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# Sociopsychological and Political Reactions towards Immigration in Scandinavia

How globalized events triggered changes in immigration  
policies in Denmark and Sweden

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# Abstract

Currently, a series of events initiated by globalization and its effects have interfered on how people live and how they face the “other,” the “outsider.” Through a series of theories and concepts, countries are analyzed, and their reactions towards these occurrences scrutinized. Recently in Denmark and Sweden, high-developed nations where everything functions almost flawlessly, episodes have somehow changed how these societies go ahead with their lives and their vision towards the immigrant. Throughout this thesis, different theories and concepts will be explained and will be used to explain shifts in these countries political, sociopsychological, and economic spheres. The purpose is to analyze and compare how these fields have suffered changes during the years, especially after the 9/11 and the War on Terror, and the 2015 Refugee Crisis. Examples from books, articles, government websites, organizations reports, and newspaper articles will be used to bring into evidence how both countries reacted, and how they act differently regarding globalized events involving immigration. The conclusions show that dramatic changes happened in both countries after these incidents, where different actions were put into practice ever since. Securitization became stricter, primarily due to the fear of the “other.” This same fear provoked a rise on the populism and participation of right-wing parties in Sweden and Denmark. The results also evidenced how the welfare state has a profound influence on these countries motions, and how integration strategies are in continually changing towards Assimilation instead of Multiculturalism.

*Key words:* Sweden, Denmark, Migration, Refugee Crisis, War on Terror, Ontological Insecurity, Securitization, Populism, Welfare State

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# 1. Introduction

*“Many foreigners find that on a daily basis natives do not think of them as having “equal social worth” (Marshall 1950). They are perceived by the majority as “exiles from society” (Moon 1988, 43), very much like the poor, who, as a result of capitalist market forces, have become outsiders, lacking the “means for self respect and the means to be recognized by fellow citizens as of equal worth to themselves, a recognition basic to democracy” (Pateman 1988, 235). (Crepaz, 2008, p.171).*

Migration, or the act of moving from one country to another with multiple finalities (e.g., work, study, family), has been changing its connotation for a while now. First acting mainly as a tool for EU countries to achieve the labor force needed for their development and growth, migration has now changed its role due to the appearance of key events connected to globalization.

Since the advent of external facts connected to war, poverty, terrorism, among others, migration became a synonym to crisis, and crisis became a meaning of *“unsustainable ‘pressure’ on the EU and its member states”*, due to the fact that some of these countries are not entirely prepared to help the ones *“most exposed to massive migratory movements”* (Bevelander & Petersson, 2014, p.59). Also, as affirmed by Henrik Vigh on his article *Crisis and Chronicity* (2008), even if the crisis is seen as fragmentation, it is essential to keep in mind that is a persistent and durable situation, a constant.

From the War on Terror and later the outbreak of the Refugee Crisis in 2015, it is evident how migration has become indeed a crisis and not just a chosen activity. Together with this context of the on-going crisis, several consequences came along. For instance, while the EU restricted its support towards integration within its member states by the provision of instruments and funding, many of these countries implemented *“restrictive integration policies where migrants have more duties than rights,”* reinforced their national identities, and saw a prominent growth on the fear regarding foreigners (Iremiciuc, 2017).

Therefore, Kinnvall (2004) explains that due to new restrictions and the fear related to those coming from the “outside,” migration can also be seen nowadays as a psychological and structural procedure, where insecurity amidst the “outsiders” grow together with a feeling of dependence, anxiety, and lack of power. Also according to Kinnvall (2004, p.754), *“By ordering the other both structurally (e.g., immigrants as “bogus” asylum seekers) and*

*psychologically (by turning the stranger into an enemy), a discourse of exclusion is constructed.”*

In Denmark, the non-native population is defined by the following terms in official statistics: ‘immigrant’, a person who was born abroad and whose parents are foreign citizens or born abroad as well; ‘descendant’, a person born in Denmark but whose parents are immigrants or descendants in possess of a foreign citizenship; and ‘person of Danish origin’, someone who regardless of the place of birth has at least one parent born in Denmark and with Danish citizenship (Careja & Bevelander, 2018).

In Sweden, on the other hand, the terms used regarding the non-native population have a different connotation. The main terms used in the country official statistics are ‘foreign-born’ (i.e., an individual born outside Sweden); ‘Swedish background’, for children of immigrants who were born in Sweden; and ‘foreign background’, for people who were either born inside or outside Sweden, but have both parents foreign-born (Careja & Bevelander, 2018).

The following sections are going to examine how “the other” is seen psychologically and within a societal, political and economic structure, especially in Sweden and Denmark, Scandinavian countries that even being so close geographically, have very different attitudes towards migration policies.

## 1.1 Purpose, Aim, and Research Questions

The fundamental aim of this thesis is to highlight how the War on Terror and the 2015 Refugee Crisis have influenced and triggered changes in migration policies in Sweden and Denmark. This will be done by examining migration policies, securitization, ontological (in)security, the welfare state, and the rise of populism and right-wing parties in these countries.

This thesis seeks to further explain these changes by exploring particular aspects of each of the sections mentioned above, for instance, multiculturalism and assimilationism policies; the importance of citizenship; changes in border control; the securitization of specific groups, e.g., Muslims; the meaning and changes of the welfare state; the modifications in the political sphere.

The focus of this work will be on Sweden and Denmark, due to their closeness in social aspects and location, but also to the peculiar diversity in treatment towards refugees and immigrants.

Therefore, the following general research questions will guide my investigation:

- What are the primary socio-psychological, political, and economic reactions caused by the war on terror and the refugee crisis in Denmark and Sweden, and how they impacted and changed Danish and Swedish migration policies?

## 1.2 Methodology

This thesis will take an analytical approach through qualitative as well as quantitative methods. Through a vast range reconstruction of the relevant literature, the topics about migration, citizenship, integration strategies, securitization, ontological security, the welfare state, and the rise of populism are going to be dissected and analyzed using multiple theoretical approaches, while at the same time comparing the examples of Sweden and Denmark regarding each of the topics.

At the same time, government websites and other statistical sources will provide quantitative information and data on how questions connected to refugees and migrants have changed in both countries along the years.

Examples from books and articles regarding the refugee crisis and migration in Sweden and Denmark will provide an empirical illustration of how each country responded to the crisis.

It was decided not to conduct interviews and surveys due to the lack of time and resources to put them in practice in a systematic way, as well as due to the immense amount of material already at disposition for analysis.

## 2. Citizenship

*“States are generally unwilling to tolerate, generation after generation, large numbers of non-citizens without an entitlement to citizenship. Whatever their degree of economic and social integration, lack of citizenship differentiates them from the broader community and implicitly justifies the xenophobic and exclusionary rhetoric of the far right”* (Hansen & Weil, 2001, p.12).

Citizenship, according to Eva Ersboll in the book *Towards a European Nationality* (2001), is what gives a person a series of rights in the country where he or she is a citizen. For instance, it gives someone the right to enter in the home country and stay indefinitely; it gives the right to vote on elections (e.g., parliamentary); the access to some private, semipublic and public positions; and also secures the individual with diplomatic protection. It is also essential to put into evidence that the immigrant who enjoys the social rights of a country without being a citizen is known as ‘denizen’ (Crepaz, 2008).

According to the Maastricht (1993) and Amsterdam (1999) Treaties, the importance of nationality law is beyond doubt. The nationality law implies several crucial factors. Firstly, it gives the states the prerogative of exclusion and inclusion, employing membership or restrictions in the format of visas. Secondly, it establishes those who are entitled to a passport and have the right to vote. It also decides the ones who are free from an eventual expulsion; and overall, it is one of the central cores of the individual identity, defining the boundary between “us and the others” (Hansen & Weil, 2001).

In Scandinavia, the Nationality Law in Denmark and Sweden are very distinct. While in Denmark the first Nationality Act (*Indfodsret*) was adopted in 1776; Sweden had a later institution, in 1894. Several changes happened since the establishment of them. The first one occurred in the Danish Act in 1898, where the original principle of granting nationality by *jus soli* (birthplace) was altered to *jus sanguinis* (parents’ birthplace). In 1924-25, both countries decided to apply the family unity principle, together with the prevention of statelessness (*“Statelessness is defined as people who, in a legal sense, are without nation state identity”* (Stokes-Dupass, 2017)), and dual nationality to their Nationality Acts (Hansen & Weil, 2001).

Denmark and Sweden, though possessing many principles in common in their Nationality Acts, have distinct conditions when it refers to naturalization. The primary factor to be highlighted is about residence permit. While Denmark requires a minimum of seven consecutive years of residence to be granted naturalization, and between four to six years to



obtain it through marriage to a Danish citizen, Sweden is more flexible. There, after five years of continuous residence, it is possible to obtain Swedish citizenship, and in the case of refugees and asylum seekers, after four years it is granted (Hansen & Weil, 2001).

Other aspects also come into scrutiny when related to granting naturalization. For instance, when related to a person's conduct, Sweden requires a 'good character' as a precondition. For example, considering financial status, if someone has a debt, that may be a cause for citizenship rejection in Sweden. In Denmark, a person ideally should not have personal debts. Language-wise, to obtain Danish citizenship, the individual in question must be able to maintain a conversation in Danish, and tests of language proficiency are carried out. In Sweden, even if language requirements ceased at the beginning of the 1980s, it is still under discussion whether having proficiency in the language is relevant for the integration of foreigners into their new society and also for better comprehension of their rights and duties as citizens (Hansen & Weil, 2001).

In 1983, due to the rise of asylum seekers and foreigners caused by the 1973 Oil Crisis, Denmark created the Aliens Act. As a liberal refugee policy, its debut description is 'the (normatively) perfect, which is the enemy of the useful.' After several amendments were stipulated, it is nowadays used as a path towards xenophobia, or fear of the other, and as an essential tool for the discussion over refugees (Hansen & Weil, 2001).

The Aliens Act, assembled to the naturalization debate, provoked a rise of populist statements, which in consequence led to changes in the population attitudes vis-à-vis foreigners. In 1985, there were 8.698 successful applicants to asylum, compared to 332 in 1983, the year the Act came into force. In 1996, the number of people granted asylum was 7.283. In comparison, in the same year, Sweden granted 25.552 citizenships, being the Nordic country that received the most significant number of refugees and immigrants (Hansen & Weil, 2001).

As the most generous Nordic State, Sweden is considered by the other nations as an 'immigration backdoor' and has been suffering pressure from external and internal actors about its 'generous' migration legislation. Outsiders have often regarded Sweden as a channel to have their citizenship and residence granted in a less restricted manner and, once obtained, they move to another Nordic country to start a new life (Stokes-Dupass, 2017). Indeed, the number of citizenships granted in Sweden raised from 48.249 in 2015 to 63.818 in 2018 (Statistics Sweden, 2019c).

In Denmark, on the other hand, citizenship has a different connotation. It is conceived as a way to become a member of society, a part of it. It means that the person needs to be responsible for its contribution to the political and social life of the country (Stokes-Dupass, 2017). The country restricted its citizenship policies as a form of protecting its native population, and as a result, from 15.028 people who were provided with Danish citizenship in 2015, only 2.836 people were granted it in 2018 (Statistics Denmark, 2019a).

### 3. Integration and its Strategies

Integration is a crucial element when being granted a country's citizenship. First, it allows the new citizen to find its role in the new society. Also, it helps with the social cohesion of the foreigner (Iremciuc, 2017).

According to Iremciuc (2017), the process that leads to integration has two main components. The primary one is structural, and it is connected to the migrant's socio-economic status in the current community, i.e., the level of integration within the educational and working environment. The following factor is cultural and connected to the degree to which migrants identify themselves to the different culture and how much they are immersed in it.

Integration has a normative role connected to it. It helps to provide new members with their rights and duties; it establishes their share of participation in society; it defines the treatment to be given by the government and the local state towards them, and it provides migrants with their status as citizens (Bevelander & Petersson, 2014).

Sweden, as an open country towards other cultures, adopted the multiculturalism as a primary strategy to deal with the outsiders, where all cultures are accepted and supported. Denmark, by contrast, has adopted an assimilation system, where the Danish culture is sovereign and the others, even if tolerated, should not be expressed in the public sphere (Bevelander & Petersson, 2014).

#### 3.1 Multiculturalism in Sweden

Multiculturalist policies were first established in the country during the 1970s. As a society in favor of diversity, multiculturalism was first promoted in the 1974 Swedish Bill, as a measure conceived to benefit immigrants and to enrich the national culture (Tawat, 2014). An essential characteristic is the 'state-interventionist model,' which means that the state has the power to intervene in order to assist immigrants to keep their cultural traits (Stokes-Dupass, 2017).

During the 1970s until the 1990s, Sweden was a very accessible country migration wise, leading towards massive immigration when comparing to the number of total inhabitants. This multiculturalist policies defined that *"Swedish immigrants were not only encouraged to keep their cultures, but the state actively supported minorities' cultural heritages in terms of home*

*language programs, immigrant organizations, and support for vernacular newspapers and books*” (Kinnvall & Nesbitt-Larking, 2010, p.1055).

From 1968 to 1996, the necessity of cultural embeddedness was viewed as essential to enhance newcomers’ well-being. In 1996, a Cultural Policy Bill affirmed that multiple cultural expressions are a source of ‘renewal and improvement,’ and that a wide range of diversity rather than less is a form of keeping away xenophobia and discrimination. The Bill also defined diversity as the ‘essence of life.’ In fact, from 1996 until 2006, ethnocultural diversity was seen as ‘enriching for the national culture’ (Tawat, 2014).

Nowadays, integration is established since the first day of arrival. Multiculturalism defines that the immigrant has the same rights, opportunities, and duties of the locals (Bevelander & Petersson, 2014).

As soon as a migrant arrives, a resident permit is provided, and the right to employment is given even without identity papers. As for the government, work has a crucial function to the new member to be quickly inserted in the new environment (Bevelander & Petersson, 2014). In addition to this, asylum seekers and refugees have the right to choose arbitrarily the city where they want to settle down, established by the 1994 *Lagen om eget boende*, or EBO legislation. This measure, even if giving immigrants a sense of independence since the beginning, is overcrowding some Swedish cities such as Malmö, and in consequence, causing hostile repercussions from local governments and natives, e.g., xenophobia; fear of the ‘other’ (Myrberg, 2017).

Furthermore, the state concedes free language courses and an Introduction Program, where the main goal is that the recent arrivals have a better insertion within the labor and educational field (Bevelander & Petersson, 2014).

Nevertheless, these courses are not obligatory, and as a result, since many newcomers do not have proficiency in the language or do not have a diploma, after seven years in the country, only 50% of them are employed (Bevelander & Petersson, 2014).

In Sweden, Muslims have the freedom to decide their own identity. The multiculturalism applied in the country proportionate the viability of their communities as well as practices and networks, even with such cultural distinction among communities (Kinnvall & Nesbitt-Larking, 2010). Though, since the 1997 Integration Act and its distinction between the ones identified as natives and those viewed as non-Swedish due to their cultural background,

there was an open gap for far-right parties and the conception of migrants as threats and as an economic burden to fill in. This factor began to lead the country towards the Assimilation process, as in the case of Denmark, even if the Multiculturalism still prevails (Stokes-Dupass, 2017).

### 3.2 Assimilation in Denmark

In Denmark, Assimilation is the strategy that reigns when related to immigrants. In this model, homogeneity is the core value, making sure that new members of society get immerse into the Danish language, culture, and civic values in order to achieve their citizenship. The cultural survival of the Danish community is therefore guaranteed by the state, as it is the former who estipulate this assimilation of immigrants into the society by virtue of cultural principles, albeit tolerance is accepted in some cases (Kinnvall & Nesbitt-Larking, 2010).

Toleration, for the Danish, means that even if immigrants have the right to keep their culture, they are only allowed to practice it privately. The majority culture is preferred, and the ones who tolerate the practice of other cultures are considered more powerful than the people tolerated. Indeed, the Danish White Paper 517 does not mention at any time immigrants' culture (Tawat, 2014).

In Denmark, the politics of integration suffered considerable changes over the decades. While in the 1960s and 1970s it was approached by a laissez-faire policy, in the 1980s and 1990s it turned in the direction to a cultural assimilation approach. After 2001, as it will be described later, it became part of a securitization strand (Rytter, 2018).

In 1999, the Danish Integration Act established harder measures for immigrants living in their soil or seeking asylum. The first imposition consists of that even if living in Denmark, immigrants do not have the same rights, duties, or opportunities of the natives (Myrberg, 2017). On the contrary, they have fewer rights, while a higher amount of duties and responsibilities toward the nation. Lastly, they are obliged to take language courses and have in-depth knowledge of Danish society (Myrberg, 2017).

In addition, the regime of citizenship in Denmark establishes that Muslims should adapt and adopt the Danish identity, making them feel like outsiders and vulnerable regarding their new citizenship, focused on secularism (Kinnvall & Nesbitt-Larking, 2010). Therefore, the Muslims who are not capable of assimilating to their new realities end up forming an

unwelcome segregate community, that do not have a proper space among the new dominant culture and government (Kinnvall & Nesbitt-Larking, 2010).

Furthermore, contrarily to Sweden, newcomers are settled evenly among different municipalities, where they need to stay for three years before they are allowed to move elsewhere within the country. This way, cities are equilibrated and have dominant control of the number of immigrants' present, being able to provide better support for them (Myrberg, 2017).

Also, in the past decade, Denmark has established stricter measures for refugees and asylum seekers to cross its borders and live there. These impositions started a discussion among the other countries about whether the nation is following the minimum standards stipulated by the migratory conventions (Myrberg, 2017). These new measures, indeed, are a crystalline display of ontological insecurity and fear of the other, each day more recurrent in numerous societies and natives' realities.

#### 4. Ontological (In)Security and Securitizing Subjectivity

In his book *Modernity and Self-Identity* (1991, pp.38-39), Anthony Giddens describes ontological security as a reference to a “*person’s fundamental sense of safety in the world and includes a basic trust of other people. Obtaining such trust becomes necessary in order for a person to maintain a sense of psychological well-being and avoid existential anxiety.*” The trust mentioned, indeed, leads to a sense of security and confidence, taking away eventual ‘existential anxieties’, (Kinnvall, 2004, p.746) as “*The establishing of basic trust is the condition of the elaboration of self-identity just as much as it is of the identity of other persons and of objects*” (Giddens, 1991, p.42).

Currently, in our globalized world, existential anxiety and the fear of the other is in constant growth. With the rise of immigration, natives feel threatened about their jobs, privileges, and status, and therefore, they feel the need for the stipulation of their self-identity. This self-identity is made of a constant narrative of the self, where he/she can sustain it while responding to questions about his/her actions, what he/she is doing, and who he/she is (Kinnvall, 2004).

Consequently, people who feel threatened tendentially look for those who are similar to them, becoming members of particular social groups and excluding the other, the ‘outsider.’ While these groups provide security for the ‘insiders,’ it raises the feeling of ‘fear of the other,’ and therefore, generates a distinction between ‘us’ and ‘them’ (Kinnvall, 2004). As explained below and according to numerous empirical researches, it is primarily the middle-class of a developed country which suffers the most losses and menaces from globalization.

The ‘us’ versus ‘them,’ promoted by natives who have this fear of the other that is mostly based on prejudice and stereotypes, is connected to two main concepts, ‘Nativist resentment,’ and ‘Welfare chauvinism’ (Crepaz, 2008).

Welfare chauvinism is related to the threatening of the immigrant within the economic sphere. According to locals, the ‘others’ take advantage of their country’s welfare state, cause unemployment to the natives, do not pay taxes, and also take away housing and other assets who should be put at the disposal of locals in needs (Crepaz, 2008, p.65).

The concept of nativist resentment is related to prejudice within the cultural dimension. It is the aversion of the “other” due to its race, religion, looks, and way of living. Natives believe that immigrants are untrustworthy and therefore, a threat for them (Crepaz, 2008, p.65).

Usually, people who support this concept are the ones who are most in need of their nation's welfare state. They tend to support social protection, as in general, these locals are unemployed, poor, and have low or no education (Crepaz, 2008, p.74).

People who are highly educated and have a high income, on the other hand, usually are a counterweight to these two concepts. Education is a form of suppressing ignorance and prejudice, and therefore, a way to combat xenophobia. Furthermore, the higher the income, the less a native will feel threatened by an immigrant, as in general an 'outsider' is seen more like a competition for the low-paid locals (Crepaz, 2008).

Other interferences on the way an immigrant is seen by a native are the degree of trust and nationalism present in the environment. The higher the individual's level of trust, the lower the prejudice toward the other, as trust is a pre-condition for a being to establish its self-identity and to recognize the other's identity (Giddens, 1991). In contrast, the more a local is a patriot and has a significant pride for its nation, the higher the level of animosity against a newcomer (Crepaz, 2008).

The idea of increasing diversity through contact with people from different backgrounds is a factor that threatens social cohesion. This distance is a critical factor for the development of negative stereotypes towards other groups. The Contact Theory, in contrast, says that getting in deep contact with individuals from other backgrounds takes away negative stereotypes, while a superficial contact would strengthen the negative stereotypes (Uslaner, 2012). The increase of this contact, indeed, could build trust and suppress prejudices. As a result, people from different backgrounds would understand better the other and provide a more mixed environment (Uslaner, 2012).

Also, as a tolerant and open country, Sweden has flexible and favorable migration policies that persist due to many of the reasons mentioned above. The high level of education and high salaries, for instance, make the natives feel safe and open-minded regarding immigrants. The high quality of its welfare state, accessible to all, and the low level of poverty and unemployment lead the population to trust their nation and consequently, do not feel an extreme threatening by the 'other.' Societies as Sweden usually allow a fast transition of the 'other' into 'one of us,' in legal terms (Crepaz, 2008).

Denmark, on the contrary, has a closer attitude towards the other. There, because Danish culture and language are predominant, immigrants have an obligation to learn both of in order



to be able to live there. These differences between the groups, such as religion and language, are a source of domination and marginalization of the other (Kinnvall, 2010).

Trust, indeed, is considered as a device for self-protection during one's daily interactions and activities from eventual dangers. It is the primary emotional tool, a kind of 'protective cocoon,' that the individual takes with him to get through their routines. (Giddens, 1991, p.39).

As Giddens (1991, p.27) affirms, "*Many of the events reported on the news, for instance, might be experienced by the individual as external and remote; but many equally enter routinely into everyday activity.*" Routine is what congregates core connections among individuals, as through the development of repetitive activities, ontological security is stipulated.

With the advent of globalized events such as the War on Terror and the Refugee Crisis, daily routines were affected, and consequently, the ontological security proportionated by it was dismantled. Security got limited, and therefore, anxieties became a part of risk culture, as "*Awareness of high-consequence risks is probably for most people a source of unspecific anxieties*" (Giddens, 1991, p.182).

One example of reaction to the ontological insecurity taken from Sweden is the stipulation of passport control in the trains coming from Denmark from Oresund Bridge since 2015. This is a clear illustration on how the refugee crisis has impacted the national societies policies negatively, as the bridge is considered a symbol of beneficial integration between both countries, and the politics of free movement of people, one of the main principles existent on the EU territory and Schengen area, was damaged (Jensen, 2016).

In effect, since the 2015 refugee crisis, statistics have changed towards immigrants. They show how ontological insecurity interfered on the protection of the nation-state and its native population in response to this crisis. Asylum applications lodged in Denmark fell from 10.472 in 2015 to 2.600 in 2018 (Statistics Denmark, 2019b). Immigrants residence permit in the country fell from 10.415 in 2015 to 934 in 2018 (Statistics Denmark, 2019c).

Crisis, per se, generates a lack of certainty about the present and an exposition to an uncertain situation, which develops a threat on the individual self-identity. Several dilemmas are developed on the self when a crisis arises: 1. Unification versus Fragmentation, where the changes happen to threaten the protection and possible reconstruction of the narrative of self-

identity (Giddens, 1991, p.189), 2. Appropriation versus Powerlessness, where the vast and varied social sphere fills the individual with a feeling of lack of power about this mentioned atmosphere (Giddens, 1991, p.191), and 3. Uncertainty versus Authority, where “*Forms of traditional authority become only ‘authorities’ among others, part of an indefinite pluralism of expertise*” (Giddens, 1991, p.195).

#### 4.1 Securitizing Subjectivity

*“The more one attempts to preserve one’s autonomy and identity by nullifying the specific human individuality of the other, the more is felt to be necessary to continue to do so, because each denial of the other person’s ontological status, one’s own ontological security is decreased, the threat to the self from the other is potentiated and hence has to be even more desperately negated”* (Laing, 1960, p.54).

The securitization of subjectivity is a direct consequence of ontological insecurity. It is a form to securitize the self from different interpretations, focusing on the elaboration of a particular identity. (Kinnvall & Nesbitt-Larking, 2010). Its main goal is, therefore, “*an intensified search for one stable, often essentialized identity*” (Kinnvall, 2010, p.598; see also Kinnvall, 2004) where there is always the involvement of a ‘stranger-other.’

Also, this process “*seeks to build walls of ontological security around the self through the refusal to permit ambiguity or problematization in the culture or the social structures*” (Kinnvall & Nesbitt-Larking, 2011, p.57).

Two theories are intrinsic to securitizing subjectivity. The first one is known as Social Identity Theory, that explicates that even if the formation of a group is not necessary, a person will prefer to support their group, or ingroup when compared to another group, or outgroup. The second theory is called Self-categorization Theory, where the individual is viewed as a malleable part of different spheres (personal, interpersonal, and interspecies), and is in the constant motion between these categories (Kinnvall, 2010).

The basis that keeps the individual secure and safe is the sense of a home, where daily routines are performed (Kinnvall & Nesbitt-Larking, 2010). Here, identities are constructed and provided with a source of stability in the physical and social sphere, and people feel in control

of their lives. The absence of a home, or homelessness, is a source of instability and lack of permanence (Kinnvall, 2010).

The importance to belong to a particular group is essential when securitizing subjectivity. An individual feel notably recognized when surrounded by similar group members, especially when these similarities reach their maximum (Kinnvall, 2010). Indeed, in a group, people can identify themselves and significant others (Kinnvall & Nesbitt-Larking, 2010).

With the rejection of the other through the process of transforming the outsider into an enemy in order to securitize the insider subjectivity, the presence of loath and hate was expanded. One of the main results of it is the construction of the 'abject-other,' "*something rejected from which one does not part, from which one does not protect oneself as from an object*" (Kinnvall, 2010, p.753). The construction of this abject-other decreases existential anxiety while it increases ontological security.

Hence, securitizing subjectivity by the conditions of an abject-other, a stranger-enemy, has deeper roots than it appears. This fact is intrinsic to an individual culture and identity, making the source of the threat come from within a nation in the form of an immigrant, that is seen as an enemy by other members of society even if sharing the same political, social and economic system. This threat is, consequently, combated using xenophobia, nationalism, and many times, racism (Kinnvall, 2004).

Currently, the main target of the securitization of subjectivity is the Muslims. Especially since the War on Terror, they are seen by many cultures as a threat, mostly because of their religious practices and traditions (Kinnvall, 2004). There are three identity strategies in use to explain the relationship between the self and the other. The Politics of Retreatism, the Politics of Essentialism, and the Politics of Engagement, and the Muslims case will be used to describe each of them (Kinnvall & Nesbitt-Larking, 2011).

The Politics of Retreatism is the strategy assumed by the ones who do not want to be noticed, who want to keep their presence. It is adopted by Muslims as a response to securitizing subjectivity, as this strategy can also be used by the minorities towards the majority culture, and vice-versa. As affirmed by Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking (2011, p.122), this strategy is presented in the narratives of "*...cultural alienation, the lack of religious moorings, the experience of racist exclusion, cultural shunning, denizenship, and structural discrimination.*"

The Politics of Essentialism, on the other hand, is a strategy elaborated for the securitization of the subjectivity of individuals who are suffering from existential anxiety and at the same time facing ontological doubts. This strategy is a psychological reaction to the discourses of terror and discriminatory policies and attitudes (Kinnvall & Nesbitt-Larking, 2011).

Essentialism is the dominant identity strategy in Denmark, especially towards Muslims. Danish people use the politics of essentialism as a form of protection to their traditions and culture while dealing with the fear of the other. In Denmark, the practice of Islamism is not accepted in public, but only in the private sphere. The fear of their culture and traditions to spread had the consequent implementation of Danish language and culture courses imposed on newcomers. Furthermore, the use of the veil by Muslim women and the marriage with more than one person at a time, for instance, is a constant discussion in the political arena. These actions against the stranger-other are only getting more severe there, as ontological insecurity keeps increasing in the country (Kinnvall & Nesbitt-Larking, 2011).

In comparison, in Sweden predominates the Politics of Engagement. In this identity strategy, individual freedom and group expressivity are appreciated and cheered, being expressed through cycles of dialogue. Dialogue, indeed, is the key to Engagement, where citizens feel they are recognized and able to make a difference, through the practice of effective communication (Kinnvall & Nesbitt-Larking, 2011, p.160).

In Sweden, due to its multiculturalism policies, minority groups such as Muslims have for example access to funding for ethnic group organizations and activities; exemptions from dress codes; adoption of multiculturalism in school curricula; funding for bilingual education; and affirmative action (Crepaz, 2088, p.177).

Individuals, in general, are connected emotionally to their nation-states. As described above, the different politics assumed by a government is what influences the actions of the self towards the other, and vice-versa. This is a form of promotion of the 'national interest' because the menaces to identity make a state instable, and therefore, these identity threats are usually taken care of by foreign policy decisions (Steele, 2008).

The next section will talk about the rise of populism and its far-right parties in the last years, as populism is a direct reaction to ontological insecurity and a manner to securitize subjectivity.

## 5. The Rise of Populism and its Radical Right Parties

*“Some individuals find it psychologically difficult or impossible to accept the existence of diverse, mutually conflicting authorities. They find that the freedom to choose is a burden and they seek solace in more overarching systems of authority. A predilection for dogmatic authoritarianism is the pathological tendency at this pole. A person in this situation is not necessarily a traditionalist, but essentially gives up faculties of critical judgement in exchange for the convictions supplied by an authority whose rules and provisions cover most aspects of his life... Taking refuge in a dominant authority, however, is essentially an act of submission. The individual, as it were, no longer needs to engage in the problematic gamble which all trust relations presume. Instead, he or she identifies with a dominant authority on the basis of projection. The psychology of leadership plays an important role here. Submission to authority normally takes the form of a slavish adherence to an authority figure, taken to be all-knowing” (Giddens, 1991, p.196).*

Populism is a response to the ontological insecurities of the modern world. As Kinnvall affirms in her article *Ontological Insecurities and Postcolonial Imaginaries* (2018), populist rhetoric is a source of relieving to the fears and anxieties faced by individuals currently. Also, these insecurities faced by the self require a “leap of faith” to the projected future where security is established.

These insecurities usually lead states and groups to restrict their identities to the outside, to protect themselves from possible traumas and emotional crisis. This crisis and traumas, indeed, come in the format of terrorism, crime, migration crisis, and consequently, nostalgia from the past is developed and becomes a tool to model the future. While that, the present is composed by an idea of ontological security that is provided by populist narratives and discourses (Kinnvall, 2018).

According to Mudde and Kaltwasser (2013), populism is divided into two opposed and homogeneous spheres. One is ‘the pure people’ and the other ‘the corrupt elite.’ The latter wants the politics to represent their own principles and ideas, considering the people corrupt, while

the former are the ones represented by populism, affirming that politics should be a representation of the general will of the population.

In Northern Europe, populist parties are predominantly right-wing. Usually, these parties are in favor of keeping the status-quo of their nations and are mainly composed, led, and voted by men. Nevertheless, they do not consider women as a fragile being who should be protected and taken care of. On the contrary, they affirm that women are independent and do not need protection from the state. The increased attention to gender issues equality is one of the defense mechanisms adopted by populist parties to overarch the integration matter when regarding immigrants, especially Muslims (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2013).

Indeed, in Denmark, the Danish People's Party use the gender issue as one of its strategies to fight the 'Islamization' of Europe, having embraced gender equality at the highest level by the fact of being founded and led by a woman for over 15 years (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2013).

Populist Radical Right parties are guided by three central ideologies. The first one is nativism, a fusion of xenophobia and nationalism, displaying a great aversion against the stranger-other and trusting on the idea of 'nation-as-this' and 'people-as-one' (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2013; see also Kinnvall, 2010). The second one is authoritarianism, where a severe order within the society must prevail. The third and last one is populism (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2013).

Below, Swedish and Danish main populist radical right parties are described, bringing into evidence how ontological insecurities, nativism, and existential anxieties are essential for the existence of each of these parties.

### 5.1 Sweden Democrats (*Sverigedemokraterna*, SD)

Sweden Democrats is a far-right party founded in 1988, as a merge of two right-wing parties, the Keep Sweden Swedish (*Bevara Sverige Svenskt*) and the Swedish Progress Party (*Framstegspartiet*). It has a nostalgic image of the past, where the Swedish society used to be more homogeneous (Nordensvarda & Ketola, 2015).

Consequently, the party has as its primary focus the Swedish national identity and its people and culture, being averse to a multicultural society. Their main goal is to protect the

national identity of Sweden, arguing that immigration should be kept at low rates, for the safety of the Swedish population and the country's welfare state (Nordensvarda & Ketola, 2015).

Its main external interests are to limit the number of immigrants who have access to Sweden, in a manner to protect the Swedish welfare state, culture, labor market and reduce the crime rates. According to the party, the political elite, through the implementation of multiculturalist policies, has put aside the interest of the "common man" to open its doors to other cultures, particularly Islam. This neglect of the Swedish interests has opened the doors for labor competition with foreigners, promoted the abuse of the national welfare state by immigrants, and raised the violence in the state (Nordensvarda & Ketola, 2015).

For the members of Sweden Democrats, a territory should be governed by its nation and culture, and influences from abroad (e.g., political, cultural) restricted to certain extents. The party accuses the elite to threaten the national interest by stipulating multiculturalism in the country, as its ideology ignores the nation-state according to them. Also, they affirm that the elite, with the support of the mainstream media, turn a blind eye to the fact that the nation-state is weakened by multiculturalist policies and mass immigration (Nordensvarda & Ketola, 2015).

According to the party, the worst threat originated by multiculturalism is the acceptance of Islam. For them, Islam is seen as a national threat. According to Sweden Democrats, there should be stipulated assimilation policies towards immigrants, rather than integrational ones (Nordensvarda & Ketola, 2015).

Another critical factor against immigration is that newcomers are both a cost and a burden, as they usually have no work and depend on the welfare state expenses. Immigrants are also a negative aspect for the labor market, as the competition leads to Swedes unemployment, and at the same time, wages decrease. For the party, jobs should be primarily destined to Swedish nationals, and immigrants granted a temporary visa for the existent labor gaps, returning home once the work is done (Nordensvarda & Ketola, 2015).

Sweden Democrats are in favor of keeping immigrants in Swedish territory only while they are considered endangered in their home nations. They also affirm that it is better to give support to asylum seekers who are in their country of origin instead of granting them access to Sweden. This reduction of immigrants in Swedish soil is a way the party found to prioritize their population towards its welfare state (Nordensvarda & Ketola, 2015).

Furthermore, the party has an extreme anti-global discourse. For them, issues such as the US supremacy, the EU, immigration, and global economy are faced as a menace to the Swedish cultural values and ‘*Swedishness*’ (Kinnvall & Nesbitt-Larking, 2010).

The party key policies include not only the reduction of immigrant access to the country by making it harder to reach it, but also to start initiatives to send them back to their home countries. Furthermore, another protection policy the country should stipulate is to harden the restrictive measures to obtain Swedish citizenship, raising the minimum requirement of residency to ten years (Nordensvarda & Ketola, 2015).

Currently, the party is the third-largest in the Swedish Parliament (*Riksdag*), working independently as an opposition party. It is focused on the anti-immigrant rhetoric, and since 2015, its main issue is the refugee crisis that eroded that year when more than 160.000 asylum seekers arrived in the country (Milne, 2018).

In 2014, Sweden Democrats received 10% of the votes in the European elections and, in the June, 21<sup>st</sup> 2016, a new legislation changing migration policies in Sweden was adopted, where is stipulated the use of temporary residence permits, and economic self-sufficiency is necessary to the achievement of family reunification and permanent residence permits (Dahlstedt & Neergaard, 2019). In 2019, they received 23.48% of the votes at the European Parliamentary Elections, being the country’s most voted party. This critical rise shows how important the immigration issue became to Sweden (European Parliament Sweden, 2019).

## 5.2 Danish People’s Party (*Dansk Folkeparti*, DF)

In Denmark, all right-wing parties have their primary attention turned to immigrational affairs, and all of them have the same concepts when dealing with the subject. For instance, harder migratory laws should be imposed for the ones who want to access the country and stay there; for the ones who are granted the staying, it is obligatory to work, learn the language, assimilate and fill with their duties in the society (Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2003).

The Danish People’s Party, founded in 1995, has a focus towards anti-immigration and animosity to the Islamic culture and practices. During the last four national elections (2001-2011) they received between 12% to 14% of the votes (Lindekilde, 2014). In 2015, during the national elections, it reached the second most voted with 21% (Benveniste, Campani &



Lazaridis, 2016, p.118), and in the 2019 European Parliament elections, they were the fourth national party most voted, with 10.76% (European Parliament Denmark, 2019).

Its central motif is “*Denmark for Danes*” with a predominance of an anti-EU policy, protecting the rights of the Danish nationals by affirming the tax incomes should be directed to Danes and not to development aid (Denmark is one of the most significant contributors as of GDP percentage), for example. The party is also contrary to the influence of EU policies regarding domestic migration issues. As a matter of fact, since 2002, Denmark is considered one of the most secure and controlled countries in Europe when concerning immigration (Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2003).

In general, following their central leitmotif, the party uses basic slogans to reach their voters during campaigns. As examples: “‘*Your land—Your choice*’ (*Dit land, dit valg*), ‘*We vote Danish for the Danish Kroner and the Fatherland*’ (*Vi stemmer dansk for kronen og fædrelandet*)” (Benveniste, Campani & Lazaridis, 2016, p.120).

These slogans are made in a direct and straightforward language, as the main supporters of the party are usually male with low degrees of education, which makes it also the largest working-class party in Denmark. These voters’ main characteristics are the intolerance towards cultural and ethnical diversity and immigration. Similar to the Swedish far-right party, Muslim practices and culture are also considered national threats for the country’s social cohesion and identity (Benveniste, Campani & Lazaridis, 2016, p.116).

After the War on Terror, from 2001 until 2011, the party has had enormous influence through discourses regarding the ‘othering’ of immigrants on the political arena and public media. The ‘stranger-other’ is constructed mainly based on Islam, as Muslim traditions are seen as the antithesis of Danish values and principles (e.g., Authoritarian vs. Democracy; Gender Equality vs. Male-chauvinist) (Benveniste, Campani & Lazaridis, 2016, p.124).

A crucial problem about immigrants is that, while all of them have access to the country’s welfare state, only a parcel contributes to it. This is a significant discussion among right-wing parties, as the Danish welfare state has a dominant spot in the national self-perception. Immigrants contribution is low because the employment percentage is low within them. For the DF, this generates a discourse of if migrants should be able to benefit from social rights while not inserted in the labor market and therefore, not paying taxes (Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2003). The fear of the other is indeed, intrinsically connected to “*the fear of losing a particular version of the welfare state*” (Benveniste, Campani & Lazaridis, 2016, p.111).

## 6. The Importance of the Welfare State

*“From a policymaker’s perspective, it is crucial to integrate newcomers as successfully as possible. If they are not integrated well, that is, if they stay unemployed, do not intermarry, engage disproportionately in crime, and live in “parallel” societies, public opinion tends to become excessively hostile, limiting the range of possible immigration policies available to basically only restrictionist ones”* (Crepaz, 2008, p.203).

The Welfare State is a crucial element of a state’s agenda. It is what proportionate individuals with fundamental social, educational, and health rights. In general, these services and benefits are supposed to cover the whole population of a nation, without distinction (Crepaz, 2008).

In the 1930s, Social Democrats in Scandinavia redefined the meaning of the term ‘the people’ as all of those living on appropriate conditions and preferably with a citizenship status inside their national territories. Since that decade, the Scandinavian welfare state specified a gender agenda through the model of the dual-breadwinner and the formal equality between husband and wife within the marriage (this equality was established by the mid-1920s by the patriarchal family legislation). It also assured the nations’ responsibility for care work, which permits women to have paid work in combination with it (Benveniste, Campani & Lazaridis, 2016, p.114).

Thus, in the Nordic countries, the sense of national inclusion is established by essential elements such as constitutional rights and gender and social equality. In counterpart, these nations are having difficulties when including the immigrants' minorities into society, due to their religion, ethnocultural differences, and gender equality issues (Benveniste, Campani & Lazaridis, 2016, p.114).

For instance, in Denmark, the Danish populist right-wing *“has adopted a model influenced by Danish history and society. This model can be identified as: a welfare-nationalist*

*approach with clear exclusionary drives; a strong anti-immigration/nativist agenda (Betz and Meret 2009) and an opportunistic gender equality agenda (see Meret and Siim 2013)”* (Benveniste, Campani & Lazaridis, 2016, p.114).

Below there is an analysis of the Danish and the Swedish welfare state, putting into evidence their main characteristics and what is the immigrant's position inside each of them.

## 6.1 The Danish Welfare State

Ethno-cultural diversity, religion, and gender issues are a cause of reanimation of discussions over the old context of ‘the people’ (and who belongs to “the people”) in Denmark. There are also other matters into consideration, for example, how to define the country’s borders and how to connect the national with the social questions. (Benveniste, Campani & Lazaridis, 2016)

Since the 1990s, immigration came into evidence in Denmark, bringing up discussions of how the other should be granted Danish citizenship, and what would be its part within the nation’s welfare state (Benveniste, Campani & Lazaridis, 2016). According to Minkenberg (2008 cited in Benveniste, Campani & Lazaridis, 2016), Denmark has become an extremely polarized nation, regarding its welfare state and its national identity. This polarization is divided between the ‘us’ and ‘our welfare’ vis-à-vis solidarity towards the immigrant and inclusive notions of welfare.

The Danish welfare state has always had a central role in the lives of its citizens and immigrants. In effect, during the past decades, welfare was responsible for the inclusion of immigrants and refugees into the community. Between the 1960s and early 1970s, this maintenance was relatively easy, as immigrants were mainly composed of guest workers who spent some time in the country and then returned to their home countries (Pedersen & Rytter, 2014).

After the late 1970s and during the 1980s, though, this process started to change, as migrants started to settle permanently, and consequently, immigrant families expanded through family reunification. This establishment imposed an issue to the Danish welfare state system,

to which demands to health care, education, and social affairs raised considerably (Pedersen & Rytter, 2014).

In the 1980s and 1990s, with the solidification of the term ‘assimilation’ over the foreign population in the country, the government and its welfare state had the control of basically all aspects of an immigrant’s life through the imposition of policies and laws (e.g., accommodation, upbringing, family accommodation, marriage, language spoken at home), in order to make them ‘become’ Danish (Pedersen & Rytter, 2014).

From 2001, this assimilation strategy does not devote its attention only to the immigrant's well-being and cultural practices. It is now also an essential tool for the welfare state to maintain the control of immigrant families daily lives and monitor Muslim immigrants religious activities in Danish territory (Rytter, 2018).

The political scientist Ove Kaj Pedersen launched a book in 2011 called ‘The Competition State’ (*Konkurrencestaten*) (cited in Rytter, 2018, p.12), where it suggested that the Danish welfare state was turned into a competition state, due to neoliberal reforms promoted by the public sector and the Danish administration. There are four different definitions for this new ‘competition state’ in vigor: “(1) a state that mobilizes citizens and corporations to participate in the global competition; (2) a state that makes the individual responsible for his or her own life; (3) a state that strives for constant reform and change; (4) finally, a state that is actively engaged in a political endeavour to adapt international institutions to Danish interests (Pedersen 2011: 12).”

Such pre-nominated definitions do not bring a new paradigm to the Danish welfare state. Instead, they intensify and give emphasis to some primary principles (i.e., independence, self-sufficiency, and responsibility) intrinsic to the nation since the welfare state was first stipulated (Rytter, 2018).

According to some Eurostat (2018) data, Denmark kept their percentage of total benefits under certain areas basically the same. For instance, while in 2005 20.72% of total benefits were directed to health care, in 2016 these figures had slightly changed down to 20.65%. The total benefits dedicated to unemployment, though, shortened from 8.58% in 2005 to 4.66% in 2016.

Nonetheless the rise of the far-right wing in the country together with the aversion to immigrants, Denmark is still one of the countries who supply the most humanitarian aid per

capita in the world, contributing with 0.7% of its GDP to development assistance (Jensen, 2016).

## 6.2 The Swedish Welfare State

Sweden is considered the Scandinavian country with the best welfare state when measured in terms of its universal coverage. It has exceptionally generous benefits englobing the whole population, but in exchange, also high tax burdens (44% of tax revenues over GDP; in Denmark, 46%) (Crepaz, 2008; OECD, 2018a).

Before the end of World War II, Sweden was exceptionally closed to foreigners, especially towards its welfare state. In reality, the slogan “*Sweden for the Swedes*” was highly well-known. With the erosion of the “Guest worker” program in the 1960s, though, social benefits started to be allowed to immigrants as well, including assistance to unemployment (Crepaz, 2008, p.224).

During the post-war period, Sweden developed its welfare state, based on Keynesian ideas and giving emphasis to employment policies, the promotion of the labor market, and if needed, the interference of the government to support aggregate demand. The welfare state was elaborated as a halfway between socialism and capitalism, and constructed on the foundations of the *work line*, a labor market policy doctrine that highlights, for instance, the collective wage bargaining structure and full employment rules (Dahlstedt & Neergard, 2019).

To prevent the country from disputes between natives and immigrants, in 1975 the Swedish government elaborated a multiculturalism program, where the goal was to integrate newcomers to the society as soon as possible through the application of three cornerstones: partnership; equality; and freedom of choice (Crepaz, 2008, p.225).

The 1980s are seen as the first appearance of asylum seekers migration to the country. While at the beginning of the decade there were around 5.000 newcomers per year, this number increased to 15 to 30.000 per year in the middle of the ‘80s. During the years of 1991 and 1995, 61.5% of the whole immigrants’ community were asylum seekers, and anti-immigrant sentiments started to grow. In 1998, the percentage of immigrants without work was almost about 5 times the number of natives unemployed (23% versus 5%) (Crepaz, 2008, p.226).

Furthermore, at the beginning of the 1990s, while the Swedish economy was still recovering from low economic growth and high levels of domestic unemployment, the Swedish welfare state was extended to all the new immigrants in the country, consequently generating an overload on the public system and negative burdens on the public account (Crepaz, 2008).

Even with the overburden of the welfare state, no cuts were made in the system, and the new arrivals were quickly integrated into Swedish society through integration programs. As a matter of fact, these programs helped to bring immigrants off the unemployment benefit cycle, and concomitantly restricted asylum legislation and granted access to extremely qualified labor migrants only. Sweden managed to preserve the basic tenets of its welfare state, that responded adequately to the population's domestic demand towards the labor market, and successfully maintained a stable public policy atmosphere (Crepaz, 2008).

Even though the fact that this highly functional welfare state managed to blunt nativist sentiments in the 1990s, in 2003 more than 50% of Swedes agreed that to become a member of society the immigrant should share the same values and traditions of the locals. Indeed, in that year, more than 60% of the native population was in favor of the inclusion of immigrants to their society and its customs by giving up their own culture and traditions (Crepaz, 2008).

Additionally, since the 1990s Sweden unemployment and the labor market faced a rise in the disparity of participation when comparing people with Swedish and non-Swedish background. Consequently, new work line policies resulted from this matter, giving guidance to people with a foreign background on how to deal with relatively weak demand for labor (Dahlstedt & Neergard, 2019).

As an illustration of the drastic fall on the employment rate of immigrants in Sweden, the data provided by Statistics Sweden (2019b) website shows that in 2018, 112.000 immigrants were unemployed, against 59.000 in 2010. Another example is that while 79.1% of refugees were participating in the labor force in 2010, this percentage fell to 72% in 2018.

As this situation of low participation on the labor market is only partly taken care of by the welfare provisions, in consequence, terms such as 'ethnicization' and 'racialization' became an active presence in the Swedish society (Dahlstedt & Neergard, 2019).

## General Analysis

When comparing data from both countries, it is noticed that there is not a significant disparity on its numbers and percentage regarding the various matters. According to the OECD reports on Sweden and on Denmark (2018a; 2018b), the following data come to the fore:

1. While the employment rate in Sweden is 77.8%, in Denmark is 75.5%;
2. Health care wise, Sweden spend a total of 5,447 US dollars/per capita each year, while the Danish welfare state 5,299 US dollars/per capita;
3. About long-term unemployment rates, Sweden has a percentage of 15.5%, and Denmark 20.2%;
4. The overall social spending over GDP in Sweden is 26,1%, while the Danish government spends 28%;
5. Over educational matters, Sweden spends 24,417 US dollars/student per year; Denmark, on the other hand, 15.626 US dollars per student;
6. The average wage in Sweden is 44,196 US dollars; at the same time, in Denmark, the average amount is 47,250 US dollars;
7. Regarding permanent immigrant inflows in 2016, Sweden has a considerably higher number, with 138.154 people, against 60.788 people in Danish territory.

As evidenced by these comparisons above and what observed in the previous section, both countries have very elevated levels of education, employment, and wages, health care, among others. Nevertheless, when the subject is immigration, Sweden is much more receptive towards the matter, because while both countries spend a similar amount of their GDP on the welfare state, Sweden gives much more advantages to immigrants than Denmark.

Therefore, this fact can be considered as an evidence of the politics of exclusion and predominance of populism features in Denmark, because the nation keeps the high level of Scandinavian welfare and gives priority to its own ‘native-population,’ while depriving immigrants of the same rights.

## 7. Securitization and the Tightening of Borders

*“States willingly open their borders to global market forces and do so on the pretence that liberalizing borders is the only feasible option for economic growth and development... on the other hand, states are also under increasing pressure to close their borders to certain types of migrants and to maintain a strong sense of bounded national identity”* (McNevin, 2011, p. 1).

The concept of Securitization was first introduced by Ola Waever, a Danish political scientist, and defined as a *“process in which an actor in a speech act articulates a certain issue as a threat in order to justify political violations of the ‘normal order’; hence, the subject undergoes an extreme politicization, being moved into the area of security”* (Bevelander & Petersson, 2014, p.54).

It has three different stages: the first one is the recognition of a particular individual as a possible risk. The next phase is the identification of this actor as a real menace, and therefore, requires a quick countermeasure. The last step is the fruitful cultivation of the fear for this actor by the audience, serving as a justification for all kinds of actions and responses towards the menace, even if unusual and unacceptable (Stokes-Dupass, 2017).

Securitization is a tool to scrutinize different features of government policy. This is because the government is usually the agent that calculates the threats posed by external



sources. The risks promoted by those threats, later on, become relevant topics to speeches acts and a form to gain the attention of respective audiences over security matters (Kampmark, 2017).

Therefore, securitization puts emphasis on the ‘perceived risk’ generated by the occurrence of threatening events, causing the growth of the level of fear felt by the citizens of a specific nation (Kampmark, 2017).

The rise of a community fear over a dangerous situation promotes conditions for legitimization but also non-legitimation actions, as the matter is usually transferred from the dimension of ordinary politics to an exceptional domain (Kampmark, 2017).

Migration is a crucial issue debated by securitization. According to Kampmark (2017), the ability of a human to move freely has been substituted by a “risk and security” situation. This securitization of migration is, indeed, known as the most modern shape of racism.

The way in which migrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers are currently enclosed as security risks is a confirmation of the liaison amidst globalization and security. Furthermore, the threats they offer in the social, economic, and cultural spheres placed the migration matter into the radar of security affairs in both Western and non-Western civilizations (Kinnvall, 2010).

Asylum seekers are, in general, the ones who receive the highest level of attention. The fact that they do not reach territories through conventional channels and frequently do not carry the papers necessary for authorities to proceed on their arrival makes them the most untrustworthy and suspicious category of immigrants (Kampmark, 2017).

According to Vicki Squire in his book *The Contested Politics of Mobility* (2011), the process of securitization consists of distinct types of migration: ‘threatening’ versus ‘productive,’ and ‘undesirable’ versus ‘desirable.’ This undesirable migration is a reference to all of those who access or reside in a nation-state without legal permission, and, in order to keep control of the means of entry of a country against this type of migration, digitalized and physical controls were developed and checks prior to travel and within and beyond national borders.

For Didier Bigo (cited in Squire, 2011), there are classic and neomodern features to protect national frontiers. The traditional ones (e.g., border polices and guards, immigration officers and customs) picture the confines of a nation as a line of defense that should be shut at any sign of the risk of survival. The neomodern schemes (i.e., antidrug services, database

analysts, intelligence services and antiterrorist squads), on the other hand, set the so-called smart borders to provide regulation on population flows, not territories per se.

As the freedom of an individual is currently menaced by uncertainty about the others and the identity of the self, the ‘normalized’ individuals have the impression that the borders controls are very moderate as they commonly do not need to wait for a long time in line and do not face further inquiries from officers. For them, surveillance is an acceptable fact as it proportionate comfort (e.g., fast and serene travels) (Squire, 2011).

The safety proportionated by new security policies makes these ‘normal’ selves feel like a part of a travelers’ community, being in accord with the ‘big brother’ surveillance methods. On the contrary, individuals who are considered ‘unwanted’ are generally labeled as a possible danger and kept in continuous surveillance and tracked during their whole parcours (Squire, 2011).

The ‘neomodern’ policies against ‘unwanted’ individuals were mainly developed as a reaction to 9/11 and the War on Terror, in the years of 2002 and 2003. First of all, the War on Terror led to discriminatory surveillance, focusing on Muslims. There was a high increase of rejections to a nation due to the amplification of checkpoints and gates, filters to the flow of persons. The suspicion level towards non-Muslim foreigners eroded as well, considering them as possible threats. FRONTEX, the EU agency that helps the nation-states to manage their borders was created in October 2004 (FRONTEX, 2019), and ‘prevention’ became a keyword, together with the competency to seal borders at any time (Squire, 2011).

In accordance with Didier Bigo (cited in Squire, 2011), these neomodern protection tools divide the civilization into types of undesired groups that should be integrated utilizing assimilation. Otherwise, they should be excluded and banned from society. This form of governmental policies and approach also convert reassurance into anxiety and fear through the conjure of global insecurity and chaos.

## 7.1 Securitization in the European Union

*“Gerard and Pickering (2013) argued that EU securitization occurs in three distinct steps. First, “securitization seeps into policy development and implementation.” Second, “[it] is mobilized through political discourse that exaggerates the risks of migration and asylum. Third, [it] constructs migration as*

*a security problem and poses security solutions as the only viable remedy” (Gerard&Pickering, 2013, pp.1– 2)” (Stokes-Dupass, 2017, p.47).*

Before the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, the asylum application procedure was a political and humanitarian response. Refugees would be granted temporary residency and asylum upon their arrivals with expectations of concession of denizen or citizenship status afterward (Stokes-Dupass, 2017).

After the occurrence of the 9/11, asylum procedures changed radically. In-depth scrutiny on refugees was put into practice before and after their entry to a nation, justified by the increase of fear and the need to stronger national protection. Furthermore, there was a notable ascension on statelessness people, who are unwanted, undocumented, and displaced (Stokes-Dupass, 2017).

Furthermore, the erosion of a ‘new nationalism’ in Europe caused a distortion between ‘race’ and ‘culture,’ where cultural disparities exclusions are used to justify racist discriminations (Kinnvall & Nesbitt-Larking, 2010). In general, the migrants who are in the worst position in this new migration era are the Muslims.

## 7.2 Securitization in Scandinavia

*“What is new and has quickened the securitization of borders and greater scrutiny of migrants is the sharp rise in Muslim populations within the past 15 years due to family reunification and various refugee resettlement events (largely from Iraq, Iran, Somalia, and Bosnia). Nielsen argued that this sharp increase made religion suddenly become “an issue” for political actors and among “native” populations in Scandinavia (Nielsen, 2012, pp.2-3)” (Stokes-Dupass, 2017, p.41).*

In Scandinavia, the tightening of borders in the last two decades happened mainly in connection to the ‘Muslim presence’ in the region. This generated an elevation of refugees in a statelessness situation, with securitization evolving in subtly different manners in Denmark and Sweden (Stokes-Dupass, 2017).

Even with the tightening of the borders, asylum claims in Denmark and Sweden have raised considerably between 2011 and 2014, in accordance with data provided by the United

Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (cited in Stokes-Dupass, 2017). In Sweden, 29.600 immigrants demanded asylum in 2011, while in 2014 the number was elevated to 75.100. In Denmark, while in 2011 3.800 individuals asked for asylum, in 2014 the number of asylum seekers was 14.800. In the same year, 1.502 people in Denmark were considered stateless. This high growth is due primarily to the conflict in Syria and the mass migration of its population towards Europe (Stokes-Dupass, 2017).

Although a considerably lower number of immigrants reaching Denmark than Sweden, it is essential to mention that in Denmark, ethnic minorities are better represented in the political field than in Sweden (Kinnvall & Nesbitt-Larking, 2010). Nevertheless, according to Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking (2010, p.1056):

*“At the same time it is important to point out that there have been stronger tendencies in Danish mainstream society to protect an essentialist colonial notion of ‘Danish’ culture and traditions and to lament the loss of a mythic past of ethno-religious solidity. In comparison with Denmark, Sweden has had less of a homogenous idea of the nation-state, which seems to have made it somewhat easier for migrants to integrate (Alsmark, 2007) and less necessary for religion and other identity anchors to act as securitizers.”*

### 7.2.1 Securitization and Islam in Denmark

In Denmark, since the beginning of the 2000s there was the appearance of multiple regulations and laws towards Islam, as the debate about the place of Islam in the country grew considerably within the politics and media sphere since the 9/11 (especially concerning the Danish national security and the threats offered by the Muslims within and outside the state). Thus, the nation participated actively in the ‘war on terror’ in Iraq and became famous worldwide during the ‘cartoon controversy’ in 2005-06 (Pedersen & Rytter, 2014).

The ‘cartoon controversy’ was a Danish campaign promoted by the Danish far-right newspaper *Jyllandsposten*, that invited a series of Danish illustrators and cartoonists to draw the face of the Prophet Muhammad “as they see him.” In total, 12 cartoons were published under the title “*The Face of Muhammad*,” where many of them were abstract and ambiguous. These cartoons were the only ones ever considered a violation of the human rights by the United

Nations, as, for instance, one of them had a bomb replacing the prophet's turban (McGraw & Warner, 2017).

The Danish government did not take any practical actions over the matter as it faced the publication as a way of 'freedom of speech' and, as consequences, it first generated a pacific protest with 3.500 people in Copenhagen on October 2005, followed by more globalized acts such as attacks to Danish embassies around the Middle East and to some of the cartoonists, e.g., the one who drew the bomb instead of the prophet's turban suffered life-threatening attacks (Kinnvall & Nesbitt-Larking, 2010; The Telegraph, 2015a).

This controversy, indeed, changed the Danish reputation abroad. Viewed as a human rights protector, and a liberal and open country regarding immigration in the past, the nation started to be seen as exclusionist, critical of migration politics (Pedersen & Rytter, 2014).

The security measures towards immigration had expanded considerably since the early 2000s. For instance, the refugee residence grant policy changed, causing a substantial decline in the number of refugees accepted in the country (e.g., in 2001, there were 5.211 refugees who got a residence permit from Denmark, against 233 in 2007). Another example was the selection of refugees according to its 'integration potential,' where more Christian refugees were accepted instead of the ones with a Muslim background (Pedersen & Rytter, 2014).

Moreover, since the shift of the 'discourse of humanism' into the 'discourse of nationalism' in 2001, the national laws related to family reunification from non-European countries became extremely restricted. By protecting Danish values through the regulation of Muslim immigrants' influx to the nation, Denmark became one of the strictest countries for immigrants to have access in Europe (Pedersen & Rytter, 2014).

Other forms of securitization/integration response in order to protect the nation were the cut on subsidies to immigrants associations, as after the 9/11 any kind of religious and cultural groups started to be seen as suspect; the fact that migrant children were obliged to speak Danish both at school and at home, for a better integration in the community; and the requirement of a Danish language and cultural test for the obtainment of the citizenship (Pedersen & Rytter, 2014).

After the refugee crisis in 2015 and the arrival of more than 21.000 asylum seekers in the country, the Danish authorities acted through strict policies and measures. For instance,

family reunification was basically improbable during the first three years; hard measures were implanted in order to get the permanent residency permit, and there was a cut on the financial assistance to refugees (Rytter, 2018).

The most extreme measure, though, was the permission given to the Danish authorities to confiscate money and jewelry that asylum seekers would be carrying with them upon arrival, as a form of paying for their own expenses when in the country. All these measures were, indeed, a way found by the government to push away to other countries some possible new immigrant (Rytter, 2018).

### 7.2.2 Securitization and Islam in Sweden

Securitization in Sweden is changing the ‘Swedish model’ of integration and immigration. The socioeconomic sphere is gaining precedence regarding multiculturalism, and different priorities are coming into evidence. For example, the integration model is replacing traditional multiculturalist policies towards concepts of self-sufficiency, self-support, and individual rights (Kinnvall & Nesbitt-Larking, 2010).

As occurred in Denmark, the opinion regarding Muslims has changed after the 9/11 attacks, increasing the anti-Semitism feelings towards them. According to a report published by the Swedish Department of Integration in 2005 (cited in Kinnvall & Larking, 2010), 60% of the interviewees affirmed that Islam is not able to coexist with fundamental Swedish principles. In addition, less than half of the correspondents (4 out of 10) think that Swedish Muslims could be considered ordinary Swedes.

In fact, reports published in 2005 and 2006 by the Integrationsverkets with data produced by the Integration Barometer (cited in Kinnvall & Nesbitt-Larking, 2010, p.1056) affirmed that Islam and its Muslim population are not pictured “*as a natural feature of a multicultural Sweden.*”

Another field that is under securitization is the labor market. Due to acts of ethnical-racism and Islamophobia, integration in this sphere is each day scarcer. Consequently, there has been an increase on “...*spatial segregation, economic marginalization, illegal economic activities, the formation of gangs, and a culture of violence*” (Kinnvall & Nesbitt-Larking, 2010, p.1063).

Nonetheless an inevitable marginalization of Muslim and other cultural minorities, the Swedish multiculturalism is still able to avoid a diffusion between its majority and minority population, and somehow desecuritized religious hostilities (Kinnvall & Nesbitt-Larking, 2010).

Furthermore, Sweden has a less predominant polarized and hard discourse against Muslims and immigrants. Its multiculturalism is also faced as a threat for some of the general public and the political field. As an example, similar to the ‘cartoon controversy’ episode in Denmark, Sweden had the ‘*Mohammed as a dog debate*’ in July 2007, where the cartoonist Lars Vilks depicted the prophet as a dog (The Telegraph, 2015b).

After considerable debate on the media and the Islamic world, the Swedish prime minister decided to step up into the question and visited the main mosque in Stockholm in order to argue about the matter. He also received the visit of Muslim and Arabic nations ambassadors and spread the voice that ““*Sweden is a country where Christians and Muslims live side by side*” and that “*our constitution does not decide what the newspapers should print*” (El Mahdi, 2007)” (Kinnvall & Nesbitt-Larking, 2010, p.1064).

As evident, while in Denmark the political environment usually causes a dichotomy among majority and minority communities, provoking security responses from both parties, in Sweden the anti-immigrant atmosphere is diminished by mainstream politics. While in Sweden the promotion of the desecuritization of religion in favor of a cosmopolitan sphere is favored, in Denmark, on the contrary, the cosmopolitan assimilation is a requirement (Kinnvall & Nesbitt-Larking, 2010).

Although all the favorable positions chosen by Sweden regarding its securitization policies, the former suffered an extreme change in 2015, when the country decided to stop migrants at its border. After the erosion of the refugee crisis in 2015 and multiple terrorist threats, on November 12, 2015, the Swedish Prime Minister at the time and one of the ministers of the Green Party launched a new extreme restrictive Swedish refugee policy, replacing the liberal policy that was in vigor until then. They affirmed that circumstances promoted by the

refugee crisis of 2015 demanded Sweden to go against its opened and solidary policies, stopping newcomers upon their arrival in the country (Ericson, 2018).

As an illustration, according to the government website Statistics Sweden (2019a), while in 2015 there were 162.877 people searching for asylum in the country, the number fell abruptly to 21.502 asylum-seekers in 2018.

## Conclusions

Even if Denmark and Sweden are both part of high developed countries coming from the same region, there are many evident differences in their comprehensive treatment regarding immigrants and refugees.

While Sweden is still open to diversity albeit multiple changes on its multiculturalism policies that restricted the access of other nationalities into the country (e.g., passport control on Oresund Bridge), Denmark has basically closed itself into a Danish ‘cocoon,’ protecting its national culture and values from outsiders. (e.g., Danish language and cultural tests applied to immigrants).

The role of the immigrant has also continually and significantly changed through the years. Previously, since the 1960s and until the 1980s, they would come as ‘guest workers’ with the primary function of helping the development of different country areas, and therefore promoting the growth of the country, bringing benefits and helping on the rise of their economies. Currently, their main goal when coming to Sweden and Denmark is to seek shelter from war, poverty, terrorism, and diseases happening in their own home countries.



This massive ‘invasion’ of newcomers coming to Sweden and Denmark with the main scope of looking for protection and not for work is perceived as a national danger. As analyzed in my dissertation, the access of immigrants to their welfare state and its social and health benefits caused aversion of the population, as they are profiting from benefits they are not contributing economically to, while the local population pays high taxes to have access to them.

This is one of the motives why socio-psychological reactions such as ontological insecurity and securitizing subjectivity have risen in these countries. This massive flow of immigrants being granted access to the countries generated the fear of the other and existential anxieties, and consequently, the action to securitize subjectivity, protecting their individuality inside private groups and excluding the other.

Consequently, political reactions also took place, with populism and its far-right parties gaining more presence in the political sphere with the central goal of combating immigration. It also caused the development of securitization, making access to Sweden and Denmark considerably more difficult, especially after far-right parties obtained a higher position in the governmental sphere.

Also, economic reactions such as changes in the access to welfare state by immigrants have gained considerable importance on how the other is seen and accepted in the society, influencing on the population’s behavior as social, health and educational rights are vital to a nation’s existence.

As noticed during this research, immigration policies got each time more aggressive towards immigrants and refugees, especially after the War on Terror and the refugee crisis in 2015, due to the significance of how the vast influx of newcomers would influence on the countries status. These changes in Danish and Swedish policies and application of several restrictions can be justified by the socio-psychological and political and economic reactions explained and approached during the thesis.

To conclude, with the globalized advents causing each day more extreme and unexpected massive migration everywhere (e.g., crisis in Middle-Eastern and Sub-Saharan countries; climate change and diseases diaspora), it is hard to foresee the next measures Sweden, Denmark and other EU countries will be taking in the coming years towards immigration policies, although it is clear that the tendency is the ascension of even stricter measures.

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