The nexus between discourse and multi-level governance during times of crisis:

Sweden during the 2015-2016 refugee movements

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Abstract

In order to understand the role of discourse in a system of multi-level governance, this thesis performs a case study of Sweden’s response to the 2015-2016 refugee crisis. Initially praised as the European country who accepted the highest number of asylum applications per capita, by the end of 2015 Sweden had limited its asylum policy to the minimum levels under EU law. The abrupt policy change coincided with the emergence of two primary refugee discourses among media and politicians: a solidarity-oriented discourse and a problem-oriented discourse. While both discourses are visible at each level of governance, the national government expressed a commitment to solidarity through its humanitarian ideology while the local municipalities often described the challenges of accommodating the refugees as problematic. To analyze the impact of contrasting discourses at multiple levels of governance, a critical discourse analysis is conducted of news media in Sweden at the national level and the local level and discussed with reference to the theory of postcolonialism. The discourse analysis is then compared to the major changes to refugee policy at the national level and refugee reception at the local level. The results indicate a strong relationship between refugee policy/reception and media discourse at each level of governance, but a much weaker relationship between the levels of governance. This research provides new insight into the theory of multi-level governance and migration studies through its comparison of refugee governance at multiple levels.

Keywords: discourse analysis; media; multi-level governance; postcolonialism; refugee; refugee crisis; Sweden

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# 1 Introduction

In November 2015, at the height of the “refugee crisis”\(^1\) in Sweden, Deputy Prime Minister Åsa Romson broke into tears as she announced an abrupt about-face of her country’s liberal policy towards asylum seekers (Liebermann, 2015). The sweeping reforms, including document checks at the Danish border and a reduction of benefits offered to refugees, limited asylum policy to the minimum levels under EU law and was a significant departure from the generous Swedish asylum system built on welfare and inclusivity (Fratzke, 2017, p. 8). While Romson shortly thereafter regretted the “terrible decision,” Prime Minister Stefan Löfven said that his country needed respite from the record-high numbers of people seeking refuge in Sweden (Crouch, 2015). In 2015 alone, over 160,000 people—the largest number per capita in the European Union—applied for asylum in Sweden, most of whom were fleeing conflict and persecution in countries like Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan (Fratzke, 2017, p. 1). Its popularity as a destination for asylum seekers is a testament to Sweden’s reputation as an open-minded multicultural society, but has also illuminated a number of problems related to the integration and acceptance of refugee populations.

While the Swedish government was emphatic that the new asylum regulations were implemented to reduce the “great strain on Swedish society” (Ministry of Justice, 2017), it is hard to ignore the strong nationalistic currents that swept through Europe during the time of policy implementation. The peak years of the refugee crisis saw a sharp rise in electoral gains for far-right and nationalist parties throughout Europe (Aisch, Pearce, & Rousseau, 2017). Built on a platform of anti-immigration and Euroskepticism, these parties often employ racially-derogatory language in their war against multiculturalism. Sweden, a bastion of liberal immigration policy, succumbed to populist politics in 2010 when the far-right party, the Sweden Democrats (Sverigedemokraterna), gained enough electoral support to enter the Parliament (Demos, 2017, p. 381). Now as the country’s third-largest party, the Sweden Democrats have benefitted enormously from the anti-immigration sentiments engendered throughout Europe and maintain that immigrant groups are threatening Swedish culture and society (Shapiro, 2015). The rise of populist

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\(^1\) The term “refugee crisis” will be used for the duration of this thesis to indicate the large movement of displaced people into Europe between 2015 and 2016. This term was selected due to its prominence in public and academic discourse, but its negative connotations must also be acknowledged as an inherent bias that accompanies its usage.
parties like the Sweden Democrats and the implementation of restrictive immigration policy coincided with a dramatic shift in public opinion on refugee acceptance (Kärrman, 2015). The fall of 2015 witnessed an obvious change in refugee discourse among leading politicians and the media, whose rhetoric of solidarity and sympathy shifted towards a negative depiction of refugees as burdensome and problematic. The rapidity with which public opinion can change based on the actions of political leaders makes the recent influence of far-right parties especially worrisome.

The stark contrast in refugee discourse before and after the fall of 2015 is especially evident when looking to the previous year, when Sweden’s right-leaning prime minister appealed to his citizens to “open their hearts” to refugees. While politicians on the left and right rallied together against the radical Sweden Democrats, local level politicians from the Swedish municipalities criticized the central government: “Our hearts are open – but you need to open your wallet” (Crouch, 2014). This solidarity discourse on refugees communicated by the central government contrasts with problem-oriented discourse from local leaders, especially in municipalities like Malmö where higher numbers of refugees settled (Radio Sweden, 2015). When the government announced the new asylum policy in November 2015, it cited struggling municipalities as the primary motivation for the tougher policy (Romson, 2015). This discrepancy in discourse between national optimism and local frustration has made the multi-level governance of refugee integration problematic and has resulted in an abandonment of Sweden’s traditionally open refugee policy.

Discourse is particularly important in the context of refugee reception in Sweden because, regardless of whether the discourse is positive or negative, the power construction of “us” versus “them” is ever-present. The way refugees are framed by the media and politicians significantly affects their ability to integrate into Swedish society. Furthermore, a multi-level governance structure wrought with disagreement does not lead to effective policy construction, especially during a crisis. The divergent goals of the central government and the municipalities, visible in their opposing discourses, inhibits thoughtful policy formation. To address these problems, this thesis hopes to shed light on the interaction between the refugee reception system at the local and national level of governance and the increasingly anti-immigrant discourse among Swedish media and politicians.
1.1 Aim and questions

The general aim of this thesis is to illustrate the apparent connection between discourse and multi-level governance structures during times of crisis, using the refugee reception system in Sweden during the 2015-2016 refugee crisis as an example. A highly politicized event, such as the acceptance and integration of record-high numbers of refugees, results in the polarization of negative, problem-oriented and positive, solidarity-oriented discursive trends. Problem-oriented refugee discourse, whereby refugees are cast as burdensome or as security threats, is promulgated by public figures like politicians and by the media and appears to increase alongside the rising number of asylum-seekers. When variations in discourse appear between different levels of governance, it can cripple the ability of policymakers to effectively handle the situation. The short-term concerns of local governments may overshadow the long-term values and ideologies of the central government, rendering both levels vulnerable to unsatisfactory policy choices and a weakened ability to compromise. The strengthened role of negative refugee discourse, especially during times of crisis, can therefore weigh more heavily on the refugees’ ability to successfully integrate into society. For this reason, it is important to problematize negative discourse on refugees and emphasize the consequences of miscommunication between levels of governance.

In its analysis of the relationship between discourse and policy in a multi-level setting, this thesis seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What specific features of the refugee reception system and asylum policy changed during the crisis?
2. What specific features of the Swedish discourse on refugees are solidarity- or problem-oriented?
   a. How did the discourses change throughout the refugee crisis?
   b. Is this shift more pronounced at the national or municipal level?
3. Is there any discernible interaction or correlation between the discourse on refugees and the reception system throughout the crisis?

1.2 Limitations

The subject of inquiry throughout this thesis is delineated by the intersecting space of two different subject matters: discourse and multi-level governance. This is not a study
of discursive trends in Sweden concerning refugees, nor is it a historical account of the country’s reception system in recent decades. Instead, this thesis attempts to merge the two disciplines to identify what kind of relationship, if any, exists between discourse and governance. A hypothetical example of such a relationship might reveal a shift from solidarity discourse to problem-oriented discourse in a linear correlation with a tightening of the refugee reception system or asylum policy. Of course, it can be tempting to assume causality in this situation, emanating from either discourse or governance. This is a dangerous assumption because one cannot infer that one variable causes another (Bryman, 2012, p. 341). Indeed, both discursive trends and policy evolution are complex fields involving many intersecting variables, so suggesting causality between the two is impossible. Although no causality may be concluded, there is still room for observing a relationship between the two variables.

1.3 Field of research

1.3.1 Migration-related discourse and policy formation

Immigration discourse and its consequences is a research field that has captivated scholars for years and has recently garnered even more interest due to increased migration flows into Europe and the United States and the strong reactions exhibited by politicians and the public alike. Discursive trends among European countries have been studied extensively over the past few decades, especially during periods of high refugee migration such as the Balkan crisis of the early 1990s (Eastmond, 1998; Grundmann, Smith, & Wright, 2000; Lindstrom, 2003). The most recent peak in refugee numbers has sparked similar studies of the way refugees and asylum seekers are framed by the media and politicians. While larger European countries like Germany and the UK are obvious choices for case studies, Sweden attracted attention as the country who received the largest number of refugees per capita as a result of their exceptionally generous welfare and asylum policies. The Swedish moral commitment to folkhemmet—or “the people’s home,” whereby the state takes care of all of its citizens—is a foundational discourse that has gradually been challenged since it became clear the small country was struggling to support the newcomers (Dahlgren, 2016, p. 386). The tension between fulfilling their moral responsibility towards refugees and the difficulties in managing the situation further entrenched the country in a bipolar refugee discourse.
Khayati (2017) writes that there are two primary refugee discourses in Sweden: one positive discourse based on solidarity and human rights and one negative discourse that securitizes the refugees and depicts them as a social problem or burdensome (p. 11). While these competing discourses experienced a revival in media attention during the peak years of the refugee crisis, they have deeper roots of systemic racism and exclusion in Sweden (Khayati, 2017, p. 17). It is therefore important to view the discourses during the refugee crisis as part of a historical narrative and not an isolated event. Other researchers have broadened the list of observable discourse types, such as Dahlgren (2016) who charts the four main discursive currents during the refugee crisis in Sweden. Besides the “foundational, core discourses” (what Khayati would label “positive discourse”) and the “traditional counter-discourses” (or “negative discourse”), Dahlgren pinpoints two other discourses that arose within Sweden as a direct result of the crisis. The first problematizes the refugee crisis from an administrative standpoint and also blames the EU for its lack of solidarity. The second is a discourse of resolution in conjunction with the shift in government policy and acknowledges the necessity of asylum restrictions but also views Sweden’s overall role in the crisis as a “moral triumph” (Dahlgren, 2016, p.391-392). Such discourses play a crucial role in forming public opinion and ultimately policy decisions. Charting rhetorical trends among politicians and the media is a crucial first step in making a connection between discourse and effective crisis management.

Another relevant area of research connects discursive trends and policy formation. The end of Swedish exceptionalism, or the international perception of Sweden as “the model of a tolerant and egalitarian multicultural welfare society,” is explored by Schierup and Ålund (2011, p.47). The authors argue that Sweden has recently undergone a drastic policy transformation from a generous welfare state to a neoliberal system shaped by globalization and the resulting segregation and racialized exclusion (p. 46). While the authors acknowledge that populism and xenophobia had been brewing in the country for the last few decades, they cite the urban youth riots of 2008-2009 and the accompanying media rhetoric as the breaking point that signalled drastic policy changes (p. 56). Media coverage of the riots, which took place in the multiethnic suburban areas of Stockholm, Malmö, and Gothenburg, often suggested that the youth’s culturally deviant behavior was due to their immigrant background. The media’s highly loaded and negative interpretation of the events only serves to increase public distrust of immigrants and
more specifically Muslim culture (p. 53). A similar discourse analysis of media and policy documents, such as will be attempted by this thesis, should illuminate both continuity and change in the rhetorical representation of refugees in Sweden.

The importance of social media in shaping public discourse and policy formation with regards to refugees was demonstrated by Krzyżanowski (2017), who performs a critical discourse analysis of the Social Democratic Party’s Twitter account during the refugee crisis. Of particular interest is the way issues such as immigration are politicized through both “public sphere articulation” and “policy making and legitimation” (p. 1). He explains that in most countries, topics like immigration are first discussed within the public sphere before they enter the realm of policymaking (p. 2). Prominent actors within the public sphere are right-wing populist parties who use the media for agenda-setting purposes by elevating topics like immigration to the center of political debates. However, he says that Sweden is an exception to the traditional order of politicization. His paper seeks to prove that policy-driven politicization has a long history of preceding public sphere articulation (p. 2). This pattern of politicization relies on political communication within the media to legitimize the government’s policy decisions in the eyes of the public. This particular case study reveals that the Social Democrats use social media platforms to draw attention to the government’s efficiency in dealing with the situation rather than the policies’ effects on the refugees and migrants. When the refugee crisis is articulated strictly from a policy-related standpoint, the affected populations become marginalized (p. 16-17). While it is difficult to assume causality between discourse and policy formation, this article reinforces the apparent relationship between immigration discourse and policy formation.

1.3.2 Multi-level governance of migration

The multi-level governance of migration-related issues is a relatively new field of research to which this thesis will contribute. Gary Marks (1993) is credited with the conceptualization of the term ‘multi-level governance’ (MLG) in the early 1990s to analyze and explain processes of integration within the European Union. Since then, Marks and Liesbet Hooghe have continued to expand on what they define as “the dispersion of authoritative decision making across multiple territorial levels” (2001, p. xi). A great number of researchers have since adopted the term in their analyses of multi-level interactions, but it was only recently applied to migration studies. In fact, migration policy
was usually only examined at one level of government—usually the national level but increasingly on the local and city level (Caponio & Jones-Correa, 2017, p. 6). Until recently, studies about the dynamics of migration policy formation between various levels of governance were few (Scholten, 2012; Zincone & Caponio, 2006; Caponio & Jones-Correa, 2017). Migration scholars now employ the concept of MLG to explain policy-making processes, coordination, and implementation and increasingly involve the work of civil society and nonpublic actors in their analyses. While their approaches differ, their goal is the same: To explain in what ways the increasing multi-levelness of European states challenges their capacity to deal with migration-related issues (Caponio & Jones-Correa, 2017, p. 11). This thesis will contribute to the growing field of research that addresses problems of tackling tough migration-related issues in a multi-level governance structure.

Existing research related to the MLG of migration reveals a common consensus that local level migration policy deviates from national policy in many European countries (Scholten, 2012; Emilsson, 2015). Migration policy is an ‘intractable policy controversy,’ which is defined by Scholten (2012) as an issue characterized by a multiplicity of frames or multiple social realities (p. 219). This means that actors on different levels may have widely divergent ideas about how to tackle the problem, or even how to define the problem itself. If actors at different levels of governance frame the policy issue in conflicting ways, their ability to coordinate and develop effective policy is greatly hindered. A power relationship may then emerge in which one level—national or local—wields more influence over the other. Some studies suggest that migration policy controversies are tackled more effectively at the local level where there is a greater tendency to solve problems in a pragmatic way (Borkert & Caponio, 2010); however, others contend that the state has increasingly more control over policies and practices than local actors (Emilsson, 2015, p. 2). This thesis hopes to shed more light on the power dimension between local level municipalities and the national government by using rhetorical framing and policy changes during the refugee crisis in Sweden as a case study.

1.4 Research relevance

The aftermath of the recent refugee crisis in Europe witnessed a rapidly expanding body of literature focused on a number of important challenges related to the crisis. Many of these studies were case studies or comparative studies of legal and political responses across a number of countries in an effort to identify how both the European and the
international community could have better dealt with the situation. Another popular area of research examined refugee discourse, either on news or social media, as important indicators of political and social ideologies across Europe. The popularity of the refugee crisis as an area of study is unsurprising because of its critical implications for the social and political future of the European Union and its member states. This study hopes to contribute to this ever-growing body of research by marrying its two most important themes: policy and discourse.

A number of scholars in the field of migration and integration have acknowledged a lamentable gap in the research regarding the multi-level governance of migration policy. Zincone and Caponio (2006) label it a “poorly investigated research object” (p. 270), while Scholten and Penninx (2016) comment that “studies and literature, too, tend to focus on just one level, rather than seeking an understanding of the interactions between levels” (p. 93). As illustrated by the literature review, many studies focus on one area of governance—local, national, or international—and fail to consider the multiple layers of policy formation within and between countries.

While the body of literature is certainly growing, there has not yet, to this researcher’s knowledge, been a comparable study that looks for the relationship between refugee reception (at multiple levels or otherwise) and refugee discourse. In seeking a connection between discourse and policy, this project will contribute to existing research by drawing a bridge between the two fields. It will require work in both discourse and policy analysis, with the goal of identifying an important link between the way an issue is framed and the way it is pragmatically dealt with. This multidisciplinary research project aspires to be a relevant and innovative contribution to the fields of multi-level governance, migration policy, and discourse studies, among others.

1.5 Chapter summary

The following pages are organized into six chapters. The first of these focuses on research design and methodology and begins with a thorough presentation of discourse analysis as the primary methodology. It then describes how the data will be collected and analyzed. The next chapter provides the theoretical framework for the thesis, which is a combination of the theory of multi-level governance and postcolonialism. The important concepts within each theory are described, and their possible limitations accounted for. Following this chapter is a brief summary of the important developments in Swedish
immigration policy, organized by each era of development from the 1930s to the present-day. The subsequent chapter is the analysis of Swedish policy and discourse on refugees, which first determines the nodal points of the discourse. The chapter then describes the discursive trends and policy formation at the national and local levels of governance. It concludes by charting the relationship between the discourse and policy at both levels. The next chapter discusses the results of the analysis, with specific focus on tying together the empirical results with the theoretical assumptions of the paper. The concluding chapter summarizes the main findings of the paper and suggests areas for future research.
2 Research design and methodology

“Of course, discourses are composed of signs; but what they do is more than use these signs to designate things. It is this more that renders them irreducible to the language (langue) and to speech. It is this ‘more’ that we must reveal and describe.”

—Michel Foucault, 1972, p. 49

Foucault is here describing the goal of discourse analysis, whereby researchers investigate the constitutive role of language and symbols within the written and spoken word. This chapter will begin by further describing discourse analysis as a qualitative study with its roots in a number of academic disciplines. More specifically, it will focus on a branch of discourse studies called critical discourse analysis with the help of the famous practitioner, Norman Fairclough. His methodological model will form the backbone of this thesis’ methodology and will be crucial in selecting and analyzing the appropriate texts. Following this discussion will be a presentation of the plans for data collection and analysis. The analysis of texts selected from influential Swedish media platforms and government websites will be conducted in a quadripartite structure reflecting divisions between local and national levels of Swedish governance and the methods for analyzing discourse and multi-level governance. Finally, other methodological considerations will be discussed, such as possible limitations or constraints that may affect the outcome of this research.

2.1 Discourse analysis: A qualitative study of language

This thesis endeavors to determine the effect of language in framing the refugee crisis and, by extension, the ability of various levels of government to coordinate and produce an adequate response to the crisis. The most appropriate methodological approach is therefore discourse analysis, which has at its foundation the idea that language and the social world are mutually constitutive (Bryman, 2012, p. 528; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 61). Fairclough (1992a) defines discourse as “a piece of text, an instance of discursive practice, and an instance of social practice,” the study of which combines detailed text and language analysis with social and cultural theory (p. 4-5). As Foucault
describes in the above quotation, language is more than a tool used to express oneself; it is rooted in historical and social context and contributes to the reality in which it is situated. Discourse analysis (DA) is therefore a mélange of various research traditions—from linguistics and semiotics to sociology and political science (Rholetter, 2013). It considers not only the oral or written statement itself, but deeply analyses its various contexts, including the author and audience and the linguistic, historical, and social milieu in which it was created.

As a methodology, DA can vary a great deal and its application depends upon the subject matter and the researcher’s own preferences. Like most qualitative research, DA is fairly open-ended to allow for the interpretation of the social world through the eyes of the participants and the researcher (Bryman, 2012, p. 380). This makes it a flexible methodology for researchers interested in the active role of language in the creation of society and history. Due to its popularity among a wide range of academic disciplines, discourse analysis has developed into several different schools such as conversation analysis, discursive psychology, and Foucauldian discourse analysis. Each school of DA has its own theoretical and methodological foundations, which can help determine which analytical framework is most useful for a given study (Rholetter, 2013). This thesis will employ a variation of DA called critical discourse analysis (CDA).

2.1.1 Critical discourse analysis

As a critical form of discourse analysis, CDA investigates the role of discourse in the creation of unequal power distribution in society with the goal of initiating social change through more equal power relations (Wodak, 2001, p. 2; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 63-64; Bryman, 2012, p. 536). Such analyses focus on social problems and advocate for those who suffer the most by critically analysing the discourse of those in power. Because of its goal of exposing those who abuse power through talk and text and its alliance with the oppressed, van Dijk (2001) lightheartedly refers to CDA as “discourse analysis ‘with an attitude’” (p. 96). Wodak (2001) explains that unlike traditional discourse analysis, the critical view assumes that “discourse is structured by dominance; that every discourse is historically produced and interpreted, that is, it is situated in time and space; and that dominance structures are legitimated by ideologies of powerful groups” (p. 3). In summation, CDA consists of three key concepts: the concept of power, the concept of history, and the concept of ideology. These concepts are central to CDA practitioners like
Norman Fairclough, who suggests that textual analysis is superficial if not combined with an understanding of the relevant societal and cultural processes and structures (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 66). Of course, there are a variety of methods for pursuing CDA and there is no single accepted standard for data collection (Meyer, 2001, p. 30); however, this thesis will use Fairclough’s analytical framework as it “the most developed theory and method for research in communication, culture and society” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 60).

2.1.2 Norman Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework of analysis

In his book *Discourse and Social Change* (1992a), Norman Fairclough presents and expounds upon his framework for analyzing discourse. He begins by defining discourse as involving two important components. Firstly, discourse is an active social practice in which humans act upon the world and upon each other (p. 63). Secondly, discourse is in a dialectical relationship with social structure. Wodak and Fairclough (1997) later define this dialectical association as a two-way relationship in which “the discursive event is shaped by situations, institutions and social structures, but it also shapes them” (p. 258). Each discursive event must be analyzed in relation to the social domain or institutional framework in which they were created (Fairclough, 1992a, p. 64). Fairclough (2013) is also interested in discourse as an instance of social practice, specifically political practice, and its role in the formation of power and hegemony (p. 94). He studies hegemony in the sphere of political discourse through analyzing mass media discourse at the nexus of politics, entertainment, and private life (Fairclough, 1995; 2013, p. 157-158). His use of CDA to study media discourse and its relationship with politics and hegemony is an exemplary case for this thesis to follow.

As stated before, CDA as a methodology does not exist separately from other methodologies in the humanities and social science, but rather is a mix of all relevant forms of analysis. That being said, Fairclough has come closest to devising an adaptable methodology for CDA that can be applied to a wide variety of studies. He developed a “three-dimensional conception of discourse” which divides a discursive event into three dimensions: “it is a spoken or written language text, it is an instance of discursive practice involving the production and interpretation of text, and it is a piece of social practice” (Fairclough, 2013, p. 94). This three-dimensional model is an analytical framework for
discourse analysis that is based on the principle that texts can only be understood in relation to other texts and their social context (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 70).

Bryman (2012) has summarized the three-dimensional model as follows (p. 538)

- examination of the actual content, structure, and meaning of the text under scrutiny (the text dimension);
- examination of the form of discursive interaction used to communicate meaning and beliefs (the discursive practice dimension);
- consideration of the social context in which the discursive event is taking place (the social practice dimension).

Text analysis, which Fairclough (1992a) says may be accomplished without a lengthy background in linguistic studies, can be organized under four headings: vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, and text structure (p. 74-75). Beyond these categories of analysis, Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) have organized Fairclough’s ever-evolving system of textual analysis into the following set of tools (p. 83):

- interactional control: the relationship between speakers
- ethos: how identities are constructed through language and aspects of the body
- metaphors
- wording
- grammar

These categories are further elaborated in Fairclough’s Discourse and Social Change (1992a) and, as they will guide the textual analysis for this thesis, will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

Closely tied to the text dimension of the analysis is the discursive practice dimension, which “involves processes of text production, distribution, and consumption” (Fairclough, 1992a, p. 78). Fairclough (1992a) divides discursive practice into three main headings, which are the ‘force’ of utterances, the ‘coherence’ of texts, and the ‘intertextuality’ of texts (p. 75). A key feature of this dimension are the constraints inflicted upon the discourse by the particular social practice of which it is part (Fairclough, 1992a, p. 80). This is related to the concept of intertextuality (or interdiscursivity), which can be defined as “the constitution of a text from diverse discourses and genres” (Fairclough, 2013, p. 96). Intertextuality assumes the heterogeneity of texts, which are composed and restructured through complex interactions with elements of other texts (Fairclough, 1992b, p. 269-270). The interconnectedness of texts, for example policy
documents, political speeches, and news articles, will play an important role in this thesis’s analysis and is discussed in greater depth later in this chapter. In summary, discursive practice is a combination of micro-analysis, which looks at the production and interpretation of texts, and macro-analysis, which looks at the nature of the social practice in which the text was created (Fairclough, 1992a, p. 85-86).

The social practice dimension does not involve textual analysis, but must draw on other social or cultural theories. Analysis of social practice looks at the non-discursive social and cultural relations within which the discourse is situated (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 86). References may be made to different levels of social organisation, like “the context of the situation, the institutional context, and the wider societal context or ‘context of culture’” (Fairclough, 2013, p. 95). Fairclough narrows down the possibilities for analysis by focusing on existing social and power relations and the concept of hegemony. According to him, “hegemonic struggle” can occur within “the insitutions of civil society (education, trade unions, family), with possible unevenness between different levels and domains” (1992a, p. 92). This idea will be critical in carrying out this thesis, which seeks to determine the relationship between different levels of governance in terms of the power inequality between the government and the refugees. Fairclough’s three-dimensional conception of discourse is illustrated below, based on the image included in *Discourse and Social Change* (1992a, p. 73).

![Figure 1 Fairclough’s three-dimensional conception of discourse](image)

Figure 1 Fairclough’s three-dimensional conception of discourse
2.1.3 Other approaches to discourse analysis

Another conception of discourse analysis is laid out by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe in their influential book *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (1985). An important influence in the post-Marxist tradition, their work focuses on the concept of hegemony and creates a theory of discourse to further understand the process of hegemony. While the text aims more at theory creation than practical analysis, their approach must often be supplemented with outside frameworks of analysis (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 24). Despite the dense theoretical milieu from which the text arises, they define some important key terms that will be may be useful throughout this thesis:

In the context of this discussion, we will call *articulation* any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice. The structured totality resulting from the articulatory practice, we will call *discourse*. The differential positions, insofar as they appear articulated within a discourse, we will call *moments*. By contrast, we will call *element* any difference that is not discursively articulated. (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 105)

Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) explain this discourse theory as a fishing-net, in which discursive moments are fixed as knots throughout the net and gain meaning from their differences from one another (p. 26). Therefore, discourse analysis requires that one look both at what is included in the articulation and what is excluded. One way is to identify the *nodal point*, which is identified as the point of intersection among the discourses. In an analysis of the discursive trends within the selected articles, this thesis will determine the nodal point around which all other discursive points coalesce. As this is likely to differ between the solidarity discourses and the problem-oriented discourses, one or more nodal points may be identified.

However, there exists an important difference between the work of Laclau and Mouffe and that of Fairclough that has precluded the adoption of the formers’ theory for this methodology. As was discussed previously, *critical* discourse analysis assumes that the discourse is in a dialectical relationship with societal structures. While Fairclough keeps social practice and discourse close but separate entities, Laclau and Mouffe analyse all social phenomena using the same concepts of discourse and articulation (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 35). They write that a “decisive point in their argument” is the abandonment of “the premise of ‘society’ as a sutured and self-defined totality” (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 111). For the authors, social practice is always articulatory and never a
static thing that can be compared to discursive practices (1985, p. 113-114). While this idea that meaning cannot ever be fully fixed and that society is completely discursive is interesting to consider, this thesis aims to ground refugee discourse in the particular historical and political environment in which it was created. For each discourse, this social arena is relatively fixed and can be seen changing over time with the discourses. This is the reason Fairclough’s methodology, which focuses on power relationships as expressed in discourse during particular times in history, will be used in this study.

2.2 Data collection and analysis

In order to analyze the relationship between refugee discourse and refugee reception in Sweden, the methodological framework for this thesis will be divided into four parts, or quadrants. Each quadrant will be dealt with separately before addressing all of the parts as a whole in the final discussion. This approach will allow the researcher to provide an in-depth account of each area of research before charting the evolution of the refugee reception and discourse at each level. The quadrants are created from the following divisions: refugee reception and refugee discourse at the national level and refugee reception and refugee discourse at the local level. The four quadrants be addressed separately in the following sections.

2.2.1 Media discourse analysis of the refugee crisis

Although discourse has been defined as any composite of language and semiosis ranging from spoken word to interviews and published texts (Strauss & Feiz, 2014, p. 2), this analysis will focus solely on media as the primary mode of discourse. Following in the footsteps of Fairclough, this thesis will analyze the language of mass media “as a site of power, of struggle and also as a site where language is apparently transparent” (Wodak, 2001, p. 6). The mass media is particularly interesting because of their declaration of impartiality and neutrality, which Fairclough has repeatedly disproven (Fairclough, 1995). The media is also an important discourse to analyze because of its central role in society. In most societies, media serves as the primary channel through which citizens gain information and form an understanding of the world (Talbot, 2007, p. 3). Therefore, media discourse wields a strong power and influence over public opinion and must be analysed critically in order to reveal its authoritative function.
For the purposes of this thesis, online media platforms provide the articles for analysis. Web content, rather than printed newspaper or radio, was selected due to its wide availability and the ability to search a news source’s entire database by keyword phrase. The keyword that will be used to filter the search results will be *flyktingkrisen* or “refugee crisis.” This term was chosen despite its politicized and negative depiction of refugees because of its status as the unofficial title of the period beginning in 2015 when large numbers of displaced people arrived in the European Union. Swedish news websites like Dagens Nyheter also began tagging stories related to the event with the term *flyktingkrisen*. This term was also selected because it refers to “refugees” rather than “migrants.” The UNHCR makes a clear distinction between the two terms: “refugees are persons fleeing armed conflict or persecution,” while “migrants choose to move not because of a direct threat of persecution or death, but mainly to improve their lives by finding work, or in some cases for education, family reunion, or other reasons” (Edwards, 2016). Refugees are defined and protected by the 1951 Refugee Convention, which stipulates that no state shall expel or return a refugee to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened (UNHCR, 2010). Migrants, on the other hand, are free to return home and will continue to be protected by their government. This distinction is especially crucial in the context of media discourse, when falsely classifying refugees as migrants can downgrade their protected status in the eyes of the public.

Using the keyword phrase *flyktingkrisen*, fifteen articles will be selected from each news website. Since this study will focus on two Swedish news sources, there will be thirty articles in total to analyze. A study wishing to perform a more quantitative categorization of the articles may have chosen to study a larger sample size, but for the purposes of an in-depth discourse analysis it is wiser to choose a smaller number of texts. Discourse analyses often choose only a few texts or even a single text to analyze because the focus of interest is on language use and apparent discursive patterns which can be distinguished in only a few texts (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 120). The timeframe for this study will be limited to September 2015 to March 2016. These dates were selected because most of the refugees arrived in Sweden between September and December 2015. Arrivals then slowed in early 2016 after border checks were put in place at the Danish border (Fratzke, 2017, p. 4). An analysis of the articles written during this time frame should indicate whether the refugee discourse became more positive, negative, or stayed the same during and shortly after the peak numbers of refugees arrived.
Choice of material

The articles under analysis will be drawn from two Swedish news websites: Dagens Nyheter (DN) and Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snällposten, or Sydsvenskan. These sources were selected because the first provides a national perspective on the refugee crisis and the second a locally-oriented perspective. Both papers are owned by the media group, Bonnier AB, and both define their political affiliation as independent liberal. DN, whose name in English translates to “Daily News,” is published in Stockholm and is one of the largest and most influential newspapers in Sweden (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2017). It has a reputation for being an agenda setter in public debate on political issues and provides full national and international coverage (UNHCR, 2015). Sydsvenskan, or “The South Swedish” in English, is a daily newspaper published in the southernmost region of Sweden, Skåne, and is headquartered in Sweden’s third-largest city, Malmö. Primarily distributed in the region, it provides local, national, and international news. It was selected because Malmö, at the border of Denmark, received the majority of refugees and has reported difficulties in receiving such large numbers of immigrants compared to other Swedish municipalities (Traub, 2016; Myrberg, 2017, p. 326). A comparison of the discourses in both publications will hopefully shed light on the differing attitudes and opinions towards the refugees at the national level and the local level.

Operationalization

Once the articles have been collected from the corresponding news websites (www.dn.se and www.sydsvenskan.se), Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework will be applied to each article, focusing on the text, discursive practice, and social practice. Particularly important in this reading is Fairclough’s concept of intertextuality because “it gives a way into the complexity of discursive events...which is such a particularly salient feature in a period of intense sociocultural and discoursal/linguistic change” (Fairclough, 1992b, p. 269). Intertextuality is visible in a couple of different ways. Discourse representation, by which parts of a text are explicitly incorporated into a text and marked with quotations or reporting clauses, is a major characteristic of news reports as representations of what newsworthy people have said (Fairclough, 1992b, p. 273). In indirectly representing the subjects of a report (i.e. through statements without quotations), a reporter may (deliberately or not) misrepresent their subject (p. 274). This
is particularly problematic when reporting about refugees, who oftentimes are referred to in plural form or by authority figures, obscuring their individual voices. Similarly, news media can be guilty of transmitting the voices of the powerful by reporting their speeches or actions in a more palatable way or by presenting a story using provocative language (Fairclough, 1992b, p. 276). Fairclough’s framework for critical discourse analysis, with a strong emphasis on the intertextuality of the documents, is an effective means of analyzing how the selected Swedish news outlets present and represent the refugees.

Next, the discourse must be categorized in order to illuminate significant trends within the media discourse. Here, Laclau and Mouffe’s concept of a nodal point and its floating signifiers will be particularly useful for identifying the main discursive elements of the texts. A nodal point can be defined as “a privileged sign around which the other signs are ordered” and “acquire meaning” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 26). For example, a nodal point could be the description of refugees as “victims” in solidarity-oriented refugee discourse, but as “terrorists” in a problem-oriented discourse. Of course, the nodal points reveal themselves upon carrying out the discourse analysis and therefore cannot be determined beforehand. It is then important to identify the floating signifiers, which are nodal points that are not crystallized within a particular discourse but instead are invested with meaning in relation to each other and the nodal point (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 28). References to race are examples of floating signifiers which have no concrete meaning until imbued with meaning by the particular text. Besides identifying nodal points and floating signifiers, this thesis hopes to categorize each article by its discursive trend. This will be performed after all of the discourse analyses have been completed and the disursive trends become visible. This categorization scheme, together with Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework of analysis and the nodal points and floating signifiers, will comprise a specially-designed rubric available in Appendix A.

2.2.2 Governance of the refugee crisis (refugee reception)

Broadly defined, governance as the exercise of authority has shifted away from the sovereign nation state and out towards less-traditional centers of authority at both the supranational and local level. While more actors are participating in important decision-making, the interaction between levels of governance is becoming more complicated. As in most countries, refugee reception in Sweden is governed among multiple actors ranging from local civil society and private actors, to municipal governments, to national
policymakers. To compare and analyze the relationships between national and local levels of governance in managing refugee reception, the methodology for this section will be grounded in the concept of multi-level governance (MLG).

The concept of MLG is attributed to Gary Marks (1993), who describes it as “a system of continuous negotiation among nested governments at several territorial tiers” (p. 392). Within a system of multi-level governance, Marks (1993) explains, “supranational, national, regional, and local governments are enmeshed in territorially overarchingly policy networks” (p. 402-402). Since Marks’ conceptualization of the term, which was originally developed in reference to the EU’s political system and efforts at integration, MLG has grown to encompass both governments and non-governmental actors at various territorial levels (Bache & Flinders, 2004, p. 4). This has led to more complex state-society relationships and has relegated the role of the state to policy coordinator while network actors rise to the level of policy making (Bache & Flinders, 2004, p. 98). This is also the case for subnational governments like cities and municipalities, who have become more influential in issues that previously concerned the central government.

The interactions or relations between the national and municipal level during the refugee crisis is the main focus of this thesis’ study of multi-level governance. While this thesis will conclude with an analysis of the correlation (if present) between media discourse and the governance of the issue at different levels, it is first necessary to analyse the relationship between the local and national level. While it is not expected that Swedish refugee governance will have vacillated a great deal, some conclusions can hopefully be drawn about whether the municipal or national level played a more active role in governance. Indeed, several studies (Scholten & Penninx, 2016; Emilsson, 2015; Hernes, 2017) have observed shifts in governance relationships in specific areas like migration policy between the local and national governments. While issues of migration, or more specifically refugee acceptance, tend to have a great effect on local policies, times of crisis may require more centralized leadership. These two competing factors will both come into play in an analysis of the Swedish response to the refugees at the national and local level.

Choice of material

For the analysis of refugee reception at the national level, documents will be procured from the Government Offices of Sweden website (www.government.se). This
website contains a section specifically focused on the Swedish government’s work regarding the refugee situation. As stated on their webpage:

The most difficult refugee situation in modern times is currently under way. Intensive work is in progress to find solutions to the major challenges that exist. An important task for the Government is to make it easier for public authorities to manage the situation in both the short and long term. (Government Offices of Sweden, 2017)

This webpage includes content about the Government’s work regarding the refugee situation, filterable by content type, source, area, and time period. For the purposes of this study, the time period will start in September 2015 which is the earliest date available under this category and coincidentally when the documents for the discourse analysis will also begin to be sourced. The documents will be filtered by content type (in this case, by “article” because this was the most prevalent content type) and will be sourced until the end of March 2016. This time frame includes 26 documents in total, which will be summarized alongside the media discourse to identify any relationship between the government policy and the discourse in the national media.

Governance at the local level will be analyzed using documents sourced from the official website of Malmö city (www.malmo.se). Because this website does not contain a section dedicated to the topic of refugees, a search conducted using the keyword phrase *flykting*, or “refugee,” reveals over one thousand results. A search by date reveals an array of documents and files from around the time period 2015/2016. The annual reports and interim reports are of particular interest, because each contains a section entitled *Flyktingmottagande*, or “Refugee Reception.” The annual reports are around 100 pages in length, and the interim reports are around 50. Annual and interim reports will be downloaded from the years 2015 and 2016 and analysed, like the Swedish government documents, to reveal any trends or relationship between refugee reception and media discourse.

**Operationalization**

While a critical discourse analysis of Swedish news media at the local and national level is a fairly detailed and complicated process, the method of analyzing the documents from the government and the Malmö municipality is much more straightforward. The documents acquired from the Swedish government website will be narrowed down based
on their relevance to the refugee crisis (for example, an article detailing a European Council meeting following the attacks in Paris in 2015 was excluded because it did not contain relevant information regarding the government’s response to the refugee crisis). The relevant articles will then be used to map the Swedish government’s standpoint and policy during the refugee crisis to illuminate any trends or major shifts therein. While the policy change from November 2015 is an obvious change, other articles may provide more nuanced clues regarding the government’s position and priorities during different points of the crisis.

Similarly, the annual and interim reports from Malmö city’s website will be analyzed in order to chart any major changes to their refugee reception. The section regarding refugee reception will be copied from the four documents (two annual reports and two interim reports from the years 2015 and 2016) and translated from Swedish to English for analysis. This, like the translation of the media articles, will be performed through the Google translate software and with the assistance of native Swedish speakers. This analysis should illumite important trends regarding refugee reception at the local level in Malmö for comparison with local discourse in Sydsvenskan.

2.2.3 Determining the relationship between discourse and governance

The four quadrants will be summarized in an analysis of the relationship between media discourse and refugee reception. This will be achieved through charting the governance changes at the various levels (policy changes at the national level and reception initiatives at the local level) alongside the discursive trends identified in the media discourse. Identifying the relationship between the two is strongly rooted in Fairclough’s three-dimensional model (Figure 1) because of its emphasis on the important role of social practice in discourse. According to Fairclough (1992a), the practices of individuals are “shaped in ways of which they are usually unaware by social structures, relations of power, and the nature of the social practice they are engaged in” (p. 72). In this case, there is a two-way relationship between the individuals creating discourse (journalists) and those creating policy (politicians). Their choices may be dictated by the actions or discourse of the other, making it difficult to discern whether the governance is a reaction to the discourse or the other way around. This embedded structure of the text and discursive practice within the greater social practice will be
considered when identifying the relationship between the discourse and the governance at the national and local levels.

2.3 Methodological limitations and other considerations

As in most qualitative research traditions, it should be noted that this study is conducted under the concept of *reflexivity*. Contrary to what French sociologist Émile Durkheim wrote that all “preconceptions must be eradicated” in research methods (as cited in Bryman, 2012, p. 39), contemporary researchers are aware that their studies may be shaped by their own latent values or biases. Bryman (2012) explains the idea of reflexivity as follows:

The reflexive attitude within postmodernism is highly critical of the notion that the researcher is someone who extracts knowledge from observations and conversations with others and then transmits knowledge to an audience. The researcher is viewed as implicated in the construction of knowledge through the stance that he or she assumes in relation to the observed and through the ways in which an account is transmitted in the form of a text. This understanding entails an acknowledgement of the implications and significance of the researcher’s choices as both observer and writer (p. 394).

As a *critical* discourse analysis, this study is subject to researcher bias in both selection of topic and of texts. CDA is not neutral but is “politically committed to social change” and takes the side of “oppressed social groups” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 64). In his CDA methodology, Fairclough (2013) encourages the researcher to focus upon a social wrong, identify obstacles to addressing the social wrong, consider whether the social order ‘needs’ the social wrong, and identify possible ways past the obstacles (p. 226). One researcher’s perception of a “social wrong” will likely differ from another researcher’s, therefore imbedding bias in the selection of research topic. There will also be some bias present in the selection of research materials, which is done with a goal of illuminating such social and power inequalities and will therefore be selected and analyzed with this purpose in mind.

This study will also be conducted with the help of translation services because the majority of texts analyzed are written in Swedish, a language in which the researcher is not fluent. Translating the documents is an additional methodological step which takes time and effort to appropriately carry out. It is with this in mind that the number of
documents selected were limited, so that the analysis will be as detailed and thorough as possible. While performing a discourse analysis is more difficult in a secondary language, Fairclough (1992a) assures practitioners that an in-depth knowledge of linguistics is not necessary (74-75). Furthermore, since the analysis will be performed on the English translation, the author's ability to pinpoint discursive trends and overall themes should not be compromised.
3 Theoretical framework

Because this thesis analyzes both the representations of refugees in Swedish media and the governance of the situation at different levels, it will employ a two-part theoretical framework to attend to each theme. This framework will combine the theory of multi-level governance with postcolonial theory. The theory of multi-level governance responds to the perceived “unravelling of the state” (Hooghe & Marks, 2003) by theorizing the relationships between various levels of government and the challenges that could arise from competing jurisdictions of authority. In a multi-tiered system of governance, adequate policy may become lost when disagreement over territorial competency arises. This is especially important during periods of high human mobility, which may require a drastic shift in authority: either up towards a more centralized mode of operation or down towards the more pragmatic local authorities.

The ability of governments to appropriately respond to mass immigration is further impeded by negative, problem-oriented discourse regarding the refugees. This is where postcolonialism comes in, which is a theory for critically analyzing the way minority groups are represented through language discourse. While the name may imply a theory specifically concerned with the period of decolonization following World War II, the theory is extremely relevant today because of its portrayal of the dichotomy between the center and periphery, West and East, and the Self and the Other. The misrepresentation of a people who have already suffered centuries of fallacious stereotyping is particularly problematic when that group attempts to peacefully integrate in a Western country. For this reason, a framework that theorizes governance practices alongside refugee representation will provide an interesting and relevant body of literature from which to analyze the data.
3.1 The theory of multi-level governance

The point of departure for this multilevel governance (MLG) approach is the existence of overlapping competencies among multiple levels of governments and the interaction of political actors across those levels. ...The presumption of multilevel governance is that these actors participate in diverse policy networks and this may involve subnational actors—interest groups and subnational governments—dealing directly with supranational actors.

—Marks et al., 1996, p. 167

The theoretical groundwork of multi-level governance (MLG), which was briefly discussed in the previous chapter, was laid by Gary Marks in 1993 as a way to understand the decision-making dynamics of the European Union. He argues that previous scholarship, dominated by theories of neofunctionalism and intergovernmentalism, misses the “increasing importance of subnational levels of decision making and their myriad connections with other levels” (Marks, 1993, p. 392). Marks observes the unravelling of a state-centric model of governance and the emergence of a new form of governance whereby non-central state authorities can enter foreign spheres of governance (the “multi-level” aspect of MLG) and non-governmental actors can influence policy at the EU level (the “governance” aspect of MLG) (Piattoni, 2010, p. 20). Caponio and Jones-Correa (2017) explain that MLG stands at the intersection of “multiple processes of activation from above, i.e. from the state and from EU supra-national institutions, and from below, i.e. from lower tiers of government and non-public actors” (p. 1-2). These pressures from multiple levels are forcing a reconceptualization of important concepts in international relations, such as an international arena ruled by external anarchy and internal hierarchy and the traditional Westphalian state built on national sovereignty (Aalberts, 2004, p. 24-25; Donnelly, 2005; Reus-Smit, 1997). Because of its relatively recent development, the body of theoretical literature on MLG is far weaker than that of more classic theories like realism or liberalism. Regardless, many scholars have continued the work of Marks and through their work some interesting theoretical frameworks have developed.
Two types of MLG

As a response to the “unraveling of the state,” Gary Marks teamed up with his partner Liesbet Hooghe (2003) to theorize two different ways in which multi-level governance should be organized. They simply label these “Type I” and “Type II” governance structures and state that they “share one vital feature: They are radical departures from the centralized state” (2003, p. 241). The first ideological perspective of MLG, Type I, has its foundation in federalism whereby the central government shares power among a limited number of governments operating at just a few levels (Hooghe & Marks, 2003, p. 236). Of the two types, the first is most familiar because it is the predominant mode within national polities, which are formed through a hierarchical system of governments (Skelcher, 2005, p. 94). These subnational governments are nonintersecting and are durable, meaning their creation or abolition is costly and unusual (Hooghe & Marks, 2003, p. 236-237). Hooghe and Marks (2003) explain the simple design principle of Type I governance: “Maximize the fit between the scale of a jurisdiction and the optimal scale of public good provision while minimizing interjurisdictional coordination by (a) creating inclusive jurisdictions that internalize most relevant externalities and (b) limiting the number of jurisdictional levels” (p. 241).

Type II governance is essentially Type I’s opposite: governance jurisdictions are task-specific, meaning that their number is potentially vast and that they operate at numerous territorial scales that may overlap (Hooghe & Marks, 2003, p. 237). These jurisdictions are goal-oriented and functional and therefore may be enacted or altered depending on the particular task, reflecting their flexibility. It is organized over a large number of levels and is often widespread at the local level and designed to respond to changing citizen preferences or functional requirements (p. 238). In practice, Hooghe & Marks (2003) note that Type II governance can be embedded in Type I governance through localized jurisdictions authorized by state legislatures, counties or municipalities, or citizen groups (p. 238). This overlap can lead to what the authors refer to as the “coordination dilemma,” which they state as: “to the extent that policies of one jurisdiction have spillovers (i.e., negative or positive externalities) for other jurisdictions, so coordination is necessary to avoid socially perverse outcomes” (p. 239). They explain this concept with reference to the prisoners’ dilemma, in which a rising number of actors makes it harder to punish defectors. Type I governance obviously responds to this issue by bundling the competencies of jurisdictions and limiting their numbers to reduce
problems like free riding (p. 239). In theorizing about how multi-level governance structures can function, Hooghe and Marks provide a template for the organization of multi-level governance in empirical cases, like the management of refugee flows.

Chris Skelcher (2005) contributes to Hooghe and Marks’s typology of MLG with the concept of “jurisdictional integrity,” which is a response to the interlinked duality of Type I and Type II governance (p. 95). He defines jurisdictional integrity as “a reformulation and contextualization of the classic idea of ‘sovereignty’” (p. 91). He expands the idea of sovereignty to encompass the subnational, national, and supranational levels, which are still reflective of the Westphalian sovereignty which values territory and authority (p. 92). Polycentric governance, as laid out by Hooghe and Marks, involves some clustering of Type II governance and certainly requires some jurisdictional overlap and questions regarding their integrity and autonomy. This discussion of jurisdictional integrity points to some potential challenges in organizing a multi-level governance structure in which two types intersect. Devising an institutional design to account for jurisdictional overlap is difficult and points to the problem of coordinating efforts within the complicated network of actors in a multi-level system.

Piattoni’s three-dimensional concept of MLG

Simona Piattoni (2010) contributes further to Marks and Hooghe’s conception of MLG in her book, *The Theory of Multi-level Governance: Conceptual, Empirical, and Normative Challenges*, in which she seeks to, among other things, clarify and analyze the concept of MLG from a theoretical perspective. Similar to Fairclough’s framework for critical discourse analysis, Piattoni lays out a three-dimensional concept of MLG. She writes that MLG crosses and problematizes three analytical distinctions: “that between center and periphery, that between state and society, and that between the domestic and the international” (p. 18). She further divides the dynamic concept of MLG into three categories to which the theory can be applied: political mobilization, policy-making, and polity structuring (p. 27). Finally, the territorial levels of MLG are listed as supranational, national, and subnational and may also include other jurisdictional levels, to be discussed shortly (p. 28). As is clear from this dissection of MLG, theorizing or empirically analyzing this third paradigm of governance requires an orchestrated approach across multiple disciplines. No longer is the state viewed as the unitary arbiter of governance; rather, a cacophony of actors from various levels and with diverse competencies must be
considered. To simplify such a multi-faceted structure, Piattoni dedicates a chapter to each dimension of her conceptual framework.

Each dimension, or axis, of her conceptual framework assumes that the autonomous (European) state is challenged by another level of governance from above, below, or within the state itself. The first challenge to the state comes from below and is the relationship between the central state and its periphery, or sub-state territories (p. 33). Problems are emerging that cannot be adequately handled at the state level and, more importantly, new actors (individual and collective, public and private) are getting more involved and rescaling the level at which such problems are solved (p. 37). One reason for this regionalization of problem solving is that citizens feel a sense of trust and reciprocity within their own communities. This is based on a communitarian view of society, which “puts the ‘person’ at the center of its analysis: a human being cannot be a ‘person’ unless he/she is a member of a community” (Piattoni, 2010, p. 49). The importance of the community harkens back to Benedict Anderson’s (1983) concept of “imagined community,” which posits that the vast majority of a nation’s members will never meet one another, but that one’s loyalty to a nation is socially constructed. While the idea was initially conceived in relation to a surge of print media and its effect on nationalism, the term is now used broadly to refer to any community with a sense of shared identities.

Piattoni’s second challenge to the state comes from above in the form of increasing cross-border interdependence (p. 52). The thick webs of connectivity that run between states are growing, often as a result of an attempt to control policy areas like migration, communication, environmental protection, and so on. The term globalization is often used to describe the effect of developments in areas like economics and mass communication technology (p. 53). Increasing state interdependency and the creation of binding agreements on shared policy concerns, while unavoidable necessities, are charged with substantially decreasing state autonomy and shifting sovereignty upwards to the international level. This new theoretical notion was a direct challenge to traditional theories of international relations, like Kenneth Waltz’s (1979) structural realism which hypothesizes that the international system is in a constant state of anarchy and that states only cooperate out of self-interest. Piattoni (2010) writes that theories focusing on mere power politics miss important factors that delineate state choice, such as the size of the state and the influence of national interest in deciding whether to cooperate internationally (p. 54-55). The common market of the European Union is a good example.
of how market and society interdependency across national borders is legitimized, thereby reducing the overall importance of the nation-state as the exclusive seat of formal political power (p. 62-63).

The third and final dimension described by Piattoni is a challenge to the state coming from civil society mobilization both within and across countries (p. 66). Such societal groups are representative of both public and private interests, and their mobilization is important for informing policy decisions. As Piattoni puts it: “Neither state nor society can govern effectively in isolation from the other: efficiency and authenticity would equally be lost” (p. 70). Such groups often coalesce into non-governmental organizations and other international institutions, again surpassing the jurisdiction of the state from within. Civil society organizations often represent the interests of certain groups, such as migrants, at the center of the European Union rather than transnationally (Piattoni, p. 79). As defined by Jan Aart Scholte (2001), civil society refers “to a political space where voluntary associations explicitly seek to shape the rules (in terms of specific policies, wider norms and deeper social structures) that govern one or the other aspect of social life” (p. 6). Such a wide definition implies that civil society can encompass many different types of actors, but who each share a goal of transforming social policy and its effects on those for whom they advocate. It is the central premise of MLG theory that these three dimensions—regional, transnational, and societal—are shifting authority away from the nation-state and towards less-traditional jurisdictions.

3.1.1 Multi-level governance of migration

The theory of multi-level governance is increasingly applied to the topic of migration policy in analyses of the relations among actors at different territorial levels (Zincone & Caponio, 2006, p. 274). This field of research is a response to the acceleration of international migration after WWII and since the mid-1980s, during which time many immigrants settled in cities and small towns in rural areas. The increased pressure on municipalities to adopt pragmatic solutions to the needs of the newly arrived migrants suggests the growing importance of the local dimension of MLG in migration policy (Borkert & Caponio, 2010, p. 9). Many studies have theorized a “local turn” of policies aimed at migrant integration, a clear departure from a policy area traditionally led by the nation-state and ideas about national identity or the “national imagined community” (Scholten & Penninx, 2016, p. 92). Zapata-Barrero, Caponio, and Scholten (2017) identify
two dimensions of this local turn: (1) the horizontal dimension, which involves policymaking involving local governance and other public, private, and social actors; and (2) the vertical dimension, which looks at the complex relations between other levels of government (p. 243). The horizontal dimension of local immigrant policies are characterized by either pragmatic necessity or competing interests, reflecting the diversity of local societies. In the vertical dimension, “decoupling” can take place between national and local levels resulting in contradictions and conflicts (Zapata-Barrero, Caponio, & Scholten, 2017, p. 244; Scholten & Penninx, 2016, p. 92). A normative theory of MLG explains that the uncoordinated manner of implementing policy at different levels of governments leads to inconsistencies in policies and is therefore problematic.

Still other researchers warn that proclaiming a complete local turn in immigration policy is too hasty. Vilde Hernes (2017) recognizes “a paradox of central-local government relations” characterized by the desirability of local autonomy against the necessity felt by the central government in controlling local governments as implementers of national policies (p. 798). This conflict is felt most strongly in the Nordic countries, where they pride themselves in a welfare model characterized by the strong role of local authorities in the production of welfare and, conversely, an emphasis on equality regulated by the central government. The two contradicting levels of government, local democracy and universal welfare state, have been labeled “the quarrelsome relatives” (Kröger, 2011, p. 149-150). The struggle between these two levels becomes problematic when one introduces an acute situation that requires immediate cooperation. The refugee crisis is one such ‘critical juncture’ that can reverse the trend suggested by historical institutionalists that radical policy change in a multi-level system is rare. Indeed, crises often demand strong central leadership that could limit the autonomy of local levels of government (Hernes, 2017, p. 801-802). At the same time, a steep rise in immigration and its implicit strain on local municipalities may threaten the theory that central leadership is necessary in all crisis situations.

3.1.2 Limitations of multi-level governance

One of the strongest criticisms levied against the theory of multi-level governance comes from Jordan (2001), who identifies shaky ground on both a theoretical and an empirical level. Paradoxically, the most crushing critique against the MLG is that it is not a theory at all, but rather an amalgam of more established integration theories like
neofunctionalism and intergovernmentalism, as it lacks a set of testable hypotheses (p. 201). He asks, “is it correct to regard MLG as a new theoretical contribution or is it really just a synthesis of existing insights?” (p. 196). This is a frequent argument against MLG, which was devised by Marks as a way to analyze the way the EU operates and tends to ignore the origins of the Union or its historical evolution. Another important criticism by Jordan is that “just because subnational actors bypass states and operate independently in Europe does not necessarily imply that they have the power to shape outcomes. In other words, mobilization and influence are not necessarily synonymous” (p. 201). This criticism is especially interesting in the context of this thesis, which seeks to determine the influence of local-level voices on the overall policy choices made by the Swedish state. According to this critique, these groups may not be as powerful as a theory of multi-level governance assumes.

Another important criticism suggests that multi-level governance is ambiguous because it often refers to vertical relationships between governments at various levels rather than governance, which implies all forms of collective action like lobby groups or social campaigns and movements (Faludi, 2012, p. 200). Indeed, Jordan (2001) questions the ambiguity of the term governance since Marks’s original proposal of MLG “focused exclusively on subnational authorities rather than other subnational actors such as pressure groups” (p. 201). Faludi (2012) makes a similar argument, accusing the founders of MLG theory of not always distinguishing between governing and governance (p. 202). He especially finds fault in their typology of MLG, the first of which describes non-intersecting jurisdictions as a “Russian doll,” which he says oversimplifies the overlapping authority structures which exist in practice (p. 203). The theory of MLG is described as “oscillating between a focus on multi-level polities—which is what type I does—and drawing attention to the multifarious relations cross-cutting hierarchical arrangement—which is what type II does so well” (Faludi, 2012, p. 204). The theory of MLG has evolved from a way to describe the operationalization of the EU into a conceptualization for a broad range of governance structures. It is no wonder that its rapid expansion in academia has led to some incorrect generalizations. Despite its sweeping application, this thesis finds its theoretical foundation—a model for explaining overlapping competencies among multiple levels of governments—useful for addressing the relationship between different levels of governance within the Swedish state during the refugee crisis.
3.2 Postcolonialism

...Ideas, cultures, and histories cannot seriously be understood or studied without their force, or more precisely their configurations of power, also being studied.... The relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony...

—Edward Said, 2003, p. 5

This thesis is also rooted in postcolonialism, which is a critical theory that emerged during a period of anti-colonial activism in colonized parts of Africa, Asia, and South America. Postcolonialism sheds light on the social and power inequalities between the Western colonizer and the colonized people, which was often promulgated through depictions of the indigenous people through literary works written by Europeans. Leela Gandhi (1999) defines postcolonialism as a “theoretical resistance to the mystifying amnesia of the colonial aftermath. It is a disciplinary project devoted to the academic task of revisiting, remembering, and, crucially, interrogating the colonial past” (p. 4). While the foundations of postcolonialism are located within a particular historical setting (decolonization), it is through the act of remembering and acknowledging the lasting impact of Western dominance in those subjugated nations that postcolonialism maintains great relevance today. Postcolonial studies specifically looks at colonial discourse, or “the construction of the native, usually in stereotypical ways, in European narratives, images and representations in a variety of modes and genres” (Nayar, 2010, p. 2). Race is an omnipresent theme in these discourses through which colonial oppressors “represent, reflect, and refract” native cultures in order to control them (Nayar, 2010, p. 25). It is the Westerner who represents the native, and the native who is represented in this vastly unequal power structure. While Sweden was not as notorious a colonizer as other European countries like England, Spain, or France, postcolonialism is still a highly relevant theory through which to examine racial discourse that still exists in the country today.
3.2.1 The creation of “the Other” in colonial discourse

Central to postcolonial theory is the concept of “the Other,” or the binary relationship between the Western colonizer and the subjugated people. This dichotomy is particularly apparent in the works of Frantz Fanon, an anti-colonial revolutionary who was active in the struggle for Algeria’s independence from France. In his seminal works, *The Wretched of the Earth* and *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon presents a psychoanalytic view of the effects of colonialism on the colonized. He discusses the stark contrast, or the “reciprocal exclusivity,” between the sphere of the colonizer and that of the colonized (Fanon, 1963, p. 38-39). Homi Bhabha (1986) refers to this “disturbing distance in-between that constitutes the figure of colonial otherness” (p. xvi). The feeling of otherness experienced by the colonized person causes them to effectively divide into two dimensions, according to Fanon: one with his fellows and one with his oppressors. That this traumatic effect forced on the colonized “is a direct result of colonialist subjugation is beyond question” (Fanon, 1986, p. 17).

Another key contributor to postcolonialism and the concept of “the Other” is Edward Said, whose 1978 book, *Orientalism*, is considered by many the inaugural work on postcolonial theory as a critical method and illustrates the textual and discursive nature of colonial power and domination over the non-European. “Orientalism” can be defined as “the theory, poetics and practice of representation, by European, of the Arab world, Asia, China and Japan (together dubbed ‘the Orient’)” (Nayar, 2010, p. 13). A particularly important concept for Said is that of exteriority, which means that the Orientalist, through textual description, manufactures and sustains stereotypes or clichés meant to support colonial dominance. Said (2003) emphasizes that “it needs to be made clear about cultural discourse and exchange within a culture that was is commonly circulated by it is not “truth” but representations” (p. 21). The Oriental is inextricably linked with “otherness,” and Westerners define themselves by how they are unlike the Other: “The Orient is irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, ‘different’; thus the European is rational, virtuous, mature, ‘normal’” (Said, 2003, p. 40). Said (2003) discusses in particular the negative depiction of “the Arab” or “Arabs” in Orientalist texts and especially in the media:

In newsreels or news photos, the Arab is always shown in large numbers. No individuality, no personal characteristics or experiences. Most of the pictures represent mass rage and misery, or irrational (hence hopelessly eccentric) gestures.
Lurking behind all of these images is the menace of jihad. Consequence: a fear that the Muslims (or Arabs) will take over the world. (p. 287)

Such distortions are especially problematic because “the Oriental” or “Arab” or any repressed minority cannot represent themselves. Therefore, their misrepresentation in the West is endlessly recreated and reinforced in a vicious cycle. It is this dichotomy between “us” and “them,” Said says, that shape ideological and political realities today (p. 327).

Building on Said’s concept of exterior representation is Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s commentary on the silencing of the Other by Western intellectuals in her 1988 essay “Can the Subaltern Speak”? She begins with a disparaging critique of French philosophers Foucault and Deleuze, whom she says only continue to denigrate the Other in their analyses that are enshrouded within a system of Western intellectual thought, impenetrable to the colonial subject (p. 74-75). She uses the term “subaltern” to describe those who cannot speak for themselves, who are “removed from all lines of social mobility” and “without identity” (Spivak, 2005, p. 475-476). While she adopted the term from the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, it was a quote by Karl Marx himself that inspired her conception of the subaltern: “They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented” (as cited in Spivak, 2005, p. 476). She criticizes those privileged intellectuals who speak on behalf of the subaltern, particularly the female subaltern, because it perpetuates their silence and does not create conditions for the subaltern to speak and be heard themselves (Darder & Griffiths, 2018, p. 2-3).

The works of these three authors have one important commonality: Their portrayal of the problematic dichotomy of “us versus them,” “the Self versus the Other,” “European versus native,” etc. As Simone de Beauvoir wrote in The Second Sex (1949), “Otherness is a fundamental category of human thought. Thus it is that no group ever sets itself up as the One without at once setting up the Other over against itself” (p. 76-77). While humanity may be inclined towards defining itself by what it is not, the continued subordination of the Other through the actions and discourses of Western elites only makes the distance between the two groups harder to bridge. The subaltern Other, conditioned by a history of colonial suppression and silencing, remains hidden in the shadows of Western scholarship who misrepresent them, whether intentionally or not. This pattern of representation by false stereotypes is universal, and with increased
movements of displaced people is becoming a detrimental barrier to their successful inclusion into Western societies.

3.2.2 Postcolonialism as critical discourse analysis

Postcolonialism examines discourse as “the mode of perceiving, judging and acting upon the non-European” (Nayar, 2010, p. 2). For practitioners of critical discourse analysis like Fairclough or van Dijk, the first step is always to identify an area of social power abuse and then to take the position of those who suffer most. The goal is always to expose and ultimately reverse this inequality. A CDA of colonial discourse would thus identify the colonized person as the victim of systemic social inequality constructed through the discourse of the European colonizer. Postcolonialism and CDA are both political because they call attention to social wrongs that result from a stark imbalance of power between those who represent and those who are represented. This particular research will marry the two fields by critically analyzing how the refugees are constructed as the Other using negative discourse that refers to them as primitive, criminal, or vulnerable. Far from dismissing the ill-effects of colonialism as something “in the past,” this thesis will illustrate the relevance of postcolonialism in modern issues of refugee reception through an analysis of media discourse and policy developments during the refugee crisis.

3.2.3 Limitations of postcolonialism

Perhaps ironic is the critique of postcolonialism, an intellectual discipline aimed at illuminating the dichotomous relationship between oppressed and oppressor, that claims that the theoretical approach is, in fact, too *dichotomous*. The first area of contention is the “profound, even constitutive, disparity between theory and practice” and that postcolonialism “is merely an end in itself” (Huggan, 2013, p. 299). This is a common complaint held by Marxists, who see a prominent disconnect between the theory of postcolonialism and the ability of the field to influence political practice (p. 300). The theory's limited practical application is important when considering modern issues such as the mistreatment of refugees in countries that frame their reception as a problem that needs to be dealt with in a “pragmatic” way.

Another limitation of postcolonialism is the name itself, which situates the theory in a specific historical timeframe. As McClintock (1992) explains, ‘If ‘post-colonial’ theory
has sought to challenge the grand march of Western historicism with its entourage of binaries..., the term ‘post-colonialism’ nonetheless re-orients the globe once more around a single, binary opposition: colonial/post-colonial (p. 85). This argument is also taken up by Shohat (1992), who argues that the term “post-colonial” implies that the detrimental effect of colonialism is in the past and ignores its persistence in the present (p. 105). While these authors find fault with the temporal limitations of postcolonialism, they are also quick to problematize a suggestion by Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2002) that postcolonialism be expanded to include “all English literary productions by societies affected by colonialism” (Shohat, 1992, p. 102). This expansion, they say, would make the study far too ambiguous (McClintock, 1992, p. 86-87). Of course, for the purposes of this study the “colonial” aspect of postcolonialism will weigh far less heavily than the social power inequality which it describes.
4 Important developments in Swedish immigration policy

An understanding of the precursors to modern immigration and integration policy developments in Sweden is vital for this thesis to avoid decontextualizing the timeframe. A brief summary of the "Swedish model" for immigrant integration is therefore included, which charts the introduction and development of its unique multicultural policy for integration and its commitment to universal welfare for immigrants and native-born Swedes alike. Each era is characterized by certain challenges that threatened the Swedish model, including financial crisis, job and housing shortage, and racist propaganda. These challenges, which resemble those in modern-day Sweden, had a profound impact on the Swedish model and its ability to retain a commitment to diversity and inclusion and are therefore important to remember.

4.1 1930-1960s: From labor migrants to asylum seekers

When Sweden’s longest-running Prime Minister, Tage Erlander, commented in 1965 that, “We Swedes live in an infinitely more happy condition [than Americans]. The population of our country is homogenous, not only in regard to race but also in many other aspects” (as cited in Wickström, 2013, p. 49), he exemplified the largely assimilationist nature of Swedish integration policy that held precedence at that time. While Sweden unarguably became home to various migrant groups over the centuries its status as a country of immigration was not realized until recent decades. Indeed, Sweden experienced a huge emigration of people from the year 1850 to the 1930s when many Swedes moved to America or Australia to escape poverty and religious persecution and to build a better life. By the end of the 1800s, a staggering 20% of males and 15% of females had emigrated from Sweden (“Sweden and Migration,” 2016). It was not until the end of the Second World War that Sweden changed from a country of emigration to a country of immigration, with workers from countries like Finland, Greece, and former Yugoslavia responding to the high demand of foreign labor in the growing industries and service sector (Bevelander, 2004, p. 5). Sweden’s liberal integration policy and labor shortage accelerated the influx of labor migrants until the end of the 1960s, when trade unions called for a ban on further labor immigration. The policy decision to limit labor migrants from non-Nordic countries meant that refugees and asylum seekers together became the dominant source of immigration in Sweden (Schierup, 2006, p. 199).
4.2 1970s: Multiculturalism emerges

While immigrants were warmly welcomed to fill the labor shortage until the mid-1960s (Bevelander, 2004, p. 12), it was not until the establishment of the Swedish Immigration Board in 1969 and the introduction of free language training the following year that Sweden began to address immigrant integration (OECD, 2016, p. 46). A few years later in 1975, the Swedish Parliament unanimously adopted an immigrant and minority policy that praised ethnic and cultural pluralism (Schierup, 2006, p. 196), thereby rejecting old assimilationist goals of homogeneity (Brännström, 2015, p. 44; Wickström, 2013, p. 25-26). Built on the pillars of equality, freedom of choice, and partnership (Bevelander, 2004, p. 12), the new multicultural policy was a defining moment in Swedish immigration policy and made Sweden the first European country to grant foreign citizens the right to vote in and run in local elections (Schierup, 2006, p. 196). The 1975 policy was inspired by a similar multicultural policy in Canada but went further in its definition of immigrants as “minorities,” entailing that they have collective rights “as distinct cultural communities and corporate interest groups” (Schierup, 2006, p. 221).

This seemingly abrupt discursive change among politicians from assimilationist to multiculturalist was not only sparked by the growing policy relevance of immigration, but also by a lively debate in the Swedish newspaper *Dagens Nyheter*. In one of the first public challenges to the concept of assimilation, Jewish refugee David Schwarz pled in 1964 for the recognition and tolerance of non-Swedish groups in Sweden (Wickström, 2013, p. 37-38). In what would soon be an inflammatory statement, the newspaper actually rejected the proposal that the Swedish government had a responsibility to protect “traditional culture” when it summarized the debate. Despite this apparent blunder, *DN*, as a widely-read media outlet in Sweden, gave voice to Schwarz and his fellow immigrants and effectively changed the political discourse and as a result, the policy.

While Sweden’s adoption of a liberal multicultural policy of integration is seemingly benevolent, it has been criticized for being a superficial attempt at maintaining an international image in line with its egalitarian foreign policy (Brännström, 2015, p. 44). Furthermore, critics of multiculturalism point to its reification of cultural distinctions, which they say “solidifies artificial distinctions of race and ethnicity better overcome through universal citizenship” (Bloemraad, Korteweg, & Yurdakul, 2008, p. 161). While
this thesis does not have space to do justice to the highly debated topic of multiculturalism, its defining role in Swedish integration policy and its creation of a distinction between immigrants and native-born Swedes must be emphasized.

4.3 1980s: “Spreading the burden”

A decade after Sweden announced their multiculturalist integration policy, difficulties of incorporating the growing numbers of refugees, many of whom were fleeing the war between Iran and Iraq, became more apparent (“Sweden and Migration,” 2016; Schierup & Ålund, 2011, p. 48). As the number of humanitarian migrants increased, responsibility for immigrant integration was decentralized away from the National Labour Market Board to the municipalities (Emilsson, 2015, p. 7). This change in policy, which put municipalities in charge of providing language training, civic orientation, and labor market preparation, was officially intended to take local considerations into account when designing integration programs.

It was also a reaction to the disproportionately high numbers of immigrants living in Sweden’s three largest cities. An ambitious housing program, later dubbed the “Million Program,” oversaw the building of one million apartments from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s. The apartments, mainly situated on the outskirts of big cities, were a response to the shortage of affordable housing in Sweden but began to attract immigrants instead of working class Swedes (Bevelander, 2004, p. 21). Ethnic segregation inevitably developed, spurring the Swedish government to enact the “Whole of Sweden Strategy” in 1985 with the goal of “sharing the burden” of migrants among as many municipalities as possible (Pred, 2000, p. 37; Schierup, 2006, p. 219). Municipalities were reimbursed by the state for all expenditures, which meant more and more municipalities, regardless of their suitability, began accepting refugees. The reorganized refugee reception also entailed a compulsory dispersal policy that paid little regard to the individual’s interests and led to negative effects like lower earnings and idleness among the refugees (Bevelander, 2004, p. 15).

The 1980s were also characterized by an upsurge of new nationalist-populist movements that coincided with the shift of immigration from a labor-market issue to a welfare issue or “social problem” (Schierup, 2006, p. 196, 219). Generous welfare policies had not proved effective against discrimination (Schierup & Ålund, 2011, p. 48), and the political right began a discourse on “welfare clientelism” that fed the fire of rising racist
and populist movements (Schierup, 2006, p. 220). The level of racist and anti-immigration activism, not seen in Sweden since the 1930s, included heinous acts such as “hate propaganda, cross-burnings, vandalism, demonstrations, and attacks against ethnoracially marked targets and political opponents” (Brännström, 2015, p. 47). The Social Democratic government, for their part, responded with a retreat from multicultural policy and a restatement of “the primacy of national norms, values, and institutions” (Schierup, 2006, p. 222). It became clear from the actions of politicians and civilians alike that Sweden was reluctant to embrace the multiple cultures on non-Westerners.

4.4 1990s: From immigration policy to integration policy

The racialized political discourse of the 1980s carried over into the next decade while Sweden plunged into economic and social crisis. The populist anti-immigrant party, New Democracy (Ny Demokrati), won seats in parliament in 1991 but was repressed by the Left-Right political consensus a few years later (Schierup & Ålund, 2011, p. 49). Despite their defeat, the anti-immigration sentiments carried on throughout the decade with accusations against immigrants as the cause of catastrophic levels of unemployment and a toll on public finances. This led to an effort to curb immigration through limiting asylum benefits and family reunification, and to encourage workforce productivity among the existing immigrants (Brännström, 2015, p. 49).

In 1996, the Swedish government officially announced the change from an immigration to an integration policy aimed at the whole population (Wiesbrock, 2011, p. 50). Most importantly, the new integration policy emphasized that “everyone is involved and must make a contribution” (Regeringskansliet, 2002). This transferred the responsibility for integration away from individual minority groups or municipal integration programs and onto society as a whole under the auspices of mutual respect and tolerance. Also conspicuous in this particular policy report (Regeringskansliet, 2002) is its statement that cultural differences should be encouraged “so long as these do not conflict with the fundamental democratic values of society,” a statement which the document reiterates twice. In light of anti-immigration and racist rhetoric, multiculturalism began to seem more threatening than in decades past and was replaced with “diversity management,” which implies a stronger emphasis on protecting Swedish culture (Schierup & Ålund, 2011, p. 49).
4.5 2000s-present day: Central government takes center stage

In 2005, the coalition of center-right parties took office and quickly aligned migrant integration with labor productivity and entrepreneurship (Brännström, 2015, p. 54), deepening the “citizen as worker” prerequisite for immigrant integration (Borevi, 2014, p. 711). Citing the ineffectiveness of the Swedish Integration Board’s introduction programs, which they say focused too little on labor market activities, the center-right government initiated a reform in 2009 allowing the state to take over responsibility for the introduction programs from the municipalities (Emilsson, 2015, p. 9). While the municipalities are still responsible for “schooling and for housing planning,” the state, “via the Swedish Public Employment Service, will have a coordinating responsibility for introduction measures,” which previously lay with the municipalities (Regeringskansliet, 2009). The government also sought to shrink the differences between municipal integration programs through more centralized leadership (Emilsson, 2015, p. 9). The Swedish Migration Board is also given more responsibility in re-settling immigrants from metropolitan municipalities to those with a smaller percentage of immigrants (Regeringskansliet, 2009). These changes illustrate a general trend towards centralization of immigration and migration policy away from the municipalities, who traditionally were allowed to work more autonomously.

Since unprecedented numbers of asylum seekers sought refuge in Sweden a few years ago, the Swedish government put in place a variety of measures to make it more difficult to reach Sweden. Temporary border controls, ID checks, and limits on family reunification were enacted when it became clear “the EU Member States were unable to share the responsibility that came with the large number of asylum seekers” (Ministry of Justice, 2018). Since bringing Sweden’s asylum rules in line with minimum standards under EU law, the country witnessed a sharp drop in asylum applications at the end of 2015 and early 2016 (Migrationsverket, 2016). At the local level, NGO initiatives to tackle the refugee situation emerged, including Refugees Welcome Sweden and several church groups who coordinate housing and accept donations for refugees. This efforts indicate that despite greater centralization of refugee and immigration policy, what one might call “coercive government” (Emilsson, 2015, p. 13), the local level continues to play an important role.
4.6 The Swedish model for immigrant integration

Charting Sweden’s post-war immigration and integration policy reveals what Schierup (2006) labels the “Swedish paradox” between the welfare state’s “strong commitment to ‘sustainable welfare’ and ‘diversity’ on the one hand, and a deepening structurally and institutionally grounded ethnic-class divisions on the other” (p. 197). Indeed, many have applauded the Swedish model of immigrant integration for its combination of welfare state universalism with an active promotion of cultural diversity. As opposed to similar European countries like Denmark or the Netherlands, Sweden does not require immigrants to pass any integration or language tests or implement any similar civic integration policy (Borevi, 2014, p. 715). In spite of the generous policy and commitment to diversity established in the 1970s, the following decades challenged the Swedish model with financial crisis and record-high numbers of people seeking refuge or economic stability. Following trends throughout Europe, the decades following the establishment of Sweden’s integration policy saw a gradual retreat from its original commitment to multiculturalism and towards more modest policy that favored societal equality and workforce participation. The most recent rise in refugee numbers again forced Sweden to depart from its generous asylum policy by implementing temporary but stringent measures to curb immigration. While Swedish immigration and integration policy has certainly experienced a number of fluctuations in the past several decades, the one constant is the influential power of discourse. From Schwarz’s appeal for multiculturalism in the 1960s, to racialized rhetoric of far-right parties in the 1980s, to the government’s reiteration of mutual respect and tolerance in the 1990s, discourse played an instrumental role in Sweden’s immigration and integration history and its analysis but continue in relation to this most recent challenge.
5 Analysis of Swedish policy and discourse on refugees

This chapter begins by identifying the two nodal points in the Swedish media discourse, which are “the refugee” and “the Swedish state.” Both local and national news articles coalesce around these two points, whose meaning changes through time along with the evolution of the discourse. The chapter then provides information on the refugee reception system at both the national and the local level before analyzing how the discourse shifts from solidarity- to problem-oriented discourse at both levels. A third discursive trend, that of integration discourse, is also identified and analyzed. Finally, the chapter charts the relationship between refugee reception and refugee discourse at both levels of governance. As will be illustrated, an apparent relationship exists between the reception system and the discourse at each individual level but not necessarily between the two levels.

5.1 Determining the nodal points in the Swedish media discourse

The identification of nodal points within a discourse can facilitate its classification and is especially useful for illustrating any trends or wider themes in the discourse. In the tradition of Laclau and Mouffe, this paper defines nodal points as empty signs that acquire meaning when inserted in a particular discourse (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 28). This occurs through the practice of articulation, whereby the identity of elements (signs whose meanings have not yet been fixed) are defined by their relation to other elements (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 105). Once these elements acquire meaning, they are transformed into moments that together form the discourse. Of course, the meanings of nodal points can fail to crystallize and instead become floating signifiers. The struggle to fix meaning to the floating signifier means its purpose can change drastically based on the discourse within which it is embedded (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 28).

When analyzing multiple discursive events, such as the thirty newspaper articles examined in this thesis, it can be difficult to locate the nodal point from one discursive event to the next. The nodal point of one article could be as specific as the workforce or education, identified by the article’s topic and imbued with meaning from the surrounding text. However, an analysis of a series of discursive events as a whole requires the researcher to zoom out to see the big picture. Which concepts are always present and whose meaning changes based on the associated signs in each article? For the purposes
of this thesis, two nodal points have been identified that remain present throughout the articles but whose meaning and importance shift linearly through time. The first nodal point is refugees and the second is the Swedish state.

5.1.1 The nodal point of “refugee” in Swedish media discourse

The first nodal point is the concept of ‘refugee,’ which acquires meaning in relation to the surrounding signs in each article. The term ‘refugee’ is commonly understood as “persons fleeing armed conflict or persecution” (UNHCR 2010), but its meaning becomes more complex and socially relevant in the context of Swedish news articles reporting on the reception of high numbers of such individuals. While international treaties and laws like the 1951 Refugee Convention or the Dublin Regulation outline the legal status of refugees and the obligations of receiving states, the national discourse on refugees plays an important role in how the refugees will be received in society. As an important voice in public debate, the media has a great deal of power in shaping the way refugees are perceived. An analysis of the thirty news articles, half of which are sourced from Dagens Nyheter and the other half from Sydsvenskan, indeed reveals a distinction between a positive and a negative refugee discourse. This distinction is evident in the contrasting signifiers, which either allude to the refugees as pitiable victims who need help or as a burden to society.

While being characterized as a victim is usually not positive, in the context of the refugee crisis the depiction of refugees as victims contributes to feelings of solidarity and philanthropy among society in their effort to raise the refugees out of their terrible circumstances. In some of the most positive discourses, refugees are described as a benefit to society. The first article from DN (this article and all subsequent articles are listed in Appendix C) mentions that refugees are beneficial for depopulated communities (“Öppna Dörren,” 2015), while the second emphasizes the importance of refugees in the workforce to support retired people (“Öppna Vägen,” 2015), which is a key tenet of the Swedish welfare model. Of the thirty articles, only two name an individual refugee whom they interviewed (“Öppna Dörren,” 2015; “Sverige,” 2015). In both cases, the refugee is extremely grateful: In the first article, “Mohammed Omar tells DN that he will never forget the reception. He does not want to live elsewhere than in Rätan”; similarly, in the second article Hamza Ibrahim tells other refugees that “there are many opportunities here that we would not have had throughout our lives in our homelands...there is a great chance of
success in society.” Far more articles focus on the poor conditions refugees face even on
their arrival to Sweden. One article from *Sydsvenskan* uses signifiers such as “a stale scent
of sweat and stuffiness” and “mattresses laid on worn linoleum floors” to describe refugee
housing as unacceptable (Mikkelsen, 2015), while another suggests that refugees were
without food or water and sleeping on the floor (Runol & Andersson, 2015) and one from
*DN* describes the “arbitrarily designed, unorganized activities” faced by the refugee
children in Swedish schools (“Stäng dåliga skolor,” 2015). In all of these examples, the
nodal point ‘refugees’ is defined within the particular discourse as people who will benefit
society when successfully integrated but who are currently in need of help. Signs like
“opportunity,” “success,” and “benefit,” define refugees as ultimately positive societal
attributes while signs like “deficiencies,” “unorganized,” and “crowded” describe the poor
conditions the refugees face.

The nodal point ‘refugees’ is also negatively defined in the Swedish media discourse
as persons who are a burden to society. Indeed, the word “burden” itself is used many
times throughout the discourse, whether to describe the effect of the “influx of children”
on Malmö schools (Persson, 2015c; see also Lönnaeus, 2015 and Westerberg, 2015b), or
on the social services for young people (Persson, 2015e). In both cases, the refugees who
are being criticized for their negative impact on the Swedish system are children and
minors. Another trend clearly visible in the discourse is defining the refugees as large
numbers or, in an even more derogatory manner, with metaphors comparing them to
flowing bodies of water. Signs that define the nodal point here include: “fifty new children
come every day,” “all areas of society are pressured by the large number of refugees,” “the
refugee flow,” “we must dampen the inflow,” “influx of students,” and “refugee stream.”
Reducing the identity of the refugees down to a very high number or a natural disaster
like a flood makes them seem like an unstoppable, threatening force on society. It also
transforms the individual people into one large, anonymous group. News consumers who
regularly read about a large, anonymous entity washing over their country are likely to
fear scared, threatened, and unwelcoming. When the idea of refugee is injected with
negative imagery, their chances of being warmly welcomed and integrated into the
receiving society are greatly hampered.
5.1.2 The nodal point of the “Swedish state” in Swedish media discourse

The other identifiable nodal point is ‘the Swedish state’, which in this case refers to conceptions of national identity. As discussed in the previous chapter, Sweden’s history of immigration and integration policy has been built on a universal welfare state and values like multiculturalism and diversity. While Sweden has made a concerted effort to project an identity of generosity and acceptance on the international stage, it has struggled to marry its ideological values with more pragmatic concerns. A tension exists between “the declared primacy of social welfare and full employment on the one hand, and a professed universalism, a global humanitarianism, or a commitment to the free international movement of labour on the other” (Schierup, 2006, p. 217). This issue is particularly visible when analyzing the country’s response to the refugee crisis, when more practical concerns like housing and employment force the country to temporarily abandon its benevolent ideology. In the media articles, the Swedish state is a nodal point that is infused with different meaning throughout the discourse. The positive discourse remains loyal to Sweden’s humanitarian identity, while the negative discourse depicts the country as bending and breaking under the strain of receiving so many refugees.

Despite the general feeling of crisis that exists in every article, many journalists signaled the county’s humanitarian identity. In one DN article (“Bra Förslag,” 2015), the journalist writes:

At best, we not only look back at this period with pride that we continued to stand up for people in flight when others chose to close the door. Perhaps we can also say that we took the opportunity and made the necessary changes to the school, the labor market, and housing policy [emphasis added].

This is a good example of discourse that uses signs such as “pride” and “opportunity” to emphasize the nation state’s continued commitment to its humanitarian values and its ability to benefit from an otherwise difficult situation. Another DN article also refers to Sweden as “a country of opportunity” and explicitly writes: “the image of Sweden as a hateful, racist nation is wrong – and in addition, risks becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy if it increases the tension” (“Sverige,” 2015). Yet another DN article similarly writes that Sweden is not “inhumane or xenophobic” and “has long been Europe’s most generous country (Helmerson, 2015). The goal of these articles is to depict the nation state in a positive light while expelling any apparent claims of racism that surfaced during the refugee crisis. DN even refers to Sweden as a “humanitarian superpower” that values
“international solidarity,” which reinforces the national identity (Molander, 2015). The Swedish state’s identity as a welcoming host to refugees is also apparent at the municipal level. A Sydsvenskan journalist writes that in Lund, “local initiatives are many” (Sjöberg, 2015), and another quotes the Head of Social Resources Management in Malmö: “I am proud of the work we have done and feel a great hope of humanity in this city” [emphasis added] (Mikkelsen, 2015). Again, the Swedish state is depicted through signifiers like “local initiatives,” “proud,” and “hope of humanity” as a country committed to their humanitarian effort.

Though some articles were clearly written with the intention of bolstering Sweden’s compassionate identity, others depict a faltering ideological stance in light of the refugee crisis. A great many articles refer to the pressure felt by the country, using words and phrases such as: “extreme strains,” “Sweden should be in the category of overpowered countries,” “close to our capacity,” “reception system is overloaded,” “burst limit,” “crowded,” and “burden.” This rhetoric transforms the nodal point of the Swedish state from a welcoming, hard-working place of respite to a country drained of resources and crying out for help. In a DN article the journalist writes that “Sweden cannot, in the long run, be the only country, together with Germany, who sees the refugee crisis as its human responsibility” (“Nödvändigt Andrum,” 2015). Many articles from local-level Sydsvenskan echo the same feelings of having taken on too much responsibility. This negative, problem-based transformation of the nodal point becomes clearer as the refugee crisis progresses.

5.1.3 Shifting nodal points: From solidarity- to problem-oriented discourse

Perhaps more interesting than the clearly identifiable solidarity-based and problem-based discourse surrounding the two nodal points is the way their importance in the discourse fluctuates through time. As the refugee crisis progresses, the nodal points visibly switch places of importance. In the beginning of the crisis, the welfare of the refugees figures more prominently into the discourse than at the peak of the crisis. A brief period of describing refugees as victims or as examples of successful integration quickly dissolves into describing them as burdensome. A similar path is charted for the Swedish state nodal point, from a focus on its humanitarian commitment to an even greater focus on the strains felt by its reception system. At the beginning of the crisis, the nodal point of refugees was much more noticeable that that of the Swedish state, but by the end of the
5.2 Refugee reception at both levels of governance

5.2.1 Refugee reception at the national level

Before charting the discursive trends, it is important to discuss how refugee immigration and integration were addressed during the refugee crisis at both the national and local levels. At the national level, governance of the refugee crisis includes international communication at both the EU and UN level, policy creation, and coordination efforts to implement national policy at lower levels of government. For the purposes of this thesis, information regarding national-level governance of the refugee situation were collected from the Swedish government’s official website (www.government.se). Relevant articles detailing the government’s proposed domestic and foreign policy were collected with publishing dates from September 2015 to March 2016. The following is a timeline of the national governance measures related to the refugee situation, immigration, and integration.

During the months of September and October 2015, responses to the refugee crisis centered around coordination at the international and domestic level. An article published on 10 September briefly summarized the crisis and highlighted Sweden’s role as one of the highest donors of humanitarian aid: “Since the war started in Syria, Sweden has contributed almost SEK 1.6 billion in humanitarian support” and “is the fifth largest aid donor (2014) when it comes to providing support for people in acute distress, known as humanitarian aid” (“Sweden Supporting,” 2015). The Government assured readers that “Sweden is not going to reduce its commitment” but calls for the EU to pursue a more active foreign and aid policy and to “drastically increase” the number of quota refuges. It is interesting to note that Sweden promises not to reduce its humanitarian commitment, but in a couple months’ time will pursue much more stringent asylum law. The Swedish Government’s call to other EU member states to increase their efforts was reiterated in an article announcing their approval of an EU proposal to relocate 120,000 asylum seekers and discouraging member states from refusing to receive people in need of protection (“EU Migration Ministers,” 2015). Other Government-led responses are to strengthen the coordination been the national and municipal level with regard to housing

The biggest changes to asylum policy began on 12 November 2015 when the government decided to temporarily introduce border controls and identity checks for ferry passengers. They cited the "acute challenges to vital functions of society," the threat to "public order and domestic security," and "major strains on several vital public services" as the reasons behind their decision. While the original measures were meant to be temporary and last only ten days, the border controls have been repeatedly prolonged and are currently set to expire in May 2018 ("Internal Border," 2017), two and a half years after they were originally introduced.

On 24 November 2015, the government implemented its most stringent asylum policy in order to "create respite for Swedish refugee reception" ("Government Proposes Measures," 2015). The policy was intended to produce "a dramatic reduction in the number of people who seek asylum and are granted a residence permit in Sweden" by tightening the asylum regulations to the minimum level in the EU so that more people will seek asylum elsewhere. Examples of policy changes include limiting the permanent residence permits to quote refugees only, not giving residency to those in the category 'otherwise in need of protection,' limiting the accessibility to family reunification to immediate family members, and introducing ID checks on all modes of public transportation to Sweden. These changes are a clear departure from Sweden's generous asylum policy and commitment to humanitarian goals visible just a few months before.

Since its adoption of measures intended to limit the number of refugees seeking asylum in Sweden, the government began to pursue policy change at the EU level. On 26 November, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven suggested that "we should start to discuss a new, sustainable system for refugee reception in the EU, based on a permanent distribution system" ("Cooperation," 2015). The government emphasized that Sweden "cannot stand alone" and agreed that no more than thirty percent of the aid budget will go to migration costs. Above all, the government stressed that all EU Member States must "take their share of responsibility" ("The EU and Turkey Agree," 2016). The officially-reported government policy and position, though collected across a period of only seven months, reveals a drastic change from a determined humanitarian ideology to a pragmatic approach of self-interest. While the government still prides itself in being a generous aid donor among the
international community, its actions during the refugee crisis reveal that its ultimate goal is self-preservation if conditions are perceived as too threatening.

5.2.2 Refugee reception at the local level

To gauge the refugee reception at the local level, annual and interim reports from the years 2015 and 2016 for the Malmö municipality will be referenced. As discussed in the methodology chapter, Malmö was selected to represent the local level because it received the most refugees during the crisis. As demonstrated by both the Sydsvenskan articles and the reports prepared by the municipality, the refugee crisis had a big impact on the municipality and prompted important changes in both its refugee reception initiatives and its discourse.

All four of the reports (an interim and an annual report from both 2015 and 2016) include a section titled flyktingmottagande, or refugee reception. It is probably not a coincidence that the section in the 2015 interim report, which covers the months January to August, is the notably shorter than the sections in other reports. The municipality did not report a significant increase in the number of refugees until April 2015, at which point the number began to increase drastically. As the municipality that “receives 46% of all unaccompanied minors coming to Sweden,” a steep increase in refugee numbers over a short period of time made a big impact on the community. Swedish municipalities are especially responsible for unaccompanied minors, or children without guardians, and must provide them with accommodation and care, schooling, and support from social services. The municipality is remunerated for the costs by the Swedish Migration Board, but it still requires a lot of work which is why “a crisis group was set up in early August after the situation became acute.” This crisis organization was tasked with supporting other administrations and was dissolved in January 2016.

The annual report from 2015 includes a much larger section on refugee reception because during the fall the municipality was responsible for more unaccompanied minors than ever before. The emphasis throughout the reports was on the support for children, since the Swedish state is responsible for adults and families of asylum seekers. The municipality’s Social Resource Board is the main unit in charge of receiving unaccompanied minors and had to employ 2,000 people during September and December 2015 undertake the myriad tasks required to arrange accommodation and care for the children. Another initiative was the establishment of an Arrival Center to “create a
dignified refugee reception” when the refugees arrived at the Central Station, which was staffed with representatives from the Migration Board, the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and the Refugees Welcome to Malmö, a civil society organization created to help provide a dignified reception to the refugees. Despite the contributions from volunteers, the costs for refugee reception in Malmö municipality increased approximately 65% from what it was just a year before.

The interim report for 2016 unsurprisingly reveals a decrease in the number of unaccompanied minors seeking asylum in Malmö: “During the period January to August 2016, a total of 304 unaccompanied children arrived in Malmö, of which approximately one third arrived before 4 January, when border controls were introduced.” A new law also came into effect on 1 March 2016 called the Reception for Settlement Act, which makes it mandatory for all municipalities in Sweden to receive newly arrived persons who have received residents permits, including resettled refugees (Swedish Migration Agency, 2017). According to the interim report, “the purpose of the Act is to ensure that new arrivals are received more quickly for resettlement in a municipality and thus begin to be established in the labor market and in society.” However, due to the housing shortage already existing in Malmö, the municipality says it will be “difficult” to fulfill their responsibility as mandated by the Migration Board. During this time the municipality also received extra funds from the government to support its refugee reception, but still reports that councils remain in a “stressed situation.”

Finally, the annual report for 2016 observed that “the number of arriving children has fallen sharply”: only 84 unaccompanied minors were reported in Malmö during the year compared with the Migration’s Board’s projections for the year of 903 children. The border controls are identified as the primary reason for the smaller number. However, the municipality is still entitled to state benefits for reception, which are applied for at the individual level at the Swedish Migration Board. Remuneration for persons with a residence permit also greatly increased, much of which will be distributed among reception committees and for strengthening social services. In summary, the local level was primarily responsible for unaccompanied minors, which had the biggest impact on the availability of housing and schooling for the children.
5.3 Refugee discourse at both levels of governance

Conducting the discourse analyses, examples of which are included in Appendix B, reveals a discursive shift during the refugee crisis in relation to the tougher asylum laws implemented in November 2015. Three discursive patterns are visible in articles from both Dagens Nyheter and Sydsvenskan, though the shift takes place earlier in the Sydsvenskan articles. The first discursive pattern is solidarity-oriented discourse, which focuses on the country and the municipalities’ responsibility to help the refugees. The second discursive pattern is problem-oriented and tends to cluster around the time when the drastic policy change was implemented. As will be demonstrated, this important shift is visible earlier in the Sydsvenskan articles than in the Dagens Nyheter articles. Reasons for this discrepancy between news sources will be speculated about, including the more immediate need for pragmatic solutions at the local level of governance. Finally, a shift is visible after the policy is enacted when the discourse begins to focus on questions of long-term refugee integration. This pattern will be discussed in the following section in conjunction with the changes in Sweden’s immigration and integration policy at both the national and local level.

5.3.1 Refugee discourse at the national level

This thesis uses media coverage of the refugee crisis in the national newspaper Dagens Nyheter to represent discourse at the national level. Fifteen articles were selected ranging from September 2015 to February 2016, a timeframe which encapsulates the most acute point of the refugee crisis in Sweden. This became evident after a survey of all media reports on DN of the refugee crisis from 2015 and 2016, which revealed more general, Euro-centric reports of the refugee crisis before the fall of 2015 and a general decline of relevant reports after December 2015. Focusing the discourse analysis on the period surrounding the peak of the crisis allows for a detailed account of how the discourse changed quite rapidly. As will be demonstrated, this shift coincided with important policy changes adopted by the Swedish government.

Solidarity-oriented discourse

The first discursive trend identified is one built on solidarity, of feelings of unity and cooperation, not only towards the refugees but also among the Swedish society and within
the European Union. The first article, titled “Öppna Dörren till Kommunerna”\(^2\) and published at the beginning of September 2015, is about a community coming together to host an extremely successful refugee welcoming committee. Despite being a small community with equally small funds, the article praises the importance of “languages, humanity, and volunteering” in creating “a fantastic first meeting with Sweden.” The article shames “rich and metropolitan” municipalities for not doing their part in hosting refugees and quips that “the welfare state is no buffet where the municipalities are discerning guests.” By this, the article means that the duty of the municipality is to offer all services mandated by the welfare state, including language education, schooling, and housing for unaccompanied minors. Around this time, both the municipalities and the state were expressing frustration that only a few municipalities took a large responsibility while others did not. A solidarity-oriented discourse is evident in the article’s call to communities and municipalities to work together to create a successful refugee reception.

Another article from later in the month also tackles the question of municipal responsibility, disparagingly writing that, “In Sweden most agree: EU member states must take joint responsibility for refugees. But within the borders of the country it has not been as easy to convince municipalities about the same logic” (“Bra Förslag,” 2015). It further states that “the situation is extraordinary” and that “everyone must contribute,” again pointing to the importance of solidarity in refugee reception. This article is critical of the current reception system in Sweden, but maintains Sweden’s ideological commitment to accepting refugees:

> At best, we not only look back at this period with the pride that we continued to stand up for people in flight when others chose to close the door. Perhaps we also get to say that we took the opportunity to make the necessary changes to the school, labor market, and housing policy [emphasis added].

The refugees are not depicted here as a problem, but as an opportunity to identify and change any flaws in the existing reception system, such as increasing the unity among municipalities and the state.

“Med ett Tält som Symbol”\(^3\), published on 10 October, responds to the growing anti-immigration discourse among politicians. “The Moderates no longer talk about open hearts,” the article observed, referencing an appeal made by the right-leaning former

\(^2\) “Open the Door to the Municipalities”
\(^3\) “With a Tent as a Symbol”
Prime Minister of Sweden for his citizens to “open your hearts” to immigration. Anti-immigration rhetoric and policy aimed at reducing immigration should be avoided, the article says, because “border controls do not make people entitled to seek asylum less entitled to it.” The article also references the lack of housing in Sweden that led the Swedish Migration Board to consider housing people in tents. Despite this “drastic symbol,” Sweden’s willingness to allow more refugees to enter the country despite a housing shortage is evidence “that solidarity and humanity are not words without action.” Again, this article is clearly calling for increased solidarity and openness despite the apparent strains on society.

Similar concerns about anti-immigration rhetoric and policy are voiced on 19 October: “Those who want to block Sweden’s borders do not see the successful, ambitious, well-integrated immigrants, they only note crime and fundamentalism – and do so eagerly” (“Sverige,” 2015). Despite the rising voices against immigration, the article emphasizes that “the image of Sweden as a hateful, racist nation is wrong” but warns that increasing tension spurned by the few who want to limit immigration could have detrimental effects and must be curtailed. Another article from the end of October similarly argued that “Sweden cannot, and should not, shut the door when the outside world is knocking” (“En Ny Grund,” 2015). As is clearly demonstrated, the solidarity-oriented discourse calls for increased cooperation among municipalities and government and discourages the adoption of policy aimed at limiting immigration.

**Problem-oriented discourse**

Unlike solidarity-based discourse, the second discursive trend has a much more negative outlook on the refugee situation. Of the fifteen articles analyzed from DN, only two displayed obvious evidence of problem-oriented discourse (“Dalta Inte,” 2015; “Flyktingar Skildras,” 2015). Of course, all of the articles written during the refugee crisis use negative terminology in line with the crisis feeling at that time. Even the solidarity-oriented articles refer to the situation as a “strain” on the Swedish reception system or describe the immigration patterns with terms like “influx” or “refugee stream.” While the focus now is on the larger discursive trends, the micro-level analysis of the discourse reveals this kind of loaded phraseology that also plays a role in shifting the discourse.

Despite some words or metaphors with negative connotations present throughout most of the articles, the problem-oriented discourse was most obvious in November 2015
when the refugee crisis was at its most acute. One article announced the temporary border controls against Denmark and describe this new measure to control immigration as a “golden opportunity” to “step up the tone against those countries that do not take responsibility in the refugee crisis” (“Dalta Inte,” 2015). In the solidarity-based discourse, the newcomers were referred to as an “opportunity” to improve reception policy, but now preventing the refugees from entering the country is the “opportunity.” “Sweden can no longer be the last outpost of European asylum law,” reads the article, making it clear that it supports the tighter border controls.

Sweden reached its breaking point on 24 November 2015 when the government implemented a historical reform of its generous asylum policy. An article published that day is titled “Necessary Breathing Space,” echoing the Prime Minister’s speech when he announced the new policy. The article evidently supports the new measures when it says, “Sweden cannot, in the long run, be the only country, together with Germany, who sees the refugee crisis as its human responsibility.” Both the policy and the discourse show Sweden distancing itself from its previously-lauded commitment to humanitarian goals and human rights. “Now, this effort is to be considered as over,” the article pronounces, marking an end to Sweden’s important role in the refugee crisis.

Integration discourse

The discourse following the controversial policy change expressed a general feeling that the crisis is over and that now work needs to be done to integrate the new arrivals who are already in Sweden. “Flyktingar Skildras som Otacksamma” 4 from early December 2015 addressed the apparent miscommunication between Swedish authorities and the refugees themselves. The article points to the popularity of media stories depicting “unreasonable refugees” or “bad Swedish reception,” which may both be exaggerations. Another issue raised is the refugees’ misinformation about what awaits them in Sweden: “It is strange and worrying that refugees believe that in Sweden you will automatically receive apartments and dinner and dessert every day.” Life if much harder, the article says, and what is not strange is that “someone is forced to sleep for a few nights on a piece of cardboard in a fair hall.” The main point of the article is summarized as follows: “Refugees are entitled to demand a dignified reception. But Sweden is also entitled to put

4 “Refugees Described as Ungrateful”
demands on those who come here. Mutual respect must be the leading word.” The article addresses not only the difficult situation of the refugees but also the difficulty Sweden faces in integrating them quickly and successfully.

“Regeringens Krishantering har Bara Börjat” from the beginning of 2016 announced that “the hard-hit Swedish reception system is about to get a respite” and that “the number of refugees has fallen drastically.” What Stefan Löfven refers to as “breathing space” is a direct result of the November policy changes, which have indeed prevented many refugees from seeking asylum in Sweden but has also led to problems with Denmark and the rest of the EU. The main issue concerning Sweden, however, is the question of integrating the refugees and is dealt with in an article called “När Vilsenheten Regerar” (2016). It cites an Ipsos survey that demonstrates that immigration and integration are the most important issues for Swedish voters. The study also saw a steep decline in the numbers of Swedes who thought the country should continue to receive immigrants but cites “the difficulty of taking care of the refugees” rather than “nationalism or xenophobia” as the primary cause of the decline in support. The integration discourse towards the end of the crisis demonstrates a desire to continue the temporary tighter asylum rules while dealing with the long-term issues relating to both international border relations and newcomer integration.

5.3.2 Refugee discourse at the local level

Local newspaper Sydsvenskan, which is headquartered in Malmö and provides news coverage of the southern Skåne region of Sweden, will here represent the local level refugee discourse in the media. Fifteen news articles were selected from September 2015 to February 2016, all of which are written with special focus on the Skåne region or on particular cities like Malmö or Lund. Similar to the national newspaper Dagens Nyheter, Sydsvenskan also displays the three discursive trends of solidarity-oriented, problem-oriented, and integration discourse. However, as will be demonstrated below, the number of problem-oriented articles far outweighed the solidarity-oriented articles.

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5 “The Government's Crisis Management has Just Begun”
6 “When Disorientation Rules”
Solidarity-oriented discourse

Solidarity-oriented discourse at the local level is expressed in appeals to the community to pool its resources in an effort to strengthen refugee reception. Some of the articles read like announcements directed at the citizens: “Malmö city is looking for emergency staff and housing to take care of unaccompanied minors” (Westerberg, 2015a). Others provide updates on issues like housing, cataloguing the exact premises offered as living accommodation to refugees. Magnusson (2015) ends the article with a quote from an emergency planning official, referring to the need for temporary accommodation in cities like Malmö: “We prioritize this right now because all good powers must help solve a difficult situation for refugees.” Another article from Lund describes an eighth-grade class who will donate the proceeds of their annual play to refugee children (Sjöberg, 2015). According to the article, this is just one example of the many "local initiatives” that demonstrate a “willingness to help in the refugee crisis.”

Other articles hope to inspire feelings of solidarity through their depictions of refugees as victims. One particularly illustrative article describes the “stale scent of sweat and stuffiness” in “chilly rooms with cracks in the walls” and “mattresses laid on worn linoleum floors” (Mikkelsen, 2015). This description of the transit houses in Malmö makes clear the urgency of the situation but is offset by the optimism of the social workers: they “laugh at the question of how much overtime they have worked” but ultimately feel that “everything is worth it.” They are “proud of the work” they have done for the refugee children and “feel a great hope of humanity in this city.” The contrast between the positivity of the staff and the pitiable conditions suffered by the refugee children is intended to encourage solidarity among readers. Runol & Andersson (2015) also discuss bad living conditions for refugees, who were reportedly “sleeping on the floor” and “not given food or drink” at the Migration Board’s accommodation in Malmö. While the Migration Board attempted to repudiate these claims, it still makes people aware that the refugees are suffering and need help from a unified community.

Problem-oriented discourse

Evidence of problem-oriented discourse was much clearer at the local level than at the national level and characterizes the majority of articles from Sydsvenskan. One article from early October is rife with discourse that problematizes the refugee situation. The “most difficult is the situation in Skåne,” where municipalities are “so heavily
pressed by the refugee crisis that the situation is ‘critical’ for school and social services” (Lönnaeus, 2015). Refugee reception is described as a strain and a pressure, while municipal leaders say, “this is a desperate call for help” and that “we must dampen the inflow.” This is a significant departure from previous articles calling for citizen unity and mobilization. The problem-oriented discourse is clear in subsequent articles, which describe the refugee situation in Malmö and other Skåne cities with terms like acute, worrying, in need of relief, at its breaking point, strained, extreme, and a burden.

The calls to support the refugees and strengthen their reception have ended in the problem-oriented discourse, which describes the presence of refugees as a burden the cities can no longer sustain. Many of the articles cite the “strain” on social services. Social workers who usually help Malmö youth now must assist unaccompanied refugee children, which “means that more young people will be ill” (Persson, 2015e). Schools have also been challenged: “The influx of children has increased so much that the challenge of integrating the students has become very great” (Persson, 2015c).

Most importantly, the majority of the articles claim that Malmö and the surrounding cities have too much responsibility. One article ends by saying, “if Malmö is to handle this, then other municipalities must go in and share the responsibility of the arrival” (Persson, 2015b). Another similarly stated, “it is worrying for Malmö, we cannot bear so much responsibility” (Persson, 2015e). Some articles called on other municipalities to share the refugee reception: Persson (2015c) emphasized that “the burden must be evenly distributed,” while he also claimed that “more and more municipalities refuse to receive children from Malmö” and that the city “is taking too much responsibility, more must help” (2015a). The local level news articles clearly illustrate the presence of refugees as a burden on the community that needs immediate alleviation.

Integration discourse

Like the national news source, Sydsvenskan began publishing articles relating to the support and integration of refugees who already live in the country. In February 2016, Westerberg and Fjellman both provide projections for budgetary expenditures for the coming years. Unsurprisingly, most of the budget will go towards schools and social services which were affected the most during the crisis. Schools are particularly important because although “the government’s intensified refugee policy has dampened the sharp rise in population in Malmö,” the age group that has grown the most is “the
sixteen- to nineteen-year-olds.” And while “there will be a more even distribution of the reception of new arrivals” because of the new law requiring all of Sweden's municipalities to receive refugees with a residence permit, appeals to the state for help continue: “There are few municipalities that carry Swedish migration policy and we need national support” (Fjellman, 2016). While clearly still in its early stages, integration discourse at the local level has clearly moved away from depicting the current state as a crisis and instead discusses how to pragmatically respond to the changes that have occurred in areas like housing, schooling, and social work.

5.4 Charting the evolution of the refugee reception and discourse

National level

A side-by-side analysis of the national policy and discourse during the refugee crisis reveals some interesting correlations between the two sets of data. Both the Swedish refugee policy and the discourse in the national media were driven by humanitarian ideals and ambitions when Sweden began receiving higher numbers of refugees. Policy at the onset of the crisis was primarily concerned with continuing Sweden’s role as a major donor of humanitarian aid, promising not to reduce its commitment while entreatying other EU member states to follow suit. Sweden's idealized identity is also visible in the solidarity-based discourse in Dagens Nyheter, which calls for the mobilization of both EU members states and municipalities across Sweden to create a welcoming reception for the refugees. In this discourse, anti-immigration policy is strongly discouraged its rhetoric cautioned against.

The biggest turning point in the discourse was published on 7 November 2015 at a time when politicians began to propose tighter refugee policy. In response to those who criticized the politicians for apparently abandoning their liberal immigration policy, Helmerson (2015) writes: “It’s incredibly hard to understand why it would be so wrong to change when reality does.” This article was published only a few days before the government decided to impose temporary border controls and identity checks, citing strains on public services and safety. In this case, the discourse only slightly preceded the policy, illustrating a seemingly close relationship between the two. From this point forward, the national discourse supported the stricter asylum policy pursued by the government. This became increasingly evident on 24 November 2015, when the
government introduced its most stringent asylum policy to date and DN published an article titled “Nödvändigt Andrum” or “Necessary Breathing Space.” The discourse and the policy are closely tied, the article wholly supporting the policy decision because “Sweden cannot, in the long run, be the only country, together with Germany, who sees the refugee crisis as its human responsibility.” Both the national government and the national discourse are shown here in a rapid retreat from their previously generous policy.

Soon after the announcement of the new policy, the discourse changed from reporting the crisis situation to declaring the end of the crisis and the beginning of the integration initiative. The tone of the articles and the policy at the end of 2015 and the beginning of 2016 have a much greater focus on the long-term. The discourse centered on the challenges of quickly integrating the new arrivals, while the government pursued policy change at the EU level with the ambition of creating a permanent distribution system for refugee reception. Through charting the discursive and policy changes at the national level, it becomes clear that the two are closely linked.

Local level

As was expected, the analysis of local initiatives and discourse revealed a much more pragmatic approach centered on solving issues as they presented themselves in real time. While the national discourse and policy still focused on Sweden’s humanitarian commitment, the Malmö municipality was arranging a crisis group and an Arrival Center to greet the new arrivals and tackle any challenges related to refugee reception. Local discourse centered on encouraging citizen mobilization to improve the difficult situation the refugees were currently facing in terms of immediate needs like accommodation. This solidarity-oriented discourse lasted a far shorter time at the local level than at the national level, and quickly switched to problem-oriented discourse by the end of September 2015.

In the fall of 2015, the municipal government was largely concerned with accommodating the unaccompanied refugee children which required a great deal more money and staff. This effort coincided with the discourse in Sydsvenskan, which wrote about the strain on the schools and social services and the need for more support from other municipalities and from the government. This entreaty was apparently answered by the national government, who adjusted the budget for municipalities to support refugee reception.
The one parallel that can be drawn between the national and the local levels is the almost immediate calm that followed the policy decision at the end of November 2015. Both levels maintain that there still remains a lot of work to be done, but also note that the number of incoming refugees is significantly lower since the new policy was introduced. The 2016 interim report announced that the number of arriving refugee children has fallen sharply since the border controls were implemented, and an article from February similarly credits the government’s intensified refugee policy with the population decline. At this point in the crisis, both levels were focused on long-term solutions, with the national level focusing on unity within the EU and the local level hoping for unity within Sweden itself.
6 Discussion of results

6.1 The challenges of governing at multiple levels

One of the goals of this thesis was to analyze the relationship between different levels of governance during a crisis situation. The mass migration of displaced persons to Europe, and specifically Sweden, in the fall of 2015 presented a challenge for the various governance structures involved, all of whom had their own objective during the crisis. While the EU was dealing with issue areas like strengthening its external border and ensuring proper implementation of EU law, Sweden itself was grappling with two competing commitments: one to its humanitarian agenda and the other to the stability of its welfare system. As evidenced by the media discourse, the central government clung tenaciously to its charitable ideology while the local level quickly abandoned similar rhetoric and began voicing their needs and concerns. Just as Piattoni (2010) described in her conceptual framework of MLG (p. 18), there existed a challenge to the state coming from both above and below. The Swedish government was frustrated at the lack of solidarity shown by its fellow member states but was also pressured by individual municipalities to tighten refugee policy and redistribute the existing refugees more evenly among the municipalities. The unwillingness of other EU member states to shoulder some of the responsibility for refugee reception and the frustration of local municipalities over the strain to their welfare resources ultimately forced the government to tighten its asylum policy to the minimum standards required under EU law.

MLG theorists explain the eventual acquiescence of the central government to the needs of its municipalities as a “local-turn” of migration policy. This change happens on two dimensions: the horizontal dimension, characterized by the adoption of immigrant policies based on pragmatic necessity, and the vertical dimension, which describes a “decoupling” between the national and local levels and the resulting contradictions and conflicts. As stated in one DN article: “The inability to cooperate between state and municipality is one of the bottlenecks of the integration process” (“Bra Förslag,” 2015). Indeed, the tensions between the two levels of governance were observable in the refugee crisis, during which the nation’s commitment to its humanitarian agenda was temporarily stalled in the face of pragmatic issues related to immediate initiatives to deal with the current crisis. This also provides evidence against those scholars who claim that immigration policy has become more centralized. In this case, the central leadership was
forced to greatly alter its asylum policy after being pressured by the needs of the local communities. The refugee crisis in Sweden is an example of when concerns of self-preservation prevail over lofty idealizations.

6.2 The crisis through the lens of postcolonialism

As a critical discourse analysis, this thesis also aimed to identify an area of social power abuse and, in taking the position of those who are subjugated by the discourse, rectify the apparent inequality. In the case of the refugee crisis in Sweden, the displaced persons seeking asylum are vulnerable not only to policy decisions but also to the way they are framed in the media and in political discourse. The discourse analysis was performed, to the best of the researcher’s ability, from the point of view of the refugee in order to illuminate the ways in which the refugee is misrepresented or, in many cases, not represented at all.

One of the most relevant concepts to this particular study is that of “the Other” in postcolonial theory, which describes the way a subordinated person (whether a member of an ex-colony or any minority group) is represented by those in power. Despite the fact that Sweden does not share the same history of widespread overseas colonies with other European countries like France or Great Britain, postcolonialism is still a valuable theory for analyzing the relationship between Swedish people, as citizens of a wealthy Western country, and those displaced people from poorer, disadvantaged countries. Dominance, whether a remnant of a colonial past or a result of social inequalities, is sustained through the misrepresentation of non-Westerners in Western discourse and scholarship. Such discourse creates a dichotomy of “us” versus “them,” or “the Westerner” verses “the Other,” or “the Swede” versus “the refugee.”

In Swedish media discourse, the refugees were frequently cast at the Other through depictions of them as either hapless victims or as burdensome intruders. In both instances the refugees are passive subjects of Swedish policy and discourse. As described by Said (2003), “Orientals were rarely seen or looked at; they were seen through, analyzed not as citizens, or even people, but as problems to be solved or confined” (p. 207). The Swedish government and municipalities referred to the refugees as a homogenous group—an “influx,” a “stream,” a large, unwieldy number that refused to fit seamlessly into Swedish society. According to Said (2003), this is an all-too-common trend: “In newsreels or newsphotos, the Arab is always shown in large numbers. No individuality,
In the thirty articles that were analyzed during the crisis, only two referred to a refugee by name and asked for their opinions, which unsurprisingly were very favorable to Sweden. In most cases, the refugees were either a numerical statistic or as an amorphous group flooding the country.

In depicting the refugees as the Other, Swedish media discourse underrepresents the refugees and even subordinates their status in their new society. In what could be considered a hegemonic display of power, refugees are silenced and not given a voice. Spivak (2005) would refer to a refugee during the crisis as a “subaltern,” or a person who cannot represent themselves and instead must be represented by Westerners (p. 476). Especially in the problem-oriented discourse, the primary voice is that of the Swedish state or the municipalities who describe the challenges to society caused by the mass immigration of refugees. When the conditions of refugees are described, it is mainly to emphasize the ends to which Swedish society had to go in order to accommodate the refugees. If the only ones given a voice are Swedish, the refugees remain the distant Other and are less likely to be warmly welcomed into Swedish society.

6.3 The relationship between discourse and policy

One of the most important goals this thesis hoped to achieve was to identify if any relationship exists between media discourse and refugee reception. This is an important question that can be applied to a wide variety of topics beyond immigration and integration. It also wanted to determine if this same relationship exists at different levels of government, i.e. between the national and the local. The results of the analyses of discourse and policy documents definitely revealed a relationship between discourse and policy at each level. On the national level, both the documents sourced from the government’s website and the news articles demonstrated a commitment to Sweden’s humanitarian efforts at the beginning of the crisis. Solidarity was encouraged, both within Sweden and among the EU member states, despite the crisis attitude that permeated all of the documents. It was not until the beginning of November that the discourse and the policy changed drastically. As was illustrated in the analysis, the discourse only preceded the policy changed by a few days and in some cases the changes occurred simultaneously. This suggests a strong relationship between the media and the policy at the national level.

The local media discourse and refugee reception were also closely related but did not follow the same time line as the national level. The local level was much quicker to
relinquish any loyalty to humanitarian endeavors and instead focused on pragmatic problem-solving. In Malmö, the municipality whose refugee reception was challenged the most, both the discourse and the reception initiatives were targeted at easing the “burden” on its social services. This led to a decidedly problem-oriented discourse, but again the tone shifted after the tightening of the asylum policy at the national level.

From the analyses at both the national and the local level, it can be suggested that a relationship does indeed exist between the media discourse and governance. Whether this same relationship exists between the levels is less clear. As was mentioned earlier, one of the reasons the government cited for its policy change in November was the difficulty faced by the municipalities. As is clear from both the Malmö reports and the media articles, the municipality was making it very clear that it needed help. Oftentimes the government’s lack of solidarity was cited as a major problem. Whether the government’s actions were truly a result of the municipality’s discourse is difficult to say without assuming causality. However, it can be said without hesitation that the voice of the municipality was united in both media and governance and probably had a great deal of influence over the subsequent decision taken by the government to tighten its asylum policy and thereby limit the number of refugees entering the country.
7 Concluding remarks

Through an analysis of both media discourse and governance during the refugee crisis in Sweden, this thesis sought to identify and define the relationship between the two areas. The refugee crisis of 2015-2016 was selected because of its polarizing effect on discourse, which can be boiled down to a positive, solidarity-oriented discourse and a negative, problem-oriented discourse. The solidarity discourse was characterized by its desire to unite both Sweden and the European Union and provide a welcoming reception to refugees, which Sweden saw as its humanitarian duty. The problem discourse, largely propagated by the rising anti-immigration populist parties, depicted the refugees as burdensome to society and as “the Other” in the words of postcolonial theory. It was conceived that the opposing discourses, when coupled with the urgency of a crisis situation, may impede the implementation of effective refugee reception policy. The difficulty in governing the crisis is even more visible when looking at the multiple levels of governance, such as the national and the local level. If the media discourse and the governance structure at each level are indeed related and there exists a divergence between the two levels, a difficulty of achieving of successful governance may arise.

The analysis did indeed reveal differing media discourse at the national and the local level, which became more noticeable when analysing the discourse over time. The national level, illustrated here through the media discourse of Sweden’s largest morning newspaper *Dagens Nyheter*, was characterized by a strong solidarity-oriented discourse from the beginning of the crisis until just before the government’s major change to asylum policy in November. The tightening of Sweden’s once-generous asylum policy coincided with a shift towards problem-oriented discourse and later to discourse focused on integrating the new arrivals. On the local level, illustrated by a regional newspaper from the south of Sweden called *Sydsvenskan*, the discourse quickly changed from solidarity- to problem-oriented at the beginning of the refugee crisis and was marked by a commitment to pragmatic, community-based concerns. The refugee reception initiatives at the local level, which used Malmö, as the largest city in southern Sweden, as an example, were also more pragmatic and focused on dealing with issues of providing accommodation and schooling for the new arrivals. While both levels of governance underwent a discursive shift, it was much more pronounced at the national level and corresponded to the equally pronounced shift in government policy.
Though there was a clear relationship between media discourse and refugee reception at the individual levels of governance, it’s difficult to ascertain the relationship between the national and the local level. While protestations at the municipal level were cited as a primary reason for the asylum policy change in November, there were undoubtedly other variables at play. It may be concluded, however, that the levels had differing objectives during the crisis which forced each to make some compromises. The difficulty in reaching consensus is the main crux of a system of multi-level governance and was clearly visible in the divergent ambitions of the national and the local levels.

There is a lot of room for future research on the relationship between discourse and governance. While this study focused on the locality that received the most refugees (Malmö), it could be interesting to conduct similar research on other municipalities who also received a lot of refugees or avoided receiving many at all. The levels of governance could also be expanded to encompass civil society initiatives or the work at the EU level. Finally, other polarizing events beyond the refugee crisis could also be examined to see if the same relationship between discourse and governance exists. This thesis was only a small contribution to the ever-expanding research area of migration and governance studies, but hopefully can inspire future research in the field.
References


Krzyżanowski, M. (2017). "We are a small country that has done enormously lot": The 'refugee crisis' and the hybrid discourse of politicizing immigration in Sweden. *Journal of Immigrant and Refugee Studies, 1*-21.


UNHCR. (2015). *Press coverage of the refugee and migrant crisis in the EU: A content analysis of five European countries.* Cardiff: UNHCR.


# Appendix

## Appendix A: Discourse analysis rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse Analysis Rubric</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Date</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Source</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>URL</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework of analysis

1. **Text dimension**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metaphors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wordings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **Discursive practice dimension** (intertextuality)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nodal point:</th>
<th>Signifiers:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Refugees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. **Social practice dimension**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification of nodal point and signifiers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nodal point:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swedish state</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification of discursive trend (underline one)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solidarity-oriented discourse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Appendix B: Samples of the discourse analysis

Sample 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse Analysis Rubric</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
<td>Kindness warms in the cold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date</strong></td>
<td>9 October 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Source</strong></td>
<td>Sydsvenskan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>URL</strong></td>
<td><a href="https://www.sydsvenskan.se/2015-10-09/omtanken-varmer-i-kylan">https://www.sydsvenskan.se/2015-10-09/omtanken-varmer-i-kylan</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fairclough's three-dimensional framework of analysis

1. **Text dimension**

**Metaphors**

- Words to describe refugee housing in Malmö: “stale,” “stuffiness,” “chilly,” “condemned premises,” “deficiencies”

**Grammar**

- “A stale scent of sweat and stuffiness spreads in chilly rooms with cracks in the walls.” Very descriptive language used to paint a picture of horrible living conditions.
- “Upstairs are mattresses laid on worn linoleum floors.” Similar to previous statement: descriptive language meant to shock the reader.
- “‘Compared to many other premises, this is quite good.’” This utterance directly followed the above negative descriptions of housing, which is meant to alarm the reader (there are worse conditions than those described?).
- “For many of the children, this is the closest to home they have come for a long time.” An appeal to the reader’s emotions and sympathy for the refugee children. However, the journalist never says how he knows the children feel at “home” in those dwellings and therefore may be inferring it.
- “How they comfort each other when panic attacks and loneliness come upon them.” Again, the journalist has no proof that the children feel panic attacks or loneliness, except at the word of the government authority figure.
- “‘I am proud of the work we have done and feel a great hope of humanity.’” A positive quote amidst the backdrop of negativity reinforces the Swedish commitment to their humanitarian aid.

2. **Discursive practice dimension (intertextuality)**

- The journalist contrasts his personal impressions of the housing for unaccompanied refugee children with that of the Head of the Unit on Social Resource management (enhetchef på sociala resursförvaltningen). This creates an intertextual relationship between the journalist’s
discourse, which describes the refugees’ squalid living conditions, and the discourse of the government employee tasked with arranging the temporary housing. The juxtaposition between his description (“chilly rooms with cracks in the walls”; “mattresses laid on worn linoleum floors”) and her affirmations (“compared to many other premises, this is quite good”; “I am proud of the work we have done and feel a great hope of humanity”) makes the reader aware of the urgency of the situation but also assured that the Swedish municipal authorities are doing their best. Most importantly, it is a call to citizens of Malmö to help (by donating items such as “television sets, DVD movies and games”) and to remain welcoming to the refugees whose situations are pitiful.

3. Social practice dimension

- As stated in the article, this was published when there were “just between 1,100 and 1,200 unaccompanied children and adolescents in Malmö” and “one hundred more come each day.” The government agency tasked with their registration, the Swedish Migration Board (Migrationsverket), was unable to keep up with the arrivals which created a “bottleneck.” As a primary port of arrival, Malmö municipality was tasked with the reception of unaccompanied refugee children, or children without parents or family traveling with them. Judging by this article, finding them appropriate accommodation was difficult and the responsible authorities were struggling. However, there was no mention in the article that Sweden or the municipality should not receive the children despite the difficulties. Acknowledging the difficulties without denying responsibility is a common theme among articles at the beginning of the “crisis.”
- This article reflects Sweden’s ideological commitment to its humanitarian effort during the refugee crisis. While the employees “laugh at the question of how much overtime they have worked,” they maintain that “everything is worth it,” that they are “proud,” and that they feel a “great hope for humanity.” At this point, the social practice of remaining positive and committed is still intact.
- There are also examples of hegemony in the article. Though the journalist describes the living standards of the refugee children’s homes, he fails to include their thoughts or feelings about their situation. He only interviews the Swedish authority, presenting a one-sided view of the situation and ignoring the real experiences of the refugees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification of nodal points and signifiers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nodal point:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signifiers:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Accommodation of refugee children described using words: “stale,” “stuffiness,” “chilly,” “condemned premises,” etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Refugees are victims.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nodal point:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Signifiers: | • Swedish employees in charge of housing say that “everything is worth it,” “are proud of the work,” and that they “feel a great hope of humanity.”
| | • Swedish state is committed to helping the refugees. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification of discursive trend</th>
<th>Solidarity-oriented discourse</th>
<th>Problem-oriented discourse</th>
<th>Integration discourse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Discourse Analysis Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>A new groundwork is laid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>23 October 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Dagens Nyheter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Fairclough's three-dimensional framework of analysis

#### 1. Text dimension

**Metaphors**
- "A new groundwork has been laid for cooperation between the parties."
  This metaphor has a positive connotation, implying a hopeful future of cooperation between political parties with regard to migration and integration policy.
- "Sweden cannot, nor should it, shut the door when the outside world is knocking."
  Shutting the door is a metaphor which here means closing Sweden's borders to refugees who need help. It represents the country’s commitment to their generous asylum policy.
- "Cow trading has its sides."
  The direct translation of this metaphor (kohandeln har sina sidor) does not have a meaning in English but could find an equivalent in the phrase: "putting everything on the table” has its sides. The author here is referring to the deal that had recently been negotiated between the government and the Alliance, which evidently was a compromise for both sides.
- "The role of the right-leaning parties in the future is to ensure that the Social Democrats and the Environmental Party do not drag their feet."
  Social Democrats and the Environmental Party, who are pro-immigration and support generous asylum rules, may be slower to implement stricter migration and integration policy than their right-leaning counterparts, which the journalist warns against.

**Wording**
- Words used to describe the refugee response: “changed dramatically,” “subject to extreme strains,” “a dilemma”
- Words to describe Sweden: “overpowered,” “close to our capacity,” “turning to the EU for relief”
- Words to describe the new refugee settlement policy: “not a revolution,” “a sober recognition of a dilemma,” “right,” “logical,” “harmonizes,” “ideal,” “necessary,” “good news,” “collaboration”

**Grammar**
- “The truth is that reality has changed dramatically in the fall.”
  Anytime a writer uses the term "the truth is," it can be read as an appeal to logos, or logic. The author here is asking the reader to see reason. According to them, it is a fact that reality changed dramatically in the fall. Whether or not that is true is irrelevant in their argument, which is to give sufficient reason for the compromise on migration.
and integration policy that was agreed on shortly before the article was published.

- “Therefore, it is also logical that you also go in a direction that harmonizes the conditions for asylum with the rest of the EU.”

Again, the author appeals to logic by saying the reform is “logical.” Following a quote by Stefan Löfven that Sweden is “close to our capacity,” this sentence rationalizes a policy closer in line with that of the EU. The reader is less likely to disagree with the statement because they want to avoid being illogical.

- “This week’s agreement is a sober recognition of a dilemma.”

This description of the reform is not enthusiastic or celebratory. Rather, the author makes it clear that the policy resulted from a difficult situation and was adopted out of necessity rather than desire. While the author is not happy about the new policy, they acknowledge it as an important adjustment and compromise in a tricky policy area.

2. Discursive practice dimension (intertextuality)

- This article is a response to the deal signed between the government and the Alliance parties requiring that only family members and unaccompanied minors continue to receive permanent residence permits. The deal was an important collaboration between Sweden’s previously opposed political parties on a polarizing issue. Moreover, it contributes to a discourse on the effectiveness of the Swedish government. According to the journalist, the new deal is evidence that “the political system has shown that it works and can find means.” Far from criticizing the government’s efforts, the article praises the deal as a successful collaboration.

3. Social practice dimension

- This article remains true to Sweden’s ideology of open borders, but with a few caveats. The author acknowledges the difficulty of the situation (extreme strains on the municipalities; doubling of asylum seekers) but praises the ability of the Swedish political system to handle the difficulties. Some small changes must be made, the author admits, but overall the Swedish government is remaining true to its ideological tradition of giving refuge to forcibly displaced people.

Identification of nodal points and signifiers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nodal point:</th>
<th>Refugees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signifiers:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Refugees not referred to directly.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nodal point:</th>
<th>Swedish state</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signifiers:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The political system has shown that it works and can find means.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Sweden cannot, and should not, shut the door when the outside world is knocking.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Swedish state is still pursuing humanitarian goals in the face of some difficulty.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Identification of discursive trend
| Solidarity-oriented discourse | Problem-oriented discourse | Integration discourse |
Sample 3:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse Analysis Rubric</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Date</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Source</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>URL</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework of analysis

4. Text dimension

**Metaphors**

- “Now you crawl with your tail between your legs, now you are adapting to us, now you affirming we are right.” This statement is what the journalist suggests the Sweden Democrats are saying to those politicians who wanted to maintain a generous asylum policy but are now considering tighter controls. The metaphor “crawl with your tail between your legs” is very insulting and compares its target to a dog who has misbehaved. This metaphor is used to exaggerate the sentiments of the anti-immigration party, who the journalist says wrongly believe they have triumphed from the new policy suggestions.

- “The two groups, like the judge from “The Wind on the Moon,” may change their shirt but never their opinion. The author is here referring to a British children’s book that describes a stubborn judge who changes his shirt (and socks and handkerchief) but never his opinion. He compares the far-left and the Sweden Democrats, who criticized the politicians for changing their opinion, with a character who is so stubborn even a child could see it.

- “At the same time, more and more municipalities are sounding the alarms: We are falling on our knees, we cannot handle it.” Of course, municipalities are not literally sounding alarms or falling on their knees, but these metaphors are used to describe the sense of panic and desperation experienced by municipal governments during the crisis. Such extraordinary levels of panic are, according to the journalist, valid reasons for changing the policy.

**Wording**

- Words to describe how the Sweden Democrats feel about the introduction of restrictive immigration policy: “celebrates,” “indignant,” “triumphant”

- Words to describe the current refugee situation: “unprecedented,” “too far and too fast,” “overloaded,” “strong increase,” “strained systems,” “passive government”

- Words the author says describe Sweden’s attitude: “generous,” “(not) inhumane or xenophobic”

**Grammar**

- “It’s incredibly hard to understand why it would be so wrong to change when reality does.” The phrases “incredibly hard” and “so wrong” emphasize the journalist’s own feelings of exasperation and defensiveness. This is a powerfully worded statement in
reaction to the jeers of those (like Sweden Democrats) who mock the change in policy.

- “How in the world can it be considered controversial to say that it’s gone too far and too fast and that now some form of tightening is required?”
  This rhetorical question is further emphasizing the author’s opinion that the refugee situation left no choice but to alter policy. While worded like a question, it leaves no room for dissent or objection.
- “Saying ‘we must brake’ when the reception system becomes overloaded is not in the least inhumane or xenophobic – especially given that Sweden has long been Europe’s most generous country.”
  Again, the journalist defends the proposed policy changes and denies accusations that Sweden is “inhumane” and “xenophobic” by praising the country as Europe’s most generous. Using the superlative “most generous” emphasizes his claim.
- “You do not change your mind, regardless of reality. You are the consistent ones. Congratulations!”
  Again, this is a sarcastic retort against Sweden Democrats. As the last sentence of the article, it’s a final defence against negative accusations that Sweden is abandoning its generous asylum policy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5. Discursive practice dimension (intertextuality)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This article cites a wide variety of sources that illustrate the changing discourse of refugee reception from one of generosity to one of restriction. Among those “bourgeois leaders and politicians, but also ministers and left-wingers” are Göran Greider, Stefan Löfven, Margot Wallström, and Morgan Johansson. He also illustrates public opinion in favour of more restrictive asylum policy by citing a poll from DN/Ipsos. He defends the change of sentiment among those previously in favour of generous asylum policy by situating it in a context of unprecedented events that put a strain on Swedish society. He also summarizes the rhetoric of the far-right Sweden democrats as insulting and jeering, making the reader feel the same defensiveness of the proposed policy changes as the author himself.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6. Social practice dimension</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This article was published a few days before the Swedish government implemented internal border controls and a couple weeks before the drastic change in asylum policy. This article is important because it demonstrates a shift in opinion and an acknowledgement that tighter asylum policy may be necessary. Previous articles maintained a firm commitment to the Swedish ideology of humanitarianism and generosity. This article is really the breaking point, when people begin to waver in their commitment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A hegemonic relationship is also present because it essentially ignores the effect of these policy changes on the refugee groups. As in many articles, the refugees are represented by numbers: 6,600 asylum applications in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
June, 24,300 applications in September, 40,000 applications in October. He does not refer to them as refugees, humans, or children, only as “figures” or “fractions”. Refugees are effectively dehumanized in this appeal to accept tighter policy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification of nodal points and signifiers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nodal point:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Refugees</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Nodal point:** | **Signifiers:** |
| **Swedish state** | • “It's incredibly hard to understand why it would be so wrong to change when reality does.” |
| | • “More and more authorities and municipalities are sounding the alarm: 'we are on our knees, we cannot handle it.'” |
| | • “Saying ‘we must brake’ when the reception system becomes overloaded is not the least inhumane or xenophobic – especially given that Sweden has long been Europe’s most generous country.” |
| | • Swedish state still humanitarian even if its policy changes due to extraordinary circumstances. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification of discursive trend</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Solidarity-oriented discourse</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Sample 4:

#### Discourse Analysis Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Refugees can live in tents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>12 November 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Sydsvenskan</td>
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<tr>
<td>URL</td>
<td><a href="https://www.sydsvenskan.se/2015-11-12/flyktingbarn-kan-fa-bo-i-talt">https://www.sydsvenskan.se/2015-11-12/flyktingbarn-kan-fa-bo-i-talt</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Fairclough's three-dimensional framework of analysis

1. **Text dimension**

   - **Metaphors**: N/A

   - **Wording**
     - Words used to describe the current situation in Malmö: “acute,” “forced,” “strained,” “worrying,”
     - Words to describe the refugees: “stuck,” “highest number ever”

   - **Grammar**
     - “Malmö will soon reach its breaking point.”
       As the first sentence of the article, it sets a tone of emergency and desperation.
     - “The next step is tent solutions.”
       Housing refugee children in tents is considered the worst-case scenario. The seriousness of this statement is multiplied because it stands alone instead of within another paragraph. That refugees must now live in tents instead of the “changing rooms, abandoned preschools, and gymnasiums” they lived in previously in a symbol of the acuteness of the situation for Malmö.
     - “It is extremely strained right now. It is very worrying.”
       This is a quote from the Manager of Social Resources, Annelie Larsson. Describing the situation as strained and worrisome is a cue to the reader that they should also be worried.
     - “refugees can no longer be guaranteed a roof over their heads.”
       A roof over one's head, or secure shelter, is a basic human necessity. Not only does the article say that there are no decent living facilities available, it says that there are none at all. This illustrates the seriousness of the situation.
     - “If Malmö is to handle this, then other municipalities must go in and share the responsibility for the new arrivals.”
       This is the last sentence of the article and the only suggestion given regarding how to handle the situation. Malmö once again iterates its position as a transit municipality and therefore a large recipient of unaccompanied minors. This call for help to other municipalities reflects possible feelings of unfairness or inequality among the municipalities.

2. **Discursive practice dimension (intertextuality)**

   - This article was written after the highest number of unaccompanied minors sought refuge in Malmö in a single night and the Swedish Migration Board announced that refugees may not be guaranteed housing. It was also published on the same day that the government
implemented temporary border controls. A spokesperson for Malmö says only that she does not know how the new policy will affect the municipality.

### 3. Social practice dimension

- Despite the desperation of the article, the author does not once call for the reduction of refugee numbers. Malmö municipality just reached a new peak in refugee reception but maintains the Swedish ideology of a moral commitment to the refugees. By not suggesting tighter restrictions (which will inevitably come later that month) and only briefly mentioning the internal border controls, the journalist avoids implying that Sweden should receive fewer refugees. The refugees already in Malmö are described as a strain on the system, but also pitiable because of the lack of suitable housing for them.

#### Identification of nodal points and signifiers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nodal point: Refugees</th>
<th>Signifiers:</th>
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</table>
| “highest number ever.” | • “highest number ever.”  
• “300 unaccompanied refugees”  
• Refugees are just referred to as a large number and a problem. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nodal point: Swedish state</th>
<th>Signifiers:</th>
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</table>
| “Malmö has soon reached its breaking point.” | • “Malmö has soon reached its breaking point.”  
• “the situation is acute”  
• “it is extremely strained right now. It’s very worrying.”  
• The city of Malmö is struggling tremendously. |

#### Identification of discursive trend

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Solidarity-oriented discourse</th>
<th>Problem-oriented discourse</th>
<th>Integration discourse</th>
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## Appendix C: List of articles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Published Date</th>
<th>Source</th>
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