Education and Labor Market Integration
The Role of Formal Education in the Process of Ensuring a Place in the Occupational Structure for Natives & Immigrants

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Introduction

One of the key questions in present society concerns the integration of immigrants. In the governmental proposal of 1997/98:16, on Swedish integration policy, it is stated that the goal is equal rights and equal opportunities for all irrespective of the ethnic and cultural background of the individual. Besides this, it is stated that in order to reach this goal it is fundamental that individuals can sustain themselves and be a part of the labor market. Hence, in order to achieve equality between immigrants and natives, participation within the labor market is of utmost importance.

The significance of these questions is not only due to the fact that Sweden has become a country of immigration. It is also due to economic trends that have affected most West European countries, including changes in the economy, the organization of labor, changes in immigration patterns and the level of education (Lundh & Ohlsson, 1999; Castles & Miller, 2003; Zimmermann, 2005). These changes have led to a state of affairs in which three issues basically govern the immigrant’s labor market situation.

The first issue is that in recent decades immigrants have had a substantially lower employment rate compared to natives; in 2003 this gap was 20 percentage points of the population between 16 and 64 years of age. This means that immigrants experiencing difficulties in the process of obtaining employment (see e.g. Åslund et al, 2006; Bevelander, 2000; Hjerm 2002, 2004). The second issue is that when immigrants do get a job it is often at a lower level than natives and at a lower level relative to their formal education (see e.g. Schierup & Paulson, 1994; Ekberg & Rooth 2004). The third issue is that when immigrants get a job their salary is lower than that of natives (see e.g. Martinsson, 1998; Rooth and Åslund, 2006). While these are general patterns for the immigrated population as a whole, there are substantial differences between different immigrant groups, where some groups experience more difficulties than others.

Aim & Research Questions

This thesis takes a closer look at two of the issues that immigrants face on the labor market, with a special interest in human capital factors, especially formal education. The overarching goal of the thesis is to examine the effect of human capital in the form of formal education – both the length and kind – on the labor market in Sweden. In other words, it is the
relationship between education and (paid) work that is the scope of this thesis. A distinction
is made between general and vocational education on the one hand, and between different
educational levels on the other.

In addition to this introductory chapter, the thesis consists of two different articles
that answer different questions concerning labor market integration. The first article, The
Importance of Where and What, is a study of natives and nine different immigrant groups in
Sweden and is concerned with the first of the above discussed problems. This article answers
the following questions:

- Controlling for human capital characteristics, can a difference in the employment
  acquisition between immigrant and native men and women in Sweden in 2003 be
determined?
- Can the difference in the employment acquisition of immigrants in Sweden be
  explained by differences in the kind of education – general or vocational –
obtained?
- Can the difference in the employment acquisition of immigrants in Sweden be
  explained by where the education – in home or host country – is obtained?

The second article, Occupational Match, is concerned with the second of the above discussed
problems and is a study of those individuals who have an employment and the skill level of
the employment. In a perspective of under and over education the following questions are
posed in the article:

- Are there differences in the match between the job level and the educational level
  between natives and nine selected immigrant groups in Sweden?
- Can the match/mismatch of the job level be explained by what type of education –
general and vocational – is obtained?
- Which factors, demographic and immigrant specific have an influence on the
  match/mismatch between education and skill level of the employment?
Theoretical Context

As mentioned above the economy has been subject to different structural changes in recent decades that have affected the labor market. The organization of labor has changed from a Fordist treadmill-based organization to a Post-Fordist organization based on teams, which has led to a higher demand for communicative skills and the disappearance of the traditional “first job” opportunities for both youth and immigrants. At the same time, the service sector has grown in importance and the industrial sector’s relative part in the economy has declined. A concise way of describing the consequences of these changes would be to say that the demand for labor with a higher general competence (e.g. language skills) and higher education (human capital) has increased (Bell, 1999; Bevelander, 2000; Broomé et al 1996; Bevelander, 2000; Lundh, 2002).

Like in many other OECD-countries a change has occurred in the country of origin of immigrants who come to Sweden. At the same time, the situation for immigrants on the labor market has gradually got worse since the oil crisis (Lundh & Ohlsson, 1999). International research has indicated that the decline in economic status of immigrants who came in the 1980s and onwards is highly correlated with changes in the "quality" of the immigrants (Borjas, 1985, 1987, 1989). More immigrants come from developing countries than industrialized countries and are generally less skilled and less successful in the host countries. The increase in the proportion of family and refugee immigration and the decrease in the proportion of independent immigrants has changed the average level of positive self-selection of the total and newly arrived immigrant population. The new immigrant groups are no longer supposed to be selected on human capital/employability criteria, and might be expected to do less well on average in the labor market compared to independent immigrants (Wright & Maxim, 1993).

These changes actualize many questions for the modern welfare state, including Sweden. Castle & Miller (2003) argue that one of the most important questions is: “What variations are there in employment patterns according to such criteria as ethnic background, gender, recentness of arrival, type of migration, legal status, education and training?” (Castle & Miller, 2003:178). This is why I am studying the labor market situation for a selected number of immigrant groups, their differences in educational levels and their labor market situation.
Labor Market Integration

As stated in the introduction, the goal of Swedish integration policy is equal rights and equal opportunities for all irrespective of an individual’s ethnic and cultural background. In order to reach this goal labor market participation is highly significant.

In this context comments about integration as a concept are helpful. Diaz (1993) defines integration as a condition in which immigrants reach part or complete equality with natives in different kinds of social relations, such as in working life, living conditions and politics (see also Popoola, 2002). Moreover, Diaz’s concept of integration is a two-step model with seven different integrational dimensions. The primary step of integration includes communicative, structural (economic) and social integration, and the secondary step includes residential, family, political and personal integration (Diaz, 1993). This also means that in both Diaz’s concept of integration and Swedish integration policy it is the economic or structural integration and ensuring a place in the occupational structure that is of utmost importance. This is the reason for defining work as paid work, even though this definition have been criticized as being a too narrow concept (see e.g. Daniels, 1987). Firstly, it is the process of getting paid work that is interesting and secondly, the process of getting a job at a level that accords with the level of education.

In the process of ensuring a place in the occupational structure, human capital is a key factor. In human capital theory, formal education, labor market experience and on-the-job-training are regarded as investments that increase the human capital of the individual (Becker, 1962; Schultz, 1961). In this thesis one aspect of human capital is of particular interest, namely (formal) education. By education I mean the education that take place in the formal school system – private and public – and other types of education like adult education that gives an individual a formal educational degree in the educational registers. Despite being a relatively broad concept it does omit a number of things. Bills (2004) uses a similar definition of education and notes that education “is not the same as ‘learning’. People can and often do attend school without necessarily learning” (Bills, 2004: 3). The concept also leaves out what people learn through work experience, the family, the media, life experience and so on. In short, it is the formal educational level that is of interest, especially as this is a key element in the process of acquiring a job. Today almost every type of employment requires some kind of formal education or educational degree and signals some kind of human capital “level” that can be used to allocate the individual to a job opportunity and to the “right” job level in the occupational structure.
In the following articles three educational distinctions are made between different educational levels, between Swedish obtained and foreign obtained education and between general and vocational education.

**Swedish & Foreign Education**

When it comes to the amount of human capital, the relationship to work seems at a first glance to be quite straightforward. Those with the most human capital, i.e. the ones with the highest educational degrees, obtain a job and a job at a higher level more easily than those with less human capital and lower educational degrees. This means that the more human capital an individual possesses, the easier it is to be included in the labor market, both for natives and immigrants (Chiswick, 1978).

For immigrants in particular we have to distinguish between schooling that took place before and after migration (Chiswick & Miller, 2007). This means that when an individual moves to Sweden his or her skills, competence and education needs to be recognized. In cases of a regulated occupation or profession, like those found in areas such as medicine, healthcare, shipping, aviation and education, the individual needs to have his or her qualifications recognized by the relevant authorities. For example, in medicine the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare is responsible for this. In cases where occupations are unregulated, the relevant trade organization often sets some kind of standard with regard to what is needed in order to work in the particular trade or occupation (Tema Nord, 2004).

When it comes to university education, The National Agency for Services to Universities and University Colleges (VHS) both recognizes and evaluates a general or unregulated foreign university education. Secondary education is recognized by the decision-making board of the local secondary school or nearest adult education centre (Tema Nord, 2004). In general, two theoretical points have been made when it comes to the distinction between Swedish and foreign education: the transferability of human capital and signaling problems on the labor market.

Chiswick and DebBurman (2003) make a distinction between international transferable skills and origin specific skills in education: “The more general the skills acquired through schooling in the origin, the greater transferability to the destination and hence the smaller the decline in value of skills upon migration” (Chiswick & DebBurman, 2003:6). When it comes to immigrants this means that their skills and knowledge, i.e. their human capital, are not perfectly transferable to a new country and therefore suggests that, on
arrival, they are expected to be less productive. In this respect they experience a higher labor market turnover and a lower employment rate relative to natives, depending on the amount of international transferable skills they acquired in their education before the actual migration.

Immigrants’ moves occur at various stages of their life cycle. Some move to other countries as children following parents, while many move during the age of employment. Those who move in childhood or youth obtain some or all of their formal education in the host country. In other words, the younger the age of arrival the more host country specific formal and informal skills will be obtained, thus increasing their chances of obtaining a position in the occupational structure. Those who move at a post-educational age, on the other hand, and obtained all their education in the home country, are reliant on the proportion of internationally transferable components in their education. Over time, however, immigrants either directly or indirectly invest in host-country-specific human capital, and it is expected that this “capital exchange process” will reduce the initial gap in employment integration between immigrants and natives.

When an individual has obtained employment the question of occupational level arises. In the human capital perspective, over and under education can be a deliberate choice of the worker, where the worker uses other types of human capital than formal education. This means that, for example, work experience could compensate for the lack of education. With regard to the immigrant labor market, Chiswick and Miller argue that as formal education is easier to transfer than work experience over education is more common among immigrant groups, but that this over education decreases with time.

In the light of human capital theory, under education among immigrants could be explained by there being a positive selection in the migration process and that it is highly motivated individuals that migrate and thereby compensate their lack of formal education with motivation. This under education is “permanent” and should not change with the duration of residence (Chiswick and Miller, 2007).

Over and under education among immigrants depends on the amount of internationally transferable components in a person’s education. Those who have an education with a small amount of internationally transferable component in their education should be more over-educated than those with a larger amount. Those with a high amount of internationally transferable components should show a higher match and also be more under-educated than those with fewer of internationally transferable components in their education.

Closely connected to human capital theory is signaling. The increased importance of a relatively higher level of education for inclusion in the labor market is
assumed to affect potential employers’ uncertainties about education obtained abroad and can be seen as a signaling problem. The basic assumption behind labor market signaling is that there is a situation of asymmetric information in the hiring process. This means that one party (the better informed potential employee) has to signal information about his or her productivity to the other party (the poorly informed potential employer). Since high education signals high productivity, one way for the potential employee to signal that he or she is a good employee with high productivity is to invest in education (Spence, 1973). In schooling that has taken place after migration, i.e. in the host country, signaling the potential productivity of the individual causes few problems, since it is expected that employers are familiar with the schooling system and its output. As indicated earlier, if information about pre-migration education is less easily available to the employer, immigrants can experience difficulties in obtaining employment.

The signaling problem could also affect the position within the occupational structure. If employers have problems with interpreting the signals from education obtained prior to immigration, over education arises, especially during the first period of stay in the new country. Over education due to signaling problems should diminish with the length of stay in the new country, however (Chiswick and Miller, 2007).

General & Vocational Education

In the two articles a distinction is made between vocational education and general education. The reason for this is, as previously discussed, that the more general the education is the easier it becomes to transfer it to another country due to the higher international transferable component.

Vocational education or training – *Yrkesutbildning* in Swedish – is often defined as “education aiming to give the students knowledge that is wanted in the labor market” (Olofsson, 2000:17). Using this rather broad definition there are three main ways of obtaining vocational education in Sweden: through the public school system, through courses in schools arranged by companies or other interested parties, and by obtaining an apprenticeship with a particular company. Vocational education also includes adult vocational education and vocational courses administrated by the Labor Market Board as labor market policy measures. As this definition is somewhat broad I have narrowed it down by using Statistics Sweden’s definition of vocational education. This definition states that vocational education at the secondary level is those educational programs where the students
receive vocational and practical training. General education at the secondary level is theoretical education that prepares for entry to university studies. At the university level educational programs that are oriented towards a specific vocation (profession) are counted as vocational education. In short, vocational education is where students obtain some kind of legitimation or certificate, while general education is where the student obtains a general degree such as Bachelor or Master’s degree (SUN 2000, Statistics Sweden).

As already indicated in the section about Swedish and foreign education, Chiswick and DebBurman (2003) argue that the more general the education is the more internationally transferable components it has. According to this line of argument, general education should be more easily transferable than vocational education. Without revealing too many of the findings included in the articles the indication is that it is the other way around, i.e. that vocational education seems to be more easily transferable than general education. In line with these findings vocational education seems have a larger internationally transferable component compared to general education.

There is, however, an alternative way of explaining the findings in the articles – and that is by signaling. Vocational education could be a signal that is easier to interpret for the employer, i.e. a carpenter is a carpenter regardless of where he or she comes from.

The Relationship between Education & Work

In the above sections I have discussed education from different perspectives, the length of the education, where the education is obtained, what kind of education, the connection between education and human capital and the connection between education and signaling. In all these perspectives the relationship between education and work is the most important.

In making concluding remarks about the relationship between education and work I discuss two researchers in particular, Mark Blaug and David Bills, both of whom give a theoretical account of this relationship.

Mark Blaug (1972) gives three different possible interpretations of the relationship between education and work. The first interpretation is the “economic”, which means that better educated individuals secure a place in the occupational structure more easily because “education imparts vocationally useful skills that are in scarce supply” (Blaug, 1972:54).

1 Blaug discusses the correlation between education and earnings, although the discussion can also be applied to the connection between education and securing a place in the occupational structure.
This is the traditional human capital interpretation, mostly put forward by economists. The relationship between education and work in human capital theory is, although seldom explicitly expressed, a meritocratic relationship. Meritocracy\(^2\) is, at its simplest, a theory that describes a society in which individuals are rewarded on the basis of their merits and that systems are structured in a way that allows this to happen, which means that the more merited get the highest positions in society. In the meritocratic society inherited markers such as race or ethnicity, and privilege bases like inheritance, property or social networks, are of little or no importance for an individual’s economic success (Bills, 2004:39) and instead it is merit that defines the economic success of an individual. In other words, it is achieved properties and not ascribed properties that are important for the economic success of the individual. This means that, in a meritocratic society, the individuals with the most human capital (in this case formal education) have more chance of gaining a foothold in the labor market and getting the best jobs in the occupational structure.

The second interpretation is the “sociological” explanation, which holds that higher educated individuals obtain jobs more easily “because length of schooling is itself correlated with social class origins or because education disseminates definite social values which are prized by the ruling elite of a society” (Westoby, 1972:463).

In this version of the relationship between education and work, what is learned in school has little or nothing to do with what is needed in order to obtain or hold down a job in the labor market. The education that an individual has obtained is thus “only” a signal to the employer of the individual’s productivity (Broomé et al, 1996).

The third interpretation according to Blaug is the “psychological”, which holds that “education merely selects people in accordance with their abilities” (Blaug, 1972:54). This means that people who are more able obtain a longer education and hence, obtain a job more easily than less able individuals (Westoby, 1972).

In this version of the relationship between education and work, education functions as a filter or sorting device. As discussed above, in connection with signaling theory education has nothing to do with what is needed in the labor market. Education merely sorts the most able individuals from the less able, in that the more able individuals will obtain the longest (hardest/most prestigious) education.

Both signaling theory and filter/sorting theory are similar to the credentialist perspective. According to Bills (2004), the credentialist version of the relationship between

\(^2\) Has its roots in the classic work *The Rise of Meritocracy*, written by Mikael Young and published in 1959.
education and work holds that “educational credentials, which are virtually incontrovertible markers of merit in the meritocracy model, are little more than arbitrary and exclusionary means of preserving socioeconomic advantage across generation and socioeconomic groups” (Bills, 2004:48).

In the light of this it is important to note some of the results detailed in the articles. In the articles, as well as in previous research, there are indications that foreign obtained education is of less value than Swedish education, which means that there is some kind of problem in the exchange process of education or the translation process of the signal. What these problems are and what exactly happens in the exchange process are not addressed in this thesis.

The second note is that there is a difference between general and vocational education. Contrary to previous research, this difference means that vocational education gives a higher premium in the labor market compared to general education.

This means that no matter whether we talk about the meritocratic human capital perspective or the credentialist signal/sorting perspective, different education seems to have a different value in the labor market. Whether this is due to differences in what is learned in education (human capital explanation) or whether different people acquire different education (signaling/sorting explanation) are not addressed in this thesis. Before discussing ways of developing the analysis I provide a summarized account of the two articles hitherto mentioned.
Summary of Two Articles

It is now time to turn attention to the two articles included in this thesis. A brief summary of both articles is presented below. The summaries are followed by a concluding discussion and a short presentation of how to develop this thesis further.

The Importance of Where and What – The effect of home country versus host country and general versus vocational education on the employment acquisition of immigrants in Sweden

This article investigates the effects of education on the chances of natives and nine selected immigrant groups getting a job. Controlling for human capital characteristics, the article investigates whether there is a difference in employment acquisition between immigrant and natives, and whether this difference can be explained by differences in educational levels, the kind of education – vocational and general – and where the education is obtained.

The article takes human capital theory as a point of departure (Becker, 1962; Schultz, 1961) and focuses specifically on education. The problem with studies that employ education in the analysis is that they often just take the educational level into consideration. They sometimes also take the educational field into consideration, as in Berggren & Omarson, (2001) and Rooth & Åslund (2006), although the kind of education is seldom employed in analyses of employment acquisition. Also, the kind of education is of utmost importance, Chiswick argues that education consists of two different components, one that is internationally transferrable and one that is country specific (Chiswick & Miller, 2007; Chiswick & DebBurman, 2003), and that the share of these differ between educational levels and kinds of education, where education at higher levels and more general education have a higher share of the international transferable component. In this article we distinguish between general and vocational education; general education being education that does not lead to a profession and vocational education being education that leads to a specific profession, like a carpenter or doctor.

Using statistics from Statistics Sweden and the LOUISE database, a sample consisting of males and females between 25 and 60 years of age, born in Sweden, Poland, Rumania, Yugoslavia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Chile, Germany, Iran, Iraq and Lebanon was drawn for the year 2003. The analysis starts with a presentation of some descriptive statistics. A logistic regression model is created where the chances of obtaining an
employment is measured controlling for standard independent variables like country of birth, age, marital status, education – both level and kind and years since migration. Three different regressions are made for males and females respectively: the first regression is the base regression, the second regression includes interaction effects between country of birth and education and the third regression includes interaction effects between age at migration and education.

From the analysis it can be concluded that, first and foremost, there are large differences in education between the different studied groups both with regard to level and kind of education. Second, there is a significant difference in the employment rates between natives and the selected immigrant groups even when controlling for human capital (education) and demographic characteristics both for the male and female population.

Third, it can be concluded, as in many other studies, that the educational level is of utmost importance for employment acquisition. Generally speaking higher education gives higher employment rates. But this is not the whole truth, however. By distinguishing between general and vocational education it is possible to give a more detailed picture of the relationship between education and employment acquisition. This leads us to the fourth important conclusion, which is that not only is the educational level of importance for employment acquisition, but also the kind of education, especially at university level where professional (vocational) education gives a high premium relative to general university education. The fact that general university education gives a small premium in the employment acquisition that is only slightly higher than compulsory education is valid for both natives and immigrants.

The general conclusion from the article is that, irrespective of place of birth, individuals with a professional university education and vocational education have less trouble finding work in a relatively strong regulated labor market like that in Sweden. Formal degrees signal an easier validation both formally to labor market institutions and informally to employers. This facilitates labor market inclusion for all individuals with this kind of education. Where this vocational and professional education was obtained does not seem to be particularly important. Individuals with a more general education at all levels seem to have a disadvantage in this respect. Given the type of labor market, more focused immigration policies that take the type of education into account could be more successful.
Occupational Match – Over and under education among immigrants in the Swedish labor market

This article is concerned with over and under education among the employed part of the population. The main question is whether the immigrant population is over or under-educated in relation to the native population, or in other words, whether the immigrant population is employed at a level that accords with their educational level or not. A comparison with the native population is done separately for males and females.

A sample consisting of the employed population between 25 and 60 years of age, born in Sweden, Rumania, Poland, Yugoslavia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Chile, Germany, Iraq, Iran and Lebanon is drawn from the year 2003. In the analysis a distinction is made not only between different levels of education but also between different kinds of education like general and vocational education.

With human capital theory, signaling and screening theories as a point of departure, the match and the mismatch between education and the level of education is measured. In general three different methods are available for measuring the match and over/under education: Workers Self Assessment (WSA), Job Analysis (JA) and Realized Match (RM). Two of these methods are employed in the article, namely JA and RM. WSA is not employed due a lack of the relevant data.

The JA is conducted by combining the Swedish educational classification SUN 2000 with the Swedish occupational classification SSYK 96. By doing so we obtain an analysis that is both objective and formal (Hartog, 2000). The RM analysis is made by calculating the mean and standard deviation for every occupational category in SSYK 96. RM is a measure of the labor market condition and hiring conditions (Hartog, 2000). By using both methods in the analysis we are able to get a more formal and objective analysis, as well as an analysis of the hiring standard and labor market condition.

In addition to the descriptive statistics, a logistic regression model is created where the odds of being employed at a level that matches the education the odds of being employed at a level that is lower than the education are calculated while controlling for standard independent variables like age, country of birth, marital status, years since immigration and kind of education. Separate regressions are made for males and females as well as for Job Analysis and Realized Match. A total of eight different regressions are made in the article.
The main conclusions that can be drawn from the study are as follows. First, there is a considerable difference between vocational and general education, in that individuals with vocational education have a higher proportion of matched individuals both among the native and the studied immigrated populations. On the other hand, vocational education has low levels of under-educated individuals and general education has lower proportions of matched individuals and higher levels of under-educated individuals. On the one hand this means that it is easier for the vocationally educated population to get a job at a matching level, while on the other it is difficult to advance past this educational level. For the generally educated population the situation is reversed.

Second, it is essential to differentiate between the different immigrant groups with regard to, for example, differing educational levels between groups. However, evidence from this study supports previous research findings that the immigrated population has a lower proportion of matched individuals and a higher proportion of over-educated individuals, but that the results differ between the various immigrant groups.

The third important conclusion from the study is that when looking at differences between the male and female population, it is important to distinguish between the native population and different immigrant populations, since different groups show different patterns between males and females with regard to match and mismatch.

The fourth and final conclusion is that the results of the analysis differ between the two used methods, Job Analysis and Realized Match. The general picture is that JA gives lower proportions of matched individuals than RM. One way of interpreting this is that the general hiring standards in the Swedish labor market are more “inclusive” than the formal requirements displayed in JA. On the other hand, the JA method is based on classification standards that sometimes become outdated.
The Next Step

In order to develop the analysis towards a doctoral thesis I conclude this introductory chapter with some remarks about possible directions in which the discussion could be developed. Here the idea is to include one or two more articles in the thesis and to develop the theoretical discussion in the introductory chapter. What, then, will the new article or articles investigate?

As we have seen in the above discussion, different kind of education or human capital is important for the individual’s place in the occupational structure. We have also seen that different kinds of education send different kinds of signals to employers. Regardless of whether it is human capital that must be transformed, exchanged or upgraded, or whether it is signals that need to be translated into readable signals for the employer, one area in particular is under researched today. This area relates to the transformation, exchange or upgrading of human capital and the translation of signals so that these work to advantage in the Swedish labor market. As discussed above, concepts like recognition, valuation or validation of foreign obtained education is of utmost importance if the individual is to obtain a place in the occupational structure.

I see a study of the process of having education valuated or validated as a logical step to advancing the discussion in the thesis. This could be done by an analysis of institutions that valuate, validate or translate education and educational signals in Sweden today. Examples of institutions of this kind include the validation centre run by the City of Malmö that validates education up to secondary level, and “Aspirantutbildningen” (an educational program for foreign academics aiming to bridging the gap to the Swedish labor market) run by Malmö University.

One way of constructing this kind of study would be to apply the metaphor of exchange office to those kinds of institutions. Based on human capital theory, this kind of study would be a study of what happens in the exchange office. What processes are in play when an individual comes to the exchange office and change their human capital to a currency that works in Sweden? What kind of capital does a person have when he or she walks away from the exchange office? What are the exchange rates and exchange fees for exchanging capital to a workable currency?

In constructing the study in this way I am suggesting that human capital functions in the same way as monetary capital. For example, if you want to purchase something in a Swedish store it is much easier to do so if you have Swedish currency. Some
Swedish stores do accept Euros or Dollars, but do not always accept other currencies. If you have foreign currency you are often forced to visit an exchange office or bank before visiting the store. A similar situation arises with human capital, in that you are often forced to go to an exchange office in order to get something out of your human capital. In this context, exchange offices could include language learning institutions, validation and assessment centers and complementary education like Aspirantutbildningen. Interesting questions here include what kind of capital do the student’s exchange, what kind of capital do they get, and what are the exchange fees?

A core concept used in education is validation (for a discussion of validation see Andersson & Fejes, 2005). In short, validation means that the competence and knowledge a person possesses is made visible through the validation process. Two validation models are available: the “system changing” and the “system adapted” model. The system changing model focuses on the knowledge that an individual possesses and with which he or she tries to change the system. The system adapted model takes the knowledge wanted by the labor market as a point of departure and tries to match the individual against this (Andersson et al, 2003). When it comes to immigrants, the consequence is often that validation becomes an instrument of selection. It then not only becomes a question of who is validated, but also which vocations and crafts are validated. In other words, validation can be said to create a segregated labor market, but can also mean that the validated person acquires social capital in the form of networks on the labor market (Andersson et al 2005). In addition to research on validation, research that connects to other form of capital, like social capital (Lin, 2001), symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1986) and symbolic capital in connection with immigrants’ educational strategies (Moldenhawer, 2005) should be of interest.
Literature


