Demanding Integration

A discourse analytical study on political discourses about language requirements, citizenship attainment, and integration in Sweden

Abstract

For a long time, Sweden remained reluctant to condition citizenship attainment. In recent years, however, an upsurge of political representatives has embraced a requirement-based approach to naturalization to promote immigrant integration. By drawing upon theories from Critical Language Testing, Standard Language Ideology, Critical Discourse Analysis, together with the methodological framework of Norman Fairclough, the thesis investigates how this discursive shift manifests in the current political predicament in Sweden. The findings confirm that discourses related to requirements, stringency, and security regarding integration and immigration, combined with the hegemonic status of the Swedish language, enable different political agendas to discursively portray language requirements as a desirable course of action to promote integration.

Key words: political discourse, requirements, standard language, Critical Discourse Analysis, hegemony

Contents

List of abbreviations

EU	European Union
M	Moderate Party
S	Social Democratic Party
SD	Swedish Democratic Party
CDS	Critical Discourse Analysis

1. Introduction

Since the turn of the century, an increasing number of countries in Europe have adopted a "language test for citizenship" approach, which mandates immigrants to pass a proficiency test in national languages to obtain citizenship. The support for this approach is well-documented as a part of a larger integration policy trend in Europe and within EU Member States, referred to as "civic integration" (Goodman 2010; Carrera 2006; Joppke and Morawska; Mulcahy 2011; Jacobs and Rae 2001 et al. 2002). Countries that have already introduced these requirements have experienced a variety of outcomes, which in turn has given rise to a scholarly debate about the ethical appropriateness of language requirements as a method to promote integration (Horner 2009; Goodman 2010; Blackledge 2009; Milani 2008; Shohamy 2009; Wodak 2015).

For long Sweden stayed an exception to this "European norm of civic integration" (Mulchaly, 2011) In recent years, however, there has been an upsurge of political representatives embracing language testing as a necessary measure to promote integration. It suffices to turn back the clock 20 years to see that this approach, let alone this policy, has not always delighted in the spoils of political support. When in 2002 Lars Leijonborg, at the time leader of the Liberal Party[1] (L), proposed to condition citizenship on language proficiency it was rejected as discriminatory and proved politically unfavorable (Bengtsson 2020). With the Moderate Party[2] (M) now in office, alongside the supporting party Swedish Democratic Party[3] (SD), language requirements have been afforded a secure position in the overall discourse on integration and immigration, characterized by an emphasis on stringency, urgency, and restrictiveness. The Moderate Party's self-appointed integration committee has announced that integration is to be evaluated based on two measurements: how many are self-sufficient and how many speak usable Swedish. Why is this politically viable now and not 20 years ago? What has changed and which "processes"

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[1] The Liberal Party (Liberalerna) is a conservative-liberal party. Historically the party has oscillated between right-wing and center-left government coalitions. The party currently forms part of the "Tidö Agreement" consisting of the Christian Democrats, Moderate Party, and Swedish Democrats. The party received 4,61 percent of the votes in the last (2022) parliamentary election.

[2] The Moderate Party (Moderaterna) is a liberal-conservative party in favor of market liberalism. In the last (2022) parliamentary election the party obtained a narrow win. To enjoy a parliamentary majority the party decided to cooperate with the Swedish Democratic Party which has generated several controversial policy proposals on matters related to integration and immigration.

[3] The Swedish Democratic Party (Sverigedemokraterna) is a nationalist and right-wing populist party. Despite being ostracized by the other parties due to its ideological roots, the party has grown in public support over the last couple of years. In the last parliamentary election (2022) the party secured 20,5 percent of the popular vote and became the largest party on the right block. The Party informally forms part of the "Tidö-agreement" and has since been able to successfully negotiate its demands on integration and immigration into the government's formal policy stance on these matters.

can be identified as explainants here? All of these are important questions that demand our critical attention. Professor Elena Shohamy, in taking a critical perspective on the matter, argues that because language planning is socially situated in structures of power, we must always be alert to the *how*, *when*, and *why* of such governance. Particularly so when the policy outcome includes termination of residence, deportation, and denial of major benefits such as health, education, and welfare (Shohamy, 2017). I refrain from speculating on potential causes or effects. Instead, I proceed from the assumption that the absence of opposition to this proposal suggests that discursive conditions more conducive to civic integration has paved the way for the acceptance of language requirements as a normatively endorsed practice.

This thesis is particularly interested in the *how*, namely how this discursive shift manifests itself semiotically in political discourse among representatives across party divisions. By looking at how a policy is justified, negotiated, and contested, or for that matter poorly justified, not deliberated nor contested, we can gain insight into the value-ladened dimension of policy-making and how this in turn might be bound up with the social and political currents of our time (Horner 2015, 6-7; Fairclough and Fairclough 2012). Thereby, the thesis aims to illustrate how a policy-proposal that was once contentious can become widely accepted under specific discursive conditions.

1.1 Aim and research question

In line with Professor Elena Shoahmy's postulate that political language planning must be critically examined, the overall aim of this thesis is to demonstrate how a shift on the need for language tests as a part of the naturalization process take semiotic form in political discourse from representatives across party lines. I employ the premise that discursive hegemonic processes can be witnessed and analyzed in terms of semiotic manifestations in political discourse (Norman Fairclough 2003, 197). One way to approach this methodologically is to treat textual claims as "social manifestations of discourse" (Fairclough 2003, 204). The thesis draw theoretical insight from Critical Language Testing and Standard Language Ideology as well as methodological input from Critical Discourse Analysis, primarily in the tradition of Norman Fairclough's social theory on discourse and analytical approach to political discourse.

I thereby seek to answer the following research question: What semiotic similarities and differences can be identified in political statements of representatives from the Moderate Party[4], Social Democratic Party[5] and the Swedish Democratic Party[6] leading up to the collectively endorsed proposal to condition citizenship attainment on language proficiency?

In order to achieve this, I will use an operative sub question divided in two sections: What similarities and differences can be found in political statements from the above-mentioned parties/representatives regarding:

I.) the premises used in practical argumentation in favor of this policy proposal?

II.) the configuration of discourses informing these premises?

1.2 Disposition

The thesis is structured into seven chapters:

- o **Chapter 1** introduces the motivation behind the choice of topic (section 1) together with the aim and research question (section 1.1) as well as the disposition of the thesis (section 1.2).

- o **Chapter 2** supplies a broad overview of how researchers from different scholarly traditions have studied the occurrence of civic integration (section 2.1) and addresses recent developments and political advancements concerning language requirements on citizenship in a Swedish political context (section 2.2).

- o **Chapter 3** provides the underlying theoretical rationale behind the choice of critical approach (section 3.1) and introduces some theoretical contributions from Critical Language Ideology Studies, Critical Language Testing, and Critical Discourse Analysis. The epistemological and ontological concerns these encompass are also addressed (section 3.2).

- o **Chapter 4** blends both theory and method. As advocated by Lennart Lundqvist (1993) the term methodology encompasses both theory and method. This might hold particularly relevant for Critical Discourse Analysis since the analytical methods tend to be theoretically motivated. Accordingly, theoretical concepts such as ideology, hegemony and political discourse outlined in the previous chapter are defined more

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[4] Sometimes referred to as "Moderates" (M)
[5] Sometimes referred to as "Social Democrats" (S)
[6] Sometimes referred to as "Swedish Democrats" (SD)

precisely together with an exploration of Fairclough's method to political discourse analysis.

o **Chapter 5** explains how the analysis was performed based on the theories and methodologies outlined in the two earlier chapters.

o **Chapter 6** presents the findings based on the observed premises and the most prevalent discourses that appeared throughout the analysis.

o **Chapter 7** provides a lengthier discussion of the findings and shorter section where the research question is answered together with corresponding conclusions.

2. Literature review

2.1 Civic integration

It is well established within the literature that the EU has played an important role in the proliferation of civic integration programs as legitimate political practice (Goodman 2016, 65). In the Council of the European Union's *Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy* (2004) we can read the following:

> "Basic knowledge of the host society's language, history, and institutions is indispensable to integration; enabling immigrants to acquire this basic knowledge is essential to successful integration." (Council of the European Union, 2004)

That said, the EUs institutional arsenal remain thin in this policy area, why the implementation and interpretation of that which Suzanne Mulchaly (2011) refers to as "the EU norm on civic integration" (29) vary vertically across Member States and horizontally between national and supranational level. In practice, the strictness and content of these processes as well as the discourses informing these tend to be tainted by domestic concerns and day-today politics (Kahn 2021, Wodak 2015, Walters 2004). Neitherway, the fact that EU presently sanctions civil integration means that Member States can always refer to the EU as a source of legitimacy when they go about restricting naturalization processes (Mulchaly 2011, 30).

The occurrence of civic integration has in turn given rise to a variety of research, ranging from economics to critical sociolinguistics. Sara Wallace Goodman (2016, 45-46) has studied civic integration as a set of policy instrument used to restrict immigrants' accessibility and eligibility to citizenship. Goodman's comparative (cross-national) research gives insight into how different civic integration programs and their respective requirements vary greatly by country, illuminating distinctions between *eligibility* (restrictive/liberal) and *accessibility* (think/thick). Economic scholars have allotted attention to the socio-economic macro-level effects that civic integration programs could yield in for the economic integration of immigrants. Peters et al. (2018) have found a positive relationship between citizenship, labor market integration, and access to formal employment for immigrants. The idea that naturalization has a positive impact on labor market integration is well-established in the literature, and the implementation of civic integration programs is often justified based on these studies. It is important to acknowledge the possibility that these requirements potentially exclude those who seek citizenship to acquire the legal protection it provides, such as immigrants without EU citizenship and individuals with

little or no formal education. For instance, though comparative longitudinal research conducted in Denmark, the Netherlands, and Sweden, Maarten Vink et al. (2021) have demonstrated that even when requirements are relatively low, significant groups of individuals fail to become naturalized and therefore do not benefit from the upward economic mobility that naturalization could cultivate. Other researchers, typically critical scholars, have taken interest in the broader sense of the term civic integration - as an ideological reorientation from rights to duties and normative perceptions of what a 'successfully integrated' member of the nation-state looks like (Joppke, 2007; Shohamy 2006; Van Avermaet 2009; Kahn 2017). In this scholarly tradition, Piet Van Avermaet (Hogan-Brun et al. 2009) has critically examined the underlying assumptions about language and socio-economic mobility and how these enter political discourses in support of discriminatory politics. Similarly, Kristine Horner (2009) has traced the embrace of civic requirements by national governments to discourses related to nationhood and cultural belonging. Other critical scholars have theorized about civic requirements as political instruments to restrict migration flows and manage border control. Within this range of literature Kamran Kahn (2017; 2022) has brought together security theory and critical sociolinguistics in his conceptualization of language testing for citizenship as a 'border regime practice'. William Walters (2004) has conceptualized citizenship requirements as a measure to regulate and surveil populations in the name of social security and order.

2.2 The Swedish context

In Sweden, much like in many other European countries, citizenship has been on the political agenda for much of the 21st century. The first investigation to reconsider citizenship laws was launched in 1997 and vocalized 'the need for measures that can be adopted to strengthen the status of citizenship as part of the integration process' (Borevi, 2012, 93[7]). The proposal to introduce language requirements was discussed at length with the verdict being that proleptically discriminatory effects superseded potentially positive outcomes. Individual circumstances such as educational background, socio-economic factors, health, but most notably, gender roles were taken into consideration as exclusive and stratifying factors. For example, it was feared the immigrant women living by traditional gender roles would not have the same means to learn Swedish as their husbands, leading to a situation where men would acquire citizenship to a greater extent than women. In short, conditioning naturalization based on language proficiency was thought to counteract integration rather than promoting it. To this, Borevi (2021) adds that the result of the investigation extolls the *rights line* as citizenship is taken to be a part of the integration process, where a right, rather than a reward that is granted once one has 'successfully integrated'. Since then, several policies have been put into place with the intent to incentivize immigrants to 'integrate'. In 2010, an introductory policy reform implemented the carrot of state provisions (to a varying degree) upon regular attendance to SFI courses (Swedish for Immigrants). As a general rule, Sweden has been determined to introduce minority-friendly policies to foster upward mobility among marginalized groups but reluctant to budge for exceptions to state intervention. In other words, multicultural policies have been ruled out with emphasis on positive[8] (right to) rather than negative (right from) rights[9] (Borevi et al. 2012, 144-145). Accordingly, Sweden's approach to integration has been focused on rights and duties rather than demands and requirements, lending itself as a prominent exception to the European norm (Mulcahy 2011, 191). For instance, the language bill in 2009 was passed with the objective to ensure that all residents in Sweden had a 'right to language', that is, the right 'to develop and acquire the Swedish language, to develop and use one's mother tongue or national minority language, and to have the opportunity to learn foreign languages' (Swedish Government 2009, 9). This protocol took a turn, however, following the January 2018

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[7] See Karin Borevi (2012) for a lengthier description of policy development on immigration related issues.

[8] Positive rights concerns rights to something, for instance state provisions.

[9] Negative rights concerns freedom from something, for instance the right to exceptions from state interventions.

agreement involving the Social Democratic Party[10], Green Party[11], Center Party[12] and Liberal Party[13]. A replica of 1997 investigation (dir. 2019:70) was given the task to submit a proposal of how language testing for citizenship could be implemented in line with the aim to 'strengthen the status of citizenship and promote an inclusive society' (SOU 2021:2, 13). The current prime minister of Sweden, Ulf Kristersson (M), at the time of the 2018 agreement in opposition, criticized the January agreement for "paying only faint interest to the integration crisis." (Kristersson, 2019) The same year, Kristersson announced that he wished to see two evaluative figures on integration: the number of economically self-sufficient immigrants and the population of immigrants who spoke usable Swedish. There are presently two investigations under evaluation: SOU 2021:54 and SOU 2022:55. The former investigates whether language requirement and civic knowledge is germane to citizenship and the latter in relation to permanent residence (Borevi et al. 2012, 144-145). The present coalition government, comprising the M, C, KD, along with the supporting SD, is resolute in implementing these proposals and continuing the initiatives of the previous government. As the Swedish minister of Migration Maria Malmer Stenergard puts it:

> "there is legitimate interest in ensuring that it is not too easy to become a Swedish citizen. Citizenship should mean something. It needs to be upgraded both legally and symbolically, and its value needs to be respected and safeguarded to a greater extent than today." (Justitiedepartementet, 02:01-02:50)

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[10] The Social Democratic Party (Socialdemokraterna)is rooted in the labor-movement and enjoyed parliamentary majority for much of the second half of the previous century. In the elections of 2010, 2014, and 2018, the party experienced a significant decrease in its share of votes, with some of these votes being gained by the Swedish Democratic Party. In the 2022 election the party obtained 30,3 percent of the popular vote but failed to form a majority government coalition and is presently in opposition.

[11] The Green Party (Miljöpartiet de Gröna) is a center-left party based on green politics that was formed in response to the absence of environmental policies in Swedish politics in the 1980s. Alongside environmental issues the party is also a proponent figure on feminist and women's rights issues. The party received 5,1 percent of the popular vote in the last election and form part of the oppositional block.

[12] The Center Party (Centerpartiet) is rooted in economic liberalism but have in recent years also emphasized social issues pertaining to equality between the sexes, anti-racism, and integration. The party received 6,7 percent of the popular vote in the last parliamentary election (2022) and form part of the oppositional block.

[13] The Liberal Party (Liberalerna) is a proponent of classical liberalism and economic liberalism and has, ever since the turn of the century, been advocating language requirements on citizenship. The Party received 4.6 percent of the popular vote in the last parliamentary election (2022) and is currently harboring a seat in government.

3. Theoretical background

The critical approach guiding this thesis stems from the theoretically motivated claim that the presentation of policy as merely functional is not without its problems. Section 3.1 of this chapter seeks to substantiate this claim by illustrating how issues related to power, ideology and language converge in the proposal to implement language requirements as a standard for neutralization processes. Section 3.2 brings together theoretical insight form Standard Language Ideology regarding cultural perceptions about language(s) and their speakers, theories from Critical Language Testing on how these perceptions materialize politically, and theories from Critical Discourse Analysis on the social role of discourse. These theoretical contributions encompass several ontological and epistemological concerns which are addressed throughout the chapter.

3.1 Critique on functional policy-making and choice of material

Politics involves actions and decisions about how to address problems, often in the face of uncertainty and limited resources. The conventional approach to policy analysis has thereby been to treat these problem formulations as self-evident, assuming that policy serves solely as a practical, natural, or evidence-based means to address these (Bacci and Woolard 2016, 9). Jimmie Åkesson's statement during a nationally broadcasted debate on May 7th, 2023 exemplifies how this functional fallacy is perpetuated in political discourse: "Why should politicians constantly discuss things that are already good? Our focus should be on addressing and resolving issues that are not functioning properly." As mentioned, the critical approach guiding this thesis objects to a functional understanding of policy-making. Primarily because problem-formulation is understood as an ideologically[14] invested practice (Fairclough and Fairclough 2012, Bacci and Woolard 2016; Blommaerts 2006, Shohamy 2006). Put differently, political actors are likely to interpret the nature of a situation as problematic based on their distinct values and concerns, leading to divergent courses of action in response to a given situation (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012). A functional approach to political discourse runs the risk of overseeing this ideological dimension (Fairclough and Fairclough 2012, Bacci and Woolard 2016; Blommaerts 2006, Shohamy 2006). If we accept this critical premise and acknowledge that policy-making takes place within an political institutional domain which I.) grants certain actors privileged access to different forms of power, II.) in which power serves

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[14] Ideology is here understood in the broader sense of the term - as the ideational structure upholding an already existing socio-political system, presently capitalism.

as a means to achieve political objectives while also being an ultimate goal in itself, and III.) that the consequences of these decisions have tangible effects on common concerns. Then, the values underlying problem formulations become a valuable point of entry for a critical analysis (Blommaerts 2006; Bacci and Woolard 2016; Fairclough and Fairclough 2012; Shohamy 2006). In sum, the critical perspective is rooted in the theoretically motivated conviction political discourse not only serve as a medium whereby power is realized, but also inform peoples' perception of what our common concerns are and should be. Milani (2008) argues that, "if we seek to understand how these discourses are perpetuated, contested, and rearticulated, we should direct our focus to the discursive events where these are most likely to affect public opinion, namely in the discourses of leading political parties and mainstream media."(35) The choice of material has accordingly been made on a corpus of texts of political nature dealing with the issue integration and citizenship. More precisely, the material combines extracts of political statements from the Moderates, Social Democrats and Swedish Democrats dealing with requirements on citizenship and integration. The (party)ideological diversity of the material is crucial to my research question, and I specifically selected parties that not only exhibit this diversity but also have sufficient support to make this proposal a legal reality.

3.2 Bridging critical perspectives on language governance

The prompt commonly advocated by supporters of language requirements on neutralization asserts that only standard language can enhance socio-economic mobility among immigrants and solve the issues caused by segregation. This is typically put forward in a common-sensical tone by referring to, among other things, the necessity of a common language between citizens for mutual understanding in a democracy (Borevi et al. 2017).

> Premise 1: Swedish is the standard language in Sweden.
>
> Premise 2: only standard languages facilitate integration to majority society.
>
> Conclusion: immigrants who do not know sufficient Swedish will thereby not properly integrate.

If premises 1 and 2 are factual, then the claim would be logically valid (Fairclough and Fairclough 2012, 64). So far, so good. If the situation of insufficient Swedish language proficiency among immigrants is identified as a political problem, the subsequent question arises: who bears the responsibility (state/individual) and by what means should this be resolved

(policy)? It is at this point that problem-formulations enter the arena and we "venture into the realm of ideas." (Borevi et al, 2012, 81-82).

The question of responsibility essentially boils down to perceptions of how integration is best achieved. Within both the literature and policy documents, integration is often referred to (in theory) as a two-way process (Lea Klarenbeek 2020). In recent years, studies on language testing as a measure of integration have observed that in practice, integration, and particularly civic integration, is demonstrably a one-sided process in which the 'outsider' bears the sole responsibility to integrate into the respective country (Joppke, 2007; Shohamy 2006; Van Avermaet 2009; Kahn 2017). This line of thinking about integration resonates well what Karin Borevi (2017, 81-82) refer to as the *obligations line* – the idea that citizenship is a reward which must be earned through demonstrable efforts to integrate. In short, the individual bares the responsibility, or has the duty to integrate. This stands in stark contrast to an integration model based the *rights line* – the idea that citizenship is a part of the integration process and that the state should facilitate for individuals to integrate. If we now look at the means, in this case *language acquisition*, we must interrogate why language is taken to be an instrument for and or indicator of integration in the first place. Goodman's civic integration index confirms that all EU Member States presently pursuing civic integration programs demand applicants to demonstrate knowledge of the host country's standardized language, which signals that certain ideas about the value(s) of language(s) might be at work (Pascouau 2009, 174).

I. Language ideology

Language ideology was famously defined by the American linguist Michel Silverstein as "any sets of beliefs about language articulated by the users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use" (Silverstein, 1979, 193). Thus, language ideologies can be understood as culturally prescribed beliefs and attitudes that shape speakers' relationships with their own and others' languages. For instance, when the value of one linguistic index becomes standard to which other linguistic varieties fall short, we arrive at the Gramscian concept of hegemony.[15] These scholars have done due work to conceptualize standard languages and the processes behind them in ideological terms by revealing its political significance and constructed nature. In effect, the ethos 'one language - one people' is broadly

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[15] Hegemony: See section 4.4.

interpreted as an elite enterprise to capture and politicize volksgeist[16] at the cost of those who do not merit linguistic membership to the 'monolingual' nation state. Bloomaerts (2006, 241) infers that it is not incidental that the established works on nationalism (Gellner 1989; Hobsbawn 1990; Anderson 1983; Greenfield 1882) all take interest in language in the process of nation building. Susan Gal (2006, 164) argues that the fact that monolingualism is still perceived as a 'natural' and 'preferred' state of a people occupying a particular territory can be argued as a direct effect of the hegemonic status standard language ideology has enjoyed for centuries.[17] To go about studying standard language ideology thus involves examining the mechanisms which influence the way we think about language(s) - the way we conceive of its value, function, quality, and usefulness in different social domains (Blommaert 2006, 141) and of course, to whom it is valuable, functional, and useful. For example, what is *intended* when politicians prompt that immigrants should speak 'usable' Swedish? This is a meta-linguistic understanding of language, meaning that when we speak of languages, we essentialize its nature and properties and by extension even its speakers. Hence why according to Irvine and Gal (2000), language ideologies create social differentiation by associating the superiority of a particular linguistic index with the superiority of a specific social group. The unfortune circumstance here is of course that languages can be seen as symbolic markers of socio-ethnic belonging, why discourses on languages so easily attach itself to xenophobic sentiments (Milani 2008, 36). In the field of integration studies, Piet Van Avermaet (Hogan-Brun et al. 2009) underscores that the notion that immigrants have no useful linguistic tools primarily reflects the ideal of a linguistically, and by implication culturally, homogeneous nation. Duchêne and Heller (2012) have in their ethnographic works observed how the link between language and cultural/national belonging become relevant economic considerations. Thereby, immigrants' linguistic repertoires are measured not only based on their proximity to the standard but also in terms of being a potentially profitable commodity for the receiving country (Duchêne and Heller 2012, 212). In the literature, this is broadly understood as a top-down approach to language planning, primarily reflecting the interest of dominant social, cultural and economic groups rather than the needs of immigrants and the functionality of their diverse linguistic repertoire (Kroskrity, 2006; Gal, 2006; Shohamy, 2009). We can now add to Shoahmy's prompt

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[16] The German term "Volksgeist" translates in English to "spirit of the people" or "national spirit" and refers to the notion that every nation or ethnic group have their own distinct natural essence, typically attributed to cultural and social values and norms.

[17] See Duchene and Heller (2012) for a contemporary commentary.

that language governance, if taken to be a practiced form of standard language ideology, is always situated within structures of power and inequality.

II. Critical language testing and border regimes

The more recent paradigm within the field, often referred to as Critical Language Testing, adopts a comprehensive perspective on language, considering it both as a medium and an object of policy formation. Shohamy (2006; 2009) posits that language testing and the associated discourses function to signal ethnic and cultural belonging, distinguishing between "Us" and "Them" categories (medium), while establishing a barometer to mitigate migration flows and reify national borders (object) (Shohamy 2001; Van Avermaet 2003). Ruth Wodak (2015) elaborates on how the prevalence of xenophobic and racist sentiments manifest in political discourses across European politics of fear. Wodak argues that almost anything can be portrayed as a threat to the collective, "Us": the imagined homogenous community (2015, 5) and therefore serves as an effective discursive strategy to justify the need for surveillance and border control. (Wodak, 2015, 54). The German sociologist Ulrich Beck (1992) famously elaborated on the political significance of public risk perception in his ontology of risk[18]. Due to the abstract, intricate, and wide-ranging nature of global risk, Beck contends that people have become more reliant upon scientific measures of identification and quantification and policy making for protection (Rasborg 2021, 33). The critical point here is that, just like problem-formulations, what is deemed an "acceptable" risk is likely to be informed by cultural perceptions and power-agendas. Hence why, according to Beck, risks, knowledge, and politics operate together (Rasborg 2021, 28-29). The following implication, which Wodak affirms, is that all citizens are susceptible to manipulation of public risk perception, i.e., politics of fear. William Walters' (2004, 5) concept "Domopolitics" endeavors to explore the ramifications of politics of fear across Europe, with specific emphasis on immigration policies and the management of domestic populations. In the same vein, Kamran Kahn (2022) suggests that language testing has become a central component of contemporary border securitization, functioning as a tool to regulate the acquisition of rights and privileges (Kahn 2017, 1462). This aligns with the fundamental essence of domopolitics, encompassing concepts of regulation, control, and surveillance (Walters 2004). Stemming from the Latin word "domo" meaning "to domesticate," the concept can be understood quite literally as the practice of taming, while its metaphorical meaning is

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[18] According to Beck, contemporary post-industrial societies are characterized not so much by the unequal distribution of goods but by the unequal distribution of "bads," namely risks (Rasborg 2021, 28-29).

intended to inspire the notion of home and safety. Drawing a parallel to one of the most familiar constructs, the family unit, some naturally belong, while others, by blood and name, do not. Language ideologies can here serve as a resource to justify who, based on the cultural, social, and economic value of one's language, merits belonging and access (Walters 2004, 250-256). Peter Andreas (2000) writes, "Far from disappearing, many borders are being reassessed and remade through ambitious and innovative state efforts to regulate transnational movement of people" (Andreas (2002) as cited in Walters 2004, 250). These innovative attempts include conditioning citizenship on qualifications such as language proficiency, educational background, and civic knowledge (Walters, 2004). Borevi (2021) argues that the nexus between social security concerns and border control may carry particular significance in welfare states that prioritize ideals of universal distribution, such as the Swedish model. Because, to ensure equitable social welfare for all, limitations on access may be implied. Or in her own words, "the regulation of immigration represents the conditions and obligations that circumscribe rights." (Borevi et al. 2021, 231)

III. Critical discourse analysis

Like many scholars who subscribe to Language Ideology Studies and Critical Language Testing, CDA researchers assert that there is no such thing as a neutral language. Instead, they depart from the ontological assessment that the social realm, including our relationships and identities, is shaped in part or whole by language. This perspective prompts diverse forms of discourse analysis as a method for studying social and cultural phenomena. (Bergstrom 2017, 378). Ruth Wodak and Norman Fairclough (1997, 258) understand language as a meaningful system which both (re)produces and has the capacity to challenge and reconfigure social reality. Thereby language is understood to be both constructive *of* social reality and constituent *in* social reality. The degree to which one emphasizes the socially constructive versus the socially constituent dimension of discourse (ontology) results in different analytical bearings on the continuum between macro (social) and micro (text) (Hart, Cap 2014, 1). Researchers who are interested in the micro level tend to be linguistically oriented and investigate patterns of speech, rhetoric, semiotic meanings, morphology, and grammatical structures, i.e., *what* people say, while researchers focusing on the macro level look at the mechanisms and social structures that facilitate the manifestation and transformation of paradigms and knowledge, i.e., that which has become *sayable* and *why* that is. For instance, if we accept the premise that social reality is entirely constituent in language, then we must also accept that identities such as woman/man, teacher/student, citizen/non-citizen do not exist en soi but only in the context of discourse.

Epistemologically this means that our ability to position ourselves as critical observers of discourse is perpetually constrained (Bergstrom 2017, 370). The investigation that follows then ought not to be a dive into the textual content of discourse (because we ourselves are constituent in it) but rather to examine the social processes and mechanisms which facilitate a particular discourse where the status of truth can fall prey to jurisdiction. Embracing the premise that discourse imposes limitations on social reality rather than determining it, an epistemological viability emerges where the critical scrutiny of discourse content is meaningful. (Wodak 1997, 258) It is worth noting that the term 'critical' does not indicate a negative connotation. Critical analytical methodologies are means of rectifying and elucidating the belief that un-balanced powers govern and preside over discourse, and through their application such powers can be exposed and addressed. This echoes Shoahmy's call to critically examine the content of textual claims (what), their communicative representations (how), and the context in which they are conveyed/produced (why). It is also relevant to Karin Borevi's (2017) prompt that it is necessary to venture into "the realm of ideas" to uncover what language requirements for citizenship attainment aim to achieve specifically.

Thus far we have come across several concepts, such as discourse, power, and ideology which have diverging definitions among critical scholars. I will not develop this much further as I intend to elucidate the alignment of these concepts with Norman Fairclough's social theory on discourse. Wodak (2008, 5-8) underscores that although these differences exist even within the CDA, researchers typically lend themselves to interdisciplinary borrowings. Ostensibly because if the goal is to reach a comprehensive understanding this must not only be achieved critically but also approached holistically, especially when looking at the complex juncture between language, ideology, and power.

4. Methodological framework

4.1 Social theory on discourse

In the earlier chapter we noted that DAS researchers embrace different analytical positions on the continuum between macro (social) and micro (text). By conceptualizing discourse as social practice, Fairclough attempts to find a middle range between these two. Any discursive 'event' (i.e., any instance of discourse) is thereby seen as being simultaneously a piece of text, an instance of discursive practice, and an instance of social practice (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002). Conversely, Fairclough makes an analytical distinction between I.) discourse-as-texts, which include the linguistic features of a discursive event. II.) discourse-as-discursive-practice, i.e., the production, distribution, and interpretation of texts within a social order, III.) discourse-as-social-practice, i.e., the ideological effects and hegemonic processes in which discourse is a productive factor. This thesis focuses primarily on the first one - the analysis of discourse-as-text. However, I prompt that we ought to, and I most definitely would if time allowed, tend to all three levels. Another core characteristic of Fairclough's social theory on discourse is the distinction between semiosis and other non-semiotic elements of social reality. Because, as per Fairclough's understanding "linguistic phenomena are social phenomena of a special sort, and social phenomena are (in part) linguistic phenomena " (Fairclough 1989, 23). The inquiry for Fairclough is to explain, within his larger social framework, how these different elements of social reality exist in a dialectical[19] relationship to one another in the (re)production of dominant social and discursive orders. Fairclough suggests that because these elements are ontologically distinct, they must be studied accordingly with an interdisciplinary and dialectical outlook. If we accept this premise and we take interest in a discursive occurrence, for instance the use of the term *immigrant* in relation to the term *obligation* in a political debate, quantifying the terms or mapping out its semiotic relation to other terms as if this was an isolated linguistic would not suffice. We might be able to say something about the grammatical structure but less about its social ramifications since the meaning can only be uncovered by looking at how it exists *in relation* to higher levels of social reality and non-semiotic element therein (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002).

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[19] This is also why Fairclough adopts a dialectical approach to discourse analysis. Such approaches are typically related to structuralism which focused on the relations between things. These relations are in turn understood as relations of power.

4.2 Text as a social manifestation of discourse

For the sake of clarity, it is relevant to develop a bit further how Fairclough theorizes about the analysis of discourse-as-text, i.e., text as a social manifestation of discourse. First, let's clarify what Fairclough intends by conceptualizing discourse as a *social practice.*

In Fairclough's social theory he argues that social practices form both a mode of reaction and a medium for mediation between structure and agency. This is the middle range between macro and micro that I mentioned earlier. Discourse, if taken to be a *social practice*, can be understood as a dialectic between structure and agency[20], between semiosis and non-semiotic elements (Newman 2020, 25). The leftovers of this mediation and (re)action is oftentimes materialized in text which can then form the basis of a social analysis of texts. Hence the prompt that *texts are social manifestations of discourse*. This begs the question of what we can uncover about the social world by examining texts as such. The answer is found in Fairclough theory of the meanings of discourse, namely they provide ways to act, they provide ways of self-identifying, and they provide ways of perceiving and understanding the social world. On a semiotic level, that which we are looking at when we examine texts, these meanings can be uncovered in *orders of discourse.*

Meanings of discourse	Corresponding semiotic element in orders of discourse	Social domain: a university
Action	Genre – conventionalized ways of interacting…	…during a lecture
Identification	Style – conventionalized ways of self-identifying…	…as a prominent professor; promising student; governing board member.
Representation	Discourses[21]- ways of talking and thinking about the world from a particular perspective.	…about how the pedagogical quality is best maintained at a university; how student should refer to their professors and vice versa.

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[20] See Archer for a more in-depth discussion on structure and agency.

[21] Discourse(s) in plural countable form is conceptually different from discourse.

Under favorable circumstances a discourse might be put into practice and reshape the nature of a social order by introducing new ways of acting (genre) and new ways of being (style). For the purpose of illustration, I here offer an imaginary example of how material change (non-semiotic) serves as a catalysis in introducing a slightly new orders of discourse (semiotic) within a university (social domain).

Picture this: a school governing board is on a mission to improve the pedagogical quality at their school and decide to go on an inspirational trip to Finland, a country renowned for its exceptional education system. During the trip, one board members observes a striking difference in how Finnish students refer to their teachers - by their first names! This seemingly foreign concept sparks curiosity and intrigue but the team remained reluctant - how would their teachers, who are used to being addressed formally, accept such a radical change? and would the student be comfortable with this? Upon their return to school, the Finnish experience seems more foreign than ever. Then, a few months later, the country is hit by a recession, resulting in cuts in the school budget. In a bid to avoid negatively affecting student education, the board decides to rent out the teachers' canteen, leading to both teachers and students sharing the same lunch space. Initially, the canteen was divided into two separate areas, with teachers on one side and students on the other. But as time passed, informal interactions started to take place - in the queue for food or at the milk stand - blurring the authority lines between teachers and students. The board members, who also ate in the canteen, closely observed these social changes, and noticed how teachers and students were now interacting with each other in ways that bore resemblances to what they had seen in Finland - the time was ripe to introduce something similar!

The takeaway here is that physical change - organizing a space - rooted in material struggle - recession - can take semiotic form - change in orders of discourse. By breaking down the barriers between teachers and students, new ways of interacting and new identities took shape in relation to the space and the activity of sharing a meal. This example highlights the complex interactions between discursive and non-discursive elements, such as activities, subjects, instruments, objects, time, and space. It also highlights that seemingly stable social orders and their semiotic manifestations (orders of discourse) are precariously maintained and susceptible to change and opposition, which points to the Fairclough prompt that social orders constrain orders of discourse without necessarily determining them. From this necessarily follows that communicative events vary in their social determination (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999),

which I address in section 4.4. Before venturing into this we shall have a look at how Fairclough theorizes about orders of discourse in political discourse.

4.3 Political discourse

Fairclough's theory on political discourse addresses the 'problem-solution' character of policymaking. Namely *how*, in what *way*, and for what *reasons* certain issues are problematized. Once again, we are here venturing into the realm of ideas. According to Fairclough, political discourses are discursive genres of a special sort because they explicitly aim to provide reason for people to act in line with certain power interest, typically in face of great uncertainty and risk. He writes "the essence of the political as a particular institutional domain is to be found in the system of *deontic reasons* that political institutions provide to *action*". There is quite a lot to debunk in this quotation. The underlying premises are derived from concept of 'deontic power' and 'status functions' in John Searle's social ontology. Status functions are formal ways of acting. For the sake of simplicity, we can equate these to Fairclough's concept of *genres* in orders of discourse (the role of a student, role of professor etc.) The main point here is that status functions are social entities, meaning that these only exist to the extent that they are collectively acknowledged. For example, the status function of the prime minister is collectively recognized to hold certain rights and obligations which differ from those of a university professor. We see here that, by accepting a status function we also endorse systems of deontic power - obligations, rights, entitlements attributed to certain formal roles. Deontic power is thereby not a source power equally available to everyone. To this Searle adds that "All political power is a matter of status functions, and for that reason all political power is deontic power." (Searle as cited in Rachar 2006, 231) The social contract between government and citizens is a status function where both parties are expected fulfill certain obligations but are also entitled to certain rights, and the distribution of these very a great deal between countries. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, in a Swedish political context this contract is based on the Swedish welfare state model which traditionally have put emphasizes on the governments obligation to provide citizens with equality in opportunity though universal welfare distribution. In political discourse in Sweden, these commitments are typically enacted in a way that resonate well with the ideals of equality and rights of the Swedish welfare state model (Borevi, 2012, 87). I offer on the next page an anecdotal example.

In the early 20th century, the idea of banning public smoking faced strong opposition from the Swedish public. But everything changed in the 1980s when an unexpected ally joined the debate – labor unions. They brought a fresh perspective by highlighting the rights of workers to breathe clean air and have a safe working environment. Around the same time, the public was becoming increasingly aware of the hazards posed by smoking. By framing the issue in terms of working conditions, the proposal struck a chord with people's values and concerns. This pivotal moment marked a turning point for public smoking in Sweden. In the following decades, a series of laws were enacted to gradually limit smoking in public spaces. As a result, the notion of everyone's right to clean air and the corresponding responsibility to abide by public smoking bans became deeply ingrained in the collective consciousness as something reasonable and justifiable. Fast forward to today, if someone were to light a cigarette on a public terrace or even worse, at a playground, there is a high chance that someone would step up and take the social responsibility to remind that person that his/her action is in fact legally sanctioned.

This is a clear example of when people collectively recognize the socially binding force of obligations, duties, commitments, moral norms. The point is not the prudence individuals express in the face of potential legal repercussions, but the 'reasonableness' this policy represents for them. The example also points to how actors draw upon orders of discourse which resonate with publicly endorsed values and concerns to achieve certain goals. This I take to be a very fortunate example of how agents rearticulate an order of discourse with the aim of achieving something for the collective good (the fact that I, someone who grew up in Sweden think this way speaks to my very point) However, this is of course not always the case. The institutional domain in which political actors operate, characterized by deontic powers, allow for political actors to exploit strategies of public manipulation to achieve this level of legitimacy. Indeed, political discourse might be deliberative by nature but the reason why individuals obey is typically not due to the strength of the actual argument but on the arguments' *perceived* legitimacy - and politicians go about their ways to achieve this in public statements and debates. (Fairclough and Fairclough 2012) From this understanding of political discourse power constitutes both the means and the ends. As mentioned earlier, Fairclough approaches this critically by looking at the 'problem-solution' dimension of political discourse. More specifically in how different value-ladened premises serve as premises in practical argumentation to arrive at a normatively sanctioned course of action - what should be done, which law should be passed and so forth. According to Fairclough, the circumstantial premise is typically connected with the goal premise "in accordance with the source of normativity

specified in the value premise." (Fairclough and Fairclough 2012, 40) The value premises are sometime expressed explicitly, for instance by appealing to publicly endorsed values and concerns. But there much value-based information is also to be found in how the problem is represented to be (the circumstantial premise) and the mean by which one seek to arrive at the goal (mans-goals) as well as the ideal future scenario (goal premise) (Fairclough and Fairclough 2012, 43). Neither of these premises can be taken to be neutral, or functional responses to existing needs, because they operate in an institutional domain in which power constitutes both the means and the ends. Meaning that, they are by nature also ideological. To understand what is meant by this we shall now turn to how Fairclough understands and uses concepts such as ideology and hegemony and how they serve to maintain certain orders of discourse.

4.4 Ideology and hegemony

Regarding ideology, Fairclough posits that "ideologies are representations of aspects of the world which contribute to establishing and maintaining relations of power, domination, and exploitation." (Fairclough 2001a, 218) By this account, discursive practices are ideologically invested "insofar as they incorporate significations which contribute to sustaining or restructuring power relations". (Fairclough 1992a, 91) If we accept this, then political discourse must always be ideologically invested. This definition of ideology is not to be confused with the great -isms like Liberalism, Socialism, Marxism, Maoism which indicate adherence to a political opinion or view. Ideology is here understood in the broader sense of the term - as the grand narrative supporting an already existing socio-political system, presently capitalism. (Blommaerts 2005, 160) From this point of view, often attributed to Antonio Gramsci, ideology penetrates the whole of society to the extent that alternative patterns of thinking and behaving become inconceivable. When one feels inclined to say, 'that normal', there is a high probability that ideology is at work. It is precisely the confluence with normalcy that makes ideology so effective and why it works at full capacity when individuals remain unaware of the ideological facets of their social and material existence. For example, an order of discourse might reach the level of popular acceptance where alternative orders become inconceivable. This is when Fairclough turns to Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony, which in very simple terms can be understood as the manufacturing of consent. (Scott, 15) Hegemonic processes can thus, according to Fairclough, be witnessed and analyzed in terms of semiotic manifestations - that is, how struggles over "the voice of supremacy" in and over discourse materialize semiotically in orders of discourse. (Blommaerts 2000, 449). Fairclough writes:

"An order of discourse can be seen as the discursive facet of the contradictory and unstable equilibrium which constitutes a hegemony, and the articulation and rearticulation of orders of discourse is correspondingly one stake in hegemonic struggle." (Fairclough 2001a, 93)

Fairclough, however, suggests that agents possess the capacity to act independently or collectively in opposition to ideology. However, because ideology subjugates[22] individuals in a pre-reflectively state of development, any attempt at opposition remains ineffective for as long as individuals are unable, or for some reason remain unwilling, to conceive of these ideological mechanisms. As we have previously observed, discursive events differ in their social determination, and the same can be said about the balance between subjects as 'ideological effects' and 'active agents' (Fairclough 1992a, 89). Subjects become active agents in relation to ideology only when they can conceive themselves as being partly an ideological effect (I dare to suggest here that Wodak's prompt that critical discourse analysis should contribute to the fostering of critical thinking tends to this very matter). As per the English definition of the verb *conceive* means to give birth to something. In this case, individuals bring to birth in themselves a position in relation to what they previously perceived as a natural social factor anchored in themselves. Once they have achieved this capacity, they transform from being passively reflective to actively reactive. That is - they can *perceive* ideology and formulate their critique, enact oppositional genres, and inculcate alternative ways of being which, in the ideal situation, do not reproduce "relations of power, domination, and exploitation."

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[22] Subjugation is a term often related to the works of Foucault. It tends to the process whereby individuals passively become subject to specific ways of interpreting their social world.

5. Implementation of theory and method

Based on the theoretical discussion above I argue that, to uncover the how: – that is, how a discursive shift takes semiotic form in political discourse we can make use of discourse analytical tools from Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) such as those developed by Norman Fairclough (2003) and Fairclough and Fairclough (2012). Additionally, we can gain insights from Language Ideology Studies (Kroskrity, 2006; Gal, 2006; Blommaerts, 2006) regarding cultural perceptions and beliefs about language(s) and their speakers. Furthermore, we can explore theories on how these perceptions and beliefs are manifested and realized through various linguistic and legal boundaries when introduced in the form of citizenship requirements (Shohamy, 2006; Kahn, 2017).

Before bringing all of this together in the subsequent discussion I will, based on Fairclough and Fairclough's (2012) theoretical and methodological approach to political discourse perform a textual analysis. Applied to the material, this narrows down the analysis to a description and interpretation of how (potentially different) circumstantial premises (C), goal premises (G), means-goals premises (M-G) and value premises (V) serve to justify and support the same practical claim. I intend to perform the analysis in two stages: textual (primarily descriptive) and intertextual (primarily interpretation). The former is focused on the linguistic level of the material and examines aspects of intended meaning and ideological associations in features such as grammatical structure, voice, and vocabulary (Fairclough 2003, 37). The latter focuses on the discursive level and seeks to reveal how a text draws upon (either reflectively or responsively) already existing discourses.

I.) Textual analysis

The textual analysis serves to answer the first part of the operative sub-question: Which similarities and differences can be identified in textual claims regarding the premises used in practical argumentation in favor of this policy proposal?

To take hold for predefined assumptions I coded each text separately line-by-line in NVivo. Additionally, to ensure coherence throughout the data-gathering process I make use of the questions in the schema below. After the first round of open coding, I began to sort my data and enter quotations into the schema. This was followed by a more in-depth linguistic analysis, looking specifically for patterns of intended meaning and ideological association in the

vocabulary (word choice), grammatical structure (verb tenses) and voice (interrogative, declarative, imperative etc.)
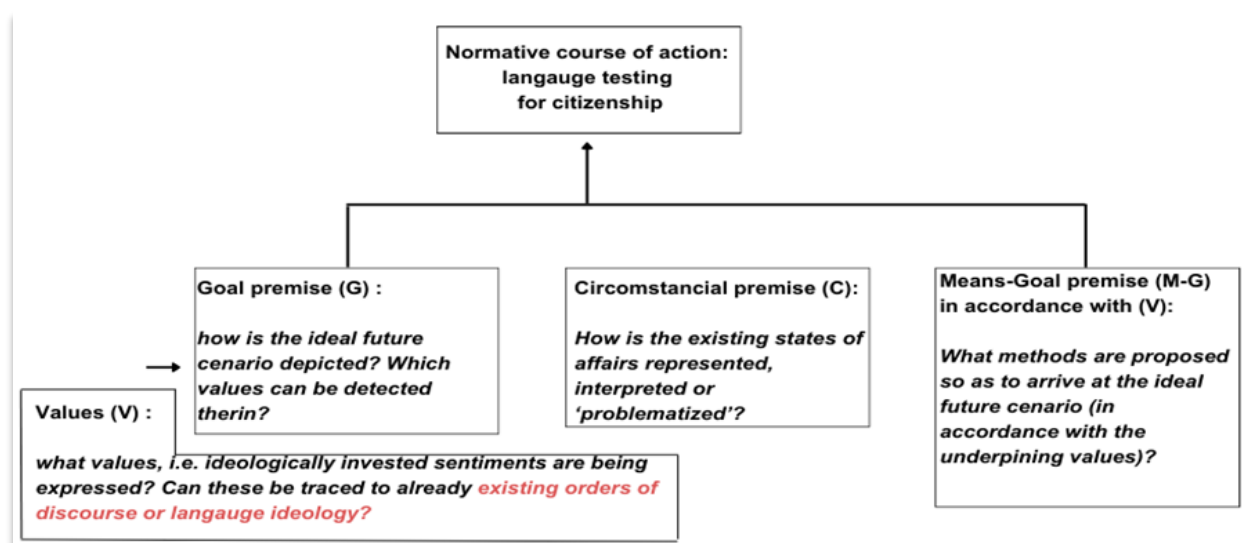
II.) Intertextual analysis

The intertextual analysis serves to answer the second part of the operative sub-question: Which similarities and differences can be identified in textual claims regarding the configuration of discourses informing the premises? (Ways of talking and thinking about the world from a particular perspective) This stage contained a great deal of interpretation and I allowed for the theory-section to enter into dialogue with the material. In practice, this entailed redefining my codes based on the theory section.

6. Results

Following the methodological and theoretical frameworks outlined in chapters three and four, this chapter presents the key findings from the data analysis. The textual analysis is presented categorically based on the premises (see table 3). The intertextual analysis is presented thematically based on the most prevalent discourses that appeared throughout the second round of analysis and is provided in a condensed version in table 4. The findings are then brought together in a final discussion section where I also answer my research questions. Extracts from relevant quotations are supplied for the sake of exemplification throughout the chapter.

Findings: Textual analysis

En Brief: Premises			
Premises	**Moderate Party**	**Social Democratic Party**	**Swedish Democratic Party**
Claim	The right thing to do retain strict asylum system and implement a concrete strategy, informed by experts and input from other countries, which is dedicated to ensuring that Immigration is a profitable enterprise for the Swedish economy and does not negatively affect social and cultural cohesion.	The right to do is to retain a strict asylum system and invest in core societal functions such as the labor-market and social welfare system with aim to create possibilities for immigrants to live up to our expectations and requirements for integration.	The right thing to is to restrict the asylum-system as much as possible and link citizenship attainment and state provisions to several requirements with the aim to ensure that immigrants do not abuse our social welfare system and infringe on our norms, mores, laws, and cultural values.
Circumstances	Issues in key societal functions such as the economy, the welfare system, as well as the maintenance of social and cultural cohesion are largely rooted in unregulated migration and the failure to impose timely expectations on many immigrants.	Integration has improved but sectorial challenges remain, particularly within the labor market due to low expectations and requirements on immigrants to integrate as well as a systemic dismantling of the Swedish labor market model and welfare system.	Sweden has become a culturally segregated and unsafe society due to the economic, social, and cultural burdens posed by prolonged periods of unregulated immigration. These processes are essentially rooted in a naive political conviction that culturally different groups should and can coexist.
Goal	Sweden should live up to the self-image of being an international role-model on social and economic matters with a world-leading model of integration, primarily regarding socio-economic profit.	Sweden should be a safe society based largely on the principle that everyone, to their ability, should labor and contribute to our shared welfare system under fair conditions.	Sweden should be a culturally cohesive society characterized by shared values, mores, and cultural preferences, only then can trust be regained our abused social welfare system restored.
Means-Goals	If our requirement-based approach to integration is	If we invest in the labor market and create opportunities for	If our requirement-based approach to integration is enacted and we

	enacted and we learn from other countries and listen to experts,we will achieve our goal in accordance with our values:	Immigrants to live up to our expectations, we will achieve our goal in accordance with our values:	create legal pathways for unsuccessfully immigrants to return home, we will achieve our goal in accordance with our values:
Values/Concerns[23]	**individual responsibilities, and obligations, social cohesion and trust, national profit.**	**Equality, economic mobility, working conditions, strong social welfare system, immigrants' obligations, and rights.**	**cultural cohesiveness/ homogeneity, national community, shared historical consciousness, equality in possibilities, restrictiveness, assimilation, individual responsibilities, and obligations, national pride**

Table. 1

Findings: Intertextual analysis

En Brief: discourses		
Moderate Party	**Social Democratic Party**	**Swedish Democratic Party**
Discourse: security, law and order Discourse: market economy Discourse: requirements	Discourse: rights and obligations Discourse: labor market integration Discourse: requirements	Discourse: security, law and order Discourse: Immigration, migrants, asylum seekers Discourse: requirements Discourse: Social cohesion and cultural homogeneity

Table. 2

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[23] The values/concerns column is in **Bold** precisely because these inform the premises above.

I.   Moderate Party

The most prevalent discourses in textual claims on integration, citizenship and language requirements from the Moderate Party (M) pertains to:

Discourse: security, law and order

When we enter the Moderate Party's website we are met with the following:

> *"The Coalition Party Moderates: The Moderate Party are not just called the Coalition Party. We are the Collation Party. We can only get through this time of crisis together, as one country. Now, more than ever, unity is needed. Unity for Sweden."*

The webpage is generously populated with buzzwords and phrases *"fatal shootings…* skyrocketing *inflation, fuel and food and electricity prices… war in Ukraine…explosions in the Baltic Sea"* and so forth demonstrate the Moderate Party's framing of 'crisis'. By appealing to public risk and fear in this way, they clearly echo the politics of fear rhetoric elucidated by Wodak (2015). As anticipated, the quandary is concluded with the declaration: *"this is how we put Sweden in order"*, whose subtext conveys that I.) the safety and welfare of the Swedish citizen is under threat in an increasingly unsafe world and II.) M, in representing political pragmatism and rationality, are poised to address and resolve this predicament. The same alarmist rhetoric is abundant in Ulf Kristersson's (M) debate article from 2019 when he announced the movement to usher in an integration committee. A substantial portion of this text is dedicated to painting a picture of Sweden in absolute disarray. Terms such as "*an issue of destiny*", "*central explanation to several grave societal issues*", *"system-threatening"* and of course, "*crisis*" are used. According to Kristersson, these are symptoms of decades of unregulated immigration coupled with immigration policies lacking demands to integrate. In an agenda debate broadcasted on national television in May 2023, Kristersson declares the following:

(2) "20 years ago, the Liberal Party, then the People's Party, wanted to introduce language requirements. 20 years have gone to waste since then"

As well as…

(3)"An expectation to learn Swedish, an expectation to be able to support oneself, an expectation to be able to relocate to where there are jobs. We have honestly missed all these things completely in Sweden"

According to Kristersson, the reason for these failures is the lack of requirements and demands imposed upon immigrants leading to a situation where structural circumstances are negated. The use of the first-person plural in the sentence *"we [the Swedish political leadership] have honestly missed all of these things"* implies that he holds the political leadership, or rather the lack of it, responsible for the situation. In this sense, he acknowledges the *obligations-line* between the state and immigrants, i.e., that the Swedish state have an obligation to declare what is expected of immigrants to Sweden and that immigrants in turn also have an obligation to fulfill these expectations.

In the debate article referred to earlier, the structure of the text is not subtle with representing elements of intended meaning. The text is organized by contrasting the successfully integrated migrant (insider) against the unsuccessfully integrated migrant (outsider).

> (3) *"Many **work illegally** under unsafe conditions. Some **commit** crimes, ...Many have **entered** Swedish society and now **contribute** with knowledge, culture, language and tax money...this is a great contribution to Sweden ....Many quickly **embrace** Swedish laws, rules and values...Among others , there is **an obvious resistance** to equality, independence and individual freedom…This results in honorary oppression that affects women as well as young girls and boys."*

The use of active verbs like *commit, contribute,* e*mbrace,* and *resist* relegate structural circumstances and emphasize individual responsibility. Semiotically we can compare this to another frequently used formulation in public debates regarding the link between immigration and crime: "individuals are drawn into crime". The use of the passive transitive verb *to be drawn into* implies the presence of an external force whereas *to commit* implies internal force or agency. From this analysis we can extrapolate that socio-economic circumstances are not considered as explanatory variables and in turn that the M values individual obligation and responsibility as the primary means to achieve integration.

Discourse: market economy

In the same article, Kristersson also outlined a goal premise, *"Sweden should have the best integration policy in the world."* Further, in a proposition to Parliament from 2021/22:4033 Kristersson stated that the ultimate goal with integration policy should be to ensure that:

> (4) *"immigration should be **good** for Sweden. This does not mean that each immigrant should be personally useful in some simple economic sense, but that **overall** immigration over time **must benefit our country**."*

Kristersson's definition of "good" and "benefit" are revealed by perpetuating the escalating cost of immigration to the Swedish economy and how this has degraded public trust in immigration as merely a symbol of political loyalty. Through context, we come to understand that Kristersson's use of the term "good" is interchangeable for socio-economically profitable. He certainly leaves no room for equivocation by adding that *"Support for migration and integration policy, like any other policy, is because it benefits society."* The semiotic link between legitimacy, integration and profit is reflected in Kristersson's normative view of how integration should be approached, not to mention a perception of political legitimacy and *his* own role in government. The ideal future scenario, and the key to how legitimacy is maintained, is fundamentally achieved by ensuring the economic security and stability of the state. The base of integration concerns ascribed to economic (in)security correspond well with Walters' (2004) use of the concept *Oikos* (the root of the word economy). [24] Furthermore, the association of successful immigrant integration with "self-sufficiency" contends the ideals germane to liberal values on what societal participation *should* look like, namely economic participation and freedom. The mention of language proficiency in conjunction with economic participation also illustrates how concepts such as national profit and monolingualism reinforce the functional value attributed to one language —the standard language— in line with certain clearly defined political objectives (Blommaerts, 2006, 141).

Discourse: requirements

The Moderate Party's emphasis on duties, individual responsibilities and obligations corresponds well with Borevi's ideal type, *the obligations line.*

Below is another extract from Kristersson's debate article:

(5) *"There has long been an underlying idea that integration is **a 'two-way process'**, with immigrants and natives integrating into a new multicultural society. This approach has been **treacherous** and **misguided**."*

This line of reasoning is directly applied to the party's approach to citizenship attainment, wherein the immigrant is expected to demonstrate efforts, thus reinforcing the perception that any observed failures linked to integration are a result of insufficient efforts on the part of immigrants.

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[24] The current Government under the Leadership of the Moderate Party and Kristersson are presently working on a new immigration framework aimed to attract "highly-qualified" labor to Sweden.

Arman Karpat (M) states the following in a parliamentary debate about imposing requirements on citizenship:

(6) *"If you choose to come to Sweden, i.e., immigrate here, and want to become part **of the Swedish community**, it is first of all the duty that is important… we must have an acceptance in our society that new-commers to Sweden do their duty and then get their rights in order to become part of the Swedish community.... We must make demands from day one……. Citizenship is the most precious thing that Sweden can give to a person and therefore, we Moderates want Swedish citizenship to be **associated with duty."***

This passage maneuvers a normative assessment of a "good citizen" to underscore the correlation between citizenship and duty. It expands the concept of citizenship beyond a mere legal contract to include an ethical dimension which wields the power to evaluate individuals based on their commitments [duties] and how these align or deviate from the imagined "Swedish community" (Walters, 2004; Blommaerts, 2006). These duties include, among other things, command of the Swedish language, economic self-sufficiency and attunement with labor-market opportunities. Similarly, the current minister of Integration, Maria Malmer Stenergard stene(M) states in a press briefing on language requirements that:

(7) *"There is a **natural link** between **citizenship** and **language** which should be strengthened … Citizenship should **mean something**. It needs to be upgraded both **legally** and **symbolically**, and its value needs to be **respected** and **safeguarded** to a greater extent than today."*

Citizenship and language are not viewed as separate issues but rather as interconnected aspects of a unified symbolic and legal entity. The lexicalization *natural link* signals a rather obvious aspects of intended meaning, reminiscent of the ethos one language – one people. By implication, citizenship in not only a legal *construct* but a by nature given *privilege* to Swedish speakers, which entails not only certain rights and privileges but also a symbolic element of belonging to the 'community imagined'(Milani, 2008). Like the word mother-tongue so clearly insinuates, the standard language not only carry a process of thought but form a natural bond among the constituent kins of the home/state (Walters, 2004).

II. Social Democratic Party

The most prevalent discourses in textual claims on integration, citizenship and language requirements from the Social Democratic Party (S) pertains to:

Discourse: rights and obligations

On the Social Democratic Party's website, we can read the following about integration:

> *"A Sweden where everyone works and contributes.*
>
> *It is increasingly **faster** for immigrants to **establish themselves** in the labor market. We must set higher **language** and **education** requirements **so that** everyone in our **strong** society can **support themselves**…segregation and lack of knowledge of the Swedish language remain major challenges. We have long taken the challenges associated with integration too **lightly**"*

Integration is perceived as flawed, with segregation and insufficient Swedish language proficiency seen as indicators of this issue. The phrase "so that" is used to introduce a subordinate clause that expresses a goal scenario - that immigrants can support themselves. It represents a typical case of theoretical reasoning, where if certain requirements are set (such as higher requirements), the likelihood of immigrants being able to support themselves increases Andersson partly attributes the root of the problem to the absence of demands, leading to the means-goal premise of needing to establish higher requirements. However, she also acknowledges that political decisions targeting the welfare state have contributed to the resulting disorder, recognizing certain state responsibilities. For example, she highlights budget cuts in social welfare services that she believes have undermined integration, making it more challenging for individuals to pursue what she considers the goal premise: learning Swedish, working, and contributing to society. These excerpts, when taken together, emphasize both individual obligations and state responsibilities, aligning well with the "two-way process" ideal of achieving integration. An interesting observation here, which I believe speaks to the dominance of discourses on requirements, is how effortlessly it intertwines with the Social Democratic notion of a "strong society" when demands are portrayed as being in the best interest of both the individual immigrant and the collective welfare. I believe the following extract serve as a good example here:

> (8) *"the Social Democrats have now implemented a reorganization of integration policy that means stronger **opportunities**, but also **stricter requirements** for establishment and integration."* (M-G-v)

Discourse: labor market integration

On the Social Democratic Party's website, we can also read the following.

*(4) "Sweden should be a welcoming country where we clearly stand up **for our values** such as gender equality and democracy. A country where **everyone works and contributes**. And where everyone has a place in the **social community**."*

The predominant use of active voice conveys a sense of directness and agency. Additionally, the conditional "*should*" indicates a normative evaluation, i.e., how the S wishes to see the outcomes of a successful integration, namely that "*everyone works and contributes*" and "*where everyone has a place in the social community*". The passage associates individual responsibility with labor market participation.

> *(9) "In our **strong** society, all municipalities in Sweden take responsibility for the integration of new arrivals. In a **secure** Sweden, we invest in skills, not lower wages. Through **faster** integration and **better** education, more people can contribute to Sweden's growth and welfare."*

Adjectives such as "strong" and "secure" serve to describe how S envisages a future ideal society. The Adjective "strong" communicates that Sweden is robust and prepared to take on the challenges by a flawed integration. The emphasis on "better education" together with "faster integration" reflect a commitment to invest in immigrants in a way that resonate more with the two-way-process ideal type of integration. Security is here linked not so much to socio-economic profit, although this is also implied, but also to working conditions and stable wages.

Discourse: requirements

In a parliamentary debate on citizenship and asylum Carina Ohlsson (2018/19:SfU19) stated the following on language requirements for citizenship:

> *(10) It is **reasonable** to require knowledge of Swedish and Swedish society in order to obtain Swedish citizenship. This provides a better **balance between rights and obligations.** It also **increases opportunities to enter Swedish society**. The language is a key to **working life** and **society in general**. It also provides **basic knowledge** and greater opportunities to **influence democratic work** and to integrate more easily into society….When we have followed the research regarding the requirements for knowledge of the Swedish language, we have seen that **if we set too high requirements - as some countries have done - it can have the opposite effect for those who have a lower level of education from the start**. It is clear that there is a very big difference if people come here illiterate or if they have a university degree. Then they have different opportunities to acquire knowledge.*

It is implied here that there is currently an inadequate balance between obligations/state and rights/immigrants and language requirements are taken to be a "reasonable" way to even these out. This passage both recreate and feeds of the narrative that Sweden has been to lax towards immigrant. Stratifying factors are also taken into consideration which underscores that the goal premise is not only to increase integration for some but to accommodate for different need within immigrants' groups. Discursively, the acknowledgment of differences among immigrants also contests the notion of the "Other" as one fixed imaginary that is frequently drawn upon. It is relevant to point out that Ohlsson make an evaluation of acquiring Swedish not only for immigrant who wish to apply for citizenship but more generally about the instrumental role of knowing Swedish for immigrants' life in Sweden. "The language is a key to working life and society in general" creates a linear correlation between language knowledge and knowledge of society, where the former stands as a prerequisite for the latter.

II.   *Swedish Democratic Party*

The most prevalent discourses in textual claims on integration, citizenship and language requirements from the Swedish Democratic Party pertains to:

Discourse: security, law and order

When we enter the Swedish Democratic Party's website, we find the following about migration (information about their integration policy is absent on the first page).

> " Serious migration policy: **Protection against** organized crime, human trafficking and terrorism. For a long time, Sweden has had a **destructive** migration policy that has led to segregation, parallel societies and **cultural burdens**. The mass immigration to Sweden of illegal immigrants, economic migrants and asylum seekers has transformed Sweden for the worse and is at the root of many **societal problems that we now** need to resolve."

The foreground of this passage is intrinsically connected to concerns of security. The language employed, including the phrases "organized crime", "human trafficking," and "terrorism," reflect Wodak's politics of fear. Furthermore, these threats are closely linked to themes of mobility and criminality, i.e., it is the systematic and unregulated flow and circulation of undesired individuals on national territory that is worrisome. Or in other words, the absence of regulations and boarders (Walters, 2004). Furthermore, the semiotic connection between

immigrants and delinquency is evident. Using Walter's concept of domopolitics, it is apparent that these delinquent immigrants pose a threat to our "home," as well as the security and safety it represents to 'Us', which is understood to be a self-evident clearly defined cultural space (cultural burden). This is further substantiated in Jimmie Åkesson's statement from the debate on May 7th:

> (11)   *"The **reason why** we talk about immigration in relation to crime **is because** there is a very, very **high overrepresentation of immigrants in crime**. This is **not strange**."*

In the Swedish Democratic election manifesto from 2022 we can read that the party which to see as Sweden that is "*great again!*", followed up by "*a Sweden that is safe again*". Safety and security are singled out as a rudimentary priority, or "*a prerequisite for everything else.*" What is intended by safety and security must be understood in relation the Party's perception of migration as hazardous, threatening, unsafe and so forth. According to Åkesson the problems he perceives are rooted in the ideology underlying multiculturalism. This is nothing new, it is well known that the Swedish Democratic Party opposes multiculturalism. On a discursive level this manifest though narratives which typically involve three participants: a treacherous "elite" /"establishment", the "Other"/Muslim-immigrant, and "Us" the culturally homogenous people (Wodak, 2015, 52).

Discourse: Immigration, migrants, asylum seekers

In a recent parliamentary debate Ludvig Asping stated the following:

> (12)   *"The **mass immigration projec**t is based on **one big lie**: that people living in unstable states need to go to Sweden on the edge of Europe to ensure their physical safety. Hundreds of thousands of people fly from Sweden to places where the Ministry of Foreign Affairs advises against travel. The most popular destinations are apparently Iraq, Iran and Somalia. It is obvious that these are people who have roots in these countries and who have then come to Sweden as so-called refugees ... there can be no general need for protection against these countries. It is impossible to argue that you must leave the country because of the risk to your own life and then return to go on vacation in the same country, it is completely **illogical**. It is also completely illogical that so-called refugees can vacation in their home country while there would be groups that cannot do the same. **The only logical conclusion one could draw from this is that the so-called asylum immigration is a well-organized fraud...Real refugees** [Ukrainian, i.e., European refugees] mostly stay in the neighborhood and try to return as soon as possible. **Real** refugees do not launch campaigns against social services. **They** [Iraqi, Irani, Somali, i.e., non-European] **do not** launch campaigns against basic human rights or demand that we change our constitutions and get rid of our freedom of expression. **They don't** demand huge financial benefits. And they don't try to acquire many identities to try to defraud a social security system, etc. etc. **If anyone asks why**

we need this systemic shift, that's exactly why. We need to get rid of the pull factors that make Sweden particularly attractive for this kind of abuse."

The distinction between "real" refugees from European countries like Ukraine and "so-called" refugees from non-European/Muslim countries like Iraq, Iran, and Somalia illustrate how the language of exclusion and inclusion parallels the underlying principles of domopolitics – the concept of governing the well-being of a those who "naturally" belong to the imagined community against those who, per definition, do not. Furthermore, there is another implicit "they" in this passage. This phrase "mass immigration project," suggests a calculated and orchestrated enterprise and insinuates a coordinated effort by political actors. Ultimately, "they" the political establishment have conspired against and lied to "Us". As Wodak (2015) has exposed, this sort of conspiracy rhetoric is a core feature of right-wing populist discourses. The notion that certain immigrant groups (non-European/Muslim) are abusing the Swedish welfare system is frequently mentioned. The delinquent immigrant imagination serves two purposes in this context: it explains the many societal problems, and as it contains a moral evaluation it also provides a moral impetus for the forthcoming judgment conclusion.

Discourse: requirements

> (13)   *"**You have** all sorts of opportunities in Sweden when **you come** here, **you have every opportunity** to become part of society. **We have** a fantastic school that you are offered, **we have** a fantastic welfare system that you are offered, simply by setting foot in this country. Yet it still looks the way it does!"*

Subject ("You") + auxiliary verb ("do") + negation ("not") + main verb ("need"). The emphasis on the subject and action verbs such as come/do/have reflect where Lessons position himself on the spectrum between right-obligations, namely far to the right. Åkesson is her reproducing the narrative that "we", i.e., the Swedish state have given "you", i.e., the immigrant all the necessary means to live up to our expectations, but "you" have failed and therefore it looks the way it does, namely that we have a culturally disintegrated society. This analysis should be interpreted in the light of the ideological (-ism) foundation of the party, wherein the notion that culturally diverse groups can/should co-exist under the same social welfare system is objected to. Social cohesion, in its strict sense of sameness in cultural values and mores, is taken to be a

prerequisite for the smooth functioning of any such social welfare state. Multiculturalism[25] is disqualified both in the ideological sense of the term and as a lived reality. It does not suffice to contribute through labor, something "broader" is due. In response to the emphasis on labor market integration represented by much of the other parties during the Agenda debate Åkesson's stated the following:

> (14)   *"'As long as we make sure they get jobs, everything will be fine, etc.' Jobs are great, I buy that, but it's broader than that."*

This circumstantial analysis is echoed in Jonas Andersson's speech from a parliamentary debate about citizenship and requirements this year.

> (15)   *"**You** do not need to learn Swedish to become a citizen of Sweden. **You** do not need to learn about our **culture** or our **society**. **You** do not have to adopt **our common fundamental values**. **You** do not have to be of **good character**, except in the most limited sense…[Muhammed][26] can, if he wants, lie on the sofa at home for a few years, pick his belly button, live on benefits and still become a Swedish citizen. Then, Mr. President, we ask ourselves with some surprise why integration in Sweden is not working...How many of these new citizens know Swedish? How many can support themselves? How many have abandoned the values of their home country such as homophobia, misogyny, anti-Semitism and contempt for secular society? **No one knows**, Mr. President, **because no demands are made**."*

Andersson is using the same structure of argument here. He declares that the Subject ("you=immigrant") + auxiliary verb ("do") + negation ("not") + main verb ("need"), but he also introduces a causality, namely because no demands are made. Furthermore, this whole passage serves as a great example of how immigrant imaginaries are reproduced through discourse. Muhammed can, and probably will because demands are not made, continue (as this is indeed taken to be the case) to abuse our social welfare, show proof of "bad character" and possibly even transgress the law. Discursively, the delinquent Muslim Immigrant imaginary serves two purposes: it establishes a causality between variables such as culture, ethnicity, and religion and

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[25] I doubt that Kristersson stance have changes since. I take it to be more likely that this conviction has become fortified now when he has agreed to cooperate with the single party that have openly advocated this view (SD). I suspect, rather, that this is a strategic and deliberated discursive move on his part to signal that the ideological differences between his and Åkesson's party, despite their political coalition, are still intact.

[26] For the sake of contextualization, it is relevant to note here that the subject [Muhammed] is used as an argumentative ideal type, motivated by the observation that an important number of immigrants come from Somalia. The cited passage is preceded by a fictive story about how Muhammed arrived in Sweden as an asylum seeker with intentions of integrating but, due to the lack of requirements, failed to do so. For the full statement see https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/webb-tv/video/debatt-om-forslag/medborgarskap_H901SfU13. (06.43-15.36)

failed integration; secondly, as it contains a moral evaluation of character it also imparts a moral impetus to the forthcoming judgment conclusion. This passage points to Wodak's (2015, 49) observation that right-wing populist discourses spread and overlap with other discourses that seem not to be directly related to immigration. The rhetoric in the extract above is echoed in how the Party reasons about citizenship and requirements.

Because the circumstantial analysis is representative of the obligations-line, the proposed methods to achieve the future scenario emphasize duties, obligations, and the need to enact a "a requirements-based approach" to integration.

> (16) *"**You have your own responsibility**. If **you move** to another country, **you have a primary responsibility to adapt** to that country. **You cannot expect** that country **to give you everything** on a silver platter. I believe that the requirement-based integration policy is **the only way forward**. An EXTREMELY strict asylum and immigration policy... Then it's about making demands."*

Proliferate requirements are, as we already know, language requirements, proof of good character and conduct, self-sufficiency, civic knowledge and so forth. The Party has been quite vocal, as have the Moderate Party, when it comes to language requirements and citizenship. In a debate article from 2021, Håkan Lösnitz and Eric Westrotht, wrote the following about language requirements:

> (17) *A citizenship is like a **membership in an exclusive club** and in this case the club is called **Sweden**. In this club **we have many laws and "regulations "** that it is important that everyone **knows** and **understands**. If one or more of the members do not have the **ability to understand** what is said and written, they cannot become a **so-called full member**, as **Swedish is the official language in Sweden according to the Language Act**. Obtaining Swedish citizenship is not a right, but should be something exclusive and something to strive for, which means that making demands is quite natural and de facto quite necessary."*

Because Swedish is the official language, it is assumed that Swedish serve as the exclusive means comprehend Swedish laws and what is vaguely referred to as "' regulations'". The quotation marks suggest that these pertain to implicit and explicit rules that lack legal endorsement, yet govern behavior, oftentimes denoted as culture (Milani, 2008). In sum, knowledge of the standard Swedish (assumption) enables (per implication) knowledge of the Swedish culture and society and is (normative evaluation) declared as a prerequisite for citizenship. We see here how the notion of one people – one language is perpetuated and serves as a premise for a practical claim"which means that making demands is quite natural and de

facto quite necessary." We should also point out that, by this account, immigrants are not only disqualified political participation but deemed incapable of comprehending and accessing knowledge of the Swedish society at large (Malian, 42, 2008). Which, based on the extracts above would per definition disqualify even a formally neutralized immigrant as a fully symbolic member of the imagined community. Hence the use of "so-called full member" in the extract.

In a parliamentary debate on citizenship and asylum Jonas Andersson (2020/21:1621) et al. stated the following:

*(18) The **Swedish language** is the **glue** that holds **Swedish society together**, and should be a **self-evident** lowest common denominator for Swedish citizens... **The Sweden Democrats believe that the emphasis in these matters must be on Sweden's best interests, what is beneficial to the kingdom as it was previously called in citizenship matters**, and not some kind of **misguided justice argument** of the sort that was used against the introduction [of language requirements] from the beginning... Citizenship should be something worth working for, something worth waiting for. At the same time, **it reduces the risk of people who have come to Sweden solely to enjoy social benefits or who cannot keep within the law becoming citizens"*

In this passage we see how language ideology, requirement discourse, security discourse, and border politics come together. The prediction is indeed not entirely wrong. Language requirements will certainly ensure that fewer immigrants become naturalized and gain access to rights and privileges. These raised requirements include, among other things, a passed language test of level B2 in Swedish (CEFR, Council of Europe).

7. Analytical discussion and conclusions

All three parties shared the view that many societal problems are rooted in failed integration, but the degree to which it was diagnosed as such and the reasons for this varied. In the respective parties' circumstantial analyses, the discourse of safety, law, and order stood out as a common denominator among Moderates and Swedish Democrats, with the delinquent immigrant imaginary serving as the underlying scheme of interpretation and explanation. In the practical argumentation, this scheme fulfilled, as I see it, two purposes: 1) to create a causal link between failed immigrants, failed integration, and large-scale societal issues; 2) to appeal to public risk perception and generate moral impetus for the forthcoming judgment conclusion. Kristersson's debate article, in which he contrasted the "bad" and the "good" immigrant, exemplifies well how these imaginaries serve to justify both moral and political judgment." As the saying goes, any moral project necessitates an immoral subject (See also Walters, 2004). In Asping's (SD) statement, this scheme was further extended into the ethnic and cultural realm by framing some immigrant groups, by nature of origin, as particularly threatening to social national welfare.[27] In both cases, however, the unregulated presence of the "bad immigrant" was deemed system-threatening, both in terms of social and cultural cohesion and economic and social security. The existing state of affairs was interpreted in a more positive light among Social Democrats. Lack of Swedish proficiency among immigrants and the structural dismantling of social welfare services were addressed as explanatory variables for failed integration.

The circumstantial premises translated well to each party's means-goal premises, dominated by the discourse on requirements and individual responsibility. The Moderates and Swedish Democrats expressed a desire for predominantly requirements-driven methods, where immigrants would shoulder the burden of integration. However, Social Democrats adopted a more moderate stance by emphasizing the rights and obligations of both immigrants and the state. The positioning of Social Democrats was notably conspicuous in their discourse on labor market integration, wherein the municipalities were specifically highlighted as central entities responsible for the integration of immigrants.[28]

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[27] Extract 14
[28] Exstract 5

Overall, the parties' reasoning on labor market integration revealed their respective views on integration termini or the goal-premise. The Moderates addressed the link between language and socio-economic mobility from a macro utilitarian standpoint, aligning with liberal economic values and concerns of economic security. The Swedish Democrats recognized the significance of labor market integration but emphasized the importance of cultural and social integration as equally imperative or even a precondition for other forms of integration and citizenship. This explicit goal-premise was noticeable throughout the practical argumentation put forward by the Swedish Democrats and, to some extent, the Moderates.

An example of the interplay between the discourse on law, order, security, and immigrant imaginaries was observed. In these statements, particular linguistic patterns were identified, wherein dichotomous categorizations such as "Us" versus "Them" and the distinction between the "good" and the "bad" immigrant intertwined with the politics of fear. The problem was represented as stemming from the unregulated presence of alleged criminal immigrants within national borders, leading to a policy response aimed at protecting against these alleged wrongdoers through legal endorsement and regulation. Extract 15 particularly stood out, stating, "We don't know [the extent to which values of their home country have been abandoned, etc.] because demands are not made." By political implication, only legal endorsement, regulation, and surveillance were considered appropriate solutions to "regain control," "restore order," and "make Sweden safe again."

In sum, in textual claims from Social Democrats the end goal of integration was framed as a matter of equality in opportunities and participation in the labor market, for Moderates it boiled down to concern of social cohesion and economic security, and for Swedish Democrats it translated into a question of social, cultural, and ultimately national preservation. This observation points to how political ideology (economic liberalism/social liberalism/national conservatism) informs policy formulation and policy response. Alas, this is not beside the point of the thesis as the attempt here is to examine how, despite these party ideological differences, they arrive at the same judgment conclusion - language requirements on citizenship.

The answer to this is found in how knowledge of standard Swedish was portrayed as the sole gateway to participation in the labor market (S), achieving social cohesion and sustaining the market (M), and ensuring cultural cohesion and national preservation (SD). Throughout all statements, it was declared with great conviction that Swedish, serves as the key facilitator for

immigrants to fully "enter society", a phrase which I observed to carry ideological connotations and multifaceted meanings. This highlights the meta-linguistic function of language, as discussed by Language Ideology Scholars, and the productive nature of discourse, as commonly articulated by scholars in Critical Discourse Analysis. Simply put, it pertains to how political representatives in their statements perpetuate the superiority of the standard language, in this case, Swedish, to the extent that integration becomes inconceivable though other means than standard language proficiency. This predisposition resonated throughout all statements on citizenship and language, even when both the values premises and the goal-premises differed.

To address my research question, I propose a hypothesis based on my analysis of the current discursive predicament, which reflects a political leadership style characterized by strictness, urgency, and restrictiveness, accompanied by corresponding commitments to national security and safety. On a semiotic level, a point worth noting is that values such as fairness and equality are often mentioned alongside references to "realism" and appeal to "common sense." The statement "it is only natural to make demands" constitutes just one among many other examples. In effect, humanitarian values are acknowledged in theory but rejected in practice as idealistic and, therefore, impractical. Taking a more measured perspective, the underlying pretext in the practical argumentation put forth by all three parties can with some moderation be summarized as follows: Sweden's migration policy and treatment of immigrants have been marked by idealism and naiveté, trusting immigrants to master the language of our economy, shared culture, legal framework, and social fabric. This trust has been broken and by political implication, it is now imperative to adopt a more stringent and assertive approach that prioritizes the importance of duty, responsibility, and obligations on the part of immigrants, preferably in forms of citizenship requirements as this will create impetus for immigrants to integrate faster while simultaneously safeguarding or social welfare system from being exploited.

Under these discursive conditions and in a society where standard ideology still enjoys hegemonic status, language requirements on citizenship have smoothly made their way into practice, largely unchallenged, under the guise of integration but in the service of exclusionary politics. Additionally, I hope to demonstrate here the deeply troubling situation that emerges when language proficiency intersects with contentious issues like immigration and integration. Namely that it readily aligns itself with xenophobic discourses, functioning as a medium to signal ethnic and cultural belonging under the guise of ethnically "neutral" arguments to

promote integration. Furthermore, when these discourses take the form of citizenship requirements, they assume the role of political instruments driven by political agendas. In Walter's metaphorical terms, these serve as "antivirus software...a scanning infrastructure regulating the passage of flow which traverses the state and the home." (Walter, 2004, 255)

The following conclusions can be reached:

- **Firstly**, all three parties endorse language requirements for citizenship, but the underlying premises leading to this conclusion diverge in terms of the goal-premise and the corresponding value-premises. Social Democrats emphasize integration as a matter of equal opportunities and labor market participation, Moderates focus on social cohesion and economic security, and Swedish Democrats underline social cohesion, cultural preservation, and national identity.

- **Secondly**, the analysis reveals that despite these party-ideological differences, the insistence on Swedish proficiency remains consistent in pursuit of all three goal-premises, highlighting the prevailing influence of standard ideology.

- **Finally**, it is hypothesized that the acceptance of language requirements for citizenship stems from their perceived ability to contribute to multiple objectives, primarily driven by the prevalence of discourse related to requirements, as well as concerns surrounding social and national security in matters of integration and immigration.

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