

The Rhetoric and Practice of Institutional Reform
Modern Immigrant Policy in Sweden

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Paper prepared for presentation at the biannual meeting of the Council
for European Studies. Chicago March 29—April 2, 2006.

Abstract

This paper argues that Swedish immigrant policy objectives and policy programs have developed in different directions since the 1960s. It suggests that the explanation for this is that immigrant policy objectives are evaluated in public political debates whereas programs are evaluated through government audits. In these different contexts, different questions are asked. The public debate focuses on questions of moral values, while the government audit system deals with issues of efficiency. Objectives and programs therefore respond differently to criticism, which creates a decoupling between what maybe termed rhetoric and practice. The paper concludes that the rhetoric was introduced in a polarised public debate, whereas the practice was initiated to solve specific problems concerning information to immigrants and training in the Swedish language. As a result of these widely different conditions, rhetoric and practice were already from the output only loosely knit together. Stability was then maintained at the practical but not at the rhetorical level. Rhetorical changes have instead accommodated the opinions of critics in the public debate.

Introduction

In 1997, Swedish immigrant policy objectives were changed for the fourth time since 1968. Each time there had been broad political support for the policy objectives, and each time, objectives were agreed upon with almost no partisan debate (Proposition 1968:142; 1975:26; 1985/86:98; 1997/98:16). During the same period, immigrant policy programs in Sweden remained virtually unchanged. A large part of these programs had been in place even years before the first decision on immigrant policy objective was taken in Parliament 1968 (Dahlström 2004). This paper will explain how this came to be.

The development of modern Swedish immigrant policy is puzzling for conventional institutional explanations, as immigrant policy institutions both seem stable and unstable. Judging from policy objectives, immigrant institutions have undergone substantial changes, while policy programs have not changed at all. What is more, changes in objectives have not resulted from external shocks, but have instead been generated by sources within the institution itself, contrary to what most institutional explanations would state (for a critique of such analyses see Thelen 2004, 27-30).

In his path breaking study of what he calls the “hidden politics of social policy retrenchment in the United States,” Jacob Hacker has developed a frame-work for explaining incremental policy changes (Hacker 2004, 243). One of his main points is that the decline in welfare state performance he observed – the privatization of risk – was a result of active interference of welfare state opponents (Hacker 2004, 257). One could imagine that something similar happened with Swedish immigrant policy, which would suggest that someone with an interest in concealing the immigrant policy programs actually taking place has fostered a discrepancy between objectives

and programs, but such an interpretation would be misleading. Neither political parties, nor organized interest-groups, have deliberately contributed to the discrepancy between immigrant policy objectives and immigrant policy programs. No interest-group or political party has played that role in Sweden, if for no other reason, because they were simply not interested enough. Contrary to what has been the case with regulation policy of immigration, labour-market organizations have not been important actors in shaping immigrant policy (Bengtsson, Lundh & Scott 2005; Lindvall & Sebring 2005). In addition, the political parties in Sweden have not had any clear positions regarding immigrant policy. As a consequence, the immigrant issue was never politicized in Sweden, and it has never been an important issue in Swedish election campaigns (Brandorf, Esaiasson & Håkansson 1996; Dahlström 2004). What is more, the immigrant issue has never been of importance to Swedish voters when deciding for which party to vote (Holmberg & Gilljam 1987; Gilljam & Holmberg 1993, 1995; Holmberg & Oscarsson 2004).

This paper proposes an explanation for the discrepancy between policy objectives and policy practice, and the gradual but decoupled transformation of Swedish immigrant policy. My argument draws on insights from scholars who have tried to explain gradual institutional transformations, but it pays greater attention as to how institutions become legitimized (Hacker 2004; Lieberman 2002; Pierson 2004; Thelen 2004; Streeck & Thelen 2005; Peters, Pierre & King 2005).

I maintain that legitimacy is the result of some kind of evaluation process. In Sweden, immigrant policy has been evaluated in two different settings. Objectives have been evaluated in the public debate, while policy programs have been evaluated in governmental audits. In these two settings, the evaluators have been interested in two different questions. Moral questions have been of utmost importance in the public

debate, whereas questions of policy efficiency have dominated the audits. As immigrant policy for the most part has followed recommendations made by evaluators, this explains the puzzling diverging of Swedish immigrant policy.

Evaluation as a source of change

Immigrant policy is only one part of the broader concept referred to as “immigration policy.” Tomas Hammar has defined immigration policy as having two parts: “(a) regulation of flows of immigration and control of aliens, and (b) immigrant policy” (Hammar 1985a, 7). This article deals only with the second issue, immigrant policy, defined as “the conditions provided to resident immigrants” (Hammar 1985a, 9).

As politicians create immigrant policy by way of institutional design, it is reasonable to look to institutional studies for explanations of the Swedish case (Favell 1998; Guiraudon 2002; Levy 2000; Ireland 1994, 2004). There are, however, some problems with this approach, as explanations of institutional change often have at least one of three shortcomings.

The first concerns tendencies to functionalism. Many explanations suffer from what Paul Pierson has called “actor-centered functionalism” (Pierson 2004, 104). These explanations start from the present situation, points out who currently benefits from the institution, and asks what power resources this actor has, that can explain the institutional design of interest. The point of departure in such studies is that institutions are chosen rationally to solve some pre-stated function. Pierson has rightly argued that there is no reason to take a connection between the winner today and the driving forces behind the institutional design for granted. For such an analysis “we have to go back and look” (Pierson 2000a, 264).

The second problem concerns the distinction between explanations of stability and explanations of change in studies following the notion of path dependency. As Kathleen Thelen (2004) has observed, the path dependency idea has made scholars consider institutional change in two distinct manners, either as small, common adaptations to uphold contingency or as rare breakdowns. Even if changes sometimes are abrupt, this distinction is futile. As Thelen argues, there is no evidence that these kinds of changes are the only ones, or even the most common ways institutions change (Thelen 2004, 30).

The third problem concerns difficulties of integrating political actors, even in genuine historical analyses of institutional change. Political conflict and ideational explanations are therefore often poorly considered (Lieberman 2002; Peters, Pierre & King 2005). During periods of stability, the notion of path dependency conceals conflicts of interest among actors, conflicts that are important even if a stable majority manages to maintain the status quo. Analytically, these conflicts are important because they are potential causes of change. Peters et al. argue that if we ignore political conflicts within institutional frameworks, we will end up with a false perception of consensus, and incremental changes will be harder to explain (Peters, Pierre & King 2005). Robert Lieberman (2002) has directed attention to a related problem. When ideational patterns are not considered in institutional explanations, a potential cause of change is ignored. Lieberman suggests that institutional changes arise from what he terms as “friction” between ideational and institutional patterns (Lieberman 2002, 697).

Wolfgang Streeck, Kathleen Thelen, and their colleagues have recently made very promising suggestions as to how to handle such shortcomings (Hacker 2004; Streeck & Thelen 2005; Thelen 2003, 2004). Their proposals are based on an

institutional model with a two-way relationship between rule makers, rules and rule takers, all “embedded in a societal context of supportive third parties that makes for institutional legitimacy” (Streeck & Thelen 2005, 13). They single out five different types of gradual changes where the mechanism in at least four of them is based on intervention of rule takers (Streeck & Thelen 2005, 31). However, even if Streeck and Thelen point to the importance of some third party, it is not included in their and their colleague’s empirical analyses, and its role needs further theoretical specification. If we could better understand the role of the third party it would help us identify more precisely what enables rule takers to “defect”, “neglect” or “redirect” the institution (Streeck & Thelen 2005, 31).

The causal mechanism in Streeck’s and Thelen’s model is plausible because of some kind of institutional mismatch within the policy field. As an example, it is this mismatch that actors use in order to “reinterpret” an institution, and it is precisely this mismatch that enables a differential growth of institutional layers (Streeck & Thelen 2005, 18-30).

It is therefore important to pay special attention as to how institutional mismatches occur, and it is here that the third party plays its important role in the legitimization process. If included in the analysis, it is possible to avoid functionalistic explanations, as a distinct social mechanism is involved, the notion of path dependency is defined in a way that makes gradual transformations possible to analyse and actors are included in the legitimization process.

The legitimization process is specified as the times when institutions are justified to some third party. The definition of legitimacy in this paper is subjective. The determining factor is the support from the most important third party. I will return to how one decides who the most important third party is, but first, we need to note

what makes it possible to gain support. Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann have argued that “legitimation justifies the institutional order by giving a normative dignity to its practical imperatives” (Berger & Luckmann 1966, 111). It has also been argued by many scholars that stability is the result of effective institutions (Lipset 1981, 64-70). This paper operates with both these paths, as ways to gain legitimacy. An institution can, with this view, gain support in one or both of two ways; either by defending the core values of the institution, or by efficiently carrying out its operations.

The next question that requires answering is the point at which such legitimization processes occur. The legitimization process is at work when the institution is created. It is now common knowledge that the moment at which an institution is established is of special importance, and that the timing of this moment is especially important, since its environment to a considerable degree, shapes the institution (Collier & Collier 1991; Pierson 2000a; 2000b; 2004; Skocpol 1992).

After that moment I argue that a third party constantly evaluates institutions and that how institutions evolve depends upon the outcome of these evaluations. Needless to say, it is very important who this third party is. In a domestic system the third party can be either some kind of public opinion, or some kind of government audit.

I distinguish between three contexts when the public opinion can be expressed in some way: the public opinion as expressed in the public political debate, intra-party opinion and electoral opinion (Sjöblom 1968). I assume that all else being equal, political actors want institutions to be seen as legitimate in all of these forums of opinion. However, it is highly unlikely that everyone would be satisfied at the same time. What is seen as legitimate objective in the public debate might not be seen as legitimate among voters, and vice versa. I assume that institutions are most likely to

adjust themselves towards the opinions expressed when criticisms are most clearly articulated. Therefore, the order of priorities is as follows: 1) Institutional change accommodates intra-party opinion, if the party has a clear ideological position. If not, then 2) institutional change accommodates electoral opinion, if the question at hand is contested in the election. If not, then 3) institutional change accommodates opinions expressed in the public debate, because this is where criticism against the policy area will be heard.

A positive outcome of an audit strengthens the legitimacy of an institution. Michael Power has claimed that we live in an “audit society” where the most important way to ensure legitimacy is by a positive audit (Power 1997, 134; Hood et al 1999). Though the audit, the institutional order is confirmed and that is essential for its legitimacy. If, for example, the institution lacks efficiency and this is discovered, changes will become necessary. If no changes are made, the institution will come under scrutiny and become vulnerable to criticism, a situation advocates of the institution would wish to avoid. Changes will remove the discovered efficiency deficits (even if the analysis advising of such changes be correct, or not). This means that here, too, the opinions of the critics should be accommodated.

In short, incremental changes will be applied when the institution attracts criticism. Criticism will also fuel political conflicts about the institution and empower opponents of the institution. Representatives of the institution will then, in order to avoid criticism, accommodate the opinions of the critics.

But, what would be the consequences of having two legitimizing processes? In a seminal article John W. Meyer and Brian Rowan point to the possibility that institutionalized organizations might show discrepancies between what is said and

what is done (Meyer & Rowan 1977). This is also the contention of Nils Brunsson's (1989) work. His conclusion reads:

This means that two organizational structures evolve. One is the formal organization which obeys the institutional norms and which can easily be adapted to new fashions or laws, literally by a few strokes of the pen on an organization chart. A quite different organizational structure can be used in 'reality', i.e. in order to coordinate action (Brunsson 1989, 7).

Brunsson has observed that the two levels have different functions: one answers to moral values and the other to efficiency expectations. It is important to note that achieving both moral and efficiency goals simultaneously are not always possible (Meyer & Rowan 1977; Brunsson 1989). The different levels are often in conflict with each other. Perhaps the objectives do not contribute to efficient production, or production does not reflect the values of the environment. This may lead to a loss of legitimacy. To avoid this, the levels are separated so that discrepancy becomes less obvious. Thus, conflicts are minimized and support from the environment is maximized. Failures on one level may even be compensated by strengths at another. This phenomenon has been called "decoupling" (Brunsson 1989, 33).

Differentiating between levels of institutions is probably necessary to understand gradual institutional transformations. It is not likely that all levels of the institution will change in the same way at the same time.

This article differentiates between a *rhetorical* and the *practical* level. Although organizational analysis helps us understand the advantages of keeping them separated, it does not offer any insights into the causal mechanisms that determine such separation (Meyer & Rowan 1977; Brunsson 1989). From the point of view of gains, such separation may be a result of both conscious decisions and other circumstances.

This paper offers a simple explanation of the separation of the levels. The separation is a result of the kinds of questions that are asked in relation to the evaluation.

At the rhetorical level, institutions are continuously evaluated, for example, in the public debate. The questions asked at this level are most often moral. For example, are objectives compatible with values like justice and liberty? If the answer is “correct,” from the point of view of the audience (participants in the public debate, party members, voters), legitimacy is maintained or enhanced, but if the answer is “incorrect,” it is challenged.

At the practical level, institutions are evaluated through governmental audit systems. The questions asked here deal with whether different production targets have been reached as efficiently as possible. Have efforts to reduce unemployment led to a sufficient number of people getting new jobs? Has language training for immigrants led to a sufficient number of degrees being awarded? If the answer is yes, then the institution is seen as efficient and thus legitimate; if not, it will be perceived as being inefficient and therefore its legitimacy is challenged.

Thus, my proposed explanation rests on the observation that the public political debate is more often about moral issues than it is about efficiency, while in the audit system it is the other way around. These questions offer different implications for how the policy area should be reformed. Issues of moral values are raised at the rhetorical level make institutions adapt to pre-dominant moral values, given need to enhance their legitimacy. For example, the objectives of the policy area may emphasize individual rights, solidarity with the poor, or something similar. Questions on efficiency imply another kind of reform agenda. It is about changing coordination, competence and resource allocation so as to facilitate more efficient performance, or

the allocation of greater or fewer resources to the area to achieve the same goal. Levels, therefore, may develop in different directions.

Summing up, three phases of Swedish immigrant policy should be of special interest. The first derives from insights about timing (Pierson 2000b; 2004). If a potential mismatch between institutional levels is essential for explanations of gradual transformations, then the conditions of the formative moments of these levels is important to analyze (Thelen 2003). The second phase draws on the first legitimizing process. If institutional rhetoric is adapted to the dominating position of its critics, it is important to study the position of the public opinion where it otherwise will be most severely criticized. It is also important to analyse the impact of this critique. The third phase draws from the second legitimizing process. The idea is that institutional practice will adapt to the position in governmental audits, and it is therefore important to study the position taken by governmental audits and the impact of their critique.

Modern Immigrant Policy in Sweden

In comparative terms, Sweden was for a long time ethnically unusually homogenous. However, since the 1930s Sweden has been a net immigrant country, and since the 1960s immigration to Sweden has been considerable. Today, almost a fifth of the Swedish population was born in another country, or has at least one parent who is born outside Sweden, and about a tenth of the population have immigrated themselves (Bengtsson, Lundh & Scott 2005). This makes Sweden a country with a comparatively short history of immigration, but with a large immigrant population. Hence, Swedish immigrant policy started to develop first in the mid 1960s (Borevi 2002).

Sweden is often seen as a country with an immigrant policy based on multicultural institutions. Sweden differs, however, from other multicultural countries such as Canada and Australia, which have a much longer history of immigration. The reason most often suggested for Sweden still being in the group of multicultural countries is the strong state interventionist model of Swedish Social Democracy (Castles & Miller 2003). At the same time, scholarly studies of Sweden suggest that the multicultural model was not chosen from the start, but introduced first in the 1970s, and that the multicultural model has been questioned during the 1990s (Hammar 1985b; Borevi 2002). This makes the Swedish case interesting to study with the model presented in the previous section as there is, or at least is assumed to be, a clear institutional setting in this policy field, but at the same time a setting that has been under scrutiny (c.f. the cases of Streeck & Thelen 2005).

Empirically, the analysis draws on interviews, official documents, and secondary sources. The interviewees have been chosen among influential policy makers and civil servants, who were active during the period of 1964-1995.

The First Years

Immigrant policies were only considered important from the 1960s, when immigration to Sweden increased dramatically (Bengtsson, Lundh & Scott 2005). Until then, government officials had assumed that the majority of immigrants that moved to Sweden would only stay for a short time, with the result that immigrant policies were not on the agenda. As immigration increased and the debate on immigrant policies intensified, this changed completely. The “adjustment” [anpassning] of immigrants, as it was then called, became a political issue (Hammar 1985b).

Interestingly, Swedish immigration policy practice was established before there were any policy objectives, or public rhetoric concerning immigrant policy. In the mid 1960s, some practical problems concerning integration of immigrants became obvious. The former ambassador Kjell Öberg was head of an agency assigned to improve information about Sweden abroad. He and his colleagues saw immigrants' personal contacts with their home countries as an important way to provide information about Sweden abroad. Therefore, the agency started an information campaign about Sweden directed to immigrants living in Sweden. "Not for their own sake, I didn't think that way then, but for Sweden," Mr. Öberg wrote much later (Öberg 1993, 233).¹ Through this information campaign, Mr. Öberg and his colleagues were involved in defining practice of Swedish immigrant policy (Jacobsson 1984).

They were after that asked to re-write an information book directed to immigrants, which had been presented by a government committee and harshly criticized (SOU 1967:18). Their work resulted in a book called *Ny i Sverige* [New in Sweden]. It was a guide to the rights and obligations of foreign nationals in Sweden that became an important component of the information directed towards immigrants. It was published in several new editions (prop. 1967:1, app.13; 1968:1, app. 13; SOU 1967:18).

During this process, several other obstacles for immigrant integration became obvious. To deal with the growing immigrant issue the Minister of the Interior of the Social Democratic government, Rune B. Andersson, formed a special working party on immigrant issues within his ministry. Mr. Öberg headed the working party, its task having been to make surveys of, initiate and coordinate immigrant policy. The working party was very active during the late 1960s, and initiated several programs,

each aimed to solve the specific problems that Mr. Öberg and his colleagues had identified (Jacobsson 1984).

Mr. Öberg was later assigned to implement these and other immigrant programs as the first Director-General of the Swedish Immigration Board. By initiating programs to solve specific problems, such as information and language training, Sweden was in practice developing an immigrant policy before its objectives were even being discussed by the government. Most of the programs initiated by the working party were made permanent and became the backbone of Swedish immigrant policy. Most of immigrant policy programs in Sweden had been started before 1968, when the first governmental bill about policy objectives was made (Proposition 1968:142).

At roughly the same time, in the late 1960s, an intense debate arose in the daily press on issues related to immigration. In the debate, two main factions were identifiable: advocates of *universalism* and advocates of a *multi-cultural society* (Dahlström 2004; Hansen 2001; Román 1994). Universalists thought that no special attention should be given to ethnic diversity in Swedish immigrant policy. Instead, immigrants should be incorporated in the welfare programs already in place. Multiculturalists, on the contrary, advocated a more diverse immigrant policy, one that takes ethnic diversity into consideration.

The debate was intense and very polarized (SOU 1984:55). Participants in the debate had different political backgrounds, and were united only by their concern for the future immigrant policy in Sweden. Most were politically unaffiliated (e.g. Schwarz 1964; Gottfarb 1964; Hammarström 1964; Kiviaed 1964; Wachtmeister 1964; Fritzson 1965; Schwarz 1966; Wächter 1966; Thinsz 1966; Reinans 1966; Simälä 1966; Öberg 1966). When this debate began it was clearly dominated by

universalists, but this would soon change (Dahlström 2004; Hansen 2001; Román 1994).

In October 1968, while this public debate was amiss and still dominated by universalists, the government sent a bill to Parliament. For the first time, the basic design of the state's immigrant policies was discussed by the government (Proposition 1968:142). Before the bill was sent to parliament, a government committee – *Utlänningsutredningen* – had pointed out a need for a determined effort in this area (SOU 1967:18). The committee said that the so-called “adjustment issues” required that the government declared its position. The committee discussed whether adjustment should aim for the assimilation or the integration of immigrants. Assimilation as defined by the committee, was a matter of “incorporating them linguistically and culturally” whereas integration was defined as a matter of “fitting them into society with a preserved linguistic, cultural and religious distinctiveness” (Proposition 1968:142, 106).

The Minister of the Interior discussed these two alternatives and suggested a compromise (Proposition 1968:142). Mr. Andersson argued that immigrants should be able to maintain affinity with the language and culture of their countries of origin, but that the state should have only limited responsibility for this end. Therefore, immigrants should be required to accomplish this on their own (Proposition 1968:142).

The bill also emphasized that immigrants should have the opportunity to have the same standard of living as the rest of the population (Proposition 1968:142). This was seen as an *equality objective* of immigrant policy, which would be realised through the universal welfare state. The equality objective, as defined in 1968, rested on the assumption that the state was not responsible for nurturing any particular

cultural community in Sweden. The Swedish welfare state needed neither cultural assimilation nor special arrangements for ethnic diversity to be created and sustained — i.e., this position corresponded to the alternative favoured by advocates of universalism.

According to this point of view, the state was responsible for the civil community while responsibility for the cultural community rested on ethnic minorities and immigrants themselves. The policy was universal, inclusive and the state was only responsible for the civil community. This position—earlier defined as a universalist immigrant policy position—was identical with the dominant tenor of the public debate. This will be discussed later in greater detail. At this juncture it is enough to note that immigrant policy rhetoric emerged in a time of harsh conflict about policy objectives and this was done only after policy practice was established (SOU 1984:55). It is important to note, more over, that rhetoric was, from the outset, a way to legitimise the immigrant policy institutions and there was much effort to avoid or settle ideational conflicts surrounding the institutions.

To conclude, immigrant policy in Sweden began by trying to solve different problems from two different settings. Swedish immigrant policy practice was established before its rhetoric, which goes against rationalist theories of policy formation. There were no policy objectives in place when the immigrant policy practice was established. Half the policy programs were in place before the first of the immigrant policy objectives – equality – had even been formulated. These programs were also very different in nature. Some of them, such as support for cultural organizations, resembled a multicultural policy-type, while other programs, such as Swedish language training and information efforts were more akin to a selective policy-type. Meanwhile, the government unequivocally stated that it was in favour of

a universal immigrant policy, to be inscribed within the very first immigrant policy bill. All this makes it possible to draw the conclusion that the timing and the conditions for rhetoric and practice were very different. They aimed at solving different problems right from the very start.

Defending Core Values

To be able to analyze changes in immigrant policy rhetoric, we must first decide the kind of public opinion to which we should expect the rhetoric to be adapted. If institutional change should derive from intra-party or electoral opinion, the immigrant issue must be politicized. As such, a policy differences between the political parties must exist, and immigrant policy has to develop into an issue of competition in elections.

This paper proposes that this has not yet happened with immigrant policy in Sweden. The political context in which Swedish immigrant policy took form has been characterized as “The Apolitical Tradition”. Hammar argued that there has been a broad consensus on immigrant issues among the Swedish elite (Hammar 1999, 1997). It has also been observed that all ministers responsible for immigrant affairs in Sweden have supported the same idea of integration of immigrants independent of their party affiliation (Demker & Malmström 1999).

The strongest argument supporting the notion of a non-politicized immigrant policy rests, however, on studies of political issues in election manifestos and party-leader-debates in Sweden. It discloses no significant differences concerning immigrant policy (Brandorf, Esaiasson & Håkansson 1996; Dahlström 2005). During the period studied, 1960-1998, the immigrant issue was not on the agenda in the election manifestos and was not an issue in the party leader debates. The immigrant

issue only occupied one percent of the election manifestos during this period, and the same fraction of the party leader debates. With respect to the manifestos in particular, the immigrant issue received a constantly low level of attention during the period. The party-leader-debate leading up to the 1994 election diverges from this pattern, however. This was the only time when the immigrant issue played a bigger role in the debate (ten percent of total debate time) but that, again, was only in the debate, not in the manifestos (Brandorf, Esaiasson & Håkansson 1996; Dahlström 2004).

One could object to the above thesis on the ground that if the electorate reacts to differences between political parties, then the issue must be seen as politicized even if parties do not support either side in their electoral campaigns. However, there are no indications that this has been the case in Sweden. Studies show that Swedish electors consider immigrant policy as a relatively unimportant issue and the co-variation between immigrant policy and party preferences are very low (Holmberg & Gilljam 1987, 1993, 1995; Holmberg & Oscarsson 2004).

Immigrant policy has thus only rarely been an issue where parties have had different positions and it has never been an important election issue. The first is a condition for voters to choose between parties, while the second shows that the immigrant issue has never been used to mobilize voters. For some reason, the established political parties in Sweden have abstained from politicizing immigrant policy. Furthermore, party differences have never been included in election manifestos, and ministers responsible for the issue all shared the same views on immigrant policy.

From this I conclude that immigrant policy in Sweden has adapted neither to intra-party opinion, nor to voter opinion. The remainder of this article will therefore discuss how policy has been affected by public opinion as expressed in public debate.

There has been almost constant pressure to change immigrant policy rhetoric in response to the public debate. Let us recall how the first policy objective was introduced, to bridge two very different opinions in the public debate as reflected in the governmental bill on immigrant policy 1968 (Proposition 1968:142). In May that same year another government committee, *Invandrarutredningen* (IU) had been summoned, its task being to study the living conditions of immigrants and minorities (Proposition 1968:142). The committee would, 1974, present the kinds of guidelines for immigrant policies that the earlier committee, *Utlänningsutredningen*, and others had asked for (SOU 1974: 69).

During the period leading to 1974, when IU presented its report, public debate on immigrant policy had changed. Demands for equal treatment of all cultural and ethnic groups became stronger, and the universal position was abandoned in the public debate.

David Schwartz, a multiculturalist and maybe the most important participant in immigrant policy debate at that time, has described when the shift in the public debate took place. In an interview in 1972 he stated: “The development has, since 1964, taken the following direction: At first, it was seen as a foreigner’s problem, concerning themselves for the most part. Starting around 1968 schooling for immigrant children became an issue, and now we are beginning to see it as a classic minority issue.”²

The reason for this change in the debate was that the multiculturalist position was seen as the only one that respected the right of immigrants and minorities to choose their cultural identity. No one defended universalism in the public debate from the end of the 1960s and on. (Hansen 2001).

This influenced the IU and its position was decidedly multiculturalist (SOU 1974:69). In its final report, it suggested three objectives for immigrant policy: equality [jämlighet], freedom of choice [valfrihet], and cooperation [samverkan].

Equality was partly the same objective as the one proposed already in 1968, but there were some differences on matters of principle as compared with the earlier objective. The IU's definition of the objective stated, among other things, that immigrants and their children should be offered "real opportunities" of maintaining "and, in the same way as the majority population, keeping and developing their languages and their traditions" (SOU 1974:69, 95). The objective also emphasized that the ethnic coherence of the minority groups and immigrant groups could not be disregarded and the state was responsible for creating "real" opportunities for the continued existence of these groups.

In formulating the objective *freedom of choice*, the break with the earlier rhetoric became even more apparent. This objective meant that members of linguistic minorities residing in Sweden should be able to choose the extent to which they would wish to preserve and develop their cultural and linguistic identities and, also, the extent to which they would wish to be adapted to the Swedish culture. The IU wrote: "This requires that the different immigrant groups receive financial support and other kinds of support to develop cultural activities of their own" (SOU 1974:69, 96). The ethnic communities received attention once more, selective policies were taken for granted, and the ethnic groups were declared to have acquired legal and civil rights.

Finally, the objective of *cooperation* came to mean "a fruitful cooperation should ensue between immigrants and minorities and the majority population" (SOU

1974:69, 96). The issue was no longer a matter of creating a common civil community, but about making different groups in society work side by side.

Unanimously Parliament adopted these objectives in 1975, and with the state's rhetoric of immigrant policy; the importance of creating cultural social institutions was emphasized (Proposition 1975:26).

The rhetoric of immigrant policy was, thus, adapted to the ideas that were dominant in the public debate at the time (Borevi 2003; Hansen 2001; Lundh & Ohlsson 1999). This notion is supported by interviews with politicians and civil servants active at the time. The Social Democratic Immigrant Minister at that time, Anna-Greta Leijon, has said that the objective was “to emphasize that policy was not about assimilation, but about co-operation on equal terms.”³ Mr. Öberg, then expert in the IU, has written that “the government probably wanted to protect it self against accusations about assimilation” (SOU 1984:55, 35). Yet another policy expert, Rolf Witrén from the Liberal Party, later Immigrant Minister and member of the IU at the time, maintains that “the big debate of the 1970s was about assimilation... and we thought that was wrong.”⁴ It seems like the committee and the government alike wanted to distance themselves from what they considered to be an illegitimate position.

During the period after the decision on the new immigrant policy objectives in 1975, the public debate on immigrant policy changed once again. Already evident from the initial responses from organizations and institutions to the IU proposals, there were fears that the different objectives might end up in conflict with one another (Proposition 1975:26).

At the end of the 1970s and in the early 1980s, criticism mounted, especially against the objective of freedom of choice, which was thought to give rise to

unrealistic expectations, and to be unclear as to what laws and rules of conduct were valid in Sweden (SOU 1984:55; Directive 1980:48; Samuelsson 1999). In the public debate several participants pointed to conflicts between cultural freedom of choice, and the rights of women and children. Rhetorically they asked: Is it possible to choose a traditional patriarchal culture? The President of the International Immigrant women Association wrote an article on this theme. She wrote: “One says that this is in the immigrants’ ‘culture’, and the police says the same thing. Also, the perpetrator refers to the ‘culture of their motherland’ to defend himself when he beats his wife. We say that violence is never culture” (Kakossiasos 1980; see for example also Eriksson & Vikström 1979).⁵

From the end of the 1970s this position dominated the public debate, and that critique led to a new period of committees and surveys. Two parallel government committees were formed: *Invandrarpolitiska kommittén* (IPOK) and *Diskrimineringsutredningen* (DU).

In their final reports, these committees stated that the objective of freedom of choice was unclear. It was open to several interpretations, since the studies that preceded the decision of 1975 had lacked discussions about the content, limitations and conditions of freedom of choice. The committees gave a more precise definition of the objective by addressing its limitations (SOU 1984:55; SOU 1984:58). The Immigrant Minister, Anita Gradin, explains how she thought at the time: “I was only prepared to go so far regarding culture. One example is if it is said to be culture to beat ones wife. It is neither a part of the Swedish, nor any other culture, but it is sometimes claimed to be.”⁶ The bill that emerged from these committee reports stated that the cultural freedom of choice was limited by the fundamental norms of Swedish society (Proposition 1985/86:98).

Subsequently, this was described as a “lowering of expectations” with regard to the cultural freedom of choice available to immigrants in Sweden (SOU 1996:55, 68). The rhetoric of immigrant policy was again adapted to public criticism (Soininen 1999). The 1975 objectives were kept but the culture-preserving ambitions of immigrant policy were lowered (Proposition 1985/86:98). Tensions between the cultural and civil institutional models had become apparent in immigrant policy, and Sweden had begun to walk down the path away from the multicultural institutional model introduced in 1975 objectives.

The three objectives remained in place until the late 1990s, although several suggestions were made as to how to make them clearer (proposition 1989/90:86; proposition 1990/91:95). Before they were permanently changed, however, the tenor of the public debate altered again.

In the late 1980s, and through the early 1990s, immigrant policies were criticized strongly, as government policies were seen as stigmatizing. They were preserved as contributing to a division into categories of “us” and “them” (SIV 1992; SOU 1996:55). This post-colonial critique was widespread in the public debate, and with a near consensus on immigrant issues of the mid 1990s that Swedish immigrant policy suffered from misleading analyses. Some influential participants in the public debate maintained that such policies were not only inappropriate but also counterproductive (Bel Habib 1992; Fonseca 1995; Gür 1993, 1995; Rojas 1992; Sunar 1997).

A new committee was formed – called *Invandrapolitiska kommittén*, like its predecessor in 1968 – and suggested new policy objectives. Immigrant policy therefore became integration policy. The earlier objectives of the policy area were changed into:

Equal rights and opportunities for all irrespective of ethnic and cultural background, a community based on social diversity and a social development characterized by mutual respect and tolerance and for which all, irrespective of background, participating in and are responsible (Proposition 1997/98:16, 27).

The biggest difference, compared to the earlier rhetoric of immigrant policy, was that the role of universal policies became crucial (Proposition 1997/98:16). Groups of immigrants were not to be singled out as beneficiaries of selective programs, but incorporated into a system of universal policies. The population should not be divided into the “us” and “them” that critics had condemned. This also had consequences for the idea of the community as a whole.

The ideas of the 1970s, when society had been seen as a system of ethnic groups participating on equal terms, were now finally abandoned. In the bill the idea of the common national history as the cement of society was discarded. Instead, “the participating in contemporary Sweden, and support for the fundamental values of society” were emphasized (Proposition 1997/98:16). The premise of immigrant policy in Sweden was, again, a civil community. Ironically, the term that summarized these developments was “integration,” one of the two concepts of which Rune B. Johansson, in 1968, warned.

Judging from this case, the legitimizing process seemed follow a specific procedure: Moral questions about immigrant policy became part of the public debate. These criticisms compelled the government to form a committee to analyze immigrant policy. The committee then adapted moral criticism and adopted it in order to disarm policy opponents. In this way, the criticism worked its way into the bill, delivered for Parliament and became a component of policy objectives. It is also important to note

that this causal process did not involve policy practice. Changes only derive from the public debate, which explains why no convergence between rhetoric and practice seems to occur.

Creating an Efficient Policy Practice

As described in previous sections several immigrant programs began in the 1960s. Among the most important were the information about Swedish society, training in Swedish, support for immigrant organizations and adult training. These programs were initiated by the special working party on immigrant issues (SOU 1967:18). Swedish language training and information directed to immigrants has since remained an important feature of Swedish immigrant policy.⁷

The government attempted to create what were seen as basic conditions of adjustment to the Swedish society (Proposition 1967:1, app. 1). Free training in Swedish was therefore offered to adult immigrants. Training in Swedish was also offered at an early stage in public schools.⁸ This immigrant policy has since been taken for granted as being part of immigrant policy, and has been conducted in much the same way ever since it was conceived. One might use the term “residual” to describe them, as they look to the need of specific groups all the while *not* considering cultural differences.

Even when taken for granted, Swedish language training has often been criticized for its poor results. It has undergone re-evaluation and been restructured on several occasions. At the end of the 1980s and beginning of 1990s, Swedish language training underwent a series of changes (Lindberg 1996), their purpose largely been to attain the operative objectives of language training in more efficient ways, while core

values in the programme have remained constant (DO 1989; SÖ 1989; RRV 1989, 1990, 1992.).

Efforts to inform immigrants about the Swedish society were initiated at roughly the same time, but these were intensified after the establishment of the Swedish Immigration Board, *Statens invandrarverk* (SIV) in 1969 (SIV 1972). The purpose was to disseminate information about Swedish society and Swedish political institutions, objectives that have remained the same since. The Swedish Immigration Board and its successor, the Swedish Integration Board, *Integrationsverket*, release such information routinely (Cf. Dahlström & Möller 2003).⁹

Language training and information efforts rested on similar principles. The idea of both was to incorporate immigrants in a civil community where they could claim individual rights. I have called these programs residual policy programs.

Another program intended to widen the scope of immigrants' rights in Sweden was the so-called interpreter and translator service – *tolk- och översättningservice* (SOU 1972:83).¹⁰ The availability of and right to interpreters and translators has received significant attention (Proposition 1975:26; Proposition 1975/76:100, app. 10; Ds U 1982:10). The right to interpreters has been evaluated and also changed during the period covered in this study. However, the authorities have always maintained the right to determine who has a right to an interpreter. That right has existed only when the authorities have deemed an individual's command of the Swedish language to be inadequate (SFS 1986:223, § 8). The interpreter service has thus been guided by the same principles as training in Swedish and information efforts.

The early experimental programs also contained programs based on principles and inherent to often multicultural policies. This encompassed, from the mid-1960s, support for religious and other organizations, support for culture, training in native

languages, and ten years later support for non-Swedish newspapers and journals (Proposition 1967: 1, app. 13; Proposition 1968: 1, app. 13).

Support for religious and other organizations became part of an experimental program in 1966 and was made permanent in 1975. Organizations for immigrants and minorities thereby received support for their regular activities (Proposition 1975:26). This step has often been seen as an important element of the development of immigrant policies, and it has been evaluated many times; however, the basic framework of the program has never been challenged (Proposition 1975/76:100, app 13; Proposition 1978/79, app.15; Proposition 1985/86:98; Proposition 1997/98:16).

A certain degree of support for immigrant culture was initiated quite early, although relatively modest. Foreign-language libraries and literatures were supported from 1967.¹¹ This kind of support was augmented during the 1970s, but was eliminated from the budget during the fiscal year 1985/86, since then, only support for foreign literature has been retained (SOU 1984:58).¹²

At the end of the 1970s, the government initiated a special program for supporting newspapers and journals in languages other than Swedish (SOU 1975:69; Proposition 1975:26). A special program for supporting such publications was started in 1977 (Proposition 1976/77:99). This program was terminated in 1986, upon the recommendation of the committee on immigrant policy, *Invandrarpolitiska kommittén* (IPOK) (Proposition 1985/86:98).

Among immigrant policy programs, training in native languages has held a special position. It has been considered the jewel in the crown among culturally-supportive immigrant policies (DsU 1975: 13; Hyltestam & Toumela 1996; SOU 1971: 51; SOU 1974: 68). Already in 1971, such training was offered in selected environments, but after the so-called “native language reform” of 1977, municipal

governments were obliged to offer training in native languages from pre-school through secondary school.¹³ Native languages training has undergone re-evaluation on numerous occasions and has been subject to both budget cuts and administrative restructuring since then.¹⁴ The evaluations have never questioned, however, whether the objectives of these programs are desirable; they have only considered their efficiency. The right to training in one's native language has been limited, both through a stricter definition of entitlement and because municipal governments were in some cases exempt from their obligation (Cf. Proposition 1975/76:118; Proposition 1984/85:100, app. 12; Proposition 1990/91:1). In the early 1990s major cuts in this area were also implemented.¹⁵

One reform that received a great deal of attention internationally during the period covered in this paper was the suffrage reform of 1975. This year, the Swedish Parliament decided that foreign nationals residing in Sweden would be given the right to vote (and to run for office) in municipal elections (Proposition 1975/76:23). To attain this right, foreign citizens would have to have lived in the country for at least three years; aside from this, the laws were uniform to Swedish citizens.¹⁶ The right for immigrants to vote in municipal elections was regulated into law, and with the exception of the 1997 legislation making it easier still for EU-citizens to vote, these laws have not changed.¹⁷ Since 1976, the authorities have worked to increase participation among foreign citizens in elections. Like other policy programs, this has been re-evaluated several times. Again, the evaluations have then only dealt with policy efficiency without ever discussing policy objectives (Dahlström & Möller 2003).

Three other immigrant policy programs have become increasingly important over time: labour market policies, adult education and support for "troubled urban

areas” [utsatta bostadsområden]. These programs were initiated in the 1970s and have become more broadly implemented in the 1990s (Proposition 1992/93:100, app. 11; Proposition 1993/94:100, app 11; SOU 2000:28). Several different kinds of labour market policies have been attempted—such as “firm introductions” in the 1970s, “public works” in the 1980s and “practice jobs” in the 1990s (SOU 1984:58; SOU 1995:76). Unlike these labour market policies, adult education for immigrants has taken place within regular programs: through basic education, supplementary secondary education and job training (SOU 1982:29; SOU 2000:28.). The support for certain urban areas, which has increased from the mid-1990s, has in practice been implemented through labour market policies and through education and training (Integrationsverket 2000b, 2000c.).

Adult education and the voting rights reform were the most obvious examples of attempts to build universal institutions in Swedish immigrant policy. Through these programs, the state assumed responsibility for civil community and this was accomplished through the introduction of immigrants – as individuals, and not as representatives of ethnic groups – within the legal and policy frameworks that already included other individuals. Labour market policies and support for certain urban areas rested on what I have called the residual principle.

In concluding immigrant policy has demonstrated remarkable stability on the practical level. No new programs have been implemented since 1977, and all existing programs, except one, have remained. However, some changes have occurred: in ambition, and in efficiency assessment. During the 1960s and early 1970s, government raised immigrant policy ambitions. It was then that the training in native languages had begun and training in the Swedish language expanded. The authorities implementing the programs, such as the SÖ, the SIV and the AMS made evaluations

that were often directed at one specific part of the program, resulting in its enlargement. Later, starting from mid 1970s, evaluations changed. From then on, they were more directed at efficiency. Many immigrant policy programs were evaluated in the late 1970s and early 1980s. One of the most frequently evaluated programs was training in the Swedish language. At the end of 1970s the program was criticized by a government audit. The students' results were not satisfactory and immigrants were criticized to have spent too much time in this program. Therefore the government assigned the SÖ to evaluate the whole program. In this evaluation, the SÖ noticed several inefficiencies and proposed a reorganization of the program. The government then formed a committee, the so-called SFI-committee, to make a broader evaluation. In these evaluations, the conclusions provided critical regarding efficiency, while the principles behind the programs were left unquestioned. The conclusions for policymakers were, therefore, that they were doing the right thing, just not enough.

Like the rhetorical level the important feedback mechanism is provided through legitimizing processes. At a first glance the feedback mechanism, through government audits, seems clearly negative. Government audits are on several occasions critical considering policy efficiency. Their analytic question is one of efficiency and as the answer is negative this decreases legitimacy for the program evaluated. These legitimacy losses drive re-organizations and changes in ambition, but it doesn't explain why policy principles remains the same through out the period.

I suggest, however, that the legitimizing process concerning policy practice also can be interpreted as a positive feedback procedure. While evaluations are critical they can provide new hopes. This would be a confirmation that the right things are done, even though not as efficiently as one would have hoped. With this knowledge, policymakers rule out other alternatives, new and different policy programs.

Therefore, there is no need for a new start, only for more efficient implementation. Nils Brunsson has observed a similar pattern considering reforming organizations: “An organization undergoing reform inspires hope; the very attempt staves off despair” (Brunsson 1989, 225; cf. Brunsson & Olsen 1993).

Language training in Swedish is one example of this. During the 1980s and early 1990s it was evaluated, criticized and re-organized many times. The critique pointed to inefficiencies in language training. Too much time was being spent in the program and students showed poor results. In spite of three different, and large, reforms between 1986 and 1994, policy principles were not reconsidered. They were not even discussed in the evaluations. Instead evaluations and reforms were engaged in technical and administrative issues, in an attempt to increase program efficiency. The existing principles were taken for granted and evaluations, even though critical, supported this idea.

Conclusions

The theoretical suggestions in this article have been confirmed. This conclusion is based on four observations. The first concerns the widely different conditions when rhetoric and practice were established. The rhetoric was introduced in a polarized public debate, whereas the practice was initiated to solve specific problems concerning information and training in the Swedish language. As a result of these different conditions right from the start, rhetoric and practice were but loosely knit together. This observation supports the historical, institutional notion on the importance of timing and direct attention to what causes a decoupled institution, and not just about its function; that has been observed earlier (Brunsson 1989; Brunsson & Olsen 1993).

Actors involved in these establishing processes performed from differencing considerations. The important actors shaping immigrant institutional practice were civil servants connected to the working party on immigrant issues, experimenting to solve particular problems concerning integration. Their trial-and-error strategy formed immigrant policy in Sweden by defining in practice what immigrant policy *is*. Policy success was from the start defined by its efficiency.

Government on the other hand, determined immigrant policy rhetoric. When composing the rhetoric, they had to strike a balance between two different standpoints within a polarized debate. At the same time they had no standpoint of their own, as the issue was not politicized. Therefore, the Minister of the Interior tried to do two things at the same time: disarm the conflict in the political debate by introducing the term adjustment [*anpassning*] instead of the terms assimilation and integration, and, join forces with the dominating opinion. As Peters *et al* have indicated conflicts among actors must not be disregarded in an analysis of institutional change (Peters, Pierre & King, 2005). The ideas introduced in this early stage, efficiency on the practical level and moral considerations on the rhetorical level, were subsequently important for institutional legitimacy (cf. Lieberman 2002).

The second observation concerns how the rhetorical level has changed. It has accommodated the opinions of its critics in the public debate. As this criticism has been on matters of principles, the core values of the rhetoric have been changed. These moral criticisms have been entered into the public debate which, I have argued, is the important third party upon which the rhetorical legitimacy hinges. Actors in the public debate have criticized policy objectives, and as the government needs policy legitimacy this led to re-considerations of objectives through government committees. These committees have since incorporated the critique in their suggestions and as the

government largely followed their recommendations, policy objective changed several times as determined by the dominating opinion in the public debate. This reflects the power of the legitimizing process. As institutional legitimacy is important for policy makers, threats to this assertion will derive incremental changes. The main argument here is that these threats are at large determined by who the relevant third party is, and only by analyzing this process is it possible to fully understand why the institution is redirected in a specific manner (Streeck & Thelen, 2005).

The third observation is on the lack of change in principle at the practical level. Here, too, opinions of the critics have been accommodated, but in this context the criticism has focused primarily on the efficiency of existing policy programs and not on the principles behind them. I have argued that the relevant third party concerning the policy practice is government audits. Their evaluations led to astonishing policy stability as to what kind of policy programs are used. The practice established during the first five to ten years of modern Swedish immigrant policy and has been in use ever since. However, it also led to an incremental change in the organization of policy programs. They have been re-organized several times during the period in order to increase efficiency. As this value—efficiency—has determined legitimacy, changes have been aimed at *how* things are done and not *what* is done. This means that alternatives to the ones already in use have been ruled out. This, ones again, directs attention to the legitimizing process. The question asked in the evaluation process—on this level that of efficiency—has determined policy outcome.

Finally, the fourth observation is that stability is maintained only when positive feedback mechanisms constantly confirm policy formation. In spite of the critical audits this has happened at the practical level. I have argued that discussion solely on policy efficiency by itself confirms the actors' recognition that right things are done,

just not enough. This gives rise to a stable set of programs, although re-organized from time to time. Every time a re-organization is made, new legitimacy is infused with hope for a more efficient tomorrow (Brunsson 1989; Brunsson & Olsen 1993).

Thelen, Streeck, and their colleagues (2005) have caused us to observe the neglect of scholarly analysis on gradual transformations in institutional studies. Their perception is to distinguish between different modes of institutional change, as there is “*a wide but not infinite variety of modes of institutional change*” (Streeck & Thelen 2005, 1). They point to five different types of change. The main purpose of this article has been to take their argument one step further by trying to answer which conditions these modes have in common. My answer is two-fold: inconsistencies within institutions, and gradual adoptions of values outside the institution. Analyzing the legitimizing process gives us insights on both of these phenomena and how they are connected to one another.

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Notes

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- ¹ “Inte för deras egen skull, så långt tänkte jag inte då, utan för Sveriges” (Öberg 1993, 233).
- ² “Utvecklingen har sedan 1964 i stora drag gått i följande riktning: Först såg man det som ett utlänningsproblem, som i första hand angick dem själva. Omkring 1968 började man även uppmärksamma invandrarbarnens skolgång, och numera kan man skönja ett minoritetsproblem av klassiskt mönster.” Interview with Mr. Schwatz (Finer 1972).
- ³ “[samverkansmålet] skulle vara en markering om att det inte skulle handla om assimilering, utan om samverkan på lika villkor.” Interview with Anna-Greta Lejion 1998-03-27.
- ⁴ “Den heta 1970-tals debatten var om man skulle driva en hård assimileringspolitik ... Det tyckte vi var fel.” Interview with Rolf Wirtén 1998-04-22.
- ⁵ “Detta är invandrarernas ’kultur’, säger man, och detsamma säger polisen. Också den skuldige mannen åberopar gärna ’hemlandets kultur’ för att ursäktas eller rättfärdiga sig när han slår sin fru. Vi säger våld är aldrig kultur.” (Kakossaios 1980.)
- ⁶ “Jag var inte beredd att gå hur långt som helst med det här med kultur. Till exempel att det är kultur att slå sin hustru. Det tillhör varken den svenska kulturen, eller någon annan kultur, men det var ibland som man försökte åberopa det”. Interview with Anita Gradin 1998-03-27.
- ⁷ Language training refers both to special training for immigrants and language training within the public school system.
- ⁸ In 1966, a right to support from the central government for supplementary teaching of foreign students was introduced (prop. 1966:1, app. 10).
- ⁹ See, for example, (SIV 1972; SIV 1981; SIV 1990; Integrationsverket 1999b; cf. Dahlström & Möller 2003).
- ¹⁰ The IU’s proposal led to the introduction of university level training for interpreters and the National School Board, SÖ, took over responsibility for experimental programs with so called “contact interpreters” from July 1, 1971. The Immigration Board’s training programs for interpreters were therefore terminated.
- ¹¹ See (prop. 1967:1, app 13; 1968:1, app. 13) for the first year when this program was tried out on an experimental basis. The government funding was channelled through the Immigration Board (prop. 1970:1, app. 13; prop. 1974:1, app. 13).
- ¹² In 1975 the government suggested, after recommendations from both the IU (SOU 1974:69) and *Litteraturutredningen* (SOU 1974:5) that the libraries should receive much more funding and that special production subsidies for “immigrant and minority languages” should be given out (SOU 1974:5; SOU 1974:69; prop. 1975:26).
- ¹³ For the decision on the objective of bilinguality (prop. 1975/76:118; UbU 1975/76:33; rskr. 1975/76:391). On training in native languages (prop. 1976/77:22; prop. 1976/77:76).
- ¹⁴ The biggest change in the system of central government funding of municipal governments concerns the general changes in the system of funding first and secondary education in 1990 (prop. 1990/91:18).
- ¹⁵ Major cuts were proposed in (prop. 1990/91:100, app. 10). The parliament struck this down, however, since it wanted municipal governments to decide what cuts to make in education programs. In spite of this, there were major cuts in these programs in the 1990s. From fiscal year 89/90 to 94/95 the proportion of students who received training in their native languages went from 64.7 % to 54.9 % of those who had the right to such training (Skolverket 1996, app.). These cuts were based on an evaluation by the national audit authority, Riksrevisionsverket (RRV), which pointed to many organizational deficiencies and claimed that the program was not cost-efficient (RRV 1990; prop. 1990/91:100, app. 10).
- ¹⁶ The requirements are that a person is 18 years old on the day of the election, has not been declared unfit by a court of law and is included in the electoral register. Furthermore, the parliament has the right to extend the right to vote in national referenda to foreign citizens in Sweden. This was done in the referendum on nuclear power in 1980 and in the referendum on the EMU, but not in the referendum on the EU in 1994 (SOU 2000:106).
- ¹⁷ The new law on Swedish citizenship on July 1, 2001 can be seen as an indirect expansion of suffrage, since it makes dual citizenship possible (prop. 1999/2000:147). The one big change that has taken place was a consequence of EU membership. On July 1, 1997 citizens of EU countries, Iceland and Norway were given the right to vote in municipal elections from the day they moved to Sweden (prop. 1996/97:70; bet. KU 1996/97:16; rskr. 177).