

# Immigrants' perceptions on integration in two institutional frameworks: Sweden and Spain

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## **Abstract**

This research project examines how immigrants of diverse ethnic origins perceive their integration, or incorporation, in two European multi-ethnic societies, Sweden and Spain, and cities, Stockholm and Barcelona. A central assumption is that immigrants' own sense of social inclusion and fair treatment is essential for their wellbeing, as well as for their willingness to integrate. Negative experiences as discrimination and perceived non-acceptance are likely to decrease solidarity and identification with society. The emphasis lies on two central dimensions of self-perceived integration, or incorporation: i) the sense of belonging and ii) the perception of opportunities. Integration is in this project defined as the process towards egalitarian coexistence in multi-ethnic societies.

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## 1. Project summary (English)

The aim of this research project is to examine how immigrants of diverse ethnic origins perceive their “integration,” or incorporation, in two European multi-ethnic societies, Sweden and Spain/Catalonia, and cities, Stockholm and Barcelona. Based on earlier research on immigrants’ self-perceptions by scholars as Shellenberg (2004, 2010), this project assumes that immigrants’ own sense of social inclusion and fair treatment is essential for their wellbeing, as well as for their willingness to integrate. Negative experiences as discrimination and perceived non-acceptance are likely to decrease solidarity and identification with society. The emphasis lies on two central dimensions of self-perceived integration, or incorporation: i) the sense of belonging and ii) the perception of enjoying, or not, equality of opportunities compared with the ethnic majority population.

### Background and conceptual framework

The integration of immigrated ethnic minorities is a large and increasing concern across Europe. Exclusion, and in extreme cases radicalization, of second generation immigrants, and simultaneously the reception of new arrivals, accentuated by the ongoing refugee crises, represent important challenges for societies where integration policies are generally discussed in terms of failure, while integration as concept is being contested both in policy-making and in academia. There is an increasing focus on the role of the receiving society for achieving a higher degree of integration, or incorporation, of immigrants, both among policymakers and scholars. A discursive shift towards a more reciprocal view on integration is represented by the intercultural policies that have been adopted in several European countries over the last decade, most importantly at the level of local administrations (Zapata-Barrero, 2012 and 2015, Gebhardt 2016). There is however also recognition that ethnic discrimination in practice affects immigrants’ chances to participate in society on equal terms (e.g. Penninx and Garcés 2016). Integration is in this project defined as, ideally, a situation of *egalitarian coexistence in multi-ethnic societies*, and the process towards this stage as, in Penninx and Garcés’ (ibid) terms, the process of *becoming an accepted part of society*. In the ideal case, this refers to a scenario where an individual’s ethnic background is irrelevant for his or her opportunities and position in society. When defining what immigrants to include in the study, being categorized as an immigrant, and thereby risk being stereotyped in negative ways, was considered more important than who has actually migrated.

Sweden and Spain are both European welfare states where immigration and its consequences are often described as a major challenge for society. Vertovec (2007) uses the term *super-diversity* to define the diversification of ethnic origins among the inhabitants

in western societies, which poses new challenges regarding the bases for social cohesion. In both Sweden and Spain, the foreign-born population has become “super-diverse” over the past decades. Sweden and Spain are also among the EU countries where the gap between immigrants and the native population is largest in terms of unemployment, poverty and over-qualification in employment, which indicates that the integration processes are seriously hampered (Eurostat 2011, Wiesbrock 2013). Despite these similarities, Sweden and Spain however represent very different cultural and institutional settings within a European context. Comparing the perceptions of immigrants of similar origins in these two countries makes it possible to identify what different obstacles and opportunities to integration/social inclusion that immigrants face in different institutional contexts.

Moreover, it may be argued that the city is more relevant than the national, or regional, level when studying integration processes. The empirical research for this project was conducted in the cities of Stockholm and Barcelona, and reflects an increasing emphasis on the city level in integration studies (e.g. Gilardoni et. al. 2015; Gebhardt 2014). The city, or the neighborhood, constitutes the physical space where interaction between people of multiple ethnic backgrounds takes place (or not) on an everyday basis.

### **Data and research methods**

The empirical data for this research project is based upon semi-structured interviews with 48 immigrants of African, Asian, Muslim and Latin American origin in Stockholm and Barcelona during 2014 and 2015. To complement the narratives by immigrants who may be affected by ethnic and racial stereotyping, 12 interviews with a control group of white, western migrants who moved voluntarily to Sweden and Spain out of personal or professional motives were included. Their migration experiences provide a valuable contrast to the non-western respondents, and insights into which dimensions of the migratory project are universal, and which are clearly differentiated along ethno-racial lines. In addition, 21 informative interviews with stakeholders involved in integration work were performed during the same time period.

Selective sampling was used to assure that the respondents would fit into the project definitions of “integration” and “immigrant.” All of the immigrant respondents have in common that they aspire for participation on equal terms with the ethnic majority in the society where they live. Most of them have a high educational level and aspire for qualified employment. None of them have a strong religious identity or other characteristics that could make them more likely to not want to fully form part of a western society. It should be noted that this does not imply an assimilationist approach; acceptance of difference is in this project viewed as an essential component of the reciprocal integration process that is considered ideal in multiethnic societies. It is however based on the point of view that

“strong multiculturalism,” as the implementation of parallel legal systems, is not compatible with integration. The respondents were selected based on the assumption that stereotyping based on visible ethno-racial features as skin color influence on how people of diverse origins are treated in different spheres of society; on the labor and housing markets as well as in everyday interaction with people from the ethnic majority. This assumption was confirmed throughout the interviews.

## **Results**

The findings reflect that the perceived sense of belonging and opportunities in society are clearly racialized: experiences of rejection and discrimination are overall common among the respondents of African, Muslim and Latin American origin in both of the cities (altogether, 27 out of 36 respondents of these origins shared this perception), and most of these respondents perceive that their origin is negative for their chances on the labor market. The Asian respondents reflect more ambiguousness: on the one hand, the Chinese perceive that they are positively valued as “hard-working” and “non-conflictive,” but also frequently bullied and ridiculed based on their physical appearance, while all the Western respondents in both cities coincide in feeling entirely accepted in the society where they live. There are however vast differences between the respondents in Stockholm and Barcelona, most strikingly in terms of perceived inclusion in society, which is far lower among the non-western respondents in Stockholm compared to Barcelona. Moreover, the impact of the economic crisis represents a central impediment for integration processes according to both immigrant respondents and integration stakeholders in Catalonia, while in Sweden, the most central concern is negative attitudes and racism among the majority society, which appears to hamper the opportunities of immigrants despite a comparably prosperous economy.

All in all, whether positive or negative, stereotypes based on ethno-racial features and national origin are central for most of the respondents in their everyday lives. These stereotypes become incorporated in their self-perceptions and affect their relations with the ethnic majority society in several ways. For instance, some Kurdish and Chilean respondents in Sweden aim lower when applying for a job than they would like to as they perceive that it is “pointless” (they expect to be discriminated against based on their earlier experiences), while Norwegian and Canadian respondents in Spain perceive that their nationality gives them “carte blanche” from integration expectations, and advantages on the job and housing markets also compared to native Spaniards.

Other factors that were identified during the data analysis, and that influence on the respondents’ perceptions and experiences of integration/incorporation to varying degrees, are the motives behind their migration projects, their gender, and whether they migrated

as adults or were born/grew up in the country where they live. Overall, the second generation immigrant respondents suffer more from perceptions of exclusion, discrimination and non-belonging than the first generation respondents, which is consistent with contemporary research within this field (e.g. Crul & Schneider 2013, Safi 2010, Wu et. al 2012). A common experience that several of the second generation immigrant respondents in both countries share is that of *not being "allowed" to belong*; that no matter how hard they try to adopt national customs and how much they declare that they feel "Swedish" or "Catalan", the majority society constantly questions their identity, which creates frustration and detachment.

### **Concluding remarks**

Based on the rich data material generated by the 81 interviews and complemented by policy documents, reports and earlier research, this project is concluded with some general statements, reflections and policy implications:

- Two interrelated integration obstacles appear particularly central: socio-economic disadvantage and negative stereotyping, which results in ethnic discrimination and thereby reinforces socio-economic disadvantage (through lacking access to (quality) employment, housing in attractive areas, etc.). It appears reasonable to assume that without real equality of opportunities, integration is hardly possible.
- A vast majority of the respondents (56/60) argue that "race" (skin color) is central for how people are treated by the majority society, and what opportunities he or she has.
- Most of the immigrant respondents in both countries with largely negative perceptions and experiences think that their ethnic origin is devalued by the majority society, and that they are perceived as less skilled and competent based on stereotypes of their home countries.
- In Stockholm, the lack of everyday, interethnic contacts because of the cemented housing segregation is perceived as a major problem with negative effects for integration. In Barcelona, contrastingly, many of the respondents consider the existence of frequent interethnic contacts in streets and squares as an important asset and part of the city's much-appreciated "cosmopolitan" character.
- In Spain/Catalonia/Barcelona, instead, acute socio-economic marginalization and extreme precariousness among immigrants are central concerns, while in Sweden/Stockholm, this is not the issue.
- Finally, both immigrant respondents and integration stakeholders largely agree that empowering non-Western immigrants is central, together with more efficient anti-discrimination work, in order to improve immigrant incorporation. Two concrete suggestions for how to do this are:

i) Facilitating the recognition of non-EU university degrees and access to public employment for foreigners.

ii) Awareness-raising campaigns emphasizing the international competence of immigrants (as language skills in French, Arabic and Chinese, or the cultural competence that is useful to develop business contacts with the countries of origin). The purpose of this measure is not only to stimulate actual transnational relations, but also to increase the status of immigrants in the majority society. Many respondents furthermore believe that a general “internationalization” of European societies, where larger numbers of people from the ethnic majority speak foreign languages and have lived abroad, potentially could foster more positive attitudes towards “super-diversity.”

## Resumen del proyecto (Spanish)

El objetivo de este proyecto de investigación es examinar cómo los inmigrantes de diversos orígenes étnicos perciben su “integración”, o incorporación, en dos sociedades multiétnicas europeas, Suecia y España/Cataluña, y más específicamente, a nivel local de las dos ciudades de Estocolmo y Barcelona. Basado en estudios anteriores sobre la autopercepción de los inmigrantes realizados por investigadores como Shellenberg (2004, 2010), este proyecto supone que la sensación propia que tienen los inmigrantes de su inclusión social y el trato justo es esencial tanto para su bienestar personal como para su voluntad de formar parte de la sociedad donde viven, o sea, integrarse. Experiencias negativas como la discriminación y la percepción de no ser aceptado/a probablemente disminuyen los sentimientos de solidaridad e identificación con la sociedad. La énfasis de este proyecto está en dos dimensiones centrales de la integración, o incorporación, autopercepcionada: i) el sentimiento de pertenencia, y ii) la percepción de tener, o no, igualdad de oportunidades comparado con la mayoría étnica.

### Trasfondo y marco conceptual

La integración de las minorías étnicas inmigradas es un asunto que preocupa a Europa de manera creciente. La exclusión social, y en casos extremos la radicalización de la segunda generación, junto con la simultánea recepción de nuevas llegadas que aumentan rápidamente por la actual crisis migratoria, representan retos importantes para las sociedades europeas. Las políticas de integración generalmente se consideran un fracaso, mientras que el propio concepto de “integración” se cuestiona cada vez más, tanto en los contextos de formulación de políticas como en la academia. Hay un enfoque creciente en el papel que juega la sociedad de recepción en el proceso de integración, o incorporación, de los inmigrantes. Varios países europeos han vivido un cambio discursivo en la última década, hacia una visión más recíproca de la integración, sobre todo a nivel de las administraciones locales (Zapata-Barrero, 2012 and 2015, Gebhardt 2016). Sin embargo, también se reconoce que la discriminación étnica en la práctica afecta las oportunidades que tienen los inmigrantes de participar en la sociedad en igualdad de condiciones que la población autóctona (ej. Penninx and Garcés 2016). En este proyecto se define la integración como, idealmente, una situación de *convivencia igualitaria en sociedades multiétnicas*, y el proceso hacia este estado como, usando las palabras de Penninx and Garcés’ (ibid), el proceso de llegar a ser una parte aceptada de la sociedad. En el caso ideal, esto se refiere a un panorama en el que el origen de una persona es irrelevante para su posición y sus oportunidades en la sociedad. Al definir qué inmigrantes incluir en este estudio, se consideró más importante ser categorizado como inmigrante, y por tanto correr el riesgo de ser estereotipado de forma negativa, que el hecho de haber o no migrado.

Suecia y España comparten las características de ser estados de bienestar europeos donde la inmigración y sus consecuencias a menudo se describen como grandes retos para la sociedad. Vertovec (2007) utiliza el concepto de “super-diversidad” para definir la diversificación de orígenes étnicos entre los habitantes de las sociedades occidentales, lo que supone nuevos retos para sus bases de cohesión social. Tanto Suecia como España se han convertido en sociedades “super-diversas” durante las últimas décadas: no sólo han llegado a tener una población inmigrada significativa, sino que esa población se ha diversificado sustancialmente en cuanto a orígenes étnicos. Además, Suecia y España están entre los países de la UE donde la quiebra entre la población inmigrada y la autóctona es más grande en cuanto a desempleo, pobreza y sobrecualificación en el empleo, lo que indica que hay problemas importantes con los procesos de integración (Eurostat 2011, Wiesbrock 2013). A pesar de estas similitudes, Suecia y España también representan contextos culturales e institucionales muy diferentes dentro del marco europeo. Comparar las percepciones que tienen los inmigrantes de orígenes similares dentro de estos dos países diferentes sirve para identificar qué diferentes obstáculos y oportunidades para la integración/inclusión social encuentran los inmigrantes en contextos institucionales diferentes.

En adición, se puede argumentar que la ciudad es más relevante que el nivel nacional, o regional, para el estudio de los procesos de integración. La investigación empírica realizada dentro del marco de este proyecto se realizó en las ciudades de Estocolmo y Barcelona, y refleja un creciente énfasis en el nivel de la ciudad en los estudios de integración de inmigrantes (ej. Gilardoni et. al. 2015; Gebhardt 2014). La ciudad, o el barrio, constituye el espacio físico donde la interacción entre personas de múltiples orígenes étnicos tiene lugar (o no) en la vida cotidiana.

### **Datos y metodología**

Los datos empíricos usados en este proyecto de investigación consisten en entrevistas semi-estructuradas con 48 inmigrantes de origen de países africanos, asiáticos, musulmanes y latinoamericanos realizadas en Estocolmo y Barcelona durante el 2014 y el 2015. Para complementar las narrativas de estos inmigrantes, que fueron seleccionados por pertenecer a grupos étnicos que corren el riesgo de sufrir estereotipos negativos relacionados con su origen y sus características raciales, se incluyó además 12 entrevistas con un grupo de control de migrantes blancos de países occidentales que se mudaron voluntariamente a Suecia o España por motivos personales o profesionales. Sus experiencias migratorias constituyen un contraste ilustrativo con los respondentes no occidentales, y contribuyen a revelar qué dimensiones del proyecto migratorio son universales, y cuáles están claramente diferenciadas según las características etno-raciales

de los inmigrantes. A parte de las 60 entrevistas con inmigrantes, se realizaron 21 entrevistas informativas con actores intermediarios durante el mismo período.

Al reclutar los respondentes se utilizó el muestreo selectivo para asegurar que encajaran con las definiciones de “integración” e “inmigrante” aplicadas en este proyecto. Todos los respondentes inmigrantes tienen en común que aspiran a participar en la sociedad donde viven en igualdad de condiciones con la población autóctona. La mayoría de los respondentes tienen un nivel educativo alto y esperan conseguir un empleo cualificado. Ninguno de ellos tiene una identidad religiosa muy pronunciada, u otras características que podría hacer más probable que no quisieran participar completamente en una sociedad occidental. Aquí parece oportuno subrayar que la selección de este perfil de respondentes no presupone un enfoque asimilacionista; al contrario, la plena aceptación de la diferencia se considera en este proyecto como un componente esencial del proceso de integración recíproco que idealmente se produciría en una sociedad multiétnica. Sin embargo, también se considera que el “multiculturalismo fuerte”, como por ejemplo la implementación de sistemas legales paralelos, no es compatible con la integración. Los respondentes fueron seleccionados basado en la presuposición que la estereotipación por características étno-raciales visibles, como el color de la piel, influyen en cómo se tratan a las personas de diversos orígenes en diferentes ámbitos de la sociedad: en el mercado laboral, en el acceso a la vivienda, y en los contactos cotidianos entre inmigrantes y autóctonos. Esta presuposición se confirmó con unanimidad a través de las entrevistas.

## **Resultados**

Los resultados de este estudio indican que las percepciones de pertenencia y de oportunidades entre los respondentes están claramente racializadas. Las experiencias de rechazo y discriminación son comunes entre los respondentes de países africanos, musulmanes y latinoamericanos en las dos ciudades (en total, 27 de 36 respondentes de estos orígenes comparten esta percepción), y la mayoría de los respondentes de estos orígenes creen que su origen es negativo para sus oportunidades en el mercado laboral. Los respondentes asiáticos son más ambiguos: por un lado, los chinos perciben que son valuados de forma positiva a través de estereotipos como “trabajadores” y “no conflictivos”, pero por otro lado a menudo se sienten ridiculizados por su aspecto físico. Los respondentes occidentales en ambas ciudades coinciden en sentirse plenamente aceptados. Sin embargo, hay también grandes diferencias entre los respondentes de Estocolmo y Barcelona, sobre todo en términos de la percepción de inclusión en la sociedad, que es mucho más baja entre los inmigrantes no occidentales en Estocolmo. Además, el impacto de la crisis económica representa un impedimento central para los procesos de integración según tanto los respondentes inmigrados como los actores intermediarios que trabajan con

temas de integración en Cataluña, mientras que en Suecia la preocupación más saliente entre los respondentes son las actitudes negativas y el racismo de la población autóctona, que aparentemente obstaculizan las oportunidades de los inmigrantes a pesar de tener una economía comparablemente próspera.

En suma, aunque los estereotipos étnicos pueden ser tanto negativos como positivos, están presentes en la vida de cada día de la mayoría de los respondentes. Estos estereotipos se incorporan en sus autopercepciones y afectan sus relaciones con la población autóctona de varias formas. Por ejemplo, algunos respondentes de origen kurdo y chileno en Suecia aspiran a trabajos debajo del nivel que querrían por percibir que “no vale la pena” intentarlo (esperan ser discriminados basados en sus experiencias previas), mientras que, por ejemplo, unos respondentes noruegos y canadienses en España perciben que su nacionalidad les da “carta blanca” de cualquier expectativa de integración de la sociedad mayoritaria, y ventajas en los mercados de trabajo y de viviendas también comparado con los españoles nativos.

Otros factores que se identificaron durante el análisis de las entrevistas, y que influyeron sobre las percepciones y experiencias de integración/incorporación de los respondentes, eran los motivos detrás de los proyectos migratorios, el género, y si migraron de adultos o nacieron/crecieron en el país donde viven. En total, los respondentes de segunda generación (que nacieron y/o crecieron en el país) sufren más por sus percepciones de exclusión, discriminación y no pertenencia que los respondentes que son inmigrantes de primera generación (que migraron de adultos o jóvenes). Esta conclusión coincide con los resultados de numerosos estudios de la segunda generación (ej. Crul & Schneider 2013, Safi 2010). Una experiencia típica entre los respondentes de segunda generación en ambos países es la de sentir que la sociedad autóctona *no “permite” su pertenencia*; o sea, que no importa cuánto intenten adaptarse a las costumbres nacionales, o cuánto declaren sentirse “suecos” o “catalanes”, porque la población autóctona constantemente cuestiona esta identidad suya, lo que les produce sentimientos de frustración y desapego.

## Conclusión

Basado en el amplio material empírico generado por las 81 entrevistas, complementadas con documentos oficiales, informes e investigaciones previas, este proyecto se concluye formulando algunos comentarios, reflexiones e implicaciones políticas generales:

- Hay dos obstáculos interrelacionados para la integración que parecen especialmente centrales: la desigualdad socio-económica y la estereotipación negativa. Ésta última puede tener como consecuencia la discriminación étnica, y por tanto reforzar la desigualdad socio-económica (a través de ser denegados acceso a trabajo (de calidad),

viviendas en zonas residenciales atractivas, etc.) Parece razonable suponer que sin igualdad de oportunidades, la integración en realidad no es posible.

- Una gran mayoría de los respondentes (56/60) piensan que la “raza” (el color de la piel) es crucial para el trato que recibe una persona en la sociedad y qué oportunidades tiene.
- La mayoría de los respondentes inmigrados en ambos países que comparten unas percepciones y experiencias negativas perciben que su origen étnico es devaluado por la población autóctona, y que son considerados como menos competentes basado en estereotipos de sus países de origen.
- En Estocolmo, la falta de contactos interétnicos en la vida cotidiana que es causa de la cementada segregación residencial se considera un problema con efectos negativos para la integración, tanto entre los respondentes inmigrados como los actores intermediarios. En Barcelona, en contraste, muchos de los respondentes piensan que la existencia de contactos interétnicos frecuentes en los espacios urbanos constituyen una ventaja importante y forman parte del carácter “cosmopolita” de la ciudad, que es apreciado por muchos respondentes de varios orígenes, occidentales y no occidentales.
- En España/Cataluña/Barcelona, la marginalidad socio-económica urgente y la extrema precariedad son preocupaciones centrales referente a la situación de los inmigrantes, mientras que en Suecia/Estocolmo, no es un asunto saliente.
- Finalmente, tanto los respondentes inmigrados como los actores intermediarios de integración están generalmente de acuerdo en que es una tarea central empoderar a los inmigrantes no occidentales, y al mismo tiempo llevar a cabo un trabajo de la no discriminación más eficaz, con tal de mejorar la incorporación de los inmigrantes en la sociedad. Dos sugerencias de medidas concretas basadas en las entrevistas son:
  - i) Facilitar la homologación de títulos de universidades no europeas y el acceso al empleo público para extranjeros. ii) Realizar campañas de sensibilización que destacan la competencia internacional de los inmigrantes (como sus conocimientos de idiomas como francés, árabe y chino, o la competencia cultural que es valioso para desarrollar contactos de negocios con sus países de origen). El objetivo de esta medida no sólo consiste en estimular las relaciones transnacionales, sino también de conseguir un cambio en las percepciones típicas del “inmigrante” y subir su estatus en la sociedad autóctona. Muchos de los respondentes además creen que la general “internacionalización” de las sociedades europeas, donde un número cada vez más alto de habitantes también de la población nativa habla lenguas extranjeras o ha vivido en otros países, potencialmente puede fomentar unas actitudes más positivas hacia la “super-diversidad”.

## Resum del projecte (Catalan)

L'objectiu d'aquest projecte de recerca és examinar com a immigrants de diversos orígens ètnics perceben la seva "integració", o incorporació, en dues societats multiètniques europees, Suècia i Espanya/Catalunya, i més específicament, al nivell local de les dues ciutats d'Estocolm i Barcelona. Basat en estudis anteriors sobre la autopercepció dels immigrants realitzats per investigadors com a Shellenberg (2004, 2010), aquest projecte suposa que la sensació pròpia que tenen els immigrants de la seva inclusió social i el tracte just és essencial tant per al seu benestar personal com a per a la seva voluntat de formar part de la societat on viuen, o sigui, integrar-se. Les experiències negatives com a la discriminació i la percepció de no ser acceptat/acceptada probablement disminueixen els sentiments de solidaritat i identificació amb la societat. L'èmfasi d'aquest projecte està en dues dimensions centrals de la integració, o incorporació, autopercepcionada: i) el sentiment de pertinença, i ii) la percepció de tenir, o no, igualtat d'oportunitats comparat amb la majoria ètnica.

## Rerefons i marc conceptual

La integració de les minories ètniques immigrades és un assumpte que preocupa a Europa de manera creixent. L'exclusió social, i en casos extrems la radicalització de la segona generació, junt amb la simultània recepció de les noves arribades que augmenten ràpidament per l'actual crisi migratòria, representen reptes importants per a les societats europees. Les polítiques d'integració generalment es consideren un fracàs, mentre el mateix concepte de "integració" es qüestiona cada vegada més, tant al context de la formulació de polítiques com a l'acadèmia. N'hi ha un enfocament creixent en el paper que juga la societat de recepció al procés d'integració, o incorporació, dels immigrants. Diversos països europeus han viscut un canvi discursiu durant la darrera dècada, adoptant una visió més recíproca de la integració, sobre tot al nivell de les administracions locals (Zapata-Barrero, 2012 i 2015, Gebhardt 2016). No obstant, també es reconeix que la discriminació ètnica a la pràctica afecta les oportunitats que tenen els immigrants de participar en la societat en igualtat de condicions amb la població autòctona (e.g. Penninx & Garcés 2016). En aquest projecte es defineix la integració com a, idealment, una situació de *convivència igualitària en societats multiètniques*, i el procés fins arribar a aquest estat com a, fent servir les paraules de Penninx i Garcés' (ibid), el procés d'arribar a ser una part acceptada de la societat. En el cas ideal, això es refereix a un panorama on l'origen d'una persona serà irrellevant per a la seva posició i les seves oportunitats a la societat. Al definir quins immigrants incloure en aquest estudi, s'ha considerat més important el fet de ser categoritzat com a immigrant, i per tant córrer el risc de ser estereotipat de forma negativa, que el fet d'haver o no migrat.

Suècia i Espanya comparteixen les característiques de ser estats de benestar europeus on la immigració i les seves conseqüències sovint es descriuen com a grans reptes per a la societat. Vertovec (2007) utilitza el concepte de la “super-diversitat” per a definir la diversificació d’origens ètnics entre els habitants de les societats occidentals, el que suposa nous reptes per als fonaments de la cohesió social. Tant Suècia com a Espanya s’han convertit en societats “super-diverses” durant les darreres dècades: no només han arribat a tenir una població immigrada significant, sinó aquesta població s’ha diversificat substancialment en quant als seus orígens ètnics. A més, Suècia i Espanya són entre els països de la UE on la desigualtat entre la població immigrada i l’autòctona és més gran en quant a l’atur, la pobresa i la sobrequalificació a la feina, el que indica que n’hi han problemes importants amb els processos d’integració (Eurostat 2011, Wiesbrock 2013). Malgrat aquestes semblances, Suècia i Espanya també representen contextos culturals i institucionals molt diferents dins el marc europeu. Comparar les percepcions que tenen els immigrants d’origens similars en aquests dos països diferents serveix per a identificar quins diferents obstacles i oportunitats per a la integració/inclusió social que troben els immigrants en contextos institucionals diferents.

En addició, es pot argumentar que la ciutat és més rellevant que el nivell nacional, o regional, per al estudi dels processos d’integració. La investigació empírica realitzada dins el marc d’aquest projecte es va realitzar a les ciutats d’Estocolm i Barcelona, i representa una creixent èmfasi al nivell de la ciutat als estudis de la integració d’immigrants (e.g. Gilardoni et. al. 2015; Gebhardt 2014). La ciutat, o el barri, constitueix l’espai físic on la interacció entre persones de múltiples orígens tenen lloc (o no) a la vida quotidiana.

## **Dades i metodologia**

Les dades empíriques utilitzats en aquest projecte de recerca consisteixen en entrevistes semi-estructurades amb 48 immigrants d’origen africà, asiàtic, de països musulmans i llatinoamericans, realitzades a Estocolm i Barcelona durant el 2014 i 2015. Per a complementar les narratives d’aquests immigrants, que van ser seleccionats per pertànyer a grups ètnics que corren el risc de patir estereotips negatius relacionats amb el seu origen i les seves característiques racials, es van incloure a més 12 entrevistes amb un grup de control de migrants blancs de països occidentals que es van mudar voluntàriament a Suècia o Espanya per motius personals o professionals. Les seves experiències migratòries constitueixen un contrast als respondents no occidentals, i contribueixen a revelar quines dimensions del projecte migratori són universals, i quines són clarament diferenciades segons les característiques etno-racials dels immigrants. A part de les 60 entrevistes amb immigrants, es van realitzar 21 entrevistes informatives amb actors intermediaris durant el mateix període de temps.

Al reclutar els respondents es va fer servir el mostreig selectiu per a assegurar que encaixessin amb les definicions de “integració” i “immigrant” aplicades en aquest projecte. Tots els respondents immigrants tenen en comú que aspiren a participar a la societat on viuen en igualtat de condicions amb la població autòctona. La majoria dels respondents tenen un nivell educatiu alt i aspiren a un lloc de feina qualificat. Ningú d’ells tenen una identitat religiosa molt pronunciada o altres característiques que podrien fer més probable que no volguessin plenament formar part d’una societat occidental. Aquí sembla oportú ressaltar que la selecció d’aquest perfil de respondents no pressuposa cap enfocament asimilacionista; al contrari, la plena acceptació de la diferencia es considera en aquest projecte com a un component essencial del procés d’integració recíproc que idealment es produiria a una societat multiètnica. No obstant, també es considera que el “multiculturalisme fort”, com a per exemple seria la implementació de sistemes legals paral·lels, no és compatible amb la integració. Els respondents van ser seleccionats basat en la pressuposició que l’estereotipació per característiques etno-racials visibles, com a el color de la pell, influeixen en com es tracten les persones de diversos orígens en diferents àmbits de la societat: al mercat laboral, a l’accés al habitatge i a les relacions quotidianes entre els immigrants i els autòctons. Aquesta pressuposició es va confirmar amb unanimitat mitjançant les entrevistes.

## **Resultats**

Els resultats d’aquest estudi indiquen que les percepcions de pertinença i d’oportunitats entre els respondents estan clarament diferenciats per les seves característiques etno-racials. Les experiències de rebuig i discriminació són comunes entre els respondents de països africans, musulmans i llatinoamericans en ambdues ciutats (en total, 27 de 36 respondents d’aquests orígens comparteixen aquesta percepció), i la majoria dels respondents d’aquests orígens pensen que el seu origen es un factor negatiu per a les seves oportunitats al mercat laboral. Els respondents asiàtics són més ambigües: per un cantó, els xinesos perceben que són valorats de forma positiva per causa d’estereotips com a “treballadors” i “no conflictius”, però per l’altre cantó sovint se senten ridiculitzats per el seu aspecte físic. Tots els respondents occidentals en les dues ciutats coincideixen en sentir-se plenament acceptats. No obstant, n’hi ha a més grans diferències entre les narratives dels respondents d’Estocolm i Barcelona, sobre tot en quant a la percepció d’inclusió a la societat, que és molt més baixa entre els immigrants no occidentals a Estocolm. A més, l’impacte de la crisi econòmica representa un impediment central per als processos d’integració segons tant els respondents immigrants com els actors intermediaris que treballen amb temes d’integració a Catalunya, mentre que a Suècia la preocupació més salient entre els respondents són les actituds negatives i el racisme de la

població autòctona, que aparentment obstaculitzen les oportunitats dels immigrants malgrat una economia comparablement pròspera.

En suma, encara que els estereotips ètnics poden ser tant negatius com a positius, estan presents a la vida de cada dia de la majoria dels respondents. Aquests estereotips s'incorporen a les seves autopercepcions i afecten les seves relacions amb la població autòctona de diverses maneres. Per exemple, alguns dels respondents d'origen kurd o xilè a Suècia aspiren a treballs sota el seu nivell desitjat per percebre que “no val la pena” intentar-ho (esperen ser discriminats basats en les seves experiències prèvies), mentre que, per exemple, uns respondents noruecs i canadencs a Espanya perceben que la seva nacionalitat els dona “carta blanca” de qualsevol expectativa d'integració des de la societat majoritària, i fins i tot avantatges al mercat laboral també comparat amb espanyols nadius.

Altres factors que es van identificar durant l'anàlisi de les entrevistes, i que influeixen en les percepcions i experiències d'integració/incorporació dels respondents, són els motius dels projectes migratoris, el gènere, i si van migrar d'adults o si van néixer/créixer al país on viuen. En total, els respondents de segona generació (que van néixer i/o créixer al país) pateixen més per les seves percepcions d'exclusió, discriminació i no pertinença que els respondents que són immigrants de primera generació (que van migrar d'adults o joves). Aquesta conclusió coincideix amb els resultats de diversos estudis sobre la segona generació (e.g. Crul & Schneider 2013, Safi 2010). Una experiència típica entre els respondents de segona generació en ambdós països és la de sentir que la societat autòctona *no “permet” la seva pertinença*; o sigui, que no importa quant intenten adaptar-se als costums nacionals, o quant declaren sentir-se “suecs” o “catalans”, perquè la població autòctona constantment qüestiona aquesta identitat seva, el que produeix sentiments de frustració i desvinculació.

## **Conclusió**

Basat en l'ample material empíric generat per les 81 entrevistes, complementades amb documents oficials, informes i investigacions prèvies, aquest projecte es conclou formulant alguns comentaris, reflexions i implicacions polítiques generals:

- N'hi ha dos obstacles interrelacionats per a la integració que semblen especialment centrals: la desigualtat social/econòmica i la estereotipació negativa. Aquesta última pot tenir com a conseqüència la discriminació ètnica, i per tant reforçar la desigualtat social/econòmica (mitjançant la mancança d'accés a un lloc de treball (de qualitat), habitatge en zones residencials atractives, etc.). Sembla raonable suposar que sense igualtat d'oportunitats, la integració no serà possible.

- Una gran majoria dels respondents (56/60) pensen que la “raça” (el color de la pell) és crucial per al tracte que rep una persona a la societat i quines oportunitats té.
- La majoria dels respondents immigrants en ambdós països que comparteixen unes percepcions i experiències negatives perceben que el seu origen ètnic és devaluat per la població autòctona, i que són considerats com a menys competents basat en estereotips dels seus països d’origen.
- A Estocolm, la falta de contactes interètnics a la vida quotidiana, que és causa de la cementada segregació residencial, es considera un problema amb efectes negatius per a la integració, tant entre els respondents immigrants com a entre els actors intermediaris. A Barcelona, en contrast, molts dels respondents pensen que l’existència de contactes interètnics freqüents als espais urbans representen una avantatge important i formen part del caràcter “cosmopolita” de la ciutat, que és apreciat per a molts dels respondents de diversos orígens, occidentals i no occidentals.
- A Espanya/Catalunya/Barcelona, la marginalitat social/econòmica urgent i la precarietat extrema són preocupacions centrals referent a la situació dels immigrants, mentre que a Suècia/Estocolm això no és un assumpte salient.
- Finalment, tant els respondents immigrants com als actors intermediaris d’integració generalment estan d’acord en que una tasca central sigui apoderar als immigrants no occidentals, i al mateix temps dur a terme un treball per a la no discriminació més eficaç, per a millorar la incorporació dels immigrants a la societat. Dos suggeriments concrets basats en les entrevistes són:
  - i) Facilitar la homologació de títols universitaris no europeus i l’accés a la feina pública per a estrangers.
  - ii) Realitzar campanyes de sensibilització que destaquen la competència internacional dels immigrants (com els seus coneixements d’idiomes com el francès, l’àrab o el xinès, o la competència cultural que es vàlid per a desenvolupar contactes de negocis amb els seus països d’origen). L’objectiu d’aquesta mesura no només consisteix en estimular les relacions transnacionals, sinó aconseguir un canvi de les percepcions típiques del “immigrant” i augmentar el seu estatus a la societat autòctona. Molts dels respondents a més pensen que la general “internacionalització” de les societats europees, on un número cada vegada més alt d’habitants també de la població nativa parlen llengües estrangeres o han viscut en altres països, potencialment pot fomentar unes actituds més positives vers la “super-diversitat”.

## Projektsammanfattning (Swedish)

Syftet med det här forskningsprojektet är att undersöka hur invandrare av olika etniskt ursprung själva upplever sin "integration" eller inkorporation i två mångetniska europeiska samhällen, Sverige och Spanien/Katalonien, och städer, Stockholm och Barcelona. Projektet bygger vidare på tidigare forskning om självupplevelser hos invandrare av bland andra Shellenberg (2004, 2010), och utgår från att invandrarers egna upplevelser av social inkludering och rättvis behandling är avgörande såväl för deras välmående som för deras vilja att delta i samhället, det vill säga "integreras". Negativa erfarenheter som diskriminering och att inte känna sig accepterad minskar istället sannolikt känslan av solidaritet och identifikation med samhället. Tonvikten ligger på två centrala dimensioner av självupplevd integration, eller inkorporation: i) känslan av tillhörighet och ii) upplevelsen av att ha samma möjligheter som den etniska majoriteten.

## Bakgrund och centrala begrepp

Integrationen av invandrade etniska minoriteter är en stor och växande angelägenhet i Europa. Social exkludering, och i extrema fall radikalisering, av andra generationens invandrare innebär tillsammans med mottagandet av nyanlända – vars antal ökar kraftigt i samband med den pågående flyktingkrisen – en stor utmaning för samhällen där integrationspolitiken överlag anses ha misslyckats. Samtidigt blir själva integrationsbegreppet alltmer kritiserat i både politiska och akademiska sammanhang. Fokus skiftas i ökande grad mot den roll det mottagande samhället spelar för att inkorporationen av invandrare ska fungera bättre. Det ter sig relevant att tala om en diskursiv förflyttning mot en mer ömsesidig syn på integrationen, vilket bland annat tagit sig uttryck genom de interkulturella policyprogram som tagits fram i ett flertal europeiska länder under det senaste årtiondet, framför allt på den lokala nivån (Zapata-Barrero, 2012 och 2015, Gebhardt 2016). Erkännandet av hur den etniska diskrimineringen i praktiken hindrar invandrare från att delta i samhället på lika villkor har också vuxit (t. ex. Penninx och Garcés 2016). I det här projektet definieras integration som, idealt, en situation av *jämlig samexistens i mångetniska samhällen*, och processen mot denna idealtypiska situation beskrivs med hjälp av Penninx och Garcés' (ibid.) definition som att *bli en accepterad del av samhället*. I ett idealiskt scenario skulle detta innebära att en individs etniska bakgrund är irrelevant för hans möjligheter eller position i samhället. Vid valet av vilka invandrare som skulle delta i projektet har jag bedömt det som mer relevant vem som kategoriseras som

invandrare, och därmed riskerar att drabbas av negativa stereotyper, än vem som faktiskt har migrerat.

Sverige och Spanien är båda europeiska välfärdsstater där invandringen och dess konsekvenser ofta beskrivs som stora utmaningar för samhället. Vertovec (2007) använder begreppet *super-mångfald* [*super-diversity*] för att beskriva en diversifiering av det etniska ursprunget hos invånarna i västerländska samhällen som utmanar själva grunden för den sociala sammanhållningen. I både Sverige och Spanien har den utlandsfödda befolkningen blivit "super-diversifierad" under de senaste årtiondena. Sverige och Spanien tillhör även de EU-länder där gapet mellan den invandrade och den inhemska befolkningen är störst när det gäller arbetslöshet, fattigdom och överkvalificering för arbetet, vilket vittnar om att det finns allvarliga problem med integrationsprocessen (Eurostat 2011, Wiesbrock 2013). Trots dessa likheter är dock skillnaderna mellan Sverige och Spanien stora ur ett europeiskt perspektiv när det gäller såväl kulturella som institutionella faktorer. Genom att jämföra hur invandrare av liknande ursprung upplever olika hinder och möjligheter för sin delaktighet och inkludering i de båda samhällena blir det möjligt att identifiera kontextuella skillnader som har betydelse för integrationsprocessen.

Det kan dessutom hävdas att staden är mer central än den nationella eller regionala nivån för studiet av integrationsprocesser. Den empiriska forskningen för det här projektet genomfördes i städerna Stockholm och Barcelona, och återspeglar en växande fokus på den lokala nivån (staden) inom integrationsforskningen (t. ex. Gilardoni m. fl. 2015; Gebhardt 2014). Staden, eller stadsdelen, utgör den fysiska miljö där interaktionen mellan människor av ett flertal olika etniska ursprung sker (eller inte) i det vardagliga livet.

## Data och metod

De empiriska data som har använts i projektet bygger på semistrukturerade djupintervjuer med 48 invandrare av afrikanskt, muslimskt, asiatiskt och latinamerikanskt ursprung, som genomfördes i Stockholm och Barcelona under 2014 och 2015. Som komplement till intervjuerna med dessa invandrare, som valdes för att de tillhör etniska grupper som riskerar att drabbas av negativa stereotyper, genomfördes även 12 djupintervjuer med personer ur en kontrollgrupp av vita, västerländska migranter som flyttat frivilligt till Sverige eller Spanien av privata eller yrkesrelaterade skäl. Deras upplevelser av migrationen och anpassningen till det nya landet utgör en värdefull kontrast till de icke-västerländska respondenternas berättelser, och bidrar till en djupare insikt i vilka aspekter av migrationsprocessen som är universella, och vilka som är tydligt differentierade utifrån etniska/rasrelaterade egenskaper. Vidare genomfördes 21 informativa intervjuer med

olika aktörer som bedriver integrationsarbete i Stockholm eller Barcelona under samma tidsperiod.

Selektivt urval tillämpades för att säkerställa att respondenterna passar projektets definitioner av begreppen "integration" och "invandrare". Alla respondenter med invandrarbakgrund har det gemensamt att de strävar efter delaktighet i samhället på lika villkor som den etniska majoritetsbefolkningen. De flesta av dem har en hög utbildningsnivå och har eller söker kvalificerade jobb. Ingen av dem har en stark religiös identitet eller andra egenskaper som skulle kunna göra det mindre sannolikt att de till fullo vill vara delaktiga i ett västerländskt samhälle. Här bör det påpekas att detta inte innebär att integration på något sätt likställs med assimilation: tvärtom betraktas acceptansen av olikhet i det här projektet som en grundläggande del i den ömsesidiga integrationsprocess som anses vara det ideala i mångetniska samhällen. Däremot bygger detta urval på synpunkten att en politiskt "stark mångkulturalism", som i praktiken till exempel kan innebära att parallella rättssystem i någon mån tillämpas, inte är förenlig med integrationstanken. Respondenterna valdes utifrån antagandet att stereotyper som bygger på synliga etniska/rasrelaterade egenskaper som hudfärg påverkar hur människor behandlas i olika sammanhang: på arbets- och bostadsmarknaderna såväl som i vardagliga relationer med människor från den etniska majoritetsbefolkningen. Detta antagande bekräftades genomgående under intervjuerna.

## Resultat

Resultaten av den här studien ger stöd för antagandet att individers upplevelser av tillhörighet och möjligheter i samhället är relaterade till deras etniska härkomst och hudfärg. Erfarenheter av att känna sig avvisad och diskriminerad är vanliga hos respondenterna med afrikanskt, muslimskt eller latinamerikanskt ursprung i båda städerna (sammanlagt uppgav 27 av 36 respondenter från de här grupperna att de ofta upplevde detta), och de flesta av dessa respondenter anser också att deras ursprung är en nackdel på arbetsmarknaden. De asiatiska respondenternas berättelser är mer tvetydiga: å ena sidan upplever de intervjuade personerna med kinesiskt ursprung att de värderas positivt som "hårt arbetande" och "oproblematiske", men de drabbas också ofta av mobbning och trakasseras på grund av sitt utseende. Samtliga västerländska respondenter i båda städerna upplever att de är fullständigt accepterade i de samhällen där de lever.

Det finns dock stora skillnader mellan berättelserna från Stockholm jämfört med Barcelona. Den mest anmärkningsvärda skillnaden rör om personerna upplever sig vara inkluderade i samhället eller inte, där avsevärt färre av de icke-västerländska respondenterna i Stockholm känner så jämfört med i Barcelona. En annan central skillnad rör den ekonomiska krisen som drabbat det spanska samhället hårt, och betraktas som ett

stort hinder för integrationen bland både invandrade respondenter och professionella aktörer inom integrationsområdet. Bland de svenska respondenterna är det istället negativa attityder mot invandrare och den växande rasismen hos majoritetssamhället som anses förhindra integrationen, trots en jämförelsevis god ekonomisk situation.

Etniska stereotyper och hur de drabbar olika grupper är ett centralt tema i projektet, och av respondenternas berättelser att döma påverkas de starkt i sitt vardagliga liv av antingen positiva eller negativa stereotyper som rör deras ursprung. Dessa stereotyper införlivas i deras självuppfattning och påverkar deras relationer med majoritetssamhället på ett flertal sätt. Exempelvis beskriver kurdiska och chilenska respondenter i Sverige hur de siktar lägre yrkesmässigt än de skulle vilja eftersom de upplever något annat som "meningslöst" (de förväntar sig att diskrimineras utifrån tidigare upplevelser), medan en norsk och en kanadensisk respondent i Spanien beskriver hur deras ursprung ger dem "frisedel" från omgivningens krav på att de ska integreras, och fördelar på arbets- och bostadsmarknaden också jämfört med infödda spanjorer.

Andra faktorer som identifierades under dataanalysen och som påverkar respondenternas upplevelser och erfarenheter av integration/inkorporation till olika grad är motiven bakom deras migrationsprojekt, deras kön och om de migrerade som vuxna eller föddes/växte upp i det land de lever i. Överlag beskriver de respondenter som tillhör andra generationens invandrare att de i högre grad lider av exkludering, diskriminering och bristande tillhörighet än respondenterna ur första generationen, vilket stämmer med slutsatser som dras från tidigare forskning inom det här området (t. ex. Crul & Schneider 2013, Safi 2010). En vanlig erfarenhet som flera av respondenterna ur andra generationen i båda länderna delar är att de inte upplever sig "*tillåtas*" känna tillhörighet; att hur mycket de än försöker att anpassa sig, och hur mycket de än uppger att de känner sig "svenska" eller "katalanska" så ifrågasätter majoritetssamhället ständigt deras identitet, vilket skapar frustration och distansering.

### **Sammanfattande kommentarer**

Utifrån det omfattande datamaterial som använts i det här projektet och som bygger på 81 intervjuer samt policydokument, rapporter och tidigare forskning, har jag formulerat en rad slutsatser och reflektioner som skulle kunna ha i åtanke vid formuleringen av framtida riktlinjer inom integrationsområdet:

- Två relaterade hinder för integrationsprocessen ter sig särskilt centrala: socioekonomisk ojämlikhet och negativa stereotyper, vilka kan resultera i etnisk diskriminering och därmed förstärka den socioekonomiska ojämlikheten (då invandrare inte får tillträde till (bra) jobb, bostäder i attraktiva bostadsområden osv.).

Det ter sig rimligt att utgå från att integration inte är möjlig utan verklig jämlikhet i fråga om individers möjligheter i samhället.

- En överväldigande majoritet av respondenterna (56/60) anser att "ras" (hudfärg) är avgörande för hur människor behandlas av majoritetssamhället, och vilka möjligheter de har.
- De flesta av de icke västerländska respondenterna i båda länderna som övervägande har negativa upplevelser och erfarenheter kopplade till sitt ursprung anser att deras etniska bakgrund nedvärderas av majoritetssamhället, och att de uppfattas som mindre begåvade och kompetenta utifrån stereotypiska uppfattningar om deras hemländer.
- I Stockholm framstår avsaknaden av vardagliga interetniska kontakter på grund av den cementerade boendesegregationen som ett stort problem med negativa konsekvenser för integrationsprocessen. I Barcelona anser tvärtom många av respondenterna att just den höga förekomsten av interetniska kontakter på gator och torg (i vad som överlag, i de flesta stadsdelar, är en betydligt mer etniskt mixad stadsbild än i Stockholm) utgör en stor tillgång och en del av stadens uppskattade "kosmopolitiska" karaktär.
- I Spanien/Katalonien/Barcelona är det istället den akuta socioekonomiska marginaliseringen med extrem utsatthet och misär som drabbar många invandrare, som betraktas som det största hindret för integrationen. Bland respondenterna i Sverige/Stockholm är detta inte en fråga som lyfts fram överhuvudtaget.
- Slutligen är både invandrarrespondenter och intervjuade integrationsaktörer överens om att en viktig uppgift för ett bättre integrationsarbete är att arbeta för att ge invandrare bättre verktyg och resurser för att delta i samhället, och parallellt bedriva ett effektivt arbete mot etnisk diskriminering. Två konkreta förslag som bygger på intervjuerna med integrationsaktörer är:
  - i) Underlätta erkännandet av utomeuropeiska universitetsutbildningar och tillträde till offentlig anställning (vilken är reserverad för EU-medborgare i en del länder, exempelvis Spanien).
  - ii) Informationskampanjer som framhäver den internationella kompetensen hos invandrare (exempelvis språkkunskaper i franska, arabiska och kinesiska, eller det kulturella know-how som är användbart för att utveckla affärskontakter med deras respektive hemländer). Syftet med sådana kampanjer är inte enbart att stimulera faktiska transnationella affärsrelationer med invandrare som konsulter, utan även att höja statusen hos invandrare i majoritetssamhället. Många av respondenterna tror dessutom att en generell "internationalisering" av de europeiska samhällena, där allt fler människor från den etniska majoriteten talar främmande språk och har levt utomlands, potentiellt kan bidra till mer positiva attityder mot "super-mångfalden".

## 1. Introduction

The integration of immigrated ethnic minorities is a large and increasing concern across Europe. Exclusion, and in extreme cases radicalization, of second generation immigrants, and simultaneously the reception of new arrivals, accentuated by the ongoing refugee crises, represent important challenges for societies where integration policies are generally discussed in terms of failure, while integration as concept is being contested both in policy-making and in academia. There is an increasing focus on the role of the receiving society for achieving a higher degree of integration, or incorporation, of immigrants, both among policymakers and scholars. A discursive shift towards a more reciprocal view on integration is represented by the intercultural policies that have been adopted in several European countries over the last decade, most importantly at the level of local administrations (Zapata-Barrero, 2012 and 2015, Gebhardt 2016). There is however also recognition that ethnic discrimination in practice affects immigrants' chances to participate in society on equal terms (e.g. Penninx and Garcés 2016).

In order to empirically investigate integration, there are myriad potential approaches and research strategies. To define the very concept of "integration" is in itself a complex and potentially politically contentious task. The European research project INTERACT, for instance, defines the integration of immigrants as "allowing them to participate in the host society at the same level as natives." The unequal power relation between immigrants and the ethnic majority is underlined, with the consequence that "the receiving society, its institutional structure and its reaction to newcomers are consequently far more decisive for the outcome of the process than the immigrants themselves" (Pasetti, 2014). This very formulation implies that boundaries drawn by the ethnic majority are hindering integration to take place.

Integration is in this project defined as, ideally, a situation of *egalitarian coexistence in multi-ethnic societies*, and the process towards this stage as, in Penninx and Garcés' (2016) terms, the process of *becoming an accepted part of society*. In the ideal case, this refers to a scenario where an individual's ethnic background is irrelevant for his or her opportunities and position in society. I argue that the very concept of "integration" presupposes a

common societal framework; shared institutions, work places, etc. within which people from different ethnic backgrounds aspire at participation and belonging. This does neither imply negligence regarding the challenges inherent in large cultural differences, nor denying anyone the right to maintain cultural practices and identities.

The focus of this research project lies, as the title suggests, on immigrants' own perceptions on integration, understood principally in terms of belonging and opportunities. This focus also justifies my choice to use the term "integration" instead of an arguably preferable alternative, such as "incorporation": I am interested in how immigrants perceive majority society attitudes and policies related to the integration discourse. How and to what extent do they perceive the expectation that they should "integrate" and how does this affect them? What obstacles and opportunities to participate in society on equal terms with the ethnic majority do they find? The focus on self-perception is motivated by the view that an actual sense of belonging is fundamental for the willingness to form part of a social context. The perception of being accepted, in turn, is viewed as a precondition for experiencing belonging, and constitutes a central aspect of the self-perceived life satisfaction of immigrants (e.g. Houle and Schellenberg, 2010). Reversely, perceptions of discrimination and intolerance damage sentiments of belonging at the individual level, and thereby harm integration processes at the societal level (Anderson 2010).

Comparing how immigrants of diverse origins perceive their place in society in two different multiethnic countries will, besides increasing knowledge of what kind of experiences immigrants of different ethnic origins have in European societies, also lead to new insights into what societal characteristics are relevant to interpret the differences in their experiences. Although there is a body of research on integration policies, there is little comparative research that allows for an analysis of the mechanisms that hinder or promote integration. In this research project, I compare Sweden and Spain, as different European welfare states in which the integration of immigrants is a central political and social question. It may however be argued that the city is more relevant than the national, or regional, level when studying integration processes. The empirical research for this project was conducted in the cities of Stockholm and Barcelona, and reflects an increasing emphasis on the city level in integration studies (e.g. Gilardoni et. al. 2015; Gebhardt 2014).

The city, or the neighborhood, constitutes the physical space where interaction between people of multiple ethnic backgrounds takes place (or not) on an everyday basis.

The differences between the two countries/cities<sup>1</sup> are relevant for understanding how different contextual frameworks shape the integration/incorporation of immigrants. Sweden and Spain are both European welfare states where immigration and its consequences are often described as a major challenge for society. Vertovec (2007) uses the term *super-diversity* to define the diversification of ethnic origins among the inhabitants in Western societies, which poses new challenges regarding the bases for social cohesion. In both Sweden and Spain, the foreign-born population has become “super-diverse” over the past decades, originating from other Western countries (in Spain, for instance the UK, Italy and Germany; in Sweden, many migrants are from the neighboring Scandinavian countries) as well as from a large number of countries in Africa, Latin America, Asia, the Middle East and Eastern Europe (migrationinfo.se; SCB report 2013, Spanish government’s report 2014; ine.es). The cultural and political contexts of Sweden and Spain are however very different, as are the countries’ respective immigration histories and migration regimes, which is relevant to understand the different obstacles and opportunities to integration/social inclusion that immigrants face.

Spain is a comparably young immigration country in the European context; until the past decades it was instead a country of emigration. Immigration from non-European countries started to increase rapidly in the 1990s, mainly to fill shortages in job sectors as construction, agriculture and domestic work. A large share of this immigration was irregular; undocumented migrants could regularize their status subsequently if they met certain conditions as holding a job contract (Izquierdo 2005). They were also granted social rights as health care and compulsory schooling, and could lead fairly normal lives in their local neighborhoods, which facilitated a certain degree of “informal integration.” It was however largely an “integration into precariousness”; immigrants have mainly been

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<sup>1</sup> Regarding the Spanish case, there will inevitably be some blurring between the national and the regional (in this case Catalan) level, as immigration politics are a national responsibility, while integration politics are formulated and implemented at the regional level (Züber, 2014).

viewed as cheap labor, occupying the lowest positions on an ethnically segmented labor market that often appears to be taken for granted (Hellgren 2015, Hellgren and Serrano 2016). Ethnic discrimination has not been very present in public or policy debates, and few concrete actions are taken to combat it (Hellgren 2012). There are campaigns for awareness-raising against racism and xenophobia at the local levels, for instance the “Anti-rumors” campaign in Barcelona (<http://www.antirumores.com/eng/project.html>), but there is a lack of legislative or practical measures to prevent and/or take legal actions against ethnic discrimination (Franco-Guillén and Hellgren 2016).

Sweden’s history as an immigration country in a larger scale goes back to the labor immigration eras of the 1950’s and 1960’s, which were followed by later decades’ refugees and family reunification migrants (Schierup et al 2006). Swedish governance structures are strong, and immigration to Sweden has been formal and highly regulated (Hellgren and Hobson 2008); undocumented migrants are few in numbers, and lack virtually all social rights. Formal membership categories, including legal residence or citizenship, however, do not automatically lead to social inclusion. Ethnic discrimination has been frequently debated in Sweden over the past decade, and may be viewed as an obstacle to integration that operates through subtle mechanisms; through common people’s reproduction of ethnic boundaries in everyday life.

In Sweden, it has long been taboo to speak of “race,” yet it appears clear that the category “immigrant” is racialized. What matters for how a person is categorized is being defined as an immigrant, rather than who has actually migrated (Hellgren 2012). Earlier research also shows that people with “non-European” or “non-Western” appearance are most likely to be discriminated against on the labor market (e.g. de los Reyes and Wingborg 2002, Burns et al. 2007). When the term “immigrant” is used in this report, unless anything else is explicitly stated, it refers to people of non-Western origin who are likely to be categorized as immigrants, regardless of whether they have migrated or not.

### **1.1. The gap between integration policies and integration processes**

The view on integration as a reciprocal process is becoming mainstreamed in European integration policies. At the EU level, integration is top political priority, and the General Directorate of Legal and Internal Affairs has defined the Common basic principles of integration. Integration is described as “a dynamic two-way process” characterized by mutual adaptation between immigrants and the majority population. Employment, knowledge of the receiving country’s language and culture, equal access to goods and services, and political participation are highlighted as central areas when integration policy guidelines are formulated within the EU (Wiesbrock, 2013).

Ambitious and extensive integration policies are however no guarantee for actual incorporation of immigrants into mainstream society. Penninx and Garcés (2016) state that, at a general level, “the study of policies is fundamentally different from the study and understanding of the processes that such policies aim at.” This point indeed appears accurate when the study object is integration policies, processes and outcomes. To measure “how integrated” an immigration country is, is a difficult, if at all possible, task. One approach is to compare the integration politics applied with the actual outcomes in terms of immigrants’ position on the labor and housing markets, poverty, participation in political and cultural life, etc. The international integration index MIPEX is currently the most established indicator of integration, comparing policies in 37 immigration countries across the world, including all EU member states ([www.mipex.eu](http://www.mipex.eu)). It is however only a measure of integration policies, and not the implementation or results of these policies (Wiesbrock, 2013).

Sweden and Spain are both illustrative cases of the gap between integration policies and practices. Both countries have comparably large proportions of immigrants: in Spain, which only has received large numbers of immigrants over the past decades, 10,6% is foreign-born ([ine.es](http://ine.es), October 2015), while in Sweden, 16% of the population has migrated to the country ([migrationsinfo.se](http://migrationsinfo.se), October 2015). Sweden has over the recent years repeatedly been ranked as number 1 in the world by MIPEX. Numerous studies have nevertheless stated that the gap between policy and practice is wide, which partly may be

explained by the existence of ethnic discrimination (e.g. Bursell, 2012; Burns et al., 2007). Also in Spain, recently ranked as number 8 by MIPEX ([www.mipex.eu](http://www.mipex.eu), March 2015), problems with marginalization of immigrants are big, and increase rapidly as a result of the financial crisis that hit jobs sectors with large presence of migrant labor particularly hard (Rendón, Bosch, Rodríguez, Pulido, interviews 2014).

Eurostat (2011) provides a thorough comparison of the integration outcomes of immigrants in all EU countries, considering four core areas: employment, education, social inclusion, and active citizenship. Elaborated within the framework of the Zaragoza Declaration from 2010, the objective is clearly formulated as to evaluate outcomes of policies, thus measuring actual integration. More areas than usually when integration is measured are included, for instance the share of employees who are overqualified for their jobs; self-employment rates<sup>2</sup>; language skills; experiences of discrimination and sense of belonging (ibid: 10-11). It is furthermore stated that “integration indicators need to show the social and economic situation of migrants (and their recent descendants) in relation to the overall population” (ibid: 23). It is widely agreed upon among policy-makers that the labor market is the single one most important arena for immigrants’ integration and economic independence. If we, for instance, take a look at the unemployment rates of foreign-born aged 25-54, Sweden and Spain are among the eight EU countries with the largest gap compared with the native population. In both Spain and Sweden, this gap is particularly large for those born outside the EU -- only Belgium has a higher gap between the native and foreign-born population in this case (ibid: 48-51).

Moreover, integration is not only about having a job, but what kind of job. High rates of labor market activity among immigrants may deviate the attention from the fact that the larger share of these jobs are low-skilled and that upwards mobility is rare (Carlson et al., 2012, Sánchez & Fahlén 2016, forthcoming). Complementing the comparison of unemployment by looking at the measure of over-qualification rates in employment, we see that the gap between the native population and immigrants is large across Europe, and

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<sup>2</sup> It is important to note that the interpretation of self-employment as an indicator of integration is open to discussion, and the results should be analyzed very carefully taking into account the particular situation in the country concerned. For some migrants, self-employment may represent an escape from long periods of unemployment and from discrimination in the labor market (Eurostat, 2011: 90, Kloosterman 2010).

again, Spain and Sweden are among the countries where the gap is largest, particularly for those born outside the EU (ibid: 76). Immigrants' position on the labor market is furthermore closely related to another key dimension of integration and social equality in multiethnic societies: the widespread poverty among immigrants. Both in Spain and Sweden, the risk of poverty among people born outside the EU is high<sup>3</sup>, and Sweden is among the EU countries where the gap compared with natives is largest (ibid). To conclude: the problems with social exclusion and inequality that affect immigrants in Sweden and Spain (just as, to a greater or lesser extent, in other European countries) are indeed a serious challenge for successful integration processes.

## **1.2. Purpose of the project**

The overall research purpose of this project is to approach the question of what integration actually is about, based upon Lamont and Molnár's (2002) definition of social boundaries, and Penninx' and Penninx & Garces' (e.g. 2008, 2016) standpoint that the study of integration should be experience-based. More specifically, the project aims to examine what obstacles and opportunities immigrants themselves perceive to achieve greater identification with and participation in society. Though the structural/institutional contexts are central to understand integration processes, the emphasis of this research project lies at the micro level, with the specific objective to examine immigrants' own experiences and perceptions on inclusion/exclusion and integration within two different institutional frameworks.

The overall research questions that have guided the empirical study are:

- 1) To what extent and in what ways do immigrants/people defined as immigrants perceive acceptance, belonging and identification with the majority society?
- 2) What obstacles and opportunities for participation on equal terms with the majority population do immigrants/people defined as immigrants experience?

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<sup>3</sup> In Spain, the risk of poverty among those born outside the EU is estimated to 36%, compared with 33% in Sweden. The gap is however larger in Sweden, where 15% of the total population are at risk of poverty, compared with 22% in Spain (Eurostat, 2011: 170).

Comparing immigrants' perceptions on integration should expand the understanding of both challenges and possibilities for integration, shedding light on what institutional characteristics may facilitate or hinder the participation of immigrants in society. It is essential to increase the knowledge of the gap between integration policies and actual outcomes: what causes it and how can it be bridged? Penninx (e.g. 2008) and Penninx & Garcés (2016) call for more empirical research on de facto integration rather than integration policies. This project aims at contributing with such knowledge.

### 1.3. Who is an “immigrant”?

When this project was formulated and designed, a central concern at the initial stage was what informants should be included; that is, who are the immigrants that are affected by integration policy aims and the expectations of the majority society? The most relevant question here appears to be not who *is* actually an immigrant (in other words, who have migrated to live in another country), but who *is defined as* an immigrant by the ethnic majority. The "immigrant label" is certainly related to human mobility, but not all migrants are labelled "immigrants" with stigmatizing connotations. The categorization starts at the border: who will, for instance, be allowed to enter a European country to live and work there largely depends on his or her nationality, and on his or her economic position. The economic status of the country of origin and the degree of voluntariness of the migration project seem to be key in understanding who is categorized as an immigrant (Hellgren 2012). Skin color appears, moreover, to remain a central marker of privilege or subordination, both in Western countries and in other parts of the world (Telles 2014). Within a country's borders, status hierarchies are reflected in patterns of segregation and discrimination, which seem to be some of the most tangible negative consequences of the immigrant label.

Van Dijk (2005: 1-2) defines racism and discrimination as “a social power system, in which one group dominates over others.” In other words, the dominating group draws the boundaries of social inclusion and defines the unwritten codes of belonging. According to

Burns and Carson (2006), racism/discrimination is the result of a certain type of prejudice that, combined with power, systematically deprives members of less privileged groups in society their rights as citizens. Schierup et al. (2006: 81-84) describe the emergence of a permanent, racialized underclass – unemployed or “working poor” in low-wage sectors – in European immigration countries, illustrating the interrelation between class and ethnicity as categories of disadvantage. As Balibar states, the concepts of race and class are intertwined in the category “immigrant” (Balibar 1991a: 206). When I interviewed young people of immigrant descent in relation to my doctoral project, they expressed the sense of *sharing an immigrant identity that had been assigned to them* (Hellgren 2012). This self-perception is viewed as central for who is and who is not defined as an “immigrant” also in the present research project.

#### **1.4. The city level in integration studies**

The empirical research for this project was conducted in the cities of Stockholm and Barcelona, both with far larger proportions of foreign-born residents than Sweden and Spain/Catalonia on average (scb.se; ine.es), and reflects an increasing emphasis on the city level in integration studies (e.g. Gilardoni et. al. 2015; Gebhardt 2014). It may certainly be argued that the city is more relevant than the national level when studying integration processes. New immigrants in Europe have tended to concentrate to the urban areas, though the degree of interethnic contact or ethnic segregation varies (Penninx et al 2008). Gebhardt (2014) for instance claims that “cities in Europe play an integral role in reducing obstacles to social mobility and addressing the particular integration challenges immigrants face in a given locality.” He also argues that efforts at the city level may be hampered by national legislation, which may be inflexible and detached from local experiences (ibid).

The city, and the neighborhood, is the physical space where interaction between people of multiple ethnic backgrounds takes place and constitutes an essential setting to understand why integration processes fail or succeed at the local level. A view on cities as central

arenas for integration processes does however not imply suggesting that inter-ethnic contacts at the micro-level would miraculously solve problems with exclusion and non-belonging. This is for instance empirically illustrated by a recent ethnographic study intended to test integration policies based on the "contact hypothesis," stressing the importance of increased face-to-face contact for reducing inter-group prejudice and conflict. The authors conclude that scholars and integration practitioners should not be too optimistic and believe that increased contacts necessarily produce positive change, as resentment and interethnic conflicts are "underwritten by much broader processes of marginalization and deeply entrenched unequal power relations" (Matejskova and Leitner 2011).

### **1.5. An inductive approach to integration**

Several authors have argued that the intersection between "race" or ethnicity, class and gender must be considered in order to understand the particular forms of social exclusion that affect people of immigrant origin (e.g. de los Reyes & Mulinari 2005, Balibar 1991 a and b). In this project, I have applied a largely inductive approach to the study of immigrants' self-perceived integration, which in practice meant that I have taken earlier theoretical insights and research results into account, but avoided to assume that either of these categories was particularly influential. The analysis is based entirely on my empirical findings, which confirm that perceptions on race and ethnic stereotypes as well as class represent central markers of difference and (lack of) opportunity for the interview persons, while the importance of gender in this context appears more unclear and ambiguous. These findings will be described in detail later in this report. First, I will draw the theoretical framework that has guided this study, before I proceed to develop the methods used in the study.

## **2. Theoretical Framework: Social Boundaries and Self-perceived Integration**

Integration may be understood as a matter of crossing boundaries between ethnic minorities and majorities, and construct new categories for inclusion; new collective identities and forms of social membership. In increasingly diverse societies, the question of common grounds for mutual solidarity and identification may appear more complex than ever (Vertovec 2007; Banting & Kymlicka 2006), and simultaneously, absolutely fundamental for coexistence to function without increasing tensions and disintegration of multiply disadvantaged groups (Rodríguez García 2010; James 2008).

### **2.1. Collective identities and the boundaries of belonging: what common framework for inclusion in multiethnic societies?**

The boundaries that immigrants face in European societies may be expressed in myriad ways. In a country like Spain, where irregular immigration and the granting of short-term residence permits is common, legal boundaries between different categories of citizens, legal residents and undocumented migrants are perceived as thresholds for integration (Serra, Rodríguez, Rendón, interviews 2014). At another level, there are invisible boundaries of exclusion that many immigrants and citizens of immigrant descent face in European societies. Subtle forms of non-acceptance may translate into patterns of inequality at the macro level.

Lamont and Molnár (2002: 168-169) describe the relationship between social and symbolic boundaries with the following words: “Social boundaries are objectified forms of social differences manifested in unequal access to and unequal distribution of resources (material and nonmaterial) and social opportunities.” They also claim that only when symbolic boundaries are widely agreed upon are they able to constrain the patterns of social interaction in significant ways. When this happens, the symbolic boundaries become social boundaries, that is, they translate into identifiable patterns of, for instance, social exclusion or class and racial segregation. Then, the question of ethnic discrimination and

(subtle, everyday) racism becomes essential in the debate on integration. It affects both social and individual dimensions: access to housing and employment, self-esteem and willingness to identify with the nation-state, and ultimately, immigrants' motivation to "integrate."

If integration is understood as becoming a fully accepted part of society, immigrants' perceived sense of belonging becomes essential. Lödén (2008) poses two crucial questions to describe the integration of young people of immigrant descent: i) "What makes young immigrants identify with the country where they live?" and ii) "To what extent is the majority population prepared to let them do that?" He suggests that national identity, as a potential means for integration, depends on whether this national identity is perceived as inclusive by both immigrants and the native population. It also requires that those already identifying with the nation-state are prepared to let those willing to identify do so. To study integration processes, it therefore becomes central to apply a bilateral view on belonging – it is hardly possible to experience belonging if one is not allowed to belong (ibid). When national identity is perceived as exclusive and serves to draw boundaries between insiders and outsiders, the consequences of "not being allowed to belong" may be serious. Symbolic boundaries turn into social boundaries with, for instance, economic effects. Overrepresentation of ethnic minorities in records of unemployment and poverty may be viewed as a sign of incomplete or failed integration, and points at the intersection between class and race/ethnicity (Arrighi, 2007).

Based on the empirical findings – which in accordance with the inductive approach were incorporated in the theoretical framework – two frequently intersecting symbolic and social boundaries are particularly relevant for this project: i) ethnic or racial prejudice and stereotyping based on phenotype, and ii) socio-economic disadvantage; that is, *race* and *class* (Mulinari and de los Reyes 2005).

### 2.1.1. “Race” and class: conceptualizing the immigrant disadvantage

“Race” as concept has long been taboo in European discourse, assuming that as there is only one human race in biological terms, highlighting differences in terms of race could be destructive and in itself reinforce racist classifications. However, claims-making actors who perceive themselves as “racialized” have started to advocate for the reintroduction of race in debates about inequality between people of different ethnic origins. In Sweden, for instance, it has become established in recent years to speak of “racialization” and “racialized” people within certain academic circles, and among anti-racist and ethnic organizations. By doing so, these actors seek to problematize the ethnic majority’s role in upholding social patterns that generate inequality between immigrants and the Swedish majority (Mulinari, interview 2014). A recent report ordered by the Swedish labor department argues for the relevance of including the controversial concept of “race,” to better understand the diverse dimensions of exclusion, and what obstacles there are to full participation in society for immigrants of different descent (Afrofobi report 2014). The question of race appears particularly central for immigrants of African descent; their representatives argue that skin color is the most important marker of differential treatment in society, and explains the particular disadvantage of the Afro-Swedish community (ibid). Racialization, moreover, does not only affect racialized people. For there to be difference, there must be a norm, and whiteness remains the norm in Western societies (Mulinari, interview 2014).

‘There is such a strong discourse in Sweden that constructs people who are not white as strangers in this country. And yet, it is impossible to speak of race in Sweden, and therefore this question cannot be examined. It is a matter of power, how the language is used [...] To speak of white people is perceived as very aggressive, to racialize white people, you cannot do that. While we can be anything from black, though rarely black as that implies that someone is also white... but dark, foreigners, immigrants... and the rest, they are simply Swedish.’ *Kitimbwa Sabuni, spokesperson of the Afro-Swedish association, interviewed 2014*

The complex mix of factors as skin color, ethnicity, country of origin, educational level and economic position that influence on how a person is defined and received in Western

societies appear clearly when the migrations of those typically labeled as “immigrants” – non-Western, driven by poverty or war and disaster – are compared with the so-called “white migrations” of privileged expatriates and lifestyle migrants (Lundström 2014). Some studies of white migrations provide a more complex picture of this assumed privileged mobility. Not all Western migrants are high-paid, transnational professionals; there are indeed Westerners who move to other countries for reasons as love or a subjective concept of “quality of life” (Conradson & Latham 2005). Many British migrants in Spain, for instance, were driven by the desire to live a relaxing life in the sun, away from career related stress and a more materialistic way of life back home, and found more obstacles than they expected (O'Reilly 2000). Leinonen's (2012) research on white Northern American immigrants in Finland moreover shows that Western migrants are indeed exempt from racial stereotypes and have higher status than racialized immigrants, but still may face important barriers and disadvantages related to lacking language skills and the fact that they are “outsiders.”

For African immigrants in Western countries, “blackness” is a visible characteristic that affects their self-perceptions and relation with the white majority in a wide range of situations (Hine et al 2009). For many other immigrant groups with varying degrees of “physical difference,” the racial dimension may become more blurred: who are considered closer to the ethnic majority than others appears to be determined through a complex, shifting and arbitrary process of identification and classification. One may however make the case that “immigrant” is in itself a racialized category that entails both phenotypical and socio-economic features. Balibar (1991) has argued that class is more relevant for who is perceived as an immigrant than race or ethnicity:

‘A Portuguese, for example, will be more of an “immigrant” than a Spaniard (in Paris), though less than an Arab or a Black; a Briton or a German certainly will not be an “immigrant”, though a Greek may perhaps be; a Spanish worker and, a fortiori, a Moroccan worker will be “immigrants”, but a Spanish capitalist, or even indeed an Algerian capitalist, will not be.’ (Balibar 1991b: 221)

However, reversely, being defined as an “immigrant,” based on ethno-racial stereotyping, may contribute to cement an individual’s position in the lower social strata of society. The most concrete example of “denied belonging” with severe consequences for the individual is perhaps labor market discrimination: immigrants not getting employment, or far below their qualifications, because of their origin. Such boundaries of belonging impede integration in socio-economic terms and cement social exclusion in ethnic/racial terms. A recent study by Telles (2014) on ethno-racial classification, inequality and discrimination in Latin America shows that economic and social inequalities are at least as much related to skin color as ethnic identification. Status hierarchies with roots in colonialism operate worldwide based on the underlying racist logics of “the more light-skinned, the better,” affecting people’s opportunities in society and, ultimately, integration processes where immigrants are stratified based on “differentness” in terms of skin color, ethnic culture and/or religion.

Applying a sociological perspective on race instead of a biological, race is understood as a social construct that differentiates people according to their skin color and phenotype. This is the definition of race that I will use throughout this report, without quotation marks as I consider it a real and relevant category to understand the specific forms of disadvantage that affect immigrants of different origins.

## **2.2. Integration as experience-based and self-perceived**

Rinus Penninx (e.g. 2008; 2016) has for decades been one of the most prominent international scholars within the integration field, and contributed to the development of a heuristic framework for integration studies. An underlying assumption is that part of the “integration failure” in European immigration societies may be explained by having formulated integration aims without making clear what is expected to be achieved through politics, and whether this is realistic. Penninx calls for more experience-based, empirical research on *de facto* integration rather than on integration policies.

In their study of the relationship between immigrant generation and integration, Wu et. al. (2012) find that factors as racial differences (skin color) and living in low income neighborhoods are related to higher discomfort and less sense of belonging among immigrants and children of immigrants. Focus thus lies on immigrants' own sense of integration and social inclusion, which is central also in Houle and Shellenberg's work (2010). By stating that the perception of acceptance (or discrimination) in the host society is a salient aspect of the life satisfaction of immigrants, they provide a crucial argument for the focus on self-perceived inclusion and subjective wellbeing as indicators of integration (ibid). Self-perceived belonging and identification with society are central as "an immigrant's sense of belonging is a reflection of integration into social networks and institutions, and it fosters feelings of social solidarity with the core or socially predominant group" (Schellenberg 2004). Reversely, experiences of discrimination and perceived non-acceptance are likely to decrease solidarity and identification with society, and thereby immigrants' willingness to integrate.

To live in a society where one is repeatedly reminded of being deviant from the collective self-image, for instance based on a predefined notion of "Swedishness" that includes being white, leads to a process by which one identifies oneself as different in relation to this norm; this is the psychological dimension of what Goffman (1963) famously conceptualized as stigmatization. The "immigrant stigma" produces negative effects on multiple, though interrelated, levels; at a personal/psychological level, damaged self-esteem, and in social life, the risk of being rejected in a way that affects people's position on the labor and housing markets, etc. This risk increases when the individual expects being rejected and acts accordingly, creating a vicious circle of alienation (Bobowik et al 2014).

In their study on ways to cope with rejection among immigrants in Spain, Bobowik et al (2014) state that immigrant and ethnic minorities feel stigmatized in all 27 EU countries, and that ethnic or racial discrimination has negative consequences for their well-being, health, and self-esteem. Therefore, to find coping strategies against discriminatory treatment becomes essential, both for the wellbeing of immigrants and ultimately for the result of migratory and integration processes. Such coping strategies may emerge both at the individual/psychological level and at the social level, with the potential of change

through collective mobilization and claims-making (ibid; Hellgren 2012). As Wettergren's (2015) research on the emotional reactions and strategies among "unwanted" new migrants in Sweden shows, perceived rejection however also generates other, more destructive reactions. She found that the migrants in her study neither reframed feelings of humiliation and anxiety in terms of opportunities, nor denied them; instead, their "strategy" was to suppress the feelings as such, as allowing them to unleash could make them more vulnerable. Among the migrants who ended up staying permanently in Sweden, and perceived that they were devalued in relation to the Swedish majority society, Wettergren found that in the effort to manage shame, they tended to either distance themselves from the host-country institutions and instead sought identification and belonging among like-minded migrants, *or* they identified with the host-country institutions, while distancing themselves from other migrants (ibid). The attitudes towards perceived discrimination thus generate different reactions, with different implications for the integration process, but none of these reactions are likely to favor integration processes.

As described in earlier sections, the focus of the present research project lies on the perceptions of immigrants and people of immigrant descent on parameters that are crucial for integration as the sense of acceptance, belonging and identification with the majority society, as well as obstacles and opportunities for participation on equal terms. Before I proceed to present my findings, I will provide a more detailed account of the research methods used for data collection and analysis.

### **3. Description of data, research methods and analysis**

Within the framework of this project, I have conducted two qualitative case studies with a largely inductive approach (e.g. Merriam 1998; Yin 1989): one in Stockholm and one in Barcelona. The data for this research project is based upon partly semistructured, partly unstructured qualitative interviews with 60 immigrants or people of immigrant descent in Stockholm and Barcelona, 30 in each city, during 2014 and 2015. The interviews were

unstructured in the sense that they partly had an open, conversation-like character. I wanted to create a relaxing atmosphere as we talked about topics that many of the respondents found sensitive, as experiences of humiliation and disadvantage. I did use a few fixed questions, as what opportunities they think that they have on the job market, what are their experiences from job search and employment, and if they have experienced racism or discrimination. Otherwise, I mostly asked the respondents to talk freely about certain themes as what it means to feel “Swedish” or “Catalan,” whether they identify with any nationality, or what they like and dislike about the society they live in.

In addition, 21 interviews with stakeholders involved in integration work were performed during the same time period. The stakeholder interviews had an informative purpose and were unstructured, given my inductive approach and interest in finding out what views and practices on integration these actors apply, without having defined beforehand what dimensions might be of particular relevance. I had however defined themes to guide the interviews, and asked the stakeholders to talk about the following concepts: integration, reciprocity in integration processes, challenges and opportunities, belonging/national identity and racism/discrimination. I also explicitly asked if and how the policy aim of integration as a two-way process is being applied in practice. While the immigrant respondents remain anonymous, a full list of the stakeholders is included at the end of this chapter.

In addition to the 81 interviews that were performed exclusively for this project, I have been able to benefit from parts of the empirical material generated in another research project that I conducted between 2013 and 2015: *Migration and Care*, a study within the macro-project *FamiliesAndSocieties*, funded by the European Commission’s Seventh Framework Program. This material consists of 90 interviews with female migrant domestic workers and 20 migration stakeholders in Sweden and Spain (for more information, see Hobson, Hellgren & Bede 2015). I have also found the 68 interviews I performed with immigration stakeholders in relation to my doctoral dissertation useful to support and complement my findings (Hellgren 2012).

In order to address the overall aims and research questions defined for this project, I specified the following levels of study as parts of a multi-dimensional approach, covering the macro, meso and micro levels:

- 1) Macro level task: To define the institutional/discursive frameworks composed by the integration policies, practices, agendas and discourses in each national context.
- 2) Meso level task: To analyze the different perspectives of integration stakeholders as political actors and policy-makers, trade unions and immigrant associations.
- 3) Micro level task: To conduct in-depth interviews with immigrants/people defined as "immigrants" about their experiences and perceptions on integration, by asking questions related to their sense of belonging, ethnic and national identity, contacts with the ethnic majority, and perceived opportunities and obstacles in the society where they live.

### **3.1. Data selection**

#### ***3.1.1. Selecting the immigrant respondents***

A central concern during the initial stage of this project was to decide which immigrant respondents to select: what immigrant backgrounds, ethnicities and other characteristics should be considered particularly relevant, and how many parameters could reasonably be covered considering the scope of the study. As discussed earlier in the report, "immigrant" is a rather vague and contested category. It may certainly be more relevant who is viewed as an immigrant than who has actually migrated (Hellgren 2012), and I therefore decided to only include immigrants from non-western countries who risk being stereotyped in negative ways due to their origin, ethnicity and/or phenotype. By adding the gender dimension, the complexity of the integration concept is further represented. Immigrant women are often portrayed as subject to multiple forms of discrimination (e.g. Parella 2004), but it has also been argued that, for instance, immigrant women in Sweden, a

country that privileges gender equality over “ethnic equality,” (Towns 2002) may identify with the majority society and integrate with more ease than their male compatriots, who to a greater extent are affected by negative stereotypes (e.g. Hellgren and Hobson 2008). Therefore, I decided to also compare male and female experiences of exclusion and inclusion. Half of the respondents are women, and half are men.

Other factors that may be relevant for the immigrants’ perceptions on integration, and that have been taken into account, are the educational level and the reasons behind the migration project. I set the requirement that the respondents should have lived in the country enough to be considered reasonably established (about 10 years minimum, as a benchmark, though some respondents fit the requirements with less years in the country), speak the language well enough to communicate in social and professional life with fluency, and have a medium or high educational level in order to be eligible for qualified professions. Furthermore, I have had the ambition to include both first and second generation immigrants in order to compare the differences these categories may generate in terms of, for instance, identification with the country of residence.

I used data from Statistics Spain ([ine.es](http://ine.es)) and Statistics Sweden ([scb.se](http://scb.se)) to map the size of different immigrant communities in Sweden and Spain. These estimates are complicated by the fact that there is no ethnic registration in either country (and there are surely important arguments against keeping such records). Yet, official statistics combined with data from the ethnic organizations should provide a fairly accurate estimate of the size of different ethnic groups. Then, there is of course the complication of defining an “ethnic group” – most relevant for the purposes of this project is however not the ethnicity or geographical origin, but the way people are stereotyped depending on their assumed belonging to a certain group.

Based on existing data on the size of different immigrant groups in Sweden and Spain ([migrationsverket.se](http://migrationsverket.se), [ine.es](http://ine.es), Spanish government’s report 2014), complemented by some early stakeholder interviews and readings on the situation and stereotyping of different ethnic groups in both countries (e.g. Afrofobi report 2014, Swedish government’s report 2012, Pasetti 2014, Aparicio & Portes 2014, Van Dijk 2005), I finally defined four groups as

particularly relevant for the study. They were selected to represent numerous and comparable immigrant communities in each context, and be representative of four different types of “ethnic stereotyping” in relation to the Western norm. With some national variations within the groups due to the representation of different immigrant collectives in Sweden and Catalonia (there are great national variations in Spain), I have included the following groups, representing four often stereotyped ethno-racial profiles:

### **1) “Black Africans”**

For this category, both in Sweden and Spain/Catalonia, I considered the most important dimension to be the skin color and other physical features identifiable as “African.” I have therefore chosen respondents of different nationalities who share the experience of being categorized as black in a country where the majority is white. This is also what representatives of the African associations whom I met in Sweden and Spain pointed out as the single one most important factor for the perceptions on difference and (non-)belonging that people of African descent experience in Western societies (Sabuni interview 2014, Sam interview 2015).

### **2) “Muslims”**

The second category, composed by people who fit in the stereotypical image of “Muslims” (which thus not mean that they share this collective identity) was more difficult to define. In both Sweden and Spain there are several immigrant groups from Muslim countries who may be affected by the same stereotypes, but who are also very different from each other. I chose two “Muslim” communities who are established in each country since several decades and therefore also have the experience of the so-called second generation: the Moroccans in Spain (with the exception of one of the respondents, who is of Syrian origin) and the Kurds in Sweden. The latter are often not practicing Muslims; many Kurds in Sweden are refugees with a history of political activism for the Kurdish independence movement, but after conversations with representatives of Kurdish associations I decided to include this group of immigrants as they frequently experience being cast as “Muslims.”

### **3) “Latins”**

Immigrants from Latin American countries are challenging to include in the study for different motives. Firstly, they are difficult to categorize, as Latin America is indeed a vast and diverse continent with many different nationalities and cultural identities; secondly, most Latin Americans have Spanish as their mother tongue and may therefore be expected to experience immigration into Spain very differently compared to Sweden. In Sweden, the Chilean community is particularly salient among immigrants from Latin America (initially constituted mainly by political refugees escaping Pinochet’s dictatorship). Chileans in Sweden are often perceived as well integrated, and cultural differences much less pronounced than what is the case for many other immigrant groups. Cristian Delgado (interview 2014), the president of the Chilean association in Sweden, however claimed that Chileans are affected by the same negative stereotyping of immigrants as many other ethnicities, as well as some specific ideas of “Latinos.”

In Spain, the “Latino” stereotype could spontaneously be expected to be less salient, due to the higher degree of cultural proximity with Latin America and the common language, but empirical studies have shown that this is not the case; particularly those who due to their phenotype are perceived as more “indigenous,” as immigrants of Bolivian origin, are affected by (negative) stereotyping (see e.g. the work of Van Dijk 2005 and Telles 2014). Many of these Latin American immigrants have come to Spain to occupy low qualified positions in the sectors that demanded much immigrant labor during the years of economic growth (e.g. Moreno and Bruquetes 2011, Hobson et al 2015). To include also highly educated Latin Americans from nationalities who are considered more “European” due to both phenotype and cultural factors, as Argentina, provides a more nuanced picture of the different experiences of integration among different categories of “Latinos.”

### **4) “Asians”**

The stereotypes related to the typical physical features traditionally cast as Asian (or “Chinese”) are well-known and frequently illustrated across the Western world. For this project, my interest was both to examine if and how these stereotypes affect Asian immigrants’ sense of being a part of society, and also to add complexity by introducing an

immigrant group that is often portrayed as different from other non-Western immigrants. It is true that Asians may often be made fun of in the media and elsewhere (Hübinette 2015: <https://tobiashubINETTE.wordpress.com/category/svt/>), but there is also a stereotype of for instance the Chinese as hard-working and reliable that may affect the way Asian immigrants are received (Lam and Liu, interviews 2014 and 2015). I have performed interviews with Chinese immigrants in both Sweden and Spain, representing comparably large and well-established communities. In the Spanish case, I also included two interviews with Philippine migrants. One of them was a highly qualified Philippine migrant whose physical appearance places her in a certain category of Asians, and her experiences of being devalued due to her origin provided valuable information to understand how ethnic stereotyping operates and what consequences it may have.

### 5) “White migrants”

To complement the narratives by immigrants who are affected by ethnic and racial stereotyping, I decided to conduct interviews with a control group of white, Western migrants: people who have migrated voluntarily to Sweden and Spain out of personal or professional motives. Their migration experiences provide a valuable contrast to the people of African, Asian, Muslim and Latin American origin, and insights into what dimensions of the migratory project are universal and what are clearly differentiated along ethno-racial lines.

#### *3.1.2. The immigrant respondents: some descriptive data*

##### **Stockholm**

*“Black Africans”: people of African descent: origin, age, time in the country and occupation*

Woman, Eritrea/Sweden	29 years old	Born in Sweden	Technology student
Woman, Tanzania	27 years old	25 years in Sweden	International relations student
Woman, Burundi	38 years old	33 years in Sweden	Project manager at NGO
Man, Eritrea	23 years old	Born in Sweden	Political science student
Man, Congo	37 years old	32 years in Sweden	Consultant

Man, Guinea Bissau	38 years old	34 years in Sweden	Carpenter
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***“Muslims”: people of Kurdish descent: age, time in the country and occupation***

Kurdish woman	30 years old	29 years in Sweden	Sales person
Kurdish woman	26 years old	25 years in Sweden	Law student
Kurdish woman	60 years old	22 years in Sweden	NGO employee
Kurdish man	37 years old	23 years in Sweden	Receptionist
Kurdish man	29 years old	18 years in Sweden	Professional soldier
Kurdish man	32 years old	16 years in Sweden	Unemployed (former law student)

***“Latins”: people of Chilean descent: age, time in the country and occupation***

Chilean woman	45 years old	29 years in Sweden	Nurse
Chilean woman	32 years old	25 years in Sweden	Unemployed (formed NGO employee)
Chilean woman	59 years old	40 years in Sweden	Nurse assistant
Chilean man	39 years old	33 years in Sweden	Graffiti artist
Chilean man	37 years old	32 years in Sweden	Labor market assistant for youth
Chilean man	39 years old	34 years in Sweden	Salesperson

***“Asians”: people of Chinese descent: age, time in the country and occupation***

Chinese woman	22 years old	22 years in Sweden	Fashion student
Chinese woman	43 years old	15 years in Sweden	Research assistant
Chinese woman	30 years old	24 years in Sweden	Art student
Chinese man	41 years old	15 years in Sweden	Photographer
Chinese man	42 years old	18 years in Sweden	Inspector at museum
Chinese man	51 years old	26 years in Sweden	Translator

***“White migrants”: people from Western countries: age, time in the country and occupation***

Australian woman	35 years old	17 years in Sweden	Researcher
Finnish woman	43 years old	4,5 years in Sweden	House wife (ex graphical designer)
French woman	39 years old	10 years in Sweden	Graphical designer

Danish man	37 years old	9 years in Sweden	PR at political department
German man	40 years old	7 years in Sweden	Consultant, self-employed
French man	37 years old	15 years in Sweden	Driver (transport)

### **Barcelona**

#### *“Black Africans”: people of African descent: origin, age, time in the country and occupation*

Woman, Kamerun	28 years old	5 years in Spain (14 in Europe)	Student and waitress
Woman, Gabon	31 years old	6 years in Spain (13 outside Gabon)	Digital communication consultant
Woman, Congo	21 years old	12 years in Spain	Logistics company, responsible for export/import
Man, Senegal	54 years old	20 years in Spain	Immigrant reception officer (public employee)
Man, Nigeria	37 years old	7 years in Spain	Translator
Man, Kamerun	24 years old	6 years in Spain	Salesperson

#### *“Muslims”: people from Muslim countries: origin, age, time in the country and occupation*

Woman, Morocco	42 years old	15 years in Spain	Kitchen assistant
Woman, Morocco	27 years old	Born in Spain	Shop assistant
Woman, Morocco	26 years old	Born in Spain	Unemployed
Man, Morocco	31 years old	11 years in Spain	Journalist
Man, Morocco	34 years old	9 years in Spain	Analyst at news institute
Man, Syria	54 years old	25 years in Spain	Project officer

#### *“Latins”: people of Latin American descent: origin, age, time in the country and occupation*

Woman, Colombia	36 years old	5 years in Spain	Administrator
Woman, Peru	29 years old	24 years in Spain	Unemployed
Woman, Bolivia	27 years old	12 years in Spain	Unemployed

Man, Venezuela	32 years old	6 years in Spain	NGO employee
Man, Argentina	50 years old	15 years in Spain	Insurance sales person
Man, Peru	54 years old	25 years in Spain	Bus driver

*“Asians”: origin, age, time in the country and occupation*

Philippine woman	47 years old	22 years in Spain	Unemployed (former IT engineer)
Chinese woman	30 years old	8 years in Spain	Chinese teacher
Chinese woman	18 years old	Born in Spain	University student (business)
Chinese man	51 years old	18 years in Spain	Restaurant owner
Philippine man	32 years old	12 years in Spain	Restaurant employee
Chinese man	64 years old	43 years in Spain	Business owner

*“White migrants”: people from Western countries: age, time in the country and occupation*

American woman	33 years old	10 years in Spain	Consultant/translator
Finnish woman	27 years old	12 years in Spain	Customer service manager
Swedish woman	38 years old	10 years in Spain	Conference company (own business)
Norwegian man	23 years old	14 years in Spain	Translator/entrepreneur
Canadian man	37 years old	8 years in Spain	Mechanical engineer, freelance
American man	38 years old	20 years in Spain	Consultant/entrepreneur

### ***3.1.3. The stakeholder respondents***

Selecting the stakeholders was far less complicated than selecting the immigrant respondents. I had clearly defined my interest in interviewing key actors involved in different aspects of the practical integration work in both cities, including representatives of the ethnic groups represented by the immigrant sample. The objective was that they should both provide their knowledge and experience of what issues are central and what work is being done, as well as their different perspectives on major challenges and what could and should be done.

The following stakeholders were interviewed for this project:

### **Stockholm**

1. Delgado, Cristian, Head of the Chilean organization in Sweden, September 2014
2. Duran, Seyran, Head of the Kurdish women's general organization in Sweden, August 2015
3. Hart Carpenter, Birgitta, Head of the integration unit at the Stockholm county (Länsstyrelsen), responsible for the implementation of integration policies in Stockholm, September 2014
4. Ingesson, Thord, Immigration expert at the trade union LO, March 2014
5. Johanson, Sara, representative of the integration NGO Internationella Bekantskaper, December 2014
6. Khan, Zakia, representative of the Swedish immigrant women's association Interfem, March 2014
7. Liu, Weihua, Head of the Chinese association in Stockholm, September 2014
8. Mijatovic, Milinko, Head of SIOS (the Cooperation group for ethnic associations in Sweden), September 2014
9. Molina, Irene, Professor of Human Geography and migration expert at Uppsala University, March 2014
10. Sabuni, Kitimbwa, Representative of the Afro Swedish association, March 2014

### **Barcelona**

1. Bonomi, Javier, Head of Fede Latina, the Latin American association in Barcelona, September 2015
2. Bosch, Xavier, Head of immigration secretariat, Generalitat de Catalunya, March 2014
3. Chuen Ping, Lam, Head of the Union of Chinese Associations in Catalonia, October 2015
4. El Fylaly, Amina, Representative of Ibn Batuta, the Moroccan Association in Barcelona, September 2015
5. García, Magda, Researcher at the Secretary of Immigration at the Catalan Government (Generalitat), March 2014
6. Pulido, Guadalupe, Head of the Anti discrimination office, Barcelona, October 2014.
7. Rendón, Gloria, Head of SAIER, Barcelona City Council's office for immigrant assistance, February 2014.
8. Rodríguez, Lola, Head of 3 units at the Barcelona City Council's Immigration Department, March 2014.
9. Saliba, Ghassan, immigration secretary at CCOO (Comisiones obreras), March 2013 <sup>4</sup>
10. Sam, Amadou Boka, head of the Senegalese association in Barcelona, October 2015

<sup>4</sup> This interview was originally performed for another project, Migration and Care (note) but was included in the analysed material as a key interview also for this project as it provided much relevant information on the challenges for integration work in Barcelona/Catalonia.

11. Serra, Marc, public official at a local center for attention to immigrants in Barcelona (Sarrià/StGervasi/Gracia district), March 2014
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## **3.2. Conducting the study**

### ***3.2.1. The macro and meso levels***

The macro level study constituted the initial stage of the research project. My objective at this level was to define and map integration policies and practices in Sweden and Spain/Catalonia, highlighting the discursive and institutional differences between the two contexts. My first aim was to define the current situation in terms of what issues are on the agenda within the field of integration in politics and public debate. To do this, I read numerous Swedish and Spanish governmental/regional/municipal reports and commissions related to the integration of immigrants, as well as recent research within this field, and media sources (newspaper articles, websites, etc.). A part of this task consisted of clarifying how integration aims are formulated and implemented at the national, regional or local level, which is particularly relevant in the case of Spain where the degree of regional autonomy is high.

At the meso level, my aim was to present the different perspectives and agendas of actors involved in practical integration work at the city levels of Stockholm and Barcelona. The stakeholder interviews were useful also to provide complementary information for a comprehensive coverage of the current situation in both Sweden/Stockholm and Spain/Catalonia/Barcelona.

### ***3.2.2. The micro level***

The interviews with 60 immigrant respondents constitute the most central, time consuming and challenging part of the project. Once the sample was defined, much time and efforts were spent establishing contacts with gatekeepers that could help me find people with immigrant background to interview. This was quite different from contacting stakeholders, as I asked for their participation not as representing an organization, but based their personal characteristics. Moreover, these personal characteristics were of a sensitive nature, as they concerned ethno-racial features and negative experiences as rejection and discrimination. In several cases, my requests were turned down, and some people who were asked to participate as for instance “Black Africans” clearly showed that they felt bothered by being labelled this way. Approaching potential respondents thus required a high degree of respectfulness and sensitivity.

I mainly contacted ethnic organizations to help me find respondents, though in some cases I used snowballing among my professional and private acquaintances to diversify the selection. I have been careful to use multiple sources to avoid bias; it has for instance been easier to find willing respondents who are active members or ethnic/anti-racist organizations, but I made sure to also include respondents from different backgrounds who are not as used to talking about these questions. As my focus lies on how immigrants who aspire at participating on equal terms with the ethnic majority perceive invisible, subtle boundaries of inclusion/exclusion, I was primarily interested in finding respondents who appear to be “well integrated”: highly educated, with language skills and professional ambitions.

The full transcripts of all 81 interviews were coded and analyzed in Dedoose (dedoose.com), an online software for qualitative and mixed-methods analysis.

## **4. Results of the study**

### **4.1. Integration in two different institutional frameworks: policies and practices in Barcelona (Catalonia/Spain) and Stockholm (Sweden)**

In this section, I will present the most central features of the integration practices and challenges that were expressed in the 21 stakeholder interviews I have conducted with integration officials, trade union actors, NGOs and ethnic organizations in Stockholm and Barcelona, complemented by official reports and documents. The intention is to show how integration policy and practice in each institutional framework contributes to define the context into which immigrants are expected to integrate.

Institutional contexts are dynamic; they change, providing more or less channels for favorable integration processes over time, and are influenced by overall social and economic changes (Hobson and Bede 2015). Besides several other contextual differences between Sweden and Spain, based on the stakeholder interviews there are two current phenomena that appear particularly relevant for the hampered integration of immigrants and ethnic minorities at present: in Spain, the severe effects of the financial crisis that has hit this country harder than many other EU member states, and in Sweden, the rapid increase in support for the anti-immigrant party the Sweden Democrats, who currently are estimated to be supported by about 16 % of the voters (ipsos.se, March 2016) and are represented in the Swedish parliament since 2010.

Structural characteristics as the economic situation and the political climate in a country resonate in practical integration work at the local level. In Barcelona, the interviewed stakeholders who attend immigrants unanimously point out the crisis as the main impediment for integration at present: there are “no jobs,” and without employment, integration is hardly achieved (interviews, 2014-2015). In Sweden, the financial crisis has not taken comparable proportions, but several of the stakeholders are alarmed by a cemented ethnic stratification on the labor market and the expanding anti-immigrant groups who represent a more overtly immigrant critical agenda than earlier, alongside an increasing mobilization of anti-racists and organizations helping refugees (Ingesson, Sabuni, Molina, Delgado, Johanson, Khan, interviews 2014, Mijatovic, Duran, interviews

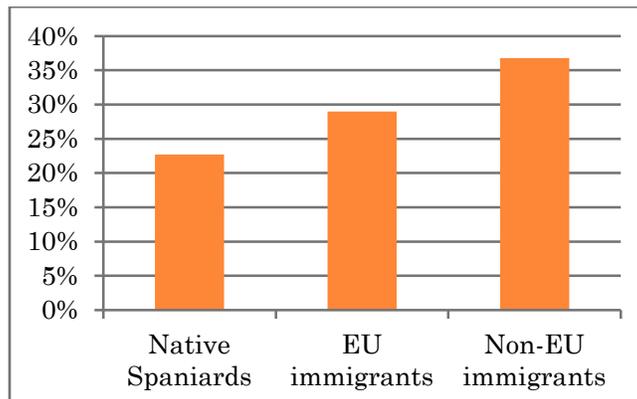
2015). Immigration and integration appear to be contentious issues indeed, perhaps more so than ever before.

### ***4.1.1. Immigration and integration in Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain***

#### ***4.1.1.1. Background and current situation***

Immigration in Spain is overall a comparably recent phenomenon, and the country is considered a “new” immigration country in a European perspective. The country started receiving increasing international immigration in the late 1980s, and from 2000, the country experienced a real immigration boom that is generally viewed as both caused by and contributing to the economic growth during this period (e.g. Simonazzi 2009). By 2007, Spain received roughly half of all new migrants to Europe. Catalonia has been a main recipient of national immigration for most of the 20th century, and is the Spanish region with the largest share of foreign migrants followed by Madrid (Spanish government’s report, 2014). There is noticeable disagreement at the Catalan policy-making level with the national government in Madrid, not the least regarding current budget cuts for integration programs. Catalan immigration policy-makers underline how problematic it is for them not to be authorized to decide who enters their territory, but expected to integrate those who arrive (Bosch, interview 2014; Zincone et al., 2011: 301-312).

The rapid transformation of Spain into a major immigration country coincided with an expanding economy with a large demand for low-wage labor in sectors as construction, agriculture and service professions, and the application of lenient immigration policies. Immigration into Spain has furthermore to a great extent been irregular, and the systematic subsequent regularizations were adopted as “an irregular immigration model” (Zincone et al., 2011: 294-302). The fact that immigration to Spain has mainly consisted of labor migrants who came to fill low-skilled positions that national workers rejected (Moreno and Bruquetas, 2011) makes it particularly vulnerable to recession and unemployment in these sectors.

**Table 1: Unemployment rates in Spain 2014 (source: Eurostat)**

Currently, the country faces the typical integration challenges of all Western immigration countries, together with the growing precariousness, unemployment and marginalization caused by the financial crisis (Bosch, Rendón, Rodríguez, interviews 2014).

Parallel to continuous (though currently decreasing ([www.ine.es](http://www.ine.es), February 2015)) flows of –mainly irregular—migrants, there is an emerging second generation of immigrants. A recent study of second generation immigrants in Spain (Aparicio and Portes, 2014) shows that the number of second-generation children who feel Spanish has increased from thirty percent in 2008 to fifty in 2012, and the rate is eighty percent among children of immigrant descent born in Spain. Simultaneously, less than ten percent of immigrant children claim to have felt discriminated against. In contrast to the perceived belonging, however, are the harsher economic realities. Though a majority of second generation immigrants want to study at the university, fewer will be able to do so due to insufficient family incomes. The report lends support to the assumption that economic disadvantage, seriously aggravated by the financial crisis, is the main problem for (non-Western) immigrants in Spain and a major obstacle for integration. This crude reality significantly hampers the possibilities to fulfill costly educational projects (which may be compared with Sweden, where universities are free of charge), and reflects the economic dimension of integration.

Currently, virtually all legal channels for non-EU labor immigration to Spain are in practice shut. Economic migration from third countries is therefore at present irregular by default (Boletín Oficial del Estado, May 25, 2015; Hellgren 2015). There is still an ongoing

regularization process for those who have stayed irregularly in the country for three years and have a job contract, but conditions for regularization because of “social attachment” (*arraigo social*) as this process is called, are becoming stricter. In Catalonia, knowledge of Catalan language and society are required, and factors as participation in civil society organizations may count as proof of integration, which according to some actors serves to increase the number of undocumented migrants who register as members in different associations. Over the past decade, the estimated number of undocumented migrants in Spain has hovered around one million. In 2011, 1,257,101 migrants without a valid residence permit were registered in the Spanish registers of inhabitants, *Padrón municipal* ([www.ine.es](http://www.ine.es), May 2011). As a result of the crisis, immigration overall has decreased and many immigrants, as well as Spaniards, have recently left the country, though there are no reliable data on how many as these may not deregister from the *Padrón municipal* and is not automatically deleted until two years later. Spanish policy-makers and immigration officials however confirm that the massive return of migrants that was expected in the wake of the crisis is so far not happening (Hobson et al 2015, Rendón, interview 2014). Immigration officials in Barcelona furthermore state that 70% of the migrants they assist daily at the city’s attention centers, offering basic information and service to immigrants, are undocumented (Rodríguez and Serra, interviews 2014).

#### 4.1.1.2. Catalan national identity

Before approaching integration work at the city level in Barcelona, it is relevant to say a few words about “Catalanism” and the role this strongly pronounced national identity plays in integration processes. Integration of immigrants in countries with multilevel governance structures entails specific challenges, which is striking in the case of Spain/Catalonia. Catalan regional autonomy after the end of Franco’s authoritarian regime in 1975 is built upon a strong notion of Catalan language and culture. Zuber (2014) argues that Catalan “monoism” has marked regional integration politics, expecting integration to be based on the minority culture and language. She refers to two debates on integration in the Catalan parliament, in which immigration as such was welcomed by all participants of the debate,

but the parties were concerned about how the language and culture into which immigrants are integrated and in which they are received should be defined; whether in Catalan, or in bilingual (Spanish and Catalan) terms. “The key conflict in Catalonia when it comes to immigrant integration appears to be about defining the linguistic identity of the host community,” Zuber claims (ibid). Approved Catalan classes are compulsory for immigrants who apply for residence permits, and the importance of speaking Catalan for integration is emphasized by institutional actors (e.g. Bosch, García, interviews 2014): “I think that integration in Catalonia in general is strongly related to the language. In the minds of people here, someone who speaks Catalan is integrated” (García, interview 2014).

Simultaneous to nationalist linguistic politics that may be perceived as coercive by immigrants, Catalonia is also explicitly defined as pluralist and a “country with a long tradition of integration that has grown economically and demographically through immigration” (Bosch, interview 2014). The case of Catalonia raises important questions about how the pronounced objective of interculturalism – which includes encouraging cross-cultural dialogue and challenging self-segregation tendencies within cultures – harmonizes with nationalist politics (Catalan immigration plan, 2014). A strongly defined national culture may hypothetically serve as “point of reference” for immigrants and thereby facilitate their integration – and if it really would be enough to speak Catalan in order to be accepted as a full member of society, it ought to be considered a rather accessible membership – but also operate exclusionary, as assimilation into “our way of being” is expected.

#### **4.1.1.3. Integration work in Barcelona: opportunities and challenges**

Any current analysis of immigration and integration in Spain will inevitably need to take the financial crisis into serious account. As discussed above, the economic dimension of integration becomes particularly salient in this context, with consequences as alarming unemployment rates in general and among immigrants in particular, and insufficient funds for integration projects (Rodríguez, Pulido, Bosch, Serra, interviews 2014). In the current scenario of continuing (though declining) and mainly irregular immigration, increasing

poverty and exclusion, the focus on integration as a two-way process tends to become secondary in practice despite pronounced intercultural policy ambitions (Barcelona immigration plan 2012-2015). Several stakeholders describe the current situation as “stand-by.” Much fewer immigrants than expected are returning to their home countries, and public authorities as well as civil society organizations and the immigrants themselves focus on short-term subsistence (Pulido, Rodríguez, Serra, Bosch, García, Saliba, interviews 2013-2014).

Yet, beyond the devastating effects of the crisis, policy-makers and other stakeholders involved in integration work in Barcelona, as NGOs, officials at municipal immigrant reception offices and trade unions, share the view that the myriad local efforts performed everyday by a wide range of voluntary grassroots actors (neighbor associations, local social centers, etc.) –ranging from basic assistance as food and housing to anti-racist campaigns and different initiatives to facilitate multiethnic coexistence and interaction in the local neighborhood – play a fundamental role to, in the words of Xavier Bosch, head of the Catalan regional government’s immigration office: “avoid a humanitarian catastrophe” (Bosch, Pulido, Rodríguez, Serra, García, interviews, 2014).

Stakeholders as policy-makers, immigration officials and integration practitioners in Barcelona/Catalonia coincide in viewing the Catalan society as particularly open and tolerant towards newcomers and their ethnic and cultural difference. Interculturalism, tolerance and anti-racism are declared to be central elements in regional and local integration policies, and racism and ethnic discrimination are not considered particularly salient problems; current challenges are described as almost exclusively economic. Social ties between neighbors and a lifestyle that encourages spontaneous encounters are viewed as important assets for “informal integration” to take place. Xavier Bosch describes integration politics as, almost, de facto “no politics”; integration, he argues, happens best spontaneously at the local level, in contact between neighbors, and through for instance promoting a housing structure of mixing and avoidance of ethnic segregation. There is however no particular housing policy to combat or prevent segregation at the political level (Bosch, interview 2014).

'I believe in less politics and more mixing. We want to promote an urban structure that facilitates physical contact, the melting pot... so that people are forced to enter into contact with each other. Barcelona has much fewer ghettos than other European cities.' *Xavier Bosch, interview 2014*

'An advantage here in Barcelona is that despite the crisis and poverty and all alarming details, there are no serious problems with racism and xenophobia. There is much solidarity, local social initiatives, many NGOs perform a fantastic work helping with basic things, so that immigrant children can eat healthy meals for instance. [...] We are surprised about the absence of social conflicts. Despite all problems here, at the micro level, between neighbors in the same building, there is a social contact that is missing in other countries. For instance, here you enter a bar or a bakery and people talk to each other. I think the fact that a person doesn't have to feel alone, that helps a lot. The human side of it all, that is.' *Magda García, interview 2014*

Guadalupe Pulido, the head of Barcelona's anti-discrimination office, presents a contrasting image as she states that discrimination based on ethnic origin is by far the most common complaint they receive. She also claims that about seventy percent of the complaints are resolved, generally through mediation, though the "solution" is more often an apology rather than concrete actions as somebody getting a job or a rental contract for an apartment that she or he was denied based on ethnicity. Pulido also states that the complaints have decreased significantly, which does not reflect any actual improvement but the fact that people at present are too concerned with basic survival to bother, or dare to, denounce discrimination. Questions as discriminatory structures impeding immigrants to climb upwards on the labor market are not given much attention, as this concerns very few people, while the large majority is struggling for basic subsistence (Pulido, interview 2014).

Gloria Rendón, who is in charge of the immigration reception office SAIER in Barcelona, highlights the problems with the kind of low-skilled immigration that Spain attracted during the years of growth. Immigrants were established in the bottom strata of society, which fostered a view on immigration as precarious. This, she claims, had detrimental

effects for people's attitudes towards immigrants and thereby for their integration (Rendón, interviews 2014):

'Immigration in Spain has been completely linked to a precarious labor market, and I would say that the main challenge for the new generations is what to do to make them participate with equality of opportunities. Now, the crisis has come between this development, there are no jobs...the whole integration process is pending on what happens with the crisis.' *Gloria Rendón, interview 2014*

To break the link between immigration and precariousness is fundamental for a more positive view on immigrants, according to Xavier Bosch and Magda García at the Catalan immigration secretariat. They refer to high-skilled immigration to Canada and consider it a model of inspiration for Catalonia, but also claim that valuing the knowledge of immigrants in general would favor integration (interviews, 2014). All in all, integration actors at different levels in Barcelona coincide in defining the emerging second generation as crucial: its failure or success regarding labor market participation and life chances in general will reveal whether integration fails or succeeds, and the financial crisis poses additional challenges to this development (Rendón, Pulido, Rodríguez, Bosch, García, interviews 2014, Bonomi, El-Fylaly, interviews 2015).

#### ***4.1.2. Immigration and integration in Stockholm/Sweden***

##### ***4.1.2.2. Background and current situation***

Sweden turned into an immigration country through large-scale, regulated labor migration during the economic boom in the 1950s and 1960s, until the oil crisis in 1973 ended this era. Instead, asylum and family reunification then became the main reasons for migration. The non-European share of the foreign-born population increased from seven to forty percent between 1970 and 2005 (DS report 2007:4 pp. 14). During these decades, immigration policies changed from the initial assimilation objective, to the explicitly multicultural perspective in the 1970s and 1980s, and subsequently towards a focus on integration. In 1997, immigration politics were renamed integration politics. Its proclaimed

goals were to support immigrants' socio-economic inclusion and independence within an ethnically pluralist framework. An essential difference compared to earlier immigration politics was the statement that integration also includes the native majority population. Anti-discrimination and anti-racism agendas were included in the integration political aims in 1997. However, the view on integration as reciprocal was not applied in the formulation of integration policies, either in 1997 or later. Södergran (2000: 4-19) considers this a crucial mistake that explains part of the failure of these politics; they were created for, and not in collaboration with, the immigrants. This critique is shared by the Cooperation group for ethnic associations in Sweden (SIOS), who has advocated for an inclusion of the "ethnic voice" in these policy-making processes for decades (Mijatovic, interviews 2004 and 2014). According to Södergran, the result was "a destructive division between 'us' and 'them'", which in her view increased the exclusion of immigrants. Södergran argues that combating ethnic discrimination and subordination is fundamental both for a more successful integration process and for Sweden as a democracy and welfare state (ibid).

During the last decade, Swedish integration policies have shifted towards a more pronounced focus on labor market participation, indeed always considered a key dimension of integration. In 2010, a new integration policy program was approved. The main difference compared with 1997 was that part of the responsibility for integration work was transferred from the municipal level to the national employment agencies, with the objective of finding work for newly arrived migrants as the main priority. Unlike several other EU countries, as Denmark and Germany, Swedish integration politics are non-coercive, and there are no specific requirements in terms of integration to be granted a long-term residence permit or citizenship. Swedish courses are free of charge and voluntary, however economic support may be relative to participation in "establishment programs" governed by the national employment agencies (Hellgren 2016).

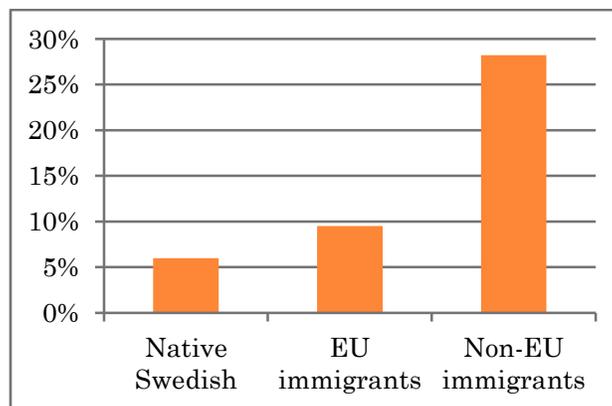
The main Swedish trade union LO's spokesperson in immigration matters, Thord Ingesson, argues that integration work was more active and multifaceted a decade ago; LO had two people working fulltime with promoting integration fourteen years ago, now they have nobody. Ingesson considers it paradoxical that "integration is not considered a priority anymore," particularly concerning the success of the anti-immigrant party the Sweden

Democrats, and just as many anti-racist actors he believes that integration is ultimately a question of social justice (Sabuni, Khan, Ingesson, interviews 2014). The Social democratic government in Sweden, which was elected in September 2014 after eight years of Conservative rule, has recently abolished the Integration minister post with the ambition to “mainstream” integration issues so that they will, ideally, impregnate all policy-making processes. Simultaneously, it is made clear that Swedish integration politics continue to emphasize labor market incorporation among newly arrived immigrants:

‘The Labor market department is in charge of establishment for newly arrived, and we consider work and education the most important components. Therefore our ambition is to create politics that facilitate the establishment of newly arrived on the Swedish labor market. Work makes it possible for people to provide for themselves, participate in society and create an independent life. That is the key for integration politics.’ *Natalie Sial, Secretary of the Swedish labor market minister Ylva Johansson (e-mail interview, November 2014)*

If integration is made equal to labor market participation, and simultaneously understood as a reciprocal process (SCB, 2005), it becomes central to reveal and eliminate obstacles for labor market participation on equal terms.

**Table 2: Unemployment rates in Sweden 2014 (source: Eurostat)**



Consequently, the problems with discrimination of people because of their name, skin-color, religious or ethnic background are widely recognized among academics, policy-makers and civil society actors and increasingly framed as an obstacle for integration

(Burns et al 2007; Bursell, 2012; Afrofobi report 2014). Parallel to growing anti-immigrant sentiments and increasing support for the anti-immigrant party The Sweden Democrats, a new wave of anti-racist actors has entered the Swedish media. They are people of immigrant descent, in their own words “racialized,” who speak for themselves and demand the authority to produce discourses (Afrofobi report 2014, Sabuni, interview 2014). The intersection between race and class in the integration process is highlighted by Zakia Khan, a representative of the Swedish immigrant women’s organization Interfem, which informs recruiters about ethnic discrimination and advocates for merit-based recruitment. As many other activists, she rejects the concept of integration and rather speaks of obstacles for participation:

‘I feel that the whole idea [of integration] is outdated. The main problem from my point of view is that the class dimension is completely absent from the integration debate in Sweden. People don’t see that so much is about money and resources. There are no ways to take part. The white majority doesn’t live in the suburbs because they have enough money to buy houses, and someone who is unemployed and lives in a suburb just has no way out, no job, no money, and is discriminated against by tenants... That is the main obstacle. We prefer to talk of inclusion rather than integration.’ *Zakia Khan, interview 2014*

All in all, the political and public debate on immigration, integration – and race – appears increasingly contentious in Sweden (e.g. Molina, Khan, Sabuni, Duran, interviews 2014-2015). In this context, it is important to state that discrimination is not necessarily based on overt anti-immigrant sentiments. It is instead a matter of preference for ethnic (Swedish) homogeneity that seems to persist and create subtle patterns of everyday exclusion, not the least on the labor market, as employers often prefer hiring native Swedes (Wiesbrock, 2013), which is reflected through the huge unemployment gap illustrated above (Eurostat 2014). The perceptions on national identity in a given context serve to reveal such subtle obstacles for integration.

#### 4.1.2.2. “Swedishness” and subtle forms of exclusion

In contrast to Catalonia, there is no official definition of national identity in Swedish integration policies, merely a statement that everyone who comes to live in Sweden has the right to maintain his or her cultural identity (Information om Sverige, 2015). The question of “Swedishness” is taboo in public discourse; this type of terminology is generally only used by anti-immigrant actors as the members of the Sweden Democrats. There is however a strongly rooted and widespread perception of Sweden as a tolerant, egalitarian and humanitarian country among the population that could be considered to constitute a kind of national identity (e.g. Hobson et al., 2007), which according to antiracist actors hampers the recognition of problems with structural racism (Burns et al 2007). Furthermore, representatives of anti-racist and ethnic minority groups who define themselves as racialized state that integration is primarily hindered through the fact that people with a different skin color are never recognized as “Swedish” by the ethnic majority, no matter how much they adopt “Swedish values” and customs (Sabuni, Delgado, Molina, Khan, interviews 2014). Physical attributes as white skin, blonde hair and blue eyes remain intimately linked to the common perception of Swedishness. Kitimbwa Sabuni, spokesperson of the Afro-Swedes’ national association, is strongly critical of the integration concept, and argues that this debate should instead be framed in terms of justice, and race, a discussion that is “completely absent in Sweden”:

‘The main problem is that people with a foreign background don’t feel that they belong here, that they may be kicked out if the Sweden Democrats would win the elections. They do not consider themselves a part of this society and the ethnic organizations’ agendas are marked by this fact. They may be grateful or angry or distance themselves from the majority, but they are always in an inferior position, they never feel that they have the right to take their place just like any citizen.’

*Kitimbwa Sabuni, interview March 2014*

This perception is shared by Cristian Delgado, head of the Chilean organization in Sweden, who believes that no matter what he does or how long he lives in the country, he will never be seen as Swedish, and therefore constantly questioned. He mentions an illustrative example: some years ago he achieved a decision-making position within his trade union,

but had to leave it as he was accused by the Swedish members for favoring other immigrants. Delgado also claims that the increasing support for anti-immigrant politics in Sweden decrease the willingness to identify with “Swedishness” among the immigrant communities, and thereby has negative consequences for their integration (Delgado, interview 2014). The negative effect of the increasing support for the Sweden Democrats on immigrants’ sense of belonging and identification with the Swedish society is also asserted by Seyran Duran, spokesperson of the Kurdish women’s association (interview 2015).

If a norm of Swedishness that is perceived as narrow and exclusionary by people with other ethnic backgrounds is counterproductive for integration, more ethnically mixed or “international” collective identities could instead potentially serve to bridge boundaries. Attaching greater value to immigrant experiences may also work empowering. Milinko Mijatovic, head of the Cooperation group for ethnic organizations in Sweden (SIOS), argues that the Swedish majority society needs to change in a “cosmopolitan” direction for integration to work. He emphasizes the importance of strengthening the cultural identity and home language of immigrant groups, and advocates for their recognition as national minorities after about 30 years in the country. Valuing their language skills and promoting a view on immigrants as “intercultural experts” or “consultants,” with the potential to, for instance, establish transnational business links through contacts between Sweden and their home countries, would also be a way to increase the status of “non-Swedes” overall (Mijatovic, interviews 2004 and 2014), and simultaneously form part of an “internationalization” of the Swedish society that should be necessary in an open, multiethnic society that does not cling to a myth of ethnic homogeneity.

#### **4.1.2.3. Integration work in Stockholm: opportunities and challenges**

When approaching the field of practical integration work in Stockholm, the image that appears is that of a multifaceted network of actors as integration organizations, consultants and NGOs. Both policy-makers and NGOs state that there has been a recent expansion of the “integration business” and intensified competition over public funding, but also an

emergence of local initiatives with new approaches, based on the recognition that the ethnic majority needs to be active in integration processes (Hart Carpenter, Sabuni, Johanson, Mijatovic, interviews 2014).

The County administrative board is responsible for the practical implementation of integration policies in Stockholm. Birgitta Hart Carpenter, head of the integration unit, describes their work as focused on the reception of newly arrived immigrants with residence permits and refugees with asylum. In line with the Swedish integration policy emphasis on labor market participation, their priority is to help newly arrived migrants to get “established” (which refers to finding work and housing) as soon as possible. Moreover, the situation of the recognized national minorities is part of their work, particularly inclusion of the Roma community. Other efforts directed towards immigrants are absent, as is the implementation of the stated policy aim of integration as a two-way process. Hart Carpenter however thinks that discourse is starting to change among companies and organizations that they work with, though still very few apply the perspective that immigrants ought to participate when businesses and activities are created. There have been discussions on bringing xenophobia and discrimination into the integration work at the County administrative board, but so far it has not been done. Hart Carpenter believes that big companies, as Ericsson, are generally better at working actively with inclusion of immigrants as they have a tradition of hiring international competence compared with public institutions. In more typically Swedish workplaces, the social codes may hinder the inclusion of people with other ethnic backgrounds, she thinks, though she emphasizes that intentions are good and that there is progress, though slow, towards the practical implementation of a “two-way perspective.” Several municipalities has for instance actively recruited Roma people as “bridge builders” between authorities and the Roma community to better address their concerns, and one of them has then been employed as public investigator, which according to Hart Carpenter is a form of quota system. She does however acknowledge that there is a lack of collaboration with immigrant communities in general, and adds that part of the two-way perspective implies empowering immigrant groups.

'You cannot focus only on changing structures. There are groups that have been discriminated for long, they expect to be discriminated and therefore they are. Then it is important to also work with changing this group's behavior.' *Birgitta Hart Carpenter, interview 2014*

There is a growing network of civil society organizations in Stockholm working with integration matters at the grassroots level. The reciprocal approach on integration is for instance pronounced at the expanding integration NGO *Internationella Bekantskaper (International Acquaintances)*, whose principal work method is to facilitate interpersonal contacts between Swedes and immigrants with language as tool. Native Swedish volunteers meet and maintain conversations with both newly arrived immigrants and residents from ethnically segregated areas who have not learned Swedish well despite many years in the country. According to Sara Johanson, one of the leading actors within the organization, the lack of intercultural contacts in everyday life is a main obstacle for integration in Swedish society.

'Our organization started as reaction against an obstacle, the lack of contacts with native Swedes in everyday life. Pelle [the founder] got frustrated as he noticed that many immigrants never had any contact with Swedes because it is so segregated here so people only talk to their compatriots. They can often spend all day with no need to use Swedish, not even in the store. [...] People meet too little. It may of course be problematic to meet, people have different values and you are not going to love everyone. But one must see it in a larger perspective, what kind of country we want to live in.' *Sara Johanson, interview 2014*

Johanson considers it important to make clear that integration is not about immigrants lacking skills that they need to compensate for, but to value the knowledge and resources they come here with: "Many people lose their self-esteem when they migrate, they may have had status in their home countries and here they are not valued, that is fundamental for positive processes of inclusion." She describes the relationship between some of the volunteers and the immigrants as unequal: Swedes may want to "educate immigrants in Swedishness," tell them how things are supposed to be done here, which reflects a

paternalistic dimension that may be implicitly inherent in the “two-way perspective” (Johanson, interview 2014).

Besides efforts to facilitate the incorporation of newly arrived migrants and the kind of contact-creating work represented by *Internationella Bekantskaper*, much work in the integration field in Stockholm consists of awareness-raising through anti-racist information and consultancy. Both Kitimbwa Sabuni, spokesperson of the Afro-Swedes association and Zakia Khan, spokesperson of the immigrant women’s network Interfem, work as professional diversity management consultants with the aim of influencing companies and organizations to hire people with immigrant backgrounds and promote more multiethnic workplaces. Irene Molina, an anti-racist scholar who introduced the concept “racialization” in Swedish debate, believes that there are both obstacles and advantages with the focus on discursive and attitude changes in Swedish society. From her perspective (which is shared by activists as Khan and Sabuni), “integration” is a matter of justice and equality: significant social change is needed to eliminate structures that differentiate depending on origin and skin color and thereby cement poverty and exclusion among the “racialized” minorities. She believes that quotas and positive action would be concrete ways to achieve greater “ethnic equality,” but states that these policy measures are firmly rejected both at the national and at the EU level (Molina, interview 2014).

#### ***4.1.3. Integration and gender: an unclear relation?***

According to most of the interviewed stakeholders representing NGOs, ethnic organizations and trade unions, obstacles for integration are generally related to economic disadvantage (class), ethnic stereotyping and prejudice (“race”) or the intersection between these two categories. The role played by gender in this context is far less clear. In both Barcelona and Stockholm, there is recognition among integration officials that immigrant women may often be particularly vulnerable and isolated from society, and there are several initiatives at the local level to encourage their participation in social life through for instance workshops and cultural events (Hart Carpenter, Pulido, El-Fylaly, interviews 2014-2015). Besides that, the gender dimension does not appear particularly salient in integration

contexts. Among the interviewed stakeholders, only two specifically pointed out its significance, and both of them represent interest organizations for immigrant women in Stockholm.

Zakia Khan at Interfem represents the interests of immigrant women in work life, and states that immigrant women and immigrant men may be exposed to different forms of prejudice (for instance, stereotypes as black or Muslim men being “dangerous,” Muslim women with headscarves “submissive,” and black women “sexually available”). She however also underlines that race/ethnicity and class are the most significant categories for disadvantage, and that “racism and discrimination create new forms of poverty” (Khan, interview 2014). Seyran Duran at the Kurdish women’s organization believes that being a woman actually may represent an advantage for integration among Kurds in Sweden, as women are viewed more positively than men of the same ethnicity by the Swedish majority, particularly since the massive attention directed towards the so called honor killings of young Kurdish women adopting a “Swedish lifestyle” during the past decade (Duran, interview 2015, Hellgren and Hobson 2008).

In the following section, I will present the main findings from the rich empirical material that was generated through my interviews with 60 immigrants of diverse origins in Barcelona and Stockholm. They were asked about the importance of being a man or woman for the opportunities or obstacles to participate in and identify with society, and as we shall see, many respondents did not consider this relevant or had no specific thoughts about it, while among those who did, some thought that being a woman was an advantage for integration, while others considered it more difficult for “ethnic” women to be accepted than for men. There is no general conclusion to be drawn on the significance of gender for immigrants’ perceptions on integration based on the data gathered for this project, which does indeed not imply that gender is irrelevant in integration processes; rather that it affects the situation of individuals in multiple and sometimes contradictory ways, and needs to be further explored.

## **4.2. The situation of different immigrant groups in Stockholm and Barcelona**

How immigrants of different origins, with different motives behind their migration projects and different expectations for the future, perceive their integration in terms of belonging and opportunities in the society of residence may indeed be expected to vary radically according to a wide range of individual and external circumstances. As I conducted the interviews included in this project, I did however find that even though every person naturally has his or her own, particular narrative, there are indeed similarities, many of which can be attributed to the person's origin. Before proceeding to the main empirical part of the study, based on in-depth interviews with 60 immigrants or people with immigrant background in Stockholm and Barcelona, I will present the main concerns of the spokespersons for different ethnic groups in both cities.

At present, two social phenomena appear to dominate the debates and discourses of ethnic associations in Stockholm and Barcelona. In Stockholm, the worries about the increasing support for the Sweden Democrats, and what is perceived as an "anti-immigrant turn" of society overall, is central among the representatives of the Afro-Swedish, Chilean and Kurdish associations, though less so among the Chinese (Sabuni, Delgado, Duran and Liu, interviews 2014-2015). Anti-racism and anti-discrimination, framed as a question of equality and social justice, is central in their agendas: "Everybody talks about equality of rights and opportunities, but not of outcomes," argues for instance Kitimbwa Sabuni at the Afro-Swedish association, and considers an explicit focus on results to be the main priority for their work towards "racial equality" (interview 2014).

In Barcelona, the financial crisis paralyses other work related to immigrants' rights and opportunities, as anti-discrimination. Integration becomes a matter of having a place in society in the most basic sense: to make a living. The interviewed spokespersons for the Moroccan, Latin American, Senegalese and Chinese associations agree that to combat social exclusion is their main, of not only, priority at present (El-Fylaly, Bonomi, Sam, Chuen Ping, interviews 2015). "People don't think about racism now, they only think about work," claims Amina El-Fylaly, spokesperson of the Moroccan association Ibn Batuta (interview 2015).

In both Stockholm and Barcelona, there are also several differences between different immigrant groups in terms of what difficulties they encounter and what position they have in society. In the following, I will present the main concerns of the four groups of immigrant respondents included in the study, and finally the control group of white, Western immigrants. An important note in relation to the classification is, as I developed more in detail in the methodological section, that the categories applied in this project are based on stereotypes rather than actual ethnic identities. So, for instance, immigrants portrayed as “Muslim” are not necessarily practitioners of Islamic faith, but commonly categorized this way (which for instance is relevant for the Kurdish community in Sweden).

#### ***4.2.1. Black Africans***

Immigrants of African origin in Sweden, who identify as black and members of the African diaspora, constitute a group for whom skin color is a central marker of difference (Afrofobi report 2014), more clearly so than among any of the other ethnic groups in the study. According to Kitimbwa Sabuni, spokesperson of the Afro-Swedish association, being black represents a clear disadvantage in Swedish society, which is related to discrimination, social exclusion and poverty. He also underlines the importance of speaking about race to be able to address these problems, but encounters much resistance and thinks that this is a strong taboo in Swedish society.

‘The relationship between race and justice, that discussion does not exist here. It is at another level in for instance Great Britain. [...] But when you look at the employment level there is a huge difference between ethnic Swedes and Afro-Swedes, it is thirty percent lower, and if you look at high positions the differences are extreme. There is also a clear racial hierarchy among ethnic groups, the whiter a person, the easier it is to be in Sweden. This is dominant even if you measure how long people have been here. But it is not possible to talk about race in Sweden.’

*Kitimbwa Sabuni, interview 2014*

Sabuni believes that, besides racial status hierarchies that place black Africans at the bottom, the integration problems affecting people of African origin in Sweden are related to

the general framing of Africa and anything African as strange and distant in relation to what is Swedish. He claims that Swedes may show a positive interest in Africa, often with paternalistic connotations; “Africa is a place where people are poor and receive development aid.” He claims that Afro-Swedes and Muslims are the most disadvantaged and negatively stereotyped immigrant groups in Sweden, but stereotypes differ: while Muslim men are perceived as threatening, Africans are, he argues “seen as children, not as competent people; not taken seriously” (Sabuni, interview 2014). When asked whether Sweden needs a mobilization for “ethnic equality” and justice, comparable with the women’s movement or the Civil rights movement in the United States during the 1960s, Sabuni replies:

‘The problem is that since racialized people in Sweden define themselves as strangers here, they have no claims on this country. To demand something is important for such a movement to emerge. Black people in the US felt that they had the right to demand equal treatment, as Americans, and here we have not quite gotten there yet.’ *Kitimbwa Sabuni, interview 2014*

The general stereotypes affecting black people in Sweden appear identical in Spain/Catalonia: that black people are less competent, inferior compared with white people, and that Africa is a continent characterized by violence, poverty and an inability to govern. According to Amadou Boka Sam, who represents the Senegalese community in Catalonia and also works for the local administration with integration issues, the Catalan society is not particularly racist compared with other European societies, but there is racism at different levels that frequently affects African immigrants. Simultaneously, he thinks that the Catalan society, compared with Spain overall and other European countries, has a particular advantage that consists of its vast network of civil society organizations that play a key role for integration processes at the local level and offers plenty of opportunities for the immigrant communities to use the existing structures and organize themselves. For instance, he describes the Senegalese community as highly active in terms of networking and participation in relations with the Catalan society (Sam, interview 2015).

Consistent with other stakeholders in Spain/Catalonia, Sam however emphasizes that the most serious question for the Senegalese community at present is the dramatically increasing precariousness in the wake of the financial crisis, and highlights how race, or the stigmatizing label “immigrant,” is closely intertwined with low socio-economic status. This linking, he believes, contributes to block access to higher strata in society for the majority of African immigrants.

‘Of course people don’t come here just because they want to, they come to work, and the sectors where immigrants work are precarious, where rights are not respected. When they say that black people or immigrants in general cannot do the same kind of work as Spaniards, that is in itself discrimination. As a Senegalese, I have been a victim of that myself. In agriculture... people are not treated in a decent way. Not everybody has the same access to the labor market, or to studies. The effects of the crisis are huge, but one could still imagine equality of opportunities and that is not being done here yet.’ *Amadou Boka Sam, interview 2015*

Besides the effects of the economic crisis, and the specific kind of prejudice that affects African people, Sam believes that integration is hampered by an underlying expectation that immigrants ought to adapt to the receiving society in a variety of ways that he finds unrealistic, and that immigrants should be seen as sources of knowledge and new perspectives rather than individuals that are expected to become as similar to the ethnic majority as possible. This view on what integration processes could entail is shared by stakeholders within this field in Sweden, who points at this perspective as essential to empower immigrant groups and increase the status of non-western nationalities overall (e.g. Mijatovic, Johanson, Khan, Molina, interviews 2014). As many other actors within the fields of immigration and integration, he also states that the situation of the second generation (in this case of young immigrants of African descent in Catalonia) is worrying, as they feel that they are a part of this country but are not treated that way by the ethnic majority, which creates much frustration. Sam describes that many parents express the concern that also their children will not achieve the equality of opportunities they no longer hope for themselves (Sam, interview 2015).

#### ***4.2.2. Immigrants from Muslim countries***

When classifying this group of immigrants, it was important to be aware of the distinction between Muslim immigrants and immigrants from Muslim countries. The latter are likely to be cast as Muslims, which is not always the case. Many Syrian immigrants in Europe are for instance Christian, and the Kurds in Sweden are often political refugees of whom several define themselves as non-religious (Duran, interview 2015). For the purpose of this project, however, what is most relevant is not whether they are actual, practicing Muslims, but whether they are affected by stereotypes of “Muslim” or “Arab” people.

The Kurdish community in Sweden shares the analysis of the integration problem that most of the interviewed stakeholders sustain: 1) that there is inequality between the Swedish majority and the immigrant groups, and also significant stratification among immigrant groups depending on their origin; and 2) that the Sweden Democrats represents an increasing ethnic polarization and a threat to integration. Seyran Duran, the spokesperson of the Kurdish women’s national organization in Sweden, thinks that the Swedish Kurds are a fairly well integrated immigrant group, and states that “most Kurds work,” though “of course there is discrimination,” and marginalization affects this community with destructive consequences as radicalization of some (mainly) young men.

‘Social exclusion is our most important concern. [...] I think that it is mostly a matter of class, of economy. But it is related. When it is because of ethnicity, then it becomes racism.’ *Seyran Duran, interview 2015*

Duran is worried about the increasing overt racism in Swedish society that she perceives, and thinks that this is related to the fact that Sweden receives so many refugees while “everyday life is getting more difficult, people have more problems with work, the economy” (ibid). Moreover, the Kurdish group in Sweden is the only of the interviewed ethnicities in this project that specifically underlines the gender dimension. Kurdish women integrate easier into Swedish society than men, Duran claims, and thinks that this is both because women tend to be more open and sociable than the men, and because Swedish society is more welcoming towards Kurdish women while there is more prejudice against Kurdish men, and Muslim men in general. She also believes that the massive media

attention given to so called honor related violence and honor murders within this ethnic group during the late 1990s and early 2000s has contributed much to a negative perception of Kurdish men in Sweden (Duran interview 2015; see also Hellgren and Hobson 2008).

The Moroccan community in Catalonia is according to their spokesperson Amina El-Fylaly at the Moroccan association Ibn Batuta particularly affected by the economic crisis and high unemployment rates. Men who used to work mainly in the construction sector have lost their jobs and can often not find employment in any sector at present, while Moroccan women “accept to clean a house for 2 or 3 Euros per hour, she doesn’t care, she has no job and has children to support.” El-Fylaly describes an alarming situation where the work of Ibn Batuta is focused on basic assistance to members, as finding aid to buy food and diapers for babies (El-Fylaly, interview 2015).

Like most other immigrant communities in Spain, Moroccans mainly moved here for economic reasons, to work and send money back home, perhaps invest in the country of origin, she says. However, many Moroccan migration projects have been hampered by the difficult economic situation in Spain and simultaneously, prices have increased significantly in Morocco which makes it impossible for most Moroccans to consider, for instance, moving back with some capital to buy a house: “It is very different in Pakistan and other countries, a euro there is worth 100 times more, a Pakistani who works here for a year can go back to buy a house, a Moroccan cannot” (ibid). This quote also reflects the relationship between the motive behind migration and the integration process: whether the objective is to become part of the new society or live there as long as it takes to reach a better economic position in the country of origin.

For many Moroccans, hence, what was initially intended to be a temporary project becomes permanent. The emerging second generation does generally not want to move to Morocco, though they, as other youth of immigrant descent in European countries, often experience tensions related to living between two cultures. Amina El-Fylaly however believes that the relationship between Catalans and Moroccans have improved over the past decade, that there is more tolerance now, and also that people are so concerned about basic survival at

present that racism becomes less of an issue. Instead of seeing immigrants as a threat in competition over the scarce job offers, she thinks that the crisis actually may lead to more solidarity between people, though there have also been incidents of threats against immigrants.

'In 2012 we had problems with that. People were saying things, there were threats in the streets and so. But a Moroccan suffers just as much as a Catalan, or more. And people understand that. We have our rights too, we are paying, immigrants pay taxes. It is not for free to live here. What is happening is not the immigrants' fault so it is not fair to say that. We blame those who have high positions in society.' *Amina El Fylaly, interview 2015*

### ***4.2.3. Latin Americans***

In Sweden, the Chilean community is by far the largest and most established Latin American community, while in Spain, given its historical and cultural ties with Latin America, there are large communities from different Latin American countries. The situation for Chileans in Sweden could, according to Cristian Delgado, the spokesperson of the national Chilean association, best be described in terms of "unfinished integration." Chileans found work easily, mainly in the industries, but are according to Delgado still viewed as immigrants, and not Swedes. He argues that there is a perception that Chileans integrated easily and that the cultural differences are small, but that Chileans are not fully accepted in many spheres of Swedish society, and that this is getting worse as the Sweden Democrats gain influence;

'If the image of what is Swedish becomes narrower, it becomes more difficult to feel Swedish [...] It frightens me to know that my two children who are born here will never be seen as Swedes, not by this party. They will never become Swedes because they don't look like Swedes. Who wants their children to grow up in a country where they are not allowed to feel at home?' *Cristian Delgado, interview 2014*

Delgado states that the first generation of Chileans struggled with the language and finding a place in society, and that these problems were expected to disappear with the second generation but did not; “there are many second generation Chileans who don’t feel that they belong in Sweden.” Delgado believes that there are strong divisions in Swedish society between Swedes and those viewed as non-Swedes, and that this polarization is increasing (interview 2014).

The diversity among Latin Americans in Spain reflects different types of prejudice and ethnic stereotypes. Javier Bonomi, head of the Latin American association Fede Latina in Barcelona, underlines the vast differences in treatment and position in society between the “European-looking” immigrants from countries as Argentina, Chile and Uruguay, who are barely affected by racism in Spain, and those with “indigenous” features from Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru or certain Central American countries. Particularly Bolivians have low status in Spain, he claims, which besides colonialist status hierarchies where “Indian” phenotype has always been looked down upon, is related to the fact that Bolivia is a poor country that “has nothing.” He describes the relation between Bolivian workers, many of whom are female domestic workers, and their employers as pathological; a master and servant relationship that creates despise and resentment, and reflects such deeply unequal roles that integration in terms of equality of opportunities appears impossible. Bonomi also contrasts Bolivia with Peru, a country with similar features but which he claims is currently gaining international status and reputation due to its innovative cuisine, which he believes benefits the image of Peruvians. The kind of prejudice affecting all Latin Americans is more subtle, as not valuing titles and degrees equally to those from Western countries. But beyond ethnic stereotyping, he shares the view of all other stakeholders interviewed in Barcelona: that the economic crisis is the main concern and affects immigrants particularly seriously, multiplying the risk of social exclusion and precariousness. Here, again, ethnic origin and socio-economic position overlap:

‘If you don’t have a Western appearance, it is much worse. If I tell you that 50% of the non-Western immigrants don’t have jobs, if you besides being an immigrant also are black or Muslim, that would be 70% [...] We have lots of problems but I don’t even want to imagine how it is like for black Africans.’ *Javier Bonomi, interview 2015*

In this context, it is interesting to note that, for instance, the Peruvian community in Spain is clearly divided along socio-economic lines. There is for instance a collective of Peruvian physicians who have lived in the country for decades, are well integrated and may be more centered on promoting links with the Spanish and Catalan establishment rather than with Peruvian immigrants at a lower socio-economic level (Bonomi, interview 2015).

#### **4.2.4. Asians**

In both Sweden and Spain, the Chinese community represents one of the most well established Asian immigrant groups, with a comparably long history of presence in the country, as well as particular and easily identifiable physical traits that contributes to stereotyping about this group of immigrants (Hübinette 2015: <https://tobiashubINETTE.wordpress.com/category/svt/>). All Asian respondents in Sweden are Chinese, but in Spain, two Philippine respondents were included. Though identified as Asian, the specific character of Philippine migration to Spain, largely directed towards work in the domestic sector, has contributed to the stereotyping of Philippine immigrants as “domestic servants” (e.g. Parreñas 2001). Particularly Philippine women are therefore affected by the same kind of prejudice and demeaning ethnic prototypes as (female) Latin American migrants from countries as Bolivia and Ecuador, casting them as servile and submissive, rather than the idea of Asians as productive and business-oriented that is commonly associated with Chinese immigrants (e.g. Liu, interview 2014 and Chuen Ping, interview 2015). This perception is confirmed by the head of Amistad, the Philippine women’s association in Barcelona, whom I interviewed for another research project in 2013 (Hobson et al 2015).

Based on the interviews with representatives of the respective ethnic associations, the Chinese community in Sweden differs from the rest regarding one central aspect: they express no clear perception of being exposed to racism or discrimination that affects the opportunities of this group of immigrants in society. Weihua Liu, representative of the Chinese association in Stockholm, asserts that Chinese immigrants may indeed be mocked and made fun of because of their specific phenotype and other characteristic features, and

being new in the country, regardless of one's national origin, entails disadvantages as not knowing the social codes or lacking access to valuable networks. Nevertheless, she also states that the image of Chinese immigrants in Sweden is overall positive: they often have high positions, many are researchers for instance, and are perceived as hard-working and respectful. There is also an interest in China related to the country's economic progress, and many Swedes currently want to learn Chinese. Negative attitudes are mostly related to the country's politics, Liu claims.

'I think that the attitudes depend much on what you do for the country, then the people get a "higher grade" or what to call it. I don't know any Chinese who receives social welfare, we all contribute to this country, at least everyone I know of. [...] I sometimes went to the church when my daughter was little, and a priest said that he had never heard about a Chinese who went to jail. That may not say much but it is a fact that... everyone wants to work hard and earn their place in this society.' *Weihua Liu, interview 2014*

Chinese are also affected by ethnic stereotypes, but this is not necessarily negative, Liu thinks, "no matter how long we live here, we will always look like Chinese, but I am myself quite proud of that." The main difficulties that Chinese immigrants in Sweden encounter are according to Liu related to the language: it is hard for them to learn Swedish fluently, which may represent a disadvantage on the labor market. She also states that as immigrants, they have to work harder and "be better than the Swedes' to get the same chances" (Liu, interview 2014).

The account on the Chinese community in Spain and Catalonia, provided by Lam Chuen Ping, head of the Union of Chinese Associations in Catalonia, largely coincides with Weihua Liu's description of the situation of Chinese immigrants in Sweden. He describes how the Chinese associations in Spain were founded as this immigrant community grew substantially since the 1970s, and how they, particularly in Catalonia, are based on business interests and links with influential political and economic actors from the majority society. Chuen Ping argues that the Chinese are more well-integrated than other immigrant communities, "even the police thinks so," and that this is related to their "entrepreneurship mentality." In Chuen Ping's words, the Chinese migrate to prosper

economically, start businesses and contribute to the society of settlement rather than demand anything from it. As an ethnic organization, the Chinese associations are primarily interested in supporting Chinese companies and the relationship between these and the majority society, and in changing the widespread image that Chinese companies represent a threat to local businesses as they tend to not respect national labor regulations and represent unfair competition (Chuen Ping, interview 2015).

“Our idea here is to build something that contributes to this society. We [as an association] help Chinese people here to coexist with natives and integrate, and we also build links between the government and the Chinese community. It is important to maintain the balance, because when the Chinese companies started to become very salient, the local business owners started to pressurize the government, so that it would put pressure on the Chinese companies. We organize meetings between Chinese and local businessmen and we respect Spanish laws. This way, our association has contributed to a better integration and coexistence.” *Lam Chuen Ping, interview 2015*

Lam Chueng Ping claims that there are no particular problems among the Chinese community that can be attributed to their nationality; rather, being Chinese in Spain/Catalonia is an advantage on the labor market, he believes:

“The Chinese who work for local or multinational companies are almost all second generation immigrants, they were educated here, and as they have this entrepreneurial mentality, they think about the work they need to do rather than how many hours they work. That is why Spanish companies are very interested in hiring Chinese workers, because they usually work more [than Spaniards]. If they need someone to work during the weekend or stay an hour longer, a Chinese will never say no. This [work ethics] is something that we have still maintained very well in the second generation, thanks to the families’ way of raising their children. If the children need to stay out of school some day to help with the family business, they do so, they are used to it. This fosters a sense of responsibility, of helping the family. And later on, this develops into a sense of responsibility in society.” *Lam Chuen Ping, interview 2015*

According to Chuen Ping, the common (positive) stereotypes of Chinese as hard-working and non-demanding, ideal employees, represent an important asset for how Chinese immigrants are perceived and influences favorably on their professional opportunities (Chuen Ping, interview 2015).

#### **4.2.5. Western migrants**

Western migrants (who are not necessarily white, though in this study, only white Westerners are included) typically move to another country because of personal and/or professional reasons as career opportunities, lifestyle preferences, or love (Lundström, 2014, Favell 2008). The general perception is that this form of human mobility, if it should at all be considered “migration,” is voluntary and often temporary, and organizations representing nationalities as Norwegian, Northern American, British, German, Australian or French citizens living in other Western countries do not focus on the social situation or integration of these “immigrants.” In both Stockholm and Barcelona, there are several associations representing people from different Western nationalities who live there on a permanent basis, as the Scandinavian club in Barcelona (<http://www.clubescandinavo.net/>) or the American Club of Sweden in Stockholm (<http://www.americanclub.se/>). It may be a linguistic detail, but yet noteworthy, that instead of “association” or “organization,” they use the term “club.” Rather than representing its members in terms of rights or claims-making of any kind, these clubs function as cultural associations, meeting points for networking and interest groups, for instance with the aim of promoting business contacts between the country of origin and the country of residence.

There are also several web communities, *Internations* being one of the most well-known, which serve as spaces for social networking, job advertisements, professional, legal and cultural advice, etc. *Internations'* website ([internations.org](http://internations.org)), with the slogan “connecting global minds,” neatly sums up the areas of interest that are generally the foci of expats/Western migrants: professional contacts and career development, leisure and friendships/relationships. The Western migrants however share one fundamental

experience with migrants of other, non-Western origins: that of moving to (or growing up in) a country that is not, or not defined as, yours. Comparing the experiences of white migrants with those of other immigrants is revealing for what elements of the migrant experience are universal, and what differ along ethno-racial lines.

### **4.3. Immigrants' perceptions on integration: experiences of difference, belonging, opportunities and obstacles**

The following section of the project report is entirely based on the 60 in-depth interviews with immigrants in Stockholm and Barcelona, performed in 2014 and 2015. The different headlines reflect the most central themes that appeared from their narratives on how the respondents perceive difference, belonging, opportunities and obstacles in the country where they live.

#### ***4.3.1. Motives behind the migration project and profile of the respondents***

The motives behind the migration projects among the respondents in Sweden and Spain reflect the overall immigration patterns and histories of the respective countries: immigration to Sweden has since the 1970s mainly consisted of asylum seekers and family reunification, while in Spain, most have arrived as – often undocumented – labor migrants to work in the low-skilled sectors where demand was vast during the years of economic growth. Consistently, out of the 18 respondents in Stockholm with origin in Africa, Kurdistan and Chile, 16 came to the country as refugees (or have parents who were refugees), and only 2 for economic/professional motives. Among the Chinese and Western migrants, motives are more diverse: studies, work, love and family projects.

In Barcelona, contrastingly, the motives behind the migration projects are diverse across the sample, with no clear distinction between migrants from poorer or richer countries. One explanation is that the selection, which deliberately was made to include only

immigrants with a medium or high educational level<sup>5</sup>, had the consequence of including mostly immigrants who were comparably privileged in their countries of origin, which overall appears to be the case based on their narratives of the situation before migration. Spain is a younger immigration country than Sweden, and a vast majority of the Spanish respondents migrated as adults (23/30 compared to 12/30 in Sweden, of whom 4 are Chinese and 6 Western migrants), and took the decision to migrate voluntarily (23/30 compared to 10/30 in Sweden, of whom 4 are Chinese and 6 Western migrants).

Integration research has traditionally viewed the migration process as unidirectional; emigration > immigration and settlement in the new country. Contemporary migration research is however increasingly focusing on temporary or circular migration, which marks a contrast with the focus on the transformation of earlier decades' labor immigration, *guest workers*, to a permanent feature of increasingly multicultural European societies. The increasing temporariness of migration projects indeed raises questions regarding the implications for integration (e.g. Schierup et al 2006; 2015). While I acknowledge the relevance of this shifting perspective, the emphasis of this study lies on immigrants who do have the intention to remain in the country on a permanent basis and become fully incorporated in society. If the plan is to remain in the country, it will most likely imply far greater demands and expectations regarding the equality of opportunities and sense of belonging and acceptance.

Nevertheless, based on several of the interviews, it became clear during the analysis that temporariness is a factor that needs to be taken into account. The fact that several of the respondents do not have the intention to stay permanently in the country where they live may reflect the transnational lifestyles that become increasingly common also among people with no former immigration history (but who do become migrants, at least temporarily, during their life course), but it may also be a reaction against permanent feelings of exclusion and lack of identification with the country of residence. This was the case for several of the respondents, particularly in the Swedish sample, who were either

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<sup>5</sup> This is based on the objective to study the experiences of people who could aspire for highly qualified professional positions and be expected to have experienced ethnic discrimination in recruitment processes. Including respondents who do not get access to the job market because of lacking skills would alter the analysis.

born in the country or arrived there as small children, but now wished to move somewhere else, where they expected to “blend in” better because of their skin color and ethnic background.

Looking closer at the respondents who express a desire to move to another country, it does not appear to matter whether they have migrated as adults, or if they initially viewed the migration to Sweden or Spain/Catalonia as temporary. Instead, in this sample it is mostly those who experience rejection and lack of inclusion or restrained opportunities due to their origin who express a desire to move somewhere else. This perception is overall more common among the respondents in Sweden than in Spain. In Spain, most of those who would like to move somewhere else state that they want to move to find a (better or any) job, which ought to be interpreted in the current context of financial crisis and high unemployment.

#### **4.3.1.1. Ethnic pluralism in Stockholm and Barcelona: experiences of being an immigrant in two different contexts**

What are, then, the implications of the motives behind immigration; whether it is voluntary or not, for integration? Based on the (limited) empirical material used for this study, the conclusion would be that particularly in Sweden, involuntary migration (refugees) coincides with nationalities that have lower status and are more frequently discriminated against. Most of the respondents from Kurdistan, Chile and Africa (16/18) have felt discriminated against and only 4/18 feel included in the society where they live (one of these just partly), despite the fact that most of them arrived as small children and grew up in Sweden. Among the Chinese respondents in Sweden, the replies are more diverse: 3/6 have experienced discrimination, and two of these are born or have grown up in Sweden. The same 3/6 Chinese respondents declare not feeling fully included in society: this perception is overall clearly linked to negative experiences of racism or discrimination.

Among the non-Western respondents in Barcelona, 16/24 have experienced discrimination, but at the same time, 15/24 state that they feel included in society (though 3 of these only partly), which is indeed a striking contrast compared with Sweden.

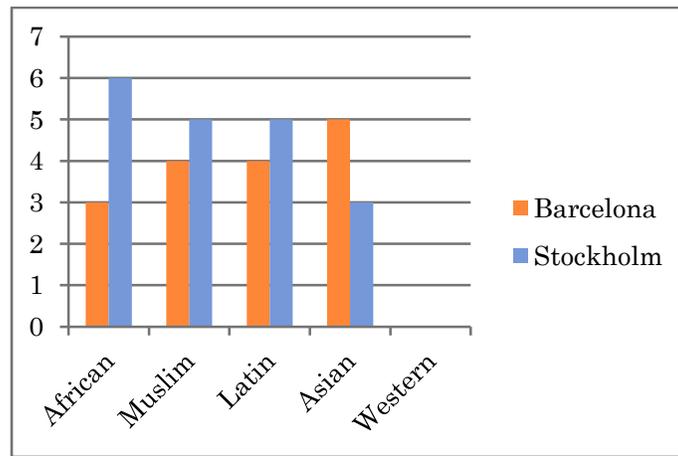
However, among the Latin American respondents, only 2/6 declare that they feel included, which may be surprising given their cultural and linguistic proximity with Spain. Here, it must be taken into account that negative stereotypes affecting Latin Americans in Spain depend much on their specific origin; Latin Americans of European descent, as many Argentinians and Chileans, for instance, enjoy far higher status in Spain than more “indigenous” Latin Americans. Also, several of the Latin American respondents in Spain with negative experiences of discrimination express strong disappointment: they expected a warmer reception and sentiments of “brotherhood” with the Spaniards, which did not happen in practice. Positive expectations that were not fulfilled may thus increase their sentiments of exclusion and non-belonging. And, as the case study was conducted in Catalonia, the strong position of the Catalan language must be taken into account. The perception by the native Catalan population that native Spanish speaking immigrants somehow represent a threat to Catalan linguistic supremacy is expressed by some of the respondents, to explain negative attitudes against Latin American immigrants.

Moreover, it is at a first glance surprising that the Asian immigrants in Barcelona have experienced racism/discrimination more frequently than any other group: 5/6 confirm this, though 5/6 also feel included in society. Looking closer at the transcripts from the interviews with the Asian respondents, however, reveals that the four Chinese respondents confirm that they experience more positive stereotypes about China than negative ones, and that they do not perceive the Spanish/Catalan society as racist overall. They may be regularly exposed to mocking comments from strangers, but do not believe that this affects their opportunities in society, nor alters their overall sentiment of being well received. This is different among the two Philippine respondents, who state that they experience racism more generally and with greater hostility.

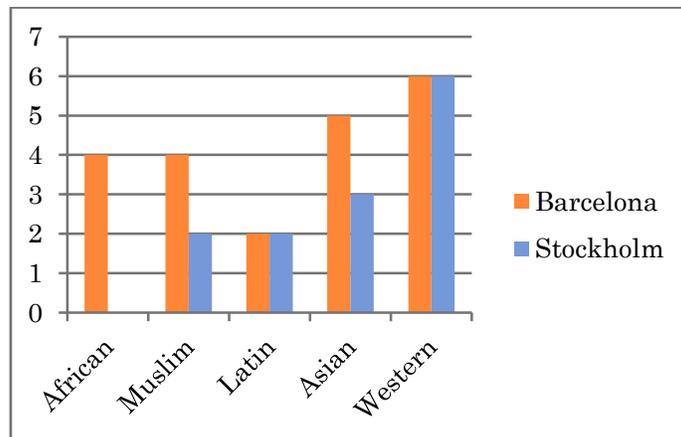
In comparison with the Swedish material, it is also noteworthy that only 3/6 African respondents claim to have experienced racism in Barcelona, while all of the Swedish African respondents have, and in several cases consider their whole lives to be marked by this experience. However, these three African respondents in Barcelona have indeed experienced racism frequently; in one case expressed through such frequent and overt discrimination that it has made labor market incorporation impossible despite skills and

qualifications. The three respondents who declare that they have not experienced racism themselves state that racism affects Black Africans in Spain in general, though their own comparably privileged position (moving in social circles and workplaces used to multi-ethnic surroundings) has made them exempt from suffering such treatment.

**Table 3: Has experienced discrimination/racism**



**Table 4: Feels included/incorporated in society**



None of the Western migrant respondents in Stockholm have experienced discrimination. They all migrated voluntarily as adults, and they all feel included, though some of them state that they may choose themselves not to participate fully in social life, nor aim at becoming part of society in all aspects. The results are identical for the Western migrants in Barcelona, though the motives behind their migration differ slightly: forming a family and raising children are more frequently mentioned as reasons for living in Sweden among the Western respondents there, while in Barcelona, “lifestyle” arguments (the way people are, the creative atmosphere, the Mediterranean climate, etc.) are most salient among all six respondents.

Unlike the Western respondents in Sweden, all of them believe that living in Barcelona represents a disadvantage career-wise; they think that they would have made more money and had better jobs if they would have stayed in their home countries, but the quality of life they consider that the city offers them compensates for a lower material standard. Moreover, in Barcelona, the Western respondents tend to underline that they have chosen to live in this *city* (and would for instance not consider living anywhere else in Spain), while in Stockholm, nobody mentions the city (or the country) as an attraction in itself, but instead emphasize the advantages of the Swedish *society*, particularly the welfare benefits available for families with children, which makes life there more attractive compared to their countries of origin such as Germany, France or Australia. 5/6 of the Western migrants in Stockholm have children with a Swedish partner, while 3/6 have children with a Spanish/Catalan partner in Barcelona. In both countries, love/relationships are a central reason for staying in the country among voluntary migrant respondents of all nationalities.

‘I met my [Swedish] wife in Berlin and she got pregnant, so I had to make a decision about whether to have my family in Berlin or in Sweden. And that was a very quick decision for me. I had been living in Berlin for 10 years, studying and working, but I didn’t really want to have children there. To have a family and work is much easier in Sweden. As how accepted it is that you work and take care of your children. One of my colleagues has this answering machine, sometimes it says “I am not at work today because my children are sick,” and a senior officer saying that in Germany,

that does not exist (laughs). And also the [low] costs of kindergarten, the support you get [in Sweden]..." *Man, 40, Stockholm, migrated from Germany at age 33*

'It has been difficult to find a good job here, but it is much more interesting and creative to live in Barcelona [than in the US]. I would not want to go back, and the climate is also important.' *Woman, 34, Barcelona, migrated from the United States at age 24*

'Barcelona is a European, cosmopolitan city, I don't know if I could live in Cádiz for example but Barcelona is the best compromise between North and South. But the salaries here... well one has to accept that... when I go back to Canada I see how my friends live in these typical Northern American houses with drive-way and one or two cars and much higher material standard than I could achieve here, and I always feel a bit jealous. But then I realize that they envy me too. It is about accepting that they may have more [material] things, but I also have more things, and by things I then mean living in a city that offers more, that is more dynamic, and with a better climate.' *Man, 36, Barcelona, migrated from Canada at age 28*

*I: If you compare living in Catalonia with living in Norway, what is the biggest difference?*

IP: The most obvious difference, it may sound too simplistic, but of course it is the weather, the climate, and how that affects people. In Norway, where the climate is terrible, you just go to work and home and that is your whole life. But here, you just go out without any particular motive and meet a lot of people who also do. You meet different people all the time and can talk to anyone, and I love talking so that suits me perfectly (laughs).

*I: So you like it better here than in Norway?*

IP: Oh yes, I could never go back to Norway again. There are so many things that are different, but to sum it up... I like "the good life" that you can live here. I love food and drink, and here you can afford to eat well. People are actually not that different, Norwegian and Catalan people are more similar than people from the south of Spain who are more spontaneous and impulsive.' *Man, 44 years old, Barcelona, migrated from Norway at age 30*

Also among the non-Western respondents, a dividing line between Stockholm/Sweden and Barcelona/Catalonia appears when talking about the main assets and disadvantages of the respective societies. Several of the respondents who often experience discrimination and disrespect still express appreciation of Barcelona or Catalonia, and the advantages they describe are similar to those the Western migrants find: an overall open and tolerant atmosphere (despite the existence of racism), a pleasant climate; a nice place to live, simply.

'The first time I arrived in Catalonia... I have to say that I have very strong ties to Catalonia, even though I had traveled around the world I would stay here because I love it. I mean, it is not always easy... some people have this attitude, they don't consider it normal that an African enters everywhere for example. I speak perfect Catalan and that helps but... It is a bit shocking for many to see a black person, it is like you have to apologize for existing. It happens to me a lot when I walk down Passeig de Gracia [fancy shopping street in central Barcelona], and I approach one of these really expensive stores, they immediately close the door. They all think that I am poor and if I enter the store it is to steal something. (...) But I got to know this place long before I moved here and I always wanted to come here.' *Woman, 28 years old, Barcelona, migrated from Kamerun at age 13*

The main advantages of the Catalan society are described in terms of an open-minded mentality and a tolerant atmosphere, by more than half of the respondents of all ethnic origins. Also several of those who state that there is racism and discrimination claim that from what they know, it is worse in other European countries, and that integration in Catalonia is relatively accessible (learning the Catalan language being key). The main disadvantages with the Spanish/Catalan society that the respondents in Barcelona point out are, nevertheless, varying degrees of racism, discrimination and intolerance towards immigrants. Here, the differences depending on origin are vast: of the African, Muslim and Latin immigrants, 16/18 think that this is the main problem with Spanish/Catalan society overall (even if they have not personally suffered from it), a perception that is shared by the Philippine respondents in the Asian group. The most serious obstacles to participation in society that the respondents of these origins experience are related to the difficulties on the labor market. This is the main arena where ethnic discrimination is indeed considered

a problem, and aggravated by the severe economic crisis and alarmingly high unemployment rates, which intensifies job competition. Among the Chinese and Western immigrants, there is more diversity among the answers depending on individual experiences, but the financial crisis and lack of good professional opportunities is overall the most common complaint.

In Stockholm, contrastingly, none of the respondents describe everyday life as amiable and relations with the native population as easy-going the way the respondents of multiple origins do in Barcelona. Both the Western and non-Western immigrants in Stockholm who migrated as adults coincide in describing the general difficulties they perceive in establishing contacts with native Swedes. It is indeed a stereotype that Swedish people are shy and anti-social and hardly talk to strangers; what amount of truth there is in this prototype may better be left unsaid, but “the way people are” is commonly referred to by the respondents as an obstacle. For instance, to be able to practice Swedish language skills in everyday life becomes complicated when it is hard to find native people who are willing to engage in conversations, and this affects both Western and non-Western immigrants (Johanson, interview 2014).

‘I can say that the Swedish really are more shy. Simple examples like, we have neighbors, they live next doors and have children the same age and it took 3 years before they were greeting you... (laughs). And it is not like they... they are nice people, but they are so shy. I don’t know what it is, we share the same sand box and the boy is the same, of course, if both parents are like that, so the kids don’t play with each other. And if you go from the north to the south of Europe, if you go to Spain, everything is out on the streets. My wife always said, I am more Spanish than Swedish... there is a big difference, and in Germany too. I lived in Cologne for example and people there are really friendly and open... that is a big difference. Here it is... (whispering)... neighbors writing these notes instead of talking to each other... I would really want to see the guy collecting all the notes (laughing).’ *Man, 40, Stockholm, migrated from Germany at age 33*

'I came from an intense social life in Peking straight to... not hell but, complete isolation. For that reason I told myself that I would have to leave after six months, but then...' *Man, 41, Stockholm, migrated from China at age 26*

Across the Swedish sample, the by far most commonly perceived advantage with Swedish society is, as mentioned above, related to the welfare state and the labor market: social security, good employment conditions and welfare benefits for families are considered the most positive features of Swedish society by 21/30 respondents. The by far most commonly perceived disadvantage is racism, intolerance and exclusion, which is considered the main problem of Swedish society by 17 of the 18 interviewed African, Kurdish and Chilean immigrants. Contrastingly, the Chinese immigrants do not consider Swedish society as generally racist, but 3/6 of the Chinese respondents consider it difficult to get in and describe the "narrow sense of Swedishness" as an obstacle for integration (one of these respondents also considers intolerance and prejudice against people from other countries to be a big problem in Sweden). The Western immigrants do not generally talk in terms of racism or discrimination (though one of them expresses this concern regarding Sweden), but all of them consider it difficult to fully integrate in Swedish society because it is so hard to get to know people; isolation and lack of everyday contacts are mentioned across the sample as strongly negative features.

Furthermore, a central difference between Stockholm and Barcelona that appear from the interviews, and that significantly affects how life as an immigrant is experienced and whether contacts with natives are facilitated or hindered, is the level of physical ethnic segregation versus ethnic mixing in everyday life. Overall, the ethnic and socio-economic segregation (which indeed intersect (Hårsman 2006)) on the housing market in Stockholm, and the social stigma it often represents to live in a low status suburban area, is underlined as a central integration problem both among stakeholders and many of the immigrant respondents.

Though there are indeed segregated housing areas in Barcelona too, both in terms of ethnically and socio-economically homogeneous wealthy and poor neighborhoods, the ethnic mixing, not the least in the city center, is far more visible than in Stockholm. This is

something that integration policy-makers express pride of, and it may be tempting to draw too optimistic conclusions of harmonic intercultural coexistence based on the visible, colorful multiculturalism of neighborhoods as El Raval and Barri Gòtic (interviews, Bosch and García, 2014). However, the sense of living in a culturally pluralistic environment is something that several of the respondents of all origins value; being surrounded by a multitude of ethnicities and cultural expressions makes them feel at home, and more comfortable with their own “difference” compared to the sentiment of never blending in that several of the respondents in Stockholm express.

‘When I was a teenager I visited family in Brussels, they had a totally different African diaspora there... and I had that feeling of not being a minority, not being different. I remember feeling so relaxed without knowing why. And when I came back to Sweden I really felt different, and then I started thinking about it. [...] Where I grew up [and still live] I don’t stand out that much, but walking around here in Vasastan [wealthy, mainly white neighborhood in central Stockholm] makes me feel really different. It is that feeling that you can never blend in, just be ordinary.’

*Woman, 27, Stockholm, migrated from Congo at age 2*

Some concluding reflections upon the motives behind immigration, and the experiences of being an immigrant in Stockholm compared to Barcelona, point to the differences in voluntariness. Not only the Western migrants but most of the diverse non-Western migrants in the Spanish/Catalan sample have chosen to move to Barcelona (in many cases the city was the preferred destination; not Spain as a country) as adults, driven by the urge to improve their professional and economic situation, or other motives as love or curiosity. Despite discrimination and/or racist attitudes being frequently experienced among non-white immigrants in both cities, the respondents in Barcelona tend to have a more positive attitude towards the place where they live. In addition, they also seem to have less permanent life/migration projects overall, and are more open to moving.

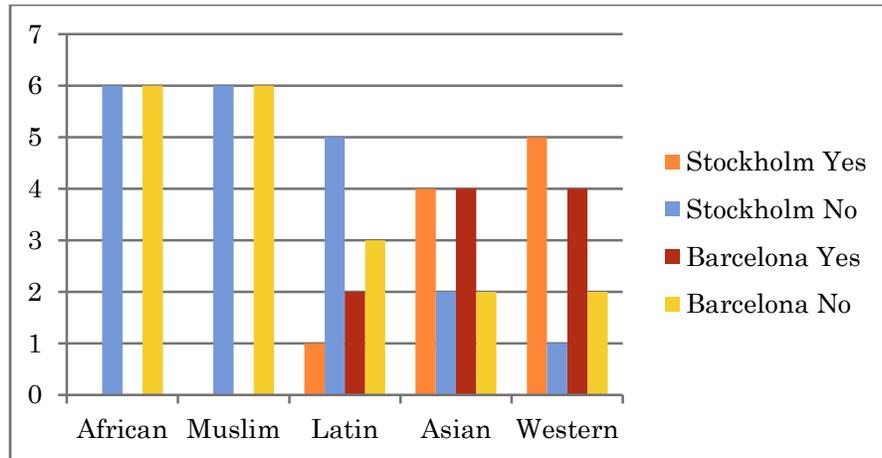
What can be said based on the above findings is that the respondents confirm the picture that migration from countries with higher status generally is voluntary, while forced migration tends to originate in countries affected by negative prejudice. It is thus hard to say whether the degree of voluntariness or the ethno-racial characteristics are more

important for how a person relates to and integrates into society, though the former appears important for motivation, while discrimination based on the latter occurs regardless of individual motives for migration and indeed may influence negatively on the ability or willingness to integrate. A tentative conclusion, based on the interviews, is that the migration projects of the non-Western respondents in Barcelona – that to a far higher extent than among the Swedish respondents are voluntary (which in turn is related to each country's migration history and policies, where Sweden receives large amounts of asylum seekers while most migration to Spain is driven by economic motives) – affect their ability to cope with stereotypes, making voluntary migrants better prepared to handle negative experiences.

#### ***4.3.2. Ethnic stereotyping – positive and negative stereotypes and their consequences***

The experiences of how one's national origin is perceived in the country of residence are radically different when comparing the Western respondents with the non-Western. Overall, both Western and non-Western immigrants coincide in considering the way their origin is perceived by the ethnic majority as central for how they are received. As seen in the table below, all respondents from Muslim and African countries in both Sweden and Spain think that their country of origin is not viewed positively. Among the other groups, there is more diversity in the answers, reflecting different kinds of stereotypes, as for instance a positive view on Peru as a tourist country (which does not necessarily imply a positive view on Peruvian immigrants), both positive and negative perceptions on China, and certain negative attitudes towards the US that Northern American citizens living in Spain are aware of, but which they do not consider affects how they are received at a personal level. It should be noted that among the Asian respondents in Barcelona, the two respondents who did state that their country of origin is negatively perceived are both of Philippine origin.

**Table 5: Thinks that his/her country of origin is valued positively**



**4.3.2.1. Privileged nationalities - when difference is an asset**

The white migrant respondents from Western countries in both Spain and Sweden overall perceive that their “difference” is largely viewed as positive, exotic, “just enough different” as one of them puts it.

‘I think that I benefit from positive discrimination. As when I was about to rent my flat, the landlady was the typical... well, a bit racist. But being Canadian, this racism may favor me. Spanish people have this inferiority complex, they think that everything from the north of the Pyrenees is better, more educated, more serious and so on, so the lady assumes that a Canadian will take better care of the apartment than a Spaniard, and would not even consider a Colombian for instance. I notice that people here overall think that the northern countries are better.’ *Man, 36, Barcelona, migrated from Canada at age 28*

‘It was very hard for me [to migrate] because I had a good life in Stockholm, a career, my own apartment, and I moved because of my [Spanish] partner. But I have always felt very well received, I mean, being an upper class immigrant... It is a bit special to be from Sweden here, in a positive sense. I am always “the Swede,” I definitely don’t feel integrated, I feel like a Swede who lives in Catalonia. But I feel at home. I mean, what does it mean to be integrated, in a way I am, I know the language, I have

children in school here, but I will never be fully a part, I will always be different. But I definitely feel accepted.' *Woman, 42, Barcelona, migrated from Sweden at age 32*

'I think it is kind of an advantage to be from Denmark for several reasons, but one is that it is real fun to come to Sweden (laughs)... it can be like "oh, how lovely, you are from Copenhagen." People have been there on vacations and like how we are, often a bit more open and direct than the Swedes. Denmark is something positive for many Swedes, you can tell, it is associated with a lifestyle, this "you are so relaxed, you take things easier..." *Man, 37, Stockholm, migrated from Denmark at age 28*

Several of the respondents in Stockholm underline the privilege of being Anglo-Saxon and native English-speaking, which is highly valued in both social and professional life and marks a hierarchy also among European nationalities, where Southern and Eastern Europe may have lower status. Also the respondents in Barcelona assert that English skills, combined with "Western appearance," are generally advantages for the way someone is treated, as well as access to international workplaces as the multinational companies where the city's expats often work.

'I think that there are different categories of immigrants here. First the English speaking, then Southern Europeans, then Latin Americans, and at the bottom the Africans and Arabs. You can tell that people in Stockholm love to speak English. If you are French speaking it is often people in their sixties who studied French in school and can relate to French culture... They may also have a picture of French people that is a bit... that we don't speak English and we scream a lot. And I sometimes interrupt and so but people are very respectful, they let me do it, and maybe they find it amusing. I have seen other French people act like that too, it is like theater... a French person here is expected to be a bit of a clown, to be funny.' *Man, 37, Stockholm, migrated from France at age 22*

'Being Australian... It is a very privileged way to [be an immigrant]...everybody loves Australia, have been there as backpackers, it is a favorite country for Swedes. I also found Sweden extremely US friendly, in an insanely naive and non-critical manner. So that gave me a free-ride considering I am English speaking, it is an enormous difference being English speaking here compared to anything else, I think. People are rather exaggeratedly uncritical. There is this attitude in Sweden that...

what should I say, that everything related to Anglo Saxon countries is cool.' *Woman, 35 years old, Stockholm, migrated from Australia at age 17*

In contrast to those conventionally perceived as immigrants, who unanimously state that fluency in the Swedish or Spanish/Catalan language is essential for participation in society, several of the Western respondents describe this as less important.

IP: After the [Swedish] course in Uppsala, after three years I had a private teacher at the coffee shop Vetekatten, the problem was that I was too lazy or too busy, I don't know, but I get along anyway, I speak German here, and English, so I quit the private lessons too.

*I: But do you think it would be a problem for your life here if you never learned Swedish?*

IP: Ja also... you probably get along anyway. It makes it more complicated to some extent, for taxes and authorities and so, many things are in English but many only in Swedish, so you would probably have to go there instead of doing it all online for instance.' *Man, 40, Stockholm, migrated from Germany at age 33*

The following quotes illustrate the respective attitudes at the workplace in relation to (insufficient) language skills experienced by a Danish and a Chinese immigrant, both highly educated and with qualified positions. They may or may not be representative, but are illustrative of what several of the respondents describe in relation to the majority society's attitudes, and what kind of immigrants are expected to integrate and learn the language fast and fluently versus who are "allowed" to choose their degree of adaptation.

*'I: When you started working as public investigator, did you know Swedish well enough?*

IP: No, I had taken some courses but it was very difficult to write. So it took me half an hour to write 5 lines in an e-mail... but I talked to my boss and got help, further training and someone to check my texts, and then I learned pretty quickly. She was fantastic, she saw through all that and said that we will work this out, you know so much else that is important for our organizations. I am so grateful for that, it also gave me a lot of self-confidence about the language.' *Man, 37, Stockholm, migrated from Denmark at age 28.*

'If I for instance have to send an e-mail, sometimes my Swedish is not 100% correct, and then I have to double check lots of times but sometimes I must send the e-mail anyway, and then some may think that "an inspector should not make this kind of mistakes." But maybe also highly educated immigrants need help with the language? Do we accept accents? Do we allow spelling errors? We need to understand that not everyone can reach the same level in talking, or writing, or way of being...' *Man, 42, Stockholm, migrated from China at age 24*

There is clearly a socio-economic dimension present when differences are made between different groups of immigrants, and the status of people from a certain nationality is apparently related to the status of this country at a global scale. In several of the interviews, it also appears clear that immigrants who have grown up in the country under disadvantaged socio-economic conditions experience an "immigrant stigma" to a much higher extent than immigrants who have moved voluntarily, as adults, and have a higher socio-economic status, even if their language skills are not as good. Having an accent is not necessarily a disadvantage; it depends on *what* accent. These findings, together with a widely shared sense of non-belonging among the young respondents of immigrant descent who have grown up in the country (and is particularly salient in the case of Sweden), which is described in detail in other parts of this report, indicate that there may be a greater sense of alienation among the second generation than the first. This is consistent with current research on the second generation (e.g. Crul & Schneider 2013, Safi 2010, Wu et. al 2012), and perhaps particularly serious in relation to the present debates on social exclusion and radicalization among youth of immigrant descent in European cities.

'I sat there with some friends who worked for the EU, there was a mix of French guys, Spanish, and a Greek girl who moved to Sweden some years ago to work here. I don't know why we started talking about it, but the difference between her and me, who grew up in a suburb... Because her accent when she speaks Swedish is considered cute, sort of, it is very different when I speak with an accent... the suburban style, the whole outfit so to speak...' *Man, 37, Stockholm, migrated from Turkey at age 13*

Another aspect of the advantages with being a migrant from a comparably wealthy, Western country is that this may facilitate a position as “transnational entrepreneur,” which in itself generates a higher status (and exemptions from the expectations to learn the native language of the new country well) than competing with natives on the national labor market.

‘So I decided that I wanted to combine what I know, PR and events, with golf. So I worked for a company that brings groups of people to Sweden to play golf and I am in charge of the German-speaking market. So that was my first Swedish client. So the clients in Berlin, if you don’t go there that disappears a bit, so instead the Swedish market was growing. So I do that, and then I started to sell a German brand of golf balls, it is a start-up from Germany, together with architect from Stockholm who owns houses in Marrakech. So I sell his golf travels all over Europe. And then I have different projects, right now I do PR and marketing for a German golf resort.’ *Man, 40, Stockholm, migrated from Germany at age 33*

Milinko Mijatovic, spokesperson of the Swedish cooperation group for ethnic associations (SIOS) who represents the immigrated ethnic minorities’ interests in society, considers the subtle divisions where some foreigners are assigned the role as valuable international contacts, and others the stigmatizing “immigrant” label, as counterproductive for integration. He underlines that Sweden is a highly export-dependent country and should consider developing business links with countries represented by a high number of immigrants in the country. Such strategies, he believes, could besides favoring business interests and generate job opportunities for immigrant groups who are over-represented among the unemployed, also improve the status of their nationalities with positive effects for integration.

‘Instead of seeing these [immigrated] individuals as a threat, you could see them as a potential. The diaspora, a platform could be created for all these questions, also global development... I was recently in Bosnia, I am born there, and see that many companies try to establish themselves there. But Sweden is locked up with this... ok, there is IKEA, but only the big ones are promoted. There could be a lot of companies but instead of recruiting people who live here they bring in some consultant...

Sweden needs to think more internationally for integration to work.' *Milinko Mijatovic, head of SIOS, interview September 2014*

#### 4.3.2.2. Difference as a disadvantage: Black, Muslim and Latin American immigrants

Across the sample, skin color and ethnic phenotype appear as central features that often intersect with (low) socio-economic status in the definition of who is considered an "immigrant." 56 out of the 60 respondents believe that race/skin color is indeed significant for how a person is treated and what opportunities he or she has in society. Two of the four respondents who did not express this point of view firmly (i.e., not mentioning it spontaneously without being asked a concrete question, or contesting vaguely like "I guess it matters") were Western migrants in Stockholm and one was a Western migrant in Barcelona. The fourth respondent was a black woman in Barcelona from a comparably wealthy African country, who thought that the economic status of the country of origin is more important than the skin color. 46 of the respondents think that class/socio-economic status is important for immigrants' treatment and opportunities; some of these considered it equally important to race, some more important and some less important.

In Spain, the concept of "immigrant" is generally perceived as equivalent to an individual from a poor country who performs the precarious work that natives don't want. In Sweden, where immigration is less linked to the labor market than in Spain (Hobson et al 2015), it is still evident that the same ethnic or racial groups overall experience most negative attitudes in relation to their origin. Respondents in both Stockholm and Barcelona defined as Black, Muslim or Latin experience such negative attitudes to a greater extent than the Chinese.

#### 4.3.2.2.1. Stereotypes affecting Black immigrants

The stereotypes that black people of African descent encounter are very similar among the respondents in Stockholm and in Barcelona. Receiving mean comments about the skin color in the streets is common in both contexts: the most typical comment simply being “negro.” The reactions appear overall more strongly felt in Sweden: the respondents there express a higher degree of resentment, while some of the black respondents in Barcelona declare that they don’t pay much attention to comments like that.

One possible explanation is that the more strongly polarized political climate around immigration in Sweden, and the stronger presence of overt anti-immigrant or racist discourse through the Sweden Democrats, influence on such comments being taken more seriously there. Also, as stated in section 4.3.1., individual immigration trajectories and motives may influence: for instance, it may be harder for someone who has grown up in a country to be exposed to racism there, than someone who has migrated at an adult age.

‘I mean, my god, is there any black person in Sweden who has not been called [negro]?’ [...] How much did we learn about black history in school? That the US had slavery, we talked about it for 2 weeks, and it is an era that lasted for long and cost over 40 millions of human lives, but nobody cares about that history. I have never learnt anything about Africa that I can be proud of in Swedish schools. It is just, “in Africa, the children starve.” When my daughter started first grade she came home and said “I never want to go to Africa”.’ *Woman, 38, Stockholm, migrated from Burundi at age 5*

‘Of course your looks matter... if you have Afro hair or rastas, the police will stop you more often. One day when I had longer hair, Afro style, the police stopped me in front of the children in the school where I worked, they asked me for my ID and actually told me that they stopped me because of my hair. I laughed, it was actually not funny but they were just so ignorant.’ *Man, 37, Barcelona, migrated from Nigeria at age 30*

'I don't like to generalize but it is very human to judge [based on skin color]. But I think it is more an economical question, the *top mantas*<sup>6</sup> are poor, that is a common view on Africans here. I have a good job now but if I would be forced to walk Las Ramblas as a prostitute they would treat me very differently.' *Woman, 21, Barcelona, migrated from Congo at age 9*

Besides the focus on phenotype (which is most commonly experienced by the Black and the Chinese respondents, though in different ways), most of the African respondents also describe the common idea of "Africa" in the European imagery as poor, marked by conflicts and disasters, and largely homogeneous; a strongly negative image that several of them believe affects the attitudes towards African people overall.

'They try not to judge, but there is a barrier between people from here, Spanish and Catalan, and the immigrants. They have this image that we don't have anything, they have to help us, we are poor and that is why we came here. But they are also very curious and ask a lot about Africa, how life is like there, the climate, the food... [...].'  
*Woman, 31, Barcelona, from Gabon, migrated from China, where she lived before, at age 25*

'There are different stereotypes if you for instance are African or Muslim... Muslims are seen as threatening. African people are seen as incompetent... they don't have a chance at the labor market. Just as the whole attitude towards Africa, it is a place you give development aid to. We must help Africa, a picture of a child... In this country, white people feel that they have the right to boss about black people.'  
*Man, 37, Stockholm, migrated from Congo at age 2*

Several of the respondents also point at the ethno-racial status hierarchies that are mentioned in many of the interviews overall. Some note that the lack of representation of immigrants in society has negative effects for their self-esteem, as well as the identification with societal institutions.

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<sup>6</sup> Popular name of the ambulatory salesmen from African countries south of Sahara, often Senegal, who are frequently visible on the streets of Barcelona and sell cheap goods as sunglasses or pirate copies of exclusive purses for a living.

'You see very few Latin Americans, Black Africans or Asians in politics, or in the state security bodies... it would be very difficult to find a black or Latin police officer, and in the governments and city councils, very difficult to find someone who represents these collectives.' *Man, 54, Barcelona, migrated from Peru at age 29*

'I would say that I am... almost black. That is the first thing you see when you look at someone, and people do probably not think "he is probably from Eritrea or Ethiopia" but they think brown, black, whatever. [...] Someone said that three things place you in the worst possible position, to be black, then Muslim, and then a woman.' *Man, 23, Stockholm, born in Sweden, parents migrated from Eritrea*

IP: There is a kind of hierarchy among us racialized people. If you are from Iran you can blend in much more, dye your hair, change your name, change religion... but I cannot do anything. You cannot hide it [the skin color]. Sure, there are women who wear the headscarf but they can take it off if it becomes too hard... if you wear a cross you can hide it.

I: Do you think that black Africans have a harder time than other groups to be accepted as a part of the Swedish society?

IP: Yes, I do think so. I wouldn't have been so sure earlier, but now that I know more about how everything works I can see that it is like that.' *Woman, 27, Stockholm, migrated from Congo at age 2*

That different ethnic stereotypes affect different immigrant groups in different ways is frequently mentioned in many of the interviews, also by people who do not themselves perceive that they are negatively stereotyped. Overall, it is often taken for granted that the Black African immigrants are worst off in this racial hierarchy, followed by Muslims. These status hierarchies are described in similar terms among both Western and non-Western immigrants of different origins.

'I can more or less blend in with the Mediterranean people, but when I think of the Africans I always feel very sad. It has to be really, really hard for them. Almost impossible. They suffer a lot from the racism.' *Man, 54, Barcelona, migrated from Syria at age 29*

'There is much racism in Barcelona, more overtly than in the US. Here you never see black people or Arabs at the university, or working, not even in bars or supermarkets... That was very shocking to me. Here the black people are on the streets.' *Woman, 34, Barcelona migrated from the United States at age 24*

'Black people are much worse off [than Moroccans], but that is the same all over the world. Moroccans are also racist, I thought it wasn't like that, they say that Islam is not racist, but the people are. I was going to marry a black American who had converted to Islam, but I left him because he became very radicalized. But my family would not have accepted it, they told me "what are you doing, marrying a black man" ...' *Woman, 27, Barcelona, migrated from Morocco as a newborn*

'It is easier to get in [for Chinese people]. There are hierarchies among immigrant groups. Perhaps the Iranians have higher status, then maybe the Vietnamese, and at the bottom, the Somali. Religiousness also creates lots of tensions, the Chinese do not have a religious problem.' *Man, 42, Stockholm, migrated from China at age 24*

'I am sure that there is a lot of it [racism]. I spoke about it with some friends, one from Eritrea and an adopted girl from India, they thought they saw a lot of it. I understand, but they don't think that I notice it as they do. And maybe that is true, but I think it is because I chose not to. But maybe they also experience it more because of their skin color. I am not saying that I look really Swedish, but their skin is really dark. So they may experience it in another way.' *Woman, 30, Stockholm, migrated from Turkey as a newborn*

'The Chinese people I know don't experience racism as strongly as black people do, or people from the Middle East.' *Man, 41, Stockholm, migrated from China at age 26*

#### *4.3.2.2.2. Stereotypes affecting immigrants from Muslim countries*

In both Sweden and Spain/Catalonia, the respondents from Muslim countries are frequently affected by negative attitudes towards their (real or assumed) religious identity. A noteworthy observation, however, when comparing the narratives of respondents from

Muslim countries in both contexts, is that while five of the six Kurdish immigrants interviewed in Sweden have repeatedly been exposed to racist comments based on their appearance, without the aggressor knowing their nationality, only one of the six Moroccan and Syrian respondents in Spain have had this experience. Several of them point out that this is because they “look Spanish” or “Mediterranean.” Among the Kurdish respondents in Sweden, being “dark” appears central for the negative stereotyping that they perceive.

“When I grew up... I did not think so much about it but people around me did, that I was not like everyone else. [...] Mostly there were racist comments and so. Everyone around me had the same [Swedish] background and I felt like one of them but yet not, they reacted to me being different but I did not understand the difference then. It is not until recent years that I fully have understood [what it means to be constantly viewed as an “immigrant” in Sweden].” *Woman, 26, Stockholm, migrated from Kurdistan at the age of 9 months*

‘When people see my face or hear me speak, they cannot tell that I am not Spanish, but of course they find out when they hear my name. But I have never experienced racism or rejection for being Moroccan, nor Muslim, because people only notice that I am Muslim in conversations about god and existential matters. A lot of people tolerate that I am Muslim but it bothers them that I don’t drink for religious motives, they think that my religion prohibits me to enjoy life.’ *Woman, 27, Barcelona, migrated from Morocco as a newborn*

‘The women who wear a headscarf have a hard time, we men are much more invisible [if we don’t have a beard], but some Moroccan women [with the hijab] have told me that people call them “murderers”.’ *Man, 31, Barcelona, migrated from Morocco at age 20*

There is thus an apparent intersection between on the one hand stereotypes based on “race,” and on the other hand stereotypes related to the Muslim religion and culture, that may affect immigrants from Muslim countries differently in different contexts. None of the Kurdish respondents in Sweden are explicitly religious, and do not use Muslim clothing or other easily identifiable symbols of this collective identity. Those who have been harassed for “being Muslim” have experienced this at work or elsewhere, where people know about

their national origin. In Spain/Catalonia, however, all three of the female respondents had at some point identified more strongly with their religion and decided to wear the headscarf, the *hijab*. All three had then experienced so much rejection and hostility from the natives that they eventually decided to stop wearing the hijab and other traditional clothing and dress in a western fashion.

'I have almost always experienced racism, but most of all when I wore the veil, and I hung out a lot with a friend who is black. And of course, the girl with the veil and the black one... people get impacted when they see two people like that, I don't know why.' *Woman, 26, Barcelona, migrated from Morocco as a newborn*

Overall, besides for those whose religiousness is visible and with the exception of the respondent cited above (who, which may be significant for her negative experiences, is far darker than the other Moroccan respondents in Barcelona and has a typically African rather than an Arabic appearance), the respondents from Muslim countries in Spain however experience much less negative stereotyping than the respondents from Muslim countries in Sweden do. I explain this by the fact that immigrants from Muslim countries whose religion is not visible blend in quite well in Spain, in contrast to Sweden: they are physically similar to the Spanish. Assuming that the spokesperson of the Afro Swedish association, Kitimbwa Sabuni, is right when he argues that "what defines Swedishness is whiteness" (interview 2014), a larger number of immigrant groups risk being perceived as different, not fully belonging, and stereotyped in negative ways (often with racist connotations) in Sweden compared to Spain.

#### *4.3.2.2.3. Stereotypes affecting Latin American immigrants*

Just as Moroccans or other North Africans may blend in more easily among the native majority in Spain/Catalonia than Black Africans, there is a central dividing line between Latin Americans who are more "European-looking" and those with an "indigenous" appearance, where the former are far better received whereas the phenotype of the latter renders them a lower position in the ethnic status hierarchy (Van Dijk 2005, Telles 2014).

In Sweden, based on the interviews with six Chilean respondents and the stakeholder representing the Chilean community in Sweden (Delgado, interview 2014), the same kind of general, negative “immigrant” stereotype that affects the respondents of Kurdish origin is salient also among the interviewed Chileans (all except one have experienced this on a regular basis). Throughout their life in Sweden, they are reminded of being perceived as “dark,” different, and inferior compared to native Swedes. The Chilean men, just as the Kurdish and Black African men in the Swedish sample, are furthermore affected by stereotypes of the assumed criminality among these groups, and the perceptions of being exposed to negative attitudes and racism are more widespread among the male respondents from these ethnic groups compared with the female.

‘It doesn’t matter if you own a company and are really rich, eight times out of ten the police will stop you if you have a nice car because you are a “darkie” [svartskalle]. Other Chileans who have great jobs, they own cleaning firms and have bought nice cars, get stopped by the police all the time. Finally they sell their cars because they get so tired of proving they are not criminals.’ *Man, 39, Stockholm (just moved to Barcelona), migrated from Chile at age 6*

‘There is a suspiciousness, where does he get the money, is he a criminal... that is the feeling I get. But I had to work at least as hard as everybody else. I bought my first apartment when I was 21, just before the prices went up. That is why I can live in Sundbyberg [a middle class area next to Stockholm], I could never have afforded it if I would have entered the housing market now. Then I would have ended up in, well these are prejudice but, Akalla [low-status suburb outside Stockholm]...’ *Man, 39, Stockholm, migrated from Chile at age 1*

‘What is Swedish... blue eyes, blonde hair. My husband is ethnically Swedish but he took my last name [when we got married] because he liked it, and now he gets a lot of questions about his origin. You cannot be seen as Swedish if you are dark and have a foreign last name. People have this need to always define where you are from, that is so tiring. But luckily Chile is at least seen as a bit exotic, racism against Chileans is not so strong, or maybe I have been naïve. It is worse for Muslims... But Spain and Chile, people travel a lot there now. It is very important what people think

about the country you come from. The Middle East and African countries, that is not at all the same, they have a much harder time. It is sad, but still good for me.’  
*Woman, 32, Stockholm, migrated from Chile at age 5*

In Spain, the most salient stereotype that affects the Latin American respondents in a similar fashion to the black Africans, is that of feeling undervalued professionally, seen as less competent and their countries as less developed (why, for instance, degrees from these countries are often questioned and difficult to validate).

‘We are undervalued. Professionally it is evident, our titles are not valued equally to those from here. But if you are from the US it is different. Even Portuguese titles are valued less here, but if you are Swedish, Dutch, German, French... that works. Some nationalities are devalued.’ *Man, 32, Barcelona, migrated from Venezuela at age 26*

#### 4.3.4.3. Positive and negative stereotypes about Asian immigrants

The Asian respondents describe the kind of particular positive and negative stereotypes they have been exposed to in accordance with the descriptions provided by the spokespersons of their organizations. These are very similar in Sweden compared to Spain/Catalonia, though the histories of negative attitudes are more strongly emphasized in the case of Chinese immigrants in Sweden. On the one hand, Chinese immigrants may be considered “funny-looking” by some people, and several of the respondents have often been mocked and ridiculed, though they rarely have experienced the same kind of hostility and devaluation as several of the Black African respondents, and the male Kurdish and Chilean respondents in Sweden, report.

‘It feels as if this stereotype about Chinese people, in a way it is sort of ok to make fun of it... in TV they may joke about Chinese norms and stereotypes, that would never happen with black people for instance. They teased us when we were children, laughed at us, people with an Eastern Asian appearance get bullied for being Chinese. [...] When I meet new people I comments as “you are really cool for being Chinese” ... there is this image that you are supposed to be really good at math, a bit nerdy almost. When I tell them I study fashion they say “but you are no real

Chinese.” It’s like you become your ethnicity.’ *Woman, 22 years old, Stockholm, born in Sweden, parents migrated from China*

‘IP: There is an increasing knowledge [about China], and China has developed much economically.

*I: Does the country have a higher status here than earlier?*

IP: Yes, and especially in the media you can see that they write about China in a more nuanced way, which has increased the knowledge. But on the other hand, I still think that there is... [discrimination and ridiculing of Chinese people in Sweden]. And Chinese people make fun of themselves to be accepted, act submissive and a bit ignorant, they say “I am Chinese, I don’t understand this...” It is done in a humorous fashion and people laugh at it, but at the same time, stereotypes are reinforced.’

*Man, 42 years old, Stockholm, migrated from China at age 24*

On the other hand, the respondents testify that there are (increasingly) positive attitudes that the respondents attribute to China’s economic growth and the transformation of Chinese society over the past decades. China has become an international superpower and an attractive market for Western countries, which apparently increases the status of Chinese nationals overall. This is coherent with earlier remarks on the potential role of immigrants as transnational consultants/business contacts, which has hitherto mostly been attributed to mobile nationals from other Western countries (e.g. Mijatovic, interview 2014). Consistently, the most common positive stereotypes of Chinese immigrants, which the Chinese stakeholders and respondents in both Sweden and Spain/Catalonia mention, are that they are viewed as hard-working, quiet, responsible and reliable, and that they “don’t cause problems as many other immigrant groups.” Accordingly, several of the Chinese respondents certify that the ethnic stereotyping privileges them compared to other immigrant groups, and at the same time, they participate in such stereotyping by asserting that they have specific characteristics that to a higher degree make them an asset for society compared with immigrants of other ethnicities.

‘I think that the Chinese in general are less problematic than other immigrant groups. We have no religious problems, no conflicts, and the prejudice about

Eastern Asians in this country are almost cheerful, it is not that dangerous to joke about Eastern Asians, but it is for instance very dangerous to joke about Arabs in this country.' *Man, 42 years old, Stockholm, migrated from China at age 24*

'The Chinese people I know here don't experience as much racism as black people or people from the Middle East do. The Swedes say about the Chinese that we just work and work... the worst thing they could think about is as that we don't pay taxes. But everybody knows that few, almost no, Chinese just sit at home and receive welfare. The Chinese work and save money... if they lack language skills they open restaurants. Chinese are rarely visible like [other immigrants], with 10 children following them...' *Man, 41 years old, Stockholm, migrated from China at age 26*

'I think that the Chinese are very well received in Spain in general, because we are very pacific. People can laugh at us and say that someone "works like a Chinese" and so, but most Chinese people come here to get a better life and they work hard. We are very quiet people, we don't want conflicts or problems. So people sense that the Chinese are not conflictive.' *Woman, 30, Barcelona, migrated from China at age 22*

'The Chinese are well educated and used to providing for themselves, we open restaurants and so. Compared with other immigrant groups I think that we are the group that is least dependent on the welfare system. It is good for integration to be able to support oneself.' *Man, 51, Stockholm, migrated from China at age 25*

The main difficulty that Chinese immigrants who migrated as adults report is that of learning the language, which they believe is much harder for them than for immigrants with more similar native languages. Several of the Chinese respondents however also point out the asset of being native Chinese-speaking, which opens up professional opportunities as teaching and international business contacts as the interest in China grows, bringing about a general interest in Chinese culture and society.

'I took a Spanish class and then I started to look for work as Chinese teacher for children. I got more and more classes to teach, I worked at the Asian house, and then I found more work teaching here too [at the Chinese cultural center Institut Confucio in Barcelona].' *Woman, 30, Barcelona, migrated from China at age 22*

'I can cook, so I created Chinese cooking courses at Medborgarskolan and ABF [well-known Swedish institutes for adult education]. Three hours during the evening, two hours of cooking and one hour talking about Chinese culture, movies, music and so. It became very popular. I had at most four classes, almost every day of the week. My Swedish was terrible, but the pupils... they could not understand what I said at first (laughs) but they very much wanted to, so they helped me learn Swedish. In a year and a half, I had learned the language.' *Man, 41 years old, Stockholm, migrated from China at age 26*

'Of course the economic development over the past 20 years has created a new impression of China across the world. Everybody is curious and wants to know more about this huge country, how it is to live in Peking or Shanghai... I am really lucky to have access to both cultures. Some [native] people even say that I have more [professional] opportunities than they do as I speak Chinese.' *Woman, 18, Barcelona, born in Spain, parents migrated from China*

Based on these narratives of Chinese immigrants, the attitudes towards China and Chinese people in the respective countries of immigration appears to affect the respondents in such a way that they perceive something in between the experience of being a "high-status," Western migrants and an often devalued immigrant from non-Western, racialized or ethnicized countries. It should however not be assumed that this necessarily applies to other Asian nationalities. As mentioned earlier, the particular stereotypes affecting (mainly female) Philippine migrants in Spain are more similar to those affecting certain groups of Latin American women, and related to the function these immigrants traditionally have filled as domestic workers. Such stereotypes may indeed affect the professional opportunities and treatment of immigrants from these countries.

'It was difficult for me [to find work], people here had this attitude, especially rich people, that Philippine immigrants are servants. So when I got a job as a university teacher, it was a very important moment in my professional life here. And then at my first day there, I presented myself, turned around to write my name on the blackboard, and I heard one of my students say out loud "what can she teach us?" and another one replied "to fry eggs".' *Woman, 47, Barcelona, migrated from The Philippines at age 25*

The experiences of racism and discrimination in different spheres of life among the respondents of different origins will be described in detail in the following section.

### ***4.3.3. Experiences of discrimination and racism***

An important standpoint in this research project is that different forms of ethnic discrimination constitute a crucial, perhaps the single one most significant, obstacle for integration, and that it might be both “objective” in terms of factual differential treatment that affects access to for instance employment or housing (Pager and Shepherd 2008), and self-perceived. The emphasis of the empirical study, the 60 in-depth interviews with immigrants of different origins, lies on their self-perceived integration, in terms of belonging and opportunities. Experiences of discrimination and racism are central parts of this self-perception.

Subtle forms of boundary-making, as dislike expressed through looks and gestures, or simply not being invited to dinner parties or to sit down with colleagues and fellow students, are difficult to address, and may certainly not have anything to do with the person in question’s ethnicity. But for someone who regularly and frequently experiences rejection, and senses that it has to do with his or her skin color or ethnic background, it may seriously damage the person’s self-esteem and self-image, sense of belonging and identification with society, and thereby affect both this person’s self-perceived and actual opportunities (Goffman 1964; Bobowik, Basabe and Páez 2014; Wettergren 2015). This is a common experience among the interviewed non-Western immigrants in both Sweden and Spain, though with variations among different groups.

As stated earlier, none of the white, Western immigrants in the sample declares to have experienced discrimination, or any kind of negative treatment based on national origin. One French respondent in Sweden however states that he has received some negative attitudes due to his lacking Swedish skills.

‘I delivered goods to restaurants around Stockholm and I liked the job, but it was physically heavy and hard because I did not speak Swedish then. I spoke English and

sometimes they received me well, sometimes not. At my first job a guy said “why don’t you speak Swedish?” “I’ve been here only one week.” “You have to learn Swedish”. “Ok, I will...” And at other restaurants, they just refused to speak English.’  
*Man, 37 years old, Stockholm, migrated from France at age 22*

This respondent is the only one among the Western migrants who is employed in a relatively low-skilled profession, as transport driver, and it is possible that his comparably low social status influences on people’s attitudes towards him.

#### **4.3.3.1. Discrimination in the labor market**

Labor market discrimination is a particularly serious form of differential treatment, as it has most tangible effects for a person’s socio-economic position. Systematic labor market discrimination of immigrants, leading to high levels of unemployment, underemployment and/or employment below an individual’s educational level, is related to the emergence of an immigrant underclass or “migrant precariat” in Western societies (Standing 2014). In this research project, I have distinguished between two central dimensions of labor market discrimination: discrimination in access to employment, most typically through job applications being disregarded due to the applicants’ ethnicity, and discriminatory or racist treatment at the workplace.

##### **4.3.3.1.1. Discrimination in access to employment**

Overall, among the non-Western immigrants in both Stockholm and Barcelona, it is more common to have experienced discrimination through the difficulty to access employment than in terms of being treated with disrespect at work, though there are several experiences of this too. Some of the respondents underline how important it is with networks and contacts, as they consider their opportunities to find a job without knowing the employer first, or being recommended by someone who does, as small. Particularly in Sweden, respondents with clearly visible physical features as dark skin color, but who have

grown up in the country and speak perfect Swedish, share the experience of being rejected based on their appearance. This experience is most common overall among men of African, Kurdish or Chilean origin. A foreign name is also frequently mentioned as a handicap when submitting job applications.

'I have never gotten a job unless I already knew the employer. They hear me speak perfect Swedish but then they hear my name and see me...' *Man, 39, Stockholm, migrated from Guinea Bissau at age 5*

'My name is not Swedish but they still get shocked when I appear at a job interview not being white. Then they ask if I am adopted... "but you speak Swedish so well" or "you don't seem so African" [...] I know when I don't get a job because of my skin color. A woman who owned a shop in *Östermalm* [fancy neighborhood in Stockholm] told me outright that I am sorry, I really like you but I cannot hire you because my clients could not identify with you.' *Woman, 38, Stockholm, migrated from Burundi at age 5*

'I may have been qualified, overqualified, and not gotten the job. And then there has always been racism in society, there still is. Now I can handle it better than I used to, I don't care anymore, but I always had that feeling. They always told me "darkie" (Sw. "*svartskalle*"), foreigner, go home...' *Man, 39 years old, Stockholm, migrated from Chile at age 1*

'It was when I played football, perhaps I didn't understand the signals. But when we were selected from the junior team to the A team, I was the best player and everybody expected me to be chosen, but five other guys were selected. It was still during my first years in Sweden and these thoughts about how immigrants manage in Sweden and what Swedes think about immigrants... I did not have them yet. So I woke up and it was painful. I did not want to admit it at first, I thought that it couldn't be like that but then it shows... [...] A teacher at the university told me, you will always be different here, and feel different.' *Man, 32 years old, Stockholm, migrated from Kurdistan at age 16*

'I have noticed that they react when I say my name, "what kind of name is that, where are you from?" "Chile? Oh, ok, we'll call you..." Those kinds of things. They

question you. They will never say “we won’t call you because you have a foreign name,” but you understand that this is the reason.’ *Man, 37, Stockholm, migrated from Chile at age 9*

There are similar testimonies in the Spanish sample:

‘Job interviews... they called me on the phone and I don’t know if there was a picture in the CV, but I speak English well and my name sounds British... but when I arrived, for being Philippine, they literally slammed the door at my face.’ *Woman, 47, Barcelona, migrated from The Philippines at age 25*

‘I took this course to be a flight attendant, it was expensive. If you passed you were sent to a job interview at an airline, and I was sent to Air Europa. I went to the interview and it turns out I was the only colored person there, we were 13 students who passed the course and the rest were from here. And I was the only one not selected to work there... [...] First, they performed the interviews in order of the course grades, and I was the third of my class, so they should have called me in as number three, but I was the last to be called. All the time, they told me to wait. So when they finally interviewed me, the guy asked if I had language skills and when he saw that I did speak French and English perfectly, and none of the other people did, he said outright “At Air Europa, we are not used to working with colored people,” and he told me to move to London or France where they are more used to immigration.’ *Man, 24, Barcelona, migrated from Kamerun at age 18*

Ethnic stereotyping is furthermore central in the case of female Philippine and Latin American immigrants in Spain; they are typically cast as domestic workers, which has been the principal labor market for women of these origins for the past decades (Hobson et. al. 2015). Several of the respondents consider this kind of prejudice as detrimental for their opportunities on the labor market: they perceive that they are expected to be caregivers or servants, and are not taken seriously when aspiring for more qualified positions.

‘The truth is that I have faced it a lot [discrimination and racism], when looking for jobs, when studying too... once they beat me up for being from Bolivia. Many times I see an offer that fits my profile but they tell me “you don’t fit the profile,” though I see that I have all they ask for. [...] If I tell people I have studies, they get surprised.

There is this prejudice that immigrants just come here to do cleaning.' *Woman, 27, Barcelona, migrated from Bolivia at age 15*

'I don't feel integrated in worklife here and that worries me. It is very hard for me to find a job. Before, I did find work in a clothes store, and within a few months I was made manager for the store, but then things happened... There was this client, a bit weird, who wanted to speak with the manager, but when he saw me he said, "no, I want to speak with the manager, not the cleaner".' *Woman, 29, Barcelona, migrated from Peru at the age of 5*

All in all, however, the respondents in Barcelona perceive that their disadvantage in relation to job search is related to them coming from countries with lower status, where skills and education are not valued equally to merits obtained in Western Europe or North America. Some express frustration over this, while others consider it normal not to be able to compete with the national majority on equal terms. There is also a higher degree of acceptance when it comes to having to accept employment below one's educational level among the respondents in Spain/Catalonia compared to Sweden, which is consistent with the overall tendency of the Spanish labor market where over-qualification is common also among natives, and where immigration largely has been directed towards employment in low wage sectors (Moreno & Bruquetes 2011, Rendón, interview 2014, Bonomi interview 2015).

'Yes, I look Spanish, but they hear my accent when I speak and ask where I come from. Generally, Venezuelans sound much like Canarians, so they ask if I come from the Canary Islands. I tell them no, from Venezuela, and then they go, oh... Of course, even though they see my CV, it is discarded. First, because the experience from outside of Spain is not valued here. But it is terrible that they don't tell you why. Of course, if it is cultural, racial or whatever, they will not tell.' *Man, 32, Barcelona, migrated from Venezuela at age 26*

'Mostly people say things against my religion, "you believe in the religion of Al Qaida," things like that, and when I have been looking for work or a flat to rent it has been a disadvantage to not be European, to be Moroccan. [...] Of course you don't have the same opportunities [as the national majority], but in general I have been

doing fine, I have been able to enjoy life here.' *Man, 31, Barcelona, migrated from Morocco at age 20*

'I am an economist, but I have worked in car workshops, in a textile factory... I am over-qualified for my current job too. I have an MBA from Esade [prestigious business school in Barcelona], I have submitted job applications to 350 companies but only 40 or 50 even had the courtesy to tell me no thanks. I am an Arab, my name sounds like Bin Laden's, a name like that is discriminated against. We should all have the same opportunities but that is not the way things are.' *Man, 54, Barcelona, migrated from Syria at age 29*

Several of the interviewed immigrants in both Stockholm and Barcelona argue that the difficulty to validate non-European university diplomas is a form of institutional discrimination that closes the door to higher positions for many immigrants who arrive with a degree.

'An African diploma is not worth much here... it has very few possibilities to be validated. I migrated as a child so I don't have that disadvantage, but I am sure that if I would have moved here later I would have had the same disadvantage as my parents, I would have been unable to get jobs at the level I used to.' *Woman, 21, Barcelona, migrated from Congo at age 9*

'I have still not been able to [validate the university degree]. As they don't need more architects here... the professional association protects the national architects, they hire foreign architects too, but at inferior positions, they cannot be in charge as they cannot be affiliated without the validated title. To get the validation you must pass a test, but nobody passes and you cannot know what you did wrong... I have strong suspicions it is not right.' *Man, 50, Barcelona, migrated from Argentina at age 35*

'When I applied for the university here I had studied four years in China to get a business degree, but here I only got 80 credits though it was really worth 160. I complained and struggled and questioned why the Chinese educational system was worth so little, and finally I got 120 credits [...] Yes [it was arbitrary]. The part of the problem is that you don't know the language, the codes, the limits... In the US, there

are professors from all over the world who speak broken English but in Sweden that doesn't work. Accents are not accepted, except an American accent. I am an expert on Chinese culture and responsible at four museums, but a Chinese is not allowed to speak up against a Swede or an American.' *Man, 42, Stockholm, migrated from China at age 24*

A few of the respondents believe that rather than racism, this is a matter of natives defending the best positions (or, as in current times of financial crisis and high unemployment rates in Spain, virtually any job) for themselves, which they view as largely rational and understandable. From this point of view, the immigrant disadvantage becomes a matter of lacking the necessary contacts and networks to access employment, rather than discrimination due to certain racial or ethnic features.

'I will never [have the same opportunities here as a Catalan]. But these things are typical in a society, even Spaniards from other provinces feel discriminated against or marginalized... Connections, friendships and favors... they use it, we all use it, every day. That is not xenophobia, it is a matter of basic economic interests, of competition.' *Man, 54, Barcelona, migrated from Syria at age 29*

The experience that immigrants with ambitions, who aspire at competing with natives over qualified positions, are perceived as threatening, is recurrent among several of the respondents, both in Sweden and Spain/Catalonia. Many of them also point out that the lack of important contacts and networks is a central obstacle for getting into the labor market – connections and friendships do from this perspective function as subtle forms of boundary-making that close the doors for outsiders.

'When people talk about integration it is usually very basic, it is about subsistence, religious conflicts... but then what? Once immigrants try to climb upwards... There is little talk about these invisible walls. But we need to talk about these things, do we allow accents? Spelling errors? What efforts should we make for immigrants to feel more respected? Sweden is a small country, the tolerance for different ways of being is not very high. You can try to be as Swedish as possible but you will never fully achieve it.' *Man, 42, Stockholm, migrated from China at age 24*

'I lived in Cuba for six months and received training to become a sound technician when I was 16. It was so much fun but I never continued to work with this in Sweden, in Cuba they immediately placed me in their national theatre but here... I tried to find a job but they just "but you are nobody"... Everyone was Swedish people from good families, this competition... I felt I had no chance here. You simply build your life based on your preconditions.' *Man, 39, Stockholm (just moved to Barcelona), migrated from Chile at age 6*

Here, there is a clearly socio-economic dimension; growing up in low status housing areas as many people of immigrant descent do makes it less likely to develop such useful social contacts (Hårsman 2006).

#### *4.3.3.1.2. Discriminatory or racist treatment at the workplace*

Once the most important obstacle, that of getting into the labor market, is passed, discrimination may appear as more or less subtle forms of bullying or differential treatment at work; not being invited to informal encounters, not being promoted despite merits, etc. Based on the findings for this project, this experience appears to be more common – and generally more subtle – in highly qualified positions. Here, it is noteworthy that several of the respondents with this experience are Chinese immigrants in Sweden. This may be interpreted as an indicator of Chinese doing comparably well on the Swedish labor market, thus accessing higher positions to a greater extent than immigrants of many other nationalities (Liu, interview 2014), but when they do, they also hit the so-called glass ceiling at some point, which creates frustration and the sense that no matter how hard they try, they will never become fully accepted as they will never be viewed as Swedes.

'I am very positive so I see it from the bright side, and stereotypes about Chinese are mostly, that we work hard and so. But... my husband is a lecturer at the university. He worked twice as hard as the rest to get that position, if he were Swedish he would have been a professor by now. You have to be much, much better than the Swedes.' *Woman, 43, Stockholm, migrated from China at age 28*

'At our department, everyone referred to it as the "ching chong department," and at first I thought it was a joke but we were only two people working there, myself and a Swedish woman, so I kind of took it personally. I guess it is ok to joke about it sometimes but if it becomes used as the common name for our department... We publish catalogues and they often said "can I get a ching chong catalogue".' *Woman, 30, Stockholm, migrated from China at age 6*

'I can tell that they consider me an outsider, other colleagues for instance. I have a good job and I think that many of those [immigrants] who do have made a huge effort to learn the local culture, but that is a trap. I decided to stop trying to be Swedish. You ask yourself all the time, how do people act in Sweden, every little detail, "was that right, do I smell strange, do I sit too close..." You just want to fit in but I refuse to act the stupid immigrant, act Chinese and say "ha ha".' *Man, 42, Stockholm, migrated from China at the age of 24*

Compared with the respondents in the Spanish sample, the fact that this experience is less common may consistently be taken as an indicator of how rare it is to find immigrants in highly qualified position on the Spanish labor market overall (Bonomi, interview 2015, Saliba, interview 2013). There are however a few similar testimonies:

'I became responsible for a department of purchases and deliveries. Well you can imagine the bullying... It was the coworkers. The problem grew when they were considering me for a promotion, to substitute the boss, they said things about me, I didn't even find out, or in meetings they would interrupt while I was speaking. They couldn't stand me being foreigner and... I spoke English which they didn't... but they bullied me and I got a depression.' *Woman, 47, Barcelona, migrated from The Philippines at age 25*

'Finally I got a job as project manager through an NGO. But my colleagues felt threatened because I learned fast, they tried to get rid of me before the contract ended.' *Woman, 36, Barcelona, migrated from Colombia at age 31*

The kind of racist treatment experienced by respondents in more low-skilled professions is overall more explicit and overtly aggressive.

'In the military, you are supposed to shave every morning but many choose not to... but me, I either wear a beard or shave it every day... so I choose to let it be like everyone else. But then they called me a Taliban. And my little brother, he is new at his work. His name is Hassan but they could not remember so they called him "Allah Akbar".' *Man, 29, Stockholm, migrated from Kurdistan at age 11*

'Now I have worked in construction for 15 years and some people are openly racist, they say "I don't like you because you are black", and I think, what an idiot, but at least they are honest and tell me what they think. But then, a lot of it is hidden but present all the time. I have had fights with my boss, I am the second manager, but when we need to hire someone he always asks first "is he Swedish?" They don't hire immigrants for jobs with customer contact, they don't want anyone to see that we work here.' *Man, 39, Stockholm, migrated from Guinea Bissau at age 5*

'A [Spanish] lady who cleaned the bar where I worked as waitress said she could not understand why she would have to "clean the shit of a negro." She could not understand why I should talk to the clients while she was cleaning. That's what she told me.' *Woman, 28, Barcelona, migrated from Kamerun at age 13*

#### 4.3.3.2. Discrimination outside the labor market

Experiences of racist attitudes, often from strangers in the street or other public spaces, are overall the most common form of discriminatory treatment that the respondents experience. Several of them perceive that they are generally well treated and respected among people who know them, in the local neighborhood and at the workplace, but still frequently get insulted by strangers in everyday situations. This experience is shared by immigrants identified as Black, Muslim, Asian and Latin alike, though the character of the exclusion, the insults or the attitudes of rejection vary in accordance with particular ethnic stereotypes related to physical appearance and images of the country of origin. Such experiences are completely absent among the respondents of Western origin, or those who are considered to look "European" and are not physically different from the ethnic majority

in their country of residence, with no identifiable “ethnic” attributes, as is the case for an Argentinian respondent in the Barcelona sample.

Overall, as seen in Table 3, experiencing racism and discrimination is more common in the Swedish sample than among the Spanish respondents. The feeling of being different in a negative way is perceived as central in the lives of a majority of the non-Western immigrants interviewed in Sweden.

‘Racist things happen all the time, it is a matter of how you handle it. I would say it happens daily, of different degrees. Mostly everyday things, at work and so, but a couple of years ago when I and a friend visited a city in western Sweden I was attacked by skinheads, they tried to kill me.’ *Man, 29 years old, Stockholm, migrated from Kurdistan at age 11*

‘There has been racism in everyday life, absolutely. Mean things people say, when they don’t let you enter a bar and so...’ *Man, 37, Stockholm, migrated from Chile at age 9*

‘I have been called “negro” as long as I can remember. When I was younger, in pre-school, I used to hit people but there I was taught that this is what they say, this is what I am called here. [...] My wife is Swedish, white. She told me something very interesting, that she didn’t understand what racism was until she met me. Now she sees how people treat me every day.’ *Man, 39, Stockholm, migrated from Guinea Bissau at age 5*

‘As a child, other kids could give me mean comments, spit at me and say “you should not live here, you are a monkey” and things like that. In general I think that being a foreigner has given me a great need for revenge, wanting to show that “we know this culture, we also belong here”.’ *Woman, 32, Stockholm, migrated from Chile at age 5*

‘They teased me for being Chinese at school, how we speak, ching chong... the first thing you see is what someone looks like and that is also the marker of that, well, you are not 100% Swedish.’ *Woman, 22, Stockholm, born in Sweden, parents migrated from China*

“There was some bullying, mostly strangers in the streets who said “ching chong,” “fucking Chinese,” threw stones and so... mostly kids, and I was a kid too. [...] I am afraid of conflicts and never used to confront them if it was a group, but it happened when I was older that I spoke back and told them they cannot say “fucking Chinese”.’

*Woman, 30 years old, Stockholm, migrated from China at age 6*

Several of the respondents in Sweden, who experience racism and discrimination and have children with Swedish partners, express the concern that their children will be exposed to the same disadvantage as themselves.

‘Look at what has happened with Sweden, they let Nazi parties march openly in the streets. It is a different climate now. I don’t want [to let my son grow up here], that thought causes me anxiety every day.’ *Man, 39, Stockholm, migrated from Guinea Bissau at age 5*

‘I definitely [think that my children will be affected by racism]. They are as dark as I am. I have neighbors, he is Chilean and she is Swedish, like us. One of their daughters is darker than the other and she always gets to hear “why are you so dark?” She is a third generation immigrant, doesn’t speak Spanish at all, and the family sees themselves as Swedish, but she will surely have problems.’ *Man, 39 years old, Stockholm, migrated from Chile at age 1*

‘When I look at my children... they are also not defined as Swedish. It doesn’t matter that their skin is lighter than mine and that their father is Swedish. My husband is always told, when he is out with the kids, “what beautiful children, where did you adopt them?” As if it is unthinkable that he could have a relationship with an African woman.’ *Woman, 38, Stockholm, migrated from Burundi at age 5*

‘Our son, he is 6 years old and starts school this year. He was not placed in our first-choice school, though all other kids in his preschool were. They all have typically Swedish names, but he was placed in a school where all kids have foreign names. I have thought a lot about how much your origin means, old injustices that I experienced come back now that he is going through this. He got very sad and wanted to go to the same school as his friends. We will complain because we don’t know how this happened, children are supposed to be placed in the school that is

closest to their homes. Now I am afraid that my children will have to go through these kinds of things because they have my last name, that nothing will change in the next generation.' *Woman, 32, Stockholm, migrated from Chile at age 5*

Among the respondents in Barcelona, experiences of overt racism are overall less frequent compared with the Swedish sample. However, some of the respondents who stated that they have never, or almost never, experienced racism or discrimination, later in the interview recalled that they had been called "negro" or other racist or ethnically demeaning terms, but consider this so normal that they hardly reflected upon it, or just did not claim to pay much attention to such incidents.

'I have been treated pretty well overall, though some people called me "fucking nigger." Maybe something happened to them, they were robbed or something... but in general people have helped me quite a lot here and I don't have a negative experience. Thanks to my social networks I always found jobs... I have not been very affected by racism.' *Man, 37, Barcelona, migrated from Nigeria at age 30*

'I cannot say that I never experienced racism because there are always people in the streets who say things, or look at you in a weird way. But most people have been very friendly and think it is great that I can speak Chinese.' *Woman, 18, Barcelona, born in Spain, parents migrated from China*

'I don't know if I have experienced it [racism] personally... but I know that it exists here. Of course they may say thing like "negro," but racism is subtle, it is about subtle ways to tell you "no, not you"... Then there is this paternalist discourse that also may be racist, the poor ones, I am better and so... and then this latent racism, "they should go back to their own countries".' *Man, 54, Barcelona, migrated from Senegal at age 34*

'People treated me worse in the beginning, before I learned Spanish well, and that made me feel insecure. But I never experienced any bad treatment at work, only comment in the streets, "china girl," things like that.' *Woman, 30, Barcelona, migrated from China at age 22*

Several of the Latin American respondents report that they frequently experienced racism or discrimination, and attribute this to Spain's colonialist past and status hierarchies with their roots in this era.

'We who come from the old colonies are still Indians to them, that is what I perceive.' *Man, 32 years old, migrated from Venezuela at age 26*

'My cousin is whiter but I am darker, so in the beginning my skin color shocked the other kids in school, it was like "wow, you really are dark," we were the first wave of immigrants... [...] But you would still never see a Chinese, an African or a Latin American working at a bank... Spanish people are not ready for that. Last summer I went with Spanish friends to the beach and the lifeguard was black, and my friends went "look, a black lifeguard!" And I told them, what is the problem, I am sure he is qualified, maybe he is a physician. And they said "how could he be a physician"... Immigrants have to struggle twice as hard.' *Woman, 29 years old, Barcelona, migrated from Peru at age 5*

As described in the section on ethnic stereotypes above, immigrants from Muslim countries may both be discriminated against based on their ethno-racial features, and because of the religion and culture they represent. Among the immigrants from Muslim countries interviewed for this project, there is an essential difference between the Swedish and the Spanish sample: the Moroccan/Syrian immigrants in Barcelona are all practicing Muslims, though moderately, while the Kurdish immigrants in Sweden are all non-religious. The three Moroccan women interviewed in Barcelona have all confronted the question of whether to wear the headscarf or not, and have worn it earlier, but all opted not to because of the overt racism and discrimination they faced when they did. The Muslim men in Barcelona, who wear "Western" clothes and physically are not remarkably different from average Spaniards, have not experienced negative attitudes unless they revealed their religion.

'I never had any problems with anyone but you notice things, attitudes. I don't wear the veil now for instance. [...] My daughter was born here, she is from here, but they will always call her "the moor's daughter".' *Woman, 42 years old, Barcelona, migrated from Morocco at age 27*

'I like to wear the veil, I like to cover myself. But I felt bad because of the way people looked at me, always having to explain why I wear the veil, that I am free and nobody forced me to... that started to make me feel insecure and after a year or so I decided to take it off.' *Woman, 27 years old, Barcelona, migrated from Morocco as a newborn*

'I feel well integrated here and have never experienced discrimination, but there is a lot of prejudice. For instance once when I called the doctor to ask for an appointment, they asked for my social security number. I spoke Catalan and the lady said "I am sorry but this cannot be right, the number you gave me is supposed to be for someone called Mohammed, not you," and I replied, "well that is me"...' *Man, 34 years old, Barcelona, migrated from Morocco at age 25*

In both Sweden and Spain, the class dimension is present in several of the respondents' narratives, and intertwined with racial/ethnic stereotyping: they cannot always tell whether the negative attitudes they perceive from people around them are because of their ethnicity or their socio-economic status, or both. Among both immigrants and stakeholders interviewed in Stockholm, the particular stigma of the "suburban identity" is a recurrent theme. Stockholm is a deeply physically segregated city (Hårsman 2006), and being associated with a low-status housing area often strongly affects the way a person is treated in a variety of contexts, as the professional, social and cultural spheres. A person categorized as an "immigrant," based on physical appearance, is assumed to have a low socio-economic position. This is also expressed through experiences of feeling constantly questioned: how can someone with dark hair, a foreign name, etc. have a nice house, a good job, a new car...

'I work at a museum and am interested in museums, and I very much enjoy visiting museums myself. And when I visit a museum, the staff always thinks that I am a tourist and speaks English with me. Then I get treated in a different way, better. They are not unfriendly when I speak Swedish, but you can tell the difference. [...] But I actually experience discrimination mostly when it comes to girls. That is when I feel the most that I am an immigrant. They [Swedish girls] are very cautious if you are an immigrant. And in a way I understand them, you come from a different culture, maybe they expect that you will behave differently...and often it is true. [...]

A friend of mine, when he goes out to party he speaks English with the girls, he is an immigrant guy from the suburbs... and he gets better treated that way.' *Man, 37, Stockholm, migrated from Turkey at age 13*

'For me it has always been about racism, the kind of racism that you don't show clearly but express emotionally, and it hurts more in the long run than if it is more direct. [...] You can never be Swedish even if you have lived here... I mean, I have black hair. This is the subtle racism, you are seen as a second-class citizen.' *Man, 39, Stockholm (just moved to Barcelona), migrated from Chile at age 6*

'It is about these little things, as when we lived in Solna [middle class area outside Stockholm] my name was the only foreign name in the building. And people immediately, well they get curious and you get this label, he his foreign but he has money, how can he afford [to live here]...' *Man, 39, Stockholm, migrated from Chile at age 1*

Among the respondents in Barcelona, the housing area is rarely mentioned, which also is symptomatic of the urban geography being more socio-economically, and ethnically, mixed compared to Stockholm. There are however several testimonies of self-experienced and/or frequent exploitative treatment of people from the own ethnic community, which is perceived as a direct form of discrimination. These experiences are related to the view of immigrants as precarious, low-skilled and poor, which is widespread in Spain overall and related to the function they have typically filled in the bottom strata of the labor market (Rendón, interview 2014; Moreno & Bruquetes 2011). The Spanish labor market is strongly stratified along ethnic lines; most non-Western immigrants came to the country to work in low-wage sectors with generally precarious conditions.

'When I worked in agriculture, that was not racism, it was exploitation. I worked 7, 8 hours per day or more for 25 euros. But I think that racism is caused much by politicians, and this image of immigrants that is being diffused. Messi for example, he is not an immigrant, well he is but... no, he is a foreigner, because he has money.' *Man, 37 years old, Barcelona, migrated from Nigeria at age 30*

There are also testimonies by Peruvian immigrants in Barcelona that reflect another dimension of the relationship between class and ethnicity: how the socio-economic

differences within an ethnic community create a division, affecting loyalties and identification within the immigrant group. Highly educated Peruvians who migrated decades ago, largely to work as physicians, may have little in common with Peruvian immigrants from working-class backgrounds, and prefer to be affiliated with Spanish or Catalan business organizations and social networks rather than the Peruvian associations.

*'Everybody looks for their space, their people... they go to different events. They may collaborate one day but do not want much contact with us the next day, these Peruvians [physicians] are almost part of the Spanish or Catalan bourgeoisie, they will not pursue their interests with people from their own country, but with financial entities or companies.'* *Man, 54 years old, Barcelona, migrated from Peru at age 29*

Similar perceptions on class divisions within the ethnic group are expressed by a woman of Chilean origin who grew up in Uppsala, a university city north of Stockholm, as well as a highly educated Moroccan immigrant in Barcelona.

*'We were pretty proud of being Latin Americans, it was not a problem, there was a positive attitude. We had both Swedish and Latin friends. But then Marcela came, we became friends, her father was a professor at Uppsala university... but they lived in Gottunda, that is a ghetto. There were lots of Chileans there... I mean, they [Marcela's family] were an exception, when it comes to Chileans the educational level makes the difference. Some who immigrated here live in suburbs... those who have no university degree. They are the ones who stayed in these areas.'* *Woman, 45 years old, Stockholm, migrated from Chile at age 6*

*I: Do you think that Moroccans in general are well received in Spain?*

IP: That depends on the person's profile. People with a university degree who work in a profession with high status in the Spanish society are well treated, but those who have low-status jobs are badly treated. Perhaps I generalize but... a lot of Moroccans express their discontent about how locals treat them. It is very hard to integrate for people who work in agriculture or construction, or who are unemployed.

*I: Do you think that the social status matters more than the national origin?*

IP: Yes, definitely, a rich Moroccan has no integration problems but a poor Moroccan without an education who lives in a marginal neighborhood has a very hard time.’  
*Man, 34 years old, Barcelona, migrated from Morocco at age 25*

The intersection between “class” and “race” appears to operate in several ways. Being classified as an immigrant often means a devaluation of status, which entails real socio-economic consequences when translated into patterns of discrimination. Phenotype, skin color, name and other features certainly matter in many situations and for many people, but, as Balibar (1991) argues – claiming that an Algerian capitalist would not be considered an immigrant in Paris though a Spanish worker would probably be – it may matter far less for someone who is wealthy.

#### 4.3.3.3. Individual and collective strategies for empowerment

All of the interviewed stakeholders recognize the existence of ethnic discrimination in society; most of them also underline that this is an everyday reality that people with immigrant backgrounds have to cope with (Delgado, Duran, Johanson, Khan, Mijatovic, Molina, Sabuni, Kitimbwa, Bonomi, El Fylaly, Pulido, Rendón, Rodríguez, Saliba, Serra, interviews 2013-2015). There are both individual and collective action strategies to address and compensate for immigrants’ disadvantage (Bobowik et al 2014). At the individual level, several of the respondents who are most affected by ethnic discrimination claim that it is particularly important for them to always perform well, even over perform. They can, as some of them put it, “not afford to screw up.” This kind of reflections are particularly salient in the interviews with the groups in my sample who overall perceive themselves as most stigmatized by their ethnic origin in relation to the society where they live; the African and Kurdish immigrants in Sweden, and the Latin American immigrants in Barcelona (with the exception of the Argentinian respondent).

‘My dad used to say, “do you know what, your friends, they can skip school and get bad grades, they will be ok anyway because they belong to this country, but you are here as a guest. And you stand out, because you are black. No matter what stupid things you do in your group of friends, they will only remember you. Your only

chance is to get the highest grades.” [...] We are aware [that it is harder for dark-skinned people to find a job], we see how it was for our parents and get constantly reminded of it through them. We also learn early that if we want to get anywhere we have to work much harder, you cannot be just good, you must be the best. You will always be different anyway so it is better to be different in a good way. We can never enjoy the luxury of just blending in.’ *Woman, 38, Stockholm, migrated from Burundi at age 5*

Another individual strategy may be to aim at changing a context that is perceived as discriminatory by moving to another country, in order to escape negative stereotypes and get a fresh start.

‘We want to move, I look for contracts in Mozambique now, but we have to be able to afford a good school and security for the kids so we cannot just leave like that. But if I get the chance I will leave, I can really not stand this [the racism he experiences on a regular basis] anymore.’ *Man, 39, Stockholm, migrated from Guinea Bissau at age 5*

‘I do consider moving from Sweden when I finish my studies. To feel... just not have to hear how different I am, just be allowed to be myself. Feel how it is to just be anyone. When I visited Cuba last summer everybody thought I was Cuban, and that was such a relief. When I opened my mouth to speak they realized I wasn’t, but just not having to feel... that they look at you and think “she’s not from here.” Here it is the other way around, when I speak they think, oh, she’s from here.’ *Woman, 29, Stockholm, father from Eritrea, mother Swedish*

At the discursive and policy-making level, there is an essential difference between the approaches different actors take on integration; whether focus lies on characteristics of the majority society or of the immigrants themselves (Garces and Penninx 2016). The interviewed stakeholders who represent ethnic minority groups, integration programs or anti-discrimination work largely focus on accomplishing change by influencing the majority society institutions’ attitudes and behavior. Some of these function as diversity management consultants and organizations who inform employers about how to avoid discriminating in recruitment processes (Sabuni, Khan, Pulido, interviews 2014); other

organizations aim to increase the status of immigrants by presenting their specific features in terms of assets: language, cultural competence, etc. (Johanson, Mijatovic, interviews 2014).

There are however different kinds of challenges in different societal contexts; this becomes strikingly clear when comparing the cases of Sweden and Spain. While there are actors also in the Spanish case who do indeed aim at a change of attitudes and discriminatory practices among the majority society, as most explicitly is the case for the Anti-discrimination office in Barcelona (Pulido, interview 2014), most representatives of immigrants' rights and interests are absorbed by the serious socio-economic situation in the wake of the crisis (Bonomi, Bosch, El-Fylaly, Saliba, Rendón, García, Serra, interviews 2013-2015). It may indeed be debated whether "empowerment" is the most adequate term to use in this context; nevertheless, it should be noted that also in Sweden, integration processes and programs take place at different levels: for instance, basic incorporation into the job and housing markets as well as claims for equality in terms of access to different job sectors and spheres of society.

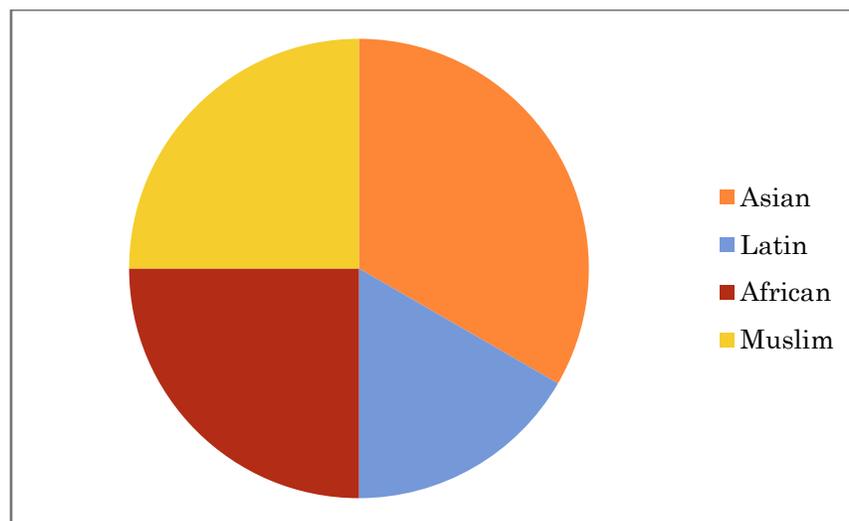
#### 4.3.3.4. Immigrants who have *not* experienced racism or discrimination

Among the 48 non-Western immigrants in the sample, 12 declare that they have not felt discriminated against, or only occasionally and in very subtle ways. The Chinese respondents represent the largest group among these 12, but there are respondents from all ethnic groups who share this experience. It appeared relevant to look closer at whether these respondents have more features in common, to explore if there is a typical profile of immigrant who does not experience discrimination within the sample.

It should be noted that in an interview situation, the interviewer can never be completely certain of whether and to what degree the respondent is telling the truth. It is essential for a good interview to establish an environment of trust, so that the respondent feels comfortable to speak openly about his or her experiences. In the case of this project, the topic is of a very sensitive nature: to admit experiencing racism and discrimination may be

painful and humiliating for the individual. For the interviewer, it may therefore be tempting to deduce that the respondents are not telling the whole truth about their experiences. I have been aware of this potential bias, and addressed it by simply staying faithful to the main methodological objective of this study: to focus on immigrants' self-perceptions. I therefore assume that the respondents who state that they are not suffering from ethnic discrimination indeed are not. It should however be noted that though these respondents state that they are not themselves suffering from discrimination based on their ethnic origin, they may acknowledge that it is a problem affecting members of their ethnic group. 10 of the 12 respondents who have not suffered from discrimination declare that race and ethnic origin matters for treatment and opportunities in society. These respondents are thus not characterized by a general non-recognition of racism and discrimination as problems in society.

**Table 6: Has not experienced racism/discrimination**



What these respondents do have in common is that most of them, 9/12, migrated voluntarily as adults. They have a high educational level; all except one has a university degree, and all except two have highly skilled professions. None are unemployed.

The narratives of these respondents overall reflect a sense of satisfaction with their life situations, and they have not experienced external obstacles that have prevented them

from doing what they want in life. Some may attribute this to luck, others to a positive attitude, or features among their own ethnic community that they believe facilitate their integration.

'I didn't [experience racism or discrimination], we were so very welcome, it was the days of [Olof] Palme, the Chileans were super welcome. Our parents had university degrees too, in our circles there were never any problems, though probably it would have been different outside these circles. [...] I am a nurse too, then you always find a job. But maybe it [being an immigrant] has been sort of a self-handicap sometimes, that you may expect to find racism in certain situations and therefore keep yourself from doing certain things.' *Woman, 45 years old, Stockholm, migrated from Chile at age 6*

'Argentiniens adapt to anything, our country is basically built of European emigrants. We don't need to form communities as the Ecuadorians, Dominicans or Colombians usually do... we mix with the Catalans and don't mind being the only Argentinian. We are much more integrated.' *Man, 50 years old, Barcelona, migrated from Argentina at age 35*

'I have never experienced it [discrimination], actually, I don't think so... I don't know why I don't get a job but I never sensed it was because of my foreign name or so. [...] But I do think that it happens a lot. My friends from Eritrea, and an adopted girl from India, notice it a lot, but maybe that is because of their skin color. I am not saying that I look really Swedish, but they have dark skin so maybe they experience it in another way.' *Woman, 30 years old, Stockholm, migrated from Turkey at the age of 7 months*

'I adapt easily to different situations so I never experienced any particular obstacles or difficulties. You have to be realistic, it is natural that people in a country want to keep the best parts to themselves.' *Man, 51 years old, Stockholm, migrated from China at age 25*

'The language was difficult, during my first 5 years I could not get very advanced tasks at my work because my Swedish skills were so limited. But the rest... I always had a job and felt well treated. Though making friends was more difficult, but I had a

lot of Chinese friends and a lot of work to do so I was busy enough.' *Woman, 43 years old, Stockholm, migrated from China at age 28*

Other testimonies reflect that to some degree, this is also a matter of what one considers, or chooses to view as, discrimination.

'Once on the bus, when I was speaking English with my partner, a lady commented in Spanish, "that girl is very beautiful, I am sure she is American." Ok, so Africans are not beautiful? Because we have this nose, these lips... sometimes people think like that, but I don't take it as racism. I have never been insulted nor felt discriminated against. [...] But it is true that Africans, if we don't migrate together we don't try to make friends with each other, because if we are a group... we notice that people look at us and then the stereotyping starts.' *Woman, 31 years old, migrated to Barcelona from China, and originally from Gabon, at age 25.*

'I feel well integrated, my partner is from here and I never experienced any kind of discrimination. But sometimes I notice that there is a great lack of knowledge about my culture.' *Man, 34 years old, Barcelona, migrated from Morocco at age 25*

'I don't take it [comments about ethnicity etc.] that seriously, I joke with my colleagues... here comes the China man! I have my face, that is a mark I can never get rid of, so it is better to joke about it than say, no, you cannot tell me that I am Chinese. If you take everything so seriously you will have a hard time.' *Man, 41 years old, Stockholm, migrated from China at age 26*

The sample used in this project is naturally too small to draw any general conclusions about who experience more or less obstacles to integration, but it does provide some initial insights that could serve to formulate hypotheses for further research within this, hitherto unexplored, topic.

#### 4.3.4. *Perceptions on identity and belonging*

The respondents were asked about their perceptions on identity, in terms of whether they identify with any particular nationality (the majority ethnicity in the country where they live, their/their parents' country of origin, or any other nationality) or how they would otherwise describe their collective identity. All in all, 38/60 respondents (19 in each of the cities) expressed clearly that they have a mixed ethnic identity, while 20 stated that they mainly identify with the country of origin. Only one of the respondents, a woman of Kurdish origin in Sweden (who migrated as a small baby, feels fully included and has never experienced racism or discrimination) claims that she identifies mainly with the majority national identity in the country where she lives, though many of the respondents express that they *also* identify as Swedish/Catalan/Spanish.

Among those who define their collective/national identity as mixed, there are differences between those who claim to belong *both* to the majority and minority culture, those who feel that they do *not belong to either*, and/or those who rather describe their collective identity in more cosmopolitan terms as "citizen of the world" or "European." There are, as illustrated in the tables in the following sections, large differences between how immigrants of different origins perceive their collective identity.

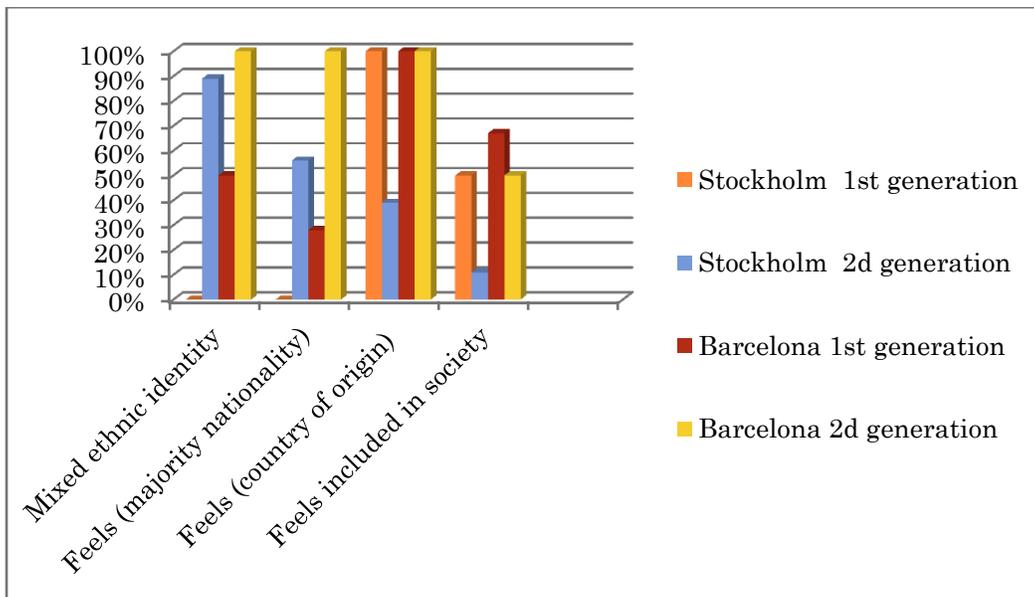
##### 4.3.4.1. *Belonging and collective identity among the first and second generation*

Garces and Penninx (2016) define integration as the process of becoming an accepted part of society. The perception of acceptance and inclusion also appeared as central in many of the interviews. Several of the respondents described how painful it was for them to understand that no matter what they did, they would never feel entirely accepted as part of society. Moreover, sentiments of ethnic identity and belonging may be related to the migration project as such: whether the migration was forced or voluntary, and whether the person migrated as an adult or a child, or was even born in the country. There is an emerging body of research on the so called "second generation" (a concept that may indeed be questioned as it potentially contributes to labelling children born in the country as

“immigrants”); the children of immigrants who grow up in countries their parents migrated to, who often experience more difficulties related to identity and belonging than their parents did (e.g. Crul et al 2012, Safi 2010).

During the analysis, I linked the respondents’ sentiments of collective identity to whether they felt included or not in the majority society, and whether they migrated as adults (“1<sup>st</sup> generation immigrants”) or grew up in or where born in the country (“2d generation immigrants”). In the table below, only non-Western immigrants are included. The Western “expats” in the sample all migrated voluntarily as adults, and may due to their ethno-cultural features not be expected to share the typical second generation experiences referred to above. It should also be noted that though I actively intended to include both first and second generation immigrants in the sample, this was not a main selection criteria.

**Table 7: Collective identity and belonging among 1 and 2 generation immigrants (% of total number of respondents in each category)**



There is overrepresentation of second generation non-Western immigrants in the Swedish sample (18/24), while the reverse is true for the Spanish sample (18/24). On the other hand, this is consistent with Spain being a new immigration country with an emerging

second generation (Aparicio & Portes 2014). This parameter is only introduced here to suggest that immigrant generation may indeed be relevant for sentiments of identification and belonging, and contribute to explain the contextual differences in immigrant experiences between Stockholm and Barcelona.

As illustrated in Table 7, the vast majority of second generation immigrants experience “mixed ethnic identities.” This perception is expressed in terms of double and sometimes conflicting belongings, or a sense of non-belonging; of not identifying with or not feeling accepted by the majority society. These are common experiences among the respondents who are born and/or have grown up in the country *where they are categorized as immigrants*. The sentiment of not fitting in is also experienced when “second generation immigrants” visit their (parents’) country of origin.

‘I feel at home here [in Sweden], I have no other home country. I may not always feel welcome here, but I feel at home. Most of us who grew up in Sweden can surely say that we don’t fit in when we go back to our home country either. You will never fit in 100% anywhere. I know that I will always be different here, and I don’t mind that much. But I am afraid that it will be a disadvantage for me. I don’t think that it always must be negative, but there is always this curiosity... you can never enter a new room and just be yourself. You can never blend in. That is the hardest part.’  
*Woman, 27 years old, Stockholm, migrated from Congo at age 2*

‘Yes, I feel very Catalan, I dance the *sardanes*, I was doing the *Castellers*<sup>7</sup> for a while... but in everyday life people makes me feel a lot that “but you are not from here,” where are you from... so that makes me feel I always have to fight for my identity. It places me in this situation that yes, I am Catalan, but also Peruvian. And when I celebrate the traditions of my country I experience this Peruvian sentiment, just a little but it is there.’ *Woman, 29 years old, Barcelona, migrated from Peru at the age of 5*

Looking at the table, it is furthermore striking that in the Barcelona sample, all of the respondents of both first and second generation identify with their (or their parents’)

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<sup>7</sup> *Sardanes* is a traditional Catalan folk dance, and has, as the *Castellers*, the human towers, a strong symbolic value as parts of Catalan culture.

country of origin, while in the Stockholm sample there is a vast difference between the generations: all first generation immigrants claim to identify with the country of origin, though among the second generation just slightly more than a third do. In the Barcelona sample, all second generation immigrants moreover identify also with the ethnic majority culture, while in Sweden, just roughly more than half do. Though the sample, as stated, is indeed limited and not intended to draw any general conclusions on collective identity but to gain insights into how immigrants reflect around identity and belonging, this finding indicates that the mixed ethnic identity that the second generation respondents in Spain experience includes both the minority and a majority culture, while in Stockholm, it is more often a sense of neither identifying with the ethnic majority nor the parents' country of origin.

This assumption is supported by the respondents' narratives. While for some of the respondents, experiencing a sense of mixed ethnic identities is largely positive, reflecting the richness of having access to more than one culture, for others, it is rather a question of lack; of not being fully a member of any community. Overall, among both the first and second generation, the feeling of not fitting in fully, of experiencing a sense of being "neither-nor" rather than "both," is more strongly expressed and far more salient among the non-Western respondents in Sweden (16/24 have this perception compared with only 4/4 in Spain). A vivid account on this sentiment is provided by a female respondent of Chilean origin, who invents the Swedish term "mellanförskap" ("in-between ship") to describe her identity.

'I want to use the word "in-between ship." I feel in between all the time, my husband and his family always collide with my parents. I get to play the role of mediator, they don't understand each other. All these cultural collisions, it takes a lot of energy. It makes me think a lot about Swedes and Swedishness....It is both interesting and hard. As a teenager I hung out a lot with Iranians, Arabs and other Chileans. We identified with each other for being different, we were kind of tough kids... it strengthened our identities as foreign, immigrants.' *Woman, 32, Stockholm, migrated from Chile at age 5*

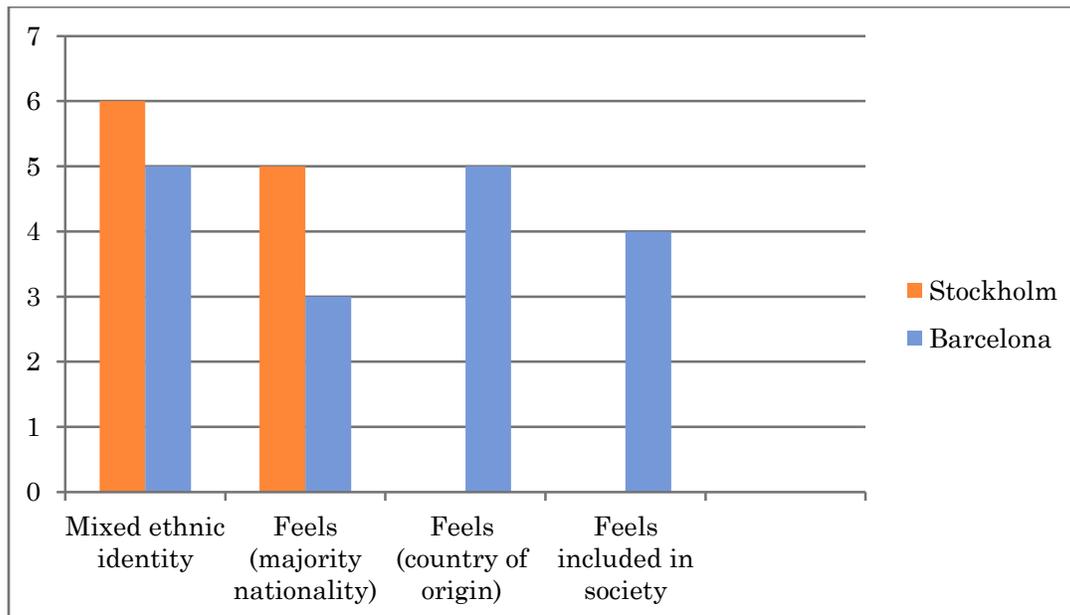
'There is a difference [between him and those who were born in Sweden by immigrated parents]. I have more Turkish culture in me, I lived there until I was 13. Those who grow up entirely in the suburbs here are not like Swedes, but they have not experienced Turkish culture either. They are more rootless... I actually think that I am more integrated than they are.' *Man, 37, Stockholm, migrated from Turkey at age 13*

'I went to school with a lot of white, ethnic Swedes, but we grew apart. Now I don't have any Swedish friends.[...] There are no clear norms for how you are supposed to act to be seen as Swedish, but still there are lots of unwritten rules for how you should be.' *Man, 23 years old, Stockholm, born in Sweden, parents from Eritrea*

These findings incite questions of inclusive versus exclusive collective identities and what the implications are of different majority cultures for integration. Is, for instance, "Swedishness" more difficult for immigrants in Sweden to identify with than Spanish or Catalan culture is for immigrants in Spain? And if this is so: why? In contemporary theory on interculturalism, a central starting point is the need to critically examine and deconstruct collective/national majority identities, which often are built on ideas of national superiority, perhaps even imperialist wars and colonialization of other cultures (Rodríguez García 2010). A two-way perspective on integration ought to include the willingness to mix majority and minority cultures and create new foundations for collective identities, which are not even necessarily expressed in ethno-cultural terms.

#### 4.3.4.2. Belonging and collective identity among the non-Western respondents

As illustrated in the table below, all African respondents in Stockholm, and all but one in Barcelona, express their collective/national identity as "mixed." What this sentiment consists of however varies strongly: all six African respondents in Sweden state that they identify with Sweden and feel Swedish, but that they perceive that they are "not allowed" to be or not "seen as" Swedes. This sentiment is also the most common one among the respondents of Kurdish and Chilean origin.

**Table 8: Collective identity and belonging among the African respondents**

The mixed ethnic identity they express thus appears to be a consequence of them not being fully accepted as part of the Swedish national identity by the ethnic majority society, which is consistent with their perception of lacking inclusion. This experience of non-belonging is, in their own view, clearly racialized.

'I am Swedish, I couldn't be anything else, I have lived here most of my life, my family is ethnically Swedish, I celebrate all Swedish holidays, I do everything that Swedish people do. I am Swedish, but at the same time I know that I will never be allowed to be Swedish, and then I don't want to become it... do you understand? A normal Swede will never see me as Swedish because of this [indicates his dark skin], my looks will always be the first thing that they judge me by. And to know that is simply terrifying.' *Man, 39, Stockholm, migrated from Guinea Bissau at age 5*

'If I had been half Polish, half Swedish, nobody would have said that I am not Swedish. But since I am brown, even if I don't think about being brown myself everybody comments on it all the time. There is always someone who asks me where I come from and I say "Farsta"... [suburb south of Stockholm]. I don't see it as a problem, I am proud of my background, but they always remind me. You are not Swedish, sort of. [...] I identify more with someone who is not ethnically Swedish

because we have gone through the same things, we understand each other better. And I don't have to put up with comments as "you are so beautiful for being African".' *Woman, 29, Stockholm, father from Eritrea, mother Swedish, born in Sweden*

Among the non-Western respondents from African, Muslim and Latin American countries in Barcelona, the references to majority culture are by no means as frequent and salient as in the Swedish sample. Some of them do refer to Catalan culture as inclusive while others instead consider it exclusive, and Catalan people as difficult to get to know, but this does not appear as central to them as among the respondents in Sweden, of whom many define themselves in relation to "Swedishness" throughout the interview.

'I think Catalan people are very distrusting... there was just no way, it has been very hard for me [to get to know people]. Catalan people are reserved, but very grateful if you learn their language. [...] There is racism here, but also a lot of people who love me... I feel very comfortable in my skin and why shouldn't I?' *Woman, 28, Barcelona, migrated from Kamerun at age 13*

'It doesn't matter if I speak perfect Swedish and dance around the Midsummer tree and celebrate all these traditions and feel really Swedish. But the only time I am allowed to feel really Swedish is when I go to Congo or Burundi, and then we have a society where it is impossible to enter, it is impossible to be considered as Swedish... Swedishness, that is a white, blonde person. That is what is viewed as Swedish, that image is so rooted in our heads, also abroad.' *Woman, 38, Stockholm, migrated from Burundi at age 5*

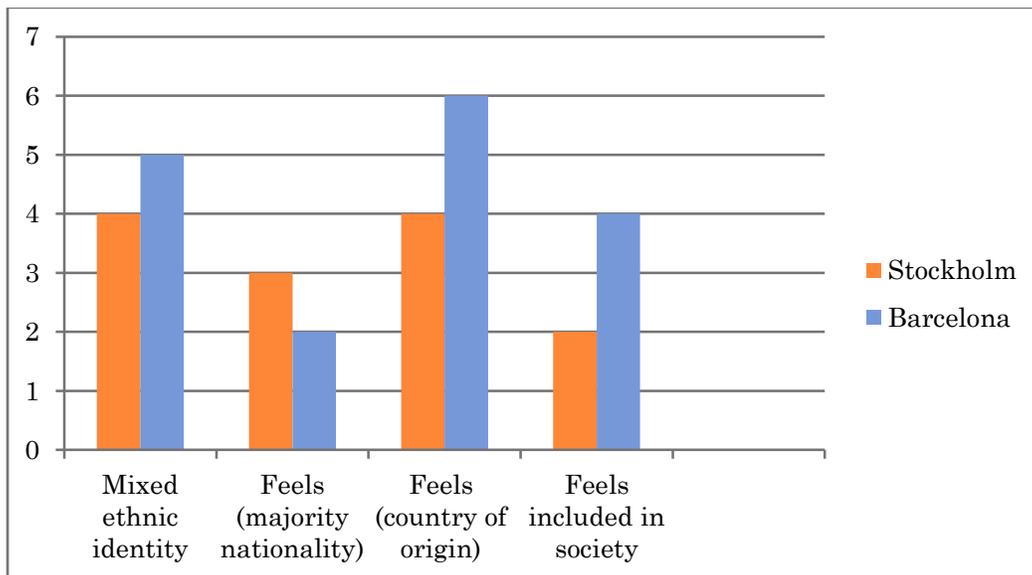
Moreover, in the Barcelona sample several of the respondents emphasize the special character of Barcelona as an open-minded melting pot, while none describe Stockholm in any similar terms. On the contrary, several of the respondents there state that it is an extremely segregated city with little interethnic contact. The city as basis for collective identity thus appears relevant only in the case of Barcelona.

'I think that particularly the city of Barcelona [is easy to integrate in], all the cultural diversity here, there are Africans, Brits, Peruvians, Japanese... all living in the same place, sharing things. That is what I see. This is an open-minded city, open to

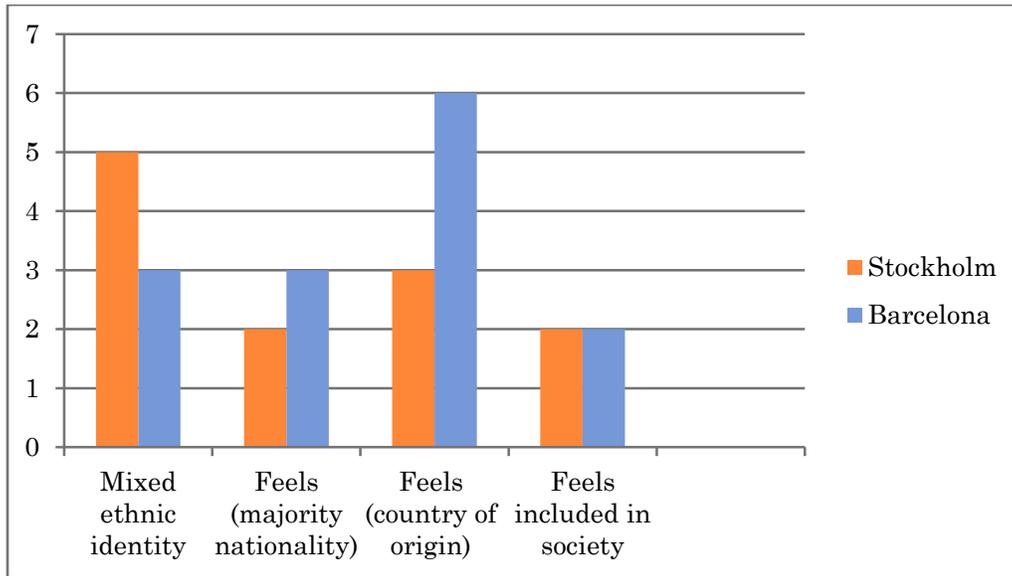
cultures and also to sexual orientations for instance.’ *Man, 37 years old, Barcelona, migrated from Nigeria at age 30*

The Asian respondents stand out in comparison with the rest as they have a by far less sense of mixed ethnic identity, or identification with the majority culture. This may appear consistent with stereotypes about the Chinese as unwilling to interact with other ethnicities; as indeed responsible and non-conflictive immigrants, but also as strongly self-segregated. Looking at the transcripts, however, this does not appear to be the case for most of them; they do engage in contacts with the majority society, and feel well received in general. Most of them migrated as adults, which contributes to explain why they feel part of the majority society’s ethnic identity to such a low extent.

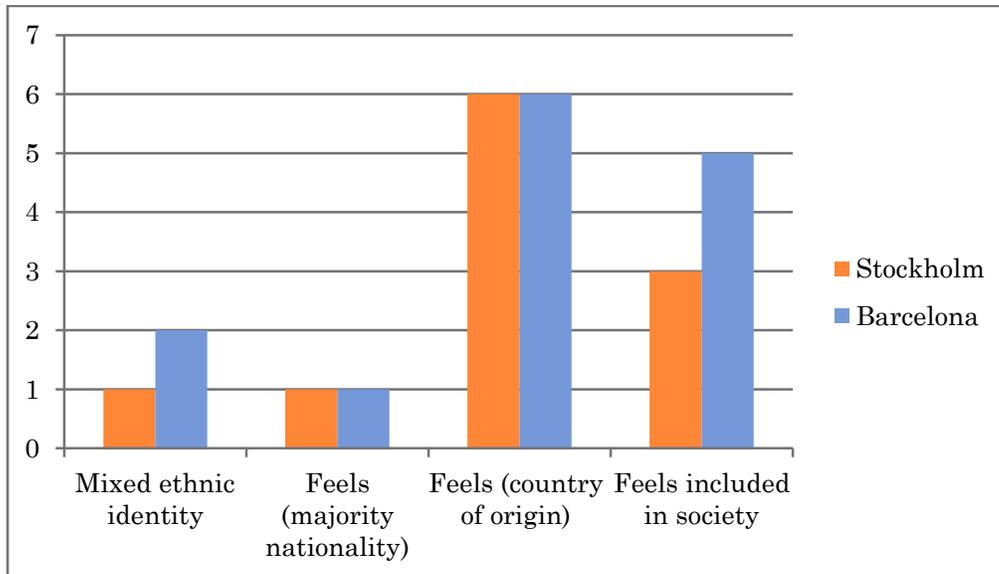
**Table 9: Collective identity among the respondents from Muslim countries**



**Table 10: Collective identity among the respondents from Latin American countries**



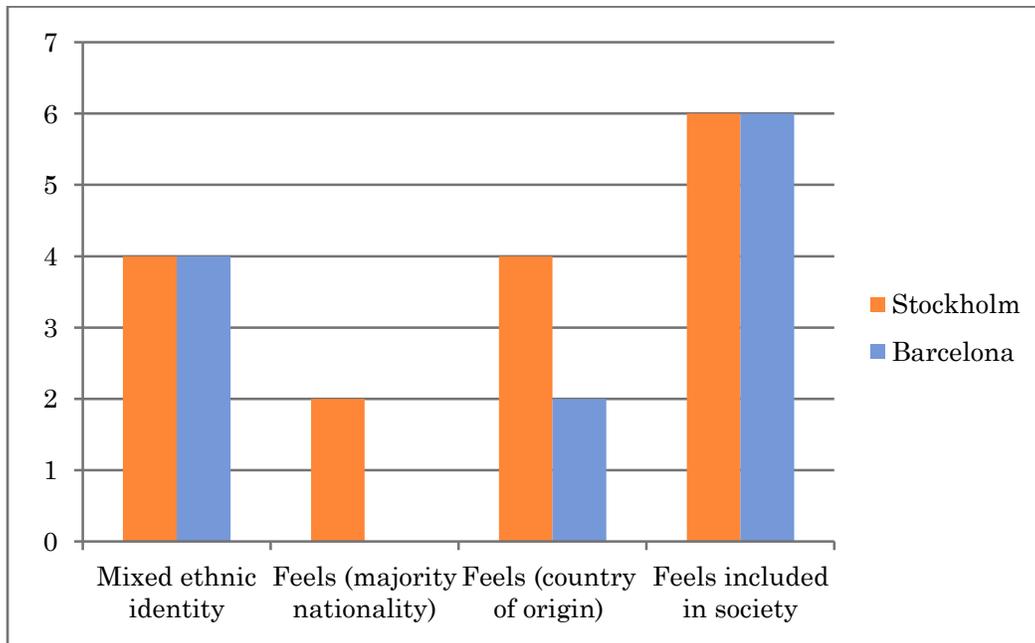
**Table 11: Collective identity among the respondents from Asian countries**



4.3.4.2. Cosmopolitanism and universal collective identities

“Cosmopolitanism,” or collective identities that are expressed in more universal terms than territorially limited, national or ethno-cultural identities, are often understood as a common denominator for highly educated, mobile elites from Western countries, detached from “primitive” or provincial cultural ties (Stevenson 2003). Among the Western respondents, few identify with the ethnic majority in the country where they live (none in the case of Barcelona). At least in Barcelona, few also declare to experience any identification with the national identity of their country of origin; this would indicate that their collective identities, if they at all ascribe to other forms of identity than the individual, are expressed in cosmopolitan terms. Combined with the fact that all Western respondents feel accepted and included in the country where they live, it would further support the idea of cosmopolitan identities as mainly Western and rather elitist.

**Table 12: Collective identity among the respondents from Western countries**



Looking closer at the rich and detailed excerpts in the transcribed interviews, however, it is evident that cosmopolitan expressions of identity as being a “citizen of the world,” or “simply a human being, nationality is irrelevant” are frequent also among the non-Western respondents, sometimes in combination with more particular, ethnic identities, sometimes not.

‘That is a good question [how she defines her identity], I have no answer. If I feel comfortable, I do... I don’t know. I could say anything, Spanish, Catalan, Congolese... It doesn’t matter much, these things with nations and flags... they categorize us, you belong here and you there, but it’s just a piece of land. But here they always ask me where I come from.’ *Woman, 21 years old, Barcelona, migrated from Congo at age 9*

‘I don’t feel Swedish, not at all. I love to live here, the nature, my family and everything, and I love the way that I can organize my life the way I can, I think that would be impossible if we moved to Berlin. So for that I can say that I really love Sweden. What I get from it. But I don’t feel Swedish at all. But I have never felt particularly German either, I mean, I am German but...’ *Man, 40, Stockholm, migrated from Germany at age 33*

‘Moroccan, Spanish, Catalan, African, European... I feel like a citizen of the world.’ *Woman, 27, Barcelona, migrated from Morocco as a newborn*

‘I am... from the world. People ask me, are you African? Yes I am, but I am also many other things. I have lived in many countries, speak many languages... yes I do have my culture and my identity, but there is so much more. I don’t feel Spanish or Catalan... well, maybe more Catalan than Spanish, I like the people here. When I lived in China I felt Chinese.’ *Woman, 31, Barcelona, from Gabon, migrated from China, where she lived before, at age 25*

‘I can be just a human being, I don’t need that [ethnic] kind of belonging. I had my identity crises but that is over now.’ *Man, 32 years old, Stockholm, migrated from Kurdistan at age 16*

To look for patterns among the several respondents of all origins who express their collective identity in cosmopolitan terms is a difficult task. How central is for instance the

educational level, or personal experiences from traveling and contacts with people from other countries? Cosmopolitan identities also may be more likely to expect among people who have voluntarily moved to another country. Such questions however lie outside of the scope for this analysis. What is particularly interesting here is instead the *potential* in such identities, and international experiences (travel, language skills, to study and work in international environments) among both the ethnic majority and minorities as positive for intercultural relations. The more people share such experiences, the more they may ideally come to identify with each other.

‘There is this diversity, and I think that it is especially so among young people here. They have travelled more, they have more experiences from other countries.’ *Man, 37 years old, Barcelona, migrated from Nigeria at age 30*

‘[A very positive experience] was when I started at the international section in high school [Kungholmens gymnasium in Stockholm]. There were many people there who had lived abroad or came from other countries, so it was much more culturally mixed. That is where I met people who were not just from Sweden and it made me feel at home.’ *Woman, 22 years old, Stockholm, born in Sweden, parents migrated from China*

‘It was an elite school [he went to a private boarding school in Sweden], but those who caused problems there were the less educated ones. Most of the children and teenagers there went to that school because their parents were away working somewhere in the world, like diplomats. I think that it is harder to find racism among people like them, they have traveled and seen that people are people everywhere you go. They may surely be idiots anyway but they are of a different kind.’ *Man, 39, Stockholm, migrated from Guinea Bissau at age 5*

This appears to be what Milinko Mijatovic, head of SIOS (the Cooperation group for ethnic associations in Sweden) has in mind when he argues that the ethnic majority in Sweden must identify less in terms of Swedishness and more as “European,” or international, for integration to work (Mijatovic, interview 2014).

#### ***4.3.5. Diverse perceptions on gender and integration***

When I started to perform the fieldwork for this project, I initially interviewed stakeholders involved in integration work at different levels to define what were the key issues at stake. According to most of them, the main obstacles for integration are generally related to economic disadvantage (class), ethnic stereotyping and prejudice (race) or the intersection between these two categories. The role played by gender in this context appears far less clear. In both Barcelona and Stockholm, there is recognition among integration officials that immigrant women may be particularly vulnerable and isolated from society, and there are several initiatives at the local level to encourage their participation in social life through for instance workshops and cultural events (Hart Carpenter, Pulido, El-Fylaly, interviews 2014-2015). Zakia Khan at Interfem in Stockholm, an organization that represents the interests of immigrant women in worklife, states that immigrant women and immigrant men may be exposed to different forms of prejudice (for instance, stereotypes as black or Muslim men being ‘dangerous’, Muslim women with headscarves submissive and black women sexually available) (Khan, interview 2014).

Khan however also underlines that race/ethnicity and class are the most significant categories for disadvantage, and that “racism and discrimination create new forms of poverty” (Khan, interview 2014). Seyran Duran at the Kurdish women’s organization believes that being a woman actually may represent an advantage for integration among Kurds in Sweden, as they are viewed more positively than men of the same ethnicity, particularly since the massive attention directed towards the so called honor killings of young Kurdish women adopting a “Swedish lifestyle” over the past decade (Duran, interview 2015, Hellgren and Hobson 2008). This way, victimization of Kurdish women may actually serve as a relative advantage for integration as it makes the majority society more favorable towards them.

The following quotes reflect a few of the most typical experiences of stereotyping that the racialized (non-Western) female respondents experienced:

i) African women as “ugly” or “sexually available”

‘You are so pretty for being African... I get to hear that often. And at a job I had, the receptionist asked me where I came from. “My mom is from Sweden and my dad is Eritrean”, I said, and she replied “Eritrea, where is that... oh, Africa, but you don’t have a nigger nose or nigger lips...” I just... I didn’t know what to say. She wanted to give me a compliment...’ *Woman, 29, Stockholm, father from Eritrea, mother Swedish*

‘There was this Spanish couple next to me and my boyfriend, they said in Spanish, looking at me “that girl is very pretty, she must be American”. Oh, so Africans are not pretty? Because our nose looks like this and our lips like that... so then I must be American. People think like that, but I don’t consider it racism but lack of knowledge, people here don’t have much contact with people from Africa or Asia.’ *Woman, 31 years old, Barcelona, from Gabon, migrated from China, where she lived before, at age 25*

‘As a black woman, of course I face much more barriers than a white woman does. They often ask me how much I charge...’ *Woman, 28, Barcelona, migrated from Kamerun at age 13*

‘As a black woman you are an object, there is something sexist about it, you get to here all kinds of strange comments... And it is much easier for me to get a job than for my brothers, though they are more highly educated than I am. If I show up, men may think that it is fabulous, they are charmed...’ *Woman, 38, Stockholm, migrated from Burundi at age 5*

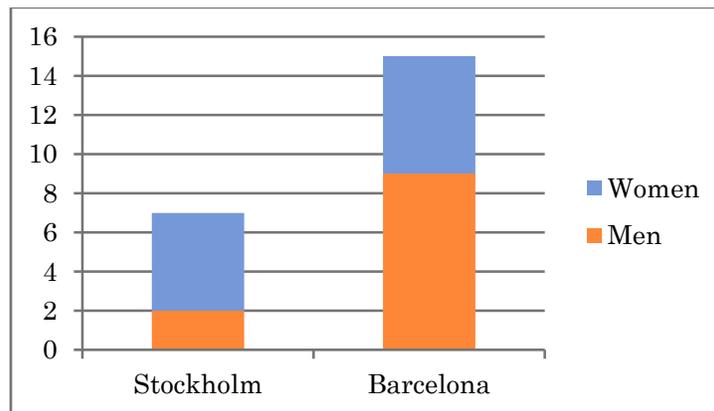
ii) Muslim women wearing the headscarf as submissive and oppressed

‘Wearing a veil... people here don’t like that. I think the veil is very important because it is so visible and a strong Muslim symbol, and often an obstacle to be able to work in Spain. I was more religious during my second year at the university, I read a lot about Islam and decided to start wearing the veil. During the first months I felt happy, and there were no problems at the university, but I started to feel bad about the way people looked at me and got tired of always having to explain why I wear the veil, that I am a free and independent person and nobody forced me to... little by little this started to make me feel insecure and I decided to take it off. But I

like to wear the veil, I like to cover myself, both for aesthetic reasons and because I feel much respect for other women who wear it, for their religiousness. But now is not the time, maybe later I will wear it again.' *Woman, 27 years old, Barcelona, migrated from Morocco as a newborn*

Among the immigrant respondents overall, there is much diversity in the views on the importance of gender for integration/participation on equal terms. Slightly less than half of the respondents, 28/60, express any view at all regarding the importance of gender in this context. Among these, the difference between the respondents in Spain/Catalonia and in Sweden is striking, which could be interpreted in light of the salience of gender equality in the Swedish context, and its privilege over any similar concern about “ethnic equality” (Towns 2002). When separating the non-Western immigrant respondents’ experiences of feeling or not included in society according to gender, the picture appears that the female respondents’ experiences are more negative than the male respondents’ in Barcelona, while in Sweden on the contrary, they are more positive.

**Table 13. Feels included in society, men and women of non-Western origin**



13/30 of the respondents in Sweden express the view that gender makes a difference for the inclusion and opportunities of immigrants in society; of these, 9 believe that being a woman is an advantage among immigrants, while 4 think that being a woman reduces one’s opportunities in general given the remaining gender inequality in all societies, though immigrant women are more disadvantaged than native women. Interestingly, 5/6 Kurdish

respondents think that men in their own ethnic group are far more disadvantaged by negative attitudes than women. Several of the African and Chilean respondents share this perception.

'I did not experience racism but my brother... I don't know, maybe it is different for boys and girls. We speak Swedish as natives but our last name is not Swedish, so... I think that this has held my brother back a lot and it has gotten worse with the years... he says "there is no point trying, people are so...[racist]." *Woman, 45, Stockholm, migrated from Chile at age 6*

'I think that it is easier for girls, immigrant guys are more discriminated against. My female friends have found jobs much more easily. Also, most of these guys I know have Arabic names, and there is so much about Islam...' *Woman, 29, Stockholm, father from Eritrea, mother Swedish*

In Spain/Catalonia, 14/15 of the respondents who believe that gender is a relevant factor for integration instead claim that immigrant women are more disadvantaged than men. Especially the female Moroccan respondents who used to wear the headscarf consider this highly stigmatizing, and perceive that they get better treated when they "look Western" (all three of them had worn more traditional Muslim clothing at some time but chosen not to continue doing so because of these negative reactions). Also the interviewed Latin American women think that their ethnic features stigmatize them, which they believe is related to the stereotypical view on female Latin migrants as domestic workers, decreasing their status on the labor market.

'I feel that the Catalans think that because I am from Latin America I don't have the same level of knowledge as they do. I had to accept jobs that had nothing to do with my Master, I worked as waitress, shop assistant, selling SIM cards and tickets to events. [...] Here they think that for being Latin women, we should work as waitresses and domestic workers, but never as head of business for instance...' *Woman, 36 years old, Barcelona, migrated from Colombia at age 31*

Also male respondents talk of the particular disadvantage that women of their ethnicity experience.

'In Spain, women are very much discriminated against, also Spanish women of course. If you are a woman, things are tough, if you are Moroccan, African, worse, if you also wear a hijab, then it is horrible.' *Man, 54, Barcelona, migrated from Syria at age 29*

Some of the respondents who think that immigrant women are particularly disadvantaged furthermore point to patriarchal oppression within their own ethnic community, which may both be a real experience and a stereotype that affects men in certain ethnic groups negatively.

'The machismo of South America is innate in all of us, and then we come to Europe where... there is machismo, but.... Generally Latin men come here to work and we don't want our women to work. And then the crisis came and now it is the Latin women who work and the men who get to stay at home doing the domestic chores. And we have learned a lot, that machismo is useless. In Latin America, gender equality does not exist, women are seen as objects, not persons. *Man, 54, Barcelona, migrated from Peru at age 29*

In this case, experiences related to immigration and external circumstances in the new country of residence are perceived to have improved the gender relations within the own ethnic community. Coming from Latin America, Spain represents a more gender equal societal context. Within a European context, the testimonies of respondents in Spain and Sweden however reflect different frameworks of gender relations, which affect the position of migrant women within these frameworks. A tentative interpretation of the comparison between the experiences of male and female immigrants in Sweden and Spain overall, is that the perception that female immigrants (of certain origins) have a better position than men in Sweden but not in Spain reflects the higher degree of gender equality overall in the Swedish society compared to the Spanish.

### 4.3.6. *Immigrants' perceptions on integration in two institutional contexts*

The empirical part of the project report ends with this final section, which explicitly focuses on the respondents' perceptions on integration and what obstacles and opportunities they identify in the two different societal contexts. Underlying here is that the contextual specificities are essential to understand what opportunities or obstacles immigrants encounter within a given societal framework. Comparing two societies that are similar in several ways (European welfare states that have received large numbers of immigrants in recent years) and different in others (different migration histories and migrant profiles, different concepts of collective identity, etc.) is indeed useful to gain more insights into how the societal contexts matter for the incorporation of immigrants, at the national and regional, and perhaps most of all local, levels. As Rodríguez García (2010) argues, it would be unreasonable to adopt a "one size fits all" European approach to integration policies and practices.

#### 4.3.6.1. *Anti-immigrant attitudes and financial crisis: context specific integration challenges*

Beyond personal experiences and perceptions, two burning societal issues are clearly more present than others in the interviews: the increasing salience of anti-immigrant discourse in Sweden, and the devastating effects of the financial crisis in Spain. Both stakeholders and immigrant respondents describe Sweden at present as marked by a polarized political climate, with antagonistic views on immigration and integration that are accentuated by the ongoing refugee crisis. Many of them link this to the presence (and gradual acceptance) of the anti-immigrant party The Sweden Democrats as a Member of Parliament, currently with a support of about 16% of the Swedish voters (ipsos.se, March 2016).

'With the Sweden Democrats here in Sweden it has become more accepted to make offensive statements in public. People yell a lot about freedom of speech, but what about my freedom of speech... what happens with my personal integrity, is it ok that I feel offended because of your right to say whatever you want? That is how things are here now.' *Man, 39, Stockholm, migrated from Guinea Bissau at age 5*

'Everybody talks a lot about the Sweden Democrats. Personally, I cannot understand how these people are being framed as the worst kind of villains. That is not what it is about, that the Sweden Democrats are evil and have bad values... it is like nobody talks about their voters, as if they were only being fooled. As if they were only everyday people who just happened to vote for this party. But obviously there is something in their agenda that attracts white Swedes.' *Man, 37, Stockholm, migrated from Congo at age 2*

In Spain, the overall perception is currently that integration processes are being hampered by the financial crisis and the alarmingly high unemployment rates, which also reflect vast differences between native-born and immigrants: at present 21% for natives and over 50% for non-Western immigrants (ine.es, FedeLatina.es, March 2016, Rendón, interview 2014, Bonomi, interview 2015).

'Now, of course, in times of crisis everybody accepts any job at all, also the Spanish. But in 2003 that was not to think about, then they needed us to do the dirty work. But they use immigrants as the wheels of a car, or as Kleenex, they use us when they need us and then throw us away. And life does not work that way.' *Man, 54, Barcelona, migrated from Syria at age 29*

In Sweden, the respondents overall perceive that the most central obstacle to integration are attitudes among the ethnic majority: immigrants feel that they are not accepted as equals or considered to fully belong in Sweden. In Spain, there are—as we have seen in earlier sections— similar experiences of racism and discrimination, though the perceptions of inclusion among the respondents are also significantly higher. The main problem here is not defined as symbolic or discursive but indeed economic; there are no jobs, and it can be discussed whether “integration” is at all possible without employment. The Spanish labor market is clearly ethnically stratified; this is related to the country’s (young) immigration history, where most migrants came to Spain to work in low wage sectors that demanded labor during the economic boom in the 1990s and early 2000s (Moreno and Bruquetes 2011, Hellgren 2015). The labor market is also the most central arena where the respondents have experienced ethnic discrimination, or when they consider discrimination

to be particularly serious as it clearly impacts on their socio-economic situation, just as in Sweden.

Yet, the difference remains that more respondents in Sweden than in Spain consider society to be racist at a general level, and many of the Swedish respondents claim that it has gotten worse. Among the Swedish respondents, when asked the question of what is in their view the main problem with society in relation to integration, 26/30 answered intolerance or racism, and/or the lack of contact and the invisible walls that make it very difficult to become a part of social life. These perceptions were shared also by the Western migrants.

'Sweden is too individualistic, people don't help each other, and there is a lot of intolerance and racism.' *Woman, 35, Stockholm, migrated from Australia at age 17*

'That people with an immigrant background feel they don't belong here, and that it is impossible to talk about race in public though this is the problem.' *Man, 37, Stockholm, migrated from Congo at age 2*

'Society is closed, there are few contacts between ethnic groups, it is segregated and racism is growing.' *Woman, 45, Stockholm, migrated from Chile at age 6*

'These invisible walls... the social codes are hard, there are narrow limits for how to behave that are hard to understand.' *Man, 42, Stockholm, migrated from China at age 24*

'The structures, it is difficult to get in, which was painful to notice. The country is very polarized, there are no contacts between Swedes and immigrants in schools or at workplaces.' *Man, 32, Stockholm, migrated from Kurdistan at age 16*

'People are so afraid of conflicts, they don't talk about problems, and there are serious integration problems.' *Man, 37, Stockholm, migrated from Denmark at age 28*

In Spain, 15/30 of the respondents consider racism, intolerance and/or lack of contacts between natives and immigrants as the most important problem for integration. 13 of these 15 respondents are of African, Latin American or Muslim origin. Among the rest, the answers are diverse, but the financial crisis and the lack of professional opportunities is the

second one most frequent concern (7/15); particularly among the Western migrants who perceive that moving to Spain (for love or lifestyle related reasons) has limited their career perspectives.

'Spain is much behind Sweden as a society, there are less job opportunities, lower standard in general, and less equality. Also it is difficult to get close to the Catalans.'  
*Woman, 42, Barcelona, migrated from Sweden at age 32*

'There is a lack of professional opportunities here, you can reach a certain level but not higher. And there is also a lack of contacts between Catalans and immigrants.'  
*Woman, 31, Barcelona, from Gabon, migrated from China, where she lived before, at age 25*

'There is disintegration and lack of identification among the second generation immigrants, their hatred against society is a response to rejection. I am a Muslim and in Morocco there are religious fundamentalists, but none as extreme as those I have seen here.'  
*Man, 34, Barcelona, migrated from Morocco at age 25*

'Some sectors of society are very closed, it is difficult for foreigners to access politics or public employment, for instance.'  
*Man, 50, Barcelona, migrated from Argentina at age 35*

'Integration here is kind of accessible, what is basic is to learn the Catalan language and support Catalan culture, then they accept you.'  
*Woman, 28, Barcelona, migrated from Kamerun at age 13*

'There is a lack of integration in general though my personal experiences are mostly good, though I had some difficulties before learning Spanish well.'  
*Woman, 30, Barcelona, migrated from China at age 22*

'There is a part of Catalonia that is very racist, that is also why they started this Plataforma de Catalunya party<sup>8</sup>. But to say that this is general for Catalan society would not be correct, it is neither fair nor true. There are some tendencies, but I

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<sup>8</sup> *Platform for Catalonia* is a small political party with an explicitly anti-immigrant party program. They gained 1,65% of the votes in the regional elections in 2012, but were not listed among the candidates in the elections in 2015 ([http://resultats.parlament2015.cat/09AU/DAU09999CM\\_L2.htm](http://resultats.parlament2015.cat/09AU/DAU09999CM_L2.htm)).

don't think that Catalan society is very racist.' *Man, 54 years old, Barcelona, migrated from Senegal at age 34*

The respondents were also asked whether integration and relations between natives and immigrants in their view have improved or deteriorated over the last years. In Sweden, 13/30 respondents think that the situation has gotten worse, and only one (Chinese) respondent that it has gotten better. It should be noted that among the Afro-Swedish respondents, 3 out of 6 replied "Both," stating that there has been an increasing polarization. They claim that parallel to the increasing presence of racist discourse and actors, there are also more active anti-racist movements and awareness of discrimination. The exact same reply was provided by a Kurdish and a Chinese respondent as well. Among those who replied "no difference," 3 respondents claimed that society "has always been equally racist."

'It has gotten worse, there is more racism and nationalism, Swedes are very sensitive and take everything as critique, they think that everything Swedish is the best.' *Man, 37, Stockholm, migrated from France at age 22*

'Before, you did not meet racists everywhere or hear such things, but now they are here. It makes me worried. Now when I go somewhere, I never used to think about me being an immigrant, but now, looking at people... they are not nice when they discover that I am an immigrant. I am not that dark, but when they notice, their behavior changes. It didn't use to be like that.' *Woman, 60, Stockholm, migrated from Turkey at age 38*

'Honestly, yes [Sweden is a racist country]. But it is not black and white, and I have no victim mentality. I struggle, based on how society looks like, so to speak. There is clearly institutionalized racism, I have felt it myself and my parents have suffered from it. Yes, it is a racist country, but it is hard to say it because my friends are 95% Swedes and they are amazing people. But yes, institutions and society may be racist in a hidden way and still it is a fantastic country.' *Man, 37, Stockholm, migrated from Chile at age 9*

In Spain, 6 of the respondents thinks that it has gotten better and 5 worse, but the vast majority provides answers such as "I don't know" or "There are problems but it has always

been that way.” Interestingly, all six Western immigrants think that integration works better in Spain/Catalonia than in their countries of origin, even if they recognize that there is racism affecting people from “third world countries.”

‘It is better than Sweden though there are problems, here it is more open, it is possible to talk about prejudice, there are more problems in Swedish suburbs.’  
*Woman, 42, Barcelona, migrated from Sweden at age 32*

‘It is good here, though maybe it was a bit easier to “become local” when I came here 20 years ago, there were less foreigners then.’ *Man, 44, Barcelona, migrated from the United States at age 20*

‘It is much better than in Finland, there is more mixing and people are more open.’  
*Woman, 37, Barcelona, migrated from Finland at age 25*

Beyond how attitudes among the native majority are perceived by immigrants, exploitation on the labor market represents a dimension of unfair treatment that seriously hinders integration in the case of Spain/Catalonia, and that is not directly linked to racism or ethnic discrimination. Testimonies of immigrants being overrepresented in exploitative jobs are present in several of the Spanish respondents’ narratives (while none of the Swedish respondents have any personal experiences of or mention this as a problem). Being taken advantage of as cheap labor with an extremely weak position on the labor market, which is a very common experience among immigrants in Spain (Hellgren 2015, Pulido, Rodríguez, Rendón, interviews 2014) appears to have more to do with irregular or temporary migration statuses and about being in desperate need of a job for basic subsistence, than with discrimination based on ethno-racial grounds. Leaving jobs where the conditions are considered inhumane, as in the agricultural sector, becomes a central part of the integration process for immigrants who start their migration project at the bottom of society.

‘I think that the problems with racism are not so big here, but social inequality is the real problem.’ *Woman, 21, Barcelona, migrated from Congo at age 9*

‘You only see black people selling things in the streets, not in normal jobs.’ *Woman, 34 years old, Barcelona migrated from the United States at age 24*

'As Senegalese you are often a victim of it... I know how it is like, I have been in these situations. Working in agriculture, you are not treated like a human being. It is a job where they don't respect your rights.' *Man, 54 years old, Barcelona, migrated from Senegal at age 34*

'If you don't have the papers you have no rights. I could work the whole day in the fields for 25 euros, from 6 in the morning until 8 at night... But I saw it as something temporary. I wanted to do other things, research, languages... and I left that job, and thanks to help from my family and my cousin who let me live with him, I could subsist. And then I started working for an NGO, with integration. Then they offered me a job in Barcelona, as an English teacher. They have mostly treated me well here, well sometimes people call me "fucking nigger" but in general... In the fields, that was something else, that was simply exploitation.' *Man, 37 years old, Barcelona, migrated from Nigeria at age 30*

#### 4.3.6.2. Potential for better practices? The respondents' accounts on the main assets and obstacles for integration in Stockholm and Barcelona

As indicated in the previous section on differences between the two societal contexts, the lack of contact between natives and immigrants is overall perceived as a central impediment for integration, and more salient in the Swedish case than in the Spanish. The high degree of ethno-social segregation on the housing market in Stockholm is brought up in several of the interviews as one important explanation to this lack of contact, which marks a difference with the case of Barcelona that is more generally described in terms of an ethnically and culturally mixed "melting pot."

'Stockholm is completely physically segregated, and that is a huge problem. Different kinds of people almost never meet.' *Woman, 45, Stockholm, migrated from Chile at age 6*

'It is a problem when a place is as segregated as it is here, there are no natural meeting points. Then people walk around and paint a picture of how others are that may not be correct. Something is wrong about the contact between people when so

many vote for the Sweden Democrats.' *Woman, 27, Stockholm, migrated from Congo at age 2*

IP: Stockholm is incredibly segregated. Well, Sydney too I guess, but not the same way. Maybe it is because of how the housing market works. I really think about that when I go back, that there it is visibly multicultural, and not here. Not in central Stockholm. At the university...well those who do the cleaning [are immigrants].

*I: Have your work places here been multiethnic?*

IP: I worked for a Swedish authority... my closest friend there was the only one with a foreign name, she was from Bosnia, and some idiot there could make jokes with her, like "well you know how it is like in the ghetto," things like that.

*I: Because they assumed that she grew up in a marginalized suburb?*

IP: Yes, so that was my experience, that the only person there with a foreign background was exposed to that kind of comments.' *Woman, 35 years old, Stockholm, migrated from Australia at age 17*

The interethnic character of Barcelona, and to some degree of Catalan society overall, is brought up among many of the respondents here when they talk about the main opportunities and advantages for integration in the society where they live. Openness to dialogue, cultural tolerance, and an active civil society, which encourages participation in local networks and cultural activities, are characteristics that 20/30 respondents consider the main assets of Barcelona and Catalan society. Several of the respondents here also bring up the importance of Spanish and Catalan immigration history for understanding what migrating is like; both the fact that Spain has a long tradition of emigration (to northern Europe) for economic motives, and that Catalonia has received much labor immigration from other parts of Spain.

'There is tolerance and openness here, it is a country with a long migration history, people identify with immigrants.' *Woman, 31, Barcelona, from Gabon, migrated from China, where she lived before, at age 25*

'In Catalonia, people generally understand the concept of immigration; many of them immigrated themselves or have parents or grandparents from the south of Spain. That creates more empathy, which is helpful for integration.' *Woman, 21, Barcelona, migrated from Congo at age 9*

'Catalan people are open to dialogue, and when they are wrong, they recognize that and want to change. That is an advantage with the Catalans, it makes living with them much easier.' *Man, 54, Barcelona, migrated from Syria at age 29*

'The strong civil society here facilitates integration, immigrants can also take advantage of this structure and organize themselves. This way the Senegalese community became a part of Catalan society and we understand each other, Senegalese society is also built on a network of strong associations. We participate much at the local level. Perhaps because Catalan society has experienced oppression they identify [with disadvantage] and this makes the relationship more easy-going.' *Man, 54 years old, Barcelona, migrated from Senegal at age 34*

'Honestly, I have visited other European countries and I think that the Spanish society is more tolerant than any other European society. For instance in France... people here are much nicer. It is much easier to integrate when there is a relation between people.' *Man, 34 years old, Barcelona, migrated from Morocco at age 25*

'This is a perfect mix between southern lifestyle, the sun, the relaxed atmosphere, and the modern European society.' *Man, 36, Barcelona, migrated from Canada at age 28*

'It is so free and easy to live here, Finland is full of stupid rules and regulations and people are more introvert, I am much happier here. There are so many people living here that are not originally from here and they are really easy to meet and hang out with. And then the Catalan people, they just speak Catalan so they are easy to identify too (laughs). There is a lot of cultural difference, it feels like home because everybody is different anyway, so then I don't feel so different.' *Woman, 37, Barcelona, migrated from Finland at age 25*

These experiences of contacts with Catalan society, together with the accounts described in the previous section on labor market related difficulties, provide a picture of integration in

Catalonia as largely facilitated by interpersonal relations (though this picture is not unanimous; several respondents also describe the Catalan people as inaccessible), though simultaneously hampered by the lack of professional opportunities and economic security. The advantages with life in Sweden that the respondents in Stockholm describe are contrastingly strongly focused on the Swedish welfare system and the opportunities this offers to enjoy family work-life balance and economic stability, both among Western and non-Western immigrants; altogether, 22/30 respondents consider the economic security as the most important asset of Swedish society (all six of the Western respondents state that this is a central reason why they have chosen to live in Sweden).

'People feel safe here, society takes care of you. I have never lived abroad, but I don't think it is as secure as Sweden. That is why we choose to stay here even if it is cold and dark for 6 months a year... School is better here [than in Turkey] and it is for free, and I want the best future for my children.' *Woman, 30, Stockholm, migrated from Turkey at age 1*

'There are good values here, and I have the opportunity to study what I want, for free.' *Woman, 22, Stockholm, born in Sweden, parents migrated from China*

'There is social and economic security here.' *Man, 39, Stockholm, migrated from Guinea Bissau at age 5*

'Sweden is good for family life, it is easy to have a family here, childcare is very cheap and there are many subsidies.' *Woman, 39, Stockholm, migrated from France at age 29*

'Here, you can fulfill yourself and your life project and do what you want.' *Man, 41, Stockholm, migrated from China at age 26*

'It is a fantastic society where the state spends so much to help people.' *Man, 37, Stockholm, migrated from France at age 22*

The immigrant respondents in Sweden do not appear to be concerned about subsistence or primarily economic worries. Most of the non-Western respondents perceive that their professional opportunities are seriously hampered, but this is explained by discrimination and not a general lack of jobs. Their main concerns regard the lack of contacts with Swedes

and the sense of not being wanted by the majority society. Creating better interethnic contacts is perceived as essential for integration; as one of the respondents suggests, though jokingly, perhaps romantic relationships and ethnically mixed family constellations is one way to really accomplish “integration.”

‘Yes, love is something that really works [for integration], because that is when you get rid of all these strange stereotypes that you have.’ *Woman, 29, Stockholm, father from Eritrea, mother Swedish*

‘Since high school I have thought that just being yourself is the most beautiful thing you can be. But a lot [of immigrants] try, there are language problems, many other issues... it is sad because at some point they all realize that they will never be seen as if they were from here, and then they experience this shock, that is very unpleasant. The foreigner who tries to do everything perfectly but still does not.... [become accepted].’ *Man, 32 years old, Sweden, migrated from Kurdistan at age 16*

#### 4.3.6.3. Integration as a personal choice – who is expected to integrate and who is not?

The experience of not being affected by the majority society’s expectations to “integrate” in the sense of “becoming more like that national majority” is shared by the Western respondents overall, and marks a contrast with the non-Western immigrants. It appears as if the perceived “right” to choose whether to integrate or not constitutes a central marker of difference between different categories of immigrants, where those who come from high status countries are given a “carte blanche” from the majority society’s expectations that they will integrate.

‘I: So integration is facilitated [for white western immigrants] by an international environment?

IP: Yes, or maybe not facilitated, it is more that you are not required to integrate at all.’ *Man, 36, Barcelona, migrated from Canada at age 28*

IP: There are very few immigrants where I live [in Sant Gervasi, a wealthy residential area in Barcelona], many foreigners from the US and Europe, white people, but not immigrants from third world countries. If some colored people arrive there, they are pretty well received as long as they go to school and learn Catalan well. Then it is like, "ok, now they are one of us."

*I: Is that the most important thing for being accepted here, to adapt to Catalan culture?*

IP: Yes, if you are not white.

*I: If you are white you don't have to adapt?*

IP: Well, yes to some extent, but you automatically have a certain status that gives you respect. If you are from Eastern Europe or from the Third World, then you are seen as inferior and the first thing you have to do is integrate and learn Catalan as soon as possible. I understand everything they say in Catalan but I don't have to speak it... I can switch to Spanish, and then you'll never be one of them but being Nordic that is ok.' *Man, 44 years old, Barcelona, migrated from Norway at age 30*

*I: So, the main concept in this project is integration. Have you ever felt that is a word that applies to you?*

IP: Not really, no. Since I didn't integrate myself for the first couple of years... off the record, I haven't even been living here officially until 3 months ago. I had a German health insurance and was going back so much to Germany. Nobody checks, you have your first residence where you spend 180 days per year but... I had my family, I went back to Germany, so for the first years there was no integration. I don't know what the definition is but... I am a freelancer, I don't participate in worklife.

*I: Do you think that it would be a problem for your life here if you never learned Swedish?*

IP: Ja also... you probably get along anyway. It makes it more complicated to some extent, for taxes and authorities and so, many things are in English but many only in Swedish, so you would probably have to go there instead of doing it all online for instance.' *Man, 40, Stockholm, migrated from Germany at age 33*

Some of the immigrant respondents from non-Western countries state that they feel limited by the expectations that they will become more like the ethnic majority; they think that it would be beneficial for integration if this idea were abandoned and the majority society accepted that there are many different ways to be, for instance, “Swedish” or “Catalan.” To feel that maintaining links with the country of origin is accepted is important for several of the respondents, particularly among those who migrated as adults. Some respondents claim that when there is no perceived contradiction between being both “Swedish and Kurdish” or “Catalan and Senegalese,” it becomes easier to incorporate the majority culture in their own sense of identity and belonging. Many immigrants are furthermore expected and required to maintain strong links with the country of origin, where family members may need remittances to subsist. Such transnational links and loyalties make the idea of “becoming” another nationality further unrealistic. Feeling “forced to choose sides” is likely to generate hostility towards the majority society and unwillingness to become a part of it. And, logically, feeling unaccepted generates unwillingness to be a part of the group that does not accept (Goffman 1963).

‘Integration is having a job. But in the debate, it seems like you are supposed to become Swedish to integrate. Norms... but my mother doesn’t have the same norms as her sister! For the Sweden Democrats, integration is about how you are as a person, but for me it is about participating in society, having a job that is. Whether you celebrate Christmas or not, that has nothing to do with integration I think. I mean, I am very integrated but I will always be asked where I come from.’ *Woman, 29, Stockholm, father from Eritrea, mother Swedish*

‘Integration is a shady concept I’d say. My first thought is, ok, but then give me a definition! What are you supposed to be integrated into? The way I see it there is one Swedish society and then thousands of other societies within this society that still are a part of Sweden. And it is impossible to become integrated into all these societies. I went to high school in *Solsidan* [wealthy suburb outside of Stockholm] and there are lots of ethnic Swedes their and from a certain class, maybe not upper class but... yes, they are quite rich, frankly. And maybe that is a society that I should or should not be integrated into... Then there is *Fisksätra* [suburb outside of Stockholm with high rates of immigrants and low incomes] where a lot of people

with immigrant backgrounds live, and there is not a lot of talk about how people from Solsidan should integrate into our society. I feel that there are two sides here, where one must integrate and adapt to the other.’ *Man, 23, Stockholm, parents from Eritrea*

‘I don’t want to become Swedish. What it is about is how stereotypes are experienced when it comes to integration. It is about not being defined as *different* [my italics], just because I am not Swedish.’ *Man, 42, Stockholm, migrated from China at age 24*

A common perception among the respondents is that non-Western immigrants’ “contribution” to the mutual adaptation process – which is inevitable for actual integration to take place – is not appreciated by the ethnic majority. The following account by an African respondent in Barcelona explicitly sums up this experience, and gets to conclude the vast empirical data that this report is based upon:

‘I feel both [Catalan and Senegalese]. I don’t want to lose these ties, this Senegalese sentiment. In summertime I dress in traditional Senegalese clothes because I feel like it. It is a cultural and an emotional tie. Very few of us abandon this [Senegalese] identity and decides to no longer form part of it, the emotional relationship with Senegal is also central for the transfers and remittances.[...] I will not change, I live here and respect how things work here, but I will never deny my origin. So if society allows or even encourages me to live like this, then we can live together, but this does of course not always happen. Some people think that those who come here don’t adapt. But adapt to what? From what perspective? Western, European, Catholic..? They don’t consider that people who come here may be sources of ideas, of knowledge... no, they assume that those who come here must adapt or leave. That makes integration very difficult.’ *Man, 54, Barcelona, migrated from Senegal at age 34*

## **5. Concluding discussion**

The overall purpose of this project has been to examine to what extent and in what ways do immigrants of different origins perceive acceptance, belonging and identification with the majority society in Sweden and Spain/Catalonia, or more specifically in the cities of Stockholm and Barcelona. The sixty in-depth interviews with immigrants of diverse origins were complemented by twenty-one stakeholder interviews to complement the immigrants' self-perceptions with a more general account on the integration work being performed and what main obstacles and opportunities that integration practitioners encounter in each context. Based on the comprehensive qualitative data generated that has been described in detail in the previous section, I will conclude this report with some general statements and reflections.

Overall, experiences of overt racism, ethnic discrimination in different spheres of social life (particularly on the labor market) and more subtle forms of rejection constitute the main obstacle that respondents who define themselves as racialized experience. 27 out of 36 respondents of African, Muslim and Latin American origin in both Stockholm and Barcelona often experience rejection and discrimination, and perceive that their origin is negative for their chances on the labor market. A vast majority of the respondents, 56 out of 60, argue that "race" (generally understood as equal to skin color) is central for how people are treated by the majority society, and what opportunities they have. Most of the immigrant respondents in both countries with largely negative perceptions and experiences also think that their ethnic origin is devalued by the majority society, and that they are perceived as less skilled and competent based on stereotypes of their home countries.

Moreover, comparing Stockholm and Barcelona, there are some context specific differences that are particularly striking. In Stockholm, negative attitudes towards immigrants among the ethnic majority, together with a lack of everyday, interethnic contacts because of the cemented housing segregation, are perceived as major problems with negative effects for integration. In Barcelona, contrastingly, many of the respondents consider the existence of frequent interethnic contacts in streets and squares as an important asset and part of the city's much-appreciated "cosmopolitan" character. Here, instead, acute socio-economic

marginalization and precariousness among immigrants are central concerns and perceived to seriously hamper integration processes.

The experiences of discrimination and its concrete effects, in terms of for instance not getting the jobs one applies for despite fulfilling the formal requirements, points at the relationship between negative stereotyping/ethnic discrimination and socio-economic disadvantage, which appears to be a particularly serious dimension of the obstacles for the integration, or incorporation, of immigrants in society. Immigrants who experience being denied access to jobs, housing in attractive areas, or even, as many of the narratives reflect, the right to identify as “Swedes” or “Catalans” without being questioned by the ethnic majority, are simultaneously being denied the opportunity to social mobility. This in turn cements the racialized socio-economic marginalization that is a reality in all European immigration countries. At the level of policy implications, I would argue that integration policies need to be more explicitly linked to policies that address socio-economic inequality, besides combating ethnic discrimination and empowering immigrants in different ways. It appears reasonable to assume that without real equality of opportunities, integration is hardly possible.

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