Becoming a part of 'elsewhereness': On the self-perceived integration of Swedish immigrants in Portugal

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Abstract. This article discusses the self-perceived integration of Swedes permanently residing in Portugal. The knowledge of how EU citizens, particularly Swedes, live and integrate into Portuguese society is limited. The conceptual framework on self-perceived integration takes its points of departure from the concepts of a sense of belonging to society and place, feelings of discomfort, and coping tactics. Using a semi-structured interview guide, 36 in-depth interviews with Swedes permanently residing in Portugal were conducted. While some of the permanently residing Swedes have no ambition of integrating into Portuguese society, others display a strong self-perceived feeling of being integrated within the community where they live. The added value of this paper is that it shows the complexity behind the construction of the feeling of self-perceived integration of Swedes in Portugal. Building a feeling of self-perceived integration depends on many factors and is not a linear process.

Introduction

The decision of how and where to continue one's working life or enjoy retirement can be taken in different stages of the life course, depending on the perceived possibilities of having a good and fulfilling life somewhere else. This awareness is closely linked to feelings of self-perceived integration, a concept with different interpretations and meanings for different individuals. The factors brought to the fore are diverse, and range from a sense of belonging, to feelings of discomfort, fair treatment by other individuals and official agencies, and also the perception of opportunities (Wu et al. 2012; Schellenberg 2004; Hellgren 2016; Baumeister & Leary 1995). Space has also been added to the equation, and researchers have highlighted the relevance of integration in place through mobility practices, where knowing the place-based structures allows a person to navigate his/her surroundings and leads to feelings of attachment to the place (Åkerlund & Sandberg 2015; Haldrup 2004). Other authors stressed belonging to a place being

linked with identification with the place, feelings of being at home in a location, familiarity with a place being achieved with prolonged stays, and engagement with activities made possible in the location helping to build connections with it (Antonsich 2010; Juang et al. 2018).

However, bonds to people and places are rebuilt and redesigned, and individual decision-making is adapted to the constantly changing surroundings (Palese 2013; Benson & Osbaldiston 2016). In a time of fluidity and happenstance, the need to readapt and rethink one's life plans according to changing economic and social frameworks requires flexibility of the mind and adaptability (Palese 2013). The search for a more fulfilling life in another country is certainly moulded by an individual's ability to mobilize their capital (human, financial, social), but also by structural frameworks that constrain the outcomes (O'Reilly 2012). Choosing a destination is based on weighing a set of variables and assessing the perceived gains and losses of a decision, either in the short and/or in the long run. When migrants settle down in a new environment there is a need for embedding with the people and the place, so fostering a sense of belonging (Åkerlund & Sandberg 2015; Ryan & Mulholland 2015). Different tactics can be mobilized by migrants in order to nurture feelings of being part of the hosting society, depending on their expectations and perspectives for the future. Their self-perceived integration can have different meanings and amplitudes, involving life projects of diverse duration and commitment. Acquiring resident status in a new location can lead to long stays and deep social and local intertwining, but does not necessarily involve a definite move, even if to a foreign country (Montezuma & McGarrigle 2018). Economic and class restructuring, as well as changing migration policies, may create new constraints, and other moves and living rearrangements need to be considered in order to live comfortably or fulfil aspirations of

well-being (Åkerlund 2015; Hayes 2015; Korpela 2009). For migrants aged 60+, the practice of privilege when moving to a new country may be part of their sense of belonging (Scuzzarello 2020).

With this framework in mind and drawing on the literature pertaining to lifestyle migration and sense of belonging, this paper aims at discussing the self-perceived integration of Swedish citizens, holding permanent residence entitlement in Portugal. Through their narratives, distinct ways of designing and building integration are explored showing diverse kinds and levels of involvement with the host society in the location they have chosen to live. Their subjective assessment of their own integration in Portugal is analysed through the concepts of a sense of belonging and feelings discomfort, two of the most frequent variables used in this kind of study. In order to perform this analysis, four questions from an extensive interview were chosen: (1) How do the Swedes see their place of residence? (2) How do the Swedes interact with the Portuguese? (3) How do the Swedes in Portugal live? (4) What importance does proficiency in the Portuguese language have for becoming part of the local community?

Lifestyle mobility to Portugal and integration: Do the Swedes fit in?

Portugal, together with Spain, Italy and Greece, has been hosting foreign citizens from more affluent societies for quite a long time. British, Germans and Dutch compose the older communities of sunseekers (King et al. 2000), whereas Scandinavians (Rauhut & Laine 2020) and French have settled more recently (Lestegás et al. 2018). The growing presence of EU nationals in the country is partly the result of the active policy implemented by the Portuguese authorities to attract retirees, highly-skilled migrants and investors by way of tax exemptions, Golden Visas, and other permits that give permanent

residence entitlement (Ampudia de Haro & Gaspar 2019). With this policy, the Portuguese authorities presume that foreigners will find permanent living in the country to be attractive and advantageous. However, previous research shows that the idea of permanence can be understood in different ways by individuals. Accommodating change in one's life requires celerity, and residing permanently in a place can be re-evaluated according to structural or conjunctural changes, and also to happenstance (Machado et al. 2019). Moreover, recipients of permanent residence permits can make a more "rational" choice and equalize the duration of their residence to the length of the privileges attached to the entitlement. Thus, when the legal document expires, they look for other destinations with more advantages (Montezuma & McGarrigle 2018).

Knowledge regarding how EU citizens live and integrate into Portuguese society is limited, especially in respect of systematic and encompassing qualitative studies (Oliveira & Gomes 2019). Current research findings suggest that several groups of EU nationals opt for conviviality with co-nationals and other expats, placing themselves apart in a kind of bubble of privileged citizens (Croucher 2012; Fechter 2007). Many British migrants in Spain and France have faced challenges integrating into their local communities (Benson 2009, 2013; O'Reilly 2000, 2017), whereas Swedes (Olsson 2017) and Finns (Könnilä 2014) in southern Spain prefer socialising with each other, rather than participating and integrating into Spanish society. Similar findings are also seen for retired British, German and Nordic citizens in Spain (Casado-Díaz 2007). With a limited proficiency in the Portuguese language, or even adopting the practice of not speaking Portuguese, British migrants in densely populated coastal areas easily place themselves into a self-marginalised existence (Torkington 2015). However, this does not prevent them of feeling that they belong to the place where they have chosen to live, depending on the

time that is spent living in the region (Torkington & Perdigão Ribeiro 2019), and German migrants in Western Algarve also been shown to have similar feelings (Herbers 2017).

Lifestyle migrants to the inland areas of central and southern Portugal appear to mingle with the Portuguese local society, and show a willingness to embrace the Portuguese culture and lifestyle (Sardinha 2015). One reason for this may be that there are few foreigners in these areas to begin with, so it is necessary to learn the language and customs. Sampaio's (2011) study in low density areas in the hilly region of the Algarve remarks on the efforts that German retirees make compared to English native speakers to learn Portuguese, showing a stronger commitment to engage with the local daily life. A need to be part of the local community has also been felt among a group of Dutch and Germans in a small rural community in the Alentejo region, and by taking care of the farming land, they have symbolically filled the place left by earlier Portuguese rural wage earners in the local social structure (Raminhos 2004).

Being a small, discrete group of 4,912 persons (INE 2020) from a highly developed country, the Swedes living in Portugal have never caught the attention of Portuguese researchers. Thus, there is no research on how Swedes in Portugal integrate, or on how they perceive their own integration. They are neither listed separately in e.g. the statistics on foreigners' labour market performance in Portugal (Gabinete de Estratégia e Planeamento 2018), nor is their situation in the Portuguese housing market (INE 2019) remarked. In Sweden, the Swedish citizens permanently residing in Portugal are imagined as being wealthy, and as those who try to avoid Swedish taxes and enjoy free access to Portuguese health care. Being expats, they are supposed to live in ethnic enclaves with little interest in Portugal or the Portuguese people, and this description has been actively

communicated in media by the Swedish government (Dagens Arena 2017; Aftonbladet 2019).

However, the reality of the situation is far more complex than this. Not all of the Swedes are well off, nor do they live apart from the native population (Rauhut & Laine 2020). Thus, their diversity of situations makes this research quite pertinent, especially when the Portuguese government is actively seeking to attract foreigners seen as bringing talent, human capital and investment through tax exemptions and facilitated residential permissions (Montezuma & McGarrigle 2018).

The Swedes in Portugal

Although migration flows between Portugal and Sweden have been marginal, noteworthy changes have occurred in the number of Swedish citizens permanently residing in Portugal. From approximately 1,520 people in 2006, the number halved in one year when the financial crisis hit Portugal in 2008 (INE 2019). However, the increase in stock of Swedish citizens permanently residing in Portugal is marked after 2014 by a steady growth rate, reaching slightly more than 4,900 people in 2019 (Figure 1). Swedes accounted for 0.4% of the total number of documented foreigners in Portugal in 2006, and by 2019 this had risen to 0.83% (INE 2020).

Figure 1. The number of Swedish citizens permanently residing in Portugal 2000-2019.
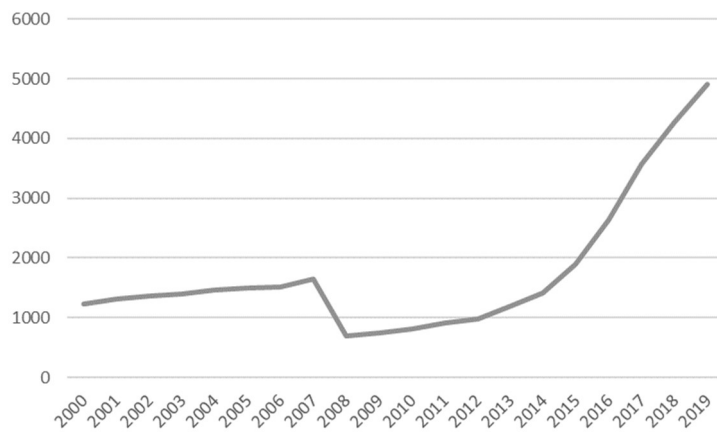
Source: INE (2020).

The age structure of Swedish citizens permanently residing in Portugal has changed over time, and the decade between 2008 and 2018 saw a remarkable increase in the relative weight of the 50-64 year (23.0% to 34.6%) and 65+ year (21.7% to 30.8%) age groups (INE 2020). This means that while a considerable group of citizens are still of working age, retirees are also numerically relevant.

Figure 2. Swedish pension beneficiaries permanently residing in Portugal 2014-2019.
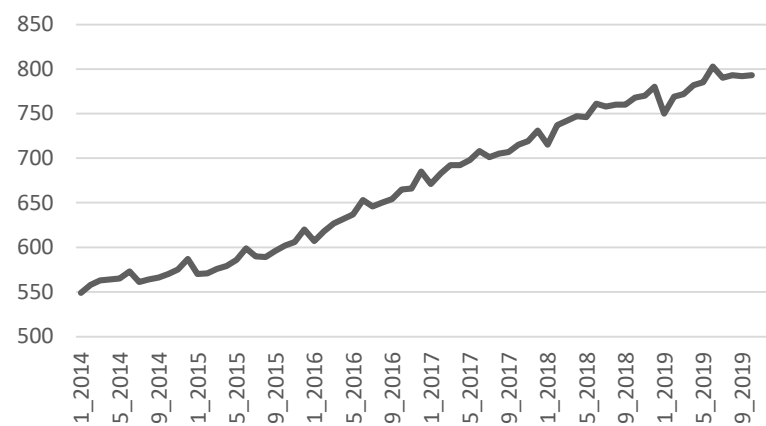
Source: Swedish Pensions Agency (2019).

However, while 1,318 Swedes permanently residing in Portugal were aged 65 or older (INE 2020), less than 800 Swedes entitled to a Swedish pension were registered by the Swedish Pensions Agency (2019) as permanently residing in Portugal in October 2019

(Figure 2). Hence, about two out of five Swedish citizens aged 65+ years permanently residing in Portugal did not receive a Swedish pension, which leads us to wonder about their livelihoods.

Swedes follow the settlement pattern common to most foreign citizens in Portugal, by clustering in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area (45%) and in the Algarve (ca. 45%), a trend reinforced since 2008. Less than 10% reside in the rest of Portugal (Rauhut & Laine 2020). In the latter area, the municipalities of Loulé, Albufeira and Portimão appear to be hotspots for Swedes (SEF 2020).

An analysis of Swedish immigrants' areas of origin in Sweden in 2008 displays a dominance for the three metropolitan areas around Stockholm (Stockholm region), Gothenburg (Västra Götaland region) and Malmo (Skåne region), and Halland in southern Sweden. In 2018, two major trends are visible: (1) Swedes migrating to Portugal come from all parts of Sweden, and (2) the dominance of the three metropolitan areas and Halland prevails. Moreover, regions with bigger cities (>100,000 inhabitants) also stand out as sending areas to Portugal (Rauhut & Laine 2020).

Methods and material

In order to understand how Swedes in Portugal self-perceive their integration into their new society, 36 in-depth interviews were conducted with Swedes permanently residing there. The selection of the respondents was non-randomised, and a notice was placed on Facebook in the closed groups 'Svenska Portugalvänner' ['Swedish Portugal Friends'] and 'Svenskar i Portugal' ['Swedes in Portugal'] to recruit interviewees for the study. Technically, the convenience sample used is a non-probability sampling method, and

there are no inclusion criteria except that people are available and willing to participate. This kind of sampling is recognized as being good for pilot studies and when the researcher wants to get in touch with groups who may be difficult to reach (Rubin and Babbie 2010). However, samples collected in this way may not represent the population of interest and can therefore be biased. Thus, in line with the standards of qualitative methodology, generalisations to the whole population cannot be made (Robson 2002). Rather than generalising the results from sample to population, this study has the ambition to explicate relevant analytical themes and stereotypes on the self-perceived integration of Swedes permanently residing in Portugal.

[Table 1 – at the end of the paper]

In total, 75 people responded and 38 were selected for interview. The main selection criterion was that the respondent was a registered *permanent* resident in Portugal, and not a second homeowner. Two of the planned interviews never took place. For the 36 in-depth interviews conducted, most took place in the home of the interviewee, and some in cafés or restaurants chosen by the interviewee. As some of the respondents lived in remote areas and in the Azores/Madeira archipelagos, five interviews were conducted remotely via skype. A profile of the respondents is presented in Table 1.

The interviews followed a semi-structured format, which was designed according to a life-course approach. Such an approach was used to identify complex motivations in the interviewees' life-work interface, and outline pre-migration and post-migration trajectories as they unfold in the immigrants (and their significant others') life-course, and so help to understand the migration processes from the migrants' perspective (McAuliffe et al. 2018). This research design enables a deeper understanding of the dynamic factors influencing the migration process, and their embedded interrelationships.

The questions asked covered contextual factors (e.g. employment situation, education, income, family background and other cultural frameworks), why the respondents had decided to leave Sweden for Portugal, and how they interact with Portugal and the Portuguese in their daily life.

A conceptual framework

Despite being a contested concept, integration is still a remarkably relevant issue in migration policy debates and a target often expected to be reached by migrants. Instead of narrowly favouring a specific integration model and seeing how Swedes fit in, we prefer to bring up several definitions of integration highlighting the diversity of focus given to its central points. For Heckmann (2006:18), integration is "a generations lasting process of inclusion and acceptance of migrants in the core institutions, relations and statuses of the receiving society", meaning that distinct processes occur in different domains. Esser (2001) points out four dimensions for gauging migrants' integration: culturation (similar to socialization), placement (position in society), interaction (social relations and networks), and identification (belonging).

Integration can also be seen as a non-normative concept, and more recent approaches focus on the relationship between migrants and the hosting society rather than on the individuals alone. Penninx and Garcés-Mascareñas (2016:14) define integration as "the process of becoming an accepted part of society". This is quite an open definition as it does not specify how and to what extent the migrant is accepted by the hosting members. Nor does it say how much change has to take place on both sides to accommodate difference. Penninx and Garcés-Mascareñas (2016) propose three analytical dimensions to assess migrants' acceptance (or not) by the hosting society: (i) the legal-political, (ii)

the socio-economic, and (iii) the cultural-religious. The first dimension pertains to residence, political rights and statuses. The point here is whether foreigners have full status as members of the political community, and their situation can range from being an undocumented migrant to being a national citizen. The second dimension refers to access and participation in sectors like the labour market, housing, healthcare, education and welfare, comparative to national citizens holding similar skills and qualifications. The interesting point is seeing how migrants perform compared to nationals. The third dimension address perceptions and practices of both migrants and the hosting society, and their mutual reactions to diversity. The degrees of acceptance of difference (either in public or private spheres) can be very distinct, as well as the expectations of conformity with e.g. culture, traditions and religious manifestations.

To large extent, integration is a subjectively perceived condition. When constructing a conceptual framework, the link between the aforementioned dimensions and the interviewees' statements has to be through their perceptions/opinions. How the immigrants perceive, see and feel their degree of integration in the new country must be in focus, just as how the natives perceive, see and feel the degree of integration of the newcomers. However, this study only focuses on the self-perceived integration of the Swedish immigrants to Portugal.

Previous studies on migrant's perceptions of integration suggest that perceiving to be part of a more complex social whole (to belong) and feelings of discomfort when living in the hosting society are two variables often used to evaluate migrants' subjective well-being (Wu et al. 2012). Recent research also suggests that sensing that one is not part of or does not belong to a group and feeling uncomfortable in daily situations leads individuals to

find ways of dealing with the constraints caused by these perceptions, and they may adopt coping strategies or opt for tactics to deal with their situation (Machado et al. 2019). The migrant must be willing to become a part of the new community in which s/he lives to become integrated (Rauhut 2020a). These three aspects – a sense of belonging, feelings of discomfort, and coping strategies – are considered key elements to achieve a subjectively perceived feeling of integration.

4.1. Sense of belonging

Psychologically, the need to belong is a fundamental human motivation (Baumeister & Leary 1995). Being intimately involved with the surrounding society through social networks can give us a sense of satisfaction and inclusion, as interaction between people builds community and offers a sense of connectedness (Schellenberg 2004). A sense of belonging is closely related to the feeling of being a member of the society, that is, to have a positive regard from and for others. Belonging is also associated with a commitment to stay in the destination country (Chow 2007) and to build primary relations in the host society (Wu et al. 2012). Here, primary relations are understood as forming a very personal, spontaneous, and inclusive relationship that involves complete personalities like the relationship between close friends or between spouses (Davies 1949). Interactions with neighbours and a familiarity with the local environment play a significant role in making people feel at home, and Liu et al. (2020:3) view that "This feeling of being at home cultivates a sense of belonging to the place where one resides".

The attachment to a location is constructed by living there, mingling with the locals, and cruising it (Haldrup 2004). According to Åkerlund and Sandberg (2015), holding a dwelling, and through mobility practices like knowing one's whereabouts, being able to

move around, and finding the basics needed for daily life will increase the feeling of familiarity. In turn, this changes *space* into *place*, by giving it meaning and significance.

There is also a temporal aspect of staying in a certain place. The longer one stays, the more familiar it becomes. Cuba and Hummon (1993:550) conclude that "research on people's attachments to particular neighborhoods or communities also documents that emotional ties to these locales grow in strength over time, in part because long-term residence imbues the landscape with the meanings of life experiences, and in part because such residence nourishes local ties to friends, kin, and community organizations".

4.2. Feelings of discomfort

Feelings of discomfort in a society are incompatible with a sense of belonging to that society. In a Canadian study, perceptions of exclusion and marginalisation are found to go hand in hand with the feeling of discomfort, and social and civil participation are needed for social inclusion (Reitz & Banerjee 2009). Wu et al. (2012:384) conclude that "[i]n this respect, feelings of discomfort are a proxy for the perceived social distance between immigrants and the Canadian-born".

Feeling uncomfortable or out of place in a hosting society is often reported as an initial perception associated with newcomer status and socialization in a foreign cultural environment. The notion of cultural distance (Kaasa et al. 2016) must be brought into the debate. Migrants may feel uneasy when confronting cultural disparities between their origin and the destination society (Khovanova-Rubicondo & Pinelli 2012). The absence of certain shared values may be more often felt when migration occurs between countries with a very large cultural distance. Sometimes, practical aspects of daily life such as

dealing with bureaucracy (Belabas & Gerrits 2017) or different social conceptions of punctuality (Birth 2004) or professional honesty, can become huge challenges for newcomers who bring other references from home. Thus, the more unfamiliar a new country, its people and its culture are, the more feelings of discomfort, and vice versa.

Language is a key for integration. A low proficiency in the native language is an additional challenge to understanding the "nuts and bolts" of complex issues like regulations and laws, and poses a barrier to socializing on a daily basis and understanding socio-cultural codes (Esteves & Sampaio 2013). By not speaking the language, parts of the new country, its culture and people will remain unfamiliar.

4.3. Coping tactics

Designing strategies to overcome daily challenges in a new country of residence is essential to building a bearable life. However, this assumes that the migrant asserts agency and capability to adaptation (De Certeau 1984). Machado et al. (2019:30) resort to this concept when exploring Brazilian and British migrants' "… routines of everyday practice acting within the more powerful strategies defined by institutions or organized bodies" in Portugal. This approach highlights their capacity to navigate the system by learning with locals how to mobilize various types of capital assets (Datta et al. 2007). To learn from the locals means that the migrant becomes familiar with what is needed for living their everyday life, which in turn helps to turn space into place. A proficiency in the local language will facilitate this process.

5. Three tales of self-perceived integration

The 36 respondents of this study can be arranged into three different groups in terms of their self-perceived integration into Portuguese society. The grouping of the respondents is based on a cluster analysis made by Rauhut (2020b), based on the same empirical material. Three main clusters are identified (Table 2). The first cluster contains respondents with different forms of personal problems. The respondents in the second cluster have come to Portugal to enjoy privileges, 'the good life' and the sun. Lastly, the respondents in the third cluster have ended up in Portugal for various reasons, including work, family-ties or a 'familiarity' with the country.

Table 2 Migration drivers, sense of belonging and self-perceived integration.

Cluster	Characteristics	Respondents	Spatial pattern	Mean years (time) in PT	Language skills	Housing situation	Social life PT	Self-perceived Integrated	Work in PT	Retired	Return to SE
1	**Social and economic problems**, marginalised	N=7	none	4 [d]	Low	Predominantly rental, in Portuguese areas	Some (mixed + Portuguese)	Low	N=2 [a]	N=4	No
2	Climate, **'good life', tax rules,** ideological, health problems [b]	N=17	Predominantly Algarve	3.8	Low	Predominantly own house/flat in gated communities	Varying (mainly Swedish, and EU expats)	Low to medium	N=6 [c]	N=9	Maybe, yes, undecided
3	**Job offers, family ties and familiarity**	N=12	Predominantly Lisbon and other Portugal	4 [e]	Very good	Rental / own house /flat in Portuguese areas	Active (mixed + Portuguese)	High	N=4	N=7	No

a. of which one is a 'digital nomad' (self-employed working remotely for Swedish clients or working remotely for a Swedish employer).
b. Two respondents have health problems, which made them move to Portugal. Both speak good Portuguese, consider themselves as integrated in the Portuguese society and they will not return to Sweden.
c. of which three are 'digital nomads'.
d. One respondent has lived for 17 years in Portugal, he speaks Portuguese relatively well, and feels relatively integrated into the Portuguese society. This makes him an outlier in this cluster.
e. Two members have stayed only a relatively short period of time in Portugal; their proficiency in Portuguese is low, and they do not feel really integrated yet. This makes them outliers in this cluster.
Source: Columns 'Characteristics', 'Respondents', and 'Spatial patterns' by Rauhut (2020b); the remaining columns originate from the interviews.

An interesting result highlighted by Rauhut (2020b) is that the settlement patterns in Portugal differ significantly between the three main clusters. As discussed in the conceptual framework, where you live and settle down will have an impact on the sense of belonging, and consequently on the self-perceived feeling of being integrated into Portuguese society. Hence, the self-perceived integration of the Swedes permanently residing in Portugal will build on this typology.

5.1 Escapers

The first cluster contains people with various forms of personal problems that 'push' them away from Sweden. Leaving Sweden was seen as an attempt to change their course of life in a more favourable direction. The members of this cluster can be described as having the following characteristics: on average they have stayed about four years in Portugal, and they do not speak Portuguese. They rent their housing, but they live amidst the Portuguese. Few have any contact with other Swedes; the social life they have is based on English speaking Portuguese or EU expats. They have nothing to return to in Sweden.

With the exception of one respondent who has lived in Portugal for almost 20 years, the persons in this cluster have not yet developed any sense of belonging. Erik (male, 66) notes that he has "a lacking social attachment. This is the worst". Several of the respondents in this group have already moved between different locations in Portugal in search of somewhere to settle down. During the time they have stayed in Portugal, some feelings of discomfort can be identified. "We've noted that there's a bureaucracy and there're lots of papers to be signed… and stamped", says Stefan (male, 40). So far, they have not developed any coping tactics.

5.2 Practicing privilege

The persons in the second cluster have moved to Portugal to enjoy the climate and 'the good life'. However, some have health problems that have been mitigated by moving to a warmer climate. Returning to Sweden is not an option for these people. The persons with health problems live amidst the Portuguese in housing they own, and they have a social life containing Portuguese, EU expats and Swedes. They have a good proficiency in Portuguese, and they perceive themselves as being integrated into the Portuguese

society. However, this is the contrary to the other members in this cluster, and generally, the members in this cluster display a low proficiency in Portuguese, live predominantly in gated communities with other expats, and do not generally perceive themselves as integrated. Indeed, some of them have no ambition of being integrated. There is also an ideological motive for emigrating: they vote conservative and dislike the red-green government in Sweden. Six of the seven persons who enjoy NHR-status are to be found in this cluster.

Among the respondents in the second cluster, only a few display a high proficiency in Portuguese, and four have no intention to learn the language. Their social life in Portugal is dominated by fellow compatriots and EU expats, mostly English and Dutch because they speak good English. Moreover, they have no interest in socialising with the native population. As Inge (male, 65) explains: "Portuguese is a very difficult language to learn /…/ we don't socialize much with the Portuguese /…/ There are many English, Dutch, French and Swiss we socialize with through the golf club. There are also many Irish."

For most persons in the second cluster, it is important to socialise with the 'right' (Swedish) people in Portugal, be active in the 'right' clubs for Swedes in Portugal, to eat at the 'right' restaurants, etc. Their place in the social hierarchy among other Swedish expats is a social construction based upon the exclusivity of being a member of the 'Swedish community' in Portugal. Living in this kind of social bubble, Croucher (2012:3) has viewed that "…these migrants of privilege are not assimilating…". Several show no wish to be part of the larger society or to establish primary relations with the Portuguese, and that is fine for them.

Many people from this particular group demand supermarkets with Swedish products,
Swedish artisans, Swedish restaurants etc. Regardless of how long they have lived in
Portugal, they say *home* when they speak of Sweden. Portugal is seen as a foreign country
and they usually label it as *here*. Anna (female, 72) is very clear when talking about where
home is: "I spend four and a half months at home every year". The rest of the year is spent
in Portugal. "I also do my shopping in a shop with *Kalles kaviar* [a Swedish caviar] and
Annas pepparkakor [ginger breads]. They also have *Wasa knäckebröd* [a Swedish crisp
bread]". This group also talks about the 'local population' when they refer to the native
Portuguese. Despite not wanting to build deeper relations with the natives and socializing
in exclusive groups of expats, none of this group expressed any plans for long-term stay.
Benefitting from NHR status, many will make a decision of where to live when the 10-
year fiscal status expires.

The members with health problems in this cluster intend on staying, and they have a good
proficiency in Portuguese. They also have a different attitude towards the Portuguese
society. "Many complain it's difficult. Yes, it is, but we've chosen to move here. So, we
have to adjust to life here. I've chosen this myself, so now I have to adjust", says Maria
(female, 49).

There are situations that make the respondents in this cluster feel discomfort, and they
complain about many things. Anna (female, 72) is disappointed that the Portuguese "are
not good at bringing bad news. They don't like it and therefor they don't say anything.
This make the information they give unreliable. They can't keep any timetable and they're
lousy at planning things /…/ It's difficult to get used to". Other areas of discomfort were
also mentioned. Bengt (male, 77) complains that: "They are so dodgy here. There are so

many old-fashioned rules here /…/ the bureaucracy and the contact with authorities are horrible /…/ Sometimes they can't speak English, they just say 'português, português'." Few of the members in the second cluster have any coping tactics, partly because they have no interest in becoming a part of the Portuguese society.

5.3 Jobs, love and familiarity

The last cluster contains three groups displaying different characteristics. The first group, contains people who came to Portugal due to job offers. They have a very good proficiency in Portuguese, have work in Portugal, live amidst the Portuguese, and perceive themselves as integrated. They are happy with their lives and have no intentions to return to Sweden. Moreover, if they ever have to leave Portugal for some unforeseeable reason, it is more likely that they will move to another country rather than return to Sweden.

The characteristics of the second group are very similar to the first, with the exception that these people have come to Portugal due to family ties. The third group consists of persons who have e.g. worked for many years in Portuguese speaking countries in Africa or have worked in the EU. Instead of returning to Sweden, these persons moved to Portugal. This group also contains persons who have worked in many countries and decided to move to Portugal because they felt familiar with the country.

Many respondents in this cluster are of working age and work in Portugal. When they speak of the place where they now live, they refer to it as *home*. Sweden is *not* home, but the country in which they lived before. Moreover, when describing the friends and family they left behind, these persons live in Sweden, and not 'back home'. Lisa (female, 55)

says that "we've stopped saying 'home' when we talk about Sweden", and this indicates

a sense of belonging and attachment to the place they live in.

Most of the people in this group are active in different social settings, such as clubs,

associations or charity work. One person is active in *Centro de Dia* [Day Centre], a charity

and/or state-run organisation helping elderly people. Another person is an active member

of the village board in the village she lives in. Several respondents are active in different

sports clubs. Often, the interviewed Swedes are the only non-Portuguese members in

these clubs, and the language spoken in these clubs and associations is Portuguese. Olivia

(female, 31) explains, "I'm very active in a cross-country running club here. Basically,

all of those I run with every weekend are Portuguese". Niklas (male, 55) has similar

experiences: "I compete in orienteering and when I practice on Wednesdays in the club

it's just Portuguese athletes". By investing time and energy in these Portuguese-based

organizations where they are a small minority, Swedes nurture a sense of belonging to

the local society and they build primary relations. The ties they build with other members,

mostly Portuguese, make them feel on an equal footing because they can mobilize

different capital assets (expertise, contacts, knowledge, time, etc.) and actively contribute

to the activities.

Many of the respondents in this group rent their house or flat, and some have bought a

house or flat which needed repairing. Buying such a house or renting is seen as an

alternative when available financial resources are relatively limited. These houses or flats

are seldom found in the touristic hot-spot areas, but generally in places with native

Portuguese or in the countryside far away from the beaches and tourists. Mats (male, 55)

explains: "There's no need to buy something flashy and expensive, but something

cheap/…/we bought a house out in the bush…The house has all we want, but it needs some love and care…our housing costs are very low". Contrary to those practicing privilege, the members of this group have no need for flashy bungalows or flats in gated communities.

"If you move to another country, you have to give 110% – you have to become Portuguese. /…/ We want to become part of the community here", says Lisa (female, 55). By observing how the Portuguese society functions and how natives sort out daily challenges like bureaucratic procedures, those Swedes with an interest in integrating into Portuguese society were able to develop tactics that allow them to make life in the country possible, and even pleasant. Nicole (female, 39) recalls that: "In the beginning it was very confusing and frustrating /…/ When you've lived here for a while, you take it easier. You don't get stressed out. If something is wrong, you have to return back to the tax office or whatever office with the correct papers…you're mentally prepared for it". Olivia (female, 31) expresses a similar experience: "It's a very bureaucratic system, but what I really appreciate here is that everybody is so friendly. It makes me overlook the fact that it sometimes takes quite a bit of time to solve something simple /…/ When I had just moved here I found this very stressful, but after a while you learn that this is nothing to get excited over". Lisa (female, 55) uses a different tactic when dealing with the Portuguese bureaucracy, by showing informational capital strategically mobilized for the challenge: "I go to the EU's information page. Every time I have to deal with the administration here, I visit that web portal to see what the rules are here in Portugal and how to deal with it in Swedish. Then I print the page in Portuguese and bring it with me. So far, I have never had any problems". These narratives illustrate the attitudes that Swedes

permanently residing in Portugal have concerning integration, and the tactics they deploy
to overcome daily challenges.

Discussion

A sense of belonging and feelings of discomfort are two of the most frequently used
variables to assess the self-perceived integration of migrants (Wu et al. 2012). The
willingness to be part of a social whole can take different forms. From learning the host
country's language, to living among natives or being affiliated to clubs and organizations
where national citizens are the majority, foreigners nurture the feeling of being part of
their hosting society. In the case of north European citizens in Southern Europe, previous
research often points to an 'expat way of living', in which social relations are mainly built
among fellow countrymen or other foreigner citizens of similar social status, with little
exchange with natives (Benson 2009). There are, however, studies highlighting the efforts
and commitments made by Germans and Dutch in small rural villages, in order to feel
part of the local community (Sardinha 2015; Morén-Alegret & Wladyka 2019). The
adoption of tactics (Machado et al. 2019) (some of which are learned with natives) is a
way of coping with life's daily challenges such as navigating bureaucracy, dealing with
different conceptions of time, or managing perceived 'dodginess'.

Many of the interviewees of the group exercising privilege expressed little desire to be a
part of the Portuguese society, and are fine with this position. Therefore, one may question
if it makes sense to talk about integration at all. This is a small group of extremely well-
off people, and this group does not socialise with ordinary commons – only with people
at their own level. This kind of economic upper class live in their own bubble and do so
independent from whatever country they originate from. Their lives are sealed off from

ordinary people, and this has also been the case in their native countries. When members of this group speak of 'home', it refers to Sweden and not to where they live. This indicates a lack of commitment to the place they stay in (Chow 2007), and absents any intentions of building primary relationships in the host community (Wu et al. 2012). Aspects such as a sense of belonging and coping tactics become irrelevant. To some extent, this group consists of privileged persons who move around in search of the best conditions each country can offer, for example in the form of tax exemptions. When they find something better, they simply move to another country, thus giving some food for thought about the pertinence of granting permanent residence permits to NHR-holders. However, most of the people in the study who actually expressed feelings of discomfort belong to this group. Previous research has pointed at conceptions of punctuality (Birth 2004), dealing with bureaucracy (Belabas & Gerrits 2017), and being uneasy when confronting cultural disparities (Khovanova-Rubicondo & Pinelli 2012) as being factors that can generate feelings of discomfort. The members of this group explicitly mention these aspects and that they find such behaviour unacceptable, i.e. they lack coping tactics.

The members in the third cluster expresses a desire to belong to the wider Portuguese society, and to actively contribute through work, time, energy or expertise to the hosting society because it makes them feel happy. They do it by learning the language, mingling with natives, etc. Following the findings of Chow (2007) and Wu et al. (2012), such relation-building with the natives creates a sense of belonging. By moving around for daily tasks like shopping or working, the space becomes familiar and a sense of feeling at home is built (Antosich 2010; Juang et al. 2018). In order to overcome structural constraints (Datta et al. 2007) and to adapt to the everyday practices of the new community, coping tactics emerge which to some extent have been learned from

interacting with natives (Machado et al. 2019). The members of this group feel a strong sense of belonging to the local Portuguese community in which they live and have developed different tactics to deal with practical problems in their daily life. Many of the respondents in this group report that they share the norms and values of the community in which they live, which facilitates the socialisation process (Kaasa et al. 2016). Consequently, they reduce their feelings of discomfort and increase their sense of belonging. Moreover, returning to Sweden is not an option they tend to consider.

Embedding is a process that occurs over time, in specific contexts and to varying degrees, as a result of on-going commitments and opportunities (Ryan & Mulholland 2015). This study shows that those practicing privilege are very happy indeed with practicing privilege in the 'expat bubble'. But others are keen on participating in different activities with the local population leading to embedding, i.e. an increase in the sense of belonging and place attachment.

The length of residence in Portugal influences the self-perception of integration, and roughly speaking, the Swedes who have been living for a longer time in the country show stronger feelings of being part of the social milieux. As stated by Cuba and Hummon (1993), time gives people the opportunity to grow emotional ties to locales, changing space into place. However, this process is not linear and variables like the purpose of migrating to Portugal intersect with social and economic issues, elevating the complexity of understanding how self-perceived integration is built.

When discussing the findings of this paper, some methodological reflections are needed. Contrary to most studies on expats, this study focuses mainly on persons outside the

'expat bubble'. When searching for respondents through social media, we got in touch with another category of ordinary people from Sweden, working in ordinary professions, earning ordinary salaries. A common denominator for these persons is that they feel that they want to integrate into the new country. Also, the drivers behind their move to Portugal differ from those in the first group, and indeed, few of them are eligible for tax-exemption.

Concluding remarks

This study discusses the self-perceived integration of Swedish citizens holding a permanent residence permit in Portugal, as well as the tactics they devise to build a feeling of being part of a social whole. Four questions were proposed to be answered.

In answer to the *first* question of *How do the Swedes see their place of residence?*, the small group practicing privilege living in an expat 'bubble' have little sense of belonging to the place they live in, and consider the idea of leaving when the privileges attached to their status ends. To them, 'home' is in Sweden while where they live is 'here'. But the majority of the Swedes in the study have a strong sense of belonging to the place where they live. They consider Portugal as 'home', and not Sweden. A similar pattern is displayed when answering the second question of *How do the Swedes interact with the Portuguese?* Those practicing privilege have few (if any) contacts with the Portuguese, and their only interaction with the locals is when they need to deal with public bureaucracy or local craftsmen. However, the majority group of the study actively interact with the Portuguese. The *third* question of *How do Swedes live in Portugal?* displays that Swedes in Portugal are not simply one homogeneous group. While those practicing privilege have bought their housing in gated communities, screened off from ordinary

people, few of the 'ordinary' Swedes have done so. Since they cannot afford to buy their own housing, they often rent and live amidst the Portuguese community.

The *fourth* question dealt with how important Swedes permanently residing in Portugal consider proficiency in the Portuguese language for becoming a part of the local community. Somewhat unsurprisingly, the small group practicing privilege has no intention of becoming part of the local community. They hardly interact with the Portuguese and Portuguese society, and they have little ambition to do so. Hence, they display little interest in mastering the Portuguese language. However, the majority of the respondents consider proficiency in Portuguese as an important tool to become part of the local community, and to function in Portuguese society. Thus, language proficiency is considered as a tool for becoming integrated.

An important methodological reflection is that any self-perceived perspectives on integration will indeed be subjective. Some of the interviewees have a strong sense of belonging and have developed tactics to handle any feelings of potential discomfort. From their perspective and with their preferences this may be true, but this says nothing about to what extent the Portuguese and Portuguese society consider them to be integrated. Thus, to what extent Swedes (as well as other EU-migrants) who are permanently residing in Portugal are considered as integrated by the Portuguese and the local communities in which they live could pose an interesting topic for future research.

Another avenue for future research could be to study how Portugal utilises the human capital and competence brought by Swedes and other EU migrants. Many of them are highly skilled and of working age. Especially, far from all of them have come to Portugal

for retirement. So far, the focus in research has been on retirement and lifestyle migration from EU countries, and on Third Country Nationals. The outflow of highly skilled Portuguese to other EU countries has gained more interest than the inflow of highly skilled in working ages from other EU countries. Yet they exist, but they are typically under-employed.

The main added value of this paper is that we manage to show that the integration of Swedes in Portugal is a story with several tales. One tale tells the story of well-off people with little interest in Portugal and the Portuguese, and what matters to them are immediate benefits such as tax exemptions. The second tale tells a completely different story about ordinary people who are not wealthy or prominent. These people feel that they want to be integrated into their new country, they learn Portuguese, some work for Portuguese employers, they socialise with natives, and they live amidst the native population. A third tale is about those who are exploring the new country, leaning the language, and trying to make a living in the new country. These three stories appear in parallel and simultaneously, however, it is a story seldom told.

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Table 1: Respondent overview

Name	Sex	Age	Lives in	Lived in Sweden	Profession	Abroad before	Years in Portugal	Speaks Portuguese	Income Sweden	Income Portugal	Civil status	Children	Social life Sweden	Social life Portugal	Return to Sweden
Arne	M	78	Algarve	Southern	Entrepreneur	No	4	No	Low	Medium	Married	No at home	family	Some (Swedish)	No
Bengt	M	77	Algarve	Stockholm	Manager	Yes	3	No	High	High	Married	No at home	family	Some (EU expats)	No
Anna	W	72	Algarve	Western	Entrepreneur	No	18	Yes	High	High	Widow	No at home	Active	Active	Maybe
Calle	M	70	Algarve	Southern	Entrepreneur	Yes	17	Yes	Low	Low	Cohabiting	No at home	Little	Some (mixed)	No
Dick	M	70	Algarve	Northern	Manager	No	5	Some	High	High	Widow	No at home	Little	Some	undecided
Berit	W	67	Algarve	Northern	Government	18years	3	Yes	Medium	High	Married	No at home	Little	Some (Mixed)	Maybe
Cecilia	W	67	Other Portugal	Northern	Education	Yes	5	Yes	Medium	Low	Married	No at home	Little	Some (Portuguese)	No
Erik	M	66	Algarve	Central	Entrepreneur	No	4	No	High	Medium	Divorced	No at home	Little	Little	Maybe
Frank	M	65	Other Portugal	Western	Consultant	No	2	Some	Medium	Medium	Married	No at home	Little	Active (Portuguese)	No
Gunnar	M	65	Other Portugal	Central	Technical	No	4	Some	High	Medium	Married	None	Little	Some (Portuguese)	No
Hans	M	65	Greater Lisbon	Western	Technical	No	1	No	High	High	Divorced	No at home	Little	Little (mixed)	Maybe
Inge	M	65	Algarve	Western	Manager	Yes	2	No	High	High	Married	No at home	Little	Active (expats+Swedes)	undecided
Doris	W	65	Algarve	Southern	Diverse	No	4	No	Low	Medium	Married	No at home	Active	Some (Swedes)	Yes
Eva	W	64	Greater Lisbon	Stockholm	Government	36years	7	Yes	High	High	Divorced	None	Little	Active (mixed)	No
Jonny	M	64	Greater Lisbon	Stockholm	Technical	No	1	No	High	High	Cohabiting	No at home	Little	Some (mixed)	undecided
Fia	W	63	Other Portugal	Central	Diverse	3 years	4	Some	Low	none	Married	None	Little	Some (Portuguese)	No
Klas	M	63	Other Portugal	Western	Finance	Yes	2	Some	High	none	Married	None	Little	Active (mixed)	No
Gittan	W	63	Other Portugal	Western	Sales	Yes	2	Some	High	none	Married	None	Little	Active (mixed)	No
Hjördis	W	61	Algarve	Central	Diverse	12years	6	No	Medium	none	Divorced	None	Active	Little	undecided
Ida	W	61	Greater Lisbon	Stockholm	Government	11years	3	Some	Medium	High	Divorced	No at home	Active	Active (mixed)	No
Josefin	W	58	Other Portugal	Southern	Finance	Yes	1	Some	High	High	Married	No at home	Little	Little (Portuguese)	No
Lars	M	58	Other Portugal	Southern	Technical	Yes	1	No	High	High	Married	No at home	Little	Little (Portuguese)	No
Kerstin	W	57	Other Portugal	Stockholm	Diverse	No	5	Yes	Medium	Low	Cohabiting	No at home	Active	Little (mixed)	undecided
Lisa	W	55	Other Portugal	Western	Sales	Yes	2	Yes	Medium	none	Married	None	Active	Active (Portuguese)	No
Mats	M	55	Algarve	Stockholm	Sales	No	2	No	High	none	Married	No at home	Active	Active (mixed)	No
Niklas	M	55	Algarve	Northern	Consultant	No	3	Some	High	High	Cohabiting	No at home	Active	Active (mixed)	No
Maria	W	49	Algarve	Southern	Diverse	No	2	Some	Low	Low	Cohabiting	No at home	Active	Some (mixed)	No
Olle	M	46	Algarve	Southern	Consultant	Yes	2	No	High	High	Cohabiting	None	Little	Some (EU expats)	No
Per	M	43	Greater Lisbon	Southern	Entrepreneur	Yes	2	Some	High	High	Married	None	Active	Active (mixed)	No
Roger	M	43	Greater Lisbon	Southern	Entrepreneur	Yes	1	No	High	none	Married	Yes	Little	Active (mixed)	No
Stefan	M	40	Other Portugal	Western	Health care	No	1	No	Medium	High	Married	Yes	Little	Active (Portuguese)	No
Nicole	W	39	Greater Lisbon	Stockholm	Health care	No	10	Yes	Medium	Low	Single	Yes	Little	Little (mixed)	No
Olivia	W	31	Other Portugal	Stockholm	Sales	No	10	Yes	none	Medium	Single	None	Active	Active (Portuguese)	No
Pia	W	30	Greater Lisbon	Stockholm	Social sector	No	1	Some	Medium	Low	Single	None	Active	Little (mixed)	No
Rita	W	29	Other Portugal	Western	Health care	No	1	Some	Medium	none	Married	Yes	Little	Active (Portuguese)	No
Sussie	W	28	Greater Lisbon	Southern	Media/Com.	Yes	3	Yes	Low	Medium	Cohabiting	None	Little	Active (Portuguese)	No