

Amon- Search for Acceptance

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Amon is twenty-two years old and was born in Uzbekistan where he lived with his mother and younger sister. Several factors led Amon and his family to leave Uzbekistan. Firstly, the fact that Amon is of 'mixed heritage,' his grandmother was a Ukrainian Jew and his grandfather Uzbek, resulted in the family being harassed by police, neighbours and schoolmates. Secondly, Uzbekistan as a country experienced great changes with the president taking full control over the country, something that resulted in violence and disturbances. More specifically, it affected Amon; in addition to being harassed for being of Jewish descent, a bomb exploded at his mother's workplace. These episodes led to the third reason that influenced their decision to leave Uzbekistan, his mother's deteriorating mental health.

His understanding of this period is rather vague. When Amon was around twelve years old his mother and aunt decided it was time to leave Uzbekistan. They paid a man to drive them out of the country, and for Amon, this journey felt long. Suddenly the man asked them to wait for him at a bus station, but he never returned. The family had arrived in Gothenburg. After meeting with the migration office it was decided the family should move to a small town outside of Gothenburg to determine their residency. After three years in Sweden, their application for residency was rejected. This resulted in the family moving first to Germany and then later to France and then applying for residency there. In France, Amon received information that he had to return to Sweden. His mother and sister stayed in France, and live there to this day. Amon returned to Gothenburg in 2005 together with his aunt. He was first placed in a small town in the middle of Sweden, but then moved back to Gothenburg. This time Amon was granted residency in Sweden.

The process of him and his family having to move between countries was depleting for Amon. In every new context he tried to adapt in different ways. Wherever he arrived he had to get a new job. Without a job he had nothing to do and could only sit and think about his situation. He also had to start over and over again with a new apartment or room and new furniture and other necessities. When returning to Sweden the last time, he couldn't keep up this pace anymore and felt angry and sad for being tossed around and for having to leave his family behind in France.



The Refugee Camp where Amon lived for several years

Amon lived several years together with other immigrants in accommodations for refugees. He tells us that the first language he learned in Sweden wasn't Swedish but Serbian. He talks about a "we and them-culture" developing and how myths kept spreading about "Swedish people." At one point Amon asked to be moved back to Gothenburg with his aunt who lived there. There he met a Swedish girl and also became a father, he describes this time as

ground-breaking. Prior to this he could never had seen himself with a Swedish girl. This experience changed his perspective on Sweden, himself and his situation.

The first time in Sweden, Amon learned Swedish and went to school with other kids. He completed elementary school but had to leave Sweden before attending high school. Now when he returned to Sweden he was offered internships, since he already had learned Swedish. But no matter where he lived, Amon has always been very eager to do something. He therefore has had many different jobs both paid and unpaid. When returning to Gothenburg, he worked as a receptionist at a hotel. Using the knowledge he received from living in different countries and the various languages he knew, he got the job. The hotel later got sold forcing Amon to quit his job. At this point Amon, through his social worker, got in touch with the Swedish Scouts.

“Yes now I perceive it in a Swedish way, when I began with Scouts, which are Swedish Scouts. Those are real Swedes. I mean there is no difference in being able to socialize with a Swedish person. [...] The second thing was the Scouts; that was when I started working with Swedish Scouts, with real Swedish people who have been Scouts for a long time, since they were kids.”

Through the Scouts, Amon received specialized Scouts training. He became deeply interested in their activities and he describes his relationship with the Scouts as “something that woke him up.” He recognizes the importance of the Scout activities in ensuring that children do not get involved in crime. Based on his extensive motivation and training, he was given greater responsibilities within the organization and now works there. Through the organization, he has also been given the opportunity to attend a training course consisting of four classes at the university level.



He feels that being involved in the Scouts has given him a window to the “real Sweden” and that he finally gets to meet Swedish people. All and all this makes him quite optimistic about his future. Eventually, he would like to get a formal education so that he can attain the job of his dreams, which is to work inside the service sector and preferably at a hotel. He also wishes to stay in the Scouts. Amon has faced several difficulties in being accepted into Swedish society. Firstly, his background of continuously being uprooted from different contexts and countries and then having to reinvent himself in a new situation. In every

country he lived in he has always tried to adapt, mostly to obtain employment. Second of all, in Sweden, he has been living with other immigrants creating a “we and them culture” as he describes it. However through the relationship with his now ex-girlfriend and the child they have, his situation began to change and he found himself celebrating traditional Swedish holidays. Lastly, his involvement in the Scouts has given him a more nuanced understanding of Swedish society and culture. Despite Amon having a hard time being included in Swedish society, he seems to have gotten to a point where he feels quite satisfied with his situation and sees a bright future ahead.