

# The Construction of Labor Immigration

A post-structural policy analysis in a Swedish context



# Abstract

The purpose of the thesis is to investigate the meaning and knowledge production on labor immigration in a Swedish governmental context. This examination is done through a post-structural policy analysis focusing on understanding the discursive construction of labor immigration and the labor immigrant is the thesis done with Carol Bacchi's method of analysis named "What's the problem represented to be?". The object for analysis is the official government report "Labor immigration to Sweden: population trends, labor market change, international outlook", also known as SOU 2005:50. The term governmentality is used to understand the advanced exercise of power taking place.

Labor immigration is represented to be a solution for Sweden's changing demography and a fragile, double edged issue that needs to be controlled. The Swedish perspective is given and left un-debated. The problem representation has wide effects such as the understanding of the labor immigrant as a commodity.

*Key words:* Policy analysis, Labor immigration, Bacchi, Post-structuralism, Governmentality, SOU 2005:50

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# 1 Introduction

Migration is not by any means a new phenomenon. People have travelled throughout the world long before the globalized world we live in today. The issue of migration is widely debated in terms of regulations, integration, and responsibility. The U.N. defines a migrant as “individuals who live away from their place of origin for at least a year” (Cohen & Sirkeci 2011: 3). This definition does not cover all sorts of migrants. There is also temporary and partially permanent migration, daily cross-border commuting and so on. Notable is the fact that the group of people seeking protection for humanitarian reasons, refugees and asylum seekers, is left out.

Obviously, it is not possible (or interesting) to use one single explanation for the reasons why people migrate. From a classical rationalist point of view migration is taking place due to economic gains to be made (Cornelius & Rosenblum 2005). This is because of the understanding of the human as a maximizing and rational actor (*ibid*). Obviously, from this standpoint reasons for migration are closely connected to the economic market. Again, this point of view does not cover refugees, which makes it quite unbalanced and one-sided.

Migration is of course regulated through policies and legislations, in some cases on a regional level and other on a state level. The laws tell us on which basis one has the right to enter a country and what criteria one needs to fulfill to be eligible to stay. There is also a web of intergovernmental agreements that regulate migration, such as extradition treaties. Asylum is to a larger extent regulated through agreements constituted by international organizations such as the United Nations guidelines on human rights.

Migration is often discussed and examined in the political and academic worlds. It is commonly framed as an issue of national security and terrorism (cf. Bigo 2009). Increased movement (migration) is often equated with a security issue and this is used as an argument for more restrictive migration politics. The framing of migration as a security issue is deeply problematic from a post-colonial understanding. Therefore, this thesis takes its starting point in the wish to examine how migration can be understood differently. This work is inspired by the political scientist Sara Kalm’s dissertation “Governing Global Migration” in which she is trying to re-think migration from a governmentality perspective (2008: 20).

The issue of labor immigration commonly appears in the debate regarding the pros and cons of immigration. It is claimed that the European industrialized countries are completely dependent on immigration from a third-country to be able to manage the expected economic growth. In line with this the Swedish government initialized a process for simplifying legislation to enable more flexible labor immigration. The Swedish legislation on labor immigration changed

through the bill "New Rules for Labor Immigration 2007/08:147"<sup>1</sup> and took effect on 15th December 2008. The bill promoted a change in the Swedish Aliens Act moving from a government-based labor trial. Basically this means that the system controlling labor immigration is centered on the companies' need of labor. Hence, the bill means that citizenship is connected to employment; a person's legal status is based on employment.

Citizenship is built around the international system of nation-states and each nation-state has its own migration system in which citizenship is regulated. There are a number of different categories to sort citizenship applicants and labor immigration is one of the major ones. A fully integrated market of trade needs a free market of labor. This might seem logical and simple but it is really a paradox in practice because a free market of labor demands free movement of people. But what happens when immigrating individuals are closely related to economic growth? Where in governmental policy is the labor immigrant equated with a worker?

## 1.1 Purpose of the thesis

The overriding purpose of the thesis is to make an attempt to understand the issue of migration as a question of power. It is also to approach the issue of labor immigration from a post-structural perspective. The aim is to scrutinize the Swedish governmental discourse on labor immigration through policy analysis. Discourse analysis will be used as a tool to understand how power is exercised through the production of meaning and knowledge. This will be done through scrutinizing how the concept of both *labor immigration* and the *labor immigrant* is constructed in the governmental policy. A governmentality perspective on political power will be used to explain the logic and set of ideas that the foundation of the way of governing is composed. Most importantly, this thesis' ambition is to make a critical, post-structural policy analysis. The purpose is to discuss and analyze the production of meaning and knowledge on the subject of labor immigration by using the "What's the problem represented to be?"-method (from now on "WPR").

### 1.1.1 Explicit aims

The aim of the thesis is to *investigate what labor immigration is represented to be in a Swedish policy context.*

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<sup>1</sup> In Swedish: "Nya regler för arbetskraftsinvandring"

## 1.2 Delimitations of research

The most obvious delimitation of the study is the Swedish context. The study is done with a strictly national perspective; nonetheless it is undeniable that there is a strong connection between Sweden and EU in general migration politics. But the policy that is the subject for this study is delimited to include labor immigration from outside the EU/EAA area. It is of great importance to point out that the ambition of the study is *not* to draw general conclusions on Swedish immigration policy.

## 1.3 Thesis outline

The thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter contains a brief background on the subject “migration” and narrows down the purpose and explicit aims of the thesis. The post-structural theoretical and methodological framework is presented in the second chapter in which the material is also presented. The analysis is given account for in the following chapter three. The second last chapter, chapter four, sums up the analysis with a final discussion and conclusion. The final chapter holds the complete list of references.

## 2 Methodological framework and key concepts

Due to the thesis' post-structural ontology, the methodological and theoretical framework will be presented in the same chapter. What this means will be further discussed in detail and presented in the following sections. Hence, this chapter will give account for the theoretical standpoints and key concepts applied in the thesis. I have chosen to call it theoretical framework, rather than just theory, to point out that post-structuralism is not a uniformed theory. It is assembled by a number of ideas and it needs to be, to some extent, de-constructed to become applicable.

It is of great importance to articulate each key concept and definition, as chosen by the researcher. This is particularly pressing when applying a post-structural approach due to the constructivist epistemology, meaning that there is no true or natural meaning attached to knowledge. Therefore each identified key concept will be accounted for separately, despite the fact they tend to overlap and merge into one another.

### 2.1 Post-structuralism

The post-structural ideas basically criticize the positivistic research approach in which the understanding of the world is based on the fixed values of truth and reality. Post-structuralism suggests otherwise; there is no such thing as a fixed reality or truth. Clearly, these conditions give a different understanding of research than the traditional positivist perspective, with no goal of obtaining objectivity or revealing the hidden truth, the researchers role changes quite dramatically (Taylor 2001: 11). By acknowledging these premises the researcher's aim is rather to interpret society and social activity (Wetherell, Taylor, & Yates 2001; Bergström & Boréus 2005).

Hence, language is an important component used to understand the theory; it is through language that construction takes place. This means that language must be comprehended in the widest sense, not only communication between people, written or spoken text; language is in one sense all social activity taking place in the society. Language is production of meaning. This will be discussed further in section 2.1.2 on discourse.

The post-structural approach opposes the traditional perspective on science in which it is argued that research and knowledge has to be produced with as little involvement and influence by the individuals conducting it as possible, this due to



the belief that social processes and society cannot be isolated and observed without a context (Taylor 2001: 11-12). The idea of post-structuralism also criticizes all kinds of essentialism that implies that there are fixed categories, characteristics and behavior given by nature (Bergström & Boréus 2005: 23). Consequently, the results from post-structural research are *not* to be used for formulating universally applicable rules (Taylor 2001: 11). The researchers role will be further discussed in section 2.2.2 “Reflexivity and the discourse analyst”.

As noted it is not possible to separate the methodology from the key concepts such as discourse, governmentality and power. The idea of power is reflected in the methodology many ways. Firstly, by letting power be defined as a relational activity the focus of analysis concentrates around representations and problematizations. The latter term means that instead of approaching a subject – such as “migration” – through examining the practice, it is rather studied through its composition and construction.<sup>2</sup> Hence, this approach focuses on how the term “labor immigration” is assembled as a term and in what context it is being done. The approach gives the opportunity to identify power relations and norms. The purpose is not to discover something new – it is to discover what is already there.

### 2.1.1 Power, knowledge and governmentality

The philosopher and academic Michel Foucault introduced the term “governmentality” and it is closely related to his extensive and important work on power and knowledge (Lövgren 2007; Kalm 2008). Therefore it is important to explain all three concepts to achieve a full understanding.

Foucault’s understanding of power means that it should be seen as a relational instead of being a static condition connected to e.g. official positions (Bergström & Boréus 2005: 14, 311). Power is not a characteristic one *possesses* – it is a social activity. With this understanding, power is constantly (re)produced and transformed through institutions, norms and discourses (Foucault 1998: 141)<sup>3</sup>. Hence, it is not possible to understand power as concentrated to subjects practicing power over others; the understanding needs to include self-discipline and social rules (Bergström & Boréus 2005: 14, 311). This is also known as the third dimension of power, defined by Steven Lukes (Bergström & Boréus 2005: 13). This definition is important to declare in order to better understand the theoretical standpoints made in the thesis. The reasoning on knowledge is clearly connected to power. Dictating knowledge is simply power. Also, it is through power that knowledge is made “true”.

Governmentality is simply “the mentalities of government” (Kalm 2008: 64). In this case the term “government” is interpreted in a wider sense as politics, not only the politics performed by the state’s highest power (the government) (*ibid.*).

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<sup>2</sup> In this case “practice” is to be understood as an activity that takes place in what would, of positivists, be referred to as reality.

<sup>3</sup> I choose to put it “(re)produce” because of the non-existing distinction between production and reproduction.

It is rather government seen as all sorts of practice of governing. The term “mentalities” is referring to the rationale that lies behind the politics. Another way to explain governmentality is using the phrase “the conduct of conduct”, which refers to the management of behavior (Lövgren 2007: 11; Kalm 2008: 65).

An analysis including the governmentality perspective does not necessarily focus on what specific laws imply but rather the goal for politics. The focus lies on how laws are constructed to create a, for the state, desirable behavior of the citizen. Through changing focus from disciplinary power the governmentality perspective is rather providing an understanding of how the population is being governed through an advanced set of norms and sanctioned behavior. This means that it is not always obvious for the population how or why they are governed in a specific way. It is also important to state that just because the population is governed in a certain way, with a certain goal, it does not mean it is a negative goal, or that the population does not voluntarily obey. The society is simply governed and certain behavior is rewarded and subsequently becomes more attractive. A post-structural understanding means that it is in policy documentation that this kind of governmentality is being stated. The WPR-method is not a regular governmentality analysis, although it uses the term and its standpoint to explain governmental control and makes it a key concept of the thesis’ theoretical framework.

Dichotomies are an important component in the process of creating norms and exercising power through governmentality. A dichotomy is a theoretical term that describes a polarizing effect, this means that the two categories are (theoretically) separated and valued as each other’s opposites. This polarizing activity is also reflecting a relationship of power where one category is always subordinate to the other. Hence, the contrasting activity is an effective tool to classify norms and to define what behavior is desirable (or not). The general issue of labor immigration stems from a well-established dichotomy: citizenship. To begin with, the international world system is organized around sovereign nation-states. According to the post-structural understanding this order is not given by nature, the phenomenon is constructed by and in society (Hansen 2011: 173-177). It can be argued that the sovereignty of the state is a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy – the state creates the system and the system creates the state. The state’s sovereignty is (re)produced by the state. This leads to “a division of the world into an ‘inside’ the state (...) and an ‘outside’ the state” (Hansen 2011: 174). This state-centrism is not only (re)producing the state sovereignty, it is also contributing to (re)producing the dichotomy of citizen and non-citizen.

## 2.1.2 Discourse and policy

The concept of discourse springs from the work of Foucault and is essential in post-structural ideas. Discourse is being used in both strictly theoretical meaning, but also as an applied method for analysis. Although, it is usually put that discourse is both methodological and theoretical. Firstly, the meaning of discourse needs to be defined.

Foucault's work widened the term discourse in an attempt "to overcome the traditional distinction between what one *says* (language) and what one *does* (practice)" (Hall 1997: 44). The discourse can be described as a system of statements on an issue that produces meaning and knowledge (cf. Hall 1997; Bergström & Boréus 2005; Carabine: 2001). It is within the discourse that knowledge is produced and knowledge is produced by and in relationships of power. This means that power is (re)produced within the discourse and the main goal for the discourse analyst is to reveal and scrutinize those relationships (Bergström & Boréus 2005: 35). The power relations devise rules for who is allowed to make statements and what kind of practice is to be considered privileged.

Even though Foucault's definition of discourse stretches beyond linguistics it is important to define language as such. For example, language does not have a direct mirror-effect to the physical course of events; it has to be seen as the system of signs and representation being used by humans (Bergström & Boréus 2005: 305). This gives way to a perspective in which not only written text but also images can be signs in language.

It is important to understand that a discourse is never stable or consistent, it is rather fluctuating and floating. This is coherent with the idea of knowledge and power being constantly (re)produced and defined. In the same way the discourse depends on its practitioners and is constantly being (re)invented and confirmed. It is of great importance to note that a discourse is not necessary uniform in its statements; it is most likely contradictory (Bacchi 1999: 40).

A post-structural policy study promotes a policy-as-discourse perspective (Bacchi 2000). This means that the policy itself is a meaning making process and it is in the policy where problems are molded and created (*ibid.*). The policy-as-discourse perspective adds the dimension that the policy disciplines in more than simply its outspoken purpose. This means that the creation of a problem disciplines itself.

## 2.2 Strategy for analysis – What's the problem represented to be?

WPR is As already mentioned the WPR-method is a post-structural policy analysis. WPR gives the researcher an opportunity to conduct a policy analysis through a discourse perspective. It highlights the importance of examining

silences and the outspoken at the same time. This deepens the analysis and adds a complexity that the traditional methods of policy analysis lack. The policy-as-discourse approach highlights why political change is hard to accomplish: it lies within the discursive constitution of “problems” (Bacchi 2000).

The focus of the analysis is therefore not the practical implementation of a policy. WPR rather puts the focus on the underlying assumptions of the understandings of a societal issue (Bacchi 1999: 13). This means that the aim is to de-construct and scrutinize the problematization of the issue rather than interpreting what is suggested in the text.

The method of WPR moves away from the idea of political government as strictly limited to laws and other official statements: WPR adopts the governmentality approach to political power. The method is in its nature critical and gives the researcher a chance to challenge and highlight what is taken for granted as knowledge and facts.

All the above mentioned points are of course reasons for choosing WPR as a method. Also, the pre-formulated questions contribute to the intersubjectivity of the final research product. This means that it is easy for readers and other scholars to follow the procedure of analysis. That does not imply that another scholar will draw the same conclusions, quite the contrary, WPR counts the researcher as inseparable from the discourse and will therefore be a part of the analysis.

The WPR approach focuses on the formation, construction and reproduction of an issue. This means that the main task is to analyze what the problem is described to be and how an issue is being made into a “problem” (Bacchi 2009: xvi). This process is referred to as problematizing.

The questions in their entirety:

1. What’s the problem represented to be in a specific policy?
2. What presupposition or assumptions underlie the representation of the problem?
3. How has this representation of the problem come about?
4. What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the problem be thought about differently?<sup>4</sup>
5. What effects are produced by this representation of the problem?
6. How/where has this representation of the problem been produced, disseminated and defended? How could it be questioned, disrupted and replaced?

(Bacchi 2009: 2)

To make the study possible to complete, within the limitations in time, length and scope, two questions be excluded in the analysis: question numbers three and six. These two questions demand a greater examination of the historical context of the issue, which is simply not possible to carry out with the given resources of this study.

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<sup>4</sup> This question has been slightly modified to suit the purpose of the thesis.

### 2.2.1 Material

A post-structural policy analysis demands a discussion of the chosen material and of the process of selecting it (Bergström & Boréus 2005: 358). A reflection of this kind will strengthen the analysis' intrasubjectivity. This is also an opportunity for the researcher to motivate major, and minor, choices that have been made during the research process.

The choice of material was done after a process of research that begun with identifying the committee and its purpose. The case of the committee is interesting as a sign of the change in Swedish immigration politics. In this analysis it represents the shifts from a government-based labor trial towards an employer driven approach to labor immigration.

The Committee for Labor Immigration (Kommittén för arbetskraftsinvandring) was formed in 2004 and was "instructed by the Government to propose a regulatory framework that will allow more extensive labor immigration from countries outside the EU/EEA" (SOU 2005:50). The committee's final work was presented in the report called SOU 2006:87<sup>5</sup>. The focus for this policy analysis will be the committee's interim report "Labor immigration to Sweden: population trends, labor market change, international outlook", also known as SOU 2005:50. The document is not legislative, it serves as a document where facts and perspective of labor immigration are presented. It was used latter as a foundation when forming the bill New Rules for Labor Immigration 2007/08:147.

It might appear peculiar to not choose the final report or the actual bill as the object for analysis, but the choice has been made in the light of a post-structural understanding of method, policy and discourse. First and foremost the WPR method's ambition is to look further than the most important and prominent document. The intriguing issues of a problem can be found in the problematizing process. This is where one can reflect upon how the problem is constituted as a problem in the first place. SOU 2005:50 is an important and interesting document for analysis because it presents the *reasoning* behind the new legislation. It gives account for the grounds on which a decision is made and helps us understand on what grounds the bill was later formed upon.

### 2.2.2 Reflexivity and the discourse analyst

When conducting social science using a post-structural methodology such as discourse analysis it is exceedingly important to reflect upon the researcher's role. This can be done through the concept of reflexivity (Wetherell, Taylor, & Yates 2001; Valkenburg & Lind 2002). Reflexivity describes how the researcher is strongly connected to their work on numerous levels and it is therefore not of any importance to argue a case for the objectivity of the researcher in order to gain

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<sup>5</sup> SOU translates to Swedish Government Official Reports

reliability. Adding the understanding of reality as multiple and non-universal it is obviously not fruitful to try to part the researcher from the research work (Taylor 2001: 16). The post-structural understanding of power and knowledge makes it obvious to understand the researcher as a part of the discourse and therefore the knowledge-production. One can describe the process of reflexivity as following: “[...] the researcher acts on the world and the world acts on the researcher, in a loop” (Taylor 2001: 17).

There is also an increasing responsibility for the researcher to reflect on their own position. One of the cornerstones of this kind of interpretative perspective is the term pre-understanding, which simply describing the pre-conceptions all people have when approaching a subject or an issue (Bergström & Boréus 2005: 25). These pre-understandings can for example consist of experiences and knowledge (*ibid*). To overcome this fact the scholar should make an attempt to understand one’s preconceptions and briefly give account for them in their work. This can be done through simply identifying and discussing these pre-understandings in connection to the work.

My pre-understandings in this project have of course been many. I have used the WPR method on another occasion and had a clear image of how the analysis process would be. This has been a great asset since it gave me the chance to alter some part of the method with my experience in mind. Also, it gave me the opportunity to focus on the analysis rather than understanding the methodology.

This thesis has been written in the context of political science, and the study’s ambition lies within that area. The ambition is to perform a somewhat critical study which has clearly influenced the choice of method and theoretical framework. There is no reason to interpret these statements as a weakness, rather the opposite. Knowledge cannot be produced in a vacuum it is a product of its world and actors.

## 3 Analysis

The chapter of analysis will be organized around each question provided in the method of WPR. Quotes from the policy are presented to support the analysis. Every statement does not have a unique quote due to the thesis' limitations in length. Even though each question will be answered in separate sections one should be aware of the strong connection and overlapping tendencies.

The process of analysis began with a first read through in order to become familiar with the document and its organization. After that, multiple closer readings and analysis began. This part of the process was organized around the questions given by WPR. By "asking" the questions in relation to the text while reading, it was relatively easy to get a well organized analysis from the beginning and it helped the process of finding themes in the text.

Due to the limitations in both time and scope there were choices to be made about the distribution of attention in the analysis. The main focus came to be the first chapter. The first chapter of the official report deals with the starting point for the policy (SOU 2005:50: 25-42). It discusses the phenomenon of labor immigration with the purpose of defining both labor immigration and the labor immigrant. One part of chapter three became object for closer analysis, namely the section "3.3 Swedish Labor market more internationally independent" (SOU 2005:50: 140). Also, parts of the fourth chapter, entitled "Sweden's demography and labor market" (SOU 2005:50: 157-197), were used.

### 3.1 What is the problem represented to be in a specific policy?

The aim of the first question is to understand how the issue of the policy is presented and constructed. This means the focus is the construction of migration in general and specifically labor immigration. The question will be answered through examining how the issue is described and portrayed – both explicitly and implicitly. The following text is organized around themes identified in the analysis.

#### 3.1.1 The solution for an ageing Swedish population

The approach to labor immigration as the solution for Sweden's ageing population becomes clear in the report at an early stage (SOU 2005:50: 32-34; 37). It is suggested that the ageing population will bring problems for future development

and economic stability. While the portion of the Swedish population able to work steadily decreases the need for labor does not. This insinuates that this need must be filled through other means.

“Demographic change is something that we share with other high income countries. An ageing population may contribute to the labor market becoming less dynamic. Increased labor immigration can help to mitigate such effects.”

(SOU 2005:50: 36)

This quote gives a clear picture of what function labor immigration should have in Swedish society. It argues that labor immigration is taking place on terms set up by Sweden and its needs (SOU 2005:50: 34). Sweden’s demographic is changing and the ageing population is represented to be a big issue for the economy:

“One consequence of demographic change is that fewer people must contribute to publicly funded services for more people. The working part of the population will, through its production and the tax base that it creates, finance a large part of publicly funded services that the population outside the labor force consumes.”

(SOU 2005:50: 34)

The idea of labor immigration being a quantitative and numerical issue is also established. Actually, every chapter of the report contains some kind of statistical argument or figure. The construction of labor immigration as a question of numbers is closely related to making it about macroeconomics and the free trade market issue rather than humanitarian. This shift in focus from the human aspect of immigration is abundantly clear throughout the report:

“Increased international competition and the introduction of new technology require changes in knowledge. New jobs will be added while old jobs are lost. Measures and actions are needed to take better advantage of those outside the labor market and raising employment rates among mainly young people, elderly, and immigrants. But it is not certain that the actions to capture the resources available in Sweden are sufficient to meet the future demand for labor, nationally or regionally. Increased mobility within the EU and labor immigration from third countries may be one of several additional opportunities to resolve the future labor supply.”

(SOU 2005:50: 157)

### 3.1.2 A fragile issue

Labor immigration is represented to be a very sensitive and fragile issue. It is made clear in a number of ways, both explicit and subtle, that labor immigration needs to be controlled and handled the right way to be a positive experience for the state:



“Labor immigration can also have an impact on the labor market if not handled properly.”

SOU 2005:50: 38

The above quote implies that this matter needs to be handled. By suggesting labor immigration as a delicate issue the policy is making way for control to be exercised. Although the outspoken purpose of the policy is to prepare for a less government regulated labor immigration legislation it is at the same time establishing that the issue is not to be let loose – a paradox is found. The paradox is a perfect example of how a policy exercises power through producing knowledge about labor immigration. By making it into a fragile subject the policy and the politics behind it are legitimizing control. The paradox just introduced goes in line with the construction of labor immigration as a threat to the nation that therefore needs to be handled and disciplined. This will be analyzed in further detail later on in the thesis.

### 3.1.3 A societal asset and a possible threat

Labor immigration is seen as an, both cultural and economic, asset for the nation. The economic aspect is of course connected to the understanding of labor immigration as the solution for an ageing population.

Labor immigration is represented to bring change to the Sweden. The change can be in such things as music, culture, and food (SOU 2005:50: 39). Lifestyle is the concept that best sums it up (*ibid*). Given the right conditions this change will be a positive experience for the society (*ibid*). One of these conditions that are presented is employment. The report not only discusses the positive effects:

“It is not unusual that these tensions can be more or less difficult to master. These situations can be attributed to different religious beliefs, the strength and the way in which religion is practiced, how family roles are exercised and not least in actively changing habits, speaking new languages, etc., in situations where it is expected.”

(SOU 2005:50 39-40)

Again, the fragileness: it *can* have a negative effect on the society. In the same section as the cultural benefits and fears are presented the issue of increased criminal activity is brought up (SOU 2005:50: 40). This is part of a bigger pattern in the policy’s representation and construction of labor immigration: it is a double-edged sword. This reasoning will be further scrutinized later on in the thesis.

### 3.1.4 A common phenomenon

The report states that international migration is a historically common phenomenon (SOU 2005:50: 25, 30). Using history is an effective way to show

that the development is with in the lines of what can be expected from a nation state like Sweden. Immigration is represented to be a natural process and this is deducted through connecting it to the process of globalization:

“International migration has increased with globalization and the expansion of communications. [...] In the case where globalization continues and communication continues to expand, there is much to suggest that international migration will be more extensive than suggested by the UN projections. There may also be elements such as reduced openness due to e.g. terrorism, which may hinder migration. International migration has an accepted place in society both for us and for countries with large emigration. Nowadays, most countries are affected by immigration as well as emigration and also as transit countries where migrants are living in a period of their journey between two countries.“

SOU 2005:50: 28-29

The naturalness of migration is explained because of it being both a direct consequence of globalization but also a condition for it. The previous quote presents the issue of migration as collective and clarifies that all nations in the world are, or will be, affected by it. SOU 2005:50 shows a positive attitude towards development and increasing migration throughout the world. It is explicitly stated that migration is here to stay:

“Migration has always existed and is likely to continue to do so to an increasing extent. It is natural that society attempts to influence migration in different ways and steer it in a direction that is best for society.”

SOU 2005:50: 32

The previous quote is again pointing out the importance of labor immigration being governed and that this control should focus on what is best for the receiving country.

## 3.2 What presupposition or assumptions underlie the representation of the problem?

The second question aims to clarify which knowledge is taken for granted as starting points in the policy. Assumptions and presuppositions should be understood as normative activities. Also, dichotomies are a key concept and should be identified in this part of the analysis.

### 3.2.1 The capable immigrant

Of the many assumptions about the labor immigrant, one of the most basic is that they are able to carry out wage labor. Perhaps more basic still, is the assumption that there is a motivation to become a part of the process. This might not be seem much of a surprise, the policy document is after all regarding labor immigration, but this is important to point out as to fully understand the construction of the labor immigrant. This is simply to fulfill the expectation as a solution for the ageing population and to constitute the work force replacement it is represented to be.

Hence, there are a number of assumptions of who this fit-for-work labor immigrant is. First of all the labor immigrant is always supposedly a member of a specific age group: not too old, not too young (SOU 2005:50: 37). This means the immigrant is already educated, healthy, motivated and ready to head straight to the labor market. It might seem given that the labor immigrant has to be fit for work but it says something about the general representation of the immigrant and raises questions regarding what happens when the labor immigrant loses the ability to work. The workers capability functions as a condition for a residence permit. By creating a capable worker it is assumed that there is an un-capable worker – a dichotomy.

### 3.2.2 The different ones

A reoccurring presupposition throughout the policy is the image of the labor immigrant as different from the native Swedish citizen. By using statistics to describe what characteristics, such as number of children, the average labor immigrant has and by contrasting this to the “Swede” a dichotomy is created. It is in the polarizing process the two categories are created; they cannot exist without each other.

The labor immigrant is, as already addressed, portrayed as a carrier of specific cultural values. It is assumed that these values are different and at some point become contradictory to the Swedish culture.

“International migration affects any country differently. A society that is exposed to immigration goes through changes. Ideas and values are mixed. Different traditions and approaches on how to solve problems can be applied to a new society and the problems encountered there. Immigration can affect, and be visible in, a society at various levels. Overall, immigration brings new experience and knowledge to a society. Much of that which is new may be such as to enrich society and the economy.”

(SOU 2005:50: 36-37)

Really, there are three assumptions being made in the statement. Firstly, the individual’s values are tied to nationality and ethnicity and that the individuals is a constant carrier of them. Secondly, deviant cultural values are always a possible

threat to the Swedish culture. This is again showing the duality of labor immigration/immigrant. The third assumption is that there is such a thing as a homogenous Swedish culture, which is subject to threat from external cultural influences. Despite this it is explicitly stated that labor immigrants are not to be seen as a uniform group (SOU 2005:50: 28, 192). This exemplifies the report's ambivalence towards grouping those taking part in the labor immigration process.

It is also made clear that these cultural values can be an important positive effect of labor immigration but again, this is on the premises of controlled immigration. Once more, the overriding issue of the fragileness of labor immigration is made obvious.

Continuously, one of the overriding ideas and assumptions of labor immigration is that under the right circumstances the phenomenon can be a positive influence.

“The younger age structure of the immigrant population, as long as they are employed to the same extent as the native population, means that they provide the economy more revenue than they cost.”

(SOU 2005:50: 38)

This suggests that the right circumstances are in fact that the process is profitable for Sweden.

### 3.2.3 Naturally ongoing

As concluded in the first part of the analysis (labor) immigration is represented to be a natural process that has been, and will continue, going on forever. This is of course highly interesting from a post-structural perspective, which argues that nature is not by any means a given constant. Suggesting something to be natural is also a way of suggesting that deviation from this norm is *un-natural*. The assumption here being that un-naturalness is in some way undesirable. Constant economic growth is also assumed to be a natural process and consequently a goal to strive for. Neither of these claims of natural processes may be very controversial or politically challenging, but both produce certain effects in the discourse. These effects will be further scrutinized later in the thesis.

## 3.3 What is left unproblematic in this problem representation?

The third question addresses what is left out and unsaid in the policy and is in some sense overlapping the second question regarding assumptions. It may seem overwhelming and complicated to single out what is not said as since the text is supposedly limited to a specific topic, most topics are not brought up. It is

however a necessary step to take in order to gain a more full understanding of the discourse.

### 3.3.1 The un-debated Swedish perspective

The un-said is in many ways connected to the assumptions presented in the second question. The immigrated work force is clearly expected to be adjusted to Sweden's needs in more than one perspective. Not only should the labor immigrants' skills be tailor made for the Swedish needs, it should also be flexible labor. This is left unproblematic in the sense that the effects for the individual labor immigrant are not discussed. It is assumed that market principles can be applied on labor immigration and its actors without causing any bigger problems. The term 'competition' is for example applied on knowledge and work opportunities without discussion of possible consequences (SOU 2005:50: 37). It is left un-problematic what will happen when a society gains citizens for a solely economic purpose. The report is overall leaving out aspects from a sociological, individual level. As earlier mentioned the effect on the Swedish society is discussed to a large extent, but the ways in which an immigrated culture is affected are left unspoken.

Constant growth is also something that is left unproblematic. A society's constant economic growth is what makes the Swedish demographic change a problem in the first place. Another perspective, which understood economic growth as a fluctuating process, would have given a different view on the issue.

The temporariness of the labor immigration that is described in the policy is left un-discussed. By letting labor immigration be a solution for a demographic and economic issue it is implicitly understood that Sweden is only facing this problem temporarily, and that the cure should therefore be flexible. This will be examined further in the last section of the thesis.

## 3.4 What effects are produced by this representation of the problem?

This last part of the analysis gives an opportunity to discuss what consequences and effects the problem representation is possibly generating. This does not mean that every lived effect or political change needs to be brought up, it is rather an opportunity to discuss how the representation of the problem is producing itself further. This is done to understand how the representation is a part of a greater discourse and societal context.

### 3.4.1 The commodified migrant

As stated earlier labor immigration and the labor immigrant is represented to be an issue of economic and market demands. By framing labor immigration as an economic issue for the nation-state, the labor immigrants are transformed into a commodity. The capitalization of labor comes with three basic principles: the workforce needs to be flexible in terms of time, it must be mobile, and it should cost as little as possible (Wallerstein 2002: 144ff). Hence, these principles will be applied to the labor immigrant, which is of course problematic.

When framing labor immigration as a commodity, these three principles are applied on the individual actors as well as the general issue. This gives rise to consequences on a number of different levels. Capitalism's demands mean that the worker is required to sell their time to the production when called for by the employer. The need for labor is not constant which suggests, according to this logic, that the labor immigrant is required to adjust accordingly. A lived effect of this could be that the individual has to relocate along with the need for labor. Being this mobile means that there is no chance for the individual to, for example, build a more stationary life including family etc. Most societies have built their legal citizenship and benefits around this kind of stationary life and may not even allow dual citizenship. This means that these individuals that move with the need for labor are not eligible for any of these benefits.

The demand for a cost effective labor brings forth effects on a global level. In a global market the race to cheaper production and lower costs is constant, and labor is not an exception. The cost of labor is of course measured on salary levels and social fees. The constant strive to lower costs creates competition among the workers and they will be forced to find new ways to win the race. This means that the labor immigrant with the lowest salary requirements will be the most desirable employers, which in turn leads one to conclude that it is the poorest individual that will be the most attractive. This could lead to the exploitation of the world's poorest groups as means to maintain the wealth of the more affluent Sweden. These groups are also more likely to be used due to the exposed position as a labor immigrant.

### 3.4.2 Employment – a way to govern

The connection between citizenship and employment brings up the issue of control. Employment is used as a condition for residency, which leads to the individual labor immigrant depending on a business to maintain their legal status. When someone cannot live up to the conditions of the employer or simply cannot find employment their residency is threatened. By making citizenship or residency conditional on employment, the employer gains more influence over the individual. This shift makes the individual labor immigrant dependent on businesses (employers) whose main aim is to make as much revenue as possible. Also, the legal responsibility a business has is not nearly as extensive as those a government has, which leads to the conclusion that the labor immigrant is less

protected and more dependent on support from other levels. Union organizations and the civil society are likely to become more important in the issue of supporting this group. This shift means that the labor immigrant's well-being or security is laid in the hands of groups driven by goodwill and not by legal responsibility.

When the labor immigrant becomes a citizen (or holds any other form of residency) with the purpose of filling a need for a failing economy, there are of course consequences. The construction of the labor immigrant as the solution of the ageing population and its decreasing work force not only has a major impact on the understanding of the general issue of immigration but also on the power relationship between the state and the individual.

### 3.4.3 Reinforced power relationship

Further to this power relationship between state and individual is a reinforced power relationship between states. The policy document is directed towards labor immigration from countries outside of the EU and these countries are as mentioned earlier referred to as third-countries. Third-country citizens are fixated in a subordinate position to the wealthy countries of the EU through the EU- and non-EU-member dichotomy. Also, by continuously polarizing the individual labor immigrant with the Swedish worker the power relationship is further fortified.

By considering a third-country nation citizen as an – possible – asset for an industrialized country, power is exercised. Meaning, in a situation where Sweden is in need of a specific skill set or profession, such as engineers, Swedish policy is able to have an effect on a third-country's national education plan. This is a typical example of governmentality. Through demanding a certain skill or profession Sweden can influence a third-country's educational investments. This is a way of practicing advanced political power and is a simple solution for keeping a third-country in a subordinate position to the wealthy EU-countries.

## 4 Conclusion

The purpose with this chapter is to sum up the analysis and connect the results with the aims of the study.

Labor immigration from a third-country is represented to be *a solution for Sweden's ageing population*. It is also represented to be *a natural process* closely connected to economic growth and globalization. It is an area filled with paradoxes. It needs a flexible legislation to fulfill the goals, but at the same time it is an area that *needs to be handled* as not to fail. Although Sweden is said to depend upon increased labor immigration, it is *a possible threat*: at the same time as it is a cultural asset it is also an object for conflict. The issue of labor immigration is something Sweden shares with other wealthy countries in the EU. Labor immigration and the labor immigrant are, to sum up, *a fragile and sensitive issue*.

It is assumed that the labor immigrant is *a carrier of cultural values*. These values are also assumed to be *different* from Swedish values, which are seen as uniform. The labor immigrant is also assumed to possess certain characteristics such as age, education and ability to work, and these characteristics compensate for the Swedish demography's development. These qualities are formulated from Swedish norms. The policy leaves a lot un-problematized, but most prominent is the lack of discussion of the one-sided Swedish perspective that is applied. Labor immigration is a double-edged issue, and is needed to be handled and governed to avoid becoming a burden. Employment is used as a condition for citizenship or residency, which leads to the individual labor immigrant depending on a business to maintain their legal status.

The effects of these representations are of course many, but all of them are somewhat an issue of power. The representation of labor immigration as an economic issue produces a capitalized labor immigrant. This is connecting the citizenship to employment and therefore becomes a tool for governance. All this is part of a bigger power relationship of the EU and the rest of the world.



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