



DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
CENTRE FOR EUROPEAN STUDIES (CES)

# WHAT IS THE PROBLEM WITH INTEGRATION?

A policy analysis of Swedish policy proposals

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## Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to study how the idea of integration has been formulated in Swedish policy proposals over time and what similarities and differences can be found in policy proposals spanning over more than a decade, starting in 2009 till 2022. By using a Poststructuralist theory that emphasizes truth as something contextual subjective and applying the WPR-approach which studies underlying ideas through problem representation. The result shows that integration in Swedish policy proposals is perceived to be tightly bound to the labour market, where the labour market acts as a key to integration. Furthermore, integration is formulated as a normative linear process, in which the newly arrived immigrant is expected to move towards integrating into a steadfast Swedish society. Integration is also presented both as a goal and as a process, wherein the government can provide sufficient circumstances that the newly arrived immigrants must use to integrate. Differences found in the study show that during the first part of the last decade the problem with integration was perceived to be a newly arrived lack of effort in integrating, whilst the latter half focused on systemic shortcomings which hindered integration efforts.

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# 1. Introduction

Immigrant integration has in recent years received increasing attention in both societal and political debates and within academia (Penninx & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2016, 13; Favell, 2010, p.65). This is in part because of what is now commonly referred to as “*the refugee crisis*” (Duszczuk et al 2021, p.3), of 2015 which was a time of global displacement that in Europe became a reception crisis. The aftermath of 2015 had rippling effects all over Europe and rising anti-immigrant rhetoric became commonplace in society but also in politics (Duszczuk et al 2021, p.3). Sweden, in particular, underwent a stark change in the government position from open immigration to limitations being made on the number of immigrants received. These events, in turn, gave way to an increased focus on migrant integration as there was a change in public attitudes towards immigrants and the concepts of integration (Gonda et al., 2021, p.30).

Furthermore, Sweden has historically gone through many changes in its approach to integration and ideas surrounding what is important features as well as keys to integration. Starting from the 1960 and being a pioneering state in Europe when adopting a multicultural model in the 1970, which showed acceptance of ethnic and cultural diversity (Kaczmarczyk et al, 2015, p.37). Sweden has also traditionally been framed as a defender of human rights and an inclusive country of multiculturalism. Multicultural in the sense that those seeking refuge and new beginnings have been welcomed to take part in welfare benefits such as health care and education (Dahlstedt & Neergaard, 2016, p.122; Borevi, 2014, p.710-712). This has made the Swedish welfare and migration regime appear somewhat exceptional, leading to the coining of the phrase *Swedish exceptionalism*. Recent studies have shown that the reality of so-called Swedish exceptionalism which refers to a concept of Sweden as untouched by colonial legacies and a self-image as being above others, has been undergoing fundamental changes over the last two decades (Dahlstedt & Neergaard, 2016, p.122). Which was highlighted even more in the aftermath of the European refugee crisis by the fundamental changes in how migration and integration were discussed (Dahlstedt & Neergaard, 2016, p.122).

## 1.1 Aim and research questions

From this background, Sweden becomes an interesting country to study regarding integration and how integration is portrayed in government documents. As that can help us gain an understanding of what underlying and implicit ideas underlie how integration is formulated and

problematized in documents that govern Sweden. The thesis, therefore, applies a qualitative text analysis and seeks to study how the concept of integration meaning which ideas of whom it entails, what is implied with integration, and how integration is achieved, is formulated in the Swedish policy proposal. Furthermore, the study aims to understand if migrant integration is portrayed differently before, during, and after the 2015 European refugee crisis. This was conducted using Carol Bacchi's (2009) *what the problem is represented to be*-approach which aims to make the implicit and underlying ideas visible by studying problem representations (p.7, 33).

By comparing Swedish government policy proposals published from the period 2009 to 2022 this thesis aims to analyze how the concept of integration is formulated through problem representation. Moreover, the thesis also aims to study how this formulation looks over time, by studying similarities and differences found in the documents. The study, furthermore, aimed to contribute to the overall research field of migrant integration studies.

With this aim in mind the following research question was composed:

- How is the problem of integration constructed in Swedish government propositions over time?
- What similarities and differences can be found in the propositions regarding the formulation of integration?

## 2. Previous research

This section will provide an overview of the current research field, beginning with a description of integration as a highly contested and multifaceted concept. Followed by integration in a European context, and lastly, the section ends with a closer look at integration from a Swedish perspective.

### 2. 1 The concept of integration

Even if integration is receiving increasing attention in societal and political debates (Penninx & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2016, p.13, Rytter, 2018, p.679), the concept of integration is still highly contested regarding whom it entails, what is implied with integration, and how integration is achieved (Anger & Strang, 2008, p.167, 178 Penninx & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2016, p.13; Rytter, 2018, p.682; Schinkel, 2018, p.5). Rytter (2018) emphasizes how integration can refer to both a goal as well as a process, a goal meaning integration as something that can be accomplished, and integration as a process as something that can be implemented (p. 682). As a result, it enables integration to be used for different purposes and contains different meanings which becomes a contributing factor to the concept's unclear nature (Rytter, 2018, p.682). In addition to the difficulties of defining integration, Schrove & Schinkel (2013) highlights that the concept of integration is built on the existence of a division between those who are integrated and those who need to be integrated (p.1132-1133).

Though the research regarding the concept of integration is vast, scholars have claimed that the concept has been used uncritically in academia as well as in popular discourse (Rytter, 2018, p.679, Schinkel, 2018, p.9, Penninx & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2016, p.12-13). Penninx and Garcés-Mascareñas (2016) point out that policy discourse as well as many studies on immigrant integration build upon a normative understanding and depiction of the concept of integration (p.12). Which contains two major assumptions, firstly that immigrants must conform to gain acceptance whilst the dominating majority culture remains the same and secondly that integration is a linear process (Penninx & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2016, p.12; Schrove & Schinkel, 2013, p.1133-1134). Schinkel (2018) argues that the lack of theorization and complexity regarding the conceptualizing integration leads to a concept that “[..] amounts to being a floating signifier that [...] translates easily across academia, policy, and popular discourse [...]” (p.3). Meaning that integration becomes an undefined concept that easily can be filled with different

meanings and used in many different contexts (Rytter, 2018, p.683). Integration can also be used to refer to economic, political, societal, and cultural integration which furthers the vagueness of the definition (Rytter, 2018, p.683). Even though the concept has been shown to be ill-defined and poses difficulties in its practical appliance, integration has become a common political ambition that easily changes over time as the undefined nature of integration allows for actors to differentiate understandings of what integration is, whom it refers and how it is achieved (Rytter, 2018, p.681, 683).

Furthermore, definitions of integration can be found in policies of varying levels of government, international and national as well as regional. However, these definitions often lack a clear criterion for how integration is measured and operationalized (Favell, 2010, p.65). Moreover, studies have shown that when these policies are applied, the responsibility for the integration is put on the immigrant who is expected to adapt to the society, which leads to integration becoming one-sided (Schinkel, 2013, p.1146). As a result, integration as a concept has created a space in which scholars, policymakers, and societal actors can fill it with a multitude of meanings of how integration is understood that are contextually bound both historical and spatial (Rytter, 2018, p.683-684; Schinkel, 2018, p.2). These meanings build upon ideas about the nation, the state, citizenship, and the relationship between minorities and majorities (Rytter, 2018, p.691; Kaczmarczyk et al., 2015, p.38). The contextually bound ideas have resulted in different countries developing differentiating “*philosophies of integration*” (Kaczmarczyk et al., 2015, p.38) which in turn is the basis for the emergence of varying integration policy models. In Germany, for example, a social model of integration originated where the labour market and participation in the welfare system both as a receiver and a contributor were seen as the basis for integration. In France, on the other hand, a republican model was created that saw vast naturalization as the way to integration (Kaczmarczyk et al., 2015, p.38). This can in turn be connected to integration being strongly linked with key issues which research shows are housing, employment, and education (Ager & Strang, 2008, p.169-171).

## 2. 2 Integration in a European context

Post-war Europe has transformed from an emigration region to an immigrant area, which has happened at different times around Europe (Kaczmarczyk et al., 2015, p.25-26). Moreover, it is essential to mention that some parts of Central and Eastern Europe have not fully undergone this change and that it is still unknown when and how this change will be made noticeable in

these parts (Kaczmarczyk et al., 2015, p.25-26; Duszczuk et al. 2020, p.24-25). Western European countries such as Germany, France, and the Netherlands were the first to begin experiencing a mass influx of immigrants from both within and outside of Europe. The influx of immigrants was by the 1950s so great that they became countries of net immigration; southern and northern Europe underwent the same transformation in the 1970s (Duszczuk et al. 2020, p.24-25). This relatively rapid transformation created several challenges for the countries such as a change in a country's demographic and within the labour market which has had a fundamental impact on the countries' social, political, and economic realms (Kaczmarczyk et al, 2015, p.25). The most notable of these challenges revolved around the political response to the process of the immigrant's settlement, in other words, integration policy (Duszczuk, et al. 2020, p.24).

The concerns of integration challenges were initially limited to the western European countries, as they were the first to undergo the change from a migrant to an immigrant region, but the same challenges soon arose in the southern European countries. (Duszczuk et al. 2020, p.24-26) Initial integration policies were created reactively, meaning that policymakers created policies for specific problems and not as part of a long-term strategy. The reason for this was that policymakers did not believe that immigration would be a permanent fixture and only saw it as a temporary phenomenon. Temporary in the sense that the immigration would consist of guest workers without an accompanying family that would work for a short time before returning to their country of origin. (Duszczuk et al. 2020, p.25-26). The integration policies that were introduced mainly focused on housing, education, and the welfare state as well as anti-discrimination efforts with the goal of boosting productivity by getting immigrants access to language learning and education. Moreover, integration was at this time seen as an inevitable process, that would happen as a natural consequence of education and socialization in the host country (Duszczuk et al. 2020, p.28). Integration was mainly focused on the economic and social spheres which led to the cultural sphere being overlooked and perceived as a one-way process where the immigrant was expected to voluntarily adjust to the host country (Duszczuk, et al. 2020, p.28).

From the late 1990s and still today, there has been a shift from voluntary integration programs to required integration courses as political efforts to meet the increase of third-country nationals' immigration. During this time integration became a condition for immigrants to stay

in EU countries, thereby taking steps toward a more assimilative approach (Duszczuk et al. 2020, p.29). In recent times, scholars point out that mainstreaming trends are visible in many European countries; mainstreaming integration aims to reach people with an immigrant background through need-based policies that also include the general population. This is to achieve a more extensive scope, which integration policy has previously failed. (Van Wolleghem, 2019, p.231-232). Even though many of the same integration trends are found in Europe, the countries' experience with integration is contextually bound. This means that historical, geographical, and socio-economic contexts have impacted and conditioned countries' policies leading to the development of an array of varying integration frameworks and policies all over Europe (Gónnda et al., 2021, p.24).

The development of the EU has played a crucial part in building a migration and integration space in Europe, as an institutional regime through the legal and regulatory system of the EU but also regarding the migration patterns within and to the EU (Kaczmarczyk et al., 2015, p.25). The development of what is often regarded as the European migration regime is a unique feature as it does not have a comparison in contemporary times regarding its scale and the legal and institutional framework (Kaczmarczyk et al., 2015, p.25). EU has also tried to define integration and it is now common practice in EU legal and political documents to refer to integration as a dynamic two-way process (European Commission, 2004; Gónnda et al., 2021 p.38). Gonda et al. (2021, p.34) argue that the promotion of a two-way process that concerns both immigrants and residents has drawn attention to the fact that the obligation and effort of integration are put on both parties.

However, integration is not constituted, from a legal point of view, as a separate common policy field in the EU but rather as a part of immigration policy. The immigration policy and therefore also the immigration efforts are subjected to shared competence within the EU in the fields of freedom, security, and justice. This means that in practice integration of immigrants remains under the member-states domain and therefore their own national law (Gónnda et al., 2021, p.33). Despite this, scholars argue even though it's too early to talk about an EU integration policy, however, there exist policy instruments connected to integration that together form a policy relating to integration (Van Wolleghem, 2019, p.190). Gonda et al (2021, p.33) however, points out that the changing of migration realities in Europe and the intermingling of cultures in more recent years have created more demands for integration initiatives to be made on the EU level.

Moreover, Gonda et al (2021) argue that the lack of a common integration policy at the EU level so far has resulted in soft policies and a gradual Europeanisation of member states' national policies through incentive-driven actions (p.33).

## 2.3 Integration in Sweden

Sweden has followed the same path as most of Europe and undergone a transformation from a country of emigration to a land of immigration, leading to the development of integration policies in the late 1960s. Prior to this, the country was primarily characterized by an assimilatory view on immigration (Kaczmarczyk et al., 2015, p.36-37; Borevi, 2014, p.710). Dahlström (2004) has described Swedish integration policy using four policy models that mark different times in Swedish history. The late 1960s universal policy model, the 1970s multicultural model, the 1980s selective policy model, and back to the universal policy model during the 1990s (Dahlström, 2004, p.213).

In 1960 Sweden started to develop a policy approach to promote immigrants to integrate into Swedish society, the migration during this time was as previously mentioned mostly labour migration. The universal policy model was based on generous redistributive benefits and services for the whole population, the idea was that labour migrants would have access to these benefits on the same ground as any other Swedish native residence (Borevi, 2014, p.710). During the 1970s, Swedish integration policies began recognizing ethnic identity and cultural communities and introduced policies with multicultural goals that combined a diversification of culture with the 1960s welfare state universalism (Borevi, 2014, p.711). In the 70s a belief emerged that access to equal rights was necessary to enable immigrants' integration into Sweden and that access to the welfare state should be given to immigrants as well as to their families. The immigration was however not unregulated, and the resident permit required the immigrant to have found a job that fulfilled several requirements. Borevi (2014) means that this created an ideal of the citizen as a worker, where the immigrant from the start is integrated into the labour market (p.710-712). Kaczmarczyk et al (2015) describe that Sweden by introducing "*multicultural policies*" (p.37) in the 70s became a pioneering state in Europe which many other countries followed (p.37).

The '80s introduced a selective model which acted as a response and critique of the multicultural model, the perception was that the migrants settling in Sweden were given too

much freedom to choose between what was believed to be their own culture and the Swedish culture (Dahlström, 2004, p.213-215; Kaczmarczyk et al., 2015, p.37). To address these perceived `problems´ arising during the multiculturalism model, the government withdrew bills created in the 1970s aimed at supporting and maintaining immigrants’ collective cultural identities (Borevi, 2014, p.710-712). During this period, however, belief in the universal integration approach as a valid model still existed, and elements of the universal model could be found in politics despite the criticism directed at the multicultural model (Dahlström, 2004, p.213-215).

In the last 20 years, integration in Sweden has mainly been focused on establishing immigrants on the labour market as a way of integrating (Qvist, 2016, p.27), with the “*refugee crisis*” (Duszczuk et al 2021, p.3) in 2015-2016 having a significant impact in Swedish integration and migration policy (Duszczuk et al 2021, p.3). In 2015 163 000 sought asylum in Sweden and the in a government-ordered report it is stated that Sweden carried out the country's largest humanitarian operation since the end of World War II (SOU 2017:13, p.454). During this time a stark change in the Swedish government position can be noted, which led to a limitation being put up on the number of newly arrived immigrants received but these events also gave way to an increasing focus on migrant integration (Duszczuk et al 2021, p.3). This period also saw a change in public attitudes towards immigrants and concepts of integration as new political and socio-economic social realities changed (Gonda et al., 2021, p.30).

### 3. Theoretical framework

This section contains a description of the theoretical framework used in this thesis, namely the Poststructuralism policy analysis. Beginning with an overview of Poststructuralism and followed by Poststructuralism in connection to the method used in this study, the WPR-approach.

#### 3.1. Poststructural policy analysis

Poststructuralism does not stand for just a single theory but rather refers to a group of thinkers whom all have in common that they reject the belief of objective and universal truths. The poststructuralism way of thinking instead highlights the role language has in constructing and reshaping our perception of reality and that knowledge never can be neutral. Therefore, poststructuralism focuses on how things are done as opposed to the essence of things because the essence is something that is constructed, and these constructs or ideas are contextually bound by for example tradition, history, and culture. This means that a word has different meanings depending on who uses it, at what time, and in what forum (Bergström & Boréus, 2018, p.28). Carol Bacchi's (2009) WPR- approach, what the problem is represented to be, builds upon poststructuralism to claim that problems cannot be viewed as objective or self-evident and creates an analytical framework and a discursive theory tool that can be used to examine policy and policy proposals (p.1-3, 33).

According to Bacchi and Goodwill (2016) to understand and interpret the implicit rationale behind ways of ruling, it is necessary and required to study how issues are problematized. Bacchi builds the WPR-approach upon Foucault, one of the prominent figures who have shaped poststructuralism, and his theories on power, knowledge, discourse, and governmentality are central to the WPR-approach (Bacchi, Goodwill, 2016, p.28). This thesis uses Bacchi's interpretation of Foucault's ideas as the basis for the theoretical framework of this thesis. Governmentality refers to any act performed by authorities that aims to guide, shape, or in any other way affect the population's conduct. Bacchi (2018) uses governmentality to focus on how governing takes place and point out that her view of governmentality differs from Foucault's (Bacchi, 2018, p.20, 33). As the WPR-approach means that every policy by its nature constitutes a proclamation, rather than searching for problematizations in situations when

governing becomes a problem which she means is more traditionally in line with Foucault's thinking (Bacchi & Goodwill, 2016, p.20)

Moreover, in Bacchi's interpretation knowledge is not what is true but rather what is seen as the truth which is dependent on contexts, such as societal ideas, concepts, and historical events. These ideas are therefore not objective truths as Bacchi a poststructuralist thinker don't believe in objective truth (Bacchi, Goodwin. 2016, p.31, 35). Power is described as something that is relational and productive which is not normative or a tangible thing that is used by institutions or people but instead, a name given to a complicated strategic circumstance that exists in society (Bacchi, Goodwin. 2016, p.28). Discourse, Bacchi means, is not only about language but also includes preconceived ideas, and its therefore within the discourse where the formulation of the problem can be found. Discourse acts as a frame of what is true which is dependent on in what context it exists within (Bacchi, 2009, p. 7; Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016, p.35). Power, knowledge, discourse, and governmentality work together to build the theoretical groundwork for the WPR-approach within which power, knowledge, and discourse is seen as parts working together to create truths. By studying political documents, we can gain an understanding of what preconceived ideas and knowledge lay the groundwork for how our society is built and is governed (Bacchi, Goodwin. 2016, p.28-29).

### 3. Method and material

The following section is divided into two parts, method, and material, the first part begins with a presentation of the method used. Followed by motivation for the choice of method and ending with a critical reflection of the method and its application. The second part contains a description of the material used in the study as well as of the of the selection process.

#### 3.1 Method

The study applied a qualitative method to perform a discursive text analysis using Carol Bacchi's (2009) *What the problem is represented to be-* approach. The WPR-approach draws upon social constructionist premises by highlighting the importance of policies context and challenging the assumption that governments react to problems that exist in the world separately from how the problems are perceived (p.1-3). Instead, the WPR-approach emphasizes that problems have many different competing representations instead of one objectively accurate problem representation. As a result, governments while trying to tackle a problem will simultaneously be a part of the production of a privileged problem representation. The representation is privileged in the sense that it forms the basis of documents used to govern and therefore has a tangible impact on the public perception of the problem (Bacchi, 2009, p.1-3).

Moreover, this means that policy documents govern through problem representation. Therefore, it is necessary to study problem representation to reveal what the implicit and underlying problems are made out to be. The WPR works as a tool to make the implicit, explicit and has two main goals, to reveal the underlying assumptions and to identify as well as reflect upon what is left out or silenced (Bacchi, 2009, p.7, 33). As policy documents are complex and can aim to amend several perceived problems the documents may contain more than one problem representation. The problem representation within a given proposal or policy may therefore contain contradictory or conflicting representations which can complicate the analytical process (Bacchi, 2009, p.3-4).

To study the policy documents, the WPR-approach formulates an analytic framework consisting of six questions:

- “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?*

*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, p.xii)

In the study, however, a delimitation has been made due to the time restraint which led to questions three and six not being used. The reason why precisely these questions were excluded is that starting with question three, this question aims at tracing the problematization back in time. The propositions used in the study cannot alone answer this question which would mean additional material is needed, this would not have been possible due to time constraints. Question six, though interesting, requires due to its nature a lot of time to properly answer and possibly additional material, thereby similarly excluded. Even though two of the six questions are not used the remaining question still are able to provide a comprehensive analysis of the proposition as they aim to make the implicit meanings explicit as well as the effects these meanings have and what the ideas hid within the implicit problem representations.

The WPR-approach was chosen for three main reasons. Firstly, by using the questions presented above to study policy documents or policy proposals we can gain an understanding of how governing takes place and how the governing affects those governed which can be done by focusing on contested concepts (Bacchi, 2009, p.8-9). Secondly, the choice of method is because the WPR-approach is very well suited to compare political developments over time, within a particular country, or cross-nationally because it provides a way of recognizing distinctions and nuances within specific problem representations (Bacchi, 2009, p.xx). Thirdly, as earlier mentioned, the WPR-approach builds on the notion that policy is shaped by historical, national, and international context and can therefore be understood as a product of culture (Bacchi, 2009, p.7-9). As the aim of this study is to compare how the concept of integration is formulated in policy propositions the WPR-approach was a fitting method for this study.

The method was applied by first gaining an overview of the material used before as Bacchi describes it, conducting a backward reading. This means that material is analysed by focusing on the solutions proposed. By studying the solutions, the implicit meanings of what the problem really is can be revealed. The backward reading was enabled by categorizing paragraphs and sections of the documents, while still trying to remain to view the sections in the context in which they were a part of as to not diminish and lose meanings or understanding of their context (Bacchi, 2009, p.xxii-19). The categorizations used changed during the analysis process as new patterns were made apparent whilst others became less prominent. The four questions used from the WPR-approach were continually used though out the analysis process and acted as the basis for the analysis. The results of the analysis were presented in a table to create an overview and simplify the reading of the results.

Furthermore, when applying the WPR-approach it is important for the researcher to be aware and show reflexivity of their own part in influencing the reading of the problem representations. As the researchers themselves are immersed and shaped by the very problem representations they aim to analyze. Researchers must when studying problem representations actively work to not buy into the problem representations without reflecting on their origins, purpose, and effects (Bacchi, 2009, p.19). Throughout the process of conducting research, I, the author of the thesis, have tried to be reflexive and part of reflexivity is recognizing that my subjective experience and preunderstandings influence the problem representations that are visible to me. I am born in Sweden to one Argentinian-borne immigrant parent and one Swedish-borne parent, even though I am often questioned about my ethnic background I have never been subject to any integration efforts. The lack of experience of existing in an integration context influences the preunderstandings I have which in turn affect the formulation of the problem representations and reading of the result.

## 3.2 Material

The material consists of five policy proposals which in total equals 812 pages and were published between the period 2009/10 up until 2021/22. Policy proposals are submitted by the government to the Swedish parliament as possible new laws or amendments to an already existing law. The proposals also contain a selection of referrals from various bodies that have been allowed to comment on the bill before it is forwarded to Parliament (Riksdagen, 2021). Policy proposals are of public record that can be viewed by everyone and serve as a political

document that explains how a law or amendment should be formulated but also why there is a need for said law or amendment, which mean they also contain political arguments made by the government (Kellgren, 2011, p.741, Nationalencyklopedin, n.d).

According to the WPR-approach policy proposal can, therefore, not contain a true depiction of what the problem really is but rather what the government perceives as being the problem (Bacchi, 2009, p.7, 33). Policy and policy proposals can but do not necessarily contain explicit declarations of what the problem is, however, it is implied that there is a problem due to the main aim of the policy is to address and solve problems. Using the WPR-approach this implicit problem representation can be made explicit (Bacchi, 2009, p.x), making the method and material used in this study well suited for each other and for an in-depth analysis of how problem representations of integration policy are depicted. Thereby how integration can be understood in Swedish official government proposal and how the perception of integration remains the same or differs over time.

The proposals were selected on the basis that they all concerned the establishment of newly arrived immigrants and were proposed in relative closeness to the 2015 European migration surge. The European migration surge is an interesting time for a multitude of reasons, as from the aspect of integration policy, both in political and societal debates the spotlight was on integration and integration policy because of the sudden influx of immigrants to Europe (Duszczuk et al 2021, p.3). As the propositions are written in Swedish titles, quotes and terminology have had to be translated into English for the sake of the thesis. These translates have been made by me, the author of the thesis, with an aim to conduct a translation that is as close as possible to the original Swedish text. Regarding terminology, all the propositions use the Swedish word nyanlända to refer to immigrant groups which in the thesis is translated into new arrivals or newly arrived. It is however of great importance to mention that when translating from one language to another there is always a risk that some of the intended meaning is lost in the translation even if the utmost effort is put in providing as accurate a translation as possible.

The propositions used are listed below in chronological order with title translation provided by me, the author. Underneath each subheading contains a brief description of the policy proposal's main aim:

### **3.2.1 Proposition 2009/10:60**

Proposition 2009/10:60 *“Newly arrived immigrants' labour market establishment - personal responsibility with professional support”* consists in its entirety of 216 pages. The proposition calls for a change in the law regarding the establishment of new arrivals, aiming to clarify and further specify state actors' roles and what is expected of the new arrivals. The central part of the proposal is to introduce means which give the state actors the right to end the payment of different kinds of allowances to new arrivals if they do not actively participate in qualifying for job search. (Prop. 2009/10:60, p.1, 38-41).

### **3.2.3 Proposition 2013/14:104**

Proposition 2013/14:104 *“Efforts for the establishment of certain newly arrived immigrants, etc.”* is 81 pages long and presents a proposal that will regulate job-seeking newly arrived the right to receive state subsidies. The government proposes that newly arrived who have job searching as the main activity will lose the right to obtain state subsidies if a suitable job offer is refused without an acceptable reason (Prop. 2013/14:104 p.1, 81).

### **3.2.4 Proposition 2015/16:54**

Proposition 2015/16:54 *“A shared responsibility for the reception of new arrivals”* is a proposal on 47 pages that aims to make it mandatory for municipalities to receive newcomers and reside them within the municipality. The proposal also contains directions for how the new arrivals should be distributed between the municipalities, the directions consider factors such as population size, the total amount of newly arrived, including unaccompanied children and asylum seekers, as well as municipalities labour market conditions (Prop. 2015/16:54, p.1).

### **3.2.5 Proposition 2017/18:194**

Proposition 2017/18:194 *“More new arrivals will achieve eligibility for upper secondary school and the quality of preschools and after-school centers will be strengthened”* is 123 pages and proposes a change in the education act regarding newly arrived students who study at upper or primary levels or attend a compulsory special needs school. The change would enable newly arrived students to receive a specially adapted timetable that can deviate from the standardized timetable that usually is applied to students at the same level (Prop. 2017/18:194, p.1, 123).

### **3.2.6 Proposition 2021/22:51**

Proposition 2021/22:51 “*A cohesive education for new arrivals who have a compulsory education*” is 73 pages long which proposes a change and clarification in the criteria for the adult municipal education that is offered to new arrivals as a part of the establishment program by the municipalities. The aim is to make sure that municipalities provide a coherent education to new arrivals within the municipal adult education (Prop. 2021/22:51, p.1, 73)

## 4. Results

In this section, the analysis of the chosen material is presented in chronological order, underneath each sub-heading each proposition is presented separately to provide a cohesive analysis of each document. The subheadings start out with presenting the dominating problem representation found in the proposition, then what underlying assumption the problem representation contains. Followed by a reflection around what the problem representation leaves unproblematic or silenced and finally ends by answering what effects the problem representation creates.

### 4.1 Proposition 2009/10:60

There are four dominant problem representations found in the solutions proposed by the government. Firstly, a lack of active participation; secondly, new arrivals have been handled differently; third, there is a lack of matching between the labor market and settlement; and fourth, there is a failure to reach previous goals.

The first and second problem representation can be found in the following statement *"A starting point for linking the compensation to active participation is also that requirements should be placed on the newcomer to, like others outside the labor market, more actively qualify for job search"* (Prop. 2009/10:60, p.105). The solution proposed here by the government is to link compensation to newly arrivals' active participation, which previously has not existed. From this, the following problem representations are produced Firstly; new arrivals have not actively participated in the labor market. Secondly, by not requiring active participation, new arrivals have been treated differently from others that are not currently but strive to become part of the labour market.

The third problem representation is that the settlement of new arrivals has not been correctly matched with the labor market. This can be understood from the following statement. *"In the Government's view, better matching the settlement to the opportunities in the labor market is a task that falls more naturally within the Swedish Public Employment Service's area of responsibility than within the Swedish Migration Board. The Swedish Public Employment Service should therefore take over the responsibility from the Swedish Migration Agency to assign a newly arrived place in a municipality"* (Prop. 2009/10:60, p.51) from this; a fourth

problem representation also can be found that the previous actors have failed in achieving the goals regarding the establishment of new arrivals on the labor market.

Several underlying assumptions can be found in the problem representation. In the problem representation of newly arrivals' lack of active participation, it can be assumed that new arrivals need to actively participate in the labour market to become established. Acquiring qualifications to receive a job is seen as highly important. Consequently, it can be understood that it is assumed that being established on the labour market is seen as a very important part of newly arrivals integration. Where active participation acts as a key to achieving this. The assumption of the labour market's importance in establishing new arrivals can also be found in the third problem representation, the lack of matching between the labour market and the settlement. It is assumed to be important to settle new arrivals where there are job opportunities. This also highlights the establishment of labour market as a requisite for new arrivals integration. The first problem representation, lack of participation, also contains an assumption about the need for monetary incentives to motivate newly arrivals to actively participate. Newly arrivals are therefore assumed to not have a self-interest in establishing themselves on the labour market but gain one by receiving monetary incentives.

In the second problem representation, where new arrivals have been handled differently from others who are similarly not established on the labour market, contains an assumption that new arrivals need to be treated the same as others who are not established on the labour market. As a result, it is emphasized that it is important for new arrivals to be treated the same way as people who are already integrated. At least when it comes to requirements made regarding actively participating in the labour market. The fourth problem representation, failure to reach previous goals, also contains assumptions about the labour market's importance regarding newly arrivals integration. By underlining that the goals have not been met it is made clear that these goals need to be met because of their importance.

One main point that is left unproblematic in the problem representation is how the newly arrived immigrants' inactivity or lack of active participation has taken shape. The proposition only mentions that new arrivals need to "[...] *more actively qualify for job search*" (Prop. 2009/10:60, p.105) but not how this active qualification should be made. Inactivity in qualifying for the labour market can take many shapes, for example, though not participating in furthering one's education, not actively looking for jobs, or not showing up for scheduled job interviews.

Effects of problem representations are connected to new arrivals being described as lacking in actively participating. The focus of the problem representation is the lack of active participation which creates the perception that the new arrivals themselves are to blame for the problem. By not actively participating in the labour market they have not become established on the labour market, therefore they have not been integrated. This has created a need for the government to introduce requirements for active participation.

## 4.2 Proposition 2013/14:104

In this policy proposal, four central problem representations can be found in the solutions proposed. Firstly, lack of active participation, and secondly, the establishment has been too slow. Thirdly previous goals have not been achieved and fourthly refusals of suitable job offer without an acceptable reason.

Three problem representations can be found in the following statement. *“To follow the establishment plan, i.e., participate in the establishment efforts, is a condition for the newcomer to receive establishment compensation. This condition creates an incentive for the individual to participate in the establishment efforts actively and achieve the goal of the establishment plan without delay.”* (Prop. 2013/14:104, p.17) By introducing a solution that means that newly arrived will lose their rights to receive benefits if they do not actively participate in establishment efforts, it is implied that newly arrived have failed to do so earlier. The last two words of the statement *“[...] without delay”* (Prop. 2013/14:104, p.17) lead to the second problem representation that the establishment has taken longer than anticipated or previously planned. The second sentence contains the third problem representation that the solution presented will enable the goals to be reached, implying that the goals had not been reached before this.

The fourth problem representations in the policy proposal are that new arrivals have refused job offers. This can be understood from the following statement. *“Requirements should be introduced for new arrivals with an establishment plan to accept an offer of a job under certain conditions.”* (Prop. 2013/14:104, p.17). The need to introduce these requirements thus contributes to the implicit perception that there exists a problem consisting of new arrivals rejecting job offers that the government perceives as suitable for the new arrivals. The proposal explains that these ‘certain conditions’ are that the job offer must be suitable and that the reason

for refusal must be acceptable. The proposition also contains further specifications regarding the consequences of a newly arrived rejected suitable job offer. *"When the right to an establishment plan ceases, the newcomer is no longer entitled to continued contributions under the law, establishment allowance, housing allowance or establishment allowance."* (Prop. 2013/14:104, p.17)

In the problem representation presented multiple underlying assumptions can be made visible. Regarding the first problem representation, the lack of active participation has an underlying assumption that new arrivals have not tried to establish themselves thoroughly. The need for an incentive also implies a lack of motivation among the newly arrived to establish themselves and become integrated, at least within the terms of which the state considers one to be integrated.

The second problem representation, which is that establishment has been too slow, implies that the government has a clear set timeframe within which they expect new arrivals to be established. The fourth problem representation, refusals of suitable job offers without an acceptable reason, implies an assumption about what types of jobs are 'suitable' for new arrivals and what types of reasons for refusal are acceptable.

Several factors are left unproblematic in the problem representation. One of the main points of the policy proposal is to stop new arrivals from rejecting job offers, but what is for the most part silenced is the reason why new arrivals have been rejecting job offers. Therefore, no understanding can be gained regarding the reason for the refusal nor in what way the job offers have been unsatisfactory for newly arrivals. There is a multitude of reasons for one to reject a job offer for example wage, the working hours, the job assignment itself, or the location. Another aspect that is left unproblematic for the most part is to which extent newly arrivals have been rejecting job offers. Both elements are just briefly mentioned in the following statement but there is no further effort made to examine the underlying reason. *"However, there is a lack of reliable information on how common it is for new arrivals who participate in establishment initiatives to reject an offer of suitable work, as well as the reasons for this."* (Prop. 2013/14:104, p.40)

In the proposal, what are seen as suitable job offers and acceptable reasons for refusal are left mainly unexplored. There are no clear criteria for how one measures suitability or what can be constituted as acceptable reasons. This creates a space where state actors themselves can create

their standards which in the long run can lead to new arrivals being treated differently depending on who handles their cases and in what municipal the processing takes place.

Multiple effects are produced from what gets left out in the different problem representations. Since the reason for refused job offers is silenced and that the job offers for the beginning were deemed suitable for the new arrivals the job offers are likely to remain the same. But because it is unclear why they had been refused it is still likely that new arrivals will continue to decline the job offers with only the added consequence of a loss of benefits.

Another effect produced is that the blame for the problem presented in the policy proposal is put on the new arrivals. Since they refused, job offers the government deems appropriate without an acceptable reason, a problem is created, leading to the government proposing implications for this action. As a result, it can be deduced that this problem arises due to new arrivals, which means that the blame is put on the new arrivals.

#### 4.3 Proposition 2015/16:54

Three dominating problem representations can be found in the solution proposals made in the proposition. Firstly, Sweden has received too few new arrivals in relation to the demand. Secondly, municipalities have been unwilling to accept arrivals, thirdly an uneven distribution between municipalities.

From the following statement, the first two problem representations can be made visible. *“To achieve a reception that corresponds to the need for reception, the Government considers that a municipality should be able to be assigned to receive new arrivals, regardless of whether the municipality has reached an agreement on reception for the settlement of new arrivals or not.”*(Prop. 2015/16:54) In other words, this means that to meet the demand, municipalities must be required to accept new arrivals even though no prior agreement has been made. As a result, the proposal contains a representation of the problem where there has been a greater need or demand for people to become settled in Sweden than there has been opportunity or availability. The proposed solution also points towards a problem representation where the municipalities have been lacking or unwilling to receive new arrivals, resulting in the need for the proposal.

*"In the distribution between municipalities, account shall be taken of the municipality's labor market conditions, population size, total reception of newly arrived and unaccompanied children and the extent of asylum seekers currently staying in the municipality."* (Prop. 2015/16:54, p.22) From this part of the solution proposal, it can be deduced that the distribution of new arrivals has been uneven between municipalities in the past. Regardless of the municipality's resources, circumstances, and the possibility of being able to accommodate new arrivals. Therefore, a third problem representation is created the uneven distribution between municipalities.

These problem representations contain several underlying assumptions. The first problem representation that Sweden has received too few new arrivals in relation to the demand contains a presumption that Sweden is an attractive destination for new arrivals and that there is significant demand. The second representation, municipals' who have been unwilling to receive arrivals, have an underlying assumption that municipals should want or be willing to accept new arrivals if they have the means to do so.

The criteria for when a municipal should be willing to receive new arrivals also contain an assumption of what new arrivals need and what is important for them to gain access to. The first criteria, labour market conditions, contain an underlying assumption that new arrivals must gain access to the labour market. The second, population size, includes an assumption that it is important to consider how big or small the population is to gauge how many new arrivals should be received. Therefore, the amount of received newly arrivals must be in relation, unspecified in which way, to the population size. The third criteria assume that it is important to know how many new arrivals, asylum seekers, and unaccompanied children reside in the municipality before it can be decided if the municipality should receive more.

Moreover, regarding what is left out and silenced in the problem representation following aspects can be made visible. As the proposal mainly focuses on the responsibility of the municipalities the state's obligation in facilitating the municipalities in their reception of new arrivals is silenced. Neither does the proposal examine or discuss why municipalities previously have been unwilling to receive new arrivals. Furthermore, the proposal does not discuss or bring up the need for earlier experience or specific prior knowledge in receiving new arrivals as an essential criterion for whether a municipal should receive new arrivals. However, this could affect municipalities' possibilities of successfully receiving new arrivals. The relative order in

which these criteria should be ranked is left unproblematic. Therefore, it is unclear whether the municipal labor market conditions are more important than the number of new arrivals the municipality has received when additional new arrivals are distributed.

The effect produced by the problem representation in the proposition is that since the policy focuses on the uneven distribution of new arrivals between municipalities. This results in the need for the government to step in and propose a requirement that makes municipalities receive new arrivals. The blame for the problem arriving is therefore put on the municipalities.

#### 4.4 Proposition 2017/18:194

In proposition 2017/18:194 three dominating problem representations can be made visible. Firstly, newly arrived have not reached the educational goals in certain subjects. Secondly, it has not previously been possible to deviate from the regular school curriculum and regulate or adapt the schedule for newly arrived students. Thirdly the students' acquired knowledge has not been the basis for the education plan.

*“In order to meet the needs of the heterogeneous group of late newcomers, the Government, therefore, believes that an additional opportunity should be introduced to prioritize certain selected subjects and thereby increase the teaching time in these subjects for those who begin their schooling in Sweden in compulsory school in later years. The Government proposes that it should be possible to make such prioritization by deviating from the provisions on timetables and the subjects and goals that otherwise apply to education in the form of an adapted timetable.”* (Prop. 2017/18:194, p.26) This statement makes the first two problem representation visible. The first problem representation is based on the need to prioritize certain subjects; this need must stem from an inability to reach the goals in these subjects. Therefore, the problem representation is that newly arrived previously have not reached the educational goals in certain subjects. The second problem representation can be deduced in the last part of the last sentence; the need forms an adaptable timetable. The need to create this solution proposal shows that it has been perceived as a problem that newly arrived students have not had an adapted timetable.

The third problem representation can be made visible from the following statement. *“It should therefore be explicitly stated in the legal text that a decision on an adapted timetable may only be made after a student's knowledge has been assessed [...].”* (Prop. 2017/18:194, p.29) The

solution presented here is that the adapted timetable should be based on the student's prior knowledge; therefore, the problem is represented that newly arrived students' previously acquired knowledge has not been the basis for the education plan, which has been perceived as a problem.

The underlying assumption found in the problem representation is that there are subjects that are more important for new arrivals than others. The bill also specifies which these subjects are: " *A student who receives an adapted timetable should also always be taught Swedish or Swedish as a second language, mathematics, English and sports and health*" (Prop. 2017/18:194, p.28). There is a discussion surrounding why these subjects are seen as more critical in the proposition. Swedish is seen as a necessity for students to pass other subjects in school. Mathematics and English are basic subjects that must be passed for students to be eligible for upper secondary school. Sports and health are central for the students to be healthy and thus perform in other subjects (Prop. 2017/18:194, p.28).

Another underlying assumption is that newly arrived students need to be treated differently regarding curriculum than other students to reach eligibility for upper secondary school. It is also assumed that newly arrived students need targeted actions to achieve eligibility for upper secondary school.

The problem representations leave out where the added time which would be used in certain subjects should come from. Whether this time should be taken from other subjects or if the newly arrived students should gain receive education outside of standard school hours, for example during the summer in summer school. If the time is supposed to be taken from other subjects, which these subjects are, is left out to educators or municipalities to decide themselves since it's not specified.

Regarding effects produced by the problem representation as the policy proposal mainly focuses on the need to reform the schooling system's lack of flexibility, no specific group is blamed for the problem arising. It has instead been the consequence of a faulty or lacking system. Thereby the government and municipalities are seen as actors working within a limited scope, in which they were unable to further help newly arrived students. These newly arrived students, furthermore, are portrayed as victims who have not previously been given the proper circumstances to achieve eligibility for upper secondary school.

## 4.5 Proposition 2021/22:51

This policy proposal contains two problem representations. Firstly, municipalities have varied in the selection of courses provided for newly arrived, and secondly, new arrivals have received varied education in relation to one another.

*“A requirement should therefore be introduced for the municipalities within municipal adult education to provide a cohesive education with an adapted selection of courses for these new arrivals.”* (Prop. 2021/22:51, p.22). This means, in other words, that Sweden's municipalities have not provided a coherent selection of adapted courses for new arrivals. Two problem representations are therefore created, firstly municipalities have varied in the selection of courses provided to new arrivals. Secondly, new arrivals have received different education depending on what municipality they are residing in which should have been the same or comparable.

Both problem representation contains the same underlying assumption: newly arrivals must receive an equal or comparable municipal adult education. Another underlying assumption is that municipalities have failed to provide adequate education to adult newly arrivals.

The problem representation leaves multiple factors unproblematic regarding the students who have received the lacking education and the government's role as well as responsibility. In the propositions problem representation, there is no mention of what should be done to help the new arrivals that have received inadequate education nor if they should be eligible for any kind of compensation in the form of, for example, further education. The possibility that the inadequate education received can have far-reaching effects on the affected newcomer's future chances of being competitive in the labour market is also left silenced. While municipalities receive criticism for providing varying adult education the government's role in ensuring that the education is satisfactory is left unproblematic.

The effects of the criticism aimed at the municipals have the effect that municipals receive the blame for providing a lacking and unequal education in comparison with other municipalities. The municipalities' inability to coordinate between themselves, therefore, creates the need for the proposition which grants them the help and guidance of the government.

4.6 Table 1

| <b>Propositions:</b>   | <b>Problem representations:</b>   | <b>Presumptions or underlying assumptions:</b>  | <b>What is left unproblematic and/or silenced:</b>  | <b>What effects are produced:</b>   |
|------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Proposition 2009/10:60 | <p>Lack of active participation</p> <p>New arrivals have been treated differently</p> <p>Lack of matching between the labor market and settlement</p> <p>Failure to reach previous goals.</p>     | <p>Actively participating is crucial.</p> <p>Labour market establishment is essential to integration.</p> <p>Labor market and settlement need to be matched.</p> <p>Need monetary incentives to motivate active participation.</p> <p>Lack of self-interest in labour market establishment.</p> <p>Equal treatment in labour market is necessary.</p> | <p>How lack of active participation has taken shape.</p>  | <p>Lack of participation reason for the proposition.</p> <p>New arrivals blamed for the need of proposition.</p>  |
| Proposition 2013/14:10 | <p>Lack of active participation.</p> <p>The establishment has been too slow.</p> <p>Previous goals haven't been achieved.</p> <p>Refusal of suitable job offers without an acceptable reason.</p> | <p>Lack of effort.</p> <p>Lack of motivation.</p> <p>Government knows how long integration takes.</p> <p>Certain type of jobs are 'suitable'.</p> <p>Exist certain acceptable</p>   | <p>Reason for job refusal.</p> <p>The extent of the job refusals.</p> <p>Which jobs offers are suitable job offers.</p> <p>Which reasons for job refusals are acceptable reasons.</p> | <p>Job offers are likely to remain the same.</p> <p>Likely that job offers will continue being refused.</p> <p>New arrivals blamed for problem arising.</p> |

|                         |  |  |   |   |
|-------------------------|--|--|---|---|
|                         |  | reasons for job refusals.  |   |   |
| Proposition 2015/16:54  | Sweden has received too few new arrivals in relation to the demand.<br><br>Municipalities have been unwilling to accept arrivals.<br><br>Uneven distribution of newcomers between municipalities | Sweden is an attractive destination.<br><br>Municipalities should be willing to accept new arrivals.<br><br>New arrivals must gain access to the labour market.<br><br>Need for matching between size/amount of population and newly arrivals. | State's obligation in facilitating the municipalities in their reception of newly arrivals.<br><br>Reason for municipalities unwillingness to receive new arrivals. | Municipalities receive blame for problem arising.       |
| Proposition 2017/18:194 | Newly arrived unable to reach certain educational goals.<br><br>Impossible to regulate curriculum of new arrivals.<br><br>Students' knowledge not the basis for the education plan.              | Certain subjects are more important than others.<br><br>Need for adapted curriculum.<br><br>Need for targeted actions.   | Where the time should be taken from.<br><br>How decides where the time should be taken from.  | Faulty or lacking system is reason for problem arising. |
| Proposition 2021/22:51  | Municipalities have varied in education provided for newly arrived.<br><br>New arrivals have received varied education to one another.   | Adult education needs to be equal.<br><br>Municipalities have not provided adequate adult education.   | Compensation for lacking education.<br><br>Hindering far-reaching effects of inadequate education.<br><br>Government's role.  | Municipals receive the blame for problem arising.       |

## 5. Conclusions and discussion

In this section, the propositions will be discussed in relation to previous research and the theoretical framework applied in this study. Starting an analysis of the results of the study and the result of the research questions. This is followed by discussing how the result relates to the previous research. In the conclusion, the main result of the study is summarized, and the study's limitations are discussed, finally ending with suggestions for further research.

### 5.1 Discussion

Although the policy proposals analyzed aim to address different issues, it is possible to find similarities between the documents on the implicit ideas of what integration is, whom it refers to and how integration should be implemented. Two main similarities that have been found are that integration is portrayed as something that is actively performed by the new arrivals and that integration is something that is made possible with the right circumstances which can be provided by the government. The policy proposals can also be put into three different categories depending on if the problem with integration is seen as a lack of providing adequate circumstance or if the newly arrived has failed to use the circumstances to become integrated, or if the problem is a mix of the two.

Starting with Proposition 2009/10:60 and Proposition 2013/14:10 which focus on the newly arrived immigrants' own responsibility in integration by discussing active participation and motivation, where the lack of these characteristics is described as problematic. This shows that motivation and active participation is perceived to be crucial parts that enable the possibility of integration. Integration can therefore be understood as heavily reliant on individuals' efforts, while the state's responsibility when it comes to integration is to provide the sufficient circumstances needed for integration to be made possible. These sufficient circumstances largely affect the labour market, as the state ensures that new arrivals have access to the labour market which in proposition 2013/14:10 can be understood by the importance put on a matching between settlement and labour market. In Proposition 2009/10:60 the importance of labour market access is visible by the emphasis that is put on the new arrivals' own part in actively participating in establishing themselves in the labour market. Another similarity between the two policy proposals is that the lack of activity participation points to a perceived understanding

that the state has provided the right circumstances but that the newly arrived immigrants have failed to use these circumstances to integrate.

In the second category Proposition 2015/16:54 and Proposition 2021/22:51 can be found in which a completely different problem representation is made visible. In these two policy proposals newly arrived immigrants as a group is hardly discussed but rather focus is put on the systemic part of the integration. These policy proposals describe the problem with integration as a failure or lacking system which has hindered integrations course or at least made it harder to achieve. In addition to the similarities in the problem formulation, it is also possible to find a similarity in what the propositions leave out. Neither Proposition 2015/16:54 nor Proposition 2021/22:51 discuss how these systemic problems have or can have affected individuals newly arrived or newly arrived as a group. As a result of leaving out possible effects of the systemic problems, the proposals fail to do discuss how these possible effects could have been alleviated or compensated. Moreover, an overall theme is that the problem with integration is that newly arrived immigrants have not been given the right circumstances to integrate as a product of the faulty system and therefore the integration in this aspect has failed.

The third and last category can be found in Proposition 2017/18:194 which does not completely fall into any of the two previous categories but is rather a mix of the two. In this proposition newly arrived immigrant students are described as having failed to meet educational goals because of a ridged system. The rigidity of the system has made it impossible for municipalities to adapt the curriculum to the individual needs of the newly arrived students which the government perceives as necessary if the educational goals are to be achieved. For this, it is understood that both the system and the newly arrived students have been formulated as part of the problem. The newly arrived students have not had sufficient circumstances as the newly arrived students needed other circumstances to reach educational goals, which extend beyond those who exist for *integrated* students. When the system was put in place there must have existed an understanding that newly arrived students need the same circumstances as students perceived as integrated which in the time of Proposition 2017/18:194 have changed.

Moreover, the result of the perception that integration is pedant upon the circumstances provided by the government and the effort made by the new arrivals portrays integration as a one-sided process. Where the society is steadfast and unmoving whilst where the newly arrived is supposed to continuously move towards being integrated into said society. This also shows

that integration is perceived as normative and linear, as the newly arrived is the one moving forward, and the society is only providing circumstances for the movement. If the process instead would have been a two-way street both the newly arrived and the society would have moved towards each other, with the two accommodating for one another. The previous research also shows that this way of portraying integration as a linear one-sided process is common in policy discourse. The protection that the immigrant should be the one who conforms to a majority culture is a common depiction of integration in policy discourse (Penninx & Garcés-Masareñas, 2016, p.12; Schinkel, 2013, p.1146; Schrove & Schinkel, 2013, p.1133-1134).

Furthermore, previous research also show that integration policies often lack clear criteria of how they should be operationalized (Favell, 2010, p.65). This is made apparent in both Proposition 2009/10:60 and Proposition 2013/14:10 where active participation is put forth as a central part of integration but the policy proposals lack in defining what active participation entails and how active participation is achieved. As a result, a political goal is proposed which fails to make clear how the goal should be reached. What is made clear is that it is important that the goal is reached and that the State is ready to provide incentives to make sure that the goal is reached.

In all the propositions analysed in this thesis, the labour market is understood as a key to integration, a feature that is necessary for integration to be made possible. This is visible in proposition 2009/10:60 and 2015/16:54 that both call for matching between settlement and job opportunities. In proposition 2013/14 where the main problem representation is that new arrivals have rejected job offers which are seen as problematic and therefore created the need for the position. Even though the connection to the labour market is not made as explicit in Proposition 2017/18:194 and Proposition 2021/22:51 which are both mainly centered around education, education can be understood as a part in gain access to the labour market. This falls in line with previous research which shows that integration often is linked with housing, employment, and education (Ager & Strang, 2008, p.169-171) and that Sweden historically has had strong connections between integration and the labour market tracing all the way back to the 1970s (Borevi, 2014, p.710-712). That idea of integration as tightly bound to the labour market still exists in Sweden today follows what previous researchers point out that different ideas of integration are formed by context such as history which continues to impact societies over a long period of time (Rytter, 2018, p.691; Kaczmarczyk et al., 2015, p.38).

## 5.2 Conclusions

The purpose of the thesis was to study how integration is formulated through problematization in policy proposals made by the government and how these problem representations differ or remain the same over time, from 2009 till 2021. The result shows that integration in Swedish government propositions is formulated as a normative linear process. Where newly arrived must conform and integrate into the Swedish society, integration is, therefore, both viewed as a process and as a goal. The view of integration as a normative linear process is an idea that has prevailed throughout the decade as all the propositions contain an underlying understanding that it is the newly arrived immigrants that are to be integrated into Swedish society.

Moreover, all the propositions are that the labour market is perceived as a key to integration. All the problem representations in explicit terms describe the labour market as necessary for integration. Another similarity is that all the propositions leave out the government's part in the problem representations, the government is instead portrayed as having no part in the problems arising but willing to take responsibility to solve the problems. Furthermore, differences can also be found between the propositions. Wherein Proposition 2009/10:60 and Proposition 2013/14:10 from the first part of the last decade focus more on newly arrived responsibility in integrating into society. During the latter part of the decade, the focus is instead on lacking systems that have created difficulties for new arrivals to integrate.

Finally, it is important to reflect upon the limitations of the study and the effects these limitations have on the reading of the results. As the thesis only studied policy propositions and not related documents such as ministerial pronouncements or government reports the thesis misses out on providing a fuller picture and broader understanding of integration. Furthermore, the thesis due to time restraint chooses to not apply two of the WPR-approach's questions, namely numbers three and six, which are questions that aim to provide a fuller picture. As previously mentioned, subjective experience can also affect the reading of the results and, the problem representations which are visible to me, the author of the thesis.

## 5.3 Further research

Suggestions for future research are to study how the model citizen is depicted in the propositions, traces of characteristics of the model citizen can already be found in this thesis. For example, newly arrived immigrants should show motivation and be active in establishing

themselves in the labour market. A study of how the model citizen is depicted could apply the WPR-approach as a possible method as it also includes cultural aspects which can be relevant when studying the depiction of the model citizen.

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