

WP2

THE NATIONAL POLICY FRAME FOR THE INTEGRATION OF NEWCOMERS: The Swedish Case

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About the Project

While integration policies as such are not new, and in some countries date back to the 1980s and beyond, there have been important shifts in the debates on integration and in related re-configurations of integration policymaking in the past decade or so. One of the main recent trends is the linkage of integration policy with admission policy and the related focus on recent immigrants. A second trend is the increasing use of obligatory integration measures and integration conditions in admission policy, and third, integration policymaking is increasingly influenced by European developments, both through vertical (more or less binding regulations, directives etc.) and through horizontal processes (policy learning between states) of policy convergence.

An increasing number of EU Member States have, in fact, adopted integration related measures as part of their admission policy, while the impact of such measures on integration processes of immigrants is far less clear. In addition, Member States' policies follow different, partly contradictory logics, in integration policy shifts by conceptualising (1) integration as rights based inclusion, (2) as a prerequisite for admission residence rights, with rights interpreted as conditional, and (3) integration as commitment to values and certain cultural traits of the host society.

The objective of *PROSINT* is to *evaluate the impact* of admission related integration policies on the integration of newcomers, to *analyse the different logics* underlying integration policymaking and to *investigate the main target groups* of compulsory and voluntary integration measures.

The project investigated different aspects of these questions along five distinct workpackages,. These analysed (1) the **European policy framework on migrant integration** (WP1), (2) the **different national policy frameworks for the integration of newcomers** in the 9 countries covered by the research (WP2), **the admission-integration nexus at the local** level in studied in 13 localities across the 9 countries covered by the research (WP3), **the perception and impacts of mandatory pre-arrival measures** in four of the nine countries covered (WP4) and a methodologically oriented study **of the impact of admission related integration measures** (WP5).

The countries covered by the project were Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Apart from individual cases project reports generally cover the period until end of 2010.

For more information about the project visit <http://research.icmpd.org/1429.html>.

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Comment:

Note this report has been written in summer 2010. Changes in the organizational structure following the re-election of the conservative government coalition in September 2010 have not been accounted for.

I The evolution of the Migration and Integration Policy Nexus

In Sweden, there is a strong division between the fields of migration and integration. While integration falls under the Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality, migration (with an own minister) is nowadays dealt with under the realms of the Ministry of Justice. Until 1996, migration was dealt with under the Ministry of Labour Market. Between 1996 and 2006, it was part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Integration, on the other hand, was part of the scope of the Ministry of Justice until 2006 when it got its own department (interviewees justice 1&2). From the 1970s up until 1997, “immigrants policy” (*invandrarpolitik*) was the field of politics that treated integration related issues. While it was clearly separated from immigration policy it was dealt with under the same authority “Immigrant Board” (*Invandrarverket*). However, a major reform in 1997 made the distinction between the two policy fields even more clear by establishing two separate authorities, namely the Migration Board (*migrationsverket*) and the Integration Board (*integrationsverket*), responsible for their field of policy each. In addition, “immigrants policy” was renamed as “integration policy”. The rationale behind it was that the first term fuelled a division into “us and them” by painting the picture of immigrants as a homogeneous group in need of special measures in order to adopt to the Swedish society. At government level it was therefore concluded that integration policies ought to be a general concern to the whole society and not be treated as an immigrant issue. Consequently, collective measures towards immigrants as a group should be limited to the first two years after arrival in the country. After that, “integration mainstreaming” of general policy measures of different welfare authorities should guarantee equal rights, duties and possibilities for all residents in Sweden (Bet. 1997/98:SfU 6).

Two of the most important changes of the new field of integration policy were the shifts of focus a) from groups to the individual and b) from measures targeting the immigrant population to measures targeting the general population (Brekke & Borchgrevink, 2007:16).¹ Interviewee 2 at the Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality states that migration and integration are treated as two separate fields also in the media, in academic research and in the formation of public opinion. Developments in the field of migration are hardly considered when talking about integration. Nevertheless, while keeping the two fields separate, the conservative coalition government (in office since 2006) has made a number of slightly different arguments that blur the clear distinction somewhat: one of them being the maintenance demand on family reunification, the other the recognition that labour migration can stimulate integration of immigrants in general (interviewee Int&Gen2). One interviewee expresses the opinion that the former government (i.e. social democratic led) almost treated the link between integration and migration as a taboo – out of fear to be seen as racist or far-rightist (SKL). According to the same interviewee, the new conservative coalition government (since 2006) was more successful in treating these sensitive issues in a clear way.

Policy formulation on integration is lead mostly by the Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality and to some extent also by the Ministry of Justice. Interestingly, the

¹ Despite the ambitious vision/goal, in 2005, a report by the Swedish National Audit Office (*riksrevisionen*) concluded that little had changed since 1997. Among others, the report sheds light on the fact that that authorities dealing with integration in practice still target immigrants and their children as a group rather than as individuals (Brekke & Borchgrevink, 2007:56).

political work leading towards the maintenance demand was led by the Ministry of Justice. Interviewees at the Ministry of Justice state that the government acted as the main actor in the process leading up to the new law on maintenance claim on family reunification.

Actors advocating the linkage between migration and integration: Tobias Billström, the conservative coalition government's Minister of Migration (himself a member of the conservative party *Moderaterna*) took the initiative to examine the feasibility for an introduction of a maintenance demand for family reunification. Overall spoken, it was the conservative coalition government that brought about this change; with the biggest party, the conservative *Moderaterna*, as its most outspoken proponents (interviewee Int&Gen2). This is the first time that the link between migration and integration has been highlighted so clearly (interviewee Migration Board). The two interviewees at the Ministry of Justice state there are a number of measures that recognize this link - however without stressing it. One example named is the granting of the permission to work for asylum seekers.

Between 1975 and 1997 the keywords of the politics of immigration were equality (meaning: same rights, duties and possibilities for everyone irrespective background), freedom of choice (meaning: minorities shall be able to choose to what extent they want to preserve/keep their cultural and language identity) and cooperation (meaning: mutual tolerance and solidarity between minority and majority population) that were set as goals for all individuals of the Swedish society (see Rakar, 2010:9). With the reform in 1997, the overarching goals of integration policy became equal rights and possibilities irrespective ethnic and cultural background. Furthermore, the society's diversity became a declared basis for the Swedish societal community, and mutual respect and tolerance was specifically emphasized (Proposition 1997/98:16:21). Since 2006, when the conservative coalition government took office, the government's integration goal is: equal rights, duties and possibilities for everyone irrespective ethnic and cultural background (Rakar, 2010:10). In that sense, Sweden applies a very functional understanding of integration (Brekke & Borchgrevink, 2007:12). Abjuring from the social democratic integration programmes that the new government vehemently declared as 'failed', the new discourse - even though admitting discrimination - focuses mainly on individuals and set as its goal the empowerment (*egenmakt/egenansvar*) of each individual. Incentives instead of state intervention have come to be seen as the new tool to reach this goal. Similarly to the social democratic discourse on integration, work is a key concept of the social liberal discourse. It is especially the liberal People's Party (*Folkpartiet*) that has been instrumental in forming the coalition government's politics on integration.

Since the halt on labour migration in the late 1960s, immigration has largely been dominated by refugee migration. Consequently, integration of foreigners has almost always dealt with the integration of refugees, persons on subsidiary protection status as well as their families that arrive within two years. Proposition 1997/98:16 legitimizes this as follows: firstly, people with protection needs are seen to have specific needs, and secondly, the reception of persons with protection needs is an international obligation. Interviewee Int&Gen2 clarifies the government's anticipation of this group of immigrants having little to no anchorage in society upon arrival in Sweden. However, the extension of this policy to all immigrants would breach with the principle of avoiding

specific policies towards immigrants as a group. The only exception are the “newly arrived refugees” (i.e. refugees, persons on subsidiary protection status as well as their families that arrive within two years) that receive special treatment for a limited period of time (between 24 and 36 months) (interviewee Int&Gen2).

The dominant dimension in the Swedish understanding of integration is employment, or broader spoken: self-sufficiency. Following from that, socio-economic issues receive the biggest attention. As most interviewees state, the conservative coalition government has emphasized this work dimensions even more than the social democratic governments in the 12 years before. It is important to note, however, that this is valid for their overall politics and not only directed towards immigrants. Gender issues, i.e. gender equality, are also seen to be of outmost importance.

The link between migration control and integration policy making is very new in Sweden; it was established on 15 April 2010 with the enforcement of the maintenance demand on family reunification. There was no explicit trigger factor; rather the implementation of the maintenance demand can be coupled to the conservative coalition government taking power in autumn 2006. However, the demand for maintenance of family members to immigrants is not a new proposition in Swedish politics. Between 1968 and 1979 there was a provision on maintenance demand for some categories of family members. Sixteen years later, in 1995, a experts inquiry considered the introduction of a maintenance demand for family members outside the core family (i.e. spouse and children under 18), but came to the conclusion that such a demand targeting immigrants specifically can be deemed incompatible with the general rationale dominating immigrants politics (not to have specific measures for immigrants). Neither the government nor the parliament suggested otherwise (SOU 2005:103:63). In 2002, an expert committee suggested to introduce a maintenance demand during two years for newly established relationships and relatives outside the core family. Increased costs for the public sector were mentioned as a main reason. A second reason was that higher immigration to Sweden can be expected since many other EU countries already implemented financial requirements for family reunification. And thirdly, it was stated that such a demand could be seen as a protection for young people (often women) that are forced into marriage (SOU 2005:103:69). As a byproduct of the maintenance demand, the committee concluded that the suggestion will increase the possibility to reach goals set out by integration politics (SOU 2002:13:242). In connection with the EU Councils directive on family reunification (2003/109/EG), the Swedish government commissioned another expert committee to take a stand how the European directive shall be included into Swedish legislation. The committee also had to take a stand on maintenance demands for family reunification, since article 7.1 a-c of the directive allows members states to introduce some forms of maintenance demands. The committee concluded that such a financial requirement is very difficult to reconcile with the general principle of welfare as well as the principles of justice and equality that mark the Swedish society (SOU 2005:103:138). Integration is not mentioned.

In Sweden, no changes in migration policies can be detected in connection with terrorist assaults since 2001.

II Admission-related integration Provisions since 2000

II.1 Pre-entry admissions

Sweden has rather recently – on April 15, 2010 – introduced its first pre-entry admission policy targeting family members. Initiated by the conservative coalition government (leading actor was mostly the dominant conservative party *Moderaterna*), the new policy requires the family member already in Sweden - the sponsor - to fulfil two requirements: a) to be able to cover his/her costs of living, and b) to have a properly organised housing arrangement spacious enough both for him/herself as well as the family members. The expert committee states that the aim of financial support requirements is first and foremost to promote integration, both for the person already in Sweden as well as for the new family members. The declared goal is inclusion rather than exclusion (*utanförskap*). Therefore, the policy is seen as an incentive for employment and self-sufficiency. Concretely, the anticipation is to motivate individuals to settle down in regions offering both possibilities for employment as well as for housing. This, so the rationale, will lead to an improved integration (SOU 2008:114:81).

At the same time the policy's intention is to solve problems with overcrowded living conditions, as they have been reported mainly from the big city areas, Malmö, Stockholm and Gothenburg (SOU 2008:114:137ff). Overcrowded living conditions have been identified to create a range of social problems; from domestic violence to bad school results. Furthermore, it is seen to contribute to housing segregation which in turn is understood to lead to an aggravation of immigrants' access to the labour market. Understanding access to labour market (as a pathway to self-sufficiency) as *the* key for successful integration, this development is thus seen as hampering integration.

While the most manifest rationale is improved integration, the new policy cannot only be viewed in this light. Given the almost negligible number of immigrant categories targeted by it, the new provision's high symbolic value became clear following the debate in the parliament on 10 March 2010 as well as during the interviews at ministerial level. The fact that Sweden over a long time was the only country in the EU without a maintenance demand served as an important argument in political debates. In addition, it has to be considered that a momentarily weak maintenance demand for family reunification provides ground for further restrictions in the future once it is part of the Swedish legislation (interviewee Int&Gen2).

II.1.1 Decision-making process

On 8 February 2008, the government decided to employ a special expert committee to investigate into the feasibility to introduce financial support requirements for the immigration of family members. Many of the committee's members were experts from the Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, as well as from the Migration Board (interviewees Just 1&2, interviewee Migration Board). On 1 December 2008, the committee presented their inquiry "Financial support requirements for the immigration of family members" (SOU 2008:114). Thereafter, the inquiry was circulated (*remiss*) to 42 organisations for comments. Among them were government authorities, such as the Migration Board and the Employment Services; NGOs, such as Caritas, Save the Children and Amnesty

International; migrant organisations, such as the Iraqi and the Somali Swedish-wide Association; municipalities, such as Malmö and Gothenburg, plus a number of other instances (Lagrådsremiss, 2009:40). The issue that by far received the most attention was whether the new law proposition would imply a separation of families with children. The children perspective was very dominant (interview justice 1&2). Thereafter the government wrote its proposition – adjusted according to some of the comments the inquiry received in the circulation round - which was handed over to the parliament (*riksdagen*) on 17 Dec 2009. In the parliament, the proposition first went to the Council on Legislation (*lagråd*) whose task is to ensure the proposition's juridical feasibility for incorporation into Swedish law. Then, the proposition plus a number of motions were discussed on 18 February 2010 in a parliamentary committee (in this case the committee on social insurance (Socialförsäkringsutskott 2009/10:SfU12)). Finally, the parliament debated and voted on the issue on 10 March 2010.

Actors involved in the policy formulation of the maintenance demand were first of all the Ministry of Justice. The chairman of the committee was a special investigator from a district court in Uppsala. The other members consisted of a judge as well as civil servants from the Ministries of Justice, Social Affairs and Integration and Gender Equality.

During the preparation process of the policy (between February 2008 and 15 April 2010), the three opposition parties (social democrats, the left party (*vänster*) and the green party (*miljöpartiet*)) criticised the policy proposition. In the parliamentary process, motions came from these three parties (Socialförsäkringsutskottets betänkande, 2009/10:sfU12). Most of their arguments circle around the right to family – and especially a child's right to family, and the negative effects on integration when splitting a family. In the aftermath of the parliament's decision to accept the policy proposition, both the left and the green party published an official report in which they once more express their criticism towards the new law. The social democrats did not sign the document.

The Ministry of Integration and Gender's suggestion was not to target the newly arrived, but to focus on new family formations (*nya anknytningar*) in general. This is based on the rationale that new family formations are based on a more free choice than in the case of family reunification (interviewee Int& Gen2). Immigrant organizations, academics and other stakeholders had the possibility to have their say through submitting a comment on the inquiry. Sustainability has not been mentioned in any of the key documents (inquiry, proposition, law).

No explicit trigger moment for this development could be detected. Most interviewees refer to the coming into power of the conservative coalition government in 2006, as it is mostly their dominant party (the conservative Moderaterna) that pushed for a maintenance demand.

References are the Directive 2003/86/EC on the right to family reunification which allows EU members states to introduce certain conditions regarding family reunification, such as stable and regular financial resources as well as a suitable accommodation (SOU 2008:114:17). Furthermore, the committee (as well as all interviewees) refers to the fact that Sweden is the only country in the European Union that has not introduced any financial conditions for family reunification and is one of the few EU countries that has not applied a demand for a decent housing until yet (SOU 2008:114:57). The committee especially refers to the situations in Germany, the

Netherlands, Ireland, Finland, Denmark and France; all of which already apply conditions in various ways (SOU 2008:114:58-60). The committee states, however, that even with this financial requirements Sweden will have much more moderate conditions for the immigration of family members than most other EU countries (SOU 2008:114:111). Interviewee Int&Gen2 refers to Canada as a country Sweden often glances at for inspiration in integration policy making - a country applying a maintenance demand for all family reunifications.

The inquiry committee reasons that the financial requirement will benefit the equality of men and women. Especially in the (much fewer) cases where a female family member stands as the sponsor, the new law with its impediments towards work and self-sufficiency is expected to contribute to an improved integration of immigrant women (SOU 2008:114:114). Similarly, if women arrive as family members to a properly organized and spacious enough housing, this will have beneficial effects for their integration into the new society (SOU 2008:114:114). The committee does not suggest different levels of financial means for male and female sponsors respectively - despite the fact that women often have a smaller income than men. Nevertheless, the committee states that these facts were part of the investigation and were taken into consideration twice: firstly, when proposing the degree of financial means in general, and secondly, when suggesting that the sponsor should only demonstrate enough financial means for the own costs of living, instead for the whole family. The latter, the committee states, cannot be supported from a gender equality perspective (SOU 2008:114:114-115).

Actors in charge of implementation and their responsibility are the Migration Board as the authority that checks the eligibility with regard to financial means and housing of the sponsor. On top of that, the migration court will also be targeted as the appeal authority (Lagrådsremiss, 2009:27).

II.1.2 Exemptions

Even though the committee states that in order for an overall successful integration as many categories of family members under the Aliens Act's chapter 5 article 3 and 3a should be included in the policy, there are a rather large number of categories that are exempted by the financial requirements. These are a) family members of Swedish citizens or a person with permanent residence permit that has been in possession of a residence permit since 4 years, b) family members of a EU/EAS or Swiss citizen, c) family members of a child (person under 18 years of age), and d) family members of persons with refugee status and people with a certain (EU defined) subsidiary protection status. In other words: The target group consists of persons that received a subsidiary protection status based on Swedish law; i.e. "protection on grounds of inner conflicts". Persons with this legal status who do not have children have to fulfil the maintenance requirement or wait for four years until they can reunite with their family members. A substantial number of people from Iraq got residence permit on these Swedish protection grounds, and are targeted by the new law (interviewees justice 1&2).

While the committee does not state any reasons as to why Swedish citizens should be excluded from the financial requirements, the exemption of EU, EEA and Swiss citizens is based on the non-discriminatory/equal treatment of EU citizens under the EC treaty since Swedish citizens are excluded. This exemption is suggested to be extended to EEA

and Swiss citizens. Moreover, EU, EEA and Swiss citizens only get residence permit (card) if they are self-sufficient which leads the committee to conclude that there is no real need for financial demands. The exemption of persons with a residence permit for four years is based on the rationale that a financial requirement should never hinder a family from reuniting. Therefore, individuals that have been unemployed over a longer period should be excluded from the financial demand as well (SOU 2008:114:74). This includes persons in possession of a permanent residence permit that have had either a temporary or a permanent residence permit for four consecutive years. The reason to exclude the category of refugees from the maintenance demand is referred to the EU directive of family reunification. The committee refers to one of the main regulations which states that a demand/condition can be put to a refugees right to reunite with his or her spouse or under-aged child *only under certain conditions* (article 12(1)). The same reasoning is extended to quota refugees.

Another category that is exempted from the condition of financial demand are children, i.e. persons under the age of 18, that apply for family reunification with a parent already in Sweden. The committee – with reference to the principle of the child's best - suggested treating each case individually. However, after taking notice of the comments (*remiss*) from civil society, organisations, authorities etc. this category got included onto the list of exemptions in the government's final proposition to the parliament (Prop. 2009/10:77:33).

There is no information yet as to how this new policy affected migration and integration patterns in Sweden. Reason to that is that the policy came into force very recently, on 15 April, 2010. The desired effects are that a couple of thousands more shall be employed and that the language is learned faster (interviewee Justice2). It will be the Migration Board's task to evaluate the new law, but by the time the interview was conducted (June 2010) nothing further was decided yet (interviewee Justice2). Some numbers (although not completely representative): between 15 April and 8 June 2010, the Migration Board processed 5,000 family reunification applications. Of those, 90 got checked for maintenance demand, of which 72 were refused (interviewee Migration Board). Usually the Migration Board does not state the reason for refusal in their statistics, but due to the profound interest in the maintenance demand there will be a system in place to track the effect of the new law (interviewee Migration Board). Some newer numbers: In 2010, the migration board processed roughly 44,000 applications for family reunification. In a total of 466 cases (i.e. roughly 1 percent) the maintenance demand was tested, which resulted in 100 positive answers (Migrationsverket, 2011).

II.2 Post-arrival provisions

Once admitted to stay in Sweden permanently, newly arrived refugees, persons on other protection statuses and their family members arriving within two years from the issuing of residence permit have the right to benefit from an introduction programme that consists of three fundamental pillars. The first is the Swedish language course (Swedish for Immigrants – sfi), the second is civic education (*samhällsinformation*). The third pillar consists of activities towards facilitating entry into the labour market; such as internships, information, validating qualifications, etc.

The free language classes already exist since 1965, and experienced a number of reforms since then. The latest reforms in 2003 brought both more flexibility and individuality

into the system by introducing three sub-courses with two levels each (A-D). Participants start and end at a level according to their skills and ability, instead of having to run blindly through the whole course. In 2007, reform number 2 of the 21st century aimed at offering civic information as a course separate from the language classes, with the aim of turning sfi into a pure language school. The most far reaching reform with post-arrival provisions is bound to come into effect on 1 December 2010. The so-called “establishment reform” (*etableringsreform*) does not include substantial changes of the post-arrival provisions (i.e. the introduction programme), rather it changes the organisation of it profoundly. For so-called newly arrived refugees and immigrants (see definition below) the national Employment Services will take over the coordinative responsibility of their introduction programme. Up until 30 November 2010, it is in the municipalities’ scope of responsibility to organise the introduction for new immigrants.

Furthermore, the following changes are incorporated into the new reform: Firstly, there will be a new actor on the labour market integration stage, the so-called ‘coach’ (*lots*). Secondly, similar to the old system, participants of the establishment reform will receive an allowance upon fulfilment of their individual establishment plan on which they have agreed upon together with an officer from the Employment Services (until 30 November 2010, it is an officer from the respective administration of the municipality). The essential difference is that the allowance will be handed out to individual participants, and will not, as it is the practice until now in many municipalities, be impacted by other household members’ income. This measure is, among others, meant to strengthen women’s participation in the courses, and on the long run, their establishment on the labour market. Thirdly, civic education will be an obligatory part in the introduction programme with its content and extent defined by the government (SOU 2010:16).

II.2.1 Target groups

The target group that falls under the responsibility of the Employment Services are the following: Newly arrived immigrants between the age of 20 and 65 whose ability to work is more than 25 percent and that received residence permit on one of the following grounds: refugee, subsidiary protection, and quota refugee, as well as family reunification to one of those persons arriving within two years.² Newly arrived immigrants who fall beyond these categories (family reunification with a non-refugee, labour migrants, EU migrants, plus persons whose ability to work is less than 25%) still fall under the municipality’s scope of responsibility. The reason why the refugee-group and their family members are in focus is the anticipation that they are only weakly linked into society. If a family member arrives later than two years the sponsor is expected to be able to support the integration of the newly arrived in a better way. In that case they often come on voluntary grounds which leads the government to believe that their establishment on the labour market will be easier (interviewee Int&Gen2). This new reform reiterates the current governments’ line for a politics that pursues work (self-sufficiency) as the ultimate goal. The new reform makes the link between participation and economic compensation more clear, but there is no link to residence

² In addition, newly arrived immigrants, age 18 and 19 that arrived in Sweden without parents, are also targeted.

permit or migration politics. Rather, it has to be seen as just another way of putting demands on the unemployed, as interviewee Int&Gen2 concludes.

On the national level, there is no state politics that targets other groups than refugees, persons on protection status as well as their families that arrive within two years. All other categories - once they get permanent residence permit - have the same rights and obligations as any Swedish person including access to the Swedish welfare system. Also, they have right to study Swedish for free (sfi). There is no specific politics that targets those groups, according to the Swedish principle that group-specific measures should be avoided as much as possible. The measures for the newly arrived are the only exception (interviewee Int&Gen2). Integration is first and foremost defined as self-sufficiency / employment.

The national policy formulation has mostly been led by the conservative coalition government and in particular by their Minister of Integration and Gender Equality (a member of the liberal party). The foremost rationale behind it is to shorten the average time from arrival to self-sufficiency - which today lies at 7 years (Sabuni, 2010) - through faster and closer contact with the Employment Services (an authority under the Ministry of Labour Market). Another goal is to avoid larger differences in the implementation of the introduction period, as it is the case under the lead of the municipalities.

On 3 April 2007 a special investigator was commissioned to investigate on the reception of refugees and other efforts that improve the possibilities of labour market integration of newly arrived refugees, other persons on subsidiary protection status as well as their family members. The investigator's report was presented on 2 June 2008 (SOU 2008:58). On 26 November 2009, the government handed over proposition 2009/10:60 with the title "the establishment of newly arrived immigrants on the labour market - empowerment through professional support" to the parliament. On 2 February 2010, the parliament's labour market committee arranged an open hearing on newly arrived refugees' labour market integration with four researchers in the field as well as representatives of the Employment Services and the Swedish Association of Regions and Local Authorities (SKL). On 18 February 2010, the committee accepted the proposition (Arbetsmarknadsutskottets betänkandet 2009/10:AU7). Most of the motions in this process came from members of the three opposition parties (the left party, the social democrats and the green party). On 17 March 2010, the parliament accepted the proposition; it will come into power on 1 December 2010. On top of that, on 5 November 2009, a special investigator was commissioned to deliver an inquiry on how the municipalities should organise and form the civic education classes (*samhällsorientering*). On 4 March 2010, the first partial report (SOU 2010:16) suggested to offer 60 hours of civic education to every newly arrived person, a large part of it in the respective mother tongue. On 20 May 2010, the final partial report (SOU 2010:37) stated that even other categories of immigrants with residence permit valid for at least one year (namely family members, labour migrants as well as EU citizens) shall be offered 60 hours of civic education classes. The report estimates their number to be around 30,000 individuals annually.

Sustainability has not been named specifically in the policy formulating process. The government focuses on *a* job and not on *the right* job, as interviewee SKL criticises. The interviewee furthermore points out that sustainability - apart from environmental issues - is a rather new term in Swedish politics.

NGOs, municipalities, state and local authorities, and migrant organisations etc. have had the possibility to express their opinion in the circulation round of the inquiry's report (*remiss*).

There is no particular trigger moment, other than change of government in 2006 from a social democratic to a conservative leadership.

With exception of the new actor 'coach' and an increased emphasis on incentives where inspiration was taken from Australia, the reform has not been impacted by similar developments in other EU countries or traditional immigration countries, such as Canada or Australia. According to interviewee Int&Gen2, who was instrumental in formulating the government's proposition on the reform, it was mostly earlier governmental inquiries as well as lessons learned from Swedish integration politics/policies that lead to the establishment of the new reform. In the preparing phase of the reform (policy proposition), the policy proposition emphasises the Swedish line that is based on equal rights and duties. The task was to depart from the Swedish model and to improve it (interviewee Int&Gen2).

The new big actor is the Employment Services. However, cooperation with municipal providers of language courses and other introduction services are of utmost importance as the municipality still stands for a number of instrumental services (next to the introduction for all immigrants that fall beyond the Employment Services category).

Criticism came above all from the three opposition parties (social democrats, the Left party and the Green party). Although principally agreeing that integration has failed and that consequently a new system is necessary, the three parties are doubtful to believe that the proposed reform is the way to go. Above all, they criticize the dominant focus on individual responsibility and point at structural obstacles to immigrant integration that are not considered by the reform. However, as interviewee Int&Gen2 reasons, the structural discrimination perspective that received a lot of attention in the first half of the 00s (2002-2005), has lost its driving force due to its unclear focus. Furthermore, the social democrats and the Left party also proposed in a motion, a.o., to extend the target group with family members of refugees (etc.) arriving within 6 years (instead of 2). Another proposition that is advocated for by the social democrats and the Left party is an overall reformed refugee reception system (Arbetsmarknadsutskottets betänkande, 2009/10:AU7:40ff).

II.3 The Installation of Admission-Related Programmes at the National Level

The post-arrival programme installed in Sweden since 1993 is the introduction programme. The programme is individual, but consists always of three parts: The first is the Swedish language course (Swedish for Immigrants – sfi), the second is civic education (*samhällsinformation*). The third part consists of activities towards facilitating entry into the labour market; such as internships, information, validating qualifications, etc.

The integration rationale behind the programme is access/entry to the labour market. Participation in society is considered to some extent as well. Except for persons that receive introduction allowance (see above), the programme is not obligatory. Non-attendance or failing has no consequences on residence permit, citizenship or other

social, political or economic rights. The only sanction the municipality/state can apply is the withdrawal of the introduction allowance.

Up until 30 November 2010, it belongs to the municipalities's responsibilities to organise and implement this policy. From 1 December 2010 it will be the state in form of the Employment Services (see description above).

III The Effects of European Integration on the Migration-Integration Nexus

There is a general understanding that the European view of integration has come to circle around 'demands on immigrants'. Interviewee Int&Gen1 states that Sweden is on a similar way although with a few major differences. While others focus on demands, Sweden has chosen to focus on incentives instead. For example: other countries have started to demand a certain level of language skills, while Sweden has chosen to introduce the so-called sfi bonus (i.e. a sum of money to sfi-participants that pass the course within a certain amount of time). Also, the few demands that exist are coupled to allowance but not to residence permit (interviewee Int&Gen1). These differences can be explained by Sweden following the 'Swedish model', which means that new legislation has to a large part been developed by improving earlier legislations (interviewee Int&Gen2). Furthermore, unlike the rest of Europe, religion (i.e. Islam) does not dominate debates on integration (interviewee Int&Gen2).

Up until 2010, it seems that the linking of integration and migration control in other EU member states had little to none effect on the situation in Sweden. In parliamentary debates, a Swedish core value of integration policies (namely to avoid special measures for a certain group of people) was held high together with another important Swedish core value, equality. However, with the entering of the far-right, anti-immigrant party Sweden Democrats into parliament in September 2010, it remains to be seen for how long these core values are going to be fundamental argumentation in integration political debates.

One reason that is understood to be standing behind Sweden's introduction of admission criteria on immigration is that all other EU countries have already introduced such a system (interviewees Justice 1&2, interviewee Int&Gen2). The inquiry committee also refers to the Directive 2003/86/EC on the right to family reunification which allows EU members states to introduce certain conditions regarding family reunification (SOU 2008:114:17).

The impact of EU's guidelines is perceived to be rather negligible. Nevertheless, Sweden's work on integration is rather similar to the EU guidelines (interviewee Int&Gen1). A look on the "Common basic principles for immigrant integration policy in the European Union" confirms that (Directorate-General Justice, Freedom, Security, 2010). Interviewee Int&Gen1 states that one point where the EU cooperation experienced difficulties was when it came to agreeing on common European values (as mentioned in article 2 of the common basic principles). Sweden's standpoint (in contrast to other member states) was that universal values should stand on universal grounds, such as human rights. As interviewee Int&Gen1 states, the working programmes on

integration of the Tammerfors-, Haag- and Stockholm-programme are rather widely framed, and mostly point out a direction on how to work at the EU level rather than the level of the single member states.

The inquiry committee on the maintenance demand refers to two European Council directives. Firstly, on the Directive 2003/86/EC on the right to family reunification which specifically allows EU members states to introduce certain conditions regarding family reunification. Secondly, the inquiry committee refers to the directive 2003/109/EG on third-country nationals with permanent residence permit in an EU country (long-term residents) with the argument that family reunification with a long-term resident is not bound by the same rules as for other immigrants (SOU 2008:114:17, 33). No other directives are named, neither by the inquiry committee, in the proposition nor by any interviewees.

The venues for policy learning are first and foremost the network of the National Contact Points on Integration, which is arranged by the EU commission 5-6 times a year. The respective network for the migration part is also important, especially when the meetings are coupled together (interviewee Int&Gen1). On the minister level, the minister conference (4 times a year) is crucial. Also technical seminars on specific integration issues is named, as well as the European Integration fund as crucial meeting places for exchange. As interviewee Int&Gen1 states, the exchange in the network for national contact points is based on the basic principles on integration that were agreed on in 2004.

France, Germany and the Netherlands are named as countries that started with demanding a certain degree of language skills acquired before immigration (interviewee Int&Gen1). Interviewee Int&Gen1 also points at crucial rhetorical differences on immigration and integration in the different member states. At one end of the scale, the interviewee detects a rhetoric that is strongly linking integration and migration (the proponents being Denmark and Austria). In these countries, the integration and migration is usually discussed in terms of integration capacity. On the other end of the scale, the interviewee points at Spain's and Sweden's rhetoric of migration as a positive driving force for socio-economic development.

Universities, academic research and knowledge organizations also contribute with insights and empirical results. Often these actors are consulted during a country's EU presidency. During Sweden's presidency in autumn 2009, the focus was on incentives, indicators and the establishment process of newly arrived immigrants (interviewee Int&Gen1).

Beside the meeting with the National Contact Points on Integration and the Ministerial Meetings, Sweden also engages in bilateral meetings with its neighbor countries, both within and outside the EU.

Interviewee Int&Gen1 states that in the Solidarity funds (Integration und and Refugee Fund) there are links between migration and integration.

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SOU 2008:114: Försörjningskrav vid anhöriginvandring. Online: <http://www.sweden.gov.se/content/1/c6/11/66/58/b6cfea2e.pdf>

SOU 2005:103: Anhörigåterförening. Online: <http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/5272/a/54123>

SOU 2002: 13: Vår anhöriginvandring. Online: <http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/108/a/1638>

Interviewees

- 2 at Ministry for Integration and Gender Equality (from the unit for Integration and Urban Development)
- 2 at Ministry of Justice (from the unit for Migration and Asylum Policy)
- 1 at Migration Board
- 1 at the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKL)