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In search of a more restrictive asylum policy?

Understanding the Swedish standpoint towards the
Common European Asylum System

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Abstract:

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the motives of the Swedish political parties for pursuing supranational asylum policies in the European Union. Although Sweden generally disapproves of supranationality Sweden is one of the foremost advocates of the Common European Asylum System. This thesis seeks to investigate the motives of the Swedish political parties for pursuing this agenda by testing the applicability of three theories on migration policy harmonization in Europe; burden-sharing, venue-shopping and international solidarity, which have rarely been empirically applied. As the empirical knowledge of the political parties' preferences towards the common asylum system is limited the preferences will be mapped out. The empirical analysis has been conducted using motive analysis and covers three policy cases from 1998-2009; the Schengen Convention, "The directive on mutual recognition of expulsion decisions" and the Stockholm Programme. The empirical analysis shows that the Social Democratic Party and the Moderate Party agree that asylum policy should be supranational and restrictive. The smaller parties prefer generous asylum policies but are divided on the supranational line where the Left Party and Green Party prefer intergovernmentalism. The motives of the Social Democratic Party and the Moderate Party can be explained by burden-sharing and venue-shopping. International solidarity is a motive for all the small parties while burden-sharing also plays a role for some of the centre-right parties.

Key words: Asylum policy, European Union, CEAS, Sweden, political parties, venue-shopping, burden-sharing, international solidarity, motive analysis

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Abbreviations:

CEAS - Common European Asylum System

EU - European Union

MS – Member State

QMV – Qualified Majority Voting

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1. INTRODUCTION

The member states of the European Union (EU) are currently in the process of harmonizing their asylum policies.¹ By creating the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) the EU wants refugees coming to Europe to meet a uniform asylum system and to level out the refugee reception among the member states (Hansen, 2008: 136-37). The question is; why do the member states want to harmonize asylum policy which is an area intimately associated with national sovereignty? There are many theories that seek to answer this question taking various different perspectives into consideration, such as burden-sharing, venue-shopping and international solidarity (Thielemann, 2008; Guiraudon, 2000; Givens & Luedkte, 2004; Zolberg, 1999). Although these theories bring several interesting aspects to the table their actual influence is hard to account for as they have seldom been empirically applied to the political interplay in the member states. Another problem is that they often overlook the role that mainstream political parties play (Bale, 2008; Schain, 2006). As the political parties have the formal power to influence asylum policy their role will be investigated in this study.

One of the strongest supporters of the CEAS is Sweden, which is quite mysterious considering the fact that Sweden is quite hesitant about supranationality in most other policy areas (Andersson, 2008; Vink, 2002; Abiri, 2000). Swedish asylum policy has traditionally been associated with solidarity and generosity, and considering the connection made between the EU's migration policy and the construction of 'Fortress Europe' the supportive Swedish position seems even more odd (Hansen, 2008; Givens, 2003). How can this be explained?

Turning to previous research on asylum policy-making in Sweden much focus has been put upon the national asylum policy debate rather than the discussions on the European asylum policy-making. In the national debate the focal point has been whether or not the Swedish asylum policy should be restrictive or generous, and to what extent supranational solutions are required (Andersson, 2008; Abiri, 2000; Spång, 2006). Although the national policy debate may provide us with indications to the supportive Swedish position, it cannot explain the

¹ In this paper the terms migration policy, immigration policy and asylum policy are used. Migration is a multidimensional area that spans from refugee seeking to labor migration. Migration policy is a general term that refers to all aspects of migration, such as asylum seeking, family reunion and labor migration. Immigration policy is a somewhat narrower term that covers those types of migration that does not spring from flight. Finally, asylum policy is the politics that regulates asylum seekers. The terms 'asylum seeker' and 'refugee' are used in parallel.

official standpoint in full, due to the lack of empirical evidence from the European harmonization process. In order to confirm whether or not these dimensions are applicable for Sweden in the European asylum debate, they will be investigated in this study.

Another interesting point in Swedish asylum policy is the rather unconventional formation of the political parties. Mikael Spång (2006: 35) has identified two blocks in Swedish asylum policy-making. The restrictive block is made up by the Social Democratic Party and the Moderate Party, who are occasionally joined by the Centre Party. The liberal block consists of the Green Party, the Left Party, the Liberal People's Party, and the Christian Democrats. However, too little empirical research has been conducted in relation to the common asylum system in order to confirm or reject this picture of the political parties.

The aim of this thesis is twofold. Firstly the aim is to map out the preferences of the political parties in terms of (1) supranational or intergovernmental, and (2) generous or restrictive preferences in order to increase our knowledge of how the parties position themselves in European asylum policy-making. Do patterns emerge over time and can parallels be drawn to the national asylum policy debate? Furthermore, the aim is to explain the motives of the political parties using theories on burden-sharing, venue-shopping and international solidarity to see which, if any, of these perspectives impacts the parties.

1.2 Disposition

The disposition of this paper is as follow. In *the second chapter* the theoretical framework of the study is presented including previous research, theory and the research aim and questions. *The third chapter* addresses the methodological considerations of the research design, case selection and material. *The fourth chapter* contains the analytical framework which is the basis of the empirical analysis. In the fifth and sixth chapters the empirical results are presented. *The fifth chapter* maps out the preferences of the political parties related to each policy case while *the sixth chapter* seeks to explain the parties' motives. Finally, in *the seventh chapter* conclusions are drawn.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Previous research

2.1.1 Asylum policy-making in Sweden

As mentioned in the introduction Sweden is a strong supporter of the Common European Asylum System, which undoubtedly evokes some questions. On the one hand Sweden has been considered a generous country when it comes to granting asylum (Andersson, 2008; Vink, 2002; Abiri, 2000) on the other hand the creation of the CEAS is often connected with ‘Fortress Europe’ and more restrictive asylum policies (Hansen, 2008; Givens, 2003). The question is why does Sweden hold this position and how has the official standpoint been formulated?

Sweden has been a net immigrant country since the end of World War II, but for a long time refugees were only a small part of the total amount of immigrants arriving in Sweden. For this reason almost all refugees were granted asylum and Sweden built up an international image based on generosity and solidarity with the third world countries. In the 1980s the number of asylum seekers started to grow alongside an increasing political frustration. In 1985 there was a break in the traditional asylum policy-making and more restrictive policies were introduced (Abiri, 2000: 12-13). This new style of policy-making has remained unchanged since 1985 even though Sweden has been governed by two ideologically opposing parties, the Social Democratic Party and the Moderate Party. Several of the policies introduced since the 1980s, such as the principle of first asylum country, are similar to the policies that would later be implemented within the frame of the EU (Abiri, 2000: 14). It is also during this period that the Swedish position towards asylum cooperation in Europe is formed. As the number of asylum seekers peaked at the beginning of the 1990s with the disintegration of Yugoslavia, Sweden started to argue for the need of a Europeanized asylum policy, not at least in terms of burden-sharing (Abiri, 2000; Geddes, 2003).

Although the Swedish position towards a common asylum system was established already in the 1990s it has continued to develop since then. Hans Andersson (2008) has studied Sweden’s position towards the CEAS in terms of decision-making procedures until 2007. During this time period he observed two major shifts in the Swedish standpoint. The first shift relates to the use of qualified majority voting (QMV) which Sweden initially opposed. This

opinion shifted when the Nice Treaty was being negotiated. Andersson identified the slow progress made in the policy-making process as the reason for this. By introducing QMV all member states would have to make an effort in asylum policy-making which would drive harmonization forward (Andersson, 2008: 156). The second shift concerns the use of minimum conditions in the common asylum system. Initially Sweden had been positive towards minimum conditions as they were seen as a guarantee of the Swedish liberal system. But when the Lisbon Treaty was being negotiated several of the Swedish parties abandoned the demand for minimum conditions, which is more puzzling. Andersson (2008: 161) believes that burden-sharing had a role to play; although he points out that there is too little empirical research in this field in order to draw any general conclusions.

Researchers who have studied the positions of the political parties in relation to the common asylum system often categorize them on two theoretical dimensions: (1) supranational or intergovernmental, and (2) restrictive or generous. Despite their ideological differences Sweden's two biggest political parties, the Social Democratic Party and the Moderate Party, both support a supranational and restrictive line in asylum policy (Andersson, 2008; Odmalm, 2011; Spång, 2006; Abiri, 2000; Kjellgren, 2010). While the smaller parties are divided along these theoretical dimensions they all tend to criticize the government for not defending the Swedish generous system enough at the EU-level (Spång, 2006: 31). The consensus on immigration and asylum policy between the Social Democratic Party and the Moderate Party has also been observed by Abiri (2000). Although these parties represent the opposing block Swedish politics, they have been in agreement on asylum policy since the 1990s. Abiri also pointed out that asylum policy divisions often are found within the big parties, especially when it comes to the level of restrictiveness. These divisions are the result of a greater ideological argumentation rather than pure party ideology (Abiri, 2000: 24-25).

According to Spång (2006: 35) two asylum policy blocks have emerged in Swedish politics that are inconsistent with political ideology and the parties' general position towards the EU. The restrictive block consists of the Social Democrats, the Moderate Party and occasionally the Centre Party. The liberal block consists of the Left Party, the Green Party, the Liberal People's Party and usually also the Christian Democrats. Although many researchers generally agree on the blocks presented by Spång they do not always agree that these preferences have been stable. Andersson (2008: 17) points out that the Liberal People's Party, who initially supported supranational asylum policies, started to have doubts in the beginning

of the 21st century. However, too little empirical research has focused on party preferences towards the CEAS over time in order to draw any general conclusions on the stability of party preferences, which is something I will address in this thesis.

Spång (2006: 37) points out that the two blocks that have emerged are a result of the Swedish political debate during the 1980s and -90s, and that the political tensions between the large and small parties have been transferred into the harmonization debate. He also notes that the Swedish political debate has been affected very little by the actual asylum policy harmonization; rather it has been shaped by European integration as a whole. Inge Dahlstedt (2000) has studied the Swedish parliamentary asylum debates during the 1980s and -90s. He observes a shift in rhetoric during the 1990s where less emphasis was put on solidarity and generosity. When Sweden joined the EU in 1995 the Swedish asylum policy entered the international spotlight. Rather than expressing pride in the generous national asylum system the Swedish political debate was characterized by fear of being different from the other member states (Dahlstedt, 2000: 50-51).

At the beginning of this chapter I raised the question of how the Swedish standpoint on the common asylum system has been formulated. After reviewing the research within this field it is hard to find a satisfactory answer. From a historical perspective we can see how the rise of asylum seekers has put pressure on the Swedish asylum system, leading to some noticeable policy changes as well as the desire for a supranational asylum system. Several researchers have also established the rather odd agreement that exists between the Social Democrats and the Moderate Party as well as the deviating opinions among the smaller parties. But can we really say that we understand the political interplay that surrounds the formulation of the Swedish standpoint? On the basis of the inadequate knowledge within this field I argue that it is necessary to continue to explore the political parties and their interactions in order to achieve a proper understanding of the state of play. By understanding the preferences and motives of the political parties it is possible to acquire a small piece of the puzzle as to what drives harmonization of asylum policy forward.

2.1.2 Harmonizing European asylum policies

In order to explain the behavior of the Swedish political parties when it comes to asylum policy harmonization it is essential to utilize the large quantity of research on migration policy harmonization in Europe. As many researchers seek to answer the question of why the member states have chosen to delegate political power to the supranational institutions in the EU, previous research is to a large extent theory driven.² Consequently there are several overarching theories as to why the member states have chosen to harmonize migration policy areas (Boswell, 2007, 2009; Guild, 2003; Givens & Luedkte, 2004; Guiraudon, 2000, 2003; Huysmans, 2000; Thielemann, 2008) that could be used to explain the motives of the Swedish political parties.

Three commonly applied theories in research on migration policy harmonization in Europe are (1) *venue-shopping*, (2) *securitization* and (3) *burden-sharing*. These theoretical perspectives offer different explanations as to why the member states would want to harmonize migration policy. While securitization highlights that the motor of harmonization is the description of asylum seekers as security threats (Huysmans, 2000; Guild, 2003) venue-shopping points to the fact that policy pressure and political opposition motivate the dominant actors to harmonize (Guiraudon, 2000, 2003; Givens & Luedkte, 2004). Burden-sharing on the other hand explains asylum policy harmonization in the light of leveling out the reception of refugees between the member states in the EU (Thielemann, 2008). The problem with these overarching theories, as will be seen in the next chapter, is the fact that they seldom have been applied to the empirical context in any of the member states. One example of this is Thielemann (2008) who in his article on burden-sharing in the creation of the CEAS makes not a single reference to national policy processes. Since the theories have not been applied to national policy processes, thereby overlooking to analyze the political interplay between the different national actors, it is hard to judge the validity of the theories. The fact that the overarching theories have not been tested empirically is a significant problem with previous

² Migration policy harmonization is a piece of the puzzle to European integration as a whole. *Neofunctionalism* (Schmitter, 2005) and *intergovernmentalism* (Moravcsik, 1998) are two commonly applied theories that seek to explain the overall European integration and to what extent the member states drive integration forward. Although they serve as the backdrop for several of the theories within this field (Guild, 2003; Givens & Luedkte, 2004; Guiraudon, 2000, 2003; Huysmans, 2000) they do not take the particular concerns of migration policy into account. Furthermore, as this study focus on the preferences and motives of the political parties rather than the influence of the Swedish government versus the European Commission, they are not included in this study. Nevertheless, it is good to reflect upon the ideas presented by e.g. Tallberg (2002) that the member states to a large extent will hold on to areas of political importance such as asylum policy, and what their motives for harmonizing these policy areas might be?

research. In this thesis I seek to apply theories on venue-shopping, burden-sharing and international solidarity on the Swedish political parties in order to see whether they can be used to explain the motives of the parties in the European asylum policy-making process. This will not only contribute to our understanding of the Swedish political parties, but also provide a small step in investigating whether or not these theories are applicable to actual asylum policy-making.

Another problem with the research in this field is the fact that many researchers overlook the important role that political parties play in the development of the common asylum policy. When discussing migration the role of organized interest groups, such as trade unions, are emphasized while political parties, who actually have real influence over the policy process, are disregarded. This behavior has been observed by for instance Bale (2008). He concludes that when political parties are discussed in migration research they tend to be so from a very limited perspective, e.g. the far-right extremist parties. This is unfortunate since political parties are at the centre of migration policy-making, even if migration policy would be completely harmonized in the EU (Bale, 2008: 316).

When studying political parties on migration topics it is easy to focus on the parties with anti-immigration agendas. Extremist parties certainly influence the public debate, which may require the mainstream parties to adjust their politics (Perlmutter, 1996; Schain, 2006). But they rarely acquire more than an indirect influence over migration policy-making, which means that their impact on policy is limited (Schain, 2006: 287). The role of the mainstream centre-right parties is, on the other hand, often overlooked. Many European countries are governed by centre-right parties who are equally preoccupied with asylum policy as the extremist parties (Bale, 2008: 318). Likewise, Hinnfors, Spehar and Bucken-Knapp (2011) have argued that social democratic parties are overlooked in migration policy research. In order to better understand the role that political parties play in asylum policy-making, the mainstream parties need to be put into the spotlight.

Studying previous research on European migration policy-making, it is clear that several important pieces of the puzzle that could help us to understand the motives of the Swedish political parties are present. Unfortunately, even if the theoretical perspectives cover many interesting aspects their actual impact is hard to judge since they have not been tested empirically on national policy processes. Moreover, they often present a very shallow

interpretation of the harmonization process as a whole. The complexity of migration policy is a well known fact as it ties into several other policy areas regardless of whether the asylum debate is held at the national or supranational level. Yet the theoretical models presented are often very simplistic, usually emphasizing only one theoretical aspect, such as burden-sharing. In order to understand why the member states have chosen to harmonize asylum policy it is important to proceed from the national level and take several theoretical perspectives into account. By focusing on the national policy processes, it is possible to get a better understanding of the overarching theories on migration policy harmonization. Here the mainstream political parties have an important role to play as they provide the vital link to why the member states want to proceed with asylum policy-making at the supranational level.

2.2 Theory

In order to explain why the political parties want a supranational asylum policy, I will use overarching theories on migration policy harmonization in Europe. As mentioned previously there are many theories that seek to explain why the EU member states have chosen to harmonize migration policy areas. In this thesis I will use venue-shopping, burden-sharing and international solidarity to explain the motives of the political parties, which will be explained more fully in the next section. The reason for applying these theories in particular is that they pick up important points from the national asylum policy debate. As Sweden is one of the countries in the EU who receives the largest proportion of asylum seekers it is likely that burden-sharing has a role to play. If the theory is well founded then Sweden should be one of the countries where political parties are motivated by burden-sharing. Likewise, if support of burden-sharing cannot be found among the Swedish political parties then we may question the accuracy of this theoretical perspective in the development of the CEAS. The fact that burden-sharing seems to be one of the key driving forces behind the Swedish standpoint to the common asylum policy has previously been pointed out by Andersson (2008) who also has concluded that empirical research has been too scarce to confirm this picture. Applying burden-sharing in this empirical analysis is a small step toward confirmation or rejection of his conclusions.

The use of venue-shopping is also based on elements in the Swedish asylum policy debate. Previous research has shown quite substantial political divisions among the parties when it

comes to the national asylum policy-making and that the debate has heated up in recent years (Andersson, 2008; Odmalm, 2011; Spång, 2006; Abiri, 2000). Since differences of opinions exist in the national asylum policy debate, for instance on the generosity of asylum policy, it is probable that the dominating actors, in the case the Social Democratic Party and the Moderate Party, escape to the EU-level in order to anchor their positions and avoid pressure from their political opponents. Spång (2006) has noticed that the smaller parties tend to criticize the government for not defending the generosity of Swedish asylum policy in EU negotiations. Furthermore Spehar (2012) highlights that both the Social Democratic Party and the Moderate Party have had problems in the past to implement restrictive asylum policies within the national policy-making process, another indication that these parties have the incentives to venue-shop. For these reasons Sweden is a good case to test how well venue-shopping can be empirically applied.

Securitization is one theoretical perspective that will not be used in this study.³ The reason for excluding securitization is based on criticism put forward in previous research as well as the Swedish domestic asylum policy debate. As suggested by for instance Boswell (2007, 2009) there is little evidence that securitization has a lasting effect on asylum policy-making, even if policy makers temporarily respond to public opinion on security issues. Furthermore, as the research presented by Dahlstedt (2000) has shown, securitized agendas and the description of immigrants as security threats has had very little impact on the Swedish political debate. The asylum policy debate has rather focused on issues such as international solidarity, which is the third theoretical perspective applied in this thesis. As there is little evidence from previous research that securitization motivates the Swedish political parties to pursue a supranational asylum policy it will be excluded from the analysis.

³ Securitization seeks to explain migration policy harmonization by presenting immigrants as security threats in the public debate and in the decision-making process, which means that asylum policy-making moves away from the traditional focus on human rights. Linking asylum seekers with terrorism is especially common after the terrorist attack in New York 9/11 2001 (Huysmans, 2000; Guild, 2003). Securitization has been criticized for exaggerating the impact of securitized agendas in migration policy. Boswell (2007: 606) has studied the impact of 9/11 on European migration policy-making and found little impact on the migration discourse. She also points out that those member states who do peruse a securitized migration agenda will only do so for a limited time period, and that aggravated public opinions will not result in a permanent security strategy (Boswell, 2009: 103). Nevertheless, the fact that securitization is excluded from this analysis does not mean that it should be disregarded as a valid theoretical perspective. The fact that it does not seem to fit the Swedish case does not automatically mean that it is not valid in other member states.

2.2.1 Venue-shopping

Venue-shopping is one of the theories used in this thesis to explain the motives of the political parties in seeking out supranational asylum policies. One of the first researchers to apply venue-shopping to the development of EU migration policy was Virginie Guiraudon (2000, 2003). Venue-shopping focuses on the national level and emphasizes the role of domestic political pressure. The dominant political actors may face resistance in carrying out their political agenda due to institutional constraints or political opposition. By transferring asylum policy to a new political venue, i.e. the EU, the national political or institutional opposition may be bypassed. Venue-shopping is thereby a way for political actors to regain control. Using the EU the dominant party may cement their asylum policy preferences as it is very hard to undo EU legislation. Parties who ‘venue-shop’ may also use EU as a scapegoat for the new asylum policy. It is not only political actors that can gain from venue-shopping but also public officials who often face less institutional constraints at the supranational level. The consequence of venue-shopping is that EU migration policy only reflects the preferences of the dominant actors in each member state (Guiraudon, 2000: 257-58).

Venue-shopping is not only useful to explain why the member states have chosen to harmonize migration policy but also to explain the high degree of fragmentation in EU migration policy. While areas such as the Schengen Convention are very progressive other areas, for instance labor migration, have barely been harmonized at all (Hansen, 2008). Guiraudon (2003) points out that these parallel tracks should be understood as an effect of the ‘windows of opportunities’ that has materialized along the way. If a national actor has decided to venue-shop at the EU-level they need to adapt their strategies to the relevant and available opportunities, taking into account the power struggles between different actors. Hence migration policy development should not be seen as an effect of path dependency or rational bargaining (Guiraudon, 2003: 264-67).

Furthermore, Givens and Luedkte (2004: 150-51) emphasize that success of migration policy harmonization is a direct effect of the national politics where political salience, political partisanship and the level of institutional protection of migrant rights play key roles. In recent years the political salience of migration topics has risen due to the increased interest from the public and the political parties. When taking decisions on, e.g. asylum policy harmonization the national governments will be affected by the level of political salience and the level of

institutional protection of asylum seekers. When political salience and the level of institutional protection are high the national government has the incentives to support harmonization, which means that harmonization of asylum policy primarily leads to *restrictive* supranational policies. Givens and Luedkte (2004: 151) define institutional protection as high when courts, civil society and EU institutions are actively involved in protecting asylum seekers. As the Swedish civil society is actively involved in asylum policy and the legal security in asylum procedures is monitored by a migration court (Fryklund & Lundberg, 2009: 14-17), the institutional protection of asylum seekers in Sweden should be considered high.

The idea that the member states use the EU as a ‘venue of secrecy’ is challenged by Boswell and Geddes (2011: 155). They point out that international asylum cooperation often sends the signal home that the government is working towards tougher asylum rules. It is only towards the citizens that the EU is used as a scapegoat. Furthermore Boswell and Geddes (2011: 154-55) discard the notion of the restrictive EU policy as suggested by both Guiraudon and Givens and Luedkte. The EU’s asylum policies have raised the standards in several countries and served as a starting point for liberalization in some countries. Another problem with venue-shopping is that it lacks empirical foundation at the national level. Guiraudon (2000, 2003) uses policy processes and negotiations at the EU level to exemplify venue-shopping despite the fact that it is so intimately associated with the relationship between the national actors.

2.2.2 Burden-sharing

Burden-sharing is another important theoretical aspect that focuses on the principle that the member states should share the ‘asylum burden’. As Andersson (2008: 161) has noted burden-sharing seems to be part of the Swedish strategy towards the common asylum policy and is present in the Swedish official standpoint towards the CEAS. The question is whether burden-sharing is a goal in itself or if it is only part of the strategy to reach another agenda?

Burden-sharing is essentially a way to achieve greater solidarity between countries regarding refugee reception. As some countries are more reluctant than others to grant asylum some countries receive a disproportionately large amount of refugees. When a country introduces restrictive asylum policies it might be provocative for countries with a generous asylum

system as it is seen as an increase of their ‘asylum burden’. Eiko Thielemann is one scholar who has emphasized the role of burden-sharing in the development of a common asylum system in the EU. According to him there are close links between the need for burden-sharing and the development of the CEAS. By creating a common asylum system binding rules are introduced in all the member states which should reduce the risk that some try to escape their responsibilities (Thielemann, 2008: 2).

Thielemann (2008) also notes that burden-sharing does not automatically mean that all states receive an equal number of asylum seekers. He separates two regimes of burden-sharing that incorporates different perspectives on solidarity. *One-dimensional burden-sharing* aims at equalizing the proportion of asylum seekers that the countries needs to receive. This is either done by binding regulations such as refugee quotas or through voluntary pledging mechanisms, such as the establishment of appealing systems between participating countries (Thielemann, 2008: 3-4). *Multi-dimensional burden-sharing* has a wider interpretation of solidarity. It does not seek to equalize the ‘asylum burden’ on a single dimension as the previous regime, but takes many perspectives into account. Countries that receive more asylum seekers than others can be compensated in other areas. One example is the creation of explicit compensation where it is possible to sell refugee quotas to other countries. Another strategy is to employ a trading logic where some countries receive refugees while others, e.g. send troops to instable counties to keep the peace and prevent migration (Thielemann, 2008: 4). ‘Sharing people’ is not something that is unfamiliar to the EU who has tried to implement burden-sharing mechanisms in the common asylum policy. One example is the Dublin Convention or the European Refugee Fund. These initiatives have often been criticized both from a human rights perspective but also from the effectiveness of the burden-sharing point of view (Thielemann, 2008: 5).

As pointed out in the previous chapter burden-sharing as a motive for asylum policy harmonization has very seldom been applied to the national empirical context. Regional burden-sharing within the member states has been studied empirically by, e.g. Boswell (2003), but there are few empirical studies where burden-sharing is presented in relation to the CEAS.

2.2.3 International solidarity and human rights

The final theoretical perspective used in this study is international solidarity and protection of human rights, an influencing factor in asylum policy decisions that have characterized the Swedish asylum policy debate (Dahlstedt, 2000). There are many different factors that influence asylum policy decisions, and according to Zolberg (1999: 81-86) migration affects society on two dimensions. The first dimension concerns the *economical* effects migration will have on the receiving countries. While employers tend to support generous migration policies since they increase access to labor and lowers wage costs, trade unions tend to oppose generous migration policies since they may lower wage levels and working conditions. The second dimension concerns *identity* and the cultural effects migration may have on the receiving country. Extremist anti-immigration parties' perceive migration as a threat to the national culture and traditions and thereby advocate restrictions. But identity may also create support of generous migration policies with actors that seek to support multiculturalism and show solidarity with people in distress. Zolberg's dimensions may not only help us to understand 'unholy' coalitions such as identified by Spång (2006) but also why political parties favor restrictive or generous asylum policies. The desire to, e.g. protect human rights may explain why parties that do not usually cooperate find common grounds.

As highlighted by, e.g. Dahlstedt (2000) international solidarity has been of major concern for some of the Swedish parties in the asylum policy debate. Solidarity as a concept has shaped several of the Swedish parties ideologically. Parties rooted in the socialist movement such as the Left Party have strong bonds to working class solidarity. Likewise, 'global solidarity' may influence newer parties such as the Green Party. The ideological relationship to solidarity may impact the parties' interests in the asylum policy debate (Poguntke, 2006). Concerning the EU's asylum policy the importance of international solidarity falls back on the discussions around Fortress Europe. Some groups believe that the EU through arrangements such as the Schengen Convention is shutting its borders towards third world countries and poor migrants (Hansen, 2008; Givens, 2003). Among these we find political parties who are very provoked by the attempts to build the CEAS.

2.3 Research aim and questions

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the motives of the Swedish political parties to pursue supranational asylum policies in the EU. There are currently a number of theories on migration policy harmonization that seeks to explain this but, as few of them have been empirically applied their impact on the political process is hard to account for. More precisely this thesis will investigate the possible influence of three of these theories; burden-sharing, venue-shopping and international solidarity. A prerequisite for this is to map out the preferences of the mainstream political parties towards the CEAS. As previous research has focused on the national policy debate, there is currently limited empirical knowledge on how the parties position themselves towards the CEAS and if these preferences are stable over time. With this thesis I intend to contribute to this knowledge by studying party preferences between 1998-2009 on two dimensions; (1) supranational or intergovernmental, and (2) restrictive or generous. By connecting the preferences and motives of the political parties towards the CEAS we may acquire new knowledge about the Swedish asylum policy debate as well as how it interplays with harmonization of European asylum policy at large.

- *Have the political parties preferred supranational or intergovernmental policies in the creation of the Common European Asylum System?*
- *Have the political parties preferred restrictive or generous policies in the creation of the Common European Asylum System?*
- *Do patterns in party preferences emerge between 1998 and 2009?*
- *Can the motives of the parties towards the creation of the Common European Asylum System be understood in terms of burden-sharing, venue-shopping and/or international solidarity?*

3. METHODS AND RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Research design

This thesis is a qualitative study that investigates the formation of the Swedish standpoint towards the CEAS by focusing on the preferences and motives of the political parties. As the preferences and motives are the focal point the qualitative design is the most advantageous. It makes it possible to understand how the Swedish standpoint has been shaped by the political parties without limiting the possibility to capture party preferences and motives. Within the qualitative field there is a range of methodological approaches that could have been used. As will be explained in the next chapter, motive analysis is the most appropriate one for the design of this study.

Since the theories used in this thesis have rarely been empirically applied it would have been relevant to conduct this type of study on all the member states. As each country has its own political system, relationship to the EU and asylum policy preferences, they can all contribute to increase our understanding of the harmonization process. However, Sweden is a particularly interesting case since it has a very distinctive asylum system, with an intergovernmental approach to the European cooperation in general and is still one of the foremost promoters of a supranational asylum system within the EU. Although much is known about the national asylum policy debate, our understanding of the European asylum policy debate in Sweden is limited, another reason for choosing Sweden. As described in the theoretical chapter, Sweden is also an interesting case to apply burden-sharing, venue-shopping and international solidarity in order to increase our empirical knowledge of these theories. Besides the societal and theoretical angle there are also methodological and practical reasons to use Sweden as an object of study. As the empirical analysis has been made by text analysis, being a native speaker of Swedish is an invaluable asset as the understanding of the language is essential for the researcher performing the analysis.

The actors investigated in this thesis are the Swedish mainstream political parties. Even if there are a range of other actors that also seek to affect asylum policy, it is the political parties that have the direct influence over the politics. As previously highlighted (Bale, 2008) the importance of the mainstream political parties is often overlooked, which means that an important part of migration policy-making has been obscured. Since the analysis stretches

from 1998-2009 only parties that have been in parliament throughout this period are included in the analysis.

The following parties are included in the study; the Left Party (*Vänsterpartiet*), the Social Democratic Party (*Sveriges socialdemokratiska arbetareparti*), the Green Party (*Miljöpartiet de Gröna*), the Centre Party (*Centerpartiet*), the Liberal People's Party (*Folkpartiet Liberalerna*), the Christian Democrats (*Kristdemokraterna*) and the Moderate Party (*Moderata samlingspartiet*).⁴

3.2 Method

The empirical results in this study have been produced by the use of motive analysis. As this thesis aims to uncover the motives as well as the preferences of the political parties towards the common asylum policy, this is the most appropriate method.

Motive analysis is a method that makes it possible to capture the premeditated motives⁵ of the object of study, in this case the Swedish political parties. Using motive analysis it is possible to link the descriptive findings of the political parties' preferences to their motives for supporting/ not supporting the harmonization process. The form of motive analysis used in this study is *intentional motive analysis* as the study aims to capture the intended motives of the parties, not how they have calculated their decisions. A motive analysis can be performed using both text analysis and interviews. In this thesis I have performed a text analysis on official documents from the Swedish parliament and government, which made it possible to capture how the parties act in the formal policy-making process. When it comes to uncovering the motives behind political decisions official documentation is a good and reliable source (Esaiasson et al, 2009: 335), as will be explained in the material chapter.

The reason for using motive analysis rather than another branch of text analysis is that it makes it possible to connect the parties' preferences with their possible motives. A discourse analysis would have been appropriate if the aim had been to put the preferences in a societal

⁴ Due to the fact that the Sweden Democrats (*Sverigedemokraterna*) is not a mainstream party and have only been in parliament since 2010 the party is excluded from this study.

⁵ It is important to distinguish between *motives* and *motivations*. A motive explains the underlying factors behind a certain preference. It is a mental process that cannot be directly observed. The motivations actors use to justify their political decisions can be directly observed, but may not necessarily be a true reflection of the motives.

context. To detect winners and losers in the debate an argumentation analysis would have been preferable. Another reason behind the choice of motive analysis is the fact that it does not take into account if the parties' arguments are objective or well founded, only if they believe them to be correct (Esaiasson et al, 2009: 328). As with all strands of text analysis the interpretation of the text is central regardless of the format. The focus of the text analysis will be on *the sender* of the text, i.e. the political party in question, as the aim is to uncover party preferences and motives (Bergström & Boréus, 2005).

Preconceptions are important to address when performing a text analysis, as this makes it possible for the reader to critically judge the validity of the empirical results. Each researcher engaging in text analysis approaches the text with a certain number of preconceptions, e.g. the knowledge of a party's ideological standpoint. Otherwise it would be impossible to interpret the text. Although a certain level of preconceptions is necessary for the analysis, it will inevitably affect the interpretation (Bergström & Boréus, 2005). As politics in general and asylum policy in particular are associated with many preconceptions, I hereby want the reader to observe some of mine. First of all I have approached the material with knowledge of previous research in mind, and my expectations have been that these patterns will recur in EU asylum policy-making. Ideological preconceptions may also lead the researcher in the wrong direction. One example of this is the assumption that a socialist party will have a generous asylum policy preference as it is built on working class solidarity. In Swedish asylum policy this may not be the case (see, e.g. Andersson, 2008; Spång, 2006). The possible influence of my preconceptions therefore has been taken into consideration.

To conclude I would like to underline the importance of the analytical framework when it comes to unlocking the interpretations made in the empirical analysis. As the parties cannot be expected to always be explicit about their preferences, interpretation of their argumentation is required. Moreover, by only searching for obvious statements, many of the nuances in the political messages will be lost, problems that are addressed by the analytical framework.

3.3 Selection of policy cases

In order to increase the transparency and reliability of the analysis the selection of the empirical cases has been based upon three key legislative moments in the creation of the CEAS. These moments represents the implementation of a convention, directive or program. It is not within the scope of this thesis to map out the parties' preferences on all the policy cases that can be linked to the CEAS. By structuring the research around key moments in the harmonization process the preferences of the political parties can be captured while at the same time making it easier for the reader to follow the analysis. As the cases stretches from 1998 to 2009 it will be possible to study the preferences over time. The selection of policy cases also increases the transparency and the reliability of the study, as they are the foundation of the material selection, further explained in the next chapter. The following policy cases have been selected:

- The Stockholm Programme – an open and secure Europe serving and protecting citizens (2010/C 115/01)
- Council Directive 2001/40/EG on the mutual recognition of decisions on the expulsion of third country nationals
- Convention 1990/06/EC implementing the Schengen agreement

Why have these three policy cases been selected in particular among the many cases of interest for this study? There are currently five legal documents that make up the core of the CEAS. It has been governed by three working programs and is affected by a number of other directives and regulations. From a research point of view it would be interesting to study all of these cases, but unfortunately this is outside of the scope of this thesis. The greatest limitation to this study is therefore made on the number of policy cases. In order to build on previous research and relate the findings to the general debate on EU migration policy harmonization, it is important to include all the parties. For the same reason it is important to investigate party preferences on both the supranational/intergovernmental and restrictive/generous dimensions. By limiting the study to three policy cases the possibility to make generalizations decreases as the preferences are only measured at three time points. Nevertheless it is still possible to make a relevant contribution to previous research. I would strongly encourage further research in this area and further complement existing data and knowledge by including more time points.

As mentioned previously, the three empirical cases represent different phases of the harmonization process. The discussions about the Schengen Convention capture party preferences before EU asylum policy was formally introduced. “The directive on mutual recognition on expulsion decisions” was adopted during the Tampere Program, which is the most intense period of asylum policy-making. Finally the Stockholm Programme represents the more recent discussions held about asylum policy. These three policy cases have been selected for several reasons, both with regards to the legal adaptation pressure and the nature of the contents in the policies. One example is the Schengen Convention that had a low ‘goodness of fit’ with Swedish legislation (Spång, 2006). The need to readjust Swedish legislation opened up political debate on if and how this should be done. Policy content is another important point. The debate about the mutual recognition of expulsions decisions touch upon the core problem of any harmonization process, whether or not to recognize other member states legislation, especially since it can be used for both restrictive and generous purposes.

The discussions about the Swedish accession to the Schengen area is an excellent starting point to investigate the parties’ preferences to the common asylum policy. The debate about Schengen membership coincides with Sweden’s accession to the EU in 1995 and is highly relevant to our understanding of EU asylum policy. Opening the borders between the member states and providing free movement for the EU citizens will naturally have consequences for asylum seekers and asylum policy in Sweden. Initially, the Schengen Convention also included asylum policy, however it was later incorporated in the Dublin Convention instead (Hansen, 2008: 67). Therefore, I argue that although the Schengen area is not part of asylum policy as such it can contribute greatly to our understanding of the political parties view on the CEAS and is therefore one of the selected policy cases.

“The directive on the mutual recognition of decisions on the expulsion of third country nationals” represents the second time point in the analysis. As the title suggests the directive aims to encourage the member states to recognize expulsion decisions made by other member states. Although the directive covers all migrants, it has a profound effect on asylum seekers, which makes it of interest for this study. At this time point the common asylum policy was only in its infancy and asylum policies differed greatly among the member states. The possibility to recognize other member states legislation, even when the conditions are more restrictive, creates a dilemma for traditionally generous countries such as Sweden. The

possibility to expel asylum seekers that would have had grounds to stay under Swedish legislation could greatly affect the Swedish asylum model. Actors with a restrictive agenda may use this opportunity to move towards a more restrictive asylum policy. The parties' position towards this directive provides us with good indications to what extent they are ready to defend the traditional Swedish asylum model.

The most recent time point covered is the preparatory discussions on the Stockholm Programme. Even though the program covers other areas than migration it sets the direction of asylum policy-making in 2010-2014, in essence laying the foundation for the last stages of the harmonization process. Furthermore, the Stockholm Programme was prepared and signed during the Swedish presidency of 2009 which means Sweden had the opportunity to put its own mark on the material. This was not only an opportunity for the government but also increased the interest for the Stockholm Program among all the parties.

3.4 Material

The primary sources of material for this study are official documents originating from the Swedish parliament or government. Protocols from debates or committee meetings, government bills, and motions put forward by the parties are examples of the types of official documentation used.⁶ In the second part of the analysis the official documents are complemented with party programs and election manifestos. These types of materials are good sources for the motive analysis as they capture the preferences of the political parties at a particular time point as well as the argumentation behind them. Mixing motions with protocols from debates makes it possible to capture both premeditated messages as well as the direct interactions between the parties.

It is of course possible to say one thing and to mean another, and official documents fall short when it comes to identifying hidden agendas, preferences the parties have not conveyed in public or informal negotiations. The analytical framework makes it possible to identify motives behind the outspoken preferences with regards to burden-sharing, venue-shopping and international solidarity; however it cannot detect completely hidden agendas. This is not the aim of the thesis but could potentially be problematic.

⁶ Bills and motions are political propositions put forward in the national legislative process. The bill is put forward by the government while the motion is put forward by a single, or a group of, parliamentarian(s).

The risk that the material does not capture the actual preferences of the parties is small. The material represents different stages of the legislative process, and it is unlikely that a party would repeatedly express the complete opposite preference as this could risk the future of their actual preference. Hence it is unlikely that a party who repeatedly supports a supranational asylum policy would actually prefer it to be intergovernmental. However, there are less extreme cases and as asylum policy is a sensitive issue it is possible that a party might express a less restrictive preference than they actually desire. This may affect the results in cases where parties generally express support for a ‘humane asylum policy’ when they actually want to implement further restrictions. Generally speaking this problem should not be of great consequence as the analytical framework includes tools to separate preferences and rhetoric. In this case, a party would also have state *how* they want policy to be ‘humane’ in order to be classified as generous.

Another important point to make is that an address in a debate by a single parliamentarian does not necessarily reflect the position of the whole party, and that opposing preferences within a party may emerge in the debate. In order to avoid this problem the classification of the parties has been based upon the full picture given by the different types of materials, e.g. protocols from debates, committee meetings and motions, and never on a single address in a debate. Nevertheless, the fact that the conflicting positions become public is of course an interesting factor in the analysis as it suggests that the issue is causing ‘*a stir*’ in the party.

The material selection has been based on the three policy cases previously presented. It is not, e.g. the Schengen Convention itself that constitute the material but the documents capturing the Swedish political debate as a result of it. As all of the documents can be tied to at least one of the policy cases the material has not just been randomly selected. This increases the reliability of the study as the material captures distinctive time points, which makes it easier for the reader to understand on what grounds it has been selected. In addition, the material is easily accessible on the Swedish parliament’s webpage.

Quotes will be used in the empirical presentation only to illustrate valuable points from the analysis. As the entire material is in Swedish all quotes presented in the text have been translated into English by the author. The quotes have been carefully translated; however the reader should note that they are translations and not the original quotes.

4. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 Mapping political preferences

In the first part of the empirical analysis I seek to identify political preferences in relation to the three policy cases and to see whether patterns emerge over time. The analysis will be conducted on two dimensions; (1) supranational or intergovernmental, and (2) generous or restrictive. These concepts have been operationalized into criteria in the analytical frame, which makes it possible to capture the nuances of the concepts and the stability of party preferences. Although they are presented as a pair of exclusionary concepts the political reality is not this rigid. A party is not necessarily generous *or* restrictive and in reality they may be influenced by both. The aim of the analytical frame is, therefore, to uncover which of these preferences *most* characterize the parties.

4.1.1 Supranational and intergovernmental approaches to EU asylum policy

Supranationality is a concept that is commonly used in research related to the EU, unfortunately often without a definition. Although many agree that the EU is a supranational institution, opinions tend to differ when it comes to specifying the supranational criteria (Andersson, 2008: 30). The focal point of this discussion comes down to the issue of national sovereignty and to what extent power has been transmitted from the nation state to another institution such as the EU. Forms of decision-making play an important role, and in a supranational cooperation the nation states have abandoned their veto power in favor of majority voting, which affects the level of state independence (Andersson, 2008: 30-32). In an intergovernmental cooperation less power has been allocated to the international institution and binding decisions are taken by unanimity (Andersson, 2008: 43-45). Moravcsik (1998) points out that in intergovernmental cooperation it is *the states* that drive integration forward, not supranational institutions such as the European Commission. These arguments provide the foundation for the definition of supranationality in this thesis, especially when it comes to the level of state influence.

The first criterion in the analytical frame is whether or not parties openly express support or resistance to the common asylum policy. As Hansen (2008) points out the CEAS is a supranational project that aims to fully harmonize European asylum policies. Parties that

support the CEAS and/or believe it to improve Swedish asylum policy are classified as supranational. Likewise, parties that oppose the CEAS and/or view it as a threat to Swedish asylum policy are classified as intergovernmental. However, politics is rarely this straightforward and in order to capture all the nuances more criteria are required.

In the second criterion the parties' view of the content of the policy proposal is taken into consideration, as progression of the common asylum system generally signifies increased supranationality. The primary indicator of this is how the parties position themselves in the vote. Parties supporting the policies are seen as having a supranational preference, while parties opposing policies are viewed as having an intergovernmental preference. However it is not enough to only consider the parties' vote but also to what extent they support or object to it. Is support/opposition given in its entirety or is it certain parts of the policy that impacts the decision? In the debate on mutual recognition of expulsion decisions the Christian Democrats voted against the directive on the grounds that harmonization needed to proceed in other areas first, before mutual recognition should be implemented (Riksdagens protokoll 2002/03:16, quotation 128). However, the party did not disapprove of mutual recognition *per se*, and taking the full picture into consideration the Christian Democrats preference was considered supranational.

How the parties use 'Fortress Europe' in the debate is the third criterion in the analytical frame. As previously mentioned Fortress Europe embodies the idea that the EU is closing the union from, e.g. poor migrants (Hansen, 2008; Geddes, 2003). Parties who use Fortress Europe to criticize the policies are seen as opponents to the CEAS and are hence classified as intergovernmental. Fortress Europe could also have been used to determine generous/restrictive preferences, as intergovernmental and generous preferences often go hand in hand in this issue. But as Fortress Europe is used to criticize the common asylum policy *as a whole*, it is used as a measure of intergovernmentalism in this study. Furthermore, as previous studies have shown that the small Swedish parties are divided along the supranational/intergovernmental line it is important that a measure of generosity is not also a measure of intergovernmentalism. Parties who deny Fortress Europe are considered supranational. One example can be found in the Schengen debate where the Social Democrats denied the idea that Schengen would create an Orwellian society, as suggested by the Left Party to enhance their criticism of Fortress Europe (Riksdagens protokoll 1997/98:91, quotation 63).

The final criterion concerns decision-making procedures. Initially migration policy was an intergovernmental policy area but in accordance with the Amsterdam Treaty it has successively increased in supranationality, including decision-making procedures (Hansen, 2008: 104-105). The parties approach to this development can contribute to the analytical frame. In accordance with Andersson’s (2008) findings Swedish political parties have become more positive towards QMV as a way to speed up harmonization of asylum policies. Hence parties who support QMV are seen as having a supranational preference while parties opposing QMV are seen as having an intergovernmental preference.

4.1.2 Analytical frame: Supranational or intergovernmental preferences

The following analytical frame summarizes the criteria used to map the preferences of the political parties when it comes to the first dimension; if the political parties want asylum policy to be supranational or intergovernmental.

Supranational	Intergovernmental
- The party argues that the CEAS improves Swedish refugee policy	- The party argues that the CEAS may threaten Swedish refugee policy.
- The party supports the proposed EU legislation in the vote.	- The party opposes the proposed EU legislation in the vote.
- The party disregards the idea that the CEAS strengthens ‘Fortress Europe’	- The party uses ‘Fortress Europe’ to criticize the CEAS
- The party express that decision-making in EU asylum policy should be made by QMV	- The party express that decision-making in EU asylum policy should be made by unanimity

4.1.3 Restrictive and generous approaches to EU asylum policy

Three sets of criteria are used in order to identify restrictive and generous preferences towards the common asylum policy. The first criterion concerns the number of refugees the parties believe should be allowed to stay. While some advocates larger quotas on the basis on solidarity others want to limit the number of refugees due to economic or cultural restraints. Although party preferences differ they are rarely specified in numbers (Demker & Malmström

1997). Parties who support an open immigration or a large asylum reception are classified as generous while parties who want to limit reception to some degree are seen as having a restrictive preference. The parties approach to amnesty⁷ is included in this criterion were supporters are considered generous.

The second criterion concerns the parties' approaches to asylum grounds, which is another way to impact the number of asylum seekers allowed to stay. War is usually accepted as a legitimate grounds for asylum while, e.g. persecution due to homosexuality might be less accepted (Demker & Malmström, 1997: 62-63). Hence the particular definition of refugee status a party supports contributes to the analytical frame. Parties who support a narrow definition of refugee status will be categorized as restrictive while parties supporting a wide definition will be categorized as generous.

The third criterion in the analytical frame is the parties approach to minimum conditions. As highlighted by Andersson (2008) the support of minimum conditions among the parties should be seen as a way to defend the generous Swedish asylum policy. On the basis of Andersson's argumentation and the high level of protection in Swedish asylum policy support of minimum conditions should in the Swedish case be considered generous. Parties who disapprove are seen as restrictive as it is probable that the level of protection in the CEAS will lower standards of Swedish asylum policy.

An important point to make is that the classification of the parties as having a restrictive or generous preference is based on a comprehensive assessment including all criteria. Even though parties want to come across as being generous towards refugees by making general statements such as 'humane asylum policy', this is not enough to qualify them as generous. They also need to specify *how* this should be achieved as illustrated by the discussion about the Stockholm Programme. In the debate the Social Democrats generally address the need to show solidarity with refugees but without examples on how this should be done (EU-nämnden 2009/10:14, quotation 279). Unlike the Left Party who underlined their generous preference by criticizing the contents of the program and its impact on refugee's rights along with the function of the Geneva Convention (Socialförsäkringsutskottet, 2008/09:SfU7y, reservation 2). Therefore the Social Democrats are not classified as having a generous preference.

⁷ When asylum seekers for a limited period of time are granted permanent residence permit

4.1.4 Analytical frame: Restrictive or generous preferences

The following analytical frame summarizes the criteria used to map the preferences of the political parties when it comes to the second dimension; if the political parties support a generous or restrictive asylum policy.

Restrictive	Generous
- The party opposes open immigration and/or amnesty, and emphasizes the need of regulations.	- The party supports open immigration and/or the granting of amnesty.
- The party supports a narrow definition of refugee status.	- The party supports a wide definition of refugee status.
- The party does not support the use of minimum conditions in EU asylum policy.	- The party supports the use of minimum conditions in EU asylum policy.

4.2 Explaining political motives

As this thesis not only seeks to identify political preferences but also to explain them a separate analytical frame is used to support this part of the analysis. The frame for explaining the motives of the political parties will draw upon theories on venue-shopping, burden-sharing and international solidarity. As explained in the theoretical chapter, burden-sharing and venue-shopping have been selected among the many theories on migration policy harmonization as they reflect several important elements in the Swedish asylum policy debate. As Sweden receives a large share of Europe’s asylum seekers it is plausible that Sweden would strive for increased burden-sharing. When it comes to venue-shopping there are quite substantial tensions between the political parties in terms of asylum policy, which in combination with the high level institutional protection creates incentives to harmonize. International solidarity has been selected as it is an important aspect of EU policy-making in this area and that has characterized the Swedish national asylum debate.

The contents of the analytical frame build on the theoretical chapter in this thesis. The application of the model will reflect both the preferences of the political parties and how they have put forward their arguments. For instance, if a party prefers asylum policy to be supranational as it levels out the number of asylum seekers among the member states we may

assume that burden-sharing plays an important role. The reader should note that this thesis does not aim to test whether these theories are applicable in all the member states, rather if they can be used to explain the Swedish experience. As noted in the theoretical framework many factors impact migration policy, which makes it unlikely that one theoretical perspective alone could explain asylum policy harmonization in all the member states. Furthermore, as the theories are *not* exclusionary it is possible that the motives of a political party may be explained by, e.g. both venue-shopping and burden-sharing.

4.2.1 Analytical frame: Explaining political motives

The following analytical frame summarizes the criteria for explaining political motives in terms of burden-sharing, venue-shopping and international solidarity as described in the theoretical chapter. The theories have been operationalized using the criteria on profile, motivations and key words. *The profile* summarizes the preferences of the parties as well as other basic conditions. *Motivations* summarize the parties’ argumentation and/or other motivating factors, while *key words* pick up the most important points from the theories. The analytical model for burden-sharing does not separate one-dimensional and multi-dimensional burden-sharing.

	Profile	Motivations	Key words
Venue-shopping	- Supranational - Restrictive - Access to Council negotiations	- Party faces political opposition - Need to cement own political agenda	- EU scapegoat - Policy pressure
Burden-sharing	- Supranational - Restrictive	- Reception of asylum seekers should be equalized - Efficiency of EU policies important	- Solidarity (MS) - Shared responsibility - Uneven distribution - Compensation
International solidarity	- Intergovernmental - Generous	- Maintain international solidarity - Support third world countries	- Multiculturalism - Human rights - Solidarity (world)

5. THE PREFERENCES OF THE SWEDISH POLITICAL PARTIES TOWARDS THE COMMON EUROPEAN ASYLUM SYSTEM

5.1 The entering of Sweden into the Schengen area

Soon after the Swedish accession to the EU in 1995 the question of whether or not Sweden should join the Schengen area emerged. At the time Sweden was already a member of the Nordic passport union and Schengen participation had to be taken into account by all the Nordic countries. In February 1996 the Nordic countries presented a joint statement expressing their willingness to join the Schengen area on condition that the Nordic passport union would be preserved. Sweden signed the Schengen Convention in December 1996 and in the following years the adaptation of the Swedish legislation began (Spång, 2006: 11-12). In December 1997 the Social Democratic government put forward a bill (Proposition 1997/98:42) proposing that the parliament should accept the Swedish membership to the Schengen area and implement the convention. The bill was debated in the Swedish parliament on 16 April 1998 where it was supported by a majority of the parliamentarians. However, not all parties and parliamentarians were equally convinced. The Left Party and the Green Party opposed its implementation alongside two members of the Centre Party, one member of the Liberal People's Party and two Social Democrats (Riksdagens protokoll 1997/98: 91).

The Left Party was one of the Swedish parties that had the most openly negative view on the Swedish accession to the Schengen Area. Their position had been previously stated before the accession in the Committee on European Union Affairs, where the party criticized the contents of the convention and expressed concerns that it would threaten Swedish asylum policy (EU-nämnden 1996/97:13, quotation 125). At the parliamentary debate in 1998 the Left Party had a very outspoken intergovernmental approach. Much emphasis was put on the restraints created by the convention and how the influence of the Swedish parliament would decrease radically. In the debate, Left Party member Alice Åström even drew parallels between Schengen and the 'Orwellian society' (Riksdagens protokoll 1997/98:91, quotation 34). As before the party criticized the contents of the convention as well as those parties who supported the idea of free movement. By focusing on the external borders the Left Party pointed out that the creation of the Schengen area would lead to the establishment of Fortress Europe;

We in the Left Party find the increased outer border controls to be absurd. They are not relevant to what it [the Schengen Convention] aims to achieve. The free movement, which is being created by the Schengen convention today, is a Fortress Europe. It is about shutting people out and achieving an enormous amount of control around the outer borders. – Alice Åström (quotation 38)

Studying the Left Party it is also clear that they have a generous asylum policy preference. When the bill was being prepared in the Committee on Justice, the Left Party together with the Green Party put forward their reservations against the government bill where they expressed concerns for the potential negative effects the convention had for asylum seekers (Justitieutskottets betänkande 1997/98:JuU15). In the parliamentary debate the Left Party supported the motions put forward by the Liberal People's Party and the Green Party where concerns on the convention's effects on the Swedish asylum policy (Motion 1997/98:Ju17), the Geneva Convention and the definition of refugee status (Motion 1997/98:Ju18) were raised.

Another party that openly opposed the implementation of the Schengen Convention was the Green Party. Prior to the Swedish accession the party expressed concerns about the convention's impact on Swedish asylum policy in the Committee on European Union Affairs (EU-nämnden 1996/97:14, quotation 138). In the April debate the Green Party emphasized the convention's negative effects on Swedish influence and sovereignty, and argued that Schengen was a typical example of how the EU tries to 'sneak in' supranationality. According to the Green Party the convention is one of the key steps in creating the 'EU state' (Riksdagens protokoll 1997/98:91 quotation 39). Besides the creation of Fortress Europe the Green Party referred several times to the deteriorating conditions for asylum seekers and other third country nationals. By constructing the outer borders in the Schengen area the EU was also securing a restrictive asylum policy;

The reason for the flight is subordinated to the escape route the asylum seekers have taken. There will be an iron ring around the EU state where as few people as possible are allowed to come in. Those who deviate, have other opinions or in any other way are dangerous for the general order and security shall be registered and supervised. - Kia Andreasson (quotation 39)

Prior to the debate the Green Party put forward a motion (1997/98:Ju18) where the humanitarian motives of the convention were questioned and concerns for the effects on Swedish asylum policy were expressed. The motion emphasized the need for a humanitarian asylum system in Europe and that people escaping war and persecution should never be hindered by such things as visa requirements. The motion is additional support that the Green

Party prefers asylum policy to be intergovernmental and generous. The same argumentation was put forward in the Committee on Justice where the party explicitly expressed that supranationality would have negative consequences for Sweden and for asylum seekers coming to Europe (Justitieutskottets betänkade 1997/98:JuU15).

On the other side in the debate we find the Social Democratic Party and the Moderate Party who both supported the implementation of the Schengen Convention. As government representatives and authors of the bill the Social Democratic Party naturally supported its contents and opposed the reservations put forward by other parties. In the debate the Social Democratic Party emphasized the positive qualities of the free movement, and unlike the Left Party and the Green Party they did not see any restraints on the Swedish influence. The Social Democrat Göran Magnusson also discarded the comparison made by the Left Party to the 'Orwellian society' (Riksdagens protokoll 1997/98:91, quotation 63), factors that all support a supranational preference. The Social Democratic Party highlighted that asylum policy was no longer part of the Schengen Convention and should therefore not be of concern to the debate. Furthermore, the party stressed that although asylum seekers have the right to protection they do not necessarily have the right to settle in the country of their choice, an indication that the party was in no hurry to defend the traditional Swedish asylum policy (Riksdagens protokoll 1997/98:91, quotation 56).. Their preference should therefore be considered restrictive

The Moderate Party started out in the debate by agreeing with the Social Democrats and the contents of the government bill, the first sign that these parties have similar agendas. The Moderate Party connected Schengen with an open and borderless society but, unlike the government, they believed it to be necessary to introduce further regulations, for instance when it comes to the responsibilities of the transporters (Riksdagens protokoll 1997/98:91, quotation 31). The quest for further regulations suggests that the party prefers more restrictive policy measures. Another notable fact is that the Moderate Party associated refugees with criminals when discussing the need for increased arrival controls, and pointed to the need for more regulations and resources for the police in order for the convention to work properly. Equalizing refugees with criminals, and ensuring that asylum seekers who have had their application rejected are returned, are both indications that the party prefers restrictive asylum policies;

The Schengen Convention thereby presupposes an extended arrival control in order to prevent for instance unwanted criminals or refugees to uncontrollably cross the Swedish border. – Gun Hellsvik (quotation 31)

The Christian Democrats also supported the government bill and the implementation of the Schengen Convention in its entirety, and talked about the Schengen area in terms of openness and further European integration. Neither did the party see any particular problems regarding the Swedish influence on policy-making (Riksdagens protokoll 1997/98:91, quotation 45). At this time the Schengen area was being incorporated into the EU acquis and the fact that the Christian Democrats did not foresee any problems with the Swedish influence suggests that the party favors supranationality. Regarding generous and restrictive policy preferences the Christian Democrats made it quite clear that they prefer asylum policy to be generous, as suggested by the following interjection;

We shall make sure that our humane asylum policy is not in any way violated by this community quest. – Rolf Åbjörnsson (quotation 45)

Finally, there are two parties where internal differences of opinions becomes quite apparent in the debate. In the official party line, the Centre Party supported the government bill and welcomed the fact that Sweden would join the Schengen area. Free movement is described in positive terms and the party did not see any major problems with regards to the contents of the convention (Riksdagens protokoll 1997/98:91, quotation 32). Interpreting the official party line the Centre Party's position should be considered supranational. In the vote two Centre Party members opposed the government bill and also made an interjection in the debate. The diverging line within the Centre Party described Schengen in negative terms and highlighted that the free movement was not in proportion to the restrictions the convention would impose, which for instance would affect asylum seekers. Fears of the development towards an EU state were expressed, alongside the fact that Schengen would contribute to the creation of Fortress Europe;

No, the EU is building a fortress that will shut the rest of the world out, particularly poor and persecuted people who are dreaded to invade our rich region. – Birgitta Hambræus (quotation 66)

In the interjection references are also made to the time when Swedish politics expressed solidarity with third world countries, which suggests that the fractions within the Centre Party wants asylum policy to be generous and perceives the current political development as a

threat (Riksdagens protokoll 1997/98:91, quotation 66). It is the official party line that forms the empirical results in this study; however it is worth noting that there are conflicting lines within the party.

Similar disagreements can be found in the Liberal People's Party. The official party line supported the government bill and the implementation of the Schengen Convention (Riksdagens protokoll 1997/98:91, quotation 33). The party was quite outspoken in its support of European integration, as well as the desire for a supranational and generous asylum policy;

It is an obvious liberal concern to work industriously and forcefully for a humane asylum policy. To achieve this goal a common asylum policy within the EU is needed, built on the principle of common responsibilities and mutual contributions. – Bengt Harding Olson (quotation 33)

The disagreement that exists within the party did not concern the objective to have a supranational and generous asylum policy. Rather the disagreements concerned whether or not the Schengen Convention could contribute to this goal. In an address made by Lennart Rohdin, member of the Liberal People's Party, it is quite clear that he also desired a supranational and generous asylum policy (Riksdagens protokoll 1997/98:91, quotation 72). However, according to Rohdin the Schengen Convention cannot contribute to this goal. Instead the Schengen area was a way for the European governments to shut the outer borders and achieve a more restrictive asylum policy. In his address he criticized the Swedish government alongside the Moderate Party and the Centre Party for supporting the restrictive development and among other things stated;

The Schengen cooperation does not demand either more open or more closed borders in the EU. It is a question of what the governments of Europe want – and they want to use Schengen to make it harder to come in. – Lennart Rohdin (quotation 72)

Taking the diverging lines on the Schengen Convention into consideration it becomes clear that the Liberal People's Party supports the development of the CEAS, presuming that it will offer generous conditions.

Table 1: The positions of the Swedish political parties towards the Schengen Convention

	Supranational	Intergovernmental
Restrictive	The Moderate Party The Social Democratic Party	
Generous	The Christian Democrats The Liberal People’s Party The Centre Party	The Left Party The Green Party

5.2 Introducing mutual recognition of expulsion decisions

Migration policy became a formal part of the EU portfolio with the Amsterdam Treaty in 1999, and the Tampere council meeting became the kickoff for an intense period of harmonization within this policy area in 2000-2004. Among the legislation that was produced in this period was “The directive on mutual recognition of decisions on the expulsion of third country nationals”. The directive was a direct effect of the Schengen cooperation and aims to prevent third country nationals who have been denied entry into one member state to hide in another member state in the Schengen area (European Union web 2). Prior to its adoption by the Council of Ministers in May 2001, the directive was discussed in the Committee on European Union Affairs where the majority supported the directive (EU-nämnden 2000/01:9). In 2002 a government bill (Proposition 2001/02:182) was presented to the Swedish parliament proposing amendments to the national legislation on the basis of the directive. The bill was processed in the Committee on Social Insurance, and on the 13 November 2002 the issue of mutual recognition on expulsion decisions was debated in the Swedish parliament where it was accepted by the Swedish parliament. The Left Party, the Green Party and the Christian Democrats opposed the adoption of the bill (Riksdagens protokoll 2002/03:16).

The Christian Democrats was one of three parties that opposed the government bill and had prior to the debate submitted a motion against its adoption. In the motion the Christian Democrats emphasized that asylum praxis differs greatly among the EU member states and that definitions on who is a refugee vary significantly. The Christian Democrats therefore believed that Sweden should wait to implement the directive until the harmonization process

had progressed further (Motion 2001/02:Sf38). These arguments were also put forward in the debate (Riksdagens protokoll 2002/03:16) where the Christian Democrat Sven Brus pointed out the huge differences in European asylum systems and that the implementation of this directive should wait until a higher level of protection for refugees could be guaranteed throughout Europe;

We believe that the level of protection needs to reach a higher minimum level. The Geneva Convention and European Convention on Human Rights must be applied at a high minimum level in all the EU states. – Sven Brus (quotation 128)

Studying the argumentation made by the Christian Democrats it is apparent that the party wants a generous asylum policy. At the same time it is clear that the party believes that this could be achieved by the CEAS. Even though they opposed the implementation of the directive at this particular time point, they did not discard the idea of a harmonized asylum policy, support of a supranational preference (Riksdagens protokoll 2002/03:16, quotation 128).

The Left Party also voted against the government bill and made several critical remarks against the directive and the government bill. The Left Party submitted a motion similar to the Christian Democrats' but in a much more critical tone. Implementing mutual recognition on expulsion decisions before having achieved a high level of protection for refugees and other immigrants was impossible. Unlike the Christian Democrats, the Left Party viewed this development as a way for the EU and the European governments to conciliate the right-wing extremist forces in Europe and deemed it another step on the way to create more restrictions for asylum seekers (Motion 2001/02:Sf37). This argument was repeated in the debate alongside sharp remarks about the creation of Fortress Europe. Moreover the party feared that the future application of the directive would be restrictive and pointed out that asylum policy should not be supranational (Riksdagens protokoll 2002/03:16, quotation 129). Further support of the Left Party's intergovernmental and generous preference can be found in the following statement from the debate;

What is more uncertain is why Sweden falls back and instead does not stand up for legal security and argues for a more humanitarian politics. Kalle Larsson (quotation 129)

The Green Party's negative approach to the directive could be seen already prior to its adoption by the Council of Ministers, in the Committee on European Union Affairs (EU-

nämnden 2000/01:9, quotation 188). In the November debate the Green Party agreed with the Left Party and Christian Democrats on many points. The Schengen Convention made it very difficult to cross the EU's outer border legally, and directives such as this restrict the possibilities for refugees and other immigrants to enter the EU legally. The fact that all member states do not apply equal conditions when judging asylum applications was considered a problem, and as no requirements on equal judgments have been made the Green Party could not accept the implementation of the directive. Furthermore the application of the directive was at risk of being arbitrary and could possibly have been used to reject immigrants on grounds other than what is stated in the directive (Riksdagens protokoll 2002/03:16, quotation 130). Although the Green Party did not express themselves quite as vividly as in the Schengen debate their position should be considered intergovernmental and generous. Concerns about the standards in other member states and arbitrary applications indicate that the party wants to protect generous conditions for refugees. The fact that the party opposed the directive points to an intergovernmental approach (Riksdagens protokoll 2002/03:16, quotation 130).

The Liberal People's Party supported the government bill and the implementation of mutual recognition of expulsion decisions. The party acknowledged that the legislative process might have started at the wrong end and that minimum conditions on issues such as refugee status should have been in place first, but this were not considered it a major problem since the directive did not require mutual recognition to take place. The party's support of the directive should be viewed as a continuation of the supranational preference also observed in the Schengen debate (Riksdagens protokoll 2002/03:16, quotation 141). Even though the Liberal People's Party supported the directive they still took the opportunity to express concerns about the development of more restrictive asylum policies throughout Europe and criticized the government for not defending the traditional Swedish generous asylum policy;

I feel a deep concern over a Europe – not primarily the EU in this case – and European countries that successively closes their borders. Unlike Anita Jönsson from the Social Democrats, who speaks about the strong Swedish asylum policy, I am ashamed of a Sweden that time after time during recent years has tightened its asylum policy. – Erik Ullenhag (quotation 141)

Support of the directive and the government bill was also given by the Centre Party, who did not see any general problems with the directive and pointed out that many of the concerns highlighted by some of the other parties were accounted for in the directive. In the debate they

expressed support for both the directive and the CEAS which indicates that the Centre Party still favors supranationality. Another sign of this is the fact that they did not problematize the contents of the directive. At the same time the Centre Party stressed that they want the common asylum system to be generous and made references to both solidarity and minimum conditions;

The asylum policy must be built upon refugees' rights, international solidarity and complete respect of international commitments. The common asylum policy should be made up by minimum conditions at the highest possible level. – Birgitta Carlsson (quotation 146)

The agreement between the Social Democratic Party and the Moderate Party observed in the Schengen debate can also be seen at this time. The Social Democratic Party was in government at the time and had participated in the adoption of the directive in the Council of Ministers. The party was also the authors of the government bill and naturally supported its contents. The Social Democrats emphasized that the application of the directive was not mandatory and that it was an important cornerstone in the creation of the free movement. Based on their support and uncritical approach to the directive their preference should be considered supranational (Riksdagens protokoll 2002/03:16, quotation 131). In the debate the Social Democrats also made general comments about the importance of solidarity and legal justice in asylum policy. But as they did not make any particular remarks on how this should be achieved, for instance by improving reception conditions, their preference cannot be considered generous. Compared with, e.g. the Centre Party who argued in favor of minimum conditions, the Social Democratic Party is not at the same level.

As in the Schengen debate, the Moderate Party supported the government bill and the incorporation of the directive into the Swedish legislation. The party stressed that the free movement is a cornerstone in the European cooperation and viewed the directive as necessary to support the free movement. Support for the directive, alongside support of the common asylum policy, indicates that the party still preferred asylum policy to be supranational. Previously in the debate the question of legal security and the practical application of the directive, as well as the contribution to Fortress Europe had been questioned by the Left Party and the Green Party. This perspective was not brought up or countered by the Moderate Party at all. At one time they made a quite vague statement that the Swedish approach hopefully would affect other member states, but otherwise they did not make any statements that could be interpreted as either outspokenly generous or restrictive. The fact that they did not counter

the criticism put forward by the Left Party and the Green Party suggests that they had no interest in defending a generous standpoint (Riksdagens protokoll 2002/03:16, quotation 136).

Table 2: The positions of the Swedish political parties towards the directive on mutual recognition on expulsion decisions

	Supranational	Intergovernmental
Restrictive	The Moderate Party The Social Democratic Party	
Generous	The Christian Democrats The Liberal People’s Party The Centre Party	The Left Party The Green Party

5.3 Preparing the Stockholm Programme

During the Swedish presidency in the EU in 2009 the new multi-annual strategic work program for the area of justice, freedom and security were in its final stage of negotiations. The work program would be signed during the Swedish presidency and was hence named the Stockholm Programme. The completion of the CEAS was an important subject in the Stockholm Programme, as the new deadline had been set for the end of 2012, which meant that it has the potential to make a substantial imprint on the common asylum policy (European Union web 3). In preparation of the final discussions on the Swedish official standpoint, the government⁸ put forward a memorandum just before the Swedish presidency started (2008/09:FPM137) generally supporting the Stockholm Programme. As it spans several policy areas it was processed by several committees. The sections concerning immigration and asylum policy was processed by the Committee on Social Insurance where the majority supported the government’s positive standpoint. The Social Democratic Party, the Left Party and the Green Party put forward reservations (Socialförsäkringsutskottet, 2008/09:SfU7y).

The Green Party had a quite negative approach to the Stockholm Programme, not at least in terms of asylum policy. In the Committee on Social Insurance the party stressed that the EU should not regulate migration policy areas since it limits the possibilities of individual migrants, especially asylum seekers, to enter the EU legally. Instead, it should be up to each

⁸ Since the election in 2006 Sweden has been governed by a coalition consisting of the Moderate Party, the Centre Party, the Liberal People’s Party and the Christian Democrats.

member state to regulate immigration and asylum policy (Socialförsäkringsutskottet, 2008/09:SfU7y). With regards to the Stockholm Programme the Green Party also put forward a motion (Motion 2009/10:Ju384) where they criticized its contents, especially concerning asylum policy. In the motion, the party wrote that the EU should not have an asylum policy of its own and the attempts to create one were just a way to keep immigrants out. These types of statements are indications that the party still advocates an intergovernmental and generous asylum policy;

The EU's current asylum policy is beneath contempt. The EU is building higher walls against the outside world and practice a wild pursue of "illegal" immigrants. [...] The plan is to have a fully harmonized asylum policy with absolute restrictiveness and increased militarization at the outer borders. (Motion 2009/10:Ju384, chapter 3)

The Left Party also used the Stockholm Programme to criticize the common asylum policy. In the Committee on Social Insurance the Left Party highlighted the negative impact of the Stockholm Program on asylum seeker. The party argued that harmonization of asylum policy has led to substantially worse conditions for asylum seekers coming to Europe, and that a common asylum policy would inevitably lead to conditions that are at the minimum level in terms of legal justice and treatment of asylum seekers. Therefore, the party did not see any benefits with the CEAS and preferred asylum policy to be intergovernmental (Socialförsäkringsutskottet, 2008/09:SfU7y, reservation 2). In relation to this argumentation the Left Party made the following statement;

Unfortunately we can establish that the misgivings put forward have come true. A number of the adopted [asylum] directives have in different ways been designed so that the asylum right has been put out of play and the Geneva Convention made useless. (2008/09:SfU7y, reservation 2)

The Social Democratic Party also had reservations against the government's position that were expressed in the Committee on Social Insurance. In the reservation the Social Democrats emphasized that they supported a common asylum policy in Europe but that it is important that it builds upon humanitarian values and legal security (Socialförsäkringsutskottet, 2008/09:SfU7y, reservation 1). This opinion was also repeated in the Committee on European Union Affairs (2009/10:14, quotation 279). The fact that Social Democrats highlight the importance of humanity on two occasions might be an indication that the party's preference is turning generous. On the other hand, the generosity in the Social Democratic rhetoric is only expressed at a general level, with no mentioning of specific policy requirements such as

reception conditions or refugee status. Even though the rhetoric has become softer it is not enough to classify their position as generous.

At the time of the Stockholm Programme the Swedish government was made up by an alliance between the Moderate Party, the Centre Party, the Liberal People's Party and the Christian Democrats. As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, the Swedish official standpoint towards the Stockholm program was positive. When the government's position was presented in the Committee on Social Insurance, the government also expressed support for the continued process of completing the CEAS;

Sweden aims at a deepened cooperation within the asylum policy area and sees the establishment of a common European asylum system as an important overall objective within the EU's asylum policy. (2009/10:2330BE)

Considering the fact that all of the government parties supported this statement their preferences should be considered supranational. When it comes to whether or not asylum policy should be generous or restrictive the government parties' preferences have diverged in the past. The question is to what extent the parties have been willing to compromise as part of the Swedish government?

The Moderate Party is the largest party in the government coalition and holds both the premiership and the post as Minister of Migration and Asylum Policy. The party also defended asylum policy harmonization outside of government statements (EU-nämnden 2009/10:16, quotation 6) and although the party referred more often than previously to the need for solidarity they, like the Social Democrats, did not make any concrete suggestions on how it should be improved. When Moderate minister Tobias Billström was questioned about the human rights perspective of asylum seeking in the Stockholm Programme, he played down the problem and pointed out that the current regulations in the Stockholm Programme are enough to protect the rights of asylum seekers (Riksdagens protokoll 2009/10:40, quotation 19). Another indication of their restrictive preference is the disregard of the value of minimum conditions in the CEAS (Riksdagens protokoll 2009/10:48, quotation 88).

The Centre Party's supranational preference can also be seen in the committee meetings, for instance in the Committee on European Union Affairs where they highlighted that the continuous harmonization of asylum policy is good. It is also noticeable that the Centre Party

has a more toned down approach when it comes to the level of generosity in asylum policy, especially in comparison with the debate on mutual recognition on expulsion decisions. The party did not believe that the Stockholm Programme would have a negative impact on asylum seekers (EU-nämnden 2009/10:14, quotation 208). Even though they mentioned the fact that harmonization should not result in lower standards, the overall impression suggests that the Centre Party has shifted their preference towards restrictiveness.

The same patterns can be seen among the Christian Democrats. The party has held on to their supranational preference, but unlike the previous debates their generous approach is more toned down. The Christian Democrats were almost invisible in the debate about the Stockholm Programme, an observation that could also be leveled at the other two small government parties. The Christian Democrats have in previous debates expressed the need for a humanitarian and generous asylum policy, but in this debate no such statements were made.

Finally, the Liberal People’s Party also seems to have become more restrictive as they entered into the government coalition. Generally speaking, they still addressed the need for a humane asylum policy, but at the same time made statements about the fact that laws are made to be followed, and that not all immigrants have the possibility to stay in Sweden (Riksdagens protokoll 2009/10:48, quotation 49).

Table 3: The positions of the Swedish political parties towards the Stockholm Programme

	Supranational	Intergovernmental
Restrictive	The Moderate Party The Social Democratic Party The Christian Democrats The Liberal People’s Party The Centre Party	
Generous		The Left Party The Green Party

5.4 Summary of party preferences

Generally speaking the parties’ preferences are fairly stable over time. Moving from the time of the Schengen Convention to the discussions on “The directive on mutual recognition of expulsion decisions” party preferences are unchanged on both dimensions. However, at the time of the Stockholm Programme party preferences seem to have shifted, were the Centre Party, the Christian Democrats and the Liberal People’s Party display increasingly restrictive preferences. This may be a result of their participation in the government coalition, as the Moderate Party has shown stable restrictive preferences. However, in order to confirm that this change in preference is permanent, more studies are needed on other policy cases from period in order to confirm the shift in preferences and to and anchor our knowledge about the party preferences.

Table 4: Summary of party preferences

Supranational & Restrictive	Supranational & Generous	Intergovernmental & Generous
<i>The Schengen Convention</i>		
The Moderate Party The Social Democratic Party	The Christian Democrats The Liberal People’s Party The Centre Party	The Left Party The Green Party
<i>The directive on mutual recognition of expulsion decisions</i>		
The Moderate Party The Social Democratic Party	The Christian Democrats The Liberal People’s Party The Centre Party	The Left Party The Green Party
<i>The Stockholm Programme</i>		
The Moderate Party The Social Democratic Party The Christian Democrats The Liberal People’s Party The Centre Party		The Left Party The Green Party

6. EXPLAINING THE MOTIVES OF THE SWEDISH POLITICAL PARTIES

As seen in the first part of the empirical analysis the Swedish political parties can be sorted into different groups when it comes to harmonization of asylum policy in the European Union. Differences in preferences suggest that the parties are driven by different motives. In this part of the empirical analysis I seek to investigate whether or not these motives can be explained by burden-sharing, venue-shopping and/or international solidarity.

As seen in the previous chapter, the Social Democratic Party and the Moderate Party are often in agreement when it comes to EU asylum policy and share a supranational and restrictive preference. One of the theories that can be applied to these parties is burden-sharing. The fact that both the Social Democrats and the Moderates are motivated by burden-sharing can be seen in relation to all three policy cases. The Moderate Party highlighted the need for efficiency in the Schengen debate and later pointed out that the Stockholm Programme would increase solidarity and shared responsibility in the CEAS (EU-nämnden 2009/10:16, quotation 2). The Moderate Party's ambition that the common asylum policy would increase shared responsibility in Europe could also be seen in the party's European Parliament election manifesto from 2009;

It is important that all countries in the union take responsibility for Europe's influx of refugees. A common policy in the area makes it possible to welcome more people to Europe as a whole. (Moderaterna, 2009: 10).

Similar arguments can be found in the Social Democratic Party who on several occasions has supported their supranational preference with arguments of burden-sharing. One example of this can be seen in the discussions about the Stockholm Programme where the party highlighted the gains that can be made by equalizing reception of asylum seekers in Europe (Riksdagens protokoll 2009/10:48, quotation 72). The fact the member states must share responsibilities when it comes to asylum policy was also expressed in the Social Democrats' party program (Socialdemokraterna, 2001: 34).

Evidence of venue-shopping can also be found in relation to the Social Democratic Party and the Moderate Party. As laid down in the previous chapter several of the prerequisites for venue-shopping can be linked to these parties. They both support a supranational and

restrictive asylum policy and have both been in government during the studied time period. Previous research and the empirical results have shown that these parties occasionally face substantial political opposition from the smaller parties. As seen in the debate about mutual recognition of expulsion decisions, criticism against the government was put forward for not defending the generous Swedish asylum policy (Riksdagens protokoll 2002/03:16). In combination with the findings made by Spehar (2012) that the small parties have hindered the Social Democrats and the Moderates to implement restrictive policy proposals in Swedish asylum policy, incentives to venue-shop are present. In contrast to the smaller parties the Social Democrats and Moderates show little criticism of the proposed EU policy and have been very supportive of the supranational policy proposals in all the three cases.

When studying the small parties in the government coalition, i.e. the Liberal People's Party, the Centre Party and the Christian Democrats, venue-shopping is not applicable. As shown in the previous chapter they have generally supported a supranational and generous asylum policy, even though they seem to have become more restrictive after entering a government coalition with the Moderate Party. As the following sections will show, their preferences can instead be explained by burden-sharing and international solidarity.

The supranational preference of the Liberal People's Party can be explained by burden-sharing. Besides their continuous support of the supranational asylum policy the party often rests upon arguments of burden-sharing. In the debate on the Stockholm Programme the party stated that increased solidarity between the member states is an important part of the CEAS and underlined the need to economically reimburse countries who take on a greater responsibility of asylum reception (Riksdagens protokoll 2009/10:48, quotation 49). As seen in the previous chapter, statements such as 'shared responsibilities' and 'mutual contributions' were used already in the Schengen debate (Riksdagens protokoll 1998/98:91, quotation 31). This picture is confirmed when studying the party's political program from 2007;

A common asylum policy should be developed within the frame of the EU so that the responsibility for the influx of refugees will be more evenly distributed. (Folkpartiet liberalerna, 2007: 42)

Although the preference of the Liberal People's Party seems to have become more restrictive in recent years the party has previously expressed an outspokenly generous preference when it comes to the common asylum policy. This suggests that the party, at least initially, was

motivated by the urge to achieve greater international solidarity. This is not only supported by the policy cases but also by the party's European Parliament election manifesto that addresses problems with reception conditions and legal security (Folkpartiet liberalerna, 2009: 7).

International solidarity is also a motive for the Centre Party, at least prior to the Stockholm Programme. The importance to show solidarity with the rest of the world is expressed on several occasions and the need to create an asylum policy that is built upon the rights of the refugees was for instance expressed in the debate about mutual recognition of expulsion decisions (Riksdagens protokoll 2002/03:16, quotation 146). The same argumentation can be found in the European Parliament election manifesto from 2009, where the party to some extent used international solidarity to motivate their asylum policy preferences (Centerpartiet, 2009: 5).

Burden-sharing can be found as one underlying factor when explaining the Christian Democrats' desire to have a supranational asylum policy. In the party program from 2001 the party states that a common asylum policy is preferable as it not only increases international solidarity but also the shared responsibility between the member states (Kristdemokraterna, 2001: 19). In the previous chapter, the Christian Democrats generous standpoint was established, which supports the idea that international solidarity is another of the party's motives. This picture is confirmed when studying the Christian Democrats European Parliament election manifesto from 2009;

The EU is one of the richest regions in the world and has a great responsibility to receive people who are forced to flee persecution and oppression. (Kristdemokraterna, 2009: 5)

However, it is important to point out that the Christian Democrats occasionally distance themselves from the Green Party and the Left Party when it comes to international solidarity (see, e.g. Riksdagens protokoll 1997/98:91, quotation 45), which may indicate that although they share the same goal that have different opinions on how it should be achieved.

When studying the Green Party and the Left Party no support of either burden-sharing or venue-shopping can be found. The parties are not interested in a supranational asylum policy, and have continuously stressed that this would lead to worsened conditions for asylum seekers all over Europe. With regards to burden-sharing their support of increasing admittance of

refugees in Sweden and extending the reception conditions contradict the fact that they would want to pass over some of Sweden's responsibility to other member states. Another example can be found in the discussions about the Stockholm Program where both parties expressed the need to introduce amnesty (Riksdagens protokoll 2009/10:48, quotation 65, 68). As the parties have not been in government and both have a generous asylum policy preference their motives cannot be explained by venue-shopping. Possibly the parties have indirectly contributed to venue-shopping as they have been very outspoken in their resistance to the CEAS, which may have led other parties to venue-shop. One indication of this is found in the Left Party's European Parliament election manifesto from 2009 where the party severely criticized the Swedish line in European asylum policy-making;

The walls of Fortress Europe are getting higher. [...] The government and parliament must not hide behind the EU in asylum politics. Moral courage is needed by Swedish politicians to stop this development. (Vänsterpartiet, 2009: 9)

However, what is clear when studying the three policy cases is that the Green Party and the Left Party are driven by international solidarity, as they have continuously emphasized the need to show solidarity with refugees and third world countries. In the discussions about mutual recognition on expulsion decisions the Left Party member Kalle Larsson pointed out that the common asylum policy would inevitably lead to restrictions and made it clear that this development was not desirable (Riksdagens protokoll 2002/03:16, quotation 129). The Green Party highlighted in the European Parliament election manifesto from 2009 that their politics is based on global justice and that asylum policy must be humane (Miljöpartiet, 2009: 3). The same tendencies can be found in the Left Party who, in their European Parliament election manifesto, pointed out that they work for a humane asylum reception, which is seriously threatened by the supranational asylum policy (Vänsterpartiet, 2009: 9, 14).

Table 5: Burden-sharing, venue-shopping or international solidarity? Summary of party motives

Burden-sharing	Venue-shopping	International solidarity
The Moderate Party	The Moderate Party	The Left Party
The Social Democratic Party	The Social Democratic Party	The Green Party
The Liberal People's Party		The Liberal People's Party
The Christian Democrats		The Centre Party
		The Christian Democrats

7. CONCLUSIONS

After examining the political parties' preferences in relation to the Schengen Convention, "The directive on mutual recognition of expulsion decisions" and the Stockholm Programme it is clear that many of the conclusions reached in previous research can be confirmed. The map out of the political parties' preferences supports the idea that they can be divided into blocks, as suggested by Spång (2006), that does not follow the usual left-right divide. The Social Democratic Party and the Moderate Party are often in agreement and advocate a more restrictive policy, unlike the small parties who generally agree that asylum policy should be generous. The Swedish positive official standpoint to a supranational asylum policy is supported by the majority of the parties and in accordance with the empirical results the parties can be divided into three groups; (1) supranational and restrictive, (2) supranational and generous and (3) intergovernmental and generous. There are patterns in party preferences that are stable until the time of the Stockholm Programme, when the small centre-right parties display changes. The analysis has also shown that theories on European migration harmonization can be useful in explaining the formation of the Swedish standpoint to the common asylum system, but that they fit the different parties to a varying degree.

The Moderates and Social Democrats agreement on asylum policy may seem strange at first, but taking into account the dimensions presented by Zolberg (1999) and the fact that they are the two dominating political parties in Sweden the picture becomes clearer. When comparing the Social Democrats with the Left Party one might expect that they would hold similar positions as they both have roots in socialism. The Social Democrats intimate relationship with the trade union movement is vital to understanding this difference. As Zolberg points out, trade unions fear that immigration will have a negative impact on working conditions and wage levels. This could be the reason why the Social Democrats, unlike the Left Party, support restrictions.

The dominating position of the Social Democratic Party and the Moderate Party in Swedish politics is another factor that may explain their agreement on asylum policy. These two parties take turn to hold the prime ministry which is likely to affect their politics. The supranational and restrictive line may be a way for the Social Democratic Party and the Moderate Party to show that they take responsibility for Swedish asylum policy. The smaller parties, who disagree whether or not asylum policy should be supranational, all prefer a generous asylum

policy. The result may seem puzzling considering the different ideological backgrounds of these parties. Again the ideas of Zolberg (1999) are useful, especially regarding the role of multiculturalism and helping people in distress, a form of argumentation that all these parties use in the debate.

This study may also contribute partly to the lack of empirical evidence on the stability of party preferences, a problem that has previously been pointed out by Andersson (2008). In the beginning of the harmonization process the party preferences are stable, but as the change of government occurred in 2006 the preferences of the small centre-right parties start to shift. At the time of the Stockholm Programme the Centre Party, the Liberal People's Party and the Christian Democrats display more restrictive preferences than previously. As they are now taking part in the government coalition, it is likely that they have had to adapt their politics to better fit the collaboration. As the parties were in opposition during the other two time points it was easier for them to express deviating or more extreme opinions. Further evidence that the parties have had to adapt is found in their European Parliament election manifestos from 2009, where they generally express more generous preferences than in the policy discussions. Since this study only includes one policy case after 2006 it is not possible to confirm that this shift is permanent, or if in fact the new restrictive approach can only be tied to this policy case. More studies are needed including other policy cases after 2006. An interesting angle in this research would be to investigate if the small government parties have tried to affect the Moderate Party's restrictive preference, as they have previously shown themselves capable of opposing restrictive government proposals.

As pointed out in the beginning of this chapter this thesis has also found empirical support for the applicability of burden-sharing, venue-shopping and international solidarity, however they can be applied to the political parties to different extents. The Moderate Party and the Social Democratic Party are both driven by burden-sharing and venue-shopping, while there is no evidence to suggest that these theories are applicable for the Green Party and the Left Party. There is evidence that all of the small parties are motivated by international solidarity, while the centre-right parties show simultaneous support of burden-sharing. Considering the Social Democrats' and Moderates' restrictive and supranational preference and the fact that they dominate Swedish politics their support of burden-sharing is not odd. As Sweden receives a great proportion of Europe's asylum seekers, and that these parties often are ultimately responsible for the function of Swedish asylum policy, their desire to have other member

states taking responsibility is logic from a cost and efficiency perspective. The fact that burden-sharing also can explain the supranational preference of the Liberal People's Party and the Christian Democrats is further support that the ideas of Thielemann (2008) have empirical relevance, at least in Sweden. In order to properly evaluate the relevance of burden-sharing in European asylum policy harmonization, it needs to be applied to more cases in other member states.

The empirical results also support the idea that the Social Democratic Party and the Moderate Party are motivated by venue-shopping. This is not strange considering that both parties have been in government during this time period, they have had access to negotiations at the EU level and unlike the small parties displayed restrictive preferences. The empirical analysis has shown that the Social Democratic Party and the Moderate Party are often opposed by the small parties. Moreover, Spehar (2012) has previously pointed out that the small parties on several occasions have hindered restrictive asylum policy proposals put forward by the Social Democrats and the Moderates. By venue-shopping it is possible for the Social Democratic Party and the Moderate Party to cement their policy preferences at the EU level, while shifting blame to the EU. As with burden-sharing this thesis can only confirm the applicability of venue-shopping on the Swedish political parties. Still, small steps towards confirming the ideas of Guiraudon (2001, 2003) and Givens and Luedkte (2004) have been made.

Among the small parties international solidarity is an important motive, even though there is a divide between supranational and intergovernmental preferences. The Green Party and the Left Party have a distinct focus on international solidarity, which will not be achieved by supranationality. Party ideology is one factor that may help to understand their motives. Solidarity is an important part of the ideology of both parties, such as the Green Party's idea about 'global solidarity'. The Centre Party, the Liberal People's Party and the Christian Democrats are also motivated by the idea of international solidarity, but believe that this can be achieved by supranationality. Here it is likely that the parties' general approach to the EU has a role to play. The centre-right parties are EU supporters while the Green Party and the Left Party have been outspoken EU opponents. As this analysis does not measure to what extent each theory fits the political parties, and that the results show mixed preferences, there are reasons to believe that other factors play a role. Clearly, the motive behind the Left Party's generous and intergovernmental preference can be explained by more factors than

international solidarity. In order to get a fuller picture on how the political parties think and act when it comes to EU asylum policy, further studies need to be conducted.

The aim of this thesis has not been to find support of the applicability for these three theories throughout the EU, and to this end I want to stress that the empirical results of this study are only applicable for Sweden. Moreover, even though empirical evidence has been found in support of these theories this study cannot confirm to what degree they affect each party. Even though the Social Democratic Party is motivated by both burden-sharing and venue-shopping, there is no way of singling out which one of these theories, if any, is the most influential. Another conclusion that can be drawn from this thesis is that by combining the study of the political interplay at the national level with overarching theories on migration policy harmonization we get a much better understanding of how the Swedish standpoint to the CEAS has been formulated. Without studying how the mainstream parties interact and argue, we would have a limited understanding of how and why the Swedish standpoint looks the way it does. And without the overarching theories on migration policy harmonization the motives of the political parties would have been much harder to unfold and tie to European integration.

All in all, the study of the political parties in relation to asylum policy harmonization in the EU has not only increased our knowledge on Swedish asylum policy-making, but also how overarching theories such as burden-sharing can be empirically applied. However, this thesis only represents three cases in the harmonization process and in order to confirm the findings and get a more detailed picture of how the Swedish parties think and act when it comes to the CEAS more studies are needed. I hope that with this study I have shown how important it is to review the political parties in order to get a full understanding of why the European countries have chosen to harmonize asylum policy. These types of studies are of course not only applicable in Sweden, and by extending the research to other member states our understanding of the European migration policy harmonization could be much more extensive.

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