

From Arrival to Citizenship: Reviewing the Multicultural Model of Swedish Refugees' Integration Policy

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ABSTRACT: This study examines Sweden's refugee integration model, tracing the trajectory from initial reception to full citizenship. Drawing on Castles and Miller's trichotomous framework of immigrant integration, it investigates how Sweden's historically multicultural policies have shaped refugees' access to social and cultural support, education and language acquisition, labour market participation, and citizenship rights. Using meta-synthesis methodology, the study reviews 52 relevant sources, including core peer-reviewed articles retrieved from the Web of Science, Clarivate, and Taylor & Francis Online (2000–2025). Findings reveal that Sweden's longstanding multicultural approach has enabled refugees to integrate effectively and access pathways to citizenship more readily than in most European states. However, recent policy shifts toward restrictive measures that include stricter residency requirements, language proficiency tests, and financial thresholds signal a move toward assimilationist tendencies. This transformation reflects broader political realignments driven by rising populism and European anti-immigration rhetoric. The article contributes to migration scholarship by offering a comprehensive framework for analysing the continuum of refugee integration and citizenship acquisition, while providing policy recommendations for balancing humanitarian obligations with political and social pressures.

KEYWORDS: Citizenship, Integration, Multicultural, Refugee, Sweden

I. INTRODUCTION

Historically, human movement from the peripheries to the centres is as old as human history. At some point in the pre-statehood era, around the 16th century, several people migrated due to push and pull factors (Long & Veroff, 2007). In recent history, global refugee movements have intensified over the past two decades due to conflicts, political instability, and economic crises. Conflict in the Middle East and Africa has contributed to unprecedented displacement (UNHCR, 2024; Fargues & Fandrich, 2012). People who are compelled to leave their home country end up becoming refugees in another country, where they struggle with issues of settlement, integration, and citizenship acquisition obstacles thereafter. As refugees' cross borders, host countries face the dual challenge of providing immediate protection and developing sustainable integration and long-term inclusion policies.

While a growing body of research examines refugee integration, most studies focus on discrete stages-such as settlement, education, or Labor market participation-rather than the whole continuum from arrival to citizenship (Borevi, 2024; Nilsson et al., 2024). In other words, only a few have ventured into the difficult task of assessing the refugees' likelihood of becoming citizens of their host countries. To remark on the vigorous task of accommodating refugees, this article analyses the feasibility of refugees' integration and citizenship acquisition via Sweden's long-term traditional multicultural model. Citizenship represents the culmination of integration, symbolizing belonging and formal membership within the host society (Salehyan, 2008). However, the pathways to citizenship remain uneven across states, shaped by distinct historical, political, and institutional contexts.

Sweden is one of the countries that has long been recognized for its multicultural refugee integration model. Since the 1970s, Swedish policies have promoted cultural diversity and social inclusion (Soininen & Qvist, 2022, p. 3), approaches which distinguish it from countries with more assimilationist or exclusionary approaches, such as France or Germany (Castles & Davidson, 2000; Borevi, 2013; Laban, 2024). However, in recent years, Sweden has experienced a significant policy shift driven by the rise of right-wing populism and growing anti-immigration rhetoric (Hellström, 2021). These political pressures have led to increasingly restrictive measures, including extended residency requirements, mandatory language and civic tests, and tightened rules for family reunification (Santos, 2025), which make refugees' integration hectic in the contemporary Swedish society.

This article addresses two key questions: How has Sweden's multicultural model shaped refugee integration from arrival to citizenship, and what do recent restrictive policies imply for its future? Using Castles and Miller's (2003) framework of differential exclusion, assimilation, and multiculturalism, it traces Sweden's evolving approach within broader European migration trends. The

From Arrival to Citizenship: Reviewing the Multicultural Model of Swedish Refugees' Integration Policy

study contributes to theoretical debates on integration models and offers policy insights for balancing humanitarian commitments with domestic political realities.

II. METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study adopts meta-synthesis methodology to highlight Sweden's multicultural refugee integration approach. The country was chosen because it is one of the countries in Europe that has a long history of a multicultural approach to refugees. The country has possessed significant integration policies and various approaches to integrating refugees. Moreover, even with the recent rise of the anti-immigrant right-wing parties in the country and across Europe, the historical epoch of Swedish multiculturalism can be said to have contributed to the development of society. Meta-synthesis was chosen because, unlike meta-analysis, which aggregates statistical values, it focuses on interpreting and reevaluating findings across numerous studies to generate new knowledge or add insight into the existing literature (Chenail, 2009; Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007).

The goal of this meta-synthesis is to follow the path of refugees from their arrival to their citizenship and to find out how Sweden's historically multicultural policies have affected results at four important stages: provision of social and cultural environment, education and language acquisition, integration into the labour market, and citizenship acquisition and political participation. This technique synthesizes information from several research studies to provide a thorough picture of the interactions between these stages and the effects of recent restrictive policy changes on Sweden's enduring multicultural approach.

A. Data Collection

In terms of data collection, we systematically search and collected documents and articles related to Swedish refugees integration from Clarivate WOS=Web of Science and Taylor & Francis Online that were primarily published at least in the last two decades from 2000 to date- the period which witnessed a series of refugee influxes that have generated countless debates and deliberations in most European countries' parliaments and around the world. We use search terms such as integration, multiculturalism, citizenship, labour market, language, and education by refugees in Sweden to pull out relevant articles for our topic. From the searched publications, we identified those most pertinent to our study topic, published between 2000 and 2025, which meet the following criteria: concentrated on Sweden and addressed at least one of the four stages of integration; supplied qualitative or mixed-methods data, including interviews, ethnographies, case studies, or Swedish immigration policy assessments; it examined multicultural policy frameworks, namely the roles of state and civil society actors in facilitating refugee assimilation. Including the grey literature from UNHCR and the European Commission, which supplements the retrieved conventional literature, 53 documents that met the inclusion criteria were reviewed for this study. Key sources that met the stated criteria included Borevi (2014) on Swedish multiculturalism, Nilsson et al. (2024) on civil society roles in labour integration, Bevelander et al. (2024) on citizenship and electoral participation, Gruber & Rabo (2014) on multiculturalism Swedish style, Rosvall et al. (2025) on Swedish refugee settlement, Thorstensson Dávila (2016) on education provision, and UNHCR (2024) global reports.

In the synthesis process, we first deduce the authors' direct quotes, then their interpretation in each study, and code them according to the four stated integration processes. We subsequently juxtapose the studies by translating the topics from one research into the language and context of others to establish conceptual connections. The themes were integrated to produce novel theoretical insights that surpass individual research on the integration process of Swedish migrants. Utilizing Castles and Miller's trichotomous model of immigrant integration, the synthesis generated a conceptual framework depicting the dynamic transition from arrival to citizenship. It disclosed that Sweden's prior supporting policies have encouraged refugee inclusion, but subsequent revisions have imposed significant obstacles to long-term integration. This meta-synthesis incorporates several views to produce policy-relevant insights for maintaining inclusive refugee routes and enhances comparative migration studies. The technique offers a systematic, theory-based framework to synthesize varied information and critically evaluate Sweden's developing refugee integration policy.

III. THE TRICHOTOMOUS MODEL CLASSIFICATION OF IMMIGRANTS' INTEGRATION

To analyse and describe the concept of variations in immigrant reception, Castles and Miller (2003) propose a trichotomous scheme: the differential exclusionary model, the assimilationist model, and the multicultural model (Money, 2010: 142-145). Using Sweden as a case study, our article is based on the multicultural refugee integration model.

A. Differential-Exclusionary Model

As the phrase implies, differential exclusion, unlike other models of immigrant acceptance, places some strict regulations and policies unfavourable to the refugees, making it very difficult for them to integrate into the host society and become citizens. The differentiated exclusionary model is a governmental policy restricting labour market mobility, resulting in immigrants being confined to low-paying and often hazardous parts of the labour market (Yetkin & Tunçalp, 2024, p. 890). State policy often leads to the segregation of immigrants in terms of where they live, mainly through social housing rules.

In general terms, differential exclusion means accepting migrants with strict functional and temporal limits: they were accepted as workers but not as permanent residents, as individuals but not as families or communities, and as temporary visitors but not as

From Arrival to Citizenship: Reviewing the Multicultural Model of Swedish Refugees' Integration Policy

long-term inhabitants (Castles & Davidson, 2000). Historically, Germany, Belgium, and Switzerland have applied this approach to welcome workers into their societies.

B. Assimilation Model

Assimilation is a sociological theory developed by famous sociologists such as Milton Gordon, Richard Alba, and Victor Nee. This approach has become an instrument for analysing the concept of refugees worldwide, especially after the Arab Spring. Classic assimilation theory posits that immigrant/ethnic groups and majority groups tend to converge in a "straight-line" manner, gradually becoming increasingly similar in terms of norms, values, behaviours, and features over time. This idea posits that immigrants who have resided in the host community for a longer duration, as well as subsequent generations, are expected to exhibit stronger resemblances to the majority group compared to immigrants with shorter durations of residence (Brettell & Hollifield, 2015, pp. 75-79). This approach tends to make the newcomer part and parcel of the host community so that their identity and culture, if not all, will, to a greater extent, disappear and be replaced by that of the host community; in other words, immigrants become just like the large community with the mere passage of time (Krieken, 2012, p. 508). This model gives newcomers long-term permission to be integrated into the community. Countries adopting such a model, like France, have more robust integration programs than those with differential-exclusionary models, like Germany, Switzerland, and Austria.

C. Multicultural Model

The concept of multiculturalism has long been debated as it appears in almost all societies, especially in the Western world. It possesses religious, secular, ethnic, racial, and gender nomenclature. Its definition is sometimes complex, as it is viewed differently by several people and societies. The adherents of the right-wing parties, especially in Europe, may classify multiculturalism as a threat to their traditional conservative culture. The humanitarian community will not favour this idea, as they are more open to multicultural policies that would allow for the proper accommodation of displaced persons, refugees, and asylum seekers, as well as protecting the rights of minorities in a nation. In this phenomenon, we might opine that multiculturalism is a nation-state attempt to protect the rights and satisfy the demands of minorities and the vulnerable members of society (Alkin, 2017, p. 181). In other words, it means promoting a harmonious multicultural society where different cultures are integrated into one society without persecution or prejudice against one another (Başaran, 2017, pp. 242-243).

Sweden's adoption of an integration strategy in 1997, which included explicit provisions for an Ombudsman against ethnic discrimination, demonstrated the nation's receptiveness to social variety and cultural amalgamation (Borevi, 2024, pp. 27-30). Some of these approaches include allowing the operation of confessional and ethnic schools and ensuring equal opportunities for all children in a favourable pluralistic social environment. The multicultural nature of Swedish society was buttressed by the country's determination to create social equality among ethnic groups and respect for immigrants' cultures, as well as provide the necessary support for ethnic minorities to prosper economically and politically (Nund, 1996, p. 2). The country's desire to maintain and sustain its policy of multiculturalism was accentuated by its preference for permanent labour import over temporary guest workers. Canada, the prime example of multiculturalism, Australia, the UK, and the Netherlands have all, in history, tried a multicultural immigrant policy.

Sweden is also widely known for its prioritization of a comprehensive immigration policy that allows for the development of immigrants in all ramifications so that they can be active members of society, contributing to the country's overall prosperity. The country emphasizes combining the right to work with the right to residence, which means immigrants and their families are considered resident foreigners rather than the workforce (Schierup, 1996, p. 23). This dignified refugees' approach contributed to the country's status as a multicultural nation, welfare state, and paragon of peace and prosperity (Ahmed, 2014, p. 102), which it possesses much more than most of its European counterparts.

However, Sweden, which used to be classified alongside Canada and Australia as possessing favourable multicultural immigrant integration policies, has begun to adopt restrictive policies that have served as stumbling blocks for further descriptive and normative multicultural strategies of the country (Borevi, 2013, pp. 140-145). This article opines that restrictive immigration policies, rather than inclusive ones, are enemies of multiculturalism and can set aside whatever benefits the latter may induce.

IV. MULTICULTURALISM VERSUS CIVIC INTEGRATION: THE SWEDISH CASE

Once ranked alongside Canada and Australia for its strong multicultural policies, Sweden was long seen as a model of inclusion-promoting cultural pluralism that enabled immigrants to preserve their identities while integrating into society (Eisenberg, 2000; Amrine & Amaechi, 2024). From the 1970s to the early 2010s, this approach thrived under a robust welfare state and progressive consensus (Wickström, 2015; Ålund, Schierup & Dahlstedt, 2025). In recent years, however, Sweden has shifted toward a civic integration model, emphasizing shared norms, language proficiency, and conditional participation over cultural diversity. The concept of civic integration underscores the responsibilities of immigrants to embrace fundamental cultural values, attain language competence, exhibit economic self-sufficiency, and engage actively in the labour market as conditions for complete participation, including citizenship (Goodman & Wright, 2015; Joppke, 2007). This development resulted from concerns about social cohesion,

From Arrival to Citizenship: Reviewing the Multicultural Model of Swedish Refugees' Integration Policy

political pressure from the right-wing parties, and increased European refugees, leading to the 2015 European migration crisis (Peshkopia, Bllaca, & Lika, 2021).

From the historical perspective of multiculturalism in Swedish society, several studies indicate that Sweden has pioneered the adoption of multicultural policies in Europe. Borevi's (2014) research argues that starting with the 1975 immigrant and minority policy, the country shifted from assimilation to a model based on 'equality', 'freedom of choice', and 'partnership'. The policy ensured comprehensive rights for immigrants, encompassing access to education in their native languages, financial support for cultural organizations, and equitable access to social benefits. The Swedish government established itself as a neutral mediator, facilitating the coexistence of various groups while safeguarding universal rights. Scholars such as Schierup and Ålund (2011) state that Sweden's multicultural model was deeply rooted in its already established democratic welfarism, which guaranteed universal social rights to all inhabitants in the country. The model laid a foundation for solidarity and a shared sense of belonging among the members of the society, culminating in the promotion of participation and decreased barriers to inclusion during the 1980s and 1990s (Borevi, 2012).

As such, the multicultural model was said to have been the prevailing model of Swedish immigrant policy during the 1990s; however, throughout the 2000s, several published academic papers noted a clear shift toward civic integration. Goodman (2013) asserts that this change in policy direction was a response not just in Sweden, but rather a broader European trend towards civic integration in which multiculturalism was criticized for supposedly encouraging segregation, unemployment, and less social cohesion.

In the event of this shift, Sweden introduced policies that include language and civic tests for permanent residence and citizenship, as well as putting in place specific stricter requirements, which include labour market participation and financial self-sufficiency criteria, which highlight the emergence of civic integration policy in the country (Santos, 2025). This policy gained momentum in society, considering the evidence provided by Nilsson et al. (2024) of how the civic integration measures have been carried out via both state institutions and CSOs.

In today's Sweden, research reveals growing tension between multiculturalism and civic integration. Multiculturalism promotes inclusive citizenship and minority rights, and studies like Bevelander et al. (2024) show that immigrants have long enjoyed relatively easy access to citizenship, which encourages political participation and trust. In contrast, civic integration stresses shared values and participation in the labor market to sustain the welfare state. Milani et al. (2021) note that Sweden has shifted from supporting multilingualism and cultural dialogue to requiring migrants to master Swedish and embrace national ideals. Critics argue that multiculturalism has failed to address unemployment and segregation in some immigrant-dense areas, fueling backlash and the rise of anti-immigration movements like the Sweden Democrats (Dahlström & Esaiasson, 2011).

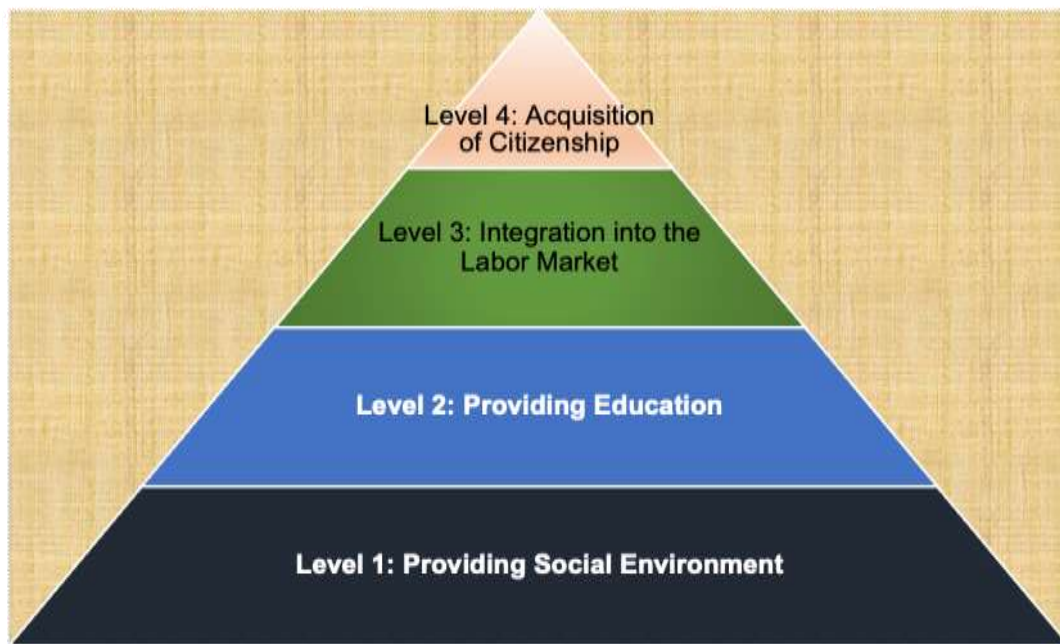
After the 2015 European migration crisis, Sweden revised its family reunification policies (Desku, 2023), extended the residency requirement for citizenship from five to eight years, and introduced Swedish language and civic knowledge tests (Johnsson, 2020; Ekberg & Dahlsten, 2023). These reforms signal a shift from multiculturalism toward a conditional, civic-based membership model. However, despite being labeled a civic integration system, Sweden's approach is better described as hybrid, combining restrictive elements with lingering multicultural features, particularly in education and social welfare. In the midst of finding a balance between these two competing paradigms, we infer that neither model alone fully addresses the contemporary Swedish immigration challenges. Thus, Future studies should investigate how hybrid approaches might maintain both cultural variety and collective social responsibility.

V. DISCUSSION: SWEDISH MULTICULTURAL PIVOTAL STAGES TO CITIZENSHIP

In this section, we shall discuss the basic steps or procedures an immigrant or a refugee has to follow to obtain Swedish citizenship. Sweden has a long-term multicultural policy tradition that has been opening up to refugees even during and after the Arab Spring and even more after the outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian war, as well as the Israel-Hamas war. Depending on contemporary events, the country continues to create new refugee policies in line with the European Union's refugee policy, resolving the 'lack of integration' that would improve the efficiency of immigrant policies. We shall justify our assumptions that Sweden is multicultural in nature and structure based on social and cultural environment provision, education and language skills provision, integration into the labour market, and the final grant of civic citizenship. Based on the designed pyramid of citizenship acquisition, we shall use the longitudinal approach to analyse the sequence of refugees' integration policies in the country. The aim is to identify the effectiveness of Swedish policies toward a favourable integration policy that would grant citizenship.

D. Infographic

The citizenship acquisition pyramid shows the four steps a refugee may need to follow to acquire Swedish citizenship.



Source: Prepared by the author on Microsoft Word

At the first level of the pyramid, a newcomer starts with the Provision of the Social and Cultural Environment. The first thing to do for refugees on arrival in their host country is to accommodate them by providing a camp and some integration allowance to help them maintain themselves. This method is on the condition that they meet all the conditions outlined by the 1951 Convention on Refugees. Providing a cultural and social environment in Sweden seems more favourable than in most European countries. Several research works indicate adequate humanitarian service to refugees in Sweden. As one poignantly asserts, the logic behind the immigrant integration policy was very much linked with the characteristics of the political and economic environment of the country in the 70s, which described multiculturalism in terms of vibrant support of immigrant culture and tradition (Borevi, 2014, p. 712). A social welfare ideology had long dominated Sweden, significantly spreading egalitarian notions. This idea meant that the principle of equality was recognized as valid for all legal residents, including immigrants.

According to a published article on refugees' placement in Sweden titled "Sense of Place in Providers' Perspectives of School Placement Policies about a Refugee Settlement in Rural Sweden," by Rosvall et al. in the *Journal of Rural Studies*, 2025, in Sweden, local municipalities managed to house refugees wherever a free spot could be found – they might end up in a vacant flat, a modest hostel, even a little camping hut, or some other form of lodging. Young refugees and their families often opted for the nearest school, mainly because it was right around the corner (Rosvall et al., 2025: 4). This gives them easy access to education, getting the necessary knowledge to integrate them perfectly into Swedish society.

Sweden is a paragon of goodness when it comes to protecting the rights of settled refugees. At all levels of government, actions were taken to protect the rights of refugees with all vigour, as the larger Swedish society strongly supports the government's refugee policy. This has made the government more proactive in protecting the rights of refugees than its European counterparts. The Swedish former minister of justice and migration, Morgan Johansson (2016), has indicated the government's commitment to ensuring the safety of refugees in the country. Swedish refugee policy is acknowledged and praised by all and sundry. In 2016, when the then U.N. secretary-general Ban-Ki Moon visited the country, he urged other European countries to emulate Swedish virtue in refugee protection as he pointed out Sweden as a role model in the efforts to protect refugees who have been forced to leave their homes due to war and terrorism.

The Swedish parties' unanimous agreement is a critical aspect of the Swedish refugees' approach compared to most European countries. The government, the Moderate Party, the Centre Party, the Liberal Party, and the Christian Democrats agreed in October 2015 on necessary measures to ensure efficiency in Sweden's reception of asylum seekers and to strengthen the introduction of new arrivals. Among the measures suggested was to make changes aimed at creating space for more asylum seekers at accommodation centres (Holst & Sofie, 2016). However, there is still much to be done to increase the quality of Swedish multicultural immigration styles, as recommended by an article on Swedish styles of multiculturalism titled "Multiculturalism Swedish Style: Shifts and sediments in educational policies and Textbooks" published by Sabine Gruber & Annika Rabo in the journal "Policy Futures in Education" in 2014; according to the article, although Sweden is still multicultural and even score very high on a Multiculturalism Policy Index, indicating its commitment to multicultural accommodations, the country lag in immigrant entry into the labour market which needed urgent attention in order to revitalize the country's 1980s cornerstone of its immigration policy of equality (*jämlikhet*), freedom of choice (*valfrihet*) and partnership (*samverkan*) (Gruber & Rabo, 2014, p. 64).

From Arrival to Citizenship: Reviewing the Multicultural Model of Swedish Refugees' Integration Policy

Secondly, as indicated on the pyramid, the notions of Education and Language Skills Provision are the next step toward refugees' integration after providing a favourable environment. Once a refugee is accepted into a society where her or his rights are protected under the law against any form of victimization, the next level on the road to integration is learning the host country's official language and acquiring the necessary education. Education and language programs for refugees in Sweden are more effective than those in some European countries. Beginning in 1972, Swedish language courses for immigrants were improved, and towns and organizations could get support for efforts to engage newcomers in these courses. Additionally, in 1973, immigrants were allowed to take Swedish language classes with foreigners while at work, with the costs covered by employers. The maximum duration of these courses was set at 240 hours. The Swedish libraries received government funding to acquire books in languages spoken by immigrants, implying support for multiculturalism. Religious organizations established by immigrants started receiving financing like other churches, independent of the Swedish church. The Finnish People's University was created in Haparanda, a town close to the Finnish border and inhabited by a significant Finnish community (Korkmaz, 2005). Establishing a university at a border greatly enhances the easy acquisition of university education for refugees who arrive at such a border town.

According to a published article on bilingualism in Sweden titled "The pivotal and peripheral roles of bilingual classroom assistants at a Swedish elementary school," published by Liv Thorstensson Dávila in the *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* in 2018, Sweden's Language Act sets out what schools should do with language teaching, laying a kind of groundwork that the government generally favours. In this setup, Swedish is treated as the principal language. At the same time, every student can pick up both a foreign language and Swedish, even if Swedish is already the language they speak at home or is seen as a minority tongue. The law casually points out that bilingualism carries a symbolic punch, essentially suggesting it can help boost the standing of ethnic minorities and keep their languages alive (Dávila, 2018: 1-2). This thinking naturally nudges society toward multiculturalism, blending official policy with everyday linguistic diversity.

The Swedish refugees' language teaching method is quite different from most European countries because the country allows a bilingual environment, which means a child's first language continues to enable them to learn a second or third language more quickly. A method that has proved to be very successful. At schools, refugees access two hours of Swedish language tuition daily and receive two hours of teaching per week in their home language (McIntyre, 2017). This is one of the factors that made Sweden a role model compared to most European countries in terms of refugee integration. It enacts laws that make refugees more readily accepted into society than their European counterparts. This can be justified considering the underlying right to education offered to refugee children; Swedish legislation mandates that they must have a school placement within one month of arrival. Refugee pupils and children of labour migrants possess identical educational rights and responsibilities as Swedish (Bunar, 2017, p. 4), a giant positive approach to refugee integration. In most European countries, refugees wander about for months without getting a school to accept them. Generally speaking, this is different in Sweden. The government of Sweden is not shying away from its responsibilities for refugees' education and providing other social services to them; the government is bound to educate the refugees conveniently, which is why several municipalities offer dedicated buses or free public transport passes to encourage newly arrived pupils to attend a broader range of schools within the country (Rothschild, 2016).

After education, Integration into the Labor Market is the next strategic step for refugees' integration and the path to citizenship acquisition in a host country. By principle, if a refugee settles, acquires education, learns the language of his host community, and finally gets employed in an organization or company, the chances of acquiring citizenship increase. The job refugees are doing will automatically qualify them to get a residence/work permit, which is one of the criteria for certain groups of immigrants to apply for citizenship.

In Sweden, this procedure is much easier than in most developed countries, as the Swedish government wants newly arrived immigrants to quickly find a workplace relevant to the individual's education and experience. Policies adopted to ensure that include: a fast track for social scientists and social workers, a fast track for teachers and preschool teachers, a fast track for professions requiring registration in health and medical care, and a fast track for chefs. The 'fast tracks' with particular focus on newly arrived immigrants under the introduction system were adopted by several organizations in the country, and the aim was to work with the social partners and the Swedish Public Employment Service to identify kinds of procedures for making the best use of valuable skills acquired by newly arrived immigrants with education or expertise in shortage occupations so that they can be matched more efficiently within a very short time with the needs of industries and enterprises (Ylva, 2016).

According to a published article on labour market integration in Sweden titled "Labor market integration of refugees in Sweden-Analysing the interactions of CSOs at different levels" published by Nilsson, Marco; Escobar, Karla & Ahl, Helene in the journal "Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies" in 2024, most people agree that active employment is the best way for refugees to assimilate into their new communities. Capital ownership, employment rate, income, and entrepreneurship are the official indicators used in Sweden to gauge labour market integration, which is challenging to meet for refugees. However, despite these challenging parameters for refugees, local civil society organizations have been crucial supplemental factors in labour market integration. The Swedish civil societies collaborate with the government to ease refugees' access to jobs in the labour market. They provide language cafes, organize general activities such as knitting, games, and sports, arrange cultural activities, and give guidance for job seeking. The best of such assistance by civil society is the one given by Integrera Mera Swedish Civil Society Organization, which arranges

From Arrival to Citizenship: Reviewing the Multicultural Model of Swedish Refugees' Integration Policy

employment fairs, validates past educational successes, and creates career prospects for recently arrived refugees (Nilsson, Escobar, & Ahl, 2024, p. 1324). The collaborative efforts by the Swedish government and civil societies to guide and assist refugees into the labour market have reduced the difficulties in getting jobs for newcomers in Sweden and, by implication, supported the multicultural policy and eased the path to citizenship.

The essential definition of "Civic Citizenship" in the light of refugees is 'Labor Market Participation' - this is the moment in time when integrating refugees into the host country either fails or succeeds. Once a refugee cannot be gainfully employed, the steps mentioned earlier, which refugees pass through, from cultural accumulation to education, make no sense at all. A refugee who got an unskilled job without passing through the steps may become a citizen of the host community before an unemployed, educated refugee who has passed through the stated steps. Because most countries' conditions for citizenship depend on the years legally spent in the country, rendering specific service to the host community, we defined the acquisition of citizenship by refugees as the ability to be an active community member while obeying all the regulations therein.

In Sweden, the requirements for citizenship acquisition for refugees or the path to acquiring citizenship for refugees are easier than in some European countries. For instance, the waiting period to qualify for citizenship in Sweden is half of Germany's eight years (Hofverberg, 2016). Moreover, in Sweden, limited or no burdensome integration requirements are needed, which differs from those in some European countries. Sweden also allows for dual citizenship, which some countries in Europe, like Germany, reject, and there is a law strictly against all forms of discrimination in Sweden, which adds to the accessible accommodation and integration of refugees in the country compared to most European countries.

As reported by an article published on citizenship and the electoral integration of refugees in Sweden titled "Socialization, citizenship and the electoral integration of refugees: evidence from Sweden" published by Pieter Bevelander, Derek S. Hutcheson & Haodong Qi in the journal "Ethnic and Racial Studies" in 2024, in most countries individual socio-economic factors contribute significantly to easy acquisition of citizenship and political participation. Sweden is not exempt from such a scenario. However, Sweden's citizenship rule has historically been relatively liberal, and continuous debates in Swedish politics about proposals to impose stricter criteria for citizenship acquisition make it a politically relevant topic. Hence, the future acquisition of Swedish citizenship may be more difficult for refugees (Bevelander, Hutcheson, & Qi, 2024: 17).

CONCLUSIONS

After the Arab Spring and even due to the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian and Israel-Hamas wars, the refugee crisis increased in Europe, as thousands of refugees struggled for a peaceful and habitable environment in European countries; these events made the host countries, mainly in Europe, enact and implement some refugee policies depending on their legal and social acceptability. Some adopt a new immigration policy that will tighten and protect the refugee influx; some are more coherent in such a way that they formulate new rules that favour newcomers into their community.

This article analysed the Swedish approaches to the acceptability of refugees based on their longstanding multicultural attitudes. The research found that despite adopting some restrictive policies, Sweden is still adhering to multiculturalism based on the current data of the Multiculturalism Index. The research also infers that, owing to the restrictive policies, the Swedish approach to refugees is currently swinging between multiculturalism and assimilation. Despite this, the path to citizenship in Sweden from arrival to citizenship for refugees is still favourable and worthy of emulation compared to most of its European counterparts.

Some of the basic positive factors that make the Swedish refugees' journey to citizenship favourable, thereby making it an archetype of goodness, are the collective efforts of the government and the supplementary roles of Swedish civil societies in assisting refugees in all ramifications and at all levels and stages of their citizenship acquisition. For instance, just as the Swedish Migration Board will grant asylum seekers temporary lodging while they await a ruling on their residence status, civil societies will offer language learning assistance and job-seeking workshops.

In the provision of social and cultural environment, due to the multicultural nature of Swedish integration history, it has been able to protect and take care of refugees in a highly motivating manner. This has been possible due to the earlier unanimous accord of the stakeholders in the country on leniency to asylum seekers and the introduction of new immigrants. In this case, the government of Sweden, the Moderate Party, the Centre Party, the liberal party, and the Christian Democrats agreed on the required steps in October 2015 to assimilate and integrate refugees. This universal declaration on refugees in Sweden has made the country a worldwide role model for refugee integration, paving the way for assimilating newcomers into its society more efficiently and quickly. The assertion can be substantiated by the E.U. migrant integration statistics, which unequivocally demonstrate that Sweden outperforms most European countries in all aspects of integration, including employment, education, social inclusion, and active citizenship (De Cock et al., 2018). For example, the Swedes have been highly successful in their musical endeavours to create a welcoming and friendly communal music atmosphere for displaced people, thus fostering a sense of hospitality for refugees (Quadrosa & Kinh, 2017, p. 1113).

The Swedish refugees' language teaching method differs from that of most European countries because the country allows a bilingual environment. This system contributes to the multicultural nature of Swedish society. The system is vital because when a child's initial language is maintained, it facilitates their ability to acquire a second or third language faster. To further facilitate

From Arrival to Citizenship: Reviewing the Multicultural Model of Swedish Refugees' Integration Policy

integration, Sweden ensures that a child starts school within a month of arrival. The Swedish refugee system tries to accommodate and assimilate everyone without rigorous procedures.

Labor market integration is vital to refugees' integration and obtaining citizenship. This article sees the final step of refugees' integration as citizenship acquisition. It defines citizenship as the ability to render a specific service to the host community- rendering services to the community guarantees all the requirements for acquiring citizenship. Some countries, like Germany, place self-support as a criterion for a refugee to apply for citizenship after the waiting period, meaning he must work to serve his host community to earn the required financial status. Labor market integration is the bedrock of refugees' integration in any country in this contemporary global village, where human beings are heavily commodified. The Swedish refugee integration system is more favourable than most developed countries, owing to the government's unanimous will to handle the situation with all efforts. In line with Sweden's norms on the future and diversity, an integration was enacted in 1997, pinpointing the idea of building a diversified society free from discrimination. In addition, Sweden ensures a fast-track system of employing newcomers in society while providing them with language education. Several countries have banned asylum seekers from being employed while their application is under consideration. The case in Sweden is entirely different, as asylum seekers are allowed to seek employment even before the result of their application is processed.

The final stage of refugee integration is citizenship acquisition. No cumbersome integration requirements must be met for long-term residence or citizenship in Sweden. This article found that Swedish integration policy and programs are characterized by an increasing labour market integration model based on multiculturalism rather than monoculturalism. In March 2024, Sweden introduced a draft regulation on labor immigration that reflected a segregationist approach, distinguishing sharply between skilled and low-skilled workers. The proposal seeks to tighten entry requirements for low-skilled migrants while attracting more highly skilled professionals (Engstrand, 2024). Such measures risk reinforcing a differentially exclusionary model, undermining the inclusive spirit of Sweden's earlier refugee integration successes.

Overall, while Sweden's integration policies-ranging from early assimilation to later multiculturalism- have achieved notable progress, the article concludes that future strategies should reinforce inclusive measures: fostering social and cultural support, strengthening civil society involvement, expanding language and education programs, ensuring fair labor market access, and maintaining accessible citizenship pathways for refugees.

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