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Exploring Gymnasielagen (New law on upper secondary education) from professionals' perspective – A way to integrate or segregate?

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Abstract

Swedish parliament in a bid to curb the large numbers of unaccompanied minors who are denied asylum status – came up with a law which is famously known as *Gymnasielagen*. The aim of the study was to explore how professionals in upper secondary schools setting and social services perceive the implementation of this law and how it contributes to integration of unaccompanied minors in Sweden concerning school environment.

Through semi structured interviews, professionals in contact with unaccompanied minors (UAMs) expressed their perception on the *Gymnasielagen* and its impacts on the lives of UAMs. The advantages and disadvantages of the law together with its contribution to integration of UAMs were investigated. The results showed that the law renewed hope for UAMs and gave them the chance to start life afresh after the long wait for asylum. There were however significant discrepancies in the law that makes it difficult for UAMs. The condition to get permanent employment after school completion does not seem achievable and puts pressure on them. They are forced to choose courses from a limited number of technical courses that would possibly get them permanent employment. Integration was also found not to be optimum because of uncertainty among the UAMs.

Keywords:

Unaccompanied minors, UAM, *Gymnasielagen*, upper secondary education, integration

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1. Introduction

“International forces and events, most dramatically the movements of populations, have changed the makeup of social agency caseloads and affected domestic practice in many countries” (Healy, 2008, p. 4-5.). Sweden has seen a large increase in the number of asylum seekers in the past few years according to Swedish migration agency (2019) and most of these refugees come from Syria and Afghanistan. There has also been influx on the number of unaccompanied minors (UAMs)(ibid.). They have been forced to leave their home country due to various reasons such as poverty, lack of opportunities, fear of serious harm or persecution as well as armed conflicts (Gornik, Sedmak & Sauer, 2018). Relevant social policies and competent social work practice is therefore necessary for Sweden to be able to cope with issues emerging from immigrations when it comes to UAMs.

Swedish parliament introduced *Gymnasielagen* (The new law on upper secondary education) that allowed UAMs whose asylum application had earlier been rejected to apply for residence permits. The law required that applications to be submitted within a period of 3 months (1 July-30 September 2018) and the applicants had to fulfil certain requirements in order to qualify. The main requirement is that the applicants should be enrolled in upper secondary school. According to Swedish Migration Agency, 11 737 applications were received while 5096 were granted residence permits by 26th of December 2018 (“Migrationsverket”, 2019).

The law on upper secondary education gives UAMs a permission to stay in Sweden until they finish their secondary school studies and it further requires that they must get permanent employment within six months after completion of their studies to be able to apply for an extension of residence permits (“Migrationsverket”, 2019). On ordinary situations where refugees are granted residence permits, they are enrolled on integration programs that enable them to adjust to their new environments (“Integration in Sweden”, 2018). UAMs who were granted permits under *Gymnasielagen* are however not covered in these programs. Furthermore, the law states that these groups of refugees are responsible for the arrangement of their own accommodation if they do not have one when they receive positive decision (“Migrationsverket”, 2019). Hence this group of refugees does not get any help anymore and they are responsible of everything in their lives.

From authors’ understanding this law gives the unaccompanied minors permission to stay in Sweden until they finish their secondary school studies. The law further requires that they must get permanent employment within six months after completion of their studies to be able to apply for an extension of residence permits. This research seeks explore *Gymnasielagen* and its impacts on

integration regarding school environment. This is relevant to international social work because international social work deals with diverse issues arising from migrations, social inclusion and integration amongst many others. In addition, unaccompanied minors are a vulnerable group, but they have many strengths that social workers can utilize in their work with this group around the world.

First the pros and cons of *Gymnasielagen* have been explored from professionals' perspective. Second part of the research is about integration and how this law is contributing to it. Both of these points of views and their deeper meanings have been gathered through interviews with professionals working with UAMs and the reason for this was that these professionals have direct contact with the group explored and hence a lot of information would be easily available. Representatives from the municipality level helped in expounding the policies that the municipalities have put in place regarding this group of UAMs.

1.1. Aim and research questions

The aim of the study was to explore how professionals in upper secondary schools setting and social services perceive the implementation of *Gymnasielagen* and how it contributes to integration of UAMs in Sweden concerning school environment.

Research questions:

- 1) What are the advantages and disadvantages of *Gymnasielagen* according to professionals' perspective?
- 2) How does this law contribute to integration of this group of UAMs according to the professionals?

1.2. Essay structure

Chapter one includes important concepts in this study and more detailed information about *Gymnasielagen*. Second chapter is about methodology; how the study was conducted as well as how the authors prepared for it beforehand. In addition, credibility of the essay and ethical considerations as well as limitations will be discussed in second chapter. Third chapter presents previous research and their relation to the topic investigated and fourth chapter continues with theoretical framework that was found relevant to the study. Study results can be seen in chapter five

and their analysis with previous research and theories can be seen in chapter six where the authors also discuss the findings and give suggestions. References and appendices used are at the end of the paper.

1.3. Concepts

1.3.1. Unaccompanied minor (UAM)

Children under 18 years old that do not have their parents or guardian/caregiver with them in Sweden are called unaccompanied minors (Gornik, Sedmak & Sauer, 2018). They have either separated from their parents during the journey or they have left their country alone (ibid.). The term unaccompanied minor is used in this study although under the law on upper secondary education unaccompanied minors are not children anymore but treated more like adult refugees. Unaccompanied minor is used to avoid misunderstandings and to be clear since this group of refugees were unaccompanied and under aged when they arrived to Sweden. UAM is an abbreviation of unaccompanied minor and will be used instead of the longer version in this paper.

1.3.2. The new law on upper secondary education (Gymnasielagen)

UAMs whose asylum application was rejected get to finish their upper secondary education if they meet certain requirements: 1) they had to have applied on 24th November 2015 or earlier or alternatively had come to Sweden before 24th November 2015 but the application was registered later, 2) they were registered as UAMs and were referred to housing in the municipality where they registered, 3) when the decision of deportation/expulsion came they had to be 18 years old or older, 4) they waited for their decision more than 15 months, 5) decision on expulsion or deportation came on 20th July 2016 or after, 6) they are studying, have studied or intending to study at the upper secondary school in Sweden and they must had been in Sweden when they applied within this law (“Migrationsverket”, 2019).

The permit is valid for 13 months and after the UAMs has got the permit his/her case will be closed after one month with the Swedish Migration Agency if the person is living in own accommodation (“Migrationsverket”, 2019). They also lose their eligibility to daily allowance. After completing upper secondary studies UAMs can apply for a six-month residence permit when they are supposed to find a job. If they find a job they can apply for permanent residence permit (ibid.).

The term *Gymnasielagen* will be used in this paper because it is the official term for the law.

1.3.3. Integration

Integration process can be seen as “the sociocultural adaptation to life in a new society” (Pastoor, 2014). It is adapting to a society that has different social, cultural and linguistic skills compared to the ones who trying to integrate (ibid.). According to Beckman (2011), the word integration means that all are treated in the same way and that all have the same rights. In addition, in Sweden integration is seen as immigrants living on the same standard level as other inhabitants (ibid.). Beckman also points out that working is an important part of integration and that “integration without access to work is not possible” (p. 90). Fahlen (2017) talks about the connection between integration and school and says school and education have an important role for integration due to the knowledge students get from there.

In this study the term integration and its use is related to school since the law has not been ongoing for so long and hence it is hard to explore integration on a labor market level. But labor market is mentioned in the definition of integration since it is part of *Gymnasielagen*.

2. Methodology

Qualitative research takes the interpretative perspective and that's why the researchers chose qualitative study methods because they wanted to get a holistic, comprehensive and subjective illustration of the situation for UAMs from the professionals' perspective (Grinnell & Unrau, 2018; Babbie & Rubin, 2011). The data was collected by interviewing schools' study counsellor, school counselors and two social workers from the municipal welfare department that worked with these youth.

2.1. Literature search

Since the study was a qualitative one, different literature was used within the process (Grinnell & Unrau, 2018). The literature was to give the authors understanding of what has been studied before about UAMs concerning especially education and integration as well as how their research themes have been described in previous researches (ibid.). SocINDEX, Scopus and SwePub were used to find relevant articles and books and the authors used many different search terms such as unaccompanied minor, unaccompanied refugee children, unaccompanied asylum seeking children, unaccompanied youth education, upper secondary school, school, Sweden, integration and policy. These terms were used in different sets, for example 'unaccompanied minor, integration, Sweden' as well as 'unaccompanied refugee children, integration, education'. The literature search was done between the time period of 4.3.2019-2.5.2019.

There is not a mass of literature about UAMs and education but the authors anyway found a good amount of literature about it both in Sweden and other European countries. *Gymnasielagen* is new and hence the authors could not find any literature about it but they focus on articles based on UAMs' schooling instead and give some background information about the law from Migration agency's website.

2.2. Sample

The authors used purposive sampling because they wanted to interview right people, in this case those who work with UAMs (Babbie & Rubin, 2011). Knowledge about the community helped

researchers to contact and find research participants and they were contacted by phone and email. The choice of respondents was based on the interaction that these professionals have with the UAMs. The interaction signifies that these professionals are knowledgeable. Patton (2015) refers to such professionals as key knowledgeable and should be willing to share non-partisan information about other cultures. All the participants selected had different forms of interactions to this group of UAMs. Two of the informants were social workers from the municipality social services. Another informant was a study counsellor while the fourth one was a school counsellor. The research was done in one municipality in mid Sweden. Authors' previous and current professional contact with social services was beneficial in getting the right participants because they knew who to contact.

2.3. Data collection

The data was collected by interviewing four professionals with open-ended questions by using an interview guide (Appendix 1.). Language of the interviews was Swedish. Interview guide began with asking the participants their general feelings and knowledge about *Gymnasielagen* and then moved on to answering the first research question as well as the second. All the participants were asked the same questions as in the interview guide but the authors asked follow-up questions when it was needed to get more information of an interesting/important topic (Rubin & Babbie, 2011). Open-ended, unbiased questions ensured that the participants could answer freely based on their own experience.

Three of the interviews were conducted in the participants' offices and the fourth interview was located in the participant's house due to personal reasons. The interviews lasted 30-45 minutes and both authors' digital audio recorders were used with permission from all the participants. Using of these recorders was both explained orally as well as in the consent form; they were used so that the authors could focus on the interview.

After four interviews, when the authors were considering interviewing fifth person, it was decided that four was enough because the answers the authors had gotten from four interviews were similar. The authors did not see a need for fifth interview since it would not have changed the results to one way or another, based on the answers they got from the first four participants.

2.4. Transcribing the interviews

Since the form of data collection was interviewing the data had to be transcribed from oral to a written text. As Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) say, when being in the situation of interviewing you can see the body language as well as hear the tone of voice but when you later transcribe the interview they are not available. The authors are aware of this and its possible consequences for the meanings of answers.

All the recordings went well and there were no technical errors; audios were clear and all the words could be heard from them so it was easy to transcribe. The recordings were transcribed quite directly after the interviews in order to remember the contexts and although the authors first decided to only transcribe the main things focusing on research questions they ended up transcribing most of the material. Both of the authors transcribed the oral statements as they were said but they did not write all the small words or sounds like “mh” that were not relevant.

2.5. Data analysis

While the authors transcribed the interviews, the analysis process started because they started to notice recurring results after listening to the interviews again. The form of analysis was content analysis as “identifying, coding, categorizing, classifying and labeling the primary patterns of the data” (Patton, 2015, p. 553). Patton uses a term *recurrent regularities* which was part of the author’s analysis as well; they aimed to find both differences (external heterogeneity) and similarities (internal homogeneity) and after finding these the authors read the data over and over again in order to make sure that the findings were correct and accurate. Then it was split up into units that the authors found meaningful and important considering the research questions and aim of the research. The researchers were open for alternative information that was not relevant for the research questions but was of other interest. When splitting the data into units and making themes and codes the authors kept looking at previous research together with research questions so that the themes would be in line with them (Robbison, 2017). There was also irrelevant information but it was saved in case it would have been needed later (ibid.).

Both authors did content analysis as described above and when they were ready, they met and compared their findings. The themes that the authors found independently were quite similar so not a lot of changes had to be done; for instance, one of the authors proposed a theme ‘integration also depends on what you are studying’ but it was changed into ‘school as an arena for integration’ since it was more clear. After establishing the themes the authors went deeper and some of the themes

were made as subthemes under bigger themes. One example of this is how ‘motivation’ and ‘integration does not really start’ were first their own themes but were later put under a bigger theme ‘barriers for integration’ because it gave the results more structure.

2.6. Credibility

According to Patton (2015), credibility consists of four parts:

“1) systematic, in-depth fieldwork, -- 2) systematic and conscientious analysis of data, -- 3) credibility of the inquirer -- and 4) readers’ and users’ philosophical belief in the value of qualitative inquiry” (p. 653).

Triangulation refers to the use of multiple perspectives, different data and alternative frameworks (Patton, 2015). One way to increase credibility is to use more than one analyst and there were two researchers doing the research to reduce possible biases and errors that could have appeared if only one researcher was involved (Patton, 2015; Robbison, 2007). Other ways of triangulation are triangulation of data sources and triangulation and in this research two theories were used (ibid.). As Grinnell & Unrau (2018) say, there are many strategies to ensure credibility but it depends on the research itself which strategies are the best. That’s why the researches have done their best to choose strategies that fit the purpose of the study as well as its design and manage their own biases (ibid.).

2.6.1. Reliability

A study is reliable if its findings can be repeated with same methods with different researchers at other times (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). There is no guarantee that other researchers would get similar results since interviews are always of personal nature and there are many things that affect the answers in a specific moment (Babbie & Rubin, 2011). In order to increase reliability the authors checked regularly during the research process if they agree with method, data and findings (Grinnell & Unrau, 2018). In addition, in order to increase reliability the authors collected data from different participants representing different professionals. By doing that they noticed that all of them gave similar answers to the questions.

When it comes to transcribing, two researchers were involved in it and hence it was easy to check if both got relatively similar lengths of texts (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). There was not significant

difference in how the two authors transcribed when it comes to verbal expressions; they both wrote most of what was said in the interviews. The reliability of transcriptions can also be said to be high because the quality of recordings was good and the authors could hear everything very clearly (ibid.).

2.6.2. Validity

Validity in this research means that the research is exploring what it is supposed to explore and it is an important part of the whole research process (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). One part of it is content validity and it is the adequacy of the measuring instrument, in this case the research questions (Grinnell & Unrau, 2018). The authors based the questions on the research questions and the aim in order to stay focused in the interview. However, the authors were prepared to hear alternative information as well. Language used in the questions was simple and the questions were not leading but neutral so that the participant could give the answer he/she felt to give independent from the researchers (ibid.). In addition, during the interviewing the researchers checked many times if they had understood the answers right. The authors also asked the questions as they were written in the interview guide because like Frankfort-Nachmias, Nachmias and DeWaard (2015) say, if you change something during the interview it can change the responses.

2.6.3. Generalization

In this study it is not relevant to think about global generalizability because sample was really small, self-selected and findings were based on the subjective understandings of the research participants (Babbie & Rubin, 2011; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). However, it is more relevant to think about how the knowledge gathered can be utilized in similar situations such as in social work to plan interventions (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). This study can contribute to that with its results.

2.7. Ethical considerations

Ethical problems in an interview research arise particularly because of the complexities of researching private lives and placing accounts in public arena (Birch et al., 2002, as cited in Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.62). The authors did their best to take ethical issues into consideration from the very beginning to the end.

2.7.1. Study settings

When starting contacting research participants the authors explained them the aim of the study and also gave them the informed consent (Appendix 2.). It explained the purpose of the study, how the information will be used and saved as well as where the thesis will be presented. In addition, they were informed who will have access to the information they give, that their participation is voluntary and that they can withdraw from the study at any time (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Their confidentiality was and is protected by not telling their real names or any other private details in any part of the study, not even in the transcriptions (ibid.).

When it comes to transcribing the interviews from Swedish to English it is always possible that the oral statements and their meanings given by the participants might change (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). That's why the authors asked control questions during the interviews to ensure that they have understood the answers right. Furthermore, the recordings and transcripts were erased when they were not needed anymore and before that they were kept only in the hands of the authors (ibid.).

Analysis process was done by the researchers. This itself can be seen biased because it was the authors who decided what to take into consideration and what not. But the authors kept in mind that the things taken into consideration have to be related to the aim of the study as well as research questions.

The results of the study could have been different if UAMs had been interviewed but the authors found it unethical since UAMs are in a difficult situation and the authors did not want to raise any more negative feelings among them.

2.7.2. The role of the researchers

Researchers are aware that their own thoughts and views about this issue exist but they aimed to stay objective by having neutral research questions as well as interview questions. They also had regular discussions about possible methods and ways to ensure objectivity and if they felt that something written was biased they let each other know it. The interview questions and research questions were changed multiple times due to this reason.

Although both of the researchers find the topic investigated really important, they kept a professional distance to the research participants. They did not only report the perspective of their

participants but also connected it to the theory and previous research, in other words remained critical (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Grinnell & Unrau (2018) talk about of how in qualitative studies the researchers cannot put their values aside but they can be aware of them during the whole process. In this research this was done by authors constantly discussing with each other about how they think about the topic chosen and how their opinions possibly could affect the research if they will not be careful.

2.8. Limitations of the study

Authors' first language is not Swedish and that can have affected the interpretations as well as the forming of questions. By this the authors mean that for example when translating the interviews into English something can have changed due to different linguistic contexts.

One limitation of this study is also the lacking existing previous research about *Gymnasielagen* because the authors had no background for it. The authors had also in general difficulties to find previous research concerning the topic but they did their best to find as much previous research as possible. In addition, the research questions formed can have affected the literature search because the authors cannot be sure about how different forming of research questions could have changed the direction of the study.

Using qualitative inquiry as a method has some limitations itself. First of all, the realities the participants describe are based on their own realities and hence the study becomes more subjective than objective (Grinnell & Unrau, 2018). In the analysis the researchers are allowed to make their own interpretations and that also makes the subjectivity weaker. In addition, as Patton (2015) states, there are some principles for analysis but there is not any test or measurement tool to estimate which findings should be paid attention to and which not. Furthermore, there are no pretests available for validity and reliability either (ibid.).

3. Previous research

This chapter is dedicated to earlier research concerning the topic studied. For a better understanding, this section shall focus on two aspects; a) findings about employment and education together with integration and b) policy and law construction. Later, these aspects will be used to analyze and discuss the findings.

3.1. Employment

A research done by Celikaksoy & Wadensjö (2017) found that most of the UAMs lose support when they turn 18 which they considered a very short period for the minors to adapt to the new status. Most of them are then forced to focus on employment instead of education. The quality of employment they settle to is therefore low as they do have neither enough education nor experience (ibid.). This is relevant to this study because the law requires UAMs to finish school and get permanent employment within a period of six months after completion of studies.

3.2. Education and integration

When it comes to the situation at school, another research found that school can contribute to segregation instead of integration due to lack of contact with Swedish students (Wimelius, Eriksson, Isaksson & Ghazinour, 2016). A study from Belgium gave similar results as UAMs described difficulties they had in making contact with Belgian peers inside and outside classes (Mels, Derluyn & Broekaert, 2008). These studies are relevant because *Gymnasielagen* ensures that UAMs will spend a lot of time at school which these studies found not to help with taking contact with natives.

Another research by Thommessen, Corcoran & Todd (2015) managed to identify that UAMs find education as a solace after the rough and traumatic experiences from their home countries and at the same time the journey to Sweden. However, they found out that UAMs need guidance and mentorship in the Swedish Society. Similar study, done with students who are UAMs in Norway, gave similar results since those UAMs felt a need for someone who could provide them care and support as well as help with making right decisions (Pastoor, 2015). Hence the findings of this study showed that teachers and classmates may play a big role in helping refugee students to integrate into Norwegian society and that better cooperation between different institutions and school-based interventions can increase sense of belonging among young refugees (ibid.). When

exploring the pros and cons of *Gymnasielagen* these studies were thought to be useful. Although the study done in Norway focused more on the psychosocial transitions its findings are seen as important for this study because it talks about integration.

3.3. Policy and law construction

When closely looking at policy construction, Allsopp & Chase (2019) managed to identify the dilemma within immigration policies at the EU level where the intended best interest of the child is taken away immediately when the age of 18 is reached. They also elaborated lacking of well-constructed policies surrounding the intentions of immigration institution at the expenses of the future lives of UAMs. Policy and law construction is an important aspect of this research and hence this study will be taken into consideration.

A study done about legislators' perspective about UAMs in Sweden showed that they (legislators) have different views on why UAMs have come to Sweden and how they should be treated (Hedlund & Cederborg, 2015). Legislators think that the migration system Sweden has is rational and logical but at the same time they have ambivalent opinions and that's why they should explain the logic how they have constructed current policies concerning UAMs since it seems to be based on simplified perspectives (ibid.). In addition, the study pointed out that it is on the hands of the politicians to raise understanding among the practitioners and how the practitioners can fulfill politicians' expectations. This study is not directly connected to the study but it gives an interesting point of view.

4. Theoretical framework

This chapter will present social ecological theory and its connection to the research as well as ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Teater, 2014). Since the aim of the study is to explore the impact of *Gymnasielagen* and its contributions towards integration these theories were found to be relevant because they take various environmental factors into consideration and have concepts that will help to analyze the results. The concepts are useful because they help to give deeper meanings to the data that was gathered. In addition, the concepts help to understand the reasons for the situation these UAMs find themselves in at the moment by looking at the data from different perspectives. Furthermore, the possible consequences of *Gymnasielagen* will be easier to discuss on many levels (micro, meso, macro) since these theories take all of the levels into consideration.

4.1. Social ecological theory

According to Wimelius et al. (2017), individuals development can be understood within the context of system relationships that form their environment. The environment can be subdivided to microsystem, mesosystem, macrosystem and exosystem (ibid.). Bronfenbrenner (1979) defines mesosystems as settings where the individual is an active participant; in this study the settings were school and the place where the unaccompanied minor is spending his/her time outside the school. Bronfenbrenner also adds that the development of the individual is shaped by ecological transitions and interconnections between different settings. To investigate these processes this research focused on the school, home/accommodation and relationships (ibid.). Macrosystem is usually studied with this theory as how it is affecting the development of an individual when it comes to class, ethnic and cultural differences and their impact on socialization and its outcomes (ibid.). This paper is focused on the first three systems mentioned above which are central to the integration process of UAMs.

4.2. Ecological theory

Ecological theory focuses on the environment and how it either supports or does not support the human to express his/her potential (Gitterman & Germain, 2008, as cited in Teater, 2014). Culture, values and norms as well as politics, individual self, group/community and culture affect both the physical and social environments and hence everything is interconnected (ibid.). There are many

concepts in this theory that are relevant to the research concerning integration and *Gymnasielagen's* disadvantages and advantages.

4.2.1. Environment fit

Environment fit is the actual fit of individuals or groups' capacities, goals, rights and needs in both the social and physical environments in particular cultural contexts. The fit can be increased, sustained or decreased by adaptations but this also depends on the coping measures and the amount of life stressors one have in his/her life as well as environmental and personal resources (Teater, 2014).

4.2.2. Life stressors

Life stressors are critical life happenings that go beyond one's resources (environmental and personal) and hence it gets difficult to handle them (Teater, 2014). They can cause serious harm and put one into risk (ibid).

4.2.3. Coping measures

Coping measures, according to Teater (2014), are special behaviors that work as a tool to handle life stressors.

4.2.4. Self-direction

Self-direction is the capacity to take control over one's life and take and accept responsibility and action in life together with respect to others life (Teater, 2014). It is threatened and limited by discrimination, oppression and lack of empowerment (ibid.).

5. Results

In results, five themes were found: ‘Uncertainty among UAMs’, ‘policy construction’, ‘renewed hope and opportunity’, ‘barriers for integration’ and ‘school as an arena for integration’. With uncertainty among UAMs is meant the relation between the target set by *Gymnasielagen* and the pressure it puts on UAMs and policy construction deals with the criticism concerning this law as well as limited choices for the UAMs. Renewed hope and opportunity deals with the advantage of *Gymnasielagen* whereas barriers for integration talks about what kind of hinders there are for integration for these youths and school as an arena for integration is about importance of school in integration. Due to ethical reasons the professionals are named as professional 1, 2, 3 and 4 where professional 1 and 2 are social workers from the municipal welfare department, professional 3 is the school counselor while professional 4 is study counselor.

5.1 Uncertainty among UAMs

5.1.1. Stress

Gymnasielagen requires that UAMs finish their upper secondary education and later find a permanent job within six months which, according to all the participants, is too high target. This target makes them living in a state of uncertainty and professional 2 thought that they are in a stressful period:

“I think they live a very stressful life, not as policy makers think “now you can rest and study”.”

All the participants had similar answers concerning the stress and how it increases due to this law. Professional 3 described this group of UAMs as youths “feeling quite bad” and that they have sleeping problems as well as anxiety. Participants had also heard about the stress from non-profit organizations and how too much responsibility is put on the UAMs who maybe do not have the tools or energy to handle the situation in the best way possible. Professional 4 explained further by saying that because many of UAMs feel bad they push things away from themselves and hence miss important information. This professional also pointed out that when UAMs have such stress their ability to get in new information will diminish which will itself affect schooling negatively.

5.1.2. Worrying

“There is still a lot of worrying: what happens now, now I will go 10 months here and then I have to apply for education...”

With this professional 3 meant that because there are so many things happening such as the stress, worrying and mental health problems at the same time with the demands coming from *Gymnasielagen*, UAMs do not have time to settle down in peace and quiet. They have not had the break that is needed to focus on education and that can cause more stress and worrying because if you do not fulfill the conditions of the law you are in risk of going out.

In addition, all the participants mentioned that the law is regularly updated and that the information does not always reach these youths who already are living in uncertainty. Professional 4 took up the responsibility of the professionals in this situation where they have to have the information in order to keep the UAMS updated and how bureaucratic language can increase the barrier to know about the law and its importance in one's life:

“I do not think they have any idea about of which rules there are for them and then we some work around them have to have information. Some (UAMs) are really engaged and know a lot. There are different reasons why not everyone knows about the law: it can be language difficulties that you do not understand, maybe it is really hard language for them, bureaucratic.”

5.1.3. Accommodation and homelessness

Accommodation was also mentioned during all of the four interviews as an uncertainty factor. *Gymnasielagen* demands UAMs to find accommodation on their own and especially professional 1 found accommodation important because it helps UAMs to focus on their studies more. Professional 1 had information that UAMs who got a residence permit via *Gymnasielagen* often stay at their friends' places and had a wondering of where they are staying when they are not at school. It also came up that there are many homeless UAMs which makes the professionals wonder how they will manage their studies in such a situation.

Professional 4 mentioned in the interview that local asylum committee and some other groups help some of the UAMs with accommodation but it's not all who get the help. Even when they get the help it is sometimes up to nine people in one room which is also a hindering factor for studies.

5.2. Policy construction

5.2.1. Criticism

“It feels like untrue promise that was made during the recent election period in Sweden when the politicians had to show that they can take care of UAMs.” (Professional 1)

Participants criticized the law and as seen above professional 1 thought that the law was only made by politicians to show that they can do something for the problem. Especially the part of the law concerning employment was seen as problematic by the participants since even Swedish-born students who do not choose a vocational education do not get a job after upper secondary school which this group of UAMs has to get. On the other hand, professional 1 had a different point of view and said that when thinking of a group that could get a job it can be these youths due to the organizations helping them with contacts. Professional 3 described the complexity of employment like this:

“So put that pressure on these youths: Now you will be here and be grateful. You have to feel good, you cannot be absent; you have to know what you want before you start. And then you must have a job. I think it is mean.”

As can be seen, professional 3 saw the law more as mean than helpful. It was further addressed by the same participant that the date (24th November) set by the law feels unfair because many UAMs came during that time and hence not all the documents are correct because people working with these youth had their hands full of work. Professional 3 had even a case where there was a boy who had come to Sweden before November 24th but that could not be confirmed because he got an appointment to the Migration agency one month after he had arrived to Sweden.

“It feels like we are doing the right thing but we actually could be doing more harm because no one has thought through the whole process.” (Professional 3)

5.2.2. Limited choices

Professional 3 continued more of this by stating that because *Gymnasielagen* makes the UAMs only focusing on getting permanent jobs, their stress and frustrations have to be put aside. When it comes to choosing the right education to ensure a job in the future, professional 4 explained that this law makes UAMs' occupation and study choices limited since they have to look at the labor market and base their choices on them. According to professional 4, this group of UAMs does not think of what they want or dream of but their focus is on staying in Sweden and choosing the right education to ensure job in the future.

Limited choices put some pressure on the professionals as well because they have to gather all information available in order to help the UAMs in the best way possible. Professional 4 told the authors about a student who had already chosen to study civic before he got his residence permit, but after professional 4 heard about his residence permit he/she as a professional felt the need to intervene:

“Because if he studies civics he does not get a professional title. So I have to talk about it with him and it can happen that I narrow down his study choices but if I do not do it, after studying three years he does not maybe get a job. It does not always feel fun to have this responsibility to say such things but you work with them and you care a lot about them.”

To give some examples of what was seen as a “good choice” and which “bad”, professional 1 mentioned that these UAMs should choose a practical education such as plumbing or nursing. Professional 4 also told in the interview that most of these UAMs choose precisely a practical education for the reason that they need to look at the labor market.

5.2.3. Ethical dilemma among professionals concerning information available

“The more I got to meet the teenagers and listened to their experiences, the more I got a negative impression about the law.” (Professional 1)

Things mentioned above in other themes such as stress, worrying, anxiety and high demands are a reason why all the professionals found the law being a negative factor in the lives of UAMs. Like mentioned earlier, their view is that the target is too high to achieve and professional 2 mentioned in the interview that the more they know about the law the more complicated it gets. All agreed on that the life of these UAMs is hard but that professionals do their best to help them.

Professional 1 and 2 said that they know the law well based on what they need to know but professional 3 had difficulties in understanding specific parts and especially how the policymakers had thought. Professional 3 had been on an information meeting and the experience had been good but there were still difficulties in defining of what to tell to the students. A colleague to professional 3 had mailed more questions to the lecturer of that meeting but never got a response. Professional 4 had similar experiences:

“I have got information. I think I know the law quite well but the latest information or some of the information meetings I was in; the law was so new so you did not really know what was happening. So the questions we asked could not be answered.”

Professional 4 told the authors that in the beginning they were told which schools are included in the law but later it changed. The word used of the law by professional 4 was ‘fuzzy’ and professional 4 explained that he/she had looked information by him/herself and got information from different sources.

5.3. Renewed hope and opportunity

All the participants describe the law as a factor that has renewed hope and gave opportunity to all UAMs. Most of the UAMs had waited quite a long for decisions on asylum and others were already facing the risk of being returned to their home countries.

“It feels like the law is really good that it gives UAMs a chance”. (Professional 1)

Professional 2 thinks that the law is a good thing since those who got permission to stay can now breathe and professional 3 gave a similar answer by describing how it is good that something is done so that these UAMs are not sent away. It is seen as a relieve and a chance for a new beginning. Professional 4 states that “there is hope for change for the better of these youths”

In addition, professional 4 also told about how the schools results and presence at school have improved after *Gymnasielagen* but it can be because they have to send their attendance report to immigration board.

5.4. Barriers for integration

5.4.1. Motivation

Participants describe the motivation to integrate as a dilemma that this group of UAMs encounters. They expressed a similar worry concerning integration and UAMs' energy level since if they are not feeling well they might not have the motivation to integrate into Swedish society. Some of them have the motivation as it may lead to job opportunity and consequently an extension of residence permit. Professional 4 describes them as ambitious in school.

On the other hand, Professional 1 elaborated that the UAMs may be lacking motivation because of uncertainty:

“How much do you dare to invest if you risk losing everything?”

Professional 2 told this group of UAMs is treated differently; it could be making them a bit conserved as they are not sure if they will be remaining in Sweden. In addition, these UAMs, according to this professional, feel disappointed over how they have been treated since others have got their residence permits much earlier and hence got different kind of assistance. This can do that some maybe do not even want to integrate in a same way. This professional continued by saying that in a way this group of UAMs are treated differently and even excluded, which refers to the conditions of the law mentioned above. Professional 3 elaborated this perspective more by saying that:

“If you get disappointed x times so why should one believe in this? --- It is better than to be sent out but for integration, you live in your own bubble.”

5.4.2. Integration does not really start

Due to factors presented above about *Gymnasielagen* all the professional think that because UAMs live an uncertain life at the moment, the integration cannot really start. Professional 3 referred to the past time by saying that there is no difference on how their lives was then and now, because they have been on the way out all the time and still it is not sure what will happen and it happens a lot of things all the time.

“They have not been able to land and think: “Okay, I will live here, now I will be here, now I will build my life further.” They have just thought: “Okay, one week more, one week more, or one day”.

And then comes new messages from the migration agency and someone comes and has heard something that grows hope.” (Professional 3)

Professional 1 said that these youths do not know about the future since their residence permit is not permanent, but if it was permanent they could take a different way:

““Okay, I will be here, I will live here, now I will explore this place and learn”, they can focus on it.”

Professional 2 mentioned about similar thing since these youths who got a residence permit via *Gymnasielagen* are in a different situation where they have to worry a lot and hence this affects how they work with their integration and how they integrate. This professional said that also these youths should get same support from social services as others since they are basically same youths.

5.5. School as an arena for integration

All participants describe school as an important aspect in the integration process. Most of the UAMs at this point are in language introduction courses which do not help with the integration but it will enable them to join the national program later. As described by professional 4, the language introduction course is meant for just foreigners and in that case, the students do not get to mingle with the Swedish born students. Students who have joined the national program are said to be seen hanging out and socializing with Swedish born students.

Professional 4 further reiterated that

“To be able to get jobs and work or go to a national program where they study with other Swedes – that is when integration is happening. --- I know some who started with language introduction and they are now within the national programs and I meet them in corridors socializing with Swedes.”

This implied that the process of integration in school context has a slow onset among the UAMS but develops gradually with time.

5.6. Summary of the results

To summarize the findings concerning the first research question about disadvantages and advantages of *Gymnasielagen* what the authors found was that it increases the stress and worrying among UAMs due to high demands and that they already had those problems before the law. In

addition, because the law does not help this group of UAMs with accommodation, many have become homeless and are looking for accommodation which itself makes problems mentioned above bigger. There was also criticism from professional's side about the settings of the law as well as the law making UAMs' choices limited. The authors understood this as if they were referring to the lack of best interest of these UAMs. In addition, the authors also found an ethical dilemma among the professionals as they seem to struggle to follow the updates of the law and use a lot of their own energy to help this group of UAMs as much as they can.

The impacts of *Gymnasielagen* on integration are also evident according to the finding although the participants stated that this law does not directly impact on integration. It was evident that the school played an important role in integration of UAMs. The school acts as a basis for language learning. There was however concerns that the language introduction class is composed of immigrants from nearly the same countries, an aspect which limited the integration process. A better integration pace is achieved when the UAMs join the national program where they can intermingle with Swedish natives.

The results also showed that UAMs are less motivated to integrate because of uncertainty that faces them ahead. The condition to get a permanent job is a highly set demand that makes them uncertain if they will be able to achieve. On the other hand, some of them are really motivated to work towards attaining this target since they had been waiting for long to get residence permits.

A renewed hope for change and better opportunities was also evident. Because of the law, the UAMs can now breathe and focus on something better. The anxiety of waiting for residence permits in uncertainty is replaced by hope for a better future.

6. Analysis and discussion

As stated earlier, the method chosen sought to analyze the perceptions of professionals in contact with UAMs by interviewing them. Choosing and consistently implementing the chosen methods of data collection, result analysis and discussion was important because it assured the focus on objectivity. The themes created under results shall be analyzed and discussed in a manner that answers the two main research questions in this research. The last part of the discussion forms the conclusion and the authors have given their own suggestions for the topic studied.

6.1. Introduction to analysis and discussion related to previous research and theories

The aim of this study was to explore how the implementation of *Gymnasielagen* is perceived by professionals and how it contributes to integration. The main results of this study concerning the aim were that UAMs are quite lonely and stressed due to *Gymnasielagen* not helping them and that the role of the school is two-sided, both positive and negative. *Gymnasielagen* also affects the professionals and there is confusion around what to do and how to interpret the law. When it comes to integration, professionals did not see that *Gymnasielagen* contributes to it but it was clear that school plays a big role in the integration of UAMs and that there are barriers for integration. Next sections will focus on the analysis and how results can be understood when compared and discussed in relation to previous research and the two theories chosen. The research questions will be analyzed individually in previous research as well as under ecological theory in order to be clear. Both research questions are together under social ecological theory because the authors find the theory connecting both research questions into an understandable whole.

6.2. Previous research

Research question 1: What are the disadvantages and advantages of Gymnasielagen?

Because *Gymnasielagen*, like it has come up earlier in this thesis, demands UAMs to be independent and take care of everything in their lives such as accommodation, they are quite alone. This is in line with the previous research which found that after turning 18 UAMs lose all support (Celikaksoy & Wadensjö, 2017). On the other hand, as it came up during the interviews, there are many voluntary organizations that help this group of UAMs and also professionals working with

UAMs are putting a lot of effort to help them as good as possible. The same research from Celikaksoy & Wadensjö (2017) talked also about employment and how UAMs (not within *Gymnasielagen*) are forced to focus on employment in order to fix their lives and that the employment is usually not good quality. This point of view makes the findings of this research interesting, because now those UAMs who got a residence permit via this law are forced to focus on education. This, if compared to the research from Celikaksoy & Wadensjö (2017), is an advantage of *Gymnasielagen* because in the best case when these UAMs finish their education they get a good quality job. So even if they are “alone” now, future might look bright for them. But the question is, how long they can postpone their stress without damage or has the damage already happened?

Because the interviews were conducted with professionals, the authors cannot know how these UAMs find the law. But previous research the authors found shows that UAMs find school comforting after their traumatic experiences (Thomessen, Corcoran & Todd, 2015). Authors’ understanding is that *Gymnasielagen* does not give comfort to this group of UAMs because they live in constant stress with the demands and there is a constant fear of something going wrong and being sent out. Furthermore, if they cannot choose the education they want, it can diminish the meaning of school as a comfortable place and school can become a source of more anxiety instead. Hence this gives the understanding that one disadvantage of *Gymnasielagen* is that it changes the meaning of school for these youths and transforms it into a place with full of demands instead of something positive. On the other hand, concerning the theme renewed hope and opportunity in this study, school gives some kind of comfort for these youths since they have now got some extended time to stay in Sweden and hence can breathe a little bit. But this, like everything within this law, depends on the level of well-being UAMs have right now. The authors think that this is better than nothing but in order to have a deeper analysis concerning this aspect of the law the thoughts of UAMs themselves is needed.

Like it has become clear from the results, there are many organizations helping UAMs as well as the school staff which the authors see as a positive thing since previous research has shown that UAMs have a need of getting help to make right decisions (Pastoor, 2015). But there is a dilemma anyway, because the professionals working with this group of UAMs are afraid of doing wrong or more harm so the term ‘right decision’ is hard to define in this context since the professionals do not exactly know in what direction *Gymnasielagen* is going with all the updates.

Although the authors did not ask the professionals about policy or law construction, it was clearly present in the answers as could be seen in the results section. It seems like the professionals are confused and even angry on how the law has been made and they question the purpose of the law.

They even said that they have difficulties to understand how the policy makers have thought and this dilemma has been present in previous research as well. Policy makers in Sweden have had different opinions on UAMs and how they should be treated (Hedlund & Cederborg, 2015). This, according to previous research, means that policies are constructed based on simplified perspectives and hence the logic is not clear. The authors agree that the logic is not clear and the perspectives are simplified, but when it comes to *Gymnasielagen*, they think based on their hypothesis as well as comments from the professionals that the policymakers did not have enough information, knowledge or competence to handle the situation and hence the law is how it is now. That's why a disadvantage of *Gymnasielagen* can be the law itself because of the reasons presented in this section.

If thinking even further these results reflect a phenomenon that is happening even on EU level where best interest of a child is taken away when age of 18 is reached (Allsopp & Chase, 2019). There are many aspects in *Gymnasielagen* which neglect the best interest of the UAMs such as; they already had many mental health problems such as stress and anxiety and this law increases them, it makes them more or less temporary homeless and forces UAMs to choose an education they might not be interested in. Lack of best interest of the child is probably the reason why there are so many disadvantages of this law because if the best interest of these UAMs had been the priority they would not have been put into such a stressful situation.

Research question 2: Law's contribution to integration.

School was seen as an important aspect of integration in the interviews and it is also present in the previous research. Right now this group of UAMs has lack of contact with Swedish students due to them still going to language introduction courses in the upper secondary education. Previous research has found that lack of contact with native students is a segregating factor and this is the case with this group of UAMs as well (Wimelius, Eriksson, Isaksson & Ghazinour, 2016). On the other hand, this is a segregating factor at the moment because if/when they are done with their language introduction, then they can join the national program and start meeting Swedish students so in the future the role of school can transform into a more positive one when it comes to integration. In Belgium the UAMs have expressed difficulties in making contact with native students but as it came up from the interviews in this study the professionals have seen this group of UAMs socializing with Swedish students (Mels, Derluyn & Broekaert, 2008). This can be seen as a positive factor for the future of this group of UAMs concerning integration since if they get into

contact with Swedish students, it will help them to come into Swedish society on a more micro level.

Teachers and classmates may play a big role concerning integration of UAMs as studied in Norway (Pastoor, 2015). It is clear that professionals help UAMs a lot and try to ensure their stay in Sweden, but it should not be the responsibility of one profession to integrate this group of UAMs. In order to learn about Swedish culture, values and get Swedish friends this group of UAMs need to be in a class with Swedish students and although it can come later in the national program, the authors think that it would be important to happen as soon as possible. In this study it was clear that many organizations help these UAMs and the authors think that their role should not be underestimated since they can help UAMs with accommodation, work and introducing Swedish culture. Like it has become clear, *Gymnasielagen* has very strict conditions and hence they are the biggest reason together with the well-being of these UAMs why integration becomes involuntarily postponed.

6.3. Theories

6.3.1. Social ecological theory

When thinking about this group of UAMs and the impact of *Gymnasielagen* on their development from the perspective of social ecological theory, some advantages can be found. When it comes to microsystem, these UAMs have people around them willing to help and hence this can be a positive factor concerning their development because relationships play an important role in everyone's life by giving support and security.

On the mesosystem level the impact of the law can be seen to be both a disadvantage and advantage because the law ensures that UAMs will spend a lot of time at school and hence they become active participants there (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). As it came clear many of these UAMs have got better school results after getting the residence permit via *Gymnasielagen* education and also the presence at school has been better which together can boost the self-confidence of these UAMs. On the other hand, the authors did not get too much information about what the UAMs are doing outside school nor did the professionals know it, but homelessness was seen as a problem which is a negative factor in the lives of these UAMs because it gives them extra stress and that way can hinder their whole potential and development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Hence these two settings are interconnected because if one has a good place to live it will be easier to manage the school but if

the situation is not like that, their life becomes more challenging and makes the risk of deportation bigger.

Furthermore, when thinking about integration, there are both negative and positive factors on the micro and meso level. Since these UAMs have some kind of network the authors see its impact on integration significant. Without these networks this group of UAMs would be all alone and the process of integration would be much more difficult. When it comes to school, it became clear from the interviews that right now the UAMs have not so much contact with Swedish students and this can be a hinder for integration. Since these youths are spending a lot of time at school, it would be important for them to get in touch with Swedish students as soon as possible in order to start the integration process.

Integration on the macro level is a bit more complex situation because based on the results of the study, this group of UAMs needs more contact with Swedish students in order to explore cultural as well as ethnic differences (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). By doing this they will be able to find their way to Swedish society because according to this theory ethnic and cultural differences impact on socialization and its outcomes (ibid.). They are still in their own bubble which is not their fault since the demands of *Gymnasielagen* go beyond their resources.

If to find something positive between the relation of this law and integration the authors think, based on the results, that without this law these UAMs would not get so much help they are now getting. So thanks to this law professionals and voluntary organizations are doing their all to ensure that UAMs get a job and residence permit in the future.

6.3.2. Ecological theory

Research question 1: What are the disadvantages and advantages of Gymnasielagen?

Ecological theory talks a lot about human potential and how environment plays a big role in it (Teater, 2014). When exploring the disadvantages and advantages of *Gymnasielagen* the concepts will be used to clarify the analysis.

UAMs had already *life stressors* such as long waiting times and mental health problems before *Gymnasielagen* and now they have them even more because their future is still not clear (Teater, 2014). The law itself is a life stressor for them because they have not had the time to get used to with the law, get information about it and its demands are really high. On the other hand, the advantage of this law concerning life stressors is that now this group of UAMs has some extended

time to stay in Sweden and it is anyway better option to stay in Sweden under these conditions than to be sent out of the country.

When the authors in the last section compared the results to previous research they came to the conclusion that the best interest of the child is missing and that the professionals are not satisfied with the policy construction. There is a concept in ecological theory called *self-direction* which is about taking control over one's own life and taking responsibility but when the authors explored *Gymnasielagen*, they noticed that UAMs are forced to be self-directive but in a negative way (Teater, 2014). For instance, they have to know what to study and base their choices on the expectations of policy makers, not their own. The authors think that concerning the well-being of this group of UAMs they do not have the capacity to take overall control of their life since they are controlled by the law and living a life filled with demands. Hence one disadvantage of *Gymnasielagen*, if analyzed with ecological theory, is that it slows down the process of being independent and building own unique future but instead makes UAMs dependent on others.

It did not come up during the research how UAMs deal with this situation since they were not participating, but professionals mentioned that their focus is on staying Sweden. This can be seen as a form of resilience, as a *coping measure* (Teater, 2014). But if contrasting their resilience to life stressors it seems that they have a heavy back to carry. However, the authors think that even if there are a lot of disadvantages of *Gymnasielagen*, resilience can help this group of UAMs further.

To conclude everything mentioned above, the environment the UAMs find themselves in at the moment is not answering their physical or social needs (Teater, 2014). These UAMs have a lot of life stressors and less coping strategies (despite resilience) which were not taken into consideration on a policy level. Luckily, they have people around them willing to help so they have some resources available which increases the *environmental fit* little bit (ibid.).

Research question 2: Law's contribution to integration.

Integration and the disadvantages and advantages of *Gymnasielagen* are strongly interconnected as the authors understand because like mentioned several times in this paper, the conditions set by this law make this group of UAMs to focus only on achieving the targets set and put integration aside. This perspective is now analyzed more in deep.

There would be a lot of factors to help with the integration of these youths such as the voluntary organizations but the law itself does not support the integration of these minors. Politics is

mentioned as one of the factors affecting one's environment and in this study *Gymnasielagen* is a remarkable factor since it puts UAMs' attention on one goal, which is to finish studies and get a permanent job (Teater, 2014). Of course individuals have their own responsibility in their society but taking into consideration the stressful situation these UAMs find themselves in right now, one can understand why not much effort is put on integration. If looking at the disadvantages of *Gymnasielagen*, such as stress, worrying, homelessness and limited choices might be the reason why the environment and individual self of these UAMs are not prioritizing or caring about integration.

There is a need for integration of these UAMs because they have been in nobody's land as one of the participants mentioned. They are still in process of finding their place in Swedish society and so far the *environment fit* is not helping them with this (Teater, 2014). In order to increase the environment fit when it comes to the integration of this group of UAMs their *life stressors* (which were mental health problems and the law itself with its demands) need to be decreased (ibid.). If their mental health and coping does not improve it gets difficult for them to fulfill the demands and even if they want to fulfill them, there will be no time or energy to think about integration. The authors, like the participants, see capacity in these youths since they have expressed their main goal being staying in Sweden to professionals. This capacity should be built further because right now the only way to cope for these youths is to try diminishing their feelings and fulfilling the demands.

If these UAMs could take more control over their own life it would help the integration process. Right now, they cannot be *self-directive* because they have to choose education based on the requirements of the law and not their own dreams which can be a disempowering factor in their live (Teater, 2014). What this has to do with integration is that if one does not feel that he/she has the control of his/her own life it can create negative feelings towards the society one lives in and make the person to seek a revenge (more or less consciously) by not putting effort to integrate in the future when they have fulfilled the demands of the law.

6.4. Conclusion and suggestions

The discrepancies that *Gymnasielagen* came along with demanding impacts on the lives of UAMs are clear. This phenomenon is in harmony of previous research where UAMs are forced to play adult roles as soon as they turn 18. The transition to adulthood and full responsibility is thus seen to be lacking in this group of UAMs. The dilemma between education and job is as observable to be a factor among UAMs. Evidentially, they cannot choose programs that will lead them directly to

university studies but instead they are forced to do technical programs that will lead them to employment. The findings however contradicted with previous research in the fact that education played a different role in the lives of UAMs portrayed in previous research and in this research. Education has previously not been a focus after acquisition of residence permits as it is in the case of UAMs who got permits via the law. Stress and anxiety became more connected to UAMs who got permits via the law as compared to what it has been on other cases where school had been a solace for them. The nature of future lives of these teenagers is a phenomenon that the authors are interested to explore in regard to school completion and job finding.

It is evident that a feeling of sigh is felt among the teenagers after a long period of anxiety. This is however short-lived by an array of demands in the law which consequently lays the basis for stress and anxiety. The authors think that it would be important to study further the impacts of the law on mental health and how the UAMs could be supported with their problems.

Policy and law construction, an aspect that should be clear to the professionals working with UAMs, proved otherwise. The professionals feel distanced from the law and this raises questions on who was consulted before and after the inception of the law. The few trainings that the professionals get, do not seem enough since the professionals remained with a lot to ask and very little to transfer to the UAMs. More detailed trainings with enough information for the professionals and consequently the teenagers are advised in order to ensure a full understanding of the law. A feedback channel from the UAMs and professionals to the policy makers should also be developed to ensure that the discrepancies within the law are communicated.

The complacency associated with *Gymnasielagen* is that the initial best interest of the child is easily replaced by reduced choices in the education of the UAMs and the struggle for survival as seen among the homeless UAMs. The same poses questions to the policy makers and calls for a continuation of “best interest of the child” even after the granting of residence permits.

The school being an important tool towards integration should be encouraged as it forms the foundation of language learning. In regard to *Gymnasielagen*, school for UAMs may have a bit of a different meaning. For this group of UAMs, it is a condition they must fulfil to be able to get a job and get residence permits at the collapse of 6 months after education. It was also seen as having a different meaning during the language learning period and another meaning during the national program studies. The meaning it carries during the first phase which is language learning phase portrays an image of rather segregation than inclusion. A different approach of language learning should be included in the program that enables UAMs to intermingle with native Swedes to feel included in the society as soon as they join school. The role of individuals and non-profit

organizations has been seen to be of great significance in the lives of UAMs and should therefore be exploited to achieve optimum results.

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Interview questions:

1. How would you describe your thoughts/feelings (if you had to) when you heard that migrat upper secondary education was about to become a law? *Hur skulle du beskriva de känslor och tankar du hade (om du hade) när du hörde att gymnasielagen skulle bli en lag?*
2. How well do you know this law? *Hur väl känner du till denna lag?*
3. How do you see the impact of this law to unaccompanied minors and their lives? *Hur ser du effekterna av denna lag till ensamkommande barn och deras liv?*
4. How would you describe this law concerning its advantages and disadvantages? *Hur skulle du beskriva gymnasielagen angående dess för-och nackdelar?*
5. What does integration mean to you when think about this group of unaccompanied minors? *Vad betyder integration för dig när du tänker på denna grupp av ensamkommande barn?*
6. How do you think this law is contributing to integration of unaccompanied minors? *Hur tänker du att denna lag medverkar till integration av ensamkommande barn?*
7. Secondary school education is important pillar of the law, how would you describe students who got residence permits through this law?(Attendance, participation, performance etc) *Gymnasi utbildning är en viktig del av denna lag, hur skulle du beskriva de studenter som fick uppehållstillstånd via gymnasielagen?*
8. How do you think the consequence of secondary school education shall be for this group of unaccompanied manors in regards to job finding? *Hur tänker du att konsekvens av gymnasie utbildning borde vara för denna grupp av ensamkommande barn när det gäller att hitta jobb osv?*
9. According to your past experiences, how easy/hard is it for secondary school graduates to get permanent jobs immediately after secondary school studies? *Enligt dina tidigare erfarenheter, hur lätt/svår är det för elever som har precis tagit student att få fast anställning?*

Informerat samtycke

Denna studie genomförs av Minna Buller och Jamine Rono som studerar på kandidatprogrammet i internationellt socialt arbete på Högskolan i Gävle. Studien är ett examensarbete som görs under en halv termin och rapporteras i form av en uppsats. Studiens syfte är att undersöka professionells uppfattning om den nya gymnasielagen och framförallt om lagens bidrag till integrering av ensamkommande barn.

Studien genomförs som en intervjustudie och vi söker därför professionella i gymnasieskola verksamhet samt andra liknande yrkesverksamma som vill bli intervjuade om lagen.

Intervjun tar ungefär 45-60 minuter att genomföra och frågorna handlar om studien och dess syfte, till exempel gymnasielagen och integration.

Det är helt frivilligt att delta i studien och du som deltagare kan när som helst avbryta ditt deltagande utan att du behöver uppge någon anledning till det. Du har också rätt att avstå svara på frågor du av någon anledning inte kan eller vill svara på.

För att vi inte ska missa något så kommer ljudet från intervjuerna att spelas in. Inspelningarna kommer att användas för analys som i sin tur utgör resultatet i studien. I den färdiga uppsatsen kommer alla uppgifter om deltagare att vara avidentifierade så ingen kan veta var just du har svarat.

Analysen kommer att göras av oss två, Minna Buller och Jamine Rono, och inspelningarna kommer att försvaras på ett säkert sätt och ingen obehörig kommer att kunna komma åt dem. Inspelningarna kommer att raderas när uppsatsen är godkänd. Genom att delta i studien så samtycker du till att ljudet från din intervju spelas in.

Den färdiga uppsatsen kommer att publiceras på Högskolan i Gävles webbsida.

Har du frågor om studien så kan du ringa Minna på telefon 079-xxxxxxx.

