Navigating Sweden’s Parental Choice Education System

A Study of Asylum-Seeking Parents

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Abstract

As high levels of forced migration continue to challenge Europe, countries like Sweden are attempting to incorporate asylum-seekers into its education system. Over the past 50 years Sweden’s education system has undergone a unique shift from a centralized to a decentralized parental-choice model of schools. An approach called plural education promotes equity through shared experience and support for equity creating initiatives. Proponents of choice argued that plural education was maintained across the decentralizing shift in policy. Yet some evidence has begun to show that these values are not being upheld. Marginalized groups, such as asylum-seekers, appear to face a number of barriers to accessing the entirety of choices.

In this qualitative case-study employing a grounded theory methodology, seven asylum-seeking parents were asked for their experiences entering their children into the Swedish compulsory school system. Semi-structured interviews explored the barriers, information and strategies each parent had for enrolment and school choice. Analysis found that parents had insufficient information for school choice, few strategies to find new information and faced a number of barriers. The implication of these findings are that these asylum-seekers did not have the support or knowledge to successfully participate in school choice and that education in Sweden may have weakened in its ability to promote equity for these respondents.

**Keywords**: Asylum-seekers, migration, school choice, plural education, Sweden, grounded theory.
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2. List of Abbreviations and Swedish Terms

Abbreviations
CSD – Center for the Study of Democracy
ECPHAO – European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
GT – Grounded theory
ICC – Intraclass correlation
LGR – Läroplan för grundskolan [Compulsory school national curriculum]
OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PISA – Programme for International Student Assessment
PS – Pilot study
RQ1 – Research question one
RQ2 – Research question two
RQ3 – Research question three
SCB – Statistiska Centralbyrån [Statistics bureau]
SFI – Svenska för Invandrare [Swedish for Immigrants]
SIA – Skolans inre arbete [Internal Work of the School]
UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
*Anonymized coding abbreviations can be found in Appendix D – Anonymized Codes.

Swedish Terms
Folkskola – Compulsory school for ages seven to thirteen introduced in 1842
Forskola – Daycare
Grundskola – Compulsory school
Gymnasium – Upper highschool
Kommun – Municipality
Migrationsverket – Migration board
Realskola – Alternative lower-secondary school
Skatteverket – Tax agency
Skolverket – National Agency for Education
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4. Introduction

A dramatic increase in forced migration to Sweden has put an incredible strain on parts of the welfare system, including education. In recent years, Sweden has received hundreds of thousands of asylum-seekers, many of whom have now received permanent residency (UNHCR, 2017; Ostrand, 2015). Happening within a system already challenged by low standardized testing scores and a uniquely competitive parental choice system, significant strain is being felt (OECD, 2015). Considerable segregation within school populations adds to these challenges (Böhmark, Holmlund, & Lindahl, 2015).

Attempts to integrate asylum-seekers in this society are based on the values promoted within the ‘Swedish Model’ (Englund, 1994). The Swedish government prioritizes ‘ensuring that all children and students have access to the same high-quality standard of education’ (Skolverket 2017c). These values were originally provided though a centralized education system which aimed to provide equal and representative education (Erikson & Jonsson, 1996a). Plural education, as a means of increasing equity and representation in society, was seen as the right of citizens and the responsibility of the state (De Vreede, 1990; Englund, 2010). Plural education aims to provide students with the experiences and tools to further integrate society across socio-economic lines (De Vreede, 1990; Englund, 2010).

The education reforms of the early 1990’s promised to better administer these values through a drastically different approach. The introduction of a parental choice model of education was argued to better represent the desires of individual parents and to be capable of reacting faster to changing educational needs (Petersson, 1991). This shift required extensive restructuring and a change in the Ministry of Education. Subsequently, parents held the responsibility of selecting the school that best met the needs of their child.

This choice system is built upon a unique voucher model involving parental choice of schools. Each school competes for the enrolment of children and connected funding. Parents choose the school that best fits their values and can provide for their child’s needs (Stiglitz, 1989). Central to this system, and all consumer choice models, is the importance of information. To make an informed choice, decision makers require appropriate information about their options. A lack of this information can result in poor decisions and incomplete attainment of the system’s potential benefits.

The study of asylum-seekers’ ability to navigate Sweden’s parental choice system provides an opportunity to learn more about their experience and the effectiveness of the Swedish system’s ability to uphold the values of plural education. If asylum-seekers are in any way failing to successfully navigate the system, it provides an opportunity to reflect on the overall role of education in Sweden and the government’s responsibility to promote equitable results.

This study involves the analysis of semi-structured interviews with asylum-seeking parents. They were asked about the information they had for school choice and how this
contributed to their enrolment and selection of schools. This paper will explore the meanings of these experiences.

4.1 Aims and Objectives

The general aims of this study are to explore the perceptions and experiences of asylum-seeking parents within the Swedish school choice system and to review the information that is available to them to make education choices. These aims will be approached by pursuing the following specific objectives:

- Understanding the historical and theoretical context of choice in the Swedish system.
- Conducting a qualitative study on the experiences of asylum-seeking parents in enrolling their children in compulsory school and participation in school choice.
- Analyzing the findings of this study in the context of the aforementioned theoretical context.

These aims and objectives will be addressed through the following research questions (RQs).

1) What information do asylum-seeking parents report receiving about the Swedish compulsory school system?

2) What strategies do asylum-seeking parents use for finding information and participating within the Swedish compulsory education system?

3) What barriers do asylum-seeking parents identify in the process of enrolment and participation of their children in the compulsory Swedish school system?

These questions will be addressed directly in section 7.4: Analysis of RQs.

4.2 Organization of Paper

The preceding sections provided a general overview of this study. The following sections will explore the subject in much greater detail. The remainder of section 4 will explain the considerations made during this study. First, the significance of this study to the field of international and comparative education will be discussed. Second, literature review will describe the use of published literature within this paper. Next, limitations and delimitations considered in the design of this study will be presented. Finally, key terms used in this paper will be presented to provide clarity in their meaning.

Section 5: Background explores the published work contributing to the education landscape faced by asylum-seekers in Sweden today. First, historical and theoretical context of the Swedish education system introduces the recent history of the Swedish education system from a theoretical perspective. This section serves the purpose of explaining how the education system developed into its current state and the motivations
for these changes. Second, the current structure of the education system in Sweden describes the realities of Swedish education today and finally Swedish migration describes the global migration challenge currently facing Sweden and the challenges it poses to the Swedish education system.

Following this, the methodological procedure used in this paper will be presented in section 6: Methodology. First, the use of grounded theory (GT) as a qualitative research approach will be discussed. Following this, study design describes the specific procedure conducted in this study. This procedure and considerations to ensure quality are further described in the following sections: sampling, translation and transcription, and ethical considerations. The final section, analytical procedure, gives a detailed description of the analytical process used.

Section 7: Analysis and Findings gives a detailed look at the analytical output. The first three sections, background codes, descriptive codes, and axial codes, give a description of the trends demonstrated by the interviews. Section 7.2.1: Sources of Information should be noted as it provides an example of the analytical process used in this study. This detail is excluded elsewhere to improve readability. Finally, analysis of RQs frames the trends from each code within the context of each of the three RQs.

In section 8: Discussion the findings from section 7: Analysis and Findings will be discussed in the theoretical context introduced in section 5: Background. A number of topics such as plural education and school choice will be returned to in the context of asylum-seekers.

The final sections of the text will provide a summary of the conclusions in the study and some potential areas of future study.

Six appendices provide further detail for certain topics within this paper.

4.3 Significance to International and Comparative Education

Sweden is facing a challenge in including a large number of asylum-seeking children into its education system. The uniqueness of these children’s experiences and backgrounds combined with the unique particular education structure of Sweden provides an important topic for analysis. The study of recently arrived marginalized communities and choice in Swedish education, both have a great deal of published work, yet in combination and in a comparative nature there is much less. This is largely due to the recency of this unique situation. This new situation provides an opportunity to better answer a number of questions. We know that that these families come with sizable disadvantages and struggle to achieve in school (Fazel, Reed, Panter-Brick, & Stein, 2012). We also know that such challenges affect students’ lives (Waters, & Leblanc, 2005). By gaining a better understanding of their experience and the challenges they face, actions to better support their needs can be implemented.

The scale of forced migration gives greater importance to this subject than a boutique area of study. The successful inclusion of this population is now of the greatest importance in Sweden and will only take greater prominence in the future. In 2010,
asylum applications consisted of 0.34% of Sweden’s population (CSD, 2012, p. 184). In 2015 that number had grown to 1.6% of the population (Bilefsky, 2016; SCB, 2017).

Harold Noah and Max Eckstein argue for the value of comparative education focusing on the micro-scale rather than solely the macro (1998, p. 54). They found that the majority of studies approach education from a large-scale, multinational approach. While of course these larger studies are important, they miss the depth of understanding that can be obtained through the study of individuals. ‘We have few, if any, comparative studies of the attitudes, opinions and actions of samples of teachers, school officials, parents, children, and politicians in the matter of changing school structures and processes’ (Noah & Eckstein, 1998, p. 54). Practicality limitations are blamed for an inability to examine subjects at a personal level. Noah and Eckstein suggest that qualitative case-studies provide an opportunity to understand educational issues better and can contribute to larger macro-studies through a deeper understanding of the motivations and experiences of individuals (1998). Investigation that includes the perceptions of asylum-seekers further enriches the depth of understanding of this topic. Patricia Potts argues that since ‘social research requires communication and understanding between people of differing perspectives’, it is inherently comparative (2007, p. 64).

Yet a small focus of study does not detract from the ability to have an international dimension. The experiences of asylum-seekers are of great interest to all countries facing migration challenges. The individual experiences of these parents in Sweden contribute to a larger understanding of asylum-seekers’ needs and how best to incorporate them into a society. Additionally, the study of school-choice is of great interest across the world. The Chilean and American education systems have a number of similarities to Sweden’s choice system while other countries have also begun to implement choice-mechanisms as well (Carnoy, 1998; Whitty, 1997). The successes and failures in Sweden allow other countries to learn and vice versa.

4.4 Literature Review

The theoretical path taken in this paper is a clear demonstration of the constructivist GT of this study described in section 6.1: Qualitative Research Approach. While this methodology intends to give a voice to asylum-seekers, a number of decisions were made regarding the presentation of information and selection of explanatory theory. While the narrative ‘chosen’ is argued to explain the experience of asylum-seekers, it is through the author’s perspective and not created independently.

Prior to the launch of this study, a preliminary search for literature was conducted. Giles, King and De Lacey say that while research using GT should be approached with an open-mind, value can be gained through a preliminary literature review (2013). An expansive supply of works relating to aspects of this study exists but a complete and overarching explanation was lacking. This served both as motivation for the selection of this topic and the use of GT as a methodology.
To gain an understanding of GT, a number of sources were used to explain the approach and provide examples. As a flexible approach to design and analysis, different interpretations exist. Glaser and Straus introduced the approach in 1967 before it evolved into different approaches (2012). Even now Glaser and Strauss disagree on how best to apply GT methods (Corbin & Strauss, 1998). In preparation of this study a number of resources were consulted, serving as guides and examples most notably the work of Corbin and Strauss and Charmaz (1998; 2014). These texts provided explanations of the procedure used that can be found in section 6.1: Qualitative research approach and section 6.6: Analytical procedure.

Due to the inductive nature of this research and the use of GT, the exploration and discovery of previously published work was an ongoing process. This process began during the pilot study (PS) with an introductory investigation of topics related to asylum-seekers and education (Munhall, 2017). During the analysis of the procedure used and responses given during the PS, subjects such as economic theories of choice were explored further (Munhall, 2017). In this study these topics were explored in more detail with the addition of topics such as public and private goods and plural education. Certain researchers such as Tomas Englund were returned to repeatedly due to the close relation of his work with that of this study.

This process of discovery and influence both to and from the interview process is described in more detail in section 6.6: Analytical Procedure. A more thorough discussion of supporting research can be found in section 5: Background and section 6.1: Qualitative Research Approach.

4.5 Limitations and Delimitations

4.5.1 Limitations

A number of limitations were noted during the implementation of this study. The most notable occurred during the semi-structured interviews. Without a common language for five of the seven interviews, translators were required. Due to the nature of translation, subtle meanings, phrasing and accentuation were impossible to analyze and not included in this study. For this reason, focus was given to the content of responses rather than including any linguistic analysis.

Additionally, the translator acting as a filter between interviewer and respondent and their choice of words, both to and from English, impacted the nature of the response. Efforts to minimize this are discussed in section 6.4: Translation and Transcription. These translators did not have professional experience. KK (identified in Appendix E: Open Coding) was a Syrian woman living in Stockholm and AA was a resident in the camp at L1. Neither translator had any formal training, potentially limiting the accuracy of their statements.

The fact that AA was a resident of camp L1 and in fact was directly involved with the enrolment of a number of children, leads to a potential obscuration of their responses.
At times, he added information during RC and RD’s interviews. His involvement could diminish the impartiality desired for a translator and his interjections had the potential to change the meaning of responses. At the same time, the content of AA’s comments was enlightening. He provided his own experience, which had had a profound impact on the parents’ ability to enrol their children in school and was an integral part of the camp’s social network. As a fellow asylum-seeker involved in the collection and dissemination of information in the camp, his experiences were a valuable addition to this study.

Gaining access to a representative sample was a sizable challenge in the early stages of this study. As will be mentioned in section 6.5: Ethical Considerations, asylum-seekers face a number of safety concerns that make their location sensitive. Safeguards encumber those that would do them harm but also those wishing to study their experiences. Significant effort was required to build a contact network that ultimately resulted in access to camps L1 and L2.

While the ethical objectives of this study prioritized anonymity, Bryman explains that absolute anonymity is difficult to achieve (2012). Pseudonyms and codes do not always prohibit identification as subtle descriptions and identifiable markers can be extracted contrary to the intentions of the researcher. As will be described in section 6.5: Ethical Considerations, every effort to ensure respondents anonymity was made during the analysis process.

Qualitative research itself is not without criticism. Bryman describes four challenges of this type of research: subjectivity; transparency; replication; and generalization (2012, p. 405). Inductive research is sometimes criticized for depending too much on the subjective and opaque nature of creating research questions. To address this, every attempt was made to provide a transparent methodology. This study would admittedly be very difficult to replicate with the exact same conditions. Many of the asylum-seekers have moved out of their current camps and the stream of applicants has now been greatly reduced at the border (Migrationsverket, 2017). That said, similar studies, focusing on themes within this study, would certainly be able to be conducted. Rather than identical replication, the methodology and themes could be used for the study of very similar groups while this study contributes to that greater theme. Related closely to this is the argument that qualitative research cannot be used towards generalization (Bryman, 2012). This study focuses on a very specific education problem within a small subset of the larger population. While its conclusions cannot be generalized broadly, they can contribute to a larger theoretical discussion. The trustworthiness of this study is explained further in section 6.2: Study design.

4.5.2 Delimitations

A number of delimitations were set for this study for practical reasons and to achieve a focused subject. These delimitations allow for an isolated case-study to be considered within a larger context as will be explained throughout this paper.

Compulsory schooling in Sweden includes children between the ages of seven and sixteen (ONISEP, 2017). This age group was chosen for two reasons. First, it is not
mandatory for children outside these ages to attend school. While a majority do, the voluntary nature of the choice of school has less immediacy (Skolverket, 2014). Second, older children attending gymnasium likely have a far greater role in decision making over their education decisions. This study focuses on the factors leading to decision making by parents so these children were not considered here. Additionally, unaccompanied minors were not included as they have a Swedish custodian responsible for their wellbeing and education decisions, who would have extensive knowledge and experience regarding enrolment and school choice (Migrationsverket, 2017g).

The population of asylum-seekers was selected from newly arrived residents because of the unique situation they experience and their prominence in current policy decisions and the media (Crouch, 2015; Larsson, 2017). Economic and voluntary migrants as well as the Roma people were excluded. The former could have a familiarity with similar education systems, while the latter community exists partially outside formal social structures and would be difficult to compare.

Finally, due to the availabilities of asylum seekers, the geographical region was delimited to an urban region, particularly Stockholm, Sweden.

4.6 Key terms

A number of terms were used in this study that can have different interpretations. The following will present clarification of their intended meaning:

Asylum-seeker: In a Swedish context this term refers to persons who have submitted an application to the government for asylum and are awaiting a decision. The decision can be permanent residency, temporary residency or a rejection of the claim.

Camp: Refers to the government sponsored living quarters provided to asylum seekers. The two camps visited are described in more detail in section 7.1: Background Codes.

Empowerment: Refers to the ability one is provided to achieve something. In this study, empowerment refers to the degree that parents can participate in school choice. High empowerment denotes a strong ability, while low denotes weak. Weak empowerment may occur in the case of insufficient support or the existence of barriers.

Participating in the education system: In this study participation refers to both the inclusion of the child in a school and the parents’ ability to take full advantage of all features of the education system for their children.

Choice: In this study choice refers to the selection of schools. The Swedish system allows parents to choose the school that best fits their child’s needs and their own values.

Ethnicity: In this study, the term ethnicity is intended to describe a group with a common culture, experience and origin. It is mentioned to differentiate between the variety of experiences within the education system.

Social network: This refers to the collection of like-minded people that act as a supportive community. The group can provide both emotional support and information.
5. Background

5.1 Historical and Theoretical Context of the Swedish Education System

Before the implications of the Swedish education system can be explored, a thorough presentation of the theoretical foundation which it is built upon must be discussed. Determining the motivations for education policy is not a simple task, as the influences can be difficult to define or even contradictory in nature (Ball, 1994). International influences can play a part in policy decisions while funding, social, logistical and other domestic concerns can impact the approach that a government takes (Ball, 1994, p. 5).

Yet core understandings of the role education plays in society lead to drastically different education models in practice. One method of understanding this role is to consider where the responsibility for providing schooling lies. This is the basis of the debate between considering education a public or private good (Englund, 1994). Each of these views carry within them certain practical applications which will be discussed below.

While this study takes place in Sweden, and therefore requires an explanation of this context, the country also provides an excellent example of the theoretical debate exploring education as a public and private good. Sweden’s education history offers not only examples of each in the last century but also a unique shifting, to a degree, from one extreme to the other. The Swedish Model, emphasising a strong centralized government built on pluralism, has in recent years given way to a system that values ‘possessive individualism’ (Englund, 1994, p. 383). Understanding this context, while important for study in a larger theoretical and international sense, is essential for understanding the state of Swedish education today.

Andersson and Nilsson present the modern Swedish education system as having three distinct historical phases. The first, from 1842 until 1919, represents a centralizing of state control and provision (Andersson & Nilsson, 2000). The second, from 1919 to 1980, shows a time of expanding access to education and a curricular focus on ‘education for citizenship’ (Andersson & Nilsson, 2000, p. 156). Finally, the time from 1980 until today is characterised by decentralization and an emphasis on parental choice in schools (Andersson & Nilsson, 2000). The latter two phases can serve as representations of the debate of the role of school in Swedish society. The following will discuss these two approaches in the context of education as a public or private good.

Sweden has a long history of state administration of education. The Ecclesiastical Act of 1686 gave the clergy authority to ‘check and record’ the responsibility of heads of households in providing their children and servants an education (Hartman, 2007, p. 260). An emphasis on reading promoted a comparably highly literate population who eventually demanded a standardization of education practices (Hartman, 2007). In 1842 the Elementary School Act empowered each Swedish municipality (kommun) as a school
district to provide compulsory schooling (folkskola) between the ages of seven and thirteen and in 1861 the government instituted the State Primary School Inspection Service to ensure quality (Nilsson-Lindström & Beach, 2013; Halldén, 2008).

For many years, the academic track of the child was determined early and was not easily deviated from (Halldén, 2008). Acceptance to higher education required attending the alternative lower-secondary school (realskola) barring those that continued in folkskola, a situation that favoured the upper-class and the more socially mobile (Halldén, 2008).

Reforms of the 20th century began to address these concerns. The 1927 Educational Act permitted the attendance of women into upper-secondary school (gymnasium) and in 1962 the first national curriculum, Läroplan för grundskolan (Lgr), was introduced producing the compulsory school, grundskola (Halldén, 2008; Nilsson-Lindström & Beach, 2013). This curriculum was a major step towards standardizing the entire education system and these reforms, among others, began to shift the intended purpose of the Swedish education system.

Erikson and Jonsson claim that the series of education reforms of the mid-20th century, as part of the expanded social system sometimes called the ‘Swedish Model’, were meant to address four inequities within the Swedish system (Erikson & Jonsson, 1996a, p. 2):

1) Academic tracks were determined at too young an age and were limiting capable students’ opportunities.
2) The requirements to proceed to higher education favoured the upper class, limiting the lower classes social mobility.
3) Children from different social classes attended different schools. Critics argued that this limited ‘social discord’ and by addressing this, students’ ability to collaborate within society would improve (Erikson & Jonsson, 1996a, p. 2).
4) A disproportionate representation in higher education meant that the ‘leading elite’ did not represent the larger diverse society (Erikson & Jonsson, 1996a, p. 2).

As these reforms went into effect in the mid-20th century, and gymnasium was restructured in the mid-1960’s, the number of students continuing to upper-secondary rose from a few percent to as high as 30 percent as seen in figure 1: Societal Changes 1920-81 (Erikson & Jonsson, 1996b, p. 2; Halldén, 2008).
Englund argues that these reforms had another impact, a change in perspective of what education was for (1994). Education was beginning to be seen as a citizenship right. According to the work of T.H. Marshall, it was believed that ‘equality and liberty’ could be ‘optimally balanced’ to counteract class stratification (Englund, 1994, p. 384). Marshall saw the citizenship right in three arenas; civil, political; and social; the final being related to education. In fact the direct aim of education was not to educate the child but to enable the future adult to participate in society (Englund, 1994). For the society to be truly inclusive Englund says citizenship rights require ‘participation in a common national community’ by considering it a public good (1994, p. 386).

Joseph Stiglitz describes a public good as having two defining properties: it is ‘nonrivalrously consumable’ – its use doesn’t limit use by others; and it is ‘nonexcludable’ – it is difficult to exclude others from using the good. (Stiglitz, 1999, p. 308). These two features can be seen in this new approach. An expansion in the number of schools and standardization of instruction gave a larger number of students the ability to participate (Erikson & Jonsson, 1996a). Education was fully funded by the state and was meant to be fully accessible and applicable to all eligible Swedish residents.

Englund contends that education being treated as a public good had another layer. The education system was made a ‘preparatory institution of political participation’ (Englund, 1994, p. 387). From John Dewey’s work Democracy and Education, Englund quotes “intermingling in the school of youth of different races, differing religions, and unlike customs [which] creates for all a new and broader environment” (Englund, 2010, p. 253). In this, Englund contends that every citizen is benefitted by the further integration of all groups within a greater society. John Dewey describes education as a social process in a democratic society if its citizens have equal ability to participate and institutions are

*Democracy is a sham without a system of public schools that introduces everyone to a world of ideas, values, and knowledge that takes all children beyond their own narrow and private worlds... The public schools must necessarily stand above and in tension with all private concerns* (Englund, 2010, p. 240).

The role of education was seen as providing the capacity for collective decision making in society (Englund, 1994).

Eric De Vreede defines a society in the following ways:

A pluralist society is a plural society insofar as its policies favour the integration of groups with another cultural origin. A discriminatory society is a plural society insofar as its policies favour segregation of groups with another cultural origin. An incorporative society is a plural society insofar as its policies favour assimilation of groups with another cultural origin. An oppressive society is a plural society insofar as its policies favour rejection of groups with another cultural origin (De Vreede, 1990, p. 131).

Plurality in this sense describes a society that, while containing distinct social and ethnic groups, allows for permeability between and equity in social mobility and opportunity. Plural education describes the attempts of the education system to address society’s inabilitys to reach plurality (De Vreede, 1990). Englund argues for the value of a plural education as a public good in three ways:

a) ‘Pluralism as openness to different perspectives’: Through globalization, citizens are presented with increasingly complex problems. Alternative and challenging views provide strategies for students to be able to understand and address challenges in a society changing around them. (Englund, 2010, p. 241).

b) ‘A public education system for a plural, public good’: Citizenship literacy as a goal of education is best provided by a public school system. A centrally administered system, has the ability to be assessed and changed by those whose influence is comparable. By giving all actors the same access and voice, their interests would be collaborative rather than combative (Englund, 2010, p. 241).

c) ‘Schools as encounters between different cultures and social groups’: By enrolling all students within the same school system, students’ exposure to different cultures and social groups, and their inherit perspectives, would be increased (Englund, 2010, p. 242).

Beyond the cultural dimension, Swedish comprehensive schooling was designed with economic interests in mind. A school structure designed for equal access and ability to transition to higher education was seen as a better ‘instrument of meritocracy’ than one that streamed students into different academic paths (and opportunities) at an early age.
(Telhaug, Mediås, & Aasen, 2004, p. 142). As far back as the mid-1940s, Swedish production was seen to contain a number of problems. The ‘Myrdal Commission’ found that an economic bubble in the 1930’s had led to ‘overcapacity, unemployment, too many plants and excessive costs’ (Lundberg, 1985, p. 13). The introduction of comprehensive schooling was intended to both address these economic inefficiencies as well as provide a more merit-based and thus productive workforce (Ljungberg, & Nilsson, 2009). Grundskola and the later adapted gymnasium were designed to meet the vocational needs of the changing country.

The view that plural education should be provided by the state as a public good is summarized by the then Education Minister Olof Palme in 1968: ‘The school must be a spearhead into the future classless society’ (Andersson & Nilsson, 2000, p. 157). The intent was to use the education system to create a more equal society through a public, national implemented system.

Yet, the difference between theory and practice can be great in education. During the end of the second phase of Swedish modern educational history, the theories from which the ‘Swedish Model’ were built upon were beginning to be criticised and noticeable failings were being identified.

There was some evidence that the ‘Swedish Model’ had been successful in its goal of increasing equity but the sluggish rate of implementation impeded the breadth and speed of its application (Premfors, 1991). A central purpose of these reforms had been to provide equal opportunities for all Swedes, yet studies found that parental influence still remained a strong predictor of academic outcomes (Heidenheimer, 1974). The reforms were criticised for being too expansive, leading to declining classroom discipline and only average achievement in schools (Heidenheimer, 1974). By the early 1970’s the education system was being criticised for being too centralized and calls for ‘direct democracy’ were made throughout society (Premfors, 1991). To counteract rising costs within the education system, teachers’ salaries had been reduced. In reaction to this, large strikes occurred in 1966 and 1971, creating a divide between the public and teachers unions (Heidenheimer, 1974, p. 406). From an economic perspective, investments in education were bringing diminishing returns. In contrast to the U.S.A., a comparison being used increasingly often, each additional year of school brought less and less benefit (Edin & Topel, 1997).

Another major criticism was the rigidity of the system. Olof Petersson describes a number of changes in Swedish society that the ‘Swedish Model’ was incapable of reacting to. Tensions between ‘laymen and professionals’, public and private interests, ‘social equality and efficiency’, and demographic changes were not being addressed domestically (Petersson, 1991, p. 180). In a globalized sense, Sweden was also feeling pressured to react to environmental and economic challenges and a popularization of decentralization worldwide (Petersson, 1991).

Petersson gives five examples of the failings of the ‘Swedish Model’ that can be applied to the education system:
a) ‘Culture of Consensus’: An increased polarization of views was not adequately represented in the political structures for conflict resolution. An increased deviation of opinion on the nature of Swedish society, nurtured through the education system, was not represented by a single, standardized approach to education (Petersson, 1991, p. 175).

b) ‘The Strong Society’: The school system was expanded to create a more equal society but this involved large tax increases and other policy decisions were limited by this high burden (Petersson, 1991, p. 176).

c) ‘Universalism’: The intention of providing social integration resulted in standardization of curriculum. Assuming a uniform and homogenous society is unrealistic in a country with growingly diverse needs and desires. (Petersson, 1991, p. 177).

d) ‘Rule by Experts’: The standardization of curriculum gave influence to a small number of experts. The credibility and flexibility of their beliefs were becoming increasingly questioned (Petersson, 1991, p. 177).

e) ‘Centralization’: Changing demographics and urban-rural divide were not being managed effectively or in a timely manner. Decentralization was being suggested (Petersson, 1991, p. 178).

In the 1979 elections the Moderata Samlingspartiet made education a central part of their platform and stated:

The educational situation which was taken over from the Social Democratic government in 1976 was characterized by a far-reaching uniformity, a restricted freedom of choice, and an attitude of down-grading of knowledge, in favour of vague social goals and the striving for equality. Uncertainty about the functions of education and the role of the teachers had successively contributed to a deterioration in the Swedish education with a resulting listlessness, lack of demands and general uncertainty over the future choice of action (Lundahl, 1990, p. 159)

With these criticisms, came a growing interest in reforming the public sector to a more privatized approach. In the late 1980’s, the government initiated the Commission for Study of Power and Democracy which came to a number of critical conclusions:

The era characterized by strong public-sector expansion, centralized collective bargaining based on a historic compromise between labour and capital, social engineering and centrally planned standard solutions has come to an end…. The present period is characterized by individualization and internationalization. The fundamental problem of democracy, i.e., how to reconstruct individual freedom, is now re-emerging in a partly new constellation. (Englund, 1994, p. 388)

In fact, the very idea of pluralism was being interpreted differently. The traditional view of pluralism, as seen in figure 2: Interpretations of Educational Pluralism, Pluralism I states that students have the right to an equal and plural society, while Pluralism II describes an organizational pluralism, that Englund argues ultimately has the opposite effect (Englund, 2010).
Yet, this interpretation was growing in popularity through a movement towards ‘possessive individualism’ in which individuals can best determine and improve their own capabilities (Popkewitz, 1991, p. 142). Rather than a violent shift in policy, it was argued that choice was the natural evolution of comprehensive education. Stephen J. Ball quotes from Jonsson and Arnman in saying ‘in comprehensive school the choice of study is free, and the pupils cannot be directed by a teacher or headmaster to take a particular study programme. Free choice of studies became one of the corner stones of the democratization of education’ (2012, p. 83). Not only was it seen to benefit the individual but also society as a whole, this became an argument for parental choice of schools. Englund describes the basis for the ‘parental right to educational authority’ in three ways (2010, p. 244):

a) ‘The revitalisation of classical liberalism: on the right of parents to educational authority’: From Sweden’s history of separate schooling systems from different classes, the pluralist movement aimed to provide a system based on equity. The centralization of school administration to the state though, was criticised for being normative. Religious groups and critics from both sides of the political spectrum demanded a stronger voice in the direction of instruction. The rights of the individual parent and their desires was argued to be overlooked. (Englund, 2010, p. 244)

b) ‘The role of international conventions’: Interpretations of international right agreements support the expansion of parental choice. Article 26 in The United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children” (Englund, 2010, p. 246). The European Convention of Human Rights includes the phrase “No person shall be denied the right to education. In the exercise of any functions which it assumes in relation to education and to teaching, the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions” (Englund, 2010, p. 246).
The Convention on the Rights of the Child contains language that does not specifically address the role of parental choice but can be argued does not present any criticism against it (Englund, 2010, p. 248).

c) ‘Identity politics: The recognition factor’: Minority groups argue for the right to ‘reproduce their specific values.’ The uniform curriculum based on Swedish values was argued to leave these groups unrepresented and exemptions or separate, sensitive schools are demanded. (Englund, 2010, p. 248)

Parental choice in schools exists in different forms. For some, choice means simply deciding between state and private schools (Boyd, 1992). Others interpret this as choosing only between state-funded schools. Both of these approaches can be described as ‘open enrolment’ and describe a system where the school is not determined by the proximity to residence but by the preferences of the parent (Boyd, 1992). A ‘controlled choice’ system describes the use of quotas within an open enrolment plans to ‘ensure racial and social class balance. (Boyd, 1992, p. 24). This involves regulating schools intake of students to ensure demographic balance and the limitation of geographic barriers.

Built on this movement towards choice and stronger local representation, a political shift towards decentralization of the entire social system had entered the public discourse. Education was being criticised from both the left and right of the political spectrum and was labelled the worst example of socialist ineptitude (Englund, 1992; Heidenheimer, 1974). The political left argued that the grundskola did not meet the equality goals it strove for and the right described the schools as ‘expensive, rigid, inefficient and provided young people with few alternatives’, while both argued they had insufficient voice in the school’s direction (Lundahl, 2002, p. 689). Leon Boucher describes the feeling as such: ‘The optimism of the 1960s has given way to the doubts of the 1970s and the uncertainties of the eighties’ (1982, p. 194).

Across the political parties, change was desired. Three primary arguments were used (Lundahl, 2002, p. 691):

a) The centrally controlled education system was unable to react to a rapidly changing globalized world.

b) A uniform approach to education was inappropriate for an increasingly diverse set of regions across the country.

c) Teachers’ stature as a representation of authority and sole source of education was questioned.

The Committee of the Internal Work of the School, Skolans inre arbete (SIA), was commissioned and operated between 1970 and 1974 with the focus of improving schooling. The SIA promoted the decentralization of administration and giving more decision-making power to students and parents (Lundahl, 2002; Johansson, Nihlfors, Steen, & Karlsson, 2016). These recommendations were not immediately introduced however because economic instability, in combination with the high cost of social programs, caused the changes to be considered as poor and ineffective investments by the public (Lundahl, 2002).
Upon their return to power in 1982, a shift in the Social Democrat’s social policy towards economic-liberalism set the stage for drastic changes to the welfare state (Daun, 2003, p. 93). Holger Daun categorizes reforms between the 1980’s and 1990’s as moving towards two new realities: a decentralization of regulatory and administrations within government, and the adoption of a market economy of state services, or choice, accompanied by reduced public spending (2003).

A number of parliamentary decisions in the late 1980’s fulfilled these decentralization desires. A proposal by the ‘parliamentary committee on education governance’ in 1987, promoted the decentralization of education funding allocation to the municipal level (Lundahl, 2002, p. 689). Politicians at the kommun level would be given authority over funding, organizing and oversight of the schools within their geographical boundaries (Forsberg & Lundgren, 2010). It was ultimately adopted by the parliament in 1989 and was accompanied by transferring responsibility of employment to the kommuns not long after (Lundahl, 2002).

The non-socialist government between the years 1991 and 1994 strongly supported the idea of choice in schools. The concept of the independent school was introduced to Sweden in a bill in 1991. The bill, enacted in 1992, stated that privately owned institutions could compete with state owned schools for funding-per-student, or vouchers, for each student enrolled (Lundahl, 2002). Decentralization was further enabled in 1993 by the application of ‘lump sum’ funding decisions for education given directly to each kommun (Lundahl, 2002, p. 691).

While these changes were being celebrated in some corners of the education industry, others took a more cautious approach. In 1992, W.L. Boyd argued that the theory of school choice looked promising but in practice assumptions are made and protections are necessary (1992). Necessary safeguards must:

1) Protect the interests of disadvantaged and at-risk youth,

2) Enable ‘supply side’ or producer choice (i.e. flexibility for educators in responding to demand)

3) Facilitate dissemination of accurate information about schools to enable informed choices and safeguard against unfair marketing practices (Boyd, 1992, p. 25).

In the case of ‘poorly educated or illiterate families’ he stressed that parents must receive guidance to ensure they are able to make informed choices (Boyd, 1992, p. 25). A central tenet of Boyd’s argument is the necessity of information in school choice. Less established within the education sphere, choice itself is well understood within economic and public health disciplines. An informed choice can be made when ‘all available information…is weighed up and used to inform the final decision; the resulting choice should be consistent with the individual’s values’ (Marteau, Dormandy, & Michie, 2001, p. 100). Additionally, this choice should be based on ‘good quality,’ and accurate information (Marteau, Dormandy, & Michie, 2001, p. 100). Imperfect information can
lead to certain market failings manifesting as incorrect or non-maximized choices or barriers to entry (Stiglitz, 1989).

As parental choice is itself a comparatively recent trend so is the field of parental choice behaviour. Yet a growing body of work has begun to demonstrate a clear divide between access and quality across the socio-economic spectrum. Hastings and Weinstein describe a trend in which low-income parents place lower importance on academic factors when choosing schools (2008). They suggest that other barriers, such as expected lower testing scores, give low-income parents less incentive to pursue effective education for their children and thus make decisions within the reality they feel they have access to (Hastings & Weinstein, 2008). Other barriers such as wealth, segregation, and education can be detrimental to parents’ ability to select a school for their child (Hornby, & Lafaele, 2011). On a societal level, Ball warns that a choice system ‘can be exploited by the middle classes as a strategy of reproduction in their search for relative advantage, social advancement and mobility’ (1993, p. 17). In this, he explains class structures can be reinforced while differences between the attainment of benefits can become more amplified.

With marginalized groups, choices can be limited without the empowerment to make them. John Friedmann explains through his ‘(Dis)empowerment Model’ that without the empowerment to realize basic societal rights, symptoms of poverty can affect a population (1998). In this context poverty is considered a lack of social power or the ability to attain societal rights, such as education. For asylum seekers as an example, support is needed, in the form of inputs, to empower disadvantaged households to gain access to societal rights. Below in figure 3: Empowerment for access to education Friedmann’s theory is adapted to show inputs that can affect a family’s empowerment or ability to attain the societal right of education (1998). Each input contributes to the level of empowerment for access to education.
These inputs can be understood as the following (Friedmann, 1998, p. 67):

a) ‘Financial resources’: Social benefits can require small administrative costs to enter eligibility. Additionally, unrealized financial requirements such as transportation costs can exist. A lack of funds can result in a lack of access to these social benefits or act as effective barriers.

b) ‘Social networks’: Informal social networks can also provide information and support. These networks may be internet based but their activity depend on the number of people in a similar situation. The value of these sources relies heavily on the breadth of the knowledge base and ability to find new information.

c) ‘Appropriate information’: Decision makers require accurate, complete and current information to make effective choices. The absence of any of these factors can affect the quality of decisions. Additionally, awareness of different benefits is a prerequisite to access.

d) ‘Defensible life space’: A stable residence in a supportive community provides security and the ability to focus on other concerns. Unstable living conditions add considerable stress and distraction to a family’s decision making process.

e) ‘Knowledge and power’: A parent’s strong education provides a basis for understanding bureaucratic structures and differentiating between nuanced decisions. A lack of a formal education makes these choices harder.

Figure 3: Empowerment for Access to Education

(Adapted from: Friedmann, 1998, p. 67)
The absence of these supportive actions can lead to marginalized groups having a comparative disadvantage in attaining social benefits. In the case of education, a lack of support can result in an inability to enrol and unequal participation in choice markets.

5.2 Current Swedish Education System

In the previous section, the modern history of the Swedish education system was described. Since the early 1990’s, the Swedish education system has remained relatively unchanged. The following is a short explanation of its structures today.

The Education Act, implemented in 2010, directs the administration and responsibilities of the Swedish government in the provision of education (Riksdagen, 2017). Nationally, education of all levels is overseen by two central agencies. The National Agency for Education, Skolverket, is responsible for evaluations of curriculum, grading methodology and school inspections while the National Agency for School Development has mechanisms to promote school development at the kommun level (Forsberg & Lundgren, 2010). Sweden has 290 kommuns, each of which has responsibility for the creation of education plans and oversight of quality (Wikström, 2006). Skolverket states the following as a mission statement:

*The Swedish National Agency for Education is tasked with ensuring that all children and students have access to the same high-quality standard of education and activities in secure environments. Our mission is to create the best conditions for the children’s development and learning and to help improve the students’ learning outcomes.* (Author’s emphasis: Skolverket, 2017c)

The structure of the Swedish education system is shown below in Figure 4: The Swedish Education System. Daycare, or forskola, precedes mandatory grundskola operating between the ages of seven and sixteen. Specialized schools addressing learning disabilities and the specific needs of the indigenous Sami people operate concurrently to grundskola (Skolverket, 2017a). Following grundskola, the non-mandatory gymnasium continues until the age of eighteen. Nationally, the rate of continuation to gymnasium is over 98% with newly-arrived students attending at a rate of 89.3% (Skolverket, 2014).
Since the early 1990’s, parental choice in school has become a core feature of the government’s education plan. Parents have the right to choose between kommun and independent schools. Kommun schools are required to give a place to children living close to the school while independent schools have no such requirement (Forsberg & Lundgren, 2010). Both types of schools are required to follow the national curriculum and each receive funding based on the number of children they have enrolled. Independent schools make up 17% of all grundskola in 2017 (Skolverket, 2017b).

All Swedish funded schools must remain open for application for any eligible students. Upon filling enrolment, schools must consider applications on a first-come, first-served basis. Operating within a voucher system, in which each child registered carries with them a set funding value, schools then compete to maximize their enrolment. The funding value for a student from grade one to nine ranges from 81,996 SEK/year to...
98,929 SEK year (Stockholm Stad, 2017). The funding value of an asylum seeking child in comparison is a flat rate of 99,500 SEK/year (Migrationsverket, 2017c).

Popular schools receiving a number of applications beyond their capacities may be required to create school queues. Sweden’s open enrolment education policy requires schools to enrol students based on their application time, with an exception made for siblings of previously enrolled students (Böhlmark et al., 2015). Students who were not selected, wait until additional spaces open up.

Introduced by the American economist Milton Friedman in the 1950s, vouchers were designed to ‘increase school quality’ while controlling the public cost on the state through the implementation of a free-market model (Carnoy, 1998, p. 309). After Sweden’s introduction of a voucher system in 1992, kommuner were required to distribute public funds to both kommun and independent schools based on enrolment within the school (Hinnerich, & Vlachos, 2016). Schools are able to compete in a number of external factors. Externally, a school will rely on its reputation, standardized test scores and school culture while internally they are able to control efficiency and staff salaries (Daun, 2003; Hinnerich, & Vlachos, 2016).

As competition has increased, a challenge the Swedish system has faced in recent years is related to the prominence of standardized testing and Sweden’s relatively poor performance. In the 2012 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) test, Sweden’s 15-year-old students produced unexpectedly poor results. In 2015, a damning report was released by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) calling for Sweden to immediately address issues of quality and equity in its education system (2015). A decreased quality of education and increased performance gap were criticised. While the results of the 2015 PISA test showed a national improvement in results, a noticeable performance gap between immigrant and non-immigrant students remains a cause for serious concern (OECD, 2016).

5.3 Swedish Migration

5.3.1 Background

The Syrian civil war, still on-going in 2017, has added to the global refugee crisis often described as ‘the worst humanitarian crisis since World War II’ (EC, 2016). This conflict alone has resulted in five million people fleeing Syria and nearly one million seeking refugee status in Europe (UNHCR, 2017). The European Union has promoted an official policy of providing refuge but many of its member countries have been resistant to accepting refugees (ECPHAO, 2016).

In response to this crisis, Sweden committed to providing every Syrian asylum-seeker permanent residency (Ostrand, 2015). A rush of applications were submitted resulting in a record number of asylum statuses given. The total number from all countries is estimated to be as high as 160,000 in 2015 alone (Bilefsky, 2016). Since this time, the government policy has become stricter and the number of newly-arrived has slowed to a trickle (Bilefsky, 2016; Crouch, 2015; Ministry of Justice, 2017). The population of
asylum seekers includes more than just Syrians. There is a variety of origins. Figure 5: Asylum Seekers – The Five Largest Groups in April 2017 below shows three weeks in 2017 and the proportion of asylum seekers from different regions.

After arriving in Sweden, Asylum-seekers must apply to Migrationsverket, the migration board, for refugee status. These applications are subject to long processing times with an average of 152 days before processing time begins and up to a year for the investigation (Pettersson, 2016; Kärnstrand, 2016). During this time asylum-seeking adults have the right to work but do not receive Swedish lessons (Migrationsverket, 2017e). Asylum seekers receive the following financial support while waiting on their decision:

**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial support for asylum seekers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In accommodation where food is included the daily compensation is</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 kr/day for adults who are alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 kr/day per person for adults who share household expenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 kr/day for children up to and including 17 years of age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In accommodation where food is not included the daily compensation is</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71 kr/day for adults who are alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61 kr/day per person for adults who share household expenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37 kr/day for children 0–3 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43 kr/day for children 4–10 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 kr/day for children 11–17 years old</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Migrationsverket, 2017d)
This allowance ‘must suffice for clothes and shoes, health care and medicines, dental care, toilet articles, other consumer goods and leisure activities’ (Migrationsverket, 2017d). Children have the right to attend school and the kommun has the responsibility to provide education ‘under the same conditions as other children and young people in the municipality’ (Migrationsverket, 2017e).

Segregation has been a recognised problem in Sweden since the 1970s with significant polarization between different ethnic groups (Böhlmark et al., 2015; Andersson, Brämå, & Holmqvist, 2010). There is a clear correlation between a family’s ethnic background, their wealth and the location of residence (Andersson et al., 2010). Yang Hansen and Gustafsson argue that lower income families send their children to a school close to their residence while wealthier families possess the economic means to participate in school choice (2016). This access disparity increases school segregation, reflecting residential segregation occurring most strongly in urban settings. As this segregation appears to be becoming more pronounced, it could be representing ‘white flight’ in which the wealthy, ethnic Swedes choose away from segregated schools rather than choosing towards quality (Yang Hansen & Gustafsson, 2016, p. 38).

Malmberg, Andersson, and Bergsten conducted a study on the preferences of school choice by parents of different neighbourhoods and ethnicities (2014). The findings indicate that the strongest influence of school choice is of the ‘social and ethnic composition of their own and their adjacent neighborhoods’ (Malmberg, et al., 2014, p. 869). This preference is stronger when neighbouring communities have high proportion of ‘visible minorities and disadvantaged groups’ (Malmberg, et al., 2014, p. 869). Based on these results, Malberg et al. provide an evaluation of the Swedish education system:

For school choice advocates, this is a potentially troubling finding. If school choice is driven not by quality concerns but by fears of social and ethnic mixing, we should not expect strong beneficial effects of free choice. The end result will instead be increased segregation with potentially negative effects on overall school performance (Malmberg, et al., 2014, p. 884).

Table 2: Ethnic Segregation in Three Cities, 1990 and 2004 (ICC) demonstrates the use of an inferential statistic called the intraclass correlation (ICC) between 1990 and 2004. Anders Lindbom uses the ICC to represent the level of segregation in three Swedish cities (2010). He describes its use as such:

This measurement compares the share of pupils with a certain characteristic, for example a non-Swedish background, in each school with the average share of pupils with that characteristic in the municipality. The more variation between schools, the higher the segregation and, consequently, the higher the ICC. (Lindbom, 2010, p. 624).
Table 2
Ethnic Segregation in Three Cities, 1990 and 2004 (ICC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pupils’ residential area (%)</th>
<th>Pupils’ actual school area (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Lindbom, 2010, p. 625)

The ICC percentage in students’ *residential area* can be seen to have risen from 10% to 19.3%, corresponding to urban neighbourhoods becoming more segregated in this time (Lindbom, 2010). Compare this to the ICC of the *actual school area*. An ICC value of 6.7% in 1990 shows that schools were integrated 3.3% more than their residential area was. At that time, schools were providing a more integrated community than what students faced at home. By 2004, both of these ICC values had risen dramatically. Put in this context, the rise of the ICC to 20.4% in 2004 is not only astonishing but in fact demonstrates more segregation in schools than in the students’ residential areas. In explanation, Lindbom blames both residential segregation and school choice for this failure of equity policies (2010). A study by Böhlmark et al., reiterates this point by showing that school segregation was higher in urban settings faced by high levels of choice (2015). Neighbourhoods, which were already segregated, largely stayed together. Even when neighbourhoods were found to be more integrated, schools were found to be segregated at a higher rate (Böhlmark et al., 2015).

A British immigration policy in 2000 aimed at reducing the clustering of asylum-seekers near urban centres dispersed them across nine more rural regions (Pinson, Arnott, & Candappa, 2010). The government policy intended to contribute to race-relations and integration efforts by softening excessive burdens on communities. The reality though, was: asylum-seekers felt isolated, far from essential services, and ostracized in ‘ethnically homogenous’ communities (Pinson et al., 2010, p. 58). Due to community and political pressure, many asylum seekers in Sweden are being sent to more rural *kommuns* in 2017 (Wenström & Öner, 2015; Migrationsverket, 2017f). The effects of this policy has not yet had a chance to be studied.

A new law allows for refugees to be giving priority in independent school queues. This is meant to counteract statistics showing very few independent schools enrolling any refugees or asylum seekers at all (Radio Sweden, 2016). This law is however, voluntary and schools must opt-in to participate. For individual schools, this could be a controversial decision. The families already within long queues dissuade schools from altering enrolment procedures. Any decision to bypass queues would be at the expense of those already in it.
5.3.2 Challenges for Education

Asylum-seekers also face challenges outside of the bureaucratic workings of their destination countries. The refugee experience itself imposes a number of challenges to achieving in a school environment. Many young students have had traumatic experiences that are detrimental to their later success and they can be missing instruction from their formative years that is difficult or impossible to overcome later (Fazel, et al., 2012). The following are a number of challenges that may be faced by asylum seeking students within Sweden.

One of the most challenging things about integrating asylum-seeking students and refugees into a school system is creating a policy for a wide variety of experiences. Sarah Dryden-Peterson argues that it is challenging for countries to understand the entirety of asylum-seekers’ experiences before their arrival in a destination country (2015). Poor records and constant relocation limit what can be known and how best to respond to a diverse set of student needs. What can be found upon examination are language barriers, psychological issues, histories of incomplete or absent schooling and an unfamiliarity with local teaching practices (Dryden-Peterson, 2015). While some asylum-seekers will have a grasp of English it is doubtful that any have been exposed to Swedish, stalling abilities to integrate. Children’s’ ability to socialize can have long-term consequences on how they develop as adults (Waters, & Leblanc, 2005). Exposure to violence and extreme stress can affect development and ability to function in a classroom setting (Fazel, et al., 2012). Without appropriate counseling and sensitive instruction, this challenge is difficult to overcome. During displacement, access to schools is limited and intermittent, a devastating obstruction for the healthy development of young students (Dryden-Peterson, 2011). Many asylum-seeking students struggle with new teaching methods upon arriving in western countries and a movement from rote learning to more problem solving approaches can be difficult to comprehend (Dryden-Peterson, 2011).

Sweden’s asylum-seeker policy includes a strategy to incorporate newly-arrived students into schools (Skolverket, 2016). All children are entitled to attend school and Migrationsverket states that ‘The child should be able to start within one month after arrival in Sweden, or as soon as is appropriate for the child's personal circumstances. [translated]’ (2013). Yet, the Schools Inspectorate found that students often wait much longer (CSD, 2012). The Center for the Study of Democracy (CSD) published a detailed report on the integration efforts of the Swedish government through the education system (2012). They provide a variety of criticisms of Sweden’s approach. While education is available to all asylum seekers, the fact that it is not mandatory means many do not enrol in schools (CSD, 2012). The quality of education should be of the same quality as native-born students but core subjects are generally provided in Swedish with insufficient efforts to provide native-language support (CSD, 2012). Excessive wait times from school queues and insufficient information limited the number of schools available for enrolment disproportionately affecting those new to the country (CSD, 2012). A number of recommendations for improving access for asylum-seeking families are provided in the CSD report. Among them, the kommun should ‘see to it that information on how to enrol
in the school is readily available to pupils and their parents or guardians’ (CSD, 2012, p. 202).

6. Methodology

6.1 Qualitative Research Approach

This section describes the qualitative methods used during this study. The lack of extensive research directly relating to asylum-seekers’ experience in the Swedish education system was previously mentioned in section 4.4: Literature Review. This made the use of GT desirable to allow for the content of responses to shape the direction of research.

Kathy Charmaz describes GT as being a ‘systematic, yet flexible’ process of collecting and analyzing qualitative data (2014, p. 1). It is foremost an inductive data collection approach using repeated and comparative interactions between data collection and theoretical exploration. This constant comparison process means that the analytical process is ongoing and does not occur at one set time. In fact, it occurs continuously as new theories are discovered and new trends appear from the review of interviews. Corbin and Strauss explain that some trends are immediately visible while others are only discovered later, upon further, deeper review (1998). GT analysis involves constant interaction between data and theory. A detailed description of the analytical procedure used in this study can be seen in section 6.6 Analytical Procedure.

The recency of the current migration challenge in Europe and the unique structure of the Swedish education system have little established published research (CSD, 2012; Dryden-Peterson, 2015). This challenge provides an opportunity though and through the inclusion of asylum-seeker’s voices, new lessons can be learned. The long term effects of Sweden’s education policy toward the recent influx of asylum-seekers is not yet known but by studying these families’ perceptions and experiences, a preliminary understanding of this subject can be gained. Rather than use a deductive methodology with a pre-established theoretical understanding of the subject, a GT approach allowed for the theory to come organically and be ‘grounded in the data’ (Charmaz, 2014, p. 1). The data determined both the direction later taken and the perspective from which it was viewed.

A constructivist viewpoint contends that study trends and conclusions drawn from the data are dependent on the researcher (Charmaz, 2014). The inferences the researcher draws from the data are just that, contingent on the researcher’s experience. Kathy Charmaz argues that this subjective lens cannot be completely removed from any study so should not be ignored (2014). Constructivism rejects the positivist claims that observations convey absolute truth and ‘social actors’ are simply ‘external realities’ (Bryman, 2012, p. 33). Even data collection that avoids contact with subjects involves a number of decisions of what to include, emphasise and connect (Bryman, 2012). Holding to a constructivist viewpoint, it can easily be argued that no research is truly objective and any denial of this would be dishonest. In this study the selection of theory and
understanding of the semi-structured interviews were influenced by a desire for equity and sympathy for marginalization. While the acknowledgement of bias in this regard can improve inter-observer consistency (returned to in section 6.2: Study Design), it must also be realized that the researcher’s impact cannot be completely removed (Bryman, 2012). This is not meant as a dismissal of the importance of this research or qualitative research in general. The theoretical background, empirical study and discussion combining the two here is meant to hold up to scrutiny on the quality of its content.

By taking a qualitative approach and through the use of GT, an interpretivist epistemology is most appropriate for this study. In accordance with this, interpretivism recognises the ‘little established criteria for data collection or evaluation of its quality’ that are used ‘not to discover the theory’ but find theory that can explain trends in the data, does not exist in a vacuum (Charmaz, 2011, p. 365; Heath & Cowley, 2004, p. 149). The perspective taken relies very much on the respondents own experiences and understandings. Interpretivist research, as a qualitative methodology, provides depth to a subject through the reliance on the perspective of respondents (Bryman, 2012). This depth can provide a better ‘understanding of human behaviour’ than ‘explanation’ of it (Bryman, 2012, p. 28). While the value of these perspectives was discussed in section 4.3: Significance to International Comparative Education, their accuracy is sometimes questioned.

To gain an understanding of the specific procedure of analysis, based on the GT approach, further detail can be seen in section 6.6: Analytical Procedure.

6.2 Study Design

The procedure used in the study is inspired by GT methodology and involved a process of constant comparison. As mentioned previously, direction was led by the data for this inductive study. The following is a description of its design.

The design of this study builds upon that of a PS submitted to Stockholm University as part of the International and Comparative Education Master’s Programme (Munhall, 2017). The initial sample of four asylum-seekers, which asked for their perceptions of the information and access to schooling that they had, provided the motivation for further study. This PS allowed for the testing of GT procedures to build a successful model to be used in this study. The PS also provided a deeper understanding of asylum-seekers’ position within the Swedish education system. This allowed for the adaptation of the interview guide into the one found in Appendix A – Interview Guide. Finally, the PS provided preliminary RQs used in the creation of those included in this study.

This paper describes an empirical, qualitative case-study using semi-structured interviews. Empirical studies cannot be used for generalization but can contribute to a larger theoretical conversation (Bryman, 2012). Additionally, this study is cross-sectional as it describes a reality for the Swedish education system unique to 2016 and 2017. Legal, political and structural realities constantly change the precise situation faced by asylum-seekers (Bryman, 2012; Bilefsky, 2016). This study can however contribute to the greater
body of work of previous studies and aims to remain relevant for a number of years, yet in a strictly theoretical sense it is a product of this specific time.

Using semi-structured interviews, seven asylum-seeking parents were interviewed. These interviews were based on the interview guides found in Appendix A: Interview Guide. This resource was used as a basic outline of conversations and acted more as a checklist of topics than a strict script. Slight adjustments to the interview guide were made after the first interview, so the discussion with RA can be considered a survey. As there was very little variation, this interview was included in the study as well. This interview guide was adapted from a similar one created for use in the PS (Munhall, 2017). Privacy and transparency were both priorities and are further explained in section 6.5: Ethical Considerations.

Five out of the seven respondents did not speak English and therefore Arabic and Dari translators were necessary. These interviews were recorded for later transcription. This procedure is discussed in more detail in section 6.4: Translation and Transcription. The number of interviews was concluded when it was determined that theoretical saturation had been reached, discussed further in section 6.3: Sampling (Charmaz, 2014).

The analytical procedure of GT is an ongoing process occurring during data collection, open coding and the presentation of findings (Charmaz, 2014). A detailed description of the analytic procedure used is given in section 6.6: Analytical procedure.

In the design of this study, reliability and validity were seriously considered. While many researchers suggest these categories are a better fit for quantitative methodologies, Guba and Lincoln suggest that an evaluation of trustworthiness is appropriate for evaluating qualitative research (Bryman, 2012, p. 390). They argue against realist views saying the purpose of study is not the search for absolute, positivist truths but to understand the different perspectives that describe it. Trustworthiness consists of four criteria: credibility; transferability; dependability; and confirmability.

- **Credibility** refers to the interpretation of responses from interviews. A study of high credibility is conducted with ‘good practice’ and there is agreement of meaning between interviewer and respondent (Bryman, 2012, p. 390). A method of determining credibility is the process of respondent validation (Bryman, 2012). This involves the sharing of findings with those involved in the study for verification. While continued direct contact was difficult because of a number of ethical and practical challenges, this was attempted to a degree. Within the information page (found in Appendix B) contact information was shared with all respondents and the promise of sharing results was available if desired. Additionally, transcripts were shared with the two translators, AA and KK, to verify the accuracy in relation to recorded interviews.

- **Transferability** refers to the ability that results can be generalized to other contexts (Bryman, 2012). To improve transferability, detailed descriptions of the contexts of respondents should be given. Section 5: Background provides a detailed description of the Swedish context and the unique experiences and challenges of these asylum-seekers.
- Dependability refers to the ability to support methodological decisions through detailed records (Bryman, 2012). This study prioritised dependability as can be seen in the detailed description of the procedure used in section 6: Methodology.
- Confirmability refers to the degree findings can be confirmed by others. As part of the master’s thesis program at Stockholm University, an academic supervisor provided support and feedback towards the design and analysis conducted during this study.

Further descriptions of the considerations taken to ensure quality and a detailed description of the procedure used can be found in the following sections.

6.3 Sampling

Theoretical sampling was defined by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss as the ‘process of data collection for generating theory’ (2012). As an alternative to probability sampling, it has the purpose of creating theory while simultaneously collecting, coding and analysing data (Glaser & Strauss 2012 p. 45). This procedure contributed to theory through the constant reassessment of methods and codes and returning to data collection (Bryman, 2012, p. 419). In this sense, data is able to determine the direction of further data collection and creation of theory. The use of a PS allowed for this to occur to a limited degree as methods were adjusted and new respondents interviewed. Strictly looking at this study though, sampling was based on convenience utilizing the contacts made in the previous PS (Munhall, 2017).

Due to the safety concerns for asylum-seekers to be discussed in section 6.5: Ethical considerations, privacy and transparency were central to the design of this study. To maintain anonymity, codes were used to represent individuals and locations, illustrated in more depth in Appendix D: Anonymized Codes. Table 3: Organization of Interview Codes, seen below shows the makeup of the sample used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Location (Language-translator)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>RC (Dari-AA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>RA (English)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>RE (Arabic-KK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RG (Arabic-KK)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Seven respondents were used in the analysis of this study. Respondents came from Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq and were interviewed in a mixture of English, Dari and
Arabic. Additionally, four respondents are briefly mentioned from the previous PS. All four came from Syria and were interviewed in Arabic through a translator at location L2 (Munhall, 2017).

As mentioned previously in section 4.5.2: Delimitations, the sample was limited to the asylum-seeking parents of seven to sixteen year old children. Due to the difficulties in sampling mentioned in section 4.5.1: Limitations, sample size was limited to the availability of respondents. A thorough search of contacts across social media, aid organizations and personal contacts provided access to two separate camps. Within these camps the availability of translators and respondents eventually led to seven interview subjects that fit the requirements of the study.

At seven respondents, sampling ceased as theoretical saturation appeared to have occurred. As this point is subjectively determined by the researcher, there are differences of opinion at when this can be decided (Draucker, Martsolf, Ross, & Rusk, 2007). In this case, clear trends such as the reliance on certain sources and content of information, were repeated and the final interviews seemed to repeat the same information. Little new information was being presented and it appeared appropriate to begin analysis.

6.4 Translation and Transcription

Interviews were conducted in person by one interviewer, BM. It was necessary for translators to be used for five of the seven interviews. These interviews were conducted in English, Dari and Arabic. An Afghan man, AA, who was resident at L1, translated between the interviewer in English and the respondents in his native Dari. It should be noted that AA was also directly involved in the enrolment process of a number of children from L1. The Arabic translator, KK, was an Arabic speaker originally from Syria who has lived in Sweden for many years.

To limit confusion and misinterpretations during the translation process, both translators were instructed to directly translate responses as closely as possible from their original meaning. Additionally, to provide AA and KK with a familiarity with the direction of research and the topics to be covered, the interview questions, found in Appendix A: Interview Guide, were reviewed prior to the interviews. After their completion, the process was reviewed to improve its quality. To ensure the credibility of transcription, both translators were given transcripts of the interviews to review for accuracy. The difficulty of arranging interviews, changing residences and the fact that many respondents did not speak English made reviewing transcripts together with the respondents impractical.

Interviews were recorded and later transcribed. Analysis was based on review of the transcripts. Numbers were used to denote the order of each response and are seen at the beginning of each quote. As will be discussed in section 6.5: Ethical considerations, names were not used to ensure privacy. As an example, the first respondent, Respondent A, is represented by the code RA. A list of these codes can be found in Appendix D – Anonymized Codes. A number of codes used in the transcripts were not quoted in this paper and were therefore excluded to avoid further complexity.
6.5 Ethical Considerations

Due to the temporary and unstable situation that asylum-seekers live in, many fear that their application for asylum will be rejected (Voutira & Harrell-Bond, 1995). Generally, these people have fled persecution and do not trust authorities, thus creating a situation of self-isolation. For this reason, many asylum seekers are reluctant to share personal information. Additionally, a number of violent attacks on refugee camps have occurred in Sweden in recent years (Järkstig, 2015; Kandefelt, 2017; Pettersson, 2017). Such attacks appear to be motivated by increased prejudice in Swedish society, making physical safety a concern (Larsson, 2017). In order to assure asylum-seeking respondents that the content of their interviews would not compromise their safety as well as to provide them with a clear understanding of this study’s potential benefits, a number of actions were taken.

Bryman quotes Diener and Crandall in describing four ways of assessing the ethicality of qualitative research:

- a) whether there is harm to participants
- b) whether there is a lack of informed consent
- c) whether there is an invasion of privacy
- d) whether deception is involved (Bryman, 2012, p. 135):

Based on these criteria, every effort was made to ensure that identifying information was not shown in this study.

Anonymization is essential to protecting people in dangerous situations. Because of the depth into personal information in qualitative study, care must be taken to provide anonymity (Bryman, 2012). All names and locations were replaced by a code to ensure that personal information was not shared. These codes are collected for reference and can be seen in Appendix D: Anonymized Codes. To ensure this personal information was not compromised online, all personal information was kept in a secure off-line location. The page used for collecting personal information offline can be seen in Appendix A: Interview Guide. During transcription of the interviews, the codes were immediately used.

The process of anonymization was also explained clearly in two ways: Orally, in English or through translation; as well as providing a written explanation of the study in both English and the respondent’s native language. While only three languages were ultimately used, English, Arabic and Dari, six translations were prepared based on the highest noted populations of asylum-seekers in Sweden – see Appendix B: Information Page (Migrationsverket, 2017b). This information document presented a summarized explanation of the research purpose, ethical considerations and contact information for respondents. This page was translated and verified by translators through the website www.upwork.com, a service connecting employers with translation services. Parts of the text in this information page was taken from the PS but adapted to fit the requirements of this study (Munhall, 2017). One location, L2, requested an ethical reference from Stockholm University. A copy of this, with personal information blacked out, can be seen in Appendix C: Ethical Reference.
To ensure that the interview subject understood the privacy procedure, purpose of the study and consented to the interview, verbal consent was required. Upon receiving the information, described, each of the respondents declared that they understood and were satisfied with the quality and depth of actions taken.

6.6 Analytical Procedure

The analytical procedure used in this study is shown graphically below in *figure 6: Methodology*. Contrary to previous iterations of GT, constructivist GT emphasizes flexibility of the approach and moves away from its ‘mechanical application’ (Charmaz, 2014, p. 13). This procedure will be discussed in more detail below.

![Figure 6: Methodology](Author’s creation, 2017)

The initial stage of this study was a preliminary PS (Munhall, 2017). In this, an exploratory literature review was conducted, introducing the basic subject of study. The subsequent PS introduced a preliminary set of interview questions that were used to interview four asylum-seeking parents. The intention of this PS was to determine
effective question structures and procedures, theoretical areas of importance and initial RQs for consideration. The results produced recommendations applied to this current study.

The beginning stages of this study can be seen running parallel alongside each other in figure 6: Methodology. This graphical representation is meant to signify that data collection and the ongoing discovery of related explanatory theories occurred simultaneously. Following a GT approach, these separate processes ran concurrently, repeatedly influencing each other. The arrows marked by a and b denote instances of influence, occurring in both directions. Rather than just occurring two isolated times, a and b are meant to serve as examples. The grey area represents a process of constant comparison in which the theoretical context and data collection influenced each other.

While the theoretical context was continuously influenced by the emerging trends during data collection, the reverse was not true to the same degree. The short nature of this study made returning to data collection impractical and any drastic structural changes of the interviews undesirable if each separate response were to be compared. That said, emphasis and areas of interest during interviews were able to be given extra attention based on the review of related theoretical concepts and content of responses

In figure 6: Methodology above, coding shows a box that explains in more detail what was done in this stage. D, e and f demonstrate the open coding conducted towards creating background, descriptive and axial codes used in section 4: Analysis. D, the precoding stage of the coding process, involved repeatedly and thoroughly reviewing the 39 pages of transcription created from interviews. This process began by reading the interviews and extracting general themes that were repeatedly mentioned. Responses fitting into codes such as time in Sweden, among others, were repeated across the entire sample and appeared worth analyzing. A large collection of these themes were then referred to during further review of the interview transcripts. Thirty-eight initial codes were identified as facts and recurring themes. Based on these codes, the text was reviewed again, looking for quotes, trends and illuminating responses. Further review of the transcripts and these ‘precodes’ allowed for adjustment or combination with those with similar themes as seen in e. Appendix E: Open Coding shows precisely which initial codes became the final codes used in this study. These 17 descriptive codes were separated into two groups, background and descriptive codes as will be described in section 4: Analysis and findings. The final stage of coding is shown by f in the creation of axial codes. These axial codes explain the trends found by comparing the results of the background and descriptive codes. These codes will be explained further in section 7.3: Axial coding.

As with the preceding stages, coding was influenced by the growing body of related theoretical works and vice versa. This selection of and connections established between theories were also influenced by the emergence of patterns and themes in the coding process. This mutual influence is demonstrated in the arrow marked c.

The stage marked as analysis represents the close review of selected quotes and allusions under each descriptive and axial code. Strictly speaking, according to Charmaz, GT analysis is done throughout the entire study but because of this stage’s close
resemblance to traditional analytical processes and for lack of a better word, this stage is described simply as analysis (2014). This analysis involved further review of the transcript through the lens of each of the background, descriptive and axial code. With each section of relevant text isolated, narratives and trends were provided. At times an ellipsis (…) is used. This should be understood to denote the omission of unrelated text. This procedure is explained more closely and exemplified in section 7.2.1 Sources of Information.

The next stage of analysis involved a return to the RQs from section 4: Aims and objectives. The trends and information from the previous analysis sections were consolidated to form responses to these questions.

The final stage of analysis was the presentation of findings seen in section 5: Discussion. This section provides an analysis of the meaning of the trends presented in section 4: Analysis in the context introduced in section 2: Background. The outputs of this stage are: final conclusions, significance of the study to the field of comparative education; and suggestions for further research. While introducing new material in the discussion section is not a conventional approach, a return to the previously introduced work allowed for reflections ‘on the implications of [one’s] findings for the research questions that have driven [one’s] research’ (Bryman, 2012, p. 690).

7. Analysis and Findings

The use of GT methodology means that there is no separate stage of analysis occurring late in a studies life (Charmaz, 2014). Analysis takes place from the moment that data is first collected and continues through the entirety of the study. The stage labelled as analysis in more deductive methodologies is best compared to the coding period of this study. Coding was conducted as described in section 6.6: Analytical Procedure and will be further clarified in the sections below.

Using the inductive approach described in section 6: Methodology a number of trends were clear during analysis of the transcripts and designated through open codes – shown in Appendix E: Open Coding. Many codes were initially identified and it was determined that a number of them were complementary and combinable. Additionally, many of them covered similar information so their inclusion would cause repetition. Where it seemed most appropriate, these codes were combined and organized into two categories: background codes – statements that require little explanation; and descriptive codes – trends that require deeper analysis. A list of these codes and short explanation of their meaning can be seen in Appendix F - Description of Codes.

Further analysis, with comparison across these codes, illuminated trends that are not immediately apparent in the transcript text. These axial codes describe trends that are not directly described by respondents but are alluded to either consciously or subconsciously.

The following sections will describe the trends found for each of the three types of code. First, background codes will show family and background information about each
respondent to provide context. Second, descriptive codes will explain the trends deemed relevant to research provided in section 5: Background and significant due to repeated occurrences in the text. Third, axial codes, which were created through the combination of background and descriptive codes, will present trends that are more complex. It should be noted that the decisions of trend strength and relevance to theories in section 5: Background were subjective decisions made by the author. Following these three sections the RQ’s introduced in section 4.1: Aims and Objectives will be addressed in the context of the following three sections.

7.1 Background Codes

The following is a description of the seven respondents populating the sample used in this study. The parents had a diverse set of backgrounds with two Syrian (RA and RB), two Afghan (RC and RD) and three Iraqi (RE, RF and RG). None of the children were reported to have any additional physical or mental learning needs. The families’ times in Sweden ranged from one year and three months to one year and six months while time out of school in Sweden (excluding vacations) ranged from one month to nine months. The parents also had a range of academic backgrounds from no formal schooling to completion of undergraduate degrees. This information is summarized below in Table 4: Respondent Background Facts.

### Table 4
Respondent Background Facts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Camp</th>
<th>Home Country</th>
<th>Time in Sweden (Year and months)</th>
<th>Total school year missed in Sweden (months)</th>
<th>Children(s) age – relevant child bolded (years)</th>
<th>Parent’s education history</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RA</td>
<td>L1</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>1 y 3 m</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.5, 6, 8</td>
<td>Undergraduate Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RB</td>
<td>L1</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>1 y 6 m</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10, 18</td>
<td>Some business training, husband - university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RC</td>
<td>L1</td>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>1 y 4 m</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6, 8, 10</td>
<td>None - Illiterate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RD</td>
<td>L1</td>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>1 y 4 m</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5, 8</td>
<td>None, informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RE</td>
<td>L2</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>1 y 4 m</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7, 10, 15, 20</td>
<td>9th grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RF</td>
<td>L2</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>1 y 5 m</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8, 18, 20, 22</td>
<td>Undergraduate degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RG</td>
<td>L2</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>1 y 4 m</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8, 18, 23</td>
<td>high school degree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RA, RB, RD and RF all were temporarily displaced during their travel towards Sweden. RA was internally displaced in Syria and her daughter’s schooling was affected by the war. RB lived in France and her son experienced constant school changes. RD travelled through Iran and Turkey, where no schooling was provided. RF spent one year in Turkey where no school was available. RC, RE and RG came directly from Afghanistan and Iraq.

Interviews occurred in two separate camps, L1 and L2. L1 consisted of two separate buildings in a semi-remote area. Each family either had their own living space or shared it with another family. There was a shared kitchen area and rooms were grouped by ethnicity. Interviews were conducted within the family’s personal living space. L2 was also in a semi-remote area in a building previously used as a hotel aimed towards business guests. Families were grouped two or more to a room. There was no personal kitchen facilities with food being provided in a communal cafeteria. Interviews were conducted in a private room.

7.2 Descriptive Codes

The specific procedure in which the following codes were analyzed is given as a detailed example seen below in section 7.2.1: Sources of Information. As described in section 6: Methodology, the meaning of each code is described in Appendix F – Description of Codes. The findings of subsequent codes will be presented in a summarized form in consideration for the reader. Illuminating and representative quotes will be given as a means of presenting and emphasising emergent trends. The final paragraph of each section will provide a short summary of the findings.

7.2.1 Sources of Information

Each of the respondents gave responses referencing the source of information that they received information from. Below are the relevant quotes demonstrating the primary source of information about education and enrolment of their children.

30. RA: I ask a lot of people.
31. BM: Who did you ask?
32. RA: Most of the information you try to find from Arab people because it is difficult to contact with the Swedish people... I asked the Arab people, when they came here what they do. Like that, on Facebook, living here or the centrum.
33. BM: So you started with Facebook groups and speaking to other people living here?
34. RA: [Nods] They are people living here before me and they have the same experience for their children.

35. BM: How did you find that information?
36. RB: We went to Skatteverket [tax agency] and we ask her for a school.
45. BM: So you have gotten a lot of your information from the government, not from people here. Have you spoken to anyone outside of the government offices? People here at the camp or on facebook groups?
46. RB: No we haven’t asked. When we were in LB3 [Location in France], we knew where we had to go in kommun or we have to go there, like in the government. Not asking people. We had this experience.

41. RC: I heard about other people at the camp going to school and AA could help me.

34. RD: The other family speak to migration and we say we also want our child to go to school, so they accept.

58. RE: The camp was very small so we didn’t have reception. So it was people telling each other.

72. RF: When we arrived LF5, kids were already started in the schools.

41. BM: Did someone tell you to speak to reception?
42. RG: Yes. People.

RA, RC, RD, RE, RF and RG all received information first from fellow camp residents through word of mouth (WOM). Of this group there were two sub-categories suggested by the passages above: advice given by experienced camp residents who had already gone through the enrolment process (RE and RG); and from other newly-arrived parents that had found information and were in the process of enrolling their children (RA, RC, RD and RF). The seventh respondent, respondent B, received their information from Skatteverket, the tax agency, and hadn’t built up a network of peers in the camp.

The secondary and tertiary sources of information are presented below:

32. RA: … Someone come before me, 1 year, they tell me you can go to this place, go to LI a place for a school, SFI [Swedish for Immigrants] and an address. I go there and ask. I have a girl. I want her in. They tell me to go to this office and give me the information.
35. BM: So they gave you information to go to an office. Do you know what that office was?
36. RA: I don’t know the name. I’m not sure
37. BM: But it was a government office?
38. RA: Yes. It was specially for... When I want to go for forskola. It is for teaching, for students.

53. BM: Who told you that you don’t have a choice of schools? The school or the kommun?
54. RB: The kommun.

35. AA: I spoke English and there were many children in the camp not in school. I apply for many children that go from here. Before me no one was checking.
36. BM: [To the father] So AA helped you register?
37. **RC**: Yes

52. **AA**: No, I ask when I find the school, when the first family got to the school. This family [**RD**] didn’t know the language so they asked if there is a school near to us. Before this the people just asked Migrationsverket.

59. **BM**: So it was word of mouth. Talking to other people in the same situation?
60. **RE**: Yes and that we had to go to the kommun and there they would just register the children

74. **RF**: ...I was just ask the manager of the camp...I kept talking and the manager of the camp was also trying with me to get enrolled.
63. **BM**: ... someone said you have to go to the kommun?
64. **RE**: Yes.
76. **RF**: We went to a centre in **LF8**. I don’t know even the kommun.
77. **BM**: Was it a government office or something official?
78. **RF**: Yeah it was a governmental thing in **LF8** where they register the kids.

40. **RG**: I asked reception. They gave me all the information
45. **BM**: And what did reception tell you?
46. **RG**: To go to a place.
47. **BM**: The kommun?
48. **RG**: It is not the kommun. It is a kind of centre, a governmental centre in **LG1**.

These sources were more diverse. Respondents described a number of different locations that they were sent to for more information about school enrolment. **RA** was referred to Svenska för Invandrare (SFI), the state sponsored Swedish for Immigrants adult school program, before being redirected to an unknown government centre for enrolment. **RB** and **RE** are both directed to the kommun for enrolment in local schools while **RF** and **RG** are first sent to the camp reception before they are informed an unknown government centre for enrolment. While knowing these centres were government operated, **RB** and **RE** did not know the name or how these services were operating. Finally, respondent **RC** and **RD** were registered directly into a school by **AA** so received no information beyond the original WOM source in the camp. **AA**’s role will be further discussed in section 7.2.5: Initiative.

Three respondents reported finding information about schools from additional sources beyond the enrolment process:

54. **RB**: ... Here, in **L1** four people come from the political parties. Different parties. They come to us and I ask them why **CB1** can’t go to school in Stockholm. She said that’s the problem. When you don’t have residency you can’t choose a school in a different kommun.
55. **BM**: And who told you this?
56. **RB**: The youth, what is it called. It is for teenager and young adults.
53. **BM**: Did you get any other information, like from the government, friends in the camp, Facebook, or volunteers about schools here?

54. **RD**: We ask the volunteers if the schools are good but that’s it. We don’t have information, we don’t have much about school.

85. **BM**: So you have mostly gotten information from word of mouth at the camp and the managers of the camp. Did you get information from any other sources? Reading online, facebook groups, NGOs, migrationsverket?

86. **RF**: Red Cross in LF5.

87. **BM**: Ok so they came to the camp and explained the system?

88. **RF**: Yes and gave some information

All three sources gave information about the functioning of the Swedish school system after respondent RB, RD and RF were already registered into schools. This provided these parents with a better understanding of how the Swedish education system works.

In the analysis of this information, a table was used to organize the source of information and location within the transcript seen below in *table 5: Analysis of sources of information*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st source:</th>
<th>2nd source:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RA: WOM, facebook <em>(A32)</em></td>
<td>RA: SFI <em>(A32)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RB: Skatteverket, migration <em>(B36)</em></td>
<td>RB: Kommun <em>(B54)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RC: WOM <em>(C41)</em></td>
<td>RC: None (registered directly into a school) <em>(C37)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RD: WOM <em>(D34)</em></td>
<td>RD: None (registered directly into a school) <em>(D52)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RE: WOM <em>(E58)</em></td>
<td>RE: Kommun <em>(E60)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RF: WOM <em>(F72)</em></td>
<td>RF: Camp Reception <em>(F74)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RG: WOM <em>(G42)</em></td>
<td>RG: Camp reception <em>(G40)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3rd source:</th>
<th>Additional Sources:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RA: Unknown government centre <em>(A36)</em></td>
<td>RA: -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RB: -</td>
<td>RB: Political parties <em>(B54)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RC: -</td>
<td>RC: -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RD: -</td>
<td>RD: Volunteers <em>(D54)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RE: -</td>
<td>RE: -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RF: Unknown government centre <em>(F78)</em></td>
<td>RF: Red Cross <em>(F86)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RG: Unknown government centre <em>(G48)</em></td>
<td>RG: -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Descriptors**
- WOM
- Facebook
- Skatteverket
- Kommun
- None (registered directly into a school)
- Camp Reception
- Unknown government centre
- Political parties
- Volunteers
- Red Cross
Summary: There were a few notable trends related to the sources of information. The reliance on WOM in the camp as a primary source of information was noted in six of the seven interviews. There were a range of secondary and tertiary sources with three respondents being sent to a government centre for which they didn’t know the name or completely grasp its process. Finally, a number of non-state volunteers and not-for-profit sources gave general information on the functionings of the Swedish compulsory school system. Combined with the reliance on WOM mentioned above, much of the information asylum-seeking parents are receiving on education is not provided by the government.

7.2.2 Information for Choice

Much of the information that respondents have received simply referred them to the next location for information such as RG describes below:

44. RG: I ask the people what to do and they said to speak to reception.
45. BM: And what did reception tell you?
46. RG: To go to a place.

The WOM source of information that six respondents relied on, referred them to either another information source or directly to the location of enrolment. Even then, the process was not thoroughly explained:

82. RF: ... the reception told me that this is the closest school and you can just register there.

Respondents had little understanding of how the Swedish school structure works and were either not aware or only partially understood the nature of choice in schools:

59. BM: When you talked to the school and kommun did they tell you anything about choosing schools?
60. RD: No. they didn’t tell me, so I don’t know.

or schools were chosen for the family:

52. RG: They choose according to a school that is close to L2.

When choice did occur, it was given between a select few schools:

42. BM: So they gave you choices for CC3?
43. RC: They gave us a list. We can choose one of these

When asked about their perception of having choice, responses were mixed. RA described not having the network she had at home to make decisions:

64. RA: ...It is not like home when you have a lot of friends, a lot of families and you know everything. But here it is a little bit difficult.

RB described a lack of support:

60. RB: In Sweden there is no real help. They trying to help us but they don’t help us as people. If they think it is helpful but for us it is not helpful.
RF seemed to be uncomfortable with choosing any school beyond her neighbourhood

91. BM: Has anyone told you anything about school choice, the right to choose schools?
92. RF: I do know about this but I still choose the closest

While RE felt confident in her ability to choose without any information.

93. BM: What do you know about changing schools? If you were unhappy with the school, would you know how to change schools?
94. RE: I think by myself it would not be a problem.
95. BM: So where would you start.
96. RE: I’m not sure but I would find it.
97. BM: So has anyone told you anything about this?
98. RE: No.

Summary: Most of the information that parents received was focused mostly on where to enrol rather than how enrolment and choice work within the Swedish school system. Parents’ attention was focused on getting their children enrolled in school as quickly as possible and they did not gain a deeper understanding of the education system. Choice in schools, in both theory and practice, was poorly understood for the Swedish system and little attention was paid to these decisions. There seemed to be little information being shared to counteract this in their future

7.2.3 Forced Changes

Respondents report being moved to different camps at different frequencies. RC describes nearly all of his families time living in their current camp:

24. RC: ... the first camp is where we registered.
25. BM: How long were you at this camp?
26. RC: 2 days.

While RF had moved six times and was preparing to move again:

51. BM: Have you lived in any other camps, or just here at L2?
52. RF: This is the 6th.
53. BM: The 6th?
54. RF: Yes. LF1, to LF2, to LF3, to LF4, to LF5, to here L2. They will also move us again.
55. BM: so you’ll move again?
56. RF: Yes

RA, RB and RD had not changed camps, while RE and RG had both changed camps one time. RE, RF and RG all described needing to change schools after being moved to a new camp resulting in further delays in schooling as they entered a new queue system and learned procedures in a new kommun. This was particularly notable for RF:
57. BM: So you moved here [Sweden] in October 2015. Approximately how long did you spend in each camp?
58. RF: Here [L2] 6 months, LF5, 6 months and then a few month about. [time in LF1-4 was approximately 5 months]
59. BM: How did you changing camps affect your attempts to enrol in school
60. RF: We started school at LF5.
61. BM: Did you change schools when you moved here [L2] or no?
62. RF: Yes.
63. BM: Ok, so you arrived in LF5 and how long from the day you arrived until CF1 started school?
64. RF: 3 months
65. BM: And how long did that take from the time you arrived until CF1 started school?
66. RF: He just started in August, from the beginning of the year. We came here at the end of May. It was only like 1 week until the end of...So we started the next school year.

This experience resulted in CF1 being out of school for nine months of the one year and five months the family had lived in Sweden. All seven respondents reported that they would soon be moving to new locations. RB, RD and RF had received a positive decision from Migrationsverket and were being resettled in a new area, while others were still waiting on their decision and were being relocated. RB and RC were happy with their current school and were worried about the effect that the coming move would have on their child’s education.

A common theme across the respondents was that there was little understanding of the details related to their upcoming move as shown by RC and RF below:

66. BM: Where are you moving to?
67. RC: I don’t remember but it is about 7 hours from here.

94. RF: ... When we just move out of here, we will be in LF7 I think.

RB describes having to change schools a number of times against the families will:

10. RB: ... CB2 has changed schools many times
14. RF: ... But for CB2, when children go to school they move the school. They don’t have stable school. They have to get new friends. That’s big problem. They have to stay in the same school to get better. That’s a big problem for us. It is very nice, it is good. He is attached to his friends.

Summary: These asylum-seeking families were frequently moved when they received a decision from Migrationsverket or for reasons they didn’t understand. These moves were perceived to create instability in the families’ lives and delayed schooling when new schools were needed to be sought out. The purpose and details of these moves was not understood in detail and could be a point of stress for families. Generally, students
were able to stay at a school once they are registered but **RB** described not being able to stay in a school as long as her family would have liked.

### 7.2.4 Education Experience and Philosophy

Respondents described school in their home countries critically. In Iraq expectations in school were high:

126. **RF**: Yes, exactly. I used to work and go back home and sit with my children two, three, four hours. Which is very exhausting.

and it was difficult to change schools

14. **RG**: We didn’t choose, the area, according to names, they choose
15. **BM**: So you are assigned a school?
16. **RG**: Yes. Even if the quality is bad, this is what is available.
17. **BM**: So it is impossible to change schools?
18. **RG**: So it is just according to where you are living and the closest school

In Syria and Iraq, the local situation created instability for the school:

20. **RA**: …. Then the bad things started because of the war and she can’t go to school. I send her to school and she likes to go to school but I was afraid. When she hears the bombs and the sound we just go run and bring her back and now she hid. She liked the friends and the books but when the war she start to hate going.

24. **RF**: Because of the situation there, school could just close 2, 3 days in a row. So there is no, no continuous education. Or some teachers, maybe they don’t come because of the situation. Teachers who live far from the school sometimes cannot arrive the school because they close the road.

while in Afghanistan it might have not even been provided:

15. **BM**: Can you tell me about education for **CCI** and **CC2** in Afghanistan. Did they go to school?
16. **RC**: No. They didn’t go to school.

After leaving their home countries **RD** and **RF** describe the lack of schools in Turkey:

29. **BM**: Before you came to Sweden did you spend time in any other countries?
30. **RF**: We were in Turkey for one year before coming here. We didn’t go to any school.
31. **BM**: There was no school in Turkey?
32. **RF**: Because of schools are not free there and it is only in Turkish language
20. **RD**: We stayed in Iran, Turkey and then on to Sweden.

23. **BM**: Did he go to school or class in this time?

24. **RD**: No.

Swedish schools were viewed positively by respondents. **RA** and **RE** have both had positive experiences with their childrens’ schools as described by **RE** below:

*100. **RE**: The teaching method is creative and I like it that they don’t put pressure on the children. So I think it is really good. It is a good school. They don’t have any challenges. They speak Swedish perfectly and everything is going well.*

**RC** describes his daughter’s experiences positively:

*61. **RC**: It is going good. They learn Swedish so they have good fun. They are taking them to swimming, sport and the zoo.*

28. **RC**: It is good that they are in school. We are happy of that. One day in a week they have Dari [Native language] studies. One woman from Afghanistan teaches them and it is good. They are learning Swedish.

While **RD** hasn’t engaged personally

32. **RD**: I don’t know. I have never been in Swedish schools.

As a whole the children are adapting well to their new surroundings, making friends, learning Swedish and becoming comfortable. **RG** describes their priority:

*72. **RG**: The positive thing for me is that there is no discrimination and they are all equal in the class.*

Parents unanimously agreed that education provides opportunities for their children. This was articulated in different ways: with clearly defined paths and expectations for their child (**RA**, **RB**, **RD**, **RF** and **RG**);

22. **RA**: I just want them to go on. Most people say ‘Doctor!’; like that. I just want them to have options. ... And you know what affects children? The school. Learning.

20. **RB**: I think it gives you opportunities. If my sons want to be an engineer it lets them but we don’t have that

82. **RD**: Now he has choice. I wish that he can go to university or become a teacher or doctor. It is my wish. He can decide by himself what he wants to be.

40. **RF**: Of course. It is the solution for ignorance and all this. I am educated and my husband. We want our boys to be educated because it affects their personality and how they develop.

84. **RG**: The future. Being responsible, being independent as a person. Find a job.
86. **RG**: When he will get a good education, he will get a good job and be good for himself and for society and the country. I am hoping, not just for my kids, to have higher education. Not just undergraduate, even masters.

to a general idea of education providing opportunity (RC and RE).

75. **RC**: I wish they go on. Go to school and they can decide for themself what they will be in the future.

106. **RE**: I don’t know. I didn’t think about it but I’m hoping for the best.

**RA** and **RF** wanted their children to benefit from post-secondary education as they had while **RC** and **RD**, who had never attended school themselves, wanted their children to have the opportunity to pursue the studies that they were interested in. All seven parents wanted their children to have better education opportunities than themselves and described the challenging move to Sweden as a sacrifice for their children’s future.

Respondents had a variety of perspectives on what constituted a quality education. **RA, RB, RF** and **RG** emphasised the need for well-formed classroom structures to support children’s learning. Below, **RF** describes how she prefers the methods used in Sweden over those used in Iraq:

122. **RF**: Yes. Here the methods are more simple but more useful. In Iraq it is more complicated but eventually it’s not giving the same. But it is the way of teaching, the way the teacher deals with the students in the class. All this affects the class.

**RB, RD** and **RF** emphasised the learning of languages to provide opportunities and help their children integrate. **RA** thought more homework is needed while **RF** appreciates there being less.

Respondents were asked who is responsible for their children’s education (**RA** was not asked). **RC, RD** and **RF** responded that society or the school was responsible for their child achieving in school. In their view, the role of the school was to provide the support needed. **RB** placed responsibility on themselves, stating that the school obstructed their wishes and **RE** and **RG** split the responsibility between themselves and the school.

**Summary**: These seven respondents and their families have come from countries that have been affected by war and crumbling education systems. The children’s education was either disrupted or of lower quality in their home country and was not provided in the transit period before Sweden. After arriving in Sweden, parents have generally been happy with the schools that they have enrolled their children in. Teachers are attentive and the curriculum is suitable for their needs. In the future parents would like their children to have greater opportunities than themselves. Some parents defined these opportunities concretely, while others described them more vaguely. Respondents have a positive view of Swedish education. They are happy that their children are in school and appreciate much of what they are learning. Half of respondents asked consider
the responsibility of education falling on the school, two split the responsibility between parents and the school and one sees it as their own.

7.2.5 Initiative

Finding information was approached with different degrees of urgency and initiative between the seven respondents. Some actively searched, going to any office they could find, insisting that their children be enrolled. Others were more passive and waited for school to be arranged for them. RA, RB and RE were anxious to enrol their children in school as described by RA below:

22. RA: ... when I came I just asked Migrationsverket ‘School! School!’’. Hold on, stop. We will tell you, we will call you. But I don’t want. I ask and ask. I ask where.

While RC, RD, RF and RG were more dependent on it being determined for them as shown by RD:

56. RD: I didn’t search. I was waiting for the school.

This difference is described by RA below:

28. RA: ... Some of them also, they don’t care, they wait. Immigration come after one month and ask who the children are and show them how to do that.

In fact, RA felt that simply waiting for school to be arranged for her daughter was unacceptable:

47. BM: What do you think would have happened if you had not gone? If you had waited.
48. RA: I would feel crazy. Just waiting. I think they would not come for a long time.

RA and RB felt that their initiative was necessary:

32. RA: Most of the information you try to find from Arab people because it is difficult to contact with the Swedish people. They don’t know about us refugee people they know about their people.

60. RB: In Sweden there is no real help. They trying to help us but they don’t help us as people. If they think it is helpful but for us it is not helpful.

Examples of motivated individuals in the camps allowed many parents to register their children in to schools. RA was quite persistent and was able to find the information for how to enrol her child into school. She describes helping other residents of the camp in this process as well:

28. RA: ... When the other families see me, oh, your girl goes to school. They ask me how I can do that. I show them. They start to go. My girl as the first girl go to school. But after that the families ask: how does she go? What do you do? I give them the address and how I do. Most of them I go with them
because they can’t speak English. I translate for them and they register their children. Some of them also, they don’t care, they wait. Immigration come after one month and ask who the children are and show them how to do that.

AA was also directly involved in the enrolment of many children in camp L1:

52. AA: No, I ask when I find the school, when the first family got to the school. This family [RD] didn’t know the language so they asked if there is a school near to us. Before this the people just asked Migrationsverket. When I learned of this school [SI] is asked migration if it is good or no. They said yes. So I went by myself to the school. I talk to the school boss. She said it’s OK. We can accept. We want refugee to come to this school so I got many papers from them. I just needed to fill out the papers, writing their name, their age, their number. I did for about 18-19 children. I did them myself. After when they went to school, the school boss was here for one night for two hours. She came to here. She helped the people with some stuff.

In RF’s family’s 9 months out of school, volunteers from a local school volunteered their time to support children not yet enrolled in school in LF4.

64. RF: In LF4, teachers were volunteering and take the children because there was a school next to the camp. Teachers were just going there and put the kids in the camp in a class.

Summary: Some parents ignored the stated enrolment process in an attempt to register their children faster. They found that, by taking this initiative they were able to more quickly enrol their children in school. Others took a more passive stance and waited to be contacted by a school. Motivated individuals volunteered their time to help others enrol in schools who were unable to themselves. The camp residents who had stronger initiative and the volunteers who supported others considered this support necessary and the Swedish government’s help insufficient.

7.2.6 Strategies

As mentioned in section 7.2.1: sources of information, much of respondents’ information came from WOM. Generally, parents asked other camp residents to share their experiences. RA suggested that this network was noticeably smaller than when she was in Syria:

64. RA: Yeah. It is not like home when you have a lot of friends, a lot of families and you know everything.

With the exception of RB, all of the other respondents began with a general sweep, asking others for advice in the camp. The respondents differed in what they did with that information. RA and RB were determined to find the necessary information and didn’t rely on the proper channels.

35. BM: How did you find that information?
36. RB: We went to Skatteverket [tax agency] and we ask her for a school.
RC and RD received basic information but that depended on AA for enrolment. They both alluded to an unfamiliarity with the Swedish system and their own lack of education experience as a reason for waiting for someone else to arrange schooling for their daughter.

55. BM: Did you look for information or did you wait for it to come to you?
56. RD: I didn’t search. I was waiting for the school.

RF expressed confidence in her understanding of the Swedish system:

89. BM: After that, today, do you feel like you understand the Swedish system? How the school system works and what its goals are?
90. RF: I have that information. Where to go, what to do.

Yet had no understanding of school choice:

91. BM: Has anyone told you anything about school choice, the right to choose schools?
92. RF: I don’t know about this but I still choose the closest

This was common across all of the respondents. They were either unaware of school choice in Sweden or felt unable to choose due to a variety of barriers (to be discussed in section 7.2.8: Barriers). RG demonstrates the feeling towards school choice in the camps.

55. BM: Has anyone told you anything about school choice here in Sweden.
56. RG: No.
59. BM: If you wanted to change schools how would you do that? Where would you find that information?
60. RG: No. I don’t know.

Summary: Of the seven respondents there was a noticeable lack of strategies used for gathering information about enrolling their children in school. Parents generally spoke to other parents and followed paths to enrolment that others had used. By relying on motivated individuals, some parents were able to achieve enrolment without understanding the system. There were less defined strategies in finding information about choice or changing schools. Without knowledge of this education structure no strategies were employed.

7.2.7 Empowerment

None of the respondents had a strong feeling of empowerment to make decisions in the Swedish school system. RA, RB, RE and RG felt that they were not receiving sufficient support;

64. RA: We are entering a new society so we must look, we must find and fight for this, especially a school. But they have to help us, show us where to look and what we need to know.

or were being blocked from making choices
32. **RB**: First, we didn’t have the residency so we can’t choose our school. They say that we have to go to the school in the kommun. Our problem is not that we choose, it is that they choose. That is the worst thing, that you don’t have the option. They don’t act like we have feelings or like we can choose. They don’t give us options. You can’t say, you have to go there and you have to go there.

While **RD** was more complacent in her approach

55. **BM**: Did you look for information or did you wait for it to come to you?  
56. **RD**: I didn’t search. I was waiting for the school.

and **RC** understood only part of the reality

32. **RC**: When we arrive in Sweden we are told one school so we don’t know about choices of school. We don’t know there are choices of school or where.

**RE** and **RG** described the kommun making decisions for them.

83. **BM**: This current school, was it recommended by people in the camp or by the kommun?  
84. **RE**: The kommun chose for us.

52. **RG**: They choose according to a school that is close to L2.

A lack of stability gave them a feeling that any decision they were able to make might be made obsolete when they were moved to a new camp. This is exemplified by **RF**:

93. **BM**: Have you considered changing schools or looking for different schools?  
94. **RF**: I think about it. When we just move out of here. We will be in **LF7** I think.

Staying in Sweden was a desire shared by all of the respondents. They had either received a positive decision from the migration board or were still waiting but generally thought Sweden would provide a strong future for their children. **RE** exemplifies this feeling:

29. **BM**: ... Do you want to stay in this country permanently? Is that your goal?  
30. **RE**: Yes. We will stay here because it is better for the children and their future.

Yet there was a level of stress relating to their unstable position

83. **RC**: We are a little worried because they are going to school here, so they already find a lot of friends, they love their teachers there. Their teachers love them. We are little worried that we transfer to other city.  
84. **BM**: The worry is that you have built a life here and you have to start again?  
85. **RC**: Yes. We are worried.
Which made choice of schools more difficult

63. BM: When you are in your new city, how will you find a school? What strategy will you use?

64. RD: I don’t know about that because I don’t speak Swedish. I will ask migration about schools when we are in our new city.

The majority of respondents said enrolling their children in school was their main priority but RD explained the need for shelter coming first:

42. RE: We needed a house first or to be in a place. To stay in a place.

and RF perhaps didn’t give her entire attention to her younger daughter’s enrolment

48. RF: Schools and I have a sick kid. I want him to have care. Health care.

Summary: Respondents did not have a strong sense of empowerment in making decisions over their children’s education. They felt they were not receiving the support they need, their desires were being ignored or were unaware of the information required to make choices. Lack of stability made the concept of school choice more difficult. For most parents, enrolment in school was the main priority for their family.

7.2.8 Barriers

Respondents discussed a number of barriers that made enrolling their children into school more difficult, delayed or even impossible. Additionally, these barriers made understanding the Swedish system and communicating with teachers more difficult.

Queues were the main barrier that respondents reported, each being affected by them. RG describes a normal experience:

37. BM: So then you moved here. How long did it take for CG1 to be enrolled in school?

38. RG: four months

61. BM: When you waited four months after going to the centre, is that because there was no spaces?

62. RG: There is no places.

Respondents explained that the absence of a queue was one of the main determinants of them having access to a school. Figure 7: Time in Sweden vs. Time in Queues below demonstrates the amount of time out of school due to queues (excluding holidays) compared to time lived in Sweden.
Another barrier related to the location of the camps and the schools. Both camps were in remote areas and there were few schools near to them. Every respondent stated that location plays a large role in which schools they would consider. RE’s school provided transit cards with enrolment but the other six did not. RG reported that her family had the financial means to buy a transit card but acknowledged this option was not available to everyone.

66. RG: The school now is far from here but I still want it. I buy the SL [transit] card myself. My own expense.
67. BM: You used your savings?
68. RG: Yes.
69. BM: What if you didn’t have the money.
70. RG: It would be hard.

Money also played a role in RA’s ability to communicate with teachers:

66. RA: So in the beginning, the teacher was good, she sent all of the information in Arabic and Dari for the Afghan families. It was more easy but this year she start the normal. The normal grade, the Swedish people, so everything is sent for me by mail. They don’t know that we didn’t have wifi here so I have to fill my own wifi and it’s expensive.

and RF suggested that location plays a large role in school choice:
91. **BM**: Has anyone told you anything about school choice, the right to choose schools?

92. **RF**: I don’t know about this but I still choose the closest

The fact that no formal Swedish lessons are given in the camps means that parents were unable to understand correspondence from the school:

66. **RA**: ... In my mail or in the Facebook like this and I must translate from Swedish. Every day I open, I translate. After that I know what they want, what they do. This takes time, it is hard. Most of the time I don’t understand what they mean.

While **RC** and **RD** relied on **AA** to translate from English to Dari.

41. **RC**: ... We got a letter and **AA** read it for us.

**RE**, **RF** and **RG** had started to learn English but instruction was informal and they had made little progress so far.

**Summary**: School queues prevented parents from enrolling their children in many schools and extended the time they spent out of school. Respondents explained that they chose schools that were close to their camp and further schools were unavailable because of transportation. This financial barrier also made communication difficult because of the need to pay for internet. Parents had a poor grasp of Swedish so had limited communication with their child’s school.

7.2.9 Communication from School

Respondents were quite positive about the communication with their child’s teachers. Some described regular contact and strong teachers

114. **RF**: From February until now [March] I go like three times. She is communicating quite often. If there is something I questioning about, she is telling about accident. They give information for **CF1** that is not for his age, like math. I go to the school and they talk to me.

56. **RA**: Yeah it’s good. She likes it so much. She found it hard at first with the children because of the language. She tell me, I’m alone and no friends, like that. I go talk to her teacher and she was very kind to respect what I’m doing. She tried to find many steps to do it with **CA1** she tried to play with her, she tried to put her with a group to play. She make a lot of steps to let **CA1** to be one of the friends. She tried the first step but it doesn’t work, so she tries another and another, like a lot of steps. She tells me that I am playing with her on the free time. She teach her some play because you know the playing in Syria, the kids play another game, so she teaches this game to **CA1** and play with her.

While others were not concerned that there was little interaction
69. **RC**: They call us two times. They say they are good guys, good students. They don’t want to lose them. All is going good.

76. **RD**: The school communicate with me to just to say he is a nice boy. Lessons are going good. About the future, I don’t know.

77. **BM**: So you communicated once and they said everything is OK?

78. **RD**: Yes

79. **BM**: Is there anything you want the school to do better?

80. **RD**: No

The schools attended by **RE**, **RF** and **RG** had Arabic translators for the parents but the school attended by **RA**, **RB**, **RC** and **RD** did not. As **RA** and **RB** spoke English, they managed to communicate but **RC** and **RD** had more difficulty:

71. **RC**: When we registered them to school we got a notebook but we don’t fill it out. We cannot write so we cannot do it. That is why we don’t know exactly because of that notebook. In that notebook, they said we will write to you how they are doing in school. If they are listening to their teachers.

72. **BM**: …they don’t give a translator?

73. **RC**: No

**Summary**: Respondents were generally positive about the communication from their school. This was true even if communication occurred rarely. Arabic translators were provided to the families living in L2 but the Dari speaking families relied on AA to translate emails and papers and did not have regular contact with their children’s teachers.

7.2.10 Positive Experiences

While a number of critical trends have been described above, respondents did have positive things to say about their experience in the Swedish education system since they arrived. Below, a number of encouraging examples describe the positive experiences experienced by the respondents. **RA** and **RG** describe their children integrating into Swedish society:

58. **RA**: Now she is friends with the three children. She is happy and good. Her Swedish is good also. She learned the language very good too.

74. **RG**: In the class, teachers don’t discriminate against any culture. From my point of view I don’t see any negative things

**RB** and **RF** appreciate the balance of play in the Swedish curriculum:

52. **RB**: Here CB2 plays a little more than he studies and that is nice. He has a good imagination and he has good ideas. He likes to go to school.

120. **RF**: Creativity. Here for example, teaching methods are very different to Iraq. Here it is more easy but they still give you the information. I think this is
good. For the child, you don’t have to repeat many, many, many times to get the information.

**RC** appreciates the instruction of Dari and variety of experiences his daughter is exposed to:

28. **RC**: It is good that they are in school. We are happy of that. One day in a week they have Dari studies. One woman from Afghanistan teaches them and it is good. They are learning Swedish.

61. **RC**: It is going good. They learn Swedish so they have good fun. They are taking them to swimming, sport and the zoo.

**Summary**: Respondents and their children have had a number of positive experiences in the Swedish school system. The children are learning Swedish, interacting positively with other children and learning valuable things for their future. Generally parents are happy with the education that their children are receiving in Sweden.

### 7.3 Axial Codes

#### 7.3.1 Impact of an Individual School

Examining the background facts *time out of school* and *camp location* in the context of the *forced changes* code provided a compelling trend that should be discussed. **RA, RB, RC** and **RD** were all residents at **L1**. These families experiences far fewer camp relocations in their time in Sweden than **RE, RF** and **RG** at **L2**. In **L1**, one school welcomed the majority of children after the school was discovered by **AA**. The students waited much less time in queues and parents describe the school structure and teachers positively. The school had a holistic approach to integrating the asylum-seeking children that appeared to be successful. The parents at **L2** had a less positive experience. After being delayed from enrolment during camp changes, individual schools were sought out. These families waited much longer in queues. Teachers in **LF4** observed that children were out of school and provided lessons to them on their own time.

#### 7.3.2 Preparedness for Initiative

As noted for the code *empowerment* many parents did not have the feeling that they had sufficient means or information to choose schools. As noted for the code *initiative* there was a divide on the degree of initiative different parents took. *Parent’s Education* seemed to predict the level of initiative that parents took in **L1** but this trend didn’t hold in **L2**. The motivated individuals though, both had a strong grasp of the English language so were able to communicate with a greater number of information sources. The Arabic speakers described communication from schools supporting their language but the Dari speakers had little to no support. This seems to demonstrate that the Swedish and English language both have considerable education information available, Arabic is supported.
and has limited information and less common languages such as Dari have very little support.

7.3.3 State Information Distribution

Examining sources of information, information for choice and strategies providing an understanding of the government’s role in providing information. First, it was clear that there was no standardized procedure for disseminating information about school enrolment and school choice to newly-arrived parents. Parents relied on the knowledge of peers and kindness of volunteers to gain even the first idea of how to enrol their children into school. It was necessary for parents to go to the kommun offices but this was never explained in a formal way and incorrect information resulted in delays. During the enrolment process, only the most basic information was given before children were put in a school queue. Some information seemed to be contradictory in nature. Little to no information was given about school choice and respondents admitted to having a poor or complete lack of understanding. As a requirement to an equitable and meaningful choice, sufficient information was not possessed by these respondents.

7.4 Analysis of RQs

The following section provides further analysis as relating to the three RQs introduced in section 4.1: Aims and Objectives.

7.4.1 Research Question One

What information do asylum-seeking parents report receiving about the Swedish compulsory school system?

The majority of parents identified their first source of information as WOM in their camp. Volunteers and various offices were also asked about enrolment and a description of the school system. Additionally, motivated individuals assertively sought out information, probing any unorthodox source they could find. This trend shows that these asylum-seekers were required to seek out the information themselves rather than having it proactively provided to them.

The reliance on these informal information sources demonstrates that there was no formal state-initiated structure for disseminating information to the interviewed asylum-seekers. Due to its informality, there is no method of standardization for these sources of information. The nature of WOM is that information is passed on without verification and there is a sizable risk that information could be altered. As can be seen in the experiences of these seven parents, their experiences varied greatly. The information that they received depended on the makeup of people in their camp, support from others around them and availability of translation to their language.

The information that asylum-seekers received largely related to the enrolment process. Parents stated that their children’s education was a high priority and was one of the first things they wished to accomplish after arriving in Sweden. This immediacy may
have created a condition as if they were ‘wearing blinders’ and consequently did not seek out or ignored information unrelated to the immediate enrolment of their child.

The process of enrolment required speaking with two to three different sources. This search resulted in additional time out of school while waiting for more information. The information of five of the primary sources was simply a referral to additional sources to find information. The other two respondents, who were illiterate, depended on another resident to register their children and admitted an inability to register their children independently. Two of the parents were successfully referred to the kommun for enrolment in school, while the other three first spoke to another source before being registered at an unknown government centre.

The content of information did not cover much beyond instructions for enrolment. When asked about school choice respondents gave two types of responses. The first was that they were not aware of choice in Sweden and did not have an understanding of what it was. The second type of response was that they had some familiarity but had neither the time nor the resources to make informed choices. In the second case, a claim of understanding the system did not necessarily mean that they did. Upon asking for further details, they were not able to speak in much detail. Regarding school choice, respondents said very little about choice without being prompted. Their responses demonstrated clearly that they were not aware of the right of school choice, understanding of its necessity for the Swedish system or that it was happening around them in the selection of schools.

The majority of parents described having positive experiences with their child’s school and teachers. They viewed the school experience positively and it was largely a vast improvement on their home country or time displaced. Yet parents who were receiving information that they didn’t understand continued to praise the school. Both RC and RD were satisfied despite having little to no contact with the school. They were contacted rarely and were not able to understand the email or paper correspondence that was sent. Their uncritical approach may have been based on their own unfamiliarity with formal schooling itself. Their experience was made more difficult with the comparatively lower support for the rarer Dari language. Many of the other parents reported Arabic teachers in school who were available to translate. This advantage was not available for the two families who spoke Dari.

Additionally, once these families move, they will be more isolated from families in the same situation, as they will be living in their own home in a community with fewer asylum seekers. While Arabic speakers may be able to establish a network of support consisting of a higher proportion of asylum-seekers, those speaking less common languages may be very much alone.

While these families will likely have more stability in their new designated homes, the limited social network that has been established is likely to be lost as each of the families are moved to a new region of the country. Having accomplishing enrolment already, parents have an understanding of the process for a new school but respondents still had a poor understanding of the Swedish choice system. Little to no knowledge
creates a situation where the closest or first discovered school is chosen. As they become permanent residents, the lack of an established source of information means they won’t have more until they learn it organically over many years.

7.4.2 Research Question Two

**What strategies do asylum-seeking parents use for finding information and participating within the Swedish compulsory education system?**

Relating closely to RQ1, RQ2 refers to strategies for obtaining new information. These strategies cannot be considered in isolation as their ability to be implemented depend on the environment and each parent’s own background.

There was a relationship between the strategies used and parents’ educational history. Parents who had completed upper high school or university actively searched for ways to enrol their child. They described their own prioritization of education with concrete descriptions of its benefits. **RC** and **RD**, who had never attended school, were much more passive towards enrolment and relied heavily on the help and initiative of another resident. Their descriptions of the benefits of education were much vaguer, simply wishing that their children would have more opportunities than themselves.

Regarding choice, parents’ education played less of a role as parents were generally unaware of this aspect of the Swedish education system. Considering their stronger understanding of the role of education, educated parents would likely adapt more quickly given appropriate information.

The child’s own history can determine the effectiveness of parent’s strategies. Incomplete and interrupted schooling combined with stressful living conditions before arriving in Sweden may have given further weight to the importance of choosing the right school.

Strategies fell into two categories: towards enrolment and towards choice. The strategies towards enrolment largely relied on the WOM sources previously described. Parents spoke to other camp residents around them who referred them to either another source or a government centre for enrolment. Strategies that were the most successful were in contrast to any stated procedure. The parents who actively pursued enrolment options outside of the official track were the first to put their children into schools. Few other sources were mentioned and strategies for finding them were absent. A strong reliance on bureaucratic structures made parents not actively pursue additional information. The majority of parents relinquished some of the responsibility of determining the direction of their childrens’ education. They described it either as the sole responsibility of the state or shared equally with parents.

In terms of choice, parents had few effective strategies for finding information. The root cause of this being they simply were not aware of choice nor did they have a strong understanding of how the system worked. When strategies did exist, they were largely ineffective, such as asking the school their child was currently in. This school would be unlikely to give a balanced perspective of its competitors in a competitive market.
More generally, parents expressed a feeling of disempowerment about being able to find information. They had a limited understanding of the Swedish school system and did not feel they had the support to change that. When these parents felt that they did have strategies, they were more related to enrolment than choice.

Unfortunately this situation is unlikely to change when families move. While their experience in enrolment will ensure that their children quickly join a school in their new community, no established strategies for enabling choice have been accumulated. There remains limited understanding of the school system and few effective strategies for addressing this. More resourceful parents had the capacity to learn quickly but those that relied on others will likely not have the same level of support in their new communities.

7.4.3 Research Question Three

What barriers do asylum-seeking parents identify in the process of enrolment and participation of their children in the compulsory Swedish school system?

As mentioned briefly for RQ2, many barriers to the Swedish education system were prohibitive to asylum speakers. Primarily, a lack of formal and standardized information is the largest barrier faced by asylum seeking parents. This absence creates a situation where parents have to seek out information to enrol their child in school and participate in school choice. A lack of strategies for finding this information causes delays in enrolment and the inability to choose alternative schools.

School queues were a sizable barrier to parents promptly enrolling their children into a desirable school. Most schools had a queue of more than one month and children had to wait before being able to attend. Even the closest schools to the camp, recommended by the kommun, had queues. While not specifically mentioned, excessively long school queues may have acted as deterrents from seeking other schools. As families generally had schools selected for them, a criteria of this selection was certainly the shortest queue. This demonstrates queues already affecting access.

Financial concerns were a major barrier. The necessity of having a transit card to attend school prevented respondents from considering schools outside of their immediate area. While some schools provided transit cards, the majority of respondents did not have this option. Money also played a part in communication with the school. Internet was not provided for free at either camp so residents were required to pay for access. This was a sizable cost for RA, who described it as necessary to be able to monitor her daughter’s progress in school.

Language was also a barrier. Arabic speakers reported having some support but some parents still struggled to understand the entirety of school correspondence. Not all schools provided Arabic translators, but many did. Some materials were not provided in Arabic so a grasp of English helped. RA and AA were able to navigate the system more easily because of this. RC and RD had a more difficult time understanding school procedures and finding information. The support for Swedish, English and Arabic was more forthcoming than that for Dari. In combination with their unfamiliarity with school, the lack of languages beyond Dari forced a reliance on AA.
Finally moving camps made enrolment and learning about school choice difficult. **RC** was unsure where the family was being resettled and could not prepare. **RA** was angry with the need to move as the family had established themselves in **L1**. All of the respondents risked losing the social network that they had established in their current camp but most notably **RC** and **RD**, who speak Dari.

Some of these barriers were overcome by individual efforts. The school in **L1** enthusiastically accepted many of the asylum-seeking children located in the camp. Through the initiative of **RA** and generosity of **AA** many children had the opportunity to attend school without a long wait. Yet the initiative shown in overcoming these barriers is a reaction to the absence of support and should not be considered a substitute for an organized state dissemination of information.

8. Discussion

The findings presented in the previous section provided a number of notable trends that require further exploration. By comparing these findings with the theoretical context introduced in section 5: Background, the implications of these asylum-seekers’ experiences in the Swedish education system can be better understood. The following discussion will explore the degree that asylum-seekers are benefiting from the parental choice model and current structure of the Swedish education system.

The reforms introduced as a part of the Swedish Model produced a unique centralization of state services, introduced comprehensive education and established education as a citizenship right in Sweden (Englund, 1994). Not only was education to provide an opportunity to reduce class segregation but it also was aimed to prepare students for active participants in democracy (Englund, 1994). This view, that education was a right of citizens and responsibility of the state, framed it as a public good, in which it was a right to be provided by the state to all citizens (Stiglitz, 1999; Englund, 2010).

The concept of plural education describes the school as a tool for the promotion of citizenship (Englund, 1994). Introduction to new perspectives, improved citizenship literacy, and exposure to new cultures and values in school provide children with the capacity for later inclusion and representation in society (Englund, 2010). With the realization that inequalities exist, a plural education approach ultimately aims to increase integration in the larger society (De Vreede, 1990).

Yet in the decades following its introduction, Sweden’s comprehensive education became increasingly criticized (Petersson, 1991). Among other criticisms, the nationalized approach was seen as ineffectively implementing the values of plural education. Critics argued that the implementation of reforms worked too slowly and were too costly (Premfors, 1991). The rigidity of a centralized education model was seen to react poorly to changing demographic interests and standardization of curriculum removed the influence of parental preference (Petersson, 1991). Additionally, the aim of attaining equity was far from being reached and parental influence remained a strong
predictor of students’ achievement (Heidenheimer, 1974). Criticism was largely aimed at the implementation of the Swedish model though, not its goals. Equal opportunities and integration in schools were still celebrated and remained a core part of Swedish culture (Popkewitz, 1991). A new approach, possessive individualism, was seen as the next evolution of plural education. In this, it was argued that individuals should be given authority over their own capabilities (Popkewitz, 1991).

While largely celebrated in its introduction, growing critical voices question the equity resulting from this model. W.L. Boyd argues that for school choice to be effective there must be certain safeguards to ensure equitable access (1992). A school choice model must ensure that: the interests of marginalized students are protected, schools are able to respond to changing demand, and all parents receive accurate and comprehensive information to ensure equality of choice (Boyd, 1992, p. 25).

After being given permanent residency in Sweden, asylum-seekers enter a country struggling to incorporate their interests. Historically, minority groups have not been able to integrate into the country’s urban centres, largely segregated to further suburbs in fairly homogenous communities (Andersson et al., 2010). Rather than provide further integration, some research has demonstrated that school choice is further separating communities within schools (Lindbom, 2010). The academic effects of this have been identified by the OECD as one of the most pressing issues facing Swedish education today (2016). In recent PISA tests immigrant students have received notably lower results (OECD, 2015).

Today, the legacy of plural education in Sweden faces its ultimate test. Its values and equity promoting measures are still enshrined within public policy but are being approached with a widely different strategy (Skolverket, 2017c; Englund, 2010). Standardized test scores have made individual achievement in school more competitive, increasing competition between schools (OECD, 2015). Claims of ‘white flight’ from schools and queues being effective filters have started to show the cracks within the choice model (Yang Hansen, & Gustafsson, 2016, p. 38; Böhlmark et al., 2015). Whether the choice model does in fact support the values of plural education is an important question for consideration.

It is within this context that this empirical study was conducted. As a result of the semi-structured interviews, a number of conclusions were reached, presented as answers to the RQs discussed in section 4.1: Aims and objectives. These conclusions represent the reality understood by the seven respondents. A lack of information, inadequate strategies and a number of barriers limited their inclusion within the Swedish education system. John Friedmann’s (Dis)empowerment model provides an approach of evaluating asylum-seekers empowerment to access education in this study (1998). Their level of empowerment describes their ability to access benefits in the Swedish parental choice model. After facing extremely challenging conditions, asylum-seekers face a new and confusing bureaucratic system (Dryden-Peterson, 2015). Facing further information, financial and social deficits, their success requires various levels of support to be successful. Yet these families lacked the support needed to fully benefit from choice and
were at a sever disadvantage in selecting schools. Below, the responses of this study are considered within each of the (Dis)empowerment model’s criteria.

Financial barriers were detrimental to the free choice of schools for these asylum-seeking families. A child’s monthly transit card costs 550 SEK in Stockholm (SL, 2017). From table 1: Financial support for asylum seekers, it can be found that the monthly government stipend for a family of three (two parents, one child) is 1650 SEK (Migrationsverket, 2017d). The purchase of a child’s monthly transit card would cost 1/3 of the family’s entire monthly budget, leaving just 1100 SEK afterwards. As these funds are required for ‘clothes and shoes, health care and medicines, dental care, toilet articles, other consumer goods and leisure activities,’ this cost is quite a burden (Migrationsverket, 2017d). Additionally, if a parent, such as RA, is required to purchase internet access, these funds would be further depleted.

All seven of the respondents stated that location was an important determinant of the school they chose. Of the seven respondents, only RE’s child attended a school that provided a transit card with enrolment. RG said that attendance at her child’s current school would be impossible if she were not able to use her own personal savings to buy a transit card. Other parents, who did not have personal savings, did not have that option. These other parents were not able to contribute the sizable proportion of their government support required to buy a transit card. When considering the choices that these asylum-seekers faced, it is clear that schools across the entire city were not a possible option. Practical choices would be limited to schools within walking distance, essentially prohibiting choice across the city.

From interviews it was clear that these seven families did not receive any information from official state sources without first requesting it. After learning about the kommun or unknown government centres from WOM in the camp, parents were given the required information to enrol in school. They reported that little information was given about school choice and they showed a poor understanding of the concept during discussion. Their reliance on WOM from other camp residents demonstrates that these asylum-seekers needed to find their own, unofficial sources of information. Individuals like RA, RC and RD benefited either from their own or others initiative. Respondents also worried about their impending move to more rural parts of Sweden.

As with the British policy of asylum-seeker dispersal, these families may face isolation in their new communities (Pinson et al., 2010). In particular, the two Afghan families, who speak a less common language and who are functionally illiterate, may be unable to find support in their immediate area or online. Respondents reported that this instability caused them stress and made decision-making regarding schools more challenging.

As described by Boyd, ‘poorly educated or illiterate families’ must have support in making school choice (1992, p. 25). In fact, for equity to exist in a choice system, information must be both accurate and comprehensive (Boyd, 1992; Stiglitz, 1999; Marteau, Dormandy, & Michie, 2001). To ensure a standard of quality, official sources are the most appropriate source. As in the cases of RC and RD, who felt unable to help
themselves, there might be an ad hoc attempt to fill this gap with unofficial sources, such as motivated individual AA. These two parents were lucky to have had the support of AA. As they admitted themselves, they would have had a great deal of trouble enrolling without his help. While respondents were able to acquire information about enrolment through their own initiative, they had little information regarding school choice. A standardized government procedure for disseminating information did not exist in for these families. None of the respondents received information from a government source first and when they eventually did from the kommun or government centre, it differed from each other, was incomplete and mainly covered enrolment. There was very little information about choice and when the families are soon resettled, no strategies for better understanding choice had yet been developed.

During the asylum process, RB, RC and RF described the challenges of instability in their living conditions and the difficulties of starting in new schools. Forced changes of camps and schools made it difficult to adapt and an unknown future was considered frightening. While these families were worried about the remoteness of their new settlements, they agreed that this move added permanency and stability to their lives. Once they receive permanent residency they will be able to start SFI to learn Swedish. This will make it easier to understand the Swedish bureaucratic system and will give them better opportunities to work, increasing their financial stability.

A parent’s own education provides a basis for understanding and navigating the complexities of a new education system (Dryden-Peterson, 2015; Friedmann, 1998). There was a clear divide between RC and RD’s lack of schooling and RA and RF’s university experience, which was apparent in their responses. The two Afghan parents had a much weaker understanding of education in general. When asked for details about the benefits of education, they were unable to provide detailed responses. This can be attributed to never attending school themselves. RA and RF, both having completed university, gave detailed responses about the value and structure of education systems. They were also able to describe the steps towards progressing through the education system. The parents with a strong educational background appeared much more adaptable to a new system and had a strong understanding of the importance of their input towards their child’s success. Parents lacking an education relied much more on others and did not fully appreciate that their input was necessary for their child’s success.

According to the (Dis)empowerment model, these asylum-seekers lack a number of supportive inputs necessary to accessing the entirety of benefits with the Swedish education system (Friedmann, 1998). Financial support is insufficient to allow for equal choice in an urban setting. The price of a transit card is too prohibitive and limits choice to schools within walking distance. Asylum-seekers relied predominantly on WOM sources for information. These sources were largely other residents within the camp and so this information was incomplete and focused largely on enrolment. These asylum-seekers had very little information related to school choice and in fact, little understanding of how it operated or even that it was a possibility. Very little information about the education system or choice was reported to have been provided by any government source. Forced camp changes made enrolment more difficult and an impending move
risked all they had learned about their current *kommun* becoming obsolete. Finally, a lack of educational background for some made navigation and understanding the role of education difficult.

While a lack of empowerment does not strictly prohibit access to education, it does make the process substantially more challenging. The requirements to overcome barriers is more difficult for those not given the required tools. A number of the respondents overcame certain barriers though, requiring additional time and effort on their part. Examples of the respondents finding alternative methods can be seen in RA and RB enrolling their children in school through their own determination and bypassing traditional channels, RC and RD enlisted the help of AA, who generously gave his time and RG having financial means to buy a transit card.

Yet, barriers still exist for these families. It is possible for them to participate in the education system, but they face additional challenges in doing so. Location and transportation to school remains a limiting factor, school queues are established and cannot be bypassed and a lack of information is prevalent. Without their own determination or help from others, barriers can further contribute to a dangerous segregating pattern in Swedish society. Worryingly, as these asylum-seekers receive permanent residency, little new information or strategies for discovery allow this situation to improve.

In this particular case, the Swedish government has failed to provide the necessary support required for education rights to be attainable. While the stated policy of *Skolverket* states that they work to ensure that ‘all children’ receive ‘the same high-quality standard of education,’ access was notably limited in this case study (*Skolverket*, 2017c).

As many independent schools open their school queues from the day students are born, asylum-seekers can find these queues virtually impenetrable if they were to try to enrol (*Böhlmark et al.*, 2015). This describes the situation faced by the three respondents in L2. Excessive queues resulted in these families experiencing over seven and a half months out of school on average (average of study – four and a half months). The Swedish government suggests that students should be able to enter a school within one month, yet these respondents experienced over half a year longer on average (*Migrationsverket*, 2013). The concept of introducing a controlled choice model and prioritizing asylum-seekers in queues could improve this situation but the political challenges of implementing these reforms make it unlikely to happen (*Boyd*, 1992). If all students are indeed selecting the best school for their needs then these families were in a distinct disadvantage compared to families who are able to enter school queues much earlier.

Parents in L1 had a different experience. Motivated individuals enrolled many children into a school nearby which willingly accepted nearly twenty children. Clearly this school had the spaces and without a queue, was willing to incorporate new students. Rather than these students being spread across a variety of schools though, they entered one, drastically changing its makeup. While this school should be commended, the family’s experience fits into a larger segregation theme. Children in L1 nearly all went to one school in this *kommun*. Other schools took few of the students, not creating a shared
experience between different groups. While the quality between each school could be analyzed, what is clear from this data is that there was limited interaction between Swedish born children in this *kommun* and asylum-seeking children.

These particular challenges are troubling in Sweden’s historical and theoretical context. As described earlier, a private good is both nonrivalrously consumable and nonexcludable (Stiglitz, 1999). While Swedish law ensures that schools cannot discriminate against anyone who wishes to enrol, the queue system created a situation where access to certain schools was limited by the timing of application (Riksdagen, 2017; Migrationsverket, 2013; CSD, 2012). Long queues effectively eliminated certain schools from consideration, leaving only those without queues for these asylum-seekers, not a feature of a public good. These families were not fully informed on the options available to them, yet even with the information they would have had problems. Queues limited what schools were available, regardless of knowledge.

When school choice was introduced in Sweden, proponents maintained that education’s plural nature would not be negatively affected (Englund, 2010; Petersson, 1991). In fact, parental choice was argued to better promote plurality where the Swedish Model had failed. Yet evidence is beginning to show that the current choice system is ineffective towards reducing segregation and at the extreme, perhaps even intensifying it (CSD, 2012; Andersson et al., 2010; Yang Hansen, & Gustafsson, 2016; Malmberg, et al., 2014). These failings fall under a larger theme, the illusion of equal choice. Sweden’s parental choice model operates under the assumption that a large number of parents are selecting between a large number of schools, a requirement of a functioning market system (Stiglitz, 1989). It is assumed that parental preference towards school culture, location and national results is the determinant of the school selection for each child (Daun, 2003).

A different picture was shown in this study. These families did not have a choice of schools. Transportation barriers and school queues limited the pool of available schools. Families’ lack of stability and a desire for immediate enrolment for their children motivated parents to choose quickly among the available options. A lack of understanding of the system and a belief that the state has a role in determining school selection allowed parents to surrender school selection to the *kommun*. Limited information prohibited an informed choice being made and an absence of strategies shows a bleak future. In this nature, it seems that plural education was not achieved for these families. A separation of school populations, exacerbated by choice, limited the ability that Swedish-born and asylum-seeking students were able to have a shared experience in this sample. Unfortunately, a lack of strategies to find additional information suggests their position will not change without substantial intervention.

9. Reflection on Research

In reflection, GT can be seen as both an effective and appropriate methodology. This inductive approach allowed the content of respondents’ answers to lead the direction of this study, giving each parent a voice. As their experience and the scale of migration in
Sweden are recent trends, little established research was available. Yet, the short nature of this study limited the flexibility sometimes desired in GT. In addition, new theoretical avenues were encountered throughout the course of this study which could have provided greater understanding of asylum-seekers’ experience. The relevant concepts discovered early on were included in the historical and theoretical background. A number of other topics through, discovered later, appear to have a theoretical connection. While some require further attention, others may require new empirical studies. Further study of these topics could provide valuable insight towards better understanding the experience of asylum-seeking parents, choice in a voucher school system and the Swedish education system.

A deeper review of literature about the asylum experience on a global scale may provide opportunities for comparison with experiences within Sweden. Sweden is not the only country facing a forced migration boom and a deeper understanding of other countries’ experiences would allow asylum-seekers needs to be better met (EC, 2016). As well, while Chile and the United States may have an education system that most resembles Sweden’s, many other countries are incorporating similar choice features into their own (Carnoy, 1998; Whitty, 1997). Parental choice and the marketization of education is a growing trend and continued international study and comparison can provide a deeper understanding of its strengths and weaknesses.

Yet, the specific topic of this study does not yet have a substantial body of published research. The small sample-group described limits the ability that the conclusions can be generalized across the larger population. This presents an opportunity for further study. A more comprehensive study of the asylum-seekers experience within parental choice in Sweden would allow stronger conclusions to be reached about how best to provide information to newcomers, their needs to successfully integrate and best to overcome barriers. An expansion across different cities would provide an understanding of how unique the Stockholm experience of this study is. A larger sample would allow the experiences of asylum-seekers from different countries to be compared. A comparison with the experience of non-asylum-seeking migrants could provide a better isolation between the factors of ethnicity, asylum and parental influence. Additionally, the challenges introduced in this study may not end after receiving permanent residency. A longer-term study would provide an understanding of how these barriers evolve over time.

The results of this study allude to another question, which is somewhat rhetorical at this stage: To what degree are Sweden’s policies of parental choice in schools enabling integration within this society? This question goes beyond the scope of this study but introduces a number of interesting topics for further investigation: do schools provide sufficient support for the needs of asylum-seekers? how does their academic achievement compare to the national average? and what inputs allow students to succeed, despite facing barriers? If the possibility of further study of these topics were to present themselves these concepts should be investigated further.
10. Conclusions

This study provided three key features: A detailed example of the challenges faced by asylum-seekers, an exploration of the legacy of plural education within the choice system and a contribution to the greater conceptual field by combining the previous two.

The sample used is a small subset of the asylum-seeking parents who have faced school choice in Sweden in 2017. Political realities and public opinions create a rapidly changing environment that is unique (Migrationsverket, 2017h). These families will remain residents in Sweden though. An understanding of their perception contributes to a better understanding of their experience. If the experience in this study is any indication of that of the larger population, it paints a discouraging picture.

Asylum-seekers in this sample relied on ethnic and social ties for information, ensuring that they not only attend the same schools together but also that they don't have the ability to integrate with ethnic Swedish children. Their information was severely lacking, they had few strategies to change this and number of barriers made enrolment and choice more difficult. While the small scale of this research makes generalization across a larger population difficult, the trends discussed in section 8: Discussion would describe a troubling reality if representative of the larger population. In many cases support must be provided for equal participation. If the Swedish government is unable to provide these supports, plural education is not being achieved and students of different backgrounds and ethnicities do not have the same degree of benefit. These failings in preparing asylum-seekers for a new system and barriers to entry represent a structure in which access and quality received is not equal.

A plural education is desirable for an integrated Sweden (Englund, 2010). Regardless of future policies, many asylum-seekers are now permanent residents of Sweden. The need for inclusion in the education system and ultimately society is a necessity. Sweden’s current choice structure puts the onus on the parent to make the correct decision but makes a strong assumption that failed in this particular example. The limits of information, ability, familiarity and access put these seven parents at a distinct disadvantage in making effective school choices and gives the children much greater obstacles to overcome.

The reliance of respondents on WOM for information severely limited their ability to receive accurate and detailed explanations of the structure of the Swedish system or timely information for efficient enrolment in school. The information they received varied wildly and those without an educated background were at an advantage. Respondents in this study were both unable to make this choice nor sufficiently aware of the need to do so. The results suggest a situation where native Swedes select schools, while new-comers are allocated schools. In a choice model this would not result in an integration of these two groups, a current goal of the Swedish government (Skolverket, 2017c). Today, 25 years after the introduction of school choice, the approach requires further investigation into its ability to promote equity within Swedish society and ultimately the degree that plural education is being provided.
11. Sources


12. Appendix A – Interview Guide

Identity Coding Guide

**Interviewers:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brendan Munhall</td>
<td>BM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Translators:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Participants:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview</th>
<th>Name(s)</th>
<th>Contact Details</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Date Interviewed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
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<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<td>E</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>G</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-section</td>
<td>Questions</td>
<td>Clarifying questions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1.a) family/basic background | - What country are you originally from?  
- When did you arrive in Sweden  
- How many children do you have?  
- How old are they?  
- Are they currently enrolled in school?  
- Does your child have any additional needs (disabilities)*?  
- Has the Swedish government discussed a plan for your child with you?  
- To parents → What is your own education history? | Can you give me an example?  
Why do you think this is?  
Can you expand on this?  
Tell me more about that? |
| 1.b) Origin country | - Can you describe how you chose/picked your child’s school in (home country)?  
- Were they able to attend the school they wanted to?  
- No → What barriers prevented this?  
- Yes → Were you happy with this school?  
- Was there an opportunity to change schools? Why or why not? | Can you give me an example?  
Why do you think this is?  
Can you expand on this?  
Tell me more about that? |
| 1.c) Transit countries | - Before living in Sweden did you live in any other countries? | Can you give me an example?  
Why do you think this is? |
### 1.d) Optional section: Special needs

- Tell me about challenges you have had before Sweden.
- How were you supported in (home/transit countries)?
- Tell me about challenges you have had in Sweden.
- What has the Swedish government done to support you?
  - Officially diagnosed in Sweden?
- What information were you given specifically about your case?

### 2: Philosophy

#### 2.a) Desires

- Do you want to stay in Sweden permanently?

#### 2.b) Philosophy

- What is the role of a school in society? What is it for?
  - How can it help your child?
  - How can it help society?
  - Who has responsivity for a child’s education, the school or the parent?

### 3: Arrival

#### 3.a) priorities

- When you were first registered in Sweden, what was your main priority for your family?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tab 3.b) information (presented by an official or learned by word of mouth)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Could you explain how the Swedish school system works from your perspective?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How do enrol your child in school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How do you find a school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Can you choose between schools?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Where did you get this information?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What makes a good school for you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Were you given information about schools from anyone (Government, NGO, school officials/advertising, other people at the camp)? For example how the school system works, where to find schools, the different levels of schooling for different ages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yes</strong> → Who, what did they say, etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How useful did you find this information?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No</strong> → Where did you find information? What did you find? Did you actively search for information yourself?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What did you do without information?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Is there anything you don’t know how to do/want to understand better? How can you find information about that?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**4: Enrolment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-section</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Clarifying questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.a) where and why chosen (feeling of choice)</td>
<td>- Why did you choose your current school?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Did you want to avoid any schools?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you want to change schools?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is choice important to you?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Do you feel that you have the ability to change schools?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- How would you do that? Would you be able to find that information anywhere?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can you give me an example?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Why do you think this is?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can you expand on this?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tell me more about that?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4.a) challenges</th>
<th><strong>What has been the most challenging parts of the Swedish school system?</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What is a school queue?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can you give me an example?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Why do you think this is?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Have you had to wait in a queue/line to register for a school?  
  Yes → for how long?  
  No → Was this the first school you looked at.

- How has transportation (buses and the t-banna) affected your choice of schools?
- Have any schools offered to pay for an SL card for you?

5: Attendance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-section</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Clarifying questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.a) satisfaction</td>
<td>Describe your current school.</td>
<td>Can you give me an example?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What works well?</td>
<td>Why do you think this is?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What does not?</td>
<td>Can you expand on this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does the school communicate with you? Do they tell you how your child is doing?</td>
<td>Tell me more about that?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How do they communicate with you?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.b) Having a voice</td>
<td>Have you had conversations with anyone from the state; kommun; school, ngo, etc about anything you want to change?</td>
<td>Can you give me an example?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What happened?</td>
<td>Why do you think this is?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nothing → What did you do next? Did anything change on its own?</td>
<td>Can you expand on this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They responded positively/They responded negatively</td>
<td>Tell me more about that?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>→ What did you do? Has anything changed?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6: Future

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-section</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Clarifying questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.a) hopes</td>
<td>What do you want education to provide for your child(ren)?</td>
<td>Can you give me an example?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How would that look/What steps should be taken to provide this?</td>
<td>Why do you think this is?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What do you want the school to provide for you?</td>
<td>Can you expand on this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What does a successful education look like to you?</td>
<td>Tell me more about that?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.b) wishes to change</td>
<td>What do you think can be improved in the Swedish school system?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What kind of information would you like to have?

| 6.c) general feeling and reflections | Is there anything else you want to share about experience in Swedish schools? |

7: Respondents

Do you know any others that you could recommend that I interview?

How can I contact them?
13. Appendix B – Information Page

English

Master's Programme in International and Comparative Education

Introduction: My name is Brendan Munhall and I am currently enrolled in the Masters of International and Comparative Education programme at Stockholm University. I am conducting research to gain an understanding of the experience of asylum seekers within the education system in Sweden and request your participation.

Aim of the Study: This study aims to understand the ability of asylum seeking students of compulsory schooling age, grades one to nine, to benefit from the school choice system in Sweden. The guardians of these students are the intended respondents as the primary decision makers in this case. My questions revolve around the information that parents have to make school choice decisions, their strategies for finding information and the means they have to act on these choices. The larger theme of this study is about the access these families have to quality education here in Sweden.

Interview Procedure: This interview is intended as a semi-structured interview. While questions have been prepared beforehand, the direction and depth of answers are dependent on the respondent. The research asks the participants to share as much detail as possible. The interview will take approximately one hour.

Privacy: The content of this interview will be used for research purposes only. All participants will be made anonymous and a code used as replacement to names. Any identifiable information will be altered to ensure anonymity.

Contact: If you have further questions about this study please contact me at ___________ or my thesis supervisor at ________________. You may keep this letter for future reference. Thank you for your participation.

Brendan Munhall
المقدمة:

اسمي Brendan Munhall وأنا مسجل حالياً في ماجستير برنامج التربية المقارنة الدولية في جامعة ستوكهولم. أنا أقوم بإجراء البحوث لفهم تجربة طالبي اللجوء في النظام التعليمي في السويد وطلب مشاركتكم.

الهدف من الدراسة:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى فهم قدرة طالبي اللجوء الطلاب في سن التعليم الإلزامي، الصفوف 1-9، للاستفادة من نظام اختيار المدرسة في السويد. أوصياء هؤلاء الطلاب هم العينات المقروضة كونهم صناع القرار الأساسيين في هذه الحالة. استفساراتي تدور حول المعلومات التي يمتلكها أولياء الأمور لاختيار قرارات اختيار المدرسة، واستراتيجياته للعثور على المعلومات، والوسائل التي لديهم للعمل على هذه الخيارات. الموضوع الأكبر والأهم في هذه الدراسة هو حول طريقة وصول هذه الأسر إلى تعليم جيد هنا في السويد.

إجراء المقابلة:

تم إعداد هذه المقابلة كمقابلة شبه منظمة. في حين أنه تم إعداد الأسئلة مسبقاً، في المقابل يكون توجه وعمق الإجابات يعتمد على المجيب (الشخص الذي تجري معه المقابلة). تطلب الأبحاث من المشاركين أن يشاركون أكبر قدر ممكن من التفاصيل. سوف تستغرق المقابلة حوالي ساعة واحدة.

الخصوصية:

سيتم استخدام محتوى هذه المقابلة لأغراض البحث فقط. سوف يكون جميع المشاركين مجهولي الهوية وسيتم استخدام رموز كبدل عن الأسماء. سوف يتم تغيير أي معلومات تعريفية لضمان عدم الكشف عن هوية المشارك. وفي ختام هذه الدراسة، سيتم إتلاف جميع المعلومات.

الإتصال:

إذا كان لديك المزيد من الأسئلة حول هذه الدراسة يرجى الاتصال بي على ______________ أو الاتصال بمشرفة الأطروحة الخاصة بي على ______________. تستطيع الاحتفاظ بهذه الرسالة للرجوع إليها في المستقبل. شكراً على مشاركتكم.

Brendan Munhall
Dari

Department of Education

Master's Programme in International and Comparative Education

Brendan Munhall

Mقدمه: نام من Brendan Munhall، است و فعلأ در پروگرام آموزش مقایسه و بین المللی در سطح ماستری در دانشگاه استکهلم مشغول به تحقیق می‌باشم. بمنظور درک تجربه پناهجویان در داخل سیستم آموزشی سوئدی، من تحقیق خود را در این زمینه انجام می‌دهم و تفاضل مشارکت‌ها را بیان می‌نمایم.

هدف تحقیق: هدف این تحقیق فهمیدن توانایی معلمان پناهجویی که در سنین اجباری مکتب یعنی از سنین ۸ تا ۱۰ سالگی، در بردن از سیستم انتخاب مکتب در سوئدی است. سربررسی می‌کنم توانایی معلمان نگهدارنده است که در این زمینه به مشورت سرپرستان مکتب که والدین بايد تصمیمات انتخاب مکتب را اتخاذ کنند، استراتژی‌هایی را برای یافتن اطلاعات و روشهایی که آنها با این انتخاب‌ها باید عمل کنند. موضوع گسترده‌تر این تحقیق درباره دسترسی که این خانواده‌ها به آموزش با کیفیت اینجا در سوئدی دارند است.

بروگاه مصاحبه: این مصاحبه به شکل یک مصاحبه تکنیکی به هدف استفاده خواهد شد. همه شرکت کنندگان بصورت ناشناخته خواهند بود و وک ویدئویی و یک کد جایگزین نام می‌گیرند. هرگونه معلومات قابل شناسایی مربوط به شرکت کنندگان بیشتری نخواهد داشت. همه اطلاعات در پایان این تحقیق خواهد داشت.

تماس: اگر شما سوالات بیشتری درباره این تحقیق دارید، در تماس شوید. شما می‌توانید این ورق را بزنید و نظر را مراجعه در آینده ثبتهاید. تشکر از مشارکت شما.

Brendan Munhall
Brendan Munhall

Mira Nam

Brendan Munhall

Two master's students from all around the world are currently enrolled in the International and Comparative Education Master's Program at Stockholm University. They have come to Stockholm to gain an understanding of the education system in Sweden and to work with the researcher. Their research is centered on the selection system for higher education in Sweden for schoolchildren seeking refuge, and the ability to understand these students' problems. Their parents are looking for fundamental decisions such as expected grades. The interview with the family will take approximately an hour. The interview will be conducted in two parts. The first will be prepared, while the second will focus on the depth of the question. The research is an impossible subject to the participants. All participants will be made anonymous and will be referred to by a code name. Any identifiable information will be removed. At the end of the research, all information will be destroyed.

If you have any further questions about this research, contact

Brendan Munhall
Master's Programme in International and Comparative Education

From the outset, Brendan Munhall introduced himself:

"The programme is run by Stockholm University's Department of Education."

The programme is designed to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of international and comparative education. It aims to prepare students for careers in educational policy, international development, and related fields.

The programme is structured around a series of core courses, which include:

1. International Education Policy
2. Comparative Education
3. Education in Developing Countries

These courses are taught by leading experts in the field and provide students with a deep understanding of the theoretical and practical aspects of international and comparative education.

To be eligible for the programme, applicants must hold a bachelor's degree in a relevant field, such as education, international studies, or social sciences. Additionally, applicants must demonstrate a strong background in quantitative and qualitative research methods.

The programme is highly competitive, and the selection process is based on academic merit, relevant work experience, and letters of recommendation.

Brendan Munhall
Master's Programme in International and Comparative Education

Brendan Munhall

Department of Education

Tigrinya

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14. Appendix C - Ethical Reference

Stockholms universitet

Institutionen för pedagogik och didaktik

Fil. dr. universitetslektor

Intyg

Till den det verkar bör


Stockholm den 17 februari 2017

Fil. Dr, universitetslektor
Letter of confirmation

To whom it may concern,

I confirm that Mr Brendan Munhall, [blurred], is studying at the Master's Programme in International and Comparative Education, 120 ECTS, at the Department of Education, Stockholm University. During his Independent study and Thesis work (two parts of the Master's Programme), I am his supervisor. Mr Munhall is now preparing a study about the receiving of refugees, and I truly appreciate all support that is given. In addition, we are very concerned about the ethical aspects of such research, and we will do our absolutely best to ensure the integrity for all persons involved.

Stockholm, February 16, 2017

[Name]
PhD Senior lecturer
15. Appendix D – Anonymized Codes

*Some other codes were used in the transcripts but were excluded in this appendix to reduce complexity.

**Interviewer**

BM – Sole interviewer and author of study.

**Translators**

KK – Arabic speaking translator used with RE, RF and RG

AA – Dari speaking translator used with RC and RD

**Respondents**

RA – Respondent A  
RB – Respondent B  
RC – Respondent C  
RD – Respondent D  
RE – Respondent E  
RF – Respondent F  
RG – Respondent G

**Locations**

L1 – First camp location where RA, RB, RC and RD were interviewed

L2 – Second camp location where RE, RF and RG were interviewed

S1 – School from L1

LF1 – First camp location for RF

LF2 – Second camp location for RF

LF3 – Third camp location for RF

LF4 – Fourth camp location for RF

LF5 – Fifth camp location for RF

LF7 – Camp where RF was next moving to

LF8 – Unknown office for enrolment in school used by RF

LG1 – Unknown office for enrolment in school used by RG

**Children**

CA1 – RA’s eight-year-old child who is enrolled in compulsory school

CB1 – RB’s older child enrolled in gymnasium

CB2 – RB’s ten-year-old child who is enrolled in compulsory school
CC1 – RA’s ten-year-old child who is enrolled in compulsory school.
CC2 – RC’s eight-year-old child who is enrolled in compulsory school.
CC3 – RB’s younger child enrolled in forskola.
CF1 - RF’s eight-year-old child who is enrolled in compulsory school.
CG1 - RG’s eight-year-old child who is enrolled in compulsory school.
16. Appendix E – Open Coding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial Open codes</th>
<th>Final Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respondents</td>
<td>Respondents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camp</td>
<td>Camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home country</td>
<td>Home country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time in Sweden</td>
<td>Time in Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time out of school before Sweden</td>
<td>Total school year missed in Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time out of school in Sweden</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children(s) age</td>
<td>Children(s) age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent’s education history</td>
<td>Parent’s education history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sources of Information</td>
<td>Information for Choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details of information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling of having choice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity with choice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiting for it to be arranged</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of system</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
17. Appendix F - Description of Codes

7.1 Background Codes

Respondent: Code for identifying each individual.

Camp: Location of residence.

Home Country: Original home land.

Time in Sweden: The length of time between each family’s arrival in Sweden and the date of their interview (March 2017).

Total school year missed in Sweden: Excluding holiday time, the amount of time children have not been enrolled in a school.

Children(s) age: The age of children at the time of interview (March 2017).

Parent’s education history: A description of schooling level that each parent had experienced in their home country.

7.2 Descriptive Codes

Sources of Information: The person or resource responsible for sharing information regarding enrolment and school choice with each parent.

Information for choice: Content of information received from the source of information.

Forced changes: Describes instances where respondents and their families moved to different camps or schools outside their own volition.

Education experience and philosophy: An explanation of the respondents understanding of education through their own experiences and their opinion on its role in society.

Initiative: Describes opportunities created based on the respondents own actions taken.

Strategies: Describes the way the respondent has found and plans to find more information.

Empowerment: Describes the feeling respondents have of being given the necessary support to pursue their desires in the education system.

Barriers: Describes obstacles to enrolment and school choice.

Communication from school: Describes information provided by school officials on the progress of each child and willingness to explain procedures that are not understood.

Positive Experiences: Describes the productive and beneficial perceptions of the Swedish education system.

7.3 Axial Codes

Impact of an Individual School: Describes the impact of one school [S1] accepting a large group of asylum-seeking students.

Preparedness for Initiative: Discusses what factors contribute to a respondent taking initiative to enrol their child in school.
State information distribution: Describes the degree that the Swedish government provided information on school choice in a systematic manner.