



**Integration challenges for quota refugees in Skåne and its implication:
The receiving municipality's perspectives.**

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate challenges within the provision of integration support to quota refugees and municipal integration staffs understanding of these challenges in Skåne. It was conducted through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with municipal integration staffs in Skåne. The research findings indicate three key challenges in the reception of quota refugees namely lack adequate housing, lack of financial resources from the region and government, and lack of provision of psychosocial support. Further challenges are connected to the lack of translators available to municipalities in the quota refugees' mother tongue, the lack of English or major refugee languages among quota refugees, and often poor mental health which slow down Swedish language learning process and affect integration negatively. As its contribution, this study provides a broader view on challenges with the provision of integration support by municipalities regarding reception capacity, housing, and integration programs to quota refugees simultaneously. Thereby, it points out the differences among municipalities in terms of resource allocation for integration, as well as the political will to integrate quota refugees which create unequal chances for integration.

Key words: Municipalities, Integration, Skåne, Reception capacity, Quota refugees

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1 Introduction

In recent years, a large number of the world's population have been forced to flee their country due to violence, war, hunger, extreme poverty, sexual or gender orientation, consequences of climate change, and other natural disasters with the hope of finding new homes (Hynie, 2018; Raleigh, 2011). These people travel across borders into neighbouring countries and end up settling in refugee camps in their new countries after seeking protection, thereby becoming refugees. Since the early 1950s, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has worked on providing durable solutions to displaced refugees (UNHCR, 2017). Durable solutions are either repatriation or return in safety and dignity to the countries of origin, local integration, or resettlement (Bevelander et al., 2009; UNHCR, 2017). The latter means the resettlement of refugees from refugee camps to a third country that has agreed to accept them. These sets of refugees are called quota refugees.

Over the past decade, there have been relatively few countries involved in the UNHCR resettlement program. This has resulted in a lack of knowledge in the field from a European perspective (Bevelander et al., 2009). Yet, Sweden has resettled thousands of refugees from refugee camps around the world since the inception of the resettlement program in 1950 in collaboration with UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). In 2019, unlike previous years when they resettled 1,900 quota refugees, Sweden resettled 5000 and agreed to resettle the same number yearly from 2019 (Migrationsverket, 2020). In contrast to other countries that lack statistical data on quota refugees, there have been several studies conducted in the Swedish context revealing that quota refugees encounter a more difficult integration process (Bevelander et al. 2009, p. 14; Capps et al. 2015). In this study, integration is understood as the outcome of a two-way process shaped by the refugees and the host community (UNHCR, 2013, p. 14).

However, most of these studies have focused on economic and labour market integration (see Bevelander, 2011; Bevelander et al., 2009; Vogiazides & Mondani, 2020). Some have researched the integration of quota refugees through the lens of refugees' experiences (see Elmeroth, 2003; Hermansson et al., 2003; Lindman, 2017; Munetsi, 2019; Shakibaie, 2008). In cases where attention was given to the perspectives of local authorities, the investigation mostly focused on integration challenges through policies (Jørgensen, 2012; Myrberg, 2017). Only limited studies have been conducted on the reception (see Lidén & Nyhlén, 2015) and

integration challenges for quota refugees from the local authority's perspectives (Stewart et al., 2008).

1.1 Research problem and aim

Skåne, one of the Swedish regions located in the South has 33 municipalities and admits a relatively large number of quota refugees with a total of 504 quota refugees in 2019 (Migrationsverket, 2020). Due to their delicate situation, quota refugees are said to be adversely affected by integration challenges especially in the labour market (Bevelander, 2011). They lack knowledge about Sweden, with many experiencing psychological distress before resettlement and have lived many years in refugee camps (Bevelander et al. 2009, p. 14; Capps et al. 2015). Therefore, they lag behind in societal progress. Yet, they get condensed establishment programs as other refugees for two years and are expected to be integrated at the end of those programs (Wiesbrock, 2011). In contrast, asylum seekers and family reunification migrants are said to have social networks and knowledge of the Swedish system. Therefore, they integrate faster (Leiler et al., 2019). Taken into consideration quota refugee's limited societal progress, it is likely to believe that they encounter many challenges and require more integration needs and support. Therefore, this empirical study aims to investigate challenges within the provision of integration support to quota refugees and how municipal integration staffs understand these challenges with respective differences to other migrant groups through the lens of housing, reception capacity, and integration programs for quota refugees in Skåne.

This study is academically relevant because it focuses on simultaneously investigating to provide a broader view of challenges within the provision of integration support to quota refugees in terms of reception capacity, housing, and integration programs, and municipal integration staff's understanding of these challenges in Skåne which only limited studies have done. Additionally, the study is societally relevant because findings can help tackle integration challenges and used to improve municipality's reception and integration of quota refugees in the selected municipalities, and in other municipalities in Sweden. Moreover, the study intends as its purpose to contribute to the insufficient integration literature by providing up-to-date knowledge on integration challenges at the local level using Skåne as its contextual focus.

Thus, this research is guided by the following research questions:

- a) What are the challenges within the integration support provided to quota refugees in Skåne and how do municipal integration staff understand these challenges?

- b) How do municipal integration staff understand the differences in integration challenges between quota refugees and other categories of migrants?

2 Contextual background

In the following section, the contextual background of this study is presented by introducing quota refugees and the case of Sweden. It begins by presenting the UNHCR resettlement program for quota refugees subsequently followed by briefly introducing the 21st-century Swedish integration policy. The resettlement and integration program in Sweden is presented to conclude the section.

2.1 The UNHCR resettlement program and quota refugees

In the late 1940s when the refugees who had fought in the second world war could not return to their countries, the United Nations (UN) and the International Refugee Organisation (IRO) thought about resettling these refugees to a third country. Thereby creating the resettlement program (Thomsson, 2009, p. 31). In the first years of the resettlement, more than one million people were resettled to a third country by the IRO which was later changed to the UNHCR in the 1950s (Thomsson, 2009, p. 32). Followingly, many more cases of resettlement between the 1950s and 1990s followed when refugees from Eastern Europe e.g., Hungary, Asia e.g., Vietnam, East, and North Africa e.g., Kenya and Sudan, gained the opportunity of protection by resettlement to a third country.

To show solidarity with displaced persons due to war, several countries began to develop resettlement programs to assist the ongoing work by UNHCR (Türk & Garlick, 2016). Ever since then, this has become part of a solution to displacement and is well recognised among several countries (Krasniqi & Suter, 2015). These sets of refugees residing in refugee camps due to war and other insecurities that are resettled are called quota refugees (UNHCR, 2018). Countries involved in these resettlement programs include traditional refugee resettlement host countries such as Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the United States (Bevelander et al., 2009). Additionally, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Iceland, Ireland, and the United Kingdom have established resettlement programs after they became prominent among traditional refugee resettlement countries. Since 2007, France, Paraguay, Portugal, Romania, Czech Republic, and Uruguay have also established resettlement schemes (Krasniqi & Suter, 2015). Looking at it in numerical terms, in 2017, the “main recipient of UNHCR resettled refugees continues to be the United States, which, despite

recording a 75 percent drop compared to 2016, received 36 percent of all UNHCR submissions (26,782), followed by the United Kingdom (9,218), Sweden (5,955), France (5,207), Canada (4,118) and Norway (3,806)” (Morrice et al., 2019, p. 2). Hence, most of the main recipients in 2017 were traditional refugee resettlement host countries.

Each country has its integration program for quota refugees with differing integration approaches and outcomes. For instance, Capps et al. (2015) illustrate the similarities and differences between resettlement programs in relation to labour market outcome, educational attainment, language acquisition, using the case of the United States of America, Canada, and Scandinavian countries. They state that a core goal of the US resettlement and integration program is based majorly on self-sufficiency. Self-sufficiency simply put is a situation when a person is capable of supporting him/herself financially or otherwise (Ott & Montgomery, 2015). This has led to the critique of its integration programs because of the lack of sufficient investment in integration support especially at the local level (Capps et al., 2015, p. 2). In contrast, Canada’s resettlement and integration programs, and that of Scandinavian countries such as Sweden and Norway, pursue to a large extent an interventionist approach where the government provides adequate integration support to refugees and immigrants (Reitz, 2002). Furthermore, Morrice et al. (2019) elucidate how the resettlement program in England to a major extent mirrors that of the US by emphasizing the self-sufficiency of migrants as its core goal. Therefore, the government only provide migrants with their needs in the first year especially by funding the English for speakers of other languages integration program. Afterwards, they are encouraged to partake in employment and in the case where they are unable to find one, they are moved to mainstream social support.

However, the Scandinavian resettlement and integration programs diverge from that of the US, and England as they emphasize investing heavily in integration programs by focusing on the training of immigrants before shifting attention to labour market participation. This is reflected in their intensive societal orientation and language training for immigrants after arrival (Capps et al., 2015). In addition, Capps et al. (2015) argue that the reason for the differences in integration programs between Canada, the US, and Scandinavian countries is because refugees and immigrants who arrive in the US in terms of language speak English to some extent, and in Canada, they speak English or French. Reason being that English and French are well-spoken languages around the world. The case of England can be expected to be the same as the US and Canada since English is an official language. This makes integration a lot less cumbersome since English and French are official languages in those countries as well.

However, this is not the case in Scandinavian countries because they do not have English as an official language. Thus, most refugees who arrive in these countries do not speak the respective official languages such as Swedish, Norwegian, or Danish as they are not spoken by many around the world. Hence, the reason for undertaking a different approach to resettlement and integration. The following section further elaborates about Swedish integration policy and the resettlement program in Sweden.

2.2 Swedish integration policy in brief

The Swedish integration policy has gone through several changes over the years to reconcile the needs of an increasingly diverse population since its inception in the 1970s (Bunar & Valenta, 2010, p. 468). Thus, the recent integration policy for the 21st century contained in the policy document “integrationspolitik för 2000-talet” (the integration policy for the 21st century) is aimed at enabling equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for all irrespective of their ethnic or cultural background, a community based on diversity and a society characterized by mutual respect and tolerance where all persons are actively responsible (Persson, 2006). The policy document spells out among other things, the activities of the public authorities, ways of tackling ethnic discrimination, xenophobia, and racism which is referred to as unjust or abusive treatment based on race, skin colour, national or ethnic origin, or religion.

Furthermore, the integration policy specifies that introduction programs are provided for newly arrived refugees to enable the individual as soon as possible to obtain housing, employment in order to become self-sufficient, good Swedish knowledge, and the ability to partake in the society (Wiesbrock, 2011). Thus, two main pillars of the integration policy are centred on housing and economic participation. The municipalities are responsible for these assignments. Generally, all municipalities are expected to provide Swedish language classes (SFI) and a 100-hour societal orientation program to refugees, yet the municipalities are given the freedom to design additional local integration policies and programs resulting in variations in all municipalities. However, in 2010, due to the increasingly high level of unemployment among immigrants and segregation in the housing sector, the integration policy was reformed where the public employment agency together with municipalities were mandated to help better integrate immigrants in order to ensure the rapid transition into the labour market and the society in general by designing individual support programs after assessment (Andersson Joona et al., 2016). In sum, while research shows a positive outcome after the policy change since

2010, there exists till date a huge gap between immigrants and natives in the Swedish labour market, and immigrants continue to face discrimination and segregation in Swedish society.

2.3 The resettlement and integration program in Sweden

Since the inception of the resettlement program by UNHCR in the 1950s, the Swedish government in collaboration with the UNHCR, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has resettled quota refugees from refugee camps to Sweden with the aim of integrating and making them new members of the society (Bevelander et al., 2009; UNHCR, 2018). In 2019, unlike previous years when they resettled 1900 quota refugees, Sweden resettled 5000 and agreed to resettle the same number yearly from 2019 (Migrationsverket, 2020). In fact, as of 2017, Sweden remained one of the highest refugee receiving countries in Europe in relation to its population (Morrice et al., 2019).

Upon arrival to Sweden, these refugees are resettled into different municipalities after an agreement has been reached between the receiving municipality and the Swedish Migration Agency (Bunar & Valenta, 2010). Thereafter, the municipalities in collaboration with the public employment service take responsibility for the integration of these newcomers by providing them with different but complementing integration support (Bunar & Valenta, 2010). Generally, language is considered in Sweden a key part of the integration support as it helps to find employment, to navigate everyday life situations, and to facilitate participation in society (UNHCR, 2013). Hence, they invest in language training for immigrants.

At the local level, the reception and integration of the increased number of quota refugees, in particular, continue to pose major integration challenges to both municipalities and the refugees due to the lack of adequate integrative infrastructures (Myrberg, 2017; Stewart et al., 2008). Moreover, the change of policy by the government from voluntary to mandatory reception of refugees additionally challenges the integration burden on municipalities who previously could decide whether to accept or reject refugees (Andersson Joonas et al., 2016). Accordingly, Andersson Joonas et al. (2016) claim that some municipalities frown at the reception of refugees because they lack the integrative capacity to cater for them. For instance, in terms of housing and provision of diverse language communication capacities (Capps et al., 2015; Righard & Öberg, 2018). These challenges make integration a complex and challenging process.

The challenging integration process is particularly more experienced by quota refugees because it is claimed that asylum seekers and family reunification migrants encounter less troublesome integration challenges when compared with quota refugees (Bevelander, 2011). This is because

they either have families to depend on in the case of the latter and have had contact with Swedish society and government agencies before acquiring their residence permit in the case of the former (Leiler et al., 2019).

Hence, on the one hand, the differences in admission pattern for all refugee categories creates different integration process. On the other hand, the burden of these municipalities to provide integration needs through its limited capacities for quota refugees creates a challenging integration process. Skåne, one of the Swedish regions located in the South has thirty-three municipalities and admits a relatively large number of quota refugees with a total of 504 quota refugees in 2019 (Migrationsverket, 2020). Considering Skåne's relatively large reception of quota refugees and previous research highlighting integration challenges from policy and refugees' perspectives, it is crucial to examine whether municipal integration staff in Skåne understand integration challenges from similar angles. Accordingly, to build this research on founded knowledge, the following section aims to present existing literature helping to understand integration challenges by looking at the interconnection between different integration elements as well as institutional barriers.

3 Literature review

The literature on refugees and their integration, in particular, has been on the ascending among scholars and decision-makers in the Global North, especially in Europe (e.g. Bevelander, 2011; UNHCR, 2013; Wiesbrock, 2011). This is partly due to the increased number of immigrants and refugees entering Europe through the UNHCR resettlement schemes, asylum seekers, and the family reunification process (Andersson Joonas et al., 2016). While the concerns for the integration of refugees are not a new phenomenon the increased recognition for these concerns, however, is relatively new. Reason being that refugee integration policies in European states became high on the political agenda in the mid-1990s (UNHCR, 2013). Thus, to understand integration challenges, it is crucial to reflect upon recent works of literature highlighting the interconnection between integration elements such as housing, education, language acquisition, and employment opportunities within resettlement programs. In other words, it is argued that the attainment of one of these integration elements influences the others. This forms the first part of this literature review. In the second part, literature on institutional barriers hindering migrant's integration are presented with major focus laying on barriers to accessing the host country's labour market, housing, education, and language.

3.1 Interconnection between integration elements within resettlement programs

Several elements contribute to either the success or barriers to refugee's reception, integration, and challenges to integration in their host community. According to Ager & Strang (2008) and their conceptual study on understanding integration, four main components affect the integration of refugees in their host community, namely *markers and means*, *social connections*, *facilitators*, and *foundation*. Each component is made up of certain elements i.e., markers and means represent employment, housing, education, and health; social connections relate to social bridges, social bonds, and social links; facilitators indicate language and cultural knowledge, safety, and stability; and lastly, foundation represents rights and citizenship. These elements are further elaborated on in the theoretical framework. Yet, in short, Ager & Strang (2008) use these integration elements to evaluate to what extent the host community provides housing to refugees, employment, education, health care, and means through which refugees can acquire the host country's language while ensuring they retain their identity, as well as how these former aspects facilitate social connections on a personal and institutional level. Accordingly, several scholars have shed light on the interconnection between some of the elements and how they affect refugees' integration process (Capps et al., 2015; Morrice et al., 2019). Hence, the following section presents arguments on how some of these elements are interconnected.

Foremost, Capps et al. (2015) and Morrice et al. (2019) stress that the attainment of one of the elements of integration, especially employment, education, housing, and language, can speed up the integration process and have a positive influence on the attainment of other elements of integration. Similarly, Murray & Skull, (2005) present in the Australian case that although refugees face many legal and institutional barriers to employment, healthcare, and education, yet, the attainment of one of these integrative elements could open the door to others. The following paragraphs shed light on the correlation between the elements considering each element in more detail.

The study of Riniolo (2016) and Capps et al. (2015) highlight that for instance, education attained in the host country such as Sweden, increases employment opportunities in the respective labour market. Amongst other things, this is because refugees with host country education are perceived to be more likely to meet the required labour market standard (Manhica et al., 2019).

Furthermore, employment helps in the acquisition of the host country's language as it can serve as a platform for practicing and developing one's language skills (Konle-Seidl, 2017). However, this may not always hold as research indicate that employment is not a guarantee for improving the language proficiency of migrants because they are usually employed in positions where they do not need to interact with anyone such as cleaning, newspaper delivery, or dish washing (Morrice et al., 2019, p. 15).

Additionally, looking more closely at language acquisition and its relationship to other integration elements, Riniolo (2016) argues that language acquisition for resettled refugees affects their access to long-term housing, education, and the labour market. More precisely, Riniolo (2016, p. 13) states that in the Swedish context, the Swedish language integration program for refugees called "Swedish for immigrants" (SFI) is centrally tailored at introducing the functionalities of the labour market and other social aspects of the society. In this regard, the acquisition of the Swedish language improves migrant labour market participation. However, an important aspect that Riniolo's study did not consider is that Swedish municipalities have the autonomy to decide the extent to which it can provide extra or basic language support which harms labour market participation of refugees especially for those in municipalities with limited provision of language support. In the same vein, Capps et al. (2015) argue that refugees and immigrants who for instance acquire English and French language proficiency in the case of Canada and English in the case of the US are more likely to increase their chances of acquiring education which in turn increases their chances of employment. Morrice et al. (2019) add that besides affecting migrants' education and employment opportunities, language proficiency also positively affects migrants' health. In fact, these studies have stressed the importance of language acquisition as it plays a key role in refugee's health because, on the one hand, they learn how to communicate with health officials and other governmental agencies. On the other hand, language acquisition promotes self-confidence among refugees and aid their integration process because communication with the majority society becomes less stressful. Nevertheless, arguments from these studies have shown a one-sided explanation of the interconnection between language acquisition and society. Integration and communication is a two-way process between the host community and the refugees. Therefore, consideration for the openness and willingness of the general society in creating social bridges is equally as important as the refugee's readiness to learn the host community language.

Lastly, as further elaborated below, migrants experience institutional integration barriers in the housing sector through segregation and isolation (Stewart et al., 2008). Accordingly, segregation and isolation reflect on other aspects of their life, for instance in lower employment opportunities, and limited interaction with natives which could have enhanced their language proficiency (Shakibaie, 2008). In the same vein, Righard & Öberg (2018) find that short-term sub-standard accommodation provided to refugees in the UK had significant lasting negative effects on self-reported health due to overcrowding. Relatedly, results from the study by the European Commission (2016) indicate that the “overcrowding rate among those born outside the EU and aged 20-64 stands at 25%, compared with 17% for the native-born. The levels are highest (40-55%) in Central and Southeast Europe (Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, and Poland) and lowest (<10%) in Belgium, Cyprus, Ireland, Malta and the Netherlands”.

Overall, this section has shown how the attainment of one integration element influences the attainment of another both positively and otherwise. In other words, the attainment of one element e.g., attaining housing in a segregated and isolated area brings about challenges that affect the integration process or the attainment of other integration elements negatively. In the following section institutional barriers that foster the challenges associated with these integration elements are further discussed.

3.2 Structural barriers to refugee integration in host countries

Scholarly debate about refugee integration claims that regardless of the system of resettlement and integration programs implemented in refugees’ host countries, refugees encounter barriers to integration regarding access to employment, housing, education, and language acquisition (e.g. Bevelander, 2011; Bevelander & Pendakur, 2014; Capps et al., 2015; Englund, 2002; Stewart et al., 2008). Accordingly, these barriers referred to as institutional barriers such as discrimination, exclusion, segregation, and racism are majorly created through institutional structures in the host country to systematically disadvantage certain groups of people (Phillips, 2006). Although, on the one hand, the degree of these institutional barriers varies from one country to another and affects all categories of migrants in different levels based on the means through which they enter the host country. On the other hand, pre-migration opportunities in terms of the level of education, language proficiency, employment experiences are also key determinants to how these barriers affect the refugees in their host communities. Respectively, in the following sections, the barriers to employment opportunities, housing, education, and language acquisition are discussed, keeping the contextual differences in mind.

3.2.1 Employment opportunities/ Labour market integration

Labour market and employment integration studies in Europe, particularly in Sweden have frequently focused on the comparison between immigrants and natives (see Anjum et al., 2012; Bevelander, 2011; Bevelander et al., 2009; Bucken-Knapp et al., 2019; Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2003; see Leiler et al., 2019; Sundvall et al., 2020). The analysis from such comparisons continues to indicate employment and wage gap differences between both groups (e.g. Bevelander et al., 2009). According to Vogiazides & Mondani (2020), in 2017, the employment gap between migrants and natives amounted to 13.6% in Sweden, the highest among OECD countries. Only 70% of male refugees and 65% of female refugees are gainfully employed ten years after their arrival. Refugees' labour market and employment integration are less different in other refugee receiving countries like the UK, Canada, USA, and Norway (Capps et al., 2015; Stewart et al., 2008). Many scholars especially in the Swedish context assert that these differences are a result of possible institutional and other forms of barriers placed on immigrants such as discrimination, and condemnation of their human and social capital by claiming human and social capital differences between natives and refugees (Bevelander et al., 2009; Duvander, 2001; Englund, 2002; Vogiazides & Mondani, 2020).

Manhica et al. (2019) in their study reveal that institutional barriers placed on refugees in the Swedish labour market are due to lack of recognition of foreign work experiences, discrimination, stigmatization, and job advertisement majorly published in Swedish language, thereby excluding migrants who do not understand Swedish. Respectively, Bunar & Valenta (2010) reaffirm the argument above. They stress that refugees and immigrants in Sweden receive extensive state-sponsored integration support majorly in the area of housing and labour market integration which are the two major pillars of Swedish integration policy. Yet, they argue that studies on Scandinavian integration reveal that refugees and immigrants have a lower standard of living and fare worse in the labour market compared with the rest of the population due to institutional barriers in access to the labour market. Moreover, Capps et al. (2015) add that these institutional barriers limit refugees who eventually find a job by condemning them to occupy low-paid employment mostly in the service sector even when they possess the requirements for high-paying employment in other sectors.

Relatedly, these institutional barriers also manifest in the Canadian, American, and Australian context, the traditional refugee receiving countries. On the one hand, Stewart et al. (2008) stress that in Canada and the USA, service providers are unable to meet the needed support of

refugees due to bureaucracy and resource constraints. On the other hand, studies on the respective three countries show how refugees face unemployment, underemployment, and difficulty securing employment that suits their qualification even when they are educated and qualified for such employment (i.e. Capps et al., 2015; Murray & Skull, 2005; Stewart et al., 2008). For instance, Stewart et al. (2008, p. 133) highlight that institutional barriers to employment for refugees in Canada is as a result of “non-recognition of foreign certificates, lack of Canadian work experience, inadequate job search skills resulting from language deficiency to those who cannot speak English or French and under-recognition for foreign work experiences”.

However, Bevelander, (2011) in the Swedish context and Morrice et al. (2019) in the UK context proclaim that these barriers to labour market integration affect immigrants and refugees at different levels. For instance, Bevelander (2011) posits that the means through which immigrants, namely quota refugees, asylum claimants, and family reunion migrants, enter a country- in this case, Sweden, play a big factor in labour market integration. Accordingly, he claims that quota refugees do not have a say in which area they are sent to, hence they could be sent to areas with limited employment opportunities. This is in contrast to family reunification migrants and asylum claimants, who can decide on the location they intend to settle in based on their social network. Yet, Vogiazides & Mondani (2020) claim that the geographical location of refugees and not just their admission process as argued by Bevelander (2011) play a vital role in determining integration through the labour market. In other words, a refugee can enter a country through family reunification who according to Bevelander (2011) are more likely to attain faster integration through employment. Thereby are least affected by institutional barriers. However, if the geographical location of that refugee is disadvantaged, it is likely that they are unable to find a job which will result in employment integration challenges.

Moreover, Bevelander (2011) claims that among all the categories of refugees, quota refugees have the least labour market integration through employment in Sweden. This is similar to other European countries, such as Ireland, where resettled refugees are three times more likely to report cases of discrimination when job searching (European Commission, 2016). This is not only due to lack of choice in their settlement location in the host country but also due to several other reasons such as having lived in refugee camps for years, having missed out on formal education, and experiencing trauma and depression (Sundvall et al., 2020). Thus, they require more initial support after resettlement. Additionally, Capps et al. (2015) argue that the

reason why quota refugees experience long unemployment periods is that they are encouraged to participate in the integration program which lasts from two years or more. In short, it can be claimed that institutional and other measures of barriers to labour market integration in Sweden affect especially quota refugees compared to other immigrants.

3.2.2 Housing

Institutional barriers hindering the integration of migrants are not only prevalent in the labour market and employment, but also cut across other spheres such as housing. Accordingly, the European Commission (2016) and Strang & Ager (2010) stress that housing is a key outcome indicator of successful integration. According to UNHCR, the provision of housing to migrants by the host country is part of the durable solutions (i.e. local integration) for migrants (UNHCR, 2013). However, it has been argued that housing can also bring about challenges to integration for migrants due to institutional barriers. The following section highlights these challenges, by first elaborating on institutional barriers for migrants in the public housing sector, and secondly, expatiating to institutional barriers in the housing sector affecting particularly quota refugees.

Studies have shown that institutional barriers hinder migrant's integration due to limited access to (public) housing. Findings from studies by the European Commission (2016) and Salat (2010) on the comparisons of access to public housing between migrants and natives indicate that migrants frequently face discrimination and prejudices at the hand of gate keepers who are responsible for allocating houses. Stewart et al. (2008) agree with these findings in the case of Canada, where refugees experience segregation, and social isolation through discrimination regarding access to public housing.

Drawing further from the work of Salat (2010) on Somalian migrants in the Swedish region of Stockholm and their access to public housing, he argues that institutional barriers imposed on migrants manifest through discrimination and prejudices in the queuing system for public housing. Discrimination according to the European Commission (2016) can be categorized as intangible i.e., unseen structural barriers imposed on migrants. In Sweden, the allocation of public housing is through a queueing system whereby individuals register with housing companies (Lind, 2017; Tyrcha, 2019). Moreover, there is usually a close collaboration between housing authorities and municipal housing corporations, therefore, these housing agents can determine who to allocate and in what areas these allocations can be situated.

In this regard, housing agents perpetuate discriminatory acts towards migrants on several folds by firstly, demanding requirements that migrants are unable to meet (Salat, 2010). For instance,

they demand high-income requirements usually stipulated to be three times the amount of the monthly rent and permanent employment contract before they can qualify to sign a housing contract. Since most migrant's face discrimination in the labour market, they are unable to meet such requirements. Secondly, discriminatory acts are carried out by housing agents by spatially segregating the limited number of migrants who seldomly meet these requirements to high migrant concentrated areas (Salat, 2010).

Furthermore, spatial segregation results in isolation and together with overcrowding, constitute a common finding in works of literature on institutional barriers to refugee integration through the lens of housing (e.g. Bunar & Valenta, 2010). According to Elmeroth (2003), isolation is more common within quota refugees, when compared to other categories of refugees. This claim can be illustrated by the study of Leiler et al. (2019). Just like Bevelander et al. (2009), Leiler et al. (2019) argue that quota refugees are mostly affected when compared to asylum seekers and family reunification migrants regarding housing and integration as a result of lack of social network, and isolation. For instance, Leiler et al. (2019) state that asylum seekers and family reunification migrants encounter less troublesome integration challenges resulting from isolation when compared to quota refugees because they either have families to depend on in the case of the latter and have made friends during the time of waiting before acquiring their residence permit in the case of the former. Additionally, asylum seeker and family reunification migrants who are unsatisfied with the accommodation provided to them by the municipality have the freedom to relocate (Leiler et al., 2019). However, recently, measures have been put in place to reduce ongoing densification in cities by discouraging asylum seekers from leaving their designated accommodations (Myrberg, 2017). One of such measures is that they forfeit their daily financial benefits. yet, according to Bunar & Valenta (2010), a large number of asylum seekers relocate due to limited employment opportunities in rural areas where they have been given accommodation and due to the desire to live close to their family and relatives. Quota refugees on the other hand have no such luxury of choice (Leiler et al., 2019). They are forced to stay in the accommodation provided to them which is usually in rural areas and outside of the main city. Thus, they often become isolated. While the study of Leiler and Elmeroth are particularly relevant for this study as investigating challenges within the provision of adequate housing to quota refugees is one of its focus, both studies have not considered how the frequently large family sizes of these refugees affect the provision of housing at the local level.

3.2.3 Education

Similar to other indicators used in measuring refugees' integration in their host country, the level of education refugees can acquire in the host country constitute an integral component in their integration process (Bevelander, 2011). Thus, the following section presents firstly, how pre-migration education affects the level to which institutional barriers impact migrants' integration. Secondly, institutional barriers encountered by migrants, especially quota refugees, in acquiring host country education are discussed.

Apart from institutional barriers limiting refugees from acquiring host country education that positively influences for instance their labour market opportunities, pre-migration educational level is also a determining factor to how these institutional barriers limit them (Morrice et al., 2019). Morrice et al. (2019) stress that pre-migration education is crucial to language learning proficiency. Similarly, Capps et al. (2015) and Stewart et al. (2008) argue that the characteristics of refugees at arrival to the host country correlates with the later outcome of their socioeconomic integration in the US and Canada. Likewise in Sweden, Englund (2002) stresses that having an education referring to pre-migration education increase the chances of a refugee entering the Swedish labour market. Yet, she acknowledges that they face many difficulties finding a job, especially one that fits their pre-migration education. Meaning that pre-migration characteristics such as age, level of literacy, gender, and other factors as indicated by Gurer (2019) in the case of Germany influence refugees' integration, and at the same time determine how institutional barriers affect them. For instance, a refugee can be educated in a certain discipline but is hindered by institutional barriers because his/her qualification is not recognized and accepted by the host country. Yet, that particular refugee could still encounter relatively fewer institutional barriers than other refugees with a lower level of education as he/she would have better opportunities in leveling up his education with the host country's standard than those with less education.

Reverting to institutional barriers in education limiting migrants from integration through the attainment of host country education, Stewart et al. (2008) present an argument from the gender perspective. The result from their study reveals that institutional barriers to the host country's educational attainment are particularly common among female migrants who have children. They claim that female migrants are disadvantaged from partaking in education because childcare subsidies provided by the host country to women with children are insufficient to

cover the high cost of day care, as such, they are forced to stay home to cater for their children, thereby refraining from education.

Relatedly as argued by many scholars, the lack of recognition and acceptance of qualifications acquired by migrants before resettlement is one of the common institutional barriers employed by a host country to deter and sometimes discourage them from attaining or continuing their education (e.g. Capps et al., 2015; Englund, 2002; Gurer, 2019; Morrice et al., 2019). These institutional barriers are less prevalent in Sweden because educational qualification acquired by migrant's pre-migration is sometimes recognized and accepted, according to Konle-Seidl (2017), although they are less transferable in the host country (Manhica et al., 2019). However, other forms of institutional barriers are synonymous with the Swedish context. For instance, the lengthy time it takes for the Swedish council of higher education to evaluate foreign qualifications can be argued to limit the rapid integration of migrants into both the host country's educational system as well as in the labour market (Konle-Seidl, 2017).

As highlighted in several studies on refugee integration and previous sections of this study, discrimination is a reoccurring phenomenon that explains why particular groups of people are disadvantaged and experience inequality in most aspects of society even in education (Englund, 2002). Accordingly, acquiring any form or level of education requires that one has to apply to educational institutions that are under the care of educational gatekeepers. These gatekeepers are responsible for screening, selecting, and deciding on candidates they consider to have met the criteria for selection. Therefore, Farchy and Liebig (2014) claim that migrants in the case of Sweden fare worse and have lower education compared to the native population because of discrimination they face in the educational sector which could be as a result of mismatching and under evaluating previously acquired education. However, this is difficult to prove. Similarly, Capps et al. (2015) second this argument but stress that this discrimination affects to a large extent quota refugees more compared to natives and other migrant categories. This is mainly due to the years some of these refugees have spent in refugee camps, thereby missing years of acquiring formal education. It leaves them languishing in a situation where they are considered too old as argued by Morrice et al. (2019) in the UK context and Capps et al. (2015) in the US and Swedish context.

3.2.4 Language

The learning of the host country's language and the proficiency of refugees in it has been identified to be an important element to refugee integration as proclaimed by Ager & Strang

(2008), Bucken-Knapp et al. (2019) and Morrice et al. (2019). As highlighted in the previous section, acquiring language proficiency in the host country's language opens doors to many opportunities for refugees. For instance, learning the local language improves refugees' social well-being (Morrice et al., 2019). However, the process of acquiring language proficiency through learning and practicing is made difficult as a result of many institutional barriers hindering refugees from partaking in language training as discussed below.

One of the institutional barriers hindering refugees from acquiring the host language and attaining its proficiency is the financial burden imposed on language learning in some countries (Capps et al., 2015; Morrice et al., 2019). In this regard, Morrice et al. (2019) claim that refugees are provided with state-funded language classes for only one year in the case of England. Thereafter, the state withdraws its support and expects unemployed refugees to continue learning the language at their own financial cost. This creates financial barriers to language learning resulting from the reduction in government support as well as, the high costs of classes and expensive travel costs. These barriers eventually lead to the reduction in participation of refugees in learning the host country's language. Relatedly, Capps et al. (2015) and Morrice et al. (2019) without considering differences in resource allocation to the integration of refugees stress that integration service providers reveal that institutional barriers affecting the integration of refugees are due to inadequate financial and human resources i.e., limited staff and low staff morale to provide refugees with the needed support to language learning. In fact, the challenge of limited human resources to language provision for refugees and the financial burden put on refugees for language learning is common in some host countries for instance England (Morrice et al., 2019)

Yet, in Sweden, there is no financial cost for language training for refugees (Wiesbrock, 2011). Sweden invests heavily in its language training for refugees through SFI with the hope of aiding integration through language acquisition and improvement. Nevertheless, Mestheneos & Ioannidi (2002) argue that other forms of institutional barriers hinder refugees which makes the state-funded language training counterproductive. According to Faris (2016), there are three main institutional barriers hindering refugees from Swedish language acquisition and improvement namely: the low quality of the Swedish language courses, the inefficient language teachers, as well as the way the SFI language program is designed. In this regard, Farchy and Liebig (2014) and Faris (2016) claim that for instance, the SFI language program is designed without consideration for the heterogeneity among refugees. They claim that all refugees are put together in the same language class irrespective of their differences in terms of the level of

literacy, pre-migration experiences, as well as other factors that result in differences in the pace of learning as well as learning capacity. In addition, Faris (2016) claim that the low quality of language classes, as well as the inefficient teaching pattern, affect refugees as they become bored and less motivated to learn or improve their Swedish language skills. Similarly, Morrice et al. (2019) second Faris' (2016) argument, stating that the situation is the same for refugees learning the English language in England.

Relatedly, Leiler et al. (2019) stress that another institutional barrier hindering, for instance, asylum seekers from language acquisition is the long waiting time for the recognition of their status in Sweden. They argue that these sets of migrants are initially eager to learn and acquire the Swedish language when they first arrive. However, over time, they become frustrated with waiting for their legal recognition and similarly become less motivated to learn Swedish which eventually affects their integration process.

While not much literature was found on differences in the experience of institutional barriers between quota refugees and other migrants, Shakibaie (2009) argues that quota refugees experience institutional barriers of learning the host country's language to a greater extent, due to their difficult pre-migration experiences as well as greater level of isolation in the host country. This relates to previous arguments.

3.3 Summary

In sum, in this chapter, works of literature on the integration of refugees in their host countries have been presented. As a sort of laying the foundation, scholarly argument on the interconnection between components of integration for refugees was put forward. Respectively, it was highlighted how the attainment of one of the components of integration influences other components. For instance, gaining employment influences speedy language proficiency. However, it was argued that it does not universally hold in all cases. Especially, since institutional barriers affecting the attainment of one element could bring about further challenges that affect the integration process, or the attainment of other integration elements negatively.

Subsequently, arguments by several scholars on institutional barriers hindering refugees from integration were elaborated using the labour market, housing, education as well as language as a point of reference. Accordingly, the section highlighted that refugees both in the Swedish context and beyond experience socioeconomic integration barriers due to discrimination, racism, xenophobia, isolation, and social inequality, and the study of Elmeroth (2003) and

Leiler et al. (2019) are pertinent to this study. Furthermore, several scholars found that particularly quota refugees experience greater barriers in contrast to other migrants in terms of employment, housing, education, and language. Lastly, it was argued that the degree to which state institutional barriers hinder refugee's integration varies from one state to another and depends on refugees' pre-migration characteristics.

Overall, although host countries claim to be interested in integrating migrants by establishing integration programs and other sorts of support, institutional barriers employed by host countries are major factors acting against the rapid integration of refugees especially in the labour market and housing sector, as well as when it comes to educational and language attainment.

4 Theoretical Framework

In this section, two theories guiding this study are presented. However, before both theories were selected, alternative theories were considered. For instance, multi-level governance and Durkheim's social theory were considered as alternative theories. However, after assessing both theories, they were deemed unsuitable in answering the research questions because the former deals with the relationship between all levels of governance, and the latter focus on the effect of how society shapes the beliefs of individuals. Thus, local level governance theory and integration theory was selected and considered to best suit this study because the study focuses its analysis of challenges with providing integration support at the municipal level. Local-level governance theory is useful and applicable to this research as it helps to conceptualize the role of local authorities in designing local integration programs and/or policies that are unique to the local context. Integration theory is particularly relevant because it helps to theorize how the receiving community and the refugees partake in the adaptation process in refugees becoming new members of the host society. The goal of this section is to provide a theoretical framework suitable for analysing the research questions and to accomplish the objective of the study.

4.1 Local governance theory

A central theory composing the theoretical framework of this thesis is the local governance theory. This theory is used to analyse how decentralization in the provision of integration support and programs within municipalities affects quota refugees at varying levels. According to John (2001, p. 2), the central concept of local governance was inspired by J.S Mill in 1861 when he argued for the importance of local democracy. Accordingly, local governance enables

and provides means whereby citizens through elected or nominated local authorities can exercise freedom or some level of control over local affairs especially when they are unsatisfied with policies of the central government (Sikander, 2011, p. 1). However, the framework for which their local democracy is allowed is majorly within the blocks of the central government (John, 2001). Thus, in the same vein, policies about the integration of refugees in many liberal European states are usually enacted at the local level with a typical example being Sweden, Denmark (Jørgensen, 2012), and Germany (Lang, 2000). This approach of governance also called decentralization refers to a system of governance where regional and local authorities can either create supplementary policies to those at the national level or design their local integration policies (Jørgensen, 2012; Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner, 2021).

Nevertheless, in most literature on refugee and integration policies, the state is frequently taken as the unit of analysis generally. Seldomly have local authorities' perspectives at the local level been used in analysing integration challenges. (i.e. Betts et al., 2020). However, these local/municipal authorities play an important role in the formation and implementation of integration policies (Jørgensen, 2012). They act as gatekeepers and reconcile the implementation of national policies and in some cases adopt supplementary ones (Betts et al., 2020). Hence, the local authorities' perspective is a crucial conceptual element for understanding integration challenges at the local level.

In Sweden, a decentralized system of governance is practiced where municipalities have the right to self-governance, but the policy framework is partly set by the central government (Government offices of Sweden, 2021). This means that municipalities have the power to design local integration and other policies. Consequently, when municipalities have the autonomy to design their integration policies, Betts et al. (2020) and Jørgensen (2012) argue that their perception of refugees either as an opportunity or as a threat in line with the municipality's economy, in addition to other factors may influence and act as a guidepost to policy adoption. Therefore, keeping this in mind, in the analysis section, focus will lay on the confirmation of this claim. Additionally, Betts et al. (2020, p. 6) and Bunar & Valenta (2010) state that the level of solidarity in existence between the majority group and the refugee community in the municipality - what Betts et al. call "identity-based solidarity"- is crucial to how municipalities implement and design local integration policies. Furthermore, Betts et al. (2020) claim that for municipalities who adopt local policies, the convergence or divergence of such policies from national policies depends largely on, for example, interpretation of national policies at the local level, how dependant municipalities are on the national

government in terms of funding and the system of government practiced. In Sweden, municipalities are to a large extent financially self-sufficient (Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner, 2021). However, they get funded by the state in the case of reception and integration of refugees (Migrationsverket, 2020).

Hence, decentralization especially in the Swedish context has brought about a system of governance whereby particularly local authorities have been empowered and can decide to bypass a state with its local policies (Peters & Pierre, 2001). Relatedly, it can be argued that such autonomy accorded to local authorities may result in consequences as local authorities may decide to adopt policies, not in line with those of the state. Henceforth, local governance may bring about solutions to integration challenges whereby local authorities have the autonomy to design, adopt and implement usually more accommodating unique policies to solve unique integration issues (Maggetti & Trein, 2019).

Overall, it can be argued that state and local government interpretation of integration challenges may differ depending on whether they utilize the same or different integration policies. This difference in understanding of integration challenges offers a unique conceptualization in the analysis section of this thesis as it provides an avenue to make sense of municipal integration staff's understanding of challenges with the provision of integration support for quota refugees. Moreover, it can be claimed that as Swedish municipalities independently direct resources towards integration programs and have large autonomy in creating policies connected to the local context, they may have a good understanding of integration challenges. However, it should be highlighted that as each Swedish municipality has different internal structures, there may be differences to what extent resources are allocated to integration programs. For instance, some may have specific units responsible for discharging integration programs while others may not have a specific unit but have broader structures within the municipality. This may influence to what extent municipal staff understands integration challenges.

4.2 Integration

The second pillar of this theoretical framework is based on integration theory. Scholars have brought forward different elements helpful in framing integration theory. As such, in the following section, these different elements are discussed and the ones crucial for this study are highlighted. These elements of integration theory are drawn from theoretical discussions by Ager & Strang (2008), Esser (2001), and Hynie (2018). First, a definition of integration is elaborated. Subsequently, the conceptual elements of integration theory are discussed.

4.2.1 Definition on integration

There is no clear definition of integration as it is a complex process that can vary depending on context and over time (Ager & Strang, 2008). However, several scholars agree that the most suitable definition of integration considers it as a two-way process on multiple levels such as on cultural, educational, and economic level (e.g. Ager & Strang, 2008; Castles et al., 2002; Hynie, 2018; Reitz, 2002). A two-way process means that both the refugees and the receiving society partake in the adaptation process (Castles et al., 2002; UNHCR, 2013). Henceforth, this study adopts the operational definition by UNHCR (2013) that relates to recent scholarly definitions of integration. UNHCR (2013, p. 14) states that integration can be defined as “the end product of a dynamic and multifaceted two-way process with three interrelated dimensions: a legal, an economic and a social-cultural dimension. Integration requires efforts by all parties concerned, including preparedness on the part of refugees to adapt to the host society without having to forego their own cultural identity, and a corresponding readiness on the part of host communities and public institutions to welcome refugees and to meet the needs of a diverse population.”

This is in contrast to the other conceptual framework for understanding refugee’s adaptation and acculturation to their host society. These concepts are assimilation- a concept that supposes that immigrants are to conform to the mainstream if they are to become similar to the majority population in terms of successful economic and social incorporation (Schneider & Crul, 2010). Therefore, it is regarded as a one-way process, emphasizing immigrant's and refugee’s readiness to fully adapt to the host society (Aleksynska & Algan, 2010; Jørgensen, 2012). Other concepts include “separation - when individuals hold on to their original culture and wish to avoid interaction with others; marginalization - when there is little cultural maintenance or having relationships with others” (Robila, 2018, p. 2).

Contrary to the other concept, integration re-emerged in Europe as one of the most important phenomena in the 1990s UNHCR (2013) as a growing political and policy debate by European nations for refugees and immigrant’s adaptation. The concept of refugees becoming “*similar*” to mainstream society presupposes that the society is not static. It involves processes of change on the part of the refugees and mainstream society (Schneider & Crul, 2010). Thus, refugees can become similar to the majority of society while retaining their cultural traits. Hence, European states make referent to immigrants and refugees becoming similar to the majority population as a process of integration. This concept is considered the best approach to refugee's

adaptation (Robila, 2018). Thus, as the focus of this study lays on municipal challenges on providing integrative support to refugees, it relates to one of the domains of the two-way process associated with integration. Thus, this thesis adopts integration as the focus of this study and not assimilation.

4.2.2 Conceptual elements of integration theory

Keeping the operational definition of integration above in mind, Ager & Strang (2008) highlight that it is crucial that, for a state and refugees to claim successful integration, there must be indicators that integration is measured against. Hence, they provide a framework with “core domains reflecting [the] normative understanding of integration” (Ager & Strang, 2008, p. 167). Though, this framework is context-dependent and may require adaptation and alteration of the core domains according to the local context. The identification of their domains proposes a well-established and two-sided understanding of integration. In the sense that it does not only consider the refugees’ perspectives but also the perspective of the host community – in this case, the municipality - of which the latter is key to this study.

This relates to Reitz’s (2002) understanding of the host society’s role in immigrant reception and integration. He identifies the following four attributes for a host community to entail, namely “pre-existing ethnic or race relations within the host population; differences in labour markets and related institutions; the impact of government policies and programs, including immigration policy, policies for immigrant integration, and policies for the regulation of social institutions; and the changing nature of international boundaries, part of the process of globalization” (Reitz, 2002, p. 1006). His theoretical framework is context related to traditional reception and integration countries such as the U.S. and Canada. Yet, he argues that this framework can be applied to relatively new immigration countries for instance within Europe but acknowledging contextual differences. While all four elements seem important in understanding integration in the Swedish context, for this study specifically the third element government policies and programs are of particular relevance. This is because integration programs are a key focus of this study, and it also aligns with the aim of the study which is to investigate municipal staffs’ understanding of challenges with providing integration support. Respectively, Reitz (2002) argues that there is a difference between *laissez-faire* (e.g. U.S) or interventionist governmental integration policies (e.g. Canada). The former provides limited government support to refugees while the latter offers more comprehensive integration support through various agencies for instance, on the government and local level, as well as through

NGOs and private institutions. It can be claimed that Sweden, similar to Canada, adopts the interventionist governmental integration approach (Ugland, 2018)

Furthermore, government policies and programs can entail for instance, “programs [assisting] immigrant settlement and integration, such as language training and counselling, and also policies for the regulation of inter-group relations, such as equal rights provisions in employment, housing and other areas of society, and policies regarding multiculturalism” (Reitz, 2002, p. 1013). Similarly, Ager & Strang (2008 p. 184-185) propose a framework on integration mirroring Reitz’s argument. It comprises of four main themes that can be summarized as follows “achievement and access across the sectors of employment, housing, education, and health; assumptions and practice regarding citizenship and rights; processes of social connection within and between groups in the community; and barriers to such connection, particularly stemming from lack of linguistic and cultural competences and from fear and instability.” For the analysis of this study, not all concepts will be touched upon because they go beyond the scope of this study. Thus, the following section identifies relevant concepts of integration that are within the confines of this study.

First of all, in order to remove barriers for integration, an essential part is that government policies and programs provide linguistic and cultural knowledge of the host community to the refugees to facilitate the social integration of an individual in the new community. While Ager & Strang (2008) term this as facilitators, Esser (2001) identifies this as cultururation process. Similar to Ager & Strang (2008), he stresses that it requires refugees to develop their human resources such as local language skills and knowledge of cultural norms and rules, and the host community to adapt to the new community member. Hence, for the former, language classes that also transfer cultural knowledge are important factors. For the latter, especially from a local government level, Ager & Strang (2008) note that the state should ensure that key information is well received by refugees. For instance, by providing sufficient information material in the diverse languages of refugees as well as other means of communication to the refugees such as through the provision of interpreters by the municipalities. This would facilitate the smooth integration of refuge into the local community and help them to get acquainted with the new rules, norms, and system of the new society they live in.

Moreover, Esser (2001) highlights three additional elements supporting successful social integration namely positioning, interaction and identification. All three elements are to a large extent depend on the cultururation process. For instance, positioning refers to a refugee obtaining

a social position through occupation, education, or certain rights. Furthermore, interaction relates to social interaction between the refugee and the host community in a daily setting. This will be further developed below. Lastly, identification of the refugee with the host society and vice versa is a crucial process by which the host community becomes the new home to the refugee. Yet, this is a long-term process and cannot be assessed in this study. As indicated above, all these three elements are highly dependent on the refugee's human resource capabilities as well as the acceptance of the host community.

What Esser calls positioning adds to Ager & Strang's (2008) understanding of markers and means referring to employment, housing, education, and health. This study in its analysis lay a specific focus on housing as this is one of the key responsibilities of the municipalities and education as it is a key driver for other domains of integration. Housing is an integral part of integration as it strengthens refugee's physical, emotional, and psychological wellbeing (Ager & Strang, 2008). While education is crucial to acquire necessary skills to access the labour market as well as for children to connect with the host community.

Additionally, Ager & Strang (2008) agrees with Esser (2001) that successful integration requires the establishment of social connection between refugees and the host communities. This is especially important as scholars such as Hynie (2018) have found that simply living in proximity would not lead to interpersonal interaction. Accordingly, developing a space for refugees to act autonomously and where all members of the community including the refugees feel welcome is paramount. In other words, it is crucial that an evenly mutual relationship between refugees and the host community is established. Additionally, this can smoothen the integration process by challenging stereotypes related to the host society's perception of immigrants. For instance, Hynie (2018) highlights that immigrants can be considered a threat to the host society as they are believed to be an economic burden, violent or criminal, and may alter traditional values, morals, and norms. This feeling of fear is interlinked with stereotypes attached to immigrants such as laziness and dependency. However, he argues that this fear is especially arising from people experiencing economic difficulty in high-income countries as they are afraid that immigrants may take away their limited opportunities. Furthermore, this fear is coupled with a lack of transparent integration and immigration policies. Thus, it can be argued that this feeling of fear and threat relates more to the community members of the host society and may not be applicable to the municipal level responsible for discharging integration policies. However, it is crucial to keep these aspects in mind as the analysis may bring forward such elements considering that each municipality has its individual organizational and political

structures. Therefore, this study understands these aspects hindering successful integration as integration obstacles.

Ager & Strang (2008) group the establishment of social connection into three categories inspired by Putnam's theory of social capital (Siisiäinen, 2000) namely, social bonds, social bridges, and social links. As the focus of this study lays on the municipals' perspective, the main category that seems relevant for this study is "social links". Social links can be defined as "the connection between individuals and structures of the state, such as government services" (Ager & Strang, 2008, p. 181). Ager & Strang (2008) state that for instance language barriers and unfamiliarity with the bureaucratic and institutional structures of the host community may limit this connection. Therefore, facilitating means such as language and institutional knowledge as identified above, are crucial factors supporting the establishment of social links.

4.3 Summary

In sum, the first pillar of this theoretical framework is formed by local governance theory. This theory helps to understand the municipal level as a crucial entity in integration policy and implementation. Followingly, in Sweden, the local authority i.e., municipality, has the right to self-governance and therefore plays an important role in the formation and implementation of integration policies. Thus, their perspective on integration challenges on the local level is paramount. Here, it is crucial to keep in mind for the analysis that each municipality is shaped by its own organizational and political structures which may influence their perception of integration challenges.

The second pillar is shaped by integration theory. This study understands integration as the outcome of a two-way process shaped by the refugee and the host community. Accordingly, for this study, it is paramount to highlight the role of the public institutions in the host community to provide refugees with sufficient support for successful integration. In other words, Sweden is understood to have an interventionist governmental integration policy putting responsibility on governmental institutions, especially at the local level to attain a progressive integration.

Furthermore, the analysis of this study is guided by the key concepts identified in this pillar of the theoretical framework namely, cultururation, positioning, integration obstacles, and social links. Cultururation refers to the provision of linguistic and cultural knowledge. Moreover, positioning is understood as the provision of housing and educational support. Additionally,

integration obstacles are shaped by the local authorities' negative perception of refugees due to their stereotypes, a feeling of fear and threat. Lastly, social links relate to the connection between refugees and the local authorities which can be enabled through institutional support.

5 Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the research methodology. First, the philosophical consideration of the research is explained. Subsequently, the research design is elaborated, followed by the method sections. The method section is divided into data collection, data analysis, ethical consideration, validity and reliability, and delimitations.

5.1 Philosophical consideration

In this section, the ontological and epistemological approach of this thesis is presented. It is used to shed light on the philosophical position of the author.

Ontology is the philosophy of knowledge, indicating a scholar's belief on the nature of reality and whether it can be observed (6 & Bellamy, 2013, p. 13). This research takes up the critical realist ontology approach inspired by Roy Bhaskar which indicates that there is only one social reality that however constitutes of unobservable processes such as beliefs and desires. Accordingly, Sayer (2015) argues that events occur irrespective of whether we experience them or not. In other words, there is an interplay between the mechanism of real events and experiences produced by empirical cases. Moreover, unobservable processes result in causal effects that become observable (Baumberger et al., 2016, p. 11; Joseph & Roberts, 2004, p. 1). For instance, the unobservable 'stereotyping' of specific ethnic groups leads to racially based discrimination of such groups which can be observed through differences in labour market employment or individual performance due to limited access to opportunities.

Moreover, from a critical realist standpoint, reality can only be approximated but not fully identified due to two main factors (6 & Bellamy, 2013, p. 13). Firstly, it is argued that knowledge derived through observation only gives partial information about reality because it is shaped by unobservable processes. Secondly, reality is constantly changing due to the influence of different unobservable processes. Hence, data will only provide the researcher with information describing an approximation of reality at a certain point in time. For instance, this research relies on the perspectives from municipal workers about their perception of the reality of reception and integration challenges of quota refugees as well as the researcher's interpretation of such observations. Thereby, it must be acknowledged that these perspectives

on the reality in the given context may not represent the full reality as it is shaped by unobservable processes such as the refugee's perspectives, interests, feelings, and experiences.

Furthermore, the epistemological perspective of this study is also constituted by critical realism. Epistemology is the study of knowledge about how to identify what constitutes the truth (Baumberger et al., 2016, p. 1). Epistemological critical realism holds that the reality of natural classification and discourses of the social world can be understood only if we recognise the structures that produce those classifications (Bryman, 2016, p. 25). Hence, critical realist epistemology attempts to determine the observable factors that shed light on the (unobserved) reality (Bryman, 2016, p. 623; Haig & Evers, 2016, p. 3). This is achieved through the help of a "focal theory" that helps to pinpoint and interpret such observable factors (6 & Bellamy, 2013, p. 14). Moreover, critical realists incorporate in their explanations theoretical terms that are not directly controllable to observations. In other words, a theory is believed to be a tool helping to identify facts through observation and interpretation about the unobservable processes of reality. Respectively, it is crucial to carefully select the concepts and theories for the research to deduct valid interpretations (6 & Bellamy, 2013, p. 14). However, as a critical realist researcher, one is always aware of the possibility that the focal theory does not hold true about the observable factors of reality (6 & Bellamy, 2013, p. 14). Hence, while theory and concepts help to identify such factors and enable the researcher to make inference about reality, theory may also need to be developed further through careful induction and theorization.

5.2 Research design

This study is based on a qualitative approach. A qualitative study is appropriate when the researcher aims to explain or give further insights into people's understanding of occurrences (Bryman, 2016; Hodges, 2011). Thus, it rests on a case study research design (de Vaus, 2001, p. 220). A case study research can either be holistic, one that allows the researcher to study the whole parts of a phenomenon or embedded. An embedded case study is a study that allows the researcher to investigate parts within the general phenomenon of cases in order to draw comparisons which is suitable for strengthening applied theories (de Vaus, 2001, p. 227). Thus, this study adopts the embedded case study approach. Hence, all the municipalities under investigation were understood as a single case and aspects that form the core focus of this study, for instance, housing, reception, and integration capacity within municipalities were analysed in line with how municipal integration staffs understand challenges with the provision of support for quota refugees.

Furthermore, this study uses an abductive reasoning approach (Żelechowska et al., 2020) by applying flexibility between deductive and inductive reasoning. On the one hand, it uses local governance theory and integration theory to test data (6 & Bellamy, 2013, p. 76). On the other hand, it allows the possibility of theory development through the data. Therefore, because this study investigated the understanding of municipal integration staff about challenges with the provision of integration support for quota refugees, and the respective differences to other migrant groups, a qualitative approach was suitable. Accordingly, questionnaires enabled the collection of a vast array of information, and semi-structured interviews allowed for deeper exploration of the data (de Vaus, 2001, p. 11).

5.3 Methods

5.3.1 Data collection

To answer the research questions, data were collected from municipalities in two separate stages. The first part of the data was collected through the NGO Save the Children on the needs of quota refugees in Sweden. This part of the data was collected by sending out closed response questionnaires with pre-given answers through an online survey platform called Netigate. The data collected through the survey questionnaire consisted of fifteen questions divided into three sub-headings with questions regarding municipalities reception, housing, and integration capacity for quota and other municipal assigned refugees. Questionnaires were sent to 221 municipalities with 86 responses. However, out of the total questionnaire sent, 33 were sent to municipalities in the Skåne region with 11 responses. Thus, in this study, only part of the data concerned with the geographical location-Skåne was used. The region of Skåne was selected for this study because it receives a relatively large number of quota refugees and accounted for the highest response rate from the overall quota refugee need project. Thus, it became necessary to explore further about integration challenges for quota refugees in the region for academic and societal importance.

The original questionnaire was in Swedish but with the help of google translate and my intermediate Swedish language skills, I translated it to English to enable a better analysis of responses. The second part of the data was collected through semi-structured interviews with municipal integration staffs conducted physically and online using an interview guide with questions about municipalities' reception, housing, and integration programs for quota refugees (see Appendix). A semi-structured interview can simply be explained to be a non-restrictive interview between an interviewer and an interviewee where open-ended questions are asked to

obtain detailed information. In total, 4 interviews were conducted in both Swedish and English using Samsung S10 for recording. Since I have an intermediate level understanding of the Swedish language, it was possible to conduct the interviews in both languages and I used google to translate words I did not fully understand.

Regarding the first part of the data collected through the questionnaire, bearing in mind its limitation concerning the number of municipalities, it can be justified those 11 responses out of 33 amounts to an adequate number for this study as they represent 33% of the total percentage of municipalities in Skåne. Additionally, semi-structured interviews with municipal integration staff gave more depth to this study as it was used to complement information collected through the questionnaire. This study applied purposive sampling technique because the researcher has a clearly defined study purpose in mind. As such, the selection of respondents i.e., municipalities was based on two criteria. The first criterion was that such municipality presently receives quota and other municipal assigned refugees or have received refugees in the past. Secondly, that respondents have specialised knowledge about the reception and integration of quota refugees because they are involved in local integration. Besides, a clear distinction was made between quota and other municipal assigned refugees. It was necessary to distinguish between different types of refugees because it allowed respondents to differentiate when explaining between challenges faced by quota refugees and other municipal assigned refugees.

It is important when collecting data for a study through a questionnaire and interviews that the right respondents are selected, instructions on how to fill the questionnaire are given, terminologies are explained, and the purpose and use of collected data are explained (Bryman, 2016). Thus, at the beginning of each data collecting process, all these relevant considerations were explained. This was to ensure that ethical considerations were taken care of in the study.

Furthermore, it is important that a researcher conducts sampling of materials when collecting data for research purposes. Thus, during the data collection, purposive sampling (Bryman, 2016, p. 407) method was used to test the questionnaire. A test link of the original questionnaire was created on the Netigate survey platform and sent by email to persons working with refugee integration. This was to help in determining if the questions were clear and understandable before the original questionnaire was sent to respondents.

5.3.2 Data Analysis

The data collected for this case study was analysed based on embedded thematic analysis (Bryman, 2016, p. 584; de Vaus, 2001, p. 220). Thematic analysis is a frequently used tool in qualitative analysis but can be approached from different angles (Bryman, 2016, p. 584). However, generating themes and/or codes are general key aspects of the analysis process. Therefore, it is crucial to elaborate on the specific approach employed in this study.

In this study, a theme is understood as an overarching category of codes and sub-codes derived from the data. Hence, the first stage of the analysis involved initial coding of the data with the theoretical concepts i.e., cultururation, positioning, integration obstacles, and social links in mind (Bryman, 2016, p. 588). Yet keeping an open mind for explorative coding to identify information unrelated to previously identified concepts (see coding table in the appendix). In the second stage, identified codes were grouped into themes by focusing on repetition, similarities, differences, and missing data within codes and sub-codes to reduce the number of codes (Ryan and Bernard, 2003 in Bryman, 2016, p. 586). Throughout the analysis process, the qualitative data analysis software Nvivo was used to facilitate the coding process as well as to provide transparency to the data management and analysis process of this study.

Overall, the thematic analysis allowed findings from municipal integration staffs' responses on integration challenges for quota refugees to be presented as a single case of Skåne. Additionally, focus also laid on respective differences in integration challenges between quota refugees and other migrant groups.

5.3.3 Ethical consideration

This section of the study presents the ethical consideration by the author concerning the data collection process. Ethical considerations are a very important aspect when conducting any type of research as such it should be treated with great care. "Ethical considerations revolve around sensitive issues such as how researchers treat the people who they research on" (Bryman, 2016. p 121) during the data collection process. Other important ethical aspects to consider during research include whether there is harm to participants, whether it invades participant's privacy, whether there is a lack of informed consent and if deception is involved. (Bryman, 2016. p 125). Therefore, this study adopts the principle of "no harm" by not causing any physical, developmental, stress, and retreat from anything that may result to cause risk to respondents. Moreover, consent to use the data collected from the respondents were granted by all respondents and can be provided only to authorised persons if needed. Yet, respondents,

interviewees, and their corresponding municipalities will be made anonymous. Additionally, as the purpose of collecting the material was solely for this project, all material collected will be stored in a way that it does not reach the general public and will be destroyed at the end of the project.

5.3.4 Validity and Reliability

5.3.5 Reliability

The preference for the use of a case study research design comes with some limitations and trade-offs. Thus, the question of validity and reliability must be addressed (Bryman, 2016, p. 41) to enable the researcher make a proper inference. Importantly, I am aware that validity and reliability are concepts that are mostly applied in quantitative research to manage large statistical materials. yet, the issue they address in this qualitative study is important as it allows the research to draw valid conclusions. Accordingly, this study aims to attain high reliability. To achieved this, two criteria were met. First, questions and answers in the questionnaire are pre-given, and using the same interview guide in the semi-structured interview allows for replicability. Secondly, municipalities selected reflect a good variation in a variable chosen as a factor i.e., the number of quota refugees received by municipalities. The Year 2019 was used to represent the base year because it was the last year quota refugees were received in Sweden before the Covid-19 pandemic disruption and 26 municipalities received quota refugees. The municipalities were grouped as big i.e., municipalities that received 50 or more quota refugees representing 50 percent (1/2), medium and small, municipalities that received between 49 and 1 quota refugees representing 41% (10/24) of the total number of quota refugees received. Thus, it shows that municipalities were not randomly selected. The selected municipalities were chosen because they receive quota refugees and reflect a common pattern regarding the number of refugees received representing big, medium, and small municipalities. Additionally, interviewees were selected because they are involved in the local integration of refugees.

5.3.6 Validity

Good research should achieve both internal and external validity in order to infer a valid conclusion (de Vaus, 2001, p. 27). Therefore, this study aimed at attaining internally and externally valid conclusions by ensuring that the tools and methods used in the data collection were consistent and reliable. To ensure the validity of the study, an option indicated as “others” was provided in the pre-given answers to respondents in the questionnaire to allow them to provide more information about integration challenges for quota refugees which according to

Guthrie (2010, p. 131) enable better understanding. Additionally, in the interview, ethical consideration was followed to ensure validity. Moreover, to circumvent problems that may arise regarding the validity of this study, both parts of the data that were collected through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were scrutinized by my internship supervisor and other colleagues to ensure the right questions were asked and it followed due processes. Transcription and coding of both materials were done keeping the key components of theories in mind i.e., cultururation, positioning, integration obstacles, and social links in mind (Bryman, 2016, p. 588).

5.3.7 Delimitations

This thesis lays its focus on the understanding of municipal integration staff about integration challenges. Thus, a possible delimitation of this study lays in the non-consideration of the perspectives of the quota refugees. Although there is a relatively large number of studies with attention given to the refugees, yet the non-consideration of the refugees could have benefitted the study as it would shed light on the understanding of how they perceive integration and integration challenges themselves. However, due to the limited time and resources of this study, it was not possible to consider the refugee's perspectives in addition to those of municipal staff.

Additionally, the study only considers the time frame from the municipality's reception of the refugees and the end of their establishment period. The study does not consider the integration challenges after the establishment period. It could have benefitted the study to understand the integration challenges of quota refugees after the establishment period. Lastly, to enrich this study, the perspectives of the public employment service workers on integration and integration challenges for quota refugees could have been included since they work in collaboration to help integrate refugees. However, the scope of this study is only focused on the perspectives of municipal integration staff because they are mostly responsible for the social integration of refugees. Public employment service is more concerned with labour market and economic integration, which is not the focus, and beyond the limit of this study.

6 Analysis and Discussion

This chapter focuses on presenting and discussing the findings from the material that was collected through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews conducted with municipal integration staffs. It is worth mentioning that I am aware that findings from this study is limited because of the limited number of respondents to the questionnaires and interviews. Yet, they

are relevant because they provide results on integration challenges from different integration elements., reception capacity, housing, and integration programs. The analysis and discussion are presented in relation to the research questions, previous literature, and theories guiding this study. Thus, the analysis and discussion evolved around challenges within the following key themes: reception capacity, housing, integration programs, Local governance/decentralization, and further challenges.

6.1 Reception capacity

This section presents the findings on the integration challenges of quota refugees in the reception capacity in municipalities by first looking at benefits and challenges of institutional structures and secondly, elaborating on the challenges encountered specifically in the reception of quota refugees.

6.1.1 Institutional structures and their benefits/challenges

Swedish municipalities are saddled with the responsibility of receiving quota refugees after an agreement between the municipality and the Swedish Migration Agency has been reached as discussed previously. Thus, they are expected to have some institutional structures in place to handle the reception and integration of these new members of their community while expecting them to adapt to the host community. Accordingly, this forms the two-way process of integration proposed by Ager & Strang (2008) as presented in the theoretical framework. Thus, the findings from the questionnaire showed that institutional structures within each municipality vary in terms of their reception capacity and structures. Hence, the extent to which quota refugees face integration challenges in each municipality depends largely on the amount of resources available in the municipality. In this study, the term capacity and structures refer to institutional resources that are connected to receiving quota refugees, for instance, human resources, housing, and integration activities. In the questionnaire, seven out of eleven municipalities stated that they have a specific team responsible for receiving and supplying quota refugees with all the necessities and information needed. Three municipalities revealed that they do not have any specific team, and one municipality answered that they have the same structure for the reception of all refugees in the municipality. However, an interview with one of the municipalities without a specific team highlighted that though they do not have any specific team assigned to the reception of quota refugees, they still have a routinized system in place for receiving quota refugees as shown in the following quote:

“We are a very small municipality, and I am working together with a colleague plus, we have only one person as a social worker who also works a bit with the reception. We are the only ones who help with the reception of quota refugees and... [..] because I have another assignment also that means I have about two and a half jobs which make it difficult. We have built up a good system, I can say I managed with clear routines how we will receive them and try a lot so that they became independent as soon as possible and can cope a little better”.

This corresponds to the questionnaire responses on whether there is a difference in the reception between quota refugees and other refugees for example asylum seekers and family reunification migrants. In which four municipalities stated that they have different introduction programs and activities for quota refugees and five stated that even though quota refugees do not receive special activities, they receive more support during the first months after their arrival. The other three interviews were conducted with municipal staff from three municipalities that have a specific unit in place, which all stated similar to the other interviewee and in line with the questionnaire responses, that quota refugees need more initial support than other refugees. e.g., in terms of introduction to health care, shopping, usage of household appliances, and the transport system illustrated by two quotes, the first from the questionnaire and the other from an interview.

“We offer more support to the quota families in relation to the other municipalities, for example, that they get help with shopping or open bank account”.

“I think that when it’s the first time, it is most difficult for them the first maybe a couple of months, then we need to give them a lot of support”.

All interviewees added that though they have specific activities in place for quota refugees, the municipalities are also flexible in providing additional support to other refugees depending on their individual assessments. Moreover, while one interviewee added that limited human resources in the specific unit make it difficult to live up to the demand for support by quota refugees, another interviewee explained that it is possible for their unit to get additional support from other units if necessary. It shows that municipalities have different resource capacities in handling the reception of quota refugees. This correlates with Reitz's (2002) argument on the reception and integration of quota refugees where the host society employs either a *laissez-faire* or interventionist approach depending on available resources. Therefore, having a specific

unit does not necessarily mean that they have a better capacity or structure in place in handling the great demand of support by quota refugees.

Additionally, as municipalities cooperate with the Swedish Migration Agency in the reception of quota refugees, it is good to consider their working relationship and how it affects the reception of quota refugees. Thus, the questionnaire showed that eight municipalities claim that they have a good collaboration with the Swedish Migration Agency. A good collaboration between the municipalities and the Swedish Migration Agency to some extent helps to prepare for the arrival of quota refugees, thereby mitigating against unprepared challenges with the reception of quota refugees. Yet, when it comes to the Swedish Migration Agency considering the wishes of municipalities in the reception of quota refugees in line with their reception capacity, only three municipalities stated that they can convey wishes to the Swedish Migration Agency while three municipalities explained that they do not have the possibility to convey wishes. However, being able to convey wishes does not mean that these wishes are granted. The inability for municipalities to convey wishes or not having their wishes granted ultimately leads municipalities to provide sub-standard housing which can result in overcrowding for quota refugees according to Righard & Öberg (2018) and Stewart et al. (2008) as quoted by one of the municipal staff responses from the questionnaire:

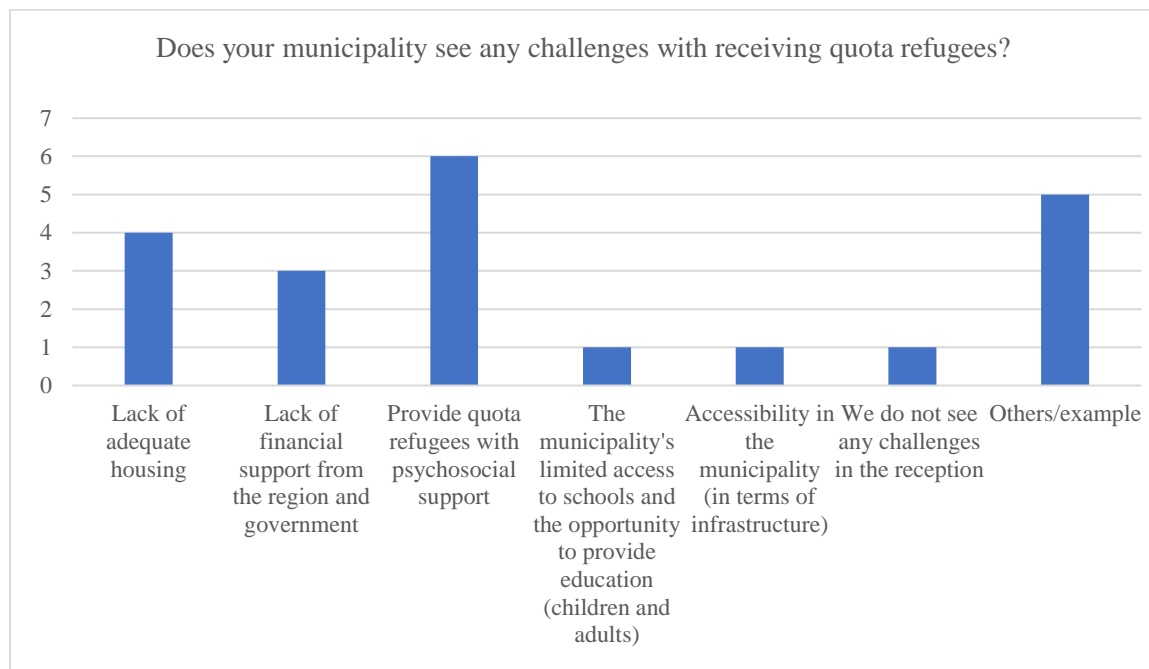
“Our housing department has conveyed a request that the Swedish Migration Agency cooperate in the transfer so that reasonable housing solutions can be found. Unfortunately, the Swedish Migration Agency has nevertheless sent families without communication with the municipality. Then there will be quick housing solutions that are not good for the families.”

In this light, the next section shows how amongst other things the resource capacity of a municipality plays a larger role in affecting the reception capacity of a municipality.

6.1.2 Challenges in the reception of quota refugees

As shown in the graph below, bearing in mind the limitation of the study of having 11 respondents and 4 interviews, key challenges identified in the questionnaire included lack of housing, lack of financial resources from region and government, and lack of provision of psychosocial support. Similar to Stewart et al. (2008), one of the findings from the questionnaire indicates that service providers at the local level are unable to meet the required needs and support of quota refugees due to resource constraints.

Graph 1: Challenges in municipalities with receiving quota refugees



In addition to the three key reception challenges identified in the questionnaire, further challenges mentioned included limited access to schools and opportunity to provide education to children and adults, lack of available infrastructures, challenges of lacking sufficient resources to cater for quota refugees due to additional needs in support and lack of cooperation in health care with adult quota refugees, as mentioned by one respondent in the questionnaire.

“Lack of cooperation in health care with adult quota refugees, difficult to get them into a health centres so they start investigating and getting the medical help they need”.

Adding to findings in previous literature, the data from both the questionnaire and the interviews showed that the insufficient provision of psychosocial support to quota refugees after receiving them poses a key integration challenge to municipalities. Accordingly, in the questionnaire insufficient psychosocial support received the highest response rate when municipalities identified major integration challenges. Correspondingly, two interviewees buttressed that there is inadequate and limited psychosocial support within municipalities. Furthermore, they state that they are yet to find a solution to this challenge. The two reasons given for the challenges in providing adequate psychosocial support to quota refugees stems from the difficulty in receiving the right medical support in the hospital due to on the one hand, communication barriers, and on the other hand, the lack of experience among hospital staff in detecting the right diagnosis in relation to the quota refugee’s mental health condition. Like

Sundvall et al. (2020), this study found that the reason for municipalities' greater need in providing psychosocial support to quota refugees is perceived to be due to the traumatic and stressful circumstances they have lived through before coming to Sweden. Nevertheless, two interviewees stated that quota refugees are faced with the same societal expectations, though considering their psychosocial situation, it can be difficult for them to meet those expectations. In that sense, they require a lot and different support from social workers and other municipal staff, which cannot always be fulfilled due to limited resources and time. Thus, two interviewees perceive that the poor mental health of quota refugees affect their integration/ learning capacities as stated in the following quote:

“For example, at SFI, it is if you think about what many of the refugees have been through, they will need more support in dealing with mental health issues like PTSD [Post-traumatic stress disorder], and depression, and extreme stress and nightmares and stuff. So, I think if they did get more help with handling and dealing with their emotional stress, and traumas that they have been through, that would make it easier for them to learn, because many of the symptoms of, for example, PTSD affects is very, it has a bad effect on your ability to learn new stuff for your memory and concentration and everything. So, I think with proper support, that would make it easier for people to learn.”

Additionally, relating to the financial constraints indicated as one of the three major challenges, three interviewees explained that it is primarily because quota refugees require lots of support and municipalities experience financial and time constraints. Thus, they are unable to meet all the needs of quota refugees which do bring about challenges to their integration. Furthermore, housing also takes up a large amount of financial resources that play into the financial challenges municipalities face, as well as result in some of the housing challenges. Moreover, the interviewees reveal that another major contributing factor to the lack of housing is the size of available housing in municipalities not fitting the often-large family size of quota refugees. This will be elaborated further under the section “housing challenges”.

Hence, contrary to previous literature, where it is argued that financial constraints lay with quota refugees in financing their integration for instance by paying for language classes (Morrice et al., 2019). In the Swedish case, however, integration programs are financed majorly by the municipalities which put the financial burden on the municipalities and not on the quota refugees.

The interviews shed light on some additional challenges that some municipalities face in the reception of quota refugees. One related to administrative challenges. Most quota refugees experience difficulty in filling out forms for different authorities such as the social service or the tax agency, as they face language barriers and unfamiliarity with the complex Swedish bureaucratic (digital) system. A new finding from this study is that municipal staff are not entitled to fill out the forms for the quota refugees but can only support them in the process for which a translator or digital translating service is required.

Another finding particular to this study is the challenge relating to the reception process for quota refugees relating to the Covid-19 pandemic. On the one hand, quota refugee's arrival to Sweden may be postponed due to travel restrictions which can disrupt the planning and reception of quota refugees. On the other hand, practical challenges within the municipalities have arisen, making for instance the collection of the ID Card for a larger group of quota refugees from the Migration Agency in Malmo by car difficult due to Covid-19 restrictions.

6.2 Housing challenges for quota refugees

In support of the integration theory by Esser (2001) and Ager & Strang (2008) on the provision of adequate housing referred to as positioning by the former, and markers and means by the latter, findings show that while municipalities are able to provide initial housing, quota refugees face difficulties in finding long-term housing solutions. Respectively, findings from the questionnaire indicated that all quota refugees receive housing on the day of arrival, however, the housing contracts differ greatly in length among municipalities. It ranges from one month to more than two years. However, following up on the questionnaire about the provision of housing by municipalities with interviewees, all interviewees stated that quota refugees would not be evicted from the accommodation until they find a permanent solution.

In both the interviews and the questionnaire, municipal staff pointed out three major challenges associated with the provision of housing for quota refugees which support and add to Andersson Joona et al. (2016) claim that municipalities frown at receiving quota refugees because they lack integrative capacity. First, municipal staff emphasizes that in many municipalities, there is a lack of housing. Second, it is particularly difficult for municipal staff to find adequate housing solutions for quota families in relation to their frequently large family size. This challenge is also experienced by quota families who are expected to find their housing later on when they are to move out of the municipal provided accommodation and municipal staff considers that Swedish and basic societal knowledge e.g., how to pay rent is

considered a facilitator to finding permanent housing on the part of quota families. Drawing back on scholarly argument on the interconnection between the attainment of one integration element e.g., language, and the influence it has on others, e.g., housing, the findings from this study support those of previous studies (Capps et al., 2015; Riniolo, 2016). A reason for challenges in finding adequate housing for large quota families is largely because Swedish apartment standard is usually designed for small families.

Nevertheless, regardless of municipalities struggling with providing adequate housing for quota refugees especially those with large families, it should be stressed that five municipalities stated in the questionnaire that they have certain criteria when allocating housing to refugee families. Four maintained that they provide the housing that is available within the municipality's capacity, and one municipality stated that they do not have any criteria when they allocate housing. What this simply indicates is that although municipalities try to provide housing with consideration of certain criteria for instance, by following the landlord's norms and the family's housing needs, the lack of housing hinders the provision of suitable housing solutions to quota families. However, it is important to stress that two municipalities stated that so far, they have managed to find suitable solutions. In addition, some municipal staff in the questionnaire highlighted that a lack of cooperation with the Swedish Migration Agency in terms of matching assigned quota refugees with available housing in the municipality results in inappropriate housing matches. Thus, this results in a quick-fix housing solution at the expense of the refugees. Hence, similar to Salat (2010) and Stewart et al. (2008), this study found that the lack of adequate housing and quick-fix solutions by municipalities lead to overcrowding and isolation where quota refugees are provided with housing in isolated areas.

Thus, municipalities do not have the capacity to provide different housing solutions and can only try to motivate quota refugees in finding appropriate long-term housing. This leads us to the third challenge: quota refugees receive limited or no support in finding permanent housing solutions, which often results in quota refugees staying in municipal-provided temporary solutions for a long time. As such, an interviewee stressed that while living in the same refugee accommodation with people in the same situation can be beneficial at the beginning in terms of getting acquainted with the new society and learning from each other, they are also aware that in the long run, it can have negative effects on what Esser (2001) calls social integration, as it hinders interaction with the local Swedish society:

“I think it can be positive to have people around you who are in the same situation and learn from each other. But if they need to stay there for a long time, I think it's not so good for the integration”.

Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that interviewed municipal staff perceive that quota refugees in some instances are placed in more favourable conditions compared to other refugees, for example, they receive a housing contract on the day of arrival, the location of the accommodation provided to them is aimed to be more centrally located, schooling is arranged, and hospital care is aimed to be in close proximity to the accommodation. This extra consideration is because municipal staff considers it important for quota refugees to live in more centrally located apartments in close distance to SFI, the municipal office, shops, and transport services because they need more support at the beginning. Contrastingly, asylum seekers are perceived by municipal staff to manage to live further away from the town centre because they are already accustomed to the Swedish system.

6.3 The effect of integration programs on cultururation

In this section, findings from the collected data on cultururation through establishment programs, language as a facilitator or a barrier in the cultururation process, and challenges in learning the Swedish language which is part of the cultururation process for quota refugees are analysed and discussed.

6.3.1 Cultururation through establishment programs

Establishment programs aimed at refugee integration in Sweden are highly decentralized where municipalities are allowed to design their establishment programs as presented in the theoretical section of this study. This means that entry into establishment programs would vary from one municipality to another depending on several factors. Establishment programs are support in the form of activities and education for certain newly arrived immigrants e.g., quota refugees. Thus, the findings from the questionnaire indicate that in most cases, it takes longer than a month for quota refugees to start the establishment program. This is mainly accounted for by two main processes that the municipality cannot influence. Firstly, the waiting process for the residence permit card and social security number, and secondly, the administration time within the Swedish Public Employment Service. Additionally, the quota refugee's needs for specific support may also influence the starting date. Hence, the waiting time which is largely attributed to the long administration process prolongs the cultururation process (i.e. Esser, 2001)

for quota refugees into the Swedish Society. Similarly, if quota refugees arrive during the summer, children must wait for the summer holidays to end before they can start school. This creates integration challenges for quota refugees as they stay home and have difficulties starting their life in Sweden. To counter this trajectory, the establishment of social linkages with other organizations during the waiting time, with the support of the municipality can be crucial. Yet, these support structures are not given in all municipalities. In fact, reflecting on social linkages as presented in the theoretical framework (Ager & Strang, 2008), one interviewee said that establishment time of two years is too short for quota refugees because they need longer support and establishment time in order to build a connection with the local administrative system. The same interviewee stresses that for asylum seekers, the said establishment time seems to be enough due to their pre-knowledge about Swedish society.

This is in contrast to another interviewee, who feels that the establishment time particularly for African quota refugees should be shortened. Yet in this case, the interviewee also showed a negative perception of refugees generally. This will be elaborated further in the section “Municipal staffs understanding of integration challenges”.

6.3.2 Language as facilitator or barrier in the cultururation process

The process of cultururation starts with the ability of the receiving community in providing information to quota refugees in a way they understand and how the host community adapts to these new members of the community while the refugees continue to develop host country language skills and cultural norms as explained by Ager & Strang (2008) and Esser (2001). In this regard, investigated municipalities aim to provide sufficient information in the respective mother tongues, however, they encounter challenges as elaborated subsequently. All respondents in the questionnaire stated that they use translators to communicate orally with the quota refugees. Three respondents added that they also use google translator or other IT translation tools to communicate orally and one respondent added that they have the capacity to communicate orally in certain languages such as English, Arabic, and French, as well as gestural language. Respectively, only two municipalities stated that they have the capacity to provide all languages through interpreters. While five municipalities said that they can provide only certain languages through interpreters. In both the questionnaire and the interviews, municipal staff highlighted the difficulty in getting the right interpreter for certain languages. This is mainly because there are only two authorized interpreters for certain languages in Sweden. In the interviews, it was further buttressed that the limited mother tongue language capacity

within municipalities makes communication with most quota refugees difficult and limits the integration process.

Furthermore, the lack of Swedish and other refugee majority languages among many quota refugees adds to the language barriers between the quota refugees and the municipality as well as the host society. In contrast, although English is not an official language in Sweden, interviewees reinforce the claim by Capps et al. (2015) & Morrice et al. (2019) that quota refugees who speak English encounter a faster integration as it helps them to build a social network. Additionally, quota refugees that have the same mother tongue tend to connect first before they interact with other people due to language barriers. Hence, these language barriers contribute to integration obstacles for the respective quota refugees because it discourages them from participating in (integration/support) activities, which results in social isolation.

6.3.3 Culturation: challenges in learning the Swedish language

All quota refugees, as other refugees, are provided with Swedish language learning classes (SFI) as well as the Societal Orientation Program, which is a 100-hour course on how the Swedish society, school, and health care works, as well as laws on being a parent. Yet, as mentioned above, getting into SFI usually take some time due to administrative processes. Thus, the interviewees identified that most quota refugees encounter certain challenges when it comes to learning Swedish. Poor mental health conditions, as discussed above limit language learning capacity and overall integration into society. Hence, one interviewee highlighted that it is not about quota refugees not wanting to learn Swedish (as often portrayed by politicians and thought by local society) but actually about their poor mental conditions as well as poorly designed language programs which do not sufficiently cater for all literacy levels, reaffirming Faris' (2016) claim.

Moreover, it was identified how the lack of connection to Swedish people, makes it difficult to practice the language. This relates to limited social bridges, as highlighted by Putnam (in Ager & Strang, 2008). This lack of social bridges is either reinforced or diminished by the social links provided by the municipality. In other words, additional language learning support through internships or language cafes can help to build social bridges in society and enhance the language learning process. Nevertheless, this depends on the municipality's capacity and the political will to do so. However, on the other hand, too close social bonds with refugees that have the same language may limit quota refugees from practicing their Swedish language and thereby prolonging their integration into the local society. Thus, overall, both the

insufficient social bridges and too strong social bonds work counterproductively to the integration of quota refugees into the host society.

Additionally, reaffirming similar arguments by Capps et al. (2015), Englund (2002), Morrice et al. (2019), and Stewart et al. (2008), the interviewees highlighted that the Swedish language learning progress also relates to individual quota refugees' characteristics, for instance, their pre-migration background, traumatizing experiences before entering Sweden, and their capabilities and motivation in learning a new language. However, most interviewees stressed that the first two factors i.e., pre-migration background and traumatizing experiences have a much larger effect on their Swedish learning capabilities. Lastly, a factor contributing to difficulties in the cultururation process is perceived to be cultural differences between quota refugees and the host society. Interviewees mentioned that especially at the beginning, quota refugees need to get used to Swedish cultural norms such as punctuality and respect for time management. Moreover, it takes time for them to navigate Swedish society as they are often unfamiliar with the digitalization of basic services. Thus, this stretches the cultururation process even further and creates more integration and learning challenges.

6.4 Social Links and integration challenges

This section looks at integration challenges or opportunities that result from institutional support provided to quota refugees from the local authorities.

Institutional support provided to quota refugees reflects the ways municipalities design local integration programs where they either choose to collaborate with other local organisations or decide not to, depending on what extent these municipalities choose to offer more integrative support. Thus, the questionnaire showed that six out of eleven municipalities design programs where they collaborate with other local organizations in the reception and integration of quota refugees. While for two municipalities, their collaboration is flexible and varies from year to year, and three municipalities indicate that they do not collaborate with other organizations. Some of the local organizations the municipalities collaborate with include the Red Cross, the church, RådRum, and different sports associations. The interviewees explained further that all municipalities must introduce quota refugees and other refugees to the Swedish (welfare) system during the Societal Orientation workshops (*samhällsorientering*) as well as accompany them to governmental agencies such as the social security service, the Swedish employment service. Furthermore, as already indicated in the questionnaire, some municipalities build

further linkages between the quota refugees and non-governmental organizations in order to support their integration into the society e.g., through practical support, language cafes, leisure activities, and social meeting points as quoted below.

“And then we also inform them about the föreningsliv (association) and activities that you can do in your free time and we have help from förening who come two times a week right now and meet these people that arrived recently, and they talk about their program that is called Svenska koden (Swedish code) So it is, yeah, it's about things but good to know when you are in Sweden. “

Yet, this additional support is not a mandatory responsibility for municipalities, implying that the support in establishing social linkages in society and thereby supporting the integration of quota refugees depend on the municipalities. Hence, in other words, this may lead to unequal chances for integration.

6.5 Local governance theory/ decentralization: municipal staffs' perception on benefits or detriment of decentralized integration programs

This section of the analysis and discussion present findings on municipal integration staffs' understanding of integration challenges. Subsequently, it presents the perceived benefits and limitations of decentralization in designing integration programs at the municipal level.

6.5.1 Municipal staffs' understanding of integration challenges

Municipalities are responsible for the integration of quota refugees. when investigating their perception of integration challenges, it is important to take into consideration that information given by the respondents is considered as an approximation of what they consider to be the truth at that point in time. This is inspired by my critical realist philosophical position that what is classified as the truth is influenced by an approximation of reality at a certain point in time. Investigating municipal integration staff's understanding of integration challenges also requires critically assessing how the decentralization of integration policy plays into integration challenges on the local level. As such, all interviewees responded that they perceive to have a good understanding of integration challenges in their municipality. However, three interviewees highlighted that their understanding of integration challenges differs from the understanding of other municipal workers for instance in the social or school sector. Precisely, within the wider society as well as the local authority there is very limited understanding of integration challenges for quota refugees which according to one interviewee is partially a

result of lack of diversity in the municipal labour force, which can be connected to discrimination in the labour market. A finding which to some extent mirror that of (Bevelander, 2011). This impacts on the challenges discussed above as elaborated by one interviewee:

“I think I have a better understanding than the municipality because I have been working with this for a long time and I am working and talking with refugees every day and I sometimes feel the municipality as a whole doesn't [...] really listen to me or the refugees and then it causes challenges. I think [...] the social services and the school and the municipality as a whole, we should work very differently to be able to offer a good environment for these families and kids. [...] As I said, as a municipality, we should [...] provide services for the citizens and [considering] the children convention, the refugee kids do not have the same opportunities and rights as other kids and that is illegal. So, I think it is a big problem the way we do not see their rights... we do not live up to [their rights] in the social services, not in the school and not in the society as a whole and that has many dangerous effects on the society and these individuals and families. [...] The services we provide both in the society as a whole and the municipality are not open in the same extent to refugee families and immigrant families as it is to Swedish families and individuals. The service is for everybody but everybody [does not] have the ability or the chance to access it and that is a problem for integration. It is also a problem because you do not get the support you need in different ways, so it makes it more difficult to get an education, a job, good life, family support, parent support, and kids support. So, I think all of the municipalities would need to work together. It is so few with a background outside Europe working in this municipality, [which] also has a negative effect on our work because we don't understand people and we don't understand [because] it is a lot of perspectives that we don't have in our organisation.”

The limited understanding of integration challenges by some municipal workers mentioned in the quote above reflects another interviewee's response, who relates the understanding of integration challenges to the refugees' unwillingness to integrate and their 'lack of civilization'. The latter was especially highlighted in respect to quota refugees from African countries. This reaffirms what Hynie (2018) calls stereotyping in the host society which poses a major integration challenge. Relating to the former i.e., “unwillingness to integrate”, the interviewee acknowledges that pre-migration issues may affect quota refugees' integration process, but also downplays it by citing the lack of motivation from quota refugees and unwillingness to get help

as a reason for encountering integration challenges. Additionally, the interviewee adds that quota refugees, like everyone else, should have obligations attached to their rights. Hence, the interviewee considers quota refugees as not worthy of enjoying the same rights as Swedish citizens if they cannot conform to their obligations. This is illustrated in the following quote:

“It is of course a problem if everything takes longer to deal with them. [...] I would like to say it is the individual himself if you want to learn or educate yourself ... Then you are halfway. But many have unfortunately been quite low. They are not so driven themselves and it is difficult to teach someone if they do not want to. [...] The ones who are sent are a quota refugee for a reason, you come to Sweden for a reason that you should get help with a place to stay [because they fled war and lost your home], for example. And everyone has some kind of baggage in their life. It does matter absolutely. But then, it does not have to mean that there is a problem in it. You have to be open because they get the help they need. Sometimes it is difficult to re-identify what kind of help they want. [...] I do not know what you yourself thinks about it. But you can ask yourself the question how long have you been a quota refugee? Now I have no good answer to theories. But should they be treated like a Swede the same day they come to Sweden? No, I can think that is quite vague, but then I mean that you then have all the rights as a Swedish citizen. At the same time, you should have the same obligations as well. But you cannot go think that you are quota refugee for 10 years for example.”

This is in contrast to the other interviewees' perception of integration challenges, while they highlight that quota refugees often lack the ability to follow up with, for instance, their language classes, they connect it rather to the quota refugee's poor mental health and the municipality's inability to provide adequate psychosocial support as a main challenge rather than focusing on the lack of motivation from the refugee to accept the support. Hence, this points to differences in municipal's perception and understanding of integration challenges based on their political view on refugees, which ultimately affect the provision of their integrative support.

6.5.2 Perceived benefits and limitations of decentralization

According to all four interviewees, the decentralization of the responsibility to integration is beneficial as it enables municipalities to adapt the integration programs according to the local context e.g., the size of the municipality. Moreover, one interviewee added, that though there is a decentralized system in place, municipalities in Skåne have a network in place to exchange

integration experiences and learn from each other. Thus, a municipality can adopt other integration approaches if they are considered applicable in the respective municipality.

However, two interviewees also pointed out that the decentralized integration approach has two major limitations that influence the integration of quota refugees. On the one hand, they highlighted that there are differences in resources among municipalities especially between the north and south of Sweden. This affects the extent to which a municipality can perform the minimum or maximum integration work. On the other hand, it is perceived that there are differences in political will among municipalities in offering good integration support to (quota) refugees. Therefore, one interviewee suggests that though a decentralized system is beneficial and should remain in place, national guidelines on integration support could help to set a threshold on the least minimum for integration support. For now, the only minimum threshold to integration support is set by the establishment program which ensures that refugees receive language training and 100 hours of education about the society (i.e., Societal Orientation). Thus, additional integration support provided by municipalities is done voluntarily which is influenced by political willingness and availability of resources.

6.6 Differences in integration challenges between quota refugees and other categories of migrants

Similar to previous works of literature, the questionnaire responses showed that all municipal staff perceives that quota refugees are in greater need of support, and this might not be the case for asylum seekers and family reunification migrants. Accordingly, the questionnaire showed that quota refugees need more practical and basic support in establishing themselves in society, as well as how to come in contact with local authorities as illustrated in the following two quotes from the questionnaire:

“Quota refugees may lack knowledge that would otherwise be taken for granted, so they may need much more practical support in the beginning. It can be about kitchen appliances, technology, hygiene and plumbing-related issues, etc.”

“A large part of the quota families who come need support in how to shop in Sweden, to buy a mobile with a prepaid card, open a bank account, buy winter clothes, etc. They usually have no contact network in Sweden, which is why they become dependent on the Social Administration's help.”

Similar to responses from the questionnaire, all interviewees highlighted that especially in the initial phase, there is a great difference both in needs and support. Although, one interviewee stated that quota refugees experience less stress and more stability than other refugees in the sense that they do not have to move around until they get to stay in a municipality permanently and have more certainty over their residence status. However, overall, all interviewees agreed that the difference in greater need by quota refugees poses a major integration challenge in contrast to other refugees.

Accordingly, as highlighted by Leiler et al. (2019) before asylum seekers arrive in the designated municipality, they have already been exposed to Swedish culture and society including the language. Thus, they are not new to the country anymore. Similarly, family reunification migrants have some knowledge about Sweden, due to their social connection in form of family members (Leiler et al., 2019). This is in contrast with quota refugees who arrive directly from refugee camps (Wiesbrock, 2011). Thus, similar to the literature, the findings show that quota refugees have to be introduced to the whole system including basic functions of society e.g., how to shop, transportation, use of kitchen appliances and household appliances as well as the bureaucratic welfare system such as the social services and digital tools. Moreover, some quota refugees are illiterate and have no prior education which poses further difficulty to the integration process. Hence, it is difficult for them to meet the expectations of society, which is why municipalities offer more support to quota refugees. However, it was highlighted that there are differences among quota refugees as some need less support and guidance while others need more. Nevertheless, adding to previous literature, interviewees stated that over time the needs of all refugees align as quota refugees begin to understand the system better and cope with it.

Yet, three out of four interviewees stated that due to the differences in need and support, it poses a challenge to the municipalities to provide adequate support to quota refugees as it requires vast resources that are not always available, as discussed in the section above. Moreover, in contrast to other refugees, quota refugees need more support in dealing with mental health issues as they are more likely to have experienced trauma or stressful circumstances. Thus, their mental health issues affect their integration/ learning capacities to a great extent, especially if not supported adequately in the host municipality.

7 Conclusion

The provision of integration support to quota refugees and the corresponding challenges associated with it is continually subjected to diverse opinions among municipal integration staffs especially because they have the autonomy to decide on the type of integration programs and support that they provide. Thus, this research aimed at exploring challenges within the provision of integration support to quota refugees and municipal integration staff's understanding of these challenges with respective differences to other migrant groups through the lens of housing, reception capacity, and integration programs.

Drawing on findings from previous works of literature on integration challenges of refugees, it was concluded that refugees generally experience socioeconomic integration challenges due to discrimination, racism, xenophobia, isolation, and social inequality. Additionally, it was concluded that due to lack of housing resulting in overcrowding, financial and resource constraints in municipalities, quota refugees experience greater integration obstacles in contrast to other migrants. Yet, the degree to which these challenges hinder refugee's integration varies depending on the refugees' pre-migration characteristics.

Based on the qualitative analysis of materials collected through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, keeping in mind the limited number of respondents which limits the conclusion of this study, it was possible to conclude, some reaffirming those of previous research and others that are particular to this study. Accordingly, due to the decentralized approach within municipalities, differences in institutional structures affect their reception capacity. Although these structural differences result in varying degrees of integration support. Similar to findings from some previous research, all municipalities state that they face some level of human and financial resource constraints which limits the integration support they can provide to quota refugees including providing adequate housing.

Moreover, the three key challenges in the reception of quota refugees in municipalities of Skåne particularly to this study are the combination of lack of housing, lack of financial resources from the region and government, and lack of provision of psychosocial support. Municipalities face three major challenges in providing housing solutions to refugees which affect their integration into the host society. The lack of adequate housing solutions for quota families in relation to their frequently large family size and limited or no support for quota refugees in finding permanent housing solutions which prolong the time they stay in temporary housing solutions and thereby contributes to isolation and segregation from the host society. The

conclusion from this study identified challenges with providing psychosocial support to quota refugees. Accordingly, as a result of insufficient provision of psychosocial support, the poor mental health of quota refugees affects their integration/ learning capacities with a solution yet to be found.

Furthermore, the study identifies several challenges relating to the cultururation process of quota refugees. it shows two main challenges within the establishment programs for quota refugees affect their cultururation process. The relatively long waiting time to start the program prolongs quota refugees' integration into the host society and due to greater needs in support, the general establishment period of two years that is provided to all categories of refugees is considered by some municipal integration staff's too short for quota refugees. Language act as a facilitator or barrier in the cultururation process. Thus, new findings from the study reveal that the lack of translators available to municipalities in the quota refugees' mother tongue, as well as the lack of English or major refugee languages among quota refugees pose a barrier to their cultururation process and contribute to social isolation. Similar to previous studies, a conclusion from this study shows that the poor mental health conditions, insufficient social bridges within the host society, and deficiency in individual quota refugee capacities influence the Swedish language learning process.

Concerning how social links are created between quota refugees and the municipalities, the study shows that social links established between quota refugees and the host society varies among municipalities due to different capacities as well as political will creating unequal chances for integration. Relatedly, an interesting finding particular to this study is the unequal integration opportunities and the differences in integration challenges, and support required between quota and other refugees. The study concludes as a final note that while municipal integration staffs understand that there are initial differences in challenges and support between refugee categories, over time these differences align as quota refugees spend more time in Sweden.

8 Contribution

This study has revealed challenges within the provision of integration support and the understanding of these challenges from the perspective of municipal integration staff at the municipal level. Thus, it gains relevance as it discusses not only the challenges with providing integration support and the understanding of integration challenges for quota refugees but also explains the integrative implications of these challenges. Hence, the study contributes to the

literature on the integration of quota refugees in Swedish municipalities in Skåne in two folds. First, it simultaneously investigates and provides a broader picture of challenges within the provision of integration support to quota refugees in terms of reception capacity, housing, and integration programs, and municipal integration staff's understanding of these challenges that can help in tackling and improving the reception and integration of quota refugees. secondly, it revealed how the differences in resource allocation for integration programs and the political will of municipalities affect quota refugees. As a suggestion, future research can be conducted by investigating challenges within the provision of integration support by including the perspectives of the refugees as well as those of local service providers to enable a two-sided view on the investigation.

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9 Appendices

9.1 Interview Guide in English and Swedish

Interview Guide

Thank you for taking time out for this Interview.

The purpose of the interview is to investigate your understanding of integration challenges for quota refugees in your municipality and how their challenges differ from other migrant categories.

I would like to tell you that this interview is very confidential and your identity (name, municipality, is protected. It will be made anonymous)

Also, at end of this research, the recorded interview will be destroyed.

Terminology: quota refugees are those refugees who came to Sweden with the help of UNHCR and who already got their residence permit before coming to Sweden

I would like to ask for your permission to record this interview and also use it as part of my research work for my master's thesis at Malmo university.

Questions

1. The integration of refugees in Sweden is an important topic both academically and politically. Can you kindly explain generally what your experiences of refugee integration is like in your municipality?
2. Are there challenges with the integration of quota refugees in your municipality?
 - Can you explain what kind of challenges?
 - How are the integration challenges experienced by quota refugees different from integration challenges experienced by other migrants? For example, family reunification migrants and asylum seekers?
3. In the survey you mentioned that there is differences in need between quota and other refugees How are the needs of quota refugees different from other migrants? For example, family reunification migrants and asylum seekers?

Reception capacity

- Can you explain about the reception capacity of your municipality when receiving quota refugees?
- Are there any other challenges you experiences for example with regards to housing, finance, languages etc?

Integration challenges

- Housing
4. In the survey, you mention that there is a lack of adequate housing for quota refugees in your municipality. Can you elaborate more about the challenges of insufficient housing and how you deal with it?
 5. You mentioned that quota refugees get housing contract for about 6 months What happens after the 6 months housing?
 - Do the quota refugees get support in finding long-term housing from the municipality?

Integration programs

6. Tell me about integration programs provided to quota refugees in your municipality!
 - What kind of integration programs does your municipality provide to quota refugees for example, with providing Swedish language learning?
 - Are there challenges with providing these integration programs/languages leaning support to quota refugees?
7. With regards to how long it takes for quota refugees to access establishment program that it depends on the individual and how much need they have.
 - Can you kindly explain further on that?
8. With respect to languages, which refugee mother tongue languages can the municipality provide to aid communication between the municipality and the refugees?
 - How do you understand challenges to provision of Swedish and other languages to quota refugees.?

9. Do you think some of the challenges you have talked about affect the integration of quota refugees? How, can you explain?

General

10. Municipalities in Sweden are allowed to design their own integration programs and policies, do you think this is beneficial or detrimental to tackling the integration challenges we talked about? Why?
11. Considering the municipality's responsibility for and connection with quota refugees, do you think you have a good understanding of the integration challenges quota refugees face?

Intervjuguide

Tack för att du tog dig tid för denna intervju.

Syftet med intervjun är att undersöka vad du uppfattar om integrationsutmaningar för kvotflyktingar i din kommun.

Jag skulle vilja säga att denna intervju är mycket konfidentiell och att din identitet (namn, kommun, är skyddad. Den kommer att göras anonym)

I slutet av denna forskning kommer också den inspelade intervjun att förstöras.

Terminologi: kvotflyktingar är de flyktingar som kom till Sverige med hjälp av UNHCR och som redan fick sitt uppehållstillstånd innan de kom till Sverige

Jag vill be om tillstånd för att spela in denna intervju och även använda den som en del av mitt forskningsarbete för min magisteruppsats vid Malmö universitet

Frogor

1. Integrationen av flyktingar i Sverige är ett viktigt ämne både akademiskt och politiskt. Kan du vänligen förklara generellt hur dina erfarenheter av flyktingintegration är i din kommun?
2. Finns det utmaningar med integrationen av kvotflyktingar i din kommun? Kan du förklara vilken typ av utmaningar? Hur skiljer sig integrationsutmaningarna från kvotflyktingar från integrationsutmaningar som andra migranter upplever? Till exempel familjeåterförande migranter och asylsökande?
3. I undersökningen nämnde du att det finns skillnader i behov mellan kvoter och andra flyktingar. Hur skiljer sig kvotflyktingarnas behov från andra migranter? Till exempel familjeåterförande migranter och asylsökande?

Mottagningskapacitet

4. Kan du förklara din kommuns mottagningskapacitet när du tar emot kvotflyktingar? Ser du några utmaningar med det när det gäller att ta emot kvotflyktingar?

5. I frågeformuläret sa du att kommunen använder samma integrationsteam för alla kategorier av flyktingar. Hur kan du förena de olika behoven som är speciella med kvotflyktingar med samma flyktingintegrationsteam?

Integrationsutmaningar

- Bostäder

6. I undersökningen nämner du att det saknas tillräckligt boende för kvotflyktingar i din kommun. Kan du utarbeta mer om utmaningarna med otillräckligt boende och hur du hanterar det?

7. Du nämnde att kvotflyktingar får ett andra hand bostadskontrakt vid ankomsten i ungefär ett år. Vad händer när bostadsavtalet slutar efter ett år? Får kvotflyktingarna stöd för att hitta långtidsboende från kommunen?

8. Hur hanterar du att tillhandahålla adekvat bostad till kvotfamiljer när kommunen endast har kapacitet som enstaka bostäder?

Ekonomiskt stöd

9. En annan utmaning du nämnde är bristen på ekonomiskt stöd från regionen och regeringen. Hur hanterar du dessa finaciala utmaningar?

10. Den tredje utmaningen du nämnde var att kvotflyktingar behöver mycket vägledning och stöd, vilket tar mycket tid under ganska lång tid. Är detta en utmaning som är speciell för enbart kvotflyktingar? Varför? Hur hanterar du det?

Integrationsprogram

11. Berätta om integrationsprogram för kvotflyktingar i din kommun! Vilken typ av integrationsprogram erbjuder din kommun? Vad tycker du om dessa program och finns det utmaningar med integrationsprogram för kvotbidrag?

12. Hur lång tid tar det innan kvotflyktingar får tillgång till etableringsprogram i din kommun?

13. Vilka flyktingmodersmål kan kommunen tillhandahålla med avseende på språk? Hur förstår du utmaningar att tillhandahålla svenska och andra språk till kvotflyktingar.?

14. Tror du att några av de utmaningar du har talat om påverkar integrationen av kvotflyktingar? Hur kan du förklara?

Allmän

15. Kommuner i Sverige får utforma sina egna integrationsprogram och policyer, tycker du att det är till nytta eller skadligt för att hantera de integrationsutmaningar vi pratade om? Varför?

16. Med tanke på kommunens ansvar för och sambandet med kvotflyktingar, tror du att du har en bra förståelse för de integrationsutmaningar som kvotflyktingar står inför

9.2 Survey questionnaire.

Receiving

1. How often does your municipality receive quota refugees? (Think before covid-19)
2. Is there any difference in the reception between quota refugees and other municipal officials in your municipality? For example, shapes of support, introductory programs, housing contracts, etc.
3. Does your municipality see any difference in the needs of quota refugees and other municipal officials?
4. What structure and capacity does your municipality have to receive quota refugees? For example, staff (teams that work with quota refugees)
5. How does your municipality work with the reception of unaccompanied on quota? Describe below.
6. Does your municipality see any challenges with receiving quota refugees?
7. Does your municipality have the opportunity to convey wishes regarding quota refugees to the Swedish Migration Agency based on the municipality capacity and ability to meet needs? For example, quota refugees with special needs, adults, children, or families

Residence

8. What form of housing contract do quota refugees receive? arrival to your municipality?
9. What does your municipality's collaboration with the Swedish Migration Board look like? regarding the arrival of quota refugees?
10. When quota refugees arrive in your municipality, how long does it take that before they get access to their long-term housing?
11. Does your municipality have any selection criteria when allocating housing? for families with children who come as quota refugees? For example, number of rooms per family member or child in the family, proximity to for example local transport and school? Feel free to give examples in the "other box" below.

Integration

12. How long does it take before quota refugees get access to establishment program in is municipality?

13. Do you collaborate in your municipality with local organizations / associations in the reception and integration of quota refugees?
14. How does your municipality communicate with quota refugees?
15. What does your capacity to communicate in your mother tongue look like? regardless of language?

9.3 Coding table

Theme	Code	Sub code	Message / comment
Decentralization	Benefits		“Yeah at least some kind of basic national program like the samhåls orienteering that is in all over Sweden but yeah, I think some more social support program that is... that everybody is offered. But then I think you have to adjust the reception to the local context”
	Limitations	Differences in resources Differences in motivation (integration obstacle)	“I think that it's in the komun that the politics First of all, all people should be treated equally it's good. But you also need resources to give them the right or the same opportunity. But we know that some komun they just do minimum in what you need and that, I think, it will be a big difference. In which komun you move to so and both I would say it could be good because it can be a difference in in south of Sweden or north of Sweden, so Maybe you can't have the same rules everywhere, but because they have different resources.
Housing	Challenges		So that, for example, might, it's difficult to find the housing that is big enough for ehh because it is often big families “The homes in Sweden are not adapted for large families which contributes to many the quota families are overcrowded”
	Questionnaire responses on type of housing contract		1/11: Firsthand-contract 4/11: Time limited contract for 2 years 1/11: Time limited contract for more than 2 years 1/11: Secondary contracts that are extended every 6 months.

Additional challenges Integration	Pre-migration		Different pre-migration experiences effect quota refugee's integration capabilities. Some lack common basic knowledge of a "civilized" society. ...
	Establishment program	Challenges → prolongs cultururation and integration	Yeah. I do not have like an overview. But when talking we always ask them if they participate in SFI when we meet them and when they come to our komun, it's a bit also being having good timing, being lucky, because if there is a place for you, if there is a place Oh, but sometimes in my image anyway, it's, there aren't any free spaces so you have to wait. But some, some of them wait for a longer time. And some of them get the place quite fast. But yeah, so I think maybe from like, I don't know, two months, up to seven months waiting? I've heard people have been waiting for quite some time....
	Limited Cultururation	Language as barrier	. But if you don't talk to people, it's very, very difficult for them to practice and learn. Swedish, so there's, yeah, I think in society if there were more possibilities for refugees to get to know Swedish people, at least talk to Swedish people
		Social bonds between refugees with same language	like a part of society because the first step for many people, many families are to get to know other people that speak the same language as you or are in the same situation as you
		Poor mental health limits language learning capacity and overall integration into society	"For example, at SFI, it's if you think about what many of the refugees have been through, they will need more support in dealing with mental health issues like PTSD, and depression, and extreme stress and nightmares and stuff. So"
		Lack of social bridges	Lack of connection to Swedish people, makes it difficult to practice the language ..
	
Reception	No specific unit	No challenges challenge	Questionnaire: 7/11: We have a team that is responsible for receiving and supplying quota refugees with all the necessities and information.
	Specific unit	Adequate support	QR are faced with same societal expectations as e.g. other refugees, yet due to their pre-

			<p>migration background it can be difficult for them to meet those expectations.</p> <p>8/11 questionnaire response highlight that QR are given more or tailored support and guidance.</p>
	Challenges	Administrative challenges	<p>Filling out forms for authorities e.g., försakenskassan and skattevaket, is problematic due to language issues as well as due to complex bureaucratic (digital) system. Thus, municipal staff must provide support but cannot fill out forms for quota refugees.</p>
		Limited resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of adequate housing, - lack of financial resources (Especially housing takes up a lot of resources) - lack of time. <p>As Quota refugees require lots of support, some municipalities experiences especially financial and time constraints. Yet they say to have a good system in place to handle it.</p> <p>...</p>