



The role of the NGOs in the integration of the newly arrived: the case of the Swedish Red Cross

A comparative perspective on the two large refugee resettlements in the 90s and 2010s in the context of integration initiatives

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Abstract

This paper investigates the position of the Swedish Red Cross in two large periods of refugee resettlement in the 90s and 2010s. Using a comparative perspective has enabled a thorough and retrospective observation of the differences in the integration initiatives of the organisation during the respective time periods. In doing so, this thesis used the findings from interviews and documents to assess a triad of dominating discourses surrounding the refugee crisis; ‘treatment of tortured refugees and asylum seekers; social activities through international meeting centres and Swedish Red Cross local branches; the relationship between the Swedish Red Cross and the Swedish authorities’.

On a theoretical level, the study examines whether integration initiatives of the Swedish Red Cross have become imbued with solidarity and agency in terms of NGO community -building within the framework of Bhattacharyya's theoretical interpretation. The findings of the study suggests that the Swedish Red Cross today is more visible in the field, given that the state frequently shares the role of providing social services with local authorities and NGOs. As such, this research contributes to the body of scholarly research on the role of NGOs in the integration of the newly arrived focusing on the case of the Swedish Red Cross.

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1. Introduction

Can we stop catastrophe? Even though the slogan “Never again”, which was frequently used after the Holocaust, is said in hope, since then the world has witnessed many genocides and war crimes, as well as ethnic cleansing and the death or displacement of millions of people. Unfortunately, catastrophes do not end. Genocides and violations of human rights have continued in Rwanda, Darfur, Bosnia, Yemen, Myanmar, Syria and many other countries. These conditions force the international community, states and voluntary non-governmental organisations to act to raise awareness and to become more aware of human rights. Undoubtedly, in order to hope that mass violence never happens again, it is necessary to do something beyond watching the events of the world silently, and not to become complicit by remaining silent in the face of catastrophe.¹ Unfortunately, millions of displacement persons forced to flee to other countries due to these conflicts.

Most European societies and countries have experienced large-scale immigration since World War II. Sweden is one of these countries that has a history of immigration and has experienced large refugee resettlements. However, after these large waves of immigration, many countries like Sweden had to find strategies to deal with "the integration of new groups". Research shows us that the immigrants' inclusion or integration process to the social structures of host communities have emerged as a challenge for nation-states and welfare state policies². After a great number of refugees came chiefly from the Middle East, former Yugoslavia, Somalia at the end of the 80s and in early 90s, it was necessary that new steps be taken. However, the most recent refugee resettlement in Sweden demonstrates the importance of the participation of the civil society organizations in reception and integration.³ All actors such as municipalities, national government and NGOs have distinctive roles and must make their own decisions to be able to cope with this major change. There are a number of studies which deal with the concept of integration in terms of government policies, however, the refugee influx also requires further clarification regarding the function of civil society in integration. Using a historical and comparative perspective examining the same single case at two or more different points this study focuses on the role of the Swedish Red Cross in integration of the newly arrived refugees (in the most recent refugee resettlement in 2010s and onward and in the previous large refugee experience in the 90s). It also examines the impact and

¹ Ambrosewicz-Jakobs, Jolanta and Fundacja Judaica - Centrum Kultury Żydowskiej. *Why should we Teach about the Holocaust?* Cracow: Jagiellonian University, 2005, p.58.

² Heckmann, Friedrich and Dominique Schnapper. *The Integration of Immigrants in European Societies: National Differences and Trends of Convergence*. Vol. 7. New Providence: Unknown Publisher, 2003. p.9.

³ Hansen, K. "Egalitarianism Under Siege? Swedish Refugee Reception and Social Trust". In S. Bendixsen, M. Bingslid, and H. Vike (Eds.), *Egalitarianism in Scandinavia, Approaches to Social Inequality and Difference*. 2018, p.273.

role of civil society which changed over the years, as well as on the Swedish Red Cross's relationship with the Swedish state in terms of integration initiatives.

1.1. NGOs in the welfare state

The history of the volunteer sector in Sweden dates back nineteenth century and its relationship with the state constitutes an integral part of this history.⁴ Hereby, Tommy Lundström addresses the importance of historical perspective to clarify the voluntary sector's status in the Swedish welfare state. The first turning point, which is considered important in understanding the conditions of the sector and the changes that take place today, is the establishment of charities in the 1840s, the second is the role of voluntary organizations with the emergence of social policy discourse in the middle of the nineteenth century, and the third is the retrenchment in voluntary sector activities following the establishment of the welfare state.⁵ Today, there are debates on a tendency towards an Anglo Saxon approach, which emphasizes the role of voluntary organizations as service producers.⁶

In the 19th century, following of the weakening of the central state and the state church, new organizations which provided education and aid for the poor began to fill the gap left by the institutions that had previously held power.⁷ It is also emphasized that popular mass movements such as the workers' and sports movements that emerged in the second half of the 19th century are crucial part of the history of the voluntary sector. At the beginning of the 20th century, CSA (The National Association for Social Work), which is a charity founded in Sweden, dealt with changing government policies regarding child welfare and poor aid. Members of these and similar organizations are known to assume prominent roles in the social welfare state bureaucracy. Lundström notes that this is noteworthy for understanding the historical and close relationship between the state and non-profit organizations that exist today.⁸

Lundström states that the fields of activity where the sector is dominant were taken over by the national government and municipalities although volunteer organizations stand to contribute in certain areas with the emergence of the welfare state. However, the striking point is that the acquisition of these activities by the government and municipalities is based on mutual consent. It means that the public sector took over the voluntary social services without any conflict.⁹ For

⁴ Lundström, Tommy. "The State and Voluntary Social Work in Sweden." *Voluntas* (Manchester, England) 7, no. 2 (1996). p.126.

⁵ Lundström, Tommy. "The State and Voluntary Social Work in Sweden", p. 126.

⁶ Hiilamo Heikki "Solidarity in a Nordic Welfare State: The Case of Finland" ed. Laitinen, Arto and Anne Birgitta Pessi. *Solidarity: Theory and Practice*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015, p. 234-246.

⁷ Lundström, Tommy. "The State and Voluntary Social Work in Sweden", p. 126.

⁸ Lundström, Tommy. "The State and Voluntary Social Work in Sweden", p. 137-138.

⁹ Lundström, Tommy. "The State and Voluntary Social Work in Sweden", p. 133.

instance, Lundsström mentions that home assistance to sick people, initiated by the Swedish Red Cross in 1920, was carried out in cooperation with the municipalities. Then, the government preferred only the municipalities for the providing of these services and gave subsidies to the municipalities that organized these activities within the boundary of themselves. Likewise, while home assistance service for the elderly was one of the major Red Cross activities in the 1950s, it was taken over by the municipalities in the 1960s.¹⁰

As a matter of fact, this new decision regarding the subsidies averted the municipalities' benefit from the services of voluntary organizations, even though voluntary organization activities were not suspended.¹¹ Lundström underlines that with the emergence of the welfare state, the aim of government's taking over of social services is not to reduce deliberately the function of the volunteer sector but instead to ensure that these services reach more people. Ultimately, Lundström describes the relationship between the state and the voluntary sector as a close collaboration and integrative processes. While the Swedish voluntary sector was dominant in the areas like sports and adult education, its effects on social services and healthcare was poor. Nevertheless, the voluntary sector had a supportive role in the fields which the public sector was active.¹²

However, Hiilamo mentions that the welfare state regime theory claims that the traditional aid is provided by the church and voluntary organizations to vulnerable groups would disappear during the development of the "social-democratic" welfare state. This statement emphasizes that solidarity will not be able to continue through the voluntary organizations. Namely, the needs of people would be met by public institutions and there would be no place for volunteer actors.¹³

In the year of the 90s, it was witnessed the conditions have undergone to transform in terms of the public sector. Lundström describes the 1990s as a period when the relations between the state, municipalities, and the voluntary sector evolved. Economic and ideological factors are considered as major factors contributing to this change.¹⁴ In more detail, these factors have been shaped around neo-liberal ideas relevant to create a more visible area for civil society and the economic crisis in the early 1990s, which undermined the government's ability to finance and sustain welfare institutions.¹⁵ In the context of the ongoing discussions towards the participation of civil society organizations in the field of social services, this study aims to investigate the engagement of non-governmental organizations in the newly arrived integration process. The foregoing summary of the history of the voluntary sector in Sweden enables the reader to comprehend the position of the voluntary sector in the welfare state.

¹⁰ Lundström, Tommy. "The State and Voluntary Social Work in Sweden", p. 133.

¹¹ Lundström, Tommy. "The State and Voluntary Social Work in Sweden", p. 133.

¹² Lundström, Tommy. "The State and Voluntary Social Work in Sweden", p. 139.

¹³ Hiilamo Heikki "Solidarity in a Nordic Welfare State: The Case of Finland", p. 234-246.

¹⁴ Lundström, Tommy and Lars Svedberg. "The Voluntary Sector in a Social Democratic Welfare State—The Case of Sweden." *Journal of Social Policy* 32, no. 2 (2003), p. 226-227.

¹⁵ Lundström, Tommy and Lars Svedberg. "The Voluntary Sector in a Social Democratic Welfare State—The Case of Sweden.", p. 226-227.

1.2. Research Aim

This study scrutinises the work of the Swedish Red Cross, the largest humanitarian organization in Sweden with a long history of immigration-related work, on the integration of newcomers. In doing so, it puts attention to the voice of the employees of the organization that actively engaged with integration work. The comparison of the two major refugee experiences historically, that one in the early 90s and the most recent one in 2010s and beyond allows us to grasp similarities or differences in integration activities. Agency and solidarity are two concepts that shape the theoretical discussion in analysing the integration services.

1.3. Research Questions

How have the Swedish Red Cross' integration initiatives changed from the 1990s to 2015 and onward?

To what extent do the refugee activities of the Swedish Red Cross reflect the concepts of solidarity and agency in NGO community-building?

How does the Swedish Red Cross define its relationship with the state in its work on integration?

1.4. Theoretical Reflections

When the golden years of the welfare state came to an end in the 90s, voluntary organizations regained their strong positions by taking action to serve the well-being and development of the society.¹⁶ Following this change, voluntary organizations made an effort to organize various activities and campaigns on issues such as vulnerable groups in society, social exclusion and struggle against poverty. On the other hand, the late 80s and early 90s is a period in which Sweden experienced a large refugee influx.¹⁷ Similar to the example of the struggle against poverty that emerged in the welfare state following the economic crisis, the same institutions have made new arrangements to overcome the new situation and the efforts to resettle the refugees have been an integral part of their work. In other words, the focus of the activities shifted towards refugees during this period.

It is vital to have the necessary conditions for the host and refugee communities to adapt to living together following large refugee influxes. Agencies such as schools, hospitals, municipalities and NGOs should each fulfil their functions in order to ensure social order and development.¹⁸ It

¹⁶ Lundström, Tommy and Lars Svedberg. "The Voluntary Sector in a Social Democratic Welfare State—The Case of Sweden.", p. 217-238.

¹⁷ Westin, Charles, Elena Dingu-Kyrklund 'Immigration and Integration of Immigrants and their Descendants: The Swedish Approach', ed. Heckmann, Friedrich and Dominique Schnapper. *The Integration of Immigrants in European Societies: National Differences and Trends of Convergence*. Vol. 7. New Providence: Unknown Publisher, 2003, p.105.

¹⁸ Hustedde, Ronald J. and Jacek Ganowicz. "The Basics: What's Essential about Theory for Community Development Practice?" *Journal of the Community Development Society* 33, no. 1 (2002). p.5.

is specifically interesting to examine the contribution of NGOs, which are increasingly taking responsibility in the welfare state, to community development. In this thesis, which examines an NGO integration initiatives in the process of adaptation to the new society after large migration experiences, it seems appropriate to explain the reflections of refugee resettlement activities towards agency and solidarity with the theory of community development.

There are different definitions of community development in the literature. Anthropologists, community psychologists, sociologists, outreach professionals and community economists have their own academic perspectives on community development.¹⁹ According to Hustedde and Ganowicz; the goal of community development is to build capacity to understand, to create, to act.²⁰ In doing so, community developers contribute to the development of a person's capacity by encouraging them to realize their own dreams and teaching them new skills and knowledge. Besides, community developers identify the existing problems to ensure solidarity among ethnically and ideologically diverse populations.²¹

Bhattacharyya argues that the aim of community development is to seek solidarity and agency, adhering to the principles of *self-help*, *felt needs* and *participation*.²² In other words, he claims that the activity should be galvanized with solidarity and agency in order to call any activity (minority rights, elderly care, environment, cultural rights, economic development) community development.²³ We can consider integration initiatives as part of these activities.

Bhattacharyya presents a new conceptual definition by reinterpreting the classic concept of community development with solidarity and agency. He argues that classic community development definitions are not universal and that most community development writers refer to the community as a village, neighbourhood, or an agricultural settlement. According to him; such definition of the concept, which sees the place or space as an integral part of society, is problematic. In place-centred societies, place or locality is important because most social activities take place within boundaries and among people who know each other and share a common culture.²⁴

However, modernity removes this importance, since most social activities are no longer limited to the physical space. Henceforward, in order for the community development to be a universally relevant field, we should go beyond the perspective that understands the community within the physical limits of a certain place.²⁵ It is emphasized that the quality that unites these two different

¹⁹ Hustedde, Ronald J. and Jacek Ganowicz. "The Basics: What's Essential about Theory for Community Development Practice?", p. 1.

²⁰ Hustedde, Ronald J. and Jacek Ganowicz. "The Basics: What's Essential about Theory for Community Development Practice?", p. 3.

²¹ Hustedde, Ronald J. and Jacek Ganowicz. "The Basics: What's Essential about Theory for Community Development Practice?", p. 3.

²² Bhattacharyya, Jnanabrata. "Solidarity and Agency: Rethinking Community Development." *Human Organization* 54, no. 1 (1995): 60-69.

²³ Bhattacharyya, Jnanabrata. "Solidarity and Agency: Rethinking Community Development.", p.61.

²⁴ Bhattacharyya, Jnanabrata, "Theorizing Community Development" *Journal of the Community Development Society* 34(2): 2004, p. 12.

²⁵ Bhattacharyya, Jnanabrata. "Theorizing Community Development" p. 11.

conceptions of society is solidarity. Bhattacharyya argues that understanding society as solidarity is what distinguishes it from other classical definitions and that any social structure with shared identity and norms is a community. Namely, it is articulated that solidarity is the desire to get along well with all people, to worry for everyone, and to make a collective effort to create and maintain a charitable society.²⁶

Another factor considered necessary for community development is agency. Here, agency is defined as the ability of people to order their own world.²⁷ Bhattacharyya states that the aim of community development is to protect and rebuild it when agency right is lost. Besides, the concept of community development, proceeding with solidarity and agency, should also coincide with this purpose in practice. Thus, it is articulated that the three principles, namely *self-help*, *felt needs* and *participation* - are suitable methods to practice community development.²⁸

Let us look at these three principles that are suitable for community development practice. According to the *self-help* principle, people should be productive instead of consuming, and active and creative but they should not depend on others. However, due to some reasons there are people who can not help themselves and so, the first aim of this principle is developing the capacity of people to be able to avail themselves. The task of the community developer is involving in this process so that people who are troubled themselves aware of their problems.²⁹ The *Felt-need* principle, which is thought to complement the *self-help* principle, emphasizes fulfilling the needs defined by the affected people themselves.³⁰ Finally, *participation* is defined as being involved in the production of collective meanings and not being excluded from it.³¹ Similarly, seeing immigrants as the only side that has to adapt into the new society, and dealing with integration as assimilation can be an example of this exclusion. It is highlighted that the principle of participation should be understood as involving those people in the process of defining and solving the problems. In summary, Bhattacharyya states that these three principles are complementary to each other and together provide the necessary guidance for the implementation of community development. In addition, whatever the problem is be it racism, sexism, employment, health, the environment, housing; or integration, he emphasizes that the problem should be felt and expressed by people. Thus, people can regain their agency by being involved in the whole process from defining the problem to its solution.³²

Based on the Bhattacharyya's explanation of the theory of community development, this thesis explores the decisions, changes, and goals towards refugee integration by delving into initiatives of the Swedish Red Cross. For instance, it will be examined whether the needs of newcomers are

²⁶ Bhattacharyya, Jnanabrata. "Theorizing Community Development" p. 14.

²⁷ Bhattacharyya, Jnanabrata. "Solidarity and Agency: Rethinking Community Development.", p. 61.

²⁸ Bhattacharyya, Jnanabrata. "Solidarity and Agency: Rethinking Community Development.", p. 63.

²⁹ Bhattacharyya, Jnanabrata. "Solidarity and Agency: Rethinking Community Development.", p. 63.

³⁰ Bhattacharyya, Jnanabrata. "Solidarity and Agency: Rethinking Community Development.", p. 63.

³¹ Bhattacharyya, Jnanabrata. "Solidarity and Agency: Rethinking Community Development.", p. 63.

³² Bhattacharyya, Jnanabrata. "Solidarity and Agency: Rethinking Community Development.", p. 64-66.

taken into account when organizing social activities for their integration, namely, whether they are involved in the process from the definition of the problem to its solution. In doing so, it will discuss whether integration activities for refugees are compatible with solidarity and agency in the context of community development within the framework of Bhattacharyya's theoretical interpretation.

1.5. Historical Background

When Swiss businessman Henri Dunant saw the devastation caused by the Battle of Solferino, one of the worst conflict of the time in northern Italy in 1859, he tried to help the wounded in the region without any medical knowledge. Following the battle of Solferino, Dunant considered training volunteers who would neutrally assist the wounded in wars and disasters. Thus, the International Red Cross was established in Geneva, Switzerland, at the proposal of Dunant in 1863.³³ The Swedish Red Cross was founded as a 'society' on May 24, 1865. In the first years, the organization made efforts to prepare for humanitarian aid in possible wars and working on nursing education. The Swedish Red Cross Society was renamed the Swedish Red Cross in 1915. The Swedish Red Cross's first international aid experience took place during the Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913. During the First World War, the Swedish Red Cross assumed many tasks, such as helping prisoners of war.³⁴

Swedish Red Cross, carrying out activities in Germany in the Second World War, evacuated more than 20,000 people from the concentration camps to Sweden with the Swedish Red Cross vehicle known as the "white buses" in Scandinavian countries.³⁵ Assisting people in need during the Second World War, Swedish Red Cross focused on national first aid, home care and social welfare activities after the war. It opened new institutions for groups like children and the elderly. The Swedish Red Cross is also intensively involved in social services that began as early as 1918. In the 1930s and 40s, while the Swedish Red Cross provided school food services, in the 1950s it began providing food aid and home help services for the elderly. In the seventies, it was known to provide services such as play therapy for children with disabilities.³⁶ Today, the Swedish Red Cross continues its activities widely both at the global level and at the national level.

1.6. Methodology

This study is based on a case study of the Swedish Red Cross, which is a non-governmental humanitarian organisation. Yin categorizes case studies into as either single or multiple. According

³³ Swedish Red Cross. *Activity Report 2016*, p. 14.

³⁴ Haug, Hans, Hans-Peter Gasser, and Institut Henri-Dunant. *Humanity for all: The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement*. Vienna; Stuttgart; Berne; Haupt, 1993. p. 243-251.

³⁵ Haug, Hans, Hans-Peter Gasser, and Institut Henri-Dunant. *Humanity for all: The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement*, p. 243-251.

³⁶ Haug, Hans, Hans-Peter Gasser, and Institut Henri-Dunant. *Humanity for all: The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement*, p. 243-251.

to this distinction, studies focusing on only a case are called single case study, while the inclusion of more than one case in the study is referred to as a multiple case study.³⁷ Our study falls into the first category. Besides, Yin explains the single case study with five different rationales as a *critical, unusual, common, revelatory, or longitudinal case*.³⁸ The fifth rationale, the longitudinal phenomenon, is used to examine the same single case at two or more different points.³⁹ This rationale, which is used to determine how certain conditions and the processes underlying them change over time, provides us a comparative overview of the activities of the organization we studied between the 90s and 2015 and onward, in accordance with the scope of our study. The time intervals followed in this line reflect the stages that are thought to indicate the existence of major changes.⁴⁰ Thus, "before and after" logic allows us to analyse initiatives of the organization in large refugee experiences which are considered critical thresholds to humanitarian aid in the early 90s, and the 2015 refugee crisis and onward. More specific methodological aspects will be taken up in the following sections.

1.7. Source Material

Our main source materials are divided into two categories. The study was carried out through a combination of archival data (annual reports, journal of the International Red Cross, and news in the organization's website etc.) which was supplemented by qualitative interviews with four different employees working on integration issue. A categorization was made through determining the themes concerning the research aim, in the Swedish Red Cross reports between 1991-1999 and 2015-2019. In addition, the 1989-2000 issues of the *International Review of the Red Cross*, a peer-reviewed journal published by the International Red Cross Committee, were scrutinized by selecting articles on Swedish Red Cross's activities for refugees. The journal especially informs readers about the activities and policies of the Red Cross.

1.8. Assessment of interviews in the qualitative research

In this study evaluating the endeavors for refugee integration based on the Swedish Red Cross's initiatives at the national level, it was preferred to pursue an interview-oriented way as a qualitative study method. However, the targeted number of interviews could not be achieved due to the COVID-19 pandemic that emerged after several interviews were conducted. Therefore, interviews

³⁷Yin, Robert K. *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*. Sixth ed. Los Angeles: SAGE, 2018, p. 83.

³⁸ Yin, Robert K. *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*, p. 84.

³⁹ Yin, Robert K. *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*, p. 87.

⁴⁰ Yin, Robert K. *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*, p. 87.

were employed as materials that underpin document analysis rather than being the primary material of the study.

Bogdan and Biklen state that interviews can be used in two ways in the qualitative research. According to the first of these two methods, interviews can be a dominant strategy in collecting data or they can be used to supplement participant observation, document analysis, or other techniques. In both cases, the interview is used to collect descriptive data through the participants' own words.⁴¹ Thus, this study falls into the second category.

The purpose of conducting interviews is to get more knowledge on the changes which have emerged in conjunction with the most recent large refugee resettlement and talking about the experiences of staff as a voice of the organization. The semi-structured interviews consist of questions related to integration activities of the Swedish Red Cross and cooperation with the state and other institutions. Questions about the initiatives of the organization in the 90s were not answered because interviewees were not working there at that time except for one. One of my interviewees, who has been working at the institution since the 90s, relayed information about the integration activities of the organization in these years. The interview progressed in the form of a group discussion, with the participation of another interviewee (interviewed before) working in the integration department for many years.

The interviewees were identified using the information service of organization. After sending a brief notification about the reason and content of the interview, contacts were established with the authorities of the Swedish Red Cross who accepted the interview request. Following this, interviews were held in Stockholm, which is the headquarters of the organization. Additionally, an interview was made with the Uppsala Red Cross, one of the local branches of the organization. Three of the interviews were conducted face to face in early March 2020, and the other one interviews were made by e-mail. Face to face interviews were recorded using voice recording based on the consent of the interviewers. The interviews were numbered from 1 to 4 in the order of the dates they were conducted. Since the second person interviewed was Annie Mohl's consent, her name was explicitly used in the thesis. Apart from these, an open discussion was made with the press officer of the institution about the integration activities. This dialogue, which is not based on voice recording, was mostly in the form of a conversation. Lastly, I have contacted two staff who is working in Swedish Red Cross treatment centres to learn more information about the treatment of tortured in Sweden. These two interviews took place via e-mail in the form of discussion. To distinguish these conversations from the main interviews, those were called 'informants' in the study.

⁴¹ Bogdan, Robert, and Sari Knopp Biklen. *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods*. 5.th, Pearson, 2006, p.103.

1.9. Reports as a source

For the most part, employees of an organisation, which must constantly process paperwork, often participate in the production and consumption of comprehensive written records and other types of documents. Silverman emphasises that if we want to understand how such organisations work and how people work with them, we cannot ignore their various activities as readers and writers. In other words, to understand how organisations operate, we need to consider the content of such written and electronic records. These may consist of annual reports, brochures, journals etc.⁴² In this respect, it is not surprising that reports and documents are the noteworthy materials that allow us to understand how the Red Cross follows the path of refugee integration.

Initially, existing archives related to Swedish Red Cross's studies were scrutinized. For this purpose, Riksarkivet, the national archive of Sweden was visited to investigate the materials of the Swedish Red Cross archive. However, the archive called "Flyktingenheten" contains individual cases and not information on refugee work of Swedish Red Cross. It was not possible to make use of this archive since the documents related to individual cases were not considered appropriate both for the purpose of the study and in terms of the ethical concerns. However, during a visit to the centre of the Swedish Red Cross in Stockholm, the reports including information about refugee work in the 90s were obtained. Most of the material regarding the most recent refugee settlement is digitally available on the official website of the organization. The bulk of the interviews are dominant as a source, as they comprise current information on the second layer of the thesis, the last refugee settlement in 2010s.

1.10. Research Method

Bruce and Berg explain content analysis as a cautious, detailed, and systematic review and interpretation of a specific material to identify themes, prejudices, and meanings. In other words, they express content analysis mainly as a coding and data interpretation process.⁴³ Boréus and Bergström state that qualitative content analysis can be used in two different ways. For example, either a student may be concentrated on how often certain words are used in the text or focus on the ideational aspect of the text without counting and measuring. As a third option, researchers can keen on both approaches.⁴⁴ In this research, the second approach mentioned above; namely, a content analysis that scrutinizes texts from an ideational point of view and focusing what they mean for the recipient will be followed.

⁴² Atkinson Paul, Amanda Coffey. "Analysing documentary realities", ed. David Silverman. 1943. *Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice*. 2.th ed. London: SAGE, 2004, p. 56-59

⁴³ Berg, Bruce Lawrence, and Howard Lune. *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. 8., [rev.] ed. Upper Saddle River, N.J: Pearson Education, 2012, p. 380.

⁴⁴ Boréus, Kristina and Göran Bergström. *Analysing Text and Discourse: Eight Approaches for the Social Sciences*. London: SAGE, 2017, p. 25.

Boréus and Bergström point out that the content analysis method will be fruitful for comparing different text and for a researcher who aims to analyse changes over time.⁴⁵ Similarly, Bruce and Berg argue that while discussing the advantages of content analysis, suggests that this analysis can be useful for research that reflects a long-time trend in society. For instance, they state that one can work on the women perception in the media or the change in the image of women in a particular time.⁴⁶ As such, the research aim that is intended to discuss integration initiatives of the Swedish Red Cross coincides with the content analysis interest mentioned above.

On the one hand, researchers using this method can analyse data with many different contents such as videos, advertisements, novels, stamps, comics, textbooks, religious articles, brochures.⁴⁷ After determining the relevant contents within the scope of the research, it is necessary to make a decision on how to evaluate the documents. Bruce and Berg articulate that the first step of content analysis begins with the research question. The researcher, who notes the points of interest to evaluate the findings, can then identify analytical categories, themes, and category names. Additionally, Bruce and Berg highlight that the categories used by researchers in content analysis can be considered in an inductive or deductive way. In more detail, testing a hypothesis through existing categories refers to the deductive approach, while the categories created from the data obtained in the context of the research question are used to express the inductive approach.⁴⁸ This study follows the inductive approach as it aims to make analysis using the categories emerging from data.

Bogdan and Biklen note that in the process of reading the data, certain words, patterns of behaviour, or events are repeated and prominent, so that coding categories can be written with words and phrases collecting from the data. Bogdan and Biklen emphasizing that developing a list of coding categories after data has been collected is a crucial step in data analysis, propose code types such as activity codes, process codes, event codes, strategy codes that help develop coding categories and sorting out data. For example, process codes seem to be suitable for putting data in the order in organizational case studies that deal with change in an organization over time.⁴⁹ In this study categories concerning the prominent and interrelated contents in the texts and interviews have identified. Thus, the categories determined based on the content analysis aim to explain the change that took place over time in the integration initiatives of the Swedish Red Cross.

⁴⁵ Boréus, Kristina and Göran Bergström. *Analyzing Text and Discourse: Eight Approaches for the Social Sciences*, p. 26.

⁴⁶ Berg, Bruce Lawrence, and Howard Lune. *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*, p. 408.

⁴⁷ Boréus, Kristina and Göran Bergström. *Analyzing Text and Discourse: Eight Approaches for the Social Sciences*, p. 25.

⁴⁸ Berg, Bruce Lawrence, and Howard Lune. *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*, p. 391.

⁴⁹ Bogdan, Robert, and Sari Knopp Biklen. *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods*. 5.th, Pearson, 2006, p. 173-178.

2. Previous Research

In this chapter, I will present the literature review which integrates what other researchers have said about the topics that our study focuses on. The assessment of different aspects of refugee and migrant integration brings us further understanding. Therefore, primarily I will attempt to mention the research addressing Swedish integration policy and its effects on refugee experiences.

2.1. Explaining the Swedish integration policy and programs in earlier and recent research

Bringing forth some of the sources concerning the refugees' integration policies in Sweden, Nihad Bunar and Marko Valenta (2010) in their study "State Assisted Integration: Refugee Integration Policies in Scandinavian Welfare States: the Swedish and Norwegian Experience" underline methods and practices that are used to integrate refugees into different areas of the host society. By doing this, the article reveals the similarities and differences in their policies regarding refugee integration between Norway and Sweden. Additionally, the authors argue for the integration of refugees into the labour market and resettlement initiatives conjunction with the housing policies in Sweden and Norway.

According to the study, although Norway and Sweden have relatively similar policies, they have some changing in practice. However, Sweden and Norway refugee integration policies divide from the weak refugee policies existing in Europe and elsewhere. Two main issues that stand out in integration policies in Norway and Sweden are housing and employment assistance.⁵⁰ Undoubtedly, the lack of assistance in employment, education, and housing etc. for refugees negatively affects integration. Nevertheless, the findings in the study show that these criteria are not adequate for successful integration in Sweden and Norway, where refugees' required housing and training assistance are fulfilled in substantially. Bunar and Valenta states that there are big differences between immigrants and the rest of the population in these two countries. For example, according to studies the level of unemployment is three times higher among refugees and immigrants than native Norwegians and Swedes.⁵¹ In more detail, according to the authors' arguments, comprehensive integration assistance in Sweden and Norway has a limited effect on equalization of differences between refugees and the host society. Therefore, Bunar and Valenta propose to expand the policy scope for successful integration. Consequently, according to, Bunar and Valenta the Swedish and Norwegian cases reminding that integration takes time to achieve, even in

⁵⁰ Valenta, M. and N. Bunar. "State Assisted Integration: Refugee Integration Policies in the Scandinavian Welfare States: The Swedish and Norwegian Experience." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 23, no. 4 (2010) p. 463.

⁵¹ Valenta, Marko, Nihad Bunar, State Assisted Integration: Refugee Integration Policies in Scandinavian Welfare States: The Swedish and Norwegian Experience'', p. 470.

countries that invest significantly in areas assumed necessary for refugee integration such as education and housing.⁵²

Similarly, Karen Fog Olwig (2012) in *Integration': Migrants and Refugees between Scandinavian Welfare Societies and Family Relations* draws a general framework on how integration is perceived in Scandinavia. It is expressed that the attitudes of the Scandinavian countries towards immigrants and refugees are largely similar due to integration programs based on great similarities in the welfare systems and cultural context. The author emphasizes that the term integration is not only a scholarly but also a powerful notion associated with the cultural, social and political meanings existing in the host society itself, as well as the challenges or opportunities faced by immigrants and refugees. Furthermore, she argues that integration in Scandinavia has a relatively intrusive structure fraught with moral and cultural values related to what it takes to be a right citizen and a member of the local society.

For instance, one of the problems with integration programs that the author touches on is that they tend to be adapted primarily to the Scandinavian welfare system rather than the needs of refugees or migrants. Karin Fog underlines that the core component of the welfare state's approach to refugees in Sweden, Norway and Denmark is to assist refugees to be included in the receiving society through a comprehensive introductory program that is expected to be completed by all newly admitted refugees. The author states that in some studies consider this understanding of integration is considered problematic in terms of turning immigrants into good citizens and interfering with private life. On the other hand, Karin Fog mentions that these integration programs can be seen as elements of the Scandinavian welfare project aimed at ensuring that all immigrants become equal members of society.⁵³

Another research relevant to the refugee policies in Sweden belongs to Elisabeth Abiri. The author brings up continuity and change in Swedish refugee policy in "The Changing Praxis of 'Generosity': Swedish Refugee Policy during the 1990s". Dealing with the underlying causes and consequences of the major change of refugee policy in Sweden in the 90s, the author points out the political fluctuation and, cooperation between the politic parties reflected on refugee policies in these years. The economic crisis experienced in the 90s also showed its effect in Sweden and following, the unemployment rate started to increase. Therefore, economic measures have been taken such as reducing welfare benefits. Additionally, Sweden, which faced a great number of asylum application in the late 80s, has experienced the highest numbers in the asylum application

⁵² Valenta, Marko, Nihad Bunar, "State Assisted Integration: Refugee Integration Policies in Scandinavian Welfare States: The Swedish and Norwegian Experience", p. 479.

⁵³ Olwig, Karen Fog "Integration: Migrants and Refugees between Scandinavian Welfare Societies and Family Relations" Olwig, Karen Fog, Larsen, Birgitte Romme, and Rytter, Mikkel, eds. *Migration, Family and the Welfare State: Integrating Migrants and Refugees in Scandinavia*. London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2012. Accessed April 28, 2020. ProQuest E-book Central. p. 1-14.

after the breakup of Yugoslavia. According to the statistics of the Migration Agency, in Sweden, the number of asylum-seekers increased from 27,000 in 1991 to 84,000 in 1992.⁵⁴

Hereby, the author argues that it does not seem to be very thriving in this process in which the generosity of Sweden was questioned. This claim is encouraged by the analysis of new decisions and discourses taken after the influx of refugees to Sweden. Regarding the new decisions, while discussing the categories that can be granted asylum according to *the Aliens Act of 1997*, the matter of the temporary protection was one of the main topics of conversation and these changes took effect since January 1997. When criticizing the generous and humanitarian aspect of Sweden's refugee policies, one of the highlights issues that Abiri alludes to point in the article is cooperation with Europe. Accordingly, Sweden has put more emphasis on the issue of burden-sharing with the wave of migration from the Balkans and is has been worried by the possibility of its generous policy being exploited.⁵⁵

The general argument of this article promotes the re-evaluation of perceptions relevant to Sweden's traditional image, along with the changes in refugee policy in the 90s. Although values such as humanism and solidarity are still important in Swedish refugee policy, she highlights that a disagreeable discourse has emerged since 1990. In a nutshell, changes in policies and discourses caused by large migration waves are conveyed to us through the Swedish case in this study. In the words of the author, " a generous refugee policy can only be so when its generosity is not put to the test." ⁵⁶

Conjunction with literature discussing how the integration policies and programs are characterized by the Scandinavian welfare states, there is also literature drawing attention to the voices of refugees themselves. Gregg Bucken-Knapp, Vedran Omanovic, Andrea Spehar (2020) in *Institutions and Organizations of Refugee Integration* brings up how refugees see themselves as an agency during integrating to their new host society.⁵⁷ The authors adopt a comparative approach that it deals with the refugees who came to Sweden from Bosnia and Herzegovina and more recently from Syria. In doing so, they mention that refugee experiences that emerge in programs and initiatives which are produced in order to support the integration.

The book, which involves the remarks of immigrants about how they have experienced the integration process, enables us to insight into the difficulties, achievements or conveniences experienced on the way to integration. Thus, these personal experiences are discussed in the book as objective indicators of the real integration process and perform as a map of how the integration works in the host society.

⁵⁴ Abiri, Elisabeth. "The Changing Praxis of 'Generosity': Swedish Refugee Policy during the 1990s." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 13, no. 1 (2000). p. 19.

⁵⁵ Abiri, Elisabeth. "The Changing Praxis of 'Generosity': Swedish Refugee Policy during the 1990s." p. 22.

⁵⁶ Abiri, Elisabeth. "The Changing Praxis of 'Generosity': Swedish Refugee Policy during the 1990s." p. 25.

⁵⁷ Bucken-Knapp, Gregg, Vedran Omanović, Andrea Spehar, Handelshögskolan, School of Public Administration, Göteborgs universitet, Förvaltningshögskolan, et al. *Institutions and Organizations of Refugee Integration: Bosnian-Herzegovinian and Syrian Refugees in Sweden 2020*.

However, there are a few points about the integration of immigrants draw attention. The authors highlight the characteristics of the country where immigrants come from and the importance of immigrant-specific factors. Moreover, economic, social, and other situations in the host country during periods of large migration are effective in initiatives related to integration. For example, the authors analysing the case of Bosnian who came to Sweden in the 90s states that the economic conditions in Sweden negatively affected the labour market and therefore the immigrant group during this period when Sweden received the most asylum application.⁵⁸

On the other hand, the fact that there was an excess of housing in many municipalities in the 90s and that this situation allowed many Bosnians to find housing close to both education and employment opportunities, is an example of the impact of the positive conditions in the host country. Along with these ongoing discussions in the book, despite the differences in conditions and the integration policy in the two separate periods compared, it is concluded that Bosnian and Syrian refugees still have some similarities regarding this process. According to one of these outcomes, integration institutions mostly are not seen enough by refugees to fulfilling their needs.⁵⁹

These examples remind us of the significance of cooperation with civil society in integration. This study on the refugee experience in the 90s and the differences and similarities of the current refugee crisis gives us information about how the state-provided programs are perceived for refugees. The challenging processes that emerge after the intense waves of migration, along with the troubled conditions of the country, reveal the importance of burden-sharing. Undoubtedly, non-governmental organizations are making important initiatives to support the integration of immigrants. Although the subject of this book is not the contribution of civil society to integration, the book, which includes immigrant experiences, is a unique opportunity to understand the deficiencies and gaps in integration and to discuss this through the example of civil society. Thus, the book provides us with a remarkable perspective for an analysis of the responsibilities that non-governmental organizations called third sector have taken or should take for refugee integration.

Marita Eastmond (2012) in "Egalitarian Ambitions, Constructions of Difference: The Paradoxes of Refugee Integration in Sweden" also deal with experiences of refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina who settled in Sweden in the 1990s. The first part of the article addresses the policy-making and public debates regarding asylum and welfare concerns that emerged with the admission of large numbers of asylum seekers to Sweden in the early 1990s. Conjunction with these concerns and discussions, the two discourses that emerge regarding refugees are highlighted in the article. The first is refugees as 'undesirable' and the other is refugees as traumatized war victims.⁶⁰ These

⁵⁸ Bucken-Knapp, Gregg, Vedran Omanović, Andrea Spehar, *Institutions and Organizations of Refugee Integration: Bosnian-Herzegovinian and Syrian Refugees in Sweden*, p. 26-27.

⁵⁹ Bucken-Knapp, Gregg, Vedran Omanović, Andrea Spehar, *Handelshögskolan, Institutions and Organizations of Refugee Integration: Bosnian-Herzegovinian and Syrian Refugees in Sweden*, p. 113-118.

⁶⁰ Eastmond, Marita "Egalitarian Ambitions, Constructions of Difference: The Paradoxes of Refugee Integration in Sweden" Olwig, Karen Fog, Larsen, Birgitte Romme, and Rytter, Mikkel, eds. *Migration, Family and the*

discourses, which draw attention with economic problems, insecurity, xenophobia and racist violence and politicization of migration, are argued that are related in some way to the characteristic structure of the welfare state. Financial concerns seem to be predominant in depicting refugees as a threat to the welfare state. However, the labelling of refugees from conflict societies as a needy category is closely related to the desire to create an egalitarian strong society and the belief in state intervention and regulation which exist in the characteristic structure of the welfare state. In other words, there is a debate that immigrants seem like a group that requires special treatment to adapt to Swedish society, and that integration is a project driven by state and welfare institutions.⁶¹

The second part of the article reflects the effects of rehabilitation programs, which are foreseen to be prepared within the context of the preparation and normalization of new members of society, on Bosnian refugees. As a result of interviews with 180 Bosnian families, the author shares the refugees' experiences and evaluates their endeavours on how they manage the process of integrating into Swedish society. According to this discussion, the government's effort to assist the rehabilitation of victims of war and violence through various programs leads to a perception that refugees have an obligation to undergo a 'normalization' process to enter Swedish society.⁶²

Refugees who fled from war and violence in their country receive support as traumatized individuals are generally required for their integration, but refugee experience shows that this is a factor that makes it difficult for them to integrate for various reasons such as difficulty in finding a job. Some people think that what they need is work and that it will contribute more psychologically. The contradiction that emerges at this point is that while the welfare state wants to create an egalitarian society, it causes the problem of inclusion due to the pressure of deficiency on refugees. Hereby, the author touches on the point of being flexible and less interfering and articulates that the welfare state's controller attitude is not welcomed for most refugees. Consequently, the refugee experiences in the article show that against the discourse of deficiency, which implies the threat of exclusion, they insist that their work and skills be seen as a solution to integration.⁶³

A similar approach is also presented by Branka Likić-Brborić and Li Bennich-Björkman (2016) in "Swedish 'exceptionalism' and the integration of refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 1990s: Acceptance and strategies of citizenship".⁶⁴ The authors address the socioeconomic and

Welfare State: Integrating Migrants and Refugees in Scandinavia. London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2012. Accessed April 28, 2020. ProQuest Ebook Central, p.98-99.

⁶¹ Eastmond, Marita "Egalitarian Ambitions, Constructions of Difference: The Paradoxes of Refugee Integration in Sweden", p. 100.

⁶² Eastmond, Marita "Egalitarian Ambitions, Constructions of Difference: The Paradoxes of Refugee Integration in Sweden", p. 105.

⁶³ Eastmond, Marita "Egalitarian Ambitions, Constructions of Difference: The Paradoxes of Refugee Integration in Sweden", p.111.

⁶⁴ Likić-Brborić, B., and L. Bennich-Björkman, "Swedish Exceptionalism" and the Integration of Refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 1990's: Acceptance and Strategies of Citizenship". eds. L. Bennich-Björkman, Roland Kostić, and B. Likić-Brborić, In *Citizens at Heart? Perspectives on Integration of Refugees in the EU*

political integration of refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina who arrived in Sweden in the 1990s. The study provides an insight into the Swedish integration model and the asylum process of Bosnian refugees to Sweden, following an informative introduction related to the concept of integration and its relationship with institutional structures that shape the identities of immigrants. The discussion continues with the evaluation of institutional and individual factors that affect socio-economic and political integration as a result of the findings obtained from interviews with refugees.

Although Bosnian refugees are particularly successful in labour integration, they articulate that administrative practices in the integration process have a characteristic that limits their professional qualifications and therefore they face difficulties.⁶⁵ In addition to the difficulties caused by the deficiency of implementation of the Swedish integration model in finding a job, it also appears to affect the social integration of refugees negatively. According to study, some of the interviewees note that finding a job is also psychologically beneficial and offers an opportunity to gather with the members of the host community. Thus, recognition of refugees' professionalism is thought to contribute to social integration, not only economically. Namely, the lack of recognition of professional competence indirectly affects social integration.⁶⁶

However, the arguments presented in the study seem that is similar to finding in Eastmond's article. Eastmond mentions that refugees refuse to be labelled as traumatized victims and try to regain their professional and social status. Likewise, in the study of Brborić and Björkman refugees who complain about the inadequate support and misleading information of the Employment Service staff stated that they want to be recognized professionally in the interviews but that they objected when faced with discrimination. The study found that the interviewees witnessed the discrepancy there is a discrepancy between the Swedish integration model, which values the concept of multiculturalism and equality, and practices that consider immigrants as a political factor.⁶⁷ Accordingly, it can be said that a similar conclusion is drawn with the outcome in the study of Eastmond which is mentioned above.

On the other hand, emphasizing that different areas of integration require different identities, the author refers that the positive impact of political participation on the social integration of individuals. In other words, the politically active interviewers feel socially integrated. One of the reasons for those to be more integrated socially is expressed as the early acceptance of the permanence of staying in Sweden. Ultimately, it can be articulated that the new identities that

After the Yugoslav Wars of Succession. Vol. 56. Uppsala: Hugo Valentin Centre, Uppsala universitet, 2016. p.87-112.

⁶⁵ Likić-Brborić, B., and L. Bennich-Björkman, "Swedish Exeptionalism" and the Integration of Refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 1990's: Acceptance and Strategies of Citizenship", p.96.

⁶⁶ Likić-Brborić, B., and L. Bennich-Björkman, "Swedish Exeptionalism" and the Integration of Refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 1990's: Acceptance and Strategies of Citizenship", p.96.

⁶⁷ Likić-Brborić, B., and L. Bennich-Björkman, "Swedish Exeptionalism" and the Integration of Refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 1990's: Acceptance and Strategies of Citizenship", p.111.

emerged with the migration agency's transformation to a transnational dimension went through different integration processes and that individual differences affect the level of integration.⁶⁸ Overall, these studies show us the importance of recognizing initiatives on integration through the experiences of refugees. Interviews conducting with refugees allow for a point of view for discussion of the Swedish integration model, providing a more transparent perspective. Given these findings, the importance of analysing the integration issue from the perspective of various actors as including refugee experiences become more visible.

2.2. The relationship between Volunteer sector and the State in Sweden in the 90s

Eva Jeppsson Grassman and Lars Svedberg presents two aspects of the voluntary sector activities in terms of the high level of volunteerism of the population and role of voluntary organizations in social care in their study on "Voluntary Action in a Scandinavian Welfare Context: The Case of Sweden".⁶⁹ Accordingly, the Swedish volunteer sector was characterized by high rate of membership and unpaid activities, rooted in the traditions of popular mass movements. According to the results of two omnibus surveys -a National omnibus survey and a comparative Eurovol Study - which Grassman and Svedberg carried out in 1992, volunteering was found to be comprehensive in Sweden.⁷⁰ However, Grassman and Svedberg addressed that high levels of volunteering in the Swedish population was higher than in many other comparable countries.

Nevertheless, Grassman and Svedberg stated that voluntary organizations that was strong in areas such as sports, trade unions and culture, did not have a significant impact on the core areas of the welfare state such as the provision of social services. From a European perspective, although volunteering in Sweden emerged to be extensive, unlike other countries that do comprehensive volunteer work in social care, it has been found that this area is only a small part of all volunteer work in Sweden. Grassman and Svedberg argue that Swedish voluntary action in the field of social care took place largely in the shadow of the welfare state. In short, it is stated that voluntary activities often appear to have a complementary function, rather than a substitute for state-provided services.⁷¹

Similarly, Tommy Lundström in "The State and Voluntary Social Work in Sweden." analyses that the relation between the voluntary sector and the state, by taking into account the changing

⁶⁸ Likić-Brborić, B., and L. Bennich-Björkman, "Swedish Exeptionalism" and the Integration of Refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 1990's: Acceptance and Strategies of Citizenship", p.111-112.

⁶⁹ Jeppsson Grassman, E. and Svedberg, L. "Voluntary action in Scandinavian social welfare context: the case of Sweden, *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 25, 1996: 415-27.

⁷⁰ Jeppsson Grassman, E. and Svedberg, L. "Voluntary action in Scandinavian social welfare context: the case of Sweden", p.420.

⁷¹ Jeppsson Grassman, E. and Svedberg, L. "Voluntary action in Scandinavian social welfare context: the case of Sweden", p.425-426.

situation in participating the production of welfare services.⁷² Lundström looking at the voluntary sector in Sweden from a historical perspective mentions that cooperation between the state and the voluntary sector is often beyond controversy. In other words, Lundström emphasizes that with the emergence of the welfare state, even when the fields of activity in which voluntary organizations are effective are taken over by the government and municipalities, this process takes place without conflict and based on mutual consent.⁷³ At that time, while the Swedish voluntary sector was dominant in areas like sports and adult education, its effects on social services and healthcare were poor. Nevertheless, the voluntary sector had a supportive role in the fields which the public sector was active. However, by the 90s, it is witnessed that the conditions have changed for public sectors. Lundström notes that in the early 90s, the relationship between the voluntary sector and the state seems to be changing into a situation in which the voluntary sector is involved a larger extent than ever before in the production of welfare services.⁷⁴

The background knowledge on the voluntary sector in Sweden enables readers to make sense of the position of the Swedish Red Cross in its relationship with the state over the years. Additionally, more detail information regarding the history of the volunteer sector in Sweden is provided in the introduction part.

2.3. Studies on the role of non-governmental organisations in refugee and immigrant integration

Recognizably, the world has witnessed a rapid increase of attention towards non-governmental and non-profit organizations in the 1980s. It seems that the importance of non-governmental organizations as an 'another' actor different from the government, has increased in providing the needs of the population.⁷⁵ From this perspective, the above studies which are presented for having a generalized overview of the experience of the refugees regarding integration programs and policy in Sweden show us the weakness and strengths way of the official initiatives in integration. Thus, these studies urge us to think about the role of non-governmental organizations as possible alternatives to government.

Catherine Enoredia Odorige (2018) in her doctoral dissertation which is called *The Role of Non-Governmental Organisations in the Integration of Third-Country Nationals in the European Union: German and Hungarian Case Studies*, points out the role of NGOs in integrating third-

⁷² Lundström, Tommy. "The State and Voluntary Social Work in Sweden", *Voluntas* (Manchester, England) 7, no. 2 (1996): 123-146.

⁷³ Lundström, Tommy. "The State and Voluntary Social Work in Sweden", p.134.

⁷⁴ Lundström, Tommy. "The State and Voluntary Social Work in Sweden", p.123.

⁷⁵ L. David Brown, Kortzen David C. "Working More Effectively with Nongovernmental Organizations " Paul, Samuel, and Arturo Israel. *Nongovernmental Organizations and the World Bank: Cooperation for Development*. Washington, D.C: World Bank, 1991. p.44.

country nationals into European societies and how NGO activities mitigate the difficulty of integrating those who are third-country nationals in the EU. In doing so, Odorige carried out her study with interviews with 6 non-governmental organizations in Hungary and 4 non-governmental organizations in Germany, as well as survey and document analysis. In this study, Odorige underlines the efforts to develop a common European immigration and integration policy in the EU to tackle the challenges of immigrant integration in the European Union. She addresses the European commission's proposal that effective integration can only be achieved in partnership between European institutions, Member States, and all stakeholders such as national, regional, and local actors. Therefore, Odorige examines that the role of NGOs as an essential partner, in achieving a common European goal of immigrant integration under the proposal that emphasizes the importance of local-level involvement in local authority and local organizations.⁷⁶

Presenting a comparative approach by examining the role of NGOs in alleviating the integration challenges and in building the necessary identities for the integration of immigrants, the author reveals differences and similarities by addressing to the historical development of the two countries' integration policies. In the light of this analogy, while NGOs are considered as the initiator of integration in Hungary, it is stated that the integration in Germany is carried out together with NGOs and various partners within the scope of the National Action Plan.⁷⁷ Moreover, as a result of surveys with immigrants, Odorige concludes that immigrants in Hungary are heavily dependent on NGOs to overcome their difficulties in the integration process. These findings help us understand the impact of host countries' immigration and integration policies on immigrants' relationship with NGOs in the resettlement process. Additionally, taking into the account the interaction between NGOs and immigrants in the two countries, the author alludes that various programs such as language courses provided by NGOs have a feature that improves the skills of immigrants and thus facilitates adaptation to the new society. In nutshell, through the findings reached the study underlines that NGOs are a platform where European identity can be created among immigrants.⁷⁸ This study presents a useful comparative framework but the conditions in the country under study differ from those in Sweden. Unlike the NGOs that are accepted as the initiator of integration and immigrants who depends heavily on NGOs to overcome their difficulties in the integration process in Hungary, the integration process in Sweden is carried out in close cooperation between state, municipalities and NGOs.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ E. Odorige, Catherine "The Role of Non-Governmental Organisations in the Integration of Third-Country Nationals in the European Union: German and Hungarian Case Studies" National University of Public Service, 2018, p. 4.

⁷⁷ E. Odorige, Catherine "The Role of Non-Governmental Organisations in the Integration of Third-Country Nationals in the European Union: German and Hungarian Case", p.173.

⁷⁸ E. Odorige, Catherine, "The Role of Non-Governmental Organisations in the Integration of Third-Country Nationals in the European Union: German and Hungarian Case Studies", p. 237.

⁷⁹ Hansen, K. "Egalitarianism Under Siege? Swedish Refugee Reception and Social Trust", p. 272.

Equally, Óscar García Agustín (2012) in "Enhancing solidarity: Discourses of voluntary organizations on immigration and integration in multicultural societies" provides a comparative approach that evaluates the national differences between the two countries through different NGO discourses. However, the author, adopting a reductive approach in terms of NGO activities, focuses on how NGOs in Spain and Denmark promote solidarity with immigrants.

While Spain and Denmark share similar concerns about the globalization of integration, it is stated that they have national differences in terms of the type of immigrants, the state and administrative structures, and political approaches. Thus, the comparative perspective that is presented in the study explicitly reveals the differences in solidarity discourses. Pointing out that some discursive classifications for immigrants make integration difficult, the author articulates that social conditions in the two countries affect civil society action as well as the creation of a discourse of solidarity in the national and transnational context.⁸⁰

Underlining that national facts affect human rights discourse in various ways, Agustín notes that, for example, in Denmark, NGOs and politicians share the same opinion on the distinction between migrants and refugees/asylum seekers. Accordingly, Danish NGOs restrict their actions to refugees and asylum seekers, while the Spanish NGOs include irregular migrants in the scope of organizational activities. Depending on linguistic mechanism differences in building solidarity, the study analysing how NGO discourses react to existing national discourses, provides an interesting perspective in understanding the power of solidarity discourse on migration and integration. Apparently, the different understandings towards refugee discourses such as "traumatized" or "people without choice" can be decisive factors for integration.⁸¹ The arguments in the study give us the opportunity to catch the different sights between the NGO approaches in Spain and Denmark, and in a broader context, it brings an idea to explore the European perspective on solidarity in terms of the integration of immigrants. This study also shows that the case of Swedish Red Cross is different than that NGOs in Denmark as discussed by Agustín. Similar to the NGOs in Spain, the Swedish Red Cross has provided integration activities regardless of legal status in the most recent refugee resettlement in the 2010s.

In the opposite side, by focusing on a single NGO in Sweden, Tadas Valutis (2013) in *Understanding the role of NGOs for immigrant integration in Sweden: a case study of TAMAM* discusses the role of an NGO in the integration of the young immigrants into Swedish society and the position of NGO in the current policies and procedures of immigrant integration in Sweden. The author addresses TAMAM's activities through interviews with employees and immigrant children. Accordingly, the organization, which interested in refugee and migrant children, designs many

⁸⁰ García Agustín, Óscar. "Enhancing Solidarity: Discourses of Voluntary Organizations on Immigration and Integration in Multicultural Societies." *Journal of Multicultural Discourses* 7, no. 1 (2012), p. 83-84.

⁸¹ García Agustín, Óscar. "Enhancing Solidarity: Discourses of Voluntary Organizations on Immigration and Integration in Multicultural Societies, p. 88-89.

activities such as language courses, sports events, excursions to help communicate with the local people and to recognize the local culture. In this way, compatible with the social integration theory, the initiatives projected by TAMAM for children are considered to have a positive effect on integration.

Although this study is a remarkable single case study to see different examples of NGOs' contribution to the integration process of immigrants, the fact that TAMAM has a five-year operating history in Sweden indicates that more time is needed to evaluate integration activities for immigrants.⁸² Thus, it can be provided with a better understanding in terms of the effectiveness of the organisation in the long-term instead of the short term.

Bring forth another perspective Gudrun Biff (2005), in "The Potential Role of NGOs in the Integration of Migrants in the Context of Mainstreaming: The Case of Tyrol" examines the participation of NGOs in the network of mainstream institutions in the State government of Tyrol, its agencies, and local authorities. The paper, consisting of a seminar presentation in Dublin, proposes a multiple participant integration to develop an integration model that takes into account the increased migration diversity, the changing needs of immigrants and the host community. In other words, it is asserted that integration will be more effective thanks to the participation of immigrant institutions in the performing of mainstream initiatives. Therefore, the government, which created a consultancy body to apply the mainstreaming concept to the integration of immigrants, has prepared integration principles for immigrants and adopted a participatory approach with the inclusion of various institutions, immigrant associations and NGOs.⁸³

One of the important points emphasized with Tyrol case is the dominant role of NGOs in the formation of the integration system. NGOs, as influential actors participating in the early stage of the mainstreaming process, are expressed as partners of public administration in organizing integration activities and taking steps in necessary situations. As a prominent example of this approach, the study addresses the activities of the multicultural association named 'Verein Multikulturell'. In addition to its contribution to mainstream integration initiatives in Tyrol, this NGO organizes various activities, especially in ensuring intercultural and professional competence. Thus, the author envisages that in the Tyrol case, where mainstream organizations do not provide adequate support for education or professional competence, further involvement of NGOs such as 'Verein Multikulturell' can galvanize integration.⁸⁴

⁸² Valutis, T., "Understanding the Role of NGO from Immigrant Integration in Sweden: A Case study of TAMAM", Lund University, 2013. Thesis

⁸³ Biffli, G., "The Potential Role of NGO in the Integration of Migrants in the Context of Mainstreaming in The Case of Tyrol", Technical Seminar and Integration Mainstreaming Dublin October 2005.p.1-7.
https://gudrunbiffli.wifo-pens.at/fileadmin/files/dublin-integrationws3-endg_10_2005_02.pdf (Accessed: 25 April 2020)

⁸⁴ Biffli, G. (2005), "The Potential Role of NGO in the Integration of Migrants in the Context of Mainstreaming in The Case of Tyrol." p.1-7.

Likewise to the findings of this study presented by Biff, NGOs, which are referred to as influential actors involved in the early stages of the integration process in Sweden during the last refugee settlement in the 2010s, have involved as partners of public administration in organizing integration activities. In this vein, Hansen emphasizes that the main part of early integration in Sweden is performed by volunteers of NGOs that do not make any distinction between acceptance and integration, however the authorities had to make this distinction due to legislative rules.⁸⁵ Ultimately, as mentioned above in the studies on the relationship between the state and the voluntary sector in Sweden, the NGOs, which were scarcely visible in the providing social services where the public sphere was mainly engaged until the 90s, seems that reversed their previous position. The effects of this change on the integration initiatives of the Swedish Red Cross will be discussed in the following sections.

Lastly, a relevant research about the role of civil society in refugee crisis was conducted by Virginia Beramendi, "21st Century citizenship: human rights, global civil society and the pushing of boundaries: The role of civil society in the refugee crisis: the case of the Swedish Red Cross".⁸⁶ The author focuses on a specific case of the Swedish Red Cross to better understand and analyse the role of civil society in the refugee crisis and examines whether the Swedish Red Cross challenges the state's concept of citizenship. In this study, the author draws a conclusion that confirms the previous research that non-governmental organizations effectively transform the concept of modern citizenship based on the nation-state and formal belonging to a concept based on common values and solidarity by providing assistance and protection to non-citizens. Furthermore, according to the author, the Swedish Red Cross contributes to more comprehensive citizenship by claiming rights for non-citizens, rather than the institution of citizenship that qualifies as an official legal category.⁸⁷ The author has made an important contribution to the relevant academic literature on the role of the Red Cross in the Refugee crisis in 2015, however, has discussed this role only within the framework of citizenship acts through one research question.

Unlike this existing research in the literature related to the Swedish Red Cross, our study focuses on integration initiatives for newcomers, from a historical perspective, addressing the two largest refugee settlements (in the 90s and in 2010s) in Sweden in the last three decades. In doing so, the Swedish Red Cross is considered a community developer that helps vulnerable groups and even advocates for their rights and thus contributes to social change. From this perspective, it questions how compatible the Swedish Red Cross integration initiatives are with agency and solidarity in terms of their contribution to community development. Therefore, our study, which examines not

⁸⁵ Hansen, K. "Egalitarianism Under Siege? Swedish Refugee Reception and Social Trust", p.286.

⁸⁶ Beramendi Heine, Virginia. "21st Century citizenship: human rights, global civil society, and the pushing of boundaries: The role of civil society in the refugee crisis: the case of the Swedish Red Cross." Department of Sociology, Stockholm University, 2017.

⁸⁷ Beramendi Heine, Virginia. "21st Century citizenship: human rights, global civil society, and the pushing of boundaries: The role of civil society in the refugee crisis: the case of the Swedish Red Cross." Department of Sociology, Stockholm University, 2017. p.40.

only integration initiatives but also Swedish Red Cross's relationship with the Swedish authorities, through the comparison of the two large refugee settlements in the 90s and 2010s, is overall quite different from the above study. Moreover, the analysis of Red Cross activities with Bhattacharyya reformulation of community development distinguishes our study from others. Besides, there is no study in the literature that deals with the integration initiatives of the Swedish Red Cross in two large refugee resettlements, at least from this perspective.

Ultimately, above we have looked at scholarly research under the two main headings and seen some of the gaps in the literature. The first part addresses research that discuss the progress of Swedish integration policy within changing condition over the years and resettlement initiatives with the experience of the refugees and immigrants. Following this section, we touch on the studies on the role of NGOs in the resettlement of the refugees and immigrants in the second part. However, in the first part, looking the Swedish integration policies in detail enables us to see the general framework of integration initiatives for refugees in the mainstream institutions and thus to evaluate the role of non-governmental organizations within the theoretical framework of our work.

NGO studies, which we examine similarly to the nature of our work, can be divided in two ways. Those who adopt a comprehensive approach by examining more than one NGOs role in the integration and those who analyse the role of NGOs in refugee or immigrant integration by concentrating on a single NGO. Although our study focusing on a single NGO is in the second part of this classification, it differs from these studies as it is based on a comparative approach of NGO participation in the two large refugee resettlements. It aims to bring a historical perspective to NGO research. Namely, it intends to explain the changes that take place after two major refugee experiences in integration activities by revealing them with similarities and differences. In short, while the bulk of the existing scholarship that analyses the effects of refugee or immigrant integration refers to the policies and the initiatives of the mainstream institutions, less research gives attention to the role of NGOs in integration. As such, the study makes a more general contribution to the integration literature by emphasizing how the Swedish Red Cross' integration initiatives have changed from the 1990s to 2015 and onward.

3. The Role of the Swedish Red Cross in the Integration of the Newly Arrived in the 90s

There is no homogeneous definition of the term 'integration', instead, there are many different understandings. The context can vary based on different characteristics, for instance, the country, the concerns, values and perspectives of the actors involved.⁸⁸ Due to this nature of the definition, Rinus Pennix expresses that responsibility for integration belongs not to a particular group but to

⁸⁸ Bucken-Knapp, Gregg, Vedran Omanović, Andrea Spehar 2020. *Institutions and Organizations of Refugee Integration: Bosnian-Herzegovinian and Syrian Refugees in Sweden*, p. 5.

many actors - migrants themselves, the host government, institutions and communities.⁸⁹ However, integration as its simplest definition is expressed as a process that aims to ensure that immigrants enjoy an equal socio-economic level with the host society.⁹⁰ This adaptation process has two sides, actors in the host country and the newcomers. While the actors of the host country can be referred to as the society, local authorities, non-governmental organizations, Brekke admits that the newcomers included both asylum seekers waiting for their cases to be decided and refugees who had already been given permanent residence.⁹¹ Even if the Swedish immigration system starts the official integration measures when the refugee is granted a residence permit, the civil society organizations did not make any distinction between reception and integration.⁹² Regarding the early integration of asylum seekers, Valenta and Bunar consider the process involvement as an important step in empowering asylum seekers and preparing them for life outside of reception facilities, wherever - in the host country, in their home country or elsewhere.⁹³ Therefore, this study will deal with both groups, that is, asylum-seekers and refugees as people who need to be integrated.

3.1. Swedish Red Cross Centres for the Rehabilitation of Tortured Refugees in the 90s

As mentioned previously, there was an increase in the number of refugees fleeing to Sweden in the late 80s and early 90s. Most refugees came from Bosnia, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Ethiopia, Chile, and Somalia. Within this period, Sweden has received the largest influx of asylum seekers since World War II, which mainly consisted of refugees from Bosnia in the 1990s.⁹⁴ Following the arrival of newcomers from societies in conflict, specifically from Bosnia, a discourse emerged in which the refugees were referred to as being “traumatised victims of war” and the refugees’ physical or mental needs should be met.⁹⁵

In the early 1990s, the Swedish Government adopted an approach with regard to the rehabilitation of newcomers who were victims of war and violence. In this vein, taking steps for

⁸⁹ Rinus, Penninx "Integration: The Role of Communities, Institutions, and the State" Migration Policy Institute, 2003. Online Source. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/integration-role-communities-institutions-and-state>

⁹⁰ Bucken-Knapp, Gregg, Vedran Omanović, Andrea Spehar 2020. *Institutions and Organizations of Refugee Integration: Bosnian-Herzegovinian and Syrian Refugees in Sweden*, p. 5.

⁹¹ Brekke, J. P., *While We Are Waiting: Uncertainty and Empowerment among Asylum seekers in Sweden*. Oslo: ISF. 2004. p.9.

⁹² Hansen, K. "Egalitarianism Under Siege? Swedish Refugee Reception and Social Trust", p. 283.

⁹³ Valenta, Marko, Nihad Bunar, "State Assisted Integration: Refugee Integration Policies in Scandinavian Welfare States: The Swedish and Norwegian Experience", p. 478.

⁹⁴ Westin, Charles, Elena Dingu-Kyrklund "Immigration and Integration of Immigrants and their Descendants: The Swedish Approach", ed. Heckmann, Friedrich and Dominique Schnapper. *The Integration of Immigrants in European Societies: National Differences and Trends of Convergence*. Vol. 7. New Providence: Unknown Publisher, 2003. p.110.

⁹⁵ Eastmond, Marita "Egalitarian Ambitions, Constructions of Difference: The Paradoxes of Refugee Integration in Sweden", p. 99.

treatment and research on the subject was encouraged by providing the necessary funding by the Swedish government.⁹⁶ Marita Eastmond states that the emergence of the 'refugee trauma' discourse in Sweden in the 1990s reflected developments in international humanitarian studies and research. The main reason for the increase in refugee trauma discourse is the appearance of PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) as an official psychiatric condition in the 1980s. The diagnosis of PTSD, which is linked to external violence and applied to refugees' experiences, has become a particular concern during the admission of Bosnian refugees to Sweden.⁹⁷ Thus, the medicalization of the refugee trauma discourse formed a turning point in the approach to refugees whose trauma was previously uncertainly noticed. Thereby, it was argued that untreated traumas can adversely affect refugees' health, family well-being, working life and social integration in the future. By taking these concerns into account, special programs and screening tools have been developed at the municipal level in order to assist refugees with war-related trauma. Likewise, many private centres for torture and trauma victims have been established in different parts of Sweden.⁹⁸ In line with those developments, the Swedish Red Cross began to work on the management of the effects that torture has on refugees.

The launch of rehabilitation centres and volunteer support groups for torture victims was one of the subjects which initially concerned the Swedish Red Cross. The Centre for the Rehabilitation of Tortured Refugees, which was established in 1985 by the Swedish Red Cross in Stockholm.⁹⁹ Even though the diagnosis of PTSD became a predominant focus in Sweden at the time of admission of Bosnian refugees, following the medicalization of the discourse on refugees in the 1980s, Swedish Red Cross has incorporated the PTSD approach in its studies. The centre, located in the Red Cross Hospital, consisted of staff who prefer to build a close and trusting relationship with refugees rather than adopting a formal attitude. Succinctly, the centre has endorsed an informal and friendly environment for refugees in order to ensure that they feel welcome. In addition, while most refugees entered the centre at their own request, some of them contacted the centre through hospitals, health clinics and immigration offices.¹⁰⁰ The main aims of the rehabilitation centre were that of: treating physical or mental injuries in order to reduce their suffering from past torture; providing necessary needs to ensure that they obtain a smoother, more ordinary social life; and the strengthening of their self-respect.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ Eastmond, Marita "Egalitarian Ambitions, Constructions of Difference: The Paradoxes of Refugee Integration in Sweden" p. 104.

⁹⁷ Eastmond, Marita "Egalitarian Ambitions, Constructions of Difference: The Paradoxes of Refugee Integration in Sweden", p.104.

⁹⁸ Eastmond, Marita "Egalitarian Ambitions, Constructions of Difference: The Paradoxes of Refugee Integration in Sweden", p.104.

⁹⁹ Svenska Röda Korsets behandlingscenter för krigsskadade och torterade, RKC *Verksamhetsberättelse 2019*. p.9.

¹⁰⁰ Wikberg, Britt, "The Swedish Red Cross Centre for the rehabilitation of tortured refugees," p. 39.

¹⁰¹ Wikberg, Britt, "The Swedish Red Cross Centre for the rehabilitation of tortured refugees," p. 39.

In 1989, in an article written for the International Red Cross Journal, Britt Wikberg, who was an information officer in the Swedish Red Cross, pointed out that the Stockholm treatment centre provided medical and psychological or psychiatric support to tortured people and their families. Wikberg's article addressed that the needs of each applicant are determined after several interviews and, subsequently, a rehabilitation program is designed for each person individually by a team of experts. In the interviews, each applicant expressed different complaints, such as headaches, depression, insomnia and nightmares.¹⁰² Therefore, the treatments have been based on individual needs, thereby allowing the centre to handle both medical and psychiatric issues and to establish cooperation with professionals, including child psychiatrists, surgeons, dentists and gynaecologists. Furthermore, it is identified that group or individual therapies which included activities such as riding, and art have been successful in rebuilding the identities of refugees.¹⁰³

The centre, however, only accepted refugees who held a work and residence permit.¹⁰⁴ Britt Wikberg points out that due to the uncertainty of the waiting period for a residence permit at that time in Sweden, it would be difficult for asylum seekers to focus on torture experiences and rehabilitation, and therefore the centre could not accept people without a residence permit. Moreover, the article states that the centre did not have sufficient space to accept all applicants. For instance, between 1985 and 1987, even though there were 527 applications, the centre was only able to treat 100-120 refugees.¹⁰⁵

The second Swedish Red Cross Treatment Centre was established in Malmö in 1988.¹⁰⁶ The staff in the Malmö centre consisted of an administrative assistant, a physician, secretary, physiotherapist, consultant, and a group of psychologists. In the same manner as the centre in Stockholm, the Centre in Malmö aimed to provide refugees with a comfortable atmosphere in order to feel at home. The Swedish Red Cross annual report of 1992 provided detailed information on the Malmö Rehabilitation Centre and included several interviews conducted with the refugees who had arrived at the Centre, as well as with the administrators and personnel. Emphasising the importance of how refugees are welcomed upon their arrival at the Centre, administrator Gunilla Pressing stated that "We want people to feel secure and to know that we are here for them."¹⁰⁷ Besides the interviews conducted with the employees, which allows to understand the founding principles and goals of the Centre, the interviews with the refugees demonstrate the actual benefits that they received from the Centre. For instance, Darius Arjamadi, who was an Iranian refugee in Sweden, expressed his feelings as follows:

¹⁰² Wikberg, Britt, "The Swedish Red Cross Centre for the rehabilitation of tortured refugees," p. 40.

¹⁰³ Wikberg, Britt, "The Swedish Red Cross Centre for the rehabilitation of tortured refugees," p. 40.

¹⁰⁴ Wikberg, Britt, "The Swedish Red Cross Centre for the rehabilitation of tortured refugees," p. 39.

¹⁰⁵ Wikberg, Britt, "The Swedish Red Cross Centre for the rehabilitation of tortured refugees," p. 39.

¹⁰⁶ Swedish Red Cross, *Annual Report 1992*, p. 33

¹⁰⁷ Swedish Red Cross, *Annual Report 1992*, p. 34

My therapist is more like a friend than a professional psychologist. When I come to the Centre, it is like seeing my family. I am always met by someone who says, "Hello Darius, how are you, do you want tea or coffee?". I feel so grateful for the help they are giving me.¹⁰⁸

In addition, Arjamadi says that he feels fortunate to have the right to receive treatment but that his friends consequently are jealous of him. Similarly, another refugee, Graziela de Iglesias, stated that, with the assistance of the Swedish Red Cross, she built a new life and feels fortunate to have been accepted as a patient.¹⁰⁹ Those statements evidence the difficulty of being admitted into the centre. In fact, it is articulated that it is difficult for refugees to receive cures as quickly as they should because of there being such a long waiting list. Concerning this issue, Wikberg points out that, for an eligible applicant, the rehabilitation process continues for one year.¹¹⁰ Considering the above, the patients' feeling fortunate can be justified. Moreover, the admission requirement for refugees to hold a residence and work permit also applies at the Malmö Centre. "The centre never rejects anyone who requests assistance, however, there is a rule explaining that refugees should have their residence and work permits ready before treatment".¹¹¹

It might be noted that, although Wikberg stated in his 1989 article that a third centre was not planned, a third Swedish Red Cross rehabilitation centre was opened at Skövde in 1991.¹¹² Despite the opening of this centre, however, the 1992 annual report addresses the necessity for more of these centres.

The need for rehabilitation centres of this kind is big. Research tells us that about one fourth of the refugees who are allowed to stay in Sweden have been subjected to torture. The figure is probably higher. Experience teaches us that people shrink from recounting their experience of torture. Courage and trust are needed before a refugee can tell his or her story.¹¹³

The emphasis on the necessity for more centres demonstrates that the existing centres have still not accepted a sufficient number of refugees. The opening of a fourth rehabilitation centre in Uppsala in 1996 was the proof of the need for more centres. However, opening more centres could be a good initiative to expand the scope of solidarity by involving asylum seekers and other migrants in the treatment process. Indeed, as Valenta and Bunar emphasize, the involvement of asylum seekers and other immigrants in the process will be an important step in empowering them and preparing them for life wherever they are - in the host country, their home country or elsewhere.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁸ Swedish Red Cross, *Annual Report 1992*, p. 33.

¹⁰⁹ Swedish Red Cross, *Annual Report 1992*, p. 33.

¹¹⁰ Wikberg, Britt, "The Swedish Red Cross Centre for the rehabilitation of tortured refugees," p.40.

¹¹¹ Swedish Red Cross, *Annual Report 1992*, p. 34.

¹¹² Swedish Red Cross, *Annual Report 1992*, p.33.

¹¹³ Swedish Red Cross, *Annual Report 1992*, p.33.

¹¹⁴ Valenta, Marko, Nihad Bunar, "State Assisted Integration: Refugee Integration Policies in Scandinavian Welfare States: The Swedish and Norwegian Experience. p. 478.

3.2. Organising a Volunteer Group for Tortured Asylum Seekers

Although the rehabilitation centres laid down a condition for accepting refugees for treatment, in 1988 the Swedish Red Cross created a breakthrough for those who do not have a residence and work permit.¹¹⁵ Following the application for asylum, the waiting process could extend up to a couple of years. In the meantime, asylum-seekers only had access to emergency care. In order to ameliorate this problem, the Swedish Red Cross initiated a project for providing asylum-seekers around Sweden with psychosocial and charitable support during this waiting period.¹¹⁶

A volunteer group, which consisted of approximately 30 people, led by Tina Mansén, was formed in order to help. This group included people of different occupations, including nurses, midwives, social workers, psychologists, mental practitioners, teachers, a psychiatrist, a secretary, a lawyer and a photographer.¹¹⁷ In the group, volunteers who were to be in steady contact with asylum seekers were named support persons, and volunteers who executed operations were called resource persons.¹¹⁸ The selection of the volunteers for the project was decided after informative meetings were held with people who signed up for the Red Cross to work with refugees. Recruited volunteers were able to receive further training, such as course days, lessons, and study visits after taking a first basic course. Additionally, the annual report of 1991 addressed that many asylum seekers contact the volunteer group with their own effort or through a friend or family member. Depending on the information obtained from the registration of the applicants, the person is either accepted at the centre or referred to another relevant institution. It is worth mentioning, however, that no application has ever been rejected.¹¹⁹

Following the first meeting accompanied by an interpreter and the volunteer group, the process continues between the asylum seeker and support person. In other words, the two decide where they want to get together and whether they require an interpreter's services (which is also offered by the volunteer group). The support person always keeps in touch with the asylum seekers during their entire waiting time for a residence permit. The volunteer group should officiate their tasks with understanding and that meetings should be based on the initiative of the asylum seeker him or herself. The primary service provided by the group was humanitarian support like fulfilling medico-social needs. The group also plays a crucial role in participating in the harmonizing process between the asylum seekers and society in general. In this vein, the group works in close contact with other volunteer organizations, immigrant societies and individual advocates.¹²⁰

¹¹⁵ Miserez, Diana and League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. "Refugees--the Trauma of Exile: The Humanitarian Role of Red Cross and Red Crescent." M. Nijhoff, 1988, p.200-201.

¹¹⁶ Svenska Röda Korset. *Årsbok 1991*, p. 16-17.

¹¹⁷ Svenska Röda Korset. *Årsbok 1991*, p. 16-17.

¹¹⁸ Svenska Röda Korset. *Årsbok 1991*, p. 16-17.

¹¹⁹ Svenska Röda Korset. *Årsbok 1991*, p. 16-17.

¹²⁰ Svenska Röda Korset. *Årsbok 1991*, p. 16-17.

It is emphasised, however, that, upon the ending of the investigation process and the approval or rejection of a residence permit, the connection between the client and volunteer group is discontinued. Thereafter, if the person receiving a residence permit required support, they were instructed to apply to the Red Cross treatment centres serving refugees. On the other hand, the project leader Tina Mansén said that it was the policy to stop support for those who have been denied a residency permit even though it was difficult to break bonds with someone after investing much time and energy.¹²¹

Given the Swedish Red Cross's approach towards tortured refugees in the 90s within the status-oriented limitation, this could be seen as constituting a gap within the scope of human rights. Nevertheless, the voluntary group project's attempt to fill this gap can be assessed as being an important attempt toward ensuring that asylum-seekers without a residence permit are prepared for integration during waiting times.

3.3. Integration through the International Meeting Centres

The Swedish Red Cross opened International meeting centres in different cities throughout the country in the 90s for the purpose of better integrating refugees and migrants into local societies. These centres were called the Swedish Red Cross international meeting centres or international gathering points. Various activities, such as literacy, language training, needlework, cooking, visits to offices and workplaces, and first aid training, were organised at these centres. These activities constituted the core function of these centres and enabled a broad range of 'civic information' to be shared among all stakeholders.¹²² Besides the content of activities, In the 1992 annual report, mentions that there is a link between the number of international meeting centres and the number of people who assigned municipalities. Therefore, it can be estimated people participating in the international meeting centres activities have a resident permit to stay Sweden.

As a result of the information we have obtained from the Swedish Red Cross annual reports, the number of international meeting centres engaged in the resettlement and integration of refugees in the 90s fluctuated throughout the 90s. More specifically, it is understood from the statistics in the annual reports that the number was 59 in 1991, 60 in 1992, 140 in 1993, 203 in 1995-96, 121 in 97, and 170 in 99.¹²³ Moreover, the report states this fluctuation in the number of international meeting centres was related to the number of refugees who received residence permits. At the time, asylum seekers had to live in camps during the investigation process and were not able to live outside of those camps in the society. For instance, the reason for the fact that the number of international gathering points was almost the same between 1991-1992 is disclosed by the fact that

¹²¹ Svenska Röda Korset. *Årsbok 1991*, p. 16-17.

¹²² Swedish Red Cross. *Annual Report 1992*, p. 23.

¹²³ Swedish Red Cross. *Annual Report 1992*, p. 24. *Verksamhetsberättelse och bokslut 1997*, p.35., *Verksamhetsberättelse och bokslut 1996*, p.31.

a diminutive number of asylum-seekers were granted residence permits and, therefore, few were settled in the municipalities. It is reported that in 1992, 83,200 asylum-seekers arrived in Sweden, 55,800 more than in 1991.¹²⁴ While in 1992, 12,800 residence permits were granted to refugees and others, a noted decline of approximately 5,900 compared to 1991.¹²⁵ Therefore, it can be said that the expansion of the international meeting centres depended on the number of refugees who were appointed in the municipalities.

In the same report which addresses the experiences of refugees coming to the centre, one states that they spent most of their time reading and speaking in Swedish. It is underlined that *Easy Swedish*, as well as basic and beneficial articles, were utilised as reading materials and that these exercises provided them with the opportunity to practice outside of school. Diya, an Iraqi immigrant, expresses his feelings about the activities in the centre with these words: “People we meet here listen very well and give us time to find the correct words.”¹²⁶

In the dialogue on how the Swedish Red Cross coped with the refugee integration issue following the large refugee resettlement in the 90s, Interviewee 1, who has been working in the Swedish Red Cross since the 90s, touched on the role played by international meeting centres to build the bridge between refugees, migrants and local people.

The Swedish Red Cross has always been active within social activities like gathering points and in the 90s they were often called international gathering points.... in Uppsala, also in Stockholm and around the country. The purpose of those kinds of activities was to have some kind of social inclusion into the social life, to meet, to talk, practice Swedish, get to know each other. [sic]
(Interview 1, March 2020)

The Swedish Red Cross contributed to local municipal integrating activities through the running of international meeting centres. For instance, the Swedish Red Cross international meeting centre in Enköping, located in the centre of Sweden, worked with the local Red Cross branch and local authorities to launch a project called the Enköping model in 1992 to prepare local immigrants for working life.¹²⁷ The purpose of this project was helping immigrants to become self-reliant within 18 months of their arrival into the municipality. Refugees from different countries, such as Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Poland, Russia, and Somalia, congregated at the meeting centre to read, speak, and gain more knowledge about Sweden. Furthermore, by taking four lessons a day, they studied Swedish every day for two months. When the two-month preparation process was over, they then received “on-the-job” practise in an office or factory for two weeks in line with their profession.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ Swedish Red Cross. *Annual Report 1992*, p. 24.

¹²⁵ Swedish Red Cross. *Annual Report 1992*, p. 24.

¹²⁶ Swedish Red Cross. *Annual Report 1992*, p. 23.

¹²⁷ Swedish Red Cross. *Annual Report 1992*, p. 23.

¹²⁸ Swedish Red Cross. *Annual Report 1992*, p. 23.

It seems that refugees and migrants find such activities very useful for becoming better acclimated to their new environment. As a refugee who attended the centre explained:

We learn how the Swedish system functions, how to act if there is a fire, how to dial 90 000, and we have the opportunity to work for a couple of weeks. Of course, it is useful.¹²⁹

It can be asserted that the cooperation of the meeting centres and local branches with local authorities for the integration of refugees in the 90s played an important role among Swedish Red Cross activities for refugees.

In the 1990s, just as today, the municipalities were the most responsible actors for refugee reception and integration through introductory programmes. Eastmond states that these programs included informative courses about Swedish society and training to prepare and familiarise newcomers to the local labour market.¹³⁰ Municipalities, however, are known to occasionally share these tasks with other agencies, such as non-governmental organizations. Introductory programmes not only supported refugees in finding a job but also assisted them in finding a place to live. Interviewee 1, for instance, reported that:

In Stockholm the municipality of Stockholm invited the branch of Stockholm Red Cross, this was 1994, to be including part of the integration and introduction programme, so ten years from 1994 to 2004 Red Cross of Stockholm branch was involved in a programme in association with the local municipality the city of Stockholm. Our introductory programme was to in all parts of the society introduce them to schooling, to education, to the workplace, to housing find a place, to live and also we worked with the social inclusion so we had local participants and refugee participants. We had Swedish or Stockholm householders, not Swedish ethnicity, people established in Stockholm living in Stockholm. Those families took part in our programme and the refugees going through there, introductory programme that was settled in the city of Stockholm after receiving asylum and resident permit. [sic] (Interviewee 1, March 2020)

Herein, it would be appropriate to underline an important point. In the 90s, it was the responsibility of the municipalities to settle refugees. As Interviewee 1 notes, the Swedish Red Cross only worked in Stockholm as part of the integration and introduction programme at the invitation of the municipality from 1994 to 2004. On the one hand, civic information, which constitutes an integral part of the activities of the international meeting centre, played a facilitating role for refugees and migrants to integrate into the society in which they had arrived.

Previous studies address the experiences of refugees who found it difficult to find a job due to insufficiency in the Swedish language, a deficiency of social networks, and attitudes among employers which limited their professional recognition.¹³¹ In particular, considering the importance of social networks and connections in finding a job, which is a common tradition in Sweden, it can

¹²⁹ Swedish Red Cross. *Annual Report 1992*, p. 24.

¹³⁰ Eastmond, Marita "Egalitarian Ambitions, Constructions of Difference: The Paradoxes of Refugee Integration in Sweden", p.100-101.

¹³¹ Bucken-Knapp, Gregg, Vedran Omanović, Andrea Spehar 2020, p. 66; Bennich-Björkman, Li, Roland Kostić, and Branka Likić-Brborić 2016, p. 96-100.

be said that providing them with the opportunity to work at offices or factories was very beneficial in terms of strengthening the agency and self-reliance of refugees. Accordingly, Interviewee 1 underlines that the Swedish Red Cross adopted a strategy which attempted to strengthen refugee agency during the integration of newcomers in the 90s. He made this point:

Our approach was empowerment. And we had a method that was more relying on the refugee and their own power and our part was to supply them with social contacts with friends with doors into the Swedish society. Because now as well as at that time, there is no formal way that I apply for a job and then I get to the job. Most jobs are found through contacts. I know a person who knows a person. You are well-known here. I have known that you can do this. So that is how we approach the introduction of the newly arrived inhabitants. [sic] (Interviewee 1, March 2020)

As our informant mentioned, in the absence of social networks, the Swedish Red Cross mediated the establishment of contacts for refugees as an important first step for future employment. Thus, they took on the duty of making refugees' paths in their new life as smooth and easy as they could. On the other hand, Eastmond argues that their approach toward empowerment was associated with the Swedish welfare state's idea of "education before work."¹³² Interviewee 1 emphasises that the city of Stockholm shifted its caretaking approach, which had been introduced in the social services, to facilitating refugees' ability to learn how to receive social allowances. This highlights how the Swedish government's integration policy has changed since the 90s.

Similarly, Eastmond addresses the fact that the discourse regarding immigrant welfare in the 1970s and 1980s turned into an idea that required refugees to obtain a certain amount of education before starting work in line with the goal of active learning to train resourceful individuals. Furthermore, Eastmond states that this idea was introduced into the new integration policy of Sweden in 1998.¹³³ This policy emphasised the importance of immigrants attaining individual competence and economic self-sufficiency. In this context, although the compulsory information programs offered by the government aim to educate immigrants with the socially and culturally correct skills, this idea has led to discussions about whether refugees should be regarded as incomplete agents and whether their freedom of personal choice is restricted. The idea of incomplete agency sees the lack of Swedish language and mental health as a problem for refugees and therefore emphasizes that individuals incorporating with these characteristics are not fully prepared to enter Swedish society.¹³⁴ According to an example that Eastmond shared, in 1995, a government committee for refugees and immigrants stated that the reason why unemployment among immigrants was their dependence on well-being and a lack of language and other formal

¹³² Eastmond, Marita "Egalitarian Ambitions, Constructions of Difference: The Paradoxes of Refugee Integration in Sweden", p. 103.

¹³³ Eastmond, Marita "Egalitarian Ambitions, Constructions of Difference: The Paradoxes of Refugee Integration in Sweden", p. 103.

¹³⁴ Eastmond, Marita "Egalitarian Ambitions, Constructions of Difference: The Paradoxes of Refugee Integration in Sweden", p. 102.

skills. Eastmond notes that this reflects the tendency to perceive integration problems in terms of the characteristics of new groups rather than the structures of the receiving society.¹³⁵ Ultimately, this idea opens the door to a one-sided integration at least in practice.

To summarise, there are ongoing discussions regarding whether the Swedish welfare state in the 90s considered refugees as a group that was not yet “completed,” despite its goals of equality and multiculturalism.¹³⁶ When we consider how the Swedish Red Cross perceived integration, preparing migrants for working life or providing civic information that is the spirit of the international meeting centres seems to be similar the welfare state's goal emphasizing active learning to train resourceful individuals. However, the approach in the meeting centres should be considered as different from welfare state idea in its aim to supply refugees social contacts with friends to open doors into the Swedish society. As highlighted in the aforementioned quotation, the aim of international meeting centre activities “was to facilitate social inclusion into the social life, to meet, talk, practice Swedish, get to know each other”.¹³⁷ Naturally, it should be admitted that the goal of mutual integration rather than assimilation is at the forefront.

Overall, the reason for conducting such a discussion is that of scrutinising the existing discussions about integration policy in Sweden in the 90s and to analyse the approach that the Swedish Red Cross adopted towards refugees as 'agents.' Besides, as mentioned in the previous research section, Bucken-Knapp, G., Omanović, V., and Spehar, A reveal how refugees see themselves as an agency while integrating into the new host society and emphasize that integration, which is a complex process, is also a long-term process developed by migrants' own agency.¹³⁸ Thus, the Swedish Red Cross's effort to strengthen refugees' own agency should be considered as a facilitator in the integration process. In the discussion part of this study, it will be discussed more thoroughly within the theoretical framework.

3.4. Relationship between the Swedish Red Cross and the Swedish authorities in the 90s

In many cases, national values, the understanding of multiculturalism and citizenship, and policies that vary from country to country, affect the role of non-governmental organizations in integration initiatives. As Brborić and Björkman mention, although Western democracies admit a model of citizenship that grants equal socio-economic, political and legal rights to all members of a political

¹³⁵ Eastmond, Marita “Egalitarian Ambitions, Constructions of Difference: The Paradoxes of Refugee Integration in Sweden”, p.102.

¹³⁶ Eastmond, Marita “Egalitarian Ambitions, Constructions of Difference: The Paradoxes of Refugee Integration in Sweden”, p.111-112.

¹³⁷ Interview 1, March 2020.

¹³⁸ Bucken-Knapp, Gregg, Vedran Omanović, Andrea Spehar, *Institutions and Organizations of Refugee Integration: Bosnian-Herzegovinian and Syrian Refugees in Sweden*, p.5-8.

community, they can adopt different approaches to manage immigrant and minority groups in association with their national welfare regime.¹³⁹ In this context, Westin and Kyrklund note that integration in Sweden is largely based on the general welfare policies managed by the public sector. Furthermore, they also state that Sweden has one of the largest public sectors among the liberal democracies of the West. More specifically, it is articulated that the role of the public sector in integration in Sweden is more varied than in European countries, where non-governmental organisations have greater participation.¹⁴⁰

As stated earlier in this study, the relationship between the state and the voluntary sector has a long history. Lundström mentions that the state took over social services from the voluntary sector in the early twentieth century.¹⁴¹ In the course of time, the state shared the task of handling social services with municipalities rather than the voluntary sector, eventually requiring municipalities to carry out this responsibility alone. Even under these circumstances, which left limited room for the volunteer sector to operate, its relationship with the state progressed without conflict based on consent. The economic recession and ideological conditions that began to change in the early 1990s moved the relationship between the state and non-governmental organisations forward. The factors affecting this change reversed the invisible and marginal role of non-governmental organisations.¹⁴² At the point where the welfare state was thought to be unable to provide the necessary assistance, non-governmental organisations were among the first organisations to address the poverty problem in the public sphere during the economic recession of the early 1990s.

Similarly, the municipalities started to receive integration support from non-governmental organisations following the large refugee resettlement in the 90s. In relation to that, the Swedish Red Cross international meeting centres assisted integration services carried out by municipalities. Through the activities achieved by international meeting centres and local branches of the Swedish Red Cross, refugees were provided with many services, such as housing, employment, and language courses. For example, the interviewee 1 underlines the desire of the city of Stockholm to share the responsibility of integrating refugees with non-governmental organisations:

In the 90s, the city of Stockholm wanted another approach, so instead of social service, that not all refugees but some refugees could have the introduction within the organisation the civil society instead of the local social service authorities. [sic] (Interviewee 1, March 2020)

Meanwhile, the Swedish Red Cross annual report of 1994 mentions collaboration between the Swedish Red Cross and some municipalities. Accordingly, the group members who gathered

¹³⁹ Li Bennich-Björkman and Branka Likić-Brborić. "Swedish exceptionalism and the integration of refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 1990s: Acceptance and strategies of citizenship". p. 88

¹⁴⁰ Westin, Charles, Elena Dingu-Kyrklund "Immigration and Integration of Immigrants and their Descendants: The Swedish Approach" p. 131.

¹⁴¹ Lundström, Tommy. "The State and Voluntary Social Work in Sweden. p. 126.

¹⁴² Lundström, Tommy and Lars Svedberg, "The Voluntary Sector in a Social Democratic Welfare State-the Case of Sweden", p. 226.

regularly and shared their experiences discussed which activities the municipalities could contribute.¹⁴³ Besides, it is remarked that collaborations are mainly based on information and education towards social and refugee activities. In other words, the collaboration groups focused their attention on the integration of refugees. For instance, the Swedish Red Cross received refugee guides as a consequence of their cooperation with the municipalities. More specifically, approximately 4,000 refugee guides were recruited throughout Sweden in cooperation with municipalities and other organisations within the scope of the Red Cross's "Communication Network" project.¹⁴⁴ The aim of the project was that of bringing refugees and local people in Sweden together to ensure a mutual cultural exchange. By this means, measures were taken to make it easier for refugees to meet a Swedish family and engage with Swedish society. Furthermore, 1994 Annual Report emphasises that these collaborations (which were effective in regard to some issues, such as the increase in the number of activities, economic benefits and job sharing) were carried out through various activities organised in each group's own municipalities.¹⁴⁵

Another point regarding the Swedish Red Cross's cooperation with Swedish authorities concerns reception centres. For example, the Swedish Red Cross ran four reception centres at the request of the Swedish government in the late 80s and early 90s.¹⁴⁶ Interviewee 1 stated, however, that "it was only three or four years;" namely, it was only a temporary situation. In these reception centres, the Swedish Red Cross came to refugees' aid in terms of finding them jobs or housing, as well as providing them with language education and health services whilst they awaited residency permits. Besides, Brit Wikberg addressed the fact that the Swedish Red Cross was taking care of around 1,000 asylum seekers in four camps and attempted to find solutions for all possible problems that might have been encountered during their integration back into Swedish society.¹⁴⁷ We mentioned that the Swedish Red Cross carried out a variety of activities in cooperation with municipal and government authorities in areas such as employment, housing, education, health, language and culture, within the framework suggested by Agar and Strang regarding what constitutes the core domains of integration.¹⁴⁸ Along with these, 'citizenship and rights' – which Agar and Strang called the 'foundation indicators' for the integration of refugees in the host country – are those domains which the Swedish Red Cross was primarily involved through different collaborations.

¹⁴³ Svenska Röda Korset. *Årsbok 1994*, p. 14-15.

¹⁴⁴ Svenska Röda Korset. *Årsbok 1994*, p. 20-21.

¹⁴⁵ Svenska Röda Korset. *Årsbok 1994*, p. 14-15.

¹⁴⁶ Haug, Hans, Hans-Peter Gasser, and Institut Henri-Dunant. *Humanity for all: The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement*. p. 249.

¹⁴⁷ Wikberg, Britt, "The Swedish Red Cross Centre for the rehabilitation of tortured refugees," p. 40.

¹⁴⁸ Agar, A., and A. Strang. "Understanding Integration: A Conceptual Framework." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 21, no. 2 (2008): p. 170.

The Swedish Red Cross has closely followed the refugee issue in the political platform as well. Aside from a new immigration law which was adopted in 1997, the legislation on asylum was also changed. Thus, most of the Swedish Red Cross initiatives for refugees focused on political activities.¹⁴⁹ In her study on Swedish Refugee Policy during the 90s, Elisabeth Abiri notes that the new legislation on Swedish immigration policies, which came into effect as of January 1 1997, includes changing practices in family reunification, especially for members who are living apart from their nuclear families.¹⁵⁰ As such, while the facility of providing temporary protection instead of permanent residence was expanded, the definition of the close family where only parents and single children under 18 are entitled to obtain a residence permit was proposed. In other words, immigration rules were narrowed for the extended family.¹⁵¹ In this context, the 1997 annual report sheds light on the Swedish Red Cross's initiatives regarding the new immigration law which affected the family reunification integration issue.

Considering these new regulations towards refugees, the Swedish Red Cross has conducted investigations to determine the effects of the new law on people whose reunification opportunities were limited in Sweden. Through these investigations, the Swedish Red Cross had the opportunity to comment on issues related to restrictions on asylum law in the EU, the cancellation of residence permits, and Sweden's connection to the Schengen agreement. In addition, the Swedish Red Cross organised a workshop concerning Schengen with other voluntary organisations attended by politicians and other actors in the field. Thus, the Swedish Red Cross has sought to contribute to the development of Swedish refugee policy by making official statements on Sweden's cooperation with the Schengen agreement. Swedish Red Cross sought to raise awareness on the consequences of the new law in 1997, that reduces the possibility of refugees and asylum seekers reuniting with their relatives, as a factor that negatively affects their integration. In doing this, it has not hesitated to criticize the state.¹⁵²

In 1997, the Swedish Red Cross launched a new collaboration with fellow European Red Cross associations to improve conditions for asylum seekers and refugees throughout Europe. The Swedish Red Cross was represented at the Council for Ethical Equality and Integration and the European Council against Racism, which strive to improve the existing social atmosphere in these domains and to make recommendations on a new law written to fight against discrimination in working life. Thereby, the Swedish Red Cross expressed its power to challenge the state through its own work and in cooperation with different authorities.¹⁵³

The Swedish Red Cross, which focused on refugee policy studies in conjunction with the new immigration law adopted in 1997, continued to follow the decisions regarding foreign legislations

¹⁴⁹ Svenska Röda Korset. *Verksamhetsberättelse och bokslut 1997*, p. 4-5.

¹⁵⁰ Abiri, Elisabeth. "The Changing Praxis of 'Generosity': Swedish Refugee Policy during the 1990s", p.17.

¹⁵¹ Abiri, Elisabeth. "The Changing Praxis of 'Generosity': Swedish Refugee Policy during the 1990s", p. 24.

¹⁵² Svenska Röda Korset. *Verksamhetsberättelse och bokslut 1997*, p. 4-5.

¹⁵³ Svenska Röda Korset. *Verksamhetsberättelse och bokslut 1997*, p. 4.

and participate in discussions regarding how asylum work should be arranged in 1998. Moreover, the issue of asylum was of significant importance at the 1998 Dublin Convention – the convention which governed which EU countries are responsible for examining asylum applications to the EU – at which the Swedish Red Cross coordinated a workshop with Caritas, Amnesty International, FARR, the Swedish Church, and the UNHCR. In this way, the attention of public authorities and other voluntary organizations was drawn to the issue.¹⁵⁴

It is clear from the arguments above that the Swedish Red Cross has tried to influence Sweden's refugee politics in different ways, from organising workshops to publishing official statements and responses. It can be said that the Swedish Red Cross has improved collaboration on refugee integration not only at the economic and social levels but also at the political level as well. For example, the Swedish Red Cross took steps for refugees awaiting reunification with their families and helped people from Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iraq, Liberia, Somalia, and many other countries, to keep up contact with their relatives. In this vein, most tasks were about people who were affected by the foreigner legislation in 1997. In 1998, unaccompanied children have been part of 46 out of the 933-family reunion-tasks the Swedish Cross processed during the year.¹⁵⁵

To sum up, the Swedish Red Cross has frequently made suggestions to support refugee resettlement and integration in cooperation with municipalities, other official authorities, and voluntary organizations. Collaboration with municipalities and official authorities is highly regarded as a way of increasing refugees' ability to find better opportunities by helping them to attain the requirements identified by the government. Even though one of the seven founding principles of the Swedish Red Cross is independence, cooperation is expressed as being equally necessary for better supporting vulnerable people and creating a better world. Taken altogether, it may be concluded that the Swedish Red Cross, which held an auxiliary role in its relationship with the Swedish government, nevertheless also criticised those government decisions which did not favour refugees by trying to compel them to bring them in line with international human rights standards.

4. The position of the Swedish Red Cross in the most recent refugee resettlement in the 2010s

As of 2019, there were more than 70 million refugees and displaced persons in the world, the highest number ever.¹⁵⁶ In the last decade, the flow of refugees to the member states of the European Union has dramatically increased. This was caused in particular by the conflicts in Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen led to a new influx of refugees.¹⁵⁷ Thereby, one of

¹⁵⁴ Svenska Röda Korset. *Verksamhetsberättelse och bokslut 1998*, p. 4.

¹⁵⁵ Svenska Röda Korset. *Verksamhetsberättelse och bokslut 1998*, p. 4-5.

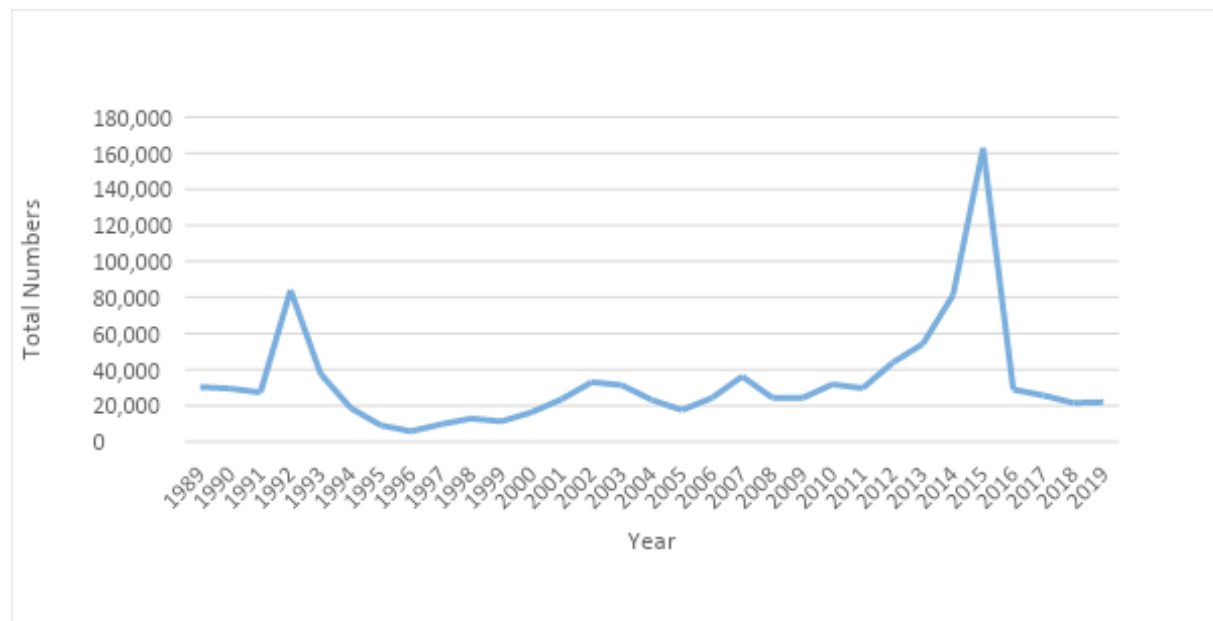
¹⁵⁶ Swedish Red Cross. *Annual Report 2019*, p. 19.

¹⁵⁷ Hansen, K. "Egalitarianism Under Siege? Swedish Refugee Reception and Social Trust", p. 270.

the most refugee-friendly countries in Europe, Sweden became the popular choice for many asylum-seekers in search of safety and better lives.¹⁵⁸

According to statistics given by the Swedish Migration Agency, Sweden saw the highest historical figure of asylum applications in 2015.¹⁵⁹ Indeed, this year is generally known as the ‘refugee crisis’ in public discourse. The table below demonstrates the changing number of asylum applications for the past thirty years.

Figure 1. Applications for asylum received by Year, 1989-2019



- Figure 1. “These figures refer to first-time applications from 22 of Sweden's 118 police districts and correspond to approx. 90 per cent of the total number of first- time applications”, Swedish Migration Agency, Accessed July 17, 2020 ¹⁶⁰

As shown in the chart, in 2015, 162,877 persons applied for asylum in Sweden, with the majority of them coming from Syria. Other refugees include citizens from Iraq, Afghanistan, Eritrea, and Somalia.¹⁶¹ Even though Sweden is experienced in receiving refugees as compared to other

¹⁵⁸ Henrik Emilsson, “Continuity or Change? The Refugee Crisis and the End of Swedish Exceptionalism.” *MIM Working Paper Series*; 18/3, 2018.

¹⁵⁹ Swedish Migration Agency. “Application for Asylum received” data for 2000-2019. <https://www.migrationsverket.se/download/18.4a5a58d51602d141cf41038/1580829734962/Application%20for%20asylum%20received%202000-2019.pdf> . Accessed July 17, 2020.

¹⁶⁰ Swedish Migration Agency. “Application for Asylum received” data for 1884-1999, <https://www.migrationsverket.se/download/18.2d998ffc151ac3871598175/1485556079477/Application%20for%20asylum%20received%201984-1999.pdf> . Accessed July 17, 2020.

¹⁶¹ Swedish Migration Agency. “Application for Asylum received” data for 2000-2019. <https://www.migrationsverket.se/download/18.4a5a58d51602d141cf41038/1580829734962/Application%20for%20asylum%20received%202000-2019.pdf> . Accessed July 17, 2020.

European states – and although a sudden arrival of a large number of refugees was nothing unexpected (viz. 1991-1992) – the number of asylum seeker applications to enter Sweden sharply increased between 2011 and 2016. Given that the number of refugees who arrived in Europe and Sweden experienced a massive increase in 2015, the integration of these has brought massive economic and political challenges for member states.¹⁶²

Resettlement has always been a major challenge for all actors assisting refugees in their inclusion into their respective new societies. Indeed, Sweden faced the challenge of effectively integrating newly arrived refugees since the 1990s.¹⁶³ Today, however, Sweden has a system in place for integrating refugees, not only at the national level, but also at the regional and local levels, in conjunction with NGOs.¹⁶⁴

In this context, with reference to the integration of newcomers, the Swedish Red Cross is one of the actors which are primarily involved in supporting asylum seekers and refugees in their attempt to join Swedish society. When asked about the position of the Swedish Red Cross on integration, interviewee 4 who is working as a thematic advisor in migration responded:

As a first step the organization needed to do urgent response, for example meeting and guiding people arriving at train stations and airports as well as providing basic support. After the first response, the next step was to provide social activities for the asylum seekers during their initial time in Sweden. Social activities could for example be language training, information, a safe place to interact with others, etc. In the aftermath of the legal changes and the long asylum process, the need for guiding and counselling is extra important. [sic] (Interviewee 4, March 2020)

Health counselling and trauma treatment are also seen as being important to integration. The above quote gives us prior knowledge into the steps the Red Cross took on their road to integration. Thus, the Swedish Red Cross has shown that it stands by asylum seekers through the early integration measures taken during the waiting process after the reception. In light of the above brief explanatory quote, dealing with the main research question of the thesis, “How have the Swedish Red Cross’s integration initiatives changed from the 1990s to 2015?”, the following section will examine the participation of the Swedish Red Cross in the most refugee resettlement in 2010s.

4.1. The role of the Swedish Red Cross Treatment Centres in integration post-2011

As with the case of those who arrived in the 90s, the refugees who reached Swedish soil since 2011 were also fleeing war and conflict dramatically increased in number. As previously mentioned, most

¹⁶² Hansen, K. ‘Egalitarianism Under Siege? Swedish Refugee Reception and Social Trust’. p.270.

¹⁶³ Bucken-Knapp, Gregg, Zainab Fakih, Andrea Spehar, School of Public Administration, Göteborgs universitet, Gothenburg University, Förvaltningshögskolan, et al. "Talking about Integration: The Voices of Syrian Refugees Taking Part in Introduction Programmes for Integration into Swedish Society." *International Migration* 57, no. 2 (2019), p. 222.

¹⁶⁴ Grip, Lena. "Knocking on the Doors of Integration: Swedish Integration Policy and the Production of a National Space." *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 21, no. 3 (2019;2020;), p. 862.

of the people who came to Sweden from the Balkans in the 90s were exposed to torture.¹⁶⁵ At that time, the Swedish Red Cross's treatment centres provided the necessary assistance to facilitate refugees' integration into Swedish society. With almost thirty years having passed since then, current studies have cited that mental health problems are common among those refugees who have arrived in Sweden in recent times. For example, a research conducted by the Swedish Red Cross on mental illnesses, trauma and living conditions amongst refugees and asylum seekers in Sweden concluded that one-third of Syrian refugees exhibited symptoms of depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Moreover, it was determined that almost one in three people among the new arrivals from Syria, and 87% of the new arrivals from Eritrea and Somalia, had been tortured. According to the research, refugees and asylum seekers have both been exposed to different types of stress, such as losing family members or staying away from their loved ones, economic problems, feeling a loss of independence and self-esteem, and being excluded by society.¹⁶⁶

Furthermore, this study, which was conducted jointly by the Swedish Red Cross University College and the Swedish Red Cross, concludes that mental illness undermines the resettlement process.¹⁶⁷ In this vein, it has been determined that the people who need psychological support should receive essential interventions that improve their mental health. Good mental health is taken to be one of the main determinants of whether refugees adapt to economic, social, or civil life which they need in order to successfully complete the resettlement process. Moreover, poor health is seen as being the most common reason why newly resettled refugees cannot be actively involved in the integration process.¹⁶⁸ Nevertheless, depending on the social and political atmosphere, it is possible to minimize the currently existing stress on refugees. For example, The Swedish Red Cross Report on Humanitarian Consequences of the Swedish *Temporary Aliens Act* shows that legal regulations, such as the Swedish *Temporary Aliens Act*, which was adopted in 2015, have negatively affected the integration of asylum seekers or refugees who have mental troubles. Besides, The *Aliens Act* which allows for temporary residence permits contra permanent ones has led to uncertainty for the future and challenging focusing on education. Therefore, the Swedish Red Cross criticized the *Temporary Aliens Act* for possible adverse effects on people traumatized by torture and persecution.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ Eastmond, Marita "Egalitarian Ambitions, Constructions of Difference: The Paradoxes of Refugee Integration in Sweden", p.103-104.

¹⁶⁶ Swedish Red Cross. University College's report series Summary (2016:1) *Newly resettled refugees and asylum seekers in Sweden*, p. 1-4.

¹⁶⁷ Swedish Red Cross. University College's report series Summary (2016:1) *Newly resettled refugees and asylum seekers in Sweden*, p. 1-4.

¹⁶⁸ Swedish Red Cross. University College's report series Summary (2016:1) *Newly resettled refugees and asylum seekers in Sweden*, p. 1-4.

¹⁶⁹ Swedish Red Cross. *Activity Report 2017*, p.35.

In this way and taking into account the situation of those who have newly arrived, the Swedish Red Cross has significantly focused on promoting the health and treatment of injured and traumatised victims of wars in its initiatives. As mentioned earlier, the Swedish Red Cross opened its first treatment centre in Stockholm for victims of war and torture more than 30 years ago. From that time till today, it has been reported that tens of thousands of people who have escaped from war and persecution have received treatment and care from them¹⁷⁰. In this vein, the Swedish Red Cross opened two more treatment centres for tortured people in addition to the other ones which had been established in the 90s. Thus, there are currently six Swedish Red Cross treatment centres in total. The centre founded in Skellefteå in 2006 accepts people regardless of legal status, such as refugees, asylum seekers, and the undocumented.¹⁷¹ For instance, in our conversation related to their work with the undocumented, a personnel, who works as a psychologist at the centre, pointed out that:

We work with those who are not allowed to stay in Sweden depending on their situation and needs. We know many undocumented migrants actually stay in Sweden for many years – some hidden, but many with family still live in Migrationsverket housing. If possible, we work as usual, treating traumatic memories, but many of the people in this group receive more stabilizing work – psychoeducation, support, we teach and practice methods to relax and deal with traumatic memories. [sic] Informant 1.

Like other centres, the Skellefteå treatment centre employs a professional team of psychologists, physiotherapists, and counsellors. It is also noted that treatment plans, which are prepared by experts with different specialities, are arranged separately for each patient.¹⁷²

Following the high number of asylum seekers who arrived in Sweden, especially in 2015, another treatment centre was opened in Goteborg in September 2015.¹⁷³ The centre accepts people irrespective of their status, such as asylum seekers, the undocumented, and people with residence permits in Sweden. In our dialog, when talking about the functioning of the Goteborg centre, a staff, who is an operations manager there, underlined that:

We take a holistic perspective with our patients where psychological, physical, and social aspects are taken into consideration. Undocumented immigrants too often present with multiple stressors and contextual challenges, which may increase risk for mental disorders. Undocumented individuals may experience discrimination for their legal status and experience psychological distress as a result. We open the therapeutic doors to these types of conversations and give the patient the freedom to talk about the fear and stigma associated with being undocumented. Validating patients' fears and simply listening to can go a long way. The fear of deportation is real. To maximize effectiveness, we select interventions that are rooted in evidence-based practice and practice-based evidence. The methods are the same for all our patients. [sic] Informant 2

¹⁷⁰ Swedish Red Cross. *Annual Report 2017*, p.7.

¹⁷¹ <https://www.rodakorset.se/fa-hjalp/behandling-for-krigsskadade-och-torterade/skelleftea/>

¹⁷² <https://www.rodakorset.se/fa-hjalp/behandling-for-krigsskadade-och-torterade/skelleftea/>

¹⁷³ Swedish Red Cross. *Årsredovisning 2015*, p. 2.

In the brief interview conducted with the officials of these two centres, it was emphasized that, unlike the 90s, everyone is offered treatment regardless of status (including illegal immigrants). In the 90s, Swedish Red Cross centres had a rule allowing only those who had residence and work permits to receive treatment. It seems, however, that those rules have changed with regard to the treatment of the tortured or wounded. Today, all Swedish Red Cross Treatment Centres (i.e. in Malmö, Stockholm, Skövde, Uppsala, Goteborg and Skellefteå) receive people who need care regardless of their legal status.¹⁷⁴ The possible reasons behind this decision and the importance of this change on the operating mechanism of the centres in terms of promoting 'agency and solidarity' will be discussed in the last section.

Today the Swedish Red Cross Treatment Centres have generally adopted similar ways in the treatment of refugees, asylum seekers or others. Experts who adopt the empowerment approach in treatment help patients who are trying to overcome mental distress to find their own ways and cope with this trauma. The activity report of 2017 addressed that there are various methods that are used in the treatment of patients. For example, yoga and water gymnastics are described as some of the methods which were applied at the Swedish Red Cross Treatment Centre for victims of war and torture.¹⁷⁵

On the other hand, more activities have been organized by Swedish Red Cross Treatment Centres since 2017. Reports mention that treatment is now provided to more children and young people who have experienced traumatic warfare and who have fled their country.¹⁷⁶ Indeed, the number of treated patients shows fluctuation throughout the years. According to statistics provided by the Swedish Red Cross, while more than 1,800 patients received support in 2016, the Swedish Red Cross treated 2,003 patients and conducted 18 torture injury investigations in 2017.¹⁷⁷ The number of treated persons was 1,329 and 1,695 in 2018 and 2019, respectively.¹⁷⁸ Overall, the treatment of victims of war and torture consists the largest areas of operation for the Swedish Red Cross. Especially the arrival of the largest numbers of refugees in 2015, a significant attention was allocated for the treatment of traumatised individuals. A study conducted by Mangrio, E., Carlson, E., and Zdravkovic, S. found that the experiences of escaping from a war-torn country and coming to a new environment, as a result of the interviews with 24 Syrian families, are challenging for mental health. Accordingly, feelings of uncertainty arise while families are waiting for their residence permits, searching for housing, or learning a language. Hence, the study concludes that this refugee group is exposed to health risks in the near future and therefore needs additional support.¹⁷⁹ Considering the possible health risks among refugees in the future, it is understandable

¹⁷⁴ <https://www.rodakorset.se/fa-hjalp/behandling-for-krigsskadade-och-torterade/>

¹⁷⁵ Swedish Red Cross. *Activity Report 2017*, p. 30-31.

¹⁷⁶ Swedish Red Cross. *Activity Report 2017*, p. 31.

¹⁷⁷ Swedish Red Cross. *Annual Report 2017*, p. 7.

¹⁷⁸ Swedish Red Cross. *Annual Report 2018*, p. 14., The Swedish Red Cross Annual Report 2019, p. 15.

¹⁷⁹ Mangrio, Elisabeth, Elisabeth Carlson, Slobodan Zdravkovic, Faculty of Health and Society, Malmö University, Care Science (VV), and Malmö Institute for Studies of Migration, Diversity and Welfare (MIM).

why the Swedish Red Cross' significant attention was allocated for the treatment of traumatised people.

4.2. Integration through the Swedish Red Cross local branches

During the 90s, the international meeting points of the Swedish Red Cross were engaged in activities devoted to helping refugees integrate better into Swedish society by having them meet with local people and practice speaking Swedish in order to have them get to know each other. In a broad sense, the centres' main theme was that of providing civic information to refugees in order to prepare them for working and social life. Apart from these international meeting centres, local branches around the country were involved in other important operations as well, such as providing first aid, elderly care, and advice on refugee or immigrant issues. It was only at the international meeting centres, however, where social activities between friends, like cooking food, having coffee, and learning new hobbies, were conducted. These international centres, whose main task was integration, were not only preparing refugees for their new lives in their host country but also trying to accelerate the integration process through various collaborations conducted with local organizations.¹⁸⁰

While the meeting centres had their own space and carried out their own activities as distinct from the local branches, nowadays, the latter have taken the responsibilities of the former (i.e. language cafes and meeting places). In other words, the majority of international gathering points do not exist today. Instead, integration activities are primarily carried out by the local branches all around Sweden. As Interviewee 4 mentions:

The Swedish Red Cross works with integration mainly through our local branches. We have language training / language cafés, homework support, mentor activities, health care services for people who have experienced trauma, social activities, basic services such as housing or food for people in need and other activities for migrants. [sic] (Interviewee 4, March 2020)

Today, the Swedish Red Cross, has become increasingly familiar with the refugee question. When talking about the differences in integration initiatives which have been offered over the years, from the 90s till today, interviewee 1 expresses the following:

It is more spread all over the country and these kinds of activities are also more accepted in the Swedish Red Cross, during the 90s it was only an exception within Red Cross for those who are especially engaged in refugees and refugees' questions, but now it is more a normal situation. [sic] (Interviewee 1, March 2020)

"Newly Arrived Refugee Parents in Sweden and their Experience of the Resettlement Process: A Qualitative Study." *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health* (2019): 140349481989353-1403494819893535. p.1

¹⁸⁰Swedish Red Cross. *Annual Report 1992*, p. 23-24.

Especially, the Annual report in 2016 emphasized that, following the most recent refugee resettlement, much of the Swedish Red Cross has focused on refugee or asylum issues.¹⁸¹ Given the increasing demand for integration following the refugee influx into Sweden interviewee, Annie Mohl said that: “It is very common. One of our biggest activities and it increased a lot from 2012 to 2016”.¹⁸² Furthermore, related to the changes brought about by the refugee crisis, interviewee 4 emphasises that:

The Swedish Red Cross is an organization working with reducing the negative effects of crises. This means that we need to be a continuously evolving organization that quickly can change in times of different types of challenges. The large number of refugees arriving in 2015 meant that we had to change our activities in order to be of most help to people in need with respect to these changes. The structure of the organization has recently been changed in order to be more effective, not only regarding the migration situation but to different challenges in the society where migration is one part. [sic] (Interviewee 4, March 2020)

It can be said, however, that the activities offered by the Swedish Red Cross have reached more people over the years. It was mentioned in the previous chapter that refugees or immigrants with residence permits joined the courses in international meeting centres. We will discuss the underlying reasons why people could not reach integration facilities at that time in more detail in the discussion section. On the other hand, more people benefitting from integration facilities today can be due to the fact that people nowadays participate in activities without any restrictions, regardless of their legal status. As a matter of fact, during one interview, a discussion was had regarding whether background – being a refugee, an asylum seeker, or an immigrant – makes a practical difference on integration initiatives which the Swedish Red Cross is currently involved with in their local branches. Interviewee Annie Mohl, who has been working with integration issues at the Swedish Red Cross for many years, makes this point:

If they are attending our activities, we do not ask anything. No. We do not ask, do you have a residence permit? Are you an asylum seeker? Are you here without legal status? We do not ask. Everybody is welcome. But the Swedish Red Cross has other activities for refugees, asylum seekers, for example. We will help with family reunification. We help with tracing families. And then, of course, you have to ask. [sic] (Interviewee 2, March 2020)

The quote above puts emphasis on the fact that legal status can, indeed, be important depending on the situation. In order to identify and solve a problem, they sometimes need to take legal status into account. As a participant in integration activities, they do not ask about legal status or their reason for being there. Sometimes, on the other hand, they need to know the background of the person in order to help them. Otherwise, as Interviewee Annie Mohl mentioned above, they would

¹⁸¹ Swedish Red Cross. *Annual Report 2016*, p. 1.

¹⁸² Annie Mohl, Interviewee 2, (March 2020).

not be able to help those refugees waiting for reunification with their families without asking about their identity. Apart from those activities which require a refugee's identity to be given, the Swedish Red Cross carries out its activities for everyone who asks to attend. The people interviewed about current integration initiatives all touched upon the fact that the Swedish Red Cross's assistance is offered regardless of the legal status.

Turning back to the activities provided, one of the most common Swedish Red Cross integration activities is that of the Language Café or language courses. This activity, which is nowadays provided by the organisation's local branches, provides an environment where people can get together to practice the Swedish language.¹⁸³ During the researcher's visit to the local branch of the Swedish Red Cross in Uppsala, I had the opportunity of observing the ambience of where language practice is performed, called a meeting place. According to my observations, the participants seemed to be chatting in a friendly, informal manner rather than adhering to any official format. Regarding this activity, interviewee Annie Mohl points out that:

Actually, it is not a school or education, but it is more it should be at least more of a conversation to meet Swedish people, to be able to learn to speak. Those people who are there doing it are volunteers. Could be anybody. You know, established in Sweden. It does not have to be a teacher. You know. They are volunteers. Some of them are teachers. You know, pensioner teachers or retired teachers, but not all of them. No, we do not demand that because it is not supposed to be school, it is supposed to be a voluntary activity. [sic] (Interviewee 2, March 2020)

Furthermore, interviewee 3, who works as the immigration coordinator at the local branch of the Swedish Red Cross in Uppsala, states that language courses not only allow people of different age groups or backgrounds to meet with each other and socialize but also to learn Swedish.

Language Cafe for everyone and I think that is the strength of this place because everybody is welcome and people meet, young people, old people. About 40 percent of participants here are women and we have children, family, and we have very old people so that is a string that I think that is very good. [sic] (Interviewee 3, March 2020)

Hereby, it is seen that diversity emerges as a facilitator which increases solidarity. Apart from diversity, another characteristic of the activities is adaptivity. In other words, they can be arranged according to the needs of refugees, asylum seekers or immigrants. Thanks to this flexibility, people can be aware of their problems to organize their own world. As such, it can be considered that the Swedish Red Cross has an approach that takes into consideration the promotion of its participants' agency. From this point of view, interviewee 3 explains that:

We have sometimes special groups with for example women that are just sitting and talking, and they have a leader. Like that...we do different things. We do not do the same things all the time.

¹⁸³Swedish Red Cross. *Activity Report 2016*, p. 20.

Maybe we have an activity for one month, two months, three months and we have to look at the needs and what society needs. If we see a lot of women here that need to talk that we can start very quickly. Then we can see know this need is what we see. I mean, what is happening in the society? It is like happening here to what is happening in the world, so we have to look at the needs and work with that the way. We do not do the same all the time. I mean everything we do it depends on what kind of needs there are in the people. [sic] (Interviewee 3, March 2020)

This also indicates that the Swedish Red Cross is open to different opinions or demands concerning its activities. In other words, it can be concluded from the above quote that the Swedish Red Cross's approach aims to create awareness and allows people to recognize their own needs. As Interviewee 3 mentioned, they can immediately organize a group activity for those who need someone to talk to. Additionally, Interviewee 3 emphasizes that each local branch can adapt its activities to the needs of its participants.

As stated at the beginning of the chapter, one of the steps taken by the Swedish Red Cross in the last refugee settlement was that of ensuring the integration of asylum seekers and refugees through various social activities. In this vein, one of the most common of these activities are the language cafes (i.e. language training). When asked "Do you have other activities besides language courses?" Interviewee 3 said:

Yes, we have different activities like drama, theatre, painting course. Sometimes doctors come here to talk about healthcare and different things. We have a swimming school for women. [sic] (Interviewee 3, March 2020)

There are also different activities, such as homework assistance for helping young people and adults after school, mentorship, cycling, hiking, breakfast club, activities for whole families (i.e. going on picnics or barbecues during the summer), going skiing, walking, etc.¹⁸⁴ These activities are organized by local branches depending on the demand.

Along with the integration-based activities mentioned by the interviewees, the annual activity reports indicate this issue. For instance, in 2017, the Swedish Red Cross carried out a mountain hiking event, one of many initiatives organized around the country to promote the integration of asylum seekers and newcomers to Sweden. During these year-round hikes to the Västerbotten mountains in Sweden, Swedish-born and newcomers alike walked side-by-side and tried to get to know one another. This event is an example of an endeavour whose goal was that of achieving mutual integration.¹⁸⁵ Likewise, the Swedish Red Cross has a "Buddy Program" which provides mutual integration and which aims to organize meetings between established and new Swedes.¹⁸⁶ Regarding the Buddy Program, Interviewee Annie Mohl underlined that:

¹⁸⁴ <https://www.rodakorset.se/fa-hjalp/aktiviteter-for-halsa-och-gemenskap/>

¹⁸⁵ Swedish Red Cross Activity Report 2017, p. 33.

¹⁸⁶ <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/intpract/kompis-sverige---buddy-sweden>

One established person and one newcomer will meet regularly. And that is real integration. That is, you know, you meet, you learn from each other better. You do things together. Both of you are learning. [sic] (Interviewee 2, March 2020)

Last but not least, finding housing and jobs for refugees or migrants is another integration initiative which the Swedish Red Cross has been engaged in since the 90s. According to interviewee 1, however, finding housing for refugees was a special program which was carried out in collaboration with the Stockholm municipality. In other words, it was not something that happened regularly. The task of accommodating refugees was, in other words, the responsibility of the government. When asked whether the Swedish Red Cross attempted to find a home for refugees in the most recent refugee resettlement, Annie Mohl states:

We do not work with housing but that is an exception now because we do with unaccompanied minors we do! That is something that is adjustable because the Swedish Red Cross is now fixing housing for unaccompanied minors locally, where you see that unaccompanied minors are homeless. [sic] (Interviewee 2, March 2020)

It is understood that there is no initiative to find housing except for some special cases and collaborations. Additionally, it was mentioned in the second chapter, for instance, that the international meeting centre in Enköping organized a course to prepare migrants and refugees for Swedish working life in the 90s.¹⁸⁷ Although this course's goal was that of preparing refugees for working life rather than finding a job, refugees gained valuable work experience in factories and workplaces and after the course it was easier for them to find a job by word-of-mouth, which is a common practice in Sweden. Therefore, it can be argued that the Swedish Red Cross was involved in job and housing integration during the 90s by collaborating with other agencies. Herein, it should be mentioned that the Swedish Red Cross has a home which provides humanitarian assistance to meet the most pressing needs of asylum seekers and refugees. In this house, whose name is "Rödakorshuset" and which is found in Skärholmen, which is a suburb of Stockholm, there are services that support social integration, such as providing food, resting rooms, showers, laundry, clothing distribution, language training and healthcare.¹⁸⁸

On the other hand, all the interviewees stated that the Swedish Red Cross has not been engaged in job integration in the most recent refugee settlement. For instance, interviewee 3 said that:

We cannot help people to search for a job. We can help them to write a CV or look at the internet for a job. We cannot provide them for a job. [sic] (Interviewee 3, March 2020)

Although they sometimes give advice on finding a job in volunteer activities, it seems that more cannot be done. In contrast with the 90s, the organization's approach toward finding asylum

¹⁸⁷ Swedish Red Cross. *Annual Report 1992*, p. 23.

¹⁸⁸ <https://kommun.redcross.se/stockholm/stockholm-syd/vart-arbete/rodakorshuset/>

seekers and migrants a job and housing has changed to some extent. In the section on the relationship between the Swedish authorities and the Swedish Red Cross, the issue of housing will be explained in more detail.

4.3. The number of local branches

The Swedish Red Cross is said to be a continually evolving organisation that can rapidly change during challenging times, such as expanding social enterprises and local activities to support vulnerable people.¹⁸⁹ Furthermore, interviewee 1 articulated that, over the years, integration initiatives for refugees have become more accepted and have spread all around Sweden. The number of activities organized and their effectiveness, however, is not directly proportional to the number of local branches. In other words, while the number of local branches during the 90s was more than a thousand, the number of local branches in 2019 was recorded as being 722.¹⁹⁰ Regarding the reason behind this decrement in the number of local branches, Interviewee 1 said that:

Some of the branches were so small so they did not do anything. They had the problems recruiting not only volunteers, our members. It had one branch in each parish. Maybe the population in the small parish, only 1000 people, members are in Red Cross maybe 50 people. We did bigger local branches today. [sic] (Interviewee 1, March 2020)

Referring to the decision to reduce the number of previously ineffective local branches, Interviewee Annie Mohl said:

We have a decision from our National Red Cross meeting that we should reduce the number of branches. So, one branch in each municipality. For example, one branch in Uppsala instead of four. If it is not effective. [sic] (Interviewee 2, March 2020)

Overall, it can be concluded that the Swedish Red Cross has prioritised having more active branches that are less in number but still able to focus more on activities rather than having many inactive local branches.

4.4. Relationship between the Swedish Red Cross and the Swedish authorities 2015 and onwards

As previously mentioned, the Red Cross is an independent organization.¹⁹¹ In the 90s, the Swedish Red Cross did not hesitate to cooperate with the Swedish authorities in order to support more people who were vulnerable. In fact, as emphasized frequently in this study, the Swedish Red Cross and the Swedish government have always had a good relationship.¹⁹² Nevertheless, it has also

¹⁸⁹ Swedish Red Cross. *Annual Report 2019*, p. 15.

¹⁹⁰ Swedish Red Cross. *Annual Report 2019*, p. 1.

¹⁹¹ Swedish Red Cross. *Annual Report 2017*, p. 4.

¹⁹² Lundström, Tommy. "The State and Voluntary Social Work in Sweden.", p. 123-146.

evolved over the years. Annual Reports address that, following the most recent large refugee settlements, the Swedish Red Cross has largely concentrated its national efforts on assisting refugees arriving in Sweden. In this context, the Swedish Red Cross carries out humanitarian aid activities in cooperation with government authorities on issues such as the treatment of tortured refugees, tracing missing family members, and reuniting families, including integration initiatives through social activities.¹⁹³

For example, the Swedish Red Cross Activity Report mentions that, in 2015, the Swedish government granted SEK 34 million to the Swedish Red Cross to strengthen humanitarian support for refugees. Thanks to this money, 5,700 volunteers supported 120,000 newcomers in 132 municipalities by carrying out activities, such as language practice, homework support, theatre, and sports, in 2016.¹⁹⁴ Equally, working in priority areas, such as asylum admission and resettlement, has continued in 2017, with special funds being given to the Swedish Red Cross by the government to promote the resettlement of new arrivals. It was also reported that more than 52,000 people participated in activities in 95 municipalities in that same year.¹⁹⁵

Given the relationship with the Swedish authorities in the initiatives mentioned above, the Swedish Red Cross plays a complementary role in cooperating with the authorities in times of crisis. Besides, the supportive role of the Swedish Red Cross in its relationship with the government is frequently emphasized both in the organization reports and interviewees' statements. As a matter of fact, when asked about this relationship, interviewee Annie Mohl responded:

We have seven fundamental principles and one of them is independence. So that means no government can influence what we do. So, we are nongovernmental. But we have an auxiliary role, which means that we support. If we also think it is necessary to support the governmental authorities. [sic] (Interviewee 2, March 2020)

As well as their collaboration with social activities, there are other initiatives of the Swedish Red Cross which are supported by the government, like treating the war-wounded and tortured. We mentioned previously that a study conducted by the Swedish Red Cross on mental illness, trauma and living conditions indicated that almost all asylum seekers from Syria had been exposed to torture. In this vein, treatment for mental problems is among the Swedish Red Cross' primary tasks. Accordingly, the annual report in 2018 indicates that the Government granted SEK 30 million to the Swedish Red Cross to work with people who suffer from mental illness and homelessness. This money was used for needs such as helping asylum seekers and migrants meet financial and social demands and conducting local activities through local branches.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹³ Swedish Red Cross. *Annual Report 2016*, p. 1.

¹⁹⁴ Swedish Red Cross. *Activity Report 2016*, p. 18.

¹⁹⁵ Swedish Red Cross. *Annual Report 2017*, p. 7.

¹⁹⁶ Swedish Red Cross. *Annual Report 2018*, p. 14.

Another collaboration related to the treatment of the war-wounded and the tortured is that the Swedish Red Cross provides training on trauma and torture to county councils and municipalities. In the context of that training, the Swedish Red Cross has prepared materials on appropriate interventions for trauma and torture treatment in cooperation with the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKL) by providing such information to healthcare staff and employees working with refugees. It is highlighted that the demand for training has increased since 2015, even though the Swedish Red Cross has provided training for occupational groups on this subject in advance.¹⁹⁷

Undoubtedly, the recent refugee resettlement has not only affected health, social or economic initiatives in many areas but has also impacted cooperation in these areas. For example, following the recent influx of refugees, as a result of an agreement with the government, a cooperative agreement was established with the immigration office on the situation of refugees in Sweden. It was understood in that agreement that the Swedish Red Cross would be ready to respond when the immigration office needed any help. In a discussion regarding the implications of collaboration between the state and the Swedish Red Cross in terms of newly arrived refugees' integration, interviewee 4 pointed out that:

The Swedish Red Cross has an agreement with the Migrant Agency regarding cooperation in some key areas regarding migrants. This agreement has recently been modified and our cooperation onwards is currently being evolved. We have a continuous dialogue with both the Migration Agency and with the government regarding the situation for migrants in Sweden. We also cooperate with some municipalities regarding integration and access to basic services. [sic] (Interviewee 4, March 2020)

Another dimension of the relationship between the Swedish Red Cross and the government is based on international and national law. Under international humanitarian law, states have an obligation to preserve family unity and reunite families torn by armed conflict.¹⁹⁸ The right to know what happened to missing relatives and the role of the Red Cross are included in the 1949 Geneva Conventions. Moreover, this convention also addresses the fact that states are responsible for cooperating with the Red Cross to facilitate family reunification.¹⁹⁹ In this context, it can be said that the Swedish government is obliged to cooperate with the Red Cross.

In 2016, the Swedish Red Cross criticized the Swedish government for applying a similar policy to the EU's restrictive refugee policy. Indeed, the Swedish Red Cross cited the *Temporary Aliens Act* enacted in 2016 as being the reason why many families were broken apart, and urged the government to remove those obstacles to enable the reunification of families divided by war or disaster.²⁰⁰ Additionally, the Swedish Red Cross is in contact with the government to facilitate the

¹⁹⁷ Swedish Red Cross. *Activity Report 2016*, p. 25.

¹⁹⁸ Swedish Red Cross. *Activity Report 2016*, p. 14.

¹⁹⁹ Swedish Red Cross. *Annual Report 2018*, p. 17.

²⁰⁰ Swedish Red Cross. *Annual Report 2016*, p. 2.

reunion of divided families in Sweden while also providing them with information, guidance, and legal advice.²⁰¹

Besides, interviewees have described the restrictive refugee policy as an obstacle for the integration of refugees and asylum seekers, especially those who are victims of trauma and torture. Interviewee Annie Mohl, for example, explained that:

The temporary residence permits came 2016. Because it makes people very insecure. They do not know about their future and because it was also very difficult for families to reunite. You can never settle in the country if you do not know where your families are or how they are. You will never unpack your luggage in the hall. You will sit there and think you will never settle down. People will try. But if you do not know about your future, how can you then decide? You know, it is difficult if not. Why should you put a method if you do not even know if you can stay or not? Well, it is so difficult. And that is an obstacle to integration. Is a very big one. And that is also what we have said about the temporary residency permits and the law saying that you cannot reunite with your family. Now you can. It is you know that there has been an opening. [sic] (Interviewee 2, March 2020)

Regarding the effects of temporary immigration law, interviewee 3 states:

I think in 2016 the migration laws and in Sweden, which made you could have a permitted resident before, now you have temporary or three years or for 13 months. Depends on what status you have it is also very different to get your family here. It is so because there are demands on you have to be able to support your family. You have to have a big enough house. So that it makes the integration much harder for peoples when you are thinking about your children that maybe are in Syria or somewhere. It is not so easy to concentrate on language or integration. And also if you have one year permit you have to seek again for to make it longer and that may give you don't insure and the life is, of course, that's that make more difficult to integrate. I think that is the biggest difficulties sure. [sic] (Interviewee 3, March 2020)

As the interviewee Annie Mohl and Interviewee 4 have noted, given that the negative effects of the *Temporary Aliens Act* on refugees have made integration difficult, the Swedish Red Cross has insisted on defending the rights of refugees and being in contact with the government by using its special status. As Annie Mohl emphasized, although some other obstacles remain, family reunification has been opened for those who need alternative protection after 19 July 2019. To add more, comparing the *Temporary Aliens Act 2016* consequences to the previous situation, it can be seen that the right to family reunification and residence is highly restricted now. Following the coming into force of the *Temporary Alien Acts 2016*, the length of the permits and the right to family reunification rely on the protection status an individual is granted. For instance, refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection are granted temporary, rather than permanent, residence permits. Moreover, the category “others in need of protection” is removed completely and

²⁰¹ Swedish Red Cross. *Activity Report 2017*, p. 31.

residence permits based on "particularly distressing circumstances" applied much less frequently than before.²⁰²

Last but not least, even though the Swedish Red Cross integration works were carried out mostly through social activities, it was also mentioned that they had attempted to help in finding housing and work for those affected individuals during the 90s. The interviewee 1 emphasized that they had been working together for many years in the introduction programs for newcomers in cooperation with the municipality in Stockholm. Nowadays, though, the Swedish Red Cross cooperates with the Swedish authorities in finding homes only for those in special cases. Interviewee 4 explains how they are working with Swedish authorities to provide homes.

The Swedish Red Cross does work with housing for the most vulnerable, which often are refugees or other migrants. These housing solutions are provided in collaboration with other organizations or municipalities. In Sweden, the Migration Agency offers housing for asylum seekers. Therefore, when we work with housing, it's usually not for people who are still asylum-seekers. Many of our local branches provide housing for unaccompanied minors in collaboration with others. The most common are the coordination of voluntary family homes, but we also have corridor accommodations and apartment accommodations. In Stockholm, we also have the Red Cross House where we provide a place of rest during the day for anyone who needs it. [sic] (Interviewee 4, March 2020)

Furthermore, interviewee Annie Mohl emphasizes that the Swedish Red Cross, which has been working in cooperation with the government in providing housing for the last three years, has received financial aid from the government for unaccompanied minors.

The Swedish Red Cross is more focused on social activities, not economic because we do not give money to people or we do not fix housing. But that is something that is adjustable because the Swedish Red Cross is now fixing housing for unaccompanied minors locally, where you see that unaccompanied minors are homeless. For example, we have received economic support from the government for three years for unaccompanied minors who need housing. A lot of local branches are working with this. [sic] (Interviewee 2, March 2020)

Grassman and Svedberg articulates that the nature of the Swedish welfare model has a great influence in shaping the Swedish volunteer sector and especially the sector related to social services. Grassman and Svedberg also notes that an advanced public welfare system that embraces most of society - sharply reduces the need for voluntary services in core areas of well-being.²⁰³ However, this reversed in the 90s and the need for voluntary service increase. Tommy Lundström points out that voluntary organizations began to appear in the production of the welfare services at that time.²⁰⁴ Grassman and Svedberg notes that these organizations sometimes play a leading role in

²⁰² Swedish Red Cross Report, *Humanitarian Consequences of the Swedish Temporary Aliens Act 2018*, p.3.

²⁰³ Jeppsson Grassman, E. and Svedberg, L. 'Voluntary action in Scandinavian social welfare context: the case of Sweden', p. 415-417.

²⁰⁴ Lundström, Tommy. "The State and Voluntary Social Work in Sweden", p.123.

society and raise awareness of different groups in vulnerable situations, but voluntary activities cannot be an alternative to services provided by the state.²⁰⁵ Nevertheless, there are discourses that the welfare state is retreating and is no longer able to fulfil its primary duties, following the arrival of the largest numbers of refugees in 2015. Hansen emphasizes that the role of the Swedish state has changed from being actively involved in building welfare to being a financing provider for volunteer groups.²⁰⁶ In this vein, it is questionable whether there is a government-run alternative. In terms of the Swedish Red Cross case, although it has maintained a supportive role since the 90s, as Interviewee Annie Mohl stated above, Sweden takes over the tasks that the state has difficulty fulfilling (Supporting unaccompanied minors).

In addition, the advocacy feature of the Swedish Red Cross has been more visible by the fact that the arrival of a large number of refugees in 2015 is recognized as a threat to the welfare state.²⁰⁷ For instance, the campaign (Scrap the law. Not families.)²⁰⁸ was conducted by the Swedish Red Cross following the restrictive refugee policy. In this sense, the Swedish Red Cross criticized the status-oriented residence permit restrictions of the Swedish state and opposed the exclusion of refugees from certain rights in line with the participation principle that Bhattacharyya calls the production of collective meanings.²⁰⁹

In conclusion, on one hand, the Swedish Red Cross believes that efforts to help both vulnerable people and refugees need to be stepped up and it does not refrain from challenging Swedish government in this vein. On the other hand, it considers the cooperation with the Swedish government, municipalities, local authorities, and society in general as a crucial element of strengthening its ability to deal with various types of crises.²¹⁰

5. Analysis and Discussion

This study was conducted on two large periods of refugee resettlement in Sweden in order to assess the integration initiatives set by the Swedish Red Cross and their initial responses to the newly arrived. A secondary aspect of the study focused on factors regarding trauma and torture treatment as well as the implementation of social activities through international meeting centres. The third feature was to investigate the relationship between the Swedish authorities and the Swedish Red Cross from the 1990s to 2015 and onwards.

This chapter will conduct an in-depth comparative analysis regarding the integration initiatives of the 1990s in contrast to 2015 and answer the following research questions of this thesis: How

²⁰⁵ Jeppsson Grassman, E. and Svedberg, L. 'Voluntary action in Scandinavian social welfare context: the case of Sweden', p. 424.

²⁰⁶ Hansen, K. 'Egalitarianism Under Siege? Swedish Refugee Reception and Social Trust', p. 276.

²⁰⁷ Hansen, K. 'Egalitarianism Under Siege? Swedish Refugee Reception and Social Trust', p. 272.

²⁰⁸ Swedish Red Cross. *Annual Report 2016*, p. 2

²⁰⁹ Bhattacharyya, Jnanabrata. "Solidarity and Agency: Rethinking Community Development." p. 60-69

²¹⁰ The Swedish Red Cross, *Activity Report 2016*, p. 15.

have the Swedish Red Cross' integration initiatives of the 1990s to 2015 changed? The findings will be analysed by discussing the compatibility of integration initiatives with solidarity and agency in the context of community development within the framework of Bhattacharyya's theoretical interpretation. Furthermore, this theoretical analysis intends to clarify the second research question: To what extent do integration activities of the Swedish Red Cross reflect the concepts of solidarity and agency in NGO community-building?

5.1. Analysing the differences of integration initiatives of the 1990s compared to 2015 and onwards

Perhaps the most significant difference of integration initiatives of the 1990s in comparison to 2015 is the abandonment of the legal status-oriented approach, of which affects integration initiatives such as trauma and torture treatment. In the annual reports and documents recorded in the 1990s, it was suggested that the underlying reason as to why residence and work permits were necessary in order to be treated for trauma was due to treatment centres being unable to handle the existing capacity of asylum seekers.²¹¹ The necessity for permits was a way to lessen the strain caused by this demand and streamline the workload in order to conduct a more dedicated integration program.

From a theoretical point of view, the legal status-based approach does not follow the parameters of solidarity according to Bhattacharyya, who interprets community development in line with agency and solidarity. This follows the condition of having the desire to get along with all people, to worry about everyone, and to make a collective effort to create and maintain a charitable society.²¹² According to Bhattacharyya, a universal approach should be adopted in contrast to the classical community development definitions, of which consider the place or space to be an integral part of society. In this case, with Bhattacharyya's definition of solidarity, it is problematic to limit the treatment of trauma and torture victims to only those with a residence or work permit. On the other hand, a voluntary service created by the Swedish Red Cross in 1988²¹³ caters to the victims without a permit, which highlights the desire for care, treatment, and compassion. The endeavour of the volunteer group to hug everyone coincides with Bhattacharyya's definition of community development, with its characteristic promoting solidarity.

Another reason related to legal status-based practice in the treatment of tortured might be the Swedish settlement policy of the early 90s. The Swedish settlement policy of the early 90s stipulated that asylum-seekers would have to wait in the camps during the investigation process necessary for the residence permit application. This would have been significantly problematic, especially in 1992,

²¹¹ Swedish Red Cross. *Annual Report 1992*, p. 34.

²¹² Bhattacharyya, Jnanabrata. "Solidarity and Agency: Rethinking Community Development." p. 60-69.

²¹³ Miserez, Diana and League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. "Refugees--the Trauma of Exile: The Humanitarian Role of Red Cross and Red Crescent", p.200-201.

where there was a large influx of asylum seekers from Bosnia during the war. These victims had no choice but to live in the camps, unable to freely move into society. Bucken-Knapp, G., Omanović, V., and Spehar, A. noted that asylum seekers who obtained a residence permit were appointed to municipalities²¹⁴, and therefore enhancing their access to new opportunities. Given the conditions on the settlement procedure, it can be assumed that the Swedish Red Cross was forced to only provide treatment to refugees resettled in municipalities.

With the opening of the Gothenburg Treatment Centre in 2015, treatment is now provided to everyone regardless of their legal status. Opening more centres allowed for a shift in the way treatment was provided, with centres now being able to handle the strain of medical demands irrespective of legal status. Furthermore, unlike the period of the 1990s, refugees no longer have to stay in camps or reception centres. Asylum seekers in Sweden now have the opportunity to arrange their own accommodation, with economic support from the authorities.²¹⁵ The services provided by the Swedish Red Cross are now more accessible for asylum seekers in relation to receiving treatment and different accommodation options.

When integration initiatives between the two large refugee resettlements in the 90s and 2010s are compared, differences are observed in integration through social activities. Although documents from the 90s do not mention a legal status-oriented approach when it comes to participation in social activities, a fluctuation in the number of international meeting centres over the years can be observed, a result of refugees obtaining residence permits and settling into municipalities.²¹⁶ In contrast, everyone today can now enjoy access to social activities such as language training and homework help provided by the Swedish Red Cross, indicating a display of Bhattacharyya's solidarity by bringing together a spectrum of identities under one roof.

Another striking difference was that international gathering points carrying out activities for refugees moved to local branches. Today, in the context of the Swedish government's settlement policy, asylum seekers can live wherever they please, unlike when the Bosnian refugees arrived in 1992. Due to the freedom of choice, it is easier for people to reach social facilities, regardless of whether they are asylum seekers, refugees or hold an undocumented status.²¹⁷ Ultimately, organising courses or activities that include everyone rather than 'refugees or immigrants' highlights the Swedish Red Cross' consideration for more inclusive representation.

International meeting centres, however, did provide activities targeted at providing 'civic information' to prepare refugees for their new life in Sweden. Moreover, as the interviewee 1 articulated, the Swedish Red Cross approach in the 90s was empowerment and has a method that

²¹⁴ Bucken-Knapp, Gregg, Vedran Omanović, Andrea Spehar, *Institutions and Organizations of Refugee Integration: Bosnian-Herzegovinian and Syrian Refugees in Sweden*, p. 66.

²¹⁵ Valenta, Marko, Nihad Bunar, "State Assisted Integration: Refugee Integration Policies in Scandinavian Welfare States: The Swedish and Norwegian Experience", p. 477.

²¹⁶ Swedish Red Cross. *Annual Report 1992*, p. 24.

²¹⁷ Brochmann, Grete and Anniken Hagelund. "Migrants in the Scandinavian Welfare State: The Emergence of a Social Policy Problem." *Nordic Journal of Migration Research* 1, no. 1 (2011), p. 20.

was more trust in the refugee and their own abilities. Similarly, all interviewees emphasised that today, local branches pay attention to the needs of refugees while organising social activities. They also state that their approach is not to tell refugees what to do but to ask them what they want.

On a theoretical level, the approach of empowerment seems to coincide with 'Self-help' and 'Felt needs', of which Bhattacharyya describes as suitable methods for practicing community development. The 'Self-help' principle implies that people should be productive and independent rather than consuming and dependent on others. The first aim of this principle is to develop a mentality focused on self-help and self-awareness, of which the community developer is responsible for. The 'Felt-need' principle emphasises the process of providing needs as defined by the affected people themselves.²¹⁸

When assessing the two large refugee resettlements in 1990s and 2010s, it is recognised that the social activities for asylum seekers or refugees are organised in a way to empower individuals' own agencies. However, all interviewees were in agreement that today Swedish Red Cross focuses more on the process of looking for a job (i.e. providing useful websites, cv building etc.) rather than actually providing a refugee with work. Therefore, it may be asserted that the Swedish Red Cross aids people with the tools necessary to develop their own capacities and find their own way. In doing so, the Swedish Red Cross organises social activities adaptable to people's needs through the integration process and community developers. By these means, an opportunity is provided for those to be more self-aware and conducive of their life paths.

According to interview findings, it is understood that the discourse surrounding the refugee crisis today is known and familiar rather than being a marginal discussion which was the case in the 90s in the Red Cross and Swedish society in general. Undoubtedly, the large refugee resettlement in the 90s had been a new and demanding experience not only for the government authorities but also for NGOs, and initiatives for integration have undergone several different transformations since in order to enhance the resettlements.

It should be noted that, according to the government's resettlement policy in the 90s, refugees were rarely able to settle wherever they wanted: in fact, they were not given the right to choose. Furthermore, refugees were sometimes sent to remote municipalities which were sparsely populated and had no experience of integration. The underlying reasons for this decision was to prevent concentration in metropolitan areas and overload capacity in these municipalities.²¹⁹ The dispersal of refugees throughout the country might be a push factor for the Swedish Red Cross to open branches in more municipalities. Additionally, today there is a significant increase in the number of asylum seekers when compared to the 90s²²⁰, leading to concern by both government

²¹⁸ Bhattacharyya, Jnanabrata. "Solidarity and Agency: Rethinking Community Development." p. 60-69.

²¹⁹ Valenta, Marko, Nihad Bunar. "State Assisted Integration: Refugee Integration Policies in Scandinavian Welfare States: The Swedish and Norwegian Experience", p. 474.

²²⁰ Migration Agency, "while the number of asylum seeker was more than 84.000 in the 90s, the figure was 162.877 in 2015.

authorities and Swedish society in general. Following the most recent refugee resettlement, how to integrate newcomers has become one of the primary concerns for government and local authorities. Thus, foregoing discussion makes it more sense how the refugee question is more accepted in the Swedish Red Cross and spread all over the country.

Finally, with regards to the last research question, there will be a discussion of how the relationship between the Swedish authorities and the Swedish Red Cross has changed in relation to refugee integration over the years. As mentioned in the paragraph above, the circumstances in Sweden at the time of the two refugee settlements were factors that affect not only the integration initiatives but also the relationship between the Swedish authorities and the Swedish Red Cross. As previously emphasised, the provision of social services in Sweden is based on mutual social trust between civil society and the government.²²¹ Kjell Hansen suggests that the driving force behind the participation of voluntary associations in the refugee admission process is a strong Scandinavian welfare approach, based on a fundamental trust between citizens and the state.²²² Accordingly, the state and other public authorities will do what is expected of them and the civil society will be a support line that enables them to work on both practical and humanitarian levels. Therefore, in terms of integration initiatives, the relationship between the Swedish Red Cross and the Swedish authorities is generally supportive. A few points based on the conditions between the two refugee settlements, however, stand out.

First, it was mentioned that the Swedish government has developed introduction programs for the integration of newcomers since the early 1990s. They were carried out on a municipal level and included activities such as language courses, skill development etc. in preparation for Swedish working life.²²³ Interview and report findings from the 90s indicate that the support of civil society organisations such as the Swedish Red Cross were periodically requested by the Swedish authorities in the integration process. In this context, the collaborations that took place in the 90s were mostly based on supporting local municipal integration activities through the running of the international meeting centres. This reflected that the support and running of the Swedish Red Cross was inherently dependent on its relationship with the Swedish state unlike the many other European countries where the non-governmental organisations have greater independence. The co-operation was mostly carried out in social activities, health care, providing basic needs and reception services. The Swedish Red Cross did not interfere with the housing integration except for its collaboration with the Stockholm municipality from 1994 to 2004. At the beginning of the 90s, when the Bosnian refugees arrived, many municipalities had no problem providing housing.

²²¹ Lundström, Tommy. "The State and Voluntary Social Work in Sweden", p. 133.

²²² Hansen, K. "Egalitarianism Under Siege? Swedish Refugee Reception and Social Trust", p. 284.

²²³ Eastmond, Marita "Egalitarian Ambitions, Constructions of Difference: The Paradoxes of Refugee Integration in Sweden", p.100-101.

Unlike the 90s, issues regarding housing and accommodation have been one of the most comprehensive issues (with regards to the most recent refugee settlement) as most municipalities do not have enough space to accommodate newly arrived refugees. It is noted however, that the Swedish government has adopted different policy measures on integration of refugees over the last three decades. One of these reforms confirmed in 2010 transferred responsibility for the integration of newly arrived refugees from the municipalities to the central government. Thereafter, municipalities whose field of activity narrowed in relation to the admission of refugees were responsible for all children under 18 who came without their parents.²²⁴ Although all of our informants confirmed that the Swedish Red Cross do not work on finding housing, special situations may arise. The Swedish Red Cross, for instance, received government funding to assist with finding housing for unaccompanied minors. Some of these children are considered adults because they are older than 18, however the government also provided funding to the Swedish Red Cross for these instances. It is recognised that the changing role of the public authorities also affects the relationship between the Swedish Red Cross and the Swedish authorities.

Another dimension concerning the relationship between the Swedish Red Cross and Swedish authorities is the diminishing social trust between the two. The political and social differences in their relative perspectives at the time of the large refugee resettlements have influenced the practices for integration initiatives. In other words, the government's decisions regarding the integration of newcomers inadvertently guide the initiatives of the Swedish Red Cross. For instance, the Swedish government issued permanent residency to the majority of asylum seekers from Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 90s, while it mostly prefers to issue the temporary residency to refugees today.²²⁵ Apparently, the Swedish *Temporary Aliens Act* that was largely shrunk the right to the residence, has created concern in terms of a humanitarian context. It also sparked criticism, for example, the Swedish Red Cross estimated that the restrictions would consequence in severe humanitarian consequences for many people. Furthermore, research conducted by the Swedish Red Cross shows that many of the expected consequences have become fact.²²⁶

As the interview and report findings demonstrate, temporary residency leads to a barrier for the integration of refugees, especially those who are injured or traumatised. As mentioned previously, the decision to issue a temporary residence permit is considered to negatively affect the integration of asylum seekers and refugees who are already under stress or suffering with mental health issues. When they feel unsafe due to temporary residence, it makes it difficult for refugees to focus on social activities or receiving mental help.²²⁷ Hence, the enactment of the law restricting permanent

²²⁴ Hansen, K. "Egalitarianism Under Siege? Swedish Refugee Reception and Social Trust", p. 273.

²²⁵ Bucken-Knapp, Gregg, Vedran Omanović, Andrea Spehar, *Institutions and Organizations of Refugee Integration: Bosnian-Herzegovinian and Syrian Refugees in Sweden*, p. 28.

²²⁶ Swedish Red Cross Report, *Humanitarian Consequences of the Swedish Temporary Aliens Act 2018*, p.2.

²²⁷ Swedish Red Cross University College's report series Summary (2016:1) *Newly resettled refugees and asylum seekers in Sweden*. p.1-4.

residence is disappointing for the Swedish Red Cross, of whom see it as a factor that hinders the integration of refugees. As Hansen emphasized, Swedish egalitarian ideas rely on social trust between civil society and the government.²²⁸ In the theoretical framework, this decision appears to be of an exclusionary characteristic, restricting immigrants from taking part in the production of collective meanings. The Swedish Red Cross has an approach that takes into account agency and solidarity in its activities, and so reacted through various campaigns criticising the new law. This highlights the effect of political conditions on Swedish Red Cross and their abilities to aiding refugees.

Turning back to the previous research, García Agustín argues that national differences in terms of the state, administrative structures and political approaches lead to differences in the solidarity discourse of NGOs, for instance, in Spain and Denmark.²²⁹ Accordingly, Danish NGOs and politicians share the same view on the distinction between immigrants and refugees/asylum seekers, while Spanish NGOs include irregular migrants in their organizational activities.²³⁰ This shows that the case of the Swedish Red Cross is different than that in NGOs in Denmark as discussed by García Agustín. However, similar to NGOs in Spain, the Swedish Red Cross arrange its activities irrespective of legal status. Analysing how NGO discourses react to existing national discourses, García Agustín's study mentions that discourses of solidarity can be decisive for integration. From this point of view, it is seen that the status-based discourse that came with the *2016 Temporary Aliens Act* in Sweden influenced civil society action. As a matter of fact, it can be said that the Swedish Red Cross's response in various ways to existing national discourses regarding restrictive law negatively affecting integration contribute on the creation of solidarity discourse in the national context.

6. Conclusion

The study has investigated responses given by the Swedish Red Cross with regard to two large periods of refugee resettlement in the 90s and 2010s. Using a comparative perspective has enabled a thorough and retrospective observation of the differences in the initiatives of the organisation during their respective time periods. Furthermore, this thesis used the findings from interviews and documents to assess a triad of dominating discourses surrounding the refugee crisis; 'treatment of newly arrived refugees and asylum seekers; social activities through international meeting centres

²²⁸ Hansen, K. "Egalitarianism Under Siege? Swedish Refugee Reception and Social Trust", p. 287.

²²⁹ García Agustín, Óscar. "Enhancing Solidarity: Discourses of Voluntary Organizations on Immigration and Integration in Multicultural Societies." p. 82.

²³⁰ García Agustín, Óscar. "Enhancing Solidarity: Discourses of Voluntary Organizations on Immigration and Integration in Multicultural Societies." p. 88.

and Red Cross local branches; the relationship between the Swedish Red Cross and the Swedish authorities’.

Related to the first discourse, the most striking component was the discontinuance of the legal status approach in relation to treating tortured or traumatised victims. The discussion on the possible reasons for the legal status approach demonstrated the effect of government policy on the way that the Swedish Red Cross was able to carry out aid, in addition to other relevant factors. The second layer of the study examined the social integrating activities of the Swedish Red Cross from 1990s to 2015 and onwards. In doing so, interview and document findings concluded whether integration initiatives were compatible with solidarity and agency in the context of community development within the framework of Bhattacharyya's theoretical definition. The findings indicated that integration activities provided today by the Swedish Red Cross are more in accordance with ‘solidarity’ and ‘agency’ compared to its previous approach. Friendly atmosphere in the local branches where activities take place have been providing people with an opportunity to define themselves without intervention. Activities are arranged according to needs in order to reach a self-aware state and achieve potential. Moreover, the diversity in the courses provided, as well as moving away from the importance of legal status, can be considered to increase solidarity as they encourage people from different backgrounds to come together. The engagement of the Swedish Red Cross with the discourse surrounding the refugee crisis has created more visibility for refugees in society.

When it comes to the history of the relationship between civil society and the state in Sweden, two factors work in tandem with each other. Hansen notes that the boundaries between NGOs and public activities are not very clear in Sweden. As a matter of fact, the Swedish Red Cross has continued to support the government in both large refugee settlements in the 90s and 2010s. The issue, however, is that the government's role in fulfilling the integration measures have changed. Following the most recent refugee settlement, Hansen surmises that the role of the welfare state, which actively participated in providing social services, has changed: the state is now the funding provider when there is a local group willing to organize and initiate a project.²³¹

The findings of this study agree with the notion that the role of government has changed but discusses its effects on the case of the Swedish Red Cross. The Swedish Red Cross supported the integration of newly arrived refugees in the early 90s by running international meeting centres. Today, the Swedish government assumes a more secondary role in relation to aiding refugees, by funding NGOs like the Swedish Red Cross to promote resettlement of new arrivals. In conclusion, given that the state frequently shares the role of providing social services with local authorities and NGOs, it should be admitted that the Swedish Red Cross has become more visible in the field.

²³¹ Hansen, K. ‘Egalitarianism Under Siege? Swedish Refugee Reception and Social Trust’, p. 276.

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