

Swedish education system and its impact on the integration of immigrants into the society

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Abstract: *The article focuses on the influence of the Swedish educational system on the integration of immigrants into the society. During the research an in-depth interview method was used. The interviewees were teachers and students from the courses for adults. The outcomes from the interviews were later validated by questionnaires given to other students from courses for adults. The integration process in Sweden gives the main focus on language learning and jobs, but other topics, such as culture, values etc. are part of the educational process as well. The paper focuses on different types of educational activities especially on SFI (SFI from Swedish name Svenska för invandrare = Swedish for migrants), because this is the first course which migrants can sign up for after coming to Sweden. According to the research the SFI course has three main positive aspects: qualified teachers, the course is free of charge, usage of professional textbooks; and three negative aspects: insufficient conversation in the classroom, too many students in the classroom and big differences among students within one study group. The research also shows that the lower education the immigrant obtained in home country the higher importance in finding a job SFI will have for them. 80% of the respondents who already had a job in Sweden were employed within one year after immigration which proves that Swedish education system has a positive impact on immigrants' integration into the society and into the labour market.*

Keywords: *immigrants, Sweden, integration, Swedish education system, Swedish courses*

Introduction

Migration has become a phenomenon in nowadays world's politics and it is one of the most important topics. "A long-term effects of immigration on society emerge particularly in the earlier stages of the migratory process when migrants settle permanently. Outcomes can be very different, depending on immigrants' characteristics and the actions of the receiving state and the society" (Castle, Haas, Miller 2014, p. 57). Some politicians in the Czech Republic and in some other Eastern and Central European countries fear immigration mainly because they believe that the immigrants have very different culture and values so they cannot integrate into a different society. Sweden is a country which has rich experience with integration of migrants because the migration started there long time before this topic was brought up to the public in Eastern and Central Europe. The mentality of people and approach of integration is also different.

The article centres on the analysis and critical evaluation of immigrants' educational possibilities. The main goal of this paper is analysing the education system for migrants and its impact on their integration into the society. The article describes different courses and options which migrants have when they study language and culture. The main focus is put on SFI (from Swedish name Svenska för invandrare = Swedish for migrants), because it is the first course which immigrants can sign up for after arrival to Sweden. Incorporation into the labour market was chosen as the main indication of integration into the society.

Theoretical background

The studies of Swedish educational system and integration of immigrants used different methods and approaches. Bevelander and Irastorza (2014) analysed the relation between employment and integration of immigrants into the society. They examined the Swedish national

register and for purposes of the research divided the immigrants into four groups according to the time when they arrived in Sweden: 1. between 1993 and 1997, 2. between 1998 and 2002, 3. between 2003 and 2007, and 4. between 2008 and 2011. The immigrants within the groups were compared to each other based on their home region and their reasons for migration. The results show that the long-term integration of asylum seekers and their families is much slower than immigrants from the European Union or other labour migrants from other countries hence Swedish integration policy should focus on this group so the difference would become less striking.

Rooth and Åslund (2006) concentrated on Swedish language and examined its' importance for immigrants when entering labour market. They analysed a vast number of previously obtained data. The results show that Swedish is very important for integration into the labour market. However, it does not apply for all the cases, there are some immigrants whose Swedish knowledge is poor but they integrated very well, on the other hand, there are other immigrants whose Swedish knowledge is very good but their integration is more complicated.

Many studies state that immigrants are heterogenous therefore there are striking differences in integration into the labour market between the groups. There are three main factors that influence the degree to which extent immigrants' will be integrated to Swedish society: the length of stay in Sweden, the time of migration and home region (Åslund, Erikson, Sjögren 2006, Eriksson 2007). Kennerberg (2009) compared SFI graduates and immigrants who did not study in the course and their incorporation into the labour market. According to their findings, around 40% of immigrants who came to Sweden between 1994 and 2001 did not participate in SFI. The main group without an interest in the course were immigrants from Western Europe and university graduates (40% of those who did not participate in SFI). The study shows that around 59% of those who did not study SFI had some temporal jobs, but only 30% worked at least one and half year during their first 3 years in Sweden. On the other hand, 54% of those participated in SFI had temporal jobs and 14% worked at least one a half year within first 3 years in Sweden. The low number of full time workers can be explained by course attendance. The students had to go to the course, therefore their time was limited and they did not have enough time to take full time jobs before finishing the course.

There are many other factors having impact on integration. For instance, Bevelander and Lundh (2007) studied how local factors influenced refugees' entry to the labour market. They found out that a very important factor is a type of a municipality. The refugees would have better chance to integrate to the labour market in 1. smaller municipalities without universities and 2. economic traditional parts of Sweden. There are many refugees with lower educational background, therefore it would be easier for them to find jobs which do not require higher degree. The economic structure of the local labour marker is also an important factor. Their research shows that refugees have higher chance to be employed in manufacturing in densely populated areas, private sectors in big cities and in areas with lower educational and skill level. Furthermore, labour market factors also play a significant role in refugees' entry to the labour market. Employment and unemployment rate influence the probability of being employed.

Other important factors are the immigrants' home region, gender and the time they have spent in Sweden. Migrants from Nordic countries have the best position on the labour market after Swedes and there is only slight difference between men and women in this group: around 60% of men and women find a job within 4 years in Sweden, almost 80% of men and over 70% of women can find a job within 9 years and after this time it does not change very much, only women's employment raises to 80%. The second group is migrants from Europe (without Nordic countries): 60% of men and 40% of women find a job after 4 years, around 60% of men and 60% of women are employed within 9 years, over 70% of men and 70% of women have a job within 19 years. Position of men and women within European migrants is different only at the beginning of their life in Sweden, after that the inequalities slowly vanish. The third group is migrants from outside of Europe: only 30% of men and 20% of women are employed within 4 years, over 50% of men and 40% of women gain a job within 9 years, around 60% of men and 60% of women have a job within 19 years. The data show that it takes longer time for women from non-European countries to enter the Swedish labour market (Centralbyrån, Statistics Sweden, 2016).

All three factors are important when it comes to Swedish labour market and integration into the society. There is a correlation between the time spent in Sweden and possibility of finding a job: the longer migrants stay in Sweden the higher chance they have to successfully gain a job. Nordic migrants have the best position on the labour market, followed by other European migrants. Migrants from non-European countries have much less opportunities than the first two groups and their integration takes longer time. According to the statistics, women are less successful in finding jobs at the beginning of their life in Sweden, but after 5 years the difference between genders starts to vanish. Women from non-European countries have the worst position, because it takes over 10 year for the differences to disappear (Centralbyrån, Statistics Sweden, 2016).

Methods

SFI is the first course which immigrants can sign up for after coming to Sweden therefore it was chosen as a main representative of the Swedish education system. The large part of the research focused on the course and took place during author's 6 months (from September 2014 to February 2015) working practise in Immigration Institute in Gothenburg. The purpose of this part is to critically evaluate its importance and find its positives and negatives. The article has following hypothesis: 1. SFI course as well as the whole education system has a positive impact on immigrants' integration into the labour market. 2. The Swedish education system helps immigrants to integrate into the society.

The paper used different methods to conduct the research. The participant observation was applied mainly for research in SFI, where the author participated as a student, and also in "Swedish coffee houses", which is an institution for immigrants to improve their conversational skills.

Throughout the research an in-depth interview method was used as well. The interviewees were teachers who had worked with immigrants and SFI students who already finished the course. The interviews took place in 2 cities, Gothenburg and Eskilstuna. The respondents were interviewed one by one in separate rooms not to influence each other. The questions were open questions and it was up to them to choose how long time they wanted to spend on each topic. The first part focused on the respondents' experience with the education of migrants, the second part focused on the education system for immigrants and their position in Sweden and in the last part they were asked about SFI and suggestions about the course. The outcome from the interviews was a list of positives and negatives of the course which were later validated by questionnaires given to other SFI students. The respondents highlighted these positives: the qualified teachers, the free-of-charge courses, the usage of books and the good preparation for future work; and these negatives: the large number of students in one classroom, the over focus on grammar, the lack of conversation, insufficient information about Swedish culture and big differences among students' knowledge of Swedish language within the study groups.

During the research in SFI, the author also used a questionnaire survey to examine the relation between SFI courses and migrants' adaption to labour market. SFI students and graduates took part in this survey. Successful incorporation into the labour market was chosen as a main aspect of the course's influence on integration hence the questionnaire tried to find out whether the migrants have a job and how long it had taken to find it. This part of the research used data from the interviews and previously discovered positives and negatives aspects were supposed to be validated or disproved.

International migrants in Sweden

Sweden is a final destination for many immigrants, therefore their structure is abundant. The tab. 1 shows that nowadays the highest number of international migrants come from Syria. The increase, due to the war in Syria, was enormous, during the last 4 years the total number raised by more than 100 000. On the other hand the number of migrants from Nordic countries (Finland, Norway and Denmark) is slowly decreasing. For instance, the Finnish group had been for a long time the biggest minority in Sweden until the year 2015 when it was outgrown by Syrian group. Another big minorities from Europe are Poles and Germans, who are on 2nd

and 9th places respectively. The largest group of migrants from Africa comes from African Horn (mainly Somalia and Eritrea), while Chileans are the biggest South American minority in Sweden (Statistika Centralbyrån, Statistics Sweden, 2018).

Tab. 1. Migrants' countries of origin between 2012 and 2017 (rounded to hundreds)

Country of origin	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Syria	9100	20500	42200	70000	116400	132100
Poland	44600	46100	48200	50800	52500	54000
Finland	65300	62800	60000	57600	55800	53800
Afghanistan	16700	20300	24000	26000	28000	37400
Eritrea	10000	12800	18000	25100	32100	36400
Somalia	36100	45000	47100	46200	41400	36400
Norway	34800	34600	34500	34400	34600	34700
Denmark	40200	39300	38400	37100	35200	33500
Germany	28000	28100	28200	28200	28700	29000
Iraq	43200	31200	26000	23200	22700	25300

Source: Statistika Centralbyrån, Statistics Sweden (2018)

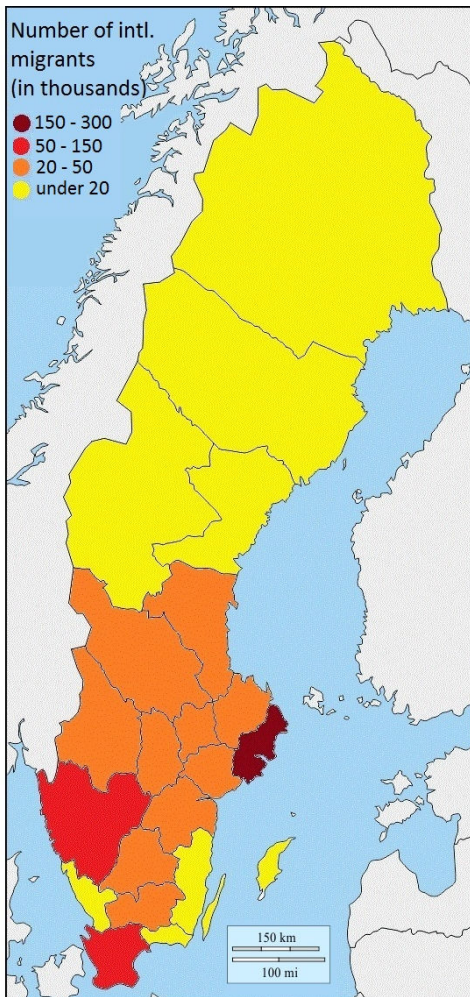


Fig. 1 shows that the most of the international migrants concentrate in the southern Sweden in biggest cities, because there are more job possibilities and the weather is milder than in the northern part. Most of the southern counties have more than 20 000 migrants except Halland, Kalmar, Blekinge and Gotland. Moreover, Skåne county (capital city is Malmö) and Västra Götaland county (capital city is Göteborg) have more than 100 000 and Stockholm has around 260 000. On the other hand none of the northern counties, despite their size, has more than 20 000 migrants.

Fig. 1. Number of international migrants in Swedish counties;
Source: D-maps (2018) and Statistika Centralbyrån, Statistics Sweden (2018),
edited by the author

Swedish education system for adult immigrants

After the arrival all immigrants need to apply for a personal number which is very important part of Swedish bureaucracy. A person without the number is not able to i.e. apply for a job or rent an apartment. The procedure of dealing with personal number applications is a time-consuming process, it can take several weeks or even months. Refugees are given the number at the time of approval of their asylum application, for other migrants the process takes longer time. After this, migrants can start to look for a job, but it is very difficult to find one without the Swedish language therefore every county arranges Swedish courses which are free of charge. The basic course SFI is organized by Komvux company or by universities. At the end of the course the students' level of Swedish should reach B1 in European language framework, the duration of the course is individualized, some of the students manage to finish in less than 1 year, and others may need 2 or more years. After the graduation there is a possibility to go on with studying at advanced course (SAS from Swedish name Svenska som andra språk = Swedish as a second language) which aim is to broaden Swedish knowledge (the result of own research and observation).

Language learning plays a very important role in Swedish Integration Policy and it is considered as a foundation of integration process. SFI course equips students with basic Swedish knowledge so they can communicate with Swedes in the country (the result of own research and observation). The course was founded in 1965 and since then the structure and conditions transformed many times. The duration was the main factor which changed, the length of the course increased many times: it was 200 hours per course in 1970, 240 hours in 1972 and 600 hours in 1981 (Järtelius 1982, pp. 82-86). Nowadays, there is no limit for the students, all depends on the individual needs and different knowledge backgrounds. The average duration varies from 350 to 2 000 hours (Statskontoret 2000:27, p. 53).

A main aim of the course is to develop students in following areas: the ability to read and write in Swedish, the communication skills in different situations, the pronunciation, the ability to use high quality equipment and the capability of long life education. SFI should teach students how to use Swedish in different situations at work as well as in private life (Skolverket 2013, pp. 6-21). Apart from the language the course includes also topics about the society and culture, thus SFI is considered as a bridge between migrants and their life in Sweden (Statskontoret 2000:27, pp. 28-31).

Everyone older than 16 years old, registered at Financial Department and does not have basic Swedish knowledge is entitled to study in SFI. Each county is responsible for course arrangement and informing citizens about the course, and delegates universities or educational institute for adults (namely Komvux) to organize lessons. After a student applies, he or she is put into the appropriate course without unnecessary delay, the waiting period should not be longer than 3 months (Skolverket 2013, pp. 6-21). The lessons are scheduled according to the student's convenience, in the bigger cities the education takes place also in the afternoon or at weekends so the student can work as well (Emilsson 2014, p. 12).

The students differ from each other in knowledge, skills and education level, thus everyone has his or her own individual study plan. The plan is made after a consultation between the student and the teacher and gives them the freedom to decide about the crucial points such as time and place of the lesson, pace of studying etc. An important part of SFI is reading and writing. Some of the immigrants come to Sweden without knowing to write, thus this basic skill is a priority. This applies mainly on illiterates, people with short school attendance and those who cannot write Latin alphabet. The students have to practise the skill throughout their study period (Skolverket 2013, pp. 19-36).

Other courses

After SFI the students can go on with studying in SAS the aim of which is to broaden Swedish knowledge (Thång, Larson 2010, p. 36). SAS is a course which offers an opportunity to study Swedish for citizens whose Swedish is not their mother tongue. The basic requirement is to graduate from SFI which means to be able to speak at the primary school level. During the course student's language knowledge is developed towards more advanced level (Skolverket 2016). SAS develops writing ability, communication as well as ability to use different resources and their understanding. Teachers use variety of methods, very common is a book report method where students have to read a book and then present it in front of the class. Another method is writing and essay on a given topic (the result of own research and observation).

SAS as well as SFI is free of charge and the immigrants can study and work at the same time. There is no time limit, everyone can study as long as they need and after this they can take a final test. The curriculum of the course focuses on advanced level of Swedish and after graduation the immigrant should be able to use Swedish on proficient level (the result of own research and observation).

In December 2010 a new course "Social orientation" (In Swedish: Samhällsorientering) was opened. The main aim was to teach immigrants about the Swedish society so they will know their rights and duties (Brändström 2016, p. 11). However, only new coming immigrants between age 20 and 65 with residence permit in one of the Swedish counties had a privilege to study there. According to the law 2010:197 it was mainly asylum seekers (Sveriges Riksdag 2010). From the year 2013 onwards newcomers between age 18 and 65 whose reason to come to Sweden was family reunion also had the right to participate, high school students and European Union citizens were excluded. Each county is responsible for organisation of the course and for informing the citizens about it (Sveriges Riksdag 2013).

The knowledge of society of the receiving country is very important. This is why this course was established. The lessons focus on the basic understanding of the Swedish society, the main aim is to broaden immigrants' awareness of human rights, democratic principles, citizens' rights and duties or structure and organization of the society. The curriculum includes also daily life topics such as work and education, housing, health care or family. "Social orientation" is free of charge and the immigrants have an option to study in their mother tongues so they can better grasp the issue and discuss about it (Brändström 2016, p. 11).

Immigrants learn about Swedish lifestyle from two main sources: from communication with social workers and from the language and other lessons. For many of them the contacts with Swedes are very rare and it takes many years to find a Swedish acquaintance or friend (Karlsson 2001, p. 87), therefore programs where immigrants can meet Swedes were established. One of them is called "Refuge Guide/Conversational Friend" (In Swedish: Flyktingguide/språkvän). In the first part of the project two people, one immigrant and one Swede, are matched together according to their hobbies and a meeting is arranged. After the first meeting it is up to them if and when they are going to meet next time. In case they do not want to pursue they can apply for a new conversational friend (the result of own research and observation). The main goal of the program is to give immigrants the opportunity to practise Swedish, better integrate into the society and to broaden his or her social contacts. It is also helpful for Swedes because they can get to know a new culture as well as integration process (Språkvän 2016).

The project was founded in 2006 in Eskilstuna which is currently leading a cooperation among other municipalities. The main pillars are: voluntary attendance, reciprocal exchange and language training. Everyone has a right to participate, and all the sites should gain some advantage (culture, language) from the exchange. The project was not very popular until 2014 when its reputation started increasing, today the idea has spread to more than 120 Swedish municipalities (Språkvän 2016).

In 2014 a new organisation called Kompisbyrån was established, but it was not under county's responsibility because it was a private entity founded by a group of young people in

Stockholm. The process of integration into the Swedish society is difficult, thus the founders decided to help with a language training. The system is almost identical to the previously described program, volunteers sign up for on the company's website and after this an immigrant is matched with a Swede according to their interests. Both of them are provided with the contact information of the conversational partner and the rest is up to them, they can decide the place and time of the meeting. If some of them wants to change he or she can apply for a new match. Anyone can take part in this program, there are no restrictions, and even social number is not needed. The organisation started its activity in Stockholm, it spread out to Gothenburg and Malmö later on (the result of own research and observation) and today can be found also in Jönköping, Linköping, Umeå, Uppsala, Västerås, Kalmar and Örebro (Kompisbyrån 2016).

In the last decade so called "Swedish coffee houses" (In Swedish Språkcaffe) started their activities, their goal is to give immigrants an opportunity to improve their Swedish skills by speaking with other learners and Swedes. "Swedish coffee houses" are situated mainly in big cities but slowly start to spread to smaller cities. The activity takes place mostly in libraries which are financed by the counties. The libraries provide rooms for the organizers once or twice a week. The teaching position is always filled with native speakers who are responsible for hosting the lesson. The main activity is a conversation, sometimes there are games or special programs prepared but most of the time immigrants have a possibility to talk to each other and to the Swedish teachers. There are no restrictions so everyone can participate (the result of own research and observation).

All of the mentioned courses are free of charge, which is big advantage, because not everyone would have enough money to pay for them. Everyone can participate, however, some of the courses such as SAS and "Social orientation" are available only for migrants with social number. The other courses are available for everyone, but there is either a small number of participants or the courses are not offered in every city. The tab. 2 shows positives and negatives of the all mentioned courses.

Tab. 2. Positives and negatives of educational activities for immigrants

Course, activity	Positives	Negatives
SAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Free of charge. - In whole Sweden. - Everyone with social number can participate. - Can be combined with work. - Broaden Swedish knowledge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is no time limit for graduation.
"Social orientation"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Free of charge. - In whole Sweden. - Information about citizens' rights and duties. - Education in the mother tongue. - Teaching method: discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The right to study the course does not apply to everyone.
"Refugee Guide/Conversational Friend"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Everyone can participate. - Free of charge. - Swedes meet with immigrants. - Language practise. - Getting familiar with each other's culture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small number of participants.
Kompisbyrån	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Everyone can participate (only in certain cities). - Free of charge. - Swedes meet with immigrants. - Language practise. - Getting familiar with each other's culture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small number of participants. - Geographical restrictions: it takes place only in few cities.
"Swedish coffee houses"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Everyone can participate. - Free of charge. - Language training. - Information about Swedish culture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is not situated in every city.

Compiled by author

Research in SFI

The questionnaire research focused on SFI, which is immigrants' first step in studying Swedish. People who graduated or were studying the course were chosen for the research. 88 immigrants participated out of which 48 were from Europe, 29 from Asia, 5 from Africa, 5 from America and 1 from Australia. The data were collected in whole Sweden, however the most participants lived in Gothenburg and surroundings. The most frequent reason for coming to Sweden was family or spouse (38), followed by study (28), work (12) and other reasons (10). Internet is one the main source of information which was proved also by this questionnaire because 55% immigrants stated that it was internet which they mostly used to gather information about Sweden prior their arrival. Next sources were relatives (19%), friends (14%) and other sources (12%). Among the respondents there were 25 men and 63 women; 12 people completed only elementary school or had no education, 16 finished high school (upper secondary level) and 60 of them finished a university. The tab. 3 shows three other characteristics of the respondents (time spent in Sweden, the reason for coming to Sweden and the duration of studying Swedish) organized by regions.

Tab. 3. Respondents' characteristics according to the home region

Time spent in Sweden				
	0-1 year	1-2 years	2-3 years	More than 3 years
Europe	9	11	13	17
Asia	1	5	10	13
Africa	0	2	1	2
America and Australia	1	2	0	3
The reason for coming to Sweden				
	Family or spouse	Study	Work	Other
Europe	25	14	5	4
Asia	9	13	3	3
Africa	0	0	3	2
America and Australia	4	0	1	1
The duration of studying Swedish				
	0-1 year	1-2 years	2-3 years	More than 3 years
Europe	38	6	2	2
Asia	20	6	2	1
Africa	3	1	1	0
America and Australia	3	3	0	0

Source: Author's research

The research was looking for positives and negatives of SFI. According to the participants' answers, mentioned in the tab. 4, the biggest advantage of the course is that it is free of charge; there are only 5 people who do not agree. On the other hand some of the students could be less motivated, they could skip classes and did not spend enough time studying at home which would result in their worse outcomes. If the course was chargeable the students might have had a different approach. The second positive of the course is the usage of textbooks but as the result of the questionnaires show they are not used in all of the groups. SFI has qualified and good teachers which was also proved by the questionnaires; only 11 people think that they are not very good. The importance of SFI in integration of immigrants into the labour market was not completely proved; 47% believe that the course can help them to find a job, 33% think that it will not help them and 20% do not know.

Tab. 4. Results of the questions about SFI

Is it good that SFI courses are free of charge?					
Answers	Yes	No	I don't know		
Number of respondents	83 (94%)	2 (2%)	3 (4%)		
Are the books used in the lessons?					
Answers	Yes	No			
Number of respondents	60 (68%)	28 (32%)			
How good are the teachers in SFI?					
Answers	Very good	Good	Average	Not so good	Bad
Number of respondents	29 (33%)	31 (36%)	16 (18%)	11 (13%)	0 (0%)
Is SFI going to help you find a job?					
Answers	Yes	No	I don't know		
Number of respondents	41 (47%)	29 (33%)	18 (20%)		
Do you want to speak more Swedish in the lessons?					
Answers	Yes	No	I don't know		
Number of respondents	65 (74%)	13 (15%)	10 (11%)		
How many students are in the study groups in SFI?					
Answers	Too many	Many	It is alright	Little	Too little
Number of respondents	18 (21%)	37 (43%)	30 (34%)	2 (2%)	0 (0%)
Are there big differences between students in their knowledge of Swedish in one group?					
Answers	Yes	No	I don't know		
Number of respondents	58 (74%)	15 (19%)	5 (7%)		
Do you want to study more about Swedish culture during the lessons?					
Answers	Absolutely yes	Yes	It is alright now	No	Absolutely not
Number of respondents	30 (34%)	19 (22%)	29 (33%)	6 (7%)	4 (4%)
How much grammar is the in the lessons?					
Answers	Too much	Much	Not too much and not too little	Little	Too little
Number of respondents	11 (13%)	19 (23%)	36 (43%)	14 (17%)	3 (4%)

Source: Author's research

The questionnaire showed three main negatives of SFI:

1. The students do not have enough opportunities to speak during the lessons
2. The studying groups have too many students
3. There are big differences among students in one group regarding the knowledge of Swedish

Everything depends on the size of the city and on the geographical location, if the city is smaller there is a bigger chance that the number of students in SFI would be lower than in the big cities. Counties which are located in the northern part of Sweden have fewer immigrants than in the south of the country so the study groups are usually smaller. The first two negative aspects are connected to each other, if the class has too many students there is no time to engage all of them into oral conversation and the writing methods need to be used. In case the number decreased the problem with the lack of speaking exercises could be solved.

Next two aspects of the course were not entirely proved as a disadvantage. 56% would like to study more about Swedish culture during the lessons, 33% thought that the time spent on the topic is sufficient and 11% thought that the lesson should focus less on Swedish culture. It can be assumed from the whole research that: 1. Some students think that Swedish culture is not worth studying, because they come from the similar cultural background. They would probably like to use the time for other activities. 2. The teacher is not limited to his or her lesson plan therefore the time used for studying Swedish culture differs in each class. The questionnaire also showed that the respondents did not agree that the course would have focused too much on grammar; only 36% thought that there was too much grammar during the class.

The main index which was used to evaluate SFI's influence of integration was migrants' incorporation on the labour market. 51% of all respondents stated that they had a job, which did not completely prove the hypothesis about the SFI's influence, however it showed that the course had a certain importance. The fig. 2 shows that the migrants from Europe, America and Australia have bigger change to be employed than migrants from other regions.

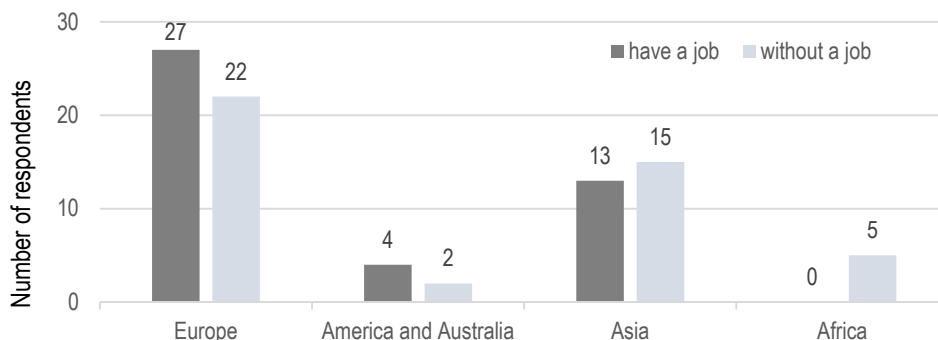


Fig. 2. Relation between migrants' home region and odds gaining a job;
Source: Author's research

The figure 3 focuses on the relation between the length of studying Swedish and employment. The rate of employed and unemployed participants was different in every category. The most of the migrants found a job within 3 months studying Swedish, however this probably also include those who did not need to speak Swedish at a workplace hence SFI did not give them such a big advantage. Some of the high skilled jobs and the jobs required high education degree are the jobs where Swedish is not a basic requirement. For instance, workers in fields of technology and computer programming, customer service positions which require the employee to speak English and their mother tongue or position in international company, where the costumers are situated in the whole world.

80% of those who have a job found it within the first year of studying Swedish. On the other hand, there was a small group of respondents (4 people) who were unemployed even after more than 2 years. These results support the idea that SFI is a course with individual approach, which can help immigrants to find a job but it is up to them how they approach the classes and how they will use their gained knowledge.

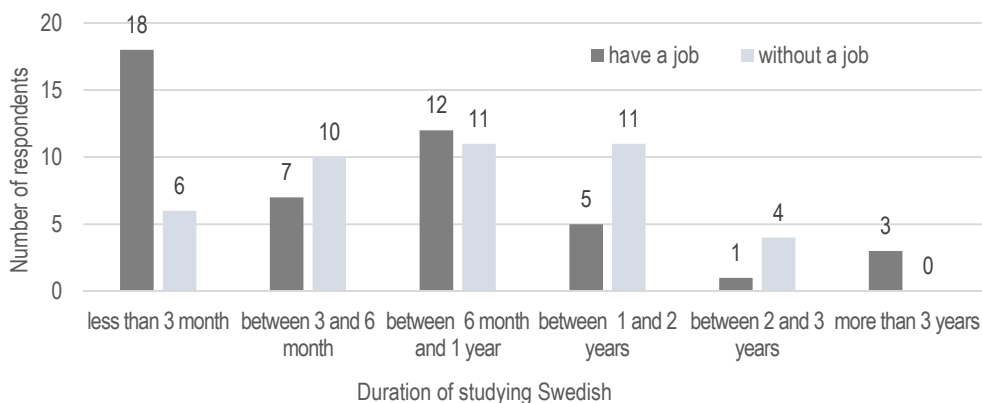


Fig. 3. Relation between duration of studying Swedish and the odds of gaining a job;
Source: Author's research

Next part of the research was searching for a cluster of immigrants for whom SFI has the biggest significance hence the questionnaire contained a question where the respondents evaluated SFI's importance for incorporation on the labour market. 44% of the respondents stated that SFI influenced their integration of the labour market, 40% thought that it did not have any influence and 16% were not sure about it. The result did not entirely prove SFI's importance, however it showed that it was helpful for a large share of the respondents.

The results of the questionnaires showed that there is a correlation between immigrants' finished educational level and their importance of SFI for them. Figure number 4 shows that the lower education the immigrant obtained in his or her home country the bigger importance in finding a job SFI will have for him or her. Immigrants coming to Sweden with university diploma study only Swedish but immigrants with very low education level study also reading, writing and learning strategies in SFI. Moreover the university diploma raises the chance to get a job therefore for university graduates SFI's contribution is not as big as for the others.

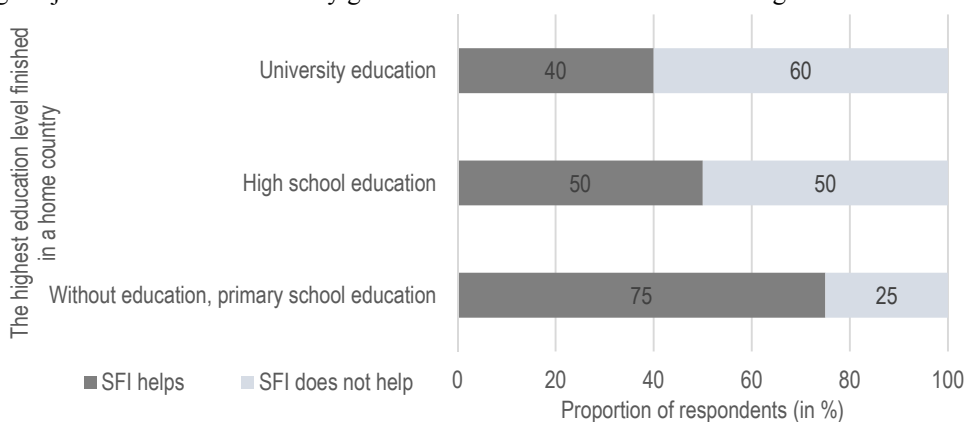


Fig. 4. SFI's importance for the immigrants (by educational level); Source: Author's research

Conclusions

The Swedish education system gives immigrants many possibilities to educate themselves and raise their chance to get a job fast. The main subject of the education system is the Swedish language because without its knowledge it would be very difficult to integrate into the society. The next crucial point is Swedish culture and values which are usually part of language learning, but there is also a course called "Social orientation" which teaches about the topic. The immigrants can study the course in their mother tongues so there would not be any misinterpretations.

The first course after coming to Sweden is SFI, which teaches the immigrants Swedish on an elementary school level. The research shows that the influence of SFI on integration is individual however, one correlation was found: the lower immigrants' education was at the home country, the bigger significance the course have for them. The research validated three main positive aspects: qualified teachers, the course is free of charge, usage of professional textbooks; and three main negative aspects: insufficient conversation in the classroom, many students in the classrooms and big differences among students' knowledge of Swedish language within the study groups.

Course SAS, which should extend the students' Swedish knowledge, follows SFI. The migrants can combine the education with other activities which improve their Swedish language level or broaden their Swedish culture and values awareness.

The paper analysed Swedish education system for immigrants and showed different options which they can choose. SFI course was examined more closely and its positives and negatives

were stressed out. Although there are negative aspects, SFI is very important for many immigrants, especially those whose educational background is lower. Both of the hypothesis were validated. SFI and the whole Swedish education system has positive impact on integration of migrants into the labour market. 49% of the respondents did not have job at the time of the research however, 80% of those who had job needed one year or less to find it. The research shows that the course is individual, the course offers an education which can help when looking for a job, but it is up to the migrants to follow the course and motivate themselves. Swedish education system helps immigrants to integrate into the Swedish society. They can study Swedish language and culture in free of charge courses. Then paper shows that the Swedish system is well organized and, even though there are some negative aspects, it helps especially immigrants with lower education background a lot to integrate into the society.

The paper describes the immigrant adult education which has a significant role in immigrants' integration in the society. Nowadays, there are more immigrants coming to Central Europe, therefore the countries' governments have to find an optimal way how to integrate and educate them. This paper shows one approach which aspects can be spread and used by other countries.

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