Friend or Foe?
A discourse analysis of two Swedish political parties’ policies on immigration

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ABSTRACT

The political playing field of Sweden has seen a lot of change in past years. Immigration is being increasingly challenged, the most obvious sign being the entry of the Sweden Democrat party into parliament in 2010 as a result of increasing discontent with the current immigration policies of the state. The purpose of this study is to see how each party legitimizes and motivates their opinions on refugee and labour immigration. In the thesis I present a discourse analysis of the immigration policy of the Sweden Democrat party and the Left Party. The reason for choosing the Left Party is their contrasting view and outspoken sentiment against the policy of the Sweden Democrat party. The analysis is of official party documents or motions that represent the views of each party on labour immigration and refugee immigration. An open society perspective is also described and used to critically analyze each parties’ opinions. The results are that the Sweden Democrats and the Left Party base their opinions on different views of what immigration results in. From an open society perspective both parties are found viewing immigration with the wrong approach.

Keywords: Labour immigration, Refugee immigration, Left Party, Sweden Democrats, Open society.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The world is globalizing and the past century has seen an unprecedented expansion of the world-economy. This has been enabled by rapid technological progress. Large numbers of people across the world have been left out on the benefits of it however, and this has led to large inequalities in the global economy. Many people turn to migration in the hopes of a more financially secure future. It was estimated there were 214 million people living outside their country of origin in 2010, around three percent of the world’s population (UNFPA, 2013). Migration is a central topic within social geography and a broad field of study. One can examine how the migration policies of a country is affected by globalization to studying the effects of immigration on the economy of a region to name a few subjects.

Sweden has a long history of migration. As Figure 1 demonstrates, periods of immigration and periods of emigration have relieved each other in varying intervals and the Swedish welfare state has in the recent decades had a generous immigration policy when compared to the rest of Europe (Brochmann and Hagelund, 2012). Figure 1 shows how immigration and emigration has fluctuated between the years 1900-2012. Important to note is that in 2012 roughly 20 % of the immigration was by Swedish citizens living abroad, amounting to 20 462 individuals out of a total of 103 059 (Migrationsverket, 2013).

Swedish migration statistics 1900-2012

![Swedish migration statistics 1900-2012](image)

*Figure 1. Number of migrants between the years 1900-2012 split into immigrants and emigrants. Source: Adapted from statistics from SCB (2013).*
Since the end of World War II Sweden has been a country of increasing immigration. Labour and refugee migrants have constituted major parts of this migration and have in part shaped the multicultural society it is considered today (Svanberg and Tydén, 2005).

The most vocal opponent of the current migration policies of Sweden are the Sweden Democrats, who first entered the parliament after the 2010 election. Their opinions of the Swedish migration policies are that they are disastrous for the Swedish national identity and culture. One of the most vocal opponents of the Sweden Democrats is the Left Party. The most well-known instance displaying the tensions between the parties possibly being that of the Left Party leader, Lars Ohly, refusing to be in the same make-up room as the Sweden Democrat leader, Jimmie Åkesson, at the post-election party leader debate in 2010. These parties represent two views on immigration that are vastly different and with both parties experiencing increasing support in the polls before the 2014 elections it is important and timely to try to understand what each party advocates and why. The riots in Stockholm in May 2013 are seen by the Sweden Democrats as a manifestation of the tensions caused by immigration. They blamed the riots on a failed immigration and integration policy (Aktuell Debatt, 2013). The Left Party stated that the riots were a symptom of a bigger problem, that the people living in the suburbs felt marginalised and ignored by the authorities (Ahmed and Liv, 2013). The language that the Left Party and the Sweden Democrats use is very different and this has led me to the point of interest that I intend to analyse in this thesis, namely how each party uses language to portray a specific image on immigration through the use of discourse.

1.1 Purpose and problem definition

Migration is being increasingly challenged in modern day Sweden. The entry of the Sweden Democrats into the Swedish parliament is the first time a self-proclaimed nationalist party got past the 4 % requisite to enter the riksdag (Sverigedemokraterna, 2011b). With a migration platform based on a restrictive immigration policy both for refugees and labour migrants, a sort of protectionism of the Swedish economy and labour market, they argue that putting a part of the money saved from the various integration projects into foreign aid would have far better effects both for Sweden and the potential immigrants. While the Sweden Democrats argue for an immigration policy protecting what they describe as Swedish national identity and culture, the Left Party argues for an immigration policy based on human rights and equality. Arguments include that all people have an equal right to freedom and security and so they advocate a loosening of the restriction on refugee immigration while keeping labour migration restricted. In this thesis I intend to identify and critically analyse the stances in immigration policy of the Sweden Democrats and the Left Party. I have phrased a set of questions I intend to try to answer in this thesis:

- What are the potential outcomes of an ‘open society’ policy for a country?
- What is the migration discourse of the Left Party and the Sweden Democrats?
- How can one critically analyse each discourse from an ‘open society’-perspective?
1.2 Delimitations
Due to the limited time frame of this thesis I will focus on the discourse of labour immigration and refugee immigration. By labour immigration I am referring to people who choose to move for work reasons, i.e. they already have employment when migrating. By refugee immigration I am referring to immigrants who choose or are forced to leave their country of origin because of fears of persecution for various reasons or because they are fleeing an armed conflict. Due to the focus on these two groups I am excluding any other group of migrants that are brought up in the migration platforms. The risk of this is that I may lose out on information that would have been of interest and could have given further insight to the subject of the study (Esaiasson et al., 2012). The approach of an open society perspective was chosen based on principle of equality, that every individual has an equal right to freedom of choice and equality before law. I felt that other perspectives of the subject presented views that contained more flaws and were in many cases based on distorted values. A closed society perspective was dismissed due to how it would value people differently based on where they came from, something that was deemed as unsustainable in the modern, globalized world where the integration of communities into the global society is increasing and a driving force in many economies.

1.3 Disposition
In the second chapter I will give a description of what could be considered the more important changes and events in Swedish immigration policy since the end of the Second World War. The third chapter focuses on methods and outlines the approach to discourse analysis that is used in the thesis. The fourth chapter presents key theories on migration being used and also describes the open society framework that will be used to critically analyse each party’s discourse. The fifth chapter presents each party’s discourse divided into two major sections, one for each party, with subsections on labour immigration and refugee immigration. Chapter six contains the analysis of each perspective from an open society perspective and chapter seven contains the final discussion where the findings and their relevance will be discussed.

1.4 Positioning
In this chapter I will position the thesis and problematize my role as the author of it further than I did in the previous chapters. This is important since the thesis will be written based on the researcher’s interpretation of language, and that language according to discourse analysis constructs reality. Because of this it is also important to remember that my perspective has been shaped by the discourse I have been exposed to previously in my life. Being from a family where one parent immigrated to Sweden means that the political discourse on immigration has had an impact on my life and it also has had an affect on my view on immigration. I believe in the idea of equal rights for all individuals regardless of heritage or origin, to name the most obvious example. I come from an academic family, both parents have university degrees, one in natural science and one in education, so my perception of the discourse on migration might be different from those with other backgrounds. My experiences in the past and my background have positioned me in a way that could have an impact on the approach on the thesis. Self-reflexivity
and critical thinking will hopefully help me overcome these challenges and possibly let my background be an asset in the course of the project. This will hopefully make readers aware that I, as the author of the thesis, have opinions on the subject and that even things such as the choice of limiting my study to labour and refugee migration is a type of bias.

2. POST-WORLD WAR II SWEDISH IMMIGRATION POLICY

The migration aspects of geography have had a major impact on Sweden in the past century. Before World War II Sweden had mainly been an emigrant country, with 1.5 million people leaving the country between the years 1850-1930, this changed during and after the war (Brochmann and Hagelund, 2012). During the war Sweden had been dependent on refugees, mainly from the neighboring countries of Norway and Denmark, for use as labour in the industries. When the war ended most of the refugees returned to their country of origin and there was a desperate need for manpower in Swedish industries, having been untouched in the war which gave Sweden a favorable position in the new European economy (Boguslaw, 2012; Brochmann and Hagelund, 2012). Throughout the decades since the end of the war the migration policies of Sweden have changed many times and this chapter serves to describe the key changes affecting refugee and labour immigration from 1945-2012 to give an overview on the history of the subject.

1945-1960

There was an openness to labour immigration after 1945. Following the end of the war up until the 1950s agreements with a few selected countries made it easy for those countries citizens to migrate to Sweden in search for a job on one condition; that they join a union upon being employed. In the 1950s the agreements were changed so that companies that were in need of foreign workers would contact the Swedish Board of Labour and the board in turn would consult the related union and, if given the green light, enter into an agreement with the board of labour in the country being recruited from. Towards the end of the 1950s the amount of people recruited had slowed down and reached low levels compared to the immediate post-war years (Boguslaw 2012: Brochmann and Hagelund, 2012).

At the end of the war it was estimated that there were a total of 90 000 refugees inside Sweden. Most came from the neighbouring Nordic countries and most of these returned home after the war (Brochmann and Hagelund, 2012). In the post-war years the definition of the term refugee was established in Sweden. Among other things, one could be considered a refugee by the Swedish state if one could be persecuted due to political background. The United Nations refugee convention was ratified in 1951 followed by the Geneva Convention in 1954. These served to guarantee certain rights and benefits that countries had to offer refugees within their

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1 Authors translation, original wording “Arbetsmarknadsstyrelsen” (Boguslaw, 2012: 59)
borders to ensure their well-being. Towards the end of the decade, in 1959, the visa requirements for refugees were abolished. (Boguslaw, 2012)

1960-1980

In the 1960s the labour immigration policy of Sweden shifted to a more restrictive approach regarding non-Scandinavian people. A debate on what the long-term effects of the open labour migration policies could have was taking place. The labour migration had not become less beneficial for Sweden from an economical point of view, an official inquiry on the labour market situation actually recommended more efforts to increase migration, but the unions were afraid that increased labour migration would lead to increased segregation where foreign workers would suffer from socio-economic marginalisation (Brochmann and Hagelund, 2012). Despite these changes, labour immigration from non-Scandinavian countries remained a large portion of total labour immigration, accounting for nearly half of the labour immigration to Sweden. It was not until the recession of 1971-1972 that the actual enactments of these policies were put in motion. The largest union federation in Sweden, LO, advocated a shift in policy so that focus was placed on marginalised Swedish groups, namely the elderly, the young and the disabled. This policy of a restrictive labour migration has largely remained in place until 2012 (Boguslaw, 2012; Brochmann and Hagelund, 2012).

The 1960s were mostly uneventful in Swedish refugee and asylum policies and regulations, the one thing of interest being the New York protocol to the Geneva Convention which was ratified in 1967, enabling refugee classification for people who had been on the run since before the year 1951. The amount of refugees entering Sweden remained relatively low in the 1960s when compared to the amount of labour immigrants, numbering only a few thousand per year on average. This number increased in the beginning of the 1970s as the number of labour immigrants were becoming increasingly restricted (Brochmann and Hagelund, 2012). Before the 1970s Swedish refugee policy was based entirely on the Geneva Convention and the UN refugee convention but in 1975 it was supplemented by the Swedish Aliens Act (Boguslaw, 2012; Brochmann and Hagelund, 2012). The supplemental changes were made to include de facto refugees and also conscientious objectors, people who were not classified as refugees according to the either convention but were in similar situations as the defined refugees (Boguslaw, 2012). It also added an exception paragraph that could be invoked if the amount of refugees was deemed large enough to have a serious impact on the welfare of the state, without any clear definition of how large a number that would be. The exception paragraph of the Swedish Aliens Act was used for the first time in 1976 after 6000 Assyrians from Turkey had entered the country within a short period of time, most of them settling in Södertälje (Brochmann and Hagelund, 2012).
The restrictions on labour immigration that had been passed in the 1970s meant a decline in the amount of labour migrants making it into Sweden from non-Nordic countries in the 1980s and 1990s. When Sweden joined the European Economic Area (EEA) on January 1st 1994 it meant that immigration laws were changed to adapt to the requirements of free mobility for labour between member countries. This also made the transition into the European Union (EU) membership that followed a year later easier as laws had been enacted regarding free mobility between the EEA countries, which consisted of the entire EU and a few countries outside the EU (Svanberg and Tydén, 2005). This had little effect in Sweden since people from other EU countries still needed a residence permit to stay in Sweden for longer than 3 months, something that was not granted without an employment, while the other Nordic countries did not need any kind of residence permit to move between each other meaning that most available jobs went to citizens of the Nordic countries.

Changes to the immigrant law in 1980 added the formal United Nation definition of the word ‘refugee’ to the Swedish legislation, a definition that had been applied in cases but not been official previously. Throughout the decade refugee immigration had been on the rise, but this was set to change with the Lucia decision on December 13th 1989, the second time the Swedish Aliens Acts exception paragraph was invoked. The amount of refugees that had entered within a 6-month period was equal to what was planned in the budget of 1989 and 1990 combined (Brochmann and Hagelund, 2012; Svanberg and Tydén, 2005). Brochmann and Hagelund (2012) describe how it is possible to deduce that this was the Swedish government’s way of sending a message to the outside world that Swedish immigration policy was no longer as generous as its reputation suggested. In 1991 a major change in the approach to immigration and refugee politics could be seen as the change of the department responsible for it, from the Ministry of Employment to the newly created Ministry of Culture. A repatriation perspective was also established as a part of the Swedish immigration politics. The immigrant law was changed again in 1997, the additions meant that more reasons to grant asylum were added. At the same time the concepts of de facto refugee and conscientious objector were removed from the legislation. In 1999 the responsibility of refugee and immigration politics again moved, this time from the Ministry of Culture to the Swedish Migration Board (Boguslaw, 2012). With the economic crisis of the 1990s a discussion on the effectiveness of the integration of refugees into the Swedish society got more heated and a reform of the daily allowance for those in asylum centers was passed. This meant that those who lived in asylum centers while waiting for their process to be completed were given tasks such as cleaning and minor repairs. If they refused their daily allowance was reduced. This was meant to help the newcomers’ self-confidence and also improve their surrounding community’s opinion of them. (Brochmann and Hagelund, 2012)

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2 The Nordic countries in alphabetical order: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.
In the beginning of the 2000s labour migration was only to be allowed to fill needs that could not be met by the domestic labour market, and foreign workers were supposed to have equal salaries and working conditions as the Swedish workers. In 2005 a new immigrant law was adopted, much of it resembling the previous one. One of the major changes was the discontinuation of the Alien Appeals Board and its subsequent replacement with migration courts that would in the future handle appeals in cases regarding migration (Brochmann and Hagelund, 2012). The change of government in 2006 led to a new policy on labour migration that went into effect in 2008 with the purpose to simplify recruitment from third countries (Boguslaw, 2012). The biggest change was that labour market testing was abolished and the responsibility for assessing the need was moved to employers from the Swedish Migration Board and the Swedish Public Employment Service. (Brochmann and Hagelund, 2012). This was meant to ease up labour migration restriction on third country citizens.

In the 2000s the changes to Swedish immigration policy were mainly caused by directives from the supranational EU-level. Sweden’s entry into the Schengen-cooperation forced Sweden to expand the number of countries which citizens had to present visas to enter Sweden in order to have uniform visa requirements for entry into an EU-country. This was due to the fact that once you enter the EU the internal borders you do not have passport controls because of the intended freedom of movement between member countries. The Dublin regulation in 2003 meant that any refugees entering the EU had to apply in asylum in the first country they entered, making it considerably more difficult to make it all the way to Sweden for those entering through southern Europe (ECRE, 201). Changes to the law were made in 2010 to adapt to EU legislation. This meant that Sweden could now exclude individuals that were suspected of committing war crimes; violent crimes unrelated to politics or had been involved in activities threatening the national security that would be continued after entering Sweden. The last major change was that it allowed for the reconsideration of an individual’s refugee status once the situation that caused it could be considered to have changed (Boguslaw, 2012; Brochmann and Hagelund, 2012).

2.1 Summary

The late 1940s and the 1950s were characterised by an open immigration policy with a focus on labour immigration that was motivated by a lack of available domestic labour. Refugee migration did not constitute more than a small portion of total immigration. Restrictions were made in the 1960s after pressure from major unions. These were motivated by the need to ensure that quality and equal conditions could be guaranteed for workers already within Sweden. In the 1970s the amount of refugees seeking shelter in Sweden was increasing steadily, at the same time the amount of labour immigration was decreasing. The Swedish labour immigration policy that was established in the 1970s largely remained until the late 2000s. The Swedish refugee policy

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3 Third countries mean countries that are not member states of the EU.
4 Labour market testing is the practice of having government institution assess the need of foreign labour for the domestic market.
5 The EU has internal and external borders, internal borders are borders between member countries.
throughout the 1970s and 1980s went through several changes. The classification of who could be classified as refugees was broadened and the exception clause added to the immigrant law in 1975 was utilised twice, supposedly to prevent threats to the Swedish welfare state and ensure that everyone received was met with humane conditions. The second time it was used in 1989, the *Lucia decision*, is often seen as the start of a more restrictive refugee immigration policy by the Swedish state. In the 1990s and 2000s the Swedish legislation on immigration was modified in order to comply with EU legislation. Labour immigration restrictions were lifted for EU-citizens⁶ while third country controls were made stricter. This led to a freedom of movement within the EU but also made it harder for refugees to make their way to Sweden due to the Dublin Regulation passed in 2003 which forces refugees to apply for asylum in the first EU country they enter. In 2008 labour immigration restrictions for third country citizens were liberalised and the responsibility for assessing the necessity of it was moved to employers from the Swedish state.

Figure 2 shows a timeline to illustrate a summary of the general development of immigration and parts of immigration policy in Sweden from 1945-2012.

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⁶ Citizens of any of the member countries of the European Union.
3. METHOD

Migration is a very broad field of study and depending on what one intends to research, the choice of methods vary greatly - from interviewing migrants to get their perspective on a certain point of interest to analyzing data to try to generalize statistics such as migration flows. This study is centered on political views on migration in Sweden, focusing on the two parties in parliament that are positioned at the furthest left and the furthest right of the political spectrum. Most of the thesis will be based on a qualitative discourse analysis of policy documents, motions and debate articles written by politicians from each party. Textual analysis will be the main focus of the analysis due to the fact that the opinions and position of a political party are expressed and summarized in the form of policy documents such as party programs. Using a qualitative analysis instead of a quantitative one is especially useful when looking for potential underlying messages that are not explicitly stated, and also when certain passages of a text are considered more important than others. Qualitative discourse analysis is about answering questions, such as what is the point of a text? Or what are the arguments and on what premises is the conclusion based? In short it allows for a more intense and immersive examination of what is essential for the understanding of the topic (Esaiasson et al., 2012: 210).

This leads me to what I intend to analyze which is the Sweden Democrat stance on labour and refugee migration, most of which is summed up in their immigration political action program. The Left Party does not have an official program on immigration, however, and to identify their policy on migration I read several key motions where they have stated their positioning on migration and from that I answer the question of where they stand in policy on labour and refugee migration. In addition to these documents I have also analyzed the main programs of the parties, interviews of party members in newspapers and debate articles written by members and published in newspapers to look for statements supporting or defying official positioning documents. To give more depth to the study I framed it in the context of an open society perspective, mainly based on Richard Florida’s book Flight of the Creative Class which describes the US dependency on immigration (Florida, 2002). This perspective allowed me to gain distance from the policy analysis of the political parties.

In the last few years discourse analysis has experienced a rapid growth of use in social sciences and gone from being controversial (Bergström and Borèus, 2012: 353) to being seen as one of the most common means of textual analysis (Esaiasson et al., 2012: 212; Winther Jørgensen and Phillips, 2000: 7). Bergström and Borèus (2012: 354) go on to state that the orientation is associated with certain perceptions about what constitutes meaning in social relations and language and that it can be regarded as both method and theory. As I read documents, articles and motions I used discourse analysis as a method but I also be used the theories that come with it in my thesis.

A reflexive approach in parts of the thesis gave me, and hopefully readers as well, an awareness of the fact that what is written is not objective truth but rather a representation of a particular and partial truth. It is important the narrative of the researcher is not seen as the truth
as the theoretical point of view of the researcher could have lead him or her see certain things in the material being analysed while being blind to other things (Robertson in Bergström and Boréus, 2012: 254). To write the thesis in its entirety as an observer would give the impression of presenting impartial truth (Hain, 2005: 257). Since qualitative research is interpretative by nature there is much debate regarding how the validity and authenticity of it can be assessed (Hain, 2005: 259). Jones suggests (in Hain, 2005: 257) that there is a risk when writing reflexively that the use of personal pronouns replaces reason with emotion, making what is written into a work of fiction. Hain (2012: 257) goes on to state that reflexivity employed through first person perspective should be used to draw attention to assumptions embedded in research texts.

With discourse analysis being a broad as both theoretical and methodological frameworks I will need to clarify the method and theoretical approach which will be used and influence the study.

3.1 Discourse as theory and as method

In this chapter I will start by presenting my understanding of discourse as theory and method. I will also elaborate and define said understanding so that it is clear which approach is being used and why. Winther Jørgensen and Phillips (2000: 7) describe discourse as a specific way to talk about and understand the world or a part of it\(^7\). The need for defining how I understand discourse becomes clear when put in those words; it is a very vague description and gives little insight into what it could actually mean. In discourse analysis, theory and method are interconnected with each other in a package deal of four parts: philosophical premises on the role of language, theoretical models, methodological guidelines and specific techniques for language analysis (Winther Jørgensen and Phillips, 2000: 10).

Both Bergström and Boréus (2012: 358) and Winther Jørgensen and Phillips (2010: 12ff) bring up several orientations for discourse analysis. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe represent one of two poststructuralist theories while Michel Foucault presents the other for Bergström and Boréus (2012: 358). The third orientation comes from Norman Fairclough whose orientation represents the critical discourse analysis (Winther Jørgensen and Phillips, 2000: 13). Post-structuralist language philosophy is what the discourse analytical approach is based upon, this kind of language philosophy claims that our access to what is real is always maintained through the means of language. Basically, language constructs the social world and how we perceive what happens around us (Winther Jørgensen and Phillips, 2000: 15f). Out of the three orientations to discourse analysis I have chosen to use the post-structuralist one by Laclau and Mouffe.

Two theoretical traditions were major contributors to Laclau and Mouffe when building their theory, Marxism and poststructuralism/structuralism. Winther and Jørgensen (2000: 32) describe how the former works as a springboard for theorising on the social parts of discourse

\(^7\) Authors translation, original wording “(diskurs är) ett bestämt sätt att tala om och förstå världen (eller ett utsnitt av världen)” (Winther Jørgensen and Phillips, 2000: 7)
while the latter gives a theory on meaning. There is also a clear connection to the semiotic tradition where language is viewed as a system of signs. According to semiotics expression and concept are two separate things, meaning that the name of something and the meaning of it are separate entities. When you combine name and meaning you get a sign. When you create a sequence of signs you get an equivalence chain. With this in mind one understands that the individual meanings of signs are open to question, discourse takes interest in how the process of placing meaning in signs actually work. In political discourse this is especially important, an example being how different the words freedom and democracy are perceived, the word element is used to describe the ambiguity of discourse and all signs in a discourse are elements. Floating signifiers are elements that are especially open to interpretation. Signs that act as parent signs, signs that are above others in the hierarchy and weigh more heavily in the meaning are called master signifiers (Bergström and Boréus, 2012: 365; Winther Jørgensen and Phillips, 2000: 33ff).

A description of concepts to describe the content and stability is also useful when using discourse analysis. The first concept will be referred to as nodal points. The concept of nodal points describes how discourse is established when meaning forms around key nodal points (Winther Jørgensen and Phillips, 2000: 33). The concept of democracy that was raised earlier works as a nodal point in political discourse where signs such as elections and parliament could connect to it. Nodal points in themselves have no meaning but gain it from the signs and elements they are connected to. Since nodal points have no fixed meanings they easily change, so if the relationships between the nodal points change it can also change the nodal points themselves. When signs are connected to one another the potential meanings of the signs are reduced in number allowing one to rule out the meanings that are not accurate, in this way Laclau and Mouffe argue that discourse is a reduction of possibilities, the excluded possibilities being referred to as the discursive field. In short, the discursive field is everything that the discourse excludes (Winther Jørgensen and Phillips, 2000: 33f). What Laclau and Mouffe try to clarify by all of this is that no signs have a fixed meaning; meaning is derived from context such as the relationship with other signs.

Instability in discourse is described with the words antagonism and dislocation. Antagonism in this instance is described as a war about the creation of meaning on a language level. The ambiguity of signs leaves a lot undecided and antagonism is a result of the power struggle between different meanings, though differing identities of signs does not have to lead to antagonism between them. As an example, an individual can be a politician and Swedish at the same time, it is when being either prevents the being of the other that an antagonistic relationship is established (Winther Jørgensen and Phillips, 2000). The opposite of antagonism in this case would be described as hegemony. The definition of hegemony in Merriam-Webster’s dictionary is influence or control over another country, a group of people, etc., in this case it would be through the means of language. Hegemonic discourse is discourse that has stabilized and there

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8 Authors translation, original wording “diskurs är således en reducering av möjligheter” (Winther Jørgensen and Phillips, 2000: 34)
are no differing potential meanings of the discourse (Bergström and Boréus, 2012). Antagonism and hegemony are similar since both signify a fixation of elements (Winther Jørgensen and Phillips, 2000).

Identity concepts are an important part of analyzing political discourse for several reasons, one being since ideology and identity are highly connected. Subject positions and subject, which Laclau and Mouffe describe as the same, explain the position in a discourse a person has. With this position there come certain expectations on how the subject should behave (Winther Jørgensen and Phillips, 2000). Subjects are fragmented meaning that they have different identities in different contexts; it gains its identity through discursive representation. This means that identities are made up of equivalence chains, since the act of combining signs into these chains give clearer definition as to what something is and is not. From this the conclusion can be drawn that identities are relationally organised, the reason you are something is because there is something else that you are not. In principle this means an individual can always identify itself differently in a given situation and that a given identity is possible but not necessary, this is referred to as overdetermination (Winther Jørgensen and Phillips, 2000). By bringing out specific possibilities of identity and ignoring others, groups are identified. There are always differences within groups but these are ignored, even though these differences could have constituted other types of groups (Winther Jørgensen and Phillips, 2000).

The combination of what is written above form the key parts of Laclau and Mouffe’s theory. By de-constructing and analysing discourse it would enable one to see the relationship between the different meanings of it. If one can find the nodal points and master signifiers in the material being used one can begin to unravel how the discourses, identity and social space is organized discursively by examining how the points and signifiers are interconnected with other signs (Winther Jørgensen and Phillips, 2000). The first step of the analysis will follow the steps of identifying problem-cause-solution, which will clarify what the ideas will be in the discourse of the parties (Bergström and Boréus, 2012). When political parties identify the chain in their documents they do it to legitimise their action in the specific area, which in turn will be important for me to identify to successfully analyse the discourse. What the parties identify also serves as their perception of how something really is; it is their definition of reality. When you identify a problem, cause or solution you actively place a certain meaning in the spotlight while others end up in discursive field, away from the thought processes of your readers. Identifying what is in the discursive field will be what I will try to do to give more context on the discourse being used. In other words I will try to show how one can understand the discourse being included and the one left out and how to understand them.

Winther Jørgensen and Phillips (2000) talk about the risk of examining discourse that is closely related to the researcher or that the researcher has an opinion of. It is important that my personal views do not affect the writing which is why I will be analysing what is being said with theories on the areas of labour and refugee migration and from an open society perspective as a way of having an additional approach to the subjects. The open society perspective will show a
perspective on migration with which one can try to view the migration in the world in a different way.

3.2 Material
Figure 3 shows which documents will be used for the discourse analysis and the theoretical framework construction. The policy documents were chosen after contact with each party and they were presented as their official documents regarding labour and refugee immigration by the respective parties.

Sweden Democrat policy documents
- Arbetsmarknadspolitik (labour market politics), passed in 2011.
- Invandringspolitiskt handlingsprogram (Immigration political action program, passed in 2007.
- Sverigedemokraternas principprogram (policy program), passed in 2011.
- Motion 2013/14:Sf314 - Suggestion for new immigration policy.

Left Party policy documents
- Motion 2013/14:Sf220 - Left Party refugee immigration policy.
- Motion 2013/14:Sk376 - Left Party labour immigration policy.

Debate
- Debatt och beslut angående betänkande 2012/13:SfU7. (Sweden Democrats and Left Party in debate on immigration and asylum policy)

Theoretical framework construction

Figure 3. Material for use in discourse analysis and theoretical framework construction.
4. THE STUDY OF MIGRATION

The study of migration is problematic as there are many differing views on the aspects which should be included, two of which I believe play a special part in the aspects of labour and refugee migration. The first problem is whether one should study international migration on the regional or local level (Rogers 2004) which is decided by the scale of the study. In this case it is the region of Sweden and its relationship with international migration being studied. The second is whether focus should be put on macro- or micro-structures. Macro-structures describe migration as an effect of large-scale institutional factors such as interstate relationships, the political economy of the world market or laws and customs of sending and receiving countries. Micro-structures are the social aspects that migrants develop as a coping mechanism for migration and settlement (Castles and Miller, 2009). Since the thesis is covering labour and refugee migration and what the discourse on the two are there is a focus on the macro-structures used as a means of describing potential causes for these types of migration.

Two traditionally important factors that have been used when discussing labour migration can be found in the push/pull theory. The push and pull theory is used to describe why people choose to leave some places behind while other places seem to attract people instead (de Haas, 2010). Castles and Miller (2009) describe this theory as ahistorical and individualistic as it puts the focus on a rational individual choice of migrating where the individual in question compares benefits and consequences. Factors that restrict mobility, such as government restrictions on migration and immigration are not given much focus and in the end one has a description of migration as an investment, similar to that of investing in an education. According to this theory migrants should mainly be the poorest people from the least financially strong parts of the world moving to the richest parts of the world. Instead they advocate that migration is a movement of workers propelled by the dynamics of the transnational capitalist economy, which simultaneously determines both the “push” and the “pull” (Castles and Miller, 2009: 25). This implies that migration is more of a collective phenomenon that should be classified as a piece of the global economic and political system. With increased economic development one tends to see an increase in emigration in the same area. This indicates that those who migrate are not those worse off but are instead what could be called the middle class of area, often having a higher education level than the average. The term used to describe this is called the migration hump and governments that try to reduce migration by encouraging development could end up with the opposite result in a short term perspective, though in the long term it might have the wanted effect (Castles and Miller, 2009; de Haas, 2010).

Castles and Miller (2009) and de Haas (2010) go on to describe how migration theory has gone through several stages in the 20th century. The first decades after World War II was characterized by global labour migration and the view on migration was positive, it brought with it economic activity and profitability. The migrants gained knowledge and experiences which the migrants who returned home could use in their often less developed country of origin. With the financial crisis of the 1970s and the instability of the world market that followed the prosperous,
rebuilding post-war decades the view on migration became increasingly pessimistic. A historical-structural approach became prominent, describing how recruitment through labour migration from less developed countries was a part of the legacy of colonialism and led to the increasing underdevelopment and increasing dependency of poorer regions in relation to richer regions (Castles and Miller, 2009; de Haas, 2010).

Two theories of migration have become increasingly popular in the decades running up to the 21st century. The new economics of migration is the first theory and claims that migration is not the choice of individuals, but of households and families and similar social structures, sometimes even whole communities. Migration is used by people as a means of differentiating income and decreasing risk, but also to increase status in hierarchies. Migrants do not sever their connections to their household and family and continue to contribute to the households means of support (Massey, 2001: O’Reilly, 2012). The second theory is called transnational theory and describes how a rapid improvement in technology, especially transport and communication related, has made migration easier than in the past. It describes what international migration means by describing it with the words cross-border connections. Connections are formed between varying places of origin and destination with movement in both directions between the two and also with outside places, the latter commonly referred to as onward migration. For these connections to be classified as international migration it means either one or more individuals change their residence from one country to another over an extended period of time (Faist et al., 2013). Faster transports, the possibility of transferring capital and being able to instantly communicate with people all over the world by means of internet or telecommunication has made maintaining links to ones area of origin easier than ever before for migrants. This has led to an increase in migration while allowing the migrating people to keep their past connections in their new environments. Networks established by migrants make the process of following in their footsteps easier for people remaining in the area of origin (Castles and Miller, 2009; Raghuram et al., 2010).

The definition of refugee migration being used is the United Nations definition, stating that refugees are people who reside outside their country of origin who are unable or unwilling to return due to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality or membership of a particular social group or political opinion (UN General Assembly, 1951: 14). When reading this one understands that refugee migrants come from a wide variety of backgrounds and socioeconomic statuses as being persecuted is often the result of differences in culture or opinions. Migrants seeking asylum are people who claim to be refugees but whose status has not been decided yet (Brettell and Hollifield, 2008; Castles and Miller, 2009).

Labour migrants are considered to be people who relocate from one country to another for the purpose of employment, the reasons vary and include both temporary labour migration where the migrants intend to return to their country of origin and also when the migration is intended to be permanent. The poorest people do not have the capital required to relocate, this lies with the middle and upper classes of poor countries which means they make up the bulk of labour
migrants and of refugee migrants that move across continents (Brettell and Hollifield, 2008; Castles and Miller, 2009).

4.2 An open society
Whether or not immigration is beneficial or detrimental for a receiving country is disputed. Support for the latter is often based on arguments that migrants tend to be less educated, and unfamiliar with the cultures and languages of their new location and unwilling to adapt (Huntington 2004). Huntington described how, in the United States (US) as of 2004, the culture was being deconstructed by excessive immigration characterised by a resistance to assimilation. The immigrants chose to not conform to the culture of the US and this caused a schism in the society that also affected the economy in a negative way (Huntington, 2004).

What Huntington advocated was a more restrictive immigration policy with the arguments that it would benefit the economical and boost financial growth. His arguments claim that a uniform and cohesive culture is the key to a strong economy. This is challenged by Richard Florida (2005). Whereas Huntington sees culture as threatened, static and fragile, Florida sees the economic importance of culture in its ability to adapt and merge with other cultures so that the human talent can be efficiently used. He states that all individuals have a creative potential within them, and that culture is best used to create a society that attracts this potential and allows it to flourish. He uses the example of the US to support the theory, an ideological state, rather than an ethnic state, that in the 20th century grew to be the dominant force in the world economy (Florida, 2005). According to George Borjas (1995) the growth of the US during these decades are in part thanks to immigration. He emphasizes that the more different they are from native productive inputs the higher the financial benefits (Borjas, 1995). The risk being that the immigrants as a group are stratified as society does not accept them when they choose to retain their own language and habits. When presented as a foreign threat the view on immigrants tends to turn negative even if their impact on the economy of a region is positive (Esses et al., 2012). Roger Ballard (1996) describes the potential consequences of trying to restrict immigration and also potential repatriation plans as bound to fail, using Muslims in Europe as an example. The methods of restricting immigration and the potential use of repatriation will lead to increased polarisation between majorities and minorities, causing minorities to enter a defensive position and increasing their efforts to protect their ways of life, leading to an even wider schism between majority and minority and causing further conflicts that could have been avoided (Ballard, 1996).

Dummett (2004) studied immigration in the UK and came to the conclusion that it is important for countries to focus on improving their ability to attract immigrants and liberalising the immigration to the country. High-skilled and low-skilled immigrants have been the key to the success and dominance of the US on the world market (Florida, 2005; Gold, 2009). The high-skilled immigrants giving them a scientific, technological, and entrepreneurial success not possible without them, the low-skilled on the other side of the spectrum helped revitalize industries and communities across the country by providing talent and energy that had been lost in several areas, among them agriculture, manufacturing and service professions (Florida, 2005:
It is difficult to measure the benefits of this immigration because it is from such large geographic areas and in such a widely different range of professions. Immigration is described as the key component of modern-day economy and the success of several countries, among them the US and the UK. Without the openness to ideas and people from different cultures and backgrounds the situations of the countries would have been weaker in the past and present (Dummett, 2004; Florida, 2005). After the terrorist attacks on September 11th, 2001, the US began adopting a far more restrictive immigration policy. From 2001 to 2002 the amount of visas issued to scientists and engineers born in foreign countries decreased by 55 percent going from roughly 166 000 down to 74 000. This decline was seen across all fields of immigration, the amount of visas to the US that were issued declined by 40 percent and applications decreased as a result. Interest was shifting away from the US due to its more restrictive policy and closing society (Florida 2005).

4.3 Summary

In the beginning of the thesis the question “What are the potential outcomes of an ‘open society’ policy for a country?” was asked. Below will be a summary of the open society perspective as presented in previous parts of this chapter to answer the question.

Migration is not as simple as people moving from A to B but has far more implications such as connections made between the places in forms of economic and cultural exchanges to name two. Critics claim that these connections are a threat to the immigrated countries’ economies and national identities and that different cultures cannot co-exist peacefully but instead clash with each other over dominance. This view, from an open society perspective, is based on false assumptions. From the open society perspective cultures have no problem co-existing, it is encouraged to have open borders and welcome people who choose to live there as this leads to attracting people with an open mindset and willingness to contribute. What keeps immigrants from being a productive part of their new society is the special rules that are imposed on them by the host society. When a country closes itself to foreign potential and human capital it will lead to a faltering economy. What countries should strive for is attracting immigrants instead of trying to keep them out. An open society policy in a nation where every individual shares equal rights is seemingly the most obvious way to attract immigrants with protectionist policies of restricting immigration to protect jobs quite possibly being counter-productive. One of the biggest issues would be how to value previous experiences and education of the immigrants so as to not let it go to waste but at the same not let individuals without qualifications perform jobs that require them. According to what has been presented previously, the benefits of immigration outweigh the consequences. Appropriate scale of the immigration in proportion to the population and capacity of the area being migrated to is something that needs to be taken into consideration. Naturally the scale of immigration could be increased if the receiving country would value the experience, knowledge and potential of those immigrating by valuing their past experiences as equal to experiences accrued within its borders.
5. EMPIRICAL DATA

From the discourse analytical perspective the people who use language have power since those people can try to shape the way things the things they talk about are understood with a conscious and planned selection of words. By analysing the choice of words in the discourse one can try to see how the respective parties try to frame migration. I will, in the first part of the analysis, try to show how one can understand the chosen discourse of each party, finding nodal points as is stated in the method will be key to this. Nodal points are the words around which meaning is built, and therefore are very important to identify to be able to understand the discourse that is used. The second part will be based in the open society perspective to show how the respective parties’ policies relate to the open society theory. In accordance with the purpose of the thesis I will present the discourse of the Left Party and Sweden Democrats on the subjects of labour immigration and refugee immigration in this chapter. The quotes will be presented in the original language, Swedish, with translations to English available in the appendix of the thesis. They will be taken from the parties’ policy programs, motions in parliament and from debate articles in Swedish newspapers.

The nodal points that I bring with me from previous chapters in order to analyse how each party shapes their discourse are migration, labour migration (arbetskraftsinvandring), and refugee (flykting). In addition to these there will be several nodal points that will be brought up for each party since their discourses are based on different thoughts and ideas.

5.1 Left Party discourse

The Left Party do not state their official policy on migration in the form of programs or documents available on their website or in printed form, instead their immigration policy can be found in motions that they present in parliament. I will begin by presenting their discourse on refugee migration and then move on to their discourse on labour migration. In motion 2013/14:Sf220 the Left Party presents the core of their refugee and immigration policy. Motion 2013/14:Sk376 presents their policy on labour immigration. Betänkande 2013/14:SfU2 is where they state their general opinions on migration and expenditure.

5.1.1 Refugee immigration

The Left Party’s policy on refugee migration is one of openness and inclusion; this is mirrored in the opening statement of the Left Party refugee and immigration policy motion 2013/14:Sf220 which shows a positive attitude toward a more generous refugee policy.

Vänsterpartiet vill skapa en mänsklig och generös flyktingpolitik i Sverige och Europa (Motion 2013/14:Sf220).

The Left Party wishes to create a humane and generous refugee policy in Sweden and Europe.

[9] There will be several quotes throughout the presentation of the discourse, they will be presented in their original language of Swedish with an English translation of the quote by the author of this thesis following below in the same format.
They motivate the increased inclusiveness with the fact that every individual has the right to seek protection from persecution. When Sweden refuses asylum seekers and refugees it violates the human rights of the refugees. A large part of the problem according to the Left Party is that the debate on migration distorts the facts as to what causes people to seek refuge outside their area of origin. Politicians have started questioning whether or not those who seek refuge are actually fleeing from a real conflict or are just voluntary migrants looking for financial stability. According to the Left Party one can, by looking at the statistics of refugees arriving in Sweden, see that the majority are from conflict zones where there is widespread oppression either because of the political structure or because of armed conflict. They use the fact that Sweden is a major weapons exporter to claim that we are partially the cause of the problem and therefore have extra responsibility in helping those that are affected (Motion 2013/14:Sf220; Debatt angående betänkande 2012/13:SfU7).

Several of the main obstacles in the way of the Left Party’s vision of a more inclusive policy come from the European Union (EU). With the entry into the EU Sweden joined in a supranational cooperation regarding migration among other things. The EU passed several pieces of legislation on migration since Sweden’s entry with the intent to guarantee certain rights for immigrants coming from outside. One law that passed forces refugees to apply for asylum in the first EU member country they arrive in, which the Left Party point out prevents them from choosing where they wish to have their case tried. The EU has also entered into cooperation with third countries in regards to returning immigrants that are denied entry and founded an organisation for border patrols (Motion 2013/14:Sf220). The Left Party claim that these acts lead to breaches of human rights, that returning people who claim to be refugees to where they came from is endangering their lives, and that it shows how inappropriate it is with supranational agreements on migration. They also claim, using support from UNHCR publications, that the restriction on immigration that has been put into effect through the EU-cooperation has led to increased risks for refugees from the Middle East and Africa that try to enter Europe (Motion 2013/14:Sf220; UNHCR 2013).

The Left Party focuses their refugee migration discourse on the nodal points of human rights, building their arguments around everyone’s equal rights and value.
motivate and validate their opinions. They combine human rights with descriptions of threats to
the health and safety of refugees to portray individuals in need of help and support with a
justified fear for their well-being. Their opinion is that Sweden in its current state is accepting
too few refugees, in part because of the EU membership but also due to the restrictive policies
that are in place on a national level.

5.1.2 Labour immigration

The labour immigration policy of the Left Party is, unlike the refugee immigration policy, one
urging a more restrictive policy. Based on the fears that labour migration in many cases,
especially when it comes to low-income jobs, leads to living standards and working conditions
for the migrating worker that are below what was promised and in violation with Swedish law.
The deregulation of restrictions on labour migration between the years 2006-2013 has led to
exploitation of the system according to the Left Party (Motion 2013/14:Sk376).

The Left Party acknowledges the importance of labour migration on Swedish society during
the post-World War II decades and claims that a well formulated labour immigration policy can
be very beneficial. However, the way labour immigration policy works in Sweden as of 2013 it is
shaped in a way that is in many ways very flawed. Tax evasion and job security are the main
arguments that the Left Party use to motivate their stance on current labour immigration policy.
They claim that the way the system is now an increase in labour migration would lead to an
increase in unreported\textsuperscript{10} employment since employees brought in from outside the Swedish
system have little insight and knowledge about what rules and laws are applicable on the
Swedish market (Motion 2013/14:Sk376).

\begin{flushright}
För företag som vill vara seriösa blir skattefusk och svartarbete ett gissel eftersom de inte kan
konkurrera på lika villkor. För den enskilde innebär svartarbete en tillvaro i otrygghet och helt
utan rättigheter (Motion 2013/14:Sk376).
\end{flushright}

For businesses that wish to be legitimate, tax evasion and undeclared work are a scourge since it
prevents competition on equal terms. For the individual, unreported employment means an
uncertain existence completely without rights.

This is combined with the fact that immigrants entering Sweden on a labour visa face deportation
if they lose their employment leads to some employers using the employment as a damoclean
sword, threatening the labour immigrant into working unreported under poor conditions. At the
same time it’s contradictory towards the principles of equal human rights and value presented in
their refugee policy due to its discrimination against foreign workers wishing to work in Sweden
(Motion 2013/14:Sk376; Sjöstedt, 2013). The Left Party fears that an increase in labour
immigration would in turn lead to a trend of social dumping, decreasing the average salaries and
weakening the position of unions on the Swedish labour market. It is not out of a stated fear of

\textsuperscript{10} Unreported employment- translated from “svartjobb” meaning to work without reporting to the state,
usually as a means of tax evasion.
foreigners competing in the labour market with Swedish citizens, but out of a wish for everyone working in Sweden to have reasonable salaries and working conditions no matter their origin\textsuperscript{11}. They define basic trade union rights as a part of human rights that are in need of protection and are being increasingly threatened by financial interests (Motion 2013/14:Sk376).

The labour migration that the Left Party advocates is for specialist areas where competence is scarcer, rather than the low-income jobs without any requirements of prior knowledge of the field. The Left Party arguments against low-income and low-skill migration is that there are plenty of unemployed people in Sweden that are applying for these jobs and that if one would chose to employ someone immigrating for it, it is often not on the basis of competence or qualification but rather of the opportunity to find employees that would work for salaries far below union standards. They go on to state that the current labour immigration policy is part of a more widespread agenda of weakening the Swedish employees position on the labour market (Motion 2013/14:Sk376; Sjöstedt, 2013).

The Left Party argues for a restriction on current labour migration with the hopes that it would stop exploitation of labour immigrants and also prevent social dumping of salaries and working conditions. The main nodal points that they use to construct and validate their arguments in the discussion on labour migration are exploitation, social dumping and security. Building the discourse around these three key words they portray a picture of a labour market that is threatened, not from outside competition but from disreputable actors inside the actual market. The motivation to a more restrictive policy is to protect those coming from abroad from these disreputable actors and to ensure a reasonable quality of life for those in the market and those entering it, no matter if they enter from Sweden or the rest of the world.

In the next chapter I will present the contrasting views of the Sweden Democrats, a party that represents a more restrictive view on immigration based mainly on the idea of national identity instead of human rights.

5.2 Sweden Democrat discourse

The Sweden Democrats have four programs relating to their policies on refugee migration and labour migration. First I will present their discourse on refugee migration, and then I will present their discourse on labour migration. The refugee immigration policy document was passed in 2007 and has not changed since; the labour immigration policy document is dated to 2011. Complementing these will be the general policy program from 2011 and the shadow budget presented in 2013.

5.2.1 Refugee migration

In the opening sentence of the immigration political action program the Sweden Democrats present their viewpoint on several areas they consider being one whole. These four areas are

\textsuperscript{11} Authors translation, original wording: “Alla som arbetar i Sverige ska garanteras rimliga löner och arbetsvillkor, oavsett varifrån de kommer.” (Motion 2013/14:Sk376)
immigration, nationality, foreign aid, and refugee policy. They present a very critical view on current and past immigration policy.

...en alltför stor invandring på ett allvarligt sätt har kommit att hota den svenska nationella identiteten och sammanhållningen i landet (Sverigedemokraterna, 2007).

...an immigration that is too large has in a serious way come to threaten the Swedish national identity and cohesion in the country.

Immigration is considered a threat to the national identity and cohesion of the country, the Sweden Democrat solution to the problem is to re-establish a shared national identity which they claim will lead to a strong internal solidarity for Sweden. They state that they reject the concepts of multiculturalism and racism. Multiculturalism is defined as a social system that value different cultures equally or higher than the original culture of the social system in question and where the state encourages immigrants to hold on to their original culture (Sverigedemokraterna, 2011b). The key points of the Sweden Democrat immigration policy are presented as a more restrictive immigration policy, increased financial support for repatriation and requirements of assimilation with the Swedish national identity for immigrants (Sverigedemokraterna, 2007; Motion 2013/14:Sf314).

An important part of the discussion that the Sweden Democrats present is the concept of national identity. The Sweden Democrat definition of who is Swedish is stated as

Svensk är den som har en helt övervägande svensk identitet, och som av sig själv och av andra svenskar uppfattas som svensk (Sverigedemokraterna, 2007).

Swedish is the person who has a predominantly Swedish identity, and who is perceived by itself and other Swedish people as Swedish.

Translated, this means that one needs to be perceived by others and perceive oneself as Swedish if one wishes to be Swedish. One of the biggest threats against national identity, from the Sweden Democrat perspective, is what is described as mass immigration. They describe how Sweden has accepted more immigrants than there is capacity for and claim that of these there are very few in need of any protection. The Sweden Democrats claim that this mass immigration combined with the high nativity of certain immigrant groups could lead to the Swedish people becoming a minority in their own country. The Swedish refugee policy is described as one of the most relaxed in the world, which the Sweden Democrats claim has led to the majority of refugees being accepted into Sweden not actually being refugees, many of which they claim have turned into settlers (Debatt angående betänkande 2012/13:SfU7). They claim that this mass immigration has diverted funds that were needed in other areas and to help people who are in actual need and that the scale of immigration Sweden is subjected to has had a detrimental effect on the economy of the country. They further argue that it has led to severe social, religious and
cultural antagonism within Sweden and that it is a threat to the Swedish welfare model (Sverigedemokraterna, 2007; Sverigedemokraterna, 2011b).

The nodal points that are used by the Sweden Democrats when discussing refugee migration are many, the key points being mass immigration and national identity. These in turn are combined with nodal points such as threat and risk to portray an image of urgency or danger. A description of national identity as something that is static, fragile and vulnerable to outside influence is presented. To further motivate their viewpoints they portray immigration as a threat to the Swedish economy. These arguments are the core of the Sweden Democrat discourse advocating for a reduction in refugee immigration to Sweden.

5.2.2 Labour migration

The Sweden Democrats view labour migration as something that is most often unnecessary. The current policy on labour migration is viewed as far too open, and the Sweden Democrats claim that the fact it is open to people from outside the EU/EES will inevitably lead to social dumping in the form of lower salaries. They describe the access to cheap foreign labour as severely affecting the Swedish workforce that is employed in low-paid jobs. The influx of foreign labour is seen as competition, leading to a market where foreign workers and Swedish workers compete for the same jobs, with the foreign workers having an advantage since they accept lower salaries. The current system of tax financed entry-level jobs for refugees is described as anti-Swedish and against the principle of a fair labour market (Sverigedemokraterna, 2007; Sverigedemokraterna 2011a).

The Sweden Democrats state that there are large numbers of people in Sweden that are capable of working but without a job, and that jobs should first and foremost go to these people, as long as qualifications are met.


In Sweden there are a large number of people who are partially or fully able-bodied but are lacking a job. Labour migration to Sweden is thus not necessary and should therefore, in principle, not take place.

Only jobs that require qualifications and knowledge that cannot be found within Sweden’s borders should be allowed to recruit from outside said borders, and then it should require extensive documentation on the actual need. Those who would be accepted would receive temporary residence permits that would be revoked once the employment in question is terminated by either party. These guest labourers would serve as temporary plugs with the end goal being that of increasing funding for education in the sectors that are in need of employees. The financial possibilities of having an open labour migration for high skill labour are viewed as
too small in comparison to the potential damage it could cause on the Swedish national identity in the long term (Sverigedemokraterna, 2011a; Sverigedemokraterna, 2011b).

While the Sweden Democrats say that certain periods of immigration in the past have been beneficial, they also say that the extensive immigration of today is in the end only detrimental due to the negative impact it has on Sweden’s national identity and cohesiveness (Motion 2013/14:Sf314; Sverigedemokraterna, 2011a). The arguments for a more restrictive immigration across these two fields are based in different arguments but with similar wording. Key nodal points used by the Sweden Democrats when discussing labour migration are national identity and cohesiveness. These are combined with nodal points such as threaten and foreign to portray a viewpoint of a labour market and economical system that is changing for the worse, according to the Sweden Democrats.

5.3 Summary of discourses
Here I will summarise the discourse of each party to give a condensed answer to the question that was phrased in the introduction to the thesis, namely: What is the migration discourse of the Left Party and the Sweden Democrats?

The Left Party and the Sweden Democrat use two different discourses based on different ideas, something that creates two very different perspectives on what impact immigration has on receiving countries. The geographical areas affected by immigration can be vast, therefore these perspectives are important to consider as they have the potential to change the policies on a national level leading to global repercussions.

The Left Party presents a discourse that puts a lot of focus on peoples equal rights and freedoms to validate their arguments on immigration (Motion 2013/14:Sf220; Motion 2013/14:Sk376). The Left Party opinion of refugee immigration is focused on the equality and security aspects of human rights approach of the question. This promotes the idea that the only basic difference between people is the places that we are born, something that is out of an individual’s control. Their problem formulation on refugee immigration is along the lines of how we as a country could help those who are born into worse conditions around the world. The Left Party advocates more of an open border policy than what is in place and larger refugee immigration as long as there are people in need of shelter. At the same time they leave out any mention as to how the process of asylum seekers could be changed once in Sweden, effectively meaning that they advocate an increase in refugees while keeping the processing system currently in place (Motion 2013/14:Sf220).

When it comes to labour immigration The Left Party focus on the question of what effect the current labour migration policies of Sweden has in terms of social dumping and everyone’s equal rights, still retaining a connection to human rights but shifting the focus to that of people already in Sweden and working. The discourse focuses on the fact that the immigration in itself is not a problem. Current development, however, is leading to unfair wages and poor job conditions for immigrants and unfair competition to those actors who pay fair wages and offer job conditions on par with what is legally required. The Left Party advocates restrictions in order
to protect those with jobs in Sweden from getting worse employment conditions. Since the labour immigration policy is restrictive, however, it goes against the universal human rights approach they present as their basis for refugee immigration. This creates an image of us vs them which is in obvious conflict with the ideals of human rights and equality (Motion 2013/14:Sk376; Sjöstedt, 2013).

The Sweden Democrats present a discourse that focuses on threats to the Swedish national identity (Sverigedemokraterna, 2007; Sverigedemokraterna, 2011a; Sverigedemokraterna, 2011b). For refugee immigration this threat is described mainly in the form of multiculturalism. Their idea is that different cultures can’t co-exist with the Swedish culture and that culture is of importance to the economic well-being of a nation. The word mass immigration is used to describe the results of current policy and the picture of a Sweden on the verge of breaking is portrayed. The Sweden Democrats restrictions to refugee immigration is therefore mainly motivated by a threat to the welfare of the Swedish state since they believe foreign cultures will cause the downfall of Swedish national identity if current immigration policy isn’t changed (Sverigedemokraterna 2007; Sverigedemokraterna 2011b; Sverigedemokraterna, 2007).

The Sweden Democrats shape their labour immigration policy around the question of actual need for labour migration. The key point they use is that as long as there are unemployed, able-bodied people in Sweden without jobs there should not be any labour immigration as long as it is not in a sector where there is a complete lack of qualified individuals within the country. In essence, foreigners are competing with Swedish people for Swedish jobs. This portrays an image of us and them, something that gives support to their idea of a national identity that is threatened from the outside (Sverigedemokraterna, 2011a; Sverigedemokraterna, 2011b).

6. OPEN SOCIETY ANALYSIS

One of the questions phrased in the beginning was: How can one critically analyse each discourse from an ‘open society’-perspective? This is what I intend to answer here. The open society perspective is based on the theory that having open borders to foreign-born individuals and treating everyone as equal before the law leads to the attraction of hard-working and motivated individuals from all around the world (Florida, 2005). People seeking a better life and willing to put a lot of effort into achieving their goal are seen as a boon to any nation that accepts them for who they are, no matter the difference in culture or language, as long as they are law-abiding citizens (Dummett, 2004; Gold, 2009).

The policy discourses of each party are based on different hypotheses. The Left Party mainly focuses their policy around everyone’s equal rights to safety and equality (Motion 2013/14:Sf220; Motion 2013/14:Sk376). This leads them to formulating a policy that advocates restriction of labour immigration. The motivation being that restricting labour immigration leads to a more equal playing field on the Swedish labour market, which keeps their focus on equality
clear (Motion 2013/14:Sk376). The Sweden Democrats on the other hand focus their policy on the idea that the most important thing a country has is its national identity, and that national identity is static and fragile to the influence of other cultures (Sverigedemokraterna, 2007; Sverigedemokraterna, 2011a; Sverigedemokraterna, 2011b). This leads them to present a more restrictive labour immigration as well, painting a picture of a Sweden versus the world scenario where foreign labour is seen as perpetuating unemployment levels for Swedish citizens (Sverigedemokraterna, 2011a). What differs between the Left Party and the Sweden Democrats policy are the ideas as to why the political parties propose restrictions. The open society perspective advocates for free mobility for labour immigration in countries (Dummett, 2005; Florida, 2005; Gold, 2009). Having a policy that presents immigration as positive should lead to an increase in interest for workers in other countries in moving to the country in question according to US statistics comparing immigration before and after the terrorist attacks on September 11th 2001 (Florida, 2005). Sweden’s GDP per capita being one of the higher in the world would only serve to reinforce the attractiveness of the country (The World Bank, 2014). The restrictive labour immigration policies of each party are therefore something that would be negative for the economic growth of Sweden. Attracting high-skill and low-skill workers and entrepreneurs would not lead to a foreign competition for Swedish jobs as the Sweden Democrats say but rather lead to more jobs being created by these immigrants (Florida, 2005; Gold 2009). The risk would be if the immigrants were not accepted as equal and treated as it once they started to involve themselves with Swedish society and the labour market (Ballard, 1996). The Left Party’s policy would likewise be detrimental for the economic growth of Sweden as the resulting closing of Swedish borders for foreign labour would limit the possibilities of hard-working and motivated people born and living outside of the country to put their skills to use in Sweden (Florida, 2005; Gold 2009). Both parties fears of social dumping is something that could potentially happen, but one could argue that companies that offer their employees fair wages and good benefits have more content employees that produce more efficiently, increasing the profits more than the actual costs of the job conditions (Florida, 2005).

When it comes to refugee immigration the parties present two different points of view. The Sweden Democrats advocate a drastic reduction of what they classify as mass immigration with the claim that Sweden’s national identity is threatened from the foreign influx of cultures that clash with Swedish culture (Sverigedemokraterna, 2007; Sverigedemokraterna 2011b). They base their arguments on the same assumptions as Huntington, namely that national identity and culture are static and fragile and that different cultures can’t co-exist peacefully. The amount of refugees entering Sweden is portrayed as disproportionate compared to what they see as actually sustainable levels and the immigrants are seen as a threat (Sverigedemokraterna, 2007). The refugees are viewed as an unnecessary drain on Sweden’s limited resources and the party questions the legitimacy of the actual claim of being a refugee (Sverigedemokraterna, 2007). The Left Party proposes the opposite of the Sweden Democrats. They wish to implement a more inclusive refugee immigration policy based on the idea that every human being is of equal worth and should have equal rights to safety and freedom. The restrictions imposed on refugee
immigration by Sweden are described as a threat to the well-being of refugees who seek refuge from conflicts and persecution. These restrictions are described as a breach of every person right to freedom and equality (Motion 2013/14:Sf220). From an open society perspective the restriction of refugee immigration that the Sweden Democrats discourse advocates goes against what would be the best interests of Sweden. Those refugee immigrants that do migrate are those that tend to have the means to do so, meaning that they are often more educated than the average person of their home country (Brettell and Hollifield, 2008; Castles and Miller, 2009). According to this the people who make it to Sweden are by no means too unskilled or unwilling to work, and could benefit to the Swedish economy. The definition of culture as something that is static and fragile is misunderstanding how it works. It is something that is constantly changing to adapt to its surroundings (Florida, 2005). One could present this as culture never being the same and therefore being constantly destroyed and rebuilt but it gives it an unjustly pessimistic portrayal. The constant change of culture should rather be seen as the incorporation of what is good that comes from other cultures along with leaving behind what is outdated and has a negative impact in a process that it is continuous. The discourse of the Left Party, while presenting an view of increased openness to refugee immigration, solely focuses on the fact that they are less fortunate than we are and that it therefore is our obligation to help them (Motion 2013/14:Sf220). This could serve to prevent the use of the competence that refugee immigration brings with it and, while ensuring the safety of those helped, in the end cause stratification of the refugees if they are not allowed to enter the labour market of their new area (Ballard, 1996).

7. CONCLUSIONS

My purpose with this thesis was to examine the immigration discourse being presented by the Left Party and the Sweden Democrats and then to analyse this from an open society perspective. In this chapter I will present the conclusions that I have made based on the findings.

The discourse of each party could be seen as one of many parts that make up the identity they wish to present to voters. The parties offer very different views of the reasons why people choose to migrate to Sweden and this naturally leads to different conclusions as well. Either parties opinions on labour immigration goes against what an open society theory advocates. If they were to be implemented the results could possibly end up similar to what the US is experiencing currently, with an decrease in interest of working in Sweden and the ensuing loss of potential that the human capital would bring with it (Florida, 2005; Gold, 2009). While the left base their policy on the fears of a decrease in equality the Sweden Democrats instead focus their policy on the idea that foreigners come to Sweden and compete with people already in Sweden for the jobs on the market (Motion 2013/14:Sk376; Sverigedemokraterna, 2011a). While I feel that the fear for a less equal labour market might be a possible outcome if the labour market of Sweden becomes less regulated I believe the risk for this shift, with the Swedish tradition of strong unions and a wide acceptance of the ideas of equality, is small (Brochmann and Hagelund,
The Sweden Democrat focus on portraying an image of us vs. them, however, I feel is completely unfounded. The immigrants that make their way to Sweden are those with the motivation and the means to do so, which I argue means that they could be a valuable asset to the Swedish economy if it accepts their skills and knowledge. The only risk of the Sweden Democrat scenario of us vs. them I feel is if that is the opinion on the matter that becomes accepted leading to the creation of a self-fulfilled prophecy (Ballard, 1996).

The Sweden Democrats advocate against refugee immigration with the motivation that the foreign cultures are directly harmful for Swedish culture and national identity. The idea is that the immigration far exceeds the capacity of Sweden and that the refugees that come refuse to adapt to Swedish culture (Motion 2013/14:Sf314; Sverigedemokraterna 2007). The Left Party proposes an open refugee immigration based on the idea of universal human rights of security and freedom, claiming that everyone shares the same rights and that it is our obligation offer help to those in need of it (Motion 2013/14:Sf220). Refugees are far from the least resourceful people from their area of origin, they more often than not have a higher level of education than the average in their home region (Castles and Miller, 2009; de Haas, 2010) and this is far too often wasted in their area of immigration. Many countries, Sweden included, don’t value the experience, knowledge and skills of immigrants and this is a waste of potential. The Sweden Democrats wish to refuse entry to most refugees, closing the doors on a lot of human capital and at the same time placing the refugees in an exposed position. The Left Party, while wanting to accept more refugees, do not seem to place much value in the skills, knowledge or experiences of them, which would lead to Sweden missing out on a lot of potential. Refugee immigrants have at the very least as much to give to their host countries as its citizens can. Both parties are lacking in their policy when it comes to valuing the potential of refugees, while the Left Party policy would lead to an eventual entrance into the Swedish labour market which is something the Sweden Democrats would refuse.

This thesis has been about the political discourse on labour and refugee immigration of the Left Party and the Sweden Democrats. While both parties present different arguments and beliefs and the Left Party undoubtedly has the more liberal view on immigration both parties are lacking to realize the potential of immigration as an enrichment for a country. I feel that this is a shame since there is so much that people can accomplish if they are simply given the right tools and conditions. Research on other parties political discourse in the same field would be interesting to show how the various political parties in Sweden view immigration.
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