

# 'Lives in Limbo: Comparing the Experiences of Forced Migrants Access to and Participation in Higher Education.

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- Research Overview
- Methodological Approach
- Key Findings
- Article 26 Project



# Overview . . .



**UK Refugee Sector**



**Access to Higher Education**

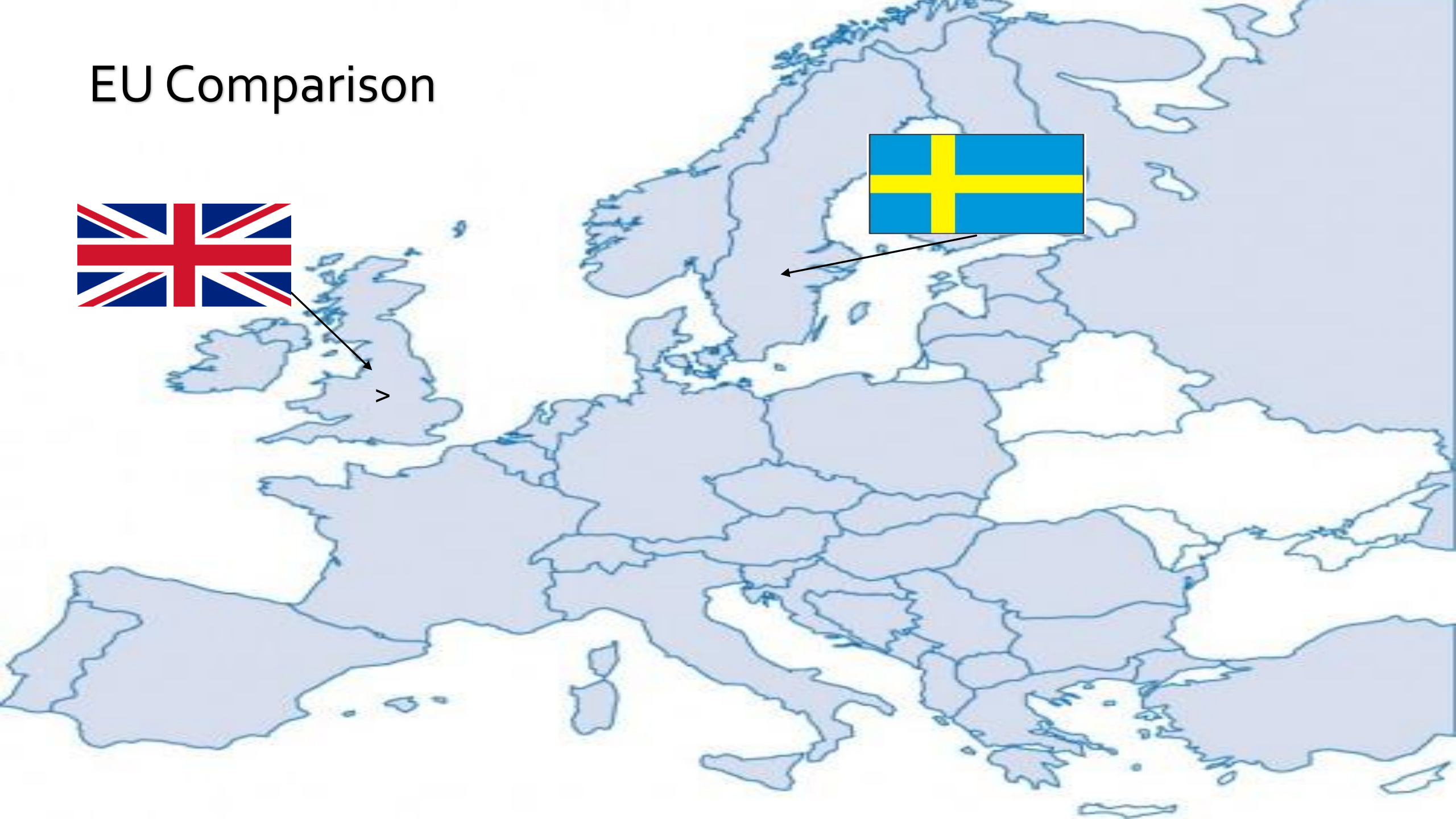


**Article 26 Project**



**PhD Research**

# EU Comparison



# Case Study Methodology

## University Case Study

- Decision makers – Executive Board
- Student Support
- Academic staff
- Compliance – Home Office
- Forced migrant students

## Key Informants

- HE governance
- Immigration governance
- Student Unions
- Employment
- Asylum / Refugee NGO's

# Data Collection

## Sweden

- Universities: 3 (3)
- University Representatives: 26
- Forced Migrants: 14
- Key Informants: 14

## England

- Universities: 3 (18)
- University Representatives: 27
- Forced Migrants: 12 (47)
- Key Informants: 6

# (In)visibility

*"Equal in every way"*

*"We don't have the forced migrants as fully defined as you seem to have in the UK, I mean you seem to have many groups I have never heard of before, I didn't know they existed . . . not defining them may mean that we push them out in oblivion, somehow at the same time defining everyone all the time may actually lock them into a category, which they can't leave"*

***HEI Staff, Sweden***

*"I'm going to disappoint you in terms of the informality of the process"*

***Deputy VC, UK***

*"My job is about knowing the university very, very well and networking . . . "*

***Pro VC, UK***





## Focus . . .

1. Forced migrants aspirations and how they interconnect with experiences of limbo and the desire to pursue opportunities in HE and;
2. The practical reality navigating HE, as a forced migrant, in a new country and a new context.

## Hopes

- 1. Family (15/26)
- 2. Career (13/26)
- 3. Education (10/26)

## Fears

- 1. Unemployment (11/26)
- Status (7/26) Racism (7/26)
- Return (4/26) Hope (4/26)

*Foucault (2001)*

*Isin (1999, 2009)*

*Yuval-Davis (2007, 2015)*

## Limbo & HE...

- **Limbo – ‘waiting’**
- **Higher Education – exercise agency**
- **i) Acute**
- **ii) Anticipatory**
- **iii) Blocked Return (Day & White, 2002)**

## Anticipatory . . .

- *“Because you can get like residency, there is like also like the social way, like the social atmosphere is slightly able to live and, there are many universities, or you can say that many countries, they are almost free to study, France, and Germany. There are many programmes in English and there is like a system which is clear, how to apply”*

**Peter, Syrian Refugee in Sweden**

## Calculating Limbo . . .

*"So suddenly I am a legal resident of a country where I will not be asked to leave under any circumstances . . . the idea by itself is very exhausting because it's just very uncommon for somebody who lived 22, 23 years of his life with the pre-assumption that he might be hurt any moment, whether by the political regime or by the limbo he was born into"*

**Halil Palestinian – Syrian in Sweden**

## Ideological Approach. . .

- *"In our country like the government is our enemy or the people's enemy and we're always afraid of them . . . what I saw in Sweden they love their country and they respect not only the country but the government, the politicians they trust them "*

**Mohammed Syrian in Sweden**

## Advice . . .

- *“In the broader sense, I mean, it feels like you’re fighting, there’s a layer of the system that is there, that is invisible when you’re on the outside and when you come in, then you see it, oh this is actually how it is”*

**Victor, Zimbabwean in the UK**

## Advice . . .

- *"It (Swedish HE) has been changed and changed and changed and it's, in a way, been more and more narrow and more and more complicated, so you have to have a degree to understand the **system**"*

**Student Support staff working in a Swedish University**



## Accrediting Prior Learning. . .

- *“Cultural capital has particular currency in the field of education, comprising embodied (dispositions, sets of meaning and modes of thinking), objectified (access to cultural goods such as art, literature) and institutionalised forms (educational/academic qualifications) that are given recognition by those who are already dominant within the field” (Devine, 2009: 522)*

# Accrediting Prior Learning. . .

## UK

- 8/12 Research Participants arrived as children.
- 7/8 Appropriate Education commensurate with age.
- 4 arrived as adults – university education.

## Sweden

- 14 / 14 arrived as adults – university education.
- Interrupted / UG / PG

## Accrediting Prior Learning. . .

- *"It's the shock of knowing that back home you had a house, you were your own person, you had a job, you did a really well-paying job and then getting to a different country and realising you haven't got anything. At all."*
- *"It just needed to be done. I decided if I wanted to be doing the pot washing and the cleaning jobs forever, I would just leave it, but I decided if I needed to get a better job, I better just start wherever. I needed to start"*

Rose, Zimbabwean in the UK

# Language Acquisition . . .

- i) Long Way (Lange Vagen)
- ii) Short Way (Korta Vagen)
- iii) Informal Learning
- iv) Bypass Swedish
- v) Tandem Language & Study

- *"We had a really really good girl who came from Syria who had low Swedish experience she had only lived here for 2 or 3 months, she managed to finish SAS3 really quickly, but at the same time they drop the motivation if they see this long distance from when I start to come here to Sweden and before I came to practice my work. I think that's really bad because if we have lots of people who are ready and they are screaming for nurses and doctors, but the system is shut down because we have always done it like this and I think we need to see how we can have a quicker way"*

Student Support staff working in a Swedish University

# Initiatives. . .

## UK

- 12/12 studying at degree level – foundation, UG or PG
- Status / finance

## Sweden

- 5 / 14 studying at degree level - English
- 9 Korta Vagen OR Informal Language
- Language / accrediting qualifications

***UK** – deter entry all international students  
– deter entry forced migrants.  
Response – individual university level –  
develop collaborative network.*

***Sweden** – state support – challenge  
numbers – tackling APL / Swedish  
Language.*



**article 26**

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# EDUCATION FOR ALL

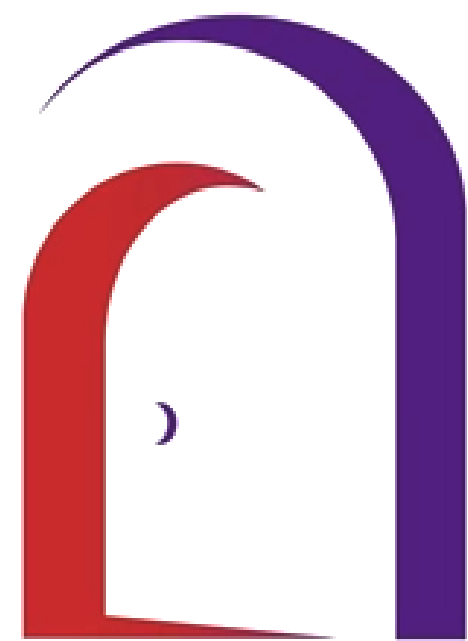
*Access to higher education for people who have sought asylum; a guide for universities.*

BY REBECCA MURRAY,  
JESSICA HOPE AND HILARY TURLEY



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Children's Legal Centre



## article 26

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