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Integration of unemployed immigrants into the labor market in Gävle

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ABSTRACT

Title: Integration of unemployed immigrants into the labor market in Gävle

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The aim of this study was to investigate unemployed immigrant's description of how they perceive the labor market in Gävle. Qualitative method face-to-face interviews were used to gather data. The results of this study shows that an unemployed immigrant seems to encounter hinders and opportunities in the labor market. The following five issues were described as being most important in influencing immigrants' employment opportunities in Gävle: Swedish language knowledge, previous education, discrimination, social network and family situation. Ecological system theory and previous research were used to analyze the gathered results.

Key words: integration, immigrant, labor market.

PREAMBLE

We first and foremost thank our supervisor Johan Kejerfors, Ph. D at Stockholm University for his guidance and valuable support throughout this study.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the present era migration has become such an urgent topic. People try to understand how migration, including processes of immigration and emigration, is shaping populations all over the world, which affects economy, political situation, educational and labor systems on domestic and international level (Batalova & Mittelstand, 2008). This subject, as stated by (IFSW, 2012), has brought social workers to the frontline in issues concerning immigrant's integration into the host country.

There are different categories of migrations and among them is forced migration, transit migration and return migration (cf, Global migration group 2008, Hugman, 2010). Forced migration is migratory movement caused by an element of coercion; this can be persecution, conflict, repression, natural disasters and political conflicts which force people to migrate. Transit migration refers to migratory movement in which a person is looking for employment and moves to a country with such opportunities. Return migration refers to the movement of a person to his his/her country of origin after spending duration of one year in another country.

It was estimated that the number of international migrants was 214 million in the year 2010 (UN, 2013) According to the United Nations (UN, 2013) the developed countries accommodated 128 million migrants and the less developed countries 86 million migrants. Europe accommodated around 70 million immigrants. Sweden, which is a country in Europe, accommodated 1, 3 million immigrants in the year 2010 and this was approximately 14, 1 percent of the total population in Sweden (UN, 2013). Nearly 60 percent of those immigrants who moved to Sweden in 2009 composed of Labor migrants, students, and Nordic and EES citizens. The remaining were those in need of protection and their families (Migrationsverket, 2010).

There are challenges that immigrants encounter in their new country. According to the international organization for economic co-operation and development statistic, OECD, (2011) the economic crisis has hit hard the immigrants especially in OECD countries. In the case of Sweden there is one particular region that has struggled with an overwhelming unemployment. The region is Gävleborg in mid Sweden which has 11, 4 percent unemployment rate in 2012 which is the highest in the whole country (Arbetsblad, 2012).

Unemployment often bears some problems that affects individual negatively and unemployed immigrants are not excluded from this. According to Pierson (2007) unemployment is viewed as key factor in causing poverty. This can be one of the risks unemployed immigrants can encounter. Other examples of the risks that an unemployed immigrant encounters in their daily life are the risk to not become integrated into the new country, the risk to become socially excluded (cf, Healy, 2008).). These types of problems are connected with social work. According to Migrationsinfo (2013) the employment rate among people born outside Sweden is lower than people born in Sweden. This issue has lately brought debate concerning the situation of immigrant's integration in the labor market. The bone of contention in this debate is often about how to help immigrants to integrate into the labor market and tackle the barriers they encounter. Surprisingly little attention seems to be paid to how the immigrants themselves define the situation. This raises the question on how unemployed immigrants living in Gävle, a municipality in Sweden, perceive their situation in the labor market

1.1 Aim

The aim of this study is to examine unemployed immigrants' description of how they perceive the labor market in Gävle

Research questions

How do unemployed immigrants perceive the labor market in Gävle?

Which are the issues that unemployed immigrants describe as having impact on their employment opportunities in Gävle?

1.2 Essay disposition

In the first section of this essay an introduction of the field chosen is presented, the introduction is followed by aim and research question Thereafter previous research is introduced to explain the scientific knowledge and concepts used in this essay. This followed by bioecological systems theory that is used as the theoretical framework together with central concepts in the study, this is presented in the third chapter. Chapter four describes the methodology in detail, explaining the method's connection to the fulfillment of the aim of the study. In chapter five results are presented with information gained from the interviews conducted together with analysis of the result in relation to previous research and the bioecological systems theory. In the final chapter results of

the study is discussed, interpreted and evaluated. To conclude, a short discussion is held with suggestions for future research.

2. PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON CHALLENGES IMMIGRANTS FACE IN THE LABOR MARKET

The aim of the following chapter is to present the research literature reviewed in this study on challenges immigrant encounter in the labor market. The literatures reviewed are produced by researchers from different countries, but mostly in Europe and North America. In these studies several issues are mentioned related to challenges immigrant encounter in the labor market. The most frequent mentioned issues include language and education, discrimination, and social network. First and most the chapter will begin with a short explanation of some key words used in this study.

What is integration?

Integration is “a dynamic and principled process in which members in a society engage in dialogue in order to maintain good social relations.” (United Nations, 2012). Successful integration processes encourage “coming together” while respecting differences, and consciously and explicitly putting great value on maintaining diversity. Integration represents the attempts not to make people adjust to society, but rather to ensure that society is accepting of all people. The goal of integration is to create “a more stable, safe and society “for all”, in which every individual, each with rights and responsibilities, has an active role to play” (United Nations, 2012).

Integration is too a concept that appears in many different contexts. It is most commonly used in Sweden to label the process by which people with different ethnic origin than the Swedish get involved in the society (Iansstyrelsen, 2013). One of the processes which people with different ethnic origin than Swedish get involved in the society is through employment.

Integrations is not only restricted to one area but touches many aspects concerning individuals in a society. In this case about unemployed immigrants integration is viewed as key aspect.

What is an immigrant?

Immigrant is a person who moves from one country to another in order to settle there for a long time (Immi, 2013). According to migrationsverket (2011) there is no generally accepted definition of immigrants however for statistic purpose a person is

counted as immigrants if he/she is registered in Sweden. Often they are divided into two categories: those born in Sweden or born abroad and have Swedish or foreign citizenship.

Immigrant is also defined as a person who plans to stay in Sweden for duration of one year and be registered in Swedish tax authority. Non-Nordic citizens must have valid residence (Lundh & Ohlsson, 1999). The immigrants include both persons who are born outside Sweden and those who are born in Sweden with two foreign-born parents (Sydsvenskan, 2010). In this study the focus group was immigrants born outside Sweden.

What is labor market?

This is defined as the market where workforce is sold and bought (Ekonomifakta, 2011). In the case of the immigrants interviewed their immediate labor market is Gävle municipality.

2.1 Language and education

Language and education seems to have an important impact on immigrant's possibilities in the labor market. Research in this area has shown that language plays a vital role in entering the labor market. According to Abdelkerim and Grace (2012) poor English proficiency was one of the main hindrances to employment which newly emerging African communities in Australia encountered. This is further supported by Liu (cited in Abdelkerim & Grace, 2012) who conducted study on English proficiency and labor supply of newly immigrants in Australia. The results showed that those who spoke poor English right from the beginning were working up to 6.5 hours per week, while those who spoke "very well" worked 27.5 hours per week. Another study by Jones and McAllister (cited in Abdelkerim & Grace, 2012) found those speaking poor English had their chances of getting job reduced by a margin of up to three times as much as the other group who spoke better English. A similar study by Hayfron (2001) examined the co-relations between language course participation, language mastery and labor market effects as reported by immigrants in Norway in the 1993 Living Conditions Survey. He found positive correlation between participation in language training courses and good knowledge in Norwegian. However, no link could be established on the basis of the survey on good knowledge in Norwegian language and immigrant earnings.

According to Delander (2005) research from countries with large immigrant population such as United States of America, Canada, Israel, Germany and Australia has shown

that good knowledge of the host countries language contributes to high income. Beside the latter Duvander (2001) show in a comparable study that speaking and understanding Swedish very well, improves the chances of immigrant in the access to labor market. This is too some extent approved by Rooth who in his (2004) study pertaining employment among immigrants found that those with good knowledge in Swedish language have high employment rate.

A particular area which encompasses language is education; it has been revealed by many researchers the implication of education to employment among unemployed immigrants. Rooth and Åslund (2006) found in their research among immigrants who came to Sweden as adult that investment in Swedish education contribute to high income compared to only having a foreign education. A further research by Broomé, Bäcklund, Lundh and Ohlsson, (1996) articulates that there is uncertainty whether formal education is a significant factor in access to employment among immigrants. It is established that with same level of formal education still unemployment is high among immigrants. Furthermore it has being shown by researchers in Canada, United Kingdom and France that immigrants with higher education have higher unemployment rates compared to their native counterpart (Storen & Wiers-Jenssen, 2010). The extent to which immigrants previous education outside western countries are valid in the new countries is significant factor in hiring decisions. According to Le Grand (2000) employers might consider that education acquired outside western industrialized countries is not equivalent to education in Sweden. This is supported by Rooth's (1999) empirical studies in Sweden which state that higher school education background does not have statistically substantial effect on employment rate among immigrants.

2.2 Discrimination

It seems that discrimination has a significant impact on the integration of immigrants in the labor market. There are some studies touching upon the effect of discrimination on the chances of employment among this particular group. In one study by Rooth (2002), adopted children of native Swedes whose physical appearance was different from children of native Swedes were compared on prospect of access to employment. The results showed that adopted children fared worse in the labor market and their probability of getting employment was lower. The difference could not be related to adoption, since adopted children from Northern Europe showed little difference compared to natives Swedes children. The assumption was that non- European adopted children have different physical appearance and as a result the object of discrimination.

Arai and Skogman Thoursie (2009) studied how salary income was affected when a person with foreign name changed their name to Swedish name. The result revealed that the income was same before name change but afterwards income was little higher for those who changed their names. The immigrants who participated in this study were from Africa, Asia or Slavic countries. This group has been characterized by higher unemployment rate and lower earnings and thus an interesting area to be investigated.

There are also a number of Swedish studies which investigated the occurrence of discrimination towards immigrants. According to Eriksson (2007) some researchers sent out fabricated applications to companies that advertised job at employment service website. For every job, two applications that contained same qualifications but one with Swedish and another with a typical Arabic name were sent to the companies. The results showed that discrimination occurred in 29 percent of the recruitment. This was particularly common in the low skill sector.

2.3 Social network

It seems that social network has a considerable impact on the possibilities for immigrants to establish themselves in the labor market. The literatures reviewed indicate that immigrants see the absence of social network as a hinder in their search for job (cf, Eso-rapport, 2011) .The importance of social network should not be underestimated since human beings in one or another way belongs to a network. One area which is significant for immigrants is work; in this case having social contacts can simplify access to labor market. According to Borell and Johansson (1996) if a person has many contacts in his/her social network and has a central position, this makes the person valuable and this can in turn broaden his/her network. This is further supported by Granovetter (cited in Calvó-Armengol & Jackson 2004) who in his study of residents in Massachusetts town found that over 50 percent of jobs were acquired through social contacts. Similar study by Ress (cited in Calvó-Armengol & Jackson 2004) found 60 percent were recruited through the same way. This indicates that employers recruit a person they know or through someone who knows them.

Results from a survey conducted by statistics Sweden (cited in Eso-rapport 2011) with immigrants on what was one of the obstacles in acquiring job. It showed that approximately 70 percent had the assumption that the absence of social contact was one of the main obstacles. Even an earlier study in 2004 by the same institution statistic Sweden (SCB) found lack of social contact as one of the obstacles. More researchers have shown in their studies the importance of networks. Among them is Bevelander and Lundh (2006) who found that the probability for newly arrived refugees to acquire job

is high when there is high proportion foreign born already in the city they move to. This could be interpreted as the newly arrived refugees have access to informal networks already in place.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter the theoretical framework chosen, in pursuit to fulfill the aim and research questions formulated, will be presented.

The theoretical framework chosen for this study is Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Model of Human Development. The reason for choosing this systems theory is that it provides a useful tool for the study of unemployed immigrants and that the process of integration is based on mutual relationships between individuals and their environment (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). The bioecological model seeks to explain variations in human development as a result of Person and Context across Time. This theory helps in recognizing how the unemployed immigrant's problems arise, and what factors contribute to their situation in the labor market. It will be explained through biological and environmental factors, economic conditions, combinations of cultural values and time. These factors are part of Bioecological Systems theory that explains how the interaction of different parts of an individual's life is formed and shaped in settings. According to Healy (2005) these settings lead to a series of concentric rings with different systems level (c.f, Shaffer, 2005).

Ecological systems paradigm was introduced by Urie Bronfenbrenner first in 1970s. In pursue of Ecological Model of Human Development one need to consider the integrity of Bioecological system in which the developing person lives his or her life. This system contains five socially structured subsystems that guide, help and support human growth. The five systems include the following: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem. They start from the microsystem which refers to the relationship between the developing person and his or her immediate environment for example family and peers (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). The mesosystem comprises the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings containing the developing person, for example relations between home and school (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). The exosystem that comprises the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings, at least one of which does not contain the developing person, but in which events occur that indirectly influence processes within the immediate settings in which the developing person lives, for example a child and the relation between the home and

the parent's workplace (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). The macrosystem refers to institutional forms of culture, for example economy, cultural values, customs and traditions, religion and bodies of knowledge (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). And the final chronosystem extends the environment into a third dimension, for example changes over the life course in family structure (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). The ecological environment is conceived as a set of nested structures, each inside the other like a set of Russian dolls (Bronfenbrenner, cited in Kejerfors, 2007).

3.1 The principal elements of the bioecological model (a Process-Person-Context-Time Model (PPCT))

For deeper understanding of the bioecological model is important to take in account a research design proposed by Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998). The research design includes four components recognized as the principal elements of the bioecological model and their interdependencies referred to as the Process-Person-Context-Time model (PPCT) (Bronfenbrenner, cited in Kejerfors, 2007). The PPCT model describes and clarifies the bioecological model and its approach to the study of human development (Kejerfors, 2007).

As proposed by Bronfenbrenner the bioecological model and its corresponding features include four interrelated components: process of human development; the person characteristics; the context; time (Kejerfors, 2007).

All components together shapes PPCT model for designing research of study of human development and for integration developmental system (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, cited in Kejerfors, 2007).

3.1.1 Proximal process

According to Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998) the first component of the model is proximal process. Proximal process covers particular forms of interaction between the person and the people, objects and symbols in his or her immediate environment that operate over time and are posited as the primary mechanism producing human development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998).

3.1.2 Person

According to Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998) there are three types of characteristics of Person that are most influential in shaping the course of future development through their ability to affect the proximal processes direction and power through the life course. The first one depicts dispositions that can set

proximal processes in motion in a certain development and continue to sustain their operation (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). The next one is biological resources of knowledge, ability, skill and experience required for the effective functioning of proximal processes at a given stage of development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). The third one is demand characteristics that can invite or discourage reactions from social environment in a kind that can foster or disrupt the operation of proximal processes. The three characteristics of person structure above can in their combination account for differences in the direction, power of resultant proximal process and developmental effect (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998).

3.1.3 Context (microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem)

Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998) clarified that when the person component of the bioecological model is expanded, the result is a richer understanding of the context in which the developmental person is fused. The three types of Person characteristics mentioned earlier are incorporated into the microsystem as characteristic of parents, relatives, close friends and others who participate in the life of the developing person on a regular base over extended period of time (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998).

Microsystems

A microsystem depicts configuration of activities, social roles and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given settings with particular physical, social and symbolic features (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). This invite, permit or hinder engagement in the immediate environment. For example, such settings as a family, school, peers, workplace and neighborhood (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) (see figure 1).

Mesosystems

A mesosystem is kind of system of microsystem. The mesosystem covers the relations and processes toward two or more settings containing the developing person (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Here can be relations between school and workplace, religious affiliation and neighborhood (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) (see figure 1).

Mutual relations between family and neighborhood play an important role in a person's development. They can create favorable environment and this can be through psychological support of family members, active peer participations in job

search. On the other hand the family can be a burden, for example religious prohibition, uneducated family member.

Exosystems

The exosystem comprises of the dealings and processes taking place between two or more settings, with a clause that at least one of settings does not contain the developing person, but in which actions happen that indirectly influence processes within the immediate setting in which the developing person lives (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). For example, relationships between a child and parent's workplace for child or between school and peers for parent (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) (see figure 1).

Macrosystems

The macrosystem consists of the supreme pattern of micro-, meso-, and exosystem characteristics of a given culture or subculture, with specific reference to the beliefs systems, bodies of knowledge, material resources, customs and traditions, lifestyles, opportunity structures, dangers and life course options that are embedded in each of these broader systems (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). The macrosystem might be belief of as a societal outline for a particular culture or subculture (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) (see figure 1).

3.1.4 Time or chronosystem

The forth and the last one component of the bioecological model has a place at previous levels: micro-, meso- and macro. Microtime refers to continuity versus discontinuity within ongoing episodes of proximal processes. Mesotime is the periodicity of these episodes across broader time intervals, for example days and weeks. Macrotime focuses on the changing expectations and events in the larger society within and across generations as they affect and affected by processes and outcomes of human development over the life course (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998).

Chronosystem's borders cover the environment into the third dimension. Following previous studies of human development, the passage of time was treated as synonymous with chronological age (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). High numbers of investigators have used research designs in which time appears not just as an aspect of the growing human being but also as a property of the surrounding environment not only over the life course, but across historical time as well (Gauvain, M. &

Cole, M., 1993).

Bronfenbrenner systems theory model:

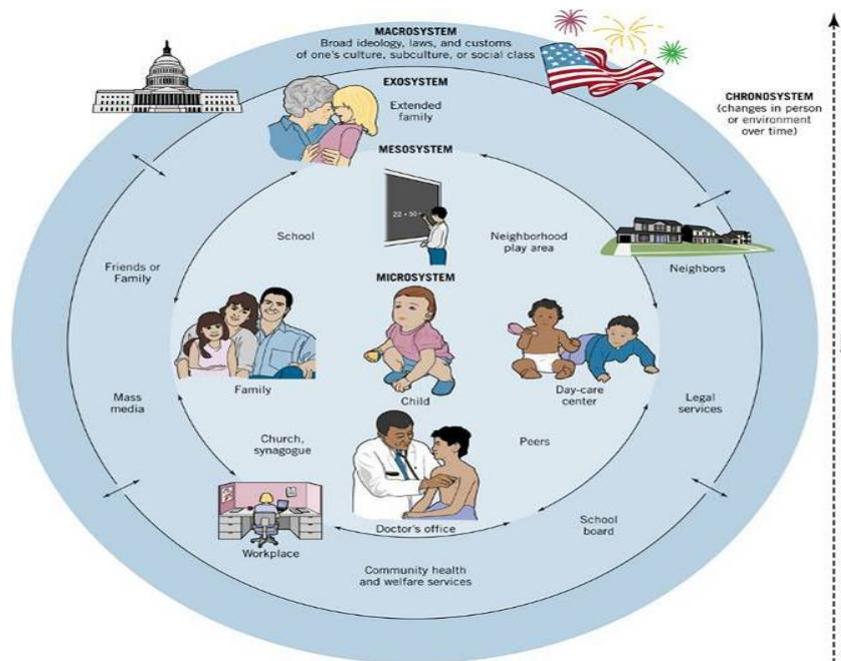


Figure1.(Shaffer,2005)

A chronosystem covers change or consistency over time not only in the characteristics of the person but also of the environment, in which that person lives (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). An example is changes over the life course in family structure, socioeconomic status, employment, place of residence and abilities in everyday life (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

3.2 Application of bioecological systems theory in social work

The bioecological model pays attention to the range of influences on a human being's development. In this respect it is closely in tune with the classic concerns of social work – a concern with the individual and his surroundings (Sudbery, 2010). Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model of human development contains cultural attitudes, for example how society views gender roles will have an effect on the expectations, self-image and self-evaluation, human being's behavior (Sudbery, 2010). The integration of immigrants on the labor market in Gävle has impact on their immediate environment such as family and closest relatives and their perception of labor market (Sudbery, 2010). Ecological systems can be used in looking into unemployed immigrant's network to find what challenges they encounter. This helps social workers to draw valuable picture of the immigrant's interaction with the society.

4. METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the method chosen in pursuit to fulfill the aim and research questions formulated for this study. It will further explain parts of methodology like sample and sampling process, selection of literature ethical consideration and essay credibility

4.1 Chosen method

In this study the method chosen is qualitative interviews (cf. Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). According to Denscombe (2009) qualitative method can be used to investigate a small scale research deeply and gather a detailed data. As a result of the latter a qualitative method was considered to be appropriate for our study. The demerit that is associated with this method is that it can be difficult to generalize small scale data to other similar units Denscombe (2009); however it is still possible to find the relation of the small units to the other units.

The study used face-to-face interviews to carry out the qualitative interviews. The reason for specifically choosing face-to-face interview was the possibility of asking follow up questions, investigating underlying reasons in a manner that is not possible to do it in questionnaires and postal means (Robson, 2002). Furthermore it is possible to repeat questions in case the interviewees do not understand and respond immediately. This is one way of making sure that the interviewees have the opportunity to correct any misunderstanding in the interview process (cf. Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009)

4.2 Sample and sampling process

The sample consisted of five unemployed immigrants that at the time for the study were living in Gävle municipality. There were three female and two male in the age bracket of 26 to 37 years, two of them are originally from other European countries, one from a country in Asia, and two from a country in Africa. The participants have been living in Gävle between 8 years to 2 years. The interviewed immigrants have been living between 8 years to 2 years. Most of them were unemployed for all the years they were in Sweden, except one who had part-time job. The motive to choose this group was that they were unemployed immigrants who lived in Gävle and its surrounding. In this study a snowball sampling was used in pursuit to find interviewees. This meant that the authors got in contact with an unemployed immigrant through a friend. They interviewed the person and then asked him to indicate others members of the population defined. According to Robson (2002) snowball sampling is useful when it is difficult to

find interviewees from a particular population. To some extent this approach was appropriate for this study since it was not easy for the interviewers to find this group. The authority we contacted in the beginning had secrecy laws that restricted them to give out individual names unless they approved. This took time to get in contact with this group which eventually led us to choose the snowball sampling.

4.3 Conduct of the study

Before the beginning of the interview the interviewees were informed about the aim of the study. After this information a letter of consent (Appendix2) was handed to the interviewees to give approval to participate in the study. Moreover interviews guide (Appendix 1) which contained interviews questions was used during the interview. The interview guide was compiled with inspirations and ideas borrowed from previous research and theory reviewed. The interview guide begun with background questions about the interview persons and finally with interview questions about unemployed perceptions of the labor market in Gävle. The interview was recorded in a smart phone recorder and simultaneously notes were written down to get rich information. The interviews took about 30- 70 minutes for each session. The interviewees were conducted in English and Swedish since some of the interviewees were better in one of the language. This was appropriate as it gave them the opportunity to express themselves freely. The interviews were listened to and transcribed into a text .The problems we encountered during the transcription include time consuming, bad sound quality which slows down transcribing. Finally the interviewers used meaning condensation to analyze the gathered data. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) "meaning condensation entails an abridgment of the meanings expressed by the interviewees into shorter formulation". Specific words and statements were selected and shortened without distorting interviewees statements. The statements of the interviewees were written in quotations. Some quotations were slightly changed to correct the grammar which makes easy to understand.

4.4 Selection of literature

The literature for this study were mainly found in the databases EBSCO host discovery, Academic Search Elite, and OECD documents at the university of Gävle library website. Other sources like the national library data base LIBRIS were used especially to find books. Furthermore Google search was used to find relevant information from international organizations for instance United Nation (UN), International Federation for Social Workers (IFSW). Beside the latter some ideas derived from newspapers and

organizations with information of relevance for the present study. The search words used in the search for literature include the following: Immigrants, unemployment, employment, Sweden.

4.5 Ethical consideration

There are some ethical considerations that have to be taken into account when carrying out research involving people. There is potential risk for participants to harm, stress and worry and other negative consequences as a result of a research (Robson, 2011). This standpoint is also supported by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) who state that ethical issues are embedded in all stages of interview research. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) there are some ethical considerations like informed consent, confidentiality, consequences and role of researcher that is significant when conducting interview inquiry. Below is a description of these ethical guidelines that came to use in the present study.

Informed consent entails informing the interviewees about the purpose of the study and potential risk and benefits from participation in the study (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009). In the present study the interviewees were given a letter of consent which contained information about voluntary participation and the right to withdraw anytime from the study. Another significant ethical consideration is confidentiality which entails that private data identifying the participants in a research are not revealed to a third party, unless the participants agree to the release of the data (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The participants in our research were informed both in written and verbal form about confidentiality. One more ethical consideration is consequences which involve the potential harm and benefits that can arise as a result of the interviewee's participation in the research (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The purpose of the study was once again informed to the participants to clarify the consequences of our research. Beside the latter the role of the researcher which involves moral integrity of the researcher is also important when carrying out interview inquiry (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The interview persons were informed that the data gathered in the form of transcription and recorded interviews will be destroyed after the degree paper have been examined. The authors of this paper have as much as possible prepared themselves to be sensitive and respond to ethical issues that can arise when undertaking this research. An example is in case the interviewees say too much or reveal private issues and regret later after the interview session.

4.6 Essay credibility

This section will present validity, reliability and generalizability of the study.

4.7.1 Validity

Validity entails to the truth and strength of a statement or whether a method investigates what it intends to investigate (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The authors used theoretical framework and previous research as a basis to write the interview guide in order to gather the correct data. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) the craftsmanship of a researcher is significant in checking validity of a research. To ensure the validity in the research we tested our interview questions on each other before doing the actual interviews. The interviewees had the opportunity to ask for clarification in case they did not understand the interview questions. The interviewers posed questions sometimes twice to make sure it is understood correctly. The interviewers also summed up the interviewees answers in pursuit to check whether they understood it correctly or not. In the end of the interview session a summary of what the interviewees answered were read to avoid missing information or adding new information. To further strength the validity audit trial was used, this involved keeping a full record of transcripts and notes from the interviews (Robson, 2002). It has to be pointed out that validity is low in qualitative studies (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

4.7.2 Reliability

Reliability entails to the uniformity or repeatability of a research result (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). It is about whether a research result is reproducible at another occasion using the same method. The interviewers used the same interview question with all interviewees with the exception of follow up questions. It was done in this way to ensure a degree of consistency in the interview questions. Audit trial as earlier described in validity part was used here too to make it possible for other researchers to carry out a similar study. Since some of the quotes were translated from Swedish to English might lead to misinterpretation which lowers the reliability of the research. Reliability is dismissed by some researchers as positivist concepts and this makes it low in qualitative studies (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

4.7.3 Generalizability

There is a form of generalization called analytical which involves the use of findings from one research to guide what happens in another research (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In this study the results from the interviews could be related to findings from previous studies, which is one way of generalizing the results.

5. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

In this chapter the results of this study will be presented and analyzed in relation to previous research reviewed and the theory chosen. The aim of the study is how unemployed immigrants perceive labor market in Gävle. The results will focus on two research questions extracted from the aim namely: How do unemployed immigrants perceive labor market in Gävle and which are the issues that affect unemployed immigrants' employment opportunities in Gävle. The main themes were namely *language and education, discrimination, social network and family situation*

First and foremost the interviewee's background information about age, nationality and sex are presented. Their names have been replaced with letters in order not to reveal their identity.

Participant A is a female unemployed immigrant from Tanzania aged 29

Participant B a female unemployed immigrant from Bulgaria aged 32

Participant C a male unemployed immigrant from Bangladesh aged 26

Participant D is a female unemployed immigrant from Belarus aged 30

Participant E is a male unemployed immigrant from Senegal aged 37

How do unemployed immigrants perceive labor market in Gävle?

The question on how unemployed immigrants perceive labor market in Gävle led to the following three patterns. The first pattern is about the "importance of education from Sweden" and the second pattern is "difficulty for foreigners to get job in Gävle". One of interviewees mentioned the significance of education obtained in Sweden.

Employment opportunity for me is difficult because when I came here, I have a degree from my country, I can use my certificates from my country but they say no it so difficult I have to study more (Interviewee A)

The interviewee seemed to be aware of the importance of getting education in Sweden. In an attempt to improve the chances of integrating into the labor market one of the persons had decided to study.

That is why I decided to study more so I can find something here to get work, because it so difficult I have applied some job (Interviewee A).

The second pattern was classified as “no opportunity to participate in employment interview”. One of the interview persons expressed disappointment because he never gets called for interview in spite of numerous job applications.

One very uncommon thing for me is this one and half year I applied almost hundred or more than hundred application to different companies. Until now I didn't get any interview (Interviewee C).

Some of this disappointment seemed to be about the time wasted on preparing applications.

I am little bit disappointed. Hundred CVs I sent no credit for that. I need two hours sometimes three hours to prepare my CV. After fifteen days the letter comes and it says no. no option (Interviewee C).

The third pattern was classified as “difficulty for foreigners to get job”. One of the interview persons expressed that the labor market in Gävle is closed and is hard for foreigners particularly Africans to get job.

The job market is very tight. I guess Gävle is not the best to look for job. So obviously it is harder for foreigners and worst for Africans (Interviewee E).

The earlier research reviewed have shown that education obtained in Sweden increases the chances of getting higher income (cf, Rooth and Åslund, 2006). This is also an understanding among some of the interviewees. The previous research also indicated that origin of a person plays role in recruitment (cf, Rooth, 2002). One of the interviews expressed that job market in Gävle is tight for foreigners and specifically for Africans.

In the view of a bioecological perspective, the unemployed immigrants perception of the labor market in Gävle can be seen as an example of a force producing human development, that is what Bronfenbrenner (2005) calls a proximal process. One of the interview persons expressed disappointment because he never gets called for interview

in spite of numerous job applications. This might have impact on their self-esteem negatively and in the long-term lose motivation to look for job. The interview person further says that he does not get credit for his application. This could be a sign that he is tired of the application process. From the standpoint of a bioecological perspective the unemployed immigrants' perception of the labor market in Gävle can also be seen as a result of their own personal characteristics and the values reported to exist in the context in which the unemployed immigrants interviewed live their everyday lives. The results from the interviews show that the interviewees have previous education from their home countries. Despite their previous education the labor market in Gävle demands that they obtain Swedish education in order to get job. Furthermore they expressed that their origin is a disadvantage when looking for job as the employers in Gävle seems to prefer people of Swedish origin

Which are the issues that affect unemployed immigrants' employment opportunities in Gävle?

The result from study shows that the interviewees have encountered different issues that affect their employment opportunities in the labor market in Gävle. The issues mentioned are classified into the following themes: language, education, social network and family situation.

Language

The importance of good knowledge in Swedish is an issue which most of the interviewees mentioned. The interviewees however seemed to have an understanding of the necessity of knowing the language. There are two patterns in this theme. The first one is classified as "Swedish language as prerequisite to get job".

If you apply for job you must speak Swedish because here in this country communication is Swedish. I think it is good to know Swedish. It will be easier for a person to get job (Interviewee A).

Another interviewee also seemed to consider language skills as a prerequisite for the performance of work.

It is important. If you have to do your job well, you should know the language (Interviewee B).

The second pattern is classified as “Swedish language not guarantee to get job”. One of the interviewees emphasized that having good knowledge in the Swedish language does not guarantee job.

It can be. But Language is not a problem for me. Like for example for bartender, you need to be behind the bar and interact with people and you learn those words. I do not think language is a problem. I think this is an excuse (Interviewee E).

Education

According to the interviewees their previous education seems not play a key role in their opportunity to acquire job. One pattern was found in theme education. This pattern was classified as “previous education not valued in Sweden” .One of the interviewee states that previous education from their homeland is not valued in Sweden.

For example if you come with a certificate from your country a degree certificate but you cannot 100 percent find job. Because they do not trust your certificate that is why they want you to study. I came from Africa but they do not trust this education (Interviewee A).

This was also said by another interviewee who also underscored the importance of getting certificates validated by Swedish authorities.

Have I really studied my education in my homeland as it says on my certificates? They do not trust most of it. And it is important to confirm your education at the Swedish college (Interviewee D).

Discrimination

In this study the interviewees stated that discrimination is one of the issues that affect their integration in the labor market in Gävle. Three patterns were found in the theme of discrimination. The first pattern was classified as “xenophobia”. One of the interviewees mentioned that Swedish people are a bit careful for newcomers especially those from other cultures.

I have a sense that there is xenophobia like kinds of people are little bit, I would say careful about foreigners. Something that does not belong to their cultural environment, you know so (Interviewee E).

One of the interviewees used himself as an example of how religion and skin color seems to have a negative impact on other person’s perception and behavior.

First of all I am a Muslim and they little bit scared about Muslim. I am not Swedish and i am the brown color this is another thing. You can say it is racism (Interviewee C).

The second pattern was classified as “feeling discrimination but not sure”.

Another interviewee tried to problematize perceived discrimination.

One feels that there is some kind of discrimination. You would think when time goes and you do not get the opportunity to come to interview. You think it is discrimination. I hope it is not anything like that in reality (Interviewee B).

The third pattern was classified as “not discrimination, only scared”. Below is the interpretation of discrimination as an issue that affects employment opportunity by one of the interviewed immigrant.

Discrimination is very hard words. I do not want to use it, it's like very wrong. In Gävle there are many immigrants who are established at Gävle labor market. So I would rather say that it is uncertainty that is the problem. People are scared; they do not know what they expect from us. How should we act? It is not discrimination No, no. It's a bit wrong word, I think (Interviewee D).

From this point of view the reason why immigrants have difficulties in integrating into the labor market in Gävle is related to uncertainty. She further says that people are scared of immigrants since they do not know what they expect from them. According to her view this cannot be called discrimination.

Social network

Social network was stated by the interviewees as both a hinder and opportunity in Gävle labor market. The interviewees mentioned how it is important to be in a network when you come to new country. Two patterns were found concerning social contact. The first pattern was classified as “having friend in the labor market”. According to one of the interviewees having a friend in the labor market can make it easier to access the labor market.

If I have friends in the labor market, then I think a certain big factor. Then I think absolutely. It would work better. Then I would get a better chance (Interviewee D).

The second pattern was classified as “Contacts from practical placements”. To get contact and experience in a workplace and by that having possibility to show ones competence was something some of the interviewees emphasized as a key factor. They stated this as a way of building network which will help them later when looking for job.

Immigrants have difficulty gaining contacts with companies and workplaces and so on. What I am trying to do now in my practical placement is to obtain contacts, and show me in some way to the employer and stuff. Practice helps a lot (Interviewee B).

The interviewees stated that contacts in the labor market are an asset when looking for job in Gävle. In their view it will take long time to get job if you do not have a network that helps you.

A lot of people who got job that I have talked to, told me for some reason that they have a connection that help them to get access to job market in Gävle. It does not work to come here and get job very quick. It is a long process (Interviewee E).

Social contact is seen by the interviewees as both a hinder and an opportunity. It is a hinder if an immigrant does not belong to a network which can help him/her when looking for job. It can also be an opportunity if an immigrant has a network who knows him/her and use them when looking for job

Family situation

One of the networks of the interviewees is family. Their families consist of different persons; it can for example be a spouse and their children or other relatives. Two patterns were found in the theme of family situation. The first pattern was categorized as “difficulty to move to a far city”. In this study one of the interviewee mentioned that having a family sometimes could be a hinder for integrating into the labor market.

I have thought about moving to another city too look for job but my husband has a permanent job here in Gävle and I have to think about it (Interviewee B)

One of the interviewees has a child and working in a place far from the child that is not the best option in her view.

So I have children, I have to quickly go home, I cannot work far away. I cannot move to everywhere (Interviewee D).

The second pattern was classified as “children have negative impact in getting job”. One of the interviewees says that a woman who is pregnant has difficulties in getting job. According to her, children have negative effect in the access to the labor market.

My friend was on an interview at the Swedish Tax Agency, she was pregnant, super pregnant, and she has not found a job. Wonder why? So you understand? So it is. Children have a negative impact on the possibility to get a job (Interviewee D).

The above interviewee D describes family as an issue that has negative effect on their opportunity to get job. They especially mentioned children as something employers see as a burden to their business.

The results presented above can be analyzed through the previous research reviewed in this study. First of all it becomes obvious that it is not one single issue only that has a bearing on immigrants’ possibilities to get a job, but a number of different issues that impact on its own or in combination with each other. The literature reviewed shows that language plays a significant role in the possibility to acquire job (cf, Rooth, 2004). The importance of language has led to two patterns. The first one was classified as “Swedish language as prerequisite to get job and the second one as “Swedish language not guarantee to get job”. The latter is contrary to what previous research reviewed stated. Another issue is education which is seen by the interviewed immigrants as important if it is a Swedish education. This is mentioned in the previous research reviewed (cf Rooth & Åslund, 2006). The interviewed immigrants stated that their previous education from their homeland is not valued in Sweden. This is also discussed in the previous research reviewed (cf, Le Grand, 2000).

Further issue mentioned in the previous research is discrimination. In the previous research reviewed the results of the interviews stated that physical appearance has effect on the opportunity to get job (cf, Rooth, 2002). There were three patterns of discrimination according to the participants. The first one was about xenophobia; this is discrimination on the basis of physical appearance. The second pattern is feeling discrimination but not sure. The interviewed immigrant has feelings of discrimination but doubts if it is really discrimination. The third pattern which was classified as “not discrimination, only scared” disagrees with the previous participants and the previous research reviewed. From the perspective of this pattern the reason why immigrants have difficulties in integrating into the labor market in Gävle is related to uncertainty towards immigrants since people do not know what they expect from them. According to the

interviewed immigrant view this cannot be called discrimination. In a nutshell the meaning of discrimination is different for different persons. It can be interpreted in different ways as stated by the above interviewed immigrants.

Besides the above issues a social network has been mentioned in the previous research reviewed as significant aspect when looking for job (cf, Calvó-Armengol & Jackson, 2004). Social network obtained through friends, practical placements is one way of acquiring job. In the situation of unemployed immigrants it seems that they view social network as possibility for them to integrate into labor market. One of the participants particularly mentioned the importance of having friend in the labor market which can act as a reference when looking for job. Despite these possibilities the absence of social network could be a hinder if an immigrant does not have social network in the labor market.

From a bioecological standpoint hinders and possibilities that the unemployed immigrants report to perceive can be seen as interrelated results of interaction with their surroundings and the context across time. The results from the interviews indicate that the unemployed immigrants interviewed reported to perceive some obstacles that hinder them from entering the labor market. Furthermore the immigrants interviewed mentioned that they have previous education from their home countries. Despite having previous education they faced hinders and possibilities. First and foremost they expressed that their education is not trusted by employers which hinders them from getting job. This can be seen through the bioecological perspective as context related (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). The education of the immigrants has maybe value in their home countries but in the context of the labor market in Gävle it is not significant. In case they obtain education in Sweden there is possibility to improve their chances of getting job. Furthermore the immigrants highlighted good knowledge of Swedish language as significant aspect when looking for job. This personal resource is helpful in acquiring job and at the same time a hinder if one does not possess it. The labor market in Gävle which the immigrants interact with demands good knowledge in Swedish as a key aspect in their recruitment. This is a macrosystem related issue (cf, Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Furthermore discrimination is an issue expressed as a hinder in integrating into the labor market. In the view of bioecological perspective of macrosystem, society has its cultures, systems and structures which have influence on people (cf, Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Some of the immigrants interviewed states that their origin was a disadvantage when looking for job. It seems that there is a structural

hinder in the Gävle labor market. This can depend on the employers little knowledge about the immigrants' personal characteristics. It can be that there are prejudices about unemployed immigrants because of their origin. It was specifically the participants from Africa and Asia that mentioned discrimination based on origin and religion respectively. This was not the same for other two participants from Europe. Since these two participants come from European countries which have cultural similarities can be a reason why they have less doubt on them been discriminated.

The results has also shown that having social networks with people in the labor market and friends were described as improving the opportunities in getting job, as well absence of social networks were described as lowering their opportunities. In the view of bioecological standpoint the microsystem which entails the surroundings which a person interacts with has influence in the immigrants search for job. The immigrants for example mentioned their social network especially friends as helpful in the search for job. Incase immigrants have a network that is not helpful in their search for job. This can undermine their chances of getting job. Another issue seen as a hinder and possibility by the immigrants interviewed is family. They especially mentioned children as something employers see as a burden to their business. On the other hand family can produce favorable environment for person that helps in raising job opportunities. This can be through psychological support of family members, active peer participations in job search.

Despite the above hinder and possibilities perceived by unemployed immigrants' in Gävle labor market there are some positive and negative aspects that is likely to happen across time. According to time or chronosystem surrounding environment and time dimension are those most important components that define and form general situation with an individual (cf, Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). Immigrants' chances of getting integrated into the new environment will improve with the lengths of stay, since it possible that they develop as persons, for example learn to speak Swedish and cultural codes, and at best also the acceptance of immigrants into labor market in Gävle is going to improve within a nearby future. A negative scenario is possible that can undermine immigrants' opportunity to acquire job. This is in case the macro level of the society puts into place rules and regulations that create hinder for their integration into labor market.

6. DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to examine unemployed immigrant's description of how they perceive the labor market in Gävle? The study showed that the perception of the interviewees is that they encounter challenges in the search for job in the labor market. The challenges will be mentioned and explained in the sub-question part.

The sub-questions of the aim were: 1). How do unemployed immigrants perceive the labor market in Gävle? 2). which are the issues that affect unemployed immigrants' employment opportunities in Gävle?

Concerning the first sub-question the following three patterns were found 1) importance of education from Sweden 2). No opportunity to participate in employment interview. 3) Difficulty for foreigners to get job.

Regarding the first question the interviewees mentioned the significance of Swedish education which according to them can be a hinder. Furthermore some of the interviewees perceived the lack of opportunity to take part in an interview. This creates frustration among them since it hinders them from the opportunity to acquire job. Lastly but not the least the interviewees stated that they perceived an atmosphere whereby people with foreign background have difficulties in getting job.

Regarding the second question, the interviewee's answers were classified into the following themes: *language, education, social network* and *family situation*. Each theme was further categorized into patterns. In education theme the patterns were classified into two 1) Swedish language as prerequisite to get job 2) Swedish language not guarantees to get job. The education theme was classified into one patterns 1) previous education not valued in Sweden. The discrimination was classified into three patterns 1) xenophobia, 2). Feeling discrimination but not sure, 3). Not discrimination only scared. The social network theme was classified into two 1). Having friend in the labor market 2). Contact from practical placement. Family situation theme was classified into two 1) difficulty to move to a far city, 2). Children have negative impact in getting job

Regarding this second question the participants mentioned that there were different issues that had impacts on their opportunity in the labor market. An important issue was language which according to some them played a significant role when looking for job. It has to be taken into consideration that one of the participants did not saw language as that significant when looking for job. Some of the interviewees also stated that previous education from their home country did not have a positive effect in the access to labor

market. This was contrary to what they thought. There was frustration among the interviewees concerning the problems they encounter in the labor market. Another issue was discrimination which some of the participants perceived as a hinder. The three patterns about discrimination mentioned above shows that the participants have different view whether discrimination is actually the hinder to get job. Furthermore social network was mentioned as an issue that is both an opportunity and hinder for unemployed immigrants chances of integrating into the labor market. The interviewed immigrants saw social networks like friends in the labor as something that makes it easier for them to get job. They also stated the absence of social network as a hinder in their search for job. Besides the latter, family situation is an issue which the interview persons experienced sometimes has negative effect when looking for job. Specifically those with a nuclear family composed of husband, wife and children were pessimistic on the impact of the family on their job opportunities. In their view families with children were seen as burden by businesses. They also mentioned the inflexibility of families in case one of the partners has permanent job and does not want the other to work in a place far from their city. The reason for not looking for job in far place was to be nearer to their children.

These findings will be another source of knowledge for researchers and the society in general in issues concerning this topic. In addition to that it is imminent that the interviewed immigrants are facing exclusion in terms of unemployment. This exclusion has an impact on their daily life, for example depression, income problems, and housing problems. Unemployed immigrants are a group that in one or another way will come into contact with social workers. Social workers can help this group through counseling, advocacy and other valuable ways like integrating into the labor market. Furthermore the result shows that unemployed immigrant's encounter hinders which undermines their integration into the labor market. This seemingly have negative impact on their daily life. Social work profession entails empowering and helping in solving problems which people encounter (IFSW, 2012). This hinders mentioned by the unemployed immigrants puts focus on the need of social work profession to address this.

Discussion of method

Despite the fact that the result showed consistency with previous research reviewed in this study and gave answers to the research questions there are some methodological limitations. The geographical representation of the sample selected for the study is limited to Africa, Asia and Europe. It would have been interesting to see the results of

the study if all continents were represented. Although the number was small the interviewers collected valuable data that was possible to use in another context. Another limitation was the choice of immigrants from only Gävle and this maybe does not show a good picture of unemployed situation in the labor market since Gävle is rather a small city. Some interviews were translated from Swedish to English and there is a risk that some of their words were misinterpreted which can lower the reliability of the research. Furthermore the participants in this study were in age bracket of 25-38 years. This might not be a representative age for all immigrants in Gävle.

6.1 Implications for Further research

This study has examined unemployed immigrants' perception of the labor market in Gävle. The study has only represented immigrants from Africa, Asia and Europe and missing continents like Latin America, North America and Australia. It will be of importance to investigate the view of immigrants from the above continents. A further study of the missing age groups could be of importance in the future. An additional interesting part would have been to conduct interview with authority in charge of employment in Gävle. This will give a more comprehensive perspective on the situation of unemployed immigrants. Hopefully, this essay opens the door for more studies related to unemployed immigrants in the near future.

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APPENDIX 1

Interview guide

Background questions

- Age
- Gender
- Country of origin
- Marital status
- Education
- How long you lived in Sweden
- Have you lived in another city? If yes which?

1. Describe your employment opportunities in Gävle?
2. Describe the factors that affect employment opportunities in Gävle?
3. How do you think family affects your employments opportunities in Gävle

APPENDIX 2

Consent

I have been given the information about the study and I know that I at any time can discontinue the interview without any reason, I approve that student Ibrahim Adan and Ekaterina Ivanova, their supervisor and examiner have access to the material that will emerge from this interview.

I do also give my permission for this interview to be recorded.

Date

Signature interviewee:

Printed name:

Signature responsible interviewer:

Printed name:
