

Högskolan Dalarna

Introduction to Swedish Culture and Society

Immigration in Sweden

Professor: Lars Båtefalk

Author: Liu, Mei-Sin

Date: 17/10/2015

Contents:

Introduction.....	3
History of Immigration in Sweden.....	3
How is the Situation of Immigration Today.....	5
The Negative Aspects of Immigration.....	6
The Positive Aspects of Immigration.....	7
Participation of Immigration in Society.....	8
Living Condition in Sweden.....	8
Conclusion.....	9
Reference.....	10

Introduction:

The purpose of this essay is to see why people come to Sweden and see what impacts of the immigration that has led to the Swedish society. I will focus on the aspect of earlier immigrants in Sweden, but also mention about recent immigrants in Sweden. From the past to now, immigration in Sweden has both negative and positive effects on Swedish society. In this text, I will also mention about the living conditions and participation of immigration in Swedish society. In addition, I will present some ideas about immigration which are according to various public pages, interviews and books which describe multiculturalism and immigration.

History of Immigration in Sweden

To start with the history of immigration in Sweden, Sweden already had the earliest immigration during the age of 1500's, and the first generation of immigrants to Sweden was German merchants and craftsmen. The reason for them to come to Sweden on the grounds is to buy the skills and knowledge in a specific area from other countries to Sweden. This generation of immigrants has contributed an important part of Swedish politics, economy, trade and industry. ¹

During the age of 1600's, Sweden was known as a great power of immigration. Upon this time, many Dutch and the Scots immigrated to Sweden. This was important for immigration to Sweden because there was a great need for knowledge and labor, and it was also important to immigrants who came to Sweden during that time for contributing something to Swedish society. There were Christians, capitalists, entrepreneurs and were no Catholics or Jews. This generation of immigrants has been

¹ The Swedish Migration Board-Historically

very important for the Swedish agricultural history. ²

During the period of 1850-1930 century there was an exodus in Sweden, and the reason for those people who left Sweden was to find new job opportunities in other countries. There were about 1.2 million Swedes who had left Sweden now and the futures of immigrants were mostly Swedes who wanted to return. ³

After the exodus in Sweden, the immigration of Sweden can be divided into three phases.

1. 1945- 1960 the refugees from the Baltic countries after the war and the crisis there.
2. 1969-1970 labor immigration, Sweden needed help in the public sector, however, for those people who wanted to immigrate to Sweden, had to have work permits or residence permits and accommodation before coming to Sweden.
3. 1980 until today began taking in immigrants from outside Europe, in the 80s, it brought many asylum seekers from Iran, Chile, Lebanon, Poland and Turkey. And after the collapse of Yugoslavia in the 90's, there came many people from those countries.

In short, immigration has increased by about 1 million since World War II. ⁴

² SCB description of the integration of Sweden

³ The Swedish Migration Board-Historically

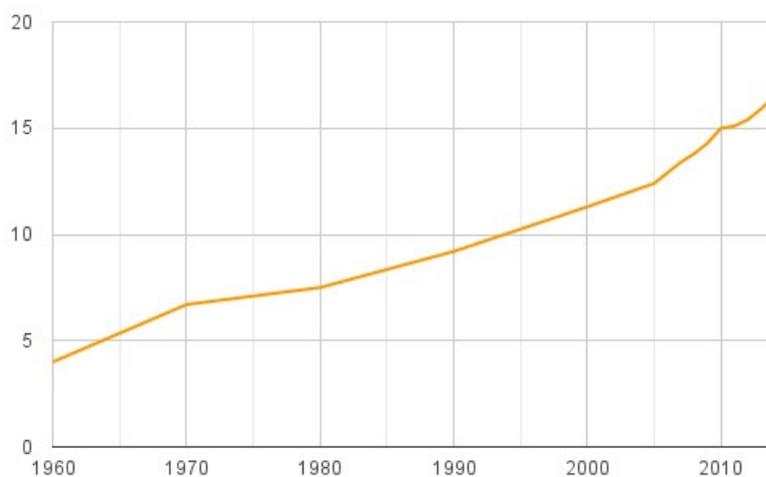
⁴ The Swedish Migration Board-Historically

How is the Situation of Immigration Today?

In 2014, there were 1.6 million of Sweden's population were born abroad, which is equivalent to over 16 percent. The most common countries of citizenship for people who immigrated the same year, Syria was followed by re-immigrant Swedish citizen. Besides, the most common emigration countries were Norway, Denmark and the UK.⁵

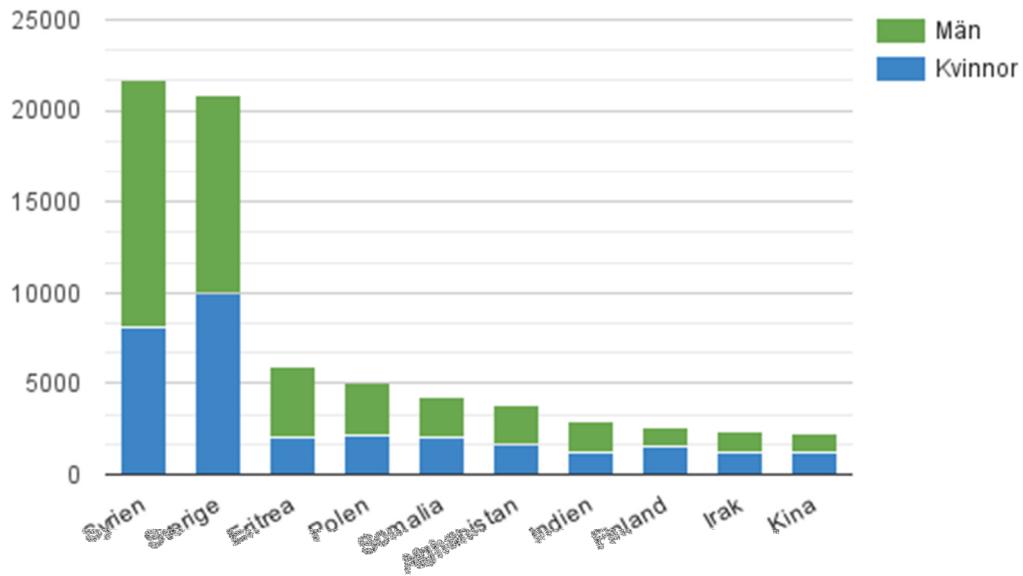
The refugee crisis in Syria has made the number of people seeking asylum in Sweden these days and which has reached at historically high levels. Until August 2015, nearly 50,000 people applied for asylum in Sweden, which are 4,000 more applications than the same period from last year.

Moreover, 6 percent of Sweden's population was born abroad, which corresponds to just over 1.6 million people, and about half of the entire foreign-born citizen originally from European countries. Finland has been the most common country of birth for foreign-born in Sweden for a long time. The second most common country of birth for foreign-born in Sweden today is Iraq, and followed by Poland.



Proportion of foreign-born population of Sweden, 1960-2014

⁵ SCB Foreign born in the realm of birth, age and gender



Source: Statistics Sweden immigrations by country of citizenship, sex and year 2014

The Negative Aspects of Immigration

The downside of immigration is that sometimes there may be so-called, culture clash, these are also called "contradictions" between "immigrant communities", which can bring or cause some tension and disquiet in some areas. The conflicts they have are often prejudices that are not passed any form of the facts.⁶

According to the text from Christofer Edling and Fredrik Liljeros, they use the term of "social shift" in the book, and they also write about how important it is to have an equal country for not getting a so-called social shift in a divided society. Moreover, in the political debate that also talks about not utilizing resources from immigrants to the maximum. Regardless of political opinion, there is still an understanding of the social shift in Swedish society.

⁶ Government Offices of Sweden

The Positive Aspects of Immigration

There are many positive things with immigration, not only for multiculturalism that Swedish people had a greater variety of food, but also the people here in Sweden has been a broader understanding of people from other countries.

During 2007-2011, it was an increase of 1.9% in full-time positions for foreign-born compared to native-born. However, one should keep in mind that it is different in different all locations or regions.⁷

For the immigrants, it should be easier to establish themselves, because the society has introduced something called the establishment phase. This is a system where you have lots of jobs for those born abroad to learn and establish themselves faster.

Many of those who come to Sweden as the first generation of immigrants usually have a much lower salary when it compared with those who are born in Sweden. This may due to the different competence; it also considers that the immigrants do not have the same knowledge as a native-born. The immigrants should have affected the average salary is not completely true, empirical studies have shown that there is no effect.

Another positive thing about immigration is that foreign-born people have studied for a long time. They usually have a higher education than what the profession really needs, which contributes to more industries that have gained more knowledge in certain areas.

⁷ Migration Economy Labour-Employment

Participation of Immigration in Society

As it has been mentioned before, there are many immigrants who are involved in the community by contributing to the work and create a better infrastructure. While some of them even trying to be the politicians in that immigrants are more involved in the community.

Examples of this are the Sollentuna municipality in Stockholm who wants to born abroad should be more politically active, and they do this by having multiple circle lectures. People want them to be active in order to understand the Swedish policy better and probably be able to participate and vote in the future.⁸

Living Condition in Sweden

There are some basic requirements for people who want to immigrate to Sweden. First of all, immigrants have to learn Swedish, because having the ability of speaking Swedish is the most important element to get a job in Sweden. Moreover, so as to simplify the job search or to continue the studies in Sweden, immigrants may need to have regulated professions. Then following by paying the taxes that if people get a job in Sweden and work more than six months, there is a need for people to pay municipal tax, which can be varies but normally about 31 percent of each person's income.

Another important condition for immigrants in Sweden is about the housing. "There is no specific social housing in Sweden. Instead, individuals who qualify are given a

⁸ Government Offices of Sweden

housing subsidy by the social authorities to live in regular rental properties.”⁹

People can either choose to buy or rent a house or an apartment.

The main insurance policy can be divided into social insurance and unemployment insurance. Social insurance is assisted by employers' contributions which covers various benefits, such as sickness, having children, retirements and disability. In addition, joining a voluntary unemployment insurance fund to receive an income-based benefit is the insurance for people who are unemployed.¹⁰

Conclusion

In conclusion, there are more and more immigrants in Sweden these days and people should pay more attention on them which includes the negative and positive aspects of immigration, participation for immigrants in Sweden and their living condition in Sweden. These important aspects also play a big role in Swedish society. People here in Sweden should be aware of that in the near future, there may be even more immigrants in Sweden than ever before, in that case, people should try to create a more harmonious place for both immigrants and Swedish people to live in Sweden.

⁹ "Living and Working in Sweden" (p.21)

¹⁰ Living and Working in Sweden

Reference

- Wikipedia. (n.d.). Immigration to Sweden. Retrieved October 21, 2015 from
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immigration_to_Sweden
- Focus Migration. (Dec. 2009). Country Profile Sweden. Retrieved from
http://focus-migration.hwwi.de/typo3_upload/groups/3/focus_Migration_Publicationen/Laenderprofile/CP_18_Sweden.pdf
- Arbetsförmedlingen. (n.d.). Living and Working in Sweden. Retrieved from
https://www.sepe.es/contenidos/personas/encontrar_empleo/encontrar_empleo_europa/paises/suecia/pdf_suecia/worksweden.pdf
- Migrationsinfo.se. (2015, April 16). Historiskt. Retrieved from
<http://www.migrationsinfo.se/migration/sverige/historiskt/>
- Government Offices of Sweden. (n.d.). Retrieved from
<http://www.government.se/>
- Michele, T., Christofer, E., Fredrik, L., Rosario, N., & Jerzy, S. (2012, August). The Phenomenology of Specialization of Criminal Suspects.
- Social Science Research Network. (n.d.). Sweden Immigration. Retrieved from
<http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/results.cfm?RequestTimeout=50000000>
- Sweden.se. (n.d.). Sweden and migration. Retrieved from
<https://sweden.se/migration/>