

# **Debating Transitional Arrangements**

## **Parliamentary Construction of Labor Migration Policies in Finland and Sweden Surrounding the Eastern Enlargement of the European Union**

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<b>Tiivistelmä – Abstract</b> <p>Tässä tutkielmassa vertaillaan Suomen ja Ruotsin kansanedustuslaitoksissa kevään 2004 aikana käytyjä debatteja työvoiman vapaata liikkuvuutta rajoittavien siirtymäaikojen käyttöönotosta Euroopan Unionin itälaajentumisen kontekstissa. Koska työvoiman uskottiin liikkuvan aiempaa enemmän unionin vanhojen ja uusien jäsenten välillä, monet vanhat jäsenmaat ottivat käyttöön erilaisia siirtymäaikoja, joilla pyrittiin hillitsemään suhteellisesti köyhempien Itä- ja Keski-Euroopan maiden kansalaisten saapumista työmarkkinoilleen. Myös Vanhasen punamultahallitus Suomessa ja Perssonin sosialidemokraattinen vähemmistöhallitus Ruotsissa ehdottivat tällaisia määräaikaista säännöksiä suojellakseen työmarkkinoitaan. Laajan julkisen keskustelun ja useiden vastaehdotusten siivittämänä Ruotsin parlamentti pidättäytyi ottamasta käyttöön siirtymäaikoja hallituksen esityksestä huolimatta, kun taas Suomessa hallituksen esitys voitti selvin numeroin, kohdaten vastustusta ainoastaan Vihreän liiton ja Kansallisen Kokoomuksen edustajilta.</p> <p>Tutkielmassa analysoidaan eri puolueiden ja yksittäisten kansanedustajien käyttämiä argumentteja sekä kahden pohjoismaisen parlamentin rinnakkaisia linjanmuodostusprosesseja. Mitkä teemat ja argumentit olivat yleisimpiä kussakin parlamentissa? Miten poliitikot perustelivat näkemyksiään? Millaisia eroja ja yhtäläisyyksiä on löydettävissä niin valtioiden sisällä, sisarpuoluiden välillä sekä yleisemmällä tasolla kahden tutkitun tapauksen kesken? Miksi tutkittujen maiden sisarpuolueet päättivät joissain tapauksissa edistää täysin päinvastaisia linjoja?</p> <p>Aineistoa käsitellään tutkielmassa pääosin diskurssianalyysin ja vertailevan historiantutkimuksen keinoin. Tutkielman aineisto koostuu ensisijaisesti Ruotsin ja Suomen parlamenttien täysistuntokeskusteluista, joita täydennetään tarpeen mukaan muilla parlamenttien sisäisillä dokumenteilla, kuten lakiesityksillä ja aloitteilla, sekä aihepiiriä käsitelleillä lehtiartikkeleilla.</p> <p>Tutkituissa parlamenttikeskusteluissa siirtymäaikoja käsiteltiin Ruotsissa pääosin hyvinvointivaltion suojelemisen ja “sosiaalisen turismin” ehkäisemisen näkökulmasta, kun taas Suomessa ulkomaisen vuokratyövoiman kasvava käyttö nousee keskeisimmäksi debatin aiheeksi. Vertailuja muihin vanhoihin jäsenvaltioihin ja aiempiin EU-laajentumisiin, viittauksia unionin solidaarisuusperiaatteisiin ja siirtymäaikojen käyttönottamisen potentiaalisia vaikutuksia maiden kansainväliseen maineeseen käsitellään kattavasti molemmissa parlamenteissa.</p>	
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## ABBREVIATIONS

A10	10 accession countries joining the European Union in 2004
AKS	Academic Karelia Society
C	Centre Party (Sweden), Centerpartiet
CEEC	Central and Eastern European country
CJEU	Court of Justice of the European Union
DCP	Draft Common Position
DF	Danish People's Party, Dansk Folkeparti
EC	European Communities
EEC	European Economic Community
EMU	Economic and Monetary Union
EP	European Parliament
EU	European Union
EU15	member states of the European Union before the 2004 enlargement
FP	Liberal People's Party (Sweden), Folkpartiet liberalerna
FPÖ	Freedom Party (Austria), Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
ILO	International Labour Organization
KD	Christian Democrats (Finland), Suomen Kristillisdemokraatit
KD	Christian Democrats (Sweden), Kristdemokraterna
KESK	Centre Party of Finland, Suomen Keskusta
KOK	National Coalition Party (Finland), Kansallinen Kokoomus
LKP	Liberal People's Party, Liberaalinen Kansanpuolue
LO	Swedish Labor Union Confederation, Landsorganisationen i Sverige
M	Moderate Party (Sweden), Moderata samlingspartiet
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MP	Green Party (Sweden), Miljöpartiet de Gröna
MP	Member of Parliament
ND	New Democrats (Sweden), Ny Demokrati
NDI	Northern Dimension Initiative
PS	True Finns (Finland), Perussuomalaiset
PWD	Posting of Workers Directive
RKP	Swedish People's Party of Finland, Ruotsalainen kansanpuolue
SAK	Central Organization of Finnish Trade Unions, Suomen Ammattiliittojen Keskusjärjestö
SAP	Swedish Social Democratic Party, Sveriges socialdemokratiska arbetareparti
SD	Services Directive
SD	Sweden Democrats, Sverigedemokraterna
SDP	Social Democratic Party of Finland, Suomen Sosialidemokraattinen Puolue
SKDL	Finnish People's Democratic League, Suomen Kansan Demokraattinen Liitto
SKP	Communist Party of Finland, Suomen Kommunistinen Puolue
TCN	third-country national
TEEC	Treaty establishing the European Economic Community
TEU	Treaty on European Union
TMWP	temporary migrant worker program
TT	Union of Industries and Employers, Teollisuuden ja Työnantajain Keskusliitto
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
V	Left Party (Sweden), Vänsterpartiet
VIHR	Green League (Finland), Vihreä liitto
VAS	Left Alliance (Finland), Vasemmistoliitto
WRS	Worker Registration Scheme
ÖVP	People's Party (Austria), Österreichische Volkspartei

## 1. Introduction

The European Union, with its 28 member states and over 500 million inhabitants, has frequently been defined as “the world’s best research laboratory on legal, transnational migration”<sup>1</sup> by those engaging in research on regional and global migration patterns. In academic and political contexts, European citizens moving between countries on the continent are classified as ‘migrants’ even though they, due to growing integration and denationalization within the EU, possess a rather unique status within the global immigrant community. Unlike the migrant group usually referred to as third-country nationals<sup>2</sup> (TCNs), intra-EU migrants are able to easily settle and search for employment opportunities in a large number of host countries within Europe that offer ample opportunities to participate in the economic, social and political spheres of their receiving societies.<sup>3</sup> Due to highly inclusive and non-segregational EU-wide treaties on free movement, the citizens of all EU member states are to be treated in an equal manner to the nationals of their host countries when traveling and changing place of residence within the Union’s borders.

Over the Union’s history, restrictions on labor mobility have been progressively abolished to respect the freedom of movement principle established already in the Treaty of Rome<sup>4</sup> (TEEC) in 1957. Still recovering from the Great Depression of 1929-1939 and the detrimental Fascist and Nazi regimes of the 1930s and the 1940s, new population flows emerged in Europe in the aftermath of World War II. In the 1950s, the continent lost millions of people in trans-Atlantic migration, a trend that soon shifted towards intra-European migration in the reconstruction era of the 1960s.<sup>5</sup> During the so-called guest-worker period of 1958-1972, nearly eight million work permits were issued to qualified industrial laborers arriving to find employment in the six member states of the European Economic Community (EEC).<sup>6</sup> After the 1973 oil crisis and the following global stock market crash, population movements in Europe became less considerable in volume yet more divergent in nature as new destinations were

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<sup>1</sup> Koikkalainen 2011.

<sup>2</sup> In the EU context, the term refers to individuals who are neither from the EU country in which they reside or are employed in nor from any other EU member state. The term is often used incorrectly in public debates as a synonym for ‘third-world country nationals’.

<sup>3</sup> Recchi 2005, 1.

<sup>4</sup> Treaty establishing the European Economic Community.

<sup>5</sup> Recchi 2005, 2-3.

<sup>6</sup> Koikkalainen 2011.

introduced and the motives for migrating within the continent became more diverse.<sup>7</sup> The temporary migrant worker programs (TMWPs) that followed the oil shock, created for the purpose of setting up certain limitations on labor migration while still providing growing Western European economies with necessary additional labor, were soon proven unsuccessful as large numbers of foreign migrant workers ended up staying in their host countries regardless of the decision-makers' ambitions to employ the so-called 'rotation principle', according to which labor would only be recruited for short time periods with limited rights and minimal possibility of family reunion. The sole motivation behind the TMWPs, from the point of view of the EC member states, was to fix the countries' often temporary shortages of labor in low-skilled occupations while clinging stubbornly on to the homogeneity of their population by obstructing the foreign workers' ability to make long-term commitments in the country. "Importing labor but not people" has been the prevailing mantra used to represent this rather stagnant phase in the European project of promoting the four freedoms: the free movement of people, services, goods and capital.<sup>8</sup>

The freedom of movement for all EU nationals was established in the Treaty of Maastricht<sup>9</sup> (TEU) in 1992. This definition of policy was a direct continuation of the 1986 Single European Act that aimed to found "an area without internal frontiers in which free movement of goods, persons, services and capital is ensured"<sup>10</sup>. The quickly progressing reduction of border controls within the European Union culminated in the adoption of the Schengen Agreement in 1995 and its incorporation into the Amsterdam Treaty two years later. In 1996, the Posted Workers Directive (PWD, 96/71/EC) helped establish general rules for the terms and conditions of employment and protective measures, such as those relating to minimum rest periods and rules regarding non-discrimination, listed in the legislation of the host country that the firms posting workers should apply to all EU citizens they send abroad to perform work in another member state.<sup>11</sup> In the EU, workers are regarded to be posted workers when they are *de facto* employed in one EU member state but are sent by their employer to another member state to perform work tasks on a temporary basis. This being the basic idea, the Directive was a rather straightforward continuation of the TMWPs with the difference that in addition to continuing to offer member states the opportunity to employ the nationals of other EU countries, the PWD ensured that posted workers' benefits were looked after as well as guaranteed that they received sufficient support

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<sup>7</sup> Recchi 2005, 4.

<sup>8</sup> Castles 2006, 742-743.

<sup>9</sup> Treaty on European Union.

<sup>10</sup> Article 26 TFEU.

<sup>11</sup> Eurofound 2010, 14-15.

from the officials of the member state they were posted in. Despite its shortcomings and the fact that its practical implications have been smaller than originally expected, the PWD is usually considered to be one of the major victories in EU social policy.<sup>12</sup>

In March 2000, the European Council in Lisbon set an ambitious goal for the EU “to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion” by 2010.<sup>13</sup> In connection to this goal, the European Council recommended that the Commission should compose a comprehensive Internal Market Strategy to eliminate unnecessary barriers prohibiting a genuine free movement of services.<sup>14</sup> Two years later, the Commission published its Report on the State of the Internal Market for Services that came into being through a legal and economic analysis of the existing barriers, conducted in close cooperation with the member states.<sup>15</sup>

The 2004 enlargement of the European Union was one of the most significant events on the continent since the dissolution of the USSR. For the ten new EU member states<sup>16</sup>, the enlargement marked the beginning of an era of cooperation and alignment. The Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, in particular, saw their memberships as the final pit stop on their troublesome journey to rejoining the community of European nation states after decades of Soviet rule. The road to a newly united Europe was not entirely free of complications, however, as the candidate countries’ standards of living were substantially lower than those of the EU15<sup>17</sup>. A year before the enlargement, average wage in Latvia, the least well-off of the accession countries, was approximately one-eighth of the average wage level in the EU15.<sup>18</sup> As a result of this discrepancy, the ideal of free movement was put to perhaps its most agonizing test since its establishment. The conceivable effects of growing labor migration from the relatively poorer eastern accession countries, the A10, incited strong debate pro et contra enlargement not only among those representing their countries in the accession negotiations lasting from March 1998 until the official signing of the Accession Treaty in April 2003 but also on a more local level in national legislatures and the media. As the enlargement was such a significant development for the

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<sup>12</sup> See e.g. Dølvik & Visser 2009.

<sup>13</sup> Lisbon European Council 2000.

<sup>14</sup> European Commission 2000.

<sup>15</sup> European Commission 2015.

<sup>16</sup> In alphabetical order: Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

<sup>17</sup> The European Union prior to the accession of ten new countries on May 1st 2004: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom.

<sup>18</sup> Koikkalainen 2011.

continent, holding strong meanings in both new and old member states as a result of diverse national histories, it was only natural that it also reflected in the relationships between the old Union members and those still in the process of acquiring that status.

The strongest hot spots emerged in Germany and Austria, where the number of incoming immigrants from the A10 countries was predicted to be the highest. It was even feared by some that xenophobia and right-wing extremism would spread across the EU, taking inspiration from the far-right Freedom Party's (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, FPÖ) success in the Austrian parliamentary election of 1999. Having received 26.9% of the electorate, the party entered a cabinet coalition with the People's Party (Österreichische Volkspartei, ÖVP) after a nearly deadlock situation. The composition of the cabinet caused great turmoil not only in Austria but perhaps even more so internationally, eventually inciting the other members of the Union to impose unprecedented diplomatic sanctions against the country<sup>19</sup> in February 2000, hoping to stop the swearing in of the government from happening. These included, for example, promises not to enter bilateral contracts with the new Austrian government or to support any Austrian candidates hoping for positions in international organizations, in addition to less official actions, for instance calling off cultural exchanges and school trips.<sup>20</sup> The fears of those that thought this victory to become one of many never materialized, though, as similar parties in France, Germany, Belgium and Italy were defeated in their domestic struggles, losing their chance to have a say in the way Europe as a whole responded to the possibility of mass immigration.<sup>21</sup> Despite these setbacks on the part of the European far-right, Austrian and German demands for long transition periods on labor immigration, allowing old member states to restrict the influx of accession country nationals into their labor markets, came into being as the parliaments of the member states were given a chance to decide themselves whether a transition period lasting two, five or seven years would be implemented in their national context starting from the Central and Eastern European countries' (CEECs) date of accession in May 2004.<sup>22</sup>

Nearly all EU15 countries imposed restrictions on the new EU citizens' entry into their labor markets. Only members to opt for very limited restrictions were the United Kingdom, Ireland and Sweden, the last becoming the only old member state to decline the opportunity altogether.<sup>23</sup> As the Irish economy was going through such incredible growth in 2004 and the employment rate was high, the government

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<sup>19</sup> Freeman 2002, 109-110; Müller 2000, 199.

<sup>20</sup> Freeman 2002, 118-120.

<sup>21</sup> Helsingin Sanomat 7.10.1999, "EU:n laajentamisohjelma hahmottuu".

<sup>22</sup> Helsingin Sanomat 7.2.2004, "Muuttoliikkeen pelko siirtää EU:n vapaita työmarkkinoita".

<sup>23</sup> Ruist 2014, 21-22.



in Dublin saw no reason to restrict the entry of A10 citizens into their labor market.<sup>24</sup> The UK cabinet, on the other hand, kept the borders open in theory but put in place lesser transitional rules of its own, including increased monitoring of incoming labor migrants through the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) and restrictions on the access of migrants to a number of British social benefits, for instance social housing and health care.<sup>25</sup> Sweden, in turn, had a strongly regulated labor market that was seen to have the means to maintain collectively agreed wage levels despite a commonly anticipated risk of ‘social dumping’, defined here as the exploitation of cheap migrant labor to increase the profits of the host country’s companies.<sup>26</sup> These fears were nothing new, though, as Sweden has through the years struggled in many ways to assimilate its national minorities, leading to, for instance, hard, periodically surfacing attitudes towards the use of migrants’ native languages.<sup>27</sup> Sweden was not alone in its fear, however, as similar debates emerged in some way in all EU15 states. Sweden’s Nordic neighbors in Denmark, to give an example, allowed A10 citizens to acquire residence and work permits only when it could be proven that they had received an employment offer meeting the Danish minimum criteria for wages and working conditions.<sup>28</sup> The Danish policy was restrictive, but not to the same degree as in Finland, where the annual number of incoming immigrants had always been at a much lower level than in the other Nordic countries. As all Nordic nations proudly showcase their own versions of the Nordic welfare model, characterized by universal access to generous benefits, they instinctively seem to have much to lose from taking people with lower skill levels from less well-off countries into their highly specialized, service-oriented labor markets. How and why differences have developed between these countries, regardless of similar starting points, is a complex matter that we will dive into through two illuminating case studies.

## 1.1 Research Questions

This thesis will compare and contrast how the theme of adopting transitional rules on the mobility of labor from the A10 countries was debated in the Swedish and Finnish parliaments in the four months

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<sup>24</sup> See e.g. Barrett 2009, 1.

<sup>25</sup> Dobson 2009, 122; Kvist 2004, 314; Drinkwater, Eade & Garapich 2010, 75. When Bulgaria and Romania became EU members in 2007, both the Irish and British governments changed their policy, choosing to adopt transitional arrangements.

<sup>26</sup> Koikkalainen 2011; Tamas & Münz 2006, 72 cited in Krings 2009, 54.

<sup>27</sup> See e.g. Lainio 2015 & Wickström 2015.

<sup>28</sup> Gurdgiev 2007, 47.

before the enlargement of the European Union in May 2004. The prospective effects of growing labor migration from the relatively poorer Central and Eastern European countries incited strong debate for and against limiting access to EU labor markets. What makes the two cases such an interesting subject of study is the fact that, despite fairly similar starting points, there were noteworthy differences in the way the decisions on the adoption of transitional arrangements were made, the arguments used during the decision-making process as well as the actualized policies. Both governments proposed temporary restrictions, arguing that cautiousness would safeguard their labor markets against an overabundance of foreign workers. Despite fears about the unpredictability of the situation, a majority of the Swedish parliament, the Riksdag, voted against the proposal and Sweden abstained from adopting restrictions, whereas in the Finnish Eduskunta the center-left government's law proposal for an initial two year transition period was passed without hustle, facing powerless resistance only from the Green League and the liberal-conservative National Coalition Party.

The focus of this thesis is on the parallel policy-building processes in the two national parliaments: which arguments dominated and were favored over others in the plenaries, how parties and individual representatives justified their policy preferences, as well as what differences and similarities existed both within countries and in particular between sister parties<sup>29</sup> as well as in general between the two selected cases. Through the simultaneous analysis of party strategies, national immigration histories, ideological factors, argumentation patterns and prevalent public discourses I hope to provide insight into *why* political parties within a common ideological direction choose to promote either similar or completely opposite policies, depending on their national context. As a certain causal complexity is always present in political decision-making, the goal is not to paint a complete picture, but to highlight fundamental differences and to discuss the probable reasons for those disparities. Potential contexts to take into consideration are infinite, ranging from societal and political factors to cultural, linguistic, intellectual and geographical conditions. It is, therefore, left to the discernment of the scholar to figure which were the most relevant in each case.<sup>30</sup>

Comparing states within the European migration system is nothing new. It will, nonetheless, continue to be a significant subject of study in the post-2015 refugee crisis atmosphere in which the underlying idea behind a European labor market, the ideal of free mobility within the European Union, has been

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<sup>29</sup> The vocabulary, e.g. 'party family' and 'sister parties', is adopted from David Arter's "Democracy in Scandinavia: Consensual, majoritarian or mixed?" Although the composition of political parties in the two parliaments is not completely the same, there are still quite a few notable similarities. In comparison to others, the center-left Social Democratic party family is in many way the most coherent one in the Nordic region.

<sup>30</sup> Skinner 2002; Hyrkkänen 2002.

challenged. In doing this kind of research, the scholar can take part in accumulating knowledge about national immigration experiences and improve understanding of the causal connections between them and current policies. Keeping this in mind, it is equally relevant to understand that any given policy-making situation must be analyzed as a fully unique occurrence where the outcome is shaped not only by past events but also by various cultural and situational factors. To employ a comparative frame for studying cases where the premises for national policy-building were handed by a supranational actor, in this case the EU, but national decision-makers maintain authority to customize policies according to national circumstances, is fruitful per se as it offers us a look into the multiplicity of arguments and proposals that spring from shared premises both within the nations themselves as well as on a broader transnational level.

Although the two decision-making processes followed separate paths, it must nevertheless be kept in mind that Finland and Sweden are close not only geographically but also politically. As noted in later chapters, the party systems and the processes of adopting laws in the two are utterly similar, stemming from a shared political culture, “all accepted ideas, institutions, commonly shared values and normal practices relevant to the exercise of power and the maintenance of order in society.”<sup>31</sup> The systems in both countries are built on a shared legal and constitutional heritage, being constructed further in both cases through developments towards a stronger popular representation, parliamentarism and universal suffrage in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>32</sup> Both constitutions in their current forms are strongly founded on the principles of popular sovereignty and representative democracy. Both countries joined the EU in 1995 during a period when the Union was going through numerous changes, looking for a new direction as the first steps would soon to be taken towards the great eastern enlargement. In the EU, Sweden has taken a more cautious approach, whereas Finland has advocated deeper integration. While Sweden prefers a more intergovernmental way of doing things, Finland has consistently been in favor of supranationalism.<sup>33</sup>

Cohen contends that in comparative history the selection of research subjects has only a slight chance of going wrong if the cases “seemed to contemporaries themselves inherently comparative.”<sup>34</sup> While

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<sup>31</sup> Munck 2011, xviii.

<sup>32</sup> See e.g. Ihalainen 2017 & Ihalainen 2015.

<sup>33</sup> See e.g. Johansson & Raunio 2010, 650, 661.

<sup>34</sup> Cohen 2004, 65. Comparing Finnish and Swedish political parties has been a popular strand of research in political science. Bucken-Knapp et al 2014, comparing the labor migration policy formation of Swedish and Finnish political parties. Arter 2002, on the evolution of the Finnish and Swedish Left Parties. Heinze 2018, on the strategic reactions of Nordic mainstream parties towards right-wing populist parties. In many cases, comparisons are performed between three or more Nordic countries, see e.g. Fladmoe 2012; Raunio 2007;

comparison certainly demands a separation of cases, it does not mean that contacts and bonds between them should be neglected. On the contrary, as Kocka notes: “such interrelations should become a part of the comparative framework by analyzing them as factors that have led to similarities or differences --- between the cases one compares.”<sup>35</sup> In this context, Swedish officials, for instance, were reported in the national press to criticize the Danish decision to adopt transitional arrangements as xenophobic while simultaneously their own cabinet was second-guessing its original decision to keep the Swedish borders open to all A10 citizens. In the first months of 2004, Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson diverged from the initial choice, proposing that the country should also consider imposing restrictions. Persson’s statement was strongly influenced, as seen in later chapters, by both reports and widespread comparisons of likely policy outcomes between the Nordic countries that pointed to Sweden being alone with its open-doors policy when its Nordic brothers were planning to take precautions and not to dissociate themselves from the decisions of a majority of the EU15. Resulting from this hesitation, an editorial in Finnish newspaper Helsingin Sanomat proclaimed in February that Finland could, at least to some extent, take gleeful pleasure in noting that its older brother had failed in its attempt to be the most “virtuous” of the EU15.<sup>36</sup>

Although this brotherly teasing was premature given that the Swedish cabinet’s preferred policy was eventually rejected in the Riksdag, the editorial demonstrates revealingly the kind of relationship the countries share and that they certainly are each other’s natural points of comparison. It also points out that in immigration policy, there is no clear line between domestic and foreign affairs. While decisions on immigration are in general made on the national level, policies on foreigners also have a potential to have implications for the way a country interacts with and is perceived by others, its international reputation. Furthermore, policy areas like migration policy are often such that they are influenced by parallel debates in relevant benchmark countries, for instance those with similar economic structures and demographic circumstances. Tightly linked countries, such as those with strong trade relations or established historical ties, are likely to look to each other for gaining either official or unofficial policy guidance. In the case of Finland and Sweden, sizable immigration from the former to the latter during

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Svalund, Saloniemi & Vulkan 2016. Comparisons between Sweden and Finland have been employed to study a large variety of topics, see e.g. Nygård & Snellman 2014, on the debates on age discrimination in Finnish and Swedish parliamentary documents, and Halonen, Ihalainen & Saarinen 2015, on language policies.

<sup>35</sup> Kocka 2003, 44.

<sup>36</sup> Helsingin Sanomat 7.2.2004, ”Muuttoliikkeen pelko siirtää EU:n vapaita työmarkkinoita”.

the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has had a great influence on the relationship between the two states, keeping for example language education related questions on the table in bilateral discussions.<sup>37</sup>

Immigration policy refers to the parts of national legislation that deal with a sovereign nation's right to control who it permits to arrive and live within its borders.<sup>38</sup> In some cases, it is also seen to include the regulation of foreigners' access to important social institutions, such as the national labor market and basic welfare benefits.<sup>39</sup> Immigration and immigrants are frequently in public discourse perceived as one phenomenon or group of people, while in reality the subject is more complicated, being linked to such diverse issues as, for instance, housing and the distribution of resources in local communities, global warming and environmental protection as well as the diffusion of cultural phenomena, just to name a few.

When differences between migrant groups are addressed, dichotomic simplifications are regrettably common, refugees and labor migrants being seen to embody alone all that immigration is.<sup>40</sup> In reality, as Forsander has noted, immigrants can without great effort be categorized into at least seven groups according to reason for entering a country: labor migrants, those moving as a result of familial ties, those ethnically rooted in their host country, foreign students, retirees moving either back from abroad or between residences, refugees and illegal or undocumented immigration.<sup>41</sup> It is therefore necessary

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<sup>37</sup> Wickström 2015.

<sup>38</sup> Saukkonen 2007, 206. 'Immigration policy' entails all legislation that concerns the movement of individuals across borders. 'Immigrant policy', in turn, deals with the integration of those who are already in the country. While this difference might be obvious to those who have gone deep into the particulars of migration studies, it is not often so when it comes to debates and statements in the public and media. In both the Finnish and Swedish languages, there are separate words for immigration policy (*maahanmuuttopolitiikka* in Finnish, *invandringspolitik* in Swedish) and immigrant policy (*maahanmuuttajapolitiikka* in Finnish, *invandrarpolitik* in Swedish). Despite this, the former is often used in both languages to refer to all policies in the field. In this thesis, we will without doubt touch upon a number of questions that fall under immigrant policy, but the main focus will be on the immigration policy aspects of our studied cases. I do, however, realize that the separation of these two branches is inherently artificial as for example access to welfare benefits may, depending on the primary focus, be considered a part of both immigrant and immigration policy.

<sup>39</sup> Geddes & Scholten 2016, 11.

<sup>40</sup> Saukkonen 2007, 43.

<sup>41</sup> Forsander 2004, 106. Kanniainen 2010, 18 criticizes with good reason the inclusion of the last group in the list. Unlike the others, referring to illegal and undocumented immigration does not offer us the reason for moving, but rather focuses on the method of transporting people across borders. As Kanniainen notes, a person who has entered a country illegally or is undocumented (these often being the same thing) may, according to their personal circumstances, belong to any of the first six groups. While the phenomenon of illegal and undocumented immigration must always be taken into account when examining immigration from a holistic point of view, its place on the list is more than debatable.

for me to note that in this thesis we will dive into a very specific and quite small part of the entity that is immigration.

Within the domain of immigration policy, my thesis focuses on the transitional regulations as a case of labor migration policy-making, an easily overlooked topic in immigration and immigration policy studies. While the attitudes of Europeans towards different migrant groups (for example Blinder 2015, Hellwig & Sinno 2017, Bruneau et al 2018), the growth of far-right and anti-immigration parties (for example Loxbo 2014, Akkerman & Rooduijn 2015, van Spanje 2011) and the integration of migrants into host societies (for example Sarvimäki 2011, Ballarino & Panichella 2015, Gregurović & Župarić-Ilić 2018) have received considerable academic attention in recent years, in part as a consequence of the 2015 refugee crisis, labor migration as a specific issue with its distinct characteristics has remained at the periphery of research activities due to its less disputed nature.

While nearly all political parties agree that there is much to be gained from well-regulated labor migration, debating on the territorial access and entry of people who are not initially able to contribute financially to the upkeep of the welfare state, as refugees and asylum seekers often are not, is quite more challenging, particularly in countries that are founded on the ideals of Lutheran work ethics and universalism. Still, while labor migration policy debates do not offer us the same intensity and heat as those related to humanitarian immigration, their detailed study is nevertheless equally important as they can assist us in creating an accurate picture of national immigration policies in their entirety. If a significant part is missing, the representation is unquestionably imperfect. The same goes for the policy-building aspect of this study. If we fail to look carefully enough into the background and creation of transitional regulations in the two parliaments, we will without doubt miss out on certain aspects of the phenomenon that the study of the most popular related themes, such as the results of those policy decisions and the role of trade unions in public debate on labor migration policies, are unable to shed light on.

## **1.2 Sources**

This thesis focuses on argumentation used by Members of Parliament during the Finnish and Swedish debates on the adoption or rejection of transitional regulations in the first four months of 2004. These are uncovered by conducting a thorough textual and comparative analysis of relevant plenary debates

in both national parliaments in addition to looking through related documents, such as law proposals, motions, committee statements and government programs. All these materials have for the most part been digitized and are readily accessible on the websites of the two parliaments or their corresponding governments. The websites both include comprehensive databases with a full-text search engines and additional documents can for the most part be acquired by requesting them from the parliamentary libraries' information services. While the minutes of debates and related records are simple to obtain, their accurate analysis, however, necessitates a genuine understanding of the distinct features of the genre of parliamentary speaking, what differentiates it from other patterns of human interaction.<sup>42</sup> As “representative institutions that had a common historical background, similarities in procedures and highly parallel political roles”<sup>43</sup>, the Swedish Riksdag and the Finnish Eduskunta are in many ways ideal systems to compare.

The short timeframe of our study allows me to do a proper comparison of the two cases as well as to examine the relevant debates in needed detail. It makes it possible to submerge thoroughly into both studied societies and cultures, a part of the research process that ensures the high quality comparison I aspire to achieve. The period to be studied was selected on the basis of a preliminary scanning of all debates in the parliaments regarding the studied transitional regulations. The issue did not rise onto the parliamentary agenda clearly until the end of 2003, only months prior to the accession of the A10 into the EU. A wider timeframe starting at the beginning of the new millennium reveals that the issue was discussed in the parliaments a number of times before, namely in 2002 during the finalization of the A10's accession negotiation process, but it was not, so to say, debated in depth until the national cabinets came out with their proposals on the adoption of fixed-term transitional arrangements in the first months of 2004. It is evident, though, that representatives in the national legislative bodies were kept informed about relevant developments in the enlargement process through their committees on EU affairs in addition to reports from representatives and officials working on the accession issue.

The opinions and arguments of both leading politicians and their respective parties are relevant for a couple of intertwined reasons. First of all, they are opinion leaders, whose positions are often observed with great care in the media and in so doing they set an example for others to follow. In representative systems, citizens exercise their voting power regularly to select the people who they want to represent themselves in the national legislature. In this sense, those appointed can be recognized to speak with the voice of the people even though, in reality, certain groups are always overrepresented. This rather

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<sup>42</sup> Ihalainen & Palonen 2009, 27. See also Ihalainen 2013.

<sup>43</sup> Ihalainen 2017, 33.

confined company is categorically responsible for the future of national immigration policies. This is of course not the whole truth as civil servants also play a role, along with those working at the grass roots level using their lobbying power to influence those with legislative authority, but in this thesis the main focus is on parliamentary decision-makers on the national level.<sup>44</sup>

Another reason for studying parliamentary debates to uncover the arguments employed by politicians is their pressuring nature. In a study by Raittila, it was noted that in the media coverage early twenty-first century politicians in Finland were in general fairly inactive in questions relating to ethnicity and racism. As most political parties are divided on immigration policy, they are often careful not to make statements that could be interpreted to take a very strong stance in one way or another and in so doing risking to drive away the portion of their voters that disagrees on them on the point in question. This is of course not true for all politicians and parties, green and anti-immigrant populist parties providing us with examples from both extremities.<sup>45</sup> In the parliament, on the other hand, parties are compelled to argue each case and come up with a position for every individual piece of legislation, if not through taking an active part in plenary debates then by casting votes in favor of a particular stance. The setup of parliamentary debate, therefore, obliges parliamentarians to step out of their comfort zone, to make their position known even in the case of topics about which they would wish to remain quiet.

The relatively in-depth nature of this thesis does not leave room for the meticulous analysis of a larger number of primary materials, for instance a large number of articles published in the press, documents located in political parties' own archives, MEPs speeches in the European Parliament or statements made on the proposals by national and international interest groups, such as national trade unions and the student movement. These sources will be consulted solely when they are deemed essential to the understanding of the context of our debates and covered essentially through a wide array of research literature. The analysis of these additional sources would undoubtedly complement as well as benefit our work, but simultaneously divert the discussion, resulting in a more superficial analysis of the our primary topic, the viewpoints of Members of Parliament on transitional regulations and the arguments they use to rationalize them.

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<sup>44</sup> Kanniainen 2010, 13.

<sup>45</sup> Raittila 2002, 87.



## 1.3 Methodology

### 1.3.1 Parliamentary Debates

Kari Palonen sees the rhetoric study of politics as an entity divided into four distinct spheres: policy, polity, politicization and politicking.<sup>46</sup> According to him, polity refers to the institutional or societal setting where politics take place, the political system or sphere. Policy, in turn, can be defined as a pre-designed scheme or a definition of goals, the selection of an approach from several alternatives.<sup>47</sup> Politicization, the act of “re-interpreting some phenomenon from a political point of view”<sup>48</sup>, brings new questions or themes to the political horizon, creating a sense of plurality and opposing reductions and simplifications.<sup>49</sup> In contrast to the border-defining action of politicization, politicking plays an explicitly performative role. As Palonen defines the difference: “politicking takes place within some games already recognized as political, while politicization re-interprets the situation in the manner of rendering them as ones in which there is something to play within the situation, and opening them as playgrounds (spaces, times etc.) for politicking”<sup>50</sup>. Political action as a whole can therefore be defined as a process, beginning with politicization, of, through deliberation and politicking, creating an action plan, a policy, in the framework of a particular polity. In my study the focus is primarily on politicking as carried out in the institutionalized framework of parliamentary debates, here rather simply defined as the deliberation, contestation and eventual selection of national policies. As the age-old ideal of parliamentary action as talking about “things as they are” without consideration of struggles for power between parties is rarely achieved when tactics come into play, scrutinizing processes of politicking are of utmost importance.<sup>51</sup>

Parliamentary politics is essentially a cyclical domain in which policies are deliberated and modified time and again depending on changing societal circumstances. Palonen associates polity and policy with stability and longevity, whereas politicization and politicking are fundamentally concerned with movement, development and change<sup>52</sup>. The natural cycle of parliamentary politics is thus built upon

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<sup>46</sup> Palonen 1993.

<sup>47</sup> Palonen 1993, 9; Palonen & Summa 1996, 11.

<sup>48</sup> Palonen 1993, 11.

<sup>49</sup> Palonen 1993, 13.

<sup>50</sup> Palonen 1993, 11.

<sup>51</sup> Palonen 2012, 15.

<sup>52</sup> Muntigl 2002, 47.

the intermittent redefinition of policies as well as constant politicking with the goal of influencing the future direction of the national agenda. Through plenary debates, members are able to defend, attack, justify and question policy decisions, going deep into the prevalent, yet often rather differing political conceptualizations of the societal reality, its identities and values that “lie at the basis of collective decision-making.”<sup>53</sup> As Fairclough argues, it is essential to explore which characteristics are included in particular representations of reality, what is left out and which features are given priority. Rather than of looking for absolute truth, comments should be compared in terms of partiality, coverage and underlying motives to make sense of their contents and connections to each other.<sup>54</sup> While it must be acknowledged that policy choices are debated multiple times at the committee stage and some initial disagreements may already have been resolved by the time public debates take place, plenary debates are nevertheless worth analyzing as through them it is, nevertheless, possible to identify the spectrum of competing understandings. More often than not decisions have in practice been made by cabinets, parties and committees when a policy comes to a vote in the plenary, but this does not eliminate the parliament’s position as “the paradigmatic institution for political deliberation”<sup>55</sup>.

In the parliament, politicians take action not only as members of their party and as representatives of a certain electoral district but also to a great extent as individuals equipped with unique socio-cultural backgrounds, professional profiles and personal preferences.<sup>56</sup> The roles and discursive behaviors they display depend on as well as are shaped by combination of intertwined social, institutional and situational factors. Party affiliations, commitments to businesses and occupational institutions outside of the parliamentary arena, positions held in associations and informal groups, the roles they possess in the hierarchies in their respective parties in addition to the understanding, and likely strain, of being on display in front of as well as representing the political will of listening audiences that continually assess the actions of their MPs and weigh their successes and failures are just a few of the components that need to be taken into account.<sup>57</sup> As Halonen, Ihalainen and Saarinen observe, political discourses are inherently multi-sited in their nature, moving in both time and space “including trajectories from the past, links with other debates and references to the future.”<sup>58</sup> Every scholar must be aware of these

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<sup>53</sup> Ilie 2016, 134.

<sup>54</sup> Fairclough 1995, 47. On the discursive process, see e.g. Ihalainen & Saarinen 2015.

<sup>55</sup> Palonen, Rosales & Turkka 2014, 3.

<sup>56</sup> Ilie 2010, 2, 13.

<sup>57</sup> Ilie 2010, 2, 9.

<sup>58</sup> Ihalainen 2017, 39.

networked discourses, even if concentrating on clearly outlined political debates that take place in a very particular space and moment in time.<sup>59</sup>

Van Dijk sees the parliamentary reality as one in which “individual political identities, as well as their display or ‘uses’ in specific social situations, may be complex, hybrid and even contradictory”<sup>60</sup> as MPs are forced to constantly balance between the different political and social agendas with which they are associated, emphasizing differences between themselves and those from which they want to be distinguished.<sup>61</sup> As many topics, including the exact particulars of labor immigration policies, are not discussed especially thoroughly in political parties’ official programs, debates in the parliament, new information picked up through discussions with experts in the parliamentary committees as well as the individual representatives’ past experiences may play a role in determining which stance one takes on an issue under debate. Even when a party has a clear position on an issue, its representatives serving in the parliament use their discretion to decide for themselves if they are to follow the position taken by their party peers or to deviate from it either completely or partially.<sup>62</sup>

By making use of this leeway and capitalizing on their distinct backgrounds, parliamentarians create their own profiles and niches within which to operate. Whereas certain politicians focus almost exclusively on social affairs and health issues, others see immigration and labor policy as their primary concern. In a milieu where topics of discussion shift quickly and occasions for exercising influence are plentiful, members must be selective of the themes about which they wish to unfurl a public controversy.<sup>63</sup> This being the case, it has become a common occurrence that debates are dominated by certain MPs that have specialized in the issue under consideration. This was also the case here, as the representatives that participated in the committee reviewing of the law proposals as members of a relevant thematic committee often also took an active role in the subsequent plenary discussions. In Finland, Employment and Equality Committee Chairperson Jukka Gustafsson<sup>64</sup>, Anne Holmlund, Heidi Hautala and Esa Lahtela stood out, whereas in the Swedish case the same can be

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<sup>59</sup> Halonen, Ihalainen & Saarinen 2015, 15.

<sup>60</sup> van Dijk 2010, 41.

<sup>61</sup> Ilie 2010, 13.

<sup>62</sup> Palonen 2012, 89.

<sup>63</sup> Palonen 2012, 90.

<sup>64</sup> Gustafsson was also active in opposing policies that could increase labor migration in later years and debates, arguing that Finnish workers should always be a priority and foreigners should not be employed if the same position could be filled by a Finnish citizen. See e.g. Jukka Gustafsson (SDP), PTK 76/2009.

observed about for instance Tomas Eneroth (Chair of the Social Insurance Committee), Sven Brus, Bo Könberg, Ulla Hoffmann, Birgitta Carlsson and Mona Jönsson.

While both old and new rhetorical approaches are in general valuable for extracting intriguing details from parliamentary debates as well as highlighting the linguistic practices through which arguments are promoted and persuasion takes place in the plenary, in this thesis the analytical toolbox is drawn more from discourse analysis. As there are quite a few branches of discourse analysis that diverge to an extent from each other<sup>65</sup>, it is necessary to note that when talking about discourse analysis, I refer to the studying of both language use and representation of the world around us, of conveying societal, cultural and political meanings.<sup>66</sup> Discourse, our essential concept, in turn, is defined here, following Ruth Wodak, as “a complex bundle of simultaneous and sequential interrelated linguistic acts, which manifest themselves within and across the social fields of action as thematically interrelated semiotic, oral or written tokens.”<sup>67</sup> According to Fairclough, the discourse analysis of communicative events is founded on the observation and interpretation of three interconnected dimensions. He calls these text, discourse practice and sociocultural practice. When analyzing texts, one focuses on a multitude of linguistic characteristics such as vocabulary and semantics, grammar, phonology, textual cohesion as well as the overall structure of the text.<sup>68</sup> In my study, especially the interpersonal function of textual features, the construction and sustaining of social identities through use of language, is of particular importance. Discourse practice consists of “the ways in which texts are produced and consumed”<sup>69</sup> as compared to sociocultural practice as the wider societal context consisting of situational, cultural and institutional practices.<sup>70</sup> It manifests in two processes: the process of production and the process of interpretation. The properties of texts can then be considered as “traces of the process of production --- and as cues in the process of interpretation”<sup>71</sup>. The last two dimensions are strongly interconnected, processes of production and interpretation for their part being socially determined and thus connected to sociocultural practice.<sup>72</sup>

We all see the surrounding reality differently and our way of understanding the world, of representing its aspects, is dependent on a number of divergence-creating factors, “the different relations people

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<sup>65</sup> See e.g. van Dijk 2011.

<sup>66</sup> Suoninen 2016, 232-233; Fairclough 2003, 124.

<sup>67</sup> Wodak 2001, 66.

<sup>68</sup> Fairclough, 1995, 57-58.

<sup>69</sup> Fairclough 1995, 60.

<sup>70</sup> Fairclough 1995, 62.

<sup>71</sup> Fairclough 1989, 24.

<sup>72</sup> Fairclough 1989, 24-25.

have to the world, which in turn depends on their positions in the world, their social and personal identities, and the social relationships in which they stand to other people.”<sup>73</sup> As scholars, we are very much concerned with parallel competing and complementing discourses, different conceptualizations of phenomena, processes, structures or relations. They serve a number of purposes, either portraying the world as it is seen from a particular perspective or, on the other hand, focusing on a representation of what the world could become if pointed in a preferred direction.<sup>74</sup>

Parliamentary decision-making, *the* institutionalized context of deliberating over alternative political trajectories, is thus in many ways an ideal focus for discourse analytic analysis. It is important to explore what function the discourses perform as well as what kind of power relations are involved.<sup>75</sup> The plenary is a place where members from both the cabinet and the opposition constantly engage in a negotiation about the orientation and future of the country. In these discussions, both conservative and reformist forces take part, articulating their views on new national policies that need to be put in action or, conversely, on old ones that should be preserved<sup>76</sup>. In performing even such simple actions as noting that societal circumstances are a certain way, politicians take part in an exercise of power, steering conversation onto a principledly desirable route through the employment of discourses.<sup>77</sup>

As such, we must not forget the related concepts of ideology and hegemony when analyzing political discourse. In contrast to its conventional definition as the perspectives, values and beliefs of social groups, ideology may also, if contemplated from a Gramscian perspective, be considered “a style of representing and reproducing but also transforming relations of power”<sup>78</sup>. As maintained by Gramsci, politics is a constant struggle for hegemony, a rivalry between ideological directions to establish their own approach as the universal way of thinking.<sup>79</sup> In this study, parties and individual politicians are understood to seek hegemony for instance through rationalizing their way of dealing with transitional arrangements and stating their attitudes towards labor immigrants as unquestionable truths. A double-sided scheme manifests and legitimation takes place both through the act of defending a viewpoint as well as by questioning a competitors’ ethos.<sup>80</sup> The goal of this thesis is to uncover the substance of

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<sup>73</sup> Fairclough 2003, 124.

<sup>74</sup> Fairclough 2003, 124.

<sup>75</sup> Jäger 2001, 34.

<sup>76</sup> For comparison, see Saarinen’s notion of discursive operationalizations, Ihalainen & Saarinen 2015, 34; Saarinen 2008, 725; Saarinen 2007.

<sup>77</sup> Adapted from Kröger 2016, 23.

<sup>78</sup> Heikkinen 2012, 115; Fairclough 2003, 9.

<sup>79</sup> Gramsci 1971; Fairclough 2003, 45.

<sup>80</sup> Fairclough 2003, 87-88, 98-100.

discourse, what aspects of the topic are emphasized during the debates, simultaneously taking notice of perspectives that are ignored either deliberately or unconsciously. Special attention is paid to the way policy preferences are justified, rationalized and argued. In this effort, the concepts of discourse, ideology, legitimation and hegemony may offer most valuable observations.

When analyzing past debates on immigration, one might find help in historical imagology, the study of images and their construction. Concisely put, historical imagology is interested in the creation and molding of cultural stereotypes, how images are presented in historical texts. It studies representations individuals and groups have of cultural “others”, in this case MPs’ views of labor immigrants joining their labor markets. Scholars immersing in imagology interpret what images found in historical texts, here parliamentary debates, tell about their creators. In order to achieve a justified analysis, one must examine how an ethnotype is represented in text, how it is created and what kind purpose it serves. It is, therefore, not concerned about the truthfulness of stereotypes, but rather examines images as views affected by political circumstances and pre-existing texts, the earlier history of the debate. In addition, imagology sees the creation and sustaining of images as a constant interplay between auto-image and the hetero-image, creation of contrasts between one’s own culture and those who are different.<sup>81</sup> This manifests in how people often portray themselves in a positive way through rhetorical “disclaimers”, depicting themselves as tolerant and open to cultural differences, and later using prejudicial remarks to legitimize attitudes and stereotypes against certain groups of immigrants.<sup>82</sup> Parliamentary debates are seen as an arena of asymmetric power where decisions about the job prospects of immigrants are made on the basis of national images without the immigrants themselves taking part in them. Common discriminatory acts, such as differentiation, diversion and depersonalization can be taken as starting points for studying differentiations between socially constructed in- and out-groups. These rhetorical strategies can be used in versatile ways to rationalize restrictive policies.<sup>83</sup> When using differentiation, for example, one might compare foreigners and local nationals with respect to work ethics and respect of the law. “They come here to steal our jobs” rhetoric, in turn, is a classic example of diversion, the attribution of problems of domestic nationals to actions taken by the immigrants.

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<sup>81</sup> Leerssen 2016; Leerssen “A summary of imagological theory”.

<sup>82</sup> Wodak 2011, 55.

<sup>83</sup> van Dijk 1984, 40.

### 1.3.2 Comparative and Transnational History

Nation states have historically been the natural objects of comparative historical analysis. This can in general be accounted to two simultaneous circumstances. First, the fact that throughout the nineteenth century and a bulk of the twentieth century all significant historical processes took place within nation states. Second, historians themselves were for long safely confined to their national contexts, focusing on discussions and topics that were relevant within that framework.<sup>84</sup> While studying a wider array of actors such as non-governmental or supranational organizations and informal networks has become increasingly popular in recent years, the nation state has still succeeded in defending its status as *the* unit of historical comparison. As Haupt and Kocka note, “insofar as historians are interested in such current-day problems such as migration, borders, and expulsions, the national frame does not decline in significance, but requires instead an expanded view that includes the international picture.”<sup>85</sup> In the rapidly globalizing world that we live in, both nation states themselves and individual political actors are more connected across borders than before. Accordingly, we are pushed to think transnationally and to constantly remember the entangled nature of modern nation states, take into consideration links that may have existed, formally or quite often informally, between our objects of comparison whether they are nation states, political parties or individual political actors.

As a neat generalization, historical comparisons can be divided into two types: those that are primarily interested in analyzing contrasts and differences and those aiming to understand general patterns.<sup>86</sup> In the case of this thesis, we are more interested in the former. Within this line of research, the scope of analyses ranges from broad macro-historical practices, in which the goal is to uncover convergent as well as divergent developments and structures on the global level, to micro-historical approaches, in which the spotlight is put on individual participants, their experiences and participation in the studied phenomenon or events. These can, for instance, be modes of speech in a particular political setting or the relationships between relevant individuals. As in our case, comparisons may also be employed to study meso-level historical occurrences, for example thematically, geographically or chronologically restricted aspects of a larger entity.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Kanniainen 2010, 14; Ihalainen 2017, 23; Haupt & Kocka 2004, 31; Fredrickson 1995, 588.

<sup>85</sup> Haupt & Kocka 2004, 33.

<sup>86</sup> Kocka & Haupt 2009, 2.

<sup>87</sup> Kocka & Haupt 2009, 10-11.

Comparative exercises are more often than not analytically richer when done not among a large group of heterogeneous cases but instead between a smaller number of meaningful countries<sup>88</sup>, that is to say national cases that are somehow linked and can therefore be seen to constitute an entity the examining of which may contribute something of significance to the construction of better knowledge about the issue in question, in our case labor immigration policies. In this thesis, I focus exclusively on Sweden and Finland. Other Nordic parliaments could certainly have been included to offer us a wider, regional perspective. If the Danish Folketing had been incorporated, analyses could have been made about the Nordic European Union member states as an entity. From the viewpoint of comparing and contrasting the three, Denmark and Finland are a most intriguing pair as they both imposed transitional rules but the reasoning behind these national decisions were built upon completely different contextual factors. While Sweden may with good reason be regarded the most liberal immigration receiving country of the three, widely known for its multicultural society and relatively open borders, Denmark and Finland, on the contrary, have long records of suspiciousness towards groups that could sever their national homogeneity. Denmark has, in fact, as maintained by Brochmann and Hagelund, “made itself known at the international scene as representative of a particularly draconian version of immigration and integration policies”<sup>89</sup>. Why then leave it out of the equation when its inclusion could have, as the only Nordic nation state in 2004 with a significant anti-immigrant party presence<sup>90</sup>, offered an exceptional perspective that is lacking in the current research layout? The reason lies in time and resources. As the number of cases rises, so does the demand for familiarization and contextualization. “Binary comparison permits a --- detailed confrontation that is almost impossible when the analysis encompasses too many cases. Thus its prime interest lies in that it makes possible a study in depth,”<sup>91</sup> Dogan and Pelassy argue.

Comparative studies aim to offer observations about national cases that could very easily been missed had they been examined in isolation from each other, without the parallel perspective provided by the other.<sup>92</sup> Despite this, it is important to remember, as noted by Baldwin, that the goal of historical study is not to offer reproducible truths nor to concern itself with laws that hold for all cases and societies, but the interest is ultimately on “the temporally unique, the particular context, [and] the unprecedented

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<sup>88</sup> Arango 2012, 47.

<sup>89</sup> Brochmann & Hagelund 2011, 13.

<sup>90</sup> In the 2001 Danish general election, the right-wing populist Dansk Folkeparti (Danish People’s Party) gained 12% of the votes, placing third of eight parties that managed to win seats in the Danish Folketing.

<sup>91</sup> Dogan & Pelassy 1984, 112.

<sup>92</sup> Baldwin 2004, 11.



confluence of circumstances”<sup>93</sup>. Two cases may at the start appear similar, but yet undergo completely different paths and end up with completely opposite outcomes. The main objective of these kinds of analyses is, therefore, to pinpoint relevant differences and suggest with reasonable indication which national circumstances are responsible for the dissimilar outcomes.<sup>94</sup> By comparing nation states, it is very possible to clarify their separate profiles and surpass the assumptions and exceptionalist claims existing in all national historiographies.<sup>95</sup> By distancing oneself from the historiographical traditions of the country one is most familiar with, the scholar may find new points of view and questions that would have otherwise likely gone without attention.<sup>96</sup> Attitudes and conceptualizations, for instance, may slowly become national canon when reproduced and repeated frequently. By contesting these through rigorous comparison, we are able to relativize them as well as to possibly find new features in institutions and phenomena that we have assumed to have been analyzed and scavenged through and through. But while comparisons have these boundary-breaking qualities, they are never without risk. If the scholar includes their own society in the study, responsibility to get well acquainted with the other cases becomes ever greater as there is no real merit in a comparison that is so asymmetric that its interpretations are questioned.

### 1.3.3 Writing the Recent Past

While those studying the distant past often struggle with producing a coherent picture from markedly fragmented materials, colleagues specializing in contemporary history, contrariwise, frequently deal with ‘info glut’<sup>97</sup>, an over-abundance of accessible material, forcing scholars to be selective to avoid becoming overwhelmed by primary sources.<sup>98</sup> This requires the historian to possess enough expertise in their subject matter to know when additional gains cannot be made through discovering as well as digging through new sources. When such saturation happens, the time for conclusions has arrived.<sup>99</sup> When preceding traditions and dogmatic interpretations are out of reach, doors are opened that enable

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<sup>93</sup> Baldwin 2004, 2.

<sup>94</sup> Adapted from Ragin 1989.

<sup>95</sup> Baldwin 2004, 4; Kocka 2003, 40; Kocka & Haupt 2009, 4. See also Ihalainen 2016, 20.

<sup>96</sup> Ihalainen 2017, 25-26.

<sup>97</sup> Luker 2010.

<sup>98</sup> Durmaz 2012, 113.

<sup>99</sup> Romano 2012, 31; Green 2004, 52.

the scholar to do something novel without experiencing the burden of past generations.<sup>100</sup> Still, while the historian of the recent past often drowns in primary materials that are many times available online, consultable historical works on the topic of one's study are often scarcer than in case of themes related to temporally distant events and phenomena and such, temporal proximity may bring certain problems to the contextualization of events.<sup>101</sup> This is, in part solved by immersing in interdisciplinary research, as we have done here. Although recognizing and appreciating the differences between my disciplines, rather starkly described by Elman and Elman as “political scientists [being] --- more likely to look to the past as a way of supporting or discrediting theoretical hypotheses while historians [being] --- more likely to be interested in past --- events for their own sake”<sup>102</sup>, I maintain that there are great gains to be made from attempting to bridge the divide and focusing on what connects the two. While political scientists are often more interested in structures and theories and historians in agency and the unique nature of phenomena, both are “concerned with establishing ‘causal narratives’, structured stories that explain events and make them intelligible to others”<sup>103</sup>.

Hindsight is always present to a certain degree in historical research regardless of the era under study. Noting the salience of the past in understanding the present can, either consciously or unconsciously, guide the selection of subject matter and research perspectives, what is studied and from what point of view. Some have gone so far as to characterize contemporary history as “a method of selection, according to which one chooses the historical subjects one studies on the basis of present issues and concerns.”<sup>104</sup> This is certainly true to some extent for this study since its topic was selected when the author was educating herself on Finnish immigration history and policy in the aftermath of the 2015 refugee crisis, finding a great gap in the historical understanding of Nordic labor migration policies and their development. Whereas there is a great deal of research on both asylum seekers and refugees, the rhetorically less antagonistic and more widely supported labor migration has been left somewhat untouched in academia. In delving into this kind of research, the author hopes to shed some new light on the building blocks of current labor immigration policies, how and why they were built so in the first place, to understand the path to where we are now.

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<sup>100</sup> Romano 2012, 33.

<sup>101</sup> Romano & Potter 2012, 3.

<sup>102</sup> Elman & Elman 2001, 7. See also Sewell 2005.

<sup>103</sup> Lawson 2013.

<sup>104</sup> Ritter 1986, 65.

Our own historical context cannot be forgotten when writing about the recent past. Regardless of this, de-familiarization is needed for the best outcome, an accurate representation of the past.<sup>105</sup> According to Palonen,

“--- intellectual distance between the scholar and the topics studied is a condition of the highest order for the study of politics. The point is that the practice of taking distance, or of de-familiarization, should be made into a conscious instrument that renders possible the analytical attitude of research as opposed to an un-reflected attitude toward the object.”<sup>106</sup>

A research process should therefore be seen as conversation between primary sources and their reader where the text speaks with its own voice but the reader is ultimately accountable for making justifiable interpretations.<sup>107</sup> The reading of past texts must not be understood as one-sided communication, mere conveyance of facts from the text to its reader, but instead also as activeness on the part of the reader to try to understand the text while simultaneously being constantly aware of its inevitable foreignness. For this purpose, Gadamer introduces the concept of ‘horizon’, the notion that we all see the world from our personal, historical and cultural background, “the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point”<sup>108</sup>. To better understand the society and period under study, we should aim for a fusion of horizons between our own standpoint and that of our historical counterparts. As a process, this is similar to a conversation between people of different backgrounds. Through a dialogue and an exchange of ideas, we are able to comprehend the intelligibility of others’ viewpoints in principle without having to necessarily agree on the details of the issue at hand.<sup>109</sup> When we shift our way of thinking and attempt to reconstruct the historical horizon, we can see the situation under study from a new perspective and at the same time be liberated in part from the hindsight we naturally possess. As Gadamer observes: “If we fail to transpose ourselves into the historical horizon from which the traditionary text speaks, we will misunderstand the significance of what it has to say to us.”<sup>110</sup> Similar thoughts were introduced by Collingwood who already in the 1950s placed reliving of past experiences<sup>111</sup> at the center of historical analysis. In his logic, history was, in reality, “nothing but the re-enactment of past thought in the historian’s mind”<sup>112</sup>. In this sense, a historian of the recent

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<sup>105</sup> Hänninen & Palonen 2004.

<sup>106</sup> Palonen 2013, 13.

<sup>107</sup> Clark 2004, 136.

<sup>108</sup> Gadamer 2004, 301.

<sup>109</sup> Gadamer 2004, 302.

<sup>110</sup> Gadamer 2004, 302.

<sup>111</sup> Collingwood 1994.

<sup>112</sup> Collingwood 1994, 228.

past has a certain advantage compared to their colleagues. As they have oftentimes lived through the period they examine, they are likely to remember the atmosphere and debates surrounding their topic and in so doing able to utilize this information when attempting to create a clear picture of the societal context in which the debates under study took place.

## **2. Divergent Governments, Similar Oppositions**

In this introductory as well as contextual chapter we will focus on the inter-party dynamics in Finland and Sweden after their respective parliamentary elections in 2002 (Sweden) and 2003 (Finland). First we will discuss the composition of the cabinets and oppositions separately and in the latter half of the chapter focus on notable differences and similarities on two levels: the studied 2004 context and the more general and long-lasting, equally crucial features and specialties of both systems. This overview is in many ways crucial for the analysis conducted in the following chapters as party dynamics are certainly a part of the explanation why such substantial differences emerged between the Finnish and Swedish policies on transitional arrangements.

The Eduskunta, the Finnish unicameral parliament, has been the main stage of representative politics in the country since its establishment in 1906. In the electoral term 2003-2007, there were eight parties in the parliament, here listed according to size: Centre Party (Keskusta, KESK<sup>113</sup>), Social Democratic Party (Sosialidemokraattinen Puolue, SDP), National Coalition (Kansallinen Kokoomus, KOK), the Left Alliance (Vasemmistoliitto, VAS), the Green League (Vihreä liitto, VIHR), Christian Democrats (Kristillisdemokraatit, KD), the Swedish People's Party (Ruotsalainen kansanpuolue, RKP) and True Finns (Perussuomalaiset, PS). The parliamentary election in spring 2003 had changed the inter-party dynamics remarkably as the Centre took first place after two long consecutive terms in the opposition. The significantly over-sized Lipponen II cabinet, 'the rainbow coalition', consisting of the SDP, the

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<sup>113</sup> In this thesis, I will in general use the abbreviations used in the source languages. Many of these are widely used in both academic and everyday texts, and as such they were concluded as the best choice for this study. This, however, leads to a situation where the abbreviation for the two Christian Democratic parties are the same, KD. This is not a problem, however, as the two parties were not particularly active in the debates on transitional arrangements. When they are mentioned, it will be clearly noted in the text whether the Christian Democratic speaker in question was operating in the Finnish Eduskunta or the Swedish Riksdag.

liberal-conservative Coalition Party, the Swedish People's Party, the Left Alliance and the Greens<sup>114</sup> was consequently replaced by a 'red-earth' coalition consisting of the Centre Party, the SDP and the Swedish People's Party<sup>115</sup>. The cabinet was backed by 116 out of 200 or 58% of parliamentary seats, and so the number of legislators giving support to the government was brought back near its historical average. The Coalition Party was the biggest loser that spring, losing six seats, while the other major parties, the Centre Party and the Social Democrats, gained seven and two seats respectively. Still, the changes in the composition of the parliament were relatively moderate. In the context of this study, it is essential to remember that the winner, the Centre Party, is seen as the most Eurosceptic of the three, whereas the SDP and the Conservatives are both known for their pro-integrationist views.<sup>116</sup>

Table 1. Finland: Composition of the Eduskunta 2003-2007. In brackets comparison (+/-) to 1999 results.

Cabinet	Seats	Opposition	Seats
Centre Party	55 (+7)	National Coalition Party	40 (-6)
Social Democratic Party	53 (+2)	Left Alliance	19 (-1)
Swedish People's Party	8 (-3) + 1 <sup>117</sup>	Green League	14 (+3)
		Christian Democrats	7 (-3)
		True Finns	3 (+2)
<i>Majority cabinet</i>	<i>116 (117)</i>		83

The new Jäätteenmäki cabinet proved short-lived, however, remaining in office under 70 days, as the Social Democratic parliamentary group in particular lost confidence in the Centrist Prime Minister as a consequence of the Iraq-gate scandal during which allegations were put forth that Jäätteenmäki had both acquired and taken advantage of secret Foreign Ministry documents during that spring's general

<sup>114</sup> The Greens left the government in spring 2002 as a result of intra-cabinet disagreements about the choice to build the country's fifth nuclear power plant. When authorization for the project was given, Minister of the Environment Satu Hassi resigned and thus the Greens joined the opposition.

<sup>115</sup> A modestly sized yet very consistently performing group the primary raison d'être of which is to represent the interests of the national Swedish-speaking minority in Finnish political life.

<sup>116</sup> Nurmi & Nurmi 2004, 558; Raunio 1999, 147-148.

<sup>117</sup> In the Finnish electoral system, the Åland Islands are entitled to one seat in the national parliament. The holder of that seat usually sits in the parliament with the members of the Swedish People's Party, being also a member of that parliamentary group.

election campaign.<sup>118</sup> In June, a coalition with an identical government program and distribution of ministerial portfolios between collaborating parties took office under Matti Vanhanen (KESK), who had served as Defense Minister under Jäätteenmäki<sup>119</sup>. In its government policy statement, the cabinet stated that it would promote labor immigration when necessary to maintain the national dependency ratio while at the same time working to secure the adoption of a flexible transitional period that would be re-evaluated before two years had passed from the A10 countries' accession to the EU.<sup>120</sup> Vanhanen himself took promoting labor immigration *when necessary* to another level by suggesting in several articles published by the newspaper Helsingin Sanomat that the solutions for population policy related questions should be found more enthusiastically in removing obstacles from elevating the birth rate than in increasing incoming immigration<sup>121</sup> Furthermore, the general goal of the Centre Party in 2003-2007 was not to increase labor immigration as such, but to permit it whenever a clear need could be pinpointed. As Nykänen has noted in her thesis on the arguments pro et contra immigration in Finland 2003-2011, immigration related topics were not brought up actively by representatives of the Centre Party in the first half of the decade, whereas its coalition companions, the Social Democrats and the Swedish People's Party were more enthusiastic to stress the country's need of immigrants throughout the studied period.<sup>122</sup> This more general position is in contradiction with the actions of the SDP in our studied debates as the party was clearly most eager of the three to adopt transitional rules, whereas Centre Party representatives were more reserved in their statements and no MPs from the RKP shared their thoughts on the issue publically in the plenary sessions.

Rather similarly to Finland, the composition of the Swedish Riksdag is decided in a general election every four years. As in the Finnish case, it is a system of proportional representation<sup>123</sup> and the country is divided into constituencies. In addition to the 310 constituency seats, the remaining 39 are so-called 'adjustment seats' that are used to ensure that each party receives a share of seats proportional to their final share of votes on the national level. Parties need to get at least four percent of given valid votes nationally to receive seats in the legislative. If a party fails to surpass the four percent mark nationally

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<sup>118</sup> Arter 2006, 27; Raunio 2011, 125.

<sup>119</sup> YLE 11.1.2018, "Henkilökuvassa Matti Vanhanen: Keskustan yksinäinen susi ei päästä lähelleen, mutta ymmärtää kavereiden arvot".

<sup>120</sup> Finnish Government 2003.

<sup>121</sup> Helsingin Sanomat 11.8.2003, "Pääministeri Vanhanen vaatii lisää lapsia Suomeen".

<sup>122</sup> Nykänen 2012, 17-18.

<sup>123</sup> The Swedish system is quite a bit more complicated than the Finnish one. In addition to following the basic principles of party-list proportional representation, it includes a minimum electoral threshold (share of votes) parties must cross to become eligible to receive seats and three different ballot papers voting citizens can choose from. These two latter features are not included in the Finnish system.

but gets over twelve percent of votes in any given constituency, it is entitled to receive seats from that constituency.<sup>124</sup>

Table 2. Sweden: Composition of the Riksdag 2002-2006. In brackets comparison (+/-) to 1998 results.

Cabinet	Seats	Opposition	Seats
Social Democratic Party	144 (+13)	Moderate Party	55 (-27)
		Liberal People's Party	48 (+31)
		Christian Democrats	33 (-9)
		Left Party	30 (-13)
		Centre Party	22 (+4)
		Green Party	17 (+1)
<i>Minority cabinet</i>	<i>144</i>		<i>205</i>

In the general election of 2002, Social Democrats (SAP) won with clear numbers, forming a minority cabinet on their own but relying a great deal on the Left and the Greens for support.<sup>125</sup> As a matter of fact, both the formerly communist Left Party (V) and the Green Party (MP) had had hopes to receive actual cabinet seats after the 2002 parliamentary election, but the demand was quickly rejected by the SAP.<sup>126</sup> The strength and importance of the Social Democratic Party in Swedish politics can easily be demonstrated by examining the composition of former cabinets. Between World War II and the year 2009, Sweden had 28 separate cabinets of which as few as six excluded the Social Democratic Party. Of the rest, 19 were single-party SAP governments.<sup>127</sup> Yet, in spite of the obvious dominance the SAP holds over other parties, it is also a fact that the party's share of seats has been in decline, while new competitors have made their entrance onto the party political playing field.<sup>128</sup> No party can alone forge credible policies. If the opposite was true, states would soon turn into a one-party totalitarian systems. Therefore, in order to guarantee the viability of its cabinet, the Social Democratic Party found a way to secure support from the Left and the Greens by agreeing to a deal, 'the 121-points program', a sort

<sup>124</sup> Widfeldt 2003, 780.

<sup>125</sup> Borevi 2012, 70.

<sup>126</sup> Olsen 2007 cited in Bergman & Bolin 2011, 267.

<sup>127</sup> Bergman & Bolin 2011, 263.

<sup>128</sup> Bergman & Bolin 2011, 252-253.

of semi-coalition, in which the participating parties agreed on a list of reforms they would implement together. In addition to this, the support parties were offered liberty to assign a number of high-level appointees from their ranks to government ministries.<sup>129</sup> As we will see in later chapters, the status of support parties complicates the analysis of individual policy-building processes. While the unofficial majority of the semi-coalition, in this case a comfortable 191 MPs, removes pressure from the cabinet of always, in each individual case, having to procure backing for policy proposals, it may also muddle the situation in the cases when the cabinet and the support parties are not in agreement about the right direction to take.<sup>130</sup>

As already implied in the title of this chapter, Sweden and Finland were governed in 2004 by notably different cabinets that were under the oversight of exceptionally similar oppositions with a high level of ideological distance between parties.<sup>131</sup> Whereas Sweden had a one-party minority cabinet, Finland had a slight majority government positioned on the center-left sector of the political spectrum. In both countries, the opposition included both the Conservatives and the post-communist Left, in addition to more centrist parties, the Greens and the Christian Democrats.<sup>132</sup> In Finland, the Centre Party was the leading political force, the Prime Minister party, whereas in Sweden its sister party was the second smallest opposition party with an electoral support of only 6.2%<sup>133</sup>, having been in the excruciatingly troublesome position before as well as during the campaign of possibly falling below the four percent mark. The party had had a change of leadership in the early 2001 to improve its poll ratings, swapping Lennart Daléus for Maud Olofson, an action that resulted in only short-lived improvements.<sup>134</sup> Having both reinvented and modernized themselves in the 1950s and 1960s<sup>135</sup> as center parties in an attempt

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<sup>129</sup> Bergman & Bolin 2011, 267; Ljunggren 2010. See also Aylott & Bergman 2004; Widfeldt 2003, 784; Sveriges Radio 24.3.2003, "Utredning om arbetskraftsinvandring".

<sup>130</sup> More on the peculiarities of minority governments within the Nordic region, see e.g. Arter 2006, 98-103.

<sup>131</sup> Arter 2006, 182, 184.

<sup>132</sup> Arter 2006, 183.

<sup>133</sup> Widfeldt 2003, 783.

<sup>134</sup> Widfeldt 2003, 780.

<sup>135</sup> According to Widfeldt 2001, 6-7 the change of the Swedish agrarian party's name from Landsbygdspartiet Bondeförbundet (Rural Party Farmer's League) to the now known Centerpartiet took place in two steps in the 1957 and 1958 party conferences. The current name was already proposed in the 1957 conference, but a compromise needed to be formulated to please both those in favor of a complete renovation and those who were afraid the new name would alienate the party's rural voters. And so, the name was then changed to Centerpartiet Bondeförbundet (Centre Party Farmer's League), only to be amended again in 1958. In Finland, the party used the name Maalaisliitto (Agrarian League) until 1965 when it was changed to Keskustapuolue and finally again in 1988 to Suomen Keskusta (Centre Party of Finland). What is interesting to note is that Maalaisliitto had, in light of its electoral success, no real need to change its name in 1965 as it was the largest party in Finland after the 1962 general election and second in 1966. More on the Finnish Centre Party's name change, see e.g. Arter 2001, 66-68.



to broaden their electoral appeal and fight back the decline of agriculture's importance in the national economy, the former agrarian parties could not have followed more different paths. While both parties lived their golden years in the 1970s, on the long run only the Finnish Keskusta was successful in its transformation into a catchall party, whereas its Swedish sister party has not succeeded in surpassing the 10% mark since 1988.<sup>136</sup>

In spite of this interesting and rather significant difference between the two Centre Parties, the biggest discrepancy in the party political dynamics of the Finnish and Swedish contexts concerns the role of Liberal parties. In the Riksdag of 2004, Folkpartiet liberalerna (FP) was the second largest opposition party after the liberal-conservative Moderate Party (Moderata samlingspartiet, M), having benefitted in the 2002 parliamentary election from what Arter refers to as a “volatile non-socialist electorate”<sup>137</sup>. In practice, this alludes to an unpredictability of electoral support: although it was at times during the campaign thought as possible that the Liberals would not get over the 4% threshold<sup>138</sup>, they in the end managed to excel themselves with a 13.4%<sup>139</sup> share of the votes and thus challenge the Conservatives' reign as the leader of the non-socialist opposition. The Finnish Liberaalinen Kansanpuolue (Liberal People's Party, LKP), the Finnish sister party of the Folkpartiet, on the contrary, lost its already weak footing in the Eduskunta in the early 1980s, following its controversial decision to try to unite the Finnish political center by becoming a member organization of the Centre Party in 1982.<sup>140</sup> The party did come back with one seat in 1991, but has since struggled as an extra-parliamentary actor, in 2007 finally being removed from the national party registry after being unsuccessful in gaining seats in two consecutive parliamentary elections. In the late 1990s, the party was challenged by the Young Finns (Nuorsuomalaiset), a movement that was founded in 1994 after the pamphlet “Ultimatum Isänmaalle: Nuorsuomalainen näkemys Suomen mahdollisuuksista” by Risto E.J. Penttilä, Jaakko Tapaninen and Janne Jutila was published. In 1999, the Liberal People's Party and the Young Finns agreed to merge, but in the end the fusion did not take place, despite being supported by a majority of members in both parties.<sup>141</sup> The space left open by the Liberals as well as the Young Finns in the Finnish party political

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<sup>136</sup> Arter 2001; Arter 2006, 187; Hilson 2008, 39-40; Batory & Sitter 2004, 527. While the two Centre Parties can, with good conscience, be called sister parties, it is important to remember that, despite seeming similar, they had very different early histories. The Finnish Agrarian League was both radically anti-elitist and anti-socialist. Ihalainen 2017, 64, 193. Bondeförbundet, on the other hand, took many of its early ideological elements from traditional conservatism. See e.g. Widfeldt 2001, 16-17.

<sup>137</sup> Arter 2006, 183.

<sup>138</sup> Arter 2006, 186.

<sup>139</sup> Widfeldt 2003, 783.

<sup>140</sup> Arter 1988, 326.

<sup>141</sup> Mickelsson 2007, 284-286; Liberaalinen Kansanpuolue 1999.

scene has since been occupied by the National Coalition Party and the Greens<sup>142</sup>, as well as to a certain extent by the Centre Party.

As the methods of both constructing and maintaining cabinets in the two countries are rather different, it is challenging to evaluate the relative strength of their oppositions. The ideological fragmentation of an opposition may lead to a serious lack of “a coherent strategy of criticizing the cabinet”<sup>143</sup>, while cooperation is in reality the only approach the opposition can take to offer a credible alternative. From such a need manifest what Zolberg refers to as ‘unholy coalitions’, temporary, often theme-specific alliances between parties that are not each other’s natural allies in issues, such as immigration, which transcend the left-right dimension.<sup>144</sup> This we will come back to in later chapters. In the Finnish case, all parties represented in the parliament in 2004, with the exception of the nationalist-oriented True Finns, had participated in a cabinet coalition, having demonstrated capability to cooperate with other parties across ideological divides. Although the National Coalition Party is in many ways a complete opposite of the Left Alliance, the chief successor of the predominantly communist Finnish People’s Democratic League<sup>145</sup> (Suomen Kansan Demokraattinen Liitto, SKDL), they both partook in the two SDP-led Lipponen cabinets between 1995-2003.

In Sweden, in turn, the bloc nature of parliamentary politics had become more important than before and non-socialist opposition parties had found more chances for cooperation and “achieved a greater unity of purpose (cohesion) than in Finland”.<sup>146</sup> Swedish non-socialist parties certainly do have great motives for both competition and cooperation, and, for that reason, they must constantly weigh in the benefits and drawbacks of each action. As Swedish cabinets nearly always consist of either the Social Democrats or the non-socialist parties<sup>147</sup>, the largest non-socialist parties are time and again driven to mutual cooperation against the Social Democrats. This kind of alliances are never simple, though, as each party within the bloc attempts to at the same time distinguish itself from the other as non-socialist voters are known to quite easily alternate between parties.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> See e.g. Ylikahri 2014.

<sup>143</sup> Raunio 2011, 125.

<sup>144</sup> Zolberg 1999.

<sup>145</sup> Founded in the aftermath of World War II, the SKDL was a consortium of thinkers positioned left from the SDP. Its biggest member organization was the Communist Party of Finland (SKP). In addition such member organizations, the SKDL also had members of its own.

<sup>146</sup> Arter 2006, 184.

<sup>147</sup> Arter 2006, 238.

<sup>148</sup> Arter 2006, 184.

### 3. Finland

All western countries can be placed into one of three categories when it comes to their immigration history: settler countries, old Europe and new Europe. The word ‘settler countries’ refers to the former colonies of European nations such as the United States and Australia. ‘Old Europe’, on the other hand, includes nations that started to receive significant numbers of immigrants from the end of World War II (for example Sweden and France), whereas ‘new Europe’ is used in reference to countries that have only in recent years transferred from large-scale emigration to a more immigration-filled existence (for example Finland and Portugal).<sup>149</sup>

As national history is one of the main issues to consider when looking for factors behind immigration policies, the immigration experiences of both Finland and Sweden will be discussed from World War II onwards in the first sub-chapters of the third and fourth sections to understand the national contexts behind the used argumentation in the parliaments in spring 2004 better. After these introductory sub-chapters, we will analyse the adoption or rejection of transitional regulations from the perspective of the actual decision-making process. The objective of these chapters is to explore the basic features of each national debate, making the understanding of later chapters easier. After establishing these facts, we will finally turn to a more specific analysis of the debates, focusing in sub-chapters 3.3 and 4.3 on the most commonly employed arguments in each national context.

#### 3.1 Immigration to Finland: A Slow Transformation

The number of foreign-born residents is substantially lower in Finland than in other Nordic states and for decades it was one of the most emigration-oriented countries in Europe.<sup>150</sup> For a majority of the twentieth century, an over-supply of domestic labor and protective immigration policies taken up by one cabinet after another kept the country from becoming ethnically heterogeneous. The over-supply of workers in the labor market resulted from several overlapping occurrences: the active participation

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<sup>149</sup> Inquiries Journal 2011.

<sup>150</sup> Korkiasaari & Söderling 2003, 2.

of women in the national labor force, large age cohorts born during the baby boom of the few years after the end of World War II and the comparatively quick progression from an agricultural economy to a larger focus on industry and services.<sup>151</sup> In addition, the Finnish government had to deal with the consequences and expenses of resettling and offering support to a considerable part of its population following the loss of Karelian areas in the Continuation War of 1941-1944<sup>152</sup>, a humanitarian effort that included finding work for them in the post-war labor market. Therefore, as the labor market was in many ways overcrowded by the country's own Finnish nationals, there was no real need for foreign labor for a number of decades after the war. And so, a clear decline occurred 1938-1955 in the number of foreign citizens, with numbers dropping from 21,000 to only 7,000.<sup>153</sup> Furthermore, as employment opportunities were scarce in the newly industrialized Finland of the 1950s, many Finns packed their belongings and moved to Sweden, whose booming economy profited greatly from culturally familiar, relatively adept immigrants from the other side of the Gulf of Bothnia.<sup>154</sup>

The tense Cold War political climate had its small but visible effects on Finnish immigration policies. In decades after World War II, defectors from the Soviet Union put a strain on the Finns' relationship with their eastern neighbor and made some Finns see these quite exceptional "immigrants" as a threat to national security.<sup>155</sup> These feelings of suspicion gained in strength from the beginning of the 1970s onwards as the country accepted a growing number of refugees to honor its humanitarian obligations, at the same time witnessing a change in the composition of its foreign population.<sup>156</sup> The first refugees in the modern sense<sup>157</sup> came to Finland from Chile in 1973 to flee from the ruling military government. According to Leitzinger, the Finnish press reported on these 182 individuals in a manner that stressed "the benevolence of Finnish authorities"<sup>158</sup>, resulting in long-term one-sided views among Finns on the nature of the Finnish refugee and immigration policy. In reality, the number of admitted refugees was moderately low in comparison to similar states in Western Europe.<sup>159</sup> Still, the importance of this

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<sup>151</sup> Dhalmann & Yousfi 2010, 222.

<sup>152</sup> Dhalmann & Yousfi 2010, 222-223.

<sup>153</sup> Lavery 2006, 150. According to Leitzinger 2016, 44, 8765 Russians received Finnish citizenship between 1918 and 1943. This will certainly have contributed to the statistical decline in the number of foreign citizens residing in Finland, but cannot explain it completely.

<sup>154</sup> Dhalmann & Yousfi 2010, 223; Tanner 2011. On Swedish companies' recruitment policies in the decade after World War II, see e.g. Korkiasaari 2001, 11-12. On the struggle of adjusting among the Finns in Sweden and the issue of mother tongue teaching for the children of immigrants, see Wickström 2015.

<sup>155</sup> Lavery 2006, 150; Pekkarinen & Pohjonen 2005; Leitzinger 2008, 273; Kanninen 2010, 44.

<sup>156</sup> Railo 2012, 423; Nykänen 2012, 3.

<sup>157</sup> Kanninen 2010, 31.

<sup>158</sup> Railo 2012, 426.

<sup>159</sup> Railo 2012, 426; Leitzinger according to Railo 2012.

transformation should not be overlooked. From the 1970s onwards, Finland started to become more heterogeneous and foreigners coming from farther than ever before brought with them new cultures, religious beliefs as well as traditions that they were passionate about cherishing. As a consequence of these developments, Finnish immigration debate became more problem-driven.<sup>160</sup>

The circumstances started to turn around slowly in the late 1980s and the early 1990s as immigration eventually overtook emigration. The most obvious reasons for this statistical change can be found in two nearly simultaneous occurrences in world politics as both the Somali and Yugoslav civil wars as well as the disintegration of the neighboring Soviet Union led to a growing number of people seeking refuge in Finland.<sup>161</sup> While the discourse began as a humanitarian one, it soon turned around, turning into a threat discourse in which the refugees were seen mainly as a problem and focus was redirected towards issues like smuggling and increases in criminality.<sup>162</sup> When in 1990 only 49 people registered in Finland were from Somalia, a year later in 1991 the number had already risen to 1412.<sup>163</sup> In addition to refugees, many Ingrian Finns, descendants of the Finnish-speaking Lutheran population that had moved to Ingria during Swedish rule, migrated to Finland from the east after being given remigrant status in 1990 as a result of famous statements made by President Koivisto.<sup>164</sup> Even then, the majority of immigrants were Finnish-born returnees from Sweden, who or whose parents had emigrated west in search of jobs during the great migration wave.<sup>165</sup>

In the 1990s, questions related to both immigration policy in general and the integration of the foreign population in particular were pushed aside as decision-makers fought against unemployment caused by the economic recession. Surprisingly, the highest immigration peak of the decade was reached in the middle of the depression, a peculiarity explained by the fact that the majority of those moving to Finland were still refugees and asylum seekers, not people coming with the primary goal of joining the local labor market.<sup>166</sup> Despite the government's growing awareness of a need to ease restrictions to try to overturn demographic trends that could threaten the renewability of the national workforce<sup>167</sup>, in 1998 the size of Finland's immigrant population was still the smallest of EU member states, only

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<sup>160</sup> Nykänen 2012, 3.

<sup>161</sup> Railo 2012, 423.

<sup>162</sup> Horsti 2013, 306.

<sup>163</sup> Open Society Foundations 2014, 25.

<sup>164</sup> Gulijeva 2003; Lähteenmäki & Pöyhönen 2015. For more information about the Ingrians see e.g. Nurmela 2003.

<sup>165</sup> Railo 2012, 424.

<sup>166</sup> Hjerpe 2001, 138; Railo 2012, 423.

<sup>167</sup> Railo 2012, 436-437.

1.6% of just over 5 million inhabitants.<sup>168</sup> In the 1990s as well as the 2000s, only 5-10% of immigrants moved to the country for employment-related reasons, whereas around two-thirds had family reasons, for example marriage or family reunification.<sup>169</sup>

And so, the costs of immigration outweighed its economic benefits in Finland as more people had left the country compared to those coming in as labor immigrants. It has been suggested that this disparity in addition Finnish citizens' limited personal experiences of foreigners had a strengthening effect on both racism and the skinhead movements of the mid-1990s, groups that attracted quite a bit of media attention for using violence against immigrants in widely reported incidents in Joensuu, Hakunila and Espoo. As a consequence of such hardening sentiments towards immigrants, a number of campaigns were launched nation-wide to tackle intolerance. Despite their apparent achievements, the campaigns have also been criticized for pushing aside problems that should have been solved, fostering a society where immigration-related issues are not discussed openly. While Hjerpe regards lack of immigrant contacts as an increasing factor in distrust towards different cultures, the relatively small number of immigrants in Finland has also been claimed to have protected the country from political extremist movements that have been popular in both Sweden and Russia.<sup>170</sup> While the Finnish attitudes towards immigrants did certainly take a more negative tone during the economic struggles of the early 1990s, the opposite happened when the economy took a turn for the better a few years later.<sup>171</sup>

At the turn of the millennium, Finnish immigration policy went through one of the biggest changes in its history as party after another started to emphasize active labor immigration policies as a strategy for attracting foreign workers to combat changes in the national dependency ratio brought on by an ageing population.<sup>172</sup> In 2006, the government published its program on immigration policy, focusing on labor migration and pointing out that it saw immigrants not only as potential labor for businesses “but also as initiators, employers and upholders of global networks”<sup>173</sup>. For the first time in the history of an independent Finland, immigration was starting to be understood as an economic asset.<sup>174</sup> In the Lipponen I cabinet program on immigration and refugee policy in 1997, the first one ever made, focus

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<sup>168</sup> Virtanen 2000 cited in Hjerpe 2001, 138.

<sup>169</sup> Heikkilä & Pikkarainen 2008, 6; Jaakkola 2009, 16; Martikainen, Saari & Korkiasaari 2013, 39.

<sup>170</sup> Hjerpe 2001, 138; Salo 2005, 8; YLE 19.1.2010, “Supo: Uusnatsismi on Suomessa sisäpiiritouhua”; Aden 2009, 27.

<sup>171</sup> Ervasti 2004, 27.

<sup>172</sup> Saukkonen 2013, 88-89.

<sup>173</sup> Jaakkola 2006, 1.

<sup>174</sup> Forsander et al 2004, 99.

had been on humanitarian migration and the integration of immigrants into the society.<sup>175</sup> Overall, the conversation on immigration was thus shifting in a more forward-looking and positive direction after a difficult decade, a development that according to Forsander et al differed quite a bit from the course taken by many other countries in Europe. While in many other countries security political arguments were starting to take over as a result of the war on terrorism launched by the USA in the aftermath of 9/11, in Finland political parties spent the same years contemplating together ways to promote societal cohesion by creating anchors through which migrants could feel increasingly like genuine members of the society.<sup>176</sup> Finland was indeed taking huge steps towards a more diverse, heterogeneous society, a notion that had been alien to most only a little more than a decade earlier.

### **3.2 Making of a Policy: Yes or No?**

In the Finnish parliamentary system, law proposals are made in the ministries, discussed preliminarily in the plenary session and then sent to the corresponding committee for further inspection, amending, hearing of experts in the field in question and eventual voting. As an actualization of what was already brought forth in the Vanhanen cabinet program, the government's proposal on transitional regulations was given to the plenary session in January 2004. From there it was sent on to the Employment and Equality Committee for further scrutiny. Before it was formally debated on in the Employment and Equality Committee, it was put through inspection in the Constitutional Law Committee, the primary task of which is to inspect the constitutionality of bills and, if found unconstitutional, suggest changes to either the wording and the overall contents of the law proposal. The Constitutional Law Committee, after hearing a number of legal specialists, proclaimed in mid-March that the bill could in its opinion be treated as ordinary legislation, not as a question concerning the constitution. It also demanded that a few minor modifications be made to its contents. The primary suggestion of the committee was to remove a mention that the cabinet would be obligated to bring a report on the effects of the legislation on the Finnish labor market and its possible extension to the Eduskunta before the two years that the temporary legislation was proposed to last had passed.<sup>177</sup> It declared that "from the perspective of constitutional law, it would be more natural if such an obligation was in its nature political and that

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<sup>175</sup> Jaakkola 2009, 11.

<sup>176</sup> Forsander et al 2004, 98-99.

<sup>177</sup> Constitutional Law Committee PeVL 5/2004; Finnish Government HE 172/2003.

it would therefore rest on the will of the parliament, expressed in its response to the law proposal.”<sup>178</sup> In the final reading of the law proposal, such an obligation was proposed by Anne Holmlund (KOK) and approved<sup>179</sup>, providing MPs a better opportunity to assess the impacts of the legislation. In a way, this offered the politicians a chance to examine in retrospect the consequences of their decisions and to make rapid changes if the need would appear.

There is often a fair amount of time between the active processing and approval of a proposal and the actual moment the law becomes effective. In this case, the processing of the bill was started only four months before the moment it was planned to take effect. The reason for this quick procedure was that the parliament reviewed and revised the outdated Aliens Act in tandem with the studied law proposal, first of all because it was seen by all parties to be in need of a complete reform and secondly in hopes that the amended legislation would give officials at the grassroots better tools for dealing successfully with the changes and challenges brought on the Finnish society by growing immigration. As the bill would not be voted on before the new Aliens Act had been ratified, the process dragged on until mid-April. Although the procedure might seem risky as there is always a chance that a bill will be rejected in the plenary, it was not a truly existing prospect in this case, as the circumstances were so clearly in favor of one end result as a consequence of the extant government-opposition dynamics.

The bill was discussed and revised in the Employment and Equality Committee throughout February and March and finally decisions were made on the 14<sup>th</sup> of April. Of the parties represented in the committee, only the Green League made its objection of the bill official through a reservation written by Heidi Hautala. In her reservation, Hautala urged the parliament to refuse the proposal in its entirety and by so doing to refrain from adopting transitional rules. Hautala argued that there was an inherent flaw in the way the parliament, when accepting the ratification of the A10 accession agreements, saw it as reasonable to apply transitional rules, but simultaneously appealed to its own Grand Committee’s 2003 position that “old member states, including Finland, should demonstrate moderation in actions that could place the citizens of different member states in unequal positions”<sup>180</sup>. Writing as a former

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<sup>178</sup> Constitutional Law Committee PeVL 5/2004.

<sup>179</sup> Minutes of the Plenary Session PTK 47/2004.

<sup>180</sup> Grand Committee SuVL 3/2003. In 2004, there were 14 specialized standing committees in the Finnish Eduskunta in addition to the Grand Committee. The Grand Committee has two main tasks: 1) to discuss any law proposals that have been modified during their first appearance in the plenary session of the parliament and 2) to deliberate on the stance of the Eduskunta on EU budget, legal and treaty issues in close cooperation with the cabinet. Whereas the other committees are preparatory in nature and decisions on their topics are ultimately made by the plenary, the Grand Committee is a decision-making organ. The committee was first made a part of the system in 1906, envisioned to function as a sort of second chamber. For more, see Raunio & Wiberg 2000; Eduskunta, “The Grand Committee – Parliament’s EU committee”.



Member of the European Parliament<sup>181</sup>, Hautala pointed out that the transitional measures could easily be made null before the end of their term if the proposal of the Commission for a Services Directive (SD, 2006/123/EC), which would radically ease restrictions on the movement of services across the internal borders of the Union, was passed in its drafted form.

But above all, Hautala believed that the proposal was already outdated before its approval in addition to being based on a false impression of the prevailing labor market situation in neighboring Estonia. In so saying, Hautala was referring to widely publicized estimations that a large part of the Estonian workforce would rush to seek employment in Finland at the moment of enlargement in May 2004.<sup>182</sup> As will be considered later in detail, temporary agency work from Estonia became an argument to be employed equally by both sides: the advocates of the bill saying that businesses would take advantage of open borders by employing cheaper Estonian labor instead of the Finnish unemployed<sup>183</sup> with its opponents responding by noting that blocking the A10 country citizens' entry into the country could, and likely would, defeat its purpose as a growing amount of work would be done under temporary work agencies instead of normal employment contracts.<sup>184</sup> It was even argued that a transition period was "like firing a heavy caliber shotgun at the ordinary Estonian job-seeker who would possibly like to enter Finland to work for an ordinary employer"<sup>185</sup>. While the objective of this study is by no means to focus on Finno-Estonian relations, the special relationship between the two countries as well as the stereotypes involved must be covered as contextualizing factors of utmost importance in the Finnish case. The two countries both belong to the family of Finno-Ugric languages, are situated close to each other and share a long entangled history. While the Finns' attitudes towards Estonians are many times distorted by negative stereotypes, it is also generally acknowledged that Estonia is Finland's 'smaller brother'.

Hautala's concerns were shared by many of those speaking against the proposal in the plenary session on the 15<sup>th</sup> of April as well as in the last debate that took place just before the law was voted on only a week before it was to be enforced. Even though the proposal incited a lively debate, the opposing coalition, consisting of the entire Green League parliamentary group and over half of Coalition Party representatives, was clearly voted down by the cabinet coalition and the remaining opposition groups. When voting time finally came, 79.9% of the MPs present voted in favor of transitional arrangements

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<sup>181</sup> Isotalus 2003.

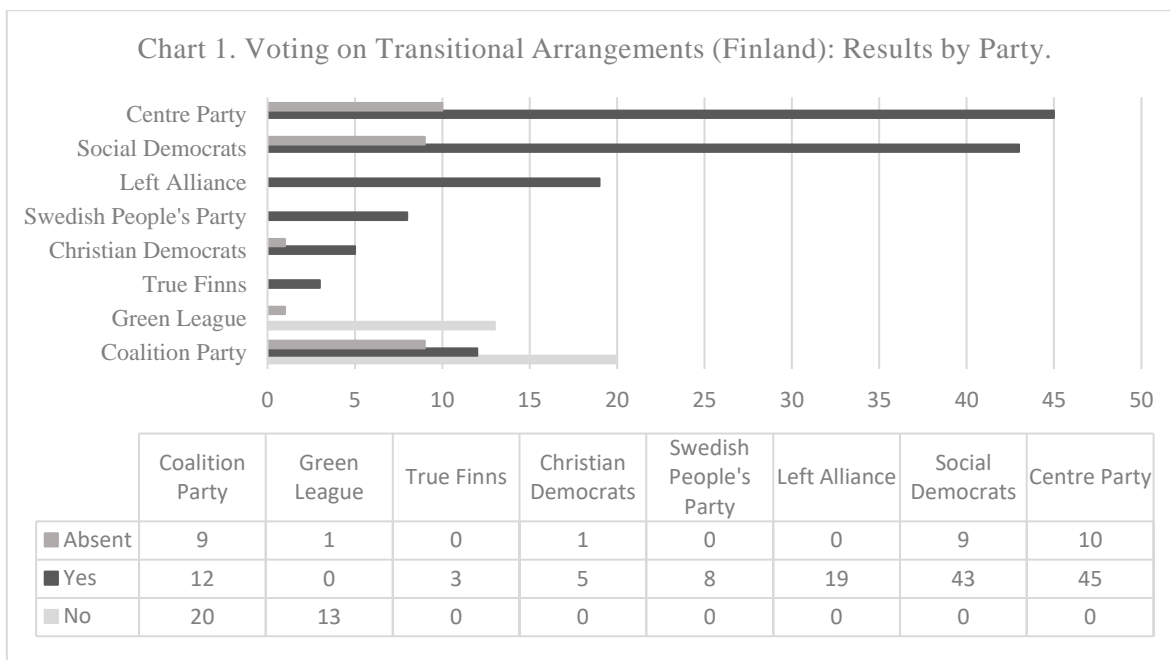
<sup>182</sup> Employment and Equality Committee TyVM 2/2004.

<sup>183</sup> For example Esa Lahtela (SDP), PTK 42/2004.

<sup>184</sup> For example Rosa Meriläinen (VIHR), PTK 42/2004.

<sup>185</sup> Heidi Hautala (VIHR), PTK 42/2004.

while the remaining 19.5% opposed and Roger Jansson (RKP, representative of the Åland Islands<sup>186</sup>) was the only one to cast a vote of abstention.<sup>187</sup>



As can be seen in Chart 1, Finnish parties tended to vote quite homogeneously on the issue within their parliamentary groups. The Coalition Party was, as a matter of fact, the only party to be divided on the question, whereas the Greens alone unanimously opposed restricting the free movement of labor from the A10 into the Finnish labor market, arguing that a transition period would create a two-tiered labor market that was against all the founding principles of the Union. All other parliamentary groups stood behind the proposal. MPs from the cabinet coalition voted unanimously in favor, despite participating in the actual plenary debate with rather dissimilar speeches and comments, ranging from those strictly against the free movement of people within the Union in general to those agreeing with the opponents of the bill on nearly all points. Nevertheless, as the results of the voting were known in advance and the issue was not one regarding which MPs who were against the proposal could realistically hope to

<sup>186</sup> In the Finnish electoral system, the Åland Islands are entitled to one seat in the national parliament. The holder of that seat usually sits in the parliament with the members of the Swedish People's Party, regardless of the intra-Ålandic party they are a member of. This was also true for Roger Jansson, who was a member of the Frisinnad Samverkan (Freeminded Co-operation), a center-right conservative group.

<sup>187</sup> Results of Voting HE 172/2003.

change the opinion others, discussion in the plenary was in practice about those who opposed the bill putting their position on record while attempting to falsify any arguments the proposal's supporters had.

In the previous chapter, we introduced the notion of unholy coalitions, strategic alliances formed for promoting of a particular cause between parties that are traditionally not natural political allies. In the Finnish case, such a coalition was started between the Green League and the Coalition Party. Zolberg has argued that such alliances are especially likely in immigration-related cases as the impact of those policies on a receiving society can be examined from two distinct perspectives, those of the economy and those concerning identity and culture. In the first, the spotlight is on both employers' and workers' unions and their role in the promotion of business activities through migration, on the one hand, and the relationship between the working conditions of workers and immigration, on the other. The second perspective, in turn, relates to the possible threat or cultural enrichment brought on by immigration.<sup>188</sup> Whereas party positions on the first perspective are more clearly split along the left-right divide, the second one is more complex, value-based and more easily identifiable when examining party stances through the cosmopolitanism-sovereignism divide.<sup>189</sup> And so, as Berg and Spehar summarize,

“Along the traditional left-right mobilization, we find the expectation of restrictive immigration entry policies to associate with right-of-center political parties, whereas liberal policies were equated with left-of-center parties. However, along the risk-opportunity mobilization, the expectation is the opposite; traditional left-wing parties are expected to advocate more restrictive migration policies while liberal and green parties are associated with liberal migration policies. Hence, in these transformative times, we may find parties being positive or negative to immigration on both ends of the economic dimension, depending on their position on the cultural dimension.”<sup>190</sup>

And so, the Greens and the National Coalition Party found common ground and in so doing chose to together resist the adoption of temporary transitional regulations. While the significance of particular arguments was not the same for both coalition partners, they could agree that substantial gains could be made by keeping borders open.

Even though the conservatives and their allies in the Green League were rather efficiently voted down in the Eduskunta, the opponents of the bill still remained hopeful that the arrangements would not last long, being instead abandoned as early as before the first checkpoint. As the movement of labor from

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<sup>188</sup> Zolberg 1999, 82-85.

<sup>189</sup> Berg & Spehar 2013, 146; Azmanova 2011, 388.

<sup>190</sup> Berg & Spehar 2013, 147.

conventional forms of employment to practices outside the reach of transitional regulations (such as temporary agency work and posted work, self-employment) was understood to undermine all grounds for adopting restrictive transitional arrangements<sup>191</sup>, it was seen rather as a matter of *how soon* the arrangements would be dropped than as a choice whether or not to extend the them in 2006 and then possibly again in 2009. As Finland had not pressed for special provisions on the movement of services from the A10 into its labor market during their accession negotiations, the transitional measures were seen as a fragile safeguard that could easily be bypassed by companies using temporary agency work or posted work instead of “proper” employees hired directly by the company they would be working for.

The uncertainty surrounding the debate can easily be illustrated, not only by quoting Coalition Party and Green League representatives, but also by referring to speech acts made by MPs representing the cabinet coalition, pointing to the risks involved so as to demonstrate that they also had taken all likely scenarios into consideration but still saw temporary transitional arrangements as the favorable choice. One such illuminating comment was made by Antti Kaikkonen (KESK) who, despite supporting the basic idea behind transitional arrangements, noted, displaying a rather realistic view of the situation:

“If considerable problems came about presumably the best solution would be, in addition to investing in efficient supervision systems, for Finland to abandon all transitional rules on the free movement of labor in the autumn of this year. In the next few months we will see if this is necessary. It would then be possible that --- conventional work contracts could spring up, contracts that would reliably function according to the same ground rules as those applying to ordinary Finnish working men and women.”<sup>192</sup>

Kaikkonen, as a matter of fact, was one of the most active MPs when it came to the urging the country to terminate transitional arrangements when it was observed that after the enlargement the number of work permits issued had fallen while the number of incoming labor migrants had not, pointing clearly to an increased use of temporary agency workers and posted workers in the Finnish labor market.<sup>193</sup> Kaikkonen’s motion on the issue was admitted in February 2005, only a little over nine months after the transitional arrangements were agreed on. In addition to the abovementioned motion, Kaikkonen, a member of the Grand Committee 2004-2007<sup>194</sup>, demonstrated a clear interest also for other questions

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<sup>191</sup> For example Kimmo Sasi (KOK), PTK 45/2004.

<sup>192</sup> Antti Kaikkonen (KESK), PTK 42/2004.

<sup>193</sup> Antti Kaikkonen (KESK), TPA 11/2005. See also Kaikkonen (KESK) et al, KK 107/2004.

<sup>194</sup> Eduskunta, MP profiles: “Antti Kaikkonen”.

related to the eastern enlargement, such as the future of Finnish alcohol taxation<sup>195</sup> and the stance of his country on the accession of possible new member states Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia and Turkey<sup>196</sup>.

### **3.3 Argumentation: Uncontrollable Employment Contracts and the Estonian Threat**

The biggest topic to emerge in debates about transitional arrangements in the Finnish parliament were the related questions of temporary agency work and posted work. By the definition of the International Labour Organization (ILO), temporary agency work refers to a situation where a worker is in practice employed by a temporary work agency, a business the main purpose of which is to reoffer the services of its employees to third parties acting as a broker of sorts between the employers and the employed.<sup>197</sup> In doing this, the company receiving hired labor delegates a part of its human resources operations to the other company. Posted workers, for their part, are sent by their employers to another EU country on a temporary basis to perform a service or take care of a fixed-term project.<sup>198</sup> As the employers of temporary agency workers are companies the primary business of which is to supply other businesses with suitable labor, these companies are often involved in a particular industry or several fields within which they offer their services. The construction industry, for instance, is a model example of a trade where both temporary agency work and posted work are relatively common. Whereas posted work is an exclusively international affair, temporary agency work concerns also many domestic women and men, for instance in the cleaning and services industries.

The details of how the EU15 countries would be allowed to protect their labor markets from predicted mass immigrations was one of the most extensive debates in the accession negotiations of the Central and Eastern European countries in the first few years of the new millennium. At the beginning of the negotiations, the European Commission made a preliminary Draft Common Position (DCP) in which it proposed that the old member states would all jointly adopt a general transition period of five years with the option of extending the measures by an additional two years in case of serious labor market disturbances. This became known as the 5+2 model. The proposal was later modified into the 2+3+2 model in the final EU Common Position that the candidate countries all had to accept as a part of the

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<sup>195</sup> Antti Kaikkonen (KESK), KK 425/2004.

<sup>196</sup> Kaikkonen (KESK) et al, KA 5/2005.

<sup>197</sup> International Labour Organization, "Temporary Agency Work".

<sup>198</sup> European Commission, "Posted Workers".

accession treaties that were signed in early spring 2003 and ratified in the national parliaments of both the new and old member states in the following months.<sup>199</sup>

The transitional measures covered only workers while students and pensioners, for instance, acquired the right and permission to move as they wished within the Union from the date of accession onwards. Furthermore, in addition to general transitional measures, Germany and Austria, the two old member states that were predicted to attract the largest number of immigrant workers from the A10 countries, succeeded in negotiating for themselves extensions to the common agreement. With these exceptions, the two were able to restrict the movement of services into their labor markets in certain immigration-sensitive fields, for example construction and industrial cleaning<sup>200</sup>, whereas the other EU15 countries were left to deal only through national legislation with a potentially growing use of foreign temporary agency work and posted work as their respective governments had not thought to demand additional extensions to an already restrictive policy.<sup>201</sup> The decision of most EU members not to insist on further measures reflects the general positive outlook towards the eastern enlargement that prevailed in many countries during the accession negotiations but would slowly change course as the date of accession came closer. Finnish MPs taking part in their national debate on the transitional arrangements referred to this lack of long-term planning unanimously as a grave mistake<sup>202</sup> that was regarded the underlying cause behind the problems the country now had to find solutions for with respect to labor immigration from the new member states. Despite faint criticism towards the former Lipponen II government that had represented Finland in the accession negotiations, it was a shared sentiment that neither the trade unions or the politicians of the time had been able to predict the direction in which both the European-wide debate and general circumstances would go in just a couple of short years.<sup>203</sup> Eurosceptic voices in the parliament used the exceptions given to Germany and Austria as evidence of how the Union as a whole was not functioning according to its democratic principles but instead in a fashion that those most capable of scheming behind the scenes had most to gain from collectively agreed policies. As Raimo Vistbacka, Vice Chair of the center-based populist True Finns party (PS)<sup>204</sup>, exclaimed:

“I am astonished greatly that it was even possible that Austria and Germany were able to attain these prerogatives if the regulations of the Accession Treaties were truly negotiated as a joint effort. I am not

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<sup>199</sup> Goldner Lang 2007, 243.

<sup>200</sup> Jukka Gustafsson (SDP), PTK 42/2004; Kuosmanen & Rislakki 2006, 138.

<sup>201</sup> Goldner Lang 2007, 249; Kvist 2004, 309-310.

<sup>202</sup> For example Antti Kaikkonen (KESK), PTK 42/2004.

<sup>203</sup> For example Jukka Gustafsson (SDP), PTK 42/2004.

<sup>204</sup> Eduskunta, MP profiles: ”Raimo Vistabacka”.

familiar with the [negotiating] mechanism, but am nonetheless particularly and downright dumbfounded by this kind of chicanery.”<sup>205</sup>

It is quite eye-catching how little time Finnish Members of Parliament used in the plenary to discuss the simultaneous decision-making processes in other Nordic EU member states. Instead, they focused on Germany and Austria that had received confirmation of their special status already years prior. It is fair to say that the decisions individual member states made concerning transitional measures were much more than cases of national legislation but rather a network of variously reasoned decisions that together made up the entity that would constitute the new EU in May 2004. Without a doubt, Germany as the biggest member state had a particularly prominent role in constructing the system of transitional rules as the German-born European Commissioner for Enlargement Günter Verheugen was in charge of moderating the accession negotiations. Coalition Party MP Kimmo Sasi, Minister of Foreign Trade in the Lipponen II cabinet and Chair of the Constitutional Law Committee<sup>206</sup>, understood the adoption of transitional regulations as a glued on approach that had, as far as he could remember, emerged as the winning policy only in the middle of the accession negotiations due to pressure put on the EU15 by German representatives who, according to Sasi

“--- with the Austrians incited a discussion that the EU also had interests in this issue [unlike the previous consensus that there should be very few transition periods and that they should be as short as possible], we also needed transitional measures and they should be directed particularly towards the free movement of labor and services. --- In conversations with the Germans, they themselves said that this [immigration issue] was not perhaps such a substantive problem, but instead a large political problem, and that this political problem would have to be prevented in a way that does not go overly well the European Union’s founding principles.”<sup>207</sup>

The actions individual EU15 countries could take to protect their labor market from immigration from the A10 countries were not only regulated by what was stated in the already ratified accession treaties but constructing these policies was moreover a question of understanding the much bigger picture of EU legislation. In this context, the Posted Workers Directive and the Services Directive, the latter of which generated as a follow-up of the former, were of utmost importance. The first, already in effect in 2004, was originally put in place to promote mobility within the Union by ensuring that all posted workers regardless of citizenship would be granted the same minimum working terms and conditions

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<sup>205</sup> Raimo Vistbacka (PS), PTK 42/2004.

<sup>206</sup> Eduskunta, MP profiles: ”Kimmo Sasi”.

<sup>207</sup> Kimmo Sasi (KOK), PTK 45/2004.

(for instance concerning rates of pay, work safety and minimum annual holiday days) as the nationals of their host country.

The Services Directive, on the other hand, was only just under preliminary discussion on the European Union level during the studied months. It nevertheless played a role in the debate as the MPs tried to see the question of adopting a transition period from a European perspective and anticipate problems that could surface if the provisions were set for the next two to seven years from the CEECs accession in May 2004. While it was EU law in spring 2004 that posted workers would be dealt with and treated equally to the nationals of their respective host country, the Services Directive, informally named the ‘Bolkenstein Directive’ as it had been drafted under the supervision of Dutch conservative-liberal politician Frederik “Frits” Bolkenstein, European Commissioner for the Internal Market<sup>208</sup>, was in the beginning designed to include the so-called ‘country of origin principle’ that would have meant that businesses offering services in another European Union country could operate everywhere within the EU borders in accordance with the regulations of their home country rather than of those of the host country.<sup>209</sup>

It was therefore feared across Europe, not only in Finland, that the principle would effectively result in social dumping and have negative effects on the companies of the old member states with higher standards for the protection of workers as they would be facing increased rivalry from cheaper foreign competitors. Especially in France and the United Kingdom, the ‘Polish plumber’ became a symbol of distrust and fear of the unknown, manifesting in concerns that under the Directive workers from less well-off parts of the continent would immigrate and steal jobs from the unexpected native citizens of their host states.<sup>210</sup> Accordingly, a number of MPs taking part in the plenary debate on transitional rules voiced their fear that the already fragile Finnish labor market would be changed revolutionarily if the country of origin principle was passed as a part of the Directive as “an even larger part of work done would be defined a service, a commodity to be transported within the internal market like goods and commodities and regulating it would become ever more challenging”<sup>211</sup>. It was even argued that the SD would eventually turn against its own creators, good people campaigning for better terms and

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<sup>208</sup> Chang et al 2010, 98.

<sup>209</sup> European Commission 2004.

<sup>210</sup> See e.g. Spigelman 2013; Grossman & Woll 2011.

<sup>211</sup> Heidi Hautala (VIHR), PTK 45/2004.



conditions of employment throughout the European Union, to the benefit of private businesses in the new member states that had low standards for the protection of their national workforce.<sup>212</sup>

In Sweden, temporary agency work or posted work did not emerge in the same way as a primary topic of debate and accordingly the concurrent European Union level debate on the contents of the Services Directive was not used widely as a justification for chosen positions on transitional measures. This is indeed natural as it was only faintly connected to the main themes of the Swedish debate that will be studied in more detail in chapter 4.3. At this point in our discussion, it is necessary to mention that in Sweden the Directive was only used by representatives that wished to point out that a transition period was not a cure to the issues that were lurking in on the Swedish labor market, or already present, and that instead of adopting such regulations major changes should be made to the workings and rules of the Swedish labor market.<sup>213</sup> These kinds of arguments were used particularly by Left Party politicians who criticized the cabinet for bringing up the topic of reforming the labor market in fundamental way only as a sub-section of the deliberation on transitional arrangements, whereas their party had for over a year tried to bring those themes to the knowledge of their colleagues. As a further criticism, Camilla Sköld Jansson (V), by training a Bachelor of Social Services<sup>214</sup>, scolded the cabinet for the change in argumentation that she depicted to have come to pass, a development from focusing merely on social tourism and social security to a second-thought reorientation of reasoning, directing attention towards problems in the labor market.<sup>215</sup>

What the Finnish plenary debate on the effects of such unconventional modes of employment on the adoption of transitional regulations illustrates rather revealingly, is the way the same information may be used by opposite sides of a political disagreement to promote antagonistic goals. Arguments related to such atypical forms of employment were nevertheless, without doubt, used more frequently by the representatives that disapproved the adoption of a transition period. Their primary argument was that by obstructing the arrival of CEEC nationals into the labor market through transitional arrangements, during the enforcement of which immigrants from those states would have to go through a strenuous permit application process, while posted workers were excluded from such rules, would steer demand of labor more in the direction of both temporary work agencies and posted work.<sup>216</sup> This was regarded a threat to the national labor market as a whole as such employments were more difficult to regulate.

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<sup>212</sup> Heidi Hautala (VIHR), PTK 42/2004.

<sup>213</sup> See e.g. Sven Brus (KD), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 3.

<sup>214</sup> Riksdag, MP profiles: "Camilla Sköld Jansson". In Swedish *socionom*.

<sup>215</sup> See e.g. Camilla Sköld Jansson (V), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 76.

<sup>216</sup> Anne Holmlund (KOK), PTK 42/2004.

Those in favor of transitional regulations, on the other hand, although for the most part very conscious of the risks involved<sup>217</sup>, instead called for improved oversight<sup>218</sup> and active cooperation with especially the Estonian authorities<sup>219</sup>. The opponents of the proposal responded to these arguments by contesting the practicality of erecting completely new structures for the supervision of immigrant workers. Anne Holmlund (KOK), Vice Chairperson of the Employment and Equality Committee<sup>220</sup>, challenged that, “in Finnish society, it is not rational to construct a new system of oversight, especially if by promoting openness we would presumably accomplish better results and concurrently eliminate temptations for finding loopholes.”<sup>221</sup> In addition, some insisted that, besides trusting the decision-makers to do their best, an equally great responsibility should be assigned to the Finnish employers to display patriotism by hiring domestic laborers instead of cheaper foreign workers.<sup>222</sup>

As was noted, it was common for Finnish Members of Parliament on both sides of the deliberation to refer to Estonia when giving examples.<sup>223</sup> This is certainly natural as the Finns represent to Estonians something similar to what Swedes are to Finns, a big brother.<sup>224</sup> As a matter of fact, it has been stated in previous studies that the inclusion of Finland and Sweden in the 1995 enlargement paved way for a speedy rapprochement between the Baltic countries and the EU. According to Arnswald, the “Baltic advocacy” of both Finland and Sweden in the first months of their membership was a key component in advancing discussions that led to the signing of the Europe Association Agreements between the EU and Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in June of 1995.<sup>225</sup> The documents gave the Baltics countries a formal recognition of their status as potential members of the Union. Consequently, by mid-December of the same year, the three Baltic states had all submitted their membership applications to Spain that was finishing its term as EU president. This regional advocacy and small states solidarity established the Nordic countries as the strongest supporters of Baltic EU membership, certainly expected of them considering their historical connections to the region and the security policy angle of the enlargement. In referring to security, the Nordic states were not only concerned with aspects related to a traditional conception of security, but instead saw the enlargement and the inclusion of the Baltics as an effective

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<sup>217</sup> For example Antti Kaikkonen (KESK), PTK 42/2004; Toimi Kankaanniemi (KD), PTK 45/2004.

<sup>218</sup> Jukka Gustafsson (SDP) & Antti Kaikkonen (KESK), PTK 42/2004.

<sup>219</sup> Esa Lahtela (SDP), PTK 45/2004.

<sup>220</sup> Eduskunta, MP profiles: ”Anne Holmlund”.

<sup>221</sup> Anne Holmlund (KOK), PTK 42/2004.

<sup>222</sup> Esa Lahtela (SDP), PTK 45/2004. On the position of the trade unions, see e.g. Vanamo-Chireux 2012; Simola 2008.

<sup>223</sup> For example Kimmo Tiilikainen (KESK) & Heidi Hautala (VIHR), PTK 42/2004.

<sup>224</sup> See e.g. Salminen 2011, 326.

<sup>225</sup> Arnswald 2000, 33-35. See also Bergman 2006, 74; Hubel 2004, 285. For a corresponding plenary debate reference to this advocacy, see e.g. Tomas Eneroth (SAP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 27.

means of creating an overall balance in the Nordic-Baltic neighborhood, not least with regard to such significant concerns as environmental protection, prevention of international crime, establishment of stable trade relations and advancement of democracy. In particular for Finland, a country that shares a 1300 kilometer long border with Russia, Union membership, including its own application in 1992, its Baltic advocacy after 1995 and its first political initiative as a member of the Union, the so-called Northern Dimension Initiative (NDI), was a critical factor in establishing itself as a part of the western security community.<sup>226</sup> This being the case, it was only logical that it would speak so strongly in favor of Baltic membership, especially when added up with its other, not security policy related benefits.<sup>227</sup>

In December 1997, the looming prospect of Baltic EU membership became an even stronger reality when Estonia took a modest yet psychologically very significant head start on Latvia and Lithuania by becoming the first of the Baltic countries with which it was recommended by the Commission for the member states to open actual accession negotiations. Although Estonia had to provide solutions for quite a few issues before its accession, “the position of its Russian minority; a big foreign trade deficit; uneven regional development and low GDP by comparison with the EU countries’ average”<sup>228</sup>, it was understood by EU officials as the most prepared for accession of the three as it had in recent years implemented a number of significant economic reforms, transforming itself quickly towards a market economy of the western kind.<sup>229</sup> It was this decision and the ensuing debates between member states that brought finally to the open that Finland was willing to put more effort into making Estonia an EU member than doing the same for Latvia and Lithuania. Finland diverged from the other Nordic countries in this matter by arguing that the enlargement should be restricted to a limited number of candidate countries to halt the Union’s system from becoming overburdened. The others were, on the contrary, in favor of securing an equal path to accession for all three Baltic States.<sup>230</sup> While the special relationship Finland has with Estonia was clearly a fundamental reason behind its choice in this issue, we must also account a part of its position to its preference in the early years of its membership in the

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<sup>226</sup> See e.g. Riddervold & Sjørnsen 2006; Arter 2000; Bergman 2006, 81; Olesen 2000, 157-158. On the expectations of Sweden and Finland when joining the EU, see Granell 1995; Arter 1995; Luostarinen & Salolainen 2006, 31-32.

<sup>227</sup> On the Nordic EU member states competition for regional leadership and solidarity, see e.g. Bergman 2006; Arnswald & Jopp 2001. While the Nordic countries like to compete for regional leadership, they are still keen to cooperate with each other on international arenas. As Olesen 2000, 163-164, argues, European integration has historically been quite a difficult project to market to the Nordic countries, but the complete opposite can be said about Nordic cooperation.

<sup>228</sup> The Estonian government’s report “Roadmap to Reform: Estonia’s future plans in the field of European integration” cited in Löfgren & Herd 2000, 75.

<sup>229</sup> Löfgren & Herd 2000, 75.

<sup>230</sup> Arnswald 2000, 40; Higashino 2004, 357.

European Union to distance itself from its Nordic neighbors as “a good European did not build blocs, and certainly not with countries whose reputation was questionable”<sup>231</sup>, a label applying well in many Finnish minds to both Denmark and Sweden with which the country disagreed on some crucial details of European cooperation, such as the necessity of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU).

Alenius observes that in addition to the Russians, the Latvians and the Baltic Germans the Finns have constituted a neighbor of great importance for the Estonians. In comparison to the others, the contacts between the Finns and the Estonians were less common in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as the two countries were kept apart geographically by the Gulf of Finland.<sup>232</sup> From the 1850s onwards, the relationship started to change and Finland became the example through which Estonians would reflect on their own goals, were they national, cultural or economic. As a consequence of this admiration, Finland became a “big brother” of sorts, seeing itself as a more progressive and civilized nation, an example Estonians should look up to and hope to become.<sup>233</sup> Both countries’ nationalistic movements started to quickly develop in the same decades and the groups found common ground in their shared understanding of language as the foundation of cultural and political identity, a kinship based on belonging to a common Finno-Ugric language group in addition to so-called ‘tribal ideology’<sup>234</sup> the goal of which was to uphold and bring together Finnic peoples.<sup>235</sup> Especially in the 1930s, the idea of a Greater Finland<sup>236</sup>, in both a geographic and mental sense, brought together Finns in ideological and political societies such as the infamous Academic Karelia Society (AKS).<sup>237</sup> The notion of deepening cooperation between the two countries was taken furthest in tentative plans for a Greater Baltic<sup>238</sup>, an idea that surfaced in the early 1920s to be quite quickly brought down by Finns who saw the union as a political risk, opting instead for easier, more economically beneficial modes of cooperation.

Zetterberg argues that the relationship between the countries alternated in the 20<sup>th</sup> century between two states of being. The first, prevailing 1918-1940 and again after 1991, can be characterized by attempts by both to protect their nation state from the economic exploitation of the other, whereas before 1918 and 1940-1991 the relationship has been more imbalanced, Estonia yielding by force of

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<sup>231</sup> Ojanen 2005, 407.

<sup>232</sup> Alenius 2002, 54-55; Raittila 2004, 159.

<sup>233</sup> Alenius 2002, 56; Lehti 1998, 112.

<sup>234</sup> *Heimoaate* in Finnish.

<sup>235</sup> Raittila 2004, 159-160; Lehti 1998, 86; Pimiä 2012, 398.

<sup>236</sup> *Suur-Suomi* in Finnish.

<sup>237</sup> Pimiä 2012, 398-399; Kiho 2008, 14.

<sup>238</sup> *Suur-Baltia* in Finnish.

circumstances to the mere position of the smaller brother.<sup>239</sup> In Finland, attitudes towards Estonians were conflicting in the latter half of the century as the Finno-Ugric kindred people on the southern shore of the Gulf of Finland was seen to embody both ‘us’ and ‘them’, brothers that were nevertheless part of the Soviet Union and thus “Russians”.<sup>240</sup> The idea of Russia as a threat to both Finland and Finnishness is at the core of a grand narrative of Finnishness.<sup>241</sup> Therefore, once acquired, a Russian connection is hard to get rid of. In spite of this perceived Soviet nature of Estonians in the mind of Finns, they were understood, as stated by Jaakkola, as more desirable migrants than true Russians, demonstrating the existence of a perceived ethnic hierarchy between different immigrant groups.<sup>242</sup>

Already during the accession negotiations, a number of surveys were conducted to create predictions about the number of Estonians possibly coming to Finland after the enlargement. The most publicized of these was a series of surveys commissioned by the Central Organization of Finnish Trade Unions (Suomen Ammattiliittojen Keskusjärjestö, SAK). These surveys, conducted by the company Suomen Gallup, found that nearly 400 000 Estonians, a large portion of a small population of only 1.4 million, would be either fairly or very interested in coming to work in Finland. These estimates, in part, caused the Finnish trade unions to push for a long transition period. It was also suspected that foreign workers would be utilized as stand-ins for Finnish labor in times of industrial action, undermining the workers’ position in concurrent negotiations.<sup>243</sup> Breaking down all their reasons for supporting the enlargement in principle but lobbying for the full seven year transitional measures, SAK published a report in July 2002 on the effects of the eastern enlargement on the movement of people across the Gulf of Finland. In its report, it argued that Finland should not soften its stance on transitional arrangements by talking about the minimum two year period as the likely scenario, but rather leave the decision to the cabinet program negotiations, anticipated to take place for the next time in spring 2007.<sup>244</sup> In addition its own report, authored by Deputy Director Matti Viialainen, former Party Secretary of the Left Alliance<sup>245</sup>, SAK was one of the signatories in a joint trade union statement in which the organizations, including for example the Confederation of Unions for Academic Professionals in Finland Akava and the Union of Industries and Employers (Teollisuuden ja Työnantajain Keskusliitto, TT), emphasized that if the

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<sup>239</sup> Raittila 2004, 161; Zetterberg 2004, 63-64.

<sup>240</sup> Raittila 2004, 163.

<sup>241</sup> Lähteenmäki & Pöyhönen 2015, 94.

<sup>242</sup> Jaakkola 2005, 70.

<sup>243</sup> Nykänen 2012, 27-28; Helsingin Sanomat 24.6.1998, ”Vain nelisen prosenttia virolaisista tulisi hakemaan töitä Suomesta.”; Helsingin Sanomat 4.10.2000, ”Halpa työvoima huolena”; Helsingin Sanomat 19.5.2002, ”Onko EU:n laajentuminen hyvä vai huono asia?”.

<sup>244</sup> Viialainen 2002, 11-13.

<sup>245</sup> YLE 23.6.2010, ”Matti Viialainen on Puumalan Lintusalon poikia”.

transitional regulations were to be lifted early, the decision should be made only after it was prepared and discussed in tripartite negotiations.<sup>246</sup>

The surveys were questioned, some challenging them by giving entirely different predictions. One of these alternative surveys was published by Saar Poll, an Estonian company specializing in social and market research. In its survey in 2001, 49,000 working-age Estonians saw it as likely that they would work in Finland, a number significantly lower than the first mentioned surveys, but still large enough to cause reservations. It was stated in the report analyzing the results of the poll that for many working abroad was more a daydream than an actual plan of action. This argument was supported by the fact that, according to the study, 42% of those who were eager to move abroad were unemployed, retired, housewives and students, likely living in situations in which they would not be able to make the move a reality.<sup>247</sup> Even high-ranking politicians expressed their doubts about the original predictions. Jukka Oas (SDP), representative of the Commission of the European Union in Finland<sup>248</sup>, substantiated his suspicions with EU statistics according to which on average about 4% of EU citizens lived abroad.<sup>249</sup> But as Finland was not the only old member country that Estonians were reported to have an interest in<sup>250</sup>, even these predictions were in many commenting statements seen as overrated. Alexander Stubb (KOK), adviser to the President of the European Commission, argued, questioning the attractiveness of the Finnish labor market:

“The [Suomen Gallup] estimate exposes a lack in sense of proportion. Estonia has a population of 1.4 million of which about a million people are engaged in the labor market. Does anyone honestly believe that --- half of them would rush to seek employment in Finland?”<sup>251</sup>

Regardless of the reality that the numbers had clearly come down since the publication of the original survey, it did have an effect on Finnish policy as it was released close to the tripartite negotiations in which the transition period was discussed in detail between politicians and the representatives of the Finnish trade unions. The surveys were remembered and even if proven false, endured also in plenary debates.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>246</sup> Akava et al 2001.

<sup>247</sup> Helsingin Sanomat 27.3.2001, ”50 000 virolaista haluaisi Suomeen töihin”.

<sup>248</sup> Taloussanomat 7.8.1999, ”Komission mies”.

<sup>249</sup> Helsingin Sanomat 24.6.1998, ”Vain nelisen prosenttia virolaisista tulisi hakemaan töitä Suomesta”.

<sup>250</sup> Esim. Helsingin Sanomat 31.5.2002, ”Virosta ei työvoimaryntäystä”.

<sup>251</sup> Helsingin Sanomat 19.5.2002, ”Onko EU:n laajentuminen hyvä vai huono asia?”.

<sup>252</sup> For example Arto Satonen (KOK), Kimmo Sasi (KOK) & Heidi Hautala (VIHR), PTK 45/2004.

The Finnish debates on posted and temporary agency work in conjunction with transitional provisions were a debate between those who wanted open borders and those who preferred additional regulation. Looking at the arguments of both sides, a pair of arguments can be found in the way MPs portrayed the threats and challenges they saw becoming menaces if their preferred policy was not enforced. The supporters of transitional arrangements feared that opening borders to CEEC workers would lead to unpredictable immigration that would hamper the footing of the Finnish unemployed, contributing to both growing long-term employment and social exclusion<sup>253</sup>. These representatives, the Finns Party group members Timo Soini, leader of the party since 1997<sup>254</sup>, and Raimo Vistbacka most insistently, scolded both the previous and present cabinet for forgetting the needs of Finnish workers and farmers in addition to concentrating too rigidly on presumed future labor shortages which, according to Soini, were sheer propaganda for which no credible evidence could be found<sup>255</sup>.

Such comments were made to respond in particular to National Coalition Party representatives, who wanted to repel the adoption of transitional arrangements on account of a weakening dependency ratio and an ageing population.<sup>256</sup> This argument is justifiable if those coming became net contributors through work and the paying of taxes.<sup>257</sup> Such arguments were not only used by the Conservatives, however, as some Green Members of Parliament also joined in on demanding a critical analysis of the future of the Finnish labor market in face of great changes. Anni Sinnemäki joined the debate by reminding her colleagues that joining the Finnish labor market through conventional employments would also be beneficial to Estonians as they would need to pay less taxes if they paid them to Finland instead of Estonia.<sup>258</sup> Adding to previous comments, Rosa Meriläinen, another member of a new up-and-coming group of young, international-minded Greens like Sinnemäki, noted, bringing up the often forgotten point that if no additional labor could be found to make up for shortages, the upkeep of the welfare state, including all its services, would fall ever more heavily on younger Finnish generations:

“In the future we will without a doubt have more and more need for labor immigration. It is entirely unreasonable to think that the only solution to push up the employment rate is for my generation to work

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<sup>253</sup> Markus Mustajärvi (VAS), PTK 42/2004.

<sup>254</sup> Eduskunta, MP profiles: ”Timo Soini”.

<sup>255</sup> Timo Soini (PS), Raimo Vistbacka (PS) & Toimi Kankaanniemi (KD), PTK 42/2004.

<sup>256</sup> Jan Vapaavuori (KOK) & Anne Holmlund (KOK), PTK 42/2004; Reijo Paaajanen (KOK), PTK 45/2004.

<sup>257</sup> Entzinger 2007, 129.

<sup>258</sup> Anni Sinnemäki (VIHR), PTK 45/2004. In Estonia, the personal income tax rate, a flat tax, was in 2004 26%. When summed up with social security payments, the total tax rate in Finland for those at the lower end of the income spectrum was lower than that in Estonia.

longer days and for more years for the pensions of your generations. It would instead be nicer if we had more peeps<sup>259</sup> to do those jobs, so that baby-busters would not need to break their backs.”<sup>260</sup>

In the government’s proposal, it was stated that “employment and economic development offices will give their approval after they have investigated that no labor suitable for the intended work is available within a reasonable timeframe among the disposable work force.”<sup>261</sup> In effect, this meant that if either a Finnish person or a foreigner already living in the country was depicted to be able to fill the position offered, no work permit would be granted and the A10 citizen looking for a way to become employed in Finland would need to look for another work offer or join the labor market in alternative way. The representatives of cabinet parties rationalized such a bureaucratic approach by noting that

“--- if we have too few doctors in Finland, if there is a shortage, too few carpenters, work permits exist for that purpose during the transition period. And so, if the matter needs to be taken care of, it will be announced that we have a labor shortage, and enough work permits will be granted, that’s that.”<sup>262</sup>

The reasoning was not approved without question by the opponents of the proposal as Anne Holmlund stated that “if the employment and economic development office assesses that a work permit cannot be granted, the very same doctor could absolutely freely join the labor market through a temporary work agency”<sup>263</sup>. The oversight of such contracts would, as noted by former Party Leader of the Green League Heidi Hautala, be considerably more challenging and entail a risk of permanent disturbances in the labor market that could, according to Rosa Meriläinen (VIHR), not only concern foreign labor but also Finnish people through an overall increase in the use of temporary agency work in the Finnish society.<sup>264</sup> These slippery slope type arguments were relatively common among Green League as well as National Coalition representatives. Reijo Paaajanen (KOK), himself an entrepreneur since the early 1970s<sup>265</sup>, argued

“The black market, undeclared work, various forms of tax evasion are not a problems that are getting any easier, not in Finland and not elsewhere, either. Wrong practices will soon become a habit that is hard to weed out after the transitional arrangements have expired.”<sup>266</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> Translated from the Finnish colloquial word *jengi* that refers to a group of people.

<sup>260</sup> Rosa Meriläinen (VIHR), PTK 42/2004.

<sup>261</sup> Finnish Government HE 172/2003, 10.

<sup>262</sup> Esa Lahtela (SDP), PTK 42/2004.

<sup>263</sup> Anne Holmlund (KOK), PTK 42/2004.

<sup>264</sup> Heidi Hautala (VIHR) & Rosa Meriläinen (VIHR), PTK 42/2004.

<sup>265</sup> Eduskunta, MP profiles: ”Reijo Paaajanen”.

<sup>266</sup> Reijo Paaajanen (KOK), PTK 45/2004.



The thought of a slippery slope was taken even a step further by Paajanen's group colleague Kimmo Sasi, former Minister of Foreign Trade<sup>267</sup>, who contended that

“If we have a system through which people can come to work here legally, --- the amount of undeclared work will be substantially decreased. But if work permit applications are still needed, it can lead to a circumstance where, if temporary agency work is not a suitable option [for the individual], work will be carried out in the undeclared way. This is perhaps the worst option for the worker.”<sup>268</sup>

Whereas the proponents of the bill focused on the likelihood of uncontrollable labor immigration, its opponents saw more risks in the likely segmentation of the labor market into two tiers. As said above, transitional regulations were thought by the Green and National Coalition members to result in more work done through posting and temporary work agencies, possibly even through the black market.<sup>269</sup> The black market argument was used in particular by Green MP Erkki Pulliainen, former Professor of Zoology at the University of Oulu<sup>270</sup>, who had throughout his parliamentary career made multiple written questions on the issue in addition to being the first signatory in an interpellation in 2002 that had called for concrete actions to tackle issues related to the black market.<sup>271</sup> Those in favor of rules, in turn, argued that untraditional forms of work would be available to foreign workers even if borders were kept open and no restrictive transitional rules were adopted. As the problem of such employment options existed regardless of the choice made, it was according to Christian Democratic Member of Parliament Toimi Kankaanniemi, former Minister of Development Issues<sup>272</sup>

“--- wisdom to proceed with caution. If all hatches are opened now, the flood may be massive, but if we advance as carefully as the cabinet suggests ---, this gives us a chance to see what happens and in this way interfere with the means we have. Those means will surely not be plentiful, but if all hatches are now opened, there is no turning back. The ship will have sailed and then we will just stand and see what happens, just like is now happening in alcohol policy and likely also in the near future on a larger scale regarding tax competition.”<sup>273</sup>

In referring to alcohol policy, Kankaanniemi alluded to the second most discussed item on the Finnish agenda with regard to the accession of new member states. It was a topic that did not have to do with

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<sup>267</sup> Eduskunta, MP profiles: "Kimmo Sasi".

<sup>268</sup> Kimmo Sasi (KOK), PTK 45/2004.

<sup>269</sup> Anne Holmlund (KOK), PTK 42/2004.

<sup>270</sup> Eduskunta, MP profiles: "Erkki Pulliainen".

<sup>271</sup> Pulliainen et al, VK 4/2002; Tontti 2007, 221.

<sup>272</sup> Eduskunta, MP profiles: "Toimi Kankaanniemi".

<sup>273</sup> Toimi Kankaanniemi (KD), PTK 42/2004.

immigration in the traditional sense, but included a movement of sorts across the European Union's internal borders. As a consequence of fears that the large excise tax level difference between Finland and Estonia would lead to growing 'liquor rally' between the harbors of their two capitals, potentially resulting in extensive public health problems, the Finnish government had decided in March to make proposals for tax reductions of 44% for distilled spirits, 32% for beer and 10% for wine.<sup>274</sup> Sweden, in turn, albeit worried about the effects the abolishing of import quotas could have on the importation of alcohol over the Øresund strait, chose not to lower its excise duties before the eastern enlargement, settling for a policy of rigorous observation. The goal behind the policy was to assess the harms and benefits caused by tax cuts in comparable countries before making any changes of their own.<sup>275</sup>

In this chapter, we have examined and analyzed the main features of the Finnish debate on transitional rules: its historical context, the policy-making process in the Eduskunta and the most important strand of arguments used by the participating parties. Keeping in mind its rather slow history of developing from one of the most emigration-oriented countries in Europe to a country receiving growing masses of immigrants, it is easy to see why it was the unwavering decision of the Vanhanen I cabinet to push for the adoption of transitional regulations. In practice, the bill was opposed fully only by the Green League MPs, whereas the National Coalition Party was divided and all other parties were in favor of the proposal. As such, the debates in the plenary were not a manifestation of genuine deliberation but rather a moment for those against the proposal to put their arguments on record and a chance for the others to attempt to invalidate them with counter-arguments. In the Eduskunta, arguments revolved primarily around two interrelated issues, the Estonian "threat" as well as the problems associated with an increasing use of temporary agency work and posted work in the Finnish labor market. Although there had been a wide consensus since the beginning of Finland's own membership in the Union that the eastern enlargement was in the country's interests politically and economically<sup>276</sup>, the exact speed in which the inescapable changes that it would entail would be tackled became a question of bigger contention. In the next chapter, we will turn to Sweden, examining first the most significant features of the Swedish case before looking into arguments that were equally present in both cases.

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<sup>274</sup> Mäkelä & Österberg 2009, 555.

<sup>275</sup> Karlsson & Österberg 2009, 22; Ugland 2000, 64; Helsingin Sanomat 3.3.2004, "Ruotsi pysyy tiukkana".

<sup>276</sup> Kuosmanen & Rislakki 2006, 145.

## 4. Sweden

### 4.1 Immigration to Sweden: A Nordic Visionary

After World War II, Sweden began to slowly liberalize its immigration policy and, as a result of this, the size of its migrant population started to rise rapidly. In 1940 foreign-born people constituted only 1% of the Swedish population, whereas at the start of the new millennium their portion had risen to 11.3%.<sup>277</sup> In addition to this significant growth in the number of immigrants, their profile also changed significantly. Whereas in the 1960s Scandinavians, mainly Finnish nationals, made up over half of the foreign-born population, their proportion had gone down to a fourth in 2004.<sup>278</sup>

Between 1949 and 1971, immigration to Sweden consisted mainly of labor migrants from European countries, mainly Finland and southern Europe. In the year 1970, approximately 60% of the migrant population was from other Nordic countries and more than 90% were European.<sup>279</sup> The utilization of foreign workers had become common in Sweden already during the war when thousands of refugees from other Nordic countries and to a lesser extent from the Baltics joined the labor force. These people found work in factories, agriculture and the forestry, substituting for Swedish citizens who were taken out of the labor market because of the mobilization.<sup>280</sup> After the war, the economy continued to grow and unemployment levels remained low, which, in addition to a marked growth in the national export industries, contributed to a persistent need of labor.<sup>281</sup> These factors were also of importance when in 1944 the idea of a common Nordic labor market resurfaced in the Riksdag after ten years of silence. The requirement to acquire a visa to enter Sweden was abolished for Danish, Norwegian and Icelandic citizens in 1945 and for Finnish citizens a few years later in 1949.<sup>282</sup> In 1954, a common Nordic labor market was created, granting all citizens of the Nordic countries a right to live, move and work freely in Sweden.<sup>283</sup>

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<sup>277</sup> Statistics Sweden, "Summary of Population Statistics 1960–2017"; Ekberg 2006, 1.

<sup>278</sup> Westin 2006.

<sup>279</sup> Ekberg 2006, 1.

<sup>280</sup> Lundh & Ohlsson 1994, 67.

<sup>281</sup> Cerna 2009, 9.

<sup>282</sup> Lundh & Ohlsson 1994, 70.

<sup>283</sup> Cerna 2009, 9.

The economy continued to grow and demand for labor remained high. With these circumstances in mind, the government worked together with active businesses, such as Volvo and SKF, to recruit new foreign labor.<sup>284</sup> But unlike West Germany and Switzerland, the Swedish government never set up a carefully organized guestworker system. In addition to companies actively initiating migration from countries like Yugoslavia and Greece, a growing number of workers came to Sweden independently to seek employment.<sup>285</sup> In this era of ‘tourist immigration’ lasting from 1955 to 1968, foreign workers could enter the country as tourists and spend up to three months in Sweden looking for a job without having to apply for a work permit.<sup>286</sup> If one succeeded in finding employment, obtaining a permit was only a formality that could be taken care of in just a few short days.<sup>287</sup>

It was also in this golden labor immigration era of the 1960s that some in Sweden started to scorn the existing open-doors immigration legislation and insist on looking for ways to better utilize domestic labor reserves (such as women, elders, the disabled) instead.<sup>288</sup> The opponents of liberal immigration policies argued that a lack of restrictions could cause unnecessary juxtapositions between Swedes and immigrants in both working life and in everyday situations<sup>289</sup>. The reasons for these hardened views can be easily found in statistics: in 1964 annual number of coming migrants started to rise high above predictions, reaching nearly 34 000 persons net in 1965.<sup>290</sup> For the Swedish welfare state that was in the middle of its best years, the poor quality of life that many immigrants were coping with became a major social contradiction that had to be resolved for the betterment of the whole society.<sup>291</sup> In 1966 it became harder than before to come to Sweden with the purpose of looking for a job and from 1967 onwards it was no longer possible to apply for a work permit while already in the country.<sup>292</sup>

As a consequence of this more open immigration debate, in 1968 the Riksdag passed the Immigration Act, bringing to an end an era of liberal immigration. Swedish workers were to be employed before looking into bringing in foreigners and the number of migrants allowed to enter the country would be matched not only to the employment situation but also to the availability of such basic necessities as

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<sup>284</sup> Cerna 2009, 9; Lundh & Ohlsson 1994, 77-78.

<sup>285</sup> Westin 2006.

<sup>286</sup> Lundqvist 2004, 3.

<sup>287</sup> Lundh & Ohlsson 1994, 77.

<sup>288</sup> Lundh & Ohlsson 1994, 78; Knocke 2000, 363.

<sup>289</sup> On the social inclusion of immigrants see e.g. Wickström 2015; Bevelander & Pendakur 2010; Valenta & Bunar 2010. On the labor market integration of immigrants in Sweden, Knocke 2000; Bevelander 1999.

<sup>290</sup> Lundh & Ohlsson 1994, 79.

<sup>291</sup> Brochmann & Hagelund 2011, 16.

<sup>292</sup> Pedersen, Røed & Wadensjö 2008, 50.

housing, education and healthcare.<sup>293</sup> Non-Nordic labor migration halted, while the number of Finns entering the country reached an all-time high in 1970-1971.<sup>294</sup> Overall, immigration transferred from bringing in foreign workers to family reunification and receiving substantially more refugees, both of which were put into effect for humanitarian reasons instead of giving the society economic boosts.<sup>295</sup> As the character of immigration changed, a larger part of incoming migrants were from non-European countries.<sup>296</sup> As the migrant community became more diverse, a more attentive integration policy was put into action with the objective of promoting equality, freedom of choice and partnership. The goals were to be accomplished by giving foreigners with a permanent residence in Sweden the same rights as those enjoyed by Swedish citizens and by giving migrants a chance to decide themselves to what extent they wished to assimilate into the Swedish society as long as the kept traditions did not clash with basic Swedish norms and values.<sup>297</sup>

In the 1980s and the 1990s, labor migration was placed on the backseat and refugee migration grew.<sup>298</sup> In the 1990s, Sweden received the most refugees of all European countries, therefore maintaining its standing as one of the most immigrant-friendly states on the continent. Despite this, the decade was a period of growing dissent with the existing policies. The circumstances in the labor market became especially difficult for non-European migrants that would suffer the most on account of the depression that slowed economic growth in the first few years of the 1990s.<sup>299</sup> In 1995, the government wrote a document in which an array of suggestions were given to reduce immigrant unemployment, including local employment projects financed by the government, loans for aspiring migrant entrepreneurs and wage subsidies.<sup>300</sup> Opposition of liberal immigration policy culminated in 1991 when the far-right Ny Demokrati (New Democracy) entered the Riksdag, being the first populist party to be elected into the Swedish parliament before the Sweden Democrats' win in the 2010 general election.<sup>301</sup> After gaining 25 seats in 1991, the party started its slow disintegration, losing all its seats in 1994 and dissolving in 2000. Regardless of these rather isolated cries for a stricter immigration policy, as a whole the 1990s was a decade of re-liberalization. The birth of this change can be pinpointed to 1991 when the freshly elected center-right government refused the previous SAP cabinet's proposal "An active immigration

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<sup>293</sup> Lundqvist 2004, 3.

<sup>294</sup> Pedersen, Røed & Wadensjö 2008, 50.

<sup>295</sup> Brochmann & Hagelund 2011, 17.

<sup>296</sup> Ekberg 2006, 1.

<sup>297</sup> Westin 2006.

<sup>298</sup> Lundqvist 2004, 11.

<sup>299</sup> Ekberg 2006, 3-4.

<sup>300</sup> Lundqvist 2004, 12.

<sup>301</sup> Spehar 2014, 153.

and refugee policy” that would have limited the rights of asylum seekers in Sweden by granting them only temporary residence permits instead of permanent ones.<sup>302</sup>

Anthony Downs has noted that “parties formulate policies in order to win elections, rather than win elections in order to formulate policies”<sup>303</sup>, submerging deep into the operating principles of political organizations. As such, much of international party-migration research during the latest half a century has traced the source of restrictive immigration policies to a phenomenon referred to as ‘Downsian contagion’. According to the theory, the likelihood of less open immigration policies increases when mainstream<sup>304</sup> political parties are faced with electoral competition from anti-immigration parties. In other words, either the actual or expected electoral success of political groups campaigning strongly against immigration would channel others toward more restrictive policy positions, as not to give their competitors ownership over the issue. Therefore, one would expect the non-socialist parties to have shifted their position in a more restrictive direction during as well as in the aftermath of the general election of 1991. In this case, they deviate from both expectations and results that have been gathered in similar party political settings in other European countries. As a matter of fact, Spehar, Bucken-Knapp and Hinnfors, all well-known academics of Swedish immigration policy, see this peculiarity as one of the distinctive features of Swedish immigration debates in the period 1991-2011.<sup>305</sup>

Especially after the Swedish membership in the EU became a reality in 1995, immigration questions in Sweden have been tightly linked to the political parties’ positions regarding the Union. The Social Democrats and the Moderates, often supported by the Centre Party, cooperated most often of Riksdag parties in the 1990s to pass laws related to immigration. The two, antagonists in the economic sphere, found a reason for working together in advancing restrictive immigration policies, a collaboration that neither party was keen to discuss in the press or otherwise publically.<sup>306</sup> They were contested in such

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<sup>302</sup> Spehar 2012, 10. See also Widfeldt 2015, 402.

<sup>303</sup> Downs 1957, 28.

<sup>304</sup> On terminology: I use the term *mainstream* to refer to all parties that do not include anti-immigration sentiments in their core values. As such, there is only one party active in the two countries during the studied period that can be labeled as something else: the Finnish True Finns. The chosen terminology is in no way ideal, as it alludes that only anti-immigration parties have attempted to advance extremist ideologies. This is certainly not true as radical elements can also be found in the political programs and operational strategies of a number of other parties across the right-left divide. Many socialist parties, for example, are often thought to be radical thinkers as they generally promote economic, welfare and social policies that are far from the norm in a majority of western nation states.

<sup>305</sup> Spehar, Bucken-Knapp & Hinnfors 2011, 3.

<sup>306</sup> Widfeldt 2015, 402.

decisions by another bloc consisting of the Liberals<sup>307</sup>, the Green Party and the Left, in addition to the Christian Democrats who often cast their votes in convergence with the second bloc to oppose policy changes that they deemed as too restrictive.<sup>308</sup> In spite of some internal conflicts on a number of issues in the common immigration policy of the EU, both the Moderates and the SAP have in general taken a positive stance towards the development of such an EU-wide policy. The Left Party and the Greens have positioned themselves on the opposite end of the spectrum, being critical of the Union in general and as a part of that criticism also reluctant towards the common immigration policy.<sup>309</sup> In the plenary debate on Swedish membership in the Schengen area, the two latter parties argued that it would take Sweden in a more restrictive direction in immigration policy as well as create a “fortress Europe” that would divide incoming migrants in either an A-class or a B-class according to their home country.<sup>310</sup>

In the first years of the new millennium, Sweden changed its immigration policy completely, turning down its traditional focus on generous asylum and refugee policies and restrictive policies on labor migration for the completely opposite: extremely liberal sentiments on labor migration and a hardened take on migrants coming to the country on humanitarian grounds.<sup>311</sup> During the 2002 general election, immigration became a highly dividing issue as the center-right parties and the Greens in conjunction with employers’ representatives called for a policy change that would make it easier for people from outside of the EU to work in Sweden, whereas the Social Democrats, the Left and the workers’ unions hoped for more attention to be paid to domestic unemployment before resorting to seeking labor from abroad.<sup>312</sup> Although the Social Democratic cabinet did not see it as necessary to make rapid decisions about labor migration, a parliamentary committee was ordered in spring 2003 to review existing laws and to give its proposal on needed reforms.<sup>313</sup>

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<sup>307</sup> The Liberals were in a difficult situation in the 1990s when it came to immigration policy. Being a part of the Bildt cabinet of 1991-1994 as well as having the portfolio of migration, the party had to face criticism for restrictive policies similar to the one it had previously given the Social Democrats. Overcoming this struggle as a generally immigration-tolerant party, they were after 1994 an important part of the bloc attempting to put a stop to the restrictive proposals of the Moderates and the Social Democrats.

<sup>308</sup> Spång 2006, 52-53.

<sup>309</sup> Spång 2006, 35-36.

<sup>310</sup> Spång 2006, 12; Polanka (MP) & Hoffmann (V), Motion 1997/98:Ju220.

<sup>311</sup> Berg & Spehar 2013, 147.

<sup>312</sup> Quirico 2012, 11.

<sup>313</sup> Cerna 2009, 20.

## 4.2 Making of a Policy: An Overflow of Options

Unlike in Finland, the question of entry policy for immigrants remained high on the political agenda in Sweden throughout the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The most active party in calling for a more liberal immigration policy was the Greens. Only a year before the debate on transitional arrangements broke out in the Swedish parliament, the Greens published a proposal that consisted of ten ways that could, in their view, be used to accomplish a socially responsible labor migration policy. In the paper, it was stated that the immigration policy of the Persson cabinet was an example of a mode of thinking in which “global development involves open borders for goods and capital, but closed borders for people.”<sup>314</sup>

The Green Party was not alone in its belief that labor migration should be increased in order to provide a credible solution for labor shortages that were considered to likely have an impact on the Swedish economy in the years and decades to come. As a matter of fact, both the liberal-conservative Moderate Party and the Liberals had continuously insisted on a less restrictive immigration policy. Thus, shortly after the Greens made their abovenoted proposal public, they coupled with the two center-right parties in heartily urging the parliament to establish a specialized committee to investigate the future of TCN labor immigration into Sweden.<sup>315</sup> Nevertheless, although the active cooperation between the Greens, Liberals and Moderates kept the issue of labor migration on the political agenda instead of letting the matter loom in the background, the Social Democratic minority cabinet continued to see it as an issue of secondary importance. Prime Minister Göran Persson has been reported to have stated in a speech given at an event organized by the Swedish Union for Civil Servants in 2003, that “there is no hurry to decide anything on labor immigration and that the need for Sweden to receive more foreign workers is not immediate, but five or ten years ahead.”<sup>316</sup>

The process of rejecting a transition period in Sweden was not as straightforward and uncomplicated a project as adopting them was in Finland. Initially in the beginning stages of the process in 2002, the SAP government had stated confidently that the country would have no need to make use of the option of applying transitional arrangements to safeguard its labor market and that the Persson cabinet would not be making such a proposal. Persson was quoted in the newspaper Svenska Dagbladet to have said

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<sup>314</sup> Spehar, Bucken-Knapp & Hinnfors 2011, 11.

<sup>315</sup> Borevi 2012, 76.

<sup>316</sup> Berg 2003. Not a direct quotation from Persson.



that the accession of the A10 would likely result in economic optimism, thus resulting in a decreasing number of emigrants leaving those countries.<sup>317</sup> Nevertheless, a year later there was a change of heart within the SAP cabinet which culminated in an investigative television show during which the Prime Minister stated that a temporary transition period would likely be necessary after all in order to protect the Swedish welfare system from “benefits tourism”. The term, coined already in the 1990s, was used regularly in both Swedish politics as well as in many other European countries to refer to the idea that the nationals of accession countries would use their newly acquired freedom of movement to benefit from the generous social services and benefits of the old member states rather than making an honest living from work.<sup>318</sup> This change in policy is believed to have been largely inspired by the so-called Rollén report published in 2002. In the document, a parliamentarily appointed committee, led by and informally named after the former Swedish Migration Board Director Berit Rollén, stressed that there was a risk that the Swedish welfare system could become a tempting pull factor for the citizens of the A10 countries with arguments such as:

“As we have seen happen in past years when organized criminals have sold ‘asylum packages’ to Sweden, it is feasible that selling work offers that give both a residence permit and access to the entire Swedish welfare system could be used as a sort of business idea. These work offers could be fabricated, offering only a short working period and/or low wages. The employed person could also be laid off after only a short period of time. There are many conceivable scenarios of how less fastidious individuals --- could coax people in need of subsistence or health care into the country. After only a short time, they would become a responsibility of the Swedish society. What is more, this is also a window of opportunity for private individuals, without any criminal involvement, to take a chance, via poorly paid jobs of meager duration, to receive a living for themselves and their family.”<sup>319</sup>

The effect of transnational influences coming from other member states should not be ruled out either as it is only natural that governments that work closely together on a regular basis monitor each other. Therefore, as the other old member countries were announcing decisions that were mainly in favor of adopting transitional measures, earlier positions were also put under fresh scrutiny within the Swedish cabinet.<sup>320</sup> Tomas Eneroth (SAP), Chair of the Social Insurance Committee, summarized the decision-making of the party:

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<sup>317</sup> Bucken-Knapp et al 2014, 589-590.

<sup>318</sup> Spehar, Bucken-Knapp & Hinnfors 2011, 11-12; Bucken-Knapp 2014, 590.

<sup>319</sup> Rollén Committee SOU 2002:116, 153.

<sup>320</sup> Arter 2006, 248. See also Barbro Holmberg (SAP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 54.

“The policy of the government has been to preferably avoid transitional arrangements. But we cannot shut our eyes from the fact that Sweden will now --- be the last, maybe the only, country not to have transitional measures. It is obvious that this changes the circumstances. I understand that it can be difficult to change previously taken political positions, but as politicians we must also take responsibility to see what takes place in our surroundings. --- It is so that all other governments in Europe regardless of party color, have made the assessment that transitional measures are needed. Therefore also we in Sweden need these regulations for a short period.”<sup>321</sup>

Therefore, the primary argument of the government in favor of transitional regulations was that they were a necessary evil, springing from unexpected circumstances, adopted only to maintain a balance and stability in the Swedish labor market. Pointing out that many center-right parties in Europe were proposing transitional regulations in their respective countries, Eneroth employed a narrative in which the cabinet was complying with the existing norms within the Union while those opposing the chosen policy would be deviating from a decision made in tandem with other old EU member states.

Table 3. Stances towards the proposal of the SAP government.

Yes to entire SAP bill	No to SAP bill Yes to parts concerning working conditions	Support for an alternative proposal No to SAP bill	No to SAP bill and the alternative proposals
Social Democrats (144)	Left Party (30) Greens (17)	Moderate Party (55) Liberals (48)	Christian Democrats (33) Centre Party (22)

When spring 2004 finally came, it turned out that there would de facto be as many as four competing proposals for the Riksdag members to choose from: the SAP cabinet’s bill, two quite similar counter-proposals drafted by the biggest center-right parties, the Moderates and the Liberals, and the motion that received support from all other parties, the full dismissal of transitional rules. As Bucken-Knapp et al have observed: “characterizing party preferences in this instance is not a simple matter of having been for or against transitional [arrangements] but rather for or against the specific proposals of other

<sup>321</sup> Tomas Eneroth (SAP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 43. See also Barbro Holmberg (SAP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 56.

mainstream parties.”<sup>322</sup> As a matter of fact, Arter describes the situation, in which both the governing Social Democrats and the leading center-right opposition parties were in favor of adopting transitional arrangements but they were all defeated by minority parties, as “both ironic and paradoxical”<sup>323</sup>.

The Social Democratic proposal, if adopted, would have meant that a 2-year transition period would have begun in May 2004, compelling A10 citizens to acquire a Swedish working permit while still in their home country.<sup>324</sup> For the work permit to be granted, the person would need to provide a job offer of sufficient duration, giving the individual a wage respectful of the standards stated in the Swedish collective bargaining agreements of their field, a salary that the employed would be able to make an adequate living from.<sup>325</sup> The worker would also need to have attained proper accommodation for him- or herself in advance.<sup>326</sup> In addition, the cabinet wanted to make the regulations on working conditions stricter to increase the control of the government in the labor market, being supported in this part of the proposal by the Left and the Greens.<sup>327</sup> The government argued that the entity they were proposing would block risks that could follow from a disorganized transition to a free movement of people, that is to say wage dumping and the labor market developing into a guestworker system of sorts.<sup>328</sup>

Despite strong argumentation from SAP representatives, both the Left Party and the Greens, parties that had both previously provided assistance to the cabinet in a number of votings during the ongoing electoral term, rejected the proposed idea of work permits. Voting against transitional measures, the Left and the Greens in cooperation with the Christian Democrats and the Centre Party, the two parties opposed to both stricter working condition regulations and any form of transitional measures, ensured the cabinet’s defeat. These parties saw the rules as a complete overreaction that would greatly hinder the will of foreign workers to join the Swedish labor market and contribute negatively to the welfare of the people and the growth of the country. As Centre Party representative Birgitta Carlsson, a farmer by profession<sup>329</sup>, argued:

”They will have to come here to look for employment. If they get employed, they must return home to acquire a certificate to be able to work here. Must we be afraid of these people? Consider how much it

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<sup>322</sup> Bucken-Knapp et al 2014, 590. This kind of thinking can be seen e.g. in a comment by Bo Könberg (FP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 2.

<sup>323</sup> Arter 2006, 248.

<sup>324</sup> Swedish Government Skr. 2003/04:119, 27.

<sup>325</sup> Swedish Government Skr. 2003/04:119, 1.

<sup>326</sup> Arter 2006, 248.

<sup>327</sup> Ulla Hoffmann (V), PR 2003/04:104 Anf. 8; Per Westerberg (M), Anf. 1.

<sup>328</sup> Swedish Government Skr. 2003/04:119, 24.

<sup>329</sup> Riksdag, MP profiles: “Birgitta Carlsson”.

will cost! They travel here to stay here and then they must go home to apply for such a certificate. It costs time, time they could spend working, and also money for the travels home.”<sup>330</sup>

With respect to medium and small party families, there was a clear difference in the choices of the Finnish and Swedish sister parties. Whereas in Finland the Left Alliance and the Christian Democrats, as well as the Centre Party, the Prime Minister party, were behind the proposal for transitional rules, despite two of them being a part of the parliamentary opposition, their Swedish counterparts opposed the adoption of transitional arrangements.

As mentioned above, transitional arrangements were more than a question of yes or no in the Swedish case as not one but two opposition parties pushed for their own, slightly lighter versions of setting up restrictions on the free movement of people from the A10 into the Swedish labor market. The Liberals, despite being deeply divided on the issue<sup>331</sup>, finally settled on a motion the idea of which was that the citizens of the new member states would be expected to provide official proof, once in the country, that they had work from which they could earn a sufficient living or alternatively were in possession of such funds, and the requirement should, as noted by Liberal group leader Bo Könberg, be extended as soon as possible to all EU citizens hoping to move to another country within the Union. This shorter transition period would last only eight months after the enlargement.<sup>332</sup>

The Moderate proposal was similar as the party also called for ‘self-reliant subsistence’<sup>333</sup> in addition to calling for a European-wide discussion on the effects of free movement of labor on national welfare systems and social security.<sup>334</sup> Therefore, what distinguished the counter-proposals from the cabinet’s proposal was that the cabinet included the requirement to acquire a work permit in the home country, while the center-right opposition parties did not see such strict rules as necessary as long as the foreign worker could provide sufficiently for him- or herself.<sup>335</sup> The main distinguishing feature between the counter-proposals was that the Moderates focused more on the need to protect the welfare system, or as Per Westerberg, economist and former Minister for Industry and Trade in the Bildt cabinet of 1991-1994<sup>336</sup>, summed up their point of view:

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<sup>330</sup> Birgitta Carlsson (C), PR 2003/04:104 Anf. 68.

<sup>331</sup> See e.g. Erik Ullenhag (FP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 74. While the other parties only wrote one collective motion to be considered in the respective committee, the Liberals had two.

<sup>332</sup> Könberg (FP) et al, Motion 2003/04:Sf39. Bo Könberg (FP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 2; Bucken-Knapp 2009, 127.

<sup>333</sup> For example Reinfeldt (M) et al, Motion 2003/04:Sf40.

<sup>334</sup> Reinfeldt (M) et al, Motion 2003/2004:Sf40; Ullenhag (FP) et al, Motion 2003/04:Sf38.

<sup>335</sup> Arter 2006, 249.

<sup>336</sup> Riksdag, MP profiles: “Per Westerberg”; Sydsvenskan 1.10.2006, “Per Westerberg ny talman”.

“We Moderates say yes to labor immigration, but also insist on individuals being able to provide for themselves. We say no to benefits immigration, we say no to the over-exploitation of the welfare system – regardless of nationality, Swedish or foreign. We do this because it will benefit Sweden, Europe and its people.”<sup>337</sup>

Like the cabinet’s proposal, the Moderate and Liberal propositions incited opinions in both directions. The Moderate proposal was strongly and widely criticized for what many, Barbro Holmberg, Minister for Migration and Asylum Policy, and Hans Karlsson, Minister for Employment<sup>338</sup>, in particular, saw as an attempt to insert the seeds of a guestworker system<sup>339</sup> into Sweden as the initiative included, for example, a condition that the citizens of other EU member states would not be able to receive Swedish social benefits while looking for a job in the country and a stipulation for the cabinet to investigate if a phasing-in period for the receiving of benefits could be introduced.<sup>340</sup> Such “hybrid-solutions” were condemned not only by Barbro Holmberg, but also by Green MP Mona Jönsson, who reminded that it was not only other Swedish Members of Parliament who were against the reforms proposed by the Conservatives but that they would also be objected in the EU directorate as actions against the Union’s principle of equal treatment.<sup>341</sup>

The Liberal proposal, for its part, was contested on grounds of its “unrealistic”<sup>342</sup> timeframe as eight months would be too short a period to make the demanded changes to Regulation 1408/71 of the EU. In their proposal, the Liberals had insisted for Sweden to take initiative to revise the regulation so that family-based benefits, such as parental benefits and child allowance, would no longer be available to foreigners with children not living in Sweden.<sup>343</sup> Tomas Eneroth (SAP) noted that while negotiations on reforming the regulation had been ongoing between member states since the late 1990s, it would still take time before an agreement could be worked out, especially as there would now be not 15 but 25 members countries looking to find a suitable solution that could be accepted by their parliaments.<sup>344</sup> Barbro Holmberg added that the regulation was over 20 years old and as such its revision should be a well-contemplated decision, instead of a case of “throwing the baby out with the bathwater”<sup>345</sup>.

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<sup>337</sup> Per Westerberg (M), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 1.

<sup>338</sup> Bucken-Knapp 2009, 125.

<sup>339</sup> Barbro Holmberg (SAP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 48.

<sup>340</sup> Bucken-Knapp 2009, 127; Reinfeldt (M) et al, Motion 2003/04:Sf40.

<sup>341</sup> Mona Jönsson (MP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 70.

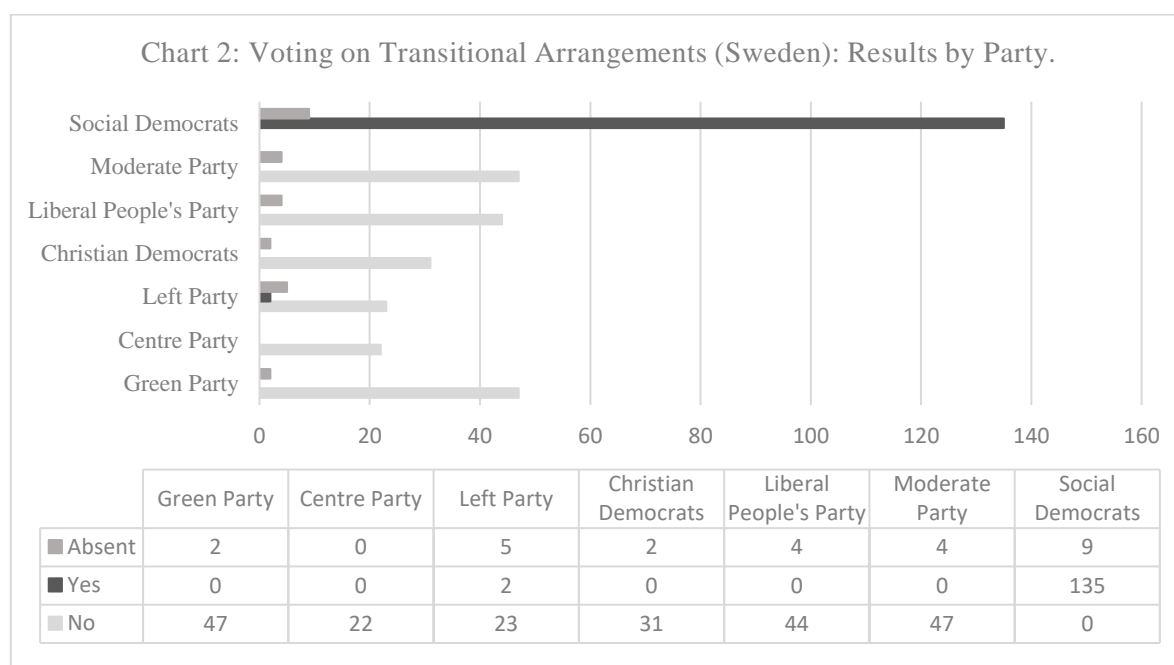
<sup>342</sup> Barbro Holmberg (SAP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 48.

<sup>343</sup> Könberg (FP) et al, Motion 2003/04:Sf39.

<sup>344</sup> Tomas Eneroth (SAP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 27.

<sup>345</sup> Barbro Holmberg (SAP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 58.

As in the Finnish parliamentary system, in Sweden a law proposal goes through an intense committee stage before being formally decided on in the plenary. In the case of the bill of transitional regulations, the Social Insurance Committee, in charge of giving a general statement on the bill, would in addition also process and examine the eight motions written by groups of MPs that wanted to give their opinion on the proposal. In the Committee, all nine opposition party representatives were against the cabinet's proposal, while the eight SAP representatives stood behind it. In the end, the Committee's statement included three separate reservations that coincided perfectly with what the parties had already said in their earlier motions. In a collective reservation, the Christian Democrats, the Left, the Centre and the Greens proclaimed the transitional regulations could channel development towards a two-tiered labor market. The Moderates and the Liberals wrote their own reservations where they advocated their own counter-proposals for one last time before the plenary vote.<sup>346</sup>



As the voting came closer, it slowly became clear that the government would be defeated. Therefore, as a last ditch effort to gain support for their policy, the SAP tried to achieve a compromise with the Liberals by promising to withdraw the law proposal if the Liberals would guarantee the approval of

<sup>346</sup> Committee on Social Insurance Statement 2003/04:SfU15; Arter 2006, 249; Bucken-Knapp 2009, 128.

another bill that would allow a transition period to be implemented at a later date if necessary.<sup>347</sup> As both bourgeois parties had hoped for some sort of transitional regulations, a compromise could have been made between one or both of them and the cabinet to ensure the approval of a transition period by standing together behind either the cabinet's bill or one of the bourgeois counterproposals.<sup>348</sup> Such a deal never realized, however, and the Moderate group leader, Mikael Odenberg, made his own last effort by replying publically to itinerant rumors that some Social Democratic representatives would be voting tactically to ensure that the final vote would not include the option of rejecting a transition period all together. As such a tactical act was against the unwritten norms that all Parliament Members are expected to comply with, Odenberg officially disapproved of such alleged plans, but at the same time alluded that if a maneuver like that would take place regardless, to vote for the Moderate counterproposal. He stressed the importance of the decision by noting that if the voting would come down to the cabinet's proposal and the rejection of it advocated by the four smaller parties, Moderate Members of Parliament would favor the latter.<sup>349</sup> The same message was repeated in the plenary session by Per Westerberg (M), first Vice Speaker of the Riksdag.<sup>350</sup>

In the end, on the 28<sup>th</sup> of April, a few days before the proposed law would have come into effect, the Moderates and the Liberals voted unanimously for their own counter-proposals whereas the rest of the opposition parties, excluding two MPs from the Left, voted down the government's proposal. In the final voting between approving and rejecting the government's proposal, 56.3% voted against the proposal whereas 42.4% were in favor and four Moderate MPs decided to cast votes of abstention.<sup>351</sup> Sweden opened its borders to A10 labor without temporary limitations on May 1<sup>st</sup> as a consequence of this parliamentary drama that ended with an exceptional decision, where the opposition managed, despite being divided, to work together to block a policy they were not ready to accept. Prime Minister Persson, commenting on the vote from a state visit to the United States, saw the parliament's decision as "extremely irresponsible".<sup>352</sup>

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<sup>347</sup> Bucken-Knapp et al 2014, 591.

<sup>348</sup> Per Westerberg (M), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 28; Barbro Holmberg (SAP), Anf. 48.

<sup>349</sup> Arter 2006, 250.

<sup>350</sup> Per Westerberg (M), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 1.

<sup>351</sup> Riksdag, Results of Voting Skr. 2003/04:119.

<sup>352</sup> Bucken-Knapp et al 2014, 591.

### 4.3 Argumentation: Social Policy and the Welfare State

Whereas in Finland the primary debates on the transitional measures circulated around posted workers and temporary agency work in addition to Estonia, in Sweden the center of attention was on themes related to social policy and the future of the welfare state, the likelihood of social or benefits tourism and wage dumping. It was a generally accepted idea among those in favor of transitional regulations that incoming foreigners from the A10 should need to be able to provide proof that they could provide for themselves with the work they would be engaging in before receiving a work permit to reduce the chance that they would fall under the care of the Swedish social security system. The fact that exactly these topics became the primary bones of contention is not a surprise as the future of the welfare state had also been one of the main sources of worry when debating on the country's possible participation in European integration before its accession into the Union in 1995. According to Jerneck, particularly the leftist parties, the SAP and the Left Party, were for a long time very critical of what the EU could offer, estimating that "Swedish involvement in the political integration of the [EU] would harm rather than sustain her capacity to pursue a welfare programme based on the principles of equal rights and advanced state-intervention"<sup>353</sup> For this reason, the incompatibility of the national Social Democratic welfare project with rapidly deepening European integration, many SAP supporters voted against the EU, defying the advice given to them by their party leadership.<sup>354</sup>

The representatives that opposed transitional measures, on the other hand, thought that the debate was revolving too much around social benefits and the welfare state, thus getting diverted from the main subject. As Margareta Andersson (C) scrutinized:

"We talk about social benefits and other such issues when this actually concerns the labor market. These are people who will come here to work that we are talking about. These are not people who first and foremost come here to demand benefits to survive."<sup>355</sup>

Still, despite criticisms on the direction in which the debate was going<sup>356</sup> and doubts that in reality the debate was not about it after all but rather about fear of competition amongst trade unions<sup>357</sup>, social benefits were one of the main bones of contention in the Swedish case. Their large role in the Swedish

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<sup>353</sup> Jerneck 1993, 26 cited in Bieler 2000, 1.

<sup>354</sup> Olesen 2000.

<sup>355</sup> Margareta Andersson (C), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 81.

<sup>356</sup> See also Camilla Sköld Jansson (V), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 76.

<sup>357</sup> See e.g. Birgitta Carlsson (C), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 17.



debates and simultaneous absence in the Finnish plenary was also one of the most explicit differences between the two cases as the topic of social security was for the most part not mentioned in the Finnish debates on transitional regulations. Contrariwise, both posted work and temporary agency work were mentioned in the Swedish debates only rarely.<sup>358</sup> They were certainly included within arguments that at their core were about something different, but they did not become the main topic of debate like in the Finnish case.

Poverty and lack of sufficient subsistence are complicated political questions. Population movements have surfaced throughout ages as a consequence of both absolute and relative poverty. Still, the stance of nation states towards the poor has been ambivalent. Though seeing the economically disadvantaged as a convenient cheap labor asset, all modern nations have also grown to see the risks the phenomenon of poverty could pose for the orderly organization of societies. The challenge of forming a position on the reduction of differences in living standards between members of society is especially difficult in the Nordic region where, despite a long tradition of generous welfare policies, there is also a strong Lutheran emphasis on work. As a result, compelling unemployed individuals to actively search for employment and sanctioning those not willing to work for a living have become important elements of modern Nordic social benefits policies. These principles are not understood to concern only the citizens of the countries, but are also applied to foreigners en route to becoming a part of that national community.<sup>359</sup> To pay for the extensive social rights offered, including income-based, need-dependent and universal social transfers, people are expected to take part in their funding by participating in the upkeep of the levels of social spending involved, for which money is collected through relatively high taxes.<sup>360</sup>

Brochmann and Hagelund have implied that the real challenge of immigration-related policy-making is the ungrateful task of protecting society against the emergence of new social inequalities.<sup>361</sup> Nordic welfare systems remain fair exclusively as long as they are financially secure. Only a welfare system that can sustain itself can afford to hold on to its high-minded principles, in the case of Nordic welfare states the principle of universalism. According Freeman, considerable incoming migration can pose a threat to the normative consensus upon which generous national welfare systems are built.<sup>362</sup> The objective of welfare systems is to transfer both welfare and wealth between the members of a society,

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<sup>358</sup> For example Ulla Hoffmann (V), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 12 & Bo Könberg (FP), Anf. 2.

<sup>359</sup> Johannisson 1988 & Haapala et al 2008 cited in Wrede 2010, 16.

<sup>360</sup> Kuisma & Nygård 2015, 160.

<sup>361</sup> Brochmann & Hagelund 2011, 16.

<sup>362</sup> Freeman 1986 cited in Brochmann & Hagelund 2011, 13.

“between individuals, between generations and sometimes also between regions.”<sup>363</sup> They rest on an imaginary contract in which “a group of people [is] committed to dividing, exchanging and sharing goods, first of all among themselves”<sup>364</sup>, “people feeling that they have something in common and are linked by ties of history, fate or --- obligations dealing with common risks, needs and challenges.”<sup>365</sup> Welfare states are intrinsically national projects<sup>366</sup> as their legitimacy depends on the level of societal and social cohesion at a given moment in time. A growing number of individuals that are not seen as embodying ‘us’ pose a challenge to the foundation upon which these systems are built.<sup>367</sup>

In a system burdened with these built-in contradictions, Social Democratic parties have most to lose. While the work of socialist parties worldwide is founded on an elaborate ideological infrastructure of internationalism and solidarity, they may in cases such as the one under study appear, contradictorily, as strong supporters of culturally and ethnically homogeneous nation states. The story is rather more complex, however, for it is a balancing act to promote the interest of both domestic and foreign labor in a world where the groups are so easily put against one another. In 2004, the SAP and the SDP were both members of the Socialist International, the global organization of social democratic, socialist and labor parties. In spite of their international nature, rooted in a common socialist ideology, Social Democratic movements are also inherently national movements. As the main architects and protectors of the modern Nordic welfare systems, they are tirelessly committed to its central principles, first and foremost the aim of treating all members of society with equality, solidarity and inclusiveness as well as the assurance of providing this all under the supervision of a strong public sector. This essentially Nordic way of thinking is strong in Social Democratic ideology. Subsequently, Hinnfors et al contend that Social Democrats are liable, more than other parties, to turn to restrictive immigration policies to protect a system they have worked so hard to build. To back their claim, they point to the regular use of themes like ‘Swedishness’ and ‘Swedish people’ in the rhetoric of the SAP, demonstrating a certain level of suspicion about ‘the other’. Göran Persson, for example, continuously argued during his term as Prime Minister that Swedish citizens should be given first priority before granting foreign workers full access to the national labor market. Bearing this in mind, there is reasonable cause to assume that the Swedish Social Democratic Party supports strict labor migration policies, at least in part, because open borders could pose a legitimate challenge to the Folkhemmet project<sup>368</sup>, presenting itself in recent

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<sup>363</sup> Entzinger 2007, 119.

<sup>364</sup> Waltzer 1983, 31, cited in Brochmann & Hagelund 2011, 14.

<sup>365</sup> Dølvik & Visser 2009, 494.

<sup>366</sup> See Myrdal 1960.

<sup>367</sup> See e.g. Entzinger 2007, 119.

<sup>368</sup> See Norocel 2016, 375.

years' policy positions as a desire to combine a heavily regulated labor market with generous welfare benefits.<sup>369</sup>

While all mentioned above is true, the welfare state aspect of Social Democratic immigration policy in the Nordic countries should certainly not be reduced to mere protection of acquired benefits or an overall conservative outlook on the future of the Nordic welfare system. While Nordic states are often referenced as model examples of a corporatist system in which wages and other relevant labor market policies are negotiated by the agents of both labor and employers in a process of collective bargaining in which government serves as mediator, parties are generally not understood as interest organizations in the strict sense. Nordic center-left parties, especially the Social Democrats, have strong links to the national workers' unions and have received funding from these in all relevant elections, while parties of the right, on the other hand, have a similar history with employers' organizations.<sup>370</sup> As the tradition of collective agreements is so deeply rooted in the Nordic labor market models, it is no surprise that during their accession negotiations in the early 1990s, Sweden, in particular, was concerned that its industrial relations system would be dissolved and replaced with a more legislative approach to labor market regulation.<sup>371</sup> The positions of parties on labor policy should not, however, be compressed to those of their collaborators. Instead, we should turn back to ideology and dig deeper to find a more satisfactory explanation for the way Social Democratic parties position themselves in labor migration debates.

Banting employs the concept of 'welfare chauvinism'<sup>372</sup> to refer the restrictive immigration policy positions of political groups that uphold the ideals of the welfare state as well as protest against open borders and the generous offering of social benefits to foreigners. Considering their long-term policies on humanitarian and labor migration, both the Finnish and the Swedish Social Democrats fulfil this criteria. Whereas traditional immigration policy research associates strict entry policies primarily with right-wing parties<sup>373</sup>, the Swedish Social Democratic Party has already since the 1960s both supported and played an active role in introducing restrictive legislation.<sup>374</sup> This is a crucial point to remember as it demonstrates how the game we call politics is, at its core, a match of cooperation and well-timed strategic alignments. The Social Democrats have been the leading party in Sweden for a bulk of their

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<sup>369</sup> Hinnfors et al 2012, 589-592. See also Gould 1999, 166.

<sup>370</sup> Kananen 2016, 175.

<sup>371</sup> Jensen 2015, 234.

<sup>372</sup> See also Keskinen 2016, 355.

<sup>373</sup> Berg & Spehar 2013, 145.

<sup>374</sup> Hinnfors et al 2012, 585.

over a century long history and still, regardless of the party's reluctant approach to migration, Sweden is recognized in both popular as well as academic accounts as the most immigrant-friendly country in Europe.

In its proposal for transitional arrangements, the SAP government made an adjacent recommendation concerning the future of the Swedish welfare state and its benefits system. In this proposal, the cabinet stated that it wanted to “commission a special investigator to review the possibility of restricting the right to assistance --- of job-seeking EU citizens who have not worked in Sweden before and are not included in the EC law principle of equality.”<sup>375</sup> In referencing the equality principle, the government was referring to the different rights given in EU legislation to job-seekers and employed people, those looking for employment being entitled to much less than those in possession of a work contract. Once employed, the foreigner would receive, for instance, the right to settle in their host country with their family, tax-paid education for their children as well as access to the social benefits of the host state.<sup>376</sup> It was then in the interest of the government to seriously contemplate the possibility of introducing a so-called ‘qualification rule’ according to which only those who had stayed in the country long enough would be eligible to receive benefits.<sup>377</sup> The goal was that the appointment of the special investigator would be endorsed by the MPs as a part of the entity proposed by the government. The investigation would commence as soon as possible and the intention of the cabinet was that the subsequent report would be published in the first half of the proposed two years’ transition period.<sup>378</sup> Whereas the cabinet was in favor of merely investigating what changes could be made within the framework of the treaties Sweden was a signatory of, some parliamentarians became inspired to make more specific proposals. Liberal Member of Parliament Bo Könberg, for example, pushed for debate on whether a similar rule could be enacted for workers that was already in place for both students and pensioners where people could move freely within the Union as long as they could provide for themselves.<sup>379</sup> In the voting, the proposal of the government was approved after a long and manifold debate and center-right calls for ‘self-reliant subsistence’ were left unanswered.<sup>380</sup>

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<sup>375</sup> Swedish Government Skr. 2003/04:119, 32.

<sup>376</sup> Anders Kruse, Committee on Social Insurance Statement 2003/04:SfU15, 79. See also Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union 2000/C 364/01; Mona Jönsson (MP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 22.

<sup>377</sup> Lundgren SOU 2005:34, 3.

<sup>378</sup> Swedish Government Skr. 2003/04:119, 32.

<sup>379</sup> Bo Könberg (FP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 57.

<sup>380</sup> Results of Voting Skr. 2003/04:119.

In the debate, the notion of a ‘Polish father of three’<sup>381</sup> became a common argument in favor of making changes to the workings of the social security system. Their fear was that families in the new member states would send their fathers to Sweden so that the whole family would be eligible to receive benefits there, as was the right of those who were employed in another EU state. Their opponents, on the other hand, saw such a situation of benefits hopping as a highly improbable one. According to Secretary of State Charlotte Svensson, working under Minister of Migration Holmberg in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the rule that the family members of foreign citizens working in Sweden were entitled to social benefits regardless of their place of residence was a result of historical conditions, dated back to the times of the Union’s earlier enlargements:

“It was natural for the countries joining the EU at the time that [access to] the social security system was binded to work and not to residency. It was --- very common that in families there was a worker, a breadwinner, the man, and a homemaker, the woman. The system was designed as it exists now so that the family would not lose all [social] security just because the member of a family who has a professional career choses to work in another member state.”<sup>382</sup>

While the representatives of the government did hear and understand the reasoning, they nevertheless saw it as problematic as there were major disparities in the living standards between Sweden and the CEE countries. To strengthen their arguments, SAP MPs frequently mentioned calculations according to which three Swedish child allowances were equal to the average wage in many of the new member states.<sup>383</sup> The government did not, however, put the blame for the possible overuse of child allowances and other social benefits only on the incoming immigrants themselves, but instead reminded that the question was equally about the likelihood that “irresponsible employers” would exploit the situation. As Svensson noted, workers would be tempted to accept low wages and obscure working conditions if they would simultaneously gain access to social benefits for themselves and their family and if the sum of wage and benefits surpassed what they would be earning in their country of origin.<sup>384</sup> The MPs who rejected these arguments, in turn, noted that most forms of social assistance were means-tested<sup>385</sup> and, as such, they would only be paid to those truly in need of financial help from the government. It

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<sup>381</sup> Compare to the French metonymy of the ‘Polish plumber’, referenced in this thesis in chapter 3.3. See also Grossman & Woll 2011; Spigelman 2013.

<sup>382</sup> Charlotte Svensson (SAP), Committee on Social Insurance Statement 2003/04:SfU15, 76.

<sup>383</sup> Barbro Holmberg (SAP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 48. See also Charlotte Svensson (SAP), Committee on Social Insurance Statement 2003/04:SfU15, 87. For a criticizing comment, see e.g. Sven Brus (KD), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 53.

<sup>384</sup> Charlotte Svensson (SAP), Committee on Social Insurance Statement 2003/04:SfU15, 77. See also Tomas Eneroth (SAP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 39.

<sup>385</sup> Available only to individuals who were able to prove that their means were under a pre-specified level.

was seen as natural that if a person had contributed to the welfare system as a working individual that they would also be eligible to be covered by existing benefits and services if they became unemployed or sick, just like Swedish citizens. It was argued that if the officials who made decisions about giving out social benefits did their jobs properly, there should be no fear that more social benefits than what was necessary would be paid out to anyone.<sup>386</sup>

When it came to the mental image of a Polish father of three who would join the Swedish labor market to gain access to its child allowances, it was without hesitation disputed by the members of the smaller and medium-sized Riksdag parties.<sup>387</sup> The SAP image of CEEC citizens was, according to them, both false and unfair as the individuals they were talking about were people like any other and just as prone to live on benefits as the Swedes themselves<sup>388</sup>, in addition to the argumentation of their opponents being based on outdated beliefs of the family structure in the A10 countries. Referencing statistics of the Swedish Institute of International Affairs, Birgitta Carlsson (C) remarked that families in the new member states were not even nearly as large as was being portrayed, but as a matter of fact the birth rate in those countries was at a similar level with that in Sweden, in some cases a bit lower. Comparing the ongoing debate to the public discourse on Tatar migrants in the 1930s and the 1940s<sup>389</sup>, Carlsson noted that the discussion was going in a direction where facts were being disregarded and stereotypes flourished.<sup>390</sup> Attempting to give an alternative picture to be compared to the one painted by the SAP in which CEE families “waited like hungry chicks for dad to send home child allowances”<sup>391</sup>, Carlsson described:

“If one thinks that fathers of three in Poland will choose to take a low-wage job in Sweden to receive child allowances, it in my opinion underestimates the breadwinners in a state like Poland. Family means a lot there and I believe that there are only a few people who [would] leave their family home to work here for longer periods to receive child benefits. The experience we have of people who come precisely from Poland or other states around us is that they are extremely energetic people who do a lot of work - -- as they are here to acquire a better subsistence. Later they will go back to their countries. It is only good that people move like this!”<sup>392</sup>

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<sup>386</sup> Birgitta Carlsson (C), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 17 & 38.

<sup>387</sup> See e.g. Ulla Hoffmann (V), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 8.

<sup>388</sup> Maud Olofsson (C), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 100.

<sup>389</sup> See e.g. Tamminen 2015, 119; Kotljarchuk 2018.

<sup>390</sup> Birgitta Carlsson (C), Committee on Social Insurance Statement 2003/04:SfU15, 86; Birgitta Carlsson (C), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 17.

<sup>391</sup> Birgitta Carlsson (C), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 17.

<sup>392</sup> Birgitta Carlsson (C), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 66.

As we can see, just like in the Finnish case, in Sweden the focus of the parliamentarians was attracted towards the new member country from which Sweden would potentially receive most immigrants. As Poland had by far the largest population of the accession countries, it emerged as a point of special interest for quite a few old member states. While the stereotype of the ‘Polish plumber’, used first in France, spread quickly across the European continent, it was not uncommon for countries like Sweden to come up with their own variations. These stereotypes were often, according to Spigelman, used in a metonymic sense. This means that a set of words is “used to refer to something with which it is conceptually related or connected.”<sup>393</sup> In this case, the stereotypes referred to a much wider variety of professions and life situations than what the words ‘Polish plumber’ or ‘Polish father of three’ would indicate by themselves.

Another notable issue with the existing system was, according to the SAP cabinet, the ambiguousness of defining when a person could be interpreted to be working. As the meaning of the concept had not been specified explicitly in European Union law, it had in practice been left to be judged by the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) in which decisions were made on the basis of case-to-case deliberation. Illustrating the dilemma, Charlotte Svensson explained:

“The deciding factor for whether a person is considered as employed is --- that they perform actual and proper work that is not of entirely marginal significance. In some cases a music teacher working twelve hours a week is considered to be employed. In another case, a cleaner working two hours a day five days a week could be considered to be an employed person.”<sup>394</sup>

As a result of such unambiguity, the notion of a so-called ‘ten-hour rule’ emerged as those who had immersed themselves deeply in the particulars of CJEU cases interpreted that around ten hours a week of work would suffice for a foreigner to gain access to Swedish welfare benefits. Calling the ten-hour rule a political bogeyman, a creature of the imagination, EU law expert Ulf Öberg pointed out in an article published by the Swedish publicly funded radio station Sveriges Radio that the cases that were being referenced often had more to do with prohibiting the discrimination of part-time workers instead of making a universal verdict about the general principles of benefits distribution.<sup>395</sup> In addition, Ulla Hoffmann (V), an active MP specializing in immigration issues across the board from humanitarian migration to the movement of labor and the reformation of the Swedish pension system<sup>396</sup>, commented

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<sup>393</sup> Spigelman 2013, 107.

<sup>394</sup> Charlotte Svensson (SAP), Committee on Social Insurance Statement 2003/04:SfU15, 77.

<sup>395</sup> See e.g. Sveriges Radio 13.4.2004, “Tiotimmarsregeln ett politiskt hjärnspöke”.

<sup>396</sup> Riksdag, MP profiles: ”Ulla Hoffmann”; Publikt 19.4.2005, ”Pensionerna gör henne upprörd”.

that individuals who would use the national welfare system in the manner the cabinet thought CEEC nationals would, to supplement lower wages, were nothing new in the Swedish context:

“The cabinet gives an example, saying: a couple of hours a week – and so gains one access to the welfare system! In this way a person can be lured to take a worse paid job since one knows that the welfare system exists ---. And this is how it is for all who live in Sweden. It is so for the single mom who tries to work part-time - 25% or 50% - and is compelled to take a job where it is only possible work so little. This can for example be in the health care field where wages are low. Because of this I would like to hear the cabinet talk about what rules in the social security system as well as in our welfare system she [Barbro Holmberg] intends to revise. I will also want to hear the cabinet say that these regulations will also apply to all who live in Sweden, that is to say that there will be some changes for the worse even here.”<sup>397</sup>

Against all changes that the cabinet was looking to explore, Hoffmann reminded her colleagues that the citizens of the accession countries were not the root cause of the problem but instead the European Union system in itself was to blame as it put pressure on the members to bring their welfare systems closer to each other.<sup>398</sup> As Nordic systems were on the more generous end of the spectrum, it was seen and feared that a downgrading of benefits would be necessary to combat the significant disparities in the Union. If such reforms were to be made, they would, however, in accordance with the European Union’s equality principle, also apply to Swedish citizens as well as foreign nationals already working in Sweden.<sup>399</sup> Agreeing with Hoffmann, Maud Olofsson, Party Leader of the Centre Party<sup>400</sup>, stated:

“I can understand that people feel anxiety about shortages in our welfare. Health care, schools, the police and roads all lack money. Yes, these days --- everything lacks money. This is something that many Swedes encounter in their day-to-day lives, but it is important to bear in mind that these are our homegrown problems. It cannot be that people who have not even set foot here are responsible for the situation that we do not have money for welfare. We cannot blame it on those who have not even been here that we cannot make our money to suffice. It is our own problem and we shall solve it ourselves.”<sup>401</sup>

It was presumed by many that incoming labor would contribute more to the upkeep of the welfare system than rely on it for a living. Reminding her colleagues of the fact that Sweden had a long history of nation-building in which immigrants had played a significant role as both laborers and founders of

<sup>397</sup> Ulla Hoffmann (V), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 62.

<sup>398</sup> Ulla Hoffmann (V), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 8.

<sup>399</sup> Ulla Hoffmann (V), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 64. See also Barbro Holmberg (SAP), Anf. 65.

<sup>400</sup> Elgán & Scobbie 2015, 210.

<sup>401</sup> Maud Olofsson (C), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 100.



businesses, Olofsson urged her colleagues to see foreign labor as a considerable resource, not a threat. Great ideas have no nationality and ideas should be welcomed regardless of nationality, she argued.<sup>402</sup> Such exchange of ideas and people was an essential feature of the globalizing world and as that world already existed, Sweden would do well by adapting to the changing international circumstances rather than struggling against them. Sven Brus, the Christian Democratic Vice Chair of the Social Insurance Committee<sup>403</sup>, agreed, noting that the political and social development of their neighboring countries would contribute also to the welfare and safety of the whole region, Sweden included.<sup>404</sup> Referencing previous domestic discussions on the importance of generating growth in the capital city of Stockholm as a means of providing that for the whole country, Birgitta Carlsson appealed that a similar mindset be applied to the eastern enlargement, welfare within the EU being the sum of all the good things that were happening in all the member states. When more people were employed within Europe, the whole continent would develop and the living standards grow everywhere.<sup>405</sup> And, if wanting to take a look at the situation from a more self-interested viewpoint, all work done in Sweden would help make sure that similar welfare services could be provided also in the coming years to the children and the parents of the generation making the decisions in 2004, argued Liberal MP Erik Ullenhag<sup>406</sup>, himself known by many for his comments during the 2002 general election that the Moderates should split, with their conservative forces joining the Christian Democrats and the liberal faction welcomed in his party<sup>407</sup>.

As was the case with the previous chapter, in this one we have examined the primary features of one national case in more detail, focusing on Swedish immigration history, the policy-building process as well as the primary bone of contention of the participating parties. As we have seen, national welfare policies and benefits tourism emerged as the main issues in the debates on transitional regulations in the Swedish Riksdag. In addition to these topics, attention was drawn in particular to Polish nationals, the image of the ‘Polish father of three’ flourishing in the comments made by politicians on both sides of the debate. Whereas in Finland the result of the voting was clear well in advance without room for exciting parliamentary drama, in Sweden the situation was quite the opposite. The MPs were divided in the debates into four groups according to their stance on the issue. Although the three largest parties all agreed that transitinal arrangements of some kind were needed, they did not succeed in cooperating with each other and in so doing lost an opportunity to pass a policy that could have been accepted by

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<sup>402</sup> Maud Olofsson (C), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 100. On the historical perspective, Per Westerberg (M), Anf. 1.

<sup>403</sup> Sydsvenskan 26.4.2004, “Hård kritik mot nya invandrapolitiken”.

<sup>404</sup> Sven Brus (KD), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 3.

<sup>405</sup> Birgitta Carlsson (C), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 68.

<sup>406</sup> Erik Ullenhag (FP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 74.

<sup>407</sup> Ny Teknik 5.10.2010, “Moderatkritikern blev inte forskningsminister”.

all three parties. And so, when sure that their counter-proposals would not triumph, the Moderates as well as the Liberals both joined the other opposition parties in bringing down the cabinet's proposal. In the next chapter, we will turn our attention to themes that were discussed quite uniformly or if not, at least equally frequently, in the two studied cases.

## **5. Common Arguments**

### **5.1 Comparisons to Other Member States and Former Enlargements**

When it comes to parliamentarians mentioning other old Union countries as examples to support their own argumentation, the studied cases were remarkably different. What connects them is that in both countries, mentions of the other were scarce<sup>408</sup>, but some countries outside of the Nordic region were given special attention. In Finland, as we have seen especially in chapter 3, such attention was given to Austria and Germany, the two states that had negotiated special conditions for themselves in the new member states' accession negotiations, and Estonia where most new incoming labor immigrants after the enlargement were predicted to come from. In Sweden, as noted in the past chapter on social policy and the welfare state, 'the Polish father of three' became a frequently used commonplace. The Estonian construction worker and the Polish father of three became the manifestations of stereotypical thinking among the Finnish and Swedish Members of Parliament. While in Finland the predominant concern was how to protect the national labor market from the overuse of less easily regulated posted and temporary agency work, in Sweden the focus was, like is also on a more general level, more on themes related to the sustenance and future of the social benefit system, it was only natural that the main images linked in plenary comments to the foreigners in question were connected so articulately to those primary lines of argumentation.

Comparisons to both foreign political institutions and current events are common in plenary debates. According to Ihalainen, foreign models may be employed for a wide variety of reasons, for instance as strategic elements used for the purpose of promoting certain arguments in domestic debates or as examples of contexts where a solution different from that under consideration has been adopted. In

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<sup>408</sup> They did exist, however, but only in a handful of statements given during the plenary debates. See e.g. Heidi Hautala (VIHR), PTK 45/2004; Tomas Eneroth (SAP), PR 2003/04:104 Anf. 37.

his dissertation on the learning of parliamentary practices in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Finnish Diet and the 20<sup>th</sup> century unicameral parliament, Pekonen notes that foreign models could be used to paint a picture of desirable and possible outcomes, but also to warn against the too rushed taking up of those very same foreign models.<sup>409</sup> The Finns have oftentimes turned to Germany for a foreign model, for a large part because of the long Finnish admiration of German culture.<sup>410</sup> It is also important to remember that the Federal Republic of Germany was and still is the dominating force in the Union as a consequence of its status as the most populous member state. As such, it should be no surprise that Germany emerged as one of the main points of comparison in the Finnish case, giving perspective to its parliamentarians on the policies the country could have had if politicians a few years prior had succeeded in securing a different outcome in the A10 accession negotiations.

On a general level, however, Swedish MPs referenced the parallel decisions of other old EU member states on transitional arrangements more often than their Finnish colleagues. Whereas cabinet party representatives argued consistently that the Swedish policy on the free movement of labor should be steadily in line with those of other members, opposition MPs thought that the country should do what was best for the country instead of searching for foreign comparables. The proponents of the bill, on the other hand, argued that if Sweden were to adopt less restrictive policies than the other old member states, migration flows would naturally turn towards it as a consequence of growing pull factors.<sup>411</sup> In addition to this re-direction argument<sup>412</sup>, they pointed out that their proposal was on the less restrictive end of the spectrum as other countries had demanded, for example, labor market testing or introduced immigration quota systems<sup>413</sup>. Those refusing to accept a transition period, in turn, thought that

“--- the Swedish government should work to reverse the negative spiral that has risen recently amongst old member states. Countries that had not intended to introduce transitional measures have now, as a result of the others’ decision-making, felt compelled to do so. We think that the Swedish government should take the initiative to turn this negative spiral in a positive direction.”<sup>414</sup>

Questioning the government’s justification of their policy, opposition politicians challenged those in the cabinet to give out details of how they had, for example in the Council of Ministers or alternatively in bilateral meetings with the representatives of other Union governments, made efforts to encourage

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<sup>409</sup> Ihalainen 2017, 20; Pekonen 2014, 44, 308.

<sup>410</sup> See e.g. Ihalainen 2017, 35.

<sup>411</sup> Doyle, Hughes & Wadensjö 2006, 19-20.

<sup>412</sup> Doyle, Hughes & Wadensjö 2006, 19.

<sup>413</sup> Tomas Eneroth (SAP), PR 2003/04:104 Anf. 27 & 31.

<sup>414</sup> Sven Brus (KD), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 3.

others to adopt the former idea of the SAP cabinet that no transitional regulations were needed.<sup>415</sup> The outspoken interpretation was that the government had not done enough to contribute to the direction of the debate on the European level, but instead lingered on the sidelines, allowing others to determine the course the continent as a whole would take.

The idea of a turn for the worse was a common fear among Swedish opposition politicians. The most popular argument in this cluster of arguments concerned the alleged populism of the Prime Minister. As contended by Christian Democratic Member of Parliament Sven Brus:

“The focus is no longer on possibilities but [instead] on difficulties. Furthermore, we are dealing with presumptive imagined difficulties. One cannot free oneself from the feeling that Göran Persson and the cabinet dipped their toes in the water and sensed an uneasiness that can be found among the masses for the new and unknown that we are moving towards. Where is the political leadership that looks forward and builds opinions, not only just puts its toes in the water and feels around?”<sup>416</sup>

By this statement, Brus was referring to a widely recited claim that Göran Persson, by talking about the effects of the eastern enlargement with words such as “benefits tourism”, was “flirting with xenophobic interests”<sup>417</sup> and acting in a populist fashion to hold on to power<sup>418</sup>. In using the kind of language that had been popular in recent months and through regularly expressing such unfounded concerns, the government, the leadership of the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO) as well as Byggnads, Swedish Building Workers' Union, had, according to Birgitta Carlsson (C), taken part in spreading prejudice towards the citizens of the new member states and in so doing embedded feelings of fear into the minds of the people that could, if let continue, threaten the entire national immigration and integration policy.<sup>419</sup> Making comparisons to the developments that had happened in Denmark, where the right-wing populist Danish People’s Party (Dansk Folkeparti, DF) had taken advantage of growing anti-migration sentiments and won third place in the 2001 parliamentary election, Mauricio Rojas, a Liberal who himself had come to Sweden as a political refugee from Chile<sup>420</sup>, argued that a similar development could also occur in Sweden if the Social Democrats would opportunistically use their inevitable loss in the transition period issue to provide evidence to the people that they were the

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<sup>415</sup> Sven Brus (KD), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 55.

<sup>416</sup> Sven Brus (KD), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 3.

<sup>417</sup> Per Westerberg (M), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 1.

<sup>418</sup> Erik Ullenhag (FP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 74; Mauricio Rojas (FP), Anf. 75.

<sup>419</sup> Birgitta Carlsson (C), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 17.

<sup>420</sup> Nordin 2005, 100.

only party that really “cared about the people, the national community and security”<sup>421</sup>. As argued by Left Party representative Ulla Hoffmann:

“--- the Prime Minister and other Ministers have talked about ‘social tourism’. The concept does not get better when used by the Court of Justice of the European Union if it is at the same time used by Pia Kjærsgaard<sup>422</sup>. It is more or less like if one were to use the concept ‘asylum shopping’ when talking about people who flee from war and persecution to steer the thoughts of people in a wrong direction, namely to slander people with a foreign background.”<sup>423</sup>

Pia Kjærsgaard was the Party Leader of the Danish People’s Party in 1995-2012.<sup>424</sup> While in Sweden mainstream political parties were constantly very aware of the electoral successes right-wing populist anti-immigration parties had received not very far from their own borders, their own parties of the kind had not prospered since the fall of Ny Demokrati in 1994. In the June 2004 European Parliament elections, the Sweden Democrats (Sverigedemokraterna, SD) managed to get only 1.13% of the votes, not qualifying for any seats.<sup>425</sup> According to Rydgren, one reason for the meager electoral support of the Sweden Democrats in the early 2000s has been that “the economic crisis during the 1990s boosted the relative importance of conventional issues of political economy and the welfare state in Sweden rather than those of a sociocultural nature, such as immigration and law and order.”<sup>426</sup> In addition, the Sweden Democrats have throughout their history struggled to establish themselves as a respectable political movement as a result of their shared past with and ongoing connections to the Swedish fascist movements.<sup>427</sup>

In addition to making comparisons to the parallel decision-making processes in other EU15 countries, MPs in both parliaments paid close attention to past enlargements in making predictions about what could possibly be ahead. This kind of history-based argumentation was popular especially among the opponents of transitional arrangements, but they were also employed now and then by those in favor of regulations. In these uncommon cases, representatives pointed out that adopting a transition period was the norm as it had been done every time the Union had gained new member states. Such controls

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<sup>421</sup> Mauricio Rojas (FP), PR 2003/04:104 Anf. 75.

<sup>422</sup> More on the Danish debates about transitional arrangements and the Danish People’s Party’s role in those discussions, see e.g. Jønsson & Petersen 2012, 134-136.

<sup>423</sup> Ulla Hoffmann (V), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 8. See also Camilla Sköld Jansson (V), Anf. 76.

<sup>424</sup> Meret 2015.

<sup>425</sup> Minkenberg & Perrineau 2007, 37.

<sup>426</sup> Rydgren 2010, 61-62; Rydgren 2006, 108-109.

<sup>427</sup> Rydgren 2010, 67.

had been put in place even when Sweden, Finland and Austria, later seen as model members, joined<sup>428</sup> and their consequences should not be overestimated as they were, as Swedish Minister of Migration and Asylum Policy Barbro Holmberg reminded, a part of a accession package that included over 200 transitional provisions<sup>429</sup>, most of which related to agriculture and environmental protection<sup>430</sup>. In the Finnish parliament, similar arguments were employed by Toimi Kankaanniemi (KD), who noted that when Finland joined the union in 1995 it received transitional regulations in questions related to both agricultural and alcohol policy, arrangements that guarded the system from sudden changes that could have been disastrous. Seeing the full membership of CEE accession countries as a choice that should not have been made so quickly in the first place, Kankaanniemi rhetorically asserted that “even though the cat flap is open, we should not disassemble the entire wall”, hoping for a slow progression towards complete membership.<sup>431</sup>

Although not agreeing on the need of a transition period, many MPs even on the less restrictive end of the spectrum in both cases considered the arisen active debate as something that could be expected, taking into consideration their knowledge of historical disputes that had taken place before previous enlargements. Alexander Stubb (KOK), campaigning actively for a seat in the European Parliament, for instance, thought that the reservations towards new member states were a phenomenon that would happen naturally before every enlargement. In his opinion, mistrust towards newcomers was a natural part of the enlargement process that had come up even during the most painless episodes in the EU’s long enlargement history. In an article published in Helsingin Sanomat, Stubb compared the ongoing enlargement to the previous one and reminded his readers that even the accession of Sweden, Finland and Austria had raised doubts among major European politicians, including the then EU Commission President Jacques Delors, who had tried to delay enlargements in the 1980s and the 1990s because he believed strongly in deepening the Union instead of widening it.<sup>432</sup> Stubb thought that it was obvious that each enlargement would provoke feelings of suspicion as those who had been prejudiced against became the next doubters themselves. He argued that the eastern enlargement should be seen more as a large scale democracy as well as human rights project rather than as competition for resources, since

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<sup>428</sup> Tomas Eneroth (SAP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 27.

<sup>429</sup> Barbro Holmberg (SAP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 48.

<sup>430</sup> Mona Jönsson (MP), PR Session 2003/04:104, Anf. 70.

<sup>431</sup> Toimi Kankaanniemi (KD), PTK 45/2004.

<sup>432</sup> Poole 2003.

the upcoming enlargement would, as had happened also in previous cases, bring welfare, stability and benefits not only to the new member states, but to the old ones as well.<sup>433</sup>

Stubb's comparison between the 1995 and 2004 enlargements may have been practical for the purpose of promoting a more open-minded way of viewing enlargements, but it gave little to help the process of easing Finnish attitudes towards Estonian immigrant labor. This was for the simple reason that the 1995 enlargement had not entailed crossing a boundary between considerably different standards of living as Finland, Sweden and Austria all had GDPs close to or even over the EU average. Therefore, when it came to formulating a national immigration policy, the 1986 enlargement was a more natural point of comparison as it had incited similar debates.<sup>434</sup> Contributing to this brand of argumentation, Johannes Koskinen (SDP), the Finnish Justice Minister<sup>435</sup>, for instance, compared the 2004 and 1986 enlargements, maintaining that the larger difference in wages and a shorter traveling distance between Finland and Estonia made the ballgame in 2004 somewhat riskier than what it had been like in 1986. While both Spain and Portugal were well on their way to becoming welfare states at the time of their accession, Koskinen argued, the countries soon entering the EU were not even close to reaching the living standards of the EU15. Koskinen endorsed his arguments by mentioning that Estonian wages were anticipated to still be less than a third of those in Finland a full year after the eastern enlargement. As further argumentation, he questioned, referring to the extensive, in his opinion undue, rebuking of surveys predicting the volume of incoming Estonian labor migration: if almost a tenth of the Finnish population was willing to move to Sweden in the 1960s and 1970s for a much smaller wage increase, why would Estonians not do the same?<sup>436</sup>

Still, comparisons between the 1986 and 2004 enlargements were also used by liberal-minded MPs that hoped that their country would deviate from adopting transitional regulations. The main point of such arguments was that as Spanish and Portuguese migrant workers had not flooded other European Union member states in the 1980s, neither would the Baltic or any other A10 citizens do so in 2004.<sup>437</sup> In Finland, Liisa Jaakonsaari, one of the very few SDP representatives arguing actively in the plenary

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<sup>433</sup> Helsingin Sanomat 19.5.2002, "Onko EU:n laajentuminen hyvä vai huono asia?".

<sup>434</sup> Helsingin Sanomat 17.4.2001, "Kohtuullinen siirtymäkausi".

<sup>435</sup> Eduskunta, MP profiles: "Johannes Koskinen".

<sup>436</sup> Helsingin Sanomat 26.2.2001, "Koskinen haluaa EU:ssa siirtymäajan työvoiman muutolle"; Kaleva 25.2.2001, "Koskinen: Siirtymäaika työmarkkinoiden avautumiselle".

<sup>437</sup> Such arguments were also employed in the media. See e.g. Helsingin Sanomat 17.4.2001, "Kohtuullinen siirtymäkausi".

on the side lobbying for the rejection all transitional regulations<sup>438</sup>, proclaimed that Finland was not, like many MPs seemed to think, “a marvelous paradise” at the gateway of which people were waiting to receive clearance to come in.<sup>439</sup> Rather, as several politicians in both parliaments noted, historically speaking accession had not increased labor emigration from new members but had instead in many cases reduced it.<sup>440</sup> While there were 109,000 Spanish citizens employed in France at the time of the 1986 enlargement, the number had dropped to merely 35,000 by 1994.<sup>441</sup> As Mona Jönsson, Swedish Green Party MP, stated, citing population statistics, the annual number of Spaniards moving to other Union countries had, in fact, fallen from over 100,000 in the end of the 1970s to only 2000-3000 after the accession of the country into the EU in 1986.<sup>442</sup> As pressed on by Erik Ullenhag (FP), some of the people who had previously worked outside of their home country had even decided to remigrate home when they began to behold a brighter future there after the enlargement.<sup>443</sup> According to the very same representatives, such a phenomenon would likely happen also after the upcoming enlargement as the A10 countries were some of the fastest growing economies in the EU, in recent times receiving lots of foreign investments, which in turn would create new employment opportunities that would narrow down the need to emigrate even further.<sup>444</sup>

## 5.2 European Solidarity and the Ideal of an United Europe

Next we will turn to a cluster of arguments that are all some way tied to the ideal of a united Europe, Europe-wide solidarity and definition of Europeanness. Contrariwise to the statements analyzed in the previous chapter, these arguments were almost exclusively used by Members of Parliament who were against the adoption of transitional rules. They were based on a shared ideological construction of what it means to be European and in what direction the Union was being taken. Each political party utilizing such arguments, of course, had in mind its own version of the European project that in every

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<sup>438</sup> While Jaakonsaari did argue for increasing immigration in the plenary, in the final voting on transitional arrangements, she voted quite contradictorily in favor of the cabinet’s proposal, as did all other SDP present at the time of voting. In spite of this, Jaakonsaari was one of the main supporters of increased immigration within her party for a large part of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. See e.g. Nykänen 2012 for more.

<sup>439</sup> Liisa Jaakonsaari (SDP), PTK 42/2004.

<sup>440</sup> Mona Jönsson (MP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 22; Margareta Andersson (C), Anf. 81; Kimmo Kiljunen (SDP), PTK 42/2004.

<sup>441</sup> Doyle, Hughes & Wadensjö 2006, 17.

<sup>442</sup> Mona Jönsson (MP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 22.

<sup>443</sup> Erik Ullenhag (FP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 74.

<sup>444</sup> Kimmo Kiljunen (SDP), PTK 42/2004; Mona Jönsson, PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 22.



case differed in some way from the official narrative of the European Union. Despite differences, all parties agreed the Union to be founded on a number of core principles that should be honored in all decision-making. One of founding principles was the idea of a truly free movement of people, goods, services and capital within the borders of the EU. The Swedish and Finnish cabinets that proposed transitional rules, regarded their proposals to be faithful to the political doctrine of the four freedoms, whereas their opponents saw them as a complete violation of those same fundamental principles.

Similarly to the comparisons between Finland and Sweden and other member states in addition to the analogies made between different enlargements, quite a few arguments related to the ideal of an united Europe and European solidarity were also made by referencing past historical experiences. In essence, the debates were both manifestations of history politics, “the ideological use of interpretations of the past in political arguments”<sup>445</sup> as well as future-building through political decision-making. In these arguments, the historical atrocities experienced by the A10 citizens under Nazism and Communism and the ending of an era during which the continent was divided into eastern and western halves took center stage, becoming commonplace justifications for objecting the adoption of transitional rules. If the underlying motive of using history political arguments concerns foreign policy, the objective is often related to the wish of the speaker to highlight stable relations with a foreign associate, stressing cohesion and unwavering support for justice and democracy.<sup>446</sup> This was also the case in our studied cases as we will shortly see.

The enlargement was understood by all, regardless of party, as a great turning point in the history of the continent.<sup>447</sup> It was recognized as the ultimate conclusion of a number of developments that had occurred in Europe since the end of World War II. Swedish Liberal MP Bo Könberg summarized the sentiments of many when he stated:

“Europe is made whole again. The Yalta Conference is finally put to rest. What was began 15 years ago when Hungary opened its Austrian border, which led to the fall of Communism in the eastern part of our continent, is now finalized as almost all countries in Europe will be in the same union. Democracy, Rechtsstaat principles and market economy have now seen the light in states previously enslaved under Nazism and Communism.”<sup>448</sup>

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<sup>445</sup> Halonen, Ihalainen & Saarinen 2015, 4.

<sup>446</sup> Torsti 2008, 66-67.

<sup>447</sup> See e.g. Sven Brus (KD), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 3.

<sup>448</sup> Bo Könberg (FP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 2.

While according to previous literature Sweden has had a stronger awareness of the Holocaust, in our research material arguments referring to these acts of horror were used rather equally in both Sweden and Finland. The Swedish connection to the Holocaust has been complicated: although it was a neutral country, receiving thousands of refugees during and after World War II, it has also had to deal with its own guilt, being a bystander and looking carefully after its own economic interests during a period of great humanitarian suffering.<sup>449</sup> In last years of the past millennium, Sweden took an initiating role in a number of projects on the Holocaust, for example the information campaign Living History, set in motion by Prime Minister Persson in 1997, contributing to the establishment of the first nationally-funded research center specialized in the Holocaust and genocide studies in Europe.<sup>450</sup> In Finland, on the other hand, the Holocaust was for long seen as an “unproblematic” question and its own involvement was downplayed, often arguing that the country had fought in its own separate war from the Nazis.<sup>451</sup> Finland’s bloodstained trauma of the Civil War of 1918 has also, as maintained by Holmila and Kvist Geverts, played a part in creating a less pronounced role for Holocaust studies and its remembrance in Finnish academia as compared to the other Nordic countries.<sup>452</sup>

The Yalta Conference in 1945 between Franklin D. Roosevelt, Joseph Stalin and Winston Churchill was held for the purpose of establishing a master plan for defeating Germany in addition to forming a mutual understanding of how the continent would be organized after fighting had ceased. Although allies during Yalta, tensions between the Soviet Union and the others started to grow and at the latest when Stalin failed to fulfill his promises of holding free elections in Eastern Europe the other leaders realized that no real consensus could be achieved. In the aftermath of the conference, no such elections took place and Eastern European countries one after another turned into Communist states.<sup>453</sup> As such, Yalta could with good reason be seen as the starting point of a downhill from which the new member states were now construed as rising from. These countries’ return to Europe was considered a process that had started with the opening of the Austrian-Hungarian border in August 1989 and the concurrent Pan-European Picnic, during which “the first stone was removed from the Berlin Wall”, as recognized by German Chancellor Helmut Kohl on the day of German reunification in 1990.<sup>454</sup> The next step in the process had been achieved when the former eastern bloc countries made a transition to multiparty systems and democracy in the aftermath of the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The accession of these

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<sup>449</sup> The Local 26.1.2007, “The Holocaust: Sweden's complex legacy”.

<sup>450</sup> Holmila & Kvist Geverts 2011, 526.

<sup>451</sup> Holmila & Silvennoinen 2011, 607.

<sup>452</sup> Holmila & Kvist Geverts 2011, 527.

<sup>453</sup> Arnold & Wiener 2012, 249; Office of the Historian, “The Yalta Conference, 1945”.

<sup>454</sup> The Local Germany 19.8.2009, “Merkel marks East German dash for freedom”.

countries into the European Union was widely seen as the start of a new beginning, perhaps even the birth of a new European identity<sup>455</sup>.

In its core, such history political arguments aimed at promoting equality between the old and the new member states in addition to pointing out the unfair nature of the transitional measures. As many in both parliaments saw it, “the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the wall that for such a long time closed the people of Eastern Europe off from the world, should have been the end of division in Europe”<sup>456</sup>, but in practice, by proposing transitional regulations that would restrict the movement of labor across borders on a temporary basis, the two governments were holding on to as well as continuing to uphold a “mental wall between the East and the West”<sup>457</sup>. The psychological climate was, in particular among those in favor of rejecting transitional arrangements, rather simply that Eastern European people had been through enough pain in the decades when they lived under the gruesome oppression of Nazism and Communism during which their human dignity had been trampled upon.<sup>458</sup> For many of those active in the debates, including Jan Vapaavuori (KOK), by training a lawyer<sup>459</sup>, showing support for the eastern enlargement in addition to a clear renunciation of all limitations on the free movement of labor were to be understood as acts of mutual international solidarity and commitment to the ideal of the European Union as a great European peace project. According to Vapaavuori, it was obvious that the accession of ten new member states would not be a completely smooth project, but regardless of this, he called for a holistic analysis of both the challenges and the advantages of the enlargement. In his opinion, the Finnish debate on transitional measures had focused to an excessive extent on threats, challenges and problems, instead of even trying to see the enlargement as an entity consisting of both the positive and the negative. He noted that

“Of course this life and world is full of problems and threats, but equally clear is the fact that the eastern enlargement of the EU is filled with enormous opportunities. We cannot take the path of only discussing problems and in so doing attempt to cherry-pick.”<sup>460</sup>

By cherry-picking Vapaavuori alluded to the inequality of power between the new and old members of the Union. Although the goal was that the A10 countries would become full EU members as soon as possible, they were nevertheless still, to some extent at least, in a subordinate position vis-à-vis the

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<sup>455</sup> Tomas Eneroth (SAP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 27.

<sup>456</sup> Per Westerberg (M), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 1.

<sup>457</sup> Ulla Hoffmann (V), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 8.

<sup>458</sup> Sven Brus (KD), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 3. See also Jan Vapaavuori (KOK), PTK 42/2004.

<sup>459</sup> Eduskunta, MP profiles: ”Jan Vapaavuori”.

<sup>460</sup> Jan Vapaavuori (KOK), PTK 42/2004.

countries that had been gained membership during previous accession rounds. As such a division into two was against the fundamental ideological principles of the Union, the primary objective of the old member states should, as noted by Swedish Centre MP Maud Olofsson, be to support the newcomers as they would aim to generate improvements in their national contexts, to offer them help from friend to friend and in doing this see them as equal peers.<sup>461</sup>

Accordingly, the main strand of argumentation in this cluster was essentially about the mental images the participants of the studied debates had about the nationals of their incoming Union partners. This is a topic in which the theoretical perspectives of historical imagology become useful, offering input for the deeper examination of such argumentation patterns. This may, perhaps, be the most revealing part of our analysis as the positions of politicians on the topics covered in the previous chapters could all, in one way or another, be traced back to the images they had of their cultural others on the eastern side of the then already collapsed Iron Curtain. Even the most simple of arguments could be viewed from this viewpoint. For example, when Vapaavuori argued that

“This [enlargement] can be viewed from two viewpoints. We can look at it from the angle that let us keep the borders closed --- or then we can set off from a Europe [positive], Eastern Europe positive point of view that let us open them and if problems emerge, take one step back.”<sup>462</sup>

He could be examined to be noting the influence of stereotypes on the policies that were chosen to be promoted by politicians. If the conceptualization of the Eastern European people was more positive among the Nordic decision-makers, they would be more willing to take the risk of keeping the internal borders of the Union open, but as their view was mainly, as understood by Vapaavuori, grounded on negative mental constructions, there was more pointing policy-making choices in a more restrictive, more cautious direction. The argument that all Union members should be treated uniformly regardless of nationality was strong among both the proponents and opponents of cabinet proposals. Some even made an effort to turn the tables around to point to double standards in the arguments of their political opponents. Such an argument can be seen for example in the way Maud Olofsson displayed in a quite simple way the context-embeddedness of many arguments:

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<sup>461</sup> Maud Olofsson (C), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 100.

<sup>462</sup> Jan Vapaavuori (KOK), PTK 42/2004.

“We should not believe that only people from other countries come and, as it is called, ‘steal’ jobs from the Swedish people. It can also be regarded so that when we do our business in the outside world we also ‘steal’ jobs from others.”<sup>463</sup>

As Swedes were not accustomed to the idea of themselves as job-stealers, the juxtaposition was used as an effective rhetorical action to display the argumentative weaknesses of one’s ideological rivals.

In addition to holding on to the old mental wall between the East and West, the actions of the cabinets were also understood by their critics to widen the chasm even further. It was argued that the adoption of transitional provisions would in practice “exclude the people of Eastern Europe from the European community”<sup>464</sup> even if the official rhetoric of the eastern enlargement rested on the notion of a reunion and a belief that new forms of cooperation and coexistence could be now established that the continent was no longer divided into two separate, ideologically divided camps. The observation of many who opposed the restrictions was that the adoption of transitional arrangements would lead to the creation of a Union divided into A-group and B-group countries<sup>465</sup> and that the free movement of people would concern only the citizens of the former. In Sweden, particularly the Left Party, the Greens and Centre Party MPs argued that the ongoing debate was about much more than temporary regulations and rules that would last only a number of years. In their opinion, it was fundamentally about the equal rights and worth of individuals in the eyes of their country.<sup>466</sup> The same kind of arguments were employed in Finland especially by the Greens and some National Coalition Party politicians who, as remarked by Tuija Brax (VIHR), former Chair of the Green League in addition to being a lawyer specialized in human rights and environment law<sup>467</sup>, underlined that a transition period would effectively be “against the principles of the EU, --- from a humane perspective deeply hurtful, downright degrading, against the people of the new member states”, in addition to being ineffective in resolving the problems they were envisioned to counteract.<sup>468</sup> As argued by Kimmo Sasi (KOK), the restrictive transitional rules would work against the legitimacy of the European Union and the credibility of the EU would become compromised in the eyes of many, and those actions that would need to be fixed in upcoming years.<sup>469</sup> Also, according to Brax, the adoption of such a policy would be against the work done and principles advocated by Finland in EU cooperation structures. Brax aimed her criticism indirectly towards the

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<sup>463</sup> Maud Olofsson (C), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 102.

<sup>464</sup> Per Westerberg (M), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 1.

<sup>465</sup> For example Ulf Holm (MP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 82.

<sup>466</sup> For example Maud Olofsson (C), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 100.

<sup>467</sup> Finnish Government, “Tuija Brax”.

<sup>468</sup> Tuija Brax (VIHR), PTK 45/2004. See also Reijo Paajanen (KOK), PTK 45/2004.

<sup>469</sup> Kimmo Sasi (KOK), PTK 45/2004.

Social Democratic Party, whose members were most active in the debate on transitional arrangements on the cabinet's side:

“Among others, Minister Tuomioja [SDP] has, God knows how many times, in matters related to foreign and security policy, emphasized that the main principle of Finland in all EU politics is that no division into different camps shall be created, no unequal groups shall be formed and that Finland will do everything [in its power] to try to prevent this. And now some, nevertheless, want to exhibit with a transition period that there are two kinds of EU citizens. That some EU citizens are more suspicious than others and that there are grounds not to let them enter Finland to perform work here in accordance with Finnish law. Instead, they must, on one hand, be suspected for at least two years and, on the other, they can be brought here as temporary agency workers, presumably with a smaller wage. --- this is an dishonorable action considering all the peoples now joining the EU have had to endure under Communist dictatorship and what they have over the past decade done --- for their country: massive efforts, fine work. And we reward them by stigmatizing them and saying that we will indefinitely mistrust them.”<sup>470</sup>

In pointing a finger at the SDP, Brax brought up the internal disputes of the party in issues concerning the European Union during the term of Party Leader Paavo Lipponen. Leader of the Party since 1993 and Prime Minister between 1995 and 2003, Lipponen is often given quite a bit of credit for the fact that the Social Democrats' position turned in favor of EU membership in early and mid-1990s and on a bigger scale for the party's continuing support for European integration in its aftermath. While the Eurosceptic minority within the party, including the abovenoted Erkki Tuomioja, Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Lipponen II and Vanhanen I cabinets<sup>471</sup>, did succeed in procuring 25% of the SDP voters to vote against Union membership, they have never been an organized faction as such.<sup>472</sup> Whereas the Finnish Social Democrats have in many cases taken an active role in EU policy, especially in the NDI launched by Lipponen in 1997 and continued by Finland as a part of its EU presidency in the latter half of 1999<sup>473</sup>, their Swedish sister party, in turn, has engaged in a complicated balancing act between the official pro-EU position of the party and objections from both within the party and the Swedish trade union movement. This has in practice manifested in “largely reactive and defensive” stances in issues relating to European cooperation.<sup>474</sup> Attempting to mend the rift to some extent, the Swedish Social Democrats have complied to give the Eurosceptic faction power within the party through ministerial

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<sup>470</sup> Tuija Brax (VIHR), PTK 45/2004.

<sup>471</sup> Eduskunta, MP profiles: ”Erkki Tuomioja”.

<sup>472</sup> Raunio 2010, 198.

<sup>473</sup> See e.g. Arter 2000, 678.

<sup>474</sup> Johansson & Raunio 2001, 241; Raunio 2010, 197; Archer 2000, 103.

portfolios and adequate funding.<sup>475</sup> In light of what was discussed earlier in our chapter on the salience of welfare state in comments relating to transitional measures in the Swedish context, it is noteworthy to observe the primary differences between the two sister parties in this respect. Unlike their Swedish sister party, the Finnish SDP leaders have, according to Raunio, seen the European integration project for the most part as compatible with the most significant principles of the Nordic welfare state.<sup>476</sup> The SAP has seized the opportunity to capitalize on the well-known Euroscepticism of the Left Party and the Greens as a reason for excluding them from coalition bargaining after general elections, providing evidence for an interpretation that the priority of the Social Democrats was, in spite of the abovenoted internal division of opinions, to form a government that would not clash on the issue of EU policy.<sup>477</sup>

The notion that the enlargement was a great celebratory event in European history was common among Members of Parliament and the fact that the A10 countries' accession day happened to fall on May Day, the International Worker's Day, was seen to make the event even more filled with meaning. As Swedish Left Party MP and former Party Leader<sup>478</sup> Ulla Hoffmann noted, stressing the importance of the looming enlargement from the perspective of international solidarity and a feeling of community between the members of the global working classes:

“The 1<sup>st</sup> of May is when workers all over the world come together and fight for employment rights, for working conditions, for strong trade union rights. --- this is done in Poland, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, Slovakia and Sweden. We who march outside on May Day, no matter where we are, do so because we believe in international solidarity.”<sup>479</sup>

The message Hoffmann was trying to convey was clear: we are all part of a joint collective, connected and brought together by similar ambitions. These are our people and we must treat them as such. The debate surrounding transitional regulations had, according to Maud Olofsson, cast a dark shadow over what should be a day of great joy and celebration, a historical moment for long not seen as a genuine prospect.<sup>480</sup> What followed the comments of Ulla Hoffmann in the Riksdag was a somewhat irrelevant dispute from the viewpoint of our primary topic, but a rather enlightening exchange of opinions for

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<sup>475</sup> Raunio 2007, 198.

<sup>476</sup> Raunio 2010, 200.

<sup>477</sup> Aylott & Bergman 2004, 11-12.

<sup>478</sup> Helsingborgs Dagblad 7.2.2003, “Ulla Hoffman ny ledare för v”; Sveriges Radio 3.3.2011, “Konst säljs till förmån för flyktingar”.

<sup>479</sup> Ulla Hoffmann (V), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 8.

<sup>480</sup> Maud Olofsson (C), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 100. For an example of how the fall of the Iron Curtain had previously been an occurrence that was not seen as something that would really happen, see Erik Ullenhag (FP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 74.

the understanding of the context as well as the relationship between parliamentary groups. Essentially, the debate sprang up when Liberal Member of Parliament Bo Könberg stated that the Left and Green representatives could not celebrate like the others on May Day the reunification of European nations into one Union when those parties were, in fact, opposed to the idea of the European Union. Könberg thought it to be hypocritical that MPs from those parties were most blatantly criticizing others when they themselves could not be regarded to be sympathetic to the project of which the enlargement was a part.<sup>481</sup> This was perhaps the clearest illustration of how the upcoming European Parliament election in June played a role in the debates on transitional measures. While the policy choices and arguments of all political parties could easily be examined from this perspective, this is the example that stands out from the rest and therefore cannot be disregarded. How did the two accused parties respond, then? Hoffmann (V) answered by arguing that

“We do not want to be a part of EU, this is quite right. In our opinion, EU is an undemocratic union. Therefore, we will naturally work for a withdrawal. But the most important thing is that we are also in the EU parliament to --- be critical to try to increase the democracy that exists.”<sup>482</sup>

In making such a comment, Hoffmann used argumentation that had been heard many times from Left Party politicians since Sweden had joined the European Union in 1995: while we are not happy with the way things are, as long as we are members we must do our best to make the circumstances better. In the Green reply to Könberg, Mona Jönsson quite humorously noted that for the Green Party, their gladness would grow more by each joining member and perhaps in the future the whole world could be united in the EU.<sup>483</sup> Such arguments linking global issues with the Union context were not common in the two debates, but when employed, they were spoken by Green representatives.<sup>484</sup> Through such speech acts of radical openness, the Greens persevered as the holder of the most open position when it came to labor immigration policy. This is unsurprising as a sizable part of Finnish Greens who were against EU membership in 1994 had argued already then that the Union’s institutions were by nature undemocratic and that the EU was too narrow a playing field for constructing truly influential policies. Instead, they encouraged their parliamentary colleagues to think globally.<sup>485</sup>

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<sup>481</sup> Bo Könberg (FP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 13 & 23.

<sup>482</sup> Ulla Hoffmann (V), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 14.

<sup>483</sup> Mona Jönsson (MP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 24.

<sup>484</sup> See e.g. Erkki Pulliainen (VIHR), PTK 42/2004.

<sup>485</sup> Paastela 2002, 28.



### 5.3 Racism, Discrimination and the Wavering Reputation of Countries

In this last chapter, we shall turn to questions related to racial and cultural discrimination, which were both used in arguments especially by those opposed to the adoption of transitional rules. In the latter part of our discussion, we focus on the different understandings that the participating MPs had of the effects of the chosen policy position of their cabinets on the international reputation of their country. Albeit the two topics not seeming to be particularly interrelated, it was decided that they would be addressed together as they were both connected in the arguments employed by the parliamentarians to the attractiveness of the labor markets in Sweden and Finland.

Discrimination in the labor market as a more general phenomenon that transcended the discussion on transitional arrangements was brought forth in particular by the Swedish Green MPs who thought that the circumstances brought on by the eastern enlargement of the Union were a splendid chance to carry out a more penetrating overall analysis of all existing problems. While the Swedish Social Democratic cabinet had argued that a transition period could, if adopted, give policy-makers time to assess which reforms were needed to answer to and solve the detected issues concerning both social benefits and workers' rights<sup>486</sup>, their timetable and the general order of doing things were questioned clamorously by the four-party alliance that was against all transitional measures. As Sven Brus (KD) emphasized:

“Tomas Eneroth [SAP] has said earlier that transitional rules give us time to prepare ourselves. He makes it appear so that May 1<sup>st</sup> 2004 falls before our feet without us having even minimal time to prepare for it. This is actually not the case. This process has been going on for a long time ---. There is reason to underline this: why will we find time for preparing and the pondering of problems that already exist only after May Day? Why have the cabinet and the Social Democrats not prepared better before May 1st?”<sup>487</sup>

As the accession of the CEEC member states had been an inevitable eventuality for years, the smaller parties did not take the explanation of the cabinet as given, but instead called for immediate actions to increase the effectiveness of Swedish labor law.<sup>488</sup> It was a priority of both the Left Party and the Greens to ensure, in cooperation with the cabinet, the passing of the proposed labor market package, which included several changes to existing legislation that could improve the ability of officials and labor unions to oversee the actions taken by both labor and employers. From their point of view, the

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<sup>486</sup> Tomas Eneroth (SAP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 37; Barbro Holmberg (SAP), Anf. 54.

<sup>487</sup> Sven Brus (KD), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 42.

<sup>488</sup> Ulla Hoffmann (V), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 64.

quintessential idea behind it was the heightened protection of workers through the prevention of social dumping and undeclared work, increased trade union control and better working conditions.<sup>489</sup> All labor should be treated equally in the Swedish working places and the key to such success would be the promotion of a business environment where the exploitation of cheap foreign labor was not seen as acceptable. The treating of foreigners in a worse way than Swedish nationals, a model example of discrimination, was regarded by these MPs as an unwanted yet unfortunately common phenomenon. Referring to a number of genuine cases in which social dumping had occurred<sup>490</sup>, these parties saw it as a real issue that workers could be brought to the country for short periods of time with unacceptably low wages, be rapidly kicked out and the trade unions would have no tools to react or to have an impact. Giving an example, Tomas Eneroth (SAP) proclaimed:

“I have heard a representative of the road haulage operators say that he will after May 1<sup>st</sup> encourage contractors to employ drivers from the former Eastern countries to bring down the price level ---. I understand that competition is hard ---. But for me as a Social Democrat it is unacceptable that European markets are advanced through a competition of wage dumping and deteriorating safety rules. It is not the manner in which we should compete and pursue [economic] growth in Europe.”<sup>491</sup>

The labor market package was opposed in particular by the two larger center-right parties, the Liberals and the Moderates, who understood it as a shortcut to “inconveniences and limitations for Swedish entrepreneurship, for small businesses and new companies”<sup>492</sup> as the proposal included, for instance, increased opportunities for trade unions to watch over the compliance of employers to collective labor agreements even in cases of workplaces where the organizations had no members.<sup>493</sup> As the Swedish Trade Union Confederation had taken an active role in the writing of the package, cooperating with the Greens in a joint working group that was originally founded for the purpose of finding alternatives for a transition period<sup>494</sup>, the two center-right parties dismissively referred to the solution as the “LO package”<sup>495</sup>, insinuating that the parties in favor of such new regulations were being led onto the route they were taking by the strong hand of the Swedish trade union movement. Laying stress on the fact

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<sup>489</sup> See e.g. Tomas Eneroth (SAP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 27; Ulla Hoffmann (V), Anf. 10. From the angle that social dumping also happens through the transferring of companies to lower wage countries, see e.g. Maud Olofsson (C), Anf. 100.

<sup>490</sup> Anders Karlson (SAP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 97; Ulla Hoffmann (V), Anf. 10.

<sup>491</sup> Tomas Eneroth (SAP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 27.

<sup>492</sup> Bo Könberg (FP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 2.

<sup>493</sup> Committee on Social Insurance Statement 2003/04:SfU15. See also Bo Könberg (FP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 2; Ulf Holm (MP), Anf. 82.

<sup>494</sup> Bucken-Knapp et al 2014, 590; Ulf Holm (MP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 82.

<sup>495</sup> See e.g. Bo Könberg (FP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 57.

that they too were opposed to both wage dumping and irresponsible employers, Per Westerberg (M), first Vice Speaker, contended that the regulations that were already in place were sufficient and that the introduction of additional rules at the same time with the adoption transitional arrangements would give the wrong message. According to Westerberg, the package would point a finger at the incoming immigrants, labeling them as “worse sort of people”.<sup>496</sup>

Turning the debate on the labor market package firmly towards the Swedish trade union movement, Erik Ullenhag (FP) told a story about a man who had worked undeclared in Sweden under absolutely unsatisfactory conditions. Advised by a friend to approach the trade union in his field for assistance, the man had listened. Instead of focusing on helping the worker, the union had, as stated by Ullenhag, contacted the police, which had led to the deportation of the person in question. By bringing up such a case, Ullenhag reminded his colleagues that the problem of undeclared employments was already existing in Sweden and that the reality was that the trade unions were not equally on the lookout for the interests of all workers. Emphasizing that he trusted the trade unions to do their duty like they had done throughout the past century, he still argued against the package, noting that the Swedish trade union movement was already one of the strongest in the entire world and that it would do well even without additional rules.<sup>497</sup> Responding to Ullenhag, Anders Karlsson (SAP), Chair of the Committee on the Labor Market<sup>498</sup>, stated:

“Somebody said earlier - it was perhaps Erik Ullenhag - that we have the world’s strongest trade unions. I could compare them to the Vienna Philharmonic that I usually listen to on the TV on New Year’s Day. It is perhaps the leading [orchestra] in the world. In any case, it is one of the world’s best. But how well does it play if the instruments are not good enough? This is exactly how the situation in the labor market is. The legislation that the trade unions have --- is not enough because society looks different today than it did when they were made.”<sup>499</sup>

But that was not all for conversation openers and proposals for the improvement of the Swedish labor market. It was particularly in the interest of the Green Party to bring about changes that would reduce the discrimination of foreigners in the labor market. As Ulf Holm, MEP in 1994-1999<sup>500</sup>, asserted, the objective of his party was not only to respond quickly to issues that were assumed by many to likely get worse as a result of the accession, for instance wage dumping and the discrimination, but rather

<sup>496</sup> Per Westerberg (SAP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 11. See also Margareta Andersson (C), Anf. 86.

<sup>497</sup> Erik Ullenhag (FP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 74.

<sup>498</sup> Riksdag, MP profiles: “Anders Karlsson”.

<sup>499</sup> Anders Karlsson (SAP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 99.

<sup>500</sup> Miljöpartiet, Om oss: “Ulf Holm”.

to solve them regardless of what would happen with respect to the enlargement.<sup>501</sup> The prevention of discrimination and the offering of equal opportunities for all regardless of the status of one's country as an old or new member of the Union<sup>502</sup>, as already suggested in the previous sub-chapter, was one of the priorities of the party in the debate on transitional arrangements. The idea of making sure that all who already resided in the country had work before opening the borders to others was portrayed as strange and fruitless as there was not a clearly numerable volume of work available in the society. Instead, Green Party politicians argued for the establishment of a national authority that would work strategically to combat all discrimination in Swedish society. In their opinion, this was also a question of economic growth and well-being, because newcomers would found businesses and thus contribute their part to the setting up of new employment opportunities for all, not only themselves.<sup>503</sup>

In their argumentation, Ulf Holm and Mona Jönsson, both Green representatives in the Riksdag, used statistics taken from a recent report published by the Swedish Integration Board (Integrationsverket) to point out that individuals with a foreign background were facing widespread ethnic discrimination in the labor market. According to the report, if such discrimination could be eliminated, the Swedish GDP could on the long run increase by as much as 90 billion Swedish kronor.<sup>504</sup> It was thus not in the interest of the country that foreign citizens, both those entering the country after the enlargement and those already in the country, were not, as a result of discrimination and ungrounded attitudes, able to find employment that matched their skills and qualifications, argued Jönsson.<sup>505</sup>

As a solution, the Green MPs proposed a number of smaller measures. In addition to urging the government to found an organization that would specialize in these issues, they also recommended that the already existing work done against discrimination on the local level should be expanded and that additional financial resources should be allocated to the enactment of an enlightenment campaign against intolerance and discrimination. Similar educational campaigns had been carried out in both Sweden and Finland in the 1980s and the 1990s to educate employers and elected trade union representatives. According to the Green MPs, such campaigns would be beneficial also in 2004.<sup>506</sup> On top of all this, they raised the question of public procurements to the table:

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<sup>501</sup> Ulf Holm (MP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 82.

<sup>502</sup> See e.g. Mona Jönsson (MP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 22. See also Maud Olofsson (C), Anf. 104.

<sup>503</sup> Ulf Holm (MP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 82; Mona Jönsson (MP), Anf. 22.

<sup>504</sup> Ulf Holm (MP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 82.

<sup>505</sup> Mona Jönsson (MP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 22.

<sup>506</sup> Mona Jönsson (MP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 22.

“Public procurements are worth around 400 billion knonor. By introducing anti-discrimination clauses into the procurements, municipalities, county councils and the state reserve themselves the right to end contracts with companies that discriminate employees on account of ethnicity or gender.”<sup>507</sup>

In the debates, outright racism against new Union citizens was talked about quite frankly yet briefly in Finland, but as seen in previous chapters, underlying xenophobic attitudes existed without a doubt behind the arguments utilized by many parliamentarians. While the terms xenophobia, discrimination and racism were used somewhat interchangeably by those taking part in the debate, it is important for us as the interpreters of those discourses to take into account the nuances of such terms that are often in colloquial language not distinguished unequivocally from each other. The distinction between the concepts racism and xenophobia is not a simple task, however, as the words often appear side by side, making the placing of arguments in either box difficult. By definition, xenophobia is "an attitudinal orientation of hostility against non-natives in a given population", "a form of racism that does not use the concept of race as a defining element."<sup>508</sup> It is oftentimes said that what separates xenophobia and racism are the notions of culture and race. Whereas racism in its traditional definition includes the act of compartmentalizing people into groups according to physical characteristics, xenophobia is in turn seen as discrimination as well as mistrust on the grounds of foreignness or not originating from within the same community.<sup>509</sup> But as the term 'ethnicity', defined as a "shared social, cultural, and historical experiences, stemming from common national or regional backgrounds"<sup>510</sup>, blurs the lines further, as the concepts 'racial' and 'ethnic' are often used interchangeably, I would use 'xenophobia' even for comments that have racist features. In making this choice, I wish to emphasize that a majority of the arguments used by both Swedish and Finnish parliamentarians seemed to be more grounded in beliefs about culturally learned ways of acting in the labor market and differences between these in Nordic and Central and Eastern European contexts rather than in racist attitudes about people who possessed certain physical features.

The topic of racism first came up in the Finnish plenary debate as a part of a comment made by Social Democratic Party MP Esa Lahtela, Chief Shop Steward for a Schauman Wood chipboard factory in 1970-1995, where he insisted, supporting transitional measures, that the restrictions were not an act of racism, but rather that

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<sup>507</sup> Ulf Holm (MP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 82.

<sup>508</sup> Boehnke, Hagan & Hefler 1998, cited in Yakushko 2008, 403.

<sup>509</sup> UNESCO, "Xenophobia"; Mähönen & Jasinskaja-Lahti 2013, 251.

<sup>510</sup> Anonymous 2016, 342.

“--- with this transition period we can possibly prevent racist and discriminatory thoughts from springing up in Finland. You see, if we would let people here without control and there would [simultaneously] be plenty of our own unemployed [without work] in a particular field, it would provoke anger towards those coming from elsewhere. In my opinion, in this case the transition period is very much needed considering this.”<sup>511</sup>

The comment inspired a number of outraged responses from Green League representatives Tuija Brax and Anni Sinnemäki, who thought it to be ridiculous how “racism could be killed with racism”, noting that the situation in the Finnish labor market would not get any better if Finnish and foreign workers were continuously put against each other without realization that the groups were often not competing for the same jobs.<sup>512</sup> The discussion on the logic of racism prevention did not go on for long, however, as Lahtela’s statement was in general ignored and the debate soon moved on to more relevant topics. As Anni Sinnemäki put it, closing this part of the debate:

“--- it is surely totally clear to everyone that if we get our employment rate to increase through receiving workers from elsewhere, it will consequently support our [economic] growth as well as also our own employment situation, domestic employment. Everyone in this chamber surely understands this, if not excessively blinded by these racism speculations.”<sup>513</sup>

As already mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, the last subject here will be the assumed effects of restrictive transitional regulations on the reputation of the receiving countries, Sweden and Finland. As both are considered “faithful implementers” within the EU community, firmly committed to acting in accordance with the given norms and rules, they are, as stated by Bengtsson, Elgström and Tallberg understood generally to be fairly interested in maintaining their reputation and credibility.<sup>514</sup> The topic was overlapping in many comments with themes that have already been discussed in former chapters, for instance statements related to European solidarity. In Sweden, debate on the future of the Swedish reputation in the eyes of the new member states was primarily discussed from the point of view of keeping promises, reliability that the country would stick to assurances it had made. These fears were brought about as the understanding among many opposition politicians was that the Prime Minister had first promised year after year that Sweden would not adopt transitional rules and then broken that vow first by mentions of benefits tourism and eventually by bringing the disappointing SAP proposal

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<sup>511</sup> Esa Lahtela (SDP), PTK 45/2004.

<sup>512</sup> Tuija Brax (VIHR) & Anni Sinnemäki (VIHR), PTK 45/2004.

<sup>513</sup> Anni Sinnemäki (VIHR), PTK 45/2004.

<sup>514</sup> Bengtsson, Elgström & Tallberg 2004; Tiilikainen 2003.

to the parliament.<sup>515</sup> By eating words that he had written in an article published in the Financial Times in September 2000 with British Prime Minister Tony Blair<sup>516</sup> that Sweden would not exercise its right to impose transitional regulations, the Prime Minister had compromised the reputation of Sweden as an open society which would welcome those who wanted to contribute to its growth with open arms, argued Christian Democratic representative Sven Brus.<sup>517</sup> Continuing this line of argumentation, Erik Ullenhag (FP) compared Persson to a bad car salesman:

“The bad car salesman runs off from what he has previously said. He will not take responsibility for a car and pay compensation in the case it is rusty, bad or does not start. Göran Persson takes distance from what he has said earlier to avoid taking political responsibility.”<sup>518</sup>

By this Ullenhag was referring to his understanding that Persson, in talks with the new member states, had assured them that Sweden would stand up for their right to free movement, but then in domestic debates giving opposite statements, arguing strongly in favor of adopting transitional measures. This unreliability could sever the reputation of Sweden, if transitional regulations were to be adopted. But because the proposal of the cabinet was blocked, the reputation of Sweden had also been redeemed.<sup>519</sup>

The Finnish reputation debate, on the other hand, was linked to the parallel decision-making process of reforming the Aliens Act. As the reputation of the country had come up in that debate with respect to asylum seekers only a day before the last debate on transitional measures, Anne Holmlund (KOK) brought up the observation that the topic would be as legitimate also in the context of the transitional arrangement debate. Although Holmlund did note that nearly all the old member states were going to adopt transitional arrangements and thus the negative blow on the image of Finland abroad would not likely be significant, she nevertheless saw the topic as consequential enough that it needed to be taken into account.<sup>520</sup> Social Democratic representative Liisa Jaakonsaari, one of very few Social Democrats against transitional arrangements, asserted, answering to Holmlund:

“What representative Holmlund said, that there is no great harm for our image as Finland has made a decision about these transition periods in line with other EU countries, is certainly true. But what if we thought of this the other way around: what sort of a positive impact to our image would it have been if Finland had not wanted a transition period? You see, Ireland is apparently the only EU country that does

<sup>515</sup> Sven Brus (KD), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 3.

<sup>516</sup> Financial Times 21.09.2000, “Reaching Out to All Europe”.

<sup>517</sup> See Sven Brus (KD), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 3.

<sup>518</sup> Erik Ullenhag (FP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 74.

<sup>519</sup> See Birgitta Carlsson (C), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 17.

<sup>520</sup> Anne Holmlund (KOK), PTK 42/2004.

not have a transition period. Look at what is happening in Ireland. They have Estonian physicians, engineers from Lithuania, economic growth is at a good level and the whole economy is in fact thriving. Not because of immigration but due to such openness and dynamicity.”<sup>521</sup>

Instead of being afraid of the possible effects of free movement across EU borders, those against the idea of a transition period were concerned with how the country could attract new immigrant labor in the aftermath of the enlargement.

“Finland is a cold country and the people are cranky. This being the case, we should instead be more worried about how to get more workers to come here, how to attract immigrants to come here,”<sup>522</sup>

Rosa Meriläinen argued. Those using such arguments, particularly representatives from the Coalition Party and the Greens, questioned the attractiveness of the labor market, one of the main arguments of their competitors. Instead, they noted that Finland would not likely rank high on the accession country citizens’ list of most attractive working countries<sup>523</sup>, as it would have to compete for capable skilled labor with highly enticing Central European countries<sup>524</sup>. As such, Finland should, according to Reijo Paaajanen (KOK), understanding that he was on the losing side of the debate, get rid of the transitional regulations earlier than its toughest competitors to attract those foreign workers who were most eager to make the move to another EU member state after the enlargement.<sup>525</sup>

As MP Paaajanen and all others were referring primarily to working class immigrants, we must at this point of our discussion observe that in both cases remarks concerning highly educated workers were scarce, most often coming up in situations when a person was attempting to argue in favor of open borders and the inclusion of skilled foreigners in the labor market. This point is relevant here as there is an evident contradiction between political programs and actual debates. Whereas highly educated labor was referred to more often than other foreign workers in parties’ programs, the attention given to them in the debates on transitional rules seems scant. This can be explained by a number of factors. As the migration of educated workers is endorsed by virtually all parties as well as the general public<sup>526</sup>, the topic does not generate enough controversy to become a point of contention during a debate where there are a large number of details to grasp onto. Another explanation concerns the notion of the cultural other. As immigrants are under-represented in higher education and professions

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<sup>521</sup> Liisa Jaakonsaari (SDP), PTK 42/2004.

<sup>522</sup> Rosa Meriläinen (VIHR), PTK 42/2004.

<sup>523</sup> Reijo Paaajanen (KOK), PTK 45/2004.

<sup>524</sup> Anni Sinnemäki (VIHR), PTK 45/2004. See also Pertti Hemmilä (KOK), PTK 42/2004.

<sup>525</sup> Reijo Paaajanen (KOK), PTK 45/2004.

<sup>526</sup> Jaakkola 2006, 5.



populated by degree-holders, migrants working in these fields may not be the first thing that comes to mind. Still, while the movement of highly qualified people with a tertiary degree was not at the center of the decision-makers' attention, it was certainly so in the new member states that were afraid of what increasing 'brain drain' could do, especially as they were also, just like the old member states, forced to face and solve issues related to the trend of ageing populations.<sup>527</sup>

## 6. Discussion

The objective of this study has been to analyze and compare the parallel policy-building processes on the adoption of transitional arrangements on the free movement of labor in the Finnish and Swedish parliaments. This has been done through examining in detail all the relevant parliamentary documents as well as by contextualizing the topics that emerged with the help of an extensive array of books and articles in addition to selected writings from the press. In addition to pointing out notable similarities and differences between the two cases, the goal has been to uncover which arguments dominated over others in the plenaries and how parties justified their positions on the given proposals. The topics that rose from the sources are themes that have been discussed in great detail in a large number of previous literary accounts and as such, this study is a good verifying continuation of that research.

In the Swedish and Finnish plenary debates, argumentation pro et contra the adoption of transitional measures diverged into five main strands: the increase of unconventional work contracts (posted work and temporary agency work), social benefits and the welfare state, comparisons to other countries and previous enlargements, European solidarity as well as discrimination and the reputation of the nations in the eyes of others. In Finland, temporary agency work as well as posted work were the most popular topics, whereas in Sweden the issue was mentioned directly only rarely, alluded to in some comments made by parliamentarians. A similar phenomenon came up the other way around when analyzing the speech acts of MPs with regard to the access to social benefits and the welfare state for the nationals of the A10 countries. The last three lines of argumentation were used as frequently in Finland as they were used in Sweden.

While the conclusions that can be drawn from the plenary debates are illuminating, it is significant to note as well as to emphasize that they do not tell the whole story on the labor migration policy stances

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<sup>527</sup> Goldner Lang 2007, 269-270.

of Finnish and Swedish mainstream political parties. Even if the access of migrants to social benefits did not become the most obvious point of contention in the Finnish case, it is not to say that politicians in the country did not see the topic as important, but rather that the national circumstances surrounding the debates led argumentation in another direction.<sup>528</sup> No generalizations or sweeping interpretations can or should be made on the basis of such temporally restricted cases, but rather we should focus on the uniqueness of each case and what it can tell us. What can clearly be said by examining the debates is the great importance of timing and setting a desired tone for the debates from the start. As illustrated in particular by the Finnish debates, topics that were established as primary bones of contention early on, long before the processing of the proposal in the Eduskunta, maintained that status until the very end. One factor of importance here is the active coverage by the national and international press. The Finnish and the Swedish debates on the adoption of transitional measures would certainly have been different had it not been for the numerous surveys on the willingness of Estonian citizens to enter the Finnish labor market after the enlargement or the widespread journalism on comments of the Swedish Prime Minister on benefits tourism. These played an important role in constituting the foundation for the deliberation in the national parliaments, challenged and put under scrutiny by the parliamentarians who were against transitional regulations.

According to Ceyhan and Tsoukala, anti-migration argumentation in Western societies<sup>529</sup> can in effect be divided into four dimensions, as illustrated in Table 4. What connects all of them is “the production of a discourse of fear and proliferation of dangers”<sup>530</sup> and they all, in one way or another, encompass internal ambivalences<sup>531</sup>, the many sides of the same issue may be positive or negative, or something in between. While there are quite a few frequently used examples of socioeconomic arguments from the negative viewpoint, for example the threat posed by migration on the competition for employment opportunities in certain professional fields or the potential overheating of welfare state structures, on the other side many politicians argue that migrants have an important role to play in the upkeep of the welfare state as well as the promotion of new business activities. As can be anticipated in the case of debates on labor immigrants arriving from nearby areas, both culturally as well as ethnically similar to the citizens of their host countries, the socioeconomic axis includes the most utilized topics in the debates on transitional regulations. Although moving from one state to another for job opportunities

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<sup>528</sup> On the Finnish debate on the relationship between social benefits and immigration, see Salo 2005, 14-21 & Keskinen 2016.

<sup>529</sup> According to Ceyhan and Tsoukala, the members of the European Union and the United States.

<sup>530</sup> Ceyhan & Tsoukala 2002, 22.

<sup>531</sup> Ceyhan & Tsoukala 2002, 24.

is without doubt a great mental and physical hassle for the individual, from the perspective of a nation state the angle is mainly economic. The other axes do not cease to exist, however, as they can all be identified to an extent in our two cases, typically intertwined with each other, sometimes being more common in one than the other. The political dimension, for example, can be recognized with ease in the Finnish case in the work of the True Finns, while the lack of an anti-immigrant populist force in the Swedish Riksdag in 2004 compels us to perform a deeper analysis of underlying understandings and stereotypes associated with the incoming A10 labor migrants to find examples of how mainstream parties in that case employ restrictive positions to further their political prestige. In the context of the parliamentary debates studied here, the ‘Polish father of three’ became such a conceptualization, used in particular by Swedish parliamentarians who wanted to rationalize their support for the adoption of transitional measures.

Table 4: Dimensions of anti-immigration argumentation in Western societies (Ceyhan & Tsoukala 2002).

<p><i>1. Socioeconomic axis:</i> migration is associated with unemployment, the rise of informal economy, the crisis of the welfare state, and urban environment deterioration</p>	<p><i>2. Security axis:</i> migration is linked to the loss of a control narrative that associates the issues of sovereignty, borders, and both internal and external security</p>
<p><i>3. Identity axis:</i> migrants are considered as being a threat to the host societies' national identity and demographic equilibrium</p>	<p><i>4. Political axis:</i> anti-immigrant, racist, and xenophobic discourses are often expected to facilitate the obtaining of political benefits</p>

While there is a consensus on the existence of Downsian contagion, briefly discussed in chapter 4.1, the extent of its effects has been disputed by scholars performing case studies on the migration policy positions of European political parties. The phenomenon should then be seen only as one factor among others when giving explanations for the policies promoted, studied side by side with other contextual elements, such as the composition of the government coalition as well as the prevailing public opinion, just to name a few. Although there are undisputable signs from Norway and Denmark on the potential

of such a phenomenon in the Nordic region<sup>532</sup>, there are still quite a few elements to investigate before anything more general can be said even about these cases, let alone the Swedish and the Finnish ones.

Our research here generated similar results: the presence of an anti-immigration party does not always motivate others to take on harsher views. Contrariwise, as the debates and previous literature illustrate, the impact of populist parties on the migration policy positions of mainstream parties in Sweden and Finland has been vague. In Finland, the nationalist True Finns were years away from their election victory of 2011, occupying only three seats in the parliament, but that did not restrain the Vanhanen I center-left cabinet from opting for closed borders and strict transitional regulations. In Sweden, there was no far-right anti-immigration party in the Riksdag in 2004. When the Sweden Democrats reached enough support to gain parliamentary seats in 2010, the non-socialist parties and the Greens responded with unprecedentedly open policies, liberalizing legislation on the migration options of TCNs into the Swedish labor market. The circumstances were similar to those 1991, when the newly elected center-right coalition announced that Sweden would start constructing a more open refugee admission policy. This happened regardless of vocal xenophobic dissent from Ny Demokrati.<sup>533</sup> Such ‘contra-Downsian contagion’ could also be found in Finland around the time when PS expanded their electoral support from a mere 5 to a substantial 39 seats in the 2011 general election.<sup>534</sup>

Regardless of significant differences, there were also many prominent similarities between our studied cases. The reputation of the countries in the eyes of others, discrimination in the labor markets as well as the importance of promoting of the Union’s ideals of equality and solidarity emerged as prominent subjects in both debates, mainly employed by parliamentarians opposing the adoption of transitional regulations. These perspectives were used to point out that by delaying the introduction of a truly free movement of labor across the borders of the Union the Finnish and Swedish cabinets were doing more harm than protecting and as such they urged the proposals to be reconsidered. The supporters of the cabinets’ proposals, in turn, contended that precautionary measures had been applied every time the EU had enlarged, and by doing the same in this case as well, the states could give themselves enough time to respond to and solve anticipated challenges, noting that two years of limited labor immigration from the A10 countries was not an unbearable price to pay for security. While a majority of parties in both contexts, with the exception of the anti-EU True Finns, the Swedish Left Party and the Swedish Greens, the latter two critical of the EU and its democratic deficit but arguing for a need to change it

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<sup>532</sup> Brochmann & Hagelund 2011, 22.

<sup>533</sup> Hinnfors et al 2012, 586.

<sup>534</sup> Bucken-Knapp et al 2014, 587.

from within<sup>535</sup>, in principle looked favorably on the project that the Union is, it was still in the overall political interest of many to exercise caution.

Social Democratic parties were substantial cabinet coalition players in both countries. Since the 2002 Swedish general election and the Finnish election a year later, the two states had had rather different cabinet coalitions, whereas the ensemble of opposition groups was remarkably similar. For ten years there had been only SAP single-party minority governments in Sweden. During that same time period, nearly all Finnish parties that had managed to secure parliamentary seats had also partaken in at least one cabinet coalition. Unlike their ideological brothers in Sweden, the Finnish SDP was not the largest group in the Finnish parliament albeit having won new seats in the most recent election. Nevertheless, regardless of the exact power relations between cabinet parties, there was a consensus about the kind of policy the Finnish government would advocate regarding labor immigration from the new member states of the EU. It is therefore well-grounded to argue that, despite their dissimilar compositions and strength in seats, the two cabinets were very much the same in their proposals and objectives when it came to transitional arrangements.

Regardless of mentioned differences, it is quite fair to say that the Social Democratic Parties in both national contexts played an important role in guiding the positions taken by their respective cabinets, arguing strongly in favor of transitional regulations. Although the Finnish bill proposing the adoption of a transition period was officially given by all three cabinet parties, it is also significant to note that the issue was clearly most relevant for Social Democratic MPs who took a considerably more active role in the plenary debates than their cabinet partners, the Centre and the Swedish People's Party. In Sweden, SAP was the only party to stand behind their proposal in its entirety, whereas in Finland the Green League and a slim majority of National Coalition Party MPs opposed restrictions firmly and certain opposition parties, the Left Alliance, the True Finns and the Christian Democrats, gave their undivided support to the cabinet.<sup>536</sup> In Finland, the voting outcome was evident from the start, whereas in the Swedish case the process of turning down the government's proposal was a more complicated one. This does not mean, however, that the Finnish Social Democrats were entirely undivided on the issue, despite officially voting unanimously in favor of a transition period. Contrariwise, some SDP politicians did express themselves in the debates in a manner that could be grasped to display if not

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<sup>535</sup> See e.g. Ulla Hoffmann (V), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 14; Sitter 2001, 31; Raunio 2007, 197-198.

<sup>536</sup> Results of Voting HE 172/2003.

undecidedness then an internal conflict on the need of such regulations.<sup>537</sup> Such representatives were scarce, however, and the firm position of the party was to promote and favor transitional measures.

The successes or losses of anti-immigration parties or strong welfare state ideologies are not enough to explain the tentative immigration policy positions of Nordic Social Democratic parties. Of the two, the latter certainly has more to offer. It is clear that SAP and SDP share a strong ideological bond that is in many ways similar to that shared on the other end of the spectrum by Green parties. Whereas the two Green parties have chosen to take an open attitude to both humanitarian and labor migration, the Social Democrats have contrariwise positioned themselves on a more restrictive end of the spectrum. As the official stances, the reasoning and the rhetoric used by these sister parties have been remarkably similar, it is reasonable to contend that ideological factors are the *primus motor* behind their migration policy positions.<sup>538</sup> This being the case, the studied debates certainly involved transnational features in addition to the clearly international ones.

We can therefore confirm the results of previous research on the debates on transitional arrangements, above all those of Bucken-Knapp et al in “No Nordic model: Understanding differences in the labour migration policy preferences of mainstream Finnish and Swedish political parties”. Focusing on the labor migration position formation of Swedish and Finnish parties as well as comparing them through an examination of their actions in debates on the adoption of transitional measures and the entry policy of TCN citizens, they argue for utilizing a three-point explanatory model for creating a coherent whole of the immigration policy stances of Swedish and Finnish mainstream parties. According to them, we should look into the dynamics of competition between parties, the composition of cabinet coalitions, the role of anti-immigration parties in the party sphere in addition to party ideology to form a holistic view of the impacting factors.<sup>539</sup> Having declared the role of anti-immigrant parties as insignificant in this case, we focus on the other parts of the model, bringing in our own contribution through additional details of used argumentation that will provide a better picture of the debates than the more general, depthless analysis of Bucken-Knapp et al. Whereas their goal was to uncover the general narrative in addition to providing tools for analysing such immigration debates, I have taken their work one step further by studying the rhetoric and arguments used by parties in the plenary sessions to advance their positions.

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<sup>537</sup> Kimmo Kiljunen (SDP) & Liisa Jaakonsaari (SDP), PTK 42/2004.

<sup>538</sup> Bucken-Knapp et al 2014, 595-596.

<sup>539</sup> Bucken-Knapp et al 2014.

While ideology is the driving force behind the actions of political parties, it is not always enough if a party wishes to not only to speak about an ideal society but also to take concrete action to promote its goals. As the Swedish case of rejecting the transitional measures demonstrates, even a strong will of the dominant party can be passed if other parties are willing to cooperate, sometimes forming ‘unholy coalitions’. This does not mean, however, that establishing such alliances is in any way a simple affair. Contrariwise, they often surface from a grave need and are informal, not founded officially but instead formed through concrete, joint action in connection to a thematically limited question. Jan Vapaavuori (KOK) marveled, realizing how amusing the contents of his day would perhaps look like to an outside observer, demonstrating the complexity of unholy coalitions:

“Politics is --- a bizarre environment. We voted on the new Aliens Act only three hours ago and I think I voted differently as compared to Heidi Hautala [VIHR] on all items. But now that we are once again discussing questions concerning foreigners three hours later, the temptation to vote like Hautala is great, and that is probably what I will do.”<sup>540</sup>

Still, it must be remembered that in some cases alignments between parties can also act as a temporary obstacle for advancing their aims, for instance when parties taking part in a cabinet coalition together build a joint government program that is built piece by piece from the priorities of each collaborating partner, each making concessions to ensure the acceptance of the entity. The idea of political action in a democracy is that no political party can achieve everything they campaign for. In the Finnish case on transitional measures, for instance, neither the Centre Party nor the Swedish People’s Party seemed too enthusiastic about the bill based on their actions during the debates, but they were in on it, an issue of great importance for the SDP. In Sweden, in turn, the SAP cabinet was left alone, having to compete with counter-proposals made by the two largest center-right parties, the Moderates and the Liberals, and the rejection proposal supported by all smaller opposition parties.

As can be seen in earlier chapters as well as in Table 5, the whole decision-making process in Sweden was a much more complex affair compared to the simple ‘yes or no’ nature of the Finnish case. While in Finland parliamentary representatives chose between two opposite proposals, in Sweden the same positions were on the table in addition to two lighter versions of transitional rules put forward by the Moderates and the Liberals. Besides deciding the fate of transitional rules, Swedish MPs also voted on two supplemental proposals. The first, referred to as the labor market package, the “LO package” in the opinion of its opposers, included a number of reforms that would increase control in the Swedish

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<sup>540</sup> Jan Vapaavuori (KOK), PTK 42/2004.

labor market. The other was about the possibility of appointing an investigator to analyze what options were available for restricting access to the welfare state for certain migrant groups. In Finland, MPs voted clearly in favor of transitional measures, while in Sweden the parallel proposal was voted down as no opposition party was willing to cooperate with the minority cabinet to ensure its passing. In the case of the supplemental proposals, the SAP was successful in securing help from its support parties, the Left Party and the Greens, sealing the deal for those parts of the proposal.

Table 5: Positions of Finnish and Swedish parties on proposed transitional arrangements.

Finland	Sweden
Centre Party: in favor, cabinet	Centre Party: against, opposition
Christian Democrats: in favor, opposition	Christian Democrats: against, opposition
Green League: against, opposition	Green Party: against, opposition, labor market package, appointing an investigator
Left Alliance: in favor, opposition	Left Party: divided, opposition, labor market package
National Coalition Party: divided, opposition	Moderate Party: in favor (counterproposal), opposition
Social Democratic Party: in favor, cabinet	Social Democratic Party: in favor, cabinet, labor market package, appointing an investigator
Swedish People's Party: in favor, cabinet	-
True Finns: in favor, opposition	-
-	Liberal People's Party: in favor (counterproposal), opposition

While the Social Democrats were, as mentioned above, the key players in both cases, struggling with the legitimate challenges open borders could pose for the Social Democratic welfare state project, the role certain other parties played in the decision-making process is less clear-cut. In general, however, our cases supported commonly conceived notions of the role of the left-right divide in the immigration policy choices of political parties, as summarized by Widfeldt:

“Centre-left parties like to portray themselves as opponents of ethnic intolerance and defenders of international solidarity, but are prone to a protectionist position on labour market issues. Centre-right parties, on the other hand, see themselves as champions of individual freedom and the right to move across borders, but also as defenders of national values. Both sides operate within a meta-ideological



frame sometimes referred to as ‘political correctness’, but are subject to internal as well as external pressures towards more restrictive immigration policies.”<sup>541</sup>

In the following, we focus especially on the Centre Parties as well as the conservative sister parties, the Finnish Coalition Party and the Swedish Moderate Party. The agrarian party family was chosen for deeper analysis because of the great difference between their positions. In Finland, the Centre was the Prime Minister party and as such obviously favored the bill of the government, whereas in Sweden the party was one of the smallest opposition groups, nevertheless being one of the cabinet’s toughest critics regarding transitional arrangements. The two conservative parties, on the other hand, were both the largest opposition forces in their respective parliaments and therefore understood as the unofficial leaders of the opposition. While political parties of the left are consistently in favor of humanitarian migration, more so than center-right parties, parties on the right are more frequently tolerant and open towards labor migration.<sup>542</sup> As far as Green parties are concerned, they seem to comprise a group of their own, being only ones unanimously in favor of both labor and humanitarian migration, appealing strongly for European as well as global solidarity with a prominent focus on the promotion of equality.

To understand the position taken by a particular party on an issue, one may often find help in analyzing the arguments used by their representatives simultaneously with knowledge on the voters of that party. Some occupations, for example managerial employees, most common among the voters of the Greens and the center-right parties, are connected in research to positive positions towards different forms of immigration.<sup>543</sup> Despite this, conservative parties often struggle as the middleman, operating between the will of their voters and their basic ideology that drive them in different, often opposite directions. Arter has portrayed the internal battle of the Swedish Moderate Party so that, in debates on transitional measures, they were being pulled in two ways by their voters who favored setting up temporary limits, many fearing benefits tourism, and their most important interest group, the employers’ organizations, who saw restrictions as protectionist tools that would create hindrances for the hiring of foreign labor, in addition to promoting the interests of the workers’ unions.<sup>544</sup>

The same conflict of interests can also be found within the Coalition Party that became the only major party in either context to be deeply divided at the voting table. It is not to say, however, that the choice was easier for the Moderates who, despite considerable disputes between disagreeing members, in the

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<sup>541</sup> Widfeldt 2015, 400.

<sup>542</sup> Leitzinger 2017, 24.

<sup>543</sup> Jaakkola 2006, 6.

<sup>544</sup> Arter 2006, 251-252.

end voted in unison against the SAP proposal. Thus, while this thesis has widely problematized SAP and SDP policies due to their position as key players, it is significant to notice that they are hardly the only Nordic party family where migration policy is a deeply divisive and continuously disputed issue. In fact, whereas the Moderates succeeded in concealing their internal disputes on the official position of the party from the public, the Liberals' corresponding split was discussed openly in the news media, with major politicians, like former Party Leader Bengt Westerberg, going against the opinion of the majority by speaking out against restrictions, even the ones recommended by his own party.<sup>545</sup> The divisions within the Liberals became apparent also during the Riksdag debates, where MPs like Erik Ullenhag took an active part in the discussion, utilizing argumentation very similar to that employed by the smaller opposition parties to dispute the adoption of transitional arrangements of any kinds on the free movement of A10 labor.<sup>546</sup>

The last party family we will analyze here in greater detail is that of the two Centre Parties, which are considered the main political advocates of voters working in agriculture and the strongest supporters of regional equality within their respective countries, despite attempts of widening their electoral field and transforming into catchall parties.<sup>547</sup> As observed in chapter 2, the Finnish Centre has succeeded in this venture, consistently ranking in top three amongst Finnish parties, while its Swedish sister has faced considerable challenges, falling under the 10% mark in 1991, staying there ever since.<sup>548</sup> Despite their similar ideological roots, focusing on decentralism and being divided on the issue of European integration<sup>549</sup>, the two Centre Parties have since gone in distinctly separate directions. From the 1970s on, the Swedish Centre has taken part in four cabinet coalitions, cooperating with the Moderate Party, the Liberals and the Christian Democrats.<sup>550</sup> Like the Finnish Keskusta, the Centerpartiet has through the years displayed a strong reluctance to refer to itself as 'bourgeois', in spite of justifiable deductions that could be made from its selection of cabinet collaborators, preferring 'non-socialist' instead.<sup>551</sup> As both Centre Parties have experienced the negative electoral effects of radicalism, the Swedish Centre learning the hard way from their extreme anti-nuclear energy policy in the late-1970s<sup>552</sup> and Keskusta experiencing the negative effects of its work reform proposal in the late 1990s, resulting in a worsened

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<sup>545</sup> Arter 2006, 251.

<sup>546</sup> See e.g. Erik Ullenhag (FP), PR 2003/04:104, Anf. 74.

<sup>547</sup> Arter 2001, 60-61 & 84; Widfeldt 2001, 7, 13-14, 17.

<sup>548</sup> Widfeldt 2001, 8; Arter 2001, 86.

<sup>549</sup> Widfeldt 2001, 16, 20-21; Arter 2001, 80.

<sup>550</sup> Widfeldt 2001, 5,

<sup>551</sup> Widfeldt 2001, 18.

<sup>552</sup> See more Widfeldt 2001, 10-11.

relationship with the SAK<sup>553</sup>, the two parties are not regarded as the most innovative or experimental of Nordic political parties.

As a matter of fact, pursuing not to be seen as a single issue party, Arter asserts the Finnish Keskusta to be prone to avoid controversy.<sup>554</sup> In the case of transitional measures, however, the relative silence and unresponsiveness of the Prime Minister party can be accounted for by the fact that labor migration was not a vital topic for the party and as such Centre MPs were not willing to discuss their arguments on the matter in greater detail than necessary. Analyzing merely the speech acts of Centre Party MPs in plenary debates on transitional rules, one could make an assumption that many of its representatives were not strongly in favor of transitional measures, but agreed to see their adoption through as they were a priority of the SDP that had been agreed on in the Vanhanen I cabinet program negotiations. This rather simplistic reasoning is not the whole tale, however, as the supporters of Keskusta have, in several studies, been pointed out as having the most negative attitude towards foreign workers of all major<sup>555</sup> Finnish political parties.<sup>556</sup> This stance had, however, eased at the turn of the millennium, the number of Centre Party voters in favor of Finland receiving more foreign job-seekers rising from 9% in 1998 to 26% in 2003.<sup>557</sup>

As was the case with the SDP, we must then conclude that the position of the Centre Party on the free movement of A10 citizens in the enlarged EU was also a sum of ideology as well as strategy. As we have observed throughout our analysis, the same holds true for all political parties, regardless of their placement on the fourfold table of ideologies. In addition to these factors, the migration policy stances of parties may be affected, for example, by processes of both competition and cooperation between them in addition to more precisely defined phenomena like the Downsian contagion. When the impact of these factors is added up, even parties within the same party family, which at first glance can seem very similar, may choose to promote very different policies.

In this thesis, we have examined in detail the policy positions of Finnish and Swedish political parties on the adoption or alternatively the rejection of transitional rules on the free movement of labor in the enlarged EU and how these opinions have been articulated in the plenary debates. By doing this kind of research, I believe to have contributed to the studying of labor immigration policies as well as their

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<sup>553</sup> Arter 2001, 76-77.

<sup>554</sup> Arter 2001, 81.

<sup>555</sup> The True Finns were not included in Jaakkola's analysis.

<sup>556</sup> Jaakkola 1999, 4; Jaakkola 2006, 9.

<sup>557</sup> Jaakkola 2005, 28.

party political construction both analytically and empirically, focusing on a recently underrepresented form of immigration in academic research. Although studies on migration are common, focusing on the labor migration policies of nation states from a comparative discourse analytic perspective and a parliamentary historical angle is rare. Such studies are very necessary, however, as without them we are blind, unable to understand policies on immigration in all their great complexity.

The debates on transitional rules can be perceived as an intermission of sorts between the adolescence of Finland and Sweden as members of the EU, lasting from their simultaneous accession in 1995 until the eastern enlargement of the Union in 2004, and their emergence as experienced contributors after the acceptance of new members. In addition, the period was a prelude for the rise of far-right populist movements in both countries in the following years and as such, it is noteworthy to examine whether any preview of what was to come could be identified in earlier debates. If compared in subsequent research to the labor migration positions of the Swedish and Finnish political parties in the aftermath of the electoral victories of the True Finns and the Sweden Democrats, we may be able to take notice of developments in policy positions and examine if they have in one way or another been affected by the growing role of the far-right in the party political competition on a national level. Alternatively, the scope of our discussion could be broadened to encompass Denmark, the third Nordic EU member, the inclusion of which would certainly enhance the regional angle of our research, making it possible to examine the Nordic EU bloc as a whole instead of doing such strongly country-centered analyses.

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