipality has agreed to take in a quota of 150 refugees per year in addition to immigrants that moved to the town on the grounds of family connections. Since 1999 Skellefteå Municipality has set up a special integration plan in helping these refugees and immigrants.\textsuperscript{22} These plans are include:

- Aiming to create possibilities for those who are refugees or immigrants who come to Skellefteå by giving the same right and possibilities regardless of ethnic and culture background.
- To counteract against racism and discrimination in all areas of Swedish society.
- To encourage all the participants in the programme to undertake different activities.
- Create Skellefteå into an attractive municipality for refugees and immigrants to settle in.
- Create the possibility for people from different cultures to be self supporting and to achieve their goal in life.

In addition to creating a pleasant environment for all immigrants, Skellefteå municipality has placed a strong focus in finding ways for helping immigrants to be self-supportive. A motion has been put forward to find a solution in the form of co-operation between different municipality-run and state-run agencies such as the municipality labour group, social workers, Swedish Job Centre (Arbetsförmedlingen), CV, VUX/SFI and Swedish Migration board. In order to successfully introduce immigrants into the labour market, the following projects have been implemented and run or supported by Skellefteå Municipality or government, these projects are Nexus, ISA (Introduktion I samverkan) and SIN (Särskild introduktion för vissa invandare).\textsuperscript{23}

1.6. Current situation

According to AMS (Arbetsförmedlingen), there are 624 persons in Skellefteå, who are foreign-born that have registered with AMS. It is reported that the total registered unemployment in Skellefteå is 5670 of which 1500 are regarded as “öppet arbetslösa”. This term refers to people who are registered as unemployed but have not participated in any educational or job training programmes provided by AMS. Figures show that it is nearly half of this group of 1500 that are immigrants.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{21} Norra Västerbotten 2007 vecka 14 årgång 97 NR 81
\textsuperscript{22} http://www.skelleftea.se/default.asp?id=3076&ptid=&refid=3077 Date:03/05/2007 Time: 17:00
\textsuperscript{23} http://www.skelleftea.se/default.asp?id=3076&ptid=&refid=3077 Date:03/05/2007 Time: 19:59
\textsuperscript{24} Norra Västerbotten 2007 vecka 14 årgång 97 NR 81
1.7. Research questions

Due to the high percentage of unemployment among immigrants in Skellefteå Municipality despite different projects that have been created in assisting to increase the immigrants’ opportunity, my research question is

“Factors that can prevent the diversifying process for immigrants to enter the labour market in Skellefteå Municipality.”

1.8. Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to be divided into three parts which are, firstly, this paper is aimed to establish and analyse the interpretations of “diversity” from a society’s perspective in the form of different government agencies and private organisations’ perspective.

Secondly from society’s perspective, this paper is aimed to analyse the platform that has been built currently in terms of helping immigrants enter the labour market in Skellefteå, whether it is a success or a failure.

Thirdly from organisation’s perspective is aimed to achieve the following:

- To establish and analyse factors that can prevent immigrants entering labour market in Skellefteå.
- To establish organisations’ perspective on immigrants’ in term of the requirement that will be needed to enter a Swedish labour market in Skellefteå.
- To establish and analyse the responses of commercial organisations towards the platform that have been built by Skellefteå Municipality and other government agencies. Organisations’ viewpoint on how to increase the immigrants’ opportunity in entering Skellefteå’s labour market.

1.9. Delimitation

Due to board area of this subject I have limited a focus of this paper to the factors that are preventing immigrants to the labour market in Skellefteå. This will exclude any other form of integration process such as culture. Diversity will only be limited to a discussion from an organisation’s and society perspective towards immigrants.

2.0. Concepts and Terms

**Refugee:** According to The United Refugee Agency database defines the concept of refugee as it is the responsibility of States to protect their citizens. When governments are unwilling or unable to protect their citizens, individuals may suffer such serious violations of their rights that they are forced to leave their homes, and often even their families, to seek safety in another country. Since, by definition, the governments of their home countries no longer protect the basic rights of refugees, the international community then steps in to ensure that those basic rights are respected. In the aftermath of World War II, the United Nations General Assembly created the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). UNHCR is mandated to protect and find durable solutions for refugees. Its activities are based on a framework of international law and standards that includes the 1948
Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the four Geneva Conventions (1949) on international humanitarian law, as well as an array of international and regional treaties and declarations, both binding and nonbinding, that specifically address the needs of refugees.  

**Quota Refugee:** The definition of quota refugee describes by The Swedish Migration Board is the quota that intended for refugees and other people who are in need of protection. The UN refugee body, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), presents such matters when other permanent solutions are unavailable. The Swedish Government decides on the criteria for the selections and the actual number of quota places. In 2005, Sweden took in 1,2429 quota refugees.

**Grounds for residence:** The Swedish Integration Board describes a term of grounds for residence as a condition for citizens from outside the Nordic region to be allowed to settle in Sweden who require a residence permit. Grounds for residence for citizens from outside the Nordic region are divided into the following categories:

- Need for protection
- Humanitarian grounds
- Family ties
- Work
- Studies
- Other

**SNS (The Swedish Centre for Business):** Centre for Business and Policy Studies SNS is an independent network of leading decision makers from the private and public sectors who share a commitment to social and economic development in Sweden. Its aim is to improve the basis for rational decisions on major social and economic issues, by promoting social science research and stimulating public debate.

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During this section we have established background of the subject, research question and purpose of this paper. In a next section a methodology and an approach of the subject will be discussed in details.

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26 [http://www.migrationsverket.se/english.jsp 17052007 12:44](http://www.migrationsverket.se/english.jsp 17052007 12:44)
27 "Pocket Facts – Statistics on Integration" © Integrationsverket, 2006
2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section outlines my research strategy in how I am planning to conduct my research that will lead to an answer of this paper research question.

2.1. Prior Knowledge

Having lived and worked in four countries located on three continents, I consider that the knowledge and practical experience that I have gained, prior to writing this paper about immigrants, is well founded, because in most of these countries I have been termed an immigrant by local authorities. Prior to Sweden, I have lived, worked, and studied in Thailand, London England and Johannesburg South Africa. My life experience in South Africa has been most unique and interesting in terms of cultural diversity, where I had many colleagues and friends who came from differing cultures and backgrounds. I have experienced, the so called “Affirmative Action” movement, where job positions are only offered to a person of “the right colour skin” rather than “the right skill” in order to justify political correctness. Most importantly, I have experienced first hand the peaceful transition process from the minority government which built upon an apartheid system to a fully democratic government.

My perspective of the study will be limited to the scope within the choice of my research strategy.

2.2. Method

The following is the outline of the research method that will be conducted in this paper.

2.2.1. Quantitative or qualitative method

This paper will be constructed using qualitative methods as a research strategy. This is because I would like to place stronger emphasise on the verbal interactions that have been conducted, rather than the quantified approach by applying numbers and metrics to the analysis of the data. This paper is also will be characterized by a qualitative research format, which according to Bryman and Bell is:

- An inductive view of the relationship which is described by Bryman and Bell as an approach to the relationship between theory and research in which theory is generated out of the research.\(^{29}\)
- An epistemological position which is described by Bryman and Bell as an interpretational meaning that stresses the understanding of the social world through an examination of that world by its participants.\(^{30}\) Therefore, this paper will represent my understanding of the subject from my point of view in terms of interpretation of the empirical data which will be reflected during the analysis and conclusion.
- An ontological position which Bryman and Bell describes as a constructionist point-of-view, implies that social properties are an outcome of the interaction between

\(^{29}\) See Bryman & Bell (2003) p. 280
\(^{30}\) See Bryman & Bell (2003) p. 280
As this paper is focused on the different viewpoints of the social actors in the situation of immigrants entering the labour market in Skellefteå Municipality, it will reflect the outcome between the interaction of organisations such as SIN, ISA and NEXUS projects towards the immigrants entering the labour market in Skellefteå.

2.2.2. Research designs

In a choice of a research design which provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data. In this paper, I have chosen a case study design which aims to provide an in-depth understanding and will focus on the situation of immigrants in Skellefteå Municipality.

2.2.1. Data collection

Empirical Data are gathered in the form of articles from various extracts from the Internet and local newspapers. In addition, I have conducted a number of interviews with government organisations, who are involved in projects and private organisations for their perspective. Interviews are conducted in the form of semi-structured interviews and unstructured interviews. I have asked for permission from the interviewees for our conversations to be tape-recorded.

2.2.1.1. Semi-structured interview

All interviews that were conducted with private organisations were in the format of semi-structured interviews. With a semi-structured interview format, I was able to guide interviewees to stay within the area of my research, but I also allowed interviewees to exaggerate and expound, in order to gather extra information. Although the interviewees are not anonymous, I have chosen, nevertheless, to protect identities of the interviewees for a privacy reason.

2.2.2.2. Unstructured interview

All interviews that were conducted with government agencies were in the format of an unstructured interview and there were no fixed set of questions presented to interviewees. This is because I would like interviewees to be able to respond freely about their projects and their different experiences. I have chosen not to transcribe the interviews because the majority of contents are about their project activities which have been already been described under the project background.

2.3. Selection of organisations

Five interviews were conducted with government agencies that are involved in this project, Vux SFI, Nexus, ISA, SIN and the Swedish Job Centre. Due to the research method is qualitative and it concentrated on the word rather the quantity therefore the numbers of interview have been limited to fit in with the timeframe of this assignment. Five interviews were conducted with private companies who have responded positively towards the request for the interview. In order to establish whether immigrants have problems in entering companies with different types of productivities, I have divided the companies into four different categories based on non-probability quota sampling sample as follow:

See Bryman & Bell p.280
Ibid., p. 32
1. Retailers
2. Financial institution
3. International (Technical) company
4. Manufacturing Company

2.4. Data transcribing

A section that transcribes the results of a semi-structured interview with different companies can be seen in appendix 1 to 5. I have chosen to transcribe certain sections of the interviews instead of transcribing in full, because some portions of them are not relevant to the subject matter. The interviews were conducted in the interviewees’ primary language which is Swedish. The recommendation procedure according to Bryman and Bell should be to transcribe the interviews from the language spoken during the interview, and consequently translate the transcript into English in order to prevent differences in the meaning of words between languages, which can lead to the translation process causing some distortion of data. But owing to only parts of the interviews being transcribed and questions that I have put to interviewees are uncomplicated, I have translated directly from Swedish to English. Although there might be some distortion of data that came from the translation process, due to the nature of this research which is focused on the whole concept of interpretation of the social world, I believed that it would not have been a significant effect on the results of the findings.

2.5. Primary source

My primary sources of information for this paper were facts based on details collected during interviews with different organisations in the Skellefteå Municipality and various government agencies that are running several programmes to support immigrants in entering the labour market. My contact with private organisations was done via e-mail and personal connection. The organisations who have been contacted via e-mail also have been informed of the purpose for this paper from an introduction letter, as well as organisations that I have a personal contact with. There is no contact has been done via direct telephone this is simply because I would not want to force respondents for an immediate reply and therefore they will have time to review the request and most importantly the subject of this study.

I have received 80 percent response from organisations that I have contacted via e-mail and received a reply within a day (letter of introduction to be seen in appendix 6) and 100 percent response from different government agencies.

I have found that all interviewees are very enthusiastic and expressed their opinion in these matters very clearly and in a direct manner, from both government agencies and private organisations. Despite being an immigrant myself, I don’t feel that interviewees especially from private organisations withheld their opinion on these issues for fear that their answer would be interpreted in a wrong way.

2.6. Criticism of primary source

Bryman & Bell (2003)
I can not find any criticism towards my primary source although I would have preferred to have conducted the interviews with organisations that did not response to my request. All the respondents are in the position that is related to personal recruitment therefore I am fully trusted for the credibility of the information that has been related to me.

2.7. Choice of secondary sources

In addition to literature, scientific journals and newspaper articles, I also relied upon information from different government agencies’ Internet homepages such as the Swedish Integration Board, Swedish Migrations Board, The Swedish National Agency for Education and the Skellefteå Municipality for some background facts and figures in which I am considered to be reliable and generated the latest information that needs to be highlighted in some part of this study. I am fully aware of information that have depicted from the electronic source such as Internet may be subjected to certain criticisms, however, as I am based my analysis and conclusion purely on my primary sources and various scientific articles and therefore I am fully confident that the information will not have any effects on the outcome on this research and reduce credibility of this paper.

Theories that have been mentioned in the literature review chapter have been limited to the researches that has been conducted in Sweden or related to immigrant’s situation in Sweden. This is because I would be able to make a better comparison that is more relevant to this study.

2.8. Criticism of secondary sources

The main criticism for the use of secondary sources in this paper can be attributed to the use of official statistics. Bryman and Bell stated that the analysis of official statistics may be thought of as a special form of secondary analysis but one that is more controversial because of the unease about the reliability and validity of certain types of official data, especially those relating to unemployment and labour disputes. Bryman and Bell have also pointed out of how some forms of official statistics are much less inclined to error but there remains however, the possible problem of variances of definition between compiler of such data and business researchers. But as I have mentioned in the choice of secondary sources that the information will be used to highlight the certain areas of this study and therefore it will not have any influence on the main outcome.

All the studies that have been conducted for immigrants’ Swedish language ability in the literature review have been tested in the form of speaking and reading. The researchers have omitted the immigrants writing capability from their research without explanations.

With the main methodology for this paper outlined and established, the next section will represent the results of data information.

34 See Bryman & Bell (2003) P.225-231
3. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section represents a collection of related theories from previous research that is relevant to a research question.
1) What is diversity and how it is interpreted differently from an organisational perspective and from a society perspective.
2) The evaluation of immigrants' education and Swedish language from an organisational perspective, determined in the context of previous research.
3) My perception of "Skellefteå Model" in how Skellefteå municipality is planning to overcome problems that can prevent local immigrants from employment.

3.1. What is diversity?

Diversity may be defined as the “state of being diverse, that is, different, unlike, various”. Thomas suggests that diversity relates to everybody and is multidimensional and in today’s society includes culture, gender, nationality, sexual orientation, physical abilities, social class, age, socioeconomic status, and religion.

In Mlekov and Widell’s book “Hur möter vi mångfalden på arbetsplatsen?” the term ‘diversity’ (mångfald) is described as a relatively new concept in Sweden. The concept originated in America during 1980’s which was founded on a two-hundred year-old history of equality in the work place. “Diversity Management” or “Managing Diversity” is a leadership philosophy in which the concept of finding an effective way to utilise human resources in a company. The concept of diversity was first known in Sweden in the mid 1980’s during the discussion of integration policy and it has became as part of a solution in finding a strategy to create a better workplace.

Mlekov and Widell divided the concept of diversity into two and it interpreted it into two separate perspectives, society perspective and organisation perspective.

- Society perspective: “Diversity” from society’s perspective is the concept of how a society and labour market should be organised in such a way that creates rights and equality for all in the labour market. As statistics show, there were high numbers of immigrants who encountered difficulties in entering the labour market despite their well educated background and sufficient working experience. The aim from the society perspective viewpoint would be to have a goal to help immigrants as well as people who are physically handicapped, disadvantaged by old age or a low education to enter the Swedish labour market.

- Organisation perspective: “Diversity” from the organisation’s perspective deals with business strategy. It looks at the affects of employing immigrants; handicapped and gender that will have an influence on the rest of the group within an organisation.

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35 Patterson, R.F. (1990), New Expanded Webster’s Dictionary, P.S.I. & Associates, INC.; Miami, FL
38 Ibid. p. 7
39 Ibid. P. 8
From the organisational management point of view, it will try to evaluate how organisations can develop and benefit from having employees from different backgrounds in terms of achieving quality and whether it would be suited to customer benefit.\(^{40}\)

### 3.1.1. Different perspectives of diversity in organisation strategy

An Organisation cannot be classified as a multi-cultural company by having recruited only 2 persons with different ethnic backgrounds or have one gender group more than the other so it appears to be the majority.\(^{41}\) Multi-culture within organisation deals with mutual development. Diversity according to Morrison can be seen from different perspectives:

- Gender or ethnicity should not be a major issue in the workplace. This model takes a point of view that we are all different and therefore it would be impossible to make special adjustments for each individual, in order to handle any conflicts that may arise and therefore everyone should be treated the same way.
- The individual is expected to fit in the dominant culture and not the other way round.
- For those who are under represented, they will be provided legal protection against any form of discrimination.
- Cultural education for employees who will be posted overseas.
- Use diversity as a resource to strengthen organisation.\(^{42}\)

### 3.2. Education and knowledge of Swedish language

#### 3.2.1. Education

From an international perspective, the evaluation of education over a long period of time has been the most studied aspect within the labour market. The theory of human capital has its origin from the period of Adam Smith. It referred to how employees demanded different levels of salary based on job specification, or in terms of difficulties or safety. In the same way that an individual demands a better compensation package from an employer because of the invested a period of time in the form of education, and that demands a return on investment. Human capital can be increased with a better education and it also can be decreased when a person fails to supply a special skill or there is less demand for that special skill in the labour market.\(^{43}\)

Previous studies showed that immigrants with certain education did not have the same opportunity in finding a job in comparison with the native born who have the same education. When an immigrant is given a job it is often one that requires an education level that is low and therefore commands a comparatively low salary in comparison with the native born Swedes who have the same form of education. From this result lead to many researchers concluding that Immigrants do no get paid relative to the education that they have in Swedish labour market. In certain respect it can also be seen as the form of discrimination.\(^{44}\)

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The result from the “Ekberg and Rooth finding” showed that 57 percent of immigrants that have academic education are employed on the basis of their education in comparison with 81 percent of the native born. One of the reasons is due to what kind of education the immigrants have to fit into the local labour market.\(^{45}\) Rooth and Åslund have given an example of an immigrant with a law degree and the other with a computer science degree. Rooth and Åslund pointed out that with an immigrant with a degree in for instance computer science does need to command the native language at a higher level while an immigrant with a law degree will need to study the language as well as re-educated him or herself to the understanding of Swedish law.\(^{46}\)

Rooth and Åslund have further explained the differences between the native born and immigrants in the labour market which simply amounts to ethnic discrimination. Rooth and Åslund used the national economic theory which suggests that there are two types of discrimination, discrimination by preference and discrimination by statistic. Discrimination by preference refers to employers who employ the minority group out of necessity due to the fact that the majority group would not perform this kind of specific work. It also refers to when the employers can pay a lower salary to an immigrant than to a native born. Discrimination by statistic refers to when an employer lacks information about an immigrant’s education and judges the immigrants’ competency based on the country or continent that he or she is came from.\(^{47}\)

### 3.2.2. Education and income

Rooth and Åslund have done a research study using information from the Swedish Statistics Bureau with the aim to establish a connection between the variation of income based on the level of education between immigrants and the native born. Rooth and Åslund have divided immigrants into five groups, the Nordic countries, Western Europe, South and North Europe and countries outside Europe. The result of the research showed that there was a clear variation between education level and income level between the native born and immigrants in these five groups mentioned above of opportunity on entering in Swedish labour market. Concerning education level, the result indicates that given the same working experience background, an immigrant would need to have a higher education than a native born to have the same chance when they both apply for the same job position. Regarding income level, the majority of results show, that the income level is comparatively similar between the native born and the immigrant with the exception of some cases where immigrants have received a lower salary than their Swedish counterpart.\(^{48}\)

### 3.2.3. Swedish language

Knowledge of the host country language has a profound importance with respect to how an immigrant can progress in the labour market. The ability to communicate in writing and speech is considered as part of the human capital and has a direct correlation to the opportunity of finding a job with a higher salary. It is also possible that a person with a better

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\(^{47}\) Ibid p.51 - 85

\(^{48}\) Ibid p.51 -85.
knowledge of the Swedish language can show his or her competency level better than a person who has no or poorer knowledge of the Swedish language. This can lead to a better job in labour market.\textsuperscript{49}

Different knowledge levels in language not only divide immigrants into the different groups but it is also explains the negative trend in expected future developments. A large group of immigrants during the past ten years came from non-European countries compared to the period between 1950 and 1960. Research in language has also shown that a difficulty in learning Swedish is far greater for immigrants who came from outside Europe.\textsuperscript{50} In addition the Swedish labour market transformed from an industrial economy, which was more common during the 1970’s, to a service industry. This requires a higher efficiency level in understanding the Swedish language.\textsuperscript{51}

It is also important from a financial perspective, that immigrants have a good knowledge of the Swedish language. This has become a responsibility for each municipality in Sweden to provide training in the Swedish language. A course for immigrants has been established, which is called Swedish for immigrants or SFI (svenska för invandrare). The research which was done by Hyltenstan and Lindberg\textsuperscript{52}, shows that it is more difficult for an adult immigrant to study the Swedish language and a very small group of immigrants can manage to command the Swedish language at the same level as the native born.

Although a good command of the Swedish language is considered to be critical for immigrants entering the Swedish labour market, Rooth and Åslund suggested that there is another important factor that one will have to take into consideration. That is in how much influence for having a good command of Swedish will play a major role in finding job!

It is not that easy to evaluate how credibility based on language will have an affect on an individual immigrant in the labour market. There is the possibility, however, according to the researchers outside observers who believed that individual language knowledge can be links to other factors. The most common example will be to look at individual motivation. If a person is highly motivated he or she will be able to study language quicker in comparison to the other. It is because of their high motivation that enables them to have a high probability of finding a job at a higher salary.\textsuperscript{53}

Rooth and Åslund conducted a research in 2003 with the aim of establishing Swedish knowledge among four groups of immigrants namely Ethiopian, Chile, Iran and Rumania and have received a permanent residence between 198-1989.

Data information was collected during the period 1993 to 2003 with selected information about individuals’ language ability, details and choice of sample. This can be seen in table below:

\textsuperscript{50} Hyltenstan, K. and I. Lindberg (2004), Svenska som andra språk – i forskning, undervisning och samhälle.  
\textsuperscript{51} See Rooth, D.O, & Åslund, O (2006) p. 52  
\textsuperscript{52} Hyltenstan, K. and I. Lindberg (2004), Svenska som andra språk – i forskning, undervisning och samhälle.  
\textsuperscript{53} See Rooth, D.O, & Åslund, O (2006) p. 57
LITERATURE REVIEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of</th>
<th>Country of</th>
<th>Age of</th>
<th>Time in</th>
<th>Age at the time of immigrating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>observation</td>
<td>origin</td>
<td>anticipants at the time of interview</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>812</td>
<td>Chile, Finland, Iran, Polen</td>
<td>25-53</td>
<td>6-25 years</td>
<td>&gt; 17 year old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>251</td>
<td>Random sample</td>
<td>25-55</td>
<td>At least 5 years</td>
<td>&gt; 17 year old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>559</td>
<td>Chile, Etiopien, Iran, Rumänien</td>
<td>33-55</td>
<td>13-14 years</td>
<td>20-40 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Rooth & Åslund

Invandraundersökningen – IU. The study was conducted by Anders Lange of Stockholm University in 1993. The level of language proficiency was based on face to face interviews and level of language proficiency was divided into 4 levels from participants’ ability in speaking and understanding of Swedish language.

International Adult Literacy Survey – IALS. The study was conducted by Mats Myhrberg of Linköping University incorporated with Skolverket. A focus point of this study concentrated on how well the participants can understand what they have read and grading was based on comprehension.

Invandrares arbetsmarknad, språkkunskaper och sociala nätverk – IASS. Interview was conducted with the immigrants who have lived in Sweden for at least 14 years.

The following are the summaries of the results from the three studies.

Table 1: Knowledge in Swedish among immigrants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge level</th>
<th>IU Speaking</th>
<th>IALS Speaking</th>
<th>IALS Reading</th>
<th>IASS Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very bad</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>28.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>43.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of observation</td>
<td>812</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>559</td>
<td>505</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Rooth & Åslund

Table 1 showed the results of the study concerning these three projects. IU have a high percentage of 88% in “good” and “excellent” while IASS study showed only 64%. The variation of results, according to Rooth and Åslund, depends on many factors, for example, the different periods which participants lived in Sweden or how grading was gauged from good to bad.

3.2.3.1. Speaking Swedish and time

But how can language be developed over a specified period based on immigrants’ previous education? Rooth & Åslund have compiled the result of this study which can be seen in figure 3.1

Figure 3. Swedish language efficiency level based on time period and education. The total of 629 people have been studied which further divided into the length of time subjects lived in Sweden, and subjects further divided into different education level, ability to speak based on scale 1 to 4.

Figure 3 showed that immigrants with a compulsory education could not speak Swedish as well as immigrants who have a high school education and university education from their origin homeland. Immigrants with compulsory educational background on average will reach Swedish language level 3 which is considered to be speaking “quite well” after 22 years of living in Sweden.

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57 Ibid., p.57
3.2.3.2. Influence of Swedish language in labour market

**Table 2. proportion of occupation based on Swedish language ability level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>IU Speaking</th>
<th>IALS Reading</th>
<th>IASS Speaking</th>
<th>IASS Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1: Very bad</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2: Bad</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3: Good</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4: Excellent</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of observations</td>
<td>812</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>559</td>
<td>505</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source : Rooth & Åslund

Table 2 shows the proportion to which the occupation increased compared on a scale of how the Swedish language increased, for instance from 1 to 2 or 2 to 3. Despite differences in how researchers measured participants’ level of Swedish language proficiency, all results still indicated the same trend, which showed that an increase in Swedish language proficiency will also increased the chance of entering the Swedish labour market.

At the same time, the results also revealed that an ability to communicate well in Swedish isn’t always necessary in some cases. Figures also show for instance, 59 percent of all participants who are considered to speak very bad Swedish according to IU figures, are able to find a job in the Swedish labour market. Rooth & Åslund explained the reason could be because they are working for an employer who is also an immigrant and has the same mother tongue language or they are using the English language as a form of communication.

3.2.4 Organisations’ perspective on immigrants’ education and knowledge of the Swedish language

Every organisation has a different view of the level of Swedish language proficiency that will be needed when it comes to job specification requirement. Rooth & Åslund pointed out that a problem within an organisation could arise when it is faced with recruitments of foreign-born applicants. How important is it to have a good command of Swedish in different job positions? How to evaluate overseas qualifications? Is it possible to evaluate from a job

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application if a person has a sufficient level of Swedish language proficiency to perform a job?\textsuperscript{60}

In spring 2006 SNS conducted quantitative research aimed at assessing how organisations evaluate foreign-born applicants. Empirical data has been collected by the questionnaire method which has been sent out to large private organisations as well as central government, county council and municipality-run organisations. Rooth & Åslund divided the findings based on an immigrant’s education, ability to communicate in Swedish and the group that those immigrants belong to.\textsuperscript{61}

3.2.4.1. Education

According to Rooth & Åslund, a result from the empirical data, shows that education plays a major roll with job applications. Few organisations believe that they are comparing the same educational backgrounds. It is believed that overseas qualifications have lower standards than those of Swedish qualifications. Although most organisations supported the idea that education will not play a major part regardless where a person was educated but most also believed that supplementary Swedish education will provide a better opportunity for entrance to the Swedish labour market.\textsuperscript{62}

3.2.4.2. Swedish Language

Irrespective of how the Swedish language can have an influence for immigrants in entering the Swedish labour market, Rooth and Åslund established that many organisations stressed the importance of good communication between customers in the retail industry or patients in the health care system and the need for Swedish language proficiency varies in different occupations and it depends on the job specification. Rooth and Åslund also discovered something else that emerged from the findings, which clarified that organisations experienced difficulties in deciding what would be needed in terms of language skill that would be most suited for a particular type of job.

Most organisations considered insufficient level of Swedish language proficiency not to be a major issue. Hence there was a comparatively large proportion of organisations that insisted that this would be the case. Nevertheless, Swedish language proficiency represented a greater problem than one anticipated because it has been seen by management to be the deciding factors for immigrants in entering labour market in Sweden. Large numbers of organisations displayed scepticism about language skill among immigrants and considered it to be a problem when it came to an assessment in the early stages of recruitment.\textsuperscript{63}

3.2.4.3. “Where are you come from?”

In addition to problems related to immigrant proficiency in the Swedish language and education, Rooth and Åslund have suggested that this study has given other indications of occurrences in term of different types of statistics that relate to the labour market. A type of discrimination can occur if employers acknowledge that a foreign-born applicant belongs to a certain group that is often shown to have lower education levels and inefficient language

\textsuperscript{60} See Rooth, D.O, & Åslund, O (2006) p.110-120.
\textsuperscript{61} See Rooth, D.O, & Åslund, O (2006) p.110-120
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid p.110-120
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid p.110-120
skills. As a result it could lead to employers disregarding the application of a foreign-born applicant that belongs to that certain group. This often happens within the first steps of the recruiting process and they were not prepared to investigate further. A majority of organisations have also expressed a need to improve the process of evaluation of education and professional qualifications. 64

Rooth and Åslund have concluded that the three factors mentioned above can increase the risk that a job application for someone with a foreign-name will be eliminated on the first step of the recruiting process. Rooth and Åslund have further suggested that these factors can also contribute to an explanation of why even though it has been obvious that there are differences between foreign-born and the native-born in a Swedish labour market, it has been difficult to pin-point exactly why or what the reasons are behind this matter.65

3.3. The Other Study

In 2005 Brita Hermelin66 conducted a study,” Recruitment Procedures in the Construction of Labour Market Relations- the Ethnic Divine in Sweden”, the study is based on an interview with a person responsible for recruitment in the Stockholm area, with the aim of building upon current levels of understanding of the selection process of new employees. Hermelin interview to different organisation were mainly dealt with the history and background of the firms or organisations, the structure of the employees and the recruitment procedure.

The following are some results that have been established from the study:

- The least advanced firms and the most advanced firms employed the largest share of immigrants. The most advanced firms recruited new employees from the international workforce as a means of obtaining competent workers. English was the language spoken in the office.
- With an integration programmes, several of the interviewees were highly sceptical towards the quality of labour market training programmes. The employers rather looked for educated than for trained individuals. (i.e. individuals who not only have the ability to learn existing practises but also have the proficiency to identify and develop new ideas and new markets.
- The high share of an immigrant population in the Stockholm region would not have any influences towards the firms and their recruitment policy and produces a more developed strategy of diversity management. Hermelin found that there were only four of the thirteen firms and public sector organisations in the interview study in which the interviewees express the aim of obtaining a more diverse workforce and to more actively support the recruitment of immigrants. Hermelin listed these firms as from public sector organisations, one of the recruitment firms and the most advanced computer consultancy firm who given an interview.67

65 Ibid. p.110-120.
3.3.1. What is the next step?

Hermelin describes the Swedish government’s programme ‘Sweden’s plan for employment 2003’ due to a concern for the lack of integration of the immigrant population into the workforce. As a result the Swedish government have implemented two measures that would assist the immigrant population into the workforce in which Hermelin describes as, the first concerns juridical legislation in the form of a law against discrimination. The second concern is the development of more effective introductory programmes for those entering Sweden, such as language education and training programme.\(^{68}\) (The result of Hermelin’s study regarding this issue showed in the previous section)

From the juridical side was previously proven to be ineffective as Knocke described the 1994 law against ethnic discrimination in working life as “toothless” and as offering few possibilities for sanctions.\(^{69}\)

Knocke describes the consequence of Sweden economic crisis during 1990s has shown traditional labour market measures are no longer enough to channel people into jobs, neither are they much help for persons of non-Swedish origin. Knocke suggested that it is up to a mainstream society to open up possibilities and for employers, both private and public, to make use of what they have brought along and what they have acquired, instead of sorting them out, when the labour market gets strained. As Knocke put it “Otherwise, all declarations proclaiming equality and integration will stand out as nothing more than another set of emperor’s new clothes”.\(^{70}\)

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3.4. Skellefteå Model

By an agreement with the Swedish Integrations Board, Skellefteå Municipality has agreed to take in a quota of 150 refugees per year in addition to immigrants that moved to the town on the grounds of family connections. In order to introduce these new immigrants and those who have already settled in Skellefteå, the Municipality cooperates with different government agencies in helping immigrants to find employment. The diagram below illustrates the model of the integration process with different projects that are currently running.

![Diagram of integration process in Skellefteå Municipality]

All immigrants who are newly arrived in Sweden will be encouraged to go to SFI course which will not only introduce them to the Swedish language but also Swedish culture. SFI is further divided into four courses, ranked from the lowest levels of A and B, then C and the highest level of D. Each level has certain requirement criteria, based on participants’ proficiency in reading, writing and speaking in Swedish. Projects are divided into 3 groups, namely ISA, Nexus and SIN. Each project requires participants to have passed certain levels of SFI (Svenska för invandare) before he or she can go forward to one of the three projects that will provide an opportunity to enter and experience the Swedish labour market. Each
project and each of SFI course-level descriptions and requirements will be described in detail under the empirical data section.

Based on a theoretically framework, this section illustrates that there are basically 2 major obstacles that all immigrants will have to overcome, firstly a proficiency in the Swedish language, and secondly, whether organisations are willing to make some adjustment and open up themselves to an idea of a multicultural organisation.

In a next section we are going to take a closer look in more details in NEXUS, SIN and ISA projects as well as organisation's viewpoint on immigrants and theses three projects.
4. EMPIRICAL

This chapter will present information based on different interviews with government agencies and private organisations as shown in figure 4. The presentation of data will be divided into 2 parts, projects and organisation.

1) Projects: Projects information has been further sub-divided into 2 parts. In the first part information of different projects is represented in terms of the project’s background, goals and purposes. The second part of the information represents additional information by means of interviews with a project manager or a project consultant.

2) Organisation: an interview with different organisations in the Skellefteå municipality.

4.1. SFI (Svenska för Invandrare)

4.1.1. Background

The SFI-programme started back in 1965, with the goal of giving foreigners a basic knowledge of the Swedish language and the Society. The goals of SFI, which have been classified by the Swedish National Agency, are that of purely developing students, and specifically:

- their ability to read and write Swedish,
- their ability to speak, converse in, read, listen to and understand Swedish in different contexts,
- good pronunciation,
- their ability to use relevant aids,
- their ability to adapt their language to different recipients and situations,
- knowledge of how language is learned and
- learning and communication strategies for their continued language development.

SFI is further divided into four courses, ranked from the lowest levels of A and B, then C and the highest level of D. Each level has certain requirement criteria, based on participants’ ability of reading, writing and speaking in Swedish. The following are objectives that the student shall have attained after completing the course for each level based on Swedish National Agency requirement.

Level A: The student shall

- be able to understand differences between spoken and written language,
- be able to communicate verbally in simple situations,
- be able to understand simple spoken language,
- be able to describe verbally his or her own knowledge and experience in a simple manner,
- be able to interpret and use some written messages and

http://www.skolverket.se/content/1/c4/56/60/SFI_engelska.pdf
http://www.skolverket.se/content/1/c4/56/60/SFI_engelska.pdf
http://www.skolverket.se/content/1/c4/56/60/SFI_engelska.pdf
http://www.skolverket.se/content/1/c4/56/60/SFI_engelska.pdf
• be aware of how language is learned and be able to use some simple aids.

Level B: The student shall

• be able to communicate verbally and in writing in everyday contexts,
• be able to understand simple spoken language and simple written texts,
• be able to describe his or her own knowledge and experience and compare them with impressions of life in Sweden,
• be able to try different ways of learning Swedish and comment upon them and
• be able to use simple aids to learn and communicate.

Level C: The student shall

• be able to communicate verbally and in writing in different situations that are relevant to the student,
• be able to understand spoken language in different situations and texts of different kinds,
• be able to describe his or her own knowledge and experience of language, working life and cultures and compare them with different conditions in Sweden and
• be able to use different strategies to learn Swedish, plan his or her own learning and use relevant aids.

Level D: The student shall

• be able to express himself/herself relatively confidently,
• be able to communicate verbally and in writing in different situations in everyday life, social life and working life that are relevant to the student,
• be able to compare his or her own and others’ experience of languages, cultures, and social life and working life in Sweden and another country.
• be able to read, comment upon and converse about texts of different kinds and
• be able to use different strategies to learn Swedish, plan his or her own continued learning, and use relevant aids.

4.1.2. Interview with Mr. Ulf Marklund SFI Head Master Vux Skellefteå

According to the interviewee there are currently 250 students who are studying SFI, 100 students between the age of 16 to 18 and 150 over the age of 19. All participants will be initiated on the Introduction Course of 5 weeks; the assessment of individual students will be made during that period in which participants will be divided into the different levels A, B, C and D groups based on previous education.

The time period to complete each level of the SFI programme depends on every individual but immigrants who have a higher education prior to coming to Sweden will take an average of one year to complete course D, while immigrants who have a considerably low education can take up to 2 years before they can pass D level.

Interviewee estimates that around 25 percent of SFI students have continued to study Swedish as a second language in order to have the necessary qualification for entrance to a Swedish University.

74 http://www.skolverket.se/content/1/c4/56/60/SFI_engelska.pdf
75 http://www.skolverket.se/content/1/c4/56/60/SFI_engelska.pdf
76 http://www.skolverket.se/content/1/c4/56/60/SFI_engelska.pdf
When asked if the SFI programme will have enough resources to handle the continuously increased of immigrants that are going to join the programme. Interviewee has already planned to increase a number of SFI teachers. At the same time, SFI programme will be working closely with ISA project in accommodating students who want to join ISA project. Interviewee believes that by introducing immigrants to a Swedish workplace it is not only they can experience Swedish working ethic but it will give them an opportunity to experience a Swedish a Swedish way of life and a chance to speak a Swedish language.

**4.2 Swedish Job Centre (Arbetsförmedlingen)**

4.2.1. Background

The Swedish Job Centre is a government organisation that is also responsible for running and implementing the different policies. The aim is to establish a well functioning labour market. The most important assignment for Swedish Job Centre is to assist job seekers finding employment.77

4.2.2. Interview with Miss. Helen Holtman of The Swedish Job Center

In addition to SIN, ISA and Nexus, this interviewee pointed out that there are many other projects within the Job Centre that are offered to immigrants as shown in the figure below.

![Diagram of Job Centre projects](http://www.ams.se/go.aspx?c=32486)

**Figure 5: Options to immigrant via Swedish Job Centre**

The interviewee explained that immigrants who have passed the SFI D course are then able to attend a form of educational programme for the labour market. The training, that is offered,

is inherent to the regular Swedish national education system to native-born Swedes. “Prova på Plats” is an offering that is offered to immigrants if they were, for instance, a hair dresser in their homeland and they might like to continue work in that field of working in a hair salon in Skellefteå. There are also practice-based programmes of “Practise” and “New Start Job”, which are programmes that are offered to immigrants as well as native-born Swedes.

Based on personal opinion, the interviewee feels that a factor which prevents immigrants from taking employment is simply a fear of an unknown from organisations. The Interviewee stressed that it is not a form of discrimination, but companies may not know how to deal with people who came from other parts of the world. The Interviewee doesn’t believe that education is a factor that prohibits immigrants from getting employment. The Interviewee pointed out that all immigrants who registered with The Swedish Job Centre will have their qualification from their home country assessed and verified by the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education (Högskolverket). Therefore any employer will be able to compare the immigrant’s education to that of Swedish educational standards.

4.3. Nexus Project

4.3.1. Project Background

Nexus Project was founded since 2001 and is funded in collaboration with several different organisations such as Medborgar School, The Immigration Board, Skelleleftä Municipality and The European Union. The goals of the project are:

- To increase the possibilities for immigrants, who have not had a Nordic background and have at least a high school education, of entering labour market.
- To offer companies skill and competence that is offered by the participants.
- To increase knowledge in the Swedish language and Swedish culture to all participants in Swedish language and Swedish culture.
- To give a clearer view of Swedish working way of life.
- To offer a mentor who can provide a direction and guidance for the participants to enter the labour market.
- To offer a working experience in Swedish companies for all participants.
- To increase the opportunities for the participants to enter in Swedish labour market.

The aim of the Nexus project is to decrease the unemployment rate of immigrants that came to Sweden from countries other than Nordic countries. The Project will open the way for a better communication between participants and companies which will create a better insight for the companies into what people from different cultural backgrounds can offer their organisation.

4.3.2. Interview with Mr. Stefan Berg Nexus project manager

In the beginning, The Nexus Project aimed at helping immigrants who already have a higher education from their home country, for example: immigrants who were dentists, engineers, doctors or accountants. But now the project is open to all immigrants who have passed SFI course C. The Nexus Project is conducted in the form of a 20 week theory study and a 20 week work practise in a selected company. The interviewee believes that employers feel very positive towards the project, as they have confidence that participants who completed the Nexus Project will be able to perform a job function. The interviewee also pointed out that employers were aware that all participants have problems with the Swedish language but as
time progressed, the participants’ Swedish proficiency improves and company will benefit from a person who can speak several languages fluently in addition to Swedish.

The interviewee believes that it is easier for participants who have qualification from within the European Union than the rest of the continents, especially in certain areas of education. The interviewee referred to the area of agriculture, as an example, if an immigrant came from the Asian continent, he or she can have a great difficulties in Sweden. The interviewee believes that it can be a great advantage if participants have gained an additional Swedish education.

![Nexus Statistic (2004-2007)](image)

**Figure 6. Result from Nexus Project from 2004 to 2006**

In figure 4.1 it depicts the position of the participants after completion of the project. The majority of participants have found a full time job and a high percentage has gone back to VUX for a further study.

### 4.4. ISA (Introduktion i Samverkan)

#### 4.4.1. Background

ISA is a project that forms part of the Skellefteå Municipality policy for an integration process that has been decided by the Municipal Committee in 05/04/2005. One purpose of the ISA project is to introduce a new arrival immigrant into the labour market in Skellefteå by a method of finding a work practise for them. The Swedish language requirement for the ISA project is that participants have studied the SFI course A and B.

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78 "Nexus" Stefen Berg, Projekt Manager.
The project aimed to achieve the following:

- To educate participants in the Swedish language to a specified SFI level
- To create possibilities for participants to support themselves by finding work or to enter the Swedish study system
- To be self-supporting as soon as possible.
- To take part in Swedish civil and social activities.  

4.4.2. Interview with Miss. Lisa Söderström, Consultant, ISA Project

As ISA started in October last year, the interviewee is still in the process of establishing contact with different organisations that are most suited to accommodating the participants. When asked what the interviewee thought could be foreseen as difficulties in placing participants to the labour market, the interviewee does not believe that the lack of Swedish language proficiency will be a major problem but stressed a concern about difficulties in finding practice place. The interviewee pointed out that there are few projects within the Skellefteå Municipality that are aimed at helping the youth into the labour market, for example, and that therefore it could be difficult for organisations to appoint everyone from the different projects if it has a small number of practice places to offer.

4.5. SIN Project (Särskild Introduktion för vissa Invandrare)

4.5.1. Background

According to Jonas Söderström SIN project aims at helping foreign nationals who are registered with the Swedish Job Centre into employment in the Swedish labour market. The project consultant will give support to both employee and employer in the event that any difficulties occur such as work function, language and cultural differences. One purpose of the project is aimed at helping foreign nationals in finding long term employment. In addition to personal support from a project consultant for the period of 6 months, employers will receive financial support equal to an amount of the employment fee. SIN requires that participants must have at least an SFI course qualification at level C.

4.5.2. Interview with Mr. Jonas Söderström SIN Project consultant

There are currently 626 foreign nationals who are registered with The Swedish Job Centre and 132 of those are eligible for the project. For those who are registered on the project, they will be interviewed by a project consultant to establish the participant’s qualification, work experience and cultural background. The project consultant will assist the participant in finding a suitable job with the right company and will make an initial introduction to that company on behalf of the participant.

The interviewee started working with the SIN Project from the time that the project was implemented in Skellefteå, namely since March 2007. Currently the interviewee is working closely with 20 participants who have been admitted to the programme. Due to SIN the short period since the project started in March, the interviewee has been unable to place any participants into any company as yet. So far it has become apparent that companies do not have extra resource with which to employ additional employees for this type.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Success</th>
<th>Obstacles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NEXUS</strong>&lt;br&gt;Swedish language requirement from SFI level C.</td>
<td>To decrease the unemployment rate of immigrants.</td>
<td>Consultant valuates participants’ previous education and work experience. Consultant establishes a contact with organisations that will be able to offer participants a working practise.</td>
<td>Since the project has been established in 2001, it has been able to place more than 50% of participants to permanent job position.</td>
<td>Participants from a project have received a very positive response from organisations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SIN</strong>&lt;br&gt;(Särskild Introduktion för vissa Invandarer)</td>
<td>Helping foreign nationals who are registered with the Swedish Job Centre into employment in the Swedish Labour Market.</td>
<td>Consultant valuates participants’ previous education and work experience. Consultant establishes a contact with organisations and presents a candidate to a selected organisation. Consultant will give support to both employee and employer in the event that any difficulties occur such as work function, language and cultural differences.</td>
<td>Project is created at the beginning of March 2007. During the time of an interview that was conducted on 20 April 2007, the project was unable to place any participant to an organisation.</td>
<td>Organisations have insufficient resources to offer a practise place to a participant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ISA</strong>&lt;br&gt;(Introduktion I Samverkan)</td>
<td>To introduce a new arrival immigrant into the labour market.</td>
<td>Consultant valuates participants previous education and work experience. Consultant establishes a contact with organisations that will be able to offer participants a working practise.</td>
<td>Since project has been running from October 2006, the project was unable to place any participants to an organisation.</td>
<td>There are few projects within the Skellefteå Municipality. Difficult for organisations to offer everyone from the different projects.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This section presents information from interviews with different organisations in The Skellefteå Municipality.

4.6. Interview with M., Branch Manager, Financial Institution, Skellefteå

4.6.1. Organisation Activity
Company deals with normal financial activities as well as offers customers different insurance policies. Skellefteå is one of 450 company branches and is considered to be one of the thirty biggest among 457 branches in Sweden.

4.6.2. Nexus, ISA and SIN
The interviewee has never heard of these three projects before. The company would be unable to offer a practice placement. To offer a placement would mean that the company would have to expend additional resources in terms of personal training.

4.6.3. Company’s perspective on immigrants
Company branch in Skellefteå currently has 21 employees and none are foreign nationals. During the ten-year period as branch manager, the interviewee could recall only four applicants who were foreign-born. According to the interviewee, an advantage from having an employee that is foreign-born, will only be a benefit to a branch that has a large customer based from that specific particular origin. Interviewee mentioned of a branch in Malmö as an example, in which a large group of customers originated from one particular region of the world, and therefore it was more beneficial for the company to have employees who came from the same region and speak the same language. The interviewee does not consider having a foreign-born employee would be a disadvantage to the company as long as the person is right for the job. The interviewee would not regard it as necessary to enforce an employee placement of a foreign-born into the Skellefteå branch. This is mainly because most customers are Swedish and having a foreign-born employee will not offer any additional benefit for the company in Skellefteå.

4.6.4. Recruitment process
The most important factor for the recruitment process is to find a person that is best suited for the job regardless of where the person came from. Hence the interviewee added that the right education would be of very little advantage. In addition, a Swedish education would be an advantage in the recruitment process, due to the fact that the interviewee is able to clarify quickly what subjects the applicant has studied for instance “Civiliekonomprograme”, while with an overseas education the interviewer will need to take on trust that the applicant has the equivalent of the Swedish qualification, without a point of reference to verify the foreign qualification. Due to the nature of the company’s business, which is namely that of providing a service to customers, there is a need for the ability to communicate well in Swedish and this would be a deciding factor for a job appointment.

4.6.5. Suggestion of how immigrants can improve their chances into job market
The interviewee acknowledged the fact that there are many immigrants with a very good educational background but they are unable to enter the Swedish labour market. The interviewee believed that the “unknown factor” can be seen as a major obstacle because many
don’t know how to handle people who come from different culture. The interviewee believed that this “unknown factor” could be overcome simply by people from different backgrounds starting work together. Therefore it would open the opportunity to get to know each other. The interviewee recommended that government organisations should take the first step in this introduction process.

4.7. Interview with Mr. T, Co-Owner, Car dealer, Skellefteå

4.7.1. Activity
The Company is an American car dealership that sells vehicles and also provides car maintenance services to its customer. Currently the company has 19 employees.

4.7.2. Nexus, ISA and SIN
The interviewee has never heard of these three projects before and therefore has never consciously employed any participants who took part in these projects.

4.7.3. Company’s perspective on immigrants
Currently the company has one foreign-born employee who is working as a car mechanic in a workshop. The interviewee could not identify his country of origin but on the basis that he can speak Swedish in the same manner as any Swedish-born, the interviewee presumed that he moved to Sweden when he was young.

The interviewee can not see any extra benefits for employing immigrants; this is because majority of customers are Swedish. The interviewee believed that one problem that could prevent immigrants from getting employment is their Swedish language proficiency. The interviewee stressed that the company deals mainly with customers who are Swedish and therefore communication problems must be eliminated.

The interviewee explained further that there is even a problem in communication misunderstanding between Swedish-born employees and therefore the company can not afford an additional problem. The interviewee pointed out that having a foreign-born who can speak other languages would be a benefit if the company were exporting or importing products from overseas distributors.

4.7.4. Recruitment process
A person who can perform a specific work function and be able to give technical support on a telephone, is someone who would need to be able to communicate very well in Swedish, the interviewee declared. If applicants meet all these criteria, then he would not have any qualms regardless of where the applicant came from.

4.7.5. Suggestion of how immigrants can improve their chances of entering the job market

The interviewee believed that immigrants should learn Swedish as fast as possible and to the highest level possible.
4.8. Interview with Mr. J, Branch Manager, Financial Institution, Skellefteå

4.8.1. Organisation activity
This company offers financial services and advice to customers. In this branch, there are currently around 70 employees.

4.8.2. Comment on NEXUS, ISA and SIN
The interviewee has never heard of Nexus, ISA or SIN and therefore the interviewee cannot comment on their activities.

4.8.3. Company’s perspective immigrants
Currently the company has 3 or 4 employees who are from Finland and one from China. The interviewee believes that the person in question from China has been living in Sweden for 18 years. According to the interviewee, the advantages of having foreign-born employees in the organisation would be that they have the same background, culture and language and that they can assist companies who want to expand their business abroad or who have many dealings with that country in particular. The interviewee has indicated that poor proficiency in the Swedish language would be considered as a disadvantage. The interviewee suggested that this could be because they have not been living in Sweden for a long period.

4.8.4. Recruitment process
The interviewee’s organisation has many criteria when it came to new employee recruitment. A person must have an academic degree and will have to go through a few tests and a long training period before he or she can become permanent staff. When the interviewer asked if he had employed any significant cases where the applicants came from other countries, the interviewee was unable to make any comment. This was because the interviewee had never had any applicants who were immigrants and therefore the interviewee was unable to clarify how the company would evaluate an overseas qualification.

4.8.5. Suggestion of how immigrants can improve their chance into job market
The interviewee suggested job a training programme would be the best approach to introduce immigrants to the job market. The interviewee believed that it would give an opportunity for both parties to get to know each other.

4.9. Interview with Mr. F, Manager, Food Production Manager, Skellefteå

4.9.1. The Organisation’s activity
The company is in the food production industry that specialises in packaging fish products. The company currently has 12 employees.

4.9.2. Comment on NEXUS, ISA and SIN
The interviewee has never heard these three projects before, therefore the interviewee can not comment on their activities.
4.9.3. Company’s perspective on immigrants
Currently there are four foreign-born employees, who are working for the company, two from Thailand and two from Bosnia. The interviewee expressed his satisfaction with their performance and their diligent work-ethic. The interviewee believes that the advantages of having foreign-born employees, is that they are good workers. Disadvantages would be a lack of good Swedish knowledge and that would create communication problems. The interviewee has also pointed out that the differences in culture can sometimes be seen as a disadvantage, this is due to people from different countries may have different ways of interpreting or understanding things in general.

4.9.4. Recruitment process
The company does not require any special education for a factory worker, therefore the interviewee did not have to do any evaluation of an overseas qualification. The interviewee put it quite simply, “we are looking for someone who has a happy disposition and likes to work with the product that company produces”.

4.9.5. Suggestion of how immigrants can improve their chance of entering the job market
The interviewee believes immigrants should take the first initiative to contact an employer themselves and to by-pass organisations such as the Swedish Job Centre. As it will represent the right attitude towards the employer, and indicate that a person really wants the job, instead of having an attitude on arrival that they have been sent by the Swedish Job Centre, the “they told me to come here” syndrome.

4.10. Interview with Mrs. M, Personal Manager, Technical Development Company, Skellefteå

4.10.1. Organisation activity
This company is an international technical development company that has branches around the world as well as offices in Sweden. Currently the company has 110 employees in the Skellefteå office.

4.10.2. Comment on NEXUS, ISA and SIN
The interviewee has been contacted by NEXUS Project before, and was in the process of taking one of their participants. The interviewee was unsure what actually happened but this particular instance was admitted to the Skellefteå Municipality programme. The interviewee has never heard of ISA nor SIN, therefore, the interviewee was unable to offer any constructive comment.

4.10.3. Company’s perspective on immigrants
The branch in Skellefteå currently has 2 employees who came from Russia and America. As the company is an international concern and have customers in different parts of the world, the interviewee believes that cultural diversity within an organisation can only be beneficial. The interviewee can not think of any disadvantages.

4.10.4. Recruitment process
The company will firstly consider “the right person for the job” as its initial criterion. The interviewee interpreted “the right person” in terms of the right education, some work experience as well as social competence. The country of the applicants’ origin will not have
any influence on the recruitment process. Despite being an international company with the English Language as its primary language in the work-place, a foreign-born applicant will still be required to have a reasonable knowledge of Swedish to communicate with Swedish customers.

4.10.5. Suggestion of how immigrants can improve their chance to enter the job market

Interviewee believes the best channel for the immigrants to enter the labour market in Skellefteå would be through different project that are offer to immigrants. Due to limited man resources and inefficient workload company currently is unable to offer any training place.
### Summary of the interviews with different organisations in Skellefteå Municipality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Company</th>
<th>View on Nexus, ISA and SIN.</th>
<th>Perspective on Immigrants/ Advantage and Disadvantage</th>
<th>Recruitment Process</th>
<th>Suggestion to reduce the Immigrants high unemployment level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial Institution (1)</td>
<td>Never heard of the projects</td>
<td><em>Advantage:</em> a benefit to a branch that has a large group of customers originated from one particular region of the world. <em>Disadvantage:</em> Does not consider having a foreign-born employee to be a disadvantage as long as the person is right for the job.</td>
<td>To find a best person that is best suited for the job.</td>
<td>Government should take a first step in employing immigrants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the time of an interview company has 21 employees and none are foreign born.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car Dealer</td>
<td>Never heard of the projects</td>
<td><em>Advantage:</em> would be a benefit if the company were exporting or importing products from overseas distributors. <em>Disadvantage:</em> Unable to communicate and to understand Swedish language 100%.</td>
<td>To find someone who is best suited for the job.</td>
<td>Immigrants will need to speak Swedish as quickly as possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the time of an interview Company has 18 employees and one foreign born employee.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Institution (2)</td>
<td>Never heard of the projects</td>
<td><em>Advantage:</em> have a same background and language that can assist a company with local customer or to assist companies who will do or have business abroad. <em>Disadvantage:</em> Swedish proficiency</td>
<td>Many criteria required for a person who is best suited for the job.</td>
<td>Training programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the time of an interview company has 70 employees, 3 or 4 foreign born employees who are working in Västerbotten county.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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## Summary of the interviews with different organisations in Skellefteå Municipality

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</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Food Production Company              | Never heard of the projects. | *Advantage*: Good workers and are not “so spoiled” like some of Swedish workers.  
*Disadvantage*: Swedish language. People from different cultures have a different way of understanding or interpreting things. | No special education requires. | Immigrants must make a first step in presenting themselves to an organisation. |
| Technical Development Company        | Brief dealing with Nexus project. | *Advantage*: positive aspect from cultural diversity as company.  
*Disadvantage*: Can not see any disadvantages. | A right person with the right level of competence. | Training programme |
5. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

In this section I will demonstrate five points that I aimed to establish in this thesis as stated in section 1.7. The discussion will be based on theories from earlier research presented under literature review in section 3, data findings in section 4, and scientific articles that have similar study material. The following points list the purposes of the study:

- To establish and analyse the interpretations of “diversity” from society’s perspective in the form of the different government agencies and commercial organisations’ perspective.
- To analyse the platform that has been built currently in terms of helping immigrants enter the labour market in Skellefteå, whether it is a success or a failure.
- To establish and analyse factors that can prevent immigrants entering the labour market in Skellefteå.
- To establish organisation’s perspective on immigrant in term of the requirement that will be needed to enter a Swedish labour market in Skellefteå.
- To establish and analyse the responses of commercial organisations towards the platform that has been built by the Skellefteå Municipality and other government agencies, and their recommendations.

As this paper is conducted in qualitative method in which the focus will be emphasized on words rather than numbers, therefore, I have used the quotations from some part of the interviews to highlight and to support my argument and statement.

5.1. Diversity!!

From a literature review which describes that there are few obstacles that could prevent immigrants from gaining employment such as language and education. These two issues will be discussed later on in section 5.2 and 5.3. But first I would like to discuss and analyse the concept of diversity further by comparing the current theories to the empirical data from different interviews that have conducted.

According to Mlekov and Widell, the concept of diversity can be divided in two perspectives namely the view from Society’s perception and the Private-organisation’s perception.

5.1.1. Society Perspective

As Melkov and Widell described diversity from the perspective of Society covered in theory in section 3.1. The view from the society perspective deals with how a society and labour market should be organised in such a way that creates a right and equality for all in a labour market. With statistics has indicated that there are high numbers of immigrants who encounter many difficulties in entering the labour market despite their well educated background and sufficient working experience. The aim from Society’s perspective would be to create a goal in helping immigrants as well as other groups with different disadvantages into the labour market.  

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

NEXUS, SIN and ISA are 3 projects that are currently running in Skellefteå Municipality. These projects are sponsored and run by different government agencies as part of integration programmes. These three projects all have one goal in common, and that is to help immigrants into the labour market in Skellefteå and become integrated with the Swedish way of life. Consultants who run each individual project believe that immigrants have so much to offer to organisations in terms of their knowledge, education and work experience. They are also believed that all the benefits are not only directed towards the companies but it will provide immigrants with a Swedish working experience, a chance to practise and improve their Swedish as well as fully expose these immigrants to Swedish culture.

5.1.2. Organisation perspective

Melkov and Widell described the Organisation’s perspective of diversity with respect to business strategy in section 3.1, and that it looks at, for instance, the affects of employing an immigrant and what that will influence the organisation. The organisations will try to evaluate on how the organisation can develop and benefit from having employees from different backgrounds in terms of achieving quality and if it will be most suitable for customer orientation. 81

Based on the empirical data, we are going to look at different responses on how companies evaluate the experience of having an immigrant as employee and how they can be of benefit to their organisations in Skellefteå.

"Advantages that I can think of, will not have any positive influence on the Skellefteå branch. But there is a branch in Malmö that I know of, which has an employee who is foreign-born. This is because there is a large group of customers who come from other countries and they are having problems with the Swedish language. To have an employee who comes from the same country-of-origin obviously would have its advantages because both can speak the same language. Skellefteå has not got a large concentrated group of immigrants nor do we have a large group of immigrants who come from the same origin as customers, so the demand to solve a language problem is not really valid here in Skellefteå", stated Mr. H. Branch Manager, Financial Institution. (Appendix 1)

Mr J who is also a branch manager for a financial institution has very similar viewpoint.

"One advantage of having foreign-born employees would be because we have a large percentage of our customer-base population that are foreign-born, they are obviously amongst our current customers or potential customers. One advantage that I can think of would be that they have the same background and language, and that they have experience that can assist companies who will do or have business abroad. I see that there are many positive points in having immigrants as employee." (Appendix 3)

From the information above it clearly indicates that the majority of organisations consider having multi-cultured employees to be an advantage, especially if the company has a large group of customers from one specific region of the world. Some believe it would be more beneficial to companies that have many businesses overseas or planning to expand its business to another part of the world and require a person who can understand the relevant language, culture and customs from that particular region.

Not all organisations agree on using foreign-born employees as a form of communicator, a food production company that has four immigrants working in a factory has seen another aspect of having immigrants as employees in their workplace, which is their diligent work-ethic with an undemanding nature as he firmly stated it.

"Advantage... from my opinion...with employees from Bosnia and Thailand who are working for us now, they are very good workers ... that they are not 'so spoiled' like some of the Swedish workers". (Appendix 4)

From the data collected, we can clearly see two different view points from these two perspectives. Although the two sides both agree that organisations could benefit from foreign-born with extra abilities such as proficiency in one or two more languages, the organisations can only see a direct benefit from these extra abilities if they have a large numbers of foreign customers. The three projects firmly believe that an organisation can make use of immigrants’ education and that their work experience will be of benefit even in Skellefteå. But the organisations would only focus on finding the right person for the job that would benefit the organisations and therefore it will demand the foreign-born applicants in most cases to have a high proficiency level of Swedish language.

Although all companies pointed out they welcome all foreign-born applicants, but regard an ability to communicate well in Swedish as essential.

**5.2. I can speak Swedish; I learnt it from a boooook!**

Every organisation has a different view of the level of Swedish language proficiency that will be needed when it comes to job specification requirements. As Rooth & Åslund pointed out in literature review (section 3.3.4) that, a problem within an organisation could arise when it is faced with recruitment of foreign-born applicants. For instance, how important is it to have a good command of Swedish in different job positions, or how to evaluate overseas qualifications, and is it possible to evaluate from a job application if a person has a sufficient level of proficiency in the Swedish language to perform a job?[^82]

In this section I am going to discuss organisation’s expectations when they recruit a new employee and how they handle immigrants’ applications.

**5.2.1. Swedish Language**

With regard to how Swedish language proficiency can have an influence for immigrants in entering the Swedish labour market. As Spence described in literature review section 3.3.3 on the knowledge of the host country languages has an importance of how well immigrants can progress in the labour market. The ability to communicate in the written and spoken fluently is considered to be part of human capital and has a direct influence on opportunity at finding a job and attaining a higher salary.[^83] From Rooth and Åslund studies shows that Swedish language proficiency has been used by managements to be the deciding factor for immigrants and lastly that employers made an informal judgement that applicants belonged to a certain

group that often showed themselves to have lower educational standards and a deficiency in language skills.  

Spence’s theory is to be supported by Rooth and Åslund research which described in section 3.3 showed that many organisations stressed the importance of good communication between staff and customers in the retail industry, the organisation experienced difficulties in deciding what would be needed in terms of language skill that would be best suited for a job and large numbers of organisations displayed scientism in immigrants’ language skill.

From empirical data that have been collected, it is illustrated that all companies acknowledge in one form or other, how important a proficiency in the Swedish language is, even though it might have different standards of requirements. Three organisations that are customer-orientated, such as financial institutions, require a high proficiency in the Swedish language, and a retail company requires an applicant with a near-perfect Swedish proficiency. Two organisations are satisfied with if an applicant that can read and write, but put their main focus on the concept of “the Right person”. Majority of companies are unable to identify the level of Swedish that would be needed, but stress that it must be sufficient to communicate with customers without any misunderstanding. Three customer orientated organisations have also stressed that Swedish will be a crucial factor in deciding whether the applicants will be accepted for a position.

To illustrate to what degree organisations consider Swedish language proficiency to be a crucial factor in the recruiting process, the following are some examples of an answer from some of the interviewees when asked what can be the disadvantages for having immigrants as employees.

Mr T the co-owner of the car dealer company has a very clear viewpoint on the level of Swedish that is required to work in his company.

“The problem here is the language. We communicate mostly with Swedish customers and not many from overseas, so that any communications problem must be eliminated. Even though we are Swedish who are born and raised in Sweden, we still have communication problems and misunderstand one another on occasions, and that creates a problem, so we can not afford another problem caused by miscommunication. Therefore, a person must be able to understand the Swedish language 100 percent and that includes speaking, reading and writing.” (Appendix 2)

Mr. J the Branch Manager at a financial institution who has although not been specific about the level of Swedish that is required to work for his organisation, but nonetheless he is also considered Swedish language to an important factor.

“Disadvantages in some cases are chiefly based in Swedish language proficiency. This can be because most immigrants have not lived in Sweden for very long. So the problem here is really the language proficiency”. (Appendix 3)

Mr. N a food production manager, however, has voiced his concerned on one extra issue in addition to a language and that none of the organisations have mentioned and that is culture.

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“Disadvantage.....perhaps having a problem in understanding each other because of language and then compounded by a problem with different cultures, whereby we have different ways of understanding or interpreting things” (Appendix 4)

From empirical evidence the results above are in agreement with Rooth & Åslund’s findings, there is also a small indication that companies require a sufficient level of Swedish language proficiency. Can we suggest that better Swedish proficiency will lead to a better chance of getting a job?

Using the theoretical framework section in table 2, the result of the research as conducted by Rooth & Åslund is revealed. It shows an influence of the Swedish language in the labour market. The research reveals that the proportion of available occupations increased as the scale of Swedish level proficiency increased. Furthermore, results also revealed an ability to communicate well in Swedish language isn’t always necessary if a person is working with an employer who has the same mother tongue or working in an organisation that used English as a main language 86.

The food production company, in a comparison to the other organisations has the highest percentage numbers of immigrants working there. The result shows that as indeed the immigrants will not need to command a high level of Swedish proficiency but it will unfortunately only limit them into a certain area of the labour market.

Two out of fives organisations although did not state a Swedish language to be a disadvantage for foreign-born employees, providing that he or she is the right person for the job and can communicate well in a Swedish language.

5.2.2. Recruitment

The literature review of section 3.3.4 by Rooth and Åslund described three factors that can lead to a risk that an application bearing a foreign-name would be eliminated in the first steps of the recruiting process which include scrutiny of education, Swedish language and being foreign-born. With respect to education, Rooth and Åslund show that an employer tended to believed that the standard of an overseas qualification is lower than its Swedish equivalent. The data results also showed that all organisations believe in choosing the best candidate for a position, regardless of what country applicants came from. The requirements for a similar position vary from one type of job to another. The following are some examples stated by interviewees when asked “What type of criteria does your company have when employing a new employee, and how do you evaluate a qualification from another country?”

“The only criteria we have is that we are going to choose the best person that is the right person for the job. It doesn’t matter which country a person came from.” (Appendix 1)

“We have many criteria, and we only recruit applicants who have an academic education. We are considered early experiences; we perform a lot of tests to find out whether an applicant has selling potential, social competence and a good education.” (Appendix 3)

86 see Rooth & Åslund (2006) p.110-120
"We are looking for a person who has the right competence, right education and social competence so a person is able to fit in to the company. A person must have a good knowledge of Swedish as well as English" (Appendix 5)

Three out from five companies have never received an application from a foreign-born applicant. One manager received 3 or 4 foreign-born applications since he was in charge during a 10-year period. A financial manager explained in detail the level of uncertainty about a foreign-born applicant’s education.

“The problem with overseas qualifications is that one really doesn’t know the composition of the qualification. For example, if I have an applicant with Swedish Civil Economics apply, I would know what a Civil Economics qualification in Sweden comprises and they don’t have to explain to me about what they have studied. If I have a foreign-born applicant with an overseas education that I don’t recognise, they will have to explain to me what they have studied. I must also then, trust that person that what she or he says that they’ve studied is comprehensive and relevant” (Appendix 1)

Due to none of the organisations have a regular dealing with overseas qualification or a foreign-born applicant and therefore it would be difficult to conclude if a factor such as qualification would have any effect on the recruitment process. The organisations have however a strong view in the recruitment process that the person must be right for the job. The full description of what would be consider “the right person” is once again can be refer back to how the organisations evaluate the foreign-born applicants as discussed in section 5.1.2.

One interesting fact has also emerged during this analysis; organisations that require a type of formal education and high proficiency in Swedish have not received many applications or extremely few from foreign-born applicants. While a food production company does not require any form of formal education or a high proficiency in the Swedish language, they have four immigrants working in the company from the total of 8 employees working in the factory. These employees have approached the company themselves and without any assistance from any of government projects. Is this an indication that immigrants are looking for a job they understood to be less demanding in terms of Swedish proficiency and formal education?

5.3. Nexus; SIN and ISA

Knocke described the situation of unemployment for refugees, particularly for that who started arriving in the early 1980s and onwards has often been considerably higher than for the Swedish population, regardless of the labour market situation. There are many difficulties in gaining access to and a foothold on the labour market despite many of them having good educational backgrounds and academic credentials.87 Nexus, SIN and ISA projects have been implemented to provide immigrants a necessary foothold in entering the labour market in Skellefteå. ISA, NEXUS and SIN project consultants believe that participants should be open to any opportunity to use their previous experience or to be given an opportunity to train for a new job. But what kind of labour market do these projects aim at and how successful are these projects!

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

From an organisation’s perspective in the previous discussion it is clearly stated how importance Swedish language proficiency is, from a high level required in retail and financial institutions, to a sufficient level in a technical company and food production company. In the empirical data section, it shows that the ISA language requirement is SFI (Svenska för Invandrare) is course A and B, SIN and NEXUS require SFI course C and SFI course D is required if a person wants to take part in the Swedish Job Centre labour training programme. Despite course requirements for each level as stated by the Swedish National School Board, a clearer idea of where the SFI course is positioned in comparison to other different Swedish courses that are offered to immigrants, can be seen in the figure illustrated below.

According to Ulf Marklund SFI Vux director, to complete SFI course D for people who have an academic education, will take an average of one year, and to complete Swedish as a Second Language B course from SFI Course D will take 2 more years. In how language can be developed over a certain period can also be seen in figure 3. The figure explains how immigrants’ previous education from their original homeland will have an effect in the Swedish language learning progress. A result like this clearly indicates that the higher the education they previously had, the faster they are able to speak the language.

Another interesting fact has emerged from this study, and that is the actual time line of how long it takes to gain a command of Swedish at a higher level. The result shows that after 7 years of living in Sweden those who have an academic background have managed to reach the scale of 3,2 which is just above “quite well” which is in the scale of 3. Nexus’ and especially ISA projects’ main goals are to introduce or find a practise place for newly arrived immigrants or those who have been living in Sweden for a short period of time. Can one make a presumption theoretically based on the result of figure 3, which indicates that immigrants who have been living in Sweden for a short period would not be able to command a good level of Swedish, and that therefore it would be difficult for them to find employment!

While SIN and ISA are unable to produce any results so far which, according to project consultants, is due to projects having only recently been launched and in are in the process of creating contact with different organisations in Skellefteå. But two consultants were able to...
express some certain over obstacles that they are facing them, such as too many looking for a practise place and company have not got the resources to have extra employee.

The Nexus project has been running in Skellefteå for the past 7 years. It is only allowed to take very small numbers of participants due to limited funding. In figure 4 it shows that the project has a high success rate in placing participants in employment. Unfortunately I am unable to obtain additional information in what types of jobs participants have applied so therefore I am unable to evaluate in which industries, what level of Swedish language proficiency is required.

However, from a similar study which was conducted by Hermelin in section 3.3 with the aim of building upon current levels of understanding of the selection process of new employees. Hermelin has established two factors which can be used as an additional data:

Firstly, Hermelin stated that the least advanced firms and the most advanced firms employed the largest share of immigrants. The most advanced firms recruited new employees from the international workforce as a means of obtaining competent workers. English was the language spoken in the office.\(^{88}\) This theory seems to agree with a finding of this study although a result can not be justified as conclusive, nevertheless, it shows that the most advanced firm which is the technical company in this study, and the least advanced firm employed which is the food production company have indeed the largest share of immigrants.

Secondly, Hermelin found that the majority of organisations who took part were highly sceptical towards the quality of labour market training programmes as the organisations would rather look for educated than for trained individuals.\(^{89}\) As none of the organisations have employees from these three projects and therefore it could not comment on the projects activities.

Despite the majority of the organisations have put the Swedish language as one of the main obstacle for immigrants entering the labour market but the three projects however do not consider a Swedish Language to be the main problem. While Nexus project manager stated that there has been no obstacle in replacing participants to organisations, SIN and ISA main concern are the limited training place or the limited resources that the organisations are willing to offer. Is it possible to conclude that one of the reasons these three projects are unable to produce a satisfactory result because there are unable to meet organisations’ requirement!

5.4. What is the next step!

With no direct benefit to organisation by having immigrants as an employee in terms of culture or language, which result in organisations have put strong emphasis on immigrants to blend themselves into Swedish organisation. When question is asked about how to improve


the unemployment situation among immigrants, the answers differ substantially. One suggests quickly learning Swedish is the recommendation from the car dealer company:

“They will have to learn to speak Swedish as quickly as possible, even speak Swedish at home and learn as much as possible about Swedish culture” (Appendix 2)

One company suggested work-practice will be the best option:

“I think practice place, it will give possibility to get to know one another, give participants a good insight to companies”. (Appendix 3)

One company believed that immigrants must take the first initiative and pass all these projects:

“I don't believe in a fixed structure. I believe that those who are unemployed must look for a job themselves. Of the four immigrants who work here, none of them came from the Swedish Job Centre, they must take a first initiative. They have been introduced to work here by friends or acquaintances”. (Appendix 4)

One company recommended that the government must take a first initiative:

“Just now with foreign-born who are having difficulty in finding work, I believed that government organisations should be taking a first step in employing them”. (Appendix 1)

When asked if they have been approached by one of these projects and whether they are willing to offer participants a practice place, most companies stated that their company would have limited human resources to take in a trainee and spend man-hours in training that person. In addition the companies deem that it is necessary to have an assignment or a project for a trainee to perform during this period, which does not occur on the regular basis.

In Hermelin’s study (section 3.3) shows that despite the high share of an immigrant population in the Stockholm region it would not have any influences towards the firms and recruitment policy and produces a more develop strategy of diversity management. The result is also indicated very similar situation in Skellefteå. Despite the organisations awareness of the increasing numbers of immigrants it has not however suggested any idea towards changing their recruitment policy. In this study shows that the majority of organisations are directed their recruitment policy towards looking for the best person who is most suited for their customer’s culture.

As Knocke has pointed out (in literature review section 3.3) that it is up to a society and employers to open up possibilities to immigrants, and to make use of what they have brought along. Without this possibility the immigrants’ unemployment situation will remain unchanged in the near future.

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6. Conclusion

From the results and discussion and analysis chapter we can see many factors that can prevent immigrants to the labour market. During this conclusion chapter I am going to begin with a brief discussion of a research question which is:

“Factors that can prevent the diversifying process for immigrants to enter the labour market in Skellefteå Municipality!”

The answer to this question can be illustrated in a flowchart below.

![Flowchart](image)

Figure 8: A flowchart of the diversifying process for immigrants entering the labour market in Skellefteå Municipality. The information based on the results of empirical data.

The flowchart above shows the process from an organisation’s perspective of how it evaluates immigrants’ position in entering the labour market. First the organisation will look at the benefits of having immigrants as employees in terms of immigrants’ ability to speak a language that the organisation considers useful for its customers. It is also looking to benefit from the knowledge that immigrants may have from the specific cultures that he or she came from.

If, however, the organisations deems it to be unnecessary to have immigrants for a job that requires his or her a certain special skill, an immigrant job application will have to go through the normal recruitment process and measure up to the organisation’s concept of “The Best person for the job” which is shown in the figure in the organisation policy annotation box.
6.1. Recruitment Process

The description of “The Best Person for The Job” is based on a collection of empirical data that shows that it differs from one organisation to another. It is a description of how a person is assessed in each organisation according to qualification and what would be most suited to the job position.

In addition to going through a normal process of “The Best Person for The Job” concept in the recruitment stage, immigrants will have to overcome three common factors that can prevent them from finding a job. These have become evident during this study:

1) The Swedish language: All organisations in this study require immigrants to have a certain proficiency in the Swedish language and organisations that are customer-orientated require high proficiency levels in the Swedish language.
2) Education: Very few organisations received job applications from immigrants, but those who have, stress a concern they have, about the qualification criteria of an immigrant’s application.
3) Unknown factor: This factor mainly based on uncertainty of how to handle people from another culture.

The inability to meet up with the organisation’s requirements will force immigrants to go through the same process until the organisation can realise their intended benefit of employing immigrants from the perspective of “The best person for the job”. When an individual’s Swedish proficiency improves to the required level or the organisation can see the direct benefits of employing an immigrant in terms of language ability and cultural knowledge then the option would be opened to the applicant.

6.2. General Conclusion

NEXUS, SIN, ISA and the Swedish Job Centre attempt to assist immigrants in this crucial process by giving guidance and acting as a mediator on the immigrants’ behalf. While the view behind each project’s belief is how immigrants can contribute to a company in terms of their education, languages and work experience, the majority of organisations who granted the interview believed that it can benefit from immigrants only if it had a large overseas client based.

A previous study showed that it will take an average of 7 years for a person with an academic background to master a command of spoken Swedish to the level of “quite well”. The majority of participants who took part in these projects have not been living in Sweden for a very long period of time. From a theoretical viewpoint their command of the Swedish language would be limited and therefore it would narrow down their chances of what industry they could enter.

The majority of organisations believe that by placing immigrants as trainees in a work-place, would be the best option by which to introduce immigrants to the labour market as well as to Swedish society, but due to limited human resources, none of the organisations could offer a trainee a position at the time of the interview. Due to the fact that the majority of organisations are unaware of Nexus; SIN and ISA activities, it was not possible for them to
give any constructive comments on how projects should be run or comment on any project itself.

6.3. My view point on the results of the study

The results of this study have shown a very grim prospect for immigrants who live in Skellefteå. It will have a strong impact on how I interpret the benefit of diversity from an organisation’s perspective, which should be based upon the concept of “tolerance”. This is based mainly because I came from South Africa where it is very common for organisations in all product activities to be comprised of people who have different ethnic origins, backgrounds and speak different languages within the company.

There are two main issues that I feel have became evident in this study, namely that there will be more likelihood to divide rather than combine the immigrants entering the Skellefteå labour market.

Firstly, the strategy of most of the organisations in this study viewed an immigrant mainly as a language interpreter rather than a skilled worker; the consequences of this will reduce the chance of immigrants to enter the Skellefteå labour market. In addition, if the organisations were to apply the theory of what are they considered being best suited for their main customers in terms of language and culture, there would be even fewer doors opening to immigrants in Skellefteå.

Secondly, the three projects that are aimed in helping immigrants to enter the labour market are a direct reminder of a “work-ghettos” concept. This is described by Knocke as the situation during the Post-war Labour Immigrations period when immigrants ended up in low-skilled jobs. All of the projects require very low proficiency levels of the Swedish language which limits the kind of industries the immigrants with minimum understanding of the Swedish language can enter. Unfortunately, by rushing immigrants into the labour market in order to justify the political policy, can lead to the creation of “Millennium work-ghettos” and as a result it will create a limitation for the immigrants and their families to a certain level of society.

6.4. Suggestion

The number of immigrants unemployed will gradually increase due to the known number of 150 per year from the refugee-quota of the Skellefteå Municipality. Additionally an unknown number will join those, based on reasons of family reunions. The Skellefteå Municipality can no longer afford to take a casual attitude by believing that organisations would have the same attitude towards the concept of an integration process. The following are some suggestions that can be recommended to the Skellefteå Municipality and could be acted on to promote diversity within the municipality.

- Awareness of different cultures should be promoted, this programme would not aim directly at organisations but to every Skellefteå citizen, men and women, young and old, this would simply be because these people are the customers that form the target-group or market that organisations are aiming to satisfy.
CONCLUSION

- Creating a “Tolerance programme” for employers in the form of seminars and workshops where employers and groups of immigrants can share ideas, fears and thoughts together.

- Invite a speaker to visit here from a company within one of the European Union countries who have similar issues with immigrants but have managed to overcome these problems.

- The result of an interview with different organisations shows that 4 in 5 companies have never heard of NEXUS, ISA and SIN before. An introduction of projects would be necessary in order to create awareness of projects’ activities. The model below suggests how organisations and a project can meet by using one channel instead of each project approaching the company separately.

![Diagram](image)

This model not only represents a less complicated channel in terms of communication between organisations and a single project, but that single project would form a unified front which would provide a single point of contact and make it easier for both sides to work together especially for the purpose of a “Tolerance Programme” as shown below.
6.5. Further study

How a culture can have an influence on a recruitment process?

6.6. Final thought

Ulf Marklund, Vux Director has stressed how important it is for immigrants to have constant interaction with Swedish people in order to improve their Swedish because many immigrants live in Sweden without any regular contact with local Swedes. Without access to organisations the only form of contact with the Swedish language will be indeed from a book!
7. Reliability and Validity

In this chapter I am going to discuss a reliability and validity of this paper the criteria that I am using according to Bryman and Bell have been adapted specifically to qualitative research.

7.1. External reliability

External reliability means the degrees in which a study can be replicated. This is since it is impossible to freeze a social setting and the circumstances of an initial study to make it replicable which the term is usually related to. It has suggested that a qualitative research will need to adopt a similar social role to that adopted by the original researcher.\(^9^2\).

Since this research is based on a case study in a Skellefteå Municipality, the external reliability of this paper can only be valid to the area. The social setting and circumstances for this research would not be too complicated to replicate as all organisations who are took part in the interview are all well established.

7.2. Internal validity

There are two prospects of internal validity, firstly internal validity mean whether when there is more than one observer, members of the research team agree about what they see and what they hear.\(^9^3\). Since I am writing this paper on my own the problem of internal validity can be eliminated.

Secondly, by which they mean whether there is a good match between researchers’ observations and the theoretical ideas they develop.\(^9^4\). Due to my research area is rather extensive I have chosen literatures, scientific articles or a local newspaper that are specific to Sweden or Skellefteå, this way I am able to narrow down theories and observations to Sweden and it wouldn’t be too complicated to replicate.

7.3. External validity

External validity refers to the degree to which findings can be generalized across social settings.\(^9^5\). Although this case setting is based in Skellefteå municipality but the main theories are based on organisation’s culture and recruitment process in which would not be limited to Skellefteå municipality.

\(^9^2\) Bryman & Bell (2003) p. 288
\(^9^3\) Ibid, p. 288
\(^9^4\) Ibid, p. 288
\(^9^5\) Ibid p. 288
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Report

“Pocket Facts – Statistics on Integration” © Integrationsverket, 2006

Interview (Goverment Organisations)

Mr. Ulf Marklund, SFI Head Master, Vux Skellefteå. Interview Date: 26 April 2007, Interview length: 30 minutes.

Miss. Helen Holtman, Consultant, Swedish Job Center (Arbetsförmedlingen), Skellefteå. Interview date: 27 April 2007, Interview length: 20 minutes.

Mr. Stefan Berg, Nexus Project Manager, Skellefteå. Interview Date: 10 April 2007. Interview Length: 30 minutes.

Mr. Jonas Söderström, SIN Project Consultant, Swedish Job Center (Arbetsförmedlingen), Skellefteå. Interview Date: 20th April 2007. Interview Length: 30 minutes.

Interviews (Private Organisations)

MR. H. Branch manager, Financial Institution, Skellefteå.
Interview Date: 27 April 2007 Interview Length: approximately 30 minutes.

MR. F, Co-Owner, Car Dealership, Skellefteå.
Interview Date: 24th April 2007. Interview Length: approximately 30 minutes.

MR. J. Branch manager, Financial Institution, Skellefteå
Interview Date: 2 May 2007 Interview Length: approximately 30 minutes.

Mr N, Manager, Food Production Company, Skellefteå
Interview Date: 4 May 2007. Interview Length: approximately 25 minutes.
Appendix 1: Interview with MR. H. Branch manager, Financial institution, Skellefteå

Transcribed of an interview with Mr. O. Branch Manager, Financial institution Skellefteå. Interview Date: 27 April 2007 Interview Length: approximately 30 minutes.

Interviewer: Please give details of your company, for example company activity, number of employees.
Interviewee: The Skellefteå office is considered to be one of the largest of our branches. We have 21 employees in this office. Our branch in Skellefteå is among one of the 30 biggest in Sweden out of 457 branches in total. We are operating in a full-range of financial activities across all our branches in Sweden, Norway, Denmark and England. We offer everything that a customer needs in terms of finance as well as insurance.

Interviewer: Have you heard of the ISA or NEXUS and SIN before, and has your company ever had participants from these projects?
Interviewee: No, I haven’t heard of these projects before.

Interviewer: Do you have any foreign-born employees working in your company at the moment?
Interviewee: No, not any that I know of.

Interviewer: What do you think it can be the advantages or disadvantages of employing foreign-born staff?
Interviewee: Advantages that I can think of, will not have any positive influence on the Skellefteå branch. But there is a branch in Malmö that I know of, which has an employee who is foreign-born. This is because there is a large group of customers who come from other countries and they are having problems with the Swedish language. To have an employee who comes from the same country-of-origin obviously would have its advantages because both can speak the same language. Skellefteå has not got a large concentrated group of immigrants nor do we have a large group of immigrants who come from the same origin as customers, so the demand to solve a language problem is not really valid here in Skellefteå. I can not see any disadvantage of having foreign-born nationals or immigrants as employees, just the right person for the right job.

Interviewer: What does this company have as criteria for employing a new employee?
Interviewee: The only criteria we have, is that we are going to choose the best person or right person for the job. It doesn’t matter which country that person comes from. But the right sort of education will have a small advantage, for example Civil Economics. What we are looking for is a person who is good with customers and has an ability to help and advise the customers.

Interviewer: How does this company evaluate qualifications from another country?
Interviewee: That is good question, but I have never had to do it before. So I can’t say much on this matter

Interviewer: Do you have any immigrants who have applied to work here?
**APPENDIX 1**

**Interviewee:** Very, very few. Surprisingly, it has been very few in fact. I have been in charge of this branch for 10 years now; during these 10 years I have only had 4 or 5 applicants with overseas qualifications from a total of 400 to 500. What we will try to do is to go through the same process as a person who has a Swedish education. The problem with overseas qualifications is that one really doesn’t know the composition of the qualification. For example, if I have an applicant with Swedish Civil Economics apply, I would know what a Civil Economics qualification in Sweden comprises and they don’t have to explain to me about what they have studied. If I have a foreign-born applicant with an overseas education that I don’t recognise, they will have to explain to me what they have studied. I must also then, trust that person that what she or he says that they’ve studied is comprehensive and relevant.

**Interviewer:** In Norra Västerbotten an article was published 7th April 2007 and stated that “According to the Swedish Job Centre, there are 1500 immigrants who registered as “open unemployed”, 624 people are foreign-born” From this report if showed that nearly half of these figures are immigrants. Do you have any suggestions in how one can improve the situation?

**Interviewee:** I don’t really know. But from my personal opinion I believe that the best applicants should be offered positions despite gender, age, races, religion or where the person came from. But who is the best applicant? This is a very subjective judgement by the person who conducted the interview. I think it is very sad that we have so many immigrants who are very well educated and they can’t find work. I can’t believe that it would be difficult for them to find a job. I think this could be because of fear from a potential employer. Some employers can think it is a lot of work to do an evaluation of a person from another culture, so they became afraid to do it. So they continue to use the same process that they were accustom to before because they know it is going to work, but it isn’t always the case. One can have a Swedish-born native who one thought was the right person at the time, until he or she started working and then one only discovered afterwards it was completely wrong person. Nevertheless, I believe it is such a pity, when one chooses to employ someone because they feel safer with a person’s culture. I believe that the majority of companies shouldn’t have any problem with employees’ cultural differences, we may have different work ethnics but we can learn so much from each other. Just now with foreign-born who are having difficulties in finding work, I believe that the government organisation should be taking a first step in employing foreign-born.

**Interviewer:** Would you be willing to offer a practise place if you were approached by one of these projects who have a candidate with a degree in economics?

**Interviewee:** This is an interesting question because we have also been approached from schools that are looking for a practise place. It doesn’t matter if a person is Swedish or an immigrant, but to take in a trainee becomes a major burden for a company, because that person needs to be shown what to do. It demands existing resources from our company such as time but that depends on how the organisation is structured. We are a small organisation here with limited resources, so we have some difficulties taking on trainees.

**Interviewer:** If you had an immigrant who applied for the position, would Swedish language proficiency be considered as one of the deciding factors.

**Interviewee:** We are dealing mostly with Swedish customers, so I would have to say yes.
Appendix 2: Interview with MR. F, Co-Owner, Car Dealership, Skellefteå


**Interviwer:** Please give details of your company, for example company activity, number of employees?

**Interviewee:** We are a representative of an American vehicle manufacturer. We are sell cars and fix them. We have 18 employees now and will be 19 employees soon.

**Interviwer:** Have you heard of the ISA or NEXUS and SIN before and has your company ever have participants from these projects?

**Interviewee:** No, I haven’t heard any of these projects before.

**Interviwer:** Do you have any foreign-born employees working in your company at the moment?

**Interviewee:** Yes, at the moment we have one person who is foreign-born. I’m not sure which country he came from but I know he was not born in Sweden.

**Interviwer:** What do you think would be the advantages or disadvantages of having foreign-born employees?

**Interviewee:** The Problem in this instance is language proficiency. We have a lot of communications with Swedish customers and not many from overseas, so that any communication problems must be eliminated. Because we are Swedish, who are born and raised in Sweden, we already have instances where communication can be a problem and cause misunderstandings between each other, so we can not deal with other forms of miscommunication. Therefore, a person must be able to understand the Swedish language 100 percent of the time and that includes speaking, reading and writing.

**Interviwer:** What happened if you were to have a lot of dealings with companies from USA and England that required your company to communicate in their language.

**Interviewee:** In this case, we would employ someone who came from that part of the world. This is because that person can not only speak the language fluently, but the person can also understand the culture and body-language which I think it is very important.

**Interviwer:** What does the company consider as criteria when selecting an employee for new employment?

**Interviewee:** We want someone who can perform a work task efficiently. That person will have to give technical support on a telephone, and that’s why communication is very important.

**Interviwer:** How does the company evaluate the qualification of an immigrant from another country?

**Interviewee:** We do not work with foreign companies so we don’t consider foreign-born applicants. Therefore we are not forced to evaluate their qualifications. It is because we work mostly with Swedish customers, so we would prefer to have Swedish personnel even if they originally came from another country.
Interviewer: In Norra Västerbotten an article was published 7th April 2007 and stated that “According to the Swedish Job Centre, there are 1500 who registered as “open unemployed”, of those 624 people are foreign-born” This report showed that over half of these figures are immigrants. Do you have any suggestions on how one can improve the situation?

Interviewee: They will have to learn to speak Swedish as quickly as possible, even speak Swedish at home and learn as much as possible about Swedish culture.
Appendix 3: Interview with MR. J. Branch manager, Financial institution, Skellefteå

Transcribed from an interview with Mr. T., Branch Manager, Financial institution, Skellefteå. Interview Date: 2 May 2007 Interview Length: approximately 30 minutes.

**Interviewer:** Please give details of your company, for example company activity, number of employees.

**Interviewee:** Our normal business is to offer financial services and advice to our customers. In this office we have 70 employees.

**Interviewer:** Have you heard of the ISA or NEXUS and SIN before and has your company ever had participants from these projects?

**Interviewee:** With ISA, Nexus and SIN, no, I never heard of these projects before.

**Interviewer:** Do you have employees who are foreign-born?

**Interviewee:** We have 3 or 4 employees, most of them came from Finland and one person who came from China and have lived in Sweden for 18 years.

**Interviewer:** What do you think could be the advantages or disadvantages of having foreign-born employees?

**Interviewee:** One advantage of having foreign-born employees would be because we have a large percentage of our customer-base population that are foreign-born, they are obviously amongst our current customers or potential customers. One advantage that I can think of would be that they have the same background and language, and that they have experience that can assist companies who will do or have business abroad. I see that there are many positive points in having immigrants as employees. Disadvantages, in some cases, can be that of Swedish language proficiency. This can be because most have not lived in Sweden for very long. So the problem there is really language proficiency.

**Interviewer:** You have stated earlier that there are 3 or 4 employees who are foreign-born and working for your organisation, do you have any idea how long they have been living in Sweden?

**Interviewee:** I know of someone who works in our organisation as “Handelskammaren”, he is from Iran and has been living here for 18 years. Another problem here with those who came here 10 years ago when the labour market was quite bad and companies would employ only Swedish workers because they felt safer with them. It is even tough for Swedish-born especially young people when the rate of unemployment is about 30 percent.

**Interviewer:** What sort of criteria do companies have for employing a new employee?

**Interviewee:** We have many criteria, and we only recruit applicants who have an academic education. We also consider early experiences; we do lots of tests to find out their selling potential, social competence and degree of education.

**Interviewer:** Does it matter which country the applicants came from?

**Interviewee:** I can’t make comment on that. We haven’t had many applicants who came from an other country. I never have had any applicants for example from Yugoslavia, Slovenia or England, I have never received any application from a foreign-born national.
Interviewer: How would your company evaluate a qualification from another country?
Interviewee: I never really came across any foreign-born education as yet.

Interviewer: In Norra Västerbotten an article was published 7th April 2007 and stated that “According to the Swedish Job Centre, there are 1500 who registered as “open unemployed”, 624 people are foreign-born” This report showed that over half of these figures are immigrants. Do you have any suggestions on how one could improve the situation?
Interviewee: I think practice in the workplace, would give both parties a possibility to get to know one another, give participants a good insight into companies.

Interviewer: Would you offer a practice place if Nexus, SIN or ISA approached your company to place one of their participants here?
Interviewee: It is going to be a very long training program. We have many formal requirements here especially there are many rules and regulations and training before they can talk to customers. Our training period is up to one year.
Appendix 4: Interview with Mr N, Manager, Food Production Company, Skellefteå

Transcribed of an interview with Mr. N. Manager, Food Production Company, Skellefteå. Interview Date: 2 May 2007 Interview Length: approximately 25 minutes.

Interviewer: Please give details of your company, for example company activity, number of employees.
Interviewee: We are working with fish products and we are distributors to restaurants and different retail outlets over the whole of Sweden. We have 12 employees today and they are all very effective workers.

Interviewer: Have you heard of the ISA or NEXUS and SIN project before and has your company ever had participants from these projects?
Interviewee: No

Interviewer: Do you have employees who are foreign-born?
Interviewee: Yes, quite a few here. Today we have four persons, two from Bosnia and two from Thailand. Earlier we had one person from Finland and it has been working out very well.

Interviewer: What do you think it could be an advantage or disadvantage of having foreign-born employees?
Interviewee: Disadvantage.....perhaps having a problem understanding each other because of a language problem. People from different cultures have a different way of understanding or interpreting things. Advantage... from my opinion...with employees from Bosnia and Thailand, they are very good workers ... that they are not “so spoiled” like some of Swedish workers.

Interviewer: What criteria have does the company consider in employing a new employee?
Interviewee: In a factory especially, we would like to employ someone who likes to work with fish. It is very few who have a background in this area and they will have to learn to use the knife and de-boned the fish. No special education is required, just the right person who is suited for the job is what we look for the most. Basically, we are looking for a happy and positive person who is able to work as a team

Interviewer: How does your company evaluate a qualification from another country?
Interviewee: I was never really in the position that I had to evaluate an overseas qualification. So it is difficult for me to answer. But I think that having a good knowledge of Swedish is quite important because the majority of workers here are Swedish.

Interviewer: In Norran Västerbotten an article was published 7th April 2007 that stated that “According to the Swedish job centre, there are 1500 who are registered as “open unemployed”, 624 people are foreign-born” This report showed that over half of these figures are immigrants. Do you have any suggestions on how one could improve the situation?
Interviewee: I don’t believe in a fixed structure. I believe that those who are unemployed must look for a job themselves. Of the four immigrants who work here, none of them came from the Swedish Job Centre. They were introduced to work here by friends or acquaintances.
Interviewer: So do what you think of these three projects, do you think it is going to help them?

Interviewee: No, not in this company. From my personal experience, it has happened too often that a person, who was sent here from the Swedish Job Centre, normally arrived with stooped shoulders and says “I have been sent here by the Swedish Job Centre”. It would project the incorrect attitude for someone who genuinely wants the job. Those who are unemployed can go to different projects without knowing what it is leading to. So it is best that a person looks for a job themselves and presents themselves to a company directly and not from the Swedish Job Centre.
Appendix 5: Interview with Mrs M, Personal Manager, Technical Development Company, Skellefteå

Transcription of an interview with Mrs. M Manager, Personal Manager, Technical Development Company, Skellefteå. Interview Date: 8 May 2007 Interview Length: approximately 45 minutes.

**Interviewer:** Please give details of your company, for example company activity, number of employees.

**Interviewee:** We are a technical company that offers our services around the world. We have, in total, around 800 employees in Sweden and in the Skellefteå branch we have 110 employees. We have an office in Germany, Finland, South America, Australia and South Africa. Mostly, we have various types of engineers who are working with us.

**Interviewer:** Have you heard of the ISA or NEXUS and SIN project before and has your company ever had any participants from these projects?

**Interviewee:** Yes, I have heard of Nexus. They have contacted me and we worked quite closely in taking in someone from that project. But then I don’t know what happened, but I believe she has got a job with the Skellefteå municipality.

**Interviewer:** So it was just her!

**Interviewee:** Yes

**Interviewer:** Do you have any employees who are foreign-born?

**Interviewee:** Yes, we have. We have one from California, USA and one came from Russia. We are not afraid to have a person with a different cultural background and for us it is important that we have the right person who has the right level of competence, and it doesn’t matter which country that person came from. But there were hardly any foreign-born candidates that applied to work with us.

**Interviewer:** Regarding the two foreign-born employees who are working here, what kind of work are they doing?

**Interviewee:** One is working as a programmer, and one is working as a project manager.

**Interviewer:** So do you have any special requirements that they must understand the Swedish language?

**Interviewee:** Even though the English language is our organisation’s language of choice, and we are an international company, but, our customers are not only from overseas but we also have local customers in Sweden. So we require that a person can understand, read and speak Swedish.

**Interviewer:** How well a person must be able to understand Swedish, at a perfect level perhaps!

**Interviewee:** If a person has the right competence, there is also a requirement to understand Swedish but not at a perfect level, as long as one knows what perfect Swedish is! As long as a person can understand Swedish and be able to write a little bit in Swedish. It is important for a person to have the right education and the right kind of experience. We have one overseas employee in our group, one can not say that her Swedish is any good and her English is also a bit doubtful. She has got a job with us anyway because she has a right competence.
Interviewer: What do you think can be an advantage or a disadvantage of having foreign-born employees?
Interviewee: Advantages are that we are an international company, and we work together with people from other cultures, so we can see only a positive aspect from cultural diversity. Our office in Stockholm is made up of a large group from different parts of the world. We have employees from Spain, Iran and Yugoslavia. We can’t see any disadvantages really.

Interviewer: What criteria does your company have employing a new employee?
Interviewee: As we discussed before, we are looking for a person who has the right level of competence, right education and social aptitude, so a person that will be able to fit into our company. That person must have a good knowledge of Swedish as well English.

Interviewer: How does your company evaluate a qualification from another country?
Interviewee: We look for a translated document from Högskola Verket, that would normally tell us what a person has, as an equivalent to a Swedish education. That also depends on what type of education, with an engineer’s qualification it is rather straightforward, but if it is in accounting we might have to consider other criteria in how we look at a person’s qualification.

Interviewer: In Norra Västerbotten an article was published 7th April 2007 and stated that “According to the Swedish Job Centre, there are 1500 who are registered as “open unemployed”, 624 people are foreign-born” This report showed that over half of these figures are immigrants. Do you have any suggestions of how one can improve the situation?
Interviewee: I don’t think that I have had many foreign-born applicants from the Skellefteå area. We have an equal opportunities program that we operate in trying to promote diversity within our organisation. I can think of only one example when I was contacted by the Swedish Job Centre who wanted to place someone who was in one of their programmes to work for us here. The only position that we could offer at the time had a requirement to have some computer experience and I thought the position could be just right for this person. So I contacted the Swedish Job Centre and we both decided that he could start to work with us. He thought it was very interesting at first; he worked as an administrator before so we thought that he would have good experience with computers. In the end he said “No, thank you” because he believed the paid was too low. Still, I think this is the best way for immigrants to come into labour market.

Interviewer: Is your organisation willing to offer a practice place to immigrants from these 3 projects!
Interviewee: Yes if we have a special project that they can do.
Hej

Jag heter Weena Göransson och jag läser civilekonom programmet på Umeå Universitet. Just nu skriver jag C uppsats som handlar om mångfalden på arbetsplatsen med syftet att ta reda på de faktorer som kan förhindra invandrare att komma in på arbetsmarknaden i Skellefteå och jag behöver er hjälp med att komplettera min undersökning.

För tillfälligt finns det tre olika projekt som pågår i Skellefteå kommun: ISA, Nexus, och SIN. Syftet för projekten är att hjälpa invandrare att komma in på arbetsmarknaden. Förutom att undervisa språket till deltagarna försöker projektet även hitta praktikplatser för alla så att de kan vänja sig till svenska arbetsplatser och öka möjligheten att skaffa jobb i framtiden.

Jag undrar om jag kan beställa tid för att intervjuar i detta ämne och för att ta reda på era synpunkter om mångfald inom er organisation. Intervjun tar cirka 30 minuter.

Vänliga hälsningar

Weena Göransson