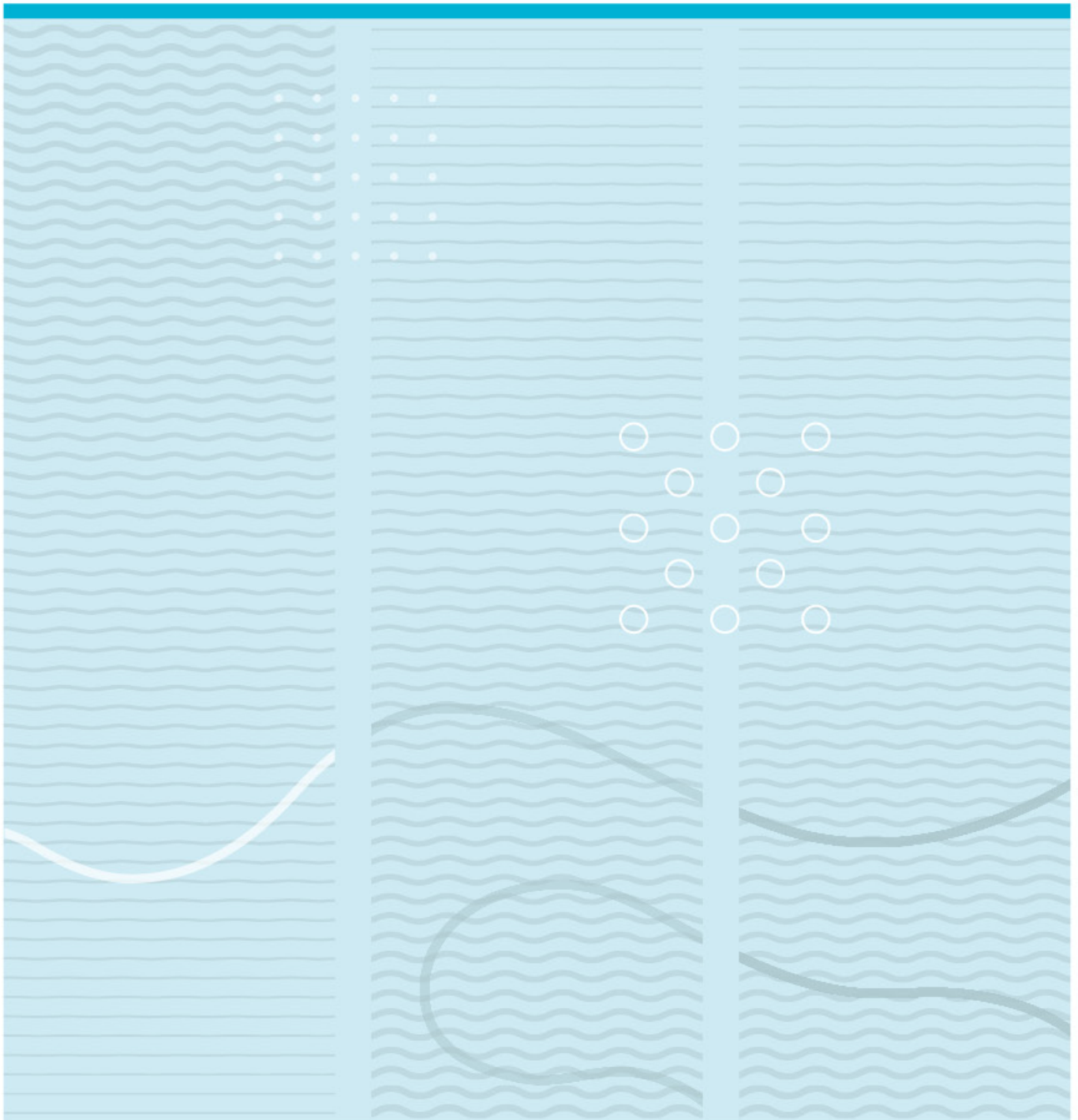


Karla Jasmin Mata Santos

How do Mexican women in Scandinavia use Cultural and Economic Capital to negotiate their transnational identities as immigrants or expats?

Migration and Cultural capital.



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This thesis is worth 45 study points

Abstract

The international growing Mexican female migration to Norway and Sweden has given rise to a different perspective to the negotiation of transnational identities. The dominant discourse on female immigrants often has no consideration of individual agency, focusing instead on women as dependent partners to either male migrants or to Norwegian and Swedish men. Previous research on the largest groups of immigrant women who are partners of native Norwegians and Swedish men, such as Thai and Russian women, has primarily focused on immigration settlements of family reunification, enhancing misconceptions affecting immigration status in social and legal spheres. Thus, studies on migrants from the west such as U.S. Americans had resisted the label of immigrants and have presented different types of acceptance due to the preconception of a higher status globally as expats. The resistance to the term 'immigrant' and considering 'expat' a more applicable term was also found within Mexicans in Scandinavia.

This study conducted a thematic analysis through semi-structured interviews with educated Mexican women living in Norway and Sweden who had studied a higher education in the previous countries mentioned. The following themes emerged: 1) Individual Agency in a Transnational Relationship, 2) Education and Language as Cultural Capital, 3) Social Class as Economic Capital, 4) Racialization and Exotism and 5) Negotiating identity as immigrant or expat, providing insights into the experiences of immigrant women from the Global South tackling stereotypes, self-perceptions and prejudice that play a significant role in the process of self-identity and society's recognition. Contrary to popular belief, Mexican women's cultural and economic capital was primarily acquired prior to migration, giving them a unique individual agency, social status, and power dynamic, as sociologist Pierre Bourdieu discusses in the Theory of Capital. Furthermore, one finding suggests that the transnational identity and self-perception as Mexicans living in Norway and Sweden may be developing into a Mexican diaspora in Norway and Sweden.

Key words: Mexicans living in Norway, Mexicans living in Sweden, immigrants, expats.

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A Kathy y Carlos, mis padres, gracias infinitas por el amor, los valores, la motivación, el impulso y sacrificios que han hecho siempre por mí y por la realización de mis sueños, los amo. También, gracias a mi familia y amigos en México que aún en la distancia siempre los recuerdo y llevo conmigo.

Drammen/ May 2022

Karla Jasmin Mata Santos

List of Abbreviations

DC- Develop Countries

IME- Institute of Mexicans abroad (Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior)

IVP- Intimate Partner Violence

LAC- Latin America and the Caribbean

LATAM- Latin America

NAFTA- North American Free Trade

NIC- Newly Industrialized Countries

NOSALF- Scandinavian Association on Latin America (Nordiska Samfundet För Latinamerikaforskning)

NSD- Norwegian Centre for Research Data (Norsk Senter for forskningsdata)

SCB- Statistics Sweden

SRE- Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores)

SSB- Statistics Norway

UDI- Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (Utlendingsdirektoratet)

UDC- Underdeveloped Countries

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1. Introduction

1.1 Context and background

Mexicans are the largest Latin American group of immigrants in the United States, as well “the world largest migrator corridor, Mexico- U.S. migration dominates public debates on migration in both countries” (De Haas, Castles & Miller, 2020, p. 149), despite the more restrictive policies in recent years. According to Israel and Batola (2020) “Mexicans are the 24 percent of the nearly 45 million foreign-born residents. In 2019, there were about 10.9 million Mexican-born individuals living in the United States” (Israel and Batola, 2020, p.1). Canada’s geographical location and economic stability have become an alternative of the United States for Mexicans. Mueller (2005) explains that the North American Free Trade Agreement¹ (NAFTA) has influenced in a great manner the growing wave of Mexican migration due to its “advanced economic integration” and the need of agricultural and low-skilled labor (Muller, 2015, p.4). While these movements may be primarily about male Mexican immigration, such as working class migrating to the United States, women are also beginning to move in large numbers, either with their spouses as part of Family Reunification or independent migrants prioritizing education in a variety of roles and identities. Statistics Norway² and Statistics Sweden³ show, female Mexican immigration in Scandinavia is predominantly characterized by women migrating because of studies, which further relates to differences in economic class, migration status and higher education.

Furthermore, previous empirical research projects have been carried out in Scandinavia within the Latin American culture, mostly focused on the Chilean community in Sweden. Andersson (2011) stated that Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) have an intermediate position in comparison to other immigrant groups. “In Sweden and elsewhere, there is sometimes a tendency to not recognize the variation in integration processes experienced by different immigration cohorts and groups of immigrants” (Andersson, 2011, p. 178-179). Although the Scandinavian welfare system is viewed as one of the most successful examples of local cooperation and collective agreement it still faces challenges within cultural anxiety, assimilation, integration,

¹ The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which was enacted in 1994 and created a free trade zone for Mexico, Canada, and the United States, is the most important feature in the U.S.-Mexico bilateral commercial relationship. As of January 1, 2008, all tariffs and quotas were eliminated on U.S. exports to Mexico and Canada under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). <https://www.trade.gov/north-american-free-trade-agreement-nafta> [Accessed 03.03.2022]

² Central Statistics Office of Norway. Official demographic and economic statistics (SSB).

³ Central Statistics of Sweden. Official Statistics office (SCB).

multicultural issues, and policy making. There is a great value in researching minorities that are not so mentioned as the Latin American ones in Scandinavia. The importance of empirical data gathered this research project could bring a new attitude, perhaps a new viewpoint of immigration in Scandinavia implementing and boosting further research of different minority groups in Scandinavia or even Europe.

In the interest of Migration and multiculturalism, one of the most fascinating fields in Human Rights, Mexican migration should be equally as interesting in North America as in the rest of the world as any other group for academia, in culture and policy making. The Human Rights of migrants are often threatened, especially the right to be free from discriminations and the right to have an identity. Even though, the Mexican women in this study are more privilege group in this sense, they also have to struggle against discrimination and negotiate their identities. Even though, this research aims to present an often unrepresented group with ambitions of providing a different perspective of the existing minority's narrative. The theories of *Transnationalism* and *Cultural capital* explored by authors like Floya Anthias (2012) and Pierre Bourdieu (2011) respectively, support and guide the goal of this research project. This research also presents interesting background in modern migration, as well definitions and connotations of concepts like *immigrants* and *expats* that will enable addressing Female Mexican migrants in Norway and Sweden. The right to have an identity and

1.2 Research Question

The varying characteristics of settlement have resulted in a significant increase in female immigration from various backgrounds to Norway and Sweden. Female immigrants, whether in minority groups or largest groups, face several prejudices and preconceptions. The backdrop of reflecting the similarities and differences of female migration will be provided comparing a minority group of female Mexican immigrants to those in the largest groups.

The statistics based on immigration settlements for the female Mexican immigrant minority group give the foundation for the following research question:

How do Mexican women in Scandinavia use Cultural Capital and Economic Capital to negotiate their transnational identities as immigrants or expats?

The following are the key five themes that arose from the grounded data as a result of the semi-structured interviews and will help to answer the research question:

- 1) Individual agency in transnational relationship.
- 2) Education and Language as Cultural Capital.
- 3) Social class as economic capital.
- 4) Racialization and exoticism.
- 5) Negotiating identity as immigrant or expat.

In addition, as part of the analysis, it will also be discussed the difference of Mexican women with other groups of migrant women such as Thai, Russians and U.S. Americans in Norway and Sweden such as, *how are female Mexicans immigrants categorized in comparison to the larger groups of female migrants in Norway and Sweden? And Are Mexican women caught up western-southern dichotomy?*

1.3 Purpose of research

The main purpose of this research project is to explore and understand the female Mexican migration in Norway and Sweden. Most academics know about the experiences or characteristics of women coming from the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, however there is an apparent lack of academic research regarding Mexican women living in Scandinavian countries in comparison to the larger minority groups. Presenting the target group and its disadvantages/advantages coming from a Latin American country from the South having a strong cultural background, distinct economic components, immigrations status, stereotypes and prejudice will contribute to an interesting interplay to research.

1.4 Methodology

A grounded theory analysis was undertaken through semi-structured interviews to answer the research question and the study's goal. Informants were invited to participate if certain criteria was met, such as age, gender, nationality, and a minimum level of higher education. Six female informants from Norway and six female informants from Sweden participated in a total of twelve interviews performed via zoom and in-person even though only 8 were included in the research

project. The semi-structured interviews were analyzed through a thematic analysis to create a more concentrated structure. The study was sent to The Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) who approved the study. In Chapter 4, Methodology will be fully addressed.

1.5 Thesis Structure

This research project will be separated into six chapters with the goal of creating a clear and presentable project based on grounded data acquired to fill in the gaps on Female Mexican immigration in Norway and Sweden presenting characteristics and negotiations in society.

Chapter one provides insight of the context and background of Female Mexican Immigration in Scandinavia countries, as well research question, purpose of research, methodology and thesis structure which will offer the reader a focused a brief presentation of the thesis project.

Chapter two will be devoted to an extensive literature review, which will include a description of Female Immigration in Scandinavia and its relevance to the topic. Secondly, statistics from Norway and Sweden will be presented to better comprehend the current groups of immigrant women with whom this study will be comparing Female Mexican Immigration. Next, the peculiarities of Mexican immigration in Scandinavia will surely be discussed through the presentation of data and immigration settlements. Studies and publications directed at Norway's and Sweden's largest immigrant groups of women will attempt to explain and display prejudices that immigrant women may face according to nationality. In addition, a compelling article on visibility and invisibility will be tackled to comprehend the conditions of U.S. immigrants/expats in the Nordic environment, setting grounds of similarity to the thesis project's target population. Finally, because Mexican immigration in Scandinavia is a difficult topic to analyze and comprehend due to its contentious geographic position and lack of interest on migration scholars, studies on Latin American countries in Scandinavia will be discussed.

Chapter three will present theoretical foundation for a deeper understanding of Transnationalism and Cultural Capital, as well concepts as; immigrant and expat in the Scandinavian context, notions that have shown to be a good fit and have enhanced findings grounded in this thesis study

Chapter 4 will be addressing descriptive Methodology about the study as; case chapter, research design, semi-structured interview, interview procedures, data analysis and foundations of ethical considerations and positionality will be included.

Chapter 5 includes a thematic analysis using transcribed extracts to support findings, as well as inclusion of theoretical discussion and conclusions.

Chapter 6 will wrap up this thesis project with concluding remarks and recommendations will be stated for future research in the topic.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introductory context

In this literature review, it will be presented the current statistics on women's immigration to Norway and Sweden. Including immigration categories such as: family reunification, labor, education, and refugee seekers. It's fascinating to compare data on women from Western and non-Western backgrounds, as well as reasons for immigrating, as this research project will compare existing studies on the largest groups of immigrant women in Norway and Sweden relevant to the aim study of female Mexicans immigrating to the previously mentioned Scandinavian countries.

Statistics Norway and Statistics Sweden provide governmental data on women. Groups living in Norway and Sweden, as well immigration settlement, age groups, sex, and migration citizenship, allowing this study to present and compare general data and patterns, exposing misconceptions about immigrant women and bringing information about minority groups such as Mexican women to light. Some factors on the statistical charts, however, were missing, which is crucial to note. Furthermore, data on Mexican women living abroad (IME) from the Mexican government has been analyzed and integrated, with help of Statistics Norway and Sweden, to produce a more clear and precise review.

Last, articles on the largest women groups will be exposed, as considerable research has been done on Thai and Russian women, exposing why women come, stay, and go through while immigrating to Norway and Sweden. As well, reasons and historical thoughts on the lack of interest of studying minority groups, such as Mexican immigration through lenses of controversial geographical location and nuances of immigrant categorizations.

2.2 Summary of immigrant women in Norway and Sweden

Diverse studies have talked about international migration as a growing phenomenon that has been mostly reflected due to labor, refugee crisis, family reunification, and globalization (Brochmann & Hagelund, 2012). In the case of Scandinavia, its national, political, and social stability as its inclusive welfare, human rights advocacy, and gender lifted the Scandinavian countries forward, making them as a remarkable destination for migrants (Mata, 2021). Various

articles included here Statistisk Sentralbyrå (Norway), Statistiska Centralbyrån (Sweden), and other authors that have mainly observed global migrations have shown that it has been predominantly feminized for some time, but this does not mean that the trend is uniform in all nations (Hakkert, 2000). There are certain places where migration is dominated by women, such as Asian international migration and Latin American interregional migration (Hakkert, 2000), but on the other hand, one of the most known waves of migration, such as Mexican migration to the United States (De Haas, Castlers & Millers, 2020), have a higher male presence contrary to the Mexican women's migration to the Scandinavian countries (Norway and Sweden) where it's much higher than the male immigration by being almost 59% of the Mexicans residents (IME, 2019) also, ground data in the Scandinavian countries show a different prejudice towards Mexicans than the stereotypical in the United States.

2.3 Statistics Norway

Women's migration ranges from educational reasons, job opportunities, marriage, business, fleeing domestic violence, or seeking asylum or refuge, all of which have a significant impact on women's immigration status in social and legal spheres. Statistics Norway (2022) shows the following data about female immigrants to Norway between 1990 to 2020, as the main three reasons for women moving to Norway are family reunification, labor, and education, as the number of females aged 19 to 29 years is higher than the total number of female refugees in 1990-2020 (Statistics Norway, 2022). Because the main emphasis of this research project is female immigrants aged 18 to 50, the following charts will only cover the age range based on the contribution goal of this research study. In addition, the following categories: Labor, Family reunification, and education (excluding refugee seekers, as data is irrelevant to the Mexican migration) will help distinguish between settlements of immigration, year intervals, and focusing on female immigration in Norway and Sweden.

Existing statistics from Statistics Norway (2022) and reports of family reunification and Marriage patterns (1990-220) help interpret data on the biggest groups of immigrant women and legal status. Previous studies give a dominating narrative of female migration due to Family reunification reasons (Table 1). This usually comes with repercussions and prejudice that plays a huge interplay in women immigration that will be addressed later, on the other hand, labor and

education have similar numbers for a certain age group that highly represents our main target group.

Immigrations, by reason for immigration, age, contents, interval (year), and sex

	Persons
	1990-2020
	Females
Labour	
18-29 years	48 674
30-59 years	36 010
Family	
18-29 years	72 600
30-59 years	78 948
Refugee	
18-29 years	21 782
30-59 years	21 046
Education	
18-29 years	48 970
30-59 years	5 215

Table 1

Source: Statistics Norway

Available at: <https://www.ssb.no/en/statbank/table/06313/tableViewLayout1/>

During the same years (1990-2020) in Norway, statistics have shown a higher number of women immigrants (44,400) in contrast to male migration (14,000), (p.39). Family reunification has the higher numbers due to women getting married to Norwegian or Swedish men, this pattern has been predominant in women's migration to these countries. Norwegian Statistisk Sentralbyrå (2022) states that it's far more common for foreign spouses to come to establish a family with men without an immigrant background. In Statistics Norway, the study *Family immigration and marriage patterns 1999-2020* show that 47,500 persons came to Norway because of marriage to an immigrant, and 58,400 persons came to Norway to marry a Norwegian (Statistisk Sentralbyrå, 2022, p.20). The largest groups coming to Norway because of marriage, are 1) Thailand, 2) Philippines, 3) Pakistan, 4) Russia, 5) Turkey, 6) USA – but Pakistanis and Turkish mostly marry immigrants, Thai, Philippines, Russians, and women from the USA marry Norwegians (Statistisk sentralbyrå, 2022, p.38). Women from Russia and the United States are among the other bigger categories of women who form relationships with males who are not immigrants (Statistisk

sentralbyrå, 2022, p.38). Even though Brazil is still among the high categories there is no group of hispanics from Latin America among the top 20. The following chart (Table 2) shows the migration data from 2016 to 2020 of the group targets immigrating to Norway.

Migration, by citizenship, contents, and year.

	Immigration				
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Russia	525	498	480	596	406
Thailand	1 377	1 073	1 020	873	601
Mexico	104	109	138	176	103
United States	895	867	947	1 085	756

Table 2

Source: Statistics Norway

Available at: <https://www.ssb.no/en/statbank/table/05476/tableViewLayout1/>

Women migrating from European countries will be omitted from this study as their social and legal background place them on a different, perhaps higher level of compatibility with the Schengen structure. Moreover, lessening their troublesome with issues such as visa loss, temporary permits, experimenting with different length stays, etc.

Therefore, three nations (Thailand, Russia and U.S.) will be studied to compare and contrast data based on citizenship, assumptions, prejudice, and societal acceptance; the focus will be on the categories of countries rather than the countries themselves. From western countries, such as the United States, it is assumed that they do not marry Norwegian men in order to live in Norway because it does not represent any superiority to their country. This in contrast to countries with non-western backgrounds, such as Thailand and Russia, where the official policy prejudice can make it difficult to obtain a visa or requiring proof of marriage legitimacy because the government may have believes of illegitimacy due to poverty preconceptions leading to motives to live in Norway.

First of all, Thailand as part of the Newly Industrialize Countries (NIC) has the largest group of immigrant women in the Scandinavian countries. Family Reunification as immigration settlement for Thai women, according to Fernbrant's research, has influenced unfavorable in public perception and reputation in Norwegian and Swedish society (Fernbrant et al, 2017). Along with Russia a non-western but part of the NIC from the east is in fourth place of women immigrating to Norway with similar outcomes but likewise as Thai women have the most research and establish

theories of immigrant women, but in this case, Russian women have higher numbers on education and work motivations than Thailand same as Mexican women (Figure 1 & Figure 2). Finally, and most importantly, the United States has had a significant increase in the number of female immigrants in recent years, which has played an essential impact since the distinction between western and non-western women categorizes immigrants differently.

As primarily found in this research project, Mexican women living in Norway and Sweden will categorize themselves as Mexicans living in Norway and Sweden rather than immigrants, therefore the following statistics presented will help draw distinctions that their experiences could be in fact more parallel to a specific group as women from the west (U.S.) while, the west dominates immigration, the “third-world” immigrants are the ones that stay (Statistics Norway, 2002, p. 12).

2.4 Statistics Sweden

Similarly, in Statistics Sweden the top 20 of immigrants (2020-2021) by sex and country of birth has increased from countries (Excluding Nordic and European countries) such as India, Syrian Arab Republic, Pakistan. Iraq, China in the top then (SCB, 2022). While the only two countries from North America and South America are the United States and Brazil, similarly as in the case of Norway. The United States takes the 12th place with 780 women immigrating in 2020 and 972 in 2021.

Seeking to land an overview of female immigration in Sweden related to the topic of this research Statistics Sweden only offered variables of age groups, therefore three groups (15-24, 25-34, 35-44) were put together to create a general chart targeting mainly the desired age studied (18-50) from 2016 to 2020.

Hence, Figure 1, shows immigration settlements for Study visa, it demonstrates the disparity in women immigration flow to Sweden in the ages of 15-44 according to Statistics Sweden (2022) during the years 2016 to 2020. –Considering that Thai women is part of the biggest group of women immigrant in Norway and Sweden – Thai women have much lower rate of educational immigration settlements than Mexicans, Russians, and women from U.S. overall.

Women immigration to Sweden, group age: 15-44, studies.

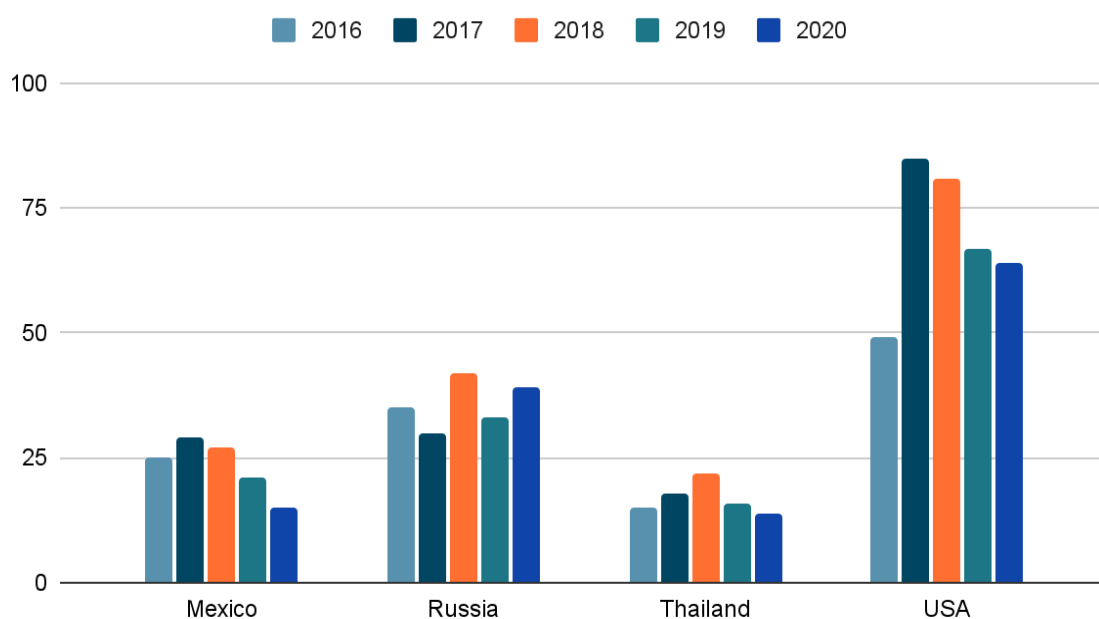


Figure 1.

Source: (SCB) Statistiskservice, Statistics Sweden

Available: https://www.statistikdatabasen.scb.se/pxweb/en/ssd/START_BE_BE0101_BE0101J/GFBGrov/

Figure 2 & Figure 3 show the Immigration settlements of working visa and Family reunification, Thai women have the highest number of Family Reunification cases (3,407 women, from 2016-2020) in comparison with the lowest category that are Mexicans (280 women from 2016 to 2020). Women from the U.S participate in the labor force and studies considerably more than the rest but still has a lower rate of immigration in general.

Even though, the major groups of female immigrants in Norway and Sweden have much larger numbers than the minority groups, there are clear differences and similarities between them. Focusing on the aim group, female Mexican immigration may not be the largest group, but some unique characteristics may be tempting this group to immigrate to Scandinavian nations, particularly for educational purposes.

Women immigration to Sweden, group age: 15-44, Labor

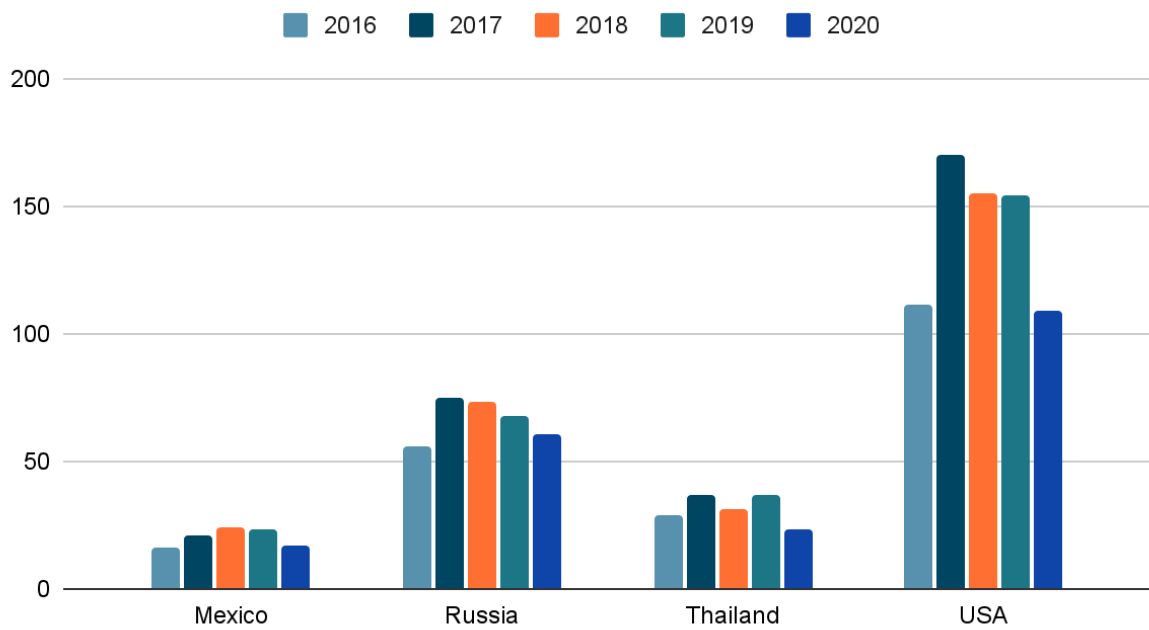


Figure 2

Source: (SCB) Statistiskservice, Statistics Sweden

Available: https://www.statistikdatabasen.scb.se/pxweb/en/ssd/START_BE_BE0101_BE0101J/GFBGrov/

Women immigration to Sweden, group age: 15-44, Relatives (Family reunification)

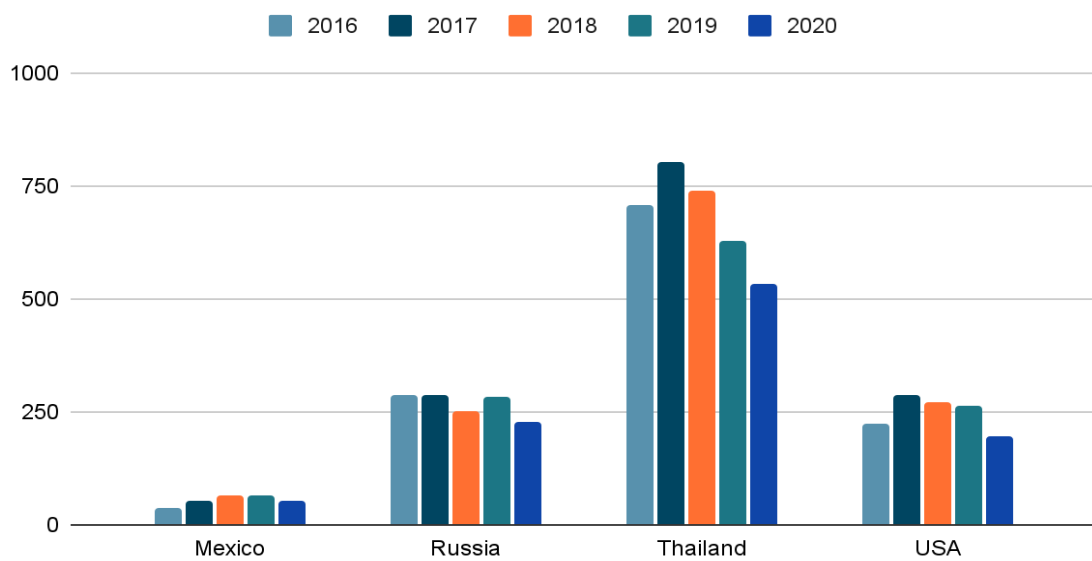


Figure 3

Source: (SCB) Statistiskservice, Statistics Sweden

Available:

https://www.statistikdatabasen.scb.se/pxweb/en/ssd/START_BE_BE0101_BE0101J/GFBGrov/

Note: Numbers on the vertical part of figures 1, 2, & 3 are number of people that applied for a visa in Sweden.

Categories were selected based on the interest of this thesis project.

Thai women may be immigrating at a higher percentage due to family reunification, while United States, shows a large number due to labor, women immigrants from Russia and Mexico have a higher presence in studies motives, as the case of Norway. It is critical to grasp the information provided by grounds for settlement, as ground data previously collected (see methodology, chapter 4) showed that Mexicans wouldn't be the only group that has met partners who marry Norwegian or Swedish men but in terms of legal categories of migration differ from top groups because Mexican women mostly immigrated through student visas first.

2.5 Characteristics on Mexican migration in Norway and Sweden

Mexico has a long history of emigration, according to official government sources, United States of America, Canada, Spain, and Germany are the top five nations that get the most Mexicans (SRE, 2020). According to the official Institute of Mexicans abroad ⁴ (IME) shows yearly statistics per country of destination, it describes that in 2012, 393 Mexicans were registered as residents living in Norway while 59% were women. This statistic lets us distinguish the main migration flows, which are 38% skilled workers, 38% professionals (entrepreneurs), 19% students, 11% housewives, and 2% related to other categories (IME, 2012). On the other hand, during the same year in Sweden there were a total of 1043 Mexican residents registered, predominantly women, 59%, while 45% were students, 33% skilled worked residents, 10% others, 6% housewives, 5% professionals, and 1% missionaries, while in both countries, Mexicans with Swedish and Norwegian citizenship were not part of the statistics as are not required to be part of the Mexican register abroad (IME, 2020).

Nowadays, in Norway 2019, 2,744 Mexican residents registered (IME, 2019) while the average age is 30 years old of which 1,646 are women. It's stated that 1,736 are married, 106 are cohabitating, 24 single and 878 cases are unknown (IME, 2019). The majority of Mexican women living in Norway are professional women. In 2019 numbers have tripled in Sweden with an estimate of 3,023 Mexican residents which 1,661 are women with an average age of 36 years (IME, 2019). According to a relevant study by Merelo (2018), the Mexican community, which is relatively small in Sweden, "is shaped mostly by middle-and upper-middle class migrants" (p.227), with important statistics such as 40% were male participants and 60% were female participants,

⁴ Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior (IME)

and 90% of those Mexican participants having studied a university degree, indicating high levels of education. (Merelo, 2018, p.228). Mexican women in Scandinavia, Norway, and Sweden are mostly relocating through purposes of higher education, particularly Master's and Ph.D. programs. – while romantic love may be the primary motive for Mexican women to immigrate, as it has been illustrated for Thai and Russian women as well, the road of legal entry through family reunification is not as common during the early years –, allowing Mexican women to benefit from social inclusion and higher migration status.

It should be noted that there may be more Mexicans living in Scandinavia, as Mexicans who currently hold Norwegian or Swedish citizenship are not required to register with statistics compiled by Mexicans living abroad (IME).

2.6 Women from the Global South

An article was published in the *Global Health Action* which is based on a grounded theory study mentioning statistics of Thai women living in Sweden, stating that “Sweden is the country with the largest number of immigrants per capita in Europe” and “75% of the Thai population are women among whom 80% are partnered with Swedish or other Scandinavian men” (Fernbrant et al, 2017, p. 1). According to Fernbrant et al. (2017), Thai women are given a two-year temporary visa residence after completing their stay, and after demonstrating a genuine relationship with the same spouse, they are given a permanent residence. According to the authors, spouses from non-western or North American (U.S. and Canada) nations, including Thai women, are disproportionately discriminated against. The most popular stereotypes suggest that south-eastern Asian women are only so called «mail-order» brides meant to act as exotic, submissive, sexually available commodities for men. (Fernbrant et al., 2017, p.2). Prejudice is known to make this group of women more vulnerable to coerced assimilation and cultural denial.

In addition, a clear finding that characterizes Thai women in Fernbrant’s study (2017) is the results of immigrating to Sweden and the challenges that they took along the decision of running away, various reasons are Intimate Partner Violence (IVP), escaping misery, dangerous situations and for better financial family support and “sacrificing motherhood by leaving their children with relatives in Thailand” (Fernbrant et al, 2017, p.5). Because the majority of these women have low educational levels or have language barriers, their sole source of income is their spouses, causing

them to become completely reliant on them (Limpriwatana, 2019). In order to obtain permanent residence in Norway and Sweden, these women must stay with their partners for a duration of up to four years. According to research on foreign marriages, the possibility for low language skills, prejudice, and social isolation to interact will be largely determined by their availability to social support and their spouses' attitudes (Fernbrant et al, 2017).

Limpriwatana (2019) stated that according to Norwegian rules, the possibilities of obtaining the right to work in Norway are quite limited for immigrant women, case of Thai becomes harder because as mentioned above language barrier and Thai women's historically low levels of education, they do not meet the requirements of Norway's labor immigration regulations. As a result, Thai women are exposed to fewer social contexts (friends circle) outside of their Thai communities, are lonelier, and might suffer from depression. Thai women tend to look down on other Thai women or to gossip about them (Limpriwatana,2019) making it harder to be supported and motivated.

Similarly, in the case of Russian women cohabiting or marrying Norwegian men will face the same prejudice and suspicion of pro forma marriages⁵ (Flemmen, 2008). Flemmen exposed the distrust that Russian women go through, even during immigration procedures, as they have to report themselves every year to the police to prove they are in a “real” relationship until proven otherwise (Flemmen, 2008, p. 119) which does not apply to all immigrant women but some that are under the category of “migration incline” according to *Utlendingsdirektoratet* (UDI). Mostly, the relations between Norwegian men and Russian women have not been positively accepted by Norwegian society. Flemmen (2008) exposed that Norwegian newspapers highly criticized the fact that Russian women might only be looking to exploit the system of marriage and take advantage of the economic part, even though often people might consider Russian women migration coherent, the following proves the predilection towards Russian women.

The attention this traffic received in the press to a large degree ensured that the image of “Russian women” for a long period became synonymous with “prostitute”. The representation of

⁵ Pro forma marriage: where the marriage is totally without reality and is entered into solely with the intent to evade immigration laws” (NOU 2004:20 [New foreigners law]: 226 cited by Flemmen, 2008, p. 117.

Russian women as prostitutes can be seen as the second challenge to the legitimacy of Russian-Norwegian marriages. Since the women came from Russia, their lives in Russia were assumed to be characterized by poverty and poor living conditions in general regarding paid work, housing, and health. (Flemmen, 2008, p. 119).

In this article, Flemmen (2008) talked to the informants and asked them how they could prove the legitimacy of their marriage and it was mentioned that reducing the gap between economic status and portraying to the world that his Russian wife has something to come back to Russia, that she has family, even feels homesick and a job, puts Norwegian-Russian marriage above the ones like Norwegian-Thailand marriages or Thai women in general were it was understood by him, they have nothing to come back to. Flemmen (2008) also added that parity and voluntary love is paramount for the legitimacy of the relationship. During the interviews, it was also stated that Russian women are vigorous, intelligent, and capable of defending themselves in case of being in an abusive relationship, having the strength to take themselves out of a relationship which might sound ludicrous as the informant made it look as if there was even an opportunity for this situation to happen to them. An eager effort was put to not portray them/her as being just another poor Russian victim from a third-world country.

Flemmen and Fernbrant et al., came up with a conclusion, agreeing with the prejudice that Thai women and Russian women both from the Global South “non-western” are seen and judged based on their nationality and tolerance that the “west”, as is Norway perceived, will lead to misinformation homogenizing women into a specific categorization “Some foreigners are met with tolerance while others are not. Additionally, media discourses represent different groups of foreigners differently” (Flemmen, 2008, p. 125).

Despite the emphasis of portraying women from the South as poor marrying for convenience, Wiers-Jensen (2015) stated in his report that the Russian student population is the 3rd largest group after Swedish and German, while 72% of Russian students participating were females enrolled in a higher education school in Norway, while from the western world is around 59% and 42% females coming from Asia, Africa, and Latin America (p.7). For instance, Statistics Sweden (Figure 1) also shows a higher percentage over Thailand and Mexico, but still faces the same prejudices of immigrant women in Norway and Sweden.

2.7 Invisible migrants, visible expats: Americans in Finnish discourse on immigration and internationalization.

Differences between the First and Third Worlds, as well as the Global North and the Global South classifications, should be discussed, assessed, and contrasted to how immigrants are regarded, stereotyped, and integrated. According to Leinonen (2012), people from the United States pointed out that being a white person had previously offered them benefits, especially while looking for employment, at the same time, “most Americans resisted being labeled as an immigrant [...] rather, they saw themselves as ‘expatriates’ or simply Americans living in Finland” (Leinonen, 2012 p. 213). Their presence in Finland is frequently “unproblematic,” even welcomed, as representatives of a cultural, political, and economic superpower (p.213). – See Definitions of the term immigrant vs expat in chapter 3.4 –.

Leinonen (2012) discusses how the concept of visibility not only focuses on physical visibility but audible visibility as well. Where in the case of people from the U.S, visually (physically) are more likely to pass as one of the Finnish people (could be the case of Norway and Sweden as well), as they might not look like the stereotypical immigrant for Finnish people. Another positive aspect of ‘acceptance’ stated is when speaking in English Finnish people were happily to meet them and practice English, given the sense of welcomeness due to “internationalization” (p.214). On the contrary of Thai and Mexican immigrants are visually way more different leading to Scandinavians to find more evident ‘differences’ visually and audibly. Evaluating findings by Leinonen (2012) native English speakers (American and British English) giving sense of “speakers of a high-status global language” (p.213). Meanwhile the comparison between Russians and people from the U.S is interesting, visually there may not be much of a difference, in this article differentiation is described:

To highlight these hierarchies within “whiteness”, I also briefly discuss the situation of Russian immigrants in Finland, focusing on public discourses. Despite their “whiteness”, Russians are a highly visible group in Finnish discussion surrounding immigration [...]. Americans and Russians provide an intriguing comparison: while Americans can be seen as “iconic of the West and modernity”, the position of Russians is often difficult due to the complicated historical relationship between Finland and Russia. (Piller 2008: 61–62) cited by Leinonen, 2012, p. 216)

Hierarchies based on nationality exists (Leinonen, 2012, p. 217). Immigrants are interconnected to victims of oppression, fleeing their own countries for opportunistic reasons, coming from third world countries, non-English speakers seeking social advantages in rich welfare states. In addition, gender also plays a role:

The negative visibility is gendered, too: Russian women are more visible than Russian men. The stereotypes of Russian women as prostitutes or fortune-hunters who marry Finnish men in order to immigrate to Finland are persistent (Jerma 2009: 99; Reuter & Kyntäjä 2006; Urponen 2008). The question of visibility is tied to class status as well: Reuter and Kyntäjä (2006: 117) discovered in their interviews with intermarried Russian women and Finnish men that well-educated couples with high social status rarely encountered negative stereotypes regarding their marriage. (Leinonen, 2012, p. 216)

Limpriwatana (2019) mentioned, Thai women faced limited opportunities due to lack of education, low language level skills and prejudice leading to general assumptions that all Thai women are unschooled. In the case of people from the U.S. Leinonen (2012) claims that positive experiences are also related to their background education and what might be considered a good work experience (p.217), not only society but within the legal framework as well. Then, being this easy and clear to understand ¾ Thai women look different, and speak different leading to a confirmation of a very large cultural difference ¾ When it comes to the target group, female Mexicans are visibly different as well, yet there appears to be a reversal dynamic occurring in comparison to persons from the U.S. As previously stated, U.S Americans do not look different but when auditory visibility is present, they are in fact not the same, 'not passing' as Finnish as Leinonen (2012) mentions, but certainly not categorized as immigrants either and might as suggested by Leinonen (2012) simply an American living overseas. U.S. Americans will even underline that they are not immigrants only because they can return to their home country if they so desire, and because their presence in Finland, was a matter of choice in comparison to the stigma associated with the term immigrant.

Whereas Mexicans are in fact visible immigrants but might speak the language (Norwegian, Swedish) ¾as appears to be a more common pattern according to ground data in this research¾, Mexican's audible visibility will lead to cultural differences but in a rather smaller perspective in the Scandinavian frame that it may be perceived or generalized. U.S. Americans and Mexicans

both have limited data in regards of immigration in Scandinavia, the U.S was connected to privileged status coming from the West as “migration scholars have used the term ‘invisibility’ to describe a lack of interest in certain immigrant groups or minorities by scholars and media because of the “unproblematic” nature of these communities” (Leinonen, 2012, 2016). Then historical background and relationships will be address next in regards of the target group.

2.8 Norwegian Social thought on Latin America

Latin American or the Mexican migration in Scandinavia has hardly any data or academic studies surrounding the topic. Hence, articles on social thought on Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as Master Thesis and PhDs, and general immigration data from Norway and Sweden, were considered for the literature review in order to locate compatible material. An exception was made by Bull (2020), carrying out a study on Norwegian social thought about Latin America where he raised the previous position of the Nordic countries and some of the reasons for the lack of representation of interest in Latin American countries. Furthermore, how this affected the relationship between the parties involved. Since the end of the cold war, Norway tried to be loyal and an ally to the United States and it was heavily influenced by the decision and relations with Latin America. However, Støle (2002) mentioned “from the 1970s relations between Norway and Latin America have gradually been strengthened through the politics of engagement of Norwegian governments, with their focus on human rights and peace processes” (Støle, 2002, p.161).

Now, Bull (2020) stated ‘solitary research’ started from theoretical curiosity and from personal interest as well as how the change of the Norwegian political orientations have developed. However, Bull did address the *Geopolitics of Knowledge*⁶ describing it as advantageous and “act of power (p.12) “. As happened with Asia, Africa, and Eastern Europe, so budget and general interest were not towards Latin American studies. Similarly, Støle (2002) stated that the institution and the Norwegian authorities were skeptical when it came to investing and supporting research covering the related fields, leading to a decline in attention to Latin American and Caribbean countries.

⁶ Geopolitics of knowledge according to Bull (2020) stated that “Mignolo’s argument is that the geopolitics of knowledge locates the production of the dominant rationalities and frameworks to understand the realities of geographical distant locations in the core areas” (p.11).

Even so, the formation of the Scandinavian Association on Latin America (NOSALF) was created in the early 70s but only lasted until the mid-90s, with a solid perspective on cultural integration, differentiation, and understanding complex societies (Støle, 2002). This background information was necessary and gratifying to further understand the gap of empirical research on Latin American minorities in Scandinavia. It has to be mentioned that this research was only made in English and in Spanish. Støle (2002) concluded that due to lack of knowledge in some Nordic languages could reduce the opportunities for academic findings or relevant information. Nevertheless, this research will continue digging deeper into the threshold of Latin-American migration in Scandinavia.

2.9 Latin American Geographical trajectories

Some of the findings and the understanding of how previous studies have affected the field of Latin American immigration, in this case, the research *Exploring Social and Geographical Trajectories of Latin Americans in Sweden* by Andersson (2011) exposes very intriguing data that reward the integration of this minority in Sweden. Andersson (2011) stated “6% of all immigrants residing in Sweden are of Latin America Caribbean origin” (Andersson, 2011, p. 177). This immigration was produced mainly for colonization and post-colonial expansion happening in Latin America in the late 60’s mostly addressed to European countries as well as the Nordic ones (Andersson, 2011). In addition, it's understood that the pillar of an efficient immigrant integration strongly relates with the social network that an immigrant builds within their stay in the host/target country, as well, as their language proficiency and participation in the labor market. An interesting discovery of this study was that this specific group, in this case, Chileans as part of the LAC community in Sweden was predominantly ruled by educated people, but unfortunately, they still have problems being integrated into the labor market (Andersson, 2011). Therefore, the following are inquiries raised by Andersson’s’ research; who is an acceptable immigrant? or what are the perfect characteristics of an immigrant in order to be approved in a society? This thesis helps to comprehend that no matter what type of immigrant, whether a first or second generation, fluent or not fluent in the national language, immigrants will face rejection in one way or another.

If I had provided data on the situation for African immigrants and for people born in Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq, and some other predominantly Muslim countries, the situation for LATAM immigrants and their descendants would, in relative terms, have looked less pessimistic. (Andersson, 2011, p.1 94)

2.10 Drawing distinctions- Summary

Statistics on Mexican women living in Norway and Sweden show a higher number of female students migrating to Scandinavian countries than migrating through other legal entries as Family reunification – as Thai women, the largest group of immigrant women in Norway and Sweden–, having a closer pattern to western women from the U.S. Yet often Scandinavian society might have the same perceptions and stereotypes of women coming from a third world and the Global South. In general, Mexico is considered as part of the Latin American continent and affects the perceptions of a general culture and country statistics. De Haas, Castles & Millers (2020) stated that “although in geographical and political terms Mexico is part of North America, high emigrations to the U.S. and its position as a country of transit migration draws it closer to its central American counterparts” (p. 149). Byberg (2002) claims that immigrants can be defined in a number of ways, depending on the purpose, but also on what kind of data is available affecting greatly immigrant women. On the other hand, when it comes to academic research, the fact that Mexico is part of the North American (De Haas, Castles & Millers, 2020) continent gives a sense of exclusion from the Latin American countries as if it is the privileged one or the least favorite to research when it comes to migration aside from the United States, therefore this topic becomes unclear and exposing extensive nuances. The study by Andersson (2011), was accurate and is highly acknowledged, as it has been one of the few research projects addressing Latin communities in Scandinavian countries.

The rhetoric of immigrant women coming from the South as being a synonym of third world has created a prejudice, horrible negative mentality that has affected specific groups of people and undermined them. More precise and concise statistics are required, as well as acknowledgment that diverse groups integrate themselves into Nordic society in different ways, employing a range of techniques and capital similarly to contributions to society and their individualistic view as immigrants.

It has to be mentioned that even though these studies are trying to understand the position of immigrant women and how they are seen in spheres of what it means to be an

immigrant and understand their decisions of leaving their home countries, migration research often focuses on women as mere 'dependents' accompanying male migrants" (De Haas, Castles & Millers, 2020, p.80). De Haas, Castles & Millers (2020), mentions "since the 19th century, a large proportion of migrant workers have been female" (p.80), yet female migration tends to be overrepresented due to primary roles in patriarchal societies. Likewise, Flemmen (2008) mentioned, a Norwegian man married to a Russian woman will either increase his Norwegianness for being a strong and economical person able to order mail brides, while on the other hand if a Norwegian woman marries a person that comes from the Middle Easter, as an example, will be considered weak and submissive and unable to find a Norwegian man. Cases related to specific nationalities such as couples from Norway with an Australian, New Zealander, or French will never make such a commotion. "All non-western women are assumed to be poor, uneducated, traditional, family-oriented, and victimized, while western women are represented as educated, modern, in control of their own bodies and sexuality, and having the freedom to make their own decisions" (Flemmen, 2008, p.115). Women from the South, on the one hand, are perceived as dependent and uneducated, whereas Norwegian women, while regarded as bright and strong, nonetheless face prejudice for making their own decisions, such as marrying non-Norwegian partners.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Introduction

This theoretical framework will serve as the foundation of this research project. The perspectives of Floya Anthias on Transnationalism, as well as Pierre Bourdieu's Theory of Capital connected to the concepts of immigrant vs expat, will be discussed. As both theories and concepts provide insight into non-recognition of qualifications and the differentiation of those who do receive recognition. Hence, the interpretation of findings that guide this research topics is influenced by them. This study aims to comprehend the often discourse about how society works and what characteristics comes to new countries have, primarily in the context of Scandinavia, and how cultural and power relations interact in the decision to categorize immigrants or expats, demonstrating the relationship between the interpretative approach collected through the grounded data (see chapter 4).

It's also crucial to address the concept of what it means to be an immigrant in the context in which it's being used, as it's critical to comprehend specific processes of integration and recognition in a society. Nonetheless, it is critical in this thesis not to homogenize one movement with another, since various groups may have varied outcomes from their processes in terms of what it means to be an immigrant or an expat. A clear distinction and understating that it does not indicate positive or negative, but rather both concepts have functionalities.

3.2 Transnationalism

Social scientists have increasingly studied major aspects as lives across borders but still maintaining connections with home countries. These lifestyles have been changing perspectives and economics of life calling it *transnational*. Transnational practices are enmeshed in long-standing patterns of change or structural alteration that have a significant impact on transnational family life and may continue to have an impact on generations' identities after migration. Floya Anthias (2012) mentions that transnational migration studies, for example, are framed “within a contextual, dynamic, and processual analysis that recognizes the interconnectedness of different identities and hierarchical structures” (p.102), similarly, Sutton-Brown (2014) exposes that Transnational feminist “attempt to gain contextualized understandings of the power dynamics that are embedded in the interplay of gender, economic, racial, class, and history, relating

condition" (Alexander & Mohanty, 1997 cited by Sutton-Brown, 2014, p. 727). Then, Transnationalism is defined as the formation of a social process in which immigrants construct social fields that traverse geographic, cultural, and political boundaries within various complex interplays (Baubock, 2003, p.701), while Tlostanova, Thapar-Björkert & Kooback (2019) citing Leela Fernandes (2013) argue that transnationalism arose at a time when the old Cold War area studies that had been institutionalized within U.S. academia began to fade away due to the collapse of the socialist system, implying that despite claims of moving on from outdated dichotomies, there was still an association to these U.S.-centric optics (p.121).

Then, when traditional paradigms were used to explain past waves of migration in Europe, such as impoverished, male, economic migrants, no consideration was given to family decision-making processes, or the social networks involved in both sending and receiving countries. With the influx of women from the former Soviet Union in the 1990s, new ideas about diaspora and transnational identities emerged, taking gendered dimensions and individual agency into account (Rudolph & Hillman as cited in Anthias, 2012). Brah (1996) also mentioned that "these recent migrations are creating new displacements, new diasporas" (p. 912), while Brah also argues that "the concept of diaspora offers a critique of discourses of fixed origins, while taking into account of a homing desire which is not the same thing as desired for a homeland" (p.913), being this an interesting observation Brah (1996) claimed that although not all groups shared the repatriation mentality, the Mexican group expressed otherwise having a stronger individual agency of return bringing an definitely essence of the discourse based on the concept diaspora. In any case, other variables than economic motive must be recognized in transnational migration studies, such as the desire to better education, romantic love, and seek independence and different life options. In addition, De Sousa Santos, Nunes & Meneses (2008) stated the following:

Emancipatory versions of multiculturalism are based on the recognition of difference, and of the right to difference and the coexistence or construction of a common way of life that extends beyond the various types of differences. These conceptions of multiculturalism are linked, in general, as Edward Said has noted (1994), to "overlapping territories" and "intertwined histories," the products of the dynamics of imperialism, colonialism, and post-colonialism, which have put metropolises and dominated territories in contact with each other (Memmi,1965), and which have created the historical conditions of diaspora and other forms of mobility ((Anderson, 1983; Clifford, 1997) cited by De Sousa Santos, Nunes & Meneses, 2008, p. 844).

Researchers Lizarraga, Mantecón, & Huete (2015) discuss how migration is not a static phenomenon but an ongoing process (p.140). Transnationalism goes further migration and diaspora but interconnects itself with the previous concepts, it defends a sense of belonging within society integration, political/nation policies, and even geographical location. Even though it empathizes a lot on nationality, it's crucial to bring a bigger flow due to the globalized world and how the flow of welfare can transcend to humans. Just as the term itself defines it with the word "trans" meaning across/beyond. (Lizarraga, Mantecón, & Huete, 2015). Transnationalism refers to states as bounded political entities whose borders are crossed by the flow of people, money, or information and are spanned by social networks, organizations or fields" (Lizarraga, Mantecón, & Huete, 2015; Baubbock,2003, p.140). As an example, and in this context, Mexicans as any Latino person are linked to being extremely family-oriented and even though in this case targeting the Mexican immigrant leaving their country doesn't mean never looking back, on the contrary, their homeland will never leave them, and it creates a sense of proudness but strengthens the skill of adaptation. In addition, it adds within the concept that immigrants favor "maintaining ties with their home communities" (p.144). When we think about Mexicans in the context of immigration, the thought immediately goes to the U.S.-Mexico immigration, Mexicans are stereotyped as illegal immigrants, asylum seekers, or low-skilled workers, stereotypes that the United States has unfortunately exported to the rest of the globe. Not only for Mexican minorities in the United States, but also for all Arabs, Asians, African Americans, and others who immigrate to a different country for different reasons, the narrative of generalizing Mexican culture or any culture in general, values, and behavior that minority group faces against Western society must come to an end. In addition, Anthias (2008) mentioned that the old traditional course of immigration has changed, and it does not define our current era, as the categories like professionals and skilled immigrants are rising numbers of immigrants. Therefore, Anthias (2008) stated "these all presents us with a multiplex reality and a shifting landscape of belonging and identity" (Anthias, 2008, p.6). Taking this into consideration, the rhetoric of immigrants being the undergrowth of a nation needs the support and demonstration of universal principles that allow immigrants to be positively recognized before and within the community/nation.

Remarkable information on Latin American and the Caribbean in Europe was found, as this transnational political participation enabled Mexicans and other groups living in Europe to actively participate and maintain first-hand connection with their nation, as allowing them to vote (for the

first time Mexicans were able to vote abroad in the 2006 election) and cooperate not only economically but also politically, which in many cases this is the only connection that an immigrant has with their home country/community.

3.3 Theory of Capital

The Theory of Capital, as presented by Pierre Bourdieu, reflects the foundations of social existence, and determines one's standing in the social sphere; he refers to it as the "currency of status." as mentioned by Grenfell (2014). Bourdieu distinguishes between categories of capital in this case three will be presented: cultural, social, economic capital that mentions interplays between social status and power dynamics (Bourdieu, 2011).

Depending on the field in which it functions, and at the cost of the more or less expensive transformations which are the precondition for its efficacy in the field in question, capital can present itself in three fundamental guises: as economic capital, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights; as cultural capital, which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications; and as social capital, made up of social obligations ("connections"), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility. (Bourdieu, 2011, p. 16)

Bourdieu introduces the understanding of capital – the role of social world, but it is also "*lex insita*, the principle underlying the immanent regularities of the social world" (Bourdieu, 2011, p17). Therefore, the outlining understating of cultural, social, and economic capital in terms of migration and individual and social acceptance and the unfairness that some might face according to the standards of requirement for membership in society make these theories and concepts relevance to my research question.

3.3.1 Cultural Capital

Bourdieu divided cultural capital into three main aspects: *embodied* – long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body (Bourdieu, 2011, p. 17)–, *objectified* – cultural goods (p.17)–, and *institutionalized* – educational qualification (p.17) –cultural capital. In the case of embodied cultural capital, attributes of body and mind, putting into play skills acquired, accent, mannerism, and like, how they seem and behave, he mentions, it buys membership to play a role in society. – Higher social status is linked to money, power, and influence –. Material belongings, brands, nice

clothes, physical assets are examples of objectified capital, whereas institutionalized capital is tied to qualification and credentials, such as educational titles and university degrees, and provides an institutionalized standing, adding to your capital is certain, the more prestigious the university, the more institutionalized cultural capital will be acquired. (Bourdieu, 2011).

It's interesting to consider Bourdieu's fascination with his studies in the educational system as it has evolved into the institutionalization that legitimizes the social system. Bourdieu (2011) mentions that not only the material means are inherited, but also the economic capital, the social capital, and the cultural capital, since these are unconsciously inherited and influences in a large manner, and that education does not provide the first two, which was decisive in achieving successful trajectories as social mobility, if individuals lack this capital and education does not provide it, then there might be a loophole. Cultural capital can be acquired to a large amount, depending on the period, society, and social class, without any deliberate inculcation, and thus quite unconsciously, according to Bourdieu (2011, p.18). Prieur et al. (2008) linked the concept to the understanding of Bourdieu stating the claim that "Bourdieu does not endorse an elitist equation between "culture" and "highbrow culture" nor does he embrace the relativist (or populist) claim that all cultures have the same value" (p.47). Prieur et al. (2008) also mentions as an example, the impoverished make their way through the educational system, but they always end up in the procedures with the most flaws. As a result, we have an issue that stems from the educational system, which has resulted in societal disparity. According to Bourdieu and his early thoughts, schools had little influence on the distribution of social positions, but this has changed once education has been universal, as education is the one that maintains an acceptable and fair standard – giving individual the cultural capital needed– of what now may be a membership to social position. People's fates are now more closely related to self-effort than to inheritances due to this institutionalized form of cultural capital, and education is beginning to be linked to the labor market through the certifications and titles, "the economic and social yield of the educational qualification depends on the social capital, again inherited, which can be used to back it up" (Bourdieu, 2011, p.17). Although, Erel (2010), discussed the usage of this concept in the transformation and contestations of migrants' cultural capital where he claims that "some immigrants are affected by the non-recognition of qualification in comparison to other immigrants" (p. 642) and "the convertibility into other forms of capital distinguishes mere cultural

resources from cultural capital” (p.643). Bourdieu also make emphasis on Social Capital because belonging to a collective capital through sharing social capital will enrich the play.

Social capital may disrobe between of what a person has and what a person knows. It is less institutionalized, according to Bourdieu (2011), and embodies more about the possession of a persistent network [...] of mutual familiarity and recognition (p.21). They can also be socially initiated, –unconsciously inherited–, and ensured by the use of a common name and a series of instituting acts giving a sense of a collective identity. Social relationships give social capital, social relationships are maintained and reinforced through exchanges, this may be the relationship that people built through life. While the inherited social capital comes from familiar network. Bourdieu (2011) explained it in the following quote:

The volume of the social capital possessed by a given agent thus depends on the size of the network of connections he can effectively mobilize and on the volume of the capital (economic, cultural or symbolic) possessed in his own right by each of those to whom he is connected. This means that, although it is relatively irreducible to the economic and cultural capital possessed by a given agent, or even by the whole set of agents to whom he is connected, social capital is never completely independent of it because the exchanges instituting mutual acknowledgment presuppose the reacknowledgement of a minimum of objective homogeneity, and because it exerts a multiplier effect on the capital he possesses in his own right. (Bourdieu, 2011, p. 21).

Hence the profits of membership and how the acknowledgement of the basis of solidarity which makes this social capital possible. The existence of a network of connections is not a natural or even a social given; it is established once and for all by an initial act of institution, which in the case of the family group is represented by the genealogical definition of kinship relations, which is a characteristic of social formation (Bourdieu, 2011, p.21). The ongoing effort of sociability required for the reproduction of social capital, a continuous series of encounters in which recognition is ceaselessly confirmed and repeated. This job, which requires time and energy and hence, directly, or indirectly, economic capital, is neither profitable nor even imaginable unless a certain expertise is invested in it. Therefore, it's understood that Economic capital is money and assets that can be converted into money. It might be a physical form or digital currency; however traditional economic capital has been different in different societies. As exchange of goods. This is the most important capital species of capital in the social of the world because it could be turn into other forms of capital. So, he expresses that it could be symbolic capital as prestige from an

imagine of respectability – Economic capital only matters if it is not just money it's also about economic relations but there may be some boundaries that should be mentioned. Jarness (2017) makes an interesting distinction on the Economic capital and the Cultural Elite that might not refer the same as Cultural Capital but denotes the formal cultural education, where Jarness (2017) describes it as “high amount of influence on politics” and the representation of mainstream culture and the established cultural life in ways that are not admitted (p.365). Hence, the Norwegian popular debates have criticized this group, denoting this cultural elite as negative and unpleasant, where not necessarily groups with the economic capital characteristic wants to be involved or related due to among the cultural elite even though the economic capital is based on economic and social status relationships.

3.4 Immigrant vs Expat: Concepts.

According to Bengtsson, Strömblad & Bay (2010), there is a hold on the popular opinion and perception of what an immigrant is in the Scandinavian context, but it may differ from other countries, as according to the lexical meaning based is on dichotomy, in this context and regarding to the aim of the study, it's described as depending on how (un) Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish the members of minority groups are perceived to be” (p.47). It's necessary to address in these languages the word immigrant. In Norwegian is *innvadrer* its denoted as “all those who come from outside of Norway including the rest of the Nordic countries and North America [...] but it's becoming an implicit code for third world, dark skin and working class people” (Bengtsson, Strömblad & Bay, 2010, p.48) but it's also mention that the ambiguity might be “the basis of considerable rhetorical power” (Bengtsson, Strömblad & Bay, 2010, p.48) while Leinonen (2012) adds that “race, nationality, and class are all at play in meanings attached to the term immigrant” (p.218). Modood (2010) also makes an emphasis on the fact that “racial and ethnic groups exist in society, both in terms of minorities being told they are different but also from the inside; that is to say, minorities having their own sense of identity [...] termed to multicultural society” (p.6). Bengtsson, Strömblad & Bay (2010) presented a study example of how Swedish nationals (born abroad, born in Sweden with at least one parent born abroad and two and respondents born in Sweden with two Swedish born parents) had categorized *invandrare* (immigrant in Swedish) which the Nordic countries are rarely perceived as immigrants by the three categories (p. 58), while a third of the participants will always think that people born in Latin America, Asia, Africa and the middle east are *invandrare*/immigrants (Bengtsson, Strömblad & Bay, 2010, p.62).

While the definition and historical origin of the word “expat” comes from the abbreviation expatriate, Pavic (2015) reflects on the past synonyms connotating to a negative meaning of the word, Pavic mentions that in English the first usage of the word was to refer to “exile” but the meaning changed over time, now meaning «A person who lives outside their native country» according to the Oxford Dictionary of Current English, (Pavic, 2015). According to Pavic (2015), the historical origin in the American context comes from the Expatriation Act of 1907, when English historian Green explained that those who fled their native country to start a new life in America would lose their citizenship, because dual-citizenship was not allowed as it was seen as disloyalty to countries of origin – “colloquial abbreviation expat originated in the British colonial context” (Pavis, 2015) –. Pavic (2015) then claims that Green exposes the new type of globalized expat understood as businesspeople going to privileged locations (Pavic, 2015). On the other hand, the lexical definition of the word may not be sufficient because the meaning or application of the word will always differ depending on who is using it and to whom and where it is being used.

While Steiner & Wanner (2019) make a distinction on what it means to be an expat, which an assumption it’s that is extremely related with “whiteness, wealthy, highly skilled individuals who easily travel from one country to another according to their job” (Favell et al. 2006 cited by Stainer & Wanner, 2019), is wrong and problematic. “These stereotypical representations [...] reflect nonetheless the global inequalities and power relations that currently structure migration processes” (Stainer & Wanner, 2019, p.57). Understanding first the differences it may be possible to state the foundations of how different actors structured different forms of migration from different categories of people as Stainer & Wanner (2019) did in an ethnographic study. Several scholars have argued in recent years that the academic literature does not adequately reflect the representation of citizens as stationary subjects who differ from migrants based on the rights and benefits afforded to them by the state. (Dahinden 2016; Fassin 2011; Favell 2008 cited by Steiner and Wanner, 2019 p.59) Stainer and Wanner (2019) argue that the decision to allow people to migrate and stay in different nations will not be neutral, and that the decision will be based on political, economic, and social dynamics in accordance with cultural norms. “The gendered bias of skill- selective policies and the disadvantages they entail for women have also been highlighted by several researchers” (Kofman and Raghuram 2005; Boucher 2007; Kofman 2014 cited by Stainer and Wanner, 2019, p.59). It is claimed that migrants have been entangled since the 1960s

emergence of skill-focused immigration, which has resulted in the categorizing of high-skilled and low-skilled immigrants, as well as labeling some of them as unwanted and unselected. This is unjustified, because these categorizations are not based on the immigrants' own capabilities, but rather on the value given to knowledge or skills, in which power is distributed unequally across places and social groups, causing immigrants, categorization as immigrants or expats (Steiner and Wanner, 2019 p.59). Hercog & Sandoz (2018) similarly state that some authors “take a policy perspective to analyze the legal and administrative practices that contribute to the selection of “wanted” migrants in different countries, while others take more a sociological perspective to reflect on the impact of social contexts” (Hercog & Sandoz, 2018, p. 456). Economic power dynamics between countries, gendered norms, and professional recruitment practices all combine with immigration regulations to produce systems of inclusion and exclusion as it was stated by Steiner and Wanner (2019, p. 78). Different gender, nationalities, and backgrounds have fewer opportunity to access migration systems than highly skilled men from western Anglo-Saxon countries, who are more likely to migrate as expats (Steiner and Wanner, 2019, p.78). Pavic (2015) and Steiner and Wanner (2019) stated that the presumptions of Americans, English, and Canadians are being designated from the start as expats in countries like Switzerland, while the rest, comers from Eastern Europe, Africa, the middle East, Asia, South America will be label as regular immigrants (Pavic, 2015).

In the case of Mexican women and the existence of negotiating identities as immigrants or expats its interesting, which leads to observation of multicultural theories, Modood (2010) in this case, states that changing a negative stereotype into a positive stereotype is one of the key aspects of multiculturalism. Khan (2019) suggests that “white racialization affects light-skinned women in general, and light-skinned Latinas in particular” (Brooks, 2012, cited by Khan, 2019, p. 703); perhaps the link between white racialization and the making of “Latinas as embodiments of natural refines the cultural reception of Latinas as exotic sexualized, others” (Khan, 2019, p.713), is implementing immigrant or expat negotiation by exoticism.

3.5 Summary

The interconnectedness of transnationalism to economic, social, and political phenomena aids in understanding the flow of lives across borders, which enhances the formation of social processes and deepens the growth of group knowledge, as well as understanding the dimensions

of transnational agency and takes into consideration gender, migration motives and cultural assets. Therefore, the theoretical perspective of Culture Capital reflects on foundations of cultural assets that often determines individual prejudices or preconceptions in society when migrating, as different types of capital, such as economic assets and non-economic assets, social capital, and symbolic capital, that often grants membership to various social groupings. These characteristics lead to labels, self-identification and group categorization as immigrants or expats, in accordance with the prominence and importance of female Mexicans in Norway and Sweden. Allowing for the establishment of how society views transnationalism in the contexts of migration and feminism. Hence the presentation of several authors addressing the identification and understanding of concepts between immigrants and expats, where nationality, capital, and gender will aimed differentiate paths of inclusion or exclusion.

4. Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This research project aims to understand – *How do Mexican women in Scandinavia use cultural capital and economic capital to negotiate their transnational identities as immigrants or expats?* – How they perceive the process of migration considering the differences of being a migrant or being an expat has guided this methodology. In addition, it will be included a research design, informants' recruitments, data collection, data analysis, ethical considerations as positionality and a summary.

Therefore, to achieve answer the previous questions stated, a qualitative research method was applied through grounded data that allowed reveal concepts and crucial focus of this thesis project. Semi-structured interviews were conducted as primary data while procedures of interpretations will be employed and thematical analysis will be presented and discussed.

4.2 Research Design

The Research design is the core of this study therefore the epistemological foundation for this project is to study essences of the social world that does not aim to explain human actions but understand the processes and realities of human actions this is known as Interpretivism (Bryman, 2016). Bryman concluded that “a strategy is required that respects the differences between people and the object of the natural sciences and therefore requires the social scientist to grasp subjective meaning on social action” (Bryman, 2016, p.26). Also, in this case the important division of qualitative studies is based on interpretivism, which allows the research to examine reality and allow for uniqueness. As a means of comprehending reality, this qualitative research was conducted in order to a better understanding human action, choice, and motivations from the perspective of the participants through the semi-structure interviews rather than examining a pattern or aiming to an explanation that may be discovered if it were the choice of opting for a positivism's epistemological foundation.

In relationship to the Epistemological foundation of Interpretivism an Inductive approach was taken to the collection and analysis of data (Bryman, 2016, p. 381), and therefore generate the theory which is defined as *grounded theory* (Bryman, 2016). It has been chosen specially as a

strategy to gathered information in a field –related to this research questions – where a gap on data has been noticed, specially focusing and stressing the importance of allowing the emergence of theoretical ideas from data (p.381). In the same way, when “data” is mentioned, it refers to the type of collection of information, in this case a qualitative research approach was critical when it came to analyze reasons, decisions, and characterizations of Female Mexicans who wanted to relocate to Norway and Sweden because its emphasis is in words rather than quantifications (numerical information). Then, Grounded Theory was chosen as the best fit for this research project because it allowed for the collection of qualitative data through in-depth semi-structured interviews, as well as the expression and discussion of ideas, while also providing a complementary structure to help understand the occurrence of a social process. The main aimed for this project was not to start with too many preconceptions (Bryman, 2016, p. 470) as the goal was to truly focus on grounded data arising from the semi-structure interviews.

3.3 Participants

The sampling strategy was guided by a purposive sampling which according to Bryman (2016) participants are not selected randomly but in a strategic manner (p.408) “those sampled are relevant to the research questions that are posed” (Bryman, 2016, 408). Consequently, the process selection of the purposive sampling were people; Mexican women, whom will mostly be addressed as *participants/informants* based of key characteristics of goals and ambitions of this research project.

All participants had to meet specific requirements as; being Mexican by nationality, having or still studying in a higher education program in Norway or Sweden, as well as being between the ages of 18 and 50 years old. Mexicans living in the Nordic countries previously mentioned were invited through a post on social media (Facebook)– Publications were post through infographics in Spanish. Informants were first contacted via social media, a public publication was posted on Facebook under the group of “*Mexicans living in Sweden*”, “*Mexicans living in Norway*”, “*Female Mexicans living in Sweden*”, “*Female Mexicans living in Sweden*” (translation from Spanish to English for the group names were given). Participants were able to have clear information about the research project; the Project’s topic, investigator’s information (email, phone number), requirements, language options, and motives of the calling (see appendix 1 & 2 for Facebook advertisements).

The selection was by first comers first contacted. To clarify, participants were directed to send a private message, email, or phone message. Following the participants' voluntary contact, the researcher followed up with a more detailed description of the research, including guidelines for zoom or in-person meetings, length of the interview, recording methods, letter of consent, privacy rights, and, most importantly, expressing gratitude for their interest in the subject and willingness to assist in the development of this research. All interviews were done in Spanish event though, all participants had a Spanglish (Spanish-English) influence when describing experiences, in addition, informants also used some Norwegian and Swedish vocabulary.

Gender was not specifically intended to be a feature of this project, but due to a lack of response from male participants, the research became a Mexican women's study. A zoom meeting or in-person meeting was organized if the attendees had no doubts and had read through the consent form. Only one participant was willing to have an in-person interview, thus most of the participants elected to have an online (zoom app) meeting. The informants were separated into two groups: those from Sweden and those from Norway. The first group consisted of six Mexican women aged 26 to 52 who live in Sweden –which one woman surpassed the age limit but was accepted due to the lack of time –. On the other hand, the second group consisted of six Mexican women living in Norway, one of whom chose to have an in-person interview and the other woman was 42 years old. Only 2 interviews from women from Norway were included in this research. Finally, three out of the eight informants decided to participate anonymously while the rest were opened to give out their full information. In total 12 interviews were scheduled. Two interviews were lacking clear information and responses did not allied with the aim of this research, 2 other interviews were stopped by participants due to personal reasons, tight schedules, work or duties, the semi-structured interviews were rescheduled but were never concluded, hence only 8 semi-interviews were included in the analysis.

Restating, only 8 interviews were completed and included in this research project. The table below displays the list of the 8 interviewees, along with names given (respecting decisions to remain anonymous), country of living, years of living in the country, field of education and degree and, last, the languages that participants indicated were their first language, second, third and some cases fourth language.

List of interviewees

Name	Country of living	Years in Norway and Sweden	Education	Language
Melina	Sweden	7 years	Master of Science in Sustainability	-Spanish -English -French -Swedish
Stephanie	Norway	5 years	Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration	Spanish -English -Norwegian
Priscilla	Sweden	18 years	Bachelor in Spanish language	Spanish -English -Swedish
Tay	Norway	5 years and a half.	Master's degree in counseling and Guidance	Spanish -English -Norwegian
Ana	Sweden	1 years	Degree in industrial engineering	-Spanish -English -French -Swedish
Marilyn	Sweden	3 years and a half	Master's degree in psychology	-Spanish -English -Swedish
Hedda	Sweden	6 years	Master of Science in Economics and Business	-Spanish -English -Swedish
Cris	Sweden	22 years	Bachelor's degree.	Spanish -English -Swedish

*Table 3
List of interviewees
Mexicans living in Norway and Sweden*

Given that the participants are all Mexican women, the decision to use Scandinavian, Spanish, and English names was made with a transnational viewpoint in mind. As a result, the names presented were picked at random and do not represent anything else.

4.1 Limitations of the study

It should be noted that the decision to have a stringent criterion of only people with a higher educational background was made, in order to have a more focused and clear study. Educated immigrants are more aware of their rights, have a greater notion of academic vocabulary, and are less afraid to communicate their actual views and thoughts. Therefore, a good

participant was defined as a person who fulfill the requirements of the first heading “basic information” as age, place of studies, range of studies and nationality. Even though it was assumed that all educated participants would be very open and participative, two out of twelve semi-structured interviews were not included since the informants were skeptical to inquiries and did not elaborate on the topic research or were more kin to have just a short conversation protecting their private lives, therefore data was not really included. These selection criteria also implied that I cannot draw any conclusion about Mexican women without higher education who might live in Norway or Sweden.

4.2 Sample Size

The sample size (12 intended interviews) was determined by the project's duration and aim. It's difficult to predict how many people will be interviewed at the outset, as Bryman (2016) points out (p.416). The sample was not required in need of a bigger size because the study was typically homogeneous: female Mexicans, group age 18-50, educated, and living in Norway and Sweden. Furthermore, Bryman (2016) revealed that many authors have differing perspectives on sample size, with some considering exceptions while others do not. In this case, Adler & Adler (2012, cited by Bryman, 2016, p.416) estimated 12 to 60 interviews to be a suitable range. Finally, the goal of the project is to have clear and useful information to work with rather than a glut of data and thus insufficient time to thoroughly evaluate it.

4.3 Semi-structured interviews

An interview guide was outlined beforehand to achieve coverage of specific topics while leaving space for the interviewee to feel free to tell details and understand the flow of the interview. This allowed participants to share their personal stories and thoughts about living in Norway and Sweden as a Mexican women. “The latter is as much as if not more to do with the conduct of the interview than with the nature of the interview guide as such” (Bryman, 2016, p. 469). Thus, thematic topics generated were around questions of importance in this research project, the following were elements of the guide:

- Basic information
- Integration
 - Social Network
 - Local customs

- Opinions about integration
- Stereotypes
 - Prejudice
 - Misconceptions
- Culture
 - Adaptation
 - Language
 - Motivations

Bryman (2016) suggested that formulation of the interview questions should aim to answer the research question but without being too specific (p.471) therefore the elements stated before were topics of conversations that guided to a more in-deep understanding of the study. As a result, the semi-structured interview was divided into four sections (as shown above): basic information, integration, stereotypes, and culture. Under those headings, open questions were used to allow the informant to communicate their experiences and ideas. The goal was to conduct a total of 12 semi-structured interviews with Mexicans living in Sweden and Norway between January and March 2022. Participants were expected to be interviewed for 45 minutes to 2 hours, depending on the flow of the interview and availability of the informants, including the 10-minute information/doubts period.

4.4 Data Collection

As mentioned above (4.3 participants), all interviews were conducted in Spanish, information as *Consent form* was written and provided in English. This decision was taken before sending the consent form and scheduling interviews to confirm informants' approval. All the participants were fluent in Spanish, English and a third language. –Researcher is fluent in Spanish and English therefore there was no need for a professional translator –. It should be noted that one of the factors that contributes to the reliability of this study is that all participants were allowed to express themselves in their first language, which was the same as the researcher's (Spanish), allowing for easier understanding and interpretation of data.

The interview guide was arranged under four broad themes: Integration, stereotypes, culture, and language because the main objective of the study was to be able to interpret

experiences of being Mexican in Scandinavian countries and find patterns that lead to theory. The interview was a semi-structured interview, flexible and open for participants to share actual experiences. Efforts were made to keep informants' participation focused on the topic. The interviews length varied from 45 minutes up to 2 hours and were audio-recorded with *Diktafon* application. Although interviews were conducted in Spanish most of the participants used English terms/words same as Norwegian and Swedish words for descriptions.

The study was sent to The Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) who previously approved the study, a part of this collection of data, voice-recording was necessary. Thus, *Diktafon* application which is web form of Dictaphone which is makes recordings encrypted preventing to listen recordings on the phone protecting participants' information. The recordings were transferred directly to the web form of Sensitive Data Services (TSD) that functions as well as NSD but with recordings.

A qualitative study applying a grounded theory approach was aiming to get concepts of theory from the data gathered. Therefore, the main interest of this research was to semi-structured an interview and have conversations with Female Mexican women living in Norway and Sweden at the time being to understand and reveal thematic concepts of their perceptions, struggles, characteristics, experiences, and thoughts about life in general in the previous Scandinavian countries. Hence, procedure choices focusing on previous thematic analysis, as grounded theory was a great way to explored perceptions, motives, struggles of Female Mexicans living in Norway and Sweden.

3.4 Data Analysis

As Bryman (2016) points out, one of the most difficult aspects of exploring and researching with qualitative research, in this case semi-structured interviews, within interpretation, can be time-consuming and exhausting as the processes of recording, conversating, writing, and transcribing continues to accumulate, "it is crucial to guard against failing to carry out a true analysis" (Bryman, 2016, p.570). Therefore, following Bryman's advice, some tools to interpret Data analysis will be followed to keep the richness and most valuable aspects of the project. Accordingly, the topics of conversations of the guide interview (see chapter 4.5), the transcriptions revealed some codes. – A code is "a textual description of the semantic boundaries of a theme or

a component of a theme” (Guest et Al. 2012) –. While *Coding* as Bryman (2016) explains are “key process in grounded theory [...] whereby data are broken down into component parts which are giving names (p.572) “. Therefore, as a qualitative research, data was prepared for analysis through themes that lead to specific codes following the process of coding in Nvivo. However, categorization and code selection were always a top priority:

Categorizing is the process whereby a limited number of codes are selected on the basis of their significance and explanatory import. Moving from numerous codes to a restricted number of categories embodies a move from detailed findings to a more abstract and conceptually powerful level of analysis. (Trainor, et Al. 2012, p. 109).

As a result, when the semi-structure interviews were finished and transcripts were completed, the next stage was to review the transcripts, keeping in mind Trainor's (2021) technique of having open data, being prepared to the findings might shift the researcher's attitude (p.116).

During the interviews and data collection, the interviews were transcribed to proceed to code using the University's NVivo program. The NVivo program helped codify categories that were important to the research and constantly mentioned by participants. This analysis involved a constant selection of codes offering a result on a theoretical coding containing differences and similarities based on participants' experiences. There were eight participants, which resulted in eight transcripts within an interview guide that was based on a thematic analysis. The transcript's codes were grouped together in NVivo based on the observations, and data was compared and analyzed in a continuous back and forth with the transcripts. The selection of information given by the participant was based on the relevance of this project as contrasting perceptions between Mexican women and the Norwegian and Swedish society, perceptions of these women while living in Norway and Sweden as well as opinions of integration. The process of coding will amid to be as transparent as possible.

Braun and Clarke (2006) offered six phases of thematic Analysis which are:

1. Familiarization	familiarizing oneself with the data, reading and being familiar with the transcripts and audio recordings, taking notes, and beginning with an analytical observation
2. Coding	Labelling features of data
3. Searching for themes	Clustering and putting together/ mapping information leading to key patterns
4. Review themes	ensuring that coded data is consistent with the rest of the data and has its own distinct essence
5. Defining and naming themes	Giving definitions and conceptual clarity for the themes selected.
6. Writing a report	Putting together a analysis compelling extras form the variety of themes drawn from data

Table 4

Six phase of Thematic Analysis. Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.230 cited by Smith (2015).

Data was analyze aiming to compare similarities and differences of the participants' responses through Braun and Clarke's six phases (2006), giving result to main themes as 1) *Individual agency in transnational relationship*, 2) *Education and language as Cultural Capital*, 3) *Social class as Economic capital*, 4) *Racialization and Exoticism* and 5) *Negotiating identity as immigrant or expat*.

3.5 Ethical considerations

Diener and Crandall (1978) mentioned by Bryman (2016), guided the procedures of ethical considerations, concerns about participants were taken to make no harm against the informants, therefore no personal or sensitive information was asked, and interviews were schedule or reschedule based on no pressure mentality. In addition, information of participants' rights were crucial before, during and after the qualitative study, consent forms were given with and explained, time for questions and doubts was provided as well, the option for being anonymous was clear and effective in concern to the third ethical principle that is the right of privacy (Bryman,

2016, p.131). The main aim of this research project is to be clear and transparent as possible with participants, the purpose of participants' information and with the development of the project. As result, participants had full access to their data, the project's procedure, and the option to withdraw at any time.

3.6 Positionality

Being a Mexican student immigrant myself, I am both an insider and an outsider in terms of my multidimensional positionality. During the semi-structured interviews, I played the position of both a researcher and an ally who could comprehend the opinions and values of my participants. As a Mexican who speaks Spanish as a first language, I was able to understand the participants' own language, metaphors, and experiences; I was also able to empathize with them as women because I was probably going through similar feelings, emotions, doubts, and frustrations while living in a Scandinavian country thousands of kilometers away from home. Nonetheless, I played the position of an enquirer, encouraging individuals to speak and ponder on themes that may still be taboo to discuss. Furthermore, my own personal experiences overseas have allowed me to study and get new perspectives on life, as well as acquire skills such as languages (English, French, and learning Norwegian) and integrate into Norwegian culture as the Female Mexican participants. The goal of the project was to pay tribute to the people who made this study possible by honoring their ideals, distinctiveness, and experiences, also, as stated in the introduction, was to collect data without any assumptions and allow the data flow to drive this thesis project. Because the decision to study a Mexican group in Scandinavia was made solely for the purpose of gaining insight and in-depth knowledge about the Mexican community in Norway and Sweden, which appears to lack research in the academic field, the main personal goal was to enrich myself and society in terms of connecting and rising awareness of multiculturalism and migration.

3.7 Summary

This chapter entailed describing and validating the methodology and research design of the study. Procedures of a semi-structured interview, data collection, data analysis, and ethical considerations were justified proving valid foundations of this Master Thesis, demonstrating the proper decision-making of participants, positionality, and considering limitations for authentic research. Therefore, a qualitative study applying a grounded theory approach based on eight out

of twelve semi-structured individual interviews of Mexican women living in Norway and Sweden between 18 and 50 years old. Five main key themes were identified and will be discussed in the following chapter.

5. Data and Findings

5.1 Introduction

It's important to start by restating the research question as the aim of this research project, *how do Mexican women in Scandinavia use cultural and economic capital to negotiate their transnational identities as immigrants or expats?* – The purpose is to present a group of female Mexicans in Scandinavia, ambitions of giving a different perspective of the existing minority's narrative. Most academics are familiar with the experiences or characteristics of women from the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, but what is known about Mexican women living in Scandinavian countries in comparison to the largest groups of female migrants. Presenting personal disadvantages/advantages as women from a Latin American country with strong cultural background, distinct economic components, immigration status, stereotypes that indeed interplays in the categorization of Female Mexicans in Scandinavia.

Therefore, this chapter explores and discusses the main themes and presents the findings, which arose out of the semi-structured interview process and data analysis. The key themes that emerged from the empirical data from Female Mexicans living in Norway and Sweden experiences were about:

- 1) *Individual agency in transnational relationship*
- 2) *Education, and language as Cultural Capital*
- 3) *Social class as economic capital*
- 4) *Racialization and exoticism*
- 5) *Negotiating identity as immigrant expat.*

As result, the framework of this thematic analysis will examine the previous topics in the following order: introduction, description of the theme, extracts from the transcriptions that will attempt to justify statements made, a theoretical discussion and finally, a conclusion.

5.2 Individual agency in transnational relationship.

The decision to be in a transnational relationship was the main motive for most of the Mexican women in this study to move and continue their lives in Norway and Sweden, but it was

not the only option for others, as several of the participants acknowledged. King-O’Riain (2016) presents sociological research where it is mentioned that “the context of migration is gendered shapes the decisions for women about their migration shaped by many factors such as poverty, employment, and lifestyle opportunities” ((Brooks and Simpson, 2013, p.106) cited by King-O’Riain, 2016, p.2). Women in romantic partnership as discussed in previous literature presented showed the more often thought of migrant women as male dependents (Anthias, 2012), leading to a lack of autonomy, therefore to a risk of different social factors that would decrease social integration and acceptance (Fernbrant et al, 2017), supporting this claim it was stated by Statistics Norway (2022) that patterns of immigration lead to assumptions and discrimination, impacting migrant women's representation in general. Hence, in this study a crucial theme emerging from data was the individual agency that these Mexican women possess even in transnational relationships, which is in an entirely different level from some of the largest group in Norway in Sweden, “this allows us to understand that international migration is not installed as a totally new experience on a fixed gender reality, but rather is part of broader social, historical, cultural processes” (Gioconda, 2011, p. 37). In the case of Melina, she mentioned the following about moving to Sweden:

It's a bit of a random story. My husband is French, and my husband told me that he wanted to go on a trip. There was this concert in Sweden that we really wanted to attend so we did, and we also visited Gothenburg and Stockholm. I really liked it.

Melina, Sweden

Despite the fact that romantic love was a major motivator for migration, individuals acknowledged their independence both before and after arriving in Scandinavian nations. Melina's experience as having a French husband who moved to Sweden demonstrates several factors and statutes of migration, as well as the possibilities of travelling around and then having a variety of settlement options. Marilyn also provides another illustration of individual agency:

My ex-boyfriend is Swedish, so he and I already had a long relationship and we had come here to visit, and I liked the culture. I was a little tired of Mexico, so I said I want to go somewhere and then I had Sweden, Germany and Holland as options and the admission process [to university] started in Sweden first, I applied and I got in, therefore I moved in.

The ability to choose from a variety of nations already demonstrates a transnational presence. According to Anthias (2012), this is a transnational identity that the previous participant showed, it relies on different options to decide to stay in a country developing a social process that traverse geographical and cultural boundaries, resulting in a lot of individual agency tied to these women's identities. Individual agency is important since the ability to choose whether or not they wish to return depends on them, however in the case of returning to war or poverty, reasons in the first place for fleeing are used against individual foreigners by the majority. Fernbrant et al. (2017) exposes the case of Thai women in Sweden perceiving lack of autonomy therefore low individual agency and no intentions of returning; because of many of Thai women come from more rural, very poor backgrounds and little education– although there is agency– the Thai women literature shows more exploitation by their partners and society, then the comparison to the Mexican women having the option to choose to migrate to a country and then return without losing rights, social status or social network, give them the essence of maintaining strong individual agency in a transnational relationship.

5.3 Education and Language as Cultural Capital

5.3.1 Education as Cultural Capital

Many of the Mexican study participants explained their situation for coming to Norway or Sweden, this was a very specific and important topic that emerged from the semi-structured interviews which was related to the immigration settlements in Norway and Sweden. According to Merelo in previous studies of Mexicans in Sweden (2018):

Many arrived in the country as skilled migrants hired by Sweden based international companies. Others arrived through a Swedish partner whom they usually met outside Sweden, very often in Mexico. Another important group of migrants arrived in Sweden as postgraduate students who later stayed on in the country as professionals or through partnership with a Swedish national (Merelo 2018, p. 227)

As referred to by Haas, Castles & Miller (2020), primary and secondary motives for migrating might change over time (p.30). My study showed a similar pattern to Merelo' study,

process of immigration settlements of Mexican women living in Scandinavia illustrating that the majority are educated or hired even before coming to Norway or Sweden. Main motivations around the participants are similar which might be regarding to their social class and educational background that influences the immigration settlements in Norway as “Unbiased and solidarity-oriented attitudes towards immigrants are also associated with high educational levels, broader experiences, and commitment to professional values” (Bengtsson, Strömblad & Bay ,2010. p, 189). Illustrating that Norwegian and Swedish majority populations have more positive attitudes to immigrants with higher education, therefore, as Bourdieu points out, education is no longer solely based on the knowledge imparted; it appears that attending higher educational institutions or institutions in the destination country confers status, network connections, and knowledge standards as symbolic values, habits and customs as well as tastes increases individual value implying that education may be linked to the key to acceptance and belonging Education does work as crucial Cultural Capital, yet these types of migration settlements as legal entries may differ from the main migration motive (De Haas, Castles & Miller, 2020, p. 31). Such as the case of Melina, Hedda and Stephanie, which they mention that romantic love was primarily the reason for migrating (as mentioned above) but ended up applying for Student visas as being studies a secondary reason for migrating rather than Family reunification entry, they mentioned their own experiences:

I looked for the universities through a centralized system. You put your 3 universities and they if they accept you in one of those then you're in, and so it was. The reason I put Lund as my first choice was because I really liked the educational program. That's when we moved in with my husband.

–Melina, Sweden

The reasons for moving to Sweden were two. My partner lives in Sweden, we met in a Mexican high school, later on, I finished university in Mexico and wanted to study a master's degree, so it was like I can apply and study in Sweden while I can also be with my partner.

–Hedda, Sweden

I was studying at the Tecnológico de Monterrey (Tec). I came as an exchange student to Stavanger on behalf of the Tec, but it was more as part of an easier way to migrate as I could not come with another visa because the I was only a student at the time; therefore, I could only apply for a student visa. My husband is Norwegian and at that time we did not have all the economic requirements for family reunification to complete the process.

–Stephanie, Norway

“Immigrant groups are just as diverse as the rest of the population” (Haas, Castles & Miller, 2020, p.80), as migrant women. All participants from Norway and Sweden are professionals’ individuals from middle class or urban Mexico society the same as a study made by Merelo (2018) that also mentioned “expectations of a better life were saturated with distinctive notions of belonging and integration into certain groups” (p.229). In addition, Scott (2006) mentioned by Merelo (2018) stated that “accounts of middle-class migration have been traditionally tainted by the notion of the privilege expatriate” (p.230). These individuals were aware that arriving as a student place them in a different immigration and social class group. According to the Erel (2010) and the study based on Migrating Cultural Capital through Pierre Bourdieu’s concept, claims that qualifications as higher education does lead to obtain better occupations than other migrant groups. “The notion of cultural capital has been widely deployed to understand skilled migration” (p. 643). The distinctions that Mexican women have as higher education and different forms of informal cultural capital will properly explain the different category from the largest group of women migrant in Norway and Sweden as well as their negotiation of identify living abroad. Bourdieu's Capital Theory highlights the educational qualification (institutionalized capital) as a convertible currency into economic and social capital in the form of understanding that these factors are compatible with society's requirements to be members of a matchable social status as the case of U.S. Americans living in Finland, as Leinonen (2012) stated:

Their presence is considered unproblematic by the dominant population due to their high social status and “acceptable” reasons of immigration (marriage, employment, studies). Migration scholars have also neglected this immigrant population precisely because of their assumed unproblematic position in Finnish society. (Leinonen, 2012, p.216)

5.3.2 Language as Cultural Capital

Participants stated their understanding of the relevance of language in the integration of female Mexicans residing in Norway and Sweden, particularly for work integration, based on the findings. Erel (2010) makes an emphasis on the “assets of regarding language knowledge and accent or light skin can be converted into ‘national capital’ therefore to legitimized belonging” (p.644), as crucial to understand the cultural capital in migration. Regarding better understand how language as cultural capital was acquired, developed, and used by the participants, the following discussion will explore and contain theoretical claims to three primary elements raised by participants: difficulties of learning Norwegian and Swedish, advantages of learning Norwegian and Swedish, and English fluency.

Language was not an issue in creating social connections with non-Norwegian or non-Swedish people for many participants, notably those who ended up marrying or cohabiting with a Norwegian or Swedish partner, but all participants did face different struggles along learning and keeping the motivation to learn the native language which Erel (2012) claimed to be “a silent marker of distinction within the migrant group” (p.654). The process of learning Norwegian and Swedish was not as natural and easy as in the case of Priscilla, a Mexican living in Malmo, Sweden for the past 18 years which mentioned her experiences of learning and feeling confident with the Swedish language were explained:

I was very embarrassed to speak Swedish. It took me a year to speak. I knew the grammatical rules, writing and reading, but I did not dare to practice the oral part. I can tell you that around 4 years later I felt more confident and that confidence was also based because of my job, because when you start working you are forced to talk and practice and that's where you learn a lot of things, also dealing with people because those who worked there were Swedish, so it was easier to listen when they spoke, although I did not participate in the conversations, I did listen to them all the time so I was learning.

—Priscilla, Sweden

Priscilla also mentioned that going to an institution called Komvux (adult education to improve grades) to study allowed her to face those challenges of speaking the language as she felt in a more secure place.

Komvux is like a school for people who want to increase their grades to be able to enter university to increase their grade points, it was here that I learned it [Swedish language] and began to speak more, with my partner we always speak English, but he also began to tell me "you have to speak Swedish to me", but when he spoke to me to practice it was in Norwegian.

–Priscilla, Sweden

In Priscilla's case, her spouse is Norwegian and lives in Sweden, which she explained made it a little more difficult to learn the language, while there are some parallels between Norwegian and Swedish, the languages are still distinct giving her different validation because of her transnational perspective while living with Norwegian in Sweden. While Stephanie said that one of the difficulties was the lack of support on behalf of her relatives.

There was a time when I didn't like the language because Leo's family [Stephanie's husband] wasn't that nice to me.

–Stephanie, Norway

Some individuals, such as Stephanie, had difficulties learning the language due to demotivation from her in-laws. In the case of Melina, however, it was discouraging because she did not feel compelled to learn the language, in addition to be one out of two in the group of Mexicans in Sweden that is not in relationship with a Swede, she expressed the following:

When I was going to come to Sweden, I started taking small courses like duolingo, nothing really and since my job is in English and my master's degree was in English, I spent a few years without really learning the language. And it's very easy not to learn because you realize that everyone speaks English until you realize that you can't immerse yourself in the culture if you don't learn it.

–Melina, Sweden

Another example was Ana's experience, she has only been living in Sweden for a year but has learned the language, when she was asked – What have been your experiences about your adaptation in the Swedish culture, has it been hard, difficult? She replied:

The most difficult thing is to connect with Swedes, it does take more time. Talking to that person and having them start looking for you to have a friendship is a bit complicated and so are the processes, the legal processes. Migration takes time and a lot of research.

–Ana, Sweden

Learning Norwegian or Swedish presented challenges for all of the participants, but it was more of a barrier to forming a social network with Norwegians or Swedes and obtaining a job that was related to their degree, but often it had no influence on the final outcome. While there were some hurdles in learning the language, participants stated the idea of having positive experiences as a result of those challenges and learning the language. Therefore, some benefits came along the experience. One of the main advantages that participants noticed about living in Norway or Sweden and learning the language was that it led to meet more people in their situation allowing them to feel more accepted and respected when learning the language. In the case of Stephanie, living in Norway she mentioned that learning the language was a way to meet new people and create a network, in addition it was a personal goal. Stephanie mentioned the following:

I speak the language well. In Stavanger I paid for it because it was my own interest, but here (Drammen) I met most of my international network through Norwegian classes. My friends are from there [Norwegian course] since they ask you for 600 hours of Norwegian class and think that's where we connected because we were in the same situation.

–Stephanie, Norway

I didn't feel the need to speak Swedish but then I realized that the key to integration in Sweden is the language. Now that I already speak Swedish, I was able to join a rugby club, it was there when I started to socialize and I can say that I already have friends, because I already belong to a social club, and we have similarities.

–Hedda, Sweden

In the instance of Hedda, inclusion occurred when her embodied cultural capital, which refers to abilities such as language (Bourdieu, 2011), provided her the assurance of membership to participate in the Swedish society. Often the participants showed a common pattern of personal motivation, as well as their own incentives to attend private language lessons or the governmental courses for immigrants. Participants mentioned to have at least a B1 level of Norwegian or Swedish while others claimed to be fluent (according to the European Mark). The third element related to language as cultural capital by the participants was their notably competence in other languages, especially their English fluency. All Mexicans interviewed spoke English as a second language did a Master program in English, and it was often their primary way of communication with their partners and their partners' families, as well as work for some, while others stated their proficiency in third languages, the most prevalent of which was French. Speaking Spanish as a mother tongue illustrated some advantages, such as speaking native English for people from the United States or the United Kingdom (Leinonen, 2012). For some participants, speaking Spanish was a work skill, and they used it to their advantage to find jobs and integrate into the labor market.

It gave me a lot of anxiety to move [to Sweden] because I could not stop thinking about what I'm going to do when I get there and in that time I said well I'm going to study Spanish [Study to be a Spanish teacher], (laughs), at that time it was beginning to become very popular (to learn Spanish) and that, well, there was a lot of demand for teachers, job offers, and that's what I did, I changed my career.

–Priscilla, Sweden

Speaking other languages such as Spanish, French have given me privileges and I see it very clearly.

–Melina, Sweden.

Yes, I do perceive a huge difference that the majority have between the other immigrants and Mexicans. I don't know if it is due to the status of having a higher level of education or the language, I couldn't really know if it was that I learned the language, or if it was the recognized education, or maybe it was both at the same time.

This embodied cultural capital as Pricilla, Melina and Tay described, turned into a professional skill that turned into an entry to institutionalized cultural capital linked to education and recognizing their individual and collective agency. Hence, the Mexican women in this study formed formal and informal human-cultural capital that often illustrated an advantage of reproducing and using it as resources as useful for social inclusion. However, Erel (2010) provides an interesting statement on this constant focus on women and cultural capital, as follows:

Feminists critically examine uses of Bourdieu's ideas for understanding gender (e.g. Adkins and Skeggs, 2004; Silva, 2005, 2008), critiquing Bourdieu's tendency to view women simply as repositories and transmitters of cultural capital rather than looking at how they produce and use it. (Erel, 2010. P.647)

Bourdieu (2011) claimed that all cultures have equal value and should be recognized, but social difference and selected requirements frequently stand in the way of acceptable cultural capital norms as the case, of the Russian students in Norway as Weirs-Jensen (2015) stated. Russian women, who, like Mexican women, are from non-western origins, are among the top three largest groups of women migrating due to studies enrolled in Norwegian schools (Flemmen, 2008), as shown in Statistics Sweden ([Figure 1](#)) still facing non-recognition, judgmental preconceptions of marrying for convenience and taking advantage of the welfare state. Despite prior research on Russian students in Norway displaying statistics of educated and experienced Russian students (Wiers- Jensen, 2015). In a study by Shavrina (2015), all Russian participants in the study often spoke about English language improvement during their international mobility, as well as motives of free education and scholarships in Norway, and other non-academic motives (p.30), whereas Mexican participants often demonstrated other kinds of improvements such as learning Norwegian or Swedish and none of the participants were granted a scholarship. It could be reflected in the case of the Mexican participants, who were all fluent in English with an almost native English and American accent, presenting an embodied cultural capital of accent and mannerisms as the U.S. Americans as Steiner and Wanner (2019) explained, presenting a transnational expat characteristic to what it gives sense of a "higher status" (Leinonen, 2012).

5.4 Social class as Economic capital.

Another element that arose in regard to the aforementioned was that the potential of moving to Norway or Sweden to study was more a matter of being admitted or not in a university rather than perceptions of economic constraints for these individuals. In addition, all participants are women and migrated themselves challenging dominant narratives of gender roles in migration (De Haas, Castles & Miller 2020, p. 346). Specially, the idea of Mexicans migrating to the U.S, for labor motives as “illegal” immigrants as De Haas, Castles & Miller (2020) explained “does not tell us anything about the socioeconomic process that created a demand for migrant labor or the circumstances that led people from leaving” (p.30). Then, immigration settlements are set: these Mexican study participants came through study reasons mostly to study a master’s degree denoting educated, middle class Mexicans. In order to support these claims participants were asked about their economical situations, in the case of Marilyn, she said:

I was a little tired of Mexico, so I said I want to go somewhere [...] besides education is not that expensive (in Sweden) and I had a good job in Mexico, so I had my savings.

–Marilyn, Sweden.

It is illustrated that Marilyn is exercising her individual agency to increase her cultural capital while also increasing her economic capital through education. While Tay expounded on her response regarding the economic element, she also mentioned that her position as a member of a higher social class than other members of Norwegian society provided her with the ability to see things from a different viewpoint than an immigrant or refugee:

The economic level, the intellectual and emotional resources will help you as a compass to make decisions.

–Tay, Norway

Engzell & Ichou (2020) stated that “immigrants with a high relative education in their country of origin are likely to see themselves as having a high social status” (p.476). The self-perceived status was based mostly in their education level and economic stability and work experienced before coming to Norway and Sweden related to their cultural and economic capital as Sociologist Bourdieu talked in the capital theory (see chapter 4). Melina and Marilyn both said

that they came here with savings, and Melina continues to work on her distance job position even before beginning the master's program. In general, the response to the economic question was unambiguous, with certain trends emerging. All these women had good jobs in Mexico, had completed bachelor's or even master's degrees, and none of the participants had received a scholarship to study in Norway or Sweden. Two of the participants confirmed that their partners assisted them while they were studying, but they still worked on the side.

I applied for a scholarship in Mexico, but I did not get it. It was my partner who helped me pay for the master's degree and told me that for her it was an investment to support me to study, since that would help us as a couple in the future. At first the economic burden was for my partner, although I worked, my salary was minimal, and it was just to pay for my transportation. Now that I have a stable job, it's half and half and we divide everything and balance the financial aspect.

—Hedda, Sweden

I do think that as a Mexican I do have some kind of advantage, mainly because I haven't had to look for a job here, that's already big. Another thing I came to study and that is already like a privilege and in a certain way it puts you in another category. It does not speak of higher or not but of economic reasons.

—Melina, Sweden.

As a result, in order to understand how these Mexican women constituted themselves in society, it's also vital to look into how they talked about their circumstances and social positions before and after they left Mexico. The previous subject has already established a social position as education as a social influence on the social game based on institutional universal acceptance (Bourdieu, 2011). Then, what Tay, Hedda, and Melina addressed in this regard could be linked to the Social Capital that Bourdieu refers to as currency in this case to a membership to perhaps social exchanges of network and the sociability of connections that are directly or indirectly linked to economic capital as assets that can be converted into currency (Bourdieu, 2011). The social status that these Mexican women claim to have, begun in their native country by having a middle-high class position, as evidenced by a solid job, education, language abilities, well-traveled, and previous transnational existence. The awareness that these educated women have of their social status allows them to perceive assets and exploit them while remaining cognizant of the problems

and stereotypes that homogenized women from non-western backgrounds face. In the instance of the Norwegian and Swedish social perception of the distinction between women from western and non-western origins, higher education may be seen as cultural capital (institutionalized), but not economic capital. Mexican women's perceptions of social class as economic capital may differ from their own, if Norwegian perceptions of non-western immigrants as poor people are based solely on country of nationality, coming from countries that are assumed to be poor, which is true in some ways, even though the Newly Industrialized Countries (NIC) exist, of which Mexico, Thailand, and Russia are members of does not modified perceptions. The existence of an elite society in Mexico that lives like an elite European may not be a component of knowledge for Norwegians and Swedes, who frequently perceive Mexicans as illegal immigrants attempting to enter the United States.

5.5 Racialization and Exoticism

5.5.1 Racialization

Mexican women in this study are not uneducated but are still brown and white skin tone, the roleplay of stereotypes of women are intrinsically found and will be discussed in order to explain the racialization and exoticism of Mexican women in Scandinavian countries. There seems to be a connection between how skin color is perceived, and the judgments people make about cultural and economic statues. It is acknowledged that some immigration stereotypes would undermine the situation of certain groups, whereas expat stereotypes enhance a person's visibility and presentation of themselves into society. Because being an immigrant is very class-based, problematic and skinned tone based and cultural and religious incompatibility between natives and immigrants (Leinonen, 2012, p. 218). Tay, one of the participants, reflected on the interplay of conflicting perceptions of female immigrants and female Mexicans and stating some differences between both:

The response to me is different as “she is no longer like an immigrant who might come and well there are certain stereotypes of women who marry and come with Norwegians, but she is no longer like the woman who depends on her husband but is like the woman who already speaks Norwegian, is independent and is studying”. But that's where the game of other types of stereotypes begins, of why is she studying a master's degree like this situation that maybe logically they don't say it but you feel it that there is an envy but there

is a certain surprise that a Mexican woman can do that. Because in my circle some of my friends do not have a master's degree or a bachelor's degree and maybe only have a technical degree (Fagbrev). While in my case this is my second master's degree.

–Tay, Norway

In the way Tay develops her response, three aspects are extracted as essential to the discussion: first, the continuous effort to not fall under the categorization of immigrant as other minority groups, second, the cultural capital observed and enhanced by the recognition of a higher status due to education and language, and third, the used of the word “surprise” indicating underestimation of individual agency due to the most common patterns of dependency rely on national partners that the largest groups of migrants in Norway and Sweden encountered (Limpriwatana, 2019) which are linked to preconceptions about immigration, particularly women. According to Transnational theory by Anthias (2012), this transnational process is frequently homogenized without the addition of distinct aspects, which participants in this study mentioned.

While Tay thought that some Norwegians were startled that she was pursuing a master's degree as a Mexican woman and so misjudged her, Priscilla had the experience of being mistaken for a white Swedish woman.

In the hotel where I worked for the first time in Sweden when I moved, I had to work with some Chileans and one day they arrived and started speaking Swedish to me, and told me that he thought I was Swedish, he judged me by the color of my skin, which was all transparent as they mentioned, and I was no, I am Mexican and I speak Spanish. That did happen to me a lot that they think I'm Swedish because of the color of my skin. There are people who do not believe that I am from Mexico. The Stereotype is that we are only brown and that's it.

–Priscilla, Sweden.

In the case of Priscila as being assumed to be Swedish because she is white confirms racialization issues as Khan (2019) claimed interpreting racialization as “the extension of racial meaning to a previous racially unclassified relationship, social practice, or group” (Omi and Winant, 2014, cited by Khan, 2019, p. 704). Race operates as a negative or favorable perception of

an individual in a foreign place, as seen by participants' acknowledgements of privilege based on their skin tone. In the case of U.S. Americans living in Finland, Leinonen (2012) defined this as "hierarchies within whiteness" (p.217) by being granted acceptance or simple the recognition of a higher global status. Modood (2010) cited Parekh (2000) posit the idea of "equal respect" (108), then he continues to develop on this hierarchy,

This is because individual have group identities and these may be the ground of existing and long-standing inequalities such as racism, for example, the ways that some people have connived and treated others as inferior, less rational, and culturally backward. While those conceptions persist, they will affect the dignity of non-white people, above all where they share a social life with white people which steeped in negative images of non-white people. The negative conceptions will lead to direct and indirect acts of discrimination.

Mexicans may appear visibly similar to Norwegian and Swedish people, and auditory visibility in English will also give them a pass as the study made by Leinonen, but when it comes to questions of nationality or ethnicity, preconceptions resurface for Mexicans living in Scandinavia as participants expressed.

5.5.2 Exoticism

The problem that the media has been making with television series programs about Mexican culture, particularly on Netflix, was another stereotype that was mentioned by all participants and was regarded as a negative stereotype. The disparities in prejudices that Mexicans in Norway and Sweden faced as a result of what the majority of society watches on television, what they understood about Mexico, and what they knew about Mexicans were fascinating to discussed. The first way to addressed stereotypes was the preconceived notion about the country from the perspective of the Norwegian and Swedish society, and the second was a perception of how Mexican people could be and act. A notable transition was the transformation of negative preconceptions into positive stereotypes. Melina, Priscilla, Ana and Stephanie, began with unfavorable impressions of the country held by native Norwegian or Swedish persons they had met. Similar findings were seen in both countries. Melina from Sweden expressed her thoughts as follows:

As a country they think, it's wow with Netflix's stereotypes of being a super tough and dangerous country.

–Melina, Sweden

They think that Mexico is a dangerous country, full of traffickers and drugs, all because of the Narcos series on Netflix. I fight hard to change this stereotype with my students. The only thing they talk about is El Chapo, Pablo from Colombia, I try to change that image, they tell me that they saw a video on social networks that they were arrested and that they were afraid because they entered an area that was not passable. I try to remove that image that has influenced a lot.

–Priscilla, Sweden

As a country they think about drugs, weapons, cartels and sometimes they think that we are not all educated, we are not intelligent.

–Ana, Sweden

They have also told me that they perceive us as intense, according to series, for example, the Modern Family series, (Gloria) that women are like soap operas, high heels, corpulent and intense. As for the country, it is related to Narcos, to drugs.

–Stephanie, Norway

This opposed current challenges in societies of the West, in terms of broader issues of integration and multiculturalism, but also in terms of prejudice against certain groups based on stereotypes and scare stories in the media, which is best understood as a form of cultural racism (Modood, 2013, p.181). Stephanie brought up Gloria (a Colombian actress) portraying a Colombian in the TV show Modern Family, which brought up homogenized Latin stereotypes of women. Despite a lack of acknowledgement of their own merits as transnational women in the Norwegian and Swedish society. Previous historical causes have included prejudices as well as exoticism among Europeans throughout colonial times. The British imagination of the Indian is not only negative, but also a fascination with the mysterious east, which could lead to exoticism linked to the racialization of women embodiments as being exotic and more sensual (Khan, 2019), Modood's (2013) statement on stereotype reevaluation helps us comprehend how exotic preconceptions may be used by these women to understand and obtain desire recognition.

This is not just in relation to individual self-definition but in relation to the outsider perceptions, treatment and social expectations – indeed the whole social constitution of what is taken to be an Asian, Latino, black, etc., including the inferiorized, imposed status of that group. That is to say, the subordinate group in question does not just begin to take charge of its positive self-definition, of revaluing the group, but also to define the ways it has been inferiorized. (Modood, 2013, p. 38)

Data collected showed similar findings of contrasting negative and positive stereotypes, what Stephanie mentioned about Gloria, who in the tv series, is married to an older white, U.S. American man posing a negative dominant stereotype of immigrant women marrying men from the west, also shows that exotic characterizations as Gloria has; tan complexion, is curvy, wears mostly high heels, and has a heavy accent, a strong temperament but perceived as sexy, funny and exotic leads to positive perhaps more likeable stereotypes. As a result, these views of being Mexican as an individual are one thing, but the country was perceived totally different. The following claims, show this difference which turned out to be positive stereotypes:

I have not seen racism towards Mexicans because of these stereotypes. The reaction to the word Mexicans has always been very positive, that we are warm.

–Cris, Sweden

What Cris mentions demonstrates a connection of positive stereotypes as key to be excluded from racism as Modood (2010) explained to be “responding to negative perceptions by offering positive images” (p.35), in this case perhaps an experience to get to know a warm Mexican. Hedda, explains more in-depth of their perceptions of Mexican people within these stereotypes.

When I talk to people, they always say that we are [Mexican people] very happy, very social, the first word is that you laugh a lot, you smile a lot, but they didn't really have an idea of what is a real Mexican, in general, they didn't have that idea of what they look like, they did it only because they always think of the typical stereotypes.

–Hedda, Sweden

I feel that the kveld taco [Taco evening] makes them feel that if they eat taco on Fridays, they are doing something very Mexican, then the Norwegian knows about Mexico and develops that necessary feeling to ask and feel curious.

–Tay, Norway

Tay associates the gastronomy aspect as being another element of interest for the Norwegian society. All participants used almost the same words as “happy”, “very social”, “cheerful”, “warm” as Chris and Hedda did to talk about the perceptions of Mexicans in Norway and Sweden. Tay, on the other side, claims that Mexico often arouses enough curiosity for people to be drawn to it specially for cultural thoughts as food, celebrations, and exoticness, the most common were “Pretty women” and “*Tacofredag*”, the last one has become part a of a cultural characterization of Norway and Sweden.

Taco culture became very popular even though it's nothing like real tacos. It's more like a Tex-Mex food. They like it, it's positive and I don't know if it's the combination of Mexican food, the people, that attracts their attention and makes them very curious about the country, the people.

–Cris, Sweden

Despite the fact that the culture of tacos in Norway and Sweden connects Mexico with Norway and Sweden in a gastronomic way, the truth is that Norwegian and Swedish tacos have nothing to do with Mexican culture. As Cris mentioned, the relation of the *Tacofredag* ‘taco Friday’ is more connected to Tex-Mex, which implies to be more of a mix of U.S. American and Mexican cuisines, as the name implies (Ibarra-Cantú & Cheetham, 2021) which reflects to the “continuation of Mexico’s long tradition of mestizaje, mixing cultures” (Wheaton and Carroll, 2017 cited by Ibarra-Cantú & Cheetham, 2021, p.71). Cris also has an interesting take on this exotism that may be considered genuine, as “Mexican food” (tacos in Norway and Sweden) might help the acceptance of Mexican people in Scandinavia as she said:

Curiosity and the mentality of stereotypes lead towards something positive or negative like racism. This privilege that we, Mexicans, have is that the Swedes are generally interested in Mexican food, which is a key that we [Mexicans living in Sweden] are using and feel a little

more integrated. We can see it even in stores, the Mexican food aisles like in ICA [Supermarket in Sweden] are integrated, not like the Arab stores that are separate.
–Cris, Sweden.

Ibarra-Cantú & Cheetham (2021) cited Pilcher (2009) arguing that “is a worldwide misconception of this specific creolized food type as being typically Mexican” (p.71). In the case of the UK as Ibarra-Cantú & Cheetham (2021) exposed, “the context of global consumer culture” non-Mexicans consumers/societies believe that they are consuming authentic dishes (p.71).

However, it is still a positive stereotype that participants indicated had a positive impact on their acceptance even though participants expressed their disappointment on the lack of authenticity same results were shown in Ibarra-Cantú & Cheetham’s study in the UK.

Thus, the main problem observed with stereotypes, according to the female Mexican participants is that stereotypes only tell a portion of the truth. If we look at Mexico, Norwegians and Swedish society will be familiar with the preconceptions that cause them to believe that Mexicans, Mexico and Mexican gastronomy are in a specific way, good but dangerous, creating a whole image. The participants did acknowledge the disparities between how people are perceived and how the country is perceived. However, there is more to it, a lengthier story about the stereotypes that leaves out enormous and general facts. Regarding to these educated Mexican women that have caused surprise in society as mentioned, because of their individual agency, cultural capital, and economic capital.

Merelo (2018) came to the same conclusion, Participants also made strong statements on being Mexican in Sweden stating, “being a blessing and a curse” (p.231) establishing Mexican as a social category associated with both good and negative traits that affect or improve their roles in a Swedish social setting, as a result, this parallel to how the British thought about Indian women, which is filled with both attraction and negative preconceptions. According and agreeing with Merelo (2018) “people’s semiotic repertoires are in this respect of a fundamental ingredient not just to elucidate, but also to reconstructs one’s world” (p.242). The knowledge and experiences of the participants led to a better comprehension of racialization and exoticism, which appears to be a tool of a strategy to change the negative into a positive for improved recognition of their position in society as Modood (2013) claimed “arising out of the feelings of not being respected or of

lacking access to public space, it consists of counterposing 'positive' images against traditional or dominant stereotypes" (p.46).

5.6 Negotiating identity as immigrant or expat

These Mexican women were asked to reflect upon their position as individuals in society living in Norway or in Sweden. Five different options were given in order to give an idea of possible options: Mexicans living in Norway or Sweden, as Swedish or Norwegian, as internationals/foreigners, as immigrants and lastly, expats. If participants had any doubts understanding the concepts of any term, then it would of have been explain but all female participants claimed to have knowledge of the terminology. The following were some of the answers to the question:

Mexican, always, I have no doubt. When my students ask me if I am from Spain I always try to correct and present the differences, I consider myself Mexican, I have said it, I am not embarrassed. and when they speak badly about my country, I accepted that many things are bad but I try to emphasize that there are good things too and that is what I try to spread and I think that is also what makes me a very active person to represent what It really Mexico is.

–Priscila, Sweden

Priscilla's response indicates that she is proud to be Mexican despite people speaking badly about the country linked to Modood (2013) reflection of stereotypes mentioned in the previous theme, enhancing their "Mexicanness". Melina, also clearly identifies as Mexican explain her thoughts as follow:

I feel like a Mexican person who lives in Sweden, and I don't think it's not just what I feel. It's more like the way I interact willingly into society, and how I'm perceived because when I get to a place, I don't feel like I'm part of the culture, I just live here and now.

–Melina, Sweden

Stephanie, who is fluent in Norwegian, considers herself as Mexican and clearly identifies as 'expat,' linking the term to not being required to stay, as Brah (1996) points out, recent migration is establishing new diasporas and the possibility of return.

Expat but also Mexican living in Norway. I think that the truth might be that I would be considered as an immigrant for my situation, for several years is between each other. For the same reason that we are both young and the option of going to Mexico is still open, we have not closed it as a family. My children are not in school yet, so I do not feel obligated to stay.

–Stephanie, Norway

However, Hedda gives an example of how the terms immigrant and expats are racialized:

I understand the expat thing more of a “white people” thing. I say that I relate more with the first one, as a Mexican living in Sweden.

–Hedda, Sweden

Even though the participants identified themselves as Mexicans residing in Norway and Sweden, several of them had expat experience. However, as Hedda pointed out, the concept of an expat gives the image of not being able to be a part of it because it is predominantly a characteristic of white people coming from the United States this is theoretically related to claims made by Pavic (2015) and Steiner and Wanner (2019), according to which specific nationalities often grant persons fixed defined better migratory statuses. The participants agreed that it was more about privileges they enjoy the reason why there were not categorizing themselves as immigrants as other groups of people, but as Mexicans do not feel they can be classed in the same category as individuals from the western backgrounds as the U.S Americans. Leinonen (2012), made this distinction clear, were individuals from Western, Northern Europe or North America (U.S. and Canada) does not fit the mental imagery with the term immigrant (p. 218), despite the fact that Mexicans and U.S Americans display similar individual agency, cultural capital and economic capital. U.S. Americans will self-identify as expats and the majority population will agree with term due to their nationality, language, and dominant opinion of “whiteness”. On the other

hand, Mexicans will have the same characteristics, but negative preconceptions of Mexico and Mexican people usually carries derogatory connotations leading to inaccurate information.

This echoes to what Bengtsson, Strömblad & Bay (2010) said about immigrants in Norway being associated with the third world, dark skin, and working-class people (p.48), which may make it difficult for them to embrace the label and be viewed as expats in Scandinavia. The need of understanding the interdependence of racial and classed distinctions which are deeply rooted through cultural and historical, economical colonization based on exploitation and exclusion that has contributed to the construction to the idea of the superiority of the “white” (Nessi & Guedes, 2019, p. 3009).

The perception of expats as a positive immigration could be desired and a consideration of Mexicans’ main target to be identify as one, participants demonstrated to be actively working towards the deserved recognition of being a good group of Mexicans living in Norway and Sweden as they are assimilating the culture and were culturally and economically a match to the target society a step towards adopting the national standards. Then, is this a Mexican diaspora? Even if they do not express it specifically with the term, they identify as Mexicans rather than Mexican-Norwegian or Mexican-Swedish, indicating that they perceive themselves as part of a diaspora that perhaps will return to Mexico whereas other immigrants settle and do not pursue these goals. It’s interesting because, in terms of the transnationalism they want to have the best of both worlds, it might not be the question of which country but the privilege of having the characteristics of both while negotiating their identities. As a result, paths are not fixed, and it is possible to change the way women from non-western backgrounds experience transnational changes in their lives while maintaining their statuses.

There are also stereotypes that Mexico is underdeveloped, poor, chaotic, polluted third world country [...], with globalization, the reasons for emigrating or immigrating change, because before it was more for seeking asylum or refugee, they didn't just come because it's nice. So now there are more reasons to live here mainly, studies, research, work and that generates new dynamics and people have to integrate and it is interesting to see how these people feel receiving and arriving.

–Melina, Sweden

Bull (2020) explained that the lack of representation on Latin American countries in Scandinavia has been a factor that had affected the representation of countries as Mexico therefore the recognition of its people, as Melina, one of the participants, expressed that the majority of the population's thoughts about countries from the Global South are intrinsically related to third world countries which in this case, Melina was perceived as not be leaning towards that description, on the contrary it was often gather by the interviews that participants were aware of the non-recognition of Mexico's geographical location therefor the lack of awareness of the country's socioeconomical development. The distinction was that Mexican women see themselves more like westerns like people from the U.S. but the common preconception from the Norwegians and Swedish's understanding, Mexico is a country from the South (like Thailand and Russian) meaning the same as third world countries connotating; impoverished conditions. This interplay it's interesting to point out because of the nuances.

Mexico falls under the category of Newly Industrialized countries (NIC) category because is not a completely underdeveloped country but not completely develop. In cultural terms Mexico do belong to the Global South because it refers to cultural terms, while the Global North is integrated by North America (U.S. and Canada, Western and Northern Europe, and the 4 tigers of Asia (Hong Kong, South Korea Taiwan, Singapore). The term "global south" does not imply "third world" or "underdeveloped." Similarly, while Latin America is a cultural phrase, South America–geographical term– encompasses the entire continent from Colombia to Argentina. Mexico belongs to Latin America rather than South America. Further investigation into Central America should be considered, as they may have the similar issue.

Mexico is part of North America (De Haas, Castles & Miller, 2020), yet it is frequently depicted as a part of South America in academic and public discourse. The perspective is on the ambiguity that Mexico faces in terms of geographical positioning, and how this may affect the negotiation of identity. Because the situation of Mexican immigrants in Scandinavia appears to be less pessimistic as Andersson (2011) mentions about Latin American groups in comparison to other groups of people, should not be dismissed as less interesting to research, as the case of U.S. Americans, as Leinonen (2012) points out that “is a matter of concern for the usefulness that middle-class, white immigrants pose no problem to the receiving society” (p.212).

These Mexican women in Norway and Sweden are living in the construction of social tactics by living abroad, traveling, studying in a different language, and negotiating their own transnational reality or identity through cultural and economic capital exchange. Perhaps from this perception, there is a possibility of overcoming preconceptions and negative stereotypes that have been established over time, which may help to overcome the often thought of a rigid mentality against female migration from the Global South, limiting it to a lineal explanation that leads to social inequality. Participants' participation and information based on their personal experiences aided in showing a narrative of traditional imposed migration mentality, which implies that immigrants are from third-world countries and expats are from wealthy countries from the Global North. It's possible that, as a NIC country, Mexicans negotiate their own individual position as expats – as members of the developed world rather than fitting the idea of "poor immigrants."

5.7 Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to highlight the findings from female Mexicans' experiences in order to gain a better understanding of how they used cultural and economic capital to negotiate their transnational identities while living in Scandinavia. In addition, to comprehend how society influences preconceptions of this minority group. It's important to restate that this study targeted Female educated Mexicans living in Norway and Sweden that presented specific empirical data that it is not intended to generalize the situation of all Mexicans living in Scandinavia. Self-perceptions of educated, middle-class or elite class that participated in this study do guide different behavior and thereby affect the social and economic integration experiences (Engezell & Ichou, 2020, p.490).

In addition, the information presented was a reflection of semi-structure interviews where, Mexican slang, intonations, emotions were part of dissecting the information which included translations from Spanish to English. De Haas, Castles & Miller (2020) stated "language is not innocent but reflects largely unconscious biases or conscious choices" (De Haas, Castles & Miller, 2020, p. 31). This discussion was an effective strategy to combine participant experiences with theoretical perspectives that assisted in answering the questions of the study in the example of Mexican female migrants in Norway and Sweden.

6. Concluding Remarks

The aim of this thesis project was to explore the use of cultural capital and economic capital of Mexican women in Norway and Sweden to understand the negotiation of their transnational identity. As well as the exploration of middle-class female immigrants. This study carried out research on challenges that immigrants face to be recognized by self-merits in a homogenous society from the west. 5 themes were analyzed in accordance with participants' experiences and narratives as: *individual agency in a transnational relationship, language and education as cultural capital, social class as economic capital, racialization and exoticism and negotiating identity as expats or immigrants.*

As a result, self-identification in the context of society's overall perceptions of women from the Global South revealed a contrast between the influences of dependency and individual agency that exhibited the most significant variations. Similarly, immigrant settlements and prejudice in the case of Mexican women in a comparison established between the two largest groups of female immigrants in Norway and Sweden, Thai women and Russian women.

In addition, a clear comparison was made with people from the U.S. that showed major privileges based on nationality and cultural capital that revealed a closer compatibility to Female Mexican women migrating to Norway and Sweden. Hence, this comparison showed in findings the confirmation of racialization issues, as interesting implications for the case of Mexicans related to the western/white domination to the third world/dark-skinned dichotomy which frequently appear to be the main barrier to allow foreigner individuals to advance and be welcomed in core societies.

Established domination over migrant groups from the South often categorized as the same as third world countries, regardless of different characteristics as individual's agency, resulting in constant challenge of accurate self-identification as a transnational individual. Furthermore, societal misunderstandings and preconceptions of words such as female immigrant, third world, and Global South have had a significant impact on the acknowledgment of positive migration and deny proper Multicultural integration.

As Bourdieu indicated, this research has demonstrated how specific identity constructions as economic and cultural assets of Mexican women may be heavily impacted by capital. These distinctions that were presented in findings have influenced how Mexican women in Norway and Sweden identify themselves simply as *Mexicans living in Norway* or *Mexicans living in Sweden*. Because of their social status and immigration settlements, individuals did not identify with the term immigrant. While expat would be a more accurate term, the common understanding of it as west privilege for 'white' people doesn't really enable Mexicans to self-identify as one, despite the fact that many of their characteristics suggest otherwise. As a result, the experiences of participants frequently revealed the results of an implicit Mexican diaspora in Norway and Sweden, which may live as a somewhat more privileged minority of minorities who may return willingly and happily home, Mexico.

A suggestion for future study might focus on the recognition of diaspora in Norway and Sweden, which could reveal whether the term diaspora is more applicable in the case of Mexicans.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Facebook advertisement– Mexicans in Norway

MEXICANOS EN NORUEGA

INVESTIGACIÓN

ACADÉMICA

Busco a mexicanos interesados en participar en una investigación académica para poder culminar tesis de Maestría con el objetivo de estudiar los procesos de integración y cultura mexicana en Noruega.

Requisitos:

- Tener entre 18 y 50 años.
- Haber/ estar estudiado Universidad/Maestría/Doctorado en Noruega.
- Ser mexican@.



¡Envíame mensaje o comenta en esta publicación!

238878@usn.no
+47 91251212

Entrevistas serán realizadas en español vía zoom, teams, facetime, etc. Duración 45min.

Picture 1.
Facebook post- Mexicans living in Norway.

Appendix 2: Facebook advertisement– Mexicans in Sweden

MEXICANOS EN SUECIA

INVESTIGACIÓN

ACADÉMICA

Busco a mexicanos interesados en participar en una investigación académica para poder culminar tesis de Maestría con el objetivo de estudiar los procesos de integración y cultura mexicana en Suecia.

Requisitos:

- Tener entre 18 y 50 años.
- Haber/ estar estudiado Universidad/Maestría/Doctorado en Suecia.
- Ser mexicana.



¡Envíame mensaje o comenta en esta publicación!

238878@usn.no
+47 91251212

Entrevistas serán realizadas en español vía zoom, teams, facetime, etc. Duración 45min.

Picture 2.
Facebook post- Mexicans living in Sweden.

Annexes

Annex 1: Letter of consent – Mexicans living in Norway

Consent form for participants- Are you interested in taking part in the research project

”Mexican student mobility in Norway”

This is an inquiry about participation in a research project where the main purpose is to *Study the Mexican minority integration strategies in Norway*. In this letter we will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.

Purpose of the project

The purpose of the project is to study one of the many Latin American communities in Norway and its urge to be included in academia.

The project’s objectives are the following coding categories; integration strategies, stereotypes, culture and language.

This is a master’s thesis research project.

Who is responsible for the research project?

The University of South-eastern Norway is the institution responsible for the project.

Why are you being asked to participate?

You have been selected according to the criteria of the project. This has been a snowball process where Mexicans that have been studying in Norway have been asked to participate.

What does participation involve for you?

The Methods that will be used in this research project are this information letter, semi-structured interview where information as experience from the participants will be collected by being recorded electronically (only sound).

- *« If you choose to take part in the project, this will involve being interviewed (in person or via zoom) It will take approx. 45 minutes. The survey includes questions about (your experience living and studying in Norway such as integration strategies, stereotypes of a*

Mexican living in Norway, culture and language). Your answers will be recorded electronically» I will record the interview and will take notes».

There are two groups of participants, at the beginning of the interviews it's being said to each participant that they are part of one of them, 1. Mexicans in Norway & 2. Mexicans living in Sweden. Each group receives a separate information letter.

Participation is voluntary

Participation in the project is voluntary. If you chose to participate, **you can withdraw your consent at any time** without giving a reason. All information about you will then be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you choose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.

Your personal privacy – how we will store and use your personal data

We will only use your personal data for the purpose(s) specified in this information letter. We will process your personal data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act).

- *In connection with the institution responsible for the project my thesis supervisor will have access to your personal data.*
- *I will replace your name (if applicable) and contact details with a code. The list of names, contact details and respective codes will be stored separately from the rest of the collected data», you will store the data on a research server, locked away/encrypted, etc.*

If applicable, indicate:

- *the name of the data processor that will collect/work with/store data will be **Nettskejma-Diktafone***

Participants will be asked to be recognizable in publications or not, and to what extent. If applicable, personal information will be published such as name, age, field of education and place of living.

What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?

The project is scheduled to end June 2022. Any personal data will be privately stored in case of further research.

If the collected data will not be anonymised at the end of the project: the main purpose will be of further storage/use of personal data (verification, follow-up studies, archiving for future research), the personal data will be stored, and only the researcher will have access to it.

Your rights

So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:

- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

What gives us the right to process your personal data?

We will process your personal data based on your consent.

Based on an agreement with *University of South-eastern Norway*, NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with data protection legislation.

Where can I find out more?

If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:

- *University of South-eastern Norway* via *Christian Stokke* who is the supervisor of this *Master thesis project*.
- Data Protection: *Karla Jasmin Mata Santos* student at the *University of South-eastern Norway*
- NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS, by email: (personverntjenester@nsd.no) or by telephone: +47 53 21 15 00.

Yours sincerely,

Project Leader, Karla Jasmin Mata Santos

Supervisor, Christian Stokke

Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project “*Mexican student mobility in Norway*” and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

- to participate in *a semi-structured interview.*
- to participate in *online semi- structured interview – if applicable*
- *for my personal data to be processed outside the EU – if applicable*
- *for information about me/myself to be published in a way that I can be recognized (in case of giving consent of using participants real name)– if applicable*
- *for my personal data to be stored after the end of the project for (follow-up studies) – if applicable*

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, approx.

[June,2022]

(Signed by participant, date)

Annex 2: Letter of consent – Mexicans living in Sweden

Consent form for participants- Are you interested in taking part in the research project

“Mexican student mobility in Sweden”

This is an inquiry about participation in a research project where the main purpose is to *Study the Mexican minority integration strategies in Sweden*. In this letter we will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.

Purpose of the project

The purpose of the project is to study one of the many Latin American communities in Sweden and its urgency to be included in academia.

The project’s objectives are the following coding categories, integration strategies, stereotypes, culture and language.

This is a master’s thesis research project.

Who is responsible for the research project?

The University of South-eastern Norway is the institution responsible for the project.

Why are you being asked to participate?

You have been selected according to the criteria of the project. This has been a snowball process where Mexicans that have been studying in Sweden have been asked to participate.

What does participation involve for you?

The Methods that will be used in this research project are this information letter, semi-structured interview where information as experience from the participants will be collected by being recorded electronically (only sound).

- *« If you choose to take part in the project, this will involve being interviewed (in person or via zoom) It will take approx. 45 minutes. The survey includes questions about (your experience living and studying in Sweden such as integration strategies, stereotypes of a Mexican living in Sweden, culture and language). Your answers will be recorded electronically» I will record the interview and will take notes».*

There are two groups of participants, at the beginning of the interviews it's being said to each participant that they are part of one of them, 1. Mexicans in Norway & 2. Mexicans living in Sweden. Each group receives a separate information letter.

Participation is voluntary

Participation in the project is voluntary. If you chose to participate, **you can withdraw your consent at any time** without giving a reason. All information about you will then be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you choose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.

Your personal privacy – how we will store and use your personal data

We will only use your personal data for the purpose(s) specified in this information letter. We will process your personal data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act).

- *In connection with the institution responsible for the project my thesis supervisor will have access to your personal data.*
- *I will replace your name (if applicable) and contact details with a code. The list of names, contact details and respective codes will be stored separately from the rest of the collected data», you will store the data on a research server, locked away/encrypted, etc.*

If applicable, indicate:

- *the name of the data processor that will collect/work with/store data will be **Nettskejma-Diktafone***

Participants will be asked to be recognizable in publications or not, and to what extent. If applicable, personal information will be published such as name, age, field of education and place of living.

What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?

The project is scheduled to end June 2022. *Any personal data will be privately stored in case of further research.*

If the collected data will not be anonymized at the end of the project: the main purpose will be of further storage/use of personal data (verification, follow-up studies, archiving for future research), the personal data will be stored, and only the researcher will have access to it.



Your rights

So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:

- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

What gives us the right to process your personal data?

We will process your personal data based on your consent.

Based on an agreement with *University of South-eastern Norway*, NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with data protection legislation.

Where can I find out more?

If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:

- *University of South-eastern Norway via Christian Stokke who is the supervisor of this Master thesis project.*
- Data Protection: Karla Jasmin Mata Santos student at the *University of South-eastern Norway*
- NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS, by email: (personvertjenester@nsd.no) or by telephone: +47 53 21 15 00.

Yours sincerely,

Project Leader, Karla Jasmin Mata Santos

Supervisor, Christian Stokke

Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project “*Mexican student mobility in Sweden*” and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

- to participate in *a semi-structured interview*.
- to participate in *online semi- structured interview – if applicable*
- *for my personal data to be processed outside the EU – if applicable*
- *for information about me/myself to be published in a way that I can be recognized (in case of giving consent of using participants real name)– if applicable*
- *for my personal data to be stored after the end of the project for (follow-up studies) – if applicable*

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, approx.

[June,2022]

(Signed by participant, date)

Annex 3: Interview guide – Mexicans living in Norway- Spanish version

Versión en español (muestra de Noruega)

Está previsto que las entrevistas duren entre 45 y 1 hora.

*Pedir permiso para grabar la entrevista

*Explicar brevemente el tema y enfoque del estudio.

Información básica

Nombre:

¿Cuántos años tienes?

¿Cuántos años llevas viviendo en Noruega?

¿Por qué decidiste venir a estudiar a Noruega?

Integración

Red social

¿Qué tan grande es la parte de nacionales de origen/anfitrión/terceros países en su red aquí en Noruega (u otros países extranjeros en los que vivió)?

¿Con quién vives en Noruega?

¿Has trabajado alguna vez en Noruega?

¿Cómo te sientes viviendo aquí, te sientes respetado, adaptado e integrado en la sociedad?

Costumbres locales

¿Te encuentras asumiendo hábitos locales?

¿Te interesa la cultura noruega o en Noruega en general?

Opiniones sobre la integración

¿Cómo te identificas viviendo en Noruega (mexicano, sueco, expatriado, internacional, inmigrante)?

¿Te encuentras enfrentando cargas económicas? (tiene algún tipo de apoyo económico de; familia, becas, crédito, ahorros?)

Estereotipos

¿Cómo crees que los noruegos te perciben como mexicano? (experiencias específicas)

¿Cómo crees que los noruegos perciben a los mexicanos? (experiencias específicas)

Comida, música, bebidas, estilo de vida, mensajes de televisión.

Cultura

Adaptación

Cuéntame sobre tus experiencias sobre la adaptación a la cultura noruega. -Idioma-

¿Cómo ha sido tu experiencia adaptándote a la cultura noruega?

¿Crees que hay similitudes entre la cultura noruega y la cultura mexicana?

¿Crees que los mexicanos pueden mantener sus valores y hábitos culturales y aun así convertirse en parte de la sociedad noruega?

¿Cree que Noruega está preparada para una sociedad culturalmente diversa?

¿Te sientes Bienvenido a Noruega?

Annex 4: Interview guide – Mexicans living in Norway- English Version

English version (Norway sample)

The interviews are planned to take around 45-1 hour

*Ask for permission to tape record the interview

*There are no right or wrong answers! I am asking for experiences, opinions, and feelings *Explain briefly the topic and focus of the study

Basic information

Name:

How old are you?

How many years have you been living in Norway?

Why did you decide to come to study in Norway?

Integration

- **Social Network**

How big is the part of home/host/ third country nationals in your network here in Norway (or other foreign countries you lived in)?

Who do you live with in Norway?

Have you ever worked in Norway?

How do you feel about living here, do you feel respected, adapted, integrated in society?

- **Local customs**

Do you find yourself taking over local habits?

Are you interested in Norwegian culture or Norwegians in general?

- **Opinions about integration**

How would you identify yourself (Mexican, Norwegian, expat, international, immigrant,)?

Do you find yourself facing economic burdens? (Do you have any types of economical support from, family, scholarships, credit, savings?)

Stereotypes

- How do you think Norwegians perceive you as a Mexican? (Specific experiences)
How do you think Norwegians perceive you as a Mexican? (Specific experiences)
Food, music, drinks, lifestyle, television prompts.

Culture

- **Adaptation**

Tell me about your experiences about adapting into Norwegian culture. -Language-

How has your experience been adapting yourself in Norwegian culture?

Do you think there are similarities between Norwegian culture and Mexican culture?

Do you think Mexicans can keep their cultural value and habits?

and still become a part of Norwegian society?

Do you think Norway is prepared for a culturally diverse society? Do you feel

Welcome to Norway?

Annex 5: Interview guide – Mexicans living in Sweden – Spanish version.

Versión en español (muestra de Suecia)

Está previsto que las entrevistas duren entre 45 y 1 hora.

*Pida permiso para grabar la entrevista

*Explicar brevemente el tema y enfoque del estudio.

Información básica

Nombre:

¿Cuántos años tienes?

¿Cuántos años llevas viviendo en Suecia?

¿Por qué decidiste venir a estudiar a Suecia?

Integración

Red social

¿Qué tan grande es la parte de nacionales de origen/anfitrión/terceros países en su red aquí en

Suecia (u otros países extranjeros en los que vivió)?

¿Con quién vives en Suecia?

¿Has trabajado alguna vez en Suecia?

¿Cómo te sientes viviendo aquí, te sientes respetado, adaptado e integrado en la sociedad?

Costumbres locales

¿Te encuentras asumiendo hábitos locales?

¿Te interesa la cultura sueca o el sueco en general?

Opiniones sobre la integración

¿Cómo te identificas (mexicano, sueco, expatriado, internacional, inmigrante)?

¿Te encuentras enfrentando cargas económicas? (tiene algún tipo de apoyo económico de; familia, becas, crédito, ahorros?)

estereotipos

¿Cómo crees que los suecos te perciben como mexicano? (experiencias específicas)

¿Cómo crees que los suecos perciben a los mexicanos? (experiencias específicas)

Comida, música, bebidas, estilo de vida, mensajes de televisión.

Cultura

Adaptación

Cuéntame sobre tus experiencias sobre la adaptación a la cultura sueca. -Idioma-

¿Cómo ha sido tu experiencia adaptándote a la cultura sueca?

¿Crees que hay similitudes entre la cultura sueca y la cultura mexicana?

¿Crees que los mexicanos pueden mantener sus valores y hábitos culturales y aun así convertirse

en parte de la sociedad sueca?

¿Cree que Suecia está preparada para una sociedad culturalmente diversa?

¿Te sientes Bienvenido a Suecia?

Annex 6: Interview guide –Mexicans living in Sweden – English version.

English version (Sweden sample)

The interviews are planned to take around 45-1 hour

*Ask for permission to tape record the interview

*There are no right or wrong answers! I am asking for experiences, opinions, and feelings! *Briefly

Explain the topic and focus of the study

Basic information

Name:

How old are you?

How many years have you been living in Sweden?

Why did you decide to come to study in Sweden?

Integration

- **Social Network**

How big is the part of home/host/ third country nationals in your network here in Sweden (or other foreign countries you lived in)?

Who do you live with in Sweden?

Have you ever worked in Sweden?

How do you feel about living here, do you feel respected, adapted, integrated in society?

- **Local customs**

Do you find yourself taking over local habits?

Are you interested in Swedish culture or Swedish in general?

- **Opinions about integration**

How would you identify yourself (Mexican, Swedish, expat, international, immigrant,)?

Do you find yourself facing economic burdens? (Do you have any types of economical support from; family, scholarships, credit, savings?)

Stereotypes

- How do you think Swedes perceive you as a Mexican? (Specific experiences)
How do you think Swedes perceive you as a Mexican? (Specific experiences)
Food, music, drinks, lifestyle, television prompts.

Culture

- **Adaptation**

Tell me about your experiences about adapting into Swedish culture. -Language-

How has your experience been adapting yourself in Swedish culture?

Do you think there are similarities between Swedish culture and Mexican culture?

Do you think Mexicans can keep their cultural values and habits and still become a part of Swedish society?

Do you think Sweden is prepared for a culturally diverse society?

Do you feel Welcome to Sweden?