

Article

Adult Migrants' Endeavours for a Life as Included

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Abstract

In many European countries, Sweden included, social inclusion of adult migrants has come to mean second language learning and labour market establishment. This understanding of social inclusion has been problematised by previous research as it reinforces a deficit discourse where migrants are depicted as lacking skills or incentives, and social inclusion is seen merely as a matter of adjusting to society. This study aims to examine migrants' positioning in relation to language learning and social inclusion. It is based on a longitudinal interview study with adult migrants, first when being enrolled in second language education, and later in the continuing process of making a life in a new country. We analyse five migrant narratives, drawing on the concepts of positioning, agency, rights, duties, and capital in relation to their past, present, and future aspirations. The results show that the position of the "good migrant" taking responsibility for language learning and job seeking is prominent. At the same time, positioning is also constructed in relation to individual aspirations and opportunities, depending on one's circumstance of life and capital, such as previous education or social networks. Thus, inclusion is closely related to being recognised, not primarily as a migrant, but as the person one strives to be, both professionally and personally.

Keywords

adult education; labour market; learning; migrants; narratives; positioning; recognition; social inclusion

Issue

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1. Introduction

In recent years, the debate about adult migrants' inclusion in society has intensified, and public discourses have come to focus on the individual migrant's responsibility to adjust to society in different ways, for example, by entering the labour market, becoming self-sufficient, developing democratic values, and learning the majority language (Abdulla, 2017; Blackledge, 2009; Fejes, 2010; Grip, 2019): In other words, to become "the good migrant" and "the good citizen" (Abdulla, 2017; B. Anderson, 2013). This study, based in Sweden, follows migrants taking part in state-regulated second language education—Swedish for Immigrants (SFI). It examines their experiences of making a life in a new country. Language education has been stated as a prerequisite for

citizenship and employment, and previous studies have shown that migrants view SFI as crucial for their future life prospects (Rosén, 2014), but insufficient for meeting their own and others' expectations of necessary language skills (Ahlgren & Rydell, 2020).

Previous research has shown that the nation-state, as the foundation for securing individuals' welfare and rights, shapes specific patterns of inclusion and exclusion (B. Anderson, 2013; Sassen, 1996). Traditionally, Sweden has been depicted as a welfare state with a universalistic social policy and inclusionary migration policies (Dahlstedt & Neergaard, 2016; Schierup & Ålund, 2011). However, during recent decades, Sweden has moved towards an increasingly strict social support policy (Ferrarini et al., 2012) and migration policy (Andersson, 2014; Djampour, 2018; Khosravi, 2010). In 2015, an

increase in asylum seekers in Sweden (Swedish Migration Agency, 2023) was labelled “the refugee crisis” and stricter migration policies followed. For example, temporary residence permits were accorded instead of permanent residence permits (SFS, 2016), and certain conditions for permanent residence and family reunification have been issued, such as income requirements and a “well-behaved lifestyle” (SOU, 2021). Furthermore, the government is investigating the use of language skills tests and knowledge of Swedish society as a requirement for permanent residency and citizenship (SOU, 2023). The government proposes “a new model for welfare qualification,” which further emphasises individual responsibility; for example, stricter activity requirements for migrants to participate in education or work to get income support (Government Offices of Sweden, n.d.). These changes reflect a stricter migration policy and a shift from citizens’ welfare being secured by individuals’ participation in the labour market, rather than social insurance systems, thus emphasising individual duties rather than rights (Dahlstedt & Neergaard, 2016). These changes sharpen the demands on migrants to become “the good migrant” (Jansson & Wernesjö, 2021). While employment and language learning are at the centre of migrants’ strivings and individual plans (Norton, 2000), social inclusion is also a matter of being *let in* (cf. Grip, 2019). The stricter Swedish migration and welfare policies reflect a will to limit and select who is to be let in. Given these changes towards an even stronger emphasis on individual responsibility for inclusion, we argue that it is important to highlight migrants’ experiences of establishment and inclusion. In this article, we aim to examine migrants’ positioning in relation to language learning and social inclusion in the process of making a life in a new country, using positioning theory to analyse their narratives. How do migrants position themselves in narratives of language learning and establishment? Which beliefs about duties and rights are given meaning in their positioning?

2. Migrants’ Learning and Identity Processes

Learning the majority language is seen as a form of respectability, and striving to develop one’s language skills becomes a way of being accepted (Ahlgren & Rydell, 2020). Language learning can also be related to, e.g., parenthood and the ability to communicate with preschool, school, healthcare institutions, etc. Language abilities have been understood as resources that increase women’s everyday power and enable them to meet their own expectations of motherhood (Carlson, 2002). Simultaneously, Norton (2000) suggests that being a mother can encourage migrants to use the language to speak to natives, giving them a position as “legitimate” speakers, and help them resist a given, marginalised position of a “migrant woman.” Similarly, Miller (2010) shows how migrants spoke about themselves as active agents in the areas of language learn-

ing, immigration, and work. Even if their linguistic agency was restricted to specific areas, these areas were seen as meaningful arenas for identity formation.

Consequently, the negotiation of identity in migration processes is not separated from how migrants are construed in migration policy. Norton (2000) shows that the feeling of being inferior as a language user restricted migrants from speaking. Thunborg et al. (2021), who use a social and biographical perspective, show how asylum seekers learn either to be marginalised and disconnected or to co-participate in their local community, and in relation to Swedish society overall. Access to formal language studies appeared important for learning Swedish as well as for gaining legitimacy for participation in society, whereas access to many other various communities was crucial to experience a sense of belonging in society. Moreover, migrants’ life aspirations were conditioned by their participation in the communities they belonged to and anchored in their biographical experiences, for example, being a good student or having an entrepreneurial approach to life (Thunborg et al., 2021).

Previous studies of adult education or labour market initiatives for migrants have problematised how these may support migrants in developing language and cultural awareness. At the same time, if shaped by a deficit discourse that construes them as lacking, migrants may be restricted from assuming previous identities or using capital accumulated through their biography (Carlson, 2002; Morrice, 2014). Migrant students in Swedish adult education who found themselves treated as “others” by Swedish students and teachers, responded by distinguishing themselves from the “other others,” that is, migrants who were not adjusting to mainstream society. Broad categorisations of migrants, therefore, imply that heterogeneity and hierarchies among migrants (and non-migrants) based on ethnicity, race, gender, and class, become invisible (Hägerström, 2004).

3. Theoretical Frame

The migration process implies a detachment between migrants’ past and present, which might cause migrants to rethink what they are and could be (Morrice, 2014). In this article, we use positioning theory as a frame for analysing how migrants, in interviews, position themselves. We understand this as identity formation, where identity is a nexus of different positions, which implies that even if there is a main position, other positions can be present within the same narrative.

Subject positions are assumed by individuals, even as they may be positioned in other ways by people around them (Davies & Harré, 1990). Positions are thus contingent and open for renegotiations in different settings (Darvin & Norton, 2014). One aspect of positioning is ideas about what we are entitled or obliged to do; rights and duties that are distributed differently, enabling different positions in different settings (Van Langenhove, 2022). The concept of positioning is thus closely linked to

how societal discourses provide different positions, but do not determine how one positions oneself. The concept of agency in narratives, moreover, can help us understand which discourses, beliefs, or ideas are relevant when positioning oneself and others (Deppermann, 2015). In this study, we focus on how participants describe themselves, as well as which normative and moral ideas of rights and duties are present in the positions taken (cf. K. T. Anderson, 2009; McVee, 2011).

We have chosen to complement positioning theory with Bourdieu's concepts of capital to highlight how different resources are given meaning as signs in migrants' positioning. It may seem contradictory to connect these two perspectives, discursive subject positioning, and production of social positions through societal distribution and valuation of resources. However, while the former helps us to understand migrants' social inclusion as discursive, the latter enables us to show how positioning interplays with resources. Positions are taken with the various resources the individual has accumulated and desires, as well as one's own and others' recognition of these resources. For example, we use educational qualifications, a form of institutionalised capital, and embodied cultural capital. Embodied capital is a system of dispositions, a base for how individuals think, act, and orientate themselves (Bourdieu, 1986). As such, and taking linguistic capital as an example, a legitimised way of speaking may be a necessity for being recognised in a social domain and also influence how one perceives one's own social worth (Bourdieu, 1991). The very same capital can be valued in one community while misrecognised in another. When being recognised and valued, capitals become symbolic (Bourdieu, 1998). Hence, we argue that the interplay between subject positioning and the meaning given to different capital is of particular interest when understanding the process of establishment and inclusion in a new country.

4. Context and Method

The data in this article are generated within a large longitudinal research project about migrants' trajectories of social inclusion and the meaning-making of these trajectories. The main material in this project comprises semi-structured interviews with migrants on two different occasions: first, when they were enrolled in different types of language education and then 1.5 to 2.5 years later. This article is based on interviews with migrants who participated in SFI. Unlike participants from other educational contexts in the project, they had all been granted a residence permit and were somewhat established in Sweden. In the first round, we interviewed 32 SFI students. In the second round, all of those we could reach, and who agreed to participate, were interviewed—it was a total of 17 participants (11 women and six men).

The first interviews were conducted face-to-face in two SFI schools in two Swedish municipalities.

We included students from all three study tracks offered in SFI: study track 1 for students with low/no educational background, study track 2 and 3 for the ones with a medium and high educational background. The participants were also mixed in terms of age and mother tongue, and comprised both men and women, although the latter were in the majority. For the second interview, we used Zoom or telephone, since the participants were by then scattered across the country. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. The study has been through ethical vetting and is guided by ethical guidelines for research in social science and humanities. The participants were informed of the aims and procedures of the study and data handling, and that participation was voluntary and confidential. This information was given in Swedish, with few complex words and a personal address to facilitate understanding. The participants gave oral and written consent before taking part in the study.

The interviews were conducted in Swedish, but two of the follow-up interviews were performed with a licensed interpreter and, in one case, a grown-up daughter of the participant acted as a translator, since it was requested by the participant. We understand interviews as a mutual construct between participant and researcher (cf. Brinkmann & Kvale, 2009). Using an interpreter implies the risk of the interpreter adding their own understanding as a filter between the participants and the interviewer (Norlund Shaswar, 2021). To reduce this risk, we gave the interpreters detailed information about the purpose of the project and explained what we expected from the interviews. Since the participants understood and spoke some Swedish, the interpreters' translations were also confirmed by the participants repeating what the interpreters said or adding additional corresponding information in Swedish.

The focus in both rounds of interviews was the migrants' experiences of SFI education, language learning, and their everyday lives. We also asked about their actions, opportunities, and obstacles in making a life in Sweden. During the first interview, participants talked about their experiences from the perspective of currently being enrolled in SFI and their prospects. In the follow-up interview, they had either finished SFI or taken a break from it. We asked about what had happened since leaving SFI, their current life, dreams, and goals for the future, and what they felt they needed to get there.

In the analysis process, we read the interviews of the 17 participants overall to get an idea of how the migrants positioned themselves in relation to their experiences of language learning and establishment, dreams, and plans, which were given meaning in their narratives. In the second stage, we selected five participants' narratives that were analysed in more depth and a more holistic sense. This selection was made to capture the different positions we saw in the material as a whole. Where more than one participant accounted for a similar main position, we based our selection on participant differences

in terms of age, countries of origin, educational background, family situation, length of time in Sweden, and reasons for migrating. This was to reflect if, and how, different conditions interplayed with the positionings. Thus, two participants in our selection of five had no previous education when arriving in Sweden, another had studied for six years, a fourth had finished secondary school, and the fifth had studied at university. Two migrated to Sweden as asylum seekers, one for work, and the other two to join a Swedish partner or a family member.

The analysis of the selected participants' interviews was made from an empirical point of departure since we first wrote the narratives closely based on what the participants accounted for generally in their trajectory in Sweden. Then we re-wrote the narratives in relation to the participants' positioning when looking at SFI in retrospect, and what significance they gave to other issues for their present and future social inclusion. We illustrate each selected narrative with one main position found in our analysis, even if this position is intertwined with other positions. The quotations have been translated into English. The following questions have guided our presentations of the migrant narratives: What are the participant's dreams and goals? What actions has she taken to achieve these? And how does she describe her prospects in relation to personal history, present situation, and opportunities? In the analysis, we focus on the participants' positioning in their narratives of establishing themselves in Sweden, and how this is done concerning ideas of rights, duties, and capital.

5. Findings: Positioning in the (Re)Construction of Life in a New Country

Below we present our findings in terms of five different positions in the participants' narratives about learning the language and making a life in Sweden. Then we analyse these positions, focusing both on individual conditions and common features of positioning in their narratives of establishment and inclusion.

5.1. Emina: A Qualified Professional

Emina was 39 years old at the time of our first interview and had then been living in Sweden for three years. She moved from Serbia when her husband obtained employment in Sweden, and they set out to make a better living. Emina described herself as a well-educated, professional woman. In Serbia, she and her husband had qualified jobs and owned a house, which in her narrative are important aspects of her past as well as of her aspirations for the future.

Emina got a bachelor's degree in business administration from Serbia and wanted to continue her professional career in Sweden. At the time of the first interview, she was enrolled in SFI and undertaking an internship as a business administrator. She found the internship useful for learning specific legislation, rules, and concepts

used within business administration in Sweden. Higher education and being a professional can, thus, be seen as cultural capital, but Emina needed to develop language skills for this capital to be recognised and useful to her in Sweden.

In the second interview, Emina described SFI as useful for developing everyday language skills, shopping, or paying a visit to the doctor. These basic language skills enabled her to continue studying and to develop her abilities to read and write in Swedish. Emina positioned herself as someone who strived to learn more than basic linguistic skills. After some time in Sweden, Emina's husband was unemployed, and life turned out differently than expected. For Emina, being a professional and having a job is about making a living, but also important for her to feel a sense of meaningfulness and purpose in life. Furthermore, employment offers an opportunity to save money, buy a house, and live a different kind of life. The family lived in a rental apartment in a residential area that she described as "not very good, but OK for a start." She missed socialising with her neighbours as they had done in Serbia and expressed a desire to recapture parts of her past life, such as being recognised as a skilled professional, living in a house, and having a meaningful social life.

Moreover, Emina positioned herself as someone actively striving towards her goals. She described how she took care of her well-being and health by doing exercise and creating meaningful spare time. She learned Swedish terms related to her profession and took part in different job-seeking activities. Emina positioned herself as different from "other migrants" in her neighbourhood, who she said did not want to work and had little understanding of her ambitions to do so. Emina described herself as "more like Swedes than other migrants" and positioned herself in relation to ideas about a good citizen in Sweden (cf. B. Anderson, 2013). Following this line, her willingness to work and make a living came across as a duty expected of her as a response to the opportunities she had been given: "I think like a Swede, I respect Sweden for accepting me and giving me an opportunity to develop in Sweden." Due to competition in the labour market and the importance of social networks providing informal knowledge about vacancies and recognising candidates for employment, Emina found this duty was not easily fulfilled:

There are many migrants, and Swedes are the first ones to get the jobs, but that is normal. But I do hope that they [employers] will see that I am a business administrator, motivated, and that I have my diplomas.

Here, Emina acknowledges labour market structures where Swedes are prioritised for employment and hopes to be recognised as a professional and potential employee in the future. Swedes are positioned as the ones being prioritised in the employment market.

In Emina's narrative, language learning appears as a sign of her willingness and efforts to work but is not sufficient to get a job (cf. Ahlgren & Rydell, 2020). She described how lacking employment and a salary hindered her from buying a house in a more high-status Swedish-speaking neighbourhood. Buying a house, in turn, can enable the accumulation of social and symbolic capital needed to once again be recognised and valued as a well-educated and qualified professional.

5.2. Sarah: An Emerging Swede

Sarah was in her early 20s and moved to Sweden from the US with her Swedish boyfriend. She had finished high school in the US and had worked in a restaurant/shop and a library. In the first interview, Sarah was about to finish her last SFI course after six months of studies. In the follow-up interview, she had finished more advanced Swedish studies and was studying a course in the non-formal adult education system, which aimed to prepare students for complementary education or university. Sarah did not yet know what work she wanted to do in the future.

Sarah positioned herself as wanting to become a Swede. To her, this was both about feeling like a Swede and being acknowledged as such. To reach these goals she stressed how she had strived to learn the Swedish language and wanted to speak Swedish as fluently as her mother tongue. She found it easier to make friends and socialise when speaking Swedish, since not everyone knows English, or could be shy about speaking it. Speaking Swedish made her feel "a greater part of the society." Sarah positioned herself as a committed language student who had chosen to enroll SFI to learn the language adequately and as a keen language learner in other contexts by saying that she consistently spoke Swedish instead of English with her boyfriend's family and friends, her colleagues, and friends from school. She often watched or listened to Swedish TV and radio and read books in Swedish. She commented that she had come to feel more like a Swede since she had become more "prepared to speak Swedish" in different contexts, and sometimes thought in Swedish. Sarah, moreover, positions herself as someone who "adopted a lot of Swedish culture," consuming Swedish media and doing "common Swedish things" with native Swedes.

However, Sarah stated that the process of becoming a Swede didn't depend on her own efforts alone. In hindsight, SFI was described as a place where to practise Swedish without being afraid of making mistakes (cf. Puigdevall et al., 2022) and Sarah confirmed that SFI had helped her develop an understanding of what it meant to work in study groups and how teaching is conducted within adult education in Sweden. In this sense, it has led to the development of embodied, cultural capital. Moreover, she said that she was encouraged by her boyfriend's family and friends to use her Swedish. A significant person was her boyfriend's mother, with whom

she "could take a coffee or a walk with." Also, when comparing herself to other migrants, Sarah commented that she had learned Swedish quicker than most. When positioning herself, she acknowledged her previous studies, the cultural capital, that had facilitated this process: "I know that I got an education from the US; that I have studied other languages before."

But despite the right to education, her social and cultural capital, and her efforts to learn the language, Sarah still positioned herself as an outsider. She talked about how people around her would discover that she was not one of them when she spoke Swedish: "If I don't talk, people think that I'm Swedish." Also, she wanted to gain formal Swedish citizenship:

Sometimes when one is a migrant it feels like one is not [taken] seriously as a part of society....But to say that "yes, I'm a Swedish citizen"—then, I believe, you will be regarded in a different way, as if one is serious about being here and wants to be here and has one's life here, too.

As the quote illustrates, the right to become a formal citizen in Sweden could serve as evidence that Sarah intended to live in Sweden permanently and as a token of her willingness to enter Swedish society (cf. Grip, 2019). Consequently, formal citizenship was given a symbolic value in her sense of being a Swede and being recognised by others as such. As we have seen, duties, rights, and capital play a part in Sarah's narrative. Like Emina, she showed a willingness to perform her duties as a migrant by actively learning the new language and adjusting to Swedish culture (cf., e.g., Abdulla, 2017; Grip, 2019). At the same time, her social and cultural capital, and the right to language education and citizenship, were central conditions in her positioning as an emerging Swede.

5.3. Dawit: An Emerging Adult

Dawit was 20 years old at the time of our first interview. He came to Sweden with his family as a quota refugee from Eritrea in 2017. Before arriving in Sweden, he had studied for six years in school. In his narrative, Dawit positions himself as an emerging adult. When newly arrived in Sweden, Dawit studied the educational program Language Introduction, organised by his upper secondary school for people under the age of 20 to support them in becoming eligible for a national secondary program. When he turned 20, he was referred to SFI and studied at study track 2. Coming from Language Introduction to SFI, he was surprised to find that the other students were the age of his parents. This prompted him to finish SFI quickly to be able to take other courses in which he hoped to meet students his own age.

At the time of the second interview, Dawit had finished SFI and had both started and dropped out of the continuing formal Swedish as a Second Language course.

He worked in a factory and lived together with his mother and siblings. An important goal for Dawit was to move to a flat of his own: “I become an adult, almost 23 years old....I will study too, distant studies or something. Thus, I need to be at home by myself. Need accommodation.” Previously, he also wished to live in a bigger city, buy an attractive car and a house, get married, and travel.

Future work is given significance in Dawit’s positioning as becoming an adult. When still an SFI student, he talked about working as a car mechanic or a salesperson. He saw SFI as useful for learning Swedish, which, in turn, was crucial for getting a job. Work itself was also useful for learning more Swedish, to “enter Sweden.” Later, when he started to work, he wanted to resume his studies in Swedish and go on to study other subjects, to start his own business—preferably a shop—or work as a mechanic or driver. He wanted a job where the noise level did not prevent him from talking with colleagues.

Consequently, language was viewed as a condition for work and interaction. Dawit expressed that the Swedish he had learned in SFI had been vital to getting his driver’s license, getting his present employment, and communicating with others. He said that his Swedish was sufficient for communication in situations where he had a pre-understanding and could make use of body language, but he still wanted to develop it: “I do believe it’s sufficient for [a] job or other, but I try to...know more. Because I live here. One must know.” Further on, Dawit said that he needed to develop his Swedish to be able to make jokes with colleagues and friends.

Dawit gave value to his social capital, e.g., for developing linguistic capital. During the first interview, he played football and described this as an opportunity to speak Swedish and experience fellowship. Later, he stressed his Language Introduction course as crucial for accumulating social capital. There, he found other migrant friends to speak Swedish with. These social contacts were valuable: “We talk...we studied [together]. Now, again, we meet at work....Sometimes we recollect what we did in school or something that happened...another life.” The quotation indicates that Dawit shared the processes of becoming an adult in a new country with friends, how it is to go from Language Introduction to work. Furthermore, his friends saw him as a good Swedish speaker:

They believe I talk Swedish completely. Then, I become a bit happy [laughter]. In front of them, I’m a bit knowledgeable....And I help them...they become happy: “Oh, you have studied and know well.”...“We wish to know as much as you do.”

In this sense, Dawit presents himself as a role model in the circle of friends, other young adults about to establish themselves in a new country. Accordingly, he appears as the one who has advanced furthest in the process. It’s reasonable to think that Dawit’s access to his circle of friends and, previously, the football commu-

nity, was essential to his sense of belonging in Sweden (cf. Thunborg et al., 2021).

Being young, Dawit is not only establishing himself in a new country but also as a grown-up. Thus, age appears as a crucial aspect of his positioning.

5.4. *Dian: An Active and Able Learner*

Dian was 21 years old at the time of the first interview. She came to Sweden with her father and daughter after fleeing from Afghanistan. Dian had no previous education when she was enrolled in SFI, and worried about learning a new language without knowing how to read or write in her mother tongue. This experience is crucial in Dian’s positioning. She began by telling us about when she started SFI, and how her first teacher wanted her to write the letters of the alphabet:

I just looked at him because I didn’t know how to do it. During the coffee break, I told a friend: “I can’t do it [read and write]; what am I to do?” My friend told me that the teacher had helped her and told me: “This is a good course—you can do it!” I thought OK. The next time the teacher took my hand and wanted me to write letters, I tried and after some time, I had learned how to read and write, and to speak Swedish.

Dian describes how the teacher’s high expectations and the reassurance from her fellow students became a starting point for her to view herself as an able learner. When she learned to read and write and develop her skills in Swedish, Dian tells us she became more independent. She could read timetables to take the bus on her own and help her daughter with homework (cf. Carlson, 2002). By stating her confidence and motivation to learn, Dian positioned herself as different from some of her friends from SFI, who described her as a smart and fast-learning student. Dian stressed her willingness to learn, and the importance of positive thinking about oneself and one’s ability: “You will learn, and it is important to believe in yourself. If you have a negative attitude, it gets difficult.”

Dian positioned herself as a language learner both inside and outside school and gave several examples of her efforts, such as listening to Swedish radio and podcasts and watching the news and children’s programs on TV. Moreover, she wanted to be a role model for her friends by encouraging them to learn and recommending different websites and podcasts.

In our first interview, Dian expressed that in the future she wanted to work as a childcare worker and develop her Swedish language to make a living and a good life for herself and her daughter. At the time of the second interview, Dian had moved towards this goal by taking more advanced second language studies and was enrolled in education to become a childcare worker. These studies had mostly been online, which implied less support from the teacher and difficulties in making new

friends among the other students. Friends were important to Dian. She wanted to meet friends who were studying to be—or working as—childminders. They could help her get a job and provide her with opportunities to speak Swedish. Her neighbours were not Swedes, but she tried to speak Swedish with them and with the teachers at her daughter's school. Thus, for Dian, social relations appear as useful social capital, both for professional and private reasons, to achieve a sense of belonging and to be able to fulfil her goals.

In Dian's narrative, language education appears as a right that enables fundamental learning and supports her own agency to continue her learning process. Simultaneously, however, she lacked the social networks needed to continue her language development and establish herself both in the labour market and with Swedish-speaking friends.

5.5. *Hawa: A Responsible Mother*

Hawa was 42 years old at the time of our second interview. She was from Somalia and had lived in Sweden for about 13 years. Like Dian, Hawa had not gone to school before she began SFI. In Somalia, she had been selling vegetables in a market stall. In Hawa's narrative, she primarily positions herself as a responsible mother, something that conditioned and guided her actions. When Hawa enrolled in SFI, she felt stressed and found it hard to study, since her son had been left in Somalia. Later, having three more children, her language studies were interrupted by parental leave. In the first interview, when she was in SFI, she said that she liked coming to class and was disappointed when she had to take time off to nurse her children when they were sick. In this sense, her motherhood made it difficult for her to study and learn Swedish. At the same time, Hawa's responsibility as a parent motivated her to learn Swedish: "The school—I've got to practise Swedish...only me. Strong mother, lonely mother." While in the first interview, learning the language appeared as a duty that she struggled to fulfil, in the second interview, she could see an improvement in her language skills:

The teachers helped me. And I didn't know how to make sentences....A little thing I have learned is a little maths, and another example is to tell the time. I can help my children a bit, not much, but I can help them a little. When I receive an SMS, when I can speak, it's easier for me to understand. Before, I didn't understand anything.

The quote illustrates how Hawa positions herself as a mother when describing the value of learning Swedish. The basic non-linguistic skills that she learned in SFI, such as maths and telling time, are issues also found in the children's syllabus in school, and SFI helped her to communicate better in Swedish, which meant that she could talk to her children's teachers. In this sense, language

learning helped her be the mother that she wanted to be (cf. Carlson, 2002). Hawa's motherhood was also visible in how she positioned herself as an active learner of Swedish. She took the opportunity to learn the language by watching children's TV programs and by talking Swedish with her children. Hawa's narrative indicates that, without the right to language education and her own efforts to learn Swedish, she would have difficulties in acquiring capital useful for fulfilling the parental role she desired.

During the second interview, Hawa had dropped out of SFI and was enrolled in a work-integrated education programme. This included a course about work life and a trainee job as a hall monitor in a lower secondary school. She walked the corridors because this was presumed to have a calming effect on students, many of whom also spoke Somali. When Hawa talked about this job, she said: "I only watch the children, but I get a salary anyway." When asked if there was something that she was happy about her job, she added: "Firstly, I'm content to have a job. Secondly, it's near my house. The school I work in is close to home, so it's easier for me to fetch and leave my children." Thus, Hawa's position as a mother was also present in her assessment of her employment situation.

Like the others, Hawa strived to learn the language and establish herself, but to a greater extent, she positioned herself as a responsible mother. Parenthood was a source of motivation, as it both restrained and provided her with opportunities to learn Swedish.

5.6. *Positioning as Active, Adaptive, and Aspirational*

All five positions reflect a strife to establishing oneself in relation to, e.g., work, education, parenting, independence, and Swedishness. A common feature is that the participants position themselves as subjects who take responsibility for reaching their goals by presenting themselves as active agents, giving different examples of how they actively practiced Swedish to improve their language skills, pursued education, and work, as well as took part in social settings. In these positions, duties are more prominent than rights. In the narratives, all participants use several examples of actions, approaches, and values to position themselves in line with the common social norms and expectations in Sweden. These positions can be understood as a response to discourses of the "good migrant and citizen" and show one's willingness to "enter" Swedish society (Abdulla, 2017; B. Anderson, 2013; Fejes, 2010; Grip, 2019; Jansson & Wernesjö, 2021). For example, language education is something that could be understood as a right, being offered and voluntary, but viewed in the narratives, as well as the current migration discourses, it is framed as a duty and a condition for inclusion (Dahlstedt et al., 2021). The emphasis on being a good migrant by fulfilling one's duties can, furthermore, be regarded as distancing oneself from "other migrants" who are depicted as less motivated and less active in fulfilling these expectations.

Even if the participants all had residence permits and had taken part in the SFI project, language development and striving for inclusion appeared as ongoing activities. As illustrated above, such actions can be interpreted as striving to live up to common expectations, as a sign of belonging (cf. Norton, 2000), and to take part in various social contexts. Language skills are important, e.g., to socialise and make friends, to get the kind of job one wants, and to help one's children in school. Moreover, by speaking Swedish, participants hoped to get recognised, for example as professionals or as Swedes, and, thus, resist being positioned as migrants (cf. Norton, 2000). This positioning can be understood as a negotiation of identity between discourses of the "good migrant" and one's individual past, present, and desires for the future (cf. Darvin & Norton, 2014; Davies & Harré, 1990).

In their positioning, the participants give examples of how they are perceived by others and what kind of expectations they experience from teachers, family, and friends. Both Dawit and Dian present themselves as role models for their friends in terms of language development and diligence in their studies, while Emina stresses that other migrants are surprised by her striving to get a job. In this sense, they use others' descriptions of themselves to strengthen their position, thus appearing as active, adaptive, and aspirational.

These positions were taken in relation to the participants' overall situation in life and the different kinds of capital they had or needed to acquire to reach their goals. Sarah arrived in Sweden with the social status of being an English-speaking American and having a Swedish boyfriend, secondary education, and some work-life experience. Emina had a higher education degree and a professional identity. Dawit had some education and was still a youth, which meant that his establishment had similarities with any youth striving for adulthood. Dian and Hawa both lacked previous education and employment. It is reasonable to assume that these differences affected their goals. In the process of forming an identity in Sweden, it was important for Emina to have her existing capital recognised, whereas for Sarah it was to feel like—and be recognised as—a Swede. In Dian's, Dawit's, and Hawa's narratives, recognition was emphasised less, while the accumulation of educational and social capital was more prominent and important for them to reach their goals. Consequently, these positionings reflect a negotiation between participants' past, present, and what they wanted to become and be recognised as (cf. Morrice, 2014). Considerations of material conditions, however, are also present in this negotiation, especially when it comes to what aspirations were regarded as possible.

6. Conclusions

The aim of this article has been to examine migrants' positioning in relation to language learning and social inclusion. We examine how migrants position them-

selves in narratives of language learning and establishment, and which beliefs about duties and rights are given meaning in their positioning. We have sought to picture the complexity of becoming established in a new country by taking a discursive perspective while, at the same time, taking material conditions into account. Due to this focus, other features emerge from the individual narratives—e.g., gender and literacy—that would be interesting to focus on in further studies on positioning. This could contribute to an intersectional understanding of migrants' inclusion.

The study has shown that positioning, partly, is made in relation to perceived duties to society. Being a "responsible migrant," in line with current discourses, is a prerequisite to being included in Sweden. The participants position themselves as active agents in terms of language learning and establishment (cf. Miller, 2010). They highlight how they had made use of language education and learning as opportunities to fulfil such duties, but also emphasise the need to develop their language for the sake of taking part in social settings and being recognised by others. Furthermore, the study shows that the participants' life situations, and what capital they had accumulated, played a role in how they made sense of social inclusion and what future they saw for themselves. For example, labour market establishment comes across both as a goal and as a tool for further inclusion, regardless of whether the goal is to be able to leave home, be a good parent, get a qualified professional position, etc. Thus, even if identities are construed in relation to the discourse and positions offered, there are other resources needed for establishment and inclusion; in other words, it is not enough to be "a good migrant."

Establishment and inclusion need to be understood as a question of recognition, as well as opportunities to work, obtain residence, and be able to combine language learning and work with parenthood (cf. Abdulla, 2017; B. Anderson, 2013; Grip, 2019). The "good migrant" discourse and a more restrictive migration policy, which focuses on individual responsibility as a key to inclusion, fail to provide a broader understanding of the various conditions that enable migrants to take part in, be let in, and be recognised by society.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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