CIVIL SOCIETY AND INTEGRATION BETWEEN ESTABLISHED HABITANTS AND NEWLY ARRIVED IN EUROPE

A Case Study of Individuell Människohjälp

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to assess the possibilities in future development of integration in Europe as well as highlighting the importance of civil society in the integration work. The thesis is informed by a postcolonial perspective and a definition of integration as a two-way process, emphasizing the importance of recognition and reciprocity between newly arrived and established habitants. By performing an ethnographic case study of a voluntary organization in Sweden and by assessing European guiding document on integration, the research identifies hinders for integration as a two-way process both within the organization as well as at European level. Hinders for full realisation of integration between established and newly arrived individuals are partly the result of power structures in relation to privileges which in turn is informed by a socioeconomic approach to integration. However, the problem is also a consequence of an underlying Eurocentric perspective on integration which is cementing the divisions between newly arrived and established habitants. Nevertheless, the case study has also identified ways to overcome the assimilative tendencies in Europe and introduce an inter-epistemic approach to integration. By dismantling the socioeconomic roles individuals play in their daily lives more space is given to psychosocial factors which are enabling people to meet on more common grounds and thus, together may easier create integration as a two-way process as defined in EU guiding documents.

Content

1. Introduction

During the last years, we have witnessed the worst refugee crisis in Europe since the second world war which was soon followed by increasing populism, Euroscepticism, worsening inequalities and humanitarian crisis. Extensive numbers of people risking their lives to seek refuge in Europe have led to tensions between both citizens and authorities. Social inequality and exclusion affecting newly arrived individuals within the EU are a huge challenge for fruitful integration processes. Broad and ambitious integration policies do not necessary translate into actual integration. Both a EU level as well as at national level policies on integration are a top priority but are still insufficient, especially as regards the attempt to create integration as a two-way process where established habitants and newly arrived are equally involved, even though this is an explicit ambition in European, guiding documents for integration (Carrera 2006, Joppke 2007, EESC 2016). Eurocentric and assimilative tendencies are still by and large informing the European approach to integration where both the governmental as well as the public approach to integration fail to create a more inclusive society. However, the increasing role of civil society within the area of integration has introduced an alternative approach to the issue by inter alia creating social venues for interaction between newly arrived and established habitants in European countries. Research on integration has mainly presented an overview of current state and the effects of European integration policies such as troubles with translating integration policies into practice and assimilative trends within national integration programs. Previous research has also to some extent assessed the role of civil society in preserving the human rights of newly arrived and in filling in the integration gaps left by the EU and national policies (Carrera 2006, Joppke 2007, Inglehart & Norris 2009, Lundberg et al. 2011, European Economic and Social Committee[EESC] 03-04-2014, Hellgren 2015, EESC 2016). However, despite an intense search for ethnographic studies on integration I have not found any. This thesis, is an attempt to redress the aforementioned research gap by conducting an ethnographic case study of one voluntary organization operating in Sweden and by being sensitive to the social processes facilitated through the integrational work performed within chosen organisation, the hinders for integration as a two-way process within the organisation and European integration policies as well as the general question whether civil society actors can contribute to the development of integration in Europe as an actual two-way- process as formulated in the common basic

principles of the EU.

In this paper, I first present a background to the issue at stake which starts with the shortcomings and negative effects of current European, governmental approach to integration. In the second section, the role of civil society within the area of integration and previous research are presented. This is followed by a presentation of the organization chosen for this research. Next, I present theoretical framework, aim and research questions, methods and empirical analysis concluding with a discussion section.

2. Previous research

In the following chapter I present some of the key issues in current European, governmental approach to integration. In the second section, the role of civil society within the area of integration and previous research are presented.

2.1 European approach to integration

Both at EU level and in many European national policies the definition of integration is described as a two-way- process where both established inhabitants and newly arrived persons are equally involved. However, this is more of a utopic view than reality. Different perceptions of the terms integration and assimilation have created confusion regarding European and national integration (and identities) policies and academic and political consensus in how to define European integration policies is lacking. Both the assimilative and multicultural approach has put most of the responsibility for integration on newly arrived themselves lacking the necessary involvement of established habitants (Joppke, 2007, 1-22).

The EU common basic principles of integration (CBPs) entail the more frequently used definition of integration which is to be found in most European integration policies: *Integration is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of the Member State*s (Council of the European Union [CEU] 2004, Presse 321). In this definition of integration, it is settled that the responsibility for change lays both in the hands of migrants and the host society where the society must ease the process of integration for newly arrived, however the definition has been widely challenged. Both authorities and common citizens have raised concerns about the obligations of the integrational process (indirectly) arguing that it its mainly newly arrived themselves that must bear the responsibility for integration in contrast to the established habitants or" reference" group (Joppke 2007, 1-22).

The imbalanced European relationship to integration is boosted by the remaining basic principles which also have informed national principles highlighting the importance of the "basic values" of the EU (leading to an understanding of integration as something which happens in a procedural agreement of what is right) and the importance of adopting to the host country (e.g. Knowing the language, national history and systems). Ideals of the multicultural

society are also squeezed in, emphasizing the right to practice diverse cultures and religions (Joppke, 2007). However, attempts to create a multicultural society at European national level have mainly been characterized by the lack of support from the host country to newly arrived (Koopmans 2010).

The purpose of the principles was (and is) to guide actors involved with integration such as European politicians and various voluntary organizations. From the perspective of voluntary organizations, the utility of the principles has been questioned partly due to their abstract and narrow character while they are still considered to be a meaningful reference point. Civil society actors now call for the need of addressing current challenges, such as expanding securitization of societies and rising xenophobia. The assimilative tendencies in European integration policy which has been informed by the formulations of the CBPs has been raised as one of the main concerns from the perspective of voluntary organizations (EESC 03-04-2014).

To further strengthen the capacity to meet the challenges of a culturally diverse Europe the EU has developed a broad cooperation with the Council of Europe on the strengthening and development of an intercultural dialogue which today informs substantial parts of EU policies and the European approach to integration. The White paper on Intercultural Dialogue produced by the Council of Europe is defining integration in the same terms as the CBPs and the concept of an intercultural dialogue is explicitly included in the reaffirmed version of the CBPs (Council of Europe [COE] 2008, EU-COE Youth Partnership 2017).

Even though EU policies have anti-discriminatory and multiethnic approaches they are interpreted differently by the member states and are strongly shaped by national preferences which member states sometimes strive to transpose at EU-level. Civic integration policy which is developed at national level has an increasingly obligatory character and has even transformed into instruments of migration control. The emphasis on cultural recognition has been reduced towards enforcement of the core values of liberal societies and the socioeconomic perspective (e.g. how education, employment and civic orientation as part of the integration work may strengthen the contribution of newly arrived to the receiving society) is currently dominant (Joppke 2007, Carrera 2006, Carrera & Wiesbrock 2009). Both

the EU and European nation states tend to disregard the assimilative characters of their integration policies but it is unavoidable to bring it up for discussion. Assimilation is defined differently by different actors. The perhaps most negative association of the term is the process of transformation where a person or a group of people are converted into the meaning of the nature of the reference group and host society. This perception of assimilation has been discredited as retrogressive put in contrast to an appreciation of diversity. The more general and normative definition refers to the process of becoming similar and be treated as similar with reference to the host society and established habitants. In this regard, there is no final state of assimilation but rather a direction of change. When discussing assimilative trends in European integration policies it is the nature and extent of rising similarities in certain areas between newly arrived and established inhabitants that I refer to (Brubaker 2001,531-548).

National variations in integration policies are natural with regard to societal models, history and patterns and traditions of migration flows, however there seem to be a convergence of national models of integration policy. Similar tendencies are partly revealed in national integration programs and civic integration policies. General elements that are shared among many European national integration programs are civic courses intended to introduce newly arrived to domestic norms, values, cultural traditions, history, language classes and labour market orientation. The programs also tend to have a mandatory character often being part of citizenship and immigration legislation as well as being a prerequisite for access to a secure juridical status (Carrera 2006, Carrera & Wiesbrock 2009). Integration as defined in the first common basic principles is losing its meaning in favor of a one-way process where national European policies are commonly performed by means of obligatory assimilation. Political practice of integration becomes the border between inhabitants deciding who has rights and who has mainly obligations where stereotypical models of national identities serves as preference in the determination of newly arrived individuals integration processes (Carrera 2006, Carrera & Wiesbrock 2009). The perception of integration of newly arrived contradicts with values of diversity, social inclusion and non-discrimination. The assimilative and Eurocentric character of European politics is justified with reference to" our core values" presented in contrast to non-western values where" where Muslim traditions and culture" often serves as an example (Inglehart & Norris 2009). In order to reach the two-way process of integration it is necessary to create a strong platform from which channels and venues for

social interaction can operate in order to come to a discursive change; civil society can play important role in this change, as argued in this paper.

Another aspect of the problematic situation is the fact that from a policy perspective, most of the migrants arriving during current refugee crisis waiting for response from their asylum claims are not supposed to integrate (Carrera 2006, Joppke, 2007). This defect in European integration policies makes it even harder to handle the situation since we have a large number of people living among us but who are systematically kept outside the system. Sweden, poses a good example in this regard where newly arrived who for different reasons have not completed their asylum process and who do not have a residence permit are left alone without sufficient support (not even offering basic knowledge in the language or important functions of the society) from the state. This large group of people must rely on civil society and others willingness to support (Flyktinggruppernas Riksråd [FARR] 2017).

Sweden has a comparatively well-established civil society which to a high extent have turned their attention to those falling outside of the state steered system. But far from all are reached and experiences of enforced unemployment, racism and isolation do doubtlessly have negative effects on integration even after a completed asylum process. Through media we have witnessed the political debate on how to cope with the challenges presented. The EU response to the refugee crisis has been dissentious, dramatic even. Member states trying to push over the responsibility to others instead of finding ways to go are nurturing the restrictive approach to immigration in Europe where civil society actors are among the main players fighting against that development (EECS 2017).

2.2 What role can civil society play?

Voluntary organizations are increasingly involved with both national and EU politics complementing the public authorities work in different fields. Both the EU and national governments are giving more attention to voluntary organizations involving them in political processes as well as establishing agreements where the voluntary sector complement the national governments. There are many distinguishing attributes to voluntary organizations compared to governments, however the fact that they are formed voluntarily and usually have

elements of voluntary participation are among the primarily features (Ungureanu Ciprian, Ionescu Nicoleta & Negru Gabriela. 2010). Volunteering, for instance, brings many positive effects and opportunities to society. It provides a platform through which local communities and civil society organizations can utilize the skills and expertise of local habitants. By volunteering one can usurp new experiences, skills and networks which may be useful both in the private social life as well as professionally. Most importantly, it offers a venue for people to integrate. The benefits of volunteering have been widely recognized inter alia by the European Commission in its launch of the program for the" European Year of Volunteering 2011" (European Commission [EC] EU Citizenship Portal 2012). Voluntary organizations in Europe offer several fundamental services such as legal aid, information, housing, education, networks and health care to substantiate integration within the borders of the European Union. In relation to governments on national, regional and local levels the organizations guards the rights of non-EU-migrants. By networking, collaborating and by direct contact with target groups voluntary organizations have the strength to promote issues related to integration (Lundberg et al. 2011).

Lundberg (2011) and his colleagues demonstrates how different voluntary organizations in the Netherlands, Great Britain, Italy and Sweden administer social services to bolster integration in the EU emphasizing the importance of civil society in areas where governments fail to meet the requirements. They conclude that governments more or less depend on civil society for securing fundamental rights to its citizens which to a considerable extent is thanks to the flexibility and nuanced combination of qualities within the organizations themselves and their networks. Furthermore, they find that the EU currently does not offer equal participatory opportunities for various voluntary organizations, much due to the need for substantial resources such as financial and personnel which in turn might hinder a strengthening of the relevance and legitimacy of the EU as a democratic body (Lundberg et al. 2011).

Winter 2016 the Migration Policy Group published an EU-wide report on voluntary initiatives for immigrant integration in Europe. The report gives an overview of new voluntary initiatives that emerged in EU member countries as a response to the increased level of immigration into the EU. In contrast to Lundberg and his colleagues as well as several actors representing civil society, the Migration Policy Group is more sceptic to the increasing role of

civil society in integrational work. Among the main concerns are the lack of structural cooperation and networking among civil society actors, especially between new initiatives and established actors raising the question of sustainability (Migration Policy Group [MPG] 2016).

 More general concerns about a deeper cooperation between the voluntary sector and the state and the voluntary sector as a provider of social service have also been voiced. Some argue that, the democratic strength within voluntary organizations risks being undermined when receiving financial support from the state when the consequence of that support might be that the organization adapt to governmental preferences rather than working for their own ideals and interests. A decreased gap, some argue, between the state and civil society may have a negative impact on the democratic voice of the people, making voluntary organizations less independent. Furthermore, the development of civil society from historically mainly having a *voice* function to function as a provider of social service has raised concerns about the preferred responsibility of the government over the welfare state (Johansson et al. 2011). A discussion about the pros and cons of the increasing role of civil society in the area of integration has been going on for several years, however the recent development with successful voluntarily initiatives indicates that we may have reason to consider a reconstruction of the European approach to immigrant integration (MPG 2016).

To conclude, European policies on integration have, despite good intentions not managed to meet the demands of an increasingly diverse European society and in decreasing restrictive attitudes towards immigration in Europe. Initiatives such as the development of the Common Basic Principles for Integration and The cooperation with the Council of Europe in establishing an European approach to integration as a two-way process facilitated by an intercultural dialogue has not had the inclusive effects on national policies and European attitudes towards immigration as it was hoped to; rather, the efforts on supranational level have not been able to counteract the Eurocentric discourses in the European approach to integration but instead, facilitated assimilative tendencies in European integration by its narrow characters and Eurocentric formulations. However, this development has not gone unnoticed either for European political actors neither for the civil society sector to which European politicians have turned for an increased cooperation on the issue. Voluntary

organisations have played a decisive role in filling in the gaps left by EU and national governments in the integrational work in Europe and in preserving the human rights of newly arrived individuals. Nevertheless, above presented research on integration are mainly based on document analysis and interviews with authorities and despite an intense search for ethnographic studies on integration I have not found any. Due to this research gap, this thesis is mainly based on ethnographically collected data on integration and the role of civil society in integration between newly arrived and established inhabitants in Sweden.

3. Individuell människohjälp (IM)

This thesis draws upon one ethnographic case study for which the international voluntary organisation Individuell Människohjälp (IM) is chosen. Here I present some of the more general characteristics of the organisation.

Individuell Människohjälp (IM) is a Swedish voluntary organization working against poverty and exclusion. IM was founded in 1938 as a reaction to the National Socialism, violence and hatred that was spreading in Europe at the time. IM remains focused on defending the inherent value of each individual emphasising the need for a holistic approach to the needs of the individual (IM Strategic platform 2011-2020).

The organisation is divided in local associations spread over substantial parts of Sweden, led by the national board. A large portion of the work performed in Sweden is held by volunteers in activity groups focusing on integration, dissemination of information, fair trade and fund-raising. The volunteers in turn are supported by local personnel established at the regional offices (Employee at IM regional office in Gothenburg, in-depth interview 03-03- 2017, IM Unofficial Operational Plan 2017 for the Western Region of Sweden).

The overall objectives of the organization are education, economic empowerment, health, civil society, integration and effective partnership. By actively working with empowerment as a method the organisation aim to help people to help themselves. The organization is fund raising and member-based with almost 7000 members, 2000 volunteers and many donors on whom the organization highly depend on and is currently working in five regions and twelve countries worldwide. In Gothenburg IM has over 350 volunteers working with integration in different activity groups and currently 8 employees at the local office (Employee at IM

regional office in Gothenburg, in-depth interview 15-03-17). By creating democratic platforms and recruiting members who form and influence the organization IM aim to contribute to the strengthening of civil society and democratic development in Sweden. Their work is guided by the four fundamental principles of a rights based approach (RBA) that is; participation, non-discrimination, accountability and transparency (IM Strategic platform 2011-2020).

In Sweden IM works with integration by creating social venues for interaction between people who are newly arrived and people who are more established in the Swedish society. In this work, the organisation promotes mutual learning and support people living in exclusion to actively participate in society. IM acts as a complement to the public welfare system by mobilizing volunteers in different activities/project in order to facilitate integration and creating models for psychosocial support. In this work, they have a norm-critical approach and are continuously dealing with questions such as xenophobia and stereotypes. Even though IM is politically impartial they function as a civil society organisation in a political context where they are taking stand against injustice and for humanity, this is done through their work and by both positioning in relation to values and ideas as well as directly targeting and interacting with authorities and decision makers (Employee at IM regional office in Gothenburg, in-depth interview 03-03- 2017).

4   Theoretical concepts of integration and the postcolonial perspective

Integration is a widely-elaborated theme where the academic literature ranges from theories on assimilation and structural racism to discussions about empowerment and identity(identities) (de los Reyes & Kamali. SOU 2005:41, Sardinha 2009, Hellgren 2015). With regard to the comprehensive contributions on issues of integration I will simply give a short presentation of some of the theoretical concepts on integration and then guide the reader into the approach of integration which constitutes the outset of this thesis.

As stated earlier, the concept of integration has many meanings and is used in several different contexts. One of the most common established theories on integration is that of assimilation which in turn take shape in several different forms. From the Chicago School of Sociology, Robert Part in his writing from the 1920s assumes that despite struggles of survival and conflicting cultures, assimilation is the inevitable outcome of processes of interaction between newly arrived individuals and the receiving country. The term may be defined as the process by which minorities, with time, adopt values, cultures, lifestyles and attitudes of the majority. From the assimilationist perspective, the nation-state is the ideal and main reference and believes that a common national culture is a necessity for a functional society. Theorists do also imply and sometimes directly state that the process of assimilation postulates an abandonment or loss of newly arrived individuals identities in favour of the absorption of characteristics belonging to a perceived group identity of the established habitants (Sardinha 2009). As mentioned before, Roger Brubaker offers a more general and normative definition of assimilation as a process where newly arrived or the minority becomes similar to and treated similar by the receiving society and the majority. Here, there is no final state but rather a direction of change towards assimilation (Brubaker 2001, 531-548).

The assimilationist approach has met critique by several researches who inter alia note that the theory underplays variations of how newly arrived adapt to the receiving society. Bhikhu Parekh argue for a pluralist perspective on cultural diversity emphasising the importance of accepting different lifestyles and group identities pointing out that the denial of the right of newly arrived to choose its own characteristics (e.g. in terms of religion, cultural expression and values) is likely to provoke resistance. Moreover, Parekh raises the question of moral and

cultural diversity within a society. The assimilationist approach assumes that societies are homogenous and unified while in reality, questions of religion, class and region, conflicting ideologies and different ways of perceiving values and practises draw a much more complex picture of what newly arrived are expected to assimilate to, and therefore, the theory fails (Parekh 2000, Sardinha 2009).

Parekh criticises contemporary and classical liberal theorists where he finds their moral understandings e.g. what "a good way of life" entails to be highly decisive due to its ethnocentric characteristics. Europe today consists of a dynamic combination of ethnicities and different cultures and thus requires an understanding of people as the complex being she is. He responds by arguing for a dialogical exchange between cultural differences and the human commonalities which would serve as a constructive approach to cultural issues brought up in a multicultural and multi-ethnic society (Parekh 2000).

The theoretical approach to multiculturalism which Parekh presents could easily be connected to concepts of interculturality and intersectionality in its relatively holistic approach; however, for the purpose of this paper, emphasis will be put on questions of identities. In the approach to integration as a two-way-process between established inhabitants and newly arrived it becomes particularly interesting to investigate how, when this two-way-process takes place, identities are affected. Deriving from theories presented, I have developed my own understanding of the integrational process on individual level.

The thesis assumes that by, to a higher extent, taking care of and recognizing the qualities (lingual, perspectives, professional qualities, cultural expression etc.) which newly arrived bring and by an increased interaction between newly arrived and established habitants we can create a national discourse which to a higher extent give room for the multifaceted society we actually live in. In parallel with this process, individual identities will be created and modified which will reduce the "us and them" perspective which currently dominate issues of integration.

Postcolonial perspective

The thesis's understanding of integration requires a critical assessment of the European approach to integration as a part of identifying what hinders integration as a two-way process. As a part of the analysis, the thesis discusses, from a postcolonial perspective, European

guiding documents informing substantial parts of how the integrational work in Europe is developed and practised. However, the postcolonial perspective, also inform the analysis overall. Here, I give a short presentation of some classical postcolonial works and the main elements of the approach applied in this thesis while the empirical section give more concrete examples of how it is applied.

The amplitude of postcolonial readings offers several, often very different approaches to postcolonial theorizing where the objects of study vary from history books and language use to art and feminist ideologies (Bill Ashcroft et al. 2005). In *Black skin, White Masks (1952),* Frantz Fanon diagnosed the black psyche in a white world and the book made him a prominent contributor to postcolonial studies. According to Fanon, resulting from a deeply rooted sense of inferiority a combination of hatred and envy has occupied the black man's psychological relation to himself and the white man. Fanon argues that the black man is enslaved by his/her own self-contempt as much as by the western oppressor, in vain trying to gain access to whiteness or to attain confidence by honouring the black man, the black subject is caught in resentment (Fanon, 1993). In conformity with Fanon, the author Edward Said aim to expose the structures of colonialism which are (among other) elaborated on in his perhaps most eminent book *Orientalism* written in 1978 (Said, 1978). In *Orientalism* Said studies the nature and history of the Western approach towards the East where he considers orientalism to be a dominant European, ideological invention for European actors to deal with "otherness" identified in eastern culture. The ideas of orientalism, Said argues, are also a reflection of European racism and imperialism (Said, 1978). While Fanon is mostly concerned with the psychological relationship between whites and blacks and the construction of the "other" based on "race", Said put emphasis on the process of orientalism and how the East is presented and identified as a subordinated "other". Both authors do also include the importance of language in the construction of opposites with the "other" on the one side and the superior West on the other side (Said 1978, Fanon 1993).

Attention to language in relation to power structures is further dealt with in the book *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures* by Bill Ashcroft, Garret Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. The authors present a comprehensive study of a wide range of post-colonial texts and how those texts may be related to each other and to broader issues of post-colonial culture. The authors define the term "postcolonial" as *all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day (*Bill Ashcroft et

al. 2005, pp 2) thus offering a very broad understanding of what there is to look for. The study is relatively critical with a strong emphasis on Eurocentric notions and the book could count as an influential classic on postcolonial readings. However, while both Fanon and Said are more concerned with specific groups of people and Ashcroft and his colleagues are more attentive to language applying a broader approach to postcolonial theorizing this thesis requires a more specified critical approach to epistemology. By giving attention to epistemology one may also increase the possibility to gain a deeper understanding of what informs large parts of the European approach to integration, thus facilitating for the development of an alternative approach in order to overcome hinders for integration as a two-way process.

I have, in this study, chosen to proceed from the definitions and approach to postcolonial writing from that of Walter Mignolo in his works *The enduring enchantment (or the epistemic privilege of modernity and where to go from here)* 2002 and *The Geo-politics of Knowledge and the Colonial Difference*, 2002 as presented below.

A postcolonial reading from the perspective of Mignolo (and in conformity with other postcolonial readings) entails questioning when, why and by whom knowledge is being constructed. At the heart of this theoretical approach lays the aim to establish that norms that have come to be perceived as universal are simply a contemplation stemming from their own geohistorical locations. In the process and in the shaping of epistemic relations coloniality is understood as a key factor of Eurocentric characters informing the epistemic relations to maintain its own dominance. Maintenance of Eurocentric dominance is especially noticeable in the construction of opposites that distinguish what is norm and not, e.g. labelling food at a restaurant as *ethnic* food, and thereby distinguishing it as opposite to the "typical domestic food". Europe and the European (citizen, norms, languages, laws, food etc.) ascribes itself as in the heart of action from which evolvement emerges at the same time as Europe has the epistemic privilege of setting the frames for what is to be dictated. Europe and the European is put in contrast to everything else as if that *other* (people, languages, "cultures", norms etc.) is less important and less valuable (Mignolo 2002 a, 2002 b). The logics of coloniality and the privileged position of Europe and the "European" are, embedded in the logics of "modernity" (the definition of what is modern or traditional is relative, however in this context "modernity" is limited to European colonisation of power thus using Europe and the

"European" as main reference for defining modernity) which in turn creates two conflicting forces; the strive to counteract colonial trails and eurocentrism in the development of societies and at the global stage and the interest in maintaining the epistemic powers from the part of European superiors (Mignolo 2002 a).

Accordingly, my analytical approach is highly concerned with the locus of enunciation, in other words; the place from which an affirmation or statement is being voiced and how that relates to (or ignores) alternative sites to proceed from. When analysing European guiding documents, the study is especially attentive to the creation of binary oppositions (e.g. "European cultures and values" vs the "values" and "cultures" of immigrated individuals in Europe). My approach is further focusing on the rhetoric's of the texts and what that rhetoric foreshadows (e.g. a highly selective relationship to the history of Europe as will be presented in the empirical section). The thesis is focusing on wordings and intertextuality; what is taken for granted in the texts and how that could or should be received by the implied reader. With the postcolonial perspective, taken inspiration from Magnolo, my analysis is sensitive to the ways in which Eurocentric thoughts are institutionalized such as language, history, space and time are organized in the empirical material of this study.

5. Aim and research questions

The overall aim of this research is to assess the possibilities in future development of integration in Europe as well as highlighting the importance of civil society in the integration work. More specifically, the aim is to assess the integration work performed by one civil society organization. The research draws upon insights from one ethnographic case- study of a voluntary organization operating in Sweden. The study is placed in a European context where I include an analysis of European guiding documents for integration. Challenges connected to the current refugee crisis form the outset of this research. The research questions derive from the highly limited academic contribution of ethnographical studies in the area, which I find needed in order to overcome the discursive hinders making the basis for the European approach to integration.

Questions answered will be as follows:

1. What social processes are taking place at IM social arenas and activities with integrational purpose?
2. What are the hinders for integration as a two-way process within the chosen organisation on the one hand and in European integration policies on the other?

By answering RQ 1 and 2, the study may contribute to addressing the question whether civil society actors can contribute to the development of integration in Europe as an actual two-way- process as formulated in the common basic principles.

As evidenced above, publications on the role of voluntary organisations in the integrational work mainly present summaries of current state offering a limited amount of in-depth information on the discourses informing the integration work within voluntary organizations as well as the organisational structures which pave the way for its success. By offering an ethnographical study on integration this study may contribute with a better understanding of the importance and utility of voluntary organisations in integration in Europe in general and in Sweden in particular. Moreover, a substantial portion of the study also bring up the challenges in the integration work in Europe in general and in the organisation in particular. The findings may be used to facilitate integration processes and guide European politicians, public authorities as well as civil society actors in their approach to integration between newly arrived and established habitants.

6. Methods

The research was carried out using qualitative research methods which were applied to analyze the discursive characteristics (such as approaches, ways of reasoning, conceptions and central issues) and factors informing the integration work of the organization Individuell Människohjälp (IM) on the one hand, and in European policies on integration on the other as well as the possible implications of their integration approaches. I have conducted six in-depth interviews (duration: 90-150 minutes each) with individuals taking part in IM activities, three of which were newly arrived individuals and three with individuals who perceive themselves as established in Swedish society and who have been living in Sweden for several years or main parts of their lives. Additionally, I have performed 10 shorter interviews (duration: 15-40 minutes each) with both established/volunteers and newly arrived/participants, performed fieldwork for three months during the spring of 2017, analyzed projects plans and annual reports, general guiding documents within the organization, as well as policy documents on European level informing the European approach to the issue.

The main methods applied are so called ethnographic research methods which refer to the study of social interactions, views and behaviours that take place within a specific social context such as communities, groups, workplaces or organisations. When performing the ethnographic study within the organisation of IM through participant observations, analysing relevant documents and conducting interviews, the central aim was to provide comprehensive, holistic insights into the views and actions among those taking part of the integration work as well as the environment in which the work is performed; ethnography suits very well with such aim. As the ethnographic approach entails many different types of data collection, I have also been able to identify discrepancies between practices and ideals within the organisation e.g. by comparing the results from interviews and the organisations guiding documents with what I have noticed on the field, the settings to which the ideals are directed. This is a clear strength of the ethnographical approach (Tracy 2012).

As I have used participant observation where I made myself part of the social context which was of interest of the study I was not only the main instrument of the method but also a part of the object of the study. More specifically, I have been registered as a volunteer within the activity groups/venues and took full part of every aspect of the activities as well the tasks/responsibilities which is put on volunteers. In addition to my physical presence in the field, I also took part of the digital communication (such as mail correspondence within each group of volunteers, mail correspondence between personnel and volunteers and Facebook groups and pages which is directly connected to the activities as digital, social platforms) between volunteers, participants and personnel as part of my role as a volunteer and to further gain an understanding of the discourses informing the integration work (Tracy 2012, Ch. 6). Excluding the moments that called for ensured, informed consent such as when entering a social context for the first time or when new (to me) participants joined the activities, my role in the setting was confined to that of a fellow being and volunteer.

When it was time for me to gather respondents for the qualitative interviews I began with asking an acquaintance who was a participant within one of the IM activity groups and who was newly arrived at Sweden. The first interview was a test interview which I intended to use both for testing my interview guide and to get an initial understanding of potential main issues in relation to integration between newly arrived and established individuals. This first interview turned out to be one of the most comprehensive ones from which I have been able to include data in several topics of my empirical analysis. The interview guide worked well and I did not change it during the research period.

I designed the interview guide for two main groups of respondents; 1. participants in IM activity groups in Gothenburg, 2. Personnel working at the IM region office in Gothenburg. Group 1 was then divided into two subcategories where half of the participants were newly arrived at Sweden and engaged in IM activity groups. The other half was volunteers within the activity groups and who considered themselves to be established in Swedish society. When selecting respondents for group 1, I at first hand aimed at collecting respondents with diverse backgrounds (such as education, work experiences, country of origin etc), age, gender, time in Sweden and social roles within the different activity groups. Since a majority of the newly arrived participants within the IM activity groups were men a majority of those who I

interviewed for this sub group were also men. However, thanks to the length of my time at the field and the variety of activity groups I managed to collect a group of female respondents who represents about 45% of my interviewees.

As I was conducting most of the interviews in parallel to fieldwork I was able to gain a better understanding of the variety of participating individuals within the IM activity groups and thus collect a group of respondents who met the above-mentioned criteria's (such as different age, social role within the groups and diverse backgrounds). In other words, I made use of my role as a volunteer in the activity groups to identify interesting perspectives coming from the participants as well as interesting social processes between participants taking place at the same arena which in turn facilitated for me to decide who to turn to for interviewing. Translated into established definitions of interview sampling the study included a combination of *convenience sampling* and *maximum variation sampling* (Tracy 2012). Since I successively increased my networks within the IM activity groups it made sense to also choose from some of those who I had interacted with to a higher extent than others within the same groups; they had an interest in my study, trusted me and thus easier to get an interview with. When I for example felt that time was scarce I could relatively quickly schedule an interview with someone who had already initiated that he/she was available for an interview. Regarding interviews of personnel I took the opportunity to ask those who I spoke with to a higher extent than the others; two who were responsible for the activity groups in which I performed fieldwork and one who had been working within the organisation for a long time and within all of the activity groups on which the study is based. Interviewed personnel also represented several different dimensions of the IM work; The first respondent did both work close to the target groups, working with skills development within the organisation and working in close collaboration with the national board e.g. on the IMs conceptual framework. the second respondent had been in close cooperation with governmental authorities e.g. in form of Voluntary Sector Organization Public Partnership (VSOPP). The third respondent spent a lot of time "at the field" networking and being very close to the target groups (newly arrived individuals, established volunteers and partners/potential partners such as other voluntary organisations). The third respondent was also quite new within the organisation and had thus gained insights which her colleagues might not find as easy to gain. Important to note though, is that all of the personnel interviewed were working in close collaboration with each other

and had both insight and interest in each other's working areas; thus, the data collected for these interviews could easily and fruitfully be compared and contribute with several different perspectives on the same topics and areas.

However, it was also highly important for the study that the respondents represented a wide variety of individuals, therefor a maximum variation sampling was needed. In order to gain a diverse group of respondents for group 1 I strategically and actively approached those who I had identified as very different from each other in relation to the sampling criteria's. Seeking a maximum variation of respondents was much more time-consuming than choosing individuals out of convenience. Nevertheless, the method contributed with a wide range of viewpoints which increased the complexity and breadth of the empirical material (Tracy 2012).

By using interviewing as one of my main methods of data collection I increased the possibility to gain information that was hidden under the official surface. I got access to first hand, up-to-date and in -depth knowledge on my specific research questions; thus, interviewing is very useful as a complementary method. In this research, interviewing was particularly interesting in that it revealed self-perception's and unconscious approaches among the respondents which have contributed to substantial parts of the empirical analysis. As I performed semi-structured, face-to-face, respondent interviews I was able to obtain a level of flexibility that was needed for example with regard to the sensitivity of the research questions (e.g. respondents had different perceptions of integration and their role in that process), in order to avoid the risk of social desirability of answers as much as possible and with regard to the different characters of the respondents. Furthermore, the semi-structured interviews allowed for the respondents to freely express their views on their own terms. Since I followed the interview guide (though in a flexible way where I for example could reformulate and change the order of the open-ended questions or jump over questions that had already been answered within another question) the interviews also provided reliable and comparable qualitative data while at the same time get the data needed for answering the research questions, of course in combination with the other types of data collection. Nevertheless, the interview questions differed to some extent depending on what role within the organization the respondent played (Tracy 2012, Ch. 7). The interview guide is to be found in appendix 1.

The concrete process of interviewing was pretty much the same for each respondent; they all decided themselves were the interview was going to be held and at what date and time (of course in consultation with me), we were not strictly bond to time limits but rather aimed at ending with fruitful results in terms of answering the guiding interview questions and a feeling of satisfaction on the respondent's side after completed interview. Interviews with group 1 were held in public areas such as restaurants, in the park, and at cafes but also at the university and in the private home of the respondents. All three interviews with the personnel were held at the IM region office in Gothenburg. Thanks to the semi- structured interview method with a flexible interview guide the interviews could easier be held in a friendly and intimate manner which in turn facilitated for the respondents to elaborate on their experiences and views.

As for the analysis of transcripts I simply began with reading them in an open manner and read them several times before putting on my theoretical glasses informed by the thesis understanding of integration and postcolonial perspective. I then put the theoretical concepts on the side again and inductively approached the texts. I went through this "on and off" process in order to gain an understanding of the many dimensions that the respondents words brought. This process was found necessary due to the scope of the empirical material; the richness (much thanks to the semi-structured interview method which brought up both deeply rooted, often subconscious feelings as well as more practical elaborations from the side of the interviewee) that the data brought required several rounds of reading and analysis in order to find indications for a suitable analytical approach to the transcripts (it might be so that I would find more theoretical concepts relevant for the study for example, however I did only add my own theoretical concept of an *inter-epistemic dialogue* to the already established theories).

The second step involved categorizing each transcript into themes (by coloring various parts of each transcript and making notes in direct connection to each colored part at the computer) with the support of the guiding interview questions and *constant comparative method* (Tracy 2012, Ch. 9). I compared the individual answers to each other to sort out what was recurrent among the interviews but also to identify contrasts. The themes where further developed in relation to the data collected from fieldwork which also made me more attentive to new themes or sub-themes within the interview transcripts. After several rounds of coloring and

commenting certain sections in the transcripts I could give each section a key word such as "recognition" or "double culture". The keywords then helped me to compare the material in more depth and develop or change the keywords to pick out potential citations to include in the presentation of the analysis. When being finished with the basic coding I began the *secondary cycle coding* (Tracy 2012 Ch. 9). Yet again I applied the thesis theoretical concepts which then facilitated for an analysis of the empirical material all together (including fieldnotes, document analysis and interviews) in relation to the thesis research questions and previous studies. At this stage, I had analytic and interpretative second-level-codes for the interview transcripts which could explain, synthesize and theorize the data. The codes where given more complex names such as "discrepancies between ideal and practise" or "contradicting perceptions of integration". As part of identifying perceptions of integration for example, the analysis of transcripts was particularly attentive to how the respondent referred to "us" and "them" as in established vs newly arrived individuals in relation to how they spoke about integration as a two-way process. The respondent's self-perceptions and unconscious approaches to integration and their social environment were identified partly by looking at how they referred to themselves as "refugee", "citizen", "privileged", "caring" or "a burden" and what they referred to as preferences in their own position in society. When sorting out the respondent's views in this second step I could also easily apply the postcolonial perspective for example, and mark out Eurocentric thoughts or views among the various transcripts. Examples of themes that could be identified from the interview transcripts are the theme "Who needs whom?" (as presented in the empirical section below) where newly arrived individuals taking part of IM activities witness of an ardent desire to learn more *from* and to get closer to the established habitants in Sweden in means of a two-way integration process. However, a sub-theme was also identified within this main theme where the individuals expressing the above-mentioned desire also, subconsciously expressed Eurocentric thoughts in terms of using their understanding of "Swedish society" as a preference for their own establishment in Sweden. Without a satisfying closeness to Swedish society the newly arrived respondents expressed feelings of inadequacy. Another recurrent main theme was that of "Recognition, socioeconomic factors vs psychosocial factors" (as presented in the empirical section below) which could be identified within the transcripts from all respondents taking part of the IM activities. By inter alia asking how the respondents felt that they could affect Swedish society and what they liked the most with themselves and

what qualities they found more essential among other people I was able to structure identified, subconscious, inner conflicts in relation to socioeconomic factors vs psychosocial factors. The second-level codes enabled me to identify patterns and cause- effect progressions. Furthermore, the advanced codes opened for a new theoretical concept that I created myself; the *inter-epistemic dialogue* as presented in the empirical section, the concept also turned out be one of the thesis main results.

The themes presented in the empirical section are a selection that was found to be more crucial than others; I could for example include a theme on social desirability in the integrational work. However, even though it was clear to me that social desirability to some extent affected the respondent's actions and views in relation to how they approached activities with integrational purpose (within the IM activity groups) it could not be regarded as a settling aspect (I also kept in mind that social desirability informs large portions of the social atmosphere in society overall).

Thanks to the ethnographic methods, I have been able to gather empirical insights into social practises that are not normally visible. Since the method aims to generate holistic social accounts my approach made it possible for me to explore, identify and link social phenomena which on first appearance have little connection with each other. Thanks to the different types of data I have been able to compare and contrast the insights of the study. For example, what participants say, during interviews and within the social venues sometimes contrast with their behaviour and social interactions. Except from the increased ability to identify discrepancies I could also note when ideals and practises collide, for example when applied methods within the organisation which also make the basis for ideals are directly contra productive when put in practise which is a consequence of unconscious approaches and perceptions as well as hidden, social structures.

However, there are several implications that come with ethnographic research methods. Firstly, it is considerably time-consuming to perform fieldwork, perhaps even more when taking on the role as both full participant and observer since that require full engagement in the contexts of interest. Neither me, nor the other participants (including involved personnel at the region office in Gothenburg) made exceptions for me in relation to my role as a researcher and registered volunteer. While being on the field, I could for example not leave

the social context to make notes since that would affect both the social processes and the activities as well as risking to miss out on relevant aspects of interest for the research. I usually made short notes when no one could see me, such as in the bathroom or when going to get something. Furthermore, it can be difficult to usurp and document the multifaceted nature of social interaction while at the same time considering the structures and contexts (e.g. documents, decisions and personnel which has informed the pre-conditions of the social interactions) in which it is taking place. However, the biggest challenge, from my experience, was avoiding becoming blind to aspects that one as a less attached observer perhaps would notice easier, the risk of becoming "home-blind". To meet this challenge, I have had to be constantly self-reflective. By keeping research diary, recording my own thought and reflections, in spoken words and by taking notes, I analysed my own position and relation to the field and research participants. Interviewing and transcribing is just as demanding in terms of time, it was sometimes even overwhelming to work with the collected data and today, it is clear to me that I collected more data than I intended and that can become problematic in relation to limitations of a thesis writing.

Regarding the European approach to integration, I have, from the postcolonial perspective as presented in the theory section, performed a limited analysis of The White Paper for Intercultural Dialogue and The Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration (COE 2008, Justice and Home Affairs Council [JHA] 2004). In my approach to a postcolonial critical assessment of the guiding documents, I have put emphasis on wordings, rhetoric's and intertextuality that communicates perceptions of Europe and "the European" as well as of understandings of "the other". My intention here, was to investigate and thus highlight problematic assumptions in the understanding of integration; what understanding of integration are the documents built on and what is assumed in the texts, both explicitly and "in between the lines"? My approach is sensitive to the place from which an affirmation or statement is being voiced and how that relates to (or ignores) alternative sites to proceed from.

Concretely, I am looking for the creation of binary oppositions such as "European cultures and values" vs the "values" and "cultures" of immigrated individuals in Europe. Regarding rhetoric's in the texts it is especially interesting to shed light on what that rhetoric foreshadows, e.g. a highly selective relationship to the history of Europe. With the postcolonial perspective, taken inspiration from Magnolo, my analysis is sensitive to the ways

in which Eurocentric thoughts are institutionalized such as language, history, space and time are organized in the empirical material of this study which in turn reproduces Eurocentric understandings of what is norm and not. Both documents present promising intentions such as defining integration as a two-way process, however they reveal both Eurocentric and colonial trails which is counteracting the ambition to meet the complexities and diversities on the basis of human rights and equality among the European habitants.

As mentioned earlier, the selected organization was the Swedish development organization Individuell Människohjälp (IM). IM is an international organization with wide networks and collaborations (which also increases the level of generalizability), explicitly defines integration as a two-way-process between established habitants and newly arrived, turns its activities to all newly arrived (without categorizing immigrants into groups such as *refugees, LGBTQ, woman, children etc.*) and have established cooperation with governmental authorities e.g. in form of Voluntary Sector Organization Public Partnership (VSOPP) (Employee at IM regional office in Gothenburg, in-depth interview 09-03-17).

I know IM since a few years back when I for the first time registered as a volunteer within the organization. My interest in civil society nourished as I got more engaged which later led to a short-term employment as a business developer at the IM region office in Gothenburg. My connections to the organization from before is what made it possible for me to perform an ethnographic study of this scope. They specifically told me, both personnel, participants and volunteers that they let me in since they trusted and cared about me and shared my interest of a study of this kind. Initially, I wanted to study another organization to compare with, however, after several weeks of trying to get access to the other organization (which I also have pretty good contact with) without any luck I had to re-think my research design and settle for just one voluntary organization, IM. Looking back, this turned out to be a good decision as I would otherwise not have been able to perform research of the same depth. Even though the most intense period of fieldwork was going on for three months, the collection of data has been going on for almost five months. I have been participating at the organization`s social platforms for approximately 15 hours a week alongside interviewing, being part of the digital communication, dialogues with both personnel, participants and volunteers as well as collecting information from the organizations guiding documents. I have counted an approximate number of participants in the research to 150 individuals.

An overview of the different activity groups which I have taken part of including a description of what my participant observation within respective group provided to the research is included in the list of appendices (appendix 2).

Considering ethics, the main ethical concerns that I find is connected to the method of participant observation. As I acted as a volunteer in the weekly activities I regularly had to ensure informed consent (including informing about participant's anonymity) and make sure that I had provided sufficient information about the research so that participants could make informed decisions whether or not to participate, this procedure was also completed before interviewing. Throughout the research period I have offered everyone involved to take part of the results. I have also, to the extent it was possible (some did not find it interesting or necessary) doublechecked with the participants that my findings corresponded to the reality of the environments of the study, for example the official structures and roles of individuals taking part of the activity groups. Furthermore, I ensured that the benefits from my participation did not leave "an empty chair" when resigning. I am aware that much of what people do and say is informed by unconscious assumptions, perceptions and approaches. My intention is not to "leave out" individuals or the organization but to highlight and problematize unconscious tendencies. In sum, the research is performed in line with the principles of voluntary participation and informed consent. All interviewees are anonymized in the analysis.

The question of validity and generalization is overall problematic in qualitative social studies since they are often composed by one single analysis at a given moment in time while socially constructed understandings are constantly under change. However, much due to the many diverse types of data I have been able to cross-check them against each other and thus consider the level of validity to be high while it might be harder to generalize from my study (Tracy 2012, Ch. 11). On the other hand, the research is designed to reveal information which could be used to achieve a discursive change, to give inspiration for new models and approaches to integration in Europe which could be applied in many different contexts and therefore may provide another type of generalizability or transferability. However, the extent to which my interpretations are valid for other organisations and contexts will have to be confirmed in future research.

7. Empirical analysis

This chapter will present the results from the analysis on European guiding documents on integration followed by the results from the ethnographical case study which this thesis builds on.

7.1 Postcolonial perspective on European guiding documents on integration

In order to get a deeper understanding of the European approach to integration between established habitants and newly arrived, the thesis includes a smaller analysis of policy documents at European level, more specifically *The common basic principles for Immigrant integration policy* produced by the EU (EC 2016) and the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue produced by the Council of Europe (COE 2008). The EU and the Council of Europe have developed a broad cooperation on issues such as democracy, human rights, the Rule of Law, integration and the European Social charter which is viewed as the Social constitution of Europe and represents central parts of the European approach to human rights. In 2008 the collaboration between the two organizations resulted in the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue where they created a reference point for both organizations of their policy-making on interculturality. (COE, The European Social Charter 2017, EU, Joint Programmes 2017). An analysis of official documents from these supranational institutions are pertinent and important due to their comprehensive influence on both the governmental decision-making process and on national policies in Europe. As we will see, the documents in fact reveal ideas and different conceptions of integration and interculturality which may hinder the organizations own integration work, that is factors that give shape to relations to "the other" and "otherness" in relation to newly arrived habitants (EC, Migrant information and good practises 2016, COE 2008).
Since the EU and the Council of Europe are both central in transmitting but also producing norms in Europe on issues such as integration and multiculturality, and since interculturality is a vital tool for these institutions when developing the social politics in Europe, I argue that their approach and use of interculturality also affects the European approach to integration.

The term *interculturality* is commonly understood as a more progressive approach to diversity in contrast to multiculturality or assimilation and an advance in relation to norms and structures in society. The term interculturality is to be found in policy documents on national

and European level, in the academic sphere as well within civil society organizations such as IM. Nevertheless, when analyzing European political documents and referencing on interculturality from a postcolonial perspective strong colonial trails appear. This is inter alia revealed in a Eurocentric approach to epistemology and knowledge. My intention here is to highlight assumptions and perceptions in the understanding of integration that may hinder the European institutions' own, explicit purpose to facilitate integration as a two-way process.

The White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue is addressed to European policy-makers and administrators, the media, educators and civil-society organisations and serves as a basis on how to respond to diversity in Europe. The document has a guiding function in EU policy and European approach to integration and the definition of an Intercultural Dialogue as worked out by the Council of Europe is directly applied by the EU in the Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration (EC Migrant information and good practises 2016, COE 2008).

Applying the postcolonial perspective to the White paper for Intercultural dialogue, the analysis is particularly sensitive to how knowledge is produced, that is questioning when, why and by whom knowledge is constructed. By doing so, it also becomes clear what is understood as norm and not. A concrete example of this kind of construction is inter alia to be found in the Council of Europe's definition of integration; (Aschcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007).

The White paper defines integration as a as a *two-sided process and as the capacity of people to live together with full respect for the dignity of each individual, the common good, pluralism and diversity, non-violence and solidarity, as well as **their** ability **to participate** in social, cultural, economic and political life. […] It requires the protection of the **weak**, as well as **the right to differ**, to create and to innovate. **Effective integration policies are needed to allow immigrants to participate fully in the life of the host country*** (COE 2008, Ch. 1.4).

One can discuss whom the text is referring to, when for example referring to "the weak", however, the last sentence, explicitly says that "effective integration policies are needed to allow immigrants", thus implicitly saying that *they* are the ones in need while the established people are not. Furthermore, the country, to which the "immigrants" arrive, is referred to as the host country of those whom the integration policies are mainly directed to ("the immigrants") even though, given preceded asylum processes the "host country" is the new

home country of newly arrived. Here, the "immigrants" (I use quotation marks because just by reducing people to the category *immigrants* as the opposite to *us*, I reproduce the structures which the thesis criticise) are referred to as "the weak" who has the right to differ from *us,* the habitants in the European country to which they arrive and who represent the norm and the implicit preference. In the quotation above, it is not only clear who is norm and not, but "immigrants" are also understood as less capable than the established habitants by referring to those who are not established as "weak". The White paper's definition of integration continues by stating that:

Immigrants should, as everybody else*, abide by the laws and respect the basic values of European societies and their cultural heritage. Strategies for integration must necessarily cover all areas of society, and include social, political and cultural aspects. They* **should respect immigrants' dignity and distinct identity and to take them into account when elaborating policies** (COE 2008, Ch. 1.4).

By speaking about "immigrants" as distinct while at the same time referring to *us* as "everybody else" the *other,* that is the "immigrants" is inevitably placed outside the European collective, the *us* or the *we.*

The documents solution to prevent divides between the habitants of Europe is to be found in what the White paper defines as "universal values":

Intercultural dialogue [...] allows us to prevent ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural divides. It enables us to move forward together, to deal with our different identities constructively and democratically **on the basis of shared universal values**. (COE 2008 pp. 4)

The values, referred to in the quotation above are presented as universal even though shared values inexorably depend on the context such as geographical outset and the people living there as well as the period of time. It does not acknowledge that "shared universal values" can be produced by other people and take on other characteristics in another time, instead, the Council of Europe as well as other European actors involved with the development and advocacy of the intercultural dialogue are turning themselves into one moral agent.

At European level, there are also tendencies to safeguarding Europe's position as a democratic, moral actor on the global stage by a selective approach to the history of Europe. Again, the White paper poses a good example of this tendency by inter alia its policy recommendation on education which is viewed as a necessary step in embodying a successful intercultural dialogue:

*Knowledge of the past is essential to understand society as it is today and to prevent a repeat of history's tragic events. In this respect, competent public authorities and education institutions are strongly encouraged to prepare and observe an annual "**Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust and for the Prevention of Crimes against Humanity**"{...] Such an event can draw on the Council of Europe's [...] project on "Teaching remembrance – Education for prevention of crimes against humanity", to raise awareness of all of the **genocides and crimes against humanity that marked the 20th century**; to educate pupils about how to prevent crimes against humanity; and to foster understanding, **tolerance** and friendship between nations, ethnic groups and religious communities, **while remaining faithful to the Council of Europe's fundamental principles.** (COE 2008, 44)*

One could argue that as a step towards decreasing the division between newly arrived and established habitants one would have to acknowledge the hegemonic characteristics of the European powers by inter alia emphasising the colonial history of Europe. However, this is more an exception than a rule, and even though the referencing to the Holocaust and crimes against humanity that marked the 20th century obviously are examples of what is to be educated it is still establishing what parts of history that should be emphasised. The European colonialization of large parts of the world which took place before the 20th century and which has shaped large parts of what defines Europe today would probably, if included in the education of history offer a broader understanding of "society as it is today". Furthermore, the intercultural dialogue is explicitly a response to increased diversity in Europe and increased immigration to Europe without acknowledging the need for such an initiative before increased immigration; thus marking, that it is because of *them* that *we* need to adopt at the same time as *we,* the majority, is the preference since those coming to Europe would not be able to fully participate in European societies without becoming similar to *us* in terms of meeting the moral standards set up by European actors and without learning about the history of Europe, European national languages and the institutions in the European "host" countries. The word

"tolerance" as used in the quotation above, is recurrent in European communication on integration including the White paper on intercultural dialogue. The word is not a positive one and is e.g. in the Oxford Dictionary defined as" The ability or willingness to tolerate the existence of opinions or behaviour that one dislikes or disagrees with" (English Oxford living Dictionary 2017). Prior focus is not on interchange but rather on the inevitable differences among" ethnic groups and religious communities" which is presumed to be problematic and something that is not highly valued thus substantiating divides among people with diverse backgrounds. Paradoxically, the Intercultural dialogue is depending on otherness on the one hand and postulates a certain degree of assimilation of "immigrants" since the language which informs the logics of interculturality are marked by European lingual sign systems on the other. The colonial and Eurocentric tendencies in the White paper which I have illustrated here are also prevalent in the The Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU.

The CBPs were adopted by the Justice and Home Affairs Council in November 2004 and reaffirmed by the European Council in 2014. The principles make the foundations of EU initiatives on integration and guide actors involved with integration such as European politicians and voluntary organisations. As mentioned above, the CBPs definition of integration as a two-way process is emphasised in the integrational work in Europe and adopted by most of the EU member states (Martinello 2006, EC Migrant information and good practises 2016). In the following examples, the distinction between *us* and *them* is informing large parts of the formulation of the CBPs:

*CBP 7: Frequent interaction between **immigrants** and **Member State citizens** is a fundamental mechanism for integration. Shared forums, **intercultural dialogue, education about immigrants and immigrant cultures**, and stimulating living conditions in urban environments enhance the interactions between immigrants and Member State citizens.*

The established habitants who are here referred to as "Member State Citizens" are, in their status as "citizens", put in direct contrast to "immigrants". The established are the reference while the immigrants are the *other*. I have already problematized the approach to and practise of the intercultural dialogue as defined by the Council of Europe, as the quotation above clearly show, emphasis is still put on *learning about* rather than *with* immigrants. Knowledge

"about" "immigrants" is presented as something fixed and the same goes for "their" cultures. The Intercultural perspective has already set the framings for how the exchange of cultural experiences should be formed while at the same time, ascribe identical attributes of the *other* which the member state citizens, the reference group, can learn *about*. Nowhere in the formulation of the CBPs does it say anything explicit about learning *with* each other, while it is explicitly stated that *we* should learn about *them* and that *they* should learn *about us:*

CBP 4: Basic knowledge of the host society's language, history, and institutions is indispensable to integration; **enabling immigrants to acquire** *this basic knowledge is essential to successful integration.*

CBP 5: Efforts in education are critical to **preparing immigrants**, *and particularly their descendants, to* **be more successful** *and more active participants in society.*

Except for the distinction between *us* and *them,* the two quotations above, (which is foregone by the third principle that emphasise the central role of employment among "immigrants" as the key to successful integration) are examples of how, individuals, in this case "immigrants", are viewed from a utility perspective where the "immigrants" should be enabled by those who are not "immigrants", thus the *us,* as a way in strengthening *their* socioeconomic status.

I suggest that in order to reach the goals of the European approach to integration and an intercultural dialogue we must first revise the definition of interculturality and instead define it as interepistemicality (which is my own conceptual reconstruction of the term interculturality). By replacing *culturality* with *epistemicality* we uncover the pre-conceptualized understandings of the *other,* that is everything and everyone who does not respond to the criteria's for being defined as *European.* An inter-epistemic dialogue includes an understanding of the social-historical power relations that inform production and distribution of knowledge and adduce several frameworks of knowledge. Thus, we go further than simply understanding *otherness,* we recognise the means of the *other* and that we can and should learn *from* rather than *about,* we create a true two-way interaction and decolonize the intercultural dialogue. The inter-epistemic dialogue opens for a collaborative discussion including *several different* logics rather than *one* (Eurocentric) logic presented differently. *Interepistemicality* recognizes coexisting lines of thought and logics and is open for epistemic

diversity. From this perspective, individuals bear the right to define their own cultural backgrounds and what one ascribes to one's identity.

Current European (especially the EU) approach to integration and the attempt to be more progressive in the formulation of e.g. guiding documents and new policies such as the emphasis on an intercultural dialogue and referencing to "shared universal values" as presented above, is from the postcolonial perspective hegemonic. When for example the European Commission describes the new EU policies on immigrant integration as based on solidarity and respect it is referred to as universal even though the understandings of what is solidaristic and respectful is highly dependent on the context in which it is practised. The people, the period of time and the geographical outset contribute to the production of norms and values which consequently differ depending on the context and that is why one need to acknowledge that "shared universal values" can be produced in another time by other people. Concepts in the EU approach to integration is based on Western epistemology and thus counteracts its ambition to be holistic and modern.

In policy documents such as the White Paper for Intercultural Dialogue and the Common Basic Principles for immigrant integration with the purpose of decreasing the negative effects of coloniality and eurocentrism (which withholds racism, stereotyping and oppression) the division of what is norm and not is still strengthened where Europe and the European is put in contrast to everything else as if that *other* (people, languages, "cultures", norms etc.) is less important and less valuable. Europe is, through European guiding documents, implicitly presented as a centralised platform of common ideals regarding democracy and progressive development of all its countries, even though, Europe and its habitants (be so newly arrived or more established) hardly can represent one, coherent European identity, distinct from everything outside the borders of Europe.

7.2 Entering the social venues

Before further discussing the integrational work within the social platforms within IM it is necessary to introduce the ambivalence and struggles in defining the participant's roles in the social context and how I, in this paper approach the issue.

The traditional division at IM between the participants and within the organization overall is as follows: 1. Personnel who are paid bear the main responsibility for the different platforms/activity groups but who do not, more than necessary, participate in the activities. 2. Volunteers who are not paid but registered as volunteers within the organisation and in one or more activity groups. The volunteers schedule themselves, hold meetings for planning for the development of the activity group, are responsible for the activities when held and to prepare in beforehand as well as different tasks that remain after each activity, furthermore they are responsible to couple with the local office and personnel on the development of the activity group. 3. Participants who are newly arrived persons taking part of one or more of the activity groups, participants are, in all groups but one not bound to any commitment in relation to IM. They usually drop in at the different social contexts and are free to leave whenever they like, however, most them are participating regularly and are keen on telling when they are coming or not. The ambition is that newly arrived participants with time will move over to be volunteers and that the activity groups, but also the organisation, reach a higher level of diversity (IM, Unofficial, Operational Plan 2017 for the Western Region of Sweden, 2017). However, the goal is far from reached partly due to factors such as the current inaccessibility in the formal steps for becoming a volunteer. Information such as introductory meetings and written information about volunteering are limited to the Swedish language and are addressed to those who more or less practise Swedish fluently. Moreover, an abstract from the Swedish criminal record is required which may not even be possible to get for a newly arrived person and may even have a deterrent effect (even though the person has nothing to hide). There are also informal factors such as a limiting discourse within the groups of volunteers that withholds the division between established and newly arrived as primary givers and takers as well as prejudices and unwillingness among (established Swedish) volunteers to introduce newly arrived participants to the option of volunteering. A third, and less visible and less

discussed hinder for a higher level of diversity is the terms used when talking about each other, that is as *volunteers* and *participants* and *Swedes* and *immigrants.*

Sometimes, it is necessary to talk about volunteers when for example discussing the future of an activity group because registered volunteers offer a foundation on which those involved can build; a part of their function is to assure that people will show up (even though volunteers can choose not to show up and withdraw their offer to engage). Nevertheless, within an already existing and stable activity group where the purpose is to create a social platform for people to meet, recognise each other and learn from each other to reach integration as a two-way process it becomes less important, or even contra productive to divide the group in *us* and *them* in terms of *volunteers* and *participants*. In the social forums, all are participants in the integrational work (aiming to reach integration as a two-way process) while there are still strong tendencies creating hierarchies in relation to a pre-conceptualized understanding of the utility of those involved. A simple example of a case where this division is strong is at the Swedish practise cafes (Tala Svenska cafeerna, the purpose here is to meet in a relaxed, social environment where established and newly arrived have a mutual exchange of experiences, views etc. to overcome generalising prejudices against one and other where one of the aspect is to speak in Swedish for those who wants to do that (IM webpage- volunteering at the Swedish practise café 2017)) where the volunteers take full responsibility for the activity in terms as described above; *I registered as a volunteer here to teach them Swedish, isn't that the whole purpose, that we should teach them Swedish and how things work here in Sweden?* (respondent 06-03-17) Learning is here seen as unidirectional- from *us* to *them.*

This is not to deny the usefulness of sharing one's knowledge in Swedish, that is a practical and often highly appreciated aspect of the activity group by everyone involved. What is problematic is the lack of recognizing the qualities of those who do not "teach" Swedish even though they contribute and express a wish to contribute even more, for example in terms of sharing their knowledge in linguistics and even support established Swedes to counter "their" prejudices against others. When I asked a group of 15 at one of the Swedish practice cafés what they would like to do and contribute with, they all agreed that they among other things wanted to create a social platform held both by established and newly arrived to fight racism

and stereotypes; *Swedes would feel better if they learnt to be more social and open minded, it would also be nicer to live here if people were friendlier.* (respondent 06-03-2017)

The issue is to some extent up for discussion among volunteers (most of the participants who are not volunteers do not ascribe volunteers as such but instead use their names) but it is not unconfrontational, and there are mainly two strands of thought on the issue; one that wants to keep the structures and divisions as they are and one that does not, and thus view everyone as equal participants. In this paper, I will refer to *Volunteers* only in their position as more privileged in the context and the same goes for when referring to established and newly arrived as less privileged, however when that is not the case and when focus only is put on the social processes that takes place in the integrational work I will simply refer to *participants.*

7.3 Peeking into the social contexts of the IM activity groups

It is Monday afternoon and volunteers from the "early" (there are two Swedish practice groups/Tala svenska grupper in operation on Mondays at the region office of IM in Gothenburg) Swedish practise group are just about to leave when volunteers from the "late" group arrive at the regional office of IM in Gothenburg. IM share building with the governmental, local centre for integration as well as with the Red Cross and some other organisations and companies. The street on which the building is located is lively and the mix of pubs, strip clubs, stores, the office of the most left-winged party in the Swedish parliament-Vänsterpartiet and rentals combined with being one of the city's hubs for non-profit organisations witness of the liberal character of the area. The staircase in the big grey building is full of people, and when I open the door to IMs office someone immediately gives me a hug while others happily greets me. The energy is spreading into my body and mind, it's like coming home to a big, loving family.

Participants from the early group are putting their jackets and shoes on, some of them are coming back in just twenty minutes to join the "late" group while others, mostly volunteers are leaving for the day. The hallway is full of shoes and people are talking heartily to each other, they exchange information about upcoming events in town, share reflections about today's meeting and some are, in a lower tone talking about the troubles and worries in relation to the asylum process some of them are stuck in. Even though many of us are strangers to each other we share of ourselves and are genuinely interested in each person there. A young man whom I know from two years back, and whom I met at a Swedish

practise activity at the same place where I am now are suddenly coming towards me with a big smile embracing me; he is sweaty and its crowded where we stand but we don't care about that. Nevertheless, as we stood there in the middle of the IM hallway, I caught myself feeling uncomfortable by his loving approach which I, unintentionally connected to his vulnerable socioeconomic status. He has been stuck in a limbo of asylum processes for several years and has yet not got his residence permit, everyone there is hoping for the best but also feel that this is as story with a bad ending. For several of those who are there today, IM activity groups are one of few, or the only social contexts in which they participate and for many of us, these meetings are a safe haven where we can rest from our ordinary worlds, we become individuals.

The volunteers meet approximately thirty minutes before the activity and start to prepare "fika", talk about the last meeting, personal matters, agree on the structure and themes of the day (which is normally predetermined) and prepare material to work with. Even though it is not explicit, the volunteers usually turn to like-minded persons when it's time to choose where to sit; *Are you going to be in the advanced group today?* Another volunteer asks me and the young woman standing by my side, we are younger than many of the other volunteers and prefer to sit in what we call the "discussion group"; it makes it easier for us to meet each other as equals since the structure of the social interaction is similar to that of our daily life's.

A few years back, the group of volunteers decided to structure the ordinary Swedish practice meetings in relation to the level of Swedish practised; beginners-level, midrange and advanced, in that way (it was believed that) we could, easier bridge linguistic hinders and adjust to the needs and interests of those who were new to the Swedish language. Some could practise words with the help of pictures and by translating between languages, some could put more emphasis on grammar and sentence structure while those who felt comfortable in speaking Swedish could focus more on fluency and discuss issues of interest. Nevertheless, this structure has now naturally diminished partly as a result of an advancement of the approach to integration as a two-way process within the organisation and among the participants engaged in the activity group(s). The physical divide in three groups are still there but the level of Swedish is not determinant, it is more about accompanying those who one feels comfortable with and emphasis is put on social interaction. We still practise Swedish

and in some groups (different from time to time) the more traditional structure of tutor and student are still present. Some volunteers are eager to keep the classroom like set-up, because they believe that they are mainly there to teach*; I am here to help them practise Swedish, isn't that the whole point of being here?* Interestingly, this approach seems to turn into a deeper interest and engagement in those participating in the meetings when the relationships are taken to a more advanced, personal level. A woman who, some of the other volunteers first perceived as conservative in terms of an assimilative approach to integration (arguing for the need of immigrants to know "Swedish norms and identities" in order to "get" integrated and who belonged to those who focused on teaching) are today, after a few months of engagement in IM social platforms as a volunteer, skipping the preparation of material, shakes her shoulders while smiling and says; *ah, we will find something to talk about, we always do.* It might seem as a small thing, but this social process is what is lacking in many other contexts with integrational purpose; they have together, people with very diverse backgrounds, both established and newly arrived, managed to overcome their pre-defined understandings of how to approach each other. The biggest, and perhaps more notable progress is that for the self-defined Swedish established woman. She as more privileged (in terms of socioeconomic resources as well as her position as first language speaker) don't really need to integrate, while those who are newly arrived are less privileged and need others to find their ways in Swedish society.

The two younger women mentioned above, belong to those who prefer to discuss and share at a more intimate and individual level and avoid winding up in situations where they are dictating, and if that happens some of the others will remind of the purpose of the group; that is exchanging views, experiences, perspectives and feelings, to share and eventually reach integration as a two-way process. They too, have developed and still are, much thanks to these kinds of meetings and are often talking about the social norms and structures which they find limiting their individual progress and in relation to others, it is part of the purpose of the group.

One day, two new volunteers arrive and they choose to sit with me in the discussion group and together we decide what to talk about. Some of the participants brought up the negative aspects of the Swedish system for integration for discussion, the two new volunteers opposed

to this and suggested that we should talk about the good things in Sweden instead, such as high level of equality and freedom of speech. Largely due to an underlying sense of hostility following their suggestion we came into disagreement. Instead, we started to talk about the protracted asylum processes, how depressing it can be to wait, that it is inhumane and a narrowminded approach to social issues. Those who were learning Swedish brought up that they found it easier to learn the language in other contexts but school, such as our group. A majority of those who were new in Sweden had very limited knowledge in both Swedish and English and since all of us spoke different languages we translated between Swedish, English, Arabic, Kurdish, Tigrinya and Somali. We discussed commonalities and differences in the words and expressions that came up and in that way, we could have a fruitful discussion, high and low. One of the new volunteers didn't say a word for almost 40 minutes (those sitting next to her had turned their backs on her to continue the conversation with four others in the group) until she eventually left, she looked upset and had clearly noticed the tensions as a result of her initial approach. Nevertheless, she appeared again the week after, she was obviously trying to find her way here too. The social processes taking place within the activity group(s) seem to be preceded by an individual process as part of a mental preparation for entering a new social context outside the personal comfort zone:

One is ready for something new when one decide to join one of the activity groups. There is a curiosity that we all share. Both volunteers and visitors have in common that we want to discover something new, broaden our views even though most of us do not know what that would entail, that would be too much to ask (respondent in-depth interview 02-03-17).

We (volunteers and participants) who are engaged within the activity group(s) are in many ways highly different from each other, the age range is from 15-80, some are lawyers, engineers, dishwashers, unemployed, students, pensioners, teachers, ex-politicians and designers, the list can be long. Some are religious, practising (or not) with different relationships to God, some dislike religiosity over all while others don't care much about the matter. We have diverse cultural identities, diverse ethical and moral principles, come from many different parts of the world and carry different luggage of experiences. Still, as soon as we enter the social venue in which we make the foundation, be it the Swedish practise Café at the IM office, a get together in the park or while practicing dancing or football within another association we paus from the social roles that we play in our daily life's (e.g. expectations, on

ourselves and from others in relation to socioeconomic resources such as at the workplace) and are nothing but individuals with the common interest of meeting each other.

7.4 Social processes taking place within IM social venues in Gothenburg

Recognition- socioeconomic factors vs psychosocial factors

As discussed in earlier chapters, the socioeconomic perspective is currently dominant in the European approach to integration while the need for mutual social interaction where the individual and personal attributes, such as ideas, principles, emotions, life experiences or passions are recognised, are less emphasised, if at all. This lack of a holistic approach to individuals and social development is a discourse informing substantial parts of all sectors in society, both in political, civil society and academic sectors.

During participant observation, it did not take long before both volunteers/established and participants/newly arrived expressed feelings of uncertainty and consequential discomfort that was directly connected to sentiments of being viewed or treated on the basis of a utility perspective; thus that they felt that they needed to offer some kind of utility value and that this is pivotal in integration work in Europe. These sentiments were further expressed during interviews and it became clear to me that this was one of the more decisive hinders for integration. People are viewed as resources in the society where they live and there is a strong volition among us to divide and to position people based on preconceptions about their function and potential:

I have good education and I can work but it is hard to find a job here. I don't feel that I have time to engage on a personal level, I need a job and good money first but no one wants to help me and I feel very stressed, I want to pay back for everything you have done for me (respondent in-depth interview 10-03-17).

The respondent quoted above pose an example of how the personal and psychosocial aspects (such as engaging in social contexts for the personal wellbeing, building social networks and take more space in the social room by e.g. influencing the activity groups within IM as a volunteer) are set aside in favour of strengthening his socioeconomic status by making

himself useful e.g. in terms of getting a job. The citation is obviously also an expression of reciprocity, he *wants* to "pay back" however, he also expresses an external pressure to contribute which in turn hinders him "to engage on a personal level" which has a negative effect on his mental health and hinders him to integrate with other people. If one does not view oneself from a utility- perspective and if one at the same time (temporarily) does not meet the utility criteria's the contrasts between privileged and less privileged are strengthened which in turn leads to increased divisions and groupings among habitants of society. As a carrier of these feelings of inadequacy it's easier to take distance from those who to a higher extent fulfil the criteria and even develop a negative posture to the *other.* Those who feel that they fulfil the criteria and who interact with people they perceive as offering less utility, struggle with finding ways to meet the *other* as equals:

In order to surpass the differentials in capability we sometimes switch focus to common interests and tone down the areas in which we have disadvantaged amount of differentials until we feel more comfortable and positive that we can meet on common ground (respondent short interview 05-04-17).

It can be hard not to view oneself as a concrete resource at the same time as the preferences stemming from a Eurocentric and socioeconomic discourse in society are projected to the other and also produces a voiced or not voiced frustration over the perceived imbalance. However, through social venues such as those developed within IM, a breathing space is created where individuals are allowed to invest more energy on the social and personal progress which otherwise does not get much room in these individual's daily life's:

When I started to join IM activities I was happy, I liked that people showed curiosity and interest in me and others, they have the courage to ask me about things, it feels good to have something that others wants (respondent in- depth interview 10-03-17).

The respondent quoted above show awareness of the importance that is given to terms of socioeconomic aspects and the perceived difference between established and newly arrived within society regarding the individual contribution to society. However, he also expresses appreciation of when the restricting socioeconomic approach are given less attention in favour of his personal experiences which in turn, fuels enhancement of the respondent's appreciation of his own personal qualities.

Diverse national and cultural identities are not problematic, we are in a place where we accept everyone, and you don't need to hide yourself, I can say that I am Syrian and that I am

proud, we accept each other. Should I be offended if someone would come up to me and say that he knows that I am from Syria and that he is too and that we should be friends? No, I would think that was a brave thing to do, to come up to me and say that. That he recognises me. We need to create a new understanding of the context in which we are living and not use all the social rules that we have in society, it is better to be true (respondent in-depth interview 22-02-17).

This citation presents an example of the importance of being recognised as a person on one's own terms. Furthermore, the respondent has chosen to take on a more norm critical perspective as a result of his social interaction in Sweden by appreciating diverse backgrounds and putting more emphasis on the individual meeting rather than settling within the limits of social rules in society. Another respondent from short interview shares part of what she gets from her engagement within the group:

When I participate in the discussion group at IM, I get more aware of how one talks about things and what one chooses to talk about, in this way the world gets so much bigger, the model for how we should be and act are reduced because in reality, there are so many dimensions in life and there is so much more to work with (respondent to short interview 07-03-17).

In social venues such as the discussion groups at IM, norm creativity is fostered among the participants. While the norm critical perspective draws attention to norms and its consequences to dismantle social structures that are limiting us, norm creativity is a way to put the analysis from norm critics into practise. By being creative, taking the pieces from the analysis, reshaping or breaking them, we actively change the norms. A norm creative approach (such as that which is created among IM participants when in the discussions groups questioning and bending norms which informs or has informed the participants life's) makes us aware of the social structures and informal rules that we relate to in our lives and help us to actively choose which norms we want to adapt to and not both in society in general, within an organisation (such as IM) or in smaller social contexts (such as within the Swedish practice group at IM). By questioning perceptions about ourselves and others we can obtain new perspectives and form our thoughts and actions to create a more inclusive society where our qualities and competences are put in focus which in turn allow us to make the basis for a social interaction which to a higher extent responds to the state and needs in our daily lives

and in society.

To conclude, what I have attempted to show in this section is the need for a combination of both socioeconomic and psychosocial approaches to integration in order to bridge social hinders such as prejudices between established and newly arrived habitants. Simply applying a utility perspective on people in society by grading them and others in terms of socioeconomic resources are not only hindering integration as a two-way process; it also risks undermining personal development and need to be accompanied by the perspective of individual recognition and norm creativity which can be facilitated through social venues such as those of IM.

The importance of feeling part of something while being in an asylum process and the imbalance between established and newly arrived in IM social venues

One of the respondents (let us call him Ibrahim) has been waiting for the asylum process in Sweden to be finished for 1.5 year and describes the consequences of that:
I love life and people and want to be happy but now, after waiting for so long and not knowing what is going to happen with me and not being allowed to do what I wish to do and what I am good at I feel like I am going crazy, depressed and have a hard time keeping the spirit up (respondent in-depth interview 15-02-17).
To manage the situation, he has registered as a volunteer in several different projects and within different voluntary organisations supporting people who are socially vulnerable in Sweden. He explains that by supporting others and by taking part of social contexts created voluntarily by and for people he can regain the feeling of having control over his life and a sense of belonging. Ibrahim is engaged within three different organisations which all are different from each other but together build a platform on which he can feel home, safe and being part of a community: *They see me as a person, my cultural identities and allow me to show what I appreciate the most with myself, within the groups we help each other all together.*

Within a majority of the social forums established through IM, half or more of the participants are yet not finished in their asylum processes. Their reasons to take part are the same as for Ibrahim: along with practising Swedish, and get closer to the system, both social (public sphere) as well as structural and governmental systems. Many of the participants have been

waiting for a final decision from the migration office for several years, some have been waiting for up to 2.5 years and IM is in this process one of few or the only connection they have to Swedish society. When asking within the groups what those who are new in Sweden do to feel more established they share their weekly schedules which is full of different kinds of activities performed within different voluntary organisations; football practise, singing in choirs, Swedish practice, discussion groups, homework groups (to which they bring their own, self-made homework), dance groups etc. The newly arrived individuals taking part of IM activities spend substantial portions of both time and energy in finding their ways in Swedish society even before they know whether the will get permit to stay or not: *I don't want to waste any time, the best thing I can do is to do whatever I can, I can't just sit at home and wait* (respondent 27-02-17).

It is common that both established and newly arrived are engaged in more than one social forum within IM, however those new in Sweden take part of more activities than established. *You are my family, I love you, to come here, to IM, is what motivates me to go up in the morning, I always long for our meetings* (respondent 06-03-17). I have heard this phrase many times from different people taking part of different social forums within the organisation, however, they are all newly arrived in Sweden and do not take on the role as volunteers within IM. The words are the same but come from different people, it also demonstrates a more emotional attachment to IM compared to established participants taking on the roles as volunteers; it is a reminder of the imbalanced relation to IM and those engaged between volunteers and participants when stepping outside the safe social structures which we create when meeting in predetermined contexts. Newly arrived participants who does not come to the activities as volunteers seem to depend on the social contexts created within IM more than those participating as volunteers which also informs the distinction between newly arrived and established within the groups. Of course, this relationship to IM social venues does not count for all individuals but it tells something about the struggles implied in extending the social processes (such as feelings of belonging and recognition that take place within the IM activities) to other parts of society and to people's daily lives.

Participants who are established in Sweden and who act as volunteers do not have the same relationship to the activity groups but still express warm feelings towards the organisation and the people they meet through IM: *I am often tired when going to the Swedish practise café since I have been working all day and have things in life that brings me down but I know that*

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I will feel better by going there. I always have much more energy after a meeting, I am happy and feel richer as a person, it gives me perspectives (respondent in-depth interview 21-03-17).

When the difference between volunteers and participants in their relation to IM and its social venues is brought to the surface by occurrences or if someone explicitly brings it up, it gets uncomfortable, and the distance between established and newly arrived increase. A clear example of this where when one of the (established) volunteers asked a newly arrived participant to write the word "full" (as in "full house") in Arabic on a note which is put on the door when the maximum number of participants has reached its limit, he wrote in Arabic; *IM, I love you, you are like family to me-* which was followed by the word *full* in Arabic. Some of the other participants who also are new in Sweden laughed nervously and tried to talk him out of writing the first part but he ignored them and simply answered with a smile. It was brave of him to do that while having a whole bunch of people monitoring him as he wrote, he looked strong and exposed at the same time. Two of the volunteers expressed their frustration over his "miswriting" and complained at him; again he simply responded with a smile without getting any friendly response, still, he did not write a new note. When this scene had ended, some volunteers expressed how difficult they found the situation, that they wanted to hug him and tell him that he was right, that it was not so important to write exactly as he was asked to. However, they never did this, they observed the scene but remained silent.

The tendency which the involved volunteers showed here – the interest of remaining in control and to keep distance – seem to partly be a consequence of an ethnically homogenous group of volunteers. When a newly arrived participant has taken on the role as a volunteer or simply taken a more authoritative position, his status has changed and the common factors has become more central. The examples above, show on the one hand the importance that activities performed within voluntary organisations can play for newly arrived as ways to get more established while on the other hand the troubles with reducing the divides between established and newly arrived when stepping outside or even trying to modify the pre-conceptualized social contexts created within the social venues. This seem to partly be a consequence of the lack of heterogeneity within the group of volunteers which in turn, to some extent, preserves the dominance of the socioeconomic approach over the psychosocial approach from the established volunteers towards the newly arrived participants. The

dominance of the socioeconomic approach in turn, give inter alia rise to an increased frustration and even uncertainty among the volunteers in relation to the participants. The ambition (and vision among the volunteers) to reach integration as a two-way process here collides with the unconscious assimilative tendencies within the group which both partly derive from and are maintained by the structural division of established participants on the one side and newly arrived participants on the other. Furthermore, I have in this section highlighted that despite of good intentions from the organisation and its volunteers there are still troubles with extending the social processes such as feelings of belonging and recognition taking place within the social venues to other social contexts outside the institution of IM.

Learning *from* rather than *about:* The interest and importance of social interaction on a personal level

Newly arrived express, perhaps not surprisingly, more interest in learning *from* the people they meet rather than *about* while the opposite counts for established persons. However, again, there is a significant difference in how the (established) volunteers approach the issue which is represented in the two-folded group of volunteers:

It gets really boring when more conservative volunteers join the group, it feels pointless to meet, for all of us. When one joins as a volunteer who does not share, or consolidate, the conservative ideas and values expressed by many of the other volunteers it feels like one doesn't fit in, doesn't get any room to express oneself, one is just there talking without getting anywhere (respondent in-depth interview 02-03-17).

When the respondent is referring to "more conservative volunteers" she is talking about those who she considers applying an assimilative approach to integration within the groups. The respondent also feels uncomfortable and even pushed away by the assimilative tendencies among some of the other volunteers. For her, pre-conceptualized settings for how the activities should be carried out are pointless since there is no room for mutual social interaction which builds the basis for integration as a two-way process.

It may take a lot of time and energy to develop the two-way approach to integration, as the citation above illustrates and it should be mentioned that this respondent has been a part of the Swedish practise group for several years, which may have fuelled her inter -epistemic

approach and interest in the *other*. However, as already mentioned, a more assimilative approach to integration is also present within the group of volunteers:

Of course, it is important for them to learn about the Swedish society and Swedish norms. I know that many of them have ideas and thoughts that collide with the Swedish values, thus they need to adapt to some extent. I don't want their attitudes towards woman to thrive here for example (respondent 27-02-17).

The person quoted here is fairly new in the group and refers only to generalising prejudices as knowledge about the *other,* which the respondent uses to justify assimilation. The person acknowledges the need for newly arrived to learn *about* the established habitants and the Swedish society but does not acknowledge the need for established habitants to learn from or with newly arrived. Furthermore, this respondent even rejects the ideas and thoughts that newly arrived may have, assuming that those ideas and thoughts would be less valuable in Sweden compared to "Swedish ideas and thoughts" that she perceives to lay the foundation for Swedish values.

Bringing back the discussion about *interculturality* and *interepistemology,* the negative consequences of the reproduction of Eurocentric values that we saw present in European policy documents, and the Eurocentric approach to integration has been brought up by all the respondents who have experiences of being newly arrived in Sweden:
As long as we keep being treated as outsiders we will always be outsiders, it is not until people understand that we are just like anyone else that we can stop being treated as and feel like outsiders (Respondent in-depth interview 22-02-17).

The respondent cited above demonstrates a sensitivity to the unwillingness that he has noted among established habitants to meet the "other", that is him and other newly arrived. He on the other hand, considers himself to be "just like anyone else" thus does not take distance to the established habitants in the way that he is criticising but instead view everyone as individuals with the equal right to inclusion and belonging. However, he also testifies to a development of a negative attitude to the established habitants since *they* are the ones making him feel like an outsider.

At the same time, a call for an inter -epistemic dialogue is present among both established and newly arrived:

*It is when we can discuss values and ideas in an open dialogue that it gets interesting. When I for example talk to a person about what he/she **really** thinks and feels about a certain issue and when both feel capable of sharing and receiving, we kind of start building a relationship, and that is the whole purpose, to build personal relations and that is when it gets fun to participate* (respondent short interview 10-04-17).

The quotation above quite well summarises some of the main parts of an inter -epistemic dialogue (as presented earlier) by recognising the means of the other and the need for learning *with* rather than *about, and* this view is shared among many of both the volunteers and participants taking part of IM activities. The respondent recognises the parallel discourse not taking on an inter -epistemic approach by emphasising the importance of the truth or what a person "really thinks" which can only come from the individual herself; taking the social interaction to a personal level is seen as necessary to build on personal relations. Furthermore, she says that it is the personal relations that create the dynamics and interesting social processes in the social interactions within the activity groups at IM.

When going to meetings at I M I first try to understand the environment and the people. There are so much personal things that you need to understand. Many people don't want to understand, but sometimes they do, if you talk to them. They feel it and hear you but they don't always listen to themselves, I think one should be more true and basic. (respondent in-depth interview 15-02-17)

Above quoted respondent is newly arrived and does not take on the role as a volunteer; however, he has been engaged within IM for almost a year and belong to those who to a higher extent than many others influence the social interactions at the IM activities. He is actively pushing for a mutual exchange of experiences and can sometimes even be perceived as too pushy for some of the participants with all his questions and thoughts, but most of the time, his ways are much appreciated. The respondent emphasises the importance of breaking through the norms and structures that are hindering integration as a two-way process and try to be "true and basic", which for him, is the same as being honest. There are notable similarities between what is expressed here and the quotation presented further up in the text where the respondent inter alia refers to the inter -epistemic dialogue as what people "really thinks and feels".

The conclusions we may draw from the citations above are that there is a disparity in the relations to get closer to the *other* through increased knowledge *about, with or* from the *other*. The volunteers which make a homogeneous group apply mainly two contrasting approaches to integration and in relation to others; one that maintains the Eurocentric and assimilative approach to integration and one that maintains the beliefs in integration as a two- way process which postulates and inter -epistemic dialogue. A majority of those participating without taking on the role as volunteers expressed a strong interest in other people, including the established habitants in Sweden (there seem to be a pattern where those who participate not as volunteers are more prone than the volunteers to take on the approach to integration as a two-way process), and *their* open-minded approach to the *other* also seems to have influence on the established participants, thus successively creating a social venue where both established and newly arrived work towards integration as a true, two-way process.

Being part of civil society- working towards a common goal

Matters of comfortability are affecting the borders between *us* and *them*; those who are established in the Swedish society have interest in withholding their privileged position and support those who are less privileged within the frames of their own premises. However, within civil society everyone who has made oneself part of a voluntarily driven system is more vulnerable (while being there) than in other sectors due to the need of each other. In a voluntary organisation, people work to a higher extent by other motives than socioeconomic factors and are instead mainly driven by common ideals such as human rights, the common good, equality, solidarity, anti-capitalism the fight against discrimination and racism and the acknowledgement of the complexities of human beings, just to mention an extract of what can be identified within and voluntary organisation (in this case working with social issues).

During fieldwork and interviews, both newly arrived and established, regardless of their role within the organisation, described their ideal society and preferred personal qualities within themselves and others in similar terms such as the importance of being honest, openminded, passionate, empathic and a society which is built on reciprocity, solidarity and equality. When bringing this up for discussion within the different social platform in which I have taken part, everyone, without any exception, expressed a frustration over a perceived lack among others

(outside the social venues of IM) of an appreciation of the values and ideals which they found to be essential:

People don't have time to care, they have other things to think about such as work and family and everyone is stressed. It is hard to find people who are true, but here, we need each other, and therefore, we care (respondent to in-depth interview 15-02-17).

The respondent show awareness of the socioeconomic approach which is dominant in society and the consequences that has for integration, however he also recognises the difference when stepping into a social context within a voluntary organisation which in this case is IM. When his thoughts, experiences, ideas etc. are given space in the social room and are objects for a mutual exchange he perceives those participating as equally vulnerable and thus need each other which in turn increase the opportunities to meet as equals.

A majority of the participants taking part in the social venues have continued to go to IM due to feelings of belonging and fellowship which gets stronger the more they engage. They often referred to loneliness (even though they have social networks, it is more a feeling rather than a physical issue) as one of the initial reasons for them to take the first step into entering the social contexts under the management of IM and express positive feelings such as happiness in relation to that initiative:

I did not work at the time and really felt that I needed to interact more with other people, I had to do something. At first it was a bit uncomfortable to be there but now I have been going there regularly for quite some time and I feel bad when not going. It gives me energy and I am happy to be part of the group (respondent short interview 09-03-17).

The above cited respondent both witness of the personal preparation before entering the social venue, being willing to go through a period of discomfort as a consequence of entering a new social context but also the positive experiences of taking that first step. Even though the respondent is not formally obliged to anything in connection to the group that she joined, still, she feels responsible in relation to the other participants to go there as they are a group, thus she feels belonging.

Both established and newly arrived, volunteers or not, view their social interaction as a way to reach higher goals. A simple conversation over a cup of coffee at the Swedish practise café at

IM office or a football game in another part of town represents more than the physical activities. The aims and ambitions expressed by the personnel working at the IM region office in Gothenburg, also emphasised in the organisation`s guiding documents (such as the IM strategic Platform and Conceptual program referred to earlier) are in many ways reached, and sometimes even advanced in practise. Some of the main issues dealt with here is integration as a two-way process, the fight against racism and stereotypes and as an extension to that, the strengthening of civil society;

This kind of activity group is to some extent, similar to a voluntary association where the most important thing is that we do something together and work towards common goals, the feeling of creating something together (respondent in-depth interview 02-03-17).

Here, we see an example of the complex understanding of the activity groups which many of the participants share; that is working together as a way to affect their environments based on common grounds. However, the dynamic social interactions that is facilitated through the social venues are just as appreciated among those engaged:

We, who meet, are often very different as individuals but we always manage to find commonalities. Sometimes when I meet someone there I think to myself; Oh my God! How can we even be different people! We can have open-hearted conversations from the start and share both feelings and thoughts (respondent in-depth interview 21-03-17).

The respondent quoted above is in conformity with the other respondents referring to the importance of "true conversations" to find commonalities in social interaction with people who one perceives as very different from oneself. Furthermore, she expresses appreciation of the sharing of "feelings and thoughts" that is facilitated through the social contexts that is created within IM and its activities; individuals who she normally would not interact with in her daily life (partly due to socioeconomic factors, such as work, education and location of her home) turn out to have a lot to offer her in psychosocial terms e.g. intellectual stimulation that fuels her interest and comfort with other people.

The positive consequences of cooperating within civil society however, becomes less essential as people move away from the collaborative context and get back to their privileged and non-privileged socioeconomic positions while the commonalities are forgotten or ignored:

Right now, I feel pressure to get more established in economic terms and I think I need that to be able to contribute. If I made myself a part of the system and myself affected the system I would of course be a part of it and feel Swedish and I think that works for the whole universe, but I can't see how I would do that right now (in-depth interview 22-02-17).

The respondent cited above has only participated in IM activities four or five times and do mainly focus on his socioeconomic status which is hindering him to further take part of both social life and other parts of "the system" in Sweden while trying to strengthen his economic status. During the interview, when he is referring to the "system" he mentions civil society as a big part of that and recognises the utility of being part of civil society partly by means of getting established in Sweden. However, due to the weight that he put into his socioeconomic status he does not value his personal attributes (such as experiences/knowledge, ideas and perspectives) as high. He contradicts himself by on the one hand stating that being part of the system (in this case civil society and social, public sphere overall) would facilitate his establishment in Sweden which is not depending on his socioeconomic status, while on the other hand stating that he cannot take part of "the system" before owning more socioeconomic resources.

Nevertheless, even though the socioeconomic approach (such as focusing on work, economic resources and the concrete utility perspective on individuals) has a restrictive and selective effect on people's ability to find commonalities among each other it can partly be overcome by increased social engagement. Individuals who are newly arrived, and who used to feel disconnected to the host society become more comfortable as well as powerful when making themselves a more active part of civil society while established individuals find it easier to meet the *others* as equals. As I engaged in the different social platforms I developed a small abstract" project" in which I brought up issues of passions, ambitions, feelings, experiences and ideals in relation to civil society with the other participants. In the start, most of them, both established and newly arrived, were hesitant about what civil society really means. Nevertheless, we all found that there are a lot that we care about and that we want to work with and eventually, we had identified four main common areas of issues for further discussion. Most of the newly arrived participants expressed a strong frustration over that they found themselves in a position where they were highly limited in influencing their own and others dissatisfying situations. We started to talk about the different aspects of civil society,

its potential and how, we, as individuals, regardless of socioeconomic factors to a higher extent can be made justice. After a few weeks, those who had taken part in this discussion witnessed an advanced understanding of the meaning of civil society. None of us were unfamiliar with the concept and we had all experiences from voluntary associations; rather, it was the discussions in which we found a common basis that nurtured the interest and capacity to formulate our knowledge and experiences in conceptualized terms. Suddenly we had groups of people, both established and newly arrived with diverse backgrounds coming from many parts of the world who together developed their ideas for how to influence their own and others' lives to the better. A young, newly arrived woman who had already engaged in a voluntary group (for girls who don't want to or can't take part of activities where the majority are boys or men) was among those who took the lead and organised the ideas ranging from voluntarily driven, multilingual schools to working with decreasing stereotypes and prejudices in Swedish society. What started as a discussion on the side of the IM activities was now extended outside the institutional walls of IM:

It was great that we started to talk about civil society and how we can make change. I didn't think that I could take part of it yet, but now I volunteer in another organisation and I have more energy and hope for the future (respondent to short interview 10-03-17).

What I have attempted to demonstrate here is that when the psychosocial approach to integration is applied in parallel to the socioeconomic approach one increases the possibilities to social interaction on equal terms which engagement in civil society can facilitate. When making oneself more exposed by interchanging personal experiences, ideas, beliefs, passions etc. with other who one depends on to realise common ambitions within e.g. a voluntary association, one can also increase one's capability to strengthen one's socioeconomic status and position in society over all. With that said, it is not always an easy task to get engaged and to maintain that engagement; however, the advantages with civil society (e.g. the possibility to deal with troubling issues without bearing all the needed resources by oneself and the possibility of bridging bureaucratic hinders) may open doors for individuals to society that might be needed in the integrational work in Europe.

Getting closer to the public sphere in Sweden by participating in IM activities

In most of the IM activity groups the participants (both established and newly arrived) take part in activities which are not directly connected to the organisation where IM instead has

established a cooperation with other actors or got sponsored with tickets for concerts/the theatre/a game/museum etc. or activities which are free and open for all. The activities are diverse and can be everything from going to the theatre, taking swimming classes, having a barbecue in the park, taking part of a festival or a human rights manifestation, going to a concert or playing football at a local football tour.

Taking part in the public sphere is an important element in many people's lives since it is a way to orientate oneself in and influence society and among other things offer ways to interact more with other people and creating social networks, taking part of public debates and contribute to that debate (which in turn is an important democratic aspect); thus, it is sort of a complement to the life of the individual. However, there are many dimensions to the public sphere and I will not elaborate on them here, rather it is the social orientation aspects that are of interest in the case of IM activities:

I have both apartment, am in school and know Swedish, at least a bit, but I also need to network and meet more people. It is hard to come up with things to do and I need someone who can guide me and who can help me to find ways and alternatives that suites me. I have heard about all the activities from my friends and when I started to go to IM they gave me information about activities, I try to go to most of it otherwise I would feel lonely. A lot of people in my situation feel lonely. One needs social interaction, to get friends and create networks, if one want a good life one most have that. (respondent in-depth interview 10-03-17).

The respondent has been living in Sweden for nine months and are putting a lot of effort in getting more established in terms of socioeconomic resources but in order to go any further he recognises the need for more substantial social interaction; to feel satisfied with his life in Sweden he needs networks, friends, hobbies and inspiration for how to build a life in his new home country but he finds it hard to do that by his own. Together with IM volunteers he is has found a way to enter the Swedish public sphere where he gets initial guidance to "ways and alternatives" in society that suits his life and ambitions.

The IM activities within the public sphere do also offer a break in the participant's ordinary life's, a break that might even be crucial for many in order to maintain the energy needed to meet the demands from the individual's social environments and positions in society:

I try to go to as many events as possible, my life is not what it used to be and I need to be reminded that there is more to it, even if it is just for a short while. We went to the theatre once, it gave me energy for almost two weeks, I needed to relax and laugh (respondent short interview 16-03-17).

The activities which are not directly connected to IM and which also, in most cases, are initiatives from the participants (both established and newly arrived) as well as being carried out without the support of the organisation, function as an extension to the ordinary social venues within IM. The concrete utility of the activities such as increased access to the public sphere and the emotional gains are the prior reasons for the participants to continue taking initiatives for activities outside the pre -conceptualized social contexts within IM. However, it also extends the social processes taking place within the regular activity groups where volunteers and participants meet on more equal terms partly as a consequence of the constantly changing environments of the activities which makes the participants more exposed and thus more dependent on each other.

Who needs whom? The paradox of integration in Sweden

Newly arrived respondents describe their perception of the Swedish approach to life as a survival of the fittest where the concepts of individualism are strong and even defended by established habitants. Compared to many other parts of the world and compared to people who have had to flee their home countries and start from scratch in new ones, we, the established and social economically privileged in society, are not as directly dependent on each other. During fieldwork, I have identified a desire among newly arrived to interact with more established habitants and this desire inform everything they do to get more integrated; thus, they are also subconsciously thinking in hierarchic and Eurocentric terms. An explicit ambition that the newly-arrived respondents share is to feel like and be perceived as a part of the Swedish society in order to get full access to it: *There is still something missing, I want to be part of Swedish society, and I am to some extent, but they still treat me as an outsider, I think it takes time, I need to interact more with Swedish people* (respondent 04-04-17). The respondents do not want to disclaim their cultural backgrounds or "become Swedish"; they are rather aiming for a fusion of identities and want to be acknowledged or recognised and gain a sense of control over their lives in the society in which they are living, just as they had before having to move. However, they to some extent depend on the established habitants to

go the whole way. Furthermore, respondents witness of feelings of hopelessness in their attempts to create a common social sphere between established and newly arrived as a result of rejection and restrictiveness among established;

*They don't need us, but we need them and each other. They don't have time or interest in interacting with us, they already got everything they need, and I think that is one reason for segregation (*respondent 04-04-17*).*

As exemplified above, one of the main issues seem to be a lack of reciprocity between established and newly arrived and when this lack of reciprocity gets too distinct the divides between newly arrived and established increase:

I have double culture, and double education and I think that we can mix, when coming here I felt very bad because they said that I can't get job because I don't speak Swedish and because I don't understand the Swedish culture, no help. And I told them to shut up! Don't tell me that I can't, I find job in another way! I am very active and have much energy but some days I don't feel good but sad, depressed, it is hard sometimes when you always have to be active and find new ways. When feeling bad (as a result of rejection) I don't talk to Swedish people (respondent in-depth 15-02-17).

Above cited respondent witness of an inner conflict where it is important or even crucial for him to interact with established habitants for which he is so motivated that he, even though he bears an underlying feeling of hopelessness, he still spends a lot of time and energy in trying to find his way into Swedish society. However, when he temporarily loses the energy and his belief in integration as a two-way process where people's experiences are interchanged or "mixed" (the respondent's word) he pauses in his attempts to interact with established habitants as a result of rejection and turn to other newly arrived, a tendency that he finds problematic.

The Paradox is that the social processes that are taking place between newly arrived who fight for their integration are commonly perceived as failed integration by them while the presence and engagement (in integrating) of established individuals are marginal. If we define

integration as a two-way process where people with diverse backgrounds meet and evolve in that interaction, it becomes clear that it is those who are established who are putting the least effort into the integrational work that is so central in discussions about immigration and immigration policies all over Europe.

Double culture and identity processes taking place through the social venues of IM

IM participants give witness of a complex perception of what there is to be integrated with in the Swedish society and among individuals where those who are newly arrived seem to have identified a wider spectrum of differences and similarities compared to those who define themselves as established Swedes:

I think that some social rules are no good for integration, if you for example ask someone a question and you don't get true answer it is not good. I get very angry when someone tells me how I should do, for example be more Swedish, I can't, I am myself and that is both Kurdish and Swedish. Some people ask questions and say things they don't mean, I like it more complicated, because people are complicated, I think it is easier for me who come from another place to see that. For me, integration is about kinship, trying to learn and give from each other (respondent in-depth interview 15-02-17).

The respondent is referring to the complexities inherent in the nature of the human being as an argument for "true" social interaction which involves the acknowledgement of the individual's right and need to define herself and to share critical, self-defined understandings of reality; thus, he actually calls for an inter-epistemic dialogue and refutes information or knowledge that are merely projections from others. Furthermore, he recognises the advantage of being new in Swedish society as he has yet not absorbed the norms and social structures in society, which makes it easier for him to let himself and the people he meets to choose the content in the interchange of experiences and understandings of the self and the reality in social interaction and thus facilitate integration as a two-way process.

The newly arrived participants explain their cultural identity as "double culture", which is a combination of what they perceive to be the best elements from their former cultural identities and cultural expressions they have identified in the Swedish society. By doing so, they can better cope with the struggles that come with being newly arrived by creating a "home"

within themselves and at the same time being able to establish this in combination with new personal attributes and in this process creating an identity which is partly "Swedish".

A commonly used reference among a majority of the participants is that of truths, which in this case is defined as being true to others and oneself in terms of recognising different values, ideas, feelings and thoughts which all are aspects that inform a person's diverse identity (ties). Both established and newly arrived participants have in common that they have stepped outside the comfort zones by becoming part of the IM activity groups which have led to a belief in a common culture marked by reciprocity, respect, honesty, self-reflectivity, curiosity, solidarity and modesty before each other's differences;

Feeling more Swedish does not mean feeling less Syrian, because you can be both, you can take the good things from each place you know. Does that mean that I would lose my Syrian part? No, but it means that I would add something to myself, because a person can be a lot of things (respondent short interview 07-04-17).

The respondent quoted above has started to find his way to feel comfortable within himself and in the Swedish society (in terms of identities) by critically modifying his cultural identities in a way that feels rightful to him. During the interview, he gives examples of what he has left behind, what he has kept and what he has added to himself since he moved from his former home country; by using different instruments for moral orientation from both countries he argues that it has made him a better person. Just as it is important to be self - reflexive the need for understanding others are equally significant:

For me, identity is most important, you can't do good in society if you don't know yourself and others, it is true talking, same as for you and me. If someone is angry I don't get angry, I try to understand why this reaction and then I can answer (respondent short interview 16-03-17).

From the perspective of the respondent cited above, a socially well-functioning society precede from the individual; if you don't understand yourself and other, we, who are the society, cannot interact in a constructive way.

Throughout fieldwork, the participants emphasised the importance of showing interest in other people and to strive for understanding the person behind all the external attributes (such

as being newly arrived or established, socioeconomic resources and looks) that might otherwise make the basis for our perception of "the other". When successfully breaking through the wall of external attributes one may easier find commonalities amongst individuals. There seem to be no easy answer to how one can make oneself feel established and being perceived as so; it is to a high extent an individual process where the personal identity is the most important aspect. The personal identity needs space in the social room, it needs to be acknowledged by others and one must work on one's own awareness of it. Both at activities in the field as well as during interviews the participants describe integration as something that takes place in social interaction; it is about creating something new together, a kind of community;

Integration for me is to feel like part of society even though the society may seem strange. I have to remind myself that I have been a person and that that person has been part of another society and that I can, together with others, be part of a new society and still be me (respondent short interview 17-03-17).

The person quoted above has responded to the changing circumstances that moving (or being forced to move) from one part of the world to another entail, by taking on a positive approach to integration as a two-way process. Furthermore, she acknowledges the power of people and the individual to construct and shape society and that society is merely the product of norms and ideas of its inhabitants.

While it can be a highly positive thing to be able to create new identities in relation to changing personal circumstances, such as moving from one country to another, there is a subtle line between oppression of identity and usurpation of new qualities and inspiration from the new society. Participants have reacted negatively on the assimilative tendencies in the European approach to integration, which they among other things connect to the Swedish governmental program for integration, such as classes for civic orientation, the high level of individualism (which is understood as a social climate which is constituted by ideas of "survival of the fittest") and high stress levels in society which creates structures that limit people's ability and willingness to take the time and energy to see and listen to one another.

Many of the participants witness of a feeling of being forced to let go of aspects in their lives which they identify with while they at the same time are forced onto a social culture and identity which themselves have not created:

When I want to tell a joke, no one understands it, no one would even listen to it, and if I for example want to show a beautiful song that deeply means something to me from Syria no one understands the poetry, and no one wants to listen, that hurts and makes me feel lonely. That makes me feel like I have lost something. I lost a cultural part and a part of my identity, like a cut in the heart, there is no room for me (respondent in-depth 22-02-17).

The respondent witnesses of sadness and feelings of oppression which have culminated from his attempts to share something which he highly values from the cultural identity which he has developed in the country of origin. When he registers the rejection of his attempts to sharing he steps back and becomes the *other* because assimilation would erode his whole identity. Again, the respondent calls for reciprocity in the integrational process, he has tried to share the logics and linguistic signs which are part of his identity but find it hard to keep those parts unless the people he is interacting with are willing to interchange.

Most of the IM participants who are newly arrived in Sweden speak more than two languages, many speak more than five and English is commonly one of those. However, since their arrival to Sweden they have lost their linguistic skills in benefit of the Swedish language. Both within the IM activity groups as well as in their daily lives they are told to speak in Swedish instead of English (or translating between languages), which is a language most people know. Even though they are keen on managing Swedish they find it troubling that they are exhorted to speak the native language rather than trying to convey their message or at all express what's on their minds. In this way, many feel restricted in terms of sharing and make use of their experiences, feelings, qualities, perspectives, knowledge and reflections until they can to speak Swedish fluently. Along the road, as they are trying to meet the requirements set up by Swedish society their energy and passions fade into a mental state of passivity, which makes the integration process even harder. In parallel to this, they also tend to forget substantial parts of their education and previous work experiences in order to adapt to a privileged group of people, with little room for personal development and to work with their establishment in Swedish society.

It counts for a majority of the participants who are newly arrived that they had to begin from scratch when they arrived at Sweden. They not only face substantial hinders in trying to contribute and make use of their socioeconomic qualities, they also very quickly absorb the perspective that they regardless of earlier experiences are mainly *newly arrived* or *refugees* in relation to the *established* habitants. This becomes particularly notable when it comes to work experiences and education. There are, as in most of the issues brought up in this research, many factors that affect the social processes. In this case, protracted administrative steps, such as translating grades from another country, the central role of the Swedish language on the labour market and in education, prolonged asylum processes as well as limited rights (directly connected to their status as newly arrived) for those who are newly arrived at Sweden are just a few of the factors affecting newly arrived individuals' understanding of their own situation. When taking part of one of IM`s more practical social forums where the participants (who are youngsters between 15-20) focus on getting a job and to become more familiar with the Swedish labour market, only 1 out of 10 of the participants chose to include their past experiences with work and education in their CVs even though they had highly relevant experiences. In the same way, when discussing the future with participants in the other activity groups, they are prepared to start from scratch in terms of education and career in order to adapt to the current state of the labour market even though their past experiences (such as working with human rights on organisational level, engineering, manual labour etc.) are relevant in Sweden:

*Many people don't like us (*referring to "us" as "refugees"*), maybe it is because they think we cost too much, some of us do but we want to pay back and we will but it is hard to get into school and to get a job before knowing Swedish fluently: In my profession you only need English but no one would take me, you can't do anything before knowing Swedish* (Respondent in-depth interview 10-03-17).

The respondent identifies himself as a refugee in debt to the Swedish society and wishes to "pay back" partly to strengthen his own position in relation to the established habitants. Not knowing the Swedish language fluently is among the main hinders for him to enter the Swedish labour market; however, it is not him who has created the hinder and he is questioning the importance that is given to the Swedish language especially within his own profession. At the workplaces (in Sweden) where his has tried to get a job the English

language is dominant while still being rejected with reference to his insufficient knowledge of Swedish.

The importance given to the Swedish language is put in relation to the globalized characteristics within the labour markets in other countries to which the respondents already have adapted. The respondents' expectations on their opportunities on the Swedish labour market have not been met, upon which they find it necessary to build new careers which to a higher extent respond to the requirements and state of the Swedish labour market:

I have good education and have worked in several different countries but I can't use that here, I want to contribute and therefore I need to go to the university here, to get an education that leads to a job here in Sweden. I have been waiting for my grades to be translated for so long now and I don't think it will lead to anything (respondent short interview 16-03-17).

The respondent quoted above recognizes and values his socioeconomic resources but finds it hopeless in further trying to contribute with what he already got since he feels that his socioeconomic resources are not equally valued by Swedish society. Partly due to an inefficient bureaucratic system he finds no other solution than to start over again by his own and adapt to the preferences of Swedish society; thus, he chooses to leave behind a substantial part of what he has identified with and partly lets himself be assimilated.

When repeatedly asking participants within the different activity groups why they are not engaged as volunteers and take on a more active role within the organisation they respond that they don't know Swedish well enough, that they don't feel that they have anything to bring that would be of use for others and that they feel a need to get more established in other terms first (such as knowing Swedish fluently, get an education that is valued in Sweden and a "respectful" job). Some of the newly arrived participants did register as volunteers after we had talked about it several times. However, both established and newly arrived got surprised when the others told about their initiative and some of the new volunteers, were still asking what they could possibly add to the organisation since they didn't know much about Swedish society.

The practical hinders for newly arrived to get established and to contribute may require a systematic, bureaucratical change; however, the mental approach to integration can be changed through social platforms such as those within IM. Here, where people with diverse

backgrounds meet for social interaction they evolve as individuals and support each other in their relationship to their surroundings:

By meeting others in groups like that I get an insight in other people's lives, their perspectives and views, it is important to try to understand others. One must know how others react to what one do or say (Respondent short interview 15-03-17).

The respondent is referring to the "discussion group" in the Swedish practice group (Tala svenska-gruppen) at IM and has taken on an active role in understanding the other participants, an approach which she uses to understand and form her position in social environments in other contexts outside the IM activity groups. Furthermore, she witnesses of an understanding of social life as something dynamic and relational which one, together with other need to work with constructively, the other participants partly function as sounding board to her which influence her self -perception. One of the highly-appreciated outcomes of participating in the activity groups is the personal development that it brings:

My ability to feel empathy has substantially increased by talking to the other participants and new people. It is particularly fruitful for me to talk to people who use Swedish language in another way than I and differently from what I am used to. I am forced to widen my perspectives and to look beyond the norms and discourses which is mediated through the language (respondent in-depth interview 02-03-17).

The respondent's ability to understand others and to critically approach norms and ideas in society has, according to her substantially increased as a direct result of social interaction with people that normally interact in other social communities than herself. She has deliberately or not, stepped outside the initial power structures that before had partly informed her role within the group.

To sum up, the respondents who are newly arrived, have, much due to their ability to observe the Swedish society and its social environments from and external perspective (connected to their position as newcomers) been able to develop an inter-epistemic approach to integration in Sweden since they have not yet usurped norms and pre-conceptualized understandings of others. Their comparatively open-minded approach has also facilitated the development of a fusion of cultural identities or "double culture" as many of the respondents call it. Even though many of the respondent have experienced mutual interchange with established

habitants, Eurocentric tendencies, inherent both within newly arrived as well as established individuals the "double culture" and reciprocity between newly arrived and established are threatened. While usurping new qualities and inspiration from the new society, some of the respondents witness of feelings of oppression of their identities and a frustration over a perceived lack of reciprocity between newly arrived and established. However, the approach to the social platforms among participants has changed as they have engaged more and have successively let go of the initial power structures between established and newly arrived within the social forums at IM. Both established and newly arrived express an individual social progress such as widened perspectives, increased ability to understand different logics, higher degree of self-reflexivity and stronger self-esteem as a result of interacting with others in social contexts where they have stepped out of their socioeconomic statuses and roles and their overall daily outsets.

The explicit and non-explicit view and perception of integration: Privileges, voice, power and responsibilities
Within the organisation, its staff, guiding documents and organisational structures within the activity groups as well as among those participating (participants/newly arrived, volunteers and staff) in the activities and social venues connected to IM there are several different and often ambivalent perspectives and perceptions of integration.

Just above a majority of the volunteers participating in the IM activities expressed, both by spoken words and actions, an approach that with *more* (than the *other)* privileges comes more responsibility towards fellow human beings when it comes to integrational work. For them, it is a necessity to share or give one's voice and power to those who do not possess those elements in that specific social context and social culture, as a way to facilitate integration as a two way-process where the volunteers participate because they want to integrate with others:
Those who know Swedish fluently have an advantage in relation to those who don't speak Swedish fluently in these kind of social contexts (Swedish practise café at Mondays). You always got the upper hand, it has been so many times that I have heard other volunteers telling participants how "things work" in Sweden and when one must intervene and tell NO, that is not the case, they are trying to project their conceptions to others (respondent in- depth interview 02-03-17),

The respondent who also takes on the role as volunteer is aware of her privileged position as a first language speaker and established in the Swedish society (thus doesn't depend as much on other people) and finds it to be her responsibility to use her voice as privileged to intervene when someone misuse their privileged position in relation to less privileged participants. Further, she expresses a frustration over the assimilative approach to integration which she identifies within some of the other volunteers and rejects pre-conceptualized understandings of a coherent "Swedish culture":

It gets best when we can move away from the structure where we have one moderator and others who just do what they are told, when we instead become a group of friends who almost talk over the top of each other ("tala I munnen på varandra") due to the intensity of the discussions and when there is no power structure such as tutor and student. That structure is all wrong, that is closer to assimilation than integration (respondent short interview 21-03-17).

Above cited respondent is also registered as a volunteer within IM and the Swedish practise group (Tala svenska gruppen) and in conformity with many other volunteers is troubled by the power structures within the group which she defines as assimilative. To her, all who engage in the group are participants equally entitled to power and voice within the group; thus, creating a social discourse where participants take part in a mutual interchange of thoughts and opinions. To the respondent, the meetings within the group are socially stimulating, she continues to go there because she gets something out of the social interaction with the others who she also considers to be her friends. She is emotionally engaged both with the group as a whole but also on individual level.

However, the assimilative and Eurocentric approach is also present among several of the newly arrived participants who do not take on the roles as volunteers:

I feel that I need to better my Swedish and learn more about the Swedish society from actual Swedes, it is not enough just to hang out with other newly arrived and go to school to learn Swedish. I also wish that there were more real Swedes at the activities because we are still

outsiders and it makes me a bit frustrated not to feel like a part of the Swedish community (respondent 06-03-17).

Above quoted respondent is valuing people based on their heritage and has even graded the level of "Swedishness" that one can have by separating immigrated Swedes and "actual Swedes" who in this case are born in Sweden and meet his requirements for being defined as "truly Swedish"; thus, he also establishes that he will never be fully "Swedish" since he has immigrated to Sweden just like his fellow friends who are newly arrived, however, he believes that he can become more *similar* to Swedes or the *other*. Furthermore, he demonstrates an instrumental view on social interaction with "actual Swedes" which he believes would help him to get more established.

Many of the participants who are newly arrived come to the meetings with the approach to learn Swedish and to learn about Sweden and "Swedishness" which in turn substantiate the assimilative approach among some of the established volunteers. The established volunteers in turn, use the Eurocentric and hierarchic approach which some of the newly arrived participants have to justify their assimilative approach and arguments for continuing to "educate" "Swedishness".

Again, the volunteers who embrace the understanding of integration as a two-way process where one as privileged should be prepared to share one's privileges are constantly trying to find solutions to bridge the problematic and contradictory approaches to integration:

To bridge this problematic I think we need to get closer to the other participants and for example ask what it means to them to learn Swedish and why they want to do that. Learning Swedish can mean so many things, the most important thing is to know who the participants are, what they want to do, their passions and experiences and if they want to speak Swedish we can do that while having conversations that feels meaningful to everyone engaged. It is very hard as a volunteer to keep up the enthusiasm during the activities if it does feel socially stimulating, when the tutor and student structure are dominating the meetings I feel that we could just as well use language practice through a cassette tape (Respondent in-depth interview 02-03-17).

The respondent expresses frustration over both the established and the newly arrived participants' approach to integration; to her, the two-way process of integration is important, she is participating in the activities as a way to integrate with other people.

The other group of volunteers expressed, by spoken words and actions, an opposite perspective. Here the position is defensive, they don't want to and don't feel responsible for sharing their privileges but rather act more restrictive the closer they come to temporarily share their privileges; when some of the volunteers came with the suggestion that the activity group should let the participants (newly arrived, not volunteers) take more responsibility of what they do during the activities one volunteer answered:

But how would we then know what to do? It would be too messy, how would we even structure that? I think that we should do as we always have done, and plan in beforehand what to do, some of them don't even know a word in Swedish and they need to learn Swedish before they can take that kind of responsibility, that's at least why I am here, to teach them Swedish (respondent 06-03-17).

The person who said this got support by some of the other volunteers while those who argued that the purpose of the group is to meet as equals and learn from each other and that the Swedish language was just one aspect of it left the room while expressing frustration and tiredness, they had lost this dispute. However, the volunteers who take on the approach exemplified above do also say that they define integration as a two-way process and for them, keeping the power structures as tutor and student is a way to respond to the needs, wishes and reflections from the newly arrived participants in line with a rights based approach. The main issue here seems to be the sharing of privileges which some find harder to do than others.

It has overall been very clear that the persons volunteering in IM activities share one of these two views more than the other; none of them could be called good or bad people because of that, of course; rather they are the products of two different strands of thoughts as a consequence of their social environment. Those arguing for sharing their privileges have several times said that their perspectives were something they had to deliberately work for over a longer time and that it was and can still be hard doing so but that they are encouraged by friends, family and education to be more critical to norms in society. It can very uncomfortable to share or give away one's privileges and let go of a social role one has

played for a longer time, and some respond with defence and restrictiveness when exposed to others in unprivileged positions.

The organisational structure within the activity groups seem also to be part of the problem where a homogeneous group of volunteers meet outside the regular hours for the activities to discuss what the other participants wants and needs and what they should practise or need to learn more about. The intentions are not to project any pre-conceptualized understandings of the *other* or integration, its rather the opposite; almost everyone in the groups of volunteers as well as the staff (newly arrived participants as well for that part) define integration as a two-way process and are very keen on applying a rights based approach where everyone taking part of the activities should take part of informing the contents and structures in the activities. The rights based approach and the definition of integration as a two-way process are also established in the organisations guiding documents. However, it is not as easy for everyone to realise those intentions and it is made even harder when both established volunteers and newly arrived participants maintain an often-subconscious approach to integration and to the *other* as it is projected from a dominating assimilative and Eurocentric approach present in society as well as European polices informing the integration work both within voluntary organisations as well as on governmental level.

The taboo of crossing the borders between privileged and less privileged outside the institution of IM

Many of those participating at IM activities have gotten new friends through the activities but when it comes to more personal relationships between volunteers and newly arrived participants the issue gets more delicate and the division between *us* and *them* are more visible. When entering the social venues everyone take on a social role which is part of the culture in that specific context and dismantle from their daily lives in order to meet each other as equals. However, as soon as participants leave that protective context the determinants in their individual lives take over at the same time as the institutional walls (connected to IM) are still present. Those engaged in the activity groups witness of a discourse which is questioning relationships between volunteers and participants where the taboo of social interaction not connected to IM is to a higher extent manifested among volunteers compared

to among those who are not. The issue illustrates a tendency to infantilize individuals who are found to be more exposed (in terms of privileges) than others:

Sometimes you (established volunteers at IM*) talk to me as a child, I know I don't know perfect Swedish but I understand it and I understand other things too and sometimes I just like to listen and watch. Sometimes, I think, oh, you think I am a child! You think that I don't understand your culture, but that is not right. You want to help all of them but then you also need to know things about them. All of us have so many things to bring, everyone has their own story, it would be good to learn from each other* (respondent in-depth interview 15-02-17).

In the integrational work, both in European guiding documents such as the White Paper and the CBPs as well as in social venues with an integrational purpose such as the Swedish Practise café at IM people tend to be divided into those who are in need and those who (to some extent) can cater those needs. In this process, the personal aspects (such as feelings, passions, thoughts) and an intersectional perspective get less attention, and even though all of those coming to for example the Swedish practise café are adults going there on their spare time with the interest of social interaction it becomes inappropriate to socialise between those two groups under other circumstances and outside the limits of the activity group.

Again, this is to a high extent depending on socioeconomic factors (such as where one live, job, education, economic status etc..) and privileges that one has (or not) in society which are determining the limits in social interaction between volunteers and participants who are newly arrived outside IM related contexts. The difference in perspective among those engaged can be exemplified by a scene which took place a while ago which some of the volunteers remembers well. A male participant who was not taking on the role as a volunteer had for a while showed interest in one of the female volunteers. One day he brings her a gift and compliments her looks and personality, the other volunteers are watching and when he leaves they immediately comment on his act stating that is was inappropriate that he found her to be a potential romantic partner. Another female volunteer brings this occurrence up as we are talking about the relationship between volunteers and participants:
I am afraid to cross a line, I think it is a mentality or discourse that make us question whether it is ok or not to meet outside the activity group, and I think that this is something that

everyone is unsure of, is it ok to date someone who one has met at IM if one is a volunteer and the other is not? (respondent in-depth interview 02-03-17)

This perspective is deeply rooted among volunteers who thus bear the main capacity to counter the tensions created. Issues of comfort, such as an unwillingness to challenge personal fears connected to a questioning and opposing to norms and structures, are hindering the social processes needed to overcome the problem. Those participating who are newly arrived have to a high extent forced themselves to be open for new social structures, ideas, norms etc. due to the fundamental changes they have had to make in their lives and many find it troublesome that those established in Sweden, including IM volunteers, are more socially restrictive than what they find themselves to be:

It is a shame that they don't want to get close. I find it hard to believe that I would get a Swedish girlfriend since I am Syrian and don't know Swedish fluently or have a real job, even though that is not the most important things, one can always evolve as a person together with someone else, is that not what it is truly about? (respondent in-depth interview 22-02-17)

The respondent has partly usurped the perception of himself as less valuable in relation to the established habitants and he refers to his lack of privileges as one of the reasons for not likely ending up in a romantic relationship with a "Swedish girl". However, he is struggling with fully accepting the importance that is put on privileges and also witness of a belief in the power of social interaction and the inherent value of each individual.

When asking a female volunteer what she thinks about romantic relationships between volunteers and participants she confirms the understanding of the more restrictive approach among established volunteers;

If a female volunteer would start dating a male participant I don't think that it would be well received among the other volunteers. They would perhaps not openly show their resistance but I think that they would not like the couple to be present at the activity group at the same time (respondent in-depth interview 21-03-17).

The respondent rejects the taboo of developing personal or romantic relationships with the *other,* but she also confirms the discourse of taboo and do not see how it could be overcome, she has also partly accepted the situation.

It seems like the main issue is to how to extend the openminded approach which is created within the social venues to other contexts disconnected from the organisation. The homogeneous group of volunteers with only established, self-defined Swedes with Western European roots are withholding the structures of *us* and *them,* something which both volunteers, participants and personnel have brought up as a main hinder for advancing the social processes within the groups in bridging different logics and approaches which those engaged bring.

The rights-based approach (defined earlier) which constitutes the fundamental approach of IM in relation to their objectives is applied on the premises of the more privileged individuals working, voluntarily or paid within the organisation. When put in practise, for example when visitors/participants are asked to take part of the development of the different activity groups the opportunity to influence is presented as a package, they can choose what to bring but only as long as it can be accommodated within the predetermined limits. Those who differ from the homogeneous group, mainly in terms of socioeconomic privileges seldom get to influence the frames and limits determining the content of the package. A big issue for the organisation as a whole is to try to create a higher level of heterogeneity within the organisation in the sense that both national and local boards, voluntary groups and personnel represent a higher level of diversity. Put in another context, let us compare with the Pride organisation who deal with LBGT issues, they would never have a board with mainly straight people, their success postulates the involvement of people representing the target group.

When asking both newly arrived participants and the personnel responsible for the activity groups why newly arrived are not engaged to a higher extent one of the main determinants is the language which foreshadows social competence and individual experiences. Since learning the Swedish language (which can take a long time) is so central for many of those coming new to Sweden put their lives on paus to meet the criteria's which are put up by the Swedish society. One of the consequences of this, is that they don't feel motivated or even capable of taking on more active roles such as volunteering, applying for board memberships or applying for jobs which they are suitable for. The division between the established participants and the newly arrived within the organisation is partly a consequence of a subconscious Eurocentric approach to integration:

I think that one of the bigger problems here is the imbalance in the groups, it is not always easy to communicate so that everyone understands but instead of encouraging there is always someone who says "No! Speak Swedish, here everyone should speak Swedish" as if those speaking other languages were doing something shameful (respondent short interview 05-04-17).

Many of the participants have suggested a more inter -epistemic approach to the activity groups, especially within the Swedish practice groups. The purpose would be to change the perspective in relation to needs of the newly arrived participants and utility of the established participants where everyone would participate on equal terms:

It would feel good if someone asked me about things that I know, perhaps we could create discussion groups where we would talk about and compare discourses informing the different languages (respondent in depth interview 10-03-17).

The respondent has registered the power structures within the group and suggests using intellectual methods, such as discourse analysis to cope with the issue. He wants to share his experiences but does not feel that he got the power or strength to do so, he would rather be asked to do so. The critique of the Eurocentric tendencies is yet again, found to be one of the main issues:

I would prefer, if one as a Swedish speaking person for example could go there to learn something and have that as an outset, being led by curiosity rather than stiff perceptions about others. I would for example like to learn Arabic, we could make an exchange (respondent in depth interview 22-03-17).

The respondent is suggesting a restructuring of the activity group and suggests a multilingual approach as a solution to the tendencies of *othering* within the group.

In periods, when the group of volunteers has consisted of people with more diverse backgrounds everyone participating witnessed of a more dynamic social interaction. However, volunteers who had different ethnical backgrounds than the majority of the volunteers quite soon, started to drop out:

I don't think we understood what we were doing, I remember that many of the established volunteers didn't like to listen to the new volunteers who had a different background than them (respondent short interview 05-04-17).

The unwillingness or the lack of capacity to let the newly arrived volunteers themselves define and share their experiences, perspectives, knowledge etc. created a tense social environment within the volunteer group. The main issue, seems to be that the established volunteers got uncomfortable by the addition of new ways of reasoning and logics which the new volunteers in turn responded to both by questioning their own ways but not the others and eventually ending their roles as volunteers. This tendency could not be entirely blamed on the established volunteers; it is everyone's responsibility to adapt to new social circumstances, but since it is mainly we, the West Europeans who inform the discourses within the integrational work in Europe we also need to acknowledge our faults and open up for a new approach, both in European politics as well as in the public sphere. The taboo of private, social interaction between established and newly arrived participants is the result of power structures in relation to privileges within the activity groups, but it is also partly a consequence of a subconscious Eurocentric perspective on integration which is cementing the divisions between newly arrived and established participants.

8. Concluding discussion

This research has focused on the issue of integration of newly arrived individuals in Europe, highlighting the importance of civil society in this integration work. The thesis was informed by a postcolonial perspective and a definition of integration as a two-way process, emphasizing the importance of recognition and reciprocity between newly arrived and established habitants. By performing an ethnographic case study of a voluntary organization in Sweden (IM) and by, in addition, assessing European guiding document on integration, this study has identified a number of hinders for integration as a two-way process both within the organization as well as at European level.

Ethnographical studies of integration are rare but particularly useful, I argue, in order to identify the discursive hinders entailed in the dominant, European approach to integration, enabling also the identification of discrepancies between ideals and practice in integration. The research questions addressed were; What social processes are taking place at IM social arenas and activities with integrational purpose? What are the hinders for integration as a two-way process within the chosen organisation on the one hand, and in European integration policies on the other? By answering these two questions this study contributes to addressing the contribution that civil society actors can make integration in Europe as an actual two- way process as formulated in the Common Basic Principles. The research has identified several social processes taking place in the integration work within the organisation as well as hinders for such integration. In the following I discuss some key findings.

Hinders for full realisation of integration between established and newly arrived individuals are partly the result of power structures in relation to privileges which in turn is informed by a socioeconomic approach to integration. However, the problem is also a consequence of an underlying Eurocentric perspective on integration which is cementing the divisions between newly arrived and established habitants. This is evident both in the European policy documents as well as in the case study.

Nevertheless, the case study has also identified some ways to overcome the assimilative tendencies in Europe and introduce, what I conceptualize as, an inter-epistemic approach to integration. By dismantling the socioeconomic roles individuals play in their daily lives more

space is given to psychosocial factors which are enabling people to meet on more common grounds and thus, together may easier create integration as a two-way process as defined in EU guiding documents. For instance, the social venues within IM influence established habitants in a way which is hard to reach in their daily lives; they have together, people with very diverse backgrounds, both established and newly arrived, managed to overcome their pre-defined understandings of how to approach each other. The established participants who, from an individual perspective (in terms of socioeconomic resources as well in relation to privileges such being a first language speaker) don't really need to integrate, while those who are newly arrived are less privileged and need others to find their ways in Swedish society. However, both established and newly arrived participants have in common that they have stepped outside their comfort zones by becoming part of the IM activity groups which have led to a belief in a common culture marked by reciprocity, respect, honesty, self-reflectivity, curiosity, solidarity and modesty before each other's differences.

The newly arrived respondents, have, much due to the norm creative approach applied within the activity groups managed to critically modify their cultural identities by using different instruments for moral orientation and by keeping some parts from their former cultural identities and added some from the Swedish society, in a way that feel right for them as individuals. This in turn makes them more comfortable both with themselves as well as with Swedish society. This process of self-reflexivity goes in parallel with an increased emphasis on striving to understand others. These social processes facilitate both for the establishment of newly arrived as well as integration as a two-way process between newly arrived and established habitants.

However, there are also several hinders; when reciprocity with the Swedish society and established habitants are lacking the newly arrived respondents instead give witness of feelings of oppression. With reference to the emphasis put on the Swedish language, learning the Swedish ways and systems as well as bureaucratic hinders for newly arrived to make use of their socioeconomic resources, respondents feel that they are instead forced to let go of aspects in their lives which they identify with while at the same time being forced onto a social culture and identity which they themselves have not created. This social process tends to culminate in two different ways; either they step back and make themselves the *other* and

mainly identify themselves as newly arrived or refugees, or they let go of substantial parts of what they used to identify with and let themselves partly be assimilated.

The emphasis put on the Swedish language both within the organisation as well as in society overall seems to be one of the more deceive hinders, since newly arrived are exhorted to speak the native language rather than to convey their message. In this way, many feel restricted in terms of sharing and make use of their experiences, feelings, qualities, perspectives, knowledge and reflections until they too, can speak Swedish fluently. Along the road, as they are trying to meet the requirements set up by Swedish society their energy and passions fade into a mental state of passivity, which makes the integration process even harder. In parallel to this, they also tend to forget substantial parts of their education and previous work experiences. In this social process, the respondents also witness of the feeling that their socioeconomic resources are not equally valued by Swedish society. However, the issue is partly also dealt with within the social venues as the participants get more engaged an focus more on the social interaction rather than the utility perspective; in some groups, discussions are held in several different languages where participants translate between each other instead of trying to find the right words in Swedish. This structure makes the basis for an inter-epistemic dialogue where established and newly arrived share and develop as individuals together which also strengthens their capacities in society over all.

 When it comes to more personal relationships between volunteers and newly arrived participants within the activity groups the division between *us* and *them* is more visible. Structures informing the homogeneous group of volunteers maintain the unidirectional perspective; volunteers are there to cater the needs of the *other*. Those engaged in the activity groups witness of a discourse which is questioning relationships between volunteers and participants where the taboo of social interaction not connected to IM is to a higher extent manifested among volunteers compared to among those who are not. The issue illustrates a tendency to infantilize individuals who are found to be more exposed (in terms of privileges) than others, they are perceived as less capable, a tendency which is also present in the formulation of European policies on integration.

Respondents who are newly arrived, have much due to their ability to observe the Swedish society and its social environments from an external perspective been able to develop an inter-epistemic approach to integration in Sweden since they have not yet usurped norms and pre-conceptualized understandings of others. When interacting within the social venues at IM, this approach seems to influence the established participants thus successively creating integration as a two-way process. Thus, participants have also developed and added qualities to their identities which are further enabling mutual social interaction. However, subconscious, Eurocentric tendencies, inherent both within established and newly arrived habitants threaten the reciprocity and the development of personal identities based on an inter-epistemic approach. Nevertheless, this is something which can be overcome by an increased level of heterogeneity and stronger emphasis on working together where everyone is more exposed and to a higher extent depend on each other, such as within a voluntary organisation or contexts similar to the logics of voluntary organisations.

In current European approach to integration, focus has mainly been put on newly arrived; how *we* may cater *their* needs in enabling *their* integration in Europe alongside with emphasis on how newly arrived and established habitants may learn more *about* each other in order to facilitate social interaction on common grounds. Moreover, focus in European policies as well as the public approach to newly arrived has mainly been on how *they* may be practically useful in the European society applying a dominating socioeconomic approach to integration. The utility perspective is further informing power structures in relation to privileges in relation to the European society. The established habitants have not to the same extent been objects for discussions on how *they* should and can integrate with newly arrived. Despite good intentions, this approach derives from a subconscious postcolonial and thus Eurocentric understanding of the *other* and on integration overall, which is hindering integration as a true two-way process and even risks cementing the divisions between newly arrived and established habitants.

By dismantling the socioeconomic roles individuals play in their daily lives in venues created for social interaction (such as within a voluntary organization) more space is given to psychosocial factors which are enabling people to meet on more common grounds and thus, together may easier create integration as a two-way process as defined in EU guiding documents. To consider socioeconomic factors in the development of social politics is of

course inevitable since society is built on the contribution of its habitants. However, by including a psychosocial approach in parallel to that we may facilitate social processes which to a higher extent can meet the demands of a diverse society and thus even strengthen the socioeconomic contribution of its habitants. Since it is the West European habitants who inform the discourse within the integrational work in Europe we also need to, both in European politics as well as in the public sphere, including civil society actors, be open for changing the approach of interculturality to interepistemicality, a change which can partly be facilitated through the experiences from social venues created within civil society.

To conclude, this study, has presented social processes and hinders for integration as a two-way process which has not been elaborated much on before, thus offering a deeper understanding of integration on individual level and emphasise the importance of applying a psychosocial approach in parallel to the socioeconomic approach. Future research on how to create more equal participatory opportunities for voluntary organizations would probably have a positive impact both at national level and for the relevance and legitimacy of the EU. Furthermore, it would be very useful with an up-to-date and in- depth research on the impact of civil society on public norms/mentalities and approaches in relation to migration and integration.

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Appendix 1

Intervjuguide: Deltagare vid integrationsfrämjande aktiviteter samt Anställda vid IM

Grupp A:

Deltagare vid integrationsfrämjande aktiviteter/träffar (nyanlända och etablerade)

Frågor att utgå ifrån:

Kan du berätta om första gången du var med på en träff/aktivitet med IM?

Varför kommer du på IM träffar?

Vad tycker du att du har gemensamt med de andra som kommer på IM träffar/aktiviteter?

Känner du flera som går på träffarna? Har du fått nya vänner genom träffarna? I vilka sammanhang tycker eller tror du att det är lättast att träffa och lära känna nya människor?

Hur skulle du säga att träffarna ha påverkat dig? (språklig utveckling, trygghet, glädje, socialt umgänge, perspektiv, negativt?)

Hur känner och tycker du att träffarna genom IM skiljer sig från andra sociala sammanhang där en kan träffa många människor? Är du med i andra likande sammanhang där du träffar nya människor som du kanske annars inte skulle ha träffat? Varför?

Vad ger det dig att komma på IM träffar/aktiviteter? Saknar du något, i sådana fall vad?

Hur tycker du att du blir bemött? Saknar du något vad gäller bemötandet? (eventuellt: Upplever du att du kommer till din rätt i den här miljön? Finns det något du skulle kunna bidra med som du inte har möjlighet att få bidra med?)

Hur mycket känner du att du kan påverka vad ni gör vid träffarna?

Hur känner du att du kan påverka samhället i Sverige? Vad skulle kunna göra det lättare för dig att påverka din vardag? (kunskap, nätverk mm) Om respondenten är nyinflyttad till Sverige: Hur var det i det landet du bodde i innan?

Hur skulle det ideala samhället se ut för dig?

Berätta vad du är mest nöjd med dig själv. Kan du berätta vilka egenskaper hos andra människor som du helst ser? Hur skulle du beskriva en riktigt "bra" person? Har du fått god kontakt med någon som du från början tänkte att du aldrig skulle kunna umgås med? Vad det som gjorde att ni ändå ville umgås?

När du träffar en ny människa, vad/vilket tänker du först på i relation till personen i fråga?

Kan du nämna något eller några saker som du identifierar dig med?

Hur upplever du att dina egna erfarenheter och kunskaper (tex språk, utbildning, arbetslivserfarenheter, mm) kommer till nytta i ditt liv? Kommer till nytta för andra människor, samhället i stort? Hur skulle du vilja att det var?

Vilka råd skulle du vilja ge till en som är ny i ett land där hen har tänkt att stanna? Varför?

Vad är integration för dig? Vad ser du för hinder för integration?

Grupp B: Anställda vid IM regionalkontor i Göteborg

Generella frågeställningar:

Vad formar integrationsarbetet inom organisationen och vilka förhållningssätt och idéer karakteriserar det arbetet?

I vilket sammanhang arbetar organisationen (organisatorisk struktur, nätverk, avtal mm) och vilken funktion har den i samhället (röstfunktion, tillhandahållande av social service, demokratiska aspekter mm)?

Vilka dokument och avtal styr arbetet?

Hur flexibelt är arbetets utformande och utförande?

Befintliga avtal som påverkar arbetet?

Vilken roll spelar "Överenskommelsen" i organisationens arbete?

Frågor att utgå från:

Vilken är din roll i organisationen (på kontoret)?

Kan du berätta om hur du hamnade här? Vad motiverar dig?

Hur arbetar du?

Hur ser du på den statliga integrationspolitiken och dess utföranden (tex samhällsorientering och dess innehåll, SFI, etableringsmetoder såsom individuell etableringsplan)?

Vad kan civilsamhället bidra med vad gäller integrationen, som du ser det? Och din organisation särskilt, vad kan den bidra med?

Hur tycker du att organisationens arbete urskiljer sig (jämför med andra)?

Efter att verksamhetsplanen är formulerad, hur flexibelt anser du att ert arbete är? Hur förhåller ni er till oförutsedda förändringar (tex systematisk utvisning till Afghanistan) om ni upptäcker att tex metoder och förutbestämda aktiviteter inte uppskattas av målgruppen?

Brukar det uppstå problem och missförstånd i ert arbete med nyanlända? Vad kan det handla om? Vad händer då? Hur hanterar ni det?

Vilka möjligheter har deltagarna att påverka innehåll och upplägg på verksamheten? Kan du ge exempel på när och hur deras synpunkter påverkat verksamheten, vid något tillfälle?

Hur praktiserar ni ett rättighetsbaserat förhållningssätt rent konkret (båda organisationerna har RBA som ett grundläggande element i respektives policy)?

Hur ser du på organisationens roll i samhället? Utför ni påverkansarbete (tex. Påverka politiker, opinionsbildning, informationsspridning), och i sådana fall, hur? Hur ser era nätverk ut? Vilka samarbetar ni med och hur? Finns det några organisationer som ni har svårt att samarbeta med och varför?

Hur skulle du beskriva den organisatoriska dimensionen i er organisation (tex. Vilka är beslutsfattare, demokratiska aspekter, volontärernas roll, policydokument) och hur mycket kan du som anställd påverka den organisatoriska strukturen?

Vad är integration för dig? Vad ser du för hinder för integration? Vilka är det största utmaningarna, som du ser det?

Appendix 2

All of the activity groups within IM result from a demand or request among target groups and are developed in collaboration with them in accordance to a rights-based approach (see above) personnel do also often take part of the activities themselves which further strengthens the closeness to the target groups. The volunteers are scheduled in beforehand and have the overall responsibility for the activities while the individuals not volunteering drop in at the meeting place which is different from group to group. Duration of the activities vary depending on the specific activity for the day and how the meeting evolves, however they are no shorter than 2 hours and usually no longer than 5 hours including common preparation, possible travels and culmination of the activities. Volunteers may have to put one or two hours more for taking on tasks connected to their assignments. All groups are venues for people with diverse backgrounds to meet, both established in the Swedish society and newly arrived. Even though the groups have some distinctive characteristics they all have an integrational purpose facilitating social processes (such as capability in understanding different logics, decreasing stereotypes and prejudices and contributing to feelings of belonging) as a complement to the strong socioeconomically perspective in society. The venues/activity groups in which I have taken part have mainly been of three different types:

The group Move it which purpose is to offer opportunities for an active leisure time for newly arrived youngsters by introducing them to Swedish associations. Together with volunteers, they take part of leisure time activities in connection to other voluntary associations once every week and several times a week during holidays. Examples of the kind of activities that I have been part of is ice skating, football, dancing classes and volleyball. The age of the participants is between 15 to 25 with an approximate number of 30-65 individuals taking part of the activities every week. My role here has firstly been as a fellow being sharing and receiving knowledge, perspectives, feelings etc. in parallel to the physical activities. Secondly, I took on the role as a volunteer with overall responsibility for the activities together with other volunteers. Taking part of this group did, among other things provide me with insights of the social processes facilitated through the group such us the utility and importance of working together towards a common goal. The role that civil society can play for newly arrived youngsters as well as the importance of the mental relief from the participant's daily lives that leisure time activities can offer.

The group for labour market orientation for newly arrived youngsters. Here young, newly arrived individuals can come once a week and take part of information about the Swedish labour market, the Swedish educational system, ways to find a job, how to write an CV and personal letter as well as information and discussions about social and cultural norms within the labour market in Sweden. The age range is 15-20 years old with an approximate number of 20 to 30 individuals taking part of the activities each week. My role here was primarily as a volunteer being a sounding board for newly arrived youngsters who intended to enter the Swedish labour market or educational system. In this group, I for example gained insights in the participants' self -perceptions and struggles with their identities as a consequence of leaving their home countries and creating new foundations in Sweden. However, the most distinct notions I could make here were the often unconscious and not explicit relations between the established volunteers and the newly arrived participants and the hinders for integration as a two-way process that is embedded in those relations.

The "late" Swedish practice group (Tala svenska- gruppen) at Mondays. This is one of the oldest and most well visited groups within IM Gothenburg where newly arrived can come and practice their Swedish in a socially relaxed environment together with volunteers who perceive themselves as established in the Swedish society. Even though the Swedish language is practiced, emphasis is put on the individual meeting and the group are featured by a norm critical/norm creative approach where participants (both volunteers and non-volunteers) discuss different themes (such as feelings, social rules, civil society, family etc.) in groups. This group is also extended outside the regular forms and often join the other Swedish practice groups (there are four groups active on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays) for barbecue, going to the theater and other additional activities. Due to its many dimensions, I discuss this group more in depth further in the thesis. Age range 15 to 80 years old with an approximate number of 20 to 70 individuals participating each week. My role here has mainly been as a fellow being even though I had to take on some tasks in relation to my role as a registered volunteer. In this social context, I have gathered substantial parts of data. Since established and newly arrived intensively interact with each other on more equal terms than in the other groups I have been able to identify social phenomena and processes which are made possible thanks to the context. Examples of the identified social processes are the personal

development and changing approaches among established volunteers which is partly a result of their participation within the group. Discrepancy and collides between ideals and practise within the organisation and among its participants was also particularly visible here.