Swedish Multiculturalism in a Comparative European Perspective

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This article discusses the use of the term multiculturalism and the background of multiculturalist policies in Europe. Postwar migration within and to Europe has changed the ethnic composition of population in most European countries. The main focus is on Sweden, which more strikingly than most European countries has gone through a transformation from a relatively homogeneous society to one with a variety of ethnic and language groups. The author stresses the role of historical factors behind different countries' reception of immigrants and their attitude to programs of integration or assimilation. Parallel to xenophobix phenomena there are very decided activities from governments and organizations to counteract in Western Europe. The increasing cooperation in the economic and political field also makes the issues of immigrant, border minorities, and historic minorities relevant.

INTRODUCTION

Some years ago the Norwegian anthropologist Fredrik Barth suggested a ban on the word *culture*. His point was that this word had been overused and misused, and tended to become analytically worthless (Eriksen, 1991). Barth's intention might have been to tease his scholarly colleagues, but one could easily have his suggestion in mind when discussing the term multiculturalism in a European context. This term, *multiculturalism,* is often used when dealing with recent change in Western societies (Western Europe and North America) and refers to attempts to integrate various categories of immigrants into the host society and also give them an opportunity to keep and develop their traditional culture and lifestyle,

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or at least essential parts of them. Ideologically, multiculturalism has become a liberal alternative to assimilation.

In Europe, the term multiculturalism (and its equivalents in respective languages) has no fixed definition, either in daily political debate, or in cultural and scholarly discourse. Multiculturalism is often used to describe a situation characterized by a multitude of ethnic groups, cultures, religions, and languages. But the term also has a normative use. In this respect it refers to an ideal situation of peaceful coexistence between individuals or groups of diverse origin. In the Swedish debate, this concept (mångkulturellt samhälle) generally has a positive connotation, while in Germany, the introduction of the term *Multikulturalismus* has not met with the same acceptance (Blaschke, 1993). European countries differ in the way they refer to themselves as immigration countries. There has been a more or less subconscious tendency to neglect or suppress the fact that immigration has taken place for centuries and put its marks on population and culture (Brubacker, 1991). No Western European country has, like Canada, proclaimed itself to be a multicultural society; but Sweden, in its 1974 constitution, legitimates the efforts of religious and ethnic minorities to preserve their culture and provides considerable economic support for this purpose (Bennet *et al.*, 1989; Blanck and Tydén, 1994).

The purpose of this article is to relate multiculturalism (in the dual sense of the word) and the implementation of multiculturalist policies against the background of the great demographic, social, and political change that has taken place in Europe during the last few decades. It is important to ask how the creation of a European Union relates to the integration of new population groups and new cultures. The first task will be to demonstrate the effects of postwar migration and to what extent European countries have become more variegated in terms of language, religion, ethnicity, and culture. The second task is to survey the response to this situation. The main focus will be Sweden, with attention given to a broader European perspective. It will then be possible to discuss and partly assess current tendencies. What does multiculturalism imply and what role does multiculturalist policy play in different parts of Europe?

The choice of Sweden as a case study demands an explanation of its relevance and validity. Sweden illustrates, more than most other European countries, a radical shift from an ethnically homogeneous population to one with mixed ethnic background.

As a consequence of postwar immigration, which resulted in a changed composition, Sweden swiftly moved from a model of Swedishization, stressing the importance of cultural and ethnic assimilation of its immigrants, to a multiculturalist model that officially allows, and even invites and expects, cultural diversity. The foundation for this policy change was

laid in the years around 1970. In Europe, Sweden is known to make consistent efforts to tackle the consequences of immigration.

In many countries, Sweden is seen as a social laboratory and a model welfare state with pragmatic social solutions. In the United States, Sweden gained this reputation in the 1930s, much to the merit of Marquis Childs, who published *Sweden: The Middle Way* in 1936. Observers of Swedish social experiments have, indeed, diverged, and some have even questioned both their efficiency and human character. In Swedes' self-image, Sweden is a tolerant country with a respectful treatment of immigrant questions in the press (Ålund in Ålund and Schierup, 1991). However, nobody is happy with the way relations between immigrants and the majority population have turned out. There is unemployment, a tendency toward segregation in schools and housing, an increasing income gap, and signs of open hostility. The question of what went wrong will be considered below and put into a European perspective.

MIGRATION PATTERNS

International postwar migration, more than any other factor, has made relevant the issue of how to provide good conditions for the coexistence of cultures in European countries. This is true for both Western and Eastern Europe. In Western and Northern Europe, first intra-European labor migration, and then an influx of refugees from Latin America, Asia, and Africa, have changed the ethnic mix. Immigration has led to the introduction of new religions and opened avenues for languages hardly spoken earlier in the receiving countries. The high number of citizenship groups is striking. Sweden has received immigration on a global scale and counts more than 100 citizenship groups. In a European perspective, this is a relatively high figure, but immigration has dramatically changed the situation in nearly all European countries. This also holds true for the Baltic countries and other former republics in the Soviet Union. Proportionally, Estonia has registered the largest immigration, mainly Russians and other Slavic groups, and has probably experienced the largest population turnover of all European countries during the postwar period. In Estonia and Latvia the effects of Soviet migration policy has led to a drastically falling share of the national peoples (Dunlop, 1993).

In Western Europe, though, the purely demographic effects of immigration have not been overly dramatic, since, immigration overlooked, the European population has almost had zero growth during the last decades. Instead, the dramatic changes have rather to do with the human, national,

and cultural contents of the population. The percentage of foreigners (non-citizens) is a rough measure of the changes (see Table I).

The proportion of noncitizens is an imperfect measure of the hetero-geneity, though, because immigrants who have become naturalized must also be taken into account. This figure is relatively high in Sweden, which has a rather instrumental view of citizenship.

In order to fully understand the multiculturalist character of Western European populations, it is important to assess the extremely multifold character of migration. This means that a country that aims to integrate its "foreigners" has to manage a series of groups and categories diverse in background, size, demographic structure, migration history, etc. One way to sort immigrations is as follows: seasonal migration, labor migration, refu-gee migration, immigration from colonies, return migration, and repatria-tion. For example, labor migrants and refugees have arrived in the host countries with very different goals and, hence, respond differently to state policies. Except migration from colonies, Sweden has received immigrants from all these categories during the 20th century. Some groups have a long history in the country (Danes, Finns, Germans), while others are newcom-ers (practically all non-Europeans).

As overseas emigration almost came to a standstill at the beginning of the Great Depression, Western Europe turned into an area of (net) im-migration in the 1930s. This process accelerated in the 1940s and 1950s, but the last war year and the early postwar years were characterized by

Table I. Foreign (Noncitizen) Population of Selected European Countries[a]

	Foreign population (1000s)	Percent of total population
Austria	413.4	5.3
Belgium	904.5	9.1
Denmark	160.0	3.1
Finland	26.3	0.5
France	3,607.6	6.4
Germany	5,241.8	8.2
Italy	781.1	1.4
Netherlands	682.4	4.6
Norway	143.3	3.4
Sweden	483.7	5.6
Switzerland	1,100.3	16.3
United Kingdom	1,875.0	3.3

[a]*Source:* Organization of Economic *Cooperation and Development, Continuous Reporting System on Migration.* Trends in International Migration, Paris, 1992.

tens of millions of displaced persons seeking their way back to their places of abode or searching for a new place in destitute Europe. Modern European immigration began during the years 1944–1947. Many countries were devastated, but a few, mainly Sweden and Switzerland, immediately opened up for labor immigration. In Sweden, much of this immigration was a planned recruitment by Swedish enterprises and the Swedish Labor Market Board, and formal agreements were made between the Swedish government and governments in Central and Southern European countries, a model adopted by West Germany in the late 1950s (Klusmeyer, 1993).

Once the political situation had returned to normal after the war, there was a striking uniformity in immigration to Western European countries. Schematically, there are four phases (cf. Table II). The first phase includes the immediate postwar years with many movements over the continent: return of military troops, resettlement of displaced persons, the evacuation of refugee camps, and a beginning labor migration. Phase 2, from 1948 to 1964, was characterized by free movement between the European Community member states and the Nordic countries. Phase 3, from 1965 to 1972, could be labeled as a guest–worker period with heavy immigration from Southern Europe. Almost concurrently, a stop to economic immigration was introduced in Western European countries in 1973 as a reaction to the so-called energy crisis and the economic recession. In reality, immigration hardly abated but took new forms. This marks Phase 4, from 1973 to 1988, during which, despite restrictions, there was an increase at the end of the period. Phase 5 started in 1989: the last years have been marked by stricter application of rules and the creation of outer barriers. (For a discussion of these tendencies see Brochmann 1991.) During the last decades a situation has gradually emerged, best characterized by three zones: one *center* in Western Europe that was, and remains, a strong population magnet; one *semiperiphery* in Southern and Eastern Europe; and one *periphery*, consisting of North Africa, parts of Asia, and Latin America. The

Table II. Yearly Immigration to Western Europe[a]

1948–1964	500,000
1965–1972	1,100,000
1973–1982	700,000
1983–1988	1,100,000
1989–1993	2,300,000

[a]Source: *Invandring och asyl i teori och praktik. En jämförelse mellan tolvländers politik, Stockholm* (Statens offentliga utredningar), 1993.

semiperiphery is an area of emigration to the center as well as an area of immigration from the periphery.

Although the ebb and flow of immigration in most Western European countries run parallel, the groups immigrating vary. This is to a large extent due to different historical traditions. For example, immigration from the Muslim world differs. Muslims who have come to France have their background in North Africa, those in Great Britain primarily come from India and Pakistan, while Turks and Kurds make up the majority of immigrants in Germany. In Sweden, the number of Bosnian Muslims is currently increasing as a result of the war in former Yugoslavia, and Bosnians might become the second largest immigrant group (after the Finns).

Since the early 1980s there has been an increasingly high immigration pressure on Western Europe, and the situation is now alarming in many countries, perhaps most so in Germany. Even German liberals positively inclined toward immigration see continued influx of immigrants as unbearable for the German society (cf. Bade, 1994). After the breakdown of the Berlin Wall and the fall of communism there has been more intensive immigration from Eastern to Western Europe. The destabilization in the former Soviet Union is a factor that is very difficult to assess in attempts to make a prognosis for population movements in the future.

SWEDEN BECOMING ETHNICALLY HETEROGENEOUS

Sweden, like the other Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway), stood out as ethnically homogeneous long into the twentieth century.[2] The Swedish census of 1930 noted less than 1% of "foreign stock," including Lapps and Finns. This is an interesting example of categorization, because both Lapps and Finns had been living for more than a half millennium in the Swedish realm. During the interwar period, Sweden, like most European countries, was restrictive in its attitude toward refugees and immigrants. The slogan was "Sweden for the Swedes." The gradual legal changes governing aliens reflected a desire to keep the country free from foreign elements (Lindberg, 1973). After the war, the attitude was radically changed, and the door was opened. The change had begun during the war. One turning point was the rather clandestine reception of Norwegian Jews in 1942 and the rescue actions in October 1943 by Danes and Swedes to save the lives of approximately 6000 Danish Jews in Nazi-occupied Denmark who were at risk of being taken to Nazi concentration and extermi-

[2]One exception is the Swedish-speaking group in Finland, the share of which has decreased during the 20th century, now being 6%, see below.

nation camps. The sociopsychologic effects of these actions cannot be over-looked in understanding the shifts in Sweden's political climate and immi-gration policy (cf. Svanberg and Tydén, 1992, for a book-length treatment of Swedish immigration in a historical perspective).

The Swedish majority population never embarked on any discourse on cultural issues with the Nordic and other European groups that arrived in the country in the 1940s and the 1950s. Only slowly did an understanding about the cultural ambitions of immigrant groups develop, and it took a long time before the consciousness matured to an understanding that the many refugees and economic migrants were a cultural challenge to society. The established attitude was that immigrants should become Swedes, adopt Swedish manners and customs, and harmonize with Swedish society.

A statement by the Swedish foreign minister, Östen Undén, in 1945 illustrates the official assimilationist stance vis-à-vis the immigrant groups. In January 1946, Undén commented in the parliament on the approxi-mately 30,000 Balts who had arrived at the end of the war: it would be best for these groups if they returned to build up their home country, the Soviet Union. If they were to stay in Sweden, they were expected to become Swedish and behave as Swedes. It may be added that Undén's declaration was made at a time when there was a strong desire from the Soviet gov-ernment to gain control over the Baltic elements in Sweden. Structurally, the Balts in Sweden were integrated quickly, but retained a strong collective identity and carried on traditions from their homeland. This was especially true of the Estonians, who developed a rich and faceted cultural and as-sociational life in Sweden. So did the Latvians, although their much smaller number did not permit such a wide variety of ethnic institutions. To the Estonians, the preservation of the language in exile was fundamental (Raag and Runblom, 1988).

Since 1930, Sweden and the neighboring countries have traveled a long way. As noted, there has been a change in the ethnic mix as Sweden has gradually widened the areas from which it receives immigrants. More-over, there has also been a turn, at least in principle, towards accepting immigrants' rights to preserve their cultural traits. Sweden has embarked on an official policy of acceptance, and even encouragement, of cultural variation. It must be asked, then, how a society that had been so assimi-lationist and skeptical of making room for foreign cultures could make a 180° turn and declare itself pluralistic. There were several important factors.

First there was a growing awareness that some groups that had arrived in Sweden during the late 1950s and the 1960s were not easily integrated. During the 1940s and 1950s, immigrants had come from a Central or West-ern European background (industrialized and urbanized) that had at least some resemblance to the Scandinavian lifestyle. The groups that started to

arrive around 1960, however, originated mainly from rural areas in Turkey and Greece and had substantially weaker educational backgrounds.

Second, with the latter groups in mind, initiatives were taken in the mid-1960s within the government, and a task force, headed by Mr. Kjell Öberg, was appointed. Öberg's group reported directly to the National Labor Market Commission and the Ministry of Labor. They worked with unconventional methods, sought remedies, and worked in contact with municipal boards and employers. They came up with and tested very concrete solutions, e.g., language training, and tried it on a small scale.

Third, in certain circles awareness was growing that the state had a moral responsibility for the well-being of people who had come to Sweden to work and who had decided to stay in the country. The number of motions in the Swedish parliament between 1966 and 1968 demonstrates this new awareness. Many of these proposals were for educational and cultural support to ethnic groups, particularly the Balts. Swedish authorities finally discovered and accepted the consequences of the population's diverse cultural and linguistic composition.

Fourth, there was international pressure on Sweden to exhibit a more flexible attitude to the linguistic and cultural maintenance of minorities. This pressure should not be overemphasized, but clear signals came from the Finnish government. There was a deep concern in Finland about the draining of the Finnish population. During the postwar years Finland had served as the main source of foreign labor for the Swedish labor market. The flight of Finnish men and women was felt as a drain of blood and was regarded as a parallel to the trans-Atlantic migration in the beginning of the century. As emigration grew, the Finnish government felt the need to protect the country's economy. It became important to prepare Finns in Sweden for a return to Finland. This had deep cultural implications, and the language preservation of the Finnish speakers was a key issue. If the Finns in Sweden were able to preserve and strengthen their language, then the potential for remigration would be larger and the returning migrants' capacity to reintegrate in Finland would be greater. Finnish measures were undertaken both at home and abroad, and the Finns used the Nordic council channels to press for cooperation on certain regulations within the Nordic labor market. Finland's demands on Sweden were important to the launching of the Swedish home language reform.

As a result of this change of direction, immigrants were granted certain cultural rights. The cultural ambitions of immigrants were protected in the constitution. The Swedish Instrument of Government (*Regeringsformen*) of 1974 exhorts support for linguistic, religious, and cultural groups who prefer to maintain their characteristics. A series of programs was designed, accepted and implemented. Support for journals produced in im-

migrant languages, support for the instruction in home languages in the public school system, and even the right to participate in political elections on the municipal level were included. Also, qualifying for Swedish citizenship was made easier.

The reforms, designed to buttress the immigrants' ambitions to preserve their culture and to give them wider elbow-room in Swedish society, were accompanied by rhetoric. The basis for integration was summarized in the concept "equality, freedom of choice, and cooperation" (*jämlikhet, valfrihet, samverkan*). Equality in this context was understood as parity between immigrants and Swedes regarding rights, duties, and opportunities. The freedom-of-choice goal supported immigrants' right to choose whether to retain their homeland culture, to "become Swedes," or to blend traits from the homeland and Swedish culture. The cooperation goal was concord between majority and minority populations. The three catchwords were repeated over and over by Swedish members of government and officials at state and local levels as the leading principle for the majority's relations to the immigrant minorities. However, these principles were decided upon without much consideration by the legislature and over time there were varying interpretations. One clarification was given in 1986 when the main goals were repeated in a government proposition: immigrants were supposed to develop their cultural heritage "within the framework of the basic norms that are valid for human coexistence in our society."

It is hardly surprising that it is possible to point at one arena after another (e.g., court, school, public social assistance) where these principles have not been easy to apply. The home language reform has been costly, and efficiency and cultural effects are now questioned more and more. To integrate immigrants in politics, Sweden in 1975 granted voting rights in local elections to all foreign citizens residing in the country for three years. Only 60% of the enfranchised foreign citizens voted in 1976. In 1991 this figure fell to 41% (Soininen and Bäck, 1993).

SWEDISH MULTICULTURALISM IN THE LIGHT OF HISTORICAL LEGACY

The policy of pluralism was a break with Swedish tradition, since immigrants have always, though at differing paces, assimilated and adopted Swedish habits and lifestyle. They have, indeed, made strong imprints on Swedish economic and cultural life, but no lasting immigrant culture has developed. Walloon concentrations around Swedish ironworks existed for a couple of generations, but were gradually dissolved. (The Walloons were recruited from today's southern Belgium in the 1600s and they stressed the

necessity of endogamy to preserve their trade secrets in their special niche of iron production.) Jewish immigrants started to arrive in Sweden in the late 18th century, but gradually were assimilated (or *emancipated* as several historians described it). The few ethnic enclaves that existed soon dissolved like the small and tight Jewish milieus that developed in Swedish cities at the end of the 19th century. Jewish traditions have persisted, but mainly because Jewish immigration has been more or less continuous. Few, if any, of the members of the Stockholm or Gothenburg Jewish congregations today are third- or fourth-generation immigrants.

Much of the political processes in Europe over the last two centuries have been aimed at creating states that stress national traditions and the homogenization of the population. An overview of immigration and multiculturalism policies in Europe demonstrates the importance of historical traditions. One aspect often referred to is the diverging German and France concepts of state and citizenship, the *ius sanguinis* in the former and the *ius soli* in the latter, which provide varying fundamentals for the reception of foreigners and immigrants. From a sociological perspective, the German situation is extremely complex. Some observers see historic roots of German xenophobia. In German culture there has traditionally been a strong dichotomy between Germans and non-Germans (*deutsch* and *undeutsch*). The idea of Germans as one people (*ein Volk*) grew out of the German national process in the 19th century. The idea of the Germans as one *Volk* is also linked to German wars: war purifies the people (or the nation). The current unification of the two Germanies and the amalgamation of the East Germans and West Germans have added another factor to the German identity process. Those who are not identified as Germans, primarily immigrants and asylum seekers, have a much weaker position (cf. Hessler, 1993).

In the case of Sweden with its special traditions, one might ask if the country can adopt to the kind of pluralism that it has delineated. Some historical factors suggest that it cannot. An inventory of Swedish historical factors and traditions standing in opposition to the current pluralist policies and can be summarized in the following way:

1. Sweden is not by birth or tradition a multicultural or multiethnic society. Unlike Canada, the state does not have two founding races (if one permits this term, which is often used in North America but obsolete in parts of Europe). Unlike Finland, Sweden has not based its identity as a state on different linguistic groups. Groups who immigrated assimilated rather quickly.
2. As a consequence, Sweden has had no experience in minority legislation, and there is no positive tradition of treating minorities. For example, Estonian-speaking Estonians who came to Sweden

during World War II were very surprised at Sweden's indifference to their claims to be treated as a minority. The Swedish authorities did not understand their wish to organize schools of their own. The Estonian struggle for their own schools is thus a sad story.

3. Sweden is an old nation, with a past as a regional great power. We are consolidated as a society, and while an expanding power in the 1600s, we established a strong central power, based on crown and church. Swedes still live with much of the centralist tendencies that grew strong in the days of Gustavus Adolphus and his successors.

4. This uniformity tendency is strong, particularly in the sphere of education. The alphabetization campaign was a nationwide undertaking. The educational program led by the church helped make the society fairly uniform. There are further examples: (a) the introduction of the elementary school (*folkskola*) from 1842 on; (b) the school reforms after 1945 — the *enhetsskola,* the *grundskola,* the lack of tradition when it comes to private schools; (c) the home language reform (*hemspråksreformen*) in the middle of the 1970s was a uniform solution aimed at home language training for all language groups, whether they were counted in hundreds of thousands, like the Finnish speaking, or just a handful of prospective pupils.

5. Sweden was never a colonial power. Therefore the country does not have any relations to decolonized areas as does, for example, Great Britain and the Netherlands.

6. Sweden has traditionally been religiously uniform in contrast to, for example, the Netherlands, which has a tradition of creating a *modus vivendi* between various religious groups.

SWEDISH MULTICULTURALISM ASSESSED

The swing to official acceptance of ethnic pluralism and the relatively abrupt change from an assimilationist society to a "multiculturalist" one during the years around 1970 coincided with other changes that were not, and could not possibly be, foreseen by the legislators. First, the measures to meet demands from various immigrant groups were introduced in a situation when the ethnic mix seemed to be given. Immigrants came from many countries in Europe and North America and represented a substantial number of languages. Moreover, all groups except a small number of immigrants from Turkey and Yugoslavia represented Christian traditions. The majority of these groups reflected "European values." When introducing new prin-

ciples for cultural choice, neither legislators, nor media debaters, envisioned the large-scale advent of non-Europeans and non-Christians.

Second, official cultural pluralism was introduced in Sweden when the Swedish economy was prospering and the country was still among the top five gross national product countries in the world. A drastic change came in the beginning of the 1970s, when the growth rate declined and Sweden gradually, more quickly than most observers realized, approached a period when the expansion of generous state-supported reforms were no longer economically justifiable.

Sweden, like all Western European states, tried to stop the large-scale immigration in the beginning of the 1970s. As was typical of the European experience, this "stop" had limited effects. Immigration based on family reunion was allowed, and the refugee immigration, which was not affected by the immigration stop, escalated in the 1970s and 1980s. Earlier labor immigrants had given more to the economy than they took out of it, and multiculturalist reforms were primarily aimed at these groups. The immigrants of the 1970s and 1980s added much less to the production potential. Also, structural reforms in production have demanded higher educational levels and more cultural competence in the labor force. An increasingly large share of immigrants have stayed out of the work force, and in the early 1990s this reached a critical level.

There is a tendency toward a new class society in Sweden with the non-Europeans forming a largely unemployed underclass. Among Iranians, who began to arrive in huge numbers in the mid-1980s, even highly qualified display unemployment of more than 50%. The Bosnians, arriving in large numbers because of the war in former Yugoslavia, like the Iranians, are mainly Muslim. Their chances are better, however, simply because they are Europeans. They may soon be the next largest immigrant group in Sweden, second only to the Finns. However, Bosnians run the risk of becoming ghettoized or suppressed in a vicious circle of unemployment and benevolent caretaking from various social agencies. The vulnerability of different groups is illustrated by statistics on Swedish unemployment (Table III).

The Swedish model of cultural pluralism was implemented according to the Swedish welfare state principles. It should be stressed that the construction of the welfare state is based on a political compromise between left and right (cf. Uddhammar, 1993). There has been a broad acceptance in all parties in parliament both of the principles of cultural pluralism and their implementation. Since 1991, however, the cost of some of the programs has been questioned by the upstart protest party New Democracy (*Ny demokrati*).

Also, the implementation of cultural pluralism has taken place in the tradition of Swedish welfare policy, which includes *comprehensiveness* (welfare

Table III. Sweden: Unemployment According to
Citizenship 1993[a]

	Men	Women
Total population	9.7	6.6
Foreign citizens	24.0	17.0
Finnish	16.5	8.9
Danish	7.7	11.6
Norwegian	19.6	7.9
Yugoslav	19.3	18.7
Iranian	52.3	55.5
Turkish	24.2	24.1
Chilean	30.2	38.1
Polish	27.1	27.2

[a]*Source: Arbetskraftsundersökningarna.* Here quoted form
Eskil Wadensjö, "Sverige och invandringen från öst," in
Richard Layard *et al.* (eds.), Invandringen från öst,
Stockholm: Studieförbundet Näringsliv och samhälle, 1994,
p. 104.

provisions should be provided for everybody), *social entitlement* (the individual
has a right to a broad spectrum of social services), and *universalism* (it in-
cludes the entire population). (See Allardt, 1986, for a discussion of welfare
state principles.) This has also led to a critique of the way in which Swedish
society has welcomed and treated its immigrants and refugees. According to
the critique, there has been too much stress on the individual and too little
understanding of the need of the group, whether family, kin, or congregation.
Sociologist Kjell Magnusson has clearly demonstrated the problematic in the
encounter between the bureaucratic welfare society and immigrants from
southern Yugoslavia who were rooted in other traditions (Magnusson, 1989).
Also, corporatist Sweden has wanted immigrants to organize themselves in
nationwide associations according to patterns based on the model of popular
movements that grew out of political traditions during the latter part of the
19th and the early part of the 20th century. The integration of immigrants
according to this principle took place during a period when this model of
relations was fading away (cf. Schierup, 1991).

Much of Swedish model thinking can be illustrated by the way Sweden
received refugees during the 1980s. The increasing number of refugees
pressed the state to find new solutions, distribute the "burdens" of recep-
tion, and take care of the refugees. The refugee reception program, imple-
mented in the mid-1980s, was a typical Swedish way of solving a social
problem: a uniform solution and an all-Sweden strategy, whereby almost
all municipalities eventually were to provide proper means for refugees,
leaving limited room for private activities and non-governmental organiza-

tions. The unpredictable factor was, of course, an increase in the number of people seeking refuge in the country, which far exceeded all calculations. The far-reaching integrative goal was not achieved, and the implementation was in practice a compromise between the "paternalist" social administration, school, employment agency, etc., in the respective municipalities and the National Immigration Board. The Board, which having had great visions, also carried operative responsibility but had weak organization in the field (Soininen, 1992).

A EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE

The introduction of Swedish multiculturalism meant a clear break with Swedish traditions. The deep character of this change and its possible effects were never really pondered by the framers. The timing of this change is interesting because it coincided with, and was evidently inspired by, the current debate and reforms in Canada. When discussing and assessing multiculturalism, one has to distinguish between three main categories of states:

1. countries with territorial minorities (e.g., Switzerland, and Yugoslavia until 1991);
2. countries that have built their modern history on large-scale immigration (e.g., Australia, Canada, United States); and
3. countries in which large-scale immigration is a recent phenomenon (e.g., Sweden and other Western European countries).

The conditions for formation of a pluralist society are quite different for these three groups of countries. Switzerland, for example, builds its balance between the ethnic groups on a strong historical tradition with problem-solving mechanisms. Both Canada and Switzerland have experienced large-scale immigration during the last half century, and both countries have at their foundation the interplay between two founding "races" (the British and French in Canada, not to forget the marginalized native groups) and language groups distributed in a clear-cut territorial pattern (German-, French-, Italian-, and Rhaeto-Romanic languages in Switzerland). The main distinction between Canada and Switzerland is that the former has built its modern history on immigration and has adopted multiculturalism as a basic principle in which the new immigrants (the so-called other ethnic groups) play a distinctive role, while Switzerland has more or less refrained from integrating its postwar immigrants and retained much of a guest-worker system. One hypothesis here is that the delicate balance between the four language groups is extremely sensitive to the immersion of immi-

grants on a permanent basis. During the 19th and 20th centuries, Finland also developed a *modus vivendi* between the two language groups (Finnish speakers and Swedish-speakers). There is in Finland, though, the latent question of immigration, which is quite small, but if larger would affect the population structure in municipalities and regions where the balance between the language groups is unsettled.

For a variety of reasons, certain immigrant groups and individuals are positively or negatively treated in Western European societies. The positive treatment (which is of course a negative in the eyes of the less privileged) is mainly an effect of bilateral and multilateral agreements between states and groups of states. There are different special treatments on the basis of citizenship in the framework of Western European cooperation. Theoretically, a Danish citizen has a favored position, since Denmark is member both of the European Union (EU) and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). Within the EU, Danish citizens have access to the labor market. Traditionally, Danes also have access to the Nordic labor market, which includes four countries outside Denmark. The European Economic Space (EES) agreement between the EU and EFTA members leveled out differences in this respect between all Western European countries.[3] And while public opinion in Germany lumps together all those who have come to the country as *immigrants,* the legal difference between different groups is substantial.

There is a strong link between the way European societies treat their immigrants and the way they treat their other minorities. There is a question as to whether immigrant groups should be labeled minorities, or whether the term minority should be used only for certain groups, specifically designated and with clearly identified rights. The linguistic usage here is unsettled. The more restricted use is applied here.

Since EC/EU policy propels mobility between the member states, migrants' cultural and linguistic rights are becoming pressing (Italians in Germany, Germans in the Netherlands, etc.). The increasing cooperation in the economic and political field also makes the issues of border minorities and historic minorities relevant. One case, more or less solved in harmony, is the century-old controversy over the Danish-German minority in the border areas between the two countries. In the increased cooperation in defense policy and the prospects of West Germany's membership in NATO, this inflammatory issue was solved on the initiative of the Bonn government in the mid-1950s. A positive sign is that some states are abandoning their ostrich policy. Poland, which for decades did not officially acknowledge the existence of its minorities, has embarked on a new line, officially acknowledging its German, Byelorussian, and other minorities. States have signed

[3]Switzerland has not signed this agreement.

treaties about mutual protection for minorities. Several international con-
ventions in the human rights sphere focus on the situation of minorities,
for example, the 1992 United Nations *Declaration of the Rights of Persons
Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities.* There
is parallel development regarding treaties involving European states, and
there is also focus on immigrant groups.

In multiethnic Europe, minority issues of the more traditional Euro-
pean model have come to the fore. Territorial minorities like the Bretons,
the Welsh, and the Scots, mobilized themselves in the 1960s and requested
regional self-government; the Faroe Islanders and the Åland Islanders have
successfully achieved semiautonomous status, but the Faroe case illustrates
the vulnerability of autonomy when the economic base is weak. The recent
tendencies toward administrative decentralization in France and Belgium
and the official acceptance of regional languages in Spain should also be
seen in this context (Söhrman, 1993).

In the new majority–minority climate in Europe with a growing sym-
pathy toward claims from minorities, Finnish-speaking Finns in Sweden
have asked to receive the formal acceptance of a nonterritorial minority in
Sweden. They are asking for cultural autonomy and sometimes refer to the
Estonian Law of Cultural Autonomy of 1925, which gave certain groups
special privileges and the right to taxation. They also refer to the fact that
Finnish is one of the languages that has always been spoken in the Swedish
realm (beside Swedish and Lappish). In addition, they refer to the situation
in Finland, where the Swedish-speaking minority has certain constitutional
rights. The Swedish government seems to have some difficulty in respond-
ing properly to these requests.

The critique against the Swedish state is pronounced from a few
groups, and most so by the Saami (Lappish) minority, who maintain that
Sweden is slow in signing international conventions on human rights and
minority rights and is unwilling to respond to demands and critique from
its historic minorities. The conflicts between the Saami (Lapps) and the
Swedish state are extremely old and the Saami have just organized to pro-
tect their interests in this century. As an indirect consequence of the im-
migrant policy, the Saami, an autochthonous population of some 20,000,
have received some guarantees regarding culture and language.

CONCLUSION

Rising xenophobia is a tendency in several Western European coun-
tries of immigration. Robbery of immigrants, attacks on homes of asylum
seekers and foreigners, and demonstrations in favor of a restricted immi-

grant policy are more common now than a decade ago. Parallel to these phenomena, we see very sharp and decided activities from governments and organizations to counteract. These phenomena are evident both in countries with few immigrants, such as Norway, and countries with many immigrants, such as Germany, where confrontations between police and demonstrating youth have been vehement during the last years.

The discussion above has concentrated on Sweden, which has made ambitious efforts to tackle the considerable problems of integrating large and diverse groups of immigrants. Introducing multiculturalist policies has been much in contrast to Swedish historical tradition, and the social experimenting has so far not been wholly successful. One aspect, not fully considered, is historical factors, and parallel European experiences clearly demonstrate that past experiences as state and nation can not be neglected.

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