

**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**  
**COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES**  
**CENTRE FOR MIGRATION STUDIES**



**CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AS SOCIAL NETWORKS AND**  
**MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR MIGRANTS**  
**A CASE STUDY OF LUND, SWEDEN**

**BY**

**ANNA STUBBERGAARD**

**(10755216)**

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON,**  
**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF**  
**MASTER OF ARTS IN MIGRATION STUDIES DEGREE**

**DECEMBER 2020**

## DECLARATION

I, Anna Stubbergaard, hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my original research, with the supervision of Dr. Leander Kandilige. This work has not been presented or submitted elsewhere, and all the references cited in this study have been duly acknowledged.



**ANNA STUBBERGAARD**

**(STUDENT)**

14TH DEC 2020

**DATE**



**DR. LEANDER KANDILIGE**

**(SUPERVISOR)**

14/12/2020

**DATE**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I am thankful for the support I have received from my family while writing this dissertation.

I would also like to express my profound gratitude for my supervisor Dr. Leander Kandilige for his consistent and important guidance throughout this process.

I want to acknowledge all the respondents who participated in this study. Firstly, the key informants who provided their knowledge and experiences that gave me a profound understanding about the important work they do. Secondly, my deepest gratitude goes to the migrants who contributed with narratives from their lives, shared their personal challenges and made this study possible.

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

CSO	Civil Society Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
SFI	Swedish For Immigrants
SMA	Swedish Migration Agency
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WHO	World Health Organization

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>DECLARATION</b> .....	i
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b> .....	ii
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b> .....	iii
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b> .....	vii
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b> .....	viii
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	ix
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</b> .....	1
1.0 Background of the study .....	1
1.1 Statement of problem.....	3
1.2 Purpose and Research Questions .....	5
1.3 Objectives .....	5
1.4 Rationality of the study.....	5
1.5 Definition of concepts.....	7
1.6 Structure of Chapters .....	9
<b>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK</b> .....	10
2.0 Introduction.....	10
2.1 Immigration and mental health .....	10
2.1.1 Post Migration Stressors .....	12
2.1.2 The Situation in Sweden .....	14
2.1.3 Civil Society Organizations as support for migrants .....	15
2.2 Conceptual Framework.....	18
2.2.1 The Social Network Theory and Social Capital.....	18
2.2.2 Psychological costs, social capital, and post migration .....	20
2.3 Model of the resettlement process and refugee mental health .....	22
2.4 Summary.....	23
<b>CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY</b> .....	24
3.0 Introduction.....	24
3.1 Research Design.....	24
3.2 Target population.....	25
3.2.1 Sample size and sampling technique.....	25
3.3 Data collection procedure .....	26
3.4 Data Analysis .....	27
3.5 Ethical considerations .....	27
3.6 Positionality .....	28
3.7 Validity, Reliability and Generalizability .....	29

3.8	Limitations .....	30
3.9	Summary .....	30
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: THE RESULTS .....</b>		<b>31</b>
4.0	Introduction.....	31
4.1	Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents .....	31
4.1.1	Migration status .....	33
4.1.2	Family .....	34
4.1.3	Education .....	35
4.1.4	The journey to Sweden .....	35
4.2	Social networks facilitating migration .....	37
4.2.1	The Choice of Sweden .....	37
4.3	The Challenges of the Post Migration Phase .....	41
4.3.1	Language barriers.....	42
4.3.2	Migration Policies .....	43
4.3.3	Future .....	44
4.3.4	Remittances .....	45
4.3.5	Family .....	46
4.3.6	Education .....	46
4.3.7	Accommodation .....	47
4.3.8	Employment.....	48
4.3.9	Culture.....	48
4.3.10	Discrimination.....	49
4.4	Perceived mental health difficulties .....	50
4.5	Background of the CSOs in Lund .....	52
4.5.1	CSOs adapting to societal needs .....	54
4.5.2	CSOs Purpose .....	55
4.5.3	CSOs Challenges .....	56
4.6	CSOs and Mental Health Difficulties .....	58
4.6.1	CSOs' Policies and Guidelines .....	59
4.7	CSOs to mitigate the psychological costs in the post migration process .....	61
4.7.1	Participation in CSO projects.....	62
4.7.2	CSOs providing social resources .....	65
4.7.3	CSO as weak ties.....	68
4.8	Summary .....	69
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION.....</b>		<b>71</b>
5.0	Introduction.....	71
5.1	The migrant experience.....	71

5.2 Social networks.....	73
5.3 CSOs and indirect support.....	75
5.4 Summary.....	76
<b>CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>77</b>
6.0 Introduction.....	77
6.1 Summary of key findings.....	77
6.2 Conclusion.....	79
6.3 Recommendation.....	81
6.4 Areas for further research.....	82
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>92</b>
Appendix 1: Interview guide for CSO workers.....	92
Appendix 2: Interview guide for the immigrants.....	93
Appendix 3: Informed Consent.....	94

## **LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents .....	32
Table 2. Background of the CSOs in Lund.....	53

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 1. Model of resettlement process and refugee mental health .....	23
Figure 2. Perceived post migration stressors experienced by the respondents .....	41
Figure 3. Frequency of post migration stressors among respondents .....	41
Figure 4: Respondents' main reasons for participating in CSOs activities and projects.....	62

## ABSTRACT

Prior research acknowledges that the prevalence of mental health problems is higher among immigrants than the native-born population and that the stress migrants experience at the place of destination can negatively impact integration. Since the beginning of the European so-called ‘refugee crisis’ in 2015, Sweden has experienced an increase of mixed migration flows, which has indicated a rising demand from the host country to support the various categories of migrants’ needs. In addition to the national, regional and local authorities adapting to the situation, parts of the Swedish civil society adjusted their projects to increasingly support newly arrived migrants. By conducting a qualitative study with key informants from civil society organizations to obtain knowledge from the host society’s perspective, as well as immigrant’s describing their own situations in the migration process, this study gives a profound understanding of the problem. The model of resettlement process and refugee mental health will provide guidance to understand post migration stressors and potential mental health difficulties, and the social network theory further guides the analysis to comprehend what role social networks and social capital have in facilitating the migration process, with particular focus on the psychological aspects. This study argues that the civil society at the place of destination can provide opportunities for migrants to access social capital and resources, and it is evident that the local civil society organizations’ projects help to reduce the most common post migration stressors. Therefore, they also decrease the risks of mental health difficulties to arise, and further improve the integration process. Despite insufficient tools and resources, the civil society organizations fill the social void that is not covered by authorities, and particularly provide support for the most vulnerable migrants. The organizations function as mediators between the migrants and the host society, where networks can be created and maintained, and therefore lower the psychological costs in the migration process.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Background of the study

International migration has always been present and part of human history, with people moving across borders for various reasons, voluntary or involuntary, to settle down in a new place. While conflicts in many places of the world have resulted in refugees having to flee for survival from their country of origin to settle in another country, population movements also consist of other categories of migrants such as labour migrants, trafficked victims and economic migrants. These mixed migration inflows are challenging for a host society, as there are multiple factors and needs to be addressed among the different categories of migrants (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2016). Depending on the reason behind the migration, as well as socio-demographic background of the migrants, the challenges they experience at the place of destination will vary. Although, as migration is a dynamic process involving cultural change and new life circumstances, it is thus likely that migrants no matter their background to some extent will experience losses or trauma of uprooting and separation from their social support and family at place of origin (Berman et al, 2009). Nevertheless, prior research has shown that the challenges migrants encounter in the country of destination can be equally stressful as the pre-migratory experiences (Dow, 2011). World Health Organization (2018) has stated that the prevalence of mental health difficulties is significantly higher among migrants than the corresponding host country population, and there are many challenges in how to improve the situation.

In 2015, Europe experienced an unexpectedly high number of international asylum-seekers, mainly refugees from the war in Syria, economic migrants from parts of Africa and the Middle

East as well as other categories of migrants (Eurostat, 2020). More than one million migrants arrived after a dangerous route across the Mediterranean Sea, being exposed to multiple risks during the journey (International Organization for Migration, 2015). Among the European countries, Sweden was the second highest recipient of immigrants that year, with more than 160,000 migrants applying for asylum (Swedish Migration Agency, 2020b). Thirty-five thousand of these were unaccompanied minors who required particular assistance (Swedish Institute, 2020). Although Sweden has been a multicultural society for a long time, where one in every six people of the population are born in another country, the sudden peak in immigration implied consequences and new challenges on many levels of the society.

This so-called ‘refugee crisis’ and its supposedly integration failure has since then been frequently debated and a political concern, where negative perceptions of migration have emerged among the public and nationalistic movements have been growing (Moore, 2016). As five years have now passed since the beginning of the ‘refugee crisis’, immigration is back to how it was before, mainly because of the stricter border controls and immigration policies that were implemented in an attempt to regulate the inflow (Swedish Institute, 2020). Although many have been deported, thousands of immigrants arriving since 2015 have been granted asylum or are still waiting on a decision from the Swedish Migration Agency (SMA). Nevertheless, the process of integrating them into the Swedish society has been of highest importance, and how to manage it properly continues to be a prevailing debate. As national, regional, and local authorities had to adapt to cope with the immigrant’s needs, they do not have the capacity to cover all. Simultaneously, many CSOs in Sweden have noticed a need for supporting the newcomers, and therefore adjusted their projects to increasingly include and focus on immigrants, to primarily provide support with settlement challenges (Törngren et al, 2018).

In Lund, a small city with a population of approximately 87,000 (World Population Review, 2020) located in south of Sweden near the Danish border, the number of immigrants arriving in 2015 was 520, whereas 290 of these were unaccompanied minors. Politicians described the situation as being ‘chaotic’ since the community was not prepared for the challenges the influx of immigrants implied. Lack of resources and inadequate experience resulted in many temporary solutions, as particularly the unaccompanied minors were in much need of acute support and health care. The following years, the number of immigrants moving to Lund continued to increase, although the proportion of unaccompanied minors decreased. Among the asylum seekers who arrived since 2015, only 20-30 percent are self-sufficient, thus the majority receive governmental allowance. Since 2018, immigration to Lund has been decreasing, as it also has in the rest of Sweden (Svanh, 2020). However, the already arrived immigrants are either awaiting a decision for their asylum application or have been granted residence permit, hence integrating them in the society is fundamental for them and the community.

### **1.1 Statement of problem**

Although international migration agencies have acknowledged the growing issue of post migration stressors and worsened mental health among immigrants, there is still lack information on how to solve the problem (Ventevogel et al, 2015, World Health Organization, 2018). Prior research agrees on the most common sources of stress during the post migration phase, and how it can result in mental health difficulties such as anxiety and depression. This can further affect the migrant’s capability to cope with the necessary adaptations towards integration (Berry et al, 1987). To learn a new language and enter the labour market demands a lot of effort, but due to the stressors and worsened well-being a migrant may not have the energy for it (Czubinska, 2017). According to Omidian (1996), mental health problems will

increase if a migrant is exposed to severe stress during a long period of time, which is why it is important to analyse the phenomenon and mitigate the problem early in the process. As Sweden experienced an unexpected increase of migrants in 2015, and have had difficulties managing it, integration of immigrants has been problematized and widely debated (Moore, 2016). Eliassi (2017) discuss how racism and discrimination towards migrants are continuously growing, partly due to the alleged lack integration often mentioned by the media and politicians. Hence, integration is a complex phenomenon with various dimensions to consider, whereas the problem of migrants' potential worsened health and it being a risk factor for lessened integration needs to be considered. The purpose of this study is therefore to analyse the psychological aspect of the post migration process, and particularly examine the stressors a migrant may experience and how factors and mediators can reduce the risk for these to become mental health difficulties. Additionally, it is acknowledged that the Swedish civil society have increasingly included migrants in their projects because of the growing need of support since 2015 (Törngren, 2018), thus the people working in these organizations will likely encounter migrants with mental health difficulties (Östlin, 2019). In Lund, several local CSOs focus on newly arrived immigrants, where they aim to offer social support and guidance in the integration process. Many of their migrant participants are in particular need of improving their situation and do not have a social network to rely on (Sydsvenskan, 2020). Nevertheless, CSOs are mainly run by volunteers who may not be sufficiently trained or experienced in how to help with mental health difficulties, which is why their organizational routines of how they address it must be investigated. As integration can be perceived as a two-way process (Bakker, 2014), both the immigrant and the host society should be considered in order to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the problem, and to examine if the support that CSOs offer benefits the well-being of immigrants and further improve integration.

## **1.2 Purpose and Research Questions**

The purpose of this study is to understand CSOs role as social networks and mental health support for migrants in the post migration phase. The study therefore aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What role does social networks have in facilitating migration to Sweden?
2. What are the main challenges a migrant experience in the post migration phase?
3. How do CSOs provide mental health support for migrants?
4. How can CSOs improve migrants' well-being in the country of destination?

## **1.3 Objectives**

In order to answer the research questions, the general objective is to explore the significance of CSOs as support for the migrant respondents' well-being, and following objectives will also be interrogated:

1. To examine if social networks have alleviated challenges during the respondents' migration to Sweden.
2. To identify the main post migration stressors experienced by the respondents.
3. To investigate how the CSOs of Lund work with mental health difficulties among migrants.
4. To explore if CSOs is a source of social capital to improve the respondents' well-being.

## **1.4 Rationality of the study**

This study provides a holistic understanding of how immigrants arriving in Sweden during the so-called 'refugee crisis' perceive their current living situation and what challenges they experience, as well as how different background characteristics affect coping mechanisms and mental health outcomes. By including local CSOs in the study, a unique insight in their part of

the receiving society is used to examine their role as a social network and mental health support for migrants. The city of Lund in Sweden is used for this case study since it experienced a sudden increase of immigrants in 2015. The community had to adapt to the situation rapidly to support the needs of the migrants, whereas involving the local CSO's were among the implemented measures. Perceiving CSOs as part of a migrant's network and social capital thus contributes to the social network theory, as it describes an important part of the meso-level of the post migration phase.

While existing literature suggests that mental health difficulties can lead to problems with integration, it often focuses on the migrant, and less is discussed on measures and correlations that can strengthen migrants' well-being from the host society's perspective. This study has an additional perspective of the receiving community's role in improving the post migration process and highlights the importance of CSOs role in providing social capital. Additionally, the information obtained suggests that post migration stressors are common, particularly among certain categories of migrants, and reveals the lack of knowledge and policies among CSOs to fully support the needs. To evaluate the CSO's capacity to meet the psychological challenges will benefit the organizations and their work, but also the city of Lund in how to improve integration. Hence, CSOs has been proven to have a central role for migrants that are part of their organizations, as their assistance in coping with stressors and engaging migrants in joyous and meaningful activities, which gives them a sense of belonging, indirectly have positive effects on a migrant's well-being. The result from this study shows the importance of promoting CSOs for newly arrived immigrants that may have a disrupted social network, as a way to integrate faster into the host society and thus minimize the post migration stressors and potential mental health difficulties.

## **1.5 Definition of concepts**

### *Asylum-seeker*

To apply for asylum is a human right, and the International Organization for Migration (2019) defines an asylum-seeker as “an individual who is seeking international protection”. It is a migrant whose asylum application has not yet been processed and thus still awaits a decision.

### *Civil Society Organization (CSO)*

United Nations (2020) describes civil society as the ‘third sector’ of society. The organizations within the civil society are outside the state and business sectors, strictly non-profit and are mainly operated by volunteers. The CSOs (which also includes NGOs) can have widely different orientations, and the most common are either of recreational, cultural, traditional or religious purposes, as well as organizations with a social focus (Clayton et al, 2000).

### *Economic migrant*

An economic migrant is someone who migrates across an international border or within a state, primarily motivated by economic opportunities and livelihood improvement (International Organization for Migration, 2019).

### *Mixed Migration Flows*

Internal or international population movement that includes various categories of migrants such as refugees, IDPs, labour migrants and refugees. It often signifies a flow of people using the same routes and means of transport although for different reasons (International Organization for Migration, 2019).

### *Unaccompanied minor*

As defined by the Convention on the Right of the Child, Article 1, an unaccompanied minor (or child) is someone “*who have been separated from both parents and other relatives and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for doing so*” (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2005).

### *Refugee*

The term ‘refugee’ is defined in the 1951 Refugee Convention as “*someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.*” (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 1951). The Organization of African Unity (1969) further defines the term in the OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa as “*every person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part of the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his country of origin or nationality.*”.

### *Immigrant*

IOM describes an immigrant as follows: “From the perspective of the country of arrival, a person who moves into a country other than that of his or her nationality or usual residence, so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence”. The UN further defines an immigrant as a person, from the perspective of the country of destination, who permanently resides, or has the intention to stay permanently, in a foreign place for more than one year regardless of the cause and the means used to migrate (International Organization for Migration, 2019).

*Post Migration Stressors:*

Thoits (1995) describes stressors as “any environmental, social or internal demand that requires the individual to readjust his/her usual behavior patterns”. Hence, the post migration stressors are stressors that are related to the experiences a migrant has at the place of destination during the post migration phase (Beiser and Hyman, 1997).

*Mental Health Difficulties*

There is no single definition of the broad and complex concept of mental health difficulties. However, this study uses the term to simplify and include the many various types of mental health problems. According to the American Psychiatric Association (2018), mental health difficulties or mental illnesses imply a common health condition that is associated with distress and/or problems functioning in social, work or family activities. WHO state that mental health difficulties can vary from common disorders of anxiety and depression, to more severe mental disorders such as schizophrenia and psychoses (World Health Organization, 2019).

**1.6 Structure of Chapters**

This study is structured into six main chapters. Chapter One is introductory and describes the background of the study, the problem statement, the purpose, research questions and the objectives, rationale of the study and lastly definition of concepts. Chapter Two reviews prior research within the same field in relation to the purpose of this study, and explains the conceptual framework. Chapter Three describes the methodology that is adopted. Furthermore, Chapter Four presents the results from the interviews with the migrants as well as the CSO key informants, and Chapter Five continues to discuss and analyse the results. Finally, Chapter Six concludes with a summary and a discussion about future research and recommendations.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the phenomenon of mental health difficulties related to post-migration stressors as potential obstacles for integration are explored through prior research. Thereafter, information about Sweden as part of the 'refugee crisis' will be processed, underlining the needs of the thousands of migrants arriving. Further, local CSOs support for migrants at the place of destination and their part of the new integration challenges will be described. This chapter will also outline the conceptual framework for the study, as the theory of social network and the complementary model of resettlement process and refugee mental health (Figure 1) will guide the analysis.

#### 2.1 Immigration and mental health

As an individual, going through new life situations or challenging times, can have various levels of impact on a person's well-being. Migration implicates an inevitable change, where adapting to new environments, cultures and societies can be complex and stressful. Depending on the migrant's background and possibly traumatic experiences during the migration process, it will affect their mental health at the place of destination (World Health Organization, 2018). International migration agencies have acknowledged the growing issue of mental health difficulties among migrants (Ventevogel et al, 2015), and multiple studies show evidence of a higher prevalence of depression and other mental disorders such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) among immigrants than in the corresponding host country population (Carballo and Mboup, 2005, Pernice and Brook, 1996, Alemi et al, 2014). The problems are particularly dominant among refugees, which may be correlated with post migratory difficulties (Priebe et al, 2016, Hwang et al, 2007). Studies have proven higher rates of suicide

among migrants than non-migrants (Carballo and Mboup 2005), as well as immigrants having an increased risk for developing schizophrenia and other psychosis (Westermeyer, 1989 in Dow, 2011). Extensive investigations from UNHCR and IOM (Ventevogel et al, 2015) demonstrates post migration problems resulting in feelings such as anger, sadness, fear and worries which can result in sleep problems and dysfunction in everyday life. Carballo and Mboup (2005) discuss how the feelings of relative deprivation, homesickness and anxiety about the future can result in depression and psycho symptomatic functional disorders. Additionally, experiences of discrimination and racism as well as feelings of alienation will increase the negative sentiments (Pernice and Brook, 1996). Carter and McGoldrick (1989) claims that migration as a life changing procedure can be disruptive and result in an emotional crisis. The difficulties will likely be more severe for undocumented immigrants as they are more exploited and vulnerable in general (Dow, 2011). Moreover, forced and displaced migrants who are being pushed out of their place of origin often have to leave much behind and are unaware of where to end up and how their future life will be like. They are more prone to experience danger and trauma during the journey, as well as suffer from more severe stressors that could affect their well-being (Kunz, 1973). Other types of migrants might be able to plan towards their journey and place of destination, and therefore be relatively mentally prepared. However, the hopes and reasons for migration, such as seeking better economic opportunities, may be disrupted upon arriving when realizing the challenges, which could result in stress for the migrant (Carter and McGoldrick, 1989).

Stress and living difficulties in the post migration phase can result in a generally lowered mental health status and result in depression, which will negatively impact the integration process (Berry et al., 1987). The changes associated with migrating to a new country increases the levels of anxiety and therefore naturally also the levels of defense, which undermines the

possibilities of adaptation to integrate. The strength it takes to learn a new language, adapt to a new culture and find an employment is demanding, and to also suffer from mental health problems adds another layer of difficulty to cope with all the challenges (Czubinska, 2017). Bakker et al. (2014) explains how mental health difficulties can decrease the cognitive and interpersonal capabilities, which decreases the effectiveness of managing stressors and improving integration.

Prior research shows that there is a lack of knowledge about the accessible health care amongst immigrants living with mental health difficulties, and language barriers can further complicate or prolong a treatment, or result in misdiagnosis. Stigma and cultural beliefs about mental disorders can be an obstacle for seeing a therapist, as many perceive mental health problems as shameful, or that support from professionals is not trustworthy (Ku, Waidmann, 2003). Kirmayer et al (2011) suggests that the cultural aspect of coping with stressors is important to consider; depending on family structure and their cultural views on health there will be various levels of acceptance about mental health problems. Additionally, undocumented immigrants could withhold personal information due to the fear of being detained or reported to authorities and are therefore more reluctant to seek help (Priebe, 2016).

### *2.1.1 Post Migration Stressors*

Within migration studies, research commonly divides the migration process into three parts: pre-migration, transit and post migration. Each phase contains various elements, risks and exposures, depending on what type of migrant one is. There are numerous reasons behind the decision to migrate, and depending on this, the process will also vary. The degree of trauma a migrant experiences prior to migration as well as during the journey will most likely have effects on his or her well-being. Kirmayer et al (2011) states that the socio-economic status of

migrants at the country of origin will presumably affect the outcome. Mirkin (1998) adds that pre-migratory factors such as culture and family situation are important determinants for a migrant's well-being at the place of destination. Additionally, there are dangers and traumatic experiences in the transit, such as kidnappings, violence, sexual abuse, diseases, starvation and poverty (UNFPA, 2005). Regardless of each individual's experience, migrants will have their social support and network relatively disrupted, with roles and norms changing in a new environment (Kirimayer et al, 2011).

Prior research has identified numerous stressors that occur in the post migration phase. Hwang et al. (2007) argue that migration itself could be a stressor since it often entails social, economic and psychological costs that will challenge a migrant's abilities to cope with the situation. However, while analysing various studies, the most commonly referred to stressors perceived by migrants are unemployment, loss of social status and new roles and norms, cultural differences and financial difficulties (Berry et al, 1987, Carballo and Mboup, 2005, Dow, 2011). Ager and Strang (2008) add the lack of safety at the place of destination, and James et al. (2019) identify uncertainty for basic needs and worries about the future as important stressors. Particularly asylum seekers and irregular migrants are stressed about the uncertainty, if they will be allowed to stay, with a constant fear of being deported (Aroian, 1993). Priebe (2016) claims that the legal processes with migration policies they must go through while waiting for an unpredictable decision are frustrating.

Moreover, the language barrier is frequently discussed throughout literature about post migration stressors, since not knowing the local language will be an obstacle on many levels of society. It can result in misunderstandings and missing out on important appointments, and the possibilities for integration decrease when language skills are limited (Westermeyer, 1989 in Dow, 2011). Mainly because of the language barrier, many immigrants experience

discrimination particularly in the labour market (Li, 2016). Additionally, the credentials from home may not be useful at the place of destination, whereas an immigrant with high socio-economic status back home now has to settle for a low status job. Hence, according to Dow (2011), immigrants from lower economic statuses are less vulnerable to mental health problems since they are more satisfied with any job they can get.

There is evidence of women being more at risk of suffering from mental health problems such as depression and anxiety than men, due to generally increased vulnerability as well as higher expectations (Priebe, 2016). Boyd (1989) suggests that migrant women have more pressure from their families at the place of origin and they are more likely to be expected to send remittances, provide care, and return home when required. Additionally, gender-based violence is more likely to occur in migrant couples during stressful times, particularly if the husband is unemployed and they are experiencing lowered socio-economic status (Dow, 2011).

### *2.1.2 The Situation in Sweden*

In 2015, many European countries experienced a rapid increase of mixed migration flows, for example as an estimation of more than one million migrants arriving by crossing the Mediterranean Sea. That year was the start of the so-called ‘refugee crisis’, where European countries felt overwhelmed by the influx of immigrants. To manage, stricter policies were implemented, and some country borders became more or less closed (International Organization for Migration, 2015). During 2015, Sweden experienced a peak in immigration as over 160,000 asylum-seekers arrived, with high numbers continuing the following year. Many of the immigrants arrived from war-torn Syria, but among the mixed migration flow were also thousands of asylum seekers from Afghanistan, particularly unaccompanied minors who arrived without a family. Since 2015, Sweden has implemented more rigorous immigration laws and other guidelines that eventually decreased the number of immigrants

(Swedish Migration Agency, 2020b). As the number of immigrants increased and Sweden was facing new challenges, political debates and controversy about migration and integration arose simultaneously, and an anti-immigration political party grew into becoming the third largest national party (Moore, 2016).

A couple of recent studies about mental health and immigrants in Sweden have been conducted. The results show similar evidence as studies in other countries, which is that the incidence of mental health difficulties is higher among immigrants than the host-country population. One study concludes that refugees have a higher risk of non-affective psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia, as well as other common mental disorders such as PTSD, compared to non-refugee migrants and native-born Swedish population. The incidence of psychotic disorders in refugees after resettlement was three times higher than in Swedish-born people and 66% higher than in non-refugee migrants (Hollander et al., 2016). In a study about immigrants from Middle East currently living in Sweden, the authors identified four dimensions of post migration stressors: social and economic strain, alienation, discrimination and status loss, and violence and threat, and emphasize the socio-economic disadvantages and the feelings of alienation as being the main causes of symptoms of common mental disorders (Lindencrona et al., 2008). A recent report concluded that unaccompanied minors living in Sweden run a ten times higher risk to commit suicide compared to Swedish-born minors, and Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare has expressed their growing concern (Edizada, Axelsson, 2020).

### *2.1.3 Civil Society Organizations as support for migrants*

As migration implies movement across borders, cultural differences as part of the process are inevitable. Friendship and family ties will transform or be disrupted; hence the social support of the migrant will change. Settling down in a new place could entail limited social life and exclusion in the host society, resulting in issues with belonging and identity to arise (Berman

et al., 2009). In a study conducted in the United States of America, evidence shows that immigrants coming from collectivistic cultures may have to learn how to adapt to a more individualistic approach. The loss of social support resulted in feelings of loneliness and isolation and has been proved to be a crucial determinant in causing mental health. It is acknowledged that immigrants who settle in areas where there is an established ethnic community will have improved mental health, and if they feel supported by the receiving community in general (Dow, 2011). By reviewing prior research, it is thus apparent that the culture and the public's attitudes towards immigration among the host society is important for an immigrant's well-being. WHO recognize the crucial contribution that the civil society in the place of destination have for migrants health, and that their extensive work is highly appreciated (Östlin, 2019). Furthermore, the CSOs improve the support among communities in the receiving society, working closely with both the native population and newly arrived immigrants.

Anheier and List (2005) discuss how civic engagement forming the third sector of society has not historically been acknowledged or considered enough, as much focus lies on the other two sectors: the state and the market. Although the civil society sector is complex to analyse, it has a part in many dimensions of a society and needs to be recognized as an important factor in the integration process. These institutions and organizations function as a balance between the government and business and has an important part of societal development. WHO (World Health Organization, 2020) describes civil society as *“the space for collective action around shared interests, purposes and values, generally distinct from government and commercial for-profit actors (...) Despite its complexity and heterogeneity, the inclusion of civil society voices is essential to give expression to the marginalized and those who often are not heard. Civil society actors can enhance the participation of communities in the provision of services and in policy decision-making.”*. This entails that the civil society should not be underestimated, as it

can influence many people and therefore be a force of change and development in a community. Held (1987, in Odmalm 2004) claims that a strong civil society is crucial for a healthy democracy, and that the state and civil society are interdependent. The state promotes the CSO's projects through funding, which the organizations must apply for, while they play a role in the society that benefits the state.

To an extent, Swedish authorities have the responsibility to take care of newly arrived immigrants and provide them with important necessities. For example, asylum-seekers have the right to health care, minimal financial support, temporary accommodation and free school for children, while awaiting a residence permit (Swedish Migration Agency, 2020b). Much of this is managed locally by each municipality, and Sweden's large public sector has the responsibility to provide the citizens as well as the immigrants with welfare services. In addition to this, Sweden has a long history of a strong civil society, which historically mainly has had a cultural and recreational purpose (Törngren et al., 2018). CSOs consisting of volunteers that provide their time, effort and knowledge are highly prevalent in the Swedish society, with almost half of the population participating in some sort of civic engagement, particularly organizations with a social dimension (Wagndal, Segnestam, 2018).

In 2015, when the increased number of immigrants arrived, many Swedish CSOs shifted their focus towards supporting the migrants in various ways, and therefore facilitating the integration process. Initially, when the rapid increase started in 2015, local CSOs and volunteers gave immediate assistance by the country border, providing newly arrived immigrants with basic needs. Since then, CSOs have continued to advocate integration through programs, activities and workshops, funded by the state and other donors (Törngren et al., 2018).

## **2.2 Conceptual Framework**

The social network theory contains various predictions about how networks and social capital can influence the migration process. This framework will guide this study in order to obtain an understanding of the role social connections play in the different phases of migration, with a focus on the potential psychological costs that migration implies. Additionally, the model of resettlement process and refugee mental health (Figure 1) is used, to obtain the dimension of mental health difficulties. Since this model considers both pre- and post migration stress as well as personal and social resources, it will be complementary to the social network theory and the concept of social capital. The model guides the analysis for the material obtained regarding post migration stressors, and although it was initially formed for refugees particularly, it will be applied to the mixed migrant group participating in this study.

### *2.2.1 The Social Network Theory and Social Capital*

The concept of social networks and its possibility to facilitate migration has been explored by many renowned researchers (Macdonald, MacDonald, 1964, Boyd, 1989, Massey, 1990). Massey and España (1987) suggest that this dynamic theory describes how social networks have an important role in understanding complex migration patterns, and how the connections between potential migrants and migrants at the place of destination could lower the costs of the migration process and function as a survival strategy. It therefore contributes to explain the meso level between the individual and the socio-structural explanations for migration (Granovetter, 1973). Boyd (1989) further discusses how there are obligations and expectations between the migrants and non-migrants that would impact the different stages of migration. Hence, there is an interdependency and solidarity within the networks, where the involved actors benefit from the mutual interests (Teye 2013, in Awumbila et al, 2017).

Within migration studies, various economic theories view the individual and the household as rational actors who consider the costs and benefits, where the choice to migrate is based on the

incentive to maximize income and diversify risks and therefore compares the expected earnings and losses (Massey et al., 1993). The social context is thus often excluded, which could result in less comprehensive explanations. To achieve a holistic perspective of the migration process, the social network theory recognizes individuals as rational yet social actors with their own agency, that can be affected by their surroundings to change their beliefs, perceptions and actions. This indicates that migration is a social product and a social behaviour (Boyd, 1989).

According to the theory of social network, the initial migrants of a specific household and network will have the highest material and psychological costs and risks. Arango (2004) claims that they are believed to be from the lower middle class, but as they function as bridges between the new destination and place of origin, they are creating possibilities for aspiring migrants from various backgrounds. Individuals and households who normally would not afford the process can now rely on network connections to minimize the costs and risks, and trust that the process will be beneficial (Massey and España, 1987). Hence, it is believed that the migration flows will continue despite wage differentials between place of origin and place of destination, since the social network theory assumes that the networks will help to overcome this (Arango, 2004). Eventually, when networks continue to grow and the costs of migrating are lowered, it is relatively risk free to migrate and the likelihood of migration continues to increase, and ultimately becomes self-perpetuating. Due to this idea of migrant reproduction, the social network theory can be useful in predicting future migration. In Massey and España (1987) study on Mexican immigrants in the United States of America, the results proved a correlation between social networks and the probability of migration, and the authors claim that the networks are the main explanation for the rapid increase of immigrants.

### *2.2.2 Psychological costs, social capital, and post migration*

Migration implies both material costs, such as transportation expenses, accommodation, and loss of income during transit, as well as psychological costs, which in turn will affect the dynamic and outcome of the process. Separation from family and origin is the main psychological cost, and the sense of loss could impact the post migration phase (Ryan, 2011). According to the theory, social networks will lower these costs as it increases a migrant's feeling of safety and reduces the vulnerability. Research has shown that the psychological costs when adjusting to the new society will be more severe if the place of origin and place of destination are very culturally different (Massey and España, 1987). However, networks can be created, continued, and most likely changed in the post migration phase, whereas social ties at the place of destination will be beneficial in the integration process (Ryan, 2011). Arango (2004) suggests that the social ties in a network where people rely on each other for information, contacts, accommodation, employment and general social support are crucial for integration, and the social capital achieved through networks could be a substitute for economic capital (Awumbila et al., 2017). Ryan's (2011) research presents evidence of how mothering has a strong impact on women's networking, and discusses how culture, language skills and educational background are factors that will affect the possibility to be part of new networks. Additionally, Boyd and Nowak (2012) claim that women have a more active role in maintaining personal networks.

Networks can have different shapes and sizes, and the level of commitment and solidarity varies depending on factors such as members' background or specific interests (Gurak and Caces, 2010). As discussed by Laumann et al. (1978), a network's formation will change over time, and it is the members mutual interests and interdependency that will maintain the group, rather than similar characteristics. This principle of complementarity will keep the members motivated to persist the connections. These common ties play a significant role in the

integration process, where an immigrant builds the social capital from the networks she or he belongs to and benefits from. The social capital further provide safety, which could be particularly important in the post migration process (Arango, 2004).

Granovetter (1973) established the concept of ‘strong and weak ties’, where he claims that the closest kinship and friendships are not the most important bonds for a migrant, but rather the more distant social ties such as acquaintances or casual contacts based on for example common background or life situation. These imply a sense of trust or empathy and are accordingly more helpful when in need of useful resources than the smaller stronger ties which rarely give access to new information. Hence, the bridging between network groups is necessary for new opportunities.

Woolcock (2001) further developed three main types of social capital that immigrants rely on in the post migration process:

The bonding social capital: Relatively small groups of close ties with a high level of trust, for example between family, neighbours and friends.

The bridging social capital: Generally a larger network with weaker ties and more distant relationships and not necessarily much in common, yet part of a person’s everyday life.

The linking social capital: Relations between actors in dissimilar situations, such as between people and societal institutions.

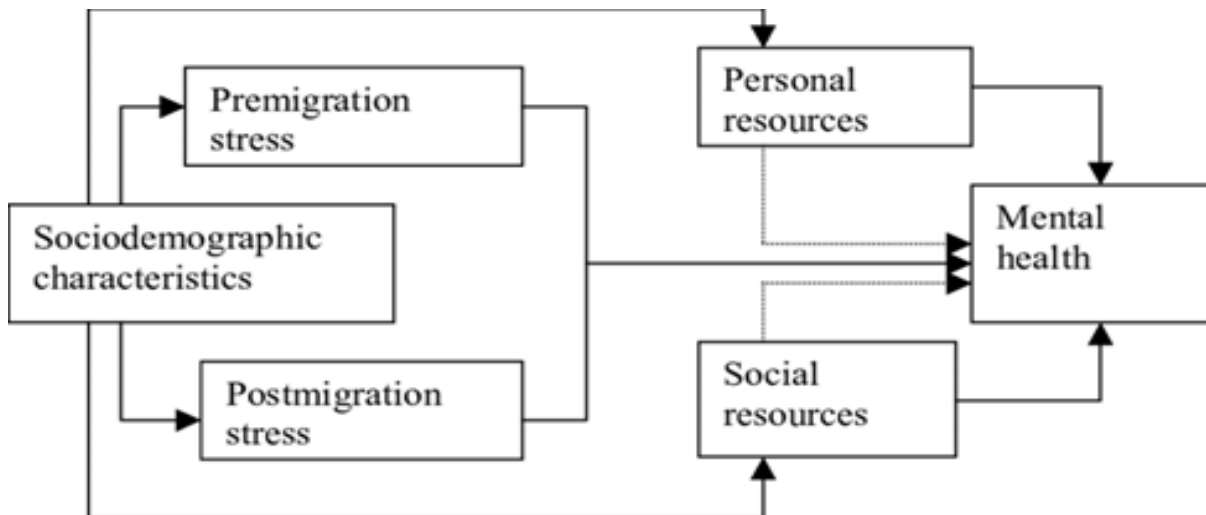
Although the social capital achieved from being part of a network has many benefits, there are also disadvantages. Awumbila et al (2017) mention how poor migrants or employers may be exploited due to the social network, and Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) claims that the obligations and moral solidarity can hinder individual mobility, whereas the members within social networks can put more pressure on the successful members. This is common within

ethnic minority groups and communities, where there is a demand for having to share the profits.

### **2.3 Model of the resettlement process and refugee mental health**

In order to investigate the mental health difficulties and stressors among the migrants in Lund, the model of the resettlement process and refugee mental health is used as a framework.

The model emphasizes important factors that will impact the level of mental health difficulties, whereas the various stressors combined with background and resources available for the migrant will show differences in mental health risks (Beiser and Hyman, 1997). Hence, the migrant's mental health outcome depends on the pre-migration circumstances and post migration experiences, as well as how personal and social resources can help the migrant to cope with the stressors to reduce the potential risks for worsened well-being. According to Beiser and Hou (2006), the model suggests that the most common resettlement stressors are unemployment, inadequate language skills and discrimination, which in turn increase the risk of worsened well-being. The model of resettlement process and refugee mental health is based on the Stress Process theory from Pearlin et al. (1981). They discuss how a process of coping behaviour, support networks and environmental circumstances, rather than single factors, can impact a migrant's mental health. Except from the sources of stress, which can have different levels of intensity depending on personal characteristics and life situations, the model also includes the two mediators of social support resources and personal resources as coping mechanisms that can regulate the effects of the stressors.



*Figure 1. Model of resettlement process and refugee mental health. Source: Beiser & Hyman (1997)*

## 2.4 Summary

By examining prior research, it is evident that mental health difficulties among migrants is a large problem all over the world, and the post migration stressors experienced at the place of destination is prevalent. However, the local CSOs' growing assistance and role of a social network to the newly arrived immigrants in the host society is not adequately addressed in the literature. Furthermore, the social network theory describes how networks and social capital can facilitate the migration process and lower the psychological costs, and the complementary model of resettlement process and refugee mental health (Figure 1) is used to understand more specifically what the stressors experienced by an immigrant can result in.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter describes the qualitative methods that are being used to examine the aim of the study, how the collection of information has been conducted and further how to analyse the gathered data. The researcher's positionality, ethical considerations and the limitations are also discussed.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

To understand a social phenomenon is a complex process, thus it is important to use the proper investigative tools. In order to conduct this study, a qualitative research design was chosen. The qualitative approach was considered most appropriate for this case study as it allows for a deeper understanding of the problem, where the purpose of this study is to analyse the respondents' narratives and behaviors. The subjective perspectives from the participants are not possible to fully capture in a quantitative research design. In many prior studies regarding immigrants' mental health, various mental health screening tools and quantitative questionnaires have been used, which could bring some clarity in the scope of the problem. This however would require a deeper knowledge regarding psychological screening used by healthcare professionals, and to use these tools as a non-professional could generate misleading results. Nevertheless, the aim of this study is not to define their well-being according to health instruments, but rather listen to their own perceptions and experiences. It is a sensitive and complex topic that is being analysed, thus one-on-one conversations with open-ended questions in the interviews are appropriate. In an interview there is an opportunity to receive more, either indirect or direct, information about their well-being as the participants can describe with their own words. Additionally, in order to examine someone's social network completely, it

demands immense logistics, technique and mapping procedures, which is not possible for this study. Therefore, it is most useful to let the respondents themselves explain. For the key informant interviews with the CSO personnel, a qualitative approach is considered to be the most applicable as well, as interviews with open-ended questions allow for them to inform about their projects and enlighten the researcher about their activities, target groups, and challenges.

### **3.2 Target population**

The target population should be selected with regards to the purpose of the study and the conceptual framework (Punch, 2014), which is why both international immigrants and CSO workers have been purposely selected to participate in this study. Through a purposive sampling, participants who possess certain characteristics are chosen (Bernard, H.R., 2002, in Etikan et al., 2016). The sample is a distinct category that requires the researcher to interview specific organizations that are directly involved in providing support for immigrants, as the key informants are able to assist with first-hand information.

#### *3.2.1 Sample size and sampling technique*

Ten key informants from CSOs in Lund were chosen to represent the host society's local civic engagement organizations. They are working either voluntarily or as coordinators in some of the most renowned CSOs in Lund, which either partly or completely have immigrants as their main target group. This type of firsthand information is difficult to find in other sources (Bogner, Littig and Menz, 2009), and interviewing the CSO personnel with a key position in each organization provides the study with valuable inside knowledge. Through purposive sampling, fifteen international immigrants with various backgrounds were chosen, since migrants in different socioeconomic backgrounds, family situations and ages are known to be exposed to and cope with stressors in different ways (Pearlin et al., 1981). Gender of the migrant respondents was not particularly considered, since this study does not specifically aim

to differentiate between genders in the analysis. Nevertheless, the study will be more interesting if both genders are represented, which is why as ten men and five women were included. The specific criteria were that they should have arrived in Sweden in 2015 or after, hence they are among the immigrants arriving after the ‘refugee crisis’ began. Additionally, all the participants were 18 or above.

### **3.3 Data collection procedure**

The data used for this study was gathered during October 2020. The CSO informants were contacted through the official website of the city of Lund, where all local CSOs are listed (Lunds Kommun, 2020). Interviews with open-ended questions were conducted, either with online video calls or in person, where the respondents answered questions to obtain deeper information about each CSO’s work with immigration and integration. The migrant interviews also consisted of open-ended questions, which allowed them to talk relatively freely about their own perspectives. Additionally, the interviews were guided by the aim of the study, which is why socio-demographic variables such as age, gender, socio-economic background, migrant status and reason for migration were asked about to further consider in the analysis. Nearly all interviews were conducted in Swedish, the common language of both respondents and the researcher. Two of the interviews were in English because the respondents felt more comfortable with that. One of the interviews required an interpreter as the respondent did not speak either Swedish or English well enough to speak freely. The interpreter spoke both the respondent’s native language as well as Swedish, to ensure an accurate translation to the researcher. Most of the interviews were audio recorded and further transcribed, although some of the respondents felt worried about being recorded on tape. This had to be respected, and those interviews were instead written down during the interview.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

All interviews were transcribed and analysed using the software program Microsoft Word. The data from the transcriptions was further used for a thematic analysis, where it was sorted and color coded according to the common themes retrieved from the conceptual framework of the study. Central phrases and narratives were compared, coded and grouped, as various concepts from the interviews were developed. Recurring themes were identified, to notice patterns among the interviews, and thematically organized to be used in the analysis (Maxwell, 2012). After arranging the data, the researcher was able to assume that a saturation point was reached from the interviews with the CSO personnel. The ten informants were chosen to obtain a representation of Lund's different types of organizations, and therefore it is considered to be enough data to ensure that the research questions can be answered. Additional data would not provide any new insights, since the CSOs were all in similar situations and had resembling answers in the interviews. However, the data collected from the migrants each had their individual experiences which provided relevant data to understand the scope of the problem. Hence, there was no saturation point reached, as further interviews of people from other countries, backgrounds and life situations could generate more interesting information for a larger research project.

### **3.5 Ethical considerations**

When conducting qualitative research, it is fundamental to consider the ethical issues that could occur, as it is the researcher's responsibility to prevent potential mistakes throughout the procedure (Creswell, 2009). The respondents should not be exposed to any risks, and it is crucial to protect the privacy of the participant and to particularly respect vulnerable populations. Gaining permission and seeking consent from the respondents is mandatory, particularly considering that the topic in this study could be intimate and stressful to talk about. (Maxwell, 2012). Before the interviews started, all respondents were informed about the

purpose and process of the study. They were given a paper which ensured consent, stating guarantees of anonymity and confidentiality, including the researcher's contact information if questions would arise after the interview. Further, in order to ensure anonymity during the data analysis as well, pseudonyms for the respondents' names have been used. Since Lund is a small city, the respondents' country of origin is not included in the analysis, for their identities to not be detectable out of that information. The CSO key informants are not named since they represent their organization, yet the CSO itself is not mentioned by name, as it would be easy to find out who the informant is. Both categories of participants provide this study with sensitive information, hence full anonymity was necessary.

### **3.6 Positionality**

The characteristics of the researcher conducting the study, as well as the participants providing information, could influence the data and thus affect the final analysis and result. It is necessary that the researcher avoids projecting personal feelings and assumptions to not influence the interviews in order to ensure reflexivity and maintain it throughout the study, and also acknowledge how factors such as gender, class, cultural and ideological background could play a role in the outcome. Maxwell (2012) claims that it is impossible to completely eliminate the impact, hence it is important to be aware of it and minimize it. Teye (2012) further discuss how power relations between the researcher and the participants can be challenging. In this study, this is particularly considered when collecting data from the migrants, since the researcher is a native-born Swede and some of the immigrants are in vulnerable positions, such as awaiting asylum, which could create asymmetry and make them reluctant to share personal perspectives. Throughout the study, the researcher has therefore taken the required steps to avoid potential bias. It is crucial to acknowledge that researcher's identity may influence the outcome of the study, hence it is necessary to adapt a reflexive approach in the process.

During the interviews, the researcher was prepared and stayed neutral yet curious, did not express any opinions and excluded personal interpretations. Situations of power relations affecting the interview can be prevented if a relationship of trust is created, and mutual respect and comfort is present. To achieve this, the topic and purpose of the study was clearly presented before the interviews started, the respondents could decide on the location for the interviews, and were able to choose which language they were most comfortable in conducting the interview in. The researcher has maintained professionalism, avoided preconceived ideas, and acknowledged the potential stigmatization about the topics being discussed, and thus respected if a respondent did not want to answer certain questions.

### **3.7 Validity, Reliability and Generalizability**

When conducting a study, the researcher must consider certain factors to assure that it is produced appropriately. Firstly, in order to guarantee validity, the researcher needs to address if choices of the research instruments and methodology are accurate for investigating the purpose of the study and can properly measure it (Leung, 2015). This study used a qualitative methodology, which is believed to be the most appropriate tool to use in order to obtain the information desired, as the study aims to examine personal experiences from the respondents. It also aspires to have a more structural level of the problem whereas key informants have been interviewed to gather organizational information. Secondly, the reliability needs to be considered. As this is a qualitative study with the purpose of generate an understanding of a phenomenon, the consistency of the results cannot be entirely guaranteed. Authors have different opinions on whether reliability should necessarily be considered for a qualitative study. Although, for the study to be as consistent and accurate as possible, Golafshani (2003) suggests that criteria such as credibility, neutrality and transferability should be adopted, and that reliability rather is an outcome of proper validity. Lastly, the generalizability of the study

should be reflected on, which can thus be complicated to determine for a qualitative study since they often aim to study a specific issue and environment (Leung, 2015). Although this study aimed at understanding both structural and individual levels of a problem, and the participants were purposively chosen to represent various migrant groups and a variety of local CSOs in Lund, the number of respondents were not sufficient to be able to fully generalize, as possibly a quantitative study could have. Nevertheless, this study rather offers an in-depth understanding of the phenomena and provides a comprehension of immigrant's situation in Lund and their relation to CSOs.

### **3.8 Limitations**

The process of conducting a study is complex, hence challenges will most likely emerge. Since this study examines personal and sensitive topics, some of the respondents felt reluctant to talk about their backgrounds and current life situations in the beginning of the interviews. Language barriers may have been a reason, as they did not fully understand the theoretical framework underpinning the questions. After more detailed explanation as well as reassurance of anonymity and confidentiality, and in some cases turning off the audio recorder, the interviews could proceed. Interviewing the CSO key informants did not encounter any specific challenges.

### **3.9 Summary**

This chapter presented why the qualitative method was chosen, and described the procedure of interviewing the participants and the data analysis that followed. One section discusses the ethical considerations that is important to address in qualitative research, as well as the researcher's positionality. Validity, reliability, generalizability and limitations is also discussed in order to assure that the study is appropriately conducted.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THE RESULTS**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the results from the data gathered from the immigrants residing in Lund as well as the information obtained from the CSO key informants. The first part gives an overview of the fifteen immigrant respondents' socio-demographic characteristics. With guidance from the social network theory, their background and reason for migration is analysed, in order to address Objective one. Further, Objective two is explored as the perceived post migration stressors among the migrants are being described as well as the potential mental health difficulties among the respondents, to understand how prevalent the problem is. The chapter also presents the information about the CSO key informants' work with immigrants in Lund. This is followed by approaching Objective Three, which seeks to investigate how the CSOs in Lund work with mental health difficulties among the immigrants participating in their projects. Lastly, Objective Four is being addressed by reviewing the importance of CSOs providing social support and facilitating the post migration phase, and how different categories of migrants may have various needs and experiences from it.

#### **4.1 Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents**

Since this study sought to represent the mixed migration flows arriving in Sweden for the past five years, and to obtain different perspectives to use for the analysis, various categories of migrants were interviewed. The following background characteristics of the fifteen immigrant respondents are presented with the basis of the model of resettlement process and refugee mental health (Figure 1), since personal characteristics such as education, family situation and pre-migration stress can have an impact on mental health difficulties.

In addition to what is demonstrated in the Table 2, the respondents were asked about their country of origin, to ensure that they are international migrants. However, this information has not been displayed, as the country of origin does not have a specific role in the analysis. It is rather the reason for migration that is of importance, and what environment and life situation they were in before migrating.

**Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents (Fieldwork, 2020)**

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Type of migrant upon arrival</b>	<b>Year of arrival in Sweden</b>	<b>Family in Sweden</b>	<b>Educational level</b>	<b>Current migration status</b>
1. Mahdi	41	Male	Refugee	2015	No	Tertiary, in country of origin	Refugee
2. James	33	Male	Labour migrant	2018	Yes	Tertiary, in country of origin	Permanent residence permit
3. George	21	Male	Unaccompanied minor	2016	No	Primary	Asylum-seeker
4. John	34	Male	Economic migrant	2015	Yes	Primary, SFI	Permanent residence permit
5. Sarah	28	Female	Refugee	2015	Yes	Tertiary, in Sweden	Stateless
6. Charles	21	Male	Unaccompanied minor	2016	No	Primary	Asylum-seeker
7. Marcus	21	Male	Unaccompanied minor	2015	No	Upper Secondary School, Sweden	Temporary residence permit
8. Ibrahim	25	Male	Refugee	2015	No	Primary, SFI	Temporary residence permit
9. Alex	24	Male	Economic migrant	2017	Yes	Primary	Asylum-seeker
10. Mariah	20	Female	Refugee	2015	Yes	Tertiary, in Sweden	Permanent residence permit
11. Ahmed	20	Male	Refugee	2015	Yes	Tertiary, in Sweden	Permanent residence permit

12. Sam	23	Male	Unaccompanied minor	2015	No	Upper Secondary School, Sweden	Permanent residence permit
13. Aya	22	Female	Student	2019	Yes	Tertiary, in Sweden	Temporary residence permit
14. Fatima	18	Female	Refugee	2019	Yes	None	Asylum-seeker
15. Lisa	21	Female	Unaccompanied minor	2016	No	Primary, currently SFI	Temporary residence permit

#### 4.1.1 Migration status

Six out of the fifteen respondents came to Sweden as refugees, having to flee from a conflict in their country of origin. Out of these six, one is yet holding the migration status of a refugee, and one continues to be stateless. Both have applied for Swedish citizenship, but due to the ‘refugee crisis’ it takes an unusually long time to receive a decision. One of the migrant respondents is currently an asylum-seeker who did not yet receive her status as a refugee or obtain a residence permit since she arrived in 2019, and three have become either temporary or permanent residents. Although these three all arrived in 2015, the migration statuses vary. This is explained through looking at their ages and family situations when they arrived in Sweden, as well as their reason for migration; Mariah and Ahmed both came as minors with their families, which is beneficial in the migration process, whereas Ibrahim was 20 years old when he arrived alone. Mariah explains her family’s situation:

*We came to Sweden as political refugees because my father was threatened, and because of this our whole family managed to get a permanent residency immediately, and then obtain citizenship much faster. (Respondent, 2020)*

Five of the respondents are categorized as unaccompanied minors. Since these are considered to be particularly vulnerable (Sydsvenskan, 2020), it is an important group to analyse. Their reason for migration varies, but a majority of them seek better economic opportunities in

Sweden to be able to support their family back home. As Table 2 shows, they currently have different migration statuses. This is due to various reasons such as number of asylum application rejections from SMA, enrolment in school, and employment. Two of the respondents came as economic migrants, who sought improved livelihood in Sweden to take care of their family in the country of origin. One respondent, James, came as a labour migrant in 2018. He already has a permanent residence permit since he has a full-time job and moved to Sweden to stay with his Swedish wife. Lastly, one respondent is an international student who studies at Lund University, for which she has obtained a temporary residence permit.

#### 4.1.2 Family

Eight out of the fifteen respondents have their families in Sweden. Fatima, Ahmed, Mariah and Sarah came as refugees together with their families and have not married yet. Aya has her family here due to her mother marrying a Swede, hence the whole family migrated together, and Alex migrated to Sweden to join his family which had already arrived a couple of years earlier. John left most of his family at the country of origin in order to migrate to Sweden, where his older brother had already settled. The five unaccompanied minors came alone, although some had distant family members in Sweden. For example, George came alone but was supposed to stay with his uncle, whom he did not hear from since he arrived four years ago:

*I had my mind set on Sweden because I had an uncle here. We talked on the phone before I left my hometown, and he promised to help me, but when I came here, he did not support me at all. (Respondent, 2020)*

Two of the respondents are married – James married a Swedish woman and Mahdi has his wife at the place of origin and he is currently working towards bringing her to Sweden.

#### *4.1.3 Education*

The majority of the respondents have finished primary school, although one has not attended school at all. Two of the respondents have a degree from their country of origin, and four are currently studying at universities in Sweden. Two of them finished Upper Secondary School and Swedish language courses in Sweden before attending university, while one, Aya, studies an international program in English and did not yet start learning Swedish.

Evidence shows that all the respondents who attend a Swedish university migrated together with their parents and other family members, whereas none of the unaccompanied minors have any higher education from place of origin. However, two of the respondents were able to finish Upper Secondary School in Sweden through a new law implemented in 2018. Asylum-seeking children have according to national law the right to start school, and due to the increased influx of immigrants in 2015 and forward, a temporary law was implemented in 2018, allowing minors who already started school in Sweden to continue and finish, despite not yet receiving residence permit. However, this was only possible for immigrants applying for asylum on or before 24<sup>th</sup> November 2015 (Swedish Migration Agency, 2020d). This mean that the respondents Charles and George, who arrived in 2016, missed out on that opportunity. Furthermore, John, Mahdi and Ibrahim have finished the language training program Swedish For Immigrants (SFI), James and Lisa recently started it, and Fatima is awaiting approval to begin.

#### *4.1.4 The journey to Sweden*

Migrating to a new place signifies challenges, and for some migrants, the journey itself is the most dreadful part of the process. The model of resettlement process and refugee mental health (Figure 1) suggest that environmental stressors during the migration journey can have future consequences for a migrant's well-being, in addition to what happened at the place of origin

that made a person choose to migrate. It is thus important to acknowledge the transit phase of migration.

Two of the respondents came to Sweden by air, and the other thirteen crossed the Mediterranean Sea to reach Europe. The dangerous journey across the Mediterranean Sea is unfortunately a common route to take for entering the EU borders, as more than one million did so during 2015 (International Organization for Migration, 2015). During the interviews, it was noticeable that they all felt heavy-hearted when telling their transit stories, and some did not want to go into details, stating that it was far too traumatic to address. As the respondents come from different countries, the routes differed geographically and they took different measures to reach the destination. One of the respondents describes how he walked the entire way from his place of origin, which took him 6 months.

*I just left my house with a bag and I did not know anybody that could help me on the way. I was scared of the police to catch me so I did not take any bus, train or car, I walked the whole way until I reached the Mediterranean Sea, where I paid a smuggler some money to join a boat. When I arrived in Greece, I kept walking until I reached Sweden. (Respondent, 2020)*

Another respondent from the same country of origin explained how he paid a smuggler 800 USD to join a boat and cross the sea. The smuggler collected the money, but let the migrants drive the boat themselves during a chaotic journey in the middle of the night.

Two of the respondents had a transit in Libya, but their experiences were remarkably different. One of them, who migrated with her family, stayed in Libya for two years. They were initially planning on staying longer, until the war in their country of origin ended, but as the conflict in Libya eventually intensified, they felt that they had to leave. They had a stable life in Libya; the parents had high income jobs and the children attended school, until they had to leave for Sweden. Another story was told from a young man migrating alone. His plan was to transit

through Libya with the expectation to reach Europe and continue to Sweden, but he was captured and kept as a slave. He did not have any money and was forced to work under terrible conditions. After one year, he managed to escape with the little money he had saved, but had to give it to smugglers for the boat trip. Due to the small amount of money, he got to join a low-quality boat that carried more than 100 people. When the boat was eventually sinking, a large ship came to rescue them.

All the thirteen respondents who crossed the Mediterranean Sea had to use the services of smugglers. Some made connections with other migrants in similar situations that helped them along the journey, particularly the unaccompanied minors. One unaccompanied minor stated that he met a family that he continued the transit with, since it was faster and easier to pass border controls as a family. Others met people along the way that guided them in the right direction, before they managed to reach the borders of Sweden.

## **4.2 Social networks facilitating migration**

This section addresses Objective one and analyses if the social network theory can explain the respondent's migration to Sweden, and if networks facilitated the migration process. This is to achieve a general perspective of the respondents' migration journey, and their personal reasons for the final destination to be Sweden.

### *4.2.1 The Choice of Sweden*

The theory of social network claims that migration is facilitated by networks, where connections and social capital can enable processes and lower the costs of migration. To have a background story of the respondents' in this study, they were asked about their reason for migration, and why they chose Sweden specifically as a country of migration. As predicted, due to the deliberate choice to interview different categories of migrants, there was a wide

range of answers. However, most of them discussed how they had heard that Sweden is peaceful and stable. The economic migrants and unaccompanied minors strived to settle in Sweden for the purpose of better livelihood and economic diversification, as they had heard about this type of strategy from other people in the place of origin and from people that already migrated. One unaccompanied minor who left for Sweden with the hope of earning money to provide for his family back home, explains:

*In the refugee camp where I grew up, it was known that Sweden was a peaceful place. All my friends wanted to migrate there, because we were told that that is where the money is. Some of us left, but I do not know if the others succeeded or died along the way. (Respondent, 2020)*

As mentioned before, six of the participants came as refugees due to conflicts, threats, and danger at the place of origin. Three of these had only heard about Sweden being a good place, where one can enjoy freedom and safety, and upon the decision to migrate, they chose Sweden because of this. However, as Mahdi expresses, there are still critical thoughts about how free they are here.

*I planned to go to Sweden because I have heard about the country, that it is democratic and how well they treat immigrants, but now many things have changed. Before, everybody was welcome, now it is different. In my home country I am not allowed to talk at all, but here I can express myself yet not be able to change anything. (Respondent, 2020)*

He continues to discuss how migrants nowadays may not be as optimistic about choosing Sweden, due to the drastic changes in migration politics for the past years since the ‘refugee crisis’. Potential migrants are now aware of the strict policies and hear about how many get deported, which will most likely prevent them from trying to cross the Swedish borders. This entails that the decision of migration is a social product, as stated by Boyd (1989), and how other migration stories and perceptions will affect the actions of a potential migrant. As another

respondent discussed, he decided to go to Sweden specifically because he heard about country's opportunities while staying in a refugee camp at the place of origin, and was influenced by his surroundings. He migrated to alone, as an unaccompanied minor with a livelihood improvement strategy, as he wanted to diversify and increase his incomes to support his family. As he did not know anyone in Sweden, he did not rely on anybody during his journey and settlement in Sweden. The social network theory claims that the initial migrant of a household can function as a bridge between the new destination and the place of origin, creating possibilities for aspiring migrants after the first one has settled. It is said that the first migrant will have the highest material and psychological costs, which will be severely reduced for the following ones (Arango, 2004). This seems to be partly accurate in the respondent's story above mentioned, as he is currently working towards having his mother to come to Sweden. Her resettlement would thus be a lot more stress-free, as he would provide her with not only the material needs such as accommodation and other living expenses, but also the psychological support. As he felt lonely and confused upon arrival, with no language skills or contacts, his mother can rely on him for support and important knowledge about the host society. In fact, the Swedish migration policies demand that if an immigrant aspires to bring their families from the place of origin, certain maintenance requirements need to be fulfilled. The immigrant needs to prove that she or he is capable of supporting the potential migrant upon arrival, and demands a proper living situation, certain level of income and a large enough apartment to cater for the arriving family members (Swedish Migration Agency, 2020a). To achieve all of this can be challenging for a newly arrived immigrant, which is why family reunification can be a lengthy process. Hence, the social network theory does not adequately consider the many obstacles for the migration to be facilitated through the initial migrant of a household. Another respondent's migration process is partly facilitated by networks, as he arrived in 2017 as an economic migrant. His family came to Sweden some years before him

and have been approved for permanent residence permit, thus it seemed like a relatively easy process for him to join the family. Unfortunately, it did not work out the way he wished, and he currently has two asylum application rejections. He stays with his family and lives off of them, since his migration status does not allow him to either attend school or work.

According to the social network theory, the likelihood of migrating is higher if potential migrants know a migrant at the place of destination. Before leaving their place of origin, nine out of the fifteen respondents knew or had heard about someone who migrated to Sweden before. Many express how their choice of migration was based on the networks already existing with people at the place of destination. One female respondent explains:

*My family decided to leave for Sweden because my father has a friend in Stockholm (the capital of Sweden), who went from our home country to Sweden some years ago, and told my father that it would be easy for him to get a job within his field of work.*

**(Respondent, 2020)**

Migration as a social product, influenced by surroundings that change one's perspective is accurate among the majority of respondents for this study, as many of them decided for Sweden due to the information they had obtained about Sweden being a good place for immigrants, and the contacts that would help them upon arrival. Although, the proclaimed help may not have been as useful as expected. One economic migrant explained how his brother and his family was already established in one Swedish city, but when he himself arrived, the SMA chose a city of residency for him. Therefore, he was not able to stay with his family and instead had to stay at a temporary shelter for asylum-seekers. Policies and legal framework are therefore an obstacle for a migrant to fully enjoy the allegedly migration facilitation that networks could provide at the place of destination. Although he felt some support and a feeling of safety due to his brother living relatively close, he did not receive much practical help in the post migration phase.

### 4.3 The Challenges of the Post Migration Phase

This section will examine the perceived post migration stressors among the respondents, and thus address Objective two of the study. The interviews were guided by the model of resettlement process and refugee mental health (Figure 1), but the respondents were asked the open-ended question: “What are the most common challenges you have experienced since you arrived in Sweden?”. Figure 2 gives an overview of the empirical result, listed according to what each respondent (number 1-15) replied, and Figure 3 gives a clearer summary of the most common stressors, which further will be described in detail.

Stressors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Migration policies															
Employment															
Language															
Culture															
Future															
Education															
Accommodation															
Remittances															
Family															
Discrimination															

Figure 2. Perceived post migration stressors experienced by the respondents (Fieldwork, 2020).

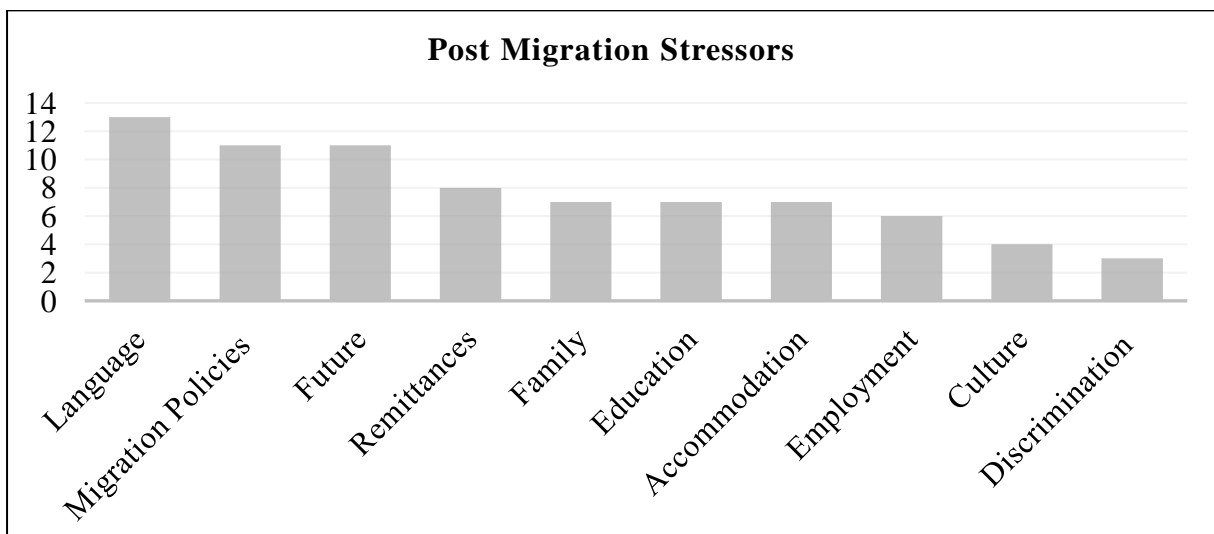


Figure 3. Frequency of post migration stressors among respondents (Fieldwork, 2020)

#### 4.3.1 Language barriers

The most common stressor among the respondents was concerning language. All except two expressed that lacking language skills has been an enormous challenge since they arrived, and how not knowing enough Swedish is the main obstacle for them to integrate more. A male respondent explained:

*The Swedish language is the biggest obstacle for me. I did not learn English when I grew up, I only speak Arabic. When I left for Sweden I did not consider the obstacle of language, I just wanted to survive life. (Respondent, 2020)*

He feels frustrated about it, since language is the key to many things; education, employment, information, making friends, and to integrate. One respondent who arrived as an unaccompanied minor discussed how he upon arrival felt that the language was impossible to learn, but now, four years later, he is managing it well. Another unaccompanied migrant further describes how he felt shy and scared to talk for the first two years, and how the difficulties in communication made him lonely and unmotivated to learn or attend school. One respondent narrates how her experience was when she arrived in Sweden as a 15-year old and had to attend Swedish high school:

*I was stressed about not speaking the language since I did not get any friends. Although I speak good English, the Swedish kids did not want to speak English with me. I felt lonely. Now that I speak the Swedish language, I feel more belonging to the society and it is easier to make Swedish friends. (Respondent, 2020)*

One respondent who is living with her family in a shelter for asylum-seekers in Lund complained about not learning the language fast enough since she is only staying with people from her country of origin. When she is home, she only speaks her native tongue and cannot practice Swedish much because her family are also lacking the language skills. Lastly, the two respondents who did not mention that insufficient language skills were a problem for them,

explained it by saying that because they already speak good English, they are able to manage in the Swedish society well since practically everybody in Sweden speaks English very well. The two also speak both French and Arabic, and as one is married to a Swede, he is currently learning Swedish fast. The other studies an international program at University and says that she does not feel stressed about learning Swedish and will do it when she feels like there is time. Hence, language barriers are not an obstacle for them to communicate, which makes them more content with the situation of not being fully integrated or having a complete sense of belonging.

#### *4.3.2 Migration Policies*

The second most common post migration stressor is the migration policies, including contact with SMA and the fear of being deported. This problem is naturally most stressful for the migrants awaiting an asylum decision. One of the respondents who is currently an asylum-seeker speaks about it:

*The immigration regulations push us immigrants to do things we do not want to, such as take jobs we are too good for, which makes us lose hope and motivation to integrate. They demand so much from us, that not even all Swedes can manage.*

**(Respondent, 2020)**

One respondent says that he only has four months left until his next asylum-application decision, which will be a definitive rejection unless he finds a full-time job before that. Another respondent is in a similar situation:

*I am mainly stressed about the SMA. If I get another asylum-application rejection, I have to leave and go back to Afghanistan, where I have no family or support at all since I grew up in Iran. But the Swedish SMA does not take that into consideration. (Respondent, 2020)*

Another immigrant in this study expressed how the stress surrounding the migration decision is overwhelming, and how the SMA forces him to wait a long time to get the residence permit. They also do not allow him to work and are of little help when he is unsure of the process. Stress over migration policies seemingly prevails a long time after arrival. Some of the respondents have temporary or permanent residence permit, yet still worry about migration policies and the requirements needed for an immigrant. This stress also influences and intensifies other dimensions of the post migration process, since the SMA can be stressing the migrants to find a job, learn the language, and integrate faster.

#### 4.3.3 Future

Ten out of the fifteen respondents mentioned how they were concerned about the future. They felt unsure of the situation in their home country and if they would be able to go back, and are also worried about their families' future at the place of origin. The worries about the future pervades their post migration situation in general, since the uncertainty in whether to stay or in some cases, have to be deported, is constantly present. One respondent, who relatively recently arrived in Sweden, explains:

*I feel safe here in Sweden now. But I do not want to hope for a future here, because I may have to go back to where I came from, so I do not want to get too comfortable here. (Respondent, 2020)*

The challenges of starting a new life at the place of destination with minimal resources and legal limitations is evident in one respondents' thoughts:

*I studied and worked in my hometown, but here I have to restart everything again. I am not young anymore, and it takes much energy to cope with it all. I want to work, I have dreams. It is important to work with what you feel comfortable and happy with, that you are passionate about, otherwise your glow will die. (Respondent, 2020)*

The uncertainty about the future makes it hard to stay motivated, continue studying or applying for jobs, since they do not know if staying in Sweden will be possible. The respondents who did not yet obtain a permanent residence permit mention how they feel hopelessness about the future.

#### 4.3.4 Remittances

The two economic migrants participating in this study send remittances to their families in place of origin, which was expected as their reason for migrating to Sweden was to improve their own as well as their families' livelihood. Additionally, all except one of the unaccompanied minors feel the pressure to send remittances, although they express that it is not always possible. Some discuss how family members expect money to be sent, since the people at the place of origin think that the migrants are living a good life in Sweden while having a high income, when in fact they are living off of subsidies from the SMA. As many of the unaccompanied minors migrated as a household strategy, they feel stressed about not performing fast or well enough to make their families back home happy about the choice of sending them. One respondent says:

*I finally have a stable job now, so I can send money to my family every month. But because I send so much money, I have to live on bare minimum. They do not understand how expensive everything is here, and I feel responsible and obligated to send money since that was the plan from the beginning. (Respondent, 2020)*

There is one respondent who also arrived in Sweden as an unaccompanied minor but is not stressed about remittances, simply because he has no contact with his family or anyone else back home. Finally, the other six respondents who are not concerned about remittances all have their families in Sweden, which can explain why they do not have to worry about this issue in particular.

#### 4.3.5 Family

Seven out of fifteen respondents express how they are stressed about their family situation. Among these seven, five came to Sweden as unaccompanied minors. This entails that they came alone and have had to survive on their own in a new country. The sense of loss and family separation would stress anybody, and particularly a child on their own. The seven respondents who mentioned family as a stressor do not have family in Sweden, and for two of them, the stress of trying to bring their family members here is an enormous personal problem. On the contrary, none of the respondents who have their family in Sweden are experiencing family-related stress.

#### 4.3.6 Education

The respondents who expressed that they were stressed about education were mainly concerned about language studies. They have to pass certain tests to move up another level in the SFI courses, which will have an effect on the outcome of their residence permit. One respondent discussed how they need to attend school and perform well to seem engaged in the Swedish system, and they also want to finish school fast to continue to the labour market instead. As many of the respondents came to Sweden to improve their livelihood, they feel that the many years of obligatory language school is a waste of time. However, the desire to study and graduate is strong. One respondent elaborates his thoughts on education:

*I want an education, if I have that, nobody can take that from me. I am currently not allowed to work since I wait for my residence permit, so I am determined to finish school. (Respondent, 2020)*

Another dimension of educational stress is from one respondent who came to Sweden as a teenager.

*I was stressed about having good grades. I was an A-student in my hometown, and my parents are well educated. When I came here, I struggled with the Swedish language, so my grades were not good enough due to the lacking language skills. One teacher told me I would never become a dentist, which was my dream, because my grades were not good enough. But when I learned Swedish fully, my grades became great again. I am now studying at university. (Respondent, 2020)*

#### 4.3.7 Accommodation

Seven of the respondents said that accommodation-related issues were stressful. Some of them explained that the SMA moved them around a lot when they first arrived, and they had to stay in different cities for short periods of time. One participant described how she and her family had to move around and the children in the family then needed to change schools. One respondent who came as an unaccompanied minor narrated his accommodation problems, as he has been living on and off the streets since he came here. It is difficult to find a place to stay, particularly with the limited money he receives as support from the SMA. He expresses that he wants to feel like his own person, with a permanent place to stay, a monthly salary and his own belongings. Additionally, two other respondents mention how they had to be homeless when the asylum center they used to stay at closed down, and they did not find anything else. They feel that the local authorities have not been of much help. Lastly, one respondent who came as a refugee said that the living situation in the beginning of their arrival was terrible. She and her family had to stay at a refugee camp with other families, in very small spaces shared with many people., which made them very uncomfortable. The respondents who did not experience stress related to accommodation all have a permanent place to stay.

#### 4.3.8 Employment

Many respondents, mainly the economic migrants and the unaccompanied minors, mentioned how they believed life would be easy in Sweden, and that they would earn a lot of money. Due to various reasons, mainly language barriers and the obligated language courses, they have not been able to find jobs of their choice and have to rely on governmental subsidies to survive. Meanwhile, the SMA is pressuring them to find jobs that guarantee a high income, otherwise they will not obtain a residence permit. One respondent discusses the issue of status loss, and how immigrants are forced to take jobs that they are overqualified for. He says:

*I have a university degree and should not settle for less, but I am forced by the SMA to take whatever I am given. I came here without anything, only the clothes I wore, but I did bring my university certification. But that means nothing here unless I speak Swedish. (Respondent, 2020)*

He continues discussing how this type of degradation makes immigrants unmotivated, and how he has seen many of his immigrant friends take low status jobs as cleaners or drivers due to the fear of being deported, instead of pursuing a career they actually want. This, according to him, will negatively affect their well-being, and he believes that Sweden does not benefit from their competencies.

#### 4.3.9 Culture

Four respondents discussed the cultural aspect being a challenge in the post migration phase. A male respondent stated that it initially was difficult to understand the culture in Sweden, since it is very different from what he is used to from his country of origin. He says that it takes a long time to grasp what is right and what is wrong, since, according to him, Swedes are not keen on telling people this. He continues by saying:

*Swedish people are not as social, they are difficult to get close to. People are used to not have as much contact as in my culture. The Swedish government takes care of the people, so we as individuals do not have to cater for each other. Here you can study from home, buy food from home, go to the bank online from home. In my hometown, you need to go out to do all these things, and we also talk to each other then, and get help from each other. (Respondent, 2020)*

One of the respondents who arrived as an unaccompanied minor says that he felt confused and lonely when he came here, and had difficulties adapting to the culture. He perceived Swedes as less social than the people in his country of origin:

*Back home I never closed the door, everybody was welcome, and we always relied on each other for help. In Sweden, the neighbours do not even know one another. I tried to befriend my next-door neighbour, but it did not work. So now I follow the norms here, and also lock my door. (Respondent, 2020)*

The respondent who did not experience any stressors but the cultural one, discussed how she find it difficult to make new Swedish friends and says it is because of the cultural differences, and how she does not understand the social life in Sweden. Further, one respondent who does not feel stressed about cultural factors says that the cultural barriers were not new to him, since he visited Sweden as well as other parts of Europe before. He also claims that he does not feel the need to be part of the Swedish culture completely, as he is fine with having the feeling of belonging in multiple cultures.

#### *4.3.10 Discrimination*

Only three of the respondents mentioned discrimination as a stressor. The first one has felt discriminated against when trying to find a job, whereas he believes that his background and immigration status have had him being denied jobs that he is qualified for. He mentions that Swedes in general are not particularly welcoming, and that just because he does not speak perfect Swedish, he does not have the same opportunities as the ones speaking fluently. The

second respondent has a similar experience, as he explains that he is not given as much responsibility at his workplace as the Swedish-born colleagues and feels less trusted and appreciated. Lastly, one female respondent said that she experienced bullying, discrimination and racism in school, but did not realize it at the time since she did not speak the language and did not understand everything her classmates said to her in Swedish. However, this stress has now been reduced since she speaks Swedish well and feels less of an outsider, and she now says that she is not more discriminated against than any other woman.

#### **4.4 Perceived mental health difficulties**

When asking the respondents about mental health, the answers varied. Some were grateful to be in Sweden and did not focus on the potential challenges or what happened in the past, and claimed that they are very content about being settled now, despite the worries of their families and stressors in life. Four of the respondents claim that they do not have any troubles, although one of these said that she felt differently in the beginning of her arrival. Then, she felt worried mostly due to the traumatic experience from before migration and during transit, but once she and her family got the residence permit the stress was severely reduced.

All the respondents who arrived as unaccompanied minors expressed feelings of distress. Although they are not a completely homogenous group despite the same category of migrant, the stress they experience and the challenges in the post migration phase in Sweden have been relatively similar, regardless of country of origin and gender. They all describe how they feel a lot of anxiety, loneliness, hopelessness and worry about the future, not knowing if they can stay in Sweden or not. One respondent says that he gets very anxious when thinking about his life and says:

*I do not want to go back, and now that I have settled here and are comfortable here, I do not want to leave my friends. (Respondent, 2020)*

Five of the respondents mention that they are, or have been, depressed. One of the unaccompanied minors says that she was depressed before, when she arrived alone, but now it is better. Another unaccompanied minor expresses that he has been very sad, and coped with his mental health difficulties through alcohol, drugs and fights. Now, he says, he is more stable and wants to focus on being good, so that he can get a permanent residence permit. One of them has coped similarly; he had a drug addiction and a destructive lifestyle for a year but he has now gotten much better. One male respondent says that he is currently depressed, has no energy or motivation to do anything, and that his life in general feels hopeless and unpredictable. The rest discuss how they have anxiety, mostly based on loneliness and stress about their life situation, but it is not something overwhelming.

None of the respondents have received any professional mental health support and have not asked to receive any either. One respondent who came as a refugee states that his anxiety and depression is caused by the migration policies and the stress that comes with it, and when asked if he has gotten any support, he replies:

*I did not get any support, because I did not ask for any. I do not need it. Even though I think about everything, I do not want to talk about it. Talking about it will not help to bring my family here. There is no need for help from a psychologist, I rather need help to find a job and then I will have a comfortable life.*

**(Respondent, 2020)**

The three respondents who do not experience any mental health difficulties have their families in Sweden, and are either currently studying at university, or have already finished. According to the empirical evidence in this study, it seems that these two factors are important in order to avoid mental health difficulties. None of them had a perceived traumatic past, they did not suffer from any significant loss in the migration process and have family and social support in Sweden. It is also interesting that these three respondents all received help during the migration

to Sweden, which entails that the social network theory's assumption of contacts reducing the psychological costs of migration could play a role.

Additionally, one respondent who suffered immensely during the transit now expresses that he is happy and does not have any mental health problems, as one may expect after what he went through. This can be explained by him having personal coping mechanism and/or social resources that prevents the pre-migration trauma to be overwhelming and thus result in mental health difficulties. Nevertheless, it is apparent that the post migration stressors examined among the respondents contribute to a worsened well-being, as it is evidently primarily the perceived stressors that are the sources of the anxiety and depression.

#### **4.5 Background of the CSOs in Lund**

As key informants, the CSO personnel that were interviewed for this study provided a foundation to understand the scope of the problems they experience in their work. Table 2 is created to give the reader an overview of the CSOs participating in this study, and describes the purpose of the organization, which groups of people they include in their projects, as well as common challenges they encounter in their work. Some of the CSOs are entirely led by volunteers, and some have a more structured organization with elected board members and a small number of employees. Nevertheless, they are all non-profit and rely on funding from the state as well as donors. Two of the CSOs are part of national Christian churches but emphasizes that they welcome people from all beliefs, and the remaining eight are religiously independent. They are either entirely local, created in and for the population of Lund, or part of larger international organizations.

**Table 2. Background of the CSOs in Lund (Fieldwork, 2020)**

<b>CSOs</b>	<b>Purpose of organization</b>	<b>Target group</b>	<b>Main Challenges</b>
<b>1.</b>	To offer social networking and a place to enjoy through physical activities and educational projects.	All ages and backgrounds, focus on families	- Lack of resources - Lack of interpreters - Volunteer privacy
<b>2.</b>	To increase well-being through psychosocial projects and physical as well as educational activities.	All ages and backgrounds, focus on families	- Lack of resources - Volunteers' knowledge
<b>3.</b>	To give children a meaningful life through self-fulfilling activities.	Children, youths up to 21 years	- Language barriers - Cultural differences
<b>4.</b>	To provide guidance in the society, practical support, language training, networking	All ages and backgrounds	- Lack of resources - Expectations of support
<b>5.</b>	To help socio-economic vulnerable children and youths, educational support, encouraging activities	Children and youths	- Volunteer privacy - Insufficient support from authorities
<b>6.</b>	To provide a safe and creative space, social networking, improve well-being	All ages and backgrounds	- Lack of resources - Lack of interpreters and guidance
<b>7.</b>	To strengthen young people's self-esteem and offer knowledge about their rights.	Children and youths	- Lack of resources - How to reach the target group
<b>8.</b>	To offer an active leisure time, strengthen the members abilities, physical activities	All ages and backgrounds, focus on families	- Lack of resources - Lacking support from authorities
<b>9.</b>	To engage in creativity, improve self-esteem, networking with multiple nationalities	All ages and backgrounds, focus on youths	- Lack of resources - Volunteer privacy
<b>10.</b>	To offer social networking with many nationalities, give guidance and support in everyday life.	All ages and backgrounds	- Language barriers - Reaching out to people in need

#### 4.5.1 CSOs adapting to societal needs

There are many types of CSOs in Lund, whereas the majority mainly operate within sports and recreational activities. The ones presented here were chosen due to their approach of integration and focus on newly arrived immigrants. All of them existed before the ‘refugee crisis’ started, and then focused on socio-economic improvements in general and providing meaningful activities for vulnerable people but has since 2015 increasingly included immigrants. This indicates that CSOs are flexible and adaptable in nature, as they alter their organizations depending on the current societal needs. One key informant described the shift by saying:

*Our organization saw the growing need of support for unaccompanied minors, so we did research and mapping on their specific needs, and what our volunteers could offer. Out of this, we had to create new working methods and guidelines which focus on flight and migration, adding knowledge about PTSD and other important dimensions. (Key Informant, 2020)*

One of the Christian organizations explained how they quite suddenly had to modify their projects and activities during the autumn of 2015. When many unaccompanied minors came to Lund, one church had to function as a temporary refugee shelter for the children that were sent there by the authorities. The children came to the church with no clothes, shoes or belongings after days or weeks of travelling. The church provided a safe place to stay until they were transferred to a more permanent stay by the SMA. This type of cooperation between governmental authorities and CSOs has since been common and functioning quite well. All the CSOs in this study receive funding from governmental agencies to advance their work, which thus often entails that they are interdependent and the CSOs are obliged to follow certain guidelines. The national, regional or local guidelines that are mandatory to adapt in the project applications provide an advisable framework for organizations, which can be valuable. This is consistent with the research of Held (1987, in Odmalm 2004), which discusses the cooperative

dimension between state and civil society. One key informant explains that they have to apply for funding every third year and come up with new project ideas for each application. Although a project may be functioning well, as it does in many cases, the funding ends after three years. This creates a frustration among both volunteer workers in the CSOs, who worked hard to build a stable foundation in a project to then be disrupted, as well as the members who participate and benefit from the services provided.

#### *4.5.2 CSOs Purpose*

Table 2 demonstrates that the CSOs' purposes are relatively similar. All of them offer projects that benefit people through physical activities such as sport events, outdoor hiking and swimming classes, as well as educational activities and social safe spaces, and therefore provide creative solutions to support newly arrived immigrants. One particular activity that has become common and popular among the civil society in Lund is the so-called "language cafés". This provides an opportunity for immigrants to participate in language training with Swedish-speaking volunteers, while having a cup of coffee and socializing simultaneously. When the CSOs in this study refer to their purpose being to offer social networking, the language cafés are a central part of it. Between 10-50 immigrants attend every time it is open, and as the CSOs of Lund cooperate, they have made sure to offer language cafés in different locations each day of the week. It is open and free for everybody no matter their language skills and educational level, and offers a positive learning experience for the immigrants. During this time, some key informants also express how the members that come to practice Swedish often mention other problems they encounter and need help with. For example, many newly arrived immigrants need assistance in filling in documents for the authorities, applying for jobs and finding accommodation and general guidance and information about the Swedish society. One key informant describes her experience from having language cafés every Sunday after church:

*On a good day, we have about 50 people coming to our activity. The parents sit by the tables and get help with studying Swedish, meanwhile we have some volunteers that cater for their children. We want the whole family to feel included, no matter what religion they belong to. But I think that many of them come here to feel seen and to have a good time, rather than actually get help with homework.*  
**(Key informant, 2020)**

Three of the organizations aim to specifically support children and youths. Some of their participants are unaccompanied minors, and others are children who arrived with their families. Commonly, these children do not have the financial resources to have an active leisure time, which is why the CSOs have projects to increase and encourage the children's interests. One CSO specifically intend to increase children's and youths' knowledge about their human rights, with much focus on preventing gender based violence and honor based violence.

#### *4.5.3 CSOs Challenges*

The increased needs among the immigrants are part of the challenges that the CSO workers experience in their work. The challenges are stated in Table 2, to obtain an understanding of the limitations the organizations and workers experience, which can have negative consequences on the support they can provide for the members. One key informant mentions how she felt stressed about the changes that the increase of immigrants entailed. Although she is used to a multicultural working environment with members from various countries, the high number of particularly unaccompanied minors required new types of services. She expresses the need for interpreters, since many migrants came with minimal Swedish language skills, and how to appropriately address their most immediate needs. Others discuss the lack of guidance and support from authorities, and how local authorities have high expectations on the civil society to manage migrants' problems and integration issues, which should rather be the

responsibility of the state and public sector. Additionally, all the CSOs in this study mentioned insufficient funding as an obstacle for being able to do their best possible work, and that there is capacity and a desire to grow, but more resources are needed. An important dimension to emphasize is that CSOs are run by volunteers who do the work in their spare time. One respondent explains the challenging experiences:

*We as volunteers are tired. It was overwhelming for some years, when the local authorities put lots of responsibility on our table. They did not say it directly, but they expected us to be creative and provide consistent quality support. I think that if another 'refugee crisis' would appear now, the civil society would be too exhausted to cope with it again. Many of the people I worked with had difficulties separating private life and their volunteer work, and the changing politics made us go from enthusiastic and engaged to drained on energy. (Key informant, 2020)*

The problem of privacy among the CSO workers are mentioned from several key informants.

One informant describes his situation:

*I myself came as a refugee to Sweden some years ago, and speak the same language as many of the unaccompanied minors. This benefits my contact with them, since it is easy for them to express themselves with me in our mutual language. But it is a disadvantage for me sometimes, because they do not understand that I am working and can not be their 'sister', so I have to be very clear with that. (Key informant, 2020)*

While analyzing the key informants' perspectives, it is evident that working for a CSO that has this type of social focus, has its disadvantages. Being a volunteer, particularly when working with vulnerable people such as asylum-seekers or unaccompanied minors, you will likely hear about difficult life situations, traumatic events and potential mental health difficulties as it is common within this group. To keep a professional distance between themselves and the participants of their organization is challenging.

#### 4.6 CSOs and Mental Health Difficulties

To achieve a broader understanding of mental health difficulties among Swedish immigrants, the key informants provided their perspectives. They talked in general terms in what they have seen among their participants as being most stressful, and if they have noticed any common difficulties. Further, they were asked about if they have any routines or guidelines within their organization on how to manage situations of mental health difficulties.

All the informants agree that mental health is an important topic to discuss, as they have witnessed the problem up close and feel that it needs to be addressed more. The stressors they have noticed are equivalent with the ones that the immigrant respondents discussed. Language barrier, migration policies, remittances, worries about the future, unemployment and family are frequently mentioned. Immigrants that participate in their organizations' activities and projects talk about their past traumas, whereas some have developed PTSD and need help from a professional therapist, and one key informant describes how she has experienced some of their members having panic attacks caused by all the stress they feel during the migration process. She continues to say:

*The immigrants are expected to be so patient; they wait and wait for yet another asylum-application rejection. That is unrealistic to expect from a youth. The system itself is an obstacle, hindering them from succeeding and not adjusting for their abilities. (Key informant, 2020)*

Further, three of the key informants mention that coping methods such as drugs and alcohol is frequent among immigrants they meet. One says that she prevented one of her immigrant participants to commit suicide, and that many of them have serious drug addictions. Five of the key informants discuss that children are particularly vulnerable. A board member from a CSO that focuses on children says that there is a noticeable difference between the children who came to Sweden with their parents, as they are visibly more calm and safe, and

the ones coming as unaccompanied minors who seem far more stressed. They suffer from pressure from home, and she claims that the remittances they are obliged to send back home can be extremely high. Another key informant mentions how the children of newly arrived families have a large responsibility in helping their parents, since they often integrate faster. She elaborates:

*It is difficult enough to be a teenager, then imagine being an immigrant teenager. Parents are more accepting of not feeling a sense of belonging, whereas kids just want to fit in. (Key informant, 2020)*

One key informant who has a long experience of working with asylum-seekers acknowledges the importance of discussing mental health difficulties, but claims that the immigrant members of her organization are tired of talking and just want to have fun when they participate in the CSOs' activities. She says that they need a break from all the talking with authorities and they prefer to not bring up their problems. Another key informant commented on the problem of cultural differences and stigma, whereas many of his CSO's participants say that they are reluctant to seek professional help since they perceive it as something only 'mad' people do. Hence, it seems to be more accepted that they express their feelings with the CSO personnel and volunteers, as the participants eventually become comfortable with sharing personal problems.

#### *4.6.1 CSOs' Policies and Guidelines*

A part of this study was to examine if organizations within the civil society have the proper tools to handle mental health problems among immigrants. Since there is evidence from prior research that immigrants are more likely to have mental health difficulties compared to the native-born Swedish population (Hollander et al, 2016), and both the immigrant respondents and the key informants agrees that it is an existing problem, it is important to investigate if and how they can tackle it. In their work, they meet a lot of different types of migrants, where each

individual has their own needs. All the CSO key informants were aware of the many challenges a newly arrived migrant experience, and they discussed how their organization has chosen to cope with it. All mention how they are not professionals within the mental health field and should therefore not act as if they are. They are not obliged to do anything, but due to their position as a supportive organization, they do as much as possible.

*I do not have the competency to improve their health, but I try my best to listen, encourage and support. Although sometimes the problems are overwhelming.*

**(Key informant, 2020)**

None of the key informants mentioned any specific strict policies their organizations use to guide their handling of mental health difficulties among immigrants. Instead, they all agree that their job is to support and listen, but not be too involved, and rather refer to the appropriate health care or facility. Only two key informants discussed that their organization have had classes about mental health, PTSD and how to work with specific groups of immigrants. Nevertheless, they are not allowed to work with health treatment, thus the training was to inform and give an understanding of the immigrants' situation rather than prepare the workers to solve the problems. One of the key informants express that the organization she works for does not have any policies simply because their purpose is not to heal their sorrows. She elaborates by saying:

*I am not a psychologist. They do not need that. They miss their families and social life, so they just want to talk, enjoy and be seen". Not for someone to dig deep in their sorrows and mental issues. I came as an immigrant myself, and experienced trauma from that. But I know how to handle it myself, but the culture in Sweden is to talk about issues to a professional. (Key informant, 2020)*

One CSO that focuses on activities for all family members has, according to the key informant, a policy of optimism. Since they are not trained or legitimized to manage mental health

difficulties, they try to bring positivity to the immigrants and encourage them in their daily work.

All of the key informants discuss how they believe that their organization have an important role in improving immigrant's mental health indirectly. Through activities that strengthen their capacities and resources, they will also feel better about themselves and further integrate better. However, it is a circular process, and if they do not feel integrated, they will also not be motivated to continue trying, whereas the lack of trying will not improve the integration process. The CSOs key informants though agrees on that their projects aims to improve their situation with indirect measures rather than professional help, hence the training in managing mental health difficulties may not be of greatest importance. Although, some key informants admit that they personally would like to be more aware in how to cope with circumstances where their participants are in some sort of psychological need, for them to be more prepared and experienced in how to handle it. Also, as some discuss, they could need training for their own best, to not be overwhelmed by it and to learn how to set personal boundaries.

#### **4.7 CSOs to mitigate the psychological costs in the post migration process**

To address the main objective of this study, to understand what role CSOs have for immigrants and thus to examine their importance in facilitating the post migration phase, it was crucial to ask the immigrant respondents about their personal experience with a local CSO. Figure 4 presents the variation of reasons for participating in the local CSOs activities and projects, which will further be described in detail.

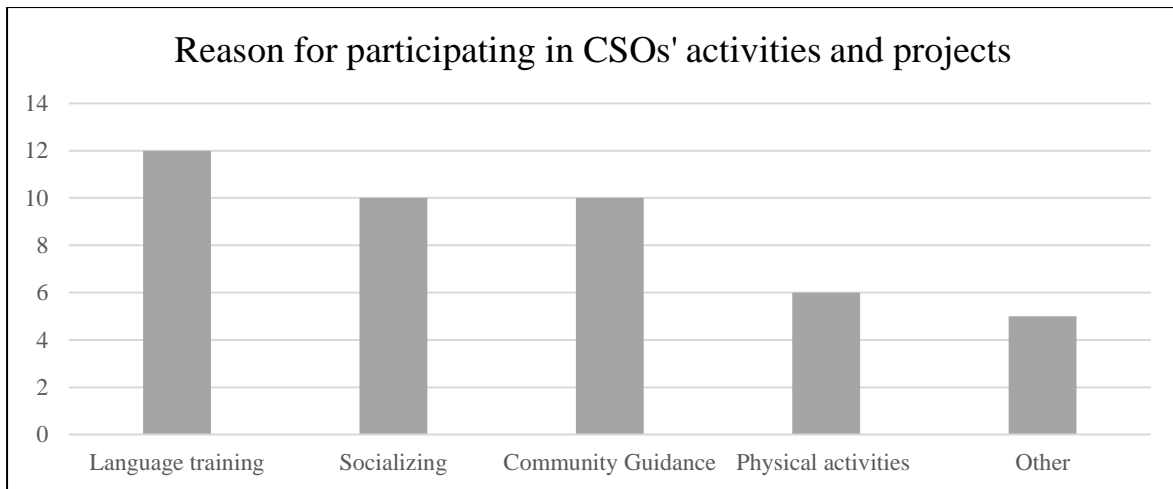


Figure 4: Respondents' main reasons for participating in CSOs activities and projects (Fieldwork, 2020).

#### 4.7.1 Participation in CSO projects

From the results of interviewing key informants from local CSOs in Lund, it is evident that the organizations have a variety of projects that aim to support immigrants in different ways. Figure 4 proves that the respondents' reason for participating are among the same as the CSO key informants mentioned to be the most popular ones; language training, physical activities, help with documents and guidance and a creative space. Interestingly, these activities are also similar to what the most common post migration stressors are, which therefore present an evidence of the important support that local CSOs can offer.

All of the respondents in this study have participated in at least one CSO since they arrived in Sweden, although their level of commitment varies. Some have not been participating since the beginning of their arrival, while one is currently involved as a volunteer, group leader and board member in a CSO that takes care of newly arrived migrants. One respondent, who came to Sweden because of marriage, has barely participated in any activities. The only thing he joins are certain projects where his own skills can be of use, such as music events or other creative activities. Another respondent who came with his family as refugees, says that he has

not felt the need to participate since he attends Swedish school and has his family here, so the help that CSOs offer is not necessary.

Many of the respondents express that they attend different organizations and their activities. Language training is the most popular reason for participating, whereas the immigrants go to language cafés organized by various CSOs. Twelve out of the total number of fifteen respondents have been attending the language cafés since they arrived in Sweden. This thus corresponds to the information given by the key informants, that the language cafés are popular and appreciated, and an important activity organized by the local CSOs in Lund. The second most common reason for participating in CSOs was because of the socializing and the social support it offers. One respondent described how he used to participate in activities almost every day through various organizations, just to meet people and not be inside at the asylum center where he lived. The CSOs focus on physical health will thus also have an impact on their mental health, as fun activities and social environments improve their well-being, particularly for those who are currently without their parents or family members for various reasons.

Another support that the immigrant respondents have suggested is the main reason for their participation in CSOs is the community guidance. This relatively diffuse concept contains several dimensions and is also one part of the difficulties that the CSO personnel experience. The community guidance entails guidance about the society in general, which can be much needed for a newly arrived immigrant. Learning about Sweden, the norms and cultural aspects, but foremost how the societal system works is an important part of the integration process. A CSO key informant says that the most frequent questions within community guidance concerns migration policies, social welfare, access to health care, educational system, and how to find a job. She continues by saying that many of the immigrants in their organizations come from countries that are very different from Sweden, which entails confusion and frustration in

understanding the system. Some of the key informants discuss how they believe that the guidance the migrants receive from the local CSOs should be given by authorities, which for some reason are not as present. They say that the authorities cannot reach out to the immigrants as the civil society does and claims that the immigrants they meet are reluctant to contact the authorities for help, as they prefer to ask a CSO volunteer that they already know and feel comfortable with. However, one key informant discusses how this can entail problems, as the volunteers may risk giving the wrong advice or assistance. They are therefore not entirely positive to help with these types of problems or questions, and rather refer the participants to the right agency or organization.

A majority of the immigrant respondents say that they go to a CSO to get help with filling out documents for banks, SMA and job applications, as well as asking for assistance in finding accommodation or other types of practical support. One respondent says:

*I got help from a CSO when I was homeless, I had nowhere to go. They helped me to solve the situation, who to contact and how to find an apartment. They welcomed me, did not judge me, and helped me when I was in trouble. (Respondent, 2020)*

Furthermore, physical activities are also an essential part of CSOs. Five of the key informants stated that they have physical activities on their organization's agenda, as they believe it is a great opportunity to increase well-being and the migrants' social networking. The CSOs often organize physical activities such as outdoor hiking, football tournaments and other sports events as a strategy to connect people and create an easygoing atmosphere for the immigrants to relax and enjoy themselves. One respondent narrates that as soon as he started training in a CSO, he improved not only his knowledge in the Swedish language by talking to native Swedes, but also developed his social skills and made new friends. Another respondent express gratitude as she learned how to swim when participating in a project with a local CSO, and through this also made new friend and are currently a swim class teacher herself.

The 'Other' category in Figure 4 refers to church activities organized by the local CSOs, and creative activities such as art, music and photography. As described before, two of the CSOs in this study was part of Christian churches, but they offer activities for people with all religious affiliations. Two of the CSOs in this study have a particular focus on well-being and personal development through supporting immigrants in being creative and encourage their creative skills, which have been very successful and popular.

CSOs contribute to an active social life for their participants, as they involve many different nationalities and socio-economic groups of the society. Many of the respondents, particularly the unaccompanied minors, express how they attend activities mainly for the company and to find new friends. The respondents within this category of migrant are also the ones who take part in most CSOs and their projects.

#### *4.7.2 CSOs providing social resources*

After interviewing both migrants in Lund and key informants from the host society, it is evident that the local CSOs help migrants in various ways. However, this study aims to particularly investigate if CSOs has a role in improving mental health difficulties in the post migration process, hence the following section will focus on Objective 4 and analyse their part as a resource of social capital, and through this, minimize the psychological costs for a migrant.

Massey and España (1987) claim that social networks lower the psychological costs in the post migration phase, as it increases the feeling of safety and reduces vulnerability. Further, Arango (2004) suggests that social ties where people can rely on each other and exchange social support are crucial for integration. The respondents in this study express that this type of social support is much what the local CSOs offer, and as they support with community guidance, information, help in finding employment and accommodation, this type of social capital is important for well-being and integration. As a majority of the respondents express that there are many factors

in the post migration process that stresses them, and some also suffer from mental health difficulties due to these problems, the CSOs have a crucial role in improving the stressors. For example, the most common stressors among the respondents in this study were language barriers and migration policies. Although the CSOs cannot solve these problems entirely, they have projects that help to minimize the stressors and develop the immigrants' personal skills as well as encouraging them to stay motivated. Some of the CSOs do their best in helping their participants to find accommodation and employment, which evidently are also common problems for the respondents. These are issues that social networks can facilitate in the post migration phase, hence the CSO fills this void for people who may not have access to such networks. Additionally, CSOs provide social support and function as a mediator between people, connecting various backgrounds and nationalities, which further extends a migrant's network.

The CSOs can be described as a facilitator for bridging social capital, where a larger network with weaker ties provides important support in an immigrant's everyday life. This is particularly evident for the unaccompanied minors who arrived without any family, thus cannot rely on bonding social capital in the post migration phase. The social links with institutions are present in each immigrant's reality, particularly the SMA. Many of the respondents though express how they do not receive much support or guidance from them, and rather turn to the CSOs for advice and assistance. This shows that the bridging social capital is important for the respondents to develop their own skills, which further improves their well-being, and thus enables them to integrate better. Nevertheless, this is particularly accurate for the respondents who came to Sweden as unaccompanied minors and economic migrants, who are the ones in most need of support. Through the CSOs, they have been able to learn the language faster, receive help in finding accommodation and employment, as well as receiving general support in the migration process. The respondents who did not have many problems in the post

migration phase have their own, personal social networks that facilitates their migration process, whereas they do not need the services of the CSOs.

The model of resettlement process and refugee mental health (Figure 1) suggest that an individual's resources will either increase or decrease mental health difficulties, and that coping behavior, support networks and environmental circumstances will impact the outcome. For example, one of the immigrant respondents has a traumatic past living in poverty as a refugee, he experienced many post migration stressors and have had negative coping methods, but the social resources can be a hindrance for all the problems developing into mental health difficulties. The social capital they obtain from the CSOs is thus only useful if they know how to mobilize it and mitigate the prevailing stressors and thus improve their life situation, such as drawing information and knowledge about finding a job or learning the language. For instance, one of the respondents who have been active in several of the local CSOs improved his language skills through language cafés and participated in physical activities for many years, and through these new connections he finally got permanent employment which allowed him to obtain a permanent residence permit. Hence, the social network and social capital through the CSOs reduced the main stressors for him, which will also reduce the possibility for mental health difficulties to arise. Another example is the migrant respondent who does not experience any stressors at all. His personal characteristics, a well-educated adult male, gives him an advantage in managing potential stressors. He also has his family in Sweden, a social network that enables him to feel safer as they can help him with the common stressors of an immigrant; accommodation, language training, employment and migration policies. According to these factors, the risk of him having mental health difficulties is minimal, and he is not in need of the support achieved by the CSOs. On the contrary, the other respondent who also has a university degree from his hometown, may think that he can cope relatively well with stressors. But, since his support networks at the place of destination are limited, the stressors

will be more intense. The CSOs projects and activities that he participates in can therefore bridge the gap of social resources and strengthen this mediator to avoid or mitigate the potential mental health difficulties. As the CSOs help in managing the post migration stressors, they have an important role as a mediator of social resource according to the model of resettlement process and refugee's mental health (Figure 1).

#### *4.7.3 CSO as weak ties*

The concept of strong and weak ties (Granovetter, 1973) is applicable when examining CSOs as a social network and social capital resource. The projects in the CSOs link people who may not have been connected otherwise and through this, they obtain new information, new perspectives and connections that they would not have if they only met people within their small groups of families. The CSOs help to expand immigrants' networks, particularly in the beginning of their stay, as they organize activities for all types of migrants. One of the respondents who is currently studying at University of Lund attend some language cafés mostly for the fun of meeting new people and people with different nationalities, rather than having to learn the language. This entails that the CSOs projects have many purposes, even for the ones not in acute need of their services. By having Swedish-speaking volunteers, they also get to know the local population and receive a firsthand insight in cultural aspects and norms. Participating in CSOs and meeting new people therefore increase the 'weak ties' and enlarge personal networks and linkages. Nevertheless, as described by one respondent, unaccompanied minors often have to stay in certain asylum centers, and there is a risk that their network is relatively small, consisting mainly of people from the same country of origin and in similar life situations. These strong ties are thus important for a person's well-being, as individuals desire to obtain a feeling of safety and cultural belonging by spending time with people from a similar background. According to Beiser and Hyman (1997), being part of a same-ethnic community may even have mental health advantages. Although, as Granovetter (1973) would suggest,

these strong ties do not necessarily develop and improve people's life situation, and might have negative consequences as well. One respondent, who claim to have been very active in various CSOs in the beginning of his arrival to Lund, now feels that he has outgrown the so-called 'community' that is created within the organization. He states that the other participants were stuck in old patterns, while he mobilized the social capital he obtained from the networking after some time and got an employment and improved his life situation. This was not particularly popular among the other participants, and according to him, the jealousy and demands he felt from the others made him leave the network created through a local CSO. The negative experiences from being too involved in a CSO could imply that participants rely on the organisation to constantly help out, which can result in passivity and less knowledge in how to individually use the social capital. However, the study suggests that CSOs function as weak ties in combination with strong ties, as groups of strong ties can participate while also connecting with other groups. Hence, new relationships and social networks are created, which allow for the participants to increase their social capital and personal resources, and thus reduce the risks of lowered mental health.

#### **4.8 Summary**

This chapter described the socio-demographic characteristics of the fifteen migrant respondents and provided a presentation of their migration journey. Their reason for migrating to Sweden was discussed, to analyse if social networks have facilitated their migration process. It was evident that many of them were impacted by social influences, and chose to migrate to Sweden due to this, but did not access the promised support from connections through networks once arriving at the place of destination. Further, the potential post migration stressors were investigated, as the findings prove that all but one of the respondents experienced at least one stressor, although depending on a migrant's background, life situation and socio-demographic characteristics, the intensity of the stress varies. The most common stressors were language,

migration policies, future and remittances, which were particularly present among the respondents who arrived in Sweden as unaccompanied minors. It is also evident that many of the respondents have felt some type of mental health problem, such as anxiety or depression, although none have sought professional help.

The chapter also presented the results from the interviews with the key informants, and analysed the information obtained by applying the social network theory and the model of resettlement stress and refugee mental health (Figure 1). It demonstrated the main reasons for why migrants attend CSOs projects, whereas it is evident that the support needed from the local CSOs differentiate. It is thus apparent that unaccompanied minors and migrants who does not have their families in Sweden are most active in participating in CSO projects. Further, the results show that the support CSOs provide through activities such as language training, physical activities and community guidance serves as an indirect help in reducing stressors and improve migrant's mental health. The social connections created through CSOs function mainly as bridging social capital, where migrants can improve their life situations through social resources and therefore decrease the psychological costs in the post migration process.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter aims to discuss the findings presented in the previous chapter. First, the results from the immigrants' experiences in relation to the psychological costs of migrating are being considered. Secondly, the chapter presents a discussion about how different types of migrants' experience stress and mental health issues at the place of destination, which also includes a gender aspect. Thirdly, a discussion about the information from the migrant interviews combined with the social network framework is carried out, as well as the importance of CSOs providing indirect support in the receiving country.

#### **5.1 The migrant experience**

The information obtained in this study presents that migrant connections and social networks has influenced the decision to migrate and the choice of which place of destination to settle in for the majority of the respondents. By being influenced of one's surroundings, and hearing about successful migration stories in a particular place of destination, it is thus likely that the choice of migration as a livelihood strategy has been common among the unaccompanied minors arriving in Sweden since 2015, whereas the family at place of origin sends their young (most often) son. The aim is for them to settle in and earn money, send remittances back home, and eventually bring the remaining family. This was accurate for all except one of the unaccompanied minors in this study, as one did not currently have contact with his family. However, as they are the initial migrants from their household and therefore have a limited network, arriving alone with minimal social support at the place of destination implies that the costs for migration is high. This concur with prior research, stating that the stress unaccompanied minors experience upon arrival is the most severe among all migrant categories (Sydsvenskan, 2020).

To study mental health is complex, though to investigate the factors that potentially lead to mental health difficulties can enable an analysis and sort out the source of the problems. The model of resettlement process and refugee mental health (Figure 1) assumes that many post migration stressors, in combination with certain socio-demographic characteristics and pre-migration stressors, can result in mental health difficulties. However, social support and coping methods can regulate and impact the outcome of well-being. Nevertheless, this study does not aim to define or conclude whether the participants suffer from any mental health issues, but merely to hear their experiences with mental health problems and explore what stressors exist, which according to the model can be potential factors as part of the process leading to mental health problems. It is thus clear, after analyzing the present post migration stressors among the respondents, that there is a correlation between several of them. The language barrier is an obstacle for many other stressors to be mitigated, as not knowing the local language will reduce the opportunities to get an employment, and not having an employment will make one feel stress about sending money home or having enough funds to afford a proper accommodation, which in turn will lead to stress about being able to obtain a residence permit. The model of resettlement process and refugee mental health (Figure 1) is therefore accurate in the sense of seeing the post migration phase and the stressors leading to mental health as a process rather than single factors.

Boyd (1989) claims that migrant women are more likely to feel stressed in the post migration phase due to the responsibility and pressure from families in their place of origin. Any particular gender differences regarding the prevalence of stressors were not detected among the respondents, hence the differences rather depend on the respondent's background and life situation. For example, the woman who arrived in Sweden as an unaccompanied minor has more in common with the unaccompanied minors who are men than with the other female respondents in regard to perceived stressors.

As prior research has stated (Kunz, 1973, Edizada and Axelsson, 2020), forced migrants and unaccompanied minors are the type of migrants suffering from most mental health related challenges. This concurs with the results from this study as well. It is evident that the respondents who came as unaccompanied minors and the ones coming as refugees are experiencing the most stress. The former category of migrant may not have had a traumatic past, but arriving to a new country alone as a child will expose you to more vulnerabilities than coming as an adult. The latter can have had a stable background and favorable socio-demographic characteristic, but whose life was disrupted due to a conflict or other external factors, and therefore has unfavorable outcome in the mental health process due to traumatic pre-migration experience.

This shows that Pearlin et al.'s (1981) suggestion regarding that the mental health outcome depends on many circumstances rather than single factors, and must be considered as a process. Different negative elements in the migration process will likely affect the mental health, but only one factor of for example a traumatic past or a current situation with many stressors is not a guarantee for worsened well-being. Thus, the mediators and coping mechanisms are important to consider, and since the model also claim that the quality of a social support network is crucial to reduce stress and mental health difficulties, the role of social networks will be further discussed.

## **5.2 Social networks**

Prior research within the social network theory suggests that social networks will increase migration, although it does not adequately address the reason behind the migration. The data in this study was gathered from various categories of migrants, which implies that they had different reasons for their decision to migrate. Due to personal circumstances, the respondents made the decision to leave their place of origin, not because of their connections at the place

of destination. However, some of the respondents did acknowledge that they chose Sweden specifically because they knew someone who had already migrated here, which could be seen as a validation of the assumption in the social network theory that the likelihood of migration is higher if there is a connection between previous migrants and potential migrants. Nevertheless, the results from this analysis have shown that none of the immigrant respondents who knew someone who already migrated received much support after arrival, and the expected initial support from their network of migrants at place of destination could not be accounted for and therefore not a facilitator in the post migration process. Additionally, although a person may have a migrant network at the place of destination such as the mother of one of the respondents aforementioned, Sweden's migration policies are an obstacle for the potential assistance the respondent can offer for his mother. Hence, structural factors on a macro-level are an obstacle for the opportunities that the meso-level of social networks may offer.

Laumann et al. (1978) suggests that networks change over time, and that mutual interests and interdependency is what will maintain the group. This is difficult to apply in the CSOs role as networks, as they are flexible and change depending on the needs of the immigrants, and the bonds of reciprocity and solidarity are not necessarily present. The participants in CSOs are there voluntary, and do not require any obligations. However, the CSOs as a mediator allows immigrants to create their own networks among themselves, which can provide the bonding social capital with the feelings of collectivity and interdependency that will be beneficial in the post migration phase.

Further, Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) discuss how the obligations and moral solidarity can hinder individual mobility, which is accurate for the economic migrants and the unaccompanied minors who came here as a survival strategy to increase their household

income. As they migrated alone, their bonding social capital lies in their families back home, that they feel a strong obligation and responsibility to send remittances to. This results in much stress for them, and their own freedom is the price to pay, since they have to survive on minimal economic resources in Sweden in order to send the majority of their income to their family back home. Additionally, although one key informant discussed the purpose of CSOs to offer a social and safe place, the participants sometimes can be affected negatively. From her experience, the newly arrived immigrants spent too much time on the projects which made them only spend time with each other, not exploring other parts of the society. The network then creates bonding social capital that is not beneficial for them when trying to integrate and expand their networks. The obligations and expectations grow stronger between the members of the network, and if one succeeds, the others rely on that one person to help.

### **5.3 CSOs and indirect support**

It can be suggested that CSOs' role as social networks are particularly important in an individualistic society as Sweden, where meeting new people and obtaining social capital can be rather hard when coming as an immigrant. Massey and España (1987) claim that the psychological costs when adjusting to a new society will be more severe if the place of origin and place of destination are very culturally different. Coming from a country outside of Europe can imply many cultural differences which may increase stressors and mental health difficulties. Therefore, CSOs role as a positive, multi-cultural and supportive place is crucial for well-being. The CSOs mainly work with indirect measures to cope with mental health difficulties, and rather focus on mitigating the stressors, which eventually will improve the participants' well-being. As there is prior research stating that there may be a stigma around seeking help for mental health issues, the CSO is there to listen, support and if necessary, refer to proper health care. The step for a migrant to talk to a CSO volunteer, who is not a professional nor a close friend, can be a convenient step towards achieving help. Although the

CSO personnel are not specifically trained to cope with mental health problems, their openness and support can be sufficient, and the indirect help they provide are perhaps more important and helpful in the integration process than being skilled at solving psychological problems.

#### **5.4 Summary**

This chapter discussed how the model of resettlement process and refugee mental health (Figure 1) can be used to explain how some migrants can be more at risk for suffering from mental health problems due to various factors. It is thus evident that not only certain post migration stressors have an impact on a migrant's well-being, hence the environment one is currently situated in as well as prior events will affect a migrant's mental health at the place of destination. There is a correlation between many of the post migration stressors that the migrant respondents' mentions, such as unemployment and lacking financial resources resulting in worries over remittances. Improved language skills will mitigate many of the challenges a migrant has, which is why one of the main reasons the respondents in this study attend CSO activities such as language cafés. Furthermore, the social capital they obtain from the CSOs can bridge the gap of social resources, and help to create new networks and extend weak ties, which can increase opportunities in life and lower the psychological costs of migration.

## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.0 Introduction

This chapter seeks to conclude the study with a summary of the key findings with regards to the purpose of the study and the four objectives: to examine if social networks have facilitated the respondents' migration to Sweden, to identify the main post migration stressors experienced by the respondents, to investigate how the CSOs of Lund work with mental health difficulties among migrants, and to analyse the significance of CSOs as a source of social capital to improve the migrants' well-being. Further, this chapter presents a conclusion, recommendations as well as potential future research areas.

#### 6.1 Summary of key findings

Firstly, this study aimed to examine if networks have had an impact in the respondents' migration process, to understand their background and why they chose migrating to Sweden. From the respondents' interviews, it is evident that many of them chose Sweden influenced by their surroundings. They had either heard from their network at the place of origin about Sweden being a good place to resettle in, or they knew someone who had already migrated and offered to help when the potential migrants arrived. However, the results demonstrate that the actual support the majority of the respondent's received have not been relevant, and the promised help has rather been a disappointment.

Secondly, the potential post migration stressors have been investigated. This study reveals that the most common post migration stressors concerns language, migration policies, the future, remittances, family, education, accommodation, employment, culture and discrimination. All

except one respondent felt at least one stressor since arriving in Sweden, although the level of how much it affects them differs. The insufficient language skills, stress over migration policies and unpredictable asylum decisions as well as uncertainty about the future are the most prevalent stressors among the respondents, and the least worrisome are culture and discrimination. The post migration stressors are most severe for those without family in Sweden, and particularly the ones arriving as minors. The respondents who have a native-born family at the place of destination, such as the respondent who married a Swedish woman or the international student whose mother married a Swede, barely experience stressors particularly related to the post migration process. Thus, the families and their networks can minimize the potential challenges a migrant face at the place of destination, which is why the stress is not as severe.

Thirdly, CSO key informants gave their perspective on mental health difficulties in their work. They have personally witnessed mental disorders such as PTSD, anxiety and depression, as well as destructive coping methods. They believe that the migrant participants within their organizations are in much need of support, as they often express their challenges to the volunteers. Accordingly, there is a much greater need for mental health support among the migrant category of unaccompanied minors. However, the CSO personnel do not have any obligations to be a psychological support, and the organizations in this study do not have any specific guidelines or policies of how to manage when their participants are not feeling mentally well. There are mixed opinions on whether they need guiding or not; some believe that it is not their duty to manage and that referring them to a health facility is enough, whereas others would prefer training in how to best meet the participants' needs. Despite this, all the key informants agree that they give indirect support through their projects of language cafés, outdoor activities, and creative projects, as their aim is to strengthen the migrants' capabilities

and resources. By encouraging them and keeping a positive mindset, they believe that mental health difficulties can be reduced.

Lastly, the challenges noticed by the key informants are equivalent to what the migrant respondents discuss themselves and they are also the reason for participating in CSO projects for the majority of them. Although the level of activity among the respondents vary, all of them have participated in at least one CSO project, mainly the language cafés where they learn Swedish and receive community guidance. Nevertheless, one of the most important purposes of the CSOs are the social resources they offer, as many respondents express that they attend activities for the socializing and meeting people, and thus expands their social circle. The CSOs bridges across ethnicities and connects people in similar situations, and function as a mediator for social networks to be created and maintained and provide the social capital that migrants may not have the opportunity to access otherwise. It is through this study evident that migrants who are in socio-economic vulnerable positions are the ones who make use of the intangible assets from the CSOs the most. As networks can facilitate factors such as accommodation, employment, information and language, the psychological costs including loneliness and stress will also be reduced. Therefore, the CSOs work to indirectly or directly improve migrants' post migration stressors and further reduce the risks of mental health difficulties are important to acknowledge.

## **6.2 Conclusion**

The research questions that were asked in order to operationalize the purpose of this study have been answered through four objectives, with the general objective being to explore the significance of CSOs as support for the migrant respondents' well-being. The findings in this study suggests that the pre-migration social networks do not evidently

facilitate the migration process for the respondents in this study, though it influenced many of the migrants' decision to migrate to Sweden. This implies that the majority of them did not have access to a social network at the place of destination to facilitate the migration process, which is why the civil society plays an important role. The CSOs projects aim to motivate, encourage and improve their participants' situation as well as providing bridging social capital. The social resources they obtain from being part of the civil society can entail safety, a sense of belonging, new knowledge and an expanded social network that bridges across various types of people. These are crucial elements to reduce the psychological costs in the post migration phase and thus improve integration.

Much of the prior research about post migration stressors and mental health difficulties among migrants were proven to be accurate in this study as well. The immigrant experience varies depending on background, reason for migration and the social resources at the place of destination, although the majority of the respondents experience post migration stressors that influence their well-being, and the ones without family have the most challenges. As a result, depression, anxiety and destructive coping methods affect the motivation to improve the situation and further integrate better. Additionally, none of the respondents have sought professional help for their problems. Instead, many participate in CSOs projects that indirectly improve migrant's well-being, since it offers a social atmosphere with activities that aim to improve post migration stressors that cause worsened well-being. While authorities provide inadequate psychological and social support in a migrant's settlement phase, the CSOs offer guidance and social environments that are beneficial for the migrant. Through their activities and projects, they enhance the migrants' skills, self-confidence and motivation, which makes them resilient through the challenges of the migration process. The CSOs are therefore evidently an important part of the host society to reduce the emergence of mental health difficulties and through this improve integration.

### 6.3 Recommendation

The findings from this study implies following recommendations:

- CSOs should receive more funding for their work. The willpower and desire to improve integration and migrants' well-being is there, but their work is hindered by the lack of financial resources. They should be acknowledged for the important role they have in operating between authorities and migrants, and thus be included in policy making due to the firsthand knowledge they have about migrants' integration problems and post migration stress.
- CSO personnel and volunteers need guidance in how to manage mental health difficulties, not for the purpose to give treatment, but to make them more comfortable when these problems occur. It could also be beneficial to educate the volunteers in common questions asked by the migrants participating in the projects, and to have guidelines in how to not be overwhelmed or too privately involved in the problems.
- As the post migration stressors needs to be reduced for migrants' mental health to improve and to achieve better integration, authorities should review migration policies and consider if the current system is beneficial for migrants and the host society. Depending on a migrant's background, reason for migration and current situation, their individual needs and capabilities should be addressed, instead of viewing them as a homogenous group who need to fulfill the same requirements.

#### **6.4 Areas for further research**

Several findings and areas within this study would be interesting to investigate in more detail. For example, the study targeted various migrant categories, hence an idea for further research is to specifically analyse one group, such as unaccompanied minors, or focus on potential gender differences. Additionally, a longitudinal study to see how the migrants participating in CSOs projects have mobilised the social capital they have obtained over time would be interesting to examine. Lastly, since this study investigates international migration, and more specifically migrants from developing countries to a developed country, further research can suggestively examine if the results would be similar for other types of countries of origin and destination.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ager, A. and A. Strang (2008) Understanding Integration: A Conceptual Framework. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 21 (2), 166-191.  
DOI: 10.1093/jrs/fen016
- Alemi, Q., James, S., Cruz, R., Zepeda, V., Racadio, M. (2014) Psychological Distress in Afghan Refugees: A Mixed-Method Systematic Review. *J Immigrant Minor Health* 16(6): 1247-1261.  
DOI: 10.1007/s10903-013-9861-1
- American Psychiatric Association (2018) *What is Mental Illness?* American Psychiatric Association. Accessed 2020-11-27 from: <https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/what-is-mental-illness>
- Anheier, H., K., List, R.A. (2005) *A Dictionary of Civil Society, Philanthropy and the Third Sector*. 1<sup>st</sup> edition. Routledge.
- Arango, J. (2004). Theories of International Migration. In D. Joly (ed.), *International Migration and the New Millennium*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 15-36.
- Aroian, K. (1993). Mental health risks and problems encountered by illegal immigrants. *Issues of Mental Health Nursing*, 14(4), 379-397.  
DOI: 10.3109/01612849309006901
- Awumbila, M., Teye, J.K., Yaro, J., A. (2017) Social Networks, Migration Trajectories and Livelihood Strategies of Migrant Domestic and Construction Workers in Accra, Ghana. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, Vol. 52(7) 982-996.  
DOI: 10.1177/0021909616634743
- Bakker, L., Dagevos, J., Engbersen, G. (2014) The Importance of Resources and Security in the Socio-Economic Integration of Refugees. A Study on the Impact of Length of Stay in Asylum Accommodation and Residence Status on Socio-Economic Integration for the Four Largest Refugee Groups in the Netherlands. *International Migration and Integration*, 15, 431-448.  
DOI: 10.1007/s12134-013-0296-2
- Beiser, M. & Hyman, I. (1997) Refugees' Time Perspective and Mental Health. *American Journal of Psychiatry*. 154, 996-1002.  
DOI: 10.1176/ajp.154.7.996
- Beiser, M. & Hou, F. (2006) Ethnic Identity, resettlement stress and depressive affect among Southeast Asian refugees in Canada. *Social Science & Medicine*, 63, 137-150.  
DOI: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2005.12.002

- Berman, H., Mulcahy, G. A., Forchuk, C., Edmunds, K. A., Haldenby, A., & Lopez, R. (2009). Uprooted and displaced: A critical narrative study of homeless, aboriginal, and newcomer girls in Canada. *Issue of Mental Health Nursing*, 30, 418-430.  
DOI: 10.1080/01612840802624475
- Berry, J.W., Kim, U., Minde, T., Moko, R. (1987) Comparative Studies of Acculturative Stress. *The International Migration Review*. Vol 21(3).  
DOI: 10.1177/019791838702100303
- Bogner A., Littig B., Menz W. (2009) *Introduction: Expert Interviews — An Introduction to a New Methodological Debate*. In: Bogner A., Littig B., Menz W. (eds) *Interviewing Experts*. Research Methods Series. Palgrave Macmillan, London.  
DOI: 10.1057/9780230244276\_1
- Boyd, Monica (1989) Family and Personal Networks in International Migration: Recent Developments and New Agendas. *The International Migration Review*. Vol 23(3), 638-670.  
DOI: 10.2307/2546433
- Boyd, M. and Nowak, J. (2012). Social Networks and International Migration: European Perspectives. In Martiniello, M. and Rath, J. (Eds.). *An Introduction to International Migration Studies*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 79-106.  
DOI: 10.1515/9789048517350-004
- Carballo, M. & Mboup, M. (2005). *International migration and health. A paper prepared for the Policy Analysis and Research Programme of the Global Commission on International Migration*. Global Commission on International Migration.
- Carter, B., & McGoldric, M. (1989). Ethnicity and the family life cycle. In B. Carter & M. McGoldric (Eds.), *The changing family life cycle: A framework for family therapy*-149-163. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Clayton, Oakley, Taylor (2000) *Civil Society Organizations and Service Provisions*. United Nation Research Institute for Social Development.  
Accessed 2020-11-12 from:  
[https://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/\(httpAuxPages\)/19AB2640214382A380256B5E004C94C5/\\$file/intrac.pdf](https://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/(httpAuxPages)/19AB2640214382A380256B5E004C94C5/$file/intrac.pdf)
- Committee on the Rights of the Child (2005) *General Comment No. &: Treatment of unaccompanied and separated children outside their country of origin*. Paragraph 7.  
Accessed 2020-11-12 from <https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/GC6.pdf>

- Creswell, J. W. (2009) *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 3rd edition. SAGE Publications.
- Czubinska, G. (2017) Migration as an Unconscious Search for Identity: Some Reflections on Language, Difference and Belonging. *British Journal of Psychotherapy* 33, 22. 159-176.  
DOI: 10.1111/bjp.12286
- Dow, H.D. (2011) An Overview of Stressors Faced by Immigrants and Refugees: A Guide for Mental Health Practitioners. *Home Health Care Management & Practice* 23(3), 210-217.  
DOI: 10.1177.1084822310390878
- Edizada, S & Axelsson, S. (2020) *Större självmordsrisk för ensamkommande*. [Increased suicidal risk for unaccompanied minors] Sveriges Radio.  
Accessed 2020-11-04 from:  
<https://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=83artikel=7569302>
- Eliassi, B. (2017) Conceptions of Immigrant Integration and Racism Among Social Workers in Sweden. *Journal of Progressive Human Services*, 22 (1), 6-35.  
DOI: 10.1080/10428232.2017.124924
- Etikan, I., Musa, S. A., Alkassim, R. S. (2016) Comparison of Convenience Sampling and Purposive Sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, 5(1), 1-4.  
DOI: 10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11
- Eurostat (2020) *Asylum and first-time asylum applicants - annual aggregated data (rounded)*.  
Accessed 2020-10-16 from:  
<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tps00191/default/line?lang=en>
- Hollander, A-C., Lewis, G., Dal H., Magnusson, C., Kirkbride, J, B., Dalman, C. (2016) Refugee migration and risk of schizophrenia and other non-affective psychoses: Cohort study of 1.3 million people in Sweden. *BMJ Online*.  
DOI: 10.1136/bmj.i1030
- Golafshani, N. (2003) Understanding Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research. *The Qualitative Report*, 8 (4), 597-607.  
Accessed 2020-11-14 from: <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol8/iss4/6>
- Granovetter, M. S. (1973). The Strength of Weak Ties, *American Journal of Sociology*, 78(6), 1360-1380.

Gurak, D.T., Caces, M.F (2010) *Migration Networks and the Shaping of Migration Systems*. Cornell University, Oxford University Press.

Hwang, S. S., Xi, J., Cao, Y., Feng, X., & Qiao, X. (2007). Anticipation of migration and psychological stress and the Three Gorges dam project, China. *Social Science & Medicine*, 65, 1012-1024.  
DOI: 10.1916/j.socscimed.2007.05.003

International Organization for Migration (2019) *International Migration Law: Glossary on Migration. No 34*. International Organization for Migration.  
Accessed 2020-11-17 from:  
[https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iml\\_34\\_glossary.pdf](https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iml_34_glossary.pdf)

International Organization for Migration (2015) *Mixed Migration Flows in the Mediterranean and Beyond: Flow Monitoring Compilation, 2015 Annual Report*. International Organization for Migration.  
Accessed 2020-11-13 from:  
[https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/situation\\_reports/file/Mixed-Flows-Mediterranean-and-Beyond-Compilation-Overview-2015.pdf](https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/situation_reports/file/Mixed-Flows-Mediterranean-and-Beyond-Compilation-Overview-2015.pdf)

James, P., Iyer, A., Webb, T.L. (2019) The impact of post-migration stressors on refugees' emotional distress and health: A longitudinal analysis. *European J Soc Psychol*. 49, 1359-1367.  
DOI: 10.1002/ejsp.2589

Kirmayer, L., Narasiah, L., Munoz, M., Rashid, M., Ryder, A.G., Guzder, J., Hassan, G., Rousseau, C., Pottie, K. (2011) Common mental health problems in immigrants and refugees: general approach in primary care. *Canadian Collaboration for Immigrant and Refugee Health*, 183 (12).  
DOI: 10.1503/cmaj.090292

Ku, L., Waidmann, T. (2003). *How race/ethnicity, immigration status, and language affect health insurance coverage, access to care and quality of care among the low-income population*. Washington, DC: Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured.  
Retrieved 2020-10-02 from:  
<https://www.kff.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/how-race-ethnicity-immigration-status-and-language-affect-health-insurance-coverage-access-to-and-quality-of-care-among-the-low-income-population.pdf>

- Kunz, E. F. (1973). The refugee in flight: Kinetic models and forms of displacement. *International Migration Review*, 7(2), 125-146.  
DOI: 10.1177/019791837300700201
- Laumann, E.O., Galaskiewicz, J., Marsden, P.V. (1978) Community Structure as Interorganizational linkages. *Annual Review of Sociology*,4, 455-84.  
DOI: 10.1146/annurev.so.04.080178.002323
- Leung, L. (2015) Validity, reliability and generalizability in qualitative research. *Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care*. 4(3), 324-327.  
DOI: 10.4103/2249-4863.161306
- Li, M. (2016) Pre-Migration Trauma and Post-migration stressors for Asian and Latino American Immigrants: Transnational Stress Proliferation. *Social Indicators Research*, 129, pp. 47-59.  
DOI: 10.1007/s11205-015-1090-7
- Lindencrona, F, Ekblad, S, Hauff, E. (2008) Mental health of recently resettled refugees from the Middle East in Sweden: the impact of pre-resettlement trauma, resettlement stress and capacity to handle stress. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*. 43, 121-131.  
DOI: 10.1007/s00127-007-0280-2
- Lunds Kommun (2020) *Associations and support*. Lunds Kommun.  
Accessed 2020-11-12 from: <https://www.lund.se/en/culture--leisure/foreningar-och-stod/>
- MacDonald, J.S. and MacDonald, L.D. (1964). Chain Migration, Ethnic Neighbourhood Formation and Social Networks, *Millbank Memorial Fund Quarterly*, 42(1): 82-97.  
DOI:10.2307/3348581
- Massey, D. S. (1990) Social Structure, Household strategies and the Cumulative Causation of Migration. *Population Index*, 56 (1), 3-26  
DOI: 10.2307/3644186
- Massey, D. S., Arango, J., Hugo, G., Kouaouci, A., Pellegrino, A., Taylor, E.J. (1993) Theories of International Migration: A Review and Appraisal. *Population and Development Review*. Vol 19 (3), 431-466

- Massey, D. S. & España, F. G (1987). "The social process of international migration." *Science*, 237, 733-738.  
DOI: 10.1126/science.237.4816733
- Maxwell, J. A. (2012) *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*. SAGE Publications.
- Mirkin, M. (1998). The impact of multiple contexts on recent immigrant families. In M. McGoldrick (Ed.), *Revisioning family therapy* (pp. 370-383). New York: The Guilford Press.
- Moore, K. (2016) *Swedish government struggling over migrant crisis*. BBC.  
Accessed 2020-11-18 from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-35549169>
- Organization of African Unity (1969), Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, 1001 U.N.T.S.  
Accessed 2020-12-10 from: <https://www.unhcr.org/about-us/background/45dc1a682/oau-convention-governing-specific-aspects-refugee-problems-africa-adopted.html>
- Odmalm, P. (2004) Civil Society, migrant organizations and political parties: theoretical linkages and applications to the Swedish context. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 30:3, 471-489.  
DOI: 10.1080/13691830410001682043.
- Omidian, P. (1996) *Aging and family in an Afghan refugee community*. New York, NY: Garland.
- Pearlin, Menaghan, Lieberman, Mullan (1981) The Stress Process. *Journal of Health and Social Behaviour*, 22 (4), 337-356.  
DOI: 10.2307/2136676
- Pernice, R., & Brook, J. (1996). Refugee and immigrants' mental health: Association of demographic and post-migration factors. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 136, 511-519.  
DOI:10.1080/00224545.1996.9714033
- Portes, A., Sensenbrenner, J. (1993) Embeddedness and Immigration: Notes on the Social Determinants of Economic Action. *American Journal of Sociology*. 98 (6), 1320-

1350.

- Priebe, S., Giacco, D., El-Nagib, R. (2016) *Health Evidence Network Synthesis Report*. World Health Organization.  
Accessed 2020-11-20 from:  
[https://www.euro.who.int/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/317622/HEN-synthesis-report-47.pdf?ua=1](https://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/317622/HEN-synthesis-report-47.pdf?ua=1)
- Punch, K. F. (2014) *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. SAGE Publications.
- Ryan, L. (2011) Migrants' social networks and weak ties: accessing resources and constructing relationships post-migration. *The Sociological Review*, 59 (4).  
DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-954X.2011.02030.x
- Svanh, G. (2020) Så gick det för barnen som kom hit ensamma [This is how it went for the children who came here alone]. *Sydsvenskan*.  
Accessed 2020-10-16 from:  
<https://www.sydsvenskan.se/2020-11-13/sa-gick-det-for-de-ensamkommande-barnen-i-lund>
- Sydsvenskan (2020) *Fem års kamp för ett nytt liv – ensamkommande barn i Lund berättar*. [Five years of struggle for a new life – unaccompanied minors in Lund narrates].  
Accessed 2020-10-16 from:  
<https://www.sydsvenskan.se/2020-11-14/fem-ars-kamp-for-ett-nytt-liv-ensamkommande-barn-i-lund>
- Swedish Institute (2020) *Sweden and Migration*.  
Accessed 2020-11-02 from: <https://sweden.se/migration/#2015>
- Swedish Migration Agency (2020a) *Family Reunification*.  
Accessed 2020-11-21 from:  
<https://www.migrationsverket.se/English/Private-individuals/Protection-and-asylum-in-Sweden/When-you-have-received-a-decision-on-your-asylum-application/If-you-are-allowed-to-stay/Family-reunification.html>
- Swedish Migration Agency (2020b) *History*.  
Accessed 2020-11-12 from:  
<https://www.migrationsverket.se/English/About-the-Migration-Agency/Migration-to-Sweden/History.html>

Swedish Migration Agency (2020c) Protection and asylum in Sweden.

Accessed 2020-11-16 from

<https://www.migrationsverket.se/English/Private-individuals/Protection-and-asylum-in-Sweden/While-you-are-waiting-for-a-decision.html>

Swedish Migration Agency (2020d) *Residence permit for upper secondary level studies for those who have applied for asylum.*

Accessed 2020-11-21 from:

<https://www.migrationsverket.se/English/Private-individuals/Protection-and-asylum-in-Sweden/Residence-permit-for-upper-secondary-level-studies.html>

Swedish Migration Agency (2020e) *Your rights.*

Accessed 2020-11-24 from:

<https://www.migrationsverket.se/English/Private-individuals/Protection-and-asylum-in-Sweden/Children-seeking-asylum/Without-parents/Your-rights.html>

Teye, J.K.(2012). Benefits, Challenges and Dynamism of Positionalities Associated with Mixed Methods Research in Developing Countries: Evidence from Ghana. *Journal of Mixed Research* 6(4), 379-391.

DOI: 10.1177/1558689812453332

Thoits, P. A. (1995) Stress, Coping, and Social Support Processes: Where Are We? What Next? *Journal of Health and Social Behaviour: Forty Years of Medical Sociology: The State of the Art and Directions for the Future.* 53-79.

DOI:10.2307/2626957

Törngren-Osanami, S., Öberg, K., Righard, E. (2018) The role of Civil Society in the Integration of Newly Arrived Refugees in Sweden. *Foundation for European Progressive Studies.*

UNFPA (2005) *International Migration and the Millennium Development Goals.*

Accessed 2020-10-14 from:

[https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/migration\\_report\\_2005.pdf](https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/migration_report_2005.pdf)

United Nations (2020) *Civil Society.*

Accessed 2020-11-10 from: <https://www.un.org/en/sections/resources-different-audiences/civil-society/index.html>

United High Commissioner for Refugees (2016), *Addressing the Challenge of Mixed Migration: Protection and Assistance in Mixed Migration.*

Accessed 2020-11-12 from:

<https://www.refworld.org/docid/5804d4204.html>

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (1951) *Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*. UNHCR.

Accessed 2020-11-20 from: <https://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10.html>

Ventevogel, P., Schinina G., Strang, A., Gagliato, M., Hansen, L.J. (2015) *Mental Health and Psychosocial Support for Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants on the Move in Europe*. A Multi-Agency Guidance Note.

Accessed 2020-10-16 from:

[https://www.euro.who.int/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/297576/MHPSS-refugees-asylum-seekers-migrants-Europe-Multi-Agency-guidance-note.pdf%3Fua%3D1](https://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/297576/MHPSS-refugees-asylum-seekers-migrants-Europe-Multi-Agency-guidance-note.pdf%3Fua%3D1)

Wagndal, M. & Segnestam Larsson, O., (2018) *Svenskarna arbetar ideellt för 131 miljarder*. Statistics Sweden.

Accessed 2020-11-13 from:

<https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/artiklar/2018/svenskarna-arbetar-ideellt-for-131-miljarder/>

Woolcock, Michael (2001) *The Place of Social Capital in Understanding Social and Economic Outcomes*. *Canadian Journal of Policy Research*.

DOI: 10.1017/CB09781107415324.00

World Health Organization (2019) *Mental Disorders*.

Accessed 2020-11-13 from: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-disorders>

World Health Organization (2018) *Mental health promotion and mental health care in refugees and migrants*.

Accessed 2020-11-13 from:

[https://www.euro.who.int/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/386563/mental-health-eng.pdf?ua=1](https://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/386563/mental-health-eng.pdf?ua=1)

World Health Organization (2020) *Social determinants of Health*.

Accessed 2020-11-13 from:

<https://www.who.int/social-determinants/themes/civilsociety/en/>

World Population review (2020) *Population of Cities in Sweden*.

Accessed 2020-11-27 from:

<https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/cities/sweden>

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Interview guide for CSO workers

#### Section A: Background information

1. Can you describe your role in the organization?
2. What is the main purpose of your organization?
3. Where does your organization obtain resources for your projects?
4. How many immigrants participates in your activities/projects?
5. What is your target group? Any specific age, gender or background?
6. What type of needs do your participants come here for?
7. What, according to you, is the most important part of your work?

#### Section B: Mental Health and Support

8. Do your participants express any certain problems?
9. Have you noticed any cases of mental health difficulties?
10. If yes in question 9, how do you handle it??
11. Do you have any obligations to report it?
12. Do you have any training/policies from your organization on how to handle it?
13. Do you see any difference in well-being between the different categories of migrants?
14. Have you witnessed any destructive coping methods? Such as drugs, alcohol etc.
15. What do you think is the best way to support the immigrants in Lund and to encourage them towards integration?

## **Appendix 2: Interview guide for the immigrants**

### **Section A: Background**

1. Could you please state your age, family situation, educational background?
2. What year did you arrive to Sweden?
3. What is your previous and current migration status?
4. Why did you decide to go to Sweden specifically?
5. Did you know anybody in Sweden before coming here?
6. How did you come here? Did you get any help during the transit?
7. Do you still have contact with your family back home, and for example send remittances?

### **Section B: Post migration stressors and mental health**

8. What challenges have you experienced since arriving in Sweden?
9. Have you felt any mental health difficulties? Such as anxiety, depression etc.
10. If yes to question 8 and 9, have you received support for this? Did you seek professional help?

### **Section C: CSO participation**

11. Have you participated in any local CSOs since your arrival to Sweden?
12. If yes, what is the main reason for your participation?
13. Do you feel that the CSOs can help with any of your needs?

### **Appendix 3: Informed Consent**

Dear Respondent,

My name is Anna Stubbergaard and I am a student from University of Ghana. I am pursuing my master's degree in Migration Studies and are therefore conducting a research called "Civil Society Organizations as networks and mental health support for migrants", where I interview migrants in Lund as well as key informants from various civil society organizations.

I am grateful if you can take your time to participate in this study. Your participation is voluntary, and the obtained information is treated with the utmost confidentiality and anonymity, and is used for academic purpose only.

For further questions, do not hesitate to contact me.