

Monika Banaś

Jagiellonian University, Krakow

CULTURE, MIGRATION-INTEGRATION, AND POLITICAL DISCOURSE

KULTÚRA, MIGRÁCIA A INTEGRÁCIA A POLITICKÝ DISKURZ

Abstract: *The article discusses a correlation between culture and political discourse on contemporary migration to Europe. To make the subject of the analysis concrete the case of Sweden has been chosen to exemplify how narratives proposed by political leaders of the country are constructed in terms of language, metaphors and performance. The parliamentary elections held in Sweden in September of 2018 displayed a modified rhetoric on contemporary challenges like health sector crisis, housing, aging society and – what will be of particular relevance in this text – on international migration.*

Keywords: culture, migration, integration, political discourse, Sweden.

1 Introduction

Europe at the end of the second decade of the 21st century faces many diverse challenges: financial, economic, social (including demographic), political and cultural. This is not an exceptional situation because in the history of the European civilization numerous problems of similar nature were occurring repeatedly in the past, and often with dramatic outcomes. These were so-called turning points, giving the socio-political, economic and cultural processes a modified direction or pace.

The financial crisis that started in the banking sector in the United States of America in 2008 quickly penetrated Europe (EUROPEAN COMMISSION 2009, 8). The European economies that got most affected by its impact were: Icelandic, Irish, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish and Greek. Most countries on the European continent have experienced the repercussions of events and decisions made on the other side of the Atlantic. This was a clear example and proof of economic connections and dependencies between Europe and America. In the global system of business networks composed of states, corporations and trans-corporations, private and state entities,

non-governmental organizations, etc. it is hard to expect a different scenario.

The same applies to international migration. The Arab spring which started in December of 2010 quickly covered neighboring countries of North Africa and the Middle East. Armed conflict in Syria and the emergence of the so-called Islamic State quickly became factors that push out hundreds of thousands of people seeking refuge in safe and (still) rich Europe. Just like peace and security for refugees, stability and prosperity of European countries was and is the main reason for mobility of so-called economic migrants. This should not come as a surprise because of the human nature and the obvious fact that everyone is looking for the best possible conditions to live. Migration therefore, whether caused by natural disasters, wars or economic factors, made Europe and the European Union of the 21st century a destination for third-country nationals. This intensive human flow into Europe got a name of "migration crisis"(PARK 2015).

2 Migration crisis and its socio-political consequences

Migrations of people from North Africa and the Arabian peninsula caused by wars, political persecution, chronic poverty and natural disasters have made Europe a symbolic, and to some extent also a real "fortress" in which migrants seek refuge. A "fortress" difficult to reach due to geographical distance and obstacles (the Mediterranean Sea), restrictions in border traffic or shortage of financial resources to cover the costs of re-settlement. The opening of the gates of Europe took place as a consequence of the declaration of German Chancellor Angela Merkel on the will and readiness of her country to accept refugees. As a result, since 2015 there has been a gradual increase in the number of newcomers from outside the European continent. In 2015 the number of asylum applications in EU countries reached 1 322 825 (EUROSTAT 2018).

The rapid influx of numerous foreign groups, distinct in terms of culture and civilization, did initially not raise doubts or fears among host societies. In highly developed European countries such as Germany or Sweden immigration gained societal acceptance as a result of support of these societies for government decisions and manifestation of solidarity with those in need. A different approach was visible in Italy, Greece or Hungary, whose borders were stormed by newcomers from the destabilized regions of North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. The involvement of Turkey in

migration matters with the European Union to avert the effects of the crisis brought some benefits for both sides, European and Turkish. While Turkey received three billion euros for retaining some of the migrants on its territory, the European Union reduced social tensions which arose as a result of terrorist attacks carried out in Europe by immigrants or people with immigrant roots (REUTERS 2018a).

A series of tragic events across the EU, from Paris to Nice, Barcelona, Madrid, London, Berlin, Hamburg, and many other cities increased the level of social anxiety, which gradually translated into expanding skepticism towards the migration policy in Europe. Growing criticism of neoliberal solutions regarding shaping the demography of the "aging" continent has been reflected not only in the language of some social media but also in the language of political discourse. Societies of countries directly affected by the migration crisis gradually changed their political preferences, leaning more towards parties, which propose a revision of current policies and practices on migration management. At the end of 2018, the political landscape of Europe is significantly different from that of a decade ago. The right-wing parties of Great Britain, Italy, Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, Denmark, Finland and Norway have received enough support from voters to form governments (BBC 2018).

A special case here is the United Kingdom. The public referendum of June 2016 regarding the country's stay or leave from the EU was caused among others by growing skepticism about the European Union's migration policy. The result of the referendum 52% for leaving the EU and 48% for remaining (BBC 2016), indicated a slight preference for the exit option, hereinafter referred to as Brexit, from the words "Britain" and "exit". The process of decoupling the British economy and policy from the EU is, as one may expect, complicated, difficult and costly. Many aspects that have so far been implemented jointly must now receive a new regulatory framework, including budgetary and financial matters.

The British "no" towards the EU continued membership had its strong foundation in the growing dissatisfaction of the British society with the so-called free flow of people. Both the traditional and the electronic media presented criticism of neo-liberal politicians for being too liberal towards the problem of migration and relocation of refugees. Anticipated solidarity

of the EU countries in accepting refugees according to quotas set by the European Council was misused and abused. Top-down arrangements agreed outside of the UK in Brussels(though still with UK's presence and attendance) did not gain sufficient acceptance by the British public. The complicated Brexit process attracts attention of many European politicians and most EU societies, in some cases refocusing the optics from Pan-European matters to EU-UK centered relations. Meanwhile, some interesting issues related to migration and integration arise in the current Scandinavian socio-political discourse.

Scandinavia (Denmark, Norway and Sweden) in the second half of the 20th century faced the necessity of importing labor from abroad. Each of these countries sought the best solutions to meet the needs reported by domestic labor markets. The fastest way was to bring selected professionals and low skilled workers from abroad. In the choice of this strategy one factor had a particularly decisive role – transformation of the economies from industry based to economies based on services. This transition typical for post-modern or late-modern Western societies was triggered by the need to develop competitive, knowledge-based economies. Sweden has been following this path since the late 1960s. The country with nearly 10 million inhabitants (as of 2018) belongs to the most developed in the world, as evidenced by one of the highest rankings in terms of the Human Development Index of 0.933 (Human Development Reports <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/SWE>).

The need of importing foreign workers, initially from other European countries, and later from outside Europe, meant that the subsequent governments of Sweden laid a special emphasis on the development of effective mechanisms shaping the immigration and integration policies (Banaś 2010). The 2015 migration crisis has caused an influx of large numbers of refugees to Europe. One of the first countries to report willingness to accept some of these migrants was Sweden (CERROTTI 2017). Due to this decision it was possible to select those migrants who in terms of professional experience and competence were most suitable for effective integration, first of all in the labor market. The economic factor played here a key role, apart from empathy, solidarity and compassion.

Contemporary Sweden of the 21st century is a multiethnic, multinational, multiracial and multicultural country. Diversity policy, which for many years was supported by the Swedish parliament, subsequent governments

and society, has become a symbol of the country's openness. The politics of multiculturalism became a way to build a strong Sweden.

3 Cultural diversity - towards an integrated society

Contemporary Western societies are subject to faster ethnic, racial and cultural diversification than in previous ages. It has to do with accelerated globalization processes, faster and cheaper ways of transport and communication. These changes had also influenced political transformations in Europe after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The new, emerging face of Europe at the end of the 20th century was becoming more and more multicultural – or in other terms – culturally diverse or culturally pluralistic. In the scientific social and political discourses these expressions still exist in parallel, however, referring to non-identical state of matter. Each of these terms, multicultural, culturally pluralistic or culturally diverse, can be defined and used in various ways depending on the speaker, writer, politician etc.

Multiculturalism can mean 1) a de facto state when there are many cultural groups within society; 2) an ideology according to which each cultural group should have equal access to symbolic and material goods guaranteed by the state; 3) the policy pursued by the state in order to provide an equal and just treatment of all cultures present in a society (Banaś, 2010, pp. 22-37).

Culturally pluralistic refers to an equal treatment of all cultures regardless of their provenance, endogenous or exogenous. In the social order formed under this pattern, diverse cultures co-create based on equal access the social, political and economic common space.

Cultural diversity, in turn, refers to the state of cultural diversity without the need for ideological or political conditioning of equal access to the broadly understood material and symbolic resources.

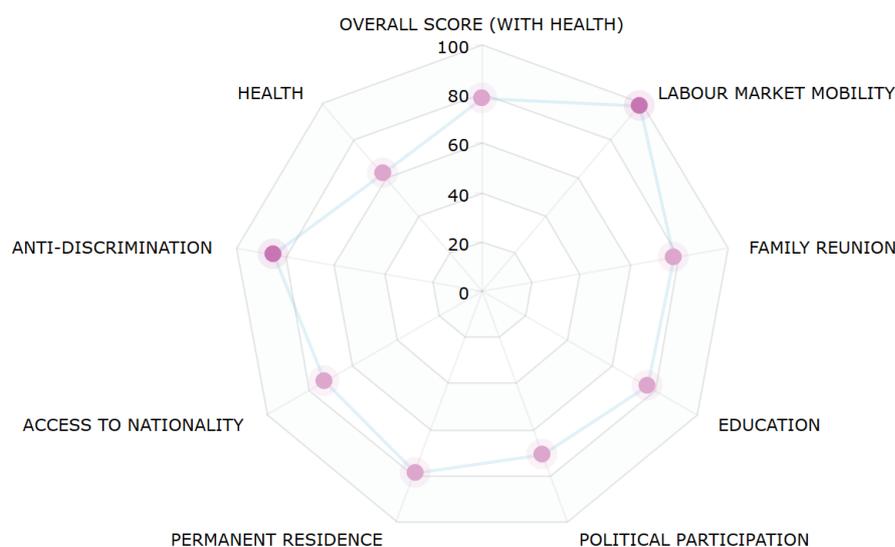
In the case of Sweden, the process of cultural differentiation began in the 1960s. This diversity, very expressive nowadays, is accepted by society and seen as an advantage. Immigration and integration policies implemented by successive governments, both under the dominance of social democrats or moderates, have been formed to include newcomers fast and quick into the mainstream society (Banaś 2010). An effective use of human competence and professional experience is here of relevance.

Immigration policy (also known as migration policy; CASTLES 2004) is closely related to integration policy. It can be considered as two sides of the same coin. The metaphor of a coin is justifiable here because each of these policies costs and is expensive. It entails considerable financial, structural, temporal, legal, psychological and social expenses, etc. Apart from the mentioned types of costs related to the implementation of both immigration and integration policies, there is also a cultural cost. It should be understood as a selection of solutions necessary to form a proper political, economic and social order for harmonious cooperation of culturally diverse groups. Cultural differences are mostly visible in the normative systems, governing rules, rites, values, behaviors, etc. Examples can be provided by attitudes towards issues like individualism, collectivism, democracy, autocracy, time concept (linear or spherical), attitude to social dialogue and consensus.

Considering the effectiveness of integration policy mechanisms and regulations attention should be directed towards some relevant aspects. Integration, being a dynamic phenomenon, requires an active participation of the parties involved in this process: the host and the guest. The cooperation of each of the participants (individuals and groups) is a condition sine qua non. This cooperation, in turn, must be based on mutual respect and respect for the values imbedded in participating cultures. Not infrequently, consensus is difficult to reach, and sometimes even impossible, as discussed later in the text. Respecting the European values that formed our continent's foundations is another important element of cooperation. The cooperation in question is not possible without recognition of human dignity, freedom, equality, solidarity and respect for civil rights inscribed in the democratic framework of the state.

Integration takes place on many levels and in many areas, of which three play a key role: the labor market, education and anti-discrimination practices. In addition to these areas, there are also regulations concerning family reunification, political participation, healthcare access to citizenship and permanent residence (MIPEX 2018). Data from the MIPEX portal, the Migration Integration Policy Index, provides an overview of the integration advancement in 38 countries, mostly European. In the MIPEX ranking for many years, Sweden has occupied the first place.

Graphic 1. Integration areas. Sweden 2014.



Source: <http://www.mipex.eu/sweden>

4 Migration and integration in political discourse – the case of Sweden

The top place occupied for many years by Sweden in the integration ranking, justifies directing special attention to the processes and events shaping internal policies of the country. The parliamentary elections of 9 September 2018 were preceded by a long political campaign in which all major parties were very actively involved. Each party in the coalition or alone tried to present its program in the most attractive way for the voters. In the end, eight parties joined the parliament, with the following support of the voters: Social Democratic Party? 28.26%, the New Moderate Alliance 19.84%, Sweden Democrats 17.53%, the Center Alliance 8.61%, the Left Alliance/Party?8.0%, the Christian Democrats Alliance 6.32%, the Liberal Alliance 5.49 % and the Green Party? 4.41% (Valmyndigheten 2018). It is worth mentioning that of the three leading parties, only Sweden Democrats noted an increase in support which allowed them to get a higher number of representatives in the parliament (62, compared with 49 in the 2014 elections) (Valmyndigheten 2018).

The winning parties of 2018 referred in their election campaigns to the most important issues requiring improved solutions, including migration and integration, health care, education, pension and security systems

among the leading themes for the majority of the competing groups. The relevance of these issues was reflected among others in the slogans used by the parties during the campaign. The following table provides a summary which allows for a comparison of the parties' signaled perspectives.

Table 1. Parties and their main slogan. Parliamentary elections 2018 in Sweden.

Party	Slogan (English version)	Slogan (Swedish version)
Social Democratic	<i>Stronger society, safer Sweden.</i>	<i>Ett starkare samhälle, ett tryggare Sverige.</i>
New Moderate The Alliance	<i>Now we take over to handle Sweden properly.</i>	<i>Nu tar vi tag i Sverige.</i>
Sweden Democrats	<i>SD2018</i>	<i>SD2018</i>
Centre The Alliance	<i>Forward!</i>	<i>Framåt!</i>
Left	<i>Tax evasion.</i> <i>School excursion.</i>	<i>Skatteflykt.</i> <i>Skolutflykt.</i>
Christian Democrats The Alliance	<i>Nobody needs to die in a queue.</i>	<i>Ingen ska behöva dö i kön.</i>
Liberals The Alliance	<i>Close or far away?</i>	<i>Närma eller fjärma?</i>
Green	<i>Now. Climate can't wait.</i>	<i>Nu. Klimatet kan inte vänta.</i>

Source: Parties' www sites.

The slogans referenced to health (Christian Democrats The Alliance), schools (Left), climate (Green), progress (Center The Alliance), reliability and stabilization (New Moderate The Alliance), security (Social Democratic) appear. and the vague acronym SD2018 (Sweden Democrats).

The choice of the slogans was on the one hand due to the parties' program frameworks and on the other due to voters' expectations. The survey conducted four months before the election (3-8 May 2018) by the Demoskop public opinion poll showed that voters were prioritizing the following issues:

1. Immigration	20%
2. Health care	18%
3. Integration	12%
4. Law & Legislature	11%
5. Education & child care	9%
6. Climate	9%
7. Economy	7%
8. Equality	7%
9. Eldery care	3%
10. Work	3%
11. Military security	1%

Source: Demoskop, May 2018

Immigration as a phenomenon requiring urgent, improved regulation took the first place in the ranking. An increasing number of voters see unlimited admission of foreigners (Expressen 2018) onto the Swedish soil as a problem. The health service, here in second place, is in fact experiencing a crisis resulting primarily from the lack of specialists: doctors, nurses, and other medical staff. In addition, the growing demand from the public for medical services is not adequately met, which creates frustration on both sides: patients and medical staff. The third most relevant issue concerns integration. The relatively high position of this item on the list is a consequence of some immigrants' maladjustment to the host society. Events of recent years indicate an increase in the number of law violation incidents primarily in large cities including Stockholm, Göteborg, Malmö, Växjö, Örebro or Uppsala. In the last two years there has been a significant rise in crime involving usage of firearms or knives (BRÅ 2018, Svenska Dagbladet 2017, Aftonbladet 2017a, 2017b). Fears of "strangers" may also be caused by media reporting on crime among immigrants in other countries that have allowed in large numbers of refugees, e. g. Germany (REUTERS 2018).

Political parties of the 2018 elections had to take into account voters' opinions on the most urgent issues as reflected in the content of political debates, press and marketing materials through which party leaders tried to win votes. In narratives addressed to the society, the parties placed particular emphasis on the candidates' general image and appearance,

language used in talks with people on the streets and during public debates. Compared with other countries, like for instance the USA or Russia, the language and expressions used in these conversations were politically correct, polite and vivid. In the "society of the spectacle", as Guy Debord wrote, a fundamental role is played by short messages, composed of pictograms, emblems, uncomplicated symbols and vivid, colorful metaphors, to make the content easy to quickly (automatically) and often unreflectively consume by the receivers. (Debord 2004).

5 Electoral narratives of three leaders

The election results of September 2018 significantly modified the internal scene of the Swedish parliament. None of the eight parties that entered the Riksdag had the minimum number of seats (min. 175) required to form a government on its own, without a need to build a coalition. Three main political formations: Social Democratic, New Moderate The Alliance and Sweden Democrats received 100, 70 and 62 seats respectively. The first two decreased the number of their representatives in the parliament, while the third increased its presence by 13, which was the largest expansion among all eight parties (Valmyndigheten 2018). In the messages addressed to voters, the leaders of the winning parties appealed to the common good of Sweden. The topics highlighted in politicians' statements were: prosperity, economy, more efficient state management, social and military security, as well as environmental protection (sustainable use of natural resources). These problems, common to the winning parties, were accompanied by other important issues that provided distinctions in the individual programs.

For Stefan Löfven and his Social Democratic party, the slogan of the *Stronger society, Safer Sweden*, served to emphasize the need to build in the international context a competitive and integrated society, organized in an inclusive manner (an open society defeating marginalization of individuals or groups). The reference to psycho-social security (safer Sweden) indicates the priority of social rather than military aspects, despite the increase of tensions on the global scene (in 2018 Swedish Ministry of Defense distributed to all households in Sweden a leaflet advising what to do and how to act in case of war).

The election manifesto of the party contained key words defining the axis of the narrative. Among the selected words were: *school, work, care, security, empathy, commitment*. An additional persuasive force was provided by phrases such as: "all country shall live and grow", "Sweden to be the world's first fossil free welfare economy", "safer homes and lives", "work and language for all" (Socialdemokraternas Valmanifest 2018). Especially the latter slogan has become a new element in the party's rhetoric. It referred to the issue of unemployed foreigners remaining in the country for many years without speaking the language but benefiting from the social security system. The Social Democrats decided to propose to voters to limit the inflow of low-qualified labor force to Sweden. With this notion they got closer to the postulates raised for many years by the New Moderates. The leader of the New Moderate The Alliance, Ulf Kristensson, pointed even stronger than Löfven, at the urgent need to tackle the problem of undeclared immigrants and individuals who stay in the country legally, but for many years remain outside the labor market.

In the Moderate election manifesto the issues of the labor market, the economy and the welfare state were prioritized. These questions were followed by migration and integration, which according to the Moderates needed far-reaching restrictions on migration and brand new solutions for integration. Some examples of them would include a ban on begging on streets - an activity undertaken still mainly by some immigrants from Romania and Bulgaria, unconditional deportation of foreigners who have committed a crime in Sweden (the sentence would be served in the country of origin of the immigrant), more power to the police, much higher budget and better technological infrastructure. Other proposals by the party urged to accept fewer refugees and issue temporal rather than permanent residence permits. A permanent residency would be conditioned by the individual's high competence in the Swedish language and culture, a well-documented work history and no criminal record. The postulate that very clearly resounds in the Moderates' electoral program aims to hold back the formation of a "parallel society" or "shadow society" consisting of people who just pretend to learn, pretend to study, pretend to work etc. According to the party, Sweden was and still is too generous while supporting individuals and groups by social benefits of the welfare state (Moderaterna, Valmanifest 2018).

Migration and integration subjects were also high on the agenda of the Sweden Democrats' (SD) electoral program. Of the 28 areas listed, the first four were: health care, social cohesion, migration, and criminal policy. Interestingly, the program did not include the phrase "integration", which anticipated a skeptical attitude towards high rates of immigrants admission into the country. According to the etymology of the word, "to integrate" means to combine different elements into one whole. Instead of integration SD proposed "social cohesion". The meaning in this context was to strengthen the community spirit, united through Swedish culture and history. According to SD, the cultural canon should be clearly defined, taught in schools and practiced in social life. Immigrants who do not have the will to accept Swedish culture and the Swedish rules governing society should not be granted permanent residence. The number of immigrants to be admitted into the country, including refugees, should be notably reduced, due to Sweden's significant involvement in humanitarian missions and humanitarian support at international level. Besides, too generous social system developed by the welfare state provides conditions for a "shadow society" with individuals and groups living in parallel to the mainstream society, but not participating in building its prosperity.

Reading the electoral programs of the three strongest parties in the Swedish parliament of 2018, several common notions were strongly emphasized: migration and integration, culture and history, good competence in the Swedish language, societal norms and values. Foreigners who do not comply with the norms and do not accept these conditions will be expelled from the country. The programs of the political parties and the rhetoric used by the winning politicians echo wishes of the Swedish society more and more accepting proposals previously associated with the right wing parties and even the far right. It is significant that even the Social Democrats, for long decades known for their very liberal attitude, adopted some elements typical for their conservative rivals.

6 Conclusion

The issues of culture and politics, immigration and integration, rhetoric and narrative presented in the article provide a set of questions to which the post-modern state of the 21st century must find effective solutions. Solutions that are a result of effective management, financing, monitoring

and modification of the subject in question. This is a difficult task, especially in the context of the rapidly changing reality, so typical for the liquid (post-) modernity (Bauman 2000). The efforts and declarations of Swedish political parties, as exemplified by Social Democrats, Moderates and Sweden Democrats, show the extent to which Swedish society is determined in defending its values, culture, history, secure the wealth of present time and the prosperous future.

The contemporary multiethnic and multiracial society of Sweden, which has a long experience of emigration (ca. 1860–1920) and immigration (after the 1950s), seeks a balance between what is historically native and what is new, foreign or partially foreign. For liberals – supporters of “open doors” – Sweden needs immigrants. The newcomers are culturally and economically required. Apart from this, they allow the mainstream society to show solidarity and express empathy for those who are less privileged. Opponents of this approach indicate the misuse of Swedish welfare by strangers who did not co-create it. An uneven participation in building a welfare state generates a parallel society, which may lead to social, cultural, economic and political destabilization. The debate on Sweden of the 21st century continues. It did not start in 2018, but it goes far beyond the caesura of the 1980s. In this process various options and political constellations may be possible. Even these that at the moment seem the least likely.

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