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Sweden: a Country of Opportunities and Constraints for Migrant Integration

by Veronica Riniolo

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In the midst of the enduring migrant crisis, Sweden's representation of itself as one of the most egalitarian, tolerant and humanitarian countries in the world is being challenged. The riots of May 2013, the rise of the anti-immigration party, and the tightening of border controls depict a more nuanced picture than that usually brushed. The quick evolution of the Swedish context and the recent surge in the number of asylum seekers (163.000 in 2015) deserve specific attention. This paper proposes elements of reflection that question a unified view the countries' capacity to handle migration-related phenomena. It offers an analysis of migrant integration processes in Sweden with specific emphasis on societal structures, migration flows, and integration policies. A first section traces back the main phases of migration flows and integration policies. A second section looks into integration processes with regard to housing and economic inclusion and introduces the challenges faced. I conclude with some remarks in a third section.

1. The evolution of migration flows and integration policies in Sweden

In the last months Sweden has found itself in the international spotlight due to migrant crisis: indeed Sweden has welcomed more asylum seekers than any other European country in relation to its population. More specifically, in 2015 Sweden received 162.877 applications for asylum of which 35.369 unaccompanied minors (see Table 1). A significant share of these asylum applications are expected to be accepted.

These numbers represent a record in the Swedish history, although this Nordic country had already welcomed a great number of refugees in the past as detailed below. In 2015 the first three countries of origin of asylum seekers are Syria (51388), Afghanistan (41564) and Iraq (20857).[1] In the same year the major reasons for immigration to Sweden are family reunification and asylum as shown by Table 2 which offers a snapshot of the foreign population in Sweden, comparing data of 2005 and 2015.

[1] Source: Migrationsverket http://www.migrationsverket.se/English/About-the-Migration-Agency/Facts-and-statistics-/Statistics.html.

Table 1 - Applications for asylum received, 2015

Year-month	Number	of which male	of which female	of which children (unaccompanied minors included)	of which unaccompanied minors *1
2015-01	4.896	3.319	1.577	1.483	543
2015-02	4.040	2.673	1.367	1.328	460
2015-03	4.117	2.732	1.385	1.294	447
2015-04	3.917	2.667	1.250	1.162	445
2015-05	5.376	3.757	1.619	1.950	1.133
2015-06	6.619	4.621	1.998	2.552	1.426
2015-07	8.065	5.712	2.353	3.210	1.880
2015-08	11.746	8.484	3.262	5.134	2.959
2015-09	24.307	17.445	6.862	9.740	4.712
2015-10	39.196	28.677	10.519	17.495	9.339
2015-11	36.726	25.383	11.343	18.155	8.808
2015-12	13.872	9.258	4.614	6.881	3.217
Totalt	162.877	114.728	48.149	70.384	35.369

Source: Migrationsverket **http://www.migrationsverket.se/English/About-the-Migration-Agency/Facts-and-statistics-/Statistics.html**

Migration flows in Sweden deeply changed during the 20th century, on the one hand due to the internal situation of the country, i.e. its economic structure and its evolution, and on the other due to external events occurring all around the world, such as wars or military coups.

Since the end of the 1940s Sweden has gone from being an almost homogenous country to a multicultural one in a relative short period, changing its ethnic composition (Eger 2010; Hale 2012). Indeed it has received a huge amount of migrants who can be classified mainly into three broad classes, i.e. labour migrants, refugees and family reunion migrants as described below.

More specifically, in the evolution of migration flows there are two distinct macro-periods: the first one, until the 1970s, characterized by labour-force migration, at the beginning mostly from neighbour countries such as Finland, and then a second period mainly characterized by refugees and tied migrants from Seventies until nowadays. Table 3 offers a reconstruction of the main phases of migration flows and integration policies in Sweden since the end of the Second World War, considering the country's economic and social structure, main policies and interventions, typology of migration flows and origin country of migrants.

Table 2 - The foreign population in Sweden: 2005 - 2015

Category	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Work	**5985**	**6257**	**9859**	**14513**	**17954**	**16373**	**17877**	**19936**	**19292**	**15872**	**16975**
of which employee	3135	3567	4829	7508	14905	14001	15158	17011	15974	12521	13789
of which researchers	341	377	396	613	933	883	870	1219	1129	1126	1083
of which seasonal workers	496	70	2358	3747	[2)]						
of which trainee/Au-pair	609	592	587	653	650	493	390	456	438	493	467
of which others	1404	1651	1689	1992	1466	996	1459	1250	1751	1732	1636
Study	6837	7331	8920	11186	13487	14188	6836	7092	7559	9267	9410
of which Doctoral studies								811	979	1247	1202
EU/EEA	**18069**	**20461**	**19387**	**19398**	**17606**	**18480**	**23226**	**25501**	**20712**	**7394**	**2791**
Employee	7414	9020	8189	7881	5857	6984	9309	9610	7850	2489	
Self-employed	1257	1144	695	488	418	522	617	511	323	81	
Family reunification	4736	5679	6350	6748	6562	6032	7700	7310	5489	2109	967
Student	3986	3489	2825	2953	3230	3365	3511	5911	4889	955	
Others	676	1129	1328	1328	1539	1577	2089	2159	2161	1760	1824
Family reunification/formation	**22713**	**27291**	**29515**	**33687**	**38332**	**30287**	**32469**	**41156**	**40026**	**42435**	**43414**
Family members	19904	22869	21284	22519	24809	21460	20835	22682	18541	18079	15637
Refugee family members	2004	3799	7691	10665	9273	3166	3037	7897	10673	13100	16251
Work permit family members					3628	5211	8242	9679	9625	9698	10023
Work permit Student members								615	944	1337	1348
Adoption	805	623	540	503	622	450	355	283	243	221	155
Asylum etc.	**8859**	**25096**	**18414**	**11237**	**11265**	**12130**	**12726**	**17405**	**28998**	**35642**	**36645**
Geneva Convention	790	963	1113	1934	1824	2304	2870	4617	7646	11341	13552
Subsidiary protection	1174	3728	10208	5278	6164	6814	6148	9095	17227	20023	18690
Humanitarian reasons	2487	3657	3938	1571	995	860	1345	1328	1378	1685	1588
Quota refugees	1263	1626	1845	2209	1936	1786	1896	1853	2187	1971	1880
Temporary law	2510	14823									
Others	635	299	1310	245	346	366	467	512	560	622	935
Total	**62463**	**86436**	**86095**	**90021**	**98644**	**91458**	**93134**	**111090**	**116587**	**110610**	**109235**

Source: Migrationsverket http://www.migrationsverket.se/English/About-the-Migration-Agency/Facts-and-statistics-/Statistics/Overview-and-time-series.html

Table 3 - The evolution of migration flows and integration policies in Sweden since the end of the Second World War

Period of time	Social and economic events		Policies and regulations	Typology of migration flows	Migrant countries of origin
From 1945 to the first half of 1970s - LIBERAL MIGRATION POLICY -	Rapid economic expansion due to the reconstruction of Sweden's neighbouring countries	1954: common Nordic labour market 1960s: rationalisation in Swedish economy and massive industrial investment to increase international competitiveness and reduce costs	→ Non-restrictive legislation in order to attract foreign labour (the state was not actively involved in the incorporation of migrants: labour migrants were expected to return to their countries at a certain point)	1950s: **skilled labour migrants** which *complemented* the native labour force 1960s: **unskilled or low-skilled migrants** used as a *substitute* for the native workforce	Nordic countries (primarily Finland) Western Germany Greece Yugoslavia Turkey
	Labour shortage	End of 1960s: criticism, especially from trade Unions (LO), against the negative side effects of migrations (preservation of the traditional industrial structure, depressing wages etc.)	→ 1965: Measures regarding education in the Swedish language, general information about Sweden and establishment of migrant offices by LO and SAF → change in admission legislation as of 1968 → future applicants for work and resident permits from non-Nordic countries have to apply before entering the country and arrange for both a job and a place to live	Decrease in the number of labour migrants from non-Nordic countries due to a new rule for entrance	

1970s	MORE RESTRICTIVE MIGRATION POLICY	- Crisis - Structural changes: decreasing industrial sector and increasing service sector demanding higher education and language proficiency	→ 1972: migrants have the right to paid leave of absence by the employer in order to study Swedish for a minimum of 240 hours → 1975: integration policy based on the multicultural principles of "**equality, freedom of choice and partnership**": Right to maintain cultural differences while enjoying the benefits of the welfare society → mid 70s: ethnic associations granted political and economic state support **1976: migrant right to vote in municipal and provincial elections** after three years of registered residency → Codification of 2 categories: ***de facto refugees*** and ***war-rejecters***	Decrease in labour migration, especially from Finland - **family reunification** (liberal family reunification policy) - **refugees** (skilled refugee migration)	Migrants mainly from non-European countries. Refugees from Chile, Poland and Turkey. Decrease in the number of Finnish migrants (due to the increasing demand for labour in Finland and diminishing gap in the standard of living between Finland and Sweden)

Middle of 1980s		→ Reorganization of refugee reception program: Sweden-wide strategy or The whole of Sweden Strategy	**Refugees**	Refugees from Chile, Ethiopia, Iran and Middle Eastern countries
First half 1990s	Deep economic recession	→ More restrictive refugee policy (temporary protection substitutes what formerly would have been the authorization of permanent residence permit)	Huge increase in the number of **asylum seekers**	Asylum seekers from Iraq, former Yugoslavia, Somalia and Eastern Europe
1994-2006 (Socialdemocratic Integrationpolitik)	1994: National Election 1995: Sweden in the EU 2004: EU enlargement	→ **1997**: *Sweden: the future and diversity – from immigration politics to integration politics (Sverige, framtiden och mångfalden – från invandrarpolitik till integration spolitik)*: equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for everyone → **1998**: creation of a new central government, the **Integration Board** (*Integrationsverket*) with the special task to oversee integration efforts throughout Swedish society - the three year waiting period for foreign citizens to vote from EU countries, Norway and Iceland was removed **2001**: Dual citizenship	Large inflow of **labour migrants** (Sweden is one of the few country that did not impose temporary restrictions on labour mobility)	Refugees from Iraq, former Yugoslavia and Eastern Europe Increasing labour migrants from Poland (due to the entry in the EU) and Denmark (locally explained: Malmoe region)

2006 - 2012	2006 and 2010: national election	→ **2007**: closure of the Integration Board → **1 January 2009**: new Anti-Discrimination Act → **1 December 2010**: Integration Policy Reform to speed up the introduction of newly arrived migrants. Swedish Public Employment Service takes coordinating responsibility		
2013 to nowadays	Refugee crisis	→ **2 September 2013**: all Syrian asylum seekers may obtain a permanent residence permit and - in 5 years – they can obtain citizenship. → **January 2016**: internal border controls →**28 April 2016**: the Government propose 1) temporary residence permit, 2) limit the right to family member immigration and 3) tighten maintenance requirements.This act will be in effect for three years	Huge increase in the number of **asylum seekers** and **refugees**	Asylum seekers mainly from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq

As Table 3 shows, from the end of the Second World War to the middle of the 1970s migration flows consisted mainly in labour immigration due to the high demand of foreign workforces in Swedish industries and service sectors. Most of them came from Nordic countries, facilitated by the Nordic labour market established in 1954. Only a few of them were refugees from non-European countries. In this period unskilled or low-skilled labour migrants were helped by a non-restrictive policy: indeed this policy was specifically adopted in order to attract foreigners, to address the needs of an economy which was undergoing a huge expansion especially in the industrial sector (Nekby 2012: 175). Migrants substituted the native labour force, favouring Sweden's attempts toward a reduction of production costs and an increase in competitiveness.

A major change took place at the end of the 1960s: the LO (Swedish Trade Union Confederation) denounced the negative effects of migrants' entrance into the Swedish labour market, such as the difficulty of maintaining the traditional industrial structure or the decrease in the general level of salary due to the presence of migrants. As a consequence of this reaction, integration policies gradually became more restrictive, leaving behind the liberal policies which had characterised Sweden until then. A more restrictive approach was adopted and new rules for the entry of migrants in the country were established. Meanwhile, as a result of the events occurring in the worldwide scenario, the nature of flows slightly changed: refugees, fleeing from their country of origin, started to enter Sweden. In 1973 for example the Chilean president Salvador Allende was killed and the country was taken over by the dictator Pinochet: some Chileans were forced to flee their country and chose Sweden as their haven. Moreover beginning in the 1970s there was also an increase in the number of migrants who came for family reunification as a consequence of the first flows of migrants, and facilitated by a liberal policy at this regard.

The 1970s represent a turning point in the Swedish history, in terms of economic structure, migration flows and integration policies. As seen above, up until then migrants had come mainly from North Europe – especially from Finland – or from East Germany. The 1970s were progressively characterised by an increase in the request of specialised work, particularly connected to the growth of the service sector: thus workers were supposed to know the Swedish language as well as have a good level of education.

In the same period a series of measures were implemented to facilitate migrant integration into Swedish society, such the provision of language courses and offering general information about Swedish society. In 1975 a policy was drawn up based on the

idea of multiculturalism, specifically on the principles of *equality, freedom of choice* and *partnership*.[2]

Along with the aforementioned transformations in the nature of migration flows, the level of integration and its challenges also changed. Starting from the 1970s there was a decrease in the level of economic integration and a deterioration of some phenomena such as residential and spatial segregation regarding migrants and their families. In line with this, since the mid-70s the main aims of Swedish integration policies have been on the one hand to counteract spatial concentration of migrants and on the other hand to promote their economic inclusion in a framework of equality between migrants and natives (Bevelander 2004: 6). It is important to underline that until the 1970s the facility to enter and to work in Sweden, due to liberal migration policy as an answer to the labour shortage, was not accompanied by a corresponding effort toward migrant integration: indeed the goal was mainly to assimilate migrants into the labour market as soon as possible (*ibidem*: 12).

During the 1980s refugee arrivals continued, especially from Chile, Ethiopia, Iran and countries from the Middle East. In the middle of 1980s Sweden reorganized its refugee reception programme,[3] with a reform called 'Sweden-wide Strategy' or 'The Whole of Sweden Strategy'. Two main actors were involved: the Swedish Immigration Board and municipalities. According to this reform, the Swedish Immigration Board was responsible for 1) reception of asylum seekers who at the beginning were placed at clearance centres; 2) transfer of the refugee once a residence permit was obtained; 3) negotiation with municipalities for the settlement of refugees. Municipalities instead had the responsibility for facilitating integration processes in different fields, including housing, language courses, introductory plans. According to some scholars, the reform had several limitations. For example Bevelander states that "this reform never functioned in its original form mainly due to the sharp increase of refugees granted a resident permit in Sweden". Critics denounced the scant attention reserved to refugee labour integration and the creation of a pattern of clientisation of refugees in the social security system. Indeed at the beginning of the reform, refugees in refugee camp were only allowed to attend language and civic coursers. Only later other activities were envisaged.

[2] Equality means that migrants were supposed to enjoy the same social and economic rights as native Swedes. Freedom of choice refers to the possibility for migrants to choose their own cultural affiliation and identity and, finally, partnership refers to the mutual tolerance and solidarity between migrants and Swedish people.

[3] The Swedish refugee policy is based on the UN Geneva Convention of 1951, which Sweden signed in 1954, and established in the Sweden Alien Act in 1989. Today the Swedish Migration Agency is in charge of all asylum application. For more information see http://www.migrationsverket.se/English/Private-individuals.html.

The last twenty-five years, from about 1990, have been characterised by several changes both in migration flows and integration policies adopted by the different governments which have ruled the country. In order to better understand this period, *three phases can be identified*: the first corresponds to the beginning of the 1990s, with the economic crisis and large inflows of refugees coming from the former Yugoslavia. A second phase, from 1994 to 2006, is the period of the social-democratic government and of the creation of the *Integration Board* (*Integrationsverket*), a new central government agency for the promotion of integration. The phase from 2006 to 2014 is the period of the Centre-Right Government and the new Reform of 2010 aimed at speeding up the labour integration of migrants, which has been recognised as one of the biggest problems of migrant integration in Sweden, as explained in two official documents.[4] The last phase corresponds to the migrant crisis that Sweden is facing nowadays.

First phase

The crisis which affected Sweden at the beginning of the 1990s required a reformulation of policies and a general cut in public expenditure. In addition to this, a large influx of refugees arrived from the Balkan area due to the war that broke out in that period and forced many individuals to flee their homes and seek haven in a new country. All this took place in a period with the highest level of unemployment in Sweden since 1930. It is worth noting that Sweden has received, since the Second World War, a huge amount of refugees whose arrival does not correspond to the cyclical demands of labour market, but rather is exclusively linked to civil wars, ethnic conflicts or political repression (Wiesbrock 2011). This is a great challenge for both the labour market and the welfare state in Sweden.

Second phase

In the second phase,[5] the Social-Democratic government, with the act *Sweden, the future and diversity – from immigration policy to integration policy* (1997/98:16), opted for a policy based on *equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for everyone*, irrespective of their ethnic and cultural background. The principles at the basis of this approach, which are detailed in the government document *Swedish Integration Policies for the 21st century,*[6] were *autonomy*, *participation* of migrants, equal rights and opportunities for all. Accordingly and consequently the explicit objectives were mainly three: the first, already

[4] The two documents are: *Government reform to speed up the introduction of new arrivals in Sweden*, Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality, December 2009 and *Swedish integration policy*, Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality, December 2009.

[5] During this phase Sweden, unlike other EU countries, did not opt for a restrictive policy with the entrance in 1995 into the European Union. Indeed it decided not to pose restrictions on the admission rules for labour migrants coming from EU.

[6] Regeringskansliet, Swedish Integration Policies for the 21st century, Regeringskansliet, June 2002.

mentioned, is to ensure same rights, responsibilities and opportunities for all; the second is to pursue a community based on diversity and the third regards a society characterized by mutual respect and tolerance, in which everyone can take an active and responsible part.

In order to reach these goals several measures were adopted, to name but a few: the creation of the *Swedish Integration Board* in 1998, a government agency that promotes and monitors the state of integration; support to municipalities in their introduction programmes and a support also to migrants associations; more stringent legislation in the field of discrimination, with the adoption of several acts concerning measures to counteract ethnic discrimination in working life[7] and in higher education.[8] Moreover in 2000 a national action plan was implemented in order to counteract xenophobia, racism and discrimination in a unified and coordinated manner.[9] Several initiatives were also developed in metropolitan regions in order to combat segregation and exclusion in those marginal areas. With a view to strengthen integration initiatives, more defined responsibilities were assigned to a number of government agencies. In this framework, municipalities were put fully in charge of the introduction of new arrivals, with specific responsibilities for offering housing, language courses, psychological and social support, and general information on Swedish society. All this was possible thanks to funding coming from the Swedish government.

Despite all these efforts, several signals of integration failures or at least limitations were emerging, first in the labour market with a profound gap in employment and unemployment rates between natives and migrants, but also the average "introduction period" in Sweden seemed to have adverse effects on migrants' entrance into the society with a *lock-in effect*. As Wiesbrock states (2011: 59), 'lock-in' refers to the perverse effect of introduction courses which, instead of promoting migrant integration, prevent them from taking part in everyday life, also with the risk of 'clientalising' migrants, who turn into passive subjects of the state rather than the autonomous and self-sufficient individuals sought after by official policy (Eastmond 2011). Another limitation was the great level of differences in the way municipalities used funding coming from the state in the introduction of new arrivals, creating huge discrepancies from one municipality to another.

Third phase

In order to deal with all these limitations, and in particular the problematic delayed entrance of migrants into the labour market, on 1 December 2010 the new reform pro-

[7] Act concerning measures to counteract ethnic discrimination in working life (1999: 30).
[8] Equal treatment of students in higher education (2001: 11).
[9] 2000/2001: 59.

moted by the Centre-Right Government entered into force. This reform, called *Labour Market Introduction of Newly Arrived Migrants – Individual Responsibility with Professional Support* – is the emblem of the Liberal Government (2006-2014). The main aim, as expressed in the two fact sheets produced by the Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality, is to speed up the introduction of newly arrived migrants into the labour market and into society at large. Among the changes, it is worth noting that the Swedish Public Employment Service assumed responsibility for coordinating the introduction activities, which had previously been a task of the municipalities. In order to deal with the great variety of subsidies that had characterised the scenario up to that point, a new benefit, the same for everyone regardless of where one is living, is paid to new arrivals whether or not they take part to the introduction programme. In order to support migrants' introduction, a new actor (*introduction guide*) was also set up to accompany newly arrived migrants. It is still too early to evaluate the effects of the reform and its innovations, such for example the centralisation of introduction activities and the closure of the *Integration Board*, one of the symbols of social-democratic action, in 2007.

Fourth phase

The recent years are characterized by a huge increase in the number of asylum seekers and refugees. In particular in 2015 as mentioned above, more than 160,000 people sought asylum in Sweden – twice as many as in 2014, with a peak during the autumn 2015 (see Table 1). The refugee crisis forced the Swedish Government to adopt new measures to address this challenge.

In 2015 the reception of asylum seekers and family reunification regulations gradually tightened. More specifically, at the end of 2015, the Government announced that Swedish legislation needs to be changed for a limited period. Consequently in the first part of 2016 the Government introduced a temporary residence permit, limited the right to family member immigration and tighten maintenance requirements.[10] This act will be in effect for three years. Moreover at the beginning of 2016 the Government introduced internal border controls that have been recently prolonged.[11]

Moreover in June 2016 the Swedish Government gave three assignments to the Swedish Migration Agency. More specifically, the Government has instructed the Swedish Migration Agency to: 1) arrange permanent measures to reduce the time from asylum application to return or residence permit; 2) to arrange for a temporary detention facili-

[10] The act will enter into force on 20 July 2016. For official and updated information see http://www.government.se/government-policy/migration/.

[11] http://www.government.se/press-releases/2016/06/border-controls-prolonged-until-november/

ty that will cover the estimated need for 100 new detention centre places; 3) to arrange for liaison officers to be stationed at missions abroad.

The Swedish Migration Agency offers a planning scenario of 60.000 asylum seekers in 2016.[12]

2. The level of migrant integration in Sweden

In the light of the framework outlined above, the present section looks at the level of migrant integration in Sweden, on the basis of the existing literature (both Swedish and international) focusing in particular on economic and housing integration. The reasons for the focus on these specific areas are twofold: integration policies in Sweden are constantly characterised by an employment-oriented nature, for example any integration measure such as language courses is aimed at an appropriate introduction into the labour market. From this stems an interest in the actual economic integration of foreigners. The second focus on the level of housing inclusion is due to the fact that housing policies have always been a central pillar of the Swedish welfare state. Nonetheless there have never been policies in this field aimed explicitly at migrants; on the contrary housing policies address all citizens with no attention to the ethnic status, in the name of a universal and equal approach.[13]

2.1 Economic integration of migrants: how a foreign name can influence job inclusion

In Sweden integration policies have always been employment-oriented: even though all the efforts were directed towards the economic integration of foreigners, the employment integration of migrants has worsened during the last decade and the gap in the employment rates between native-born Swedes and immigrants is, alongside the Netherlands, the largest in the OECD (OECD 2016).

Going back to the recent history of Sweden, and taking into consideration employment and income levels, the mid-1970s were a turning point: before then foreign born had slightly higher employment and income levels, and this was particularly true for women migrants who, at that time, participated in the labour force at a higher rate than native women (Nekby 2012: 176). From that moment the income and employment gap between migrants and native Swedish started to increase. For example in 1977, the unemployment rate for foreign citizens was at least double that of Swedish citizens (Bevelander 2004: 16). Another time period in which the situation of migrants, from an economic perspective, continued to worsen was during the 1990s when Sweden was

[12] http://www.migrationsverket.se/English/About-the-Migration-Agency/Facts-and-statistics-.html.

[13] This kind of approach does not seem to facilitate migrants' integration in the housing market, both in terms of spatial segregation and concentration in specific housing typologies (for a more detailed analysis see Riniolo 2013: 101).

affected by a deep economic recession: the unemployment rates of natives and migrants increased quickly, the result was that the gap between natives and migrants became even wider: unemployment rates were three times higher for migrants than Swedish citizens (ibidem). The situation started to improve in 1997, which registered a sharp decline in unemployment rate for both natives and foreign citizens.

The level of migrant economic integration, in terms of employment rate and level of income, is affected and determined by several factors such as time of residence, motivation of migration (there are differences between economic migrants and asylum seekers for example, or between labour migrants and tied movers), level of education and so forth. Nevertheless scholars have pointed out that in Sweden during the last decade another crucial factor has been the increasing discrimination by authorities, employers and employees toward migrants (Bevelander 2004, Nordin 2005). Several studies show how the name – Swedish or foreign – of the applicant plays a significant role in job inclusion (Carlsson & Rooth 2006, Bursell 2011). For example the study on job applications conducted by Carlsson & Rooth highlights that a letter for a job application from an applicant with a foreign-sounding name is less likely to result in an interview than a similar letter from an applicant with a Swedish name (2006). Another factor which may influence the chance to get a job is having a Swedish or a foreign degree. In Sweden differences in the level of education can only partially explain the employment integration of migrants: as Nekby noted, natives and foreign born people have approximately the same proportion of tertiary education but their economic integration is different (2012: 176). Nonetheless it is worth noting that the employment and income gap between native and first generation migrants are higher than that between natives and second generation migrants (ibidem: 182), a sign of improvement in the economic inclusion of the second generation in comparison to the first generation. Another difference regards the level of employment gap and income gap between natives and migrants: the latter – the wage gap – is lower than the former due to the fact that collective agreements and unionisation can deal with this issue (ibidem: 195) and it is smaller among females than males (le Grand & Szulkin, 2002, cited by Nekby 2012: 195).

This huge gap in employment and unemployment rates between migrants and natives, albeit reduced for the second generation, suggests a lack of equal opportunities for migrants, with several mechanisms, such as discrimination, that hinder their entrance into the labour market. It can also be partially explained by the high share of immigrants

who arrived for humanitarian reasons and partially by the existing high employment rates among the native born population, particularly among women (OECD 2016).[14]

It is worth noting that despite several notable efforts and initiatives in this field, such as for example the Reform of 2010, the lack of migrants' integration into the labour market is still a big issue (Bevelander 1999, Lindbom 2001, Joona 2011).

2.2 The spatial and residential segregation of migrants. Housing policies and their limitations

Migrants' spatial and residential segregation in Sweden is one of the main challenges in integration processes, along with the labour market gaps between natives and migrants (Andersson & Bråmå 2004, Andersson 2006, Musterd & Andersson 2006, Andersson et al. 2007, Holmqvist & Bergsten 2009). In particular the recent refugee crisis has worsened the Sweden's housing problems (OECD 2016).

Housing has traditionally been the core element of the Swedish welfare state with its generous policies characterised by major benefits both in terms of general subsidies and income-related benefits (Turned & Whitehead 2002: 201). Sweden housing policies have always had one specific characeristic in common: the absence of any defined target groups, such as vulnerable people or migrants. In order to explain this peculiarity it is useful to keep in mind the distinction made by Donnisson in 1967 (cited by Wiktorin 2006). According to Donnisson, it is generally possible to distinguish between social housing policies, directed to the most needy households, and comprehensive housing policies, which aim at improving housing standard for all the components of the population. Swedish housing policies belong to this last perspective as, since the end of the Second World War, the main goal has been to raise housing standards for all (Wiktorin 2006: 246). As presented in Table 4, several changes have occurred since the 1960s, in terms of priorities, policy interventions and main challenges.

Table 4 - Housing policies in Sweden since the 1960s

Period of time	Main problems and challenges	Housing policies implemented	Measures adopted	Rationale underpinning policies	Strengths and limitations in the implementation of policies
1965-1974	Housing shortage	"Million Homes Programme"	New constructions: 1 million new apartments mainly in multi-family municipal housing estates	Dealing with housing Shortage	Benefits - modern housing - answer to housing shortage Limitations

[14] For a detailed analysis of employment and earnings trajectories of refugee and family reunion immigrants see Bevelander & Pendakur 2014.

					- insufficient aesthetic and social design - unattractive to middle class Swedes
1967		Government bill (Proposition 1967:100): housing as a social right		Centrality of housing for all	
1970s	Homogeneous housing stock and segregation	Social mix policies: social mix according to age, household types and income in all neighbourhoods	Indirect measures: -new construction and renewal - financial subsidies from state - loans and housing grants - tenure conversion (since 1980s) - role of the cooperative housing companies in directing housing construction and housing distribution	1) Achieving social mix without targeting specific groups in order not to discriminate 2) Freedom of choice was considered the highest value by the politicians. 3) Mixed housing structure would facilitate social mix 4) Mixing would equalise housing and social opportunities and not only increase contacts between different social classes; 5) Economic reasons: decreasing the municipal cost for local services	Limitations - Weak character since mix policy was presented as a general policy which each municipality could implement in its own way (no sanctions if municipalities did not implement the policy (Andersson et al 2010, p. 246) - difficult to implement: new construction takes time
Since 1985		Refugee dispersal policy	- decentralisation of the responsibility for refugee reception and integration programmes from the state to the municipality level - municipalities signed annual contracts with the State (number and profile of new refug.)	Avoiding spatial concentration of migrants in already migrant-dense regions, cities and neighbourhoods: redirecting new refugees away from larger urban areas	Limitations 1) refugees did not stay 2) labour market integration failed 3) isolation of refugees due to the disruption of ethnic networks

1991-1994	Economic recession	Area-based urban policy (Decrease in the importance of social mix) Major housing reforms with the new conservative/liberal government	- very low level of new constructions - deregulation of housing market - reduction of subsidies - cutting of housing allowances - closure of the Ministry of Housing - liberalisation of planning regulations	- fear that social mix may favour conflicts rather than peaceful cohabitation - willingness to reduce public expenditure	Benefits - reduction of the public expenditure - directing housing policy more efficiently Limitations - increase of rents and prices (impact on affordability for lower income households) - reduction in the volume of new construction - forcing public housing companies to work more on market terms
Late 1990s	Segregation	Area-based policies	Social restructuring rather than physical.		
1998	Segregation and social polarisation in the wake of the arrival of several hundred thousand refugees	Metropolitan Development Initiative in order to break segregation and to work for equal and comparable living conditions for the inhabitants of the three largest cities	In the three largest city regions (Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmo)	Cost-sharing principle, where the state and the local actors provided a similar number of resources Integrated action to simultaneously address several issues such as education, employment, health, democratic participation and culture. Lack of physical measures	Benefits Progress in employment, educational field and benefit dependency Limitations Levels of segregation were hardly affected by the area-based programme
Beginning of the new century	Segregation	Social mix policy	New construction		

During the 1960s large flows of migrants increased the population of the largest cities, especially of the suburbs: one of the effects was that where migrants moved in, Swedes moved out, thus creating areas with high percentage of foreigners (Bevelander 2004). The first great intervention took place between 1965 and 1974, the so-called *Million Homes Programme*, with the goal of fixing the problem of housing shortage. One million dwellings were built mainly in multi-family municipal housing estates. The Programme offered a solution to housing shortage and was an occasion to build new modern housing. Nonetheless, the apartments, due to an insufficient social and aesthetic design, were unattractive to middle class Swedes, creating the conditions for spatial and residential segregation (*ibidem*).

Later initiatives in the field of housing focused more on counteracting segregation through different measures: *social mix*, starting from 1970, *refugee dispersal policy* starting from the beginning of 1980s and *area-based urban policy* since the 1990s. None of these policies had migrants as a specific target but all of these initiatives aimed at tackling segregation in its different declinations: demographic, socio-economic and ethnic segregation.

In 1970 the Commission of Inquiry (*Boendeutredningen*) provided a new direction for housing policy: the main problems were the homogeneity of the housing stock and the increasing demographic and socio-economic segregation, while ethnic segregation was not seen as a big problem at the time. The new goal was to achieve "a *social mix* according to age, household types and income" in all neighbourhoods. Indeed the underpinning idea was that mixing would equalise housing and social opportunities as well as increase contacts between different social classes (Andersson *et al.* 2010: 245). Social mix policies in Sweden have been weak and difficult to implement and the results envisaged were not achieved (*ibidem*: 248).

Since 1985 in order to avoid further spatial concentration of migrants in already migrant-dense regions, cities and neighbourhoods and to redirect new refugees away from larger urban areas, a new policy, called *Sweden-wide refugee dispersal policy*, was adopted. This intervention aimed at spreading refugees to a number of municipalities, especially those with a favourable local market (Bevelander 2004). This new Programme brought a de-centralisation of the responsibility for refugee reception and integration programmes from the state to the municipality level. In particular, municipalities signed annual contracts with the State (with regard to number and profile of new refugees) in order to establish the number of refugees to be welcomed. Several factors led to the failure of this kind of initiative: first refugees did not stay in the municipality to which they were assigned; second, and very relevantly, labour market integration failed; and finally the isolation of refugees, due to the disruption of ethnic networks, hindered their insertion in the receiving municipality.

Specifically during the conservative/liberal government (1991-1994) there was a great shift in the nature of housing policies and "some would even say housing policy was abolished" (Andersson *et al.* 2010: 244). In this period there was a reduction in the system of rent subsidies, housing allowances were cut, the Ministry of Housing was closed and planning regulations were liberalised (*ibidem*): all of this profoundly changed the nature and content of housing policies in Sweden with a reduction in the public intervention, an increase of rents and prices (impact on affordability for lower income households), a reduction in the volume of new construction and a lower importance give to social mix policies due to the fear that social mix may favour conflicts rather than peaceful cohabitation.

As Bevelander notes (2004: 23), factors such as cultural, social, economic and demographic issues affect spatial segregation. He goes on to state that ethnic segregation is strictly interconnected and mainly due to the socio-economic position of individuals or of an ethnic group; ethnic networks, discrimination by institution and structural conditions; institutional barriers which force ethnic groups into certain and unattractive parts of the cities (*ibidem*). There are still great differences in segregation, and an ethnic hierarchy among migrants: those coming from the Middle East (Turkey and Iran) and Africa are the most segregated; instead people from neighbouring country – such as Finland and Germany – are less segregated (Andersson *et al.* 2010: 242; Bevelander 2004: 21).

While it is hard to identify a specific pattern of segregation, migrants in Sweden live in a condition of spatial and residential segregation and almost all poor neighbourhoods are migrant dense – but not all migrants live in poor neighbourhoods (Andersson *et al.* 2010: 242). Comprehensive housing policies, lacking specific target groups, have not been able to address the specific needs and necessities of migrants, in particular of those coming from outside the EU.

3. Concluding discussion

During the last decades the large influx of migrants has deeply changed the ethnic and cultural composition of Sweden, posing great challenges, especially in terms of the gap in employment rates between natives and foreign-born (Bevelander 2009) and spatial and housing segregation (Murdie & Borgegård 1998, Lundqvist, Abramsson 2008, Riniolo 2013). Moreover the sharp increase of asylum seekers in 2015 worsened the situation: the rise of anti-migrant forces, such as the Sweden Democrats, and the series of arsons attacks to the accommodation centres of refugees show a climate of tensions.

Nonetheless Sweden still stands as one of the most liberal countries in Europe with a clear distinctiveness *in comparison to other EU countries* in the field of integration policies which can be summarised as follow:

1) the guiding principles of integration policies in Sweden are *diversity* and *multiculturalism*, unlike other countries such as Denmark or Netherlands where assimilation is the official aim of integration policies.

2) Moreover Swedish integration policies are *liberal* in terms of family reunification rules[15] and naturalization. Swedish legislation on naturalisation is one of the most liberal in Europe and since 2000 the Swedish government has admitted dual citizenship, thus explicitly recognizing multiple nationalities.

3) In a countertrend to other EU countries, in Sweden integration measures such as language and civic courses are not mandatory, and are not used as a tool to manage and restrict immigration as in other contexts (Carrera & Wiesbrock 2009).

4) Another specificity is the reaction of Sweden to the economic crisis, which again differentiates this country from others. In a comparative study conducted by Collett on migrant integration in Europe during the crisis (2011), she argues that in Sweden, differently from other states, integration policies and approaches are holding fast and responding to the economic crisis with more investment in integration with a particular focus on improving access to the labour market for newly arrived migrants.

To conclude, the greatest challenge ahead is represented by the reception and integration of the large new influx of arrivals that has put the reception of asylum seekers and settlement of refugees under great pressure. Despite this sudden increase, the high-developed integration system and the relatively favourable labour market conditions may sustain the process of asylum seekers' reception and integration (OECD 2016). Sweden is in strong position in the reception of refugees, although more initiatives to facilitate the integration of new arrivals in the labour market and society at large are needed.

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[15] At the beginning of 2016 the Government introduced a temporary act that limits the right to family reunification.

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