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Analysis of the political debate on citizenship testing in Sweden and the UK

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Abstract

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In recent decades, more and more countries in the Western world have introduced higher requirements on language and civics skills for the granting of citizenship. This tendency has been referred to by Joppke (2007) as ‘the civic integration policy trend’.

In the UK, citizenship testing has been an established concept since the 1980s, and the British political discourse on immigration can be said to be in line with the civic integration policy. Sweden on the other hand, is one of the few countries in Europe lacking citizenship tests, and has thus, so far, been considered a deviant from this trend.

This study explores and compares arguments concerning citizenship testing in the political discourse of Sweden and the UK using critical discourse analysis. It will analyse political proposals and announcements published between the years of 2003-2018 by the Swedish and British governments.

The Swedish and British political discourses were found to differ in certain aspects, for instance in regards of the themes of immigration control, selectivism and elitism. However, common traits were also found, which, in combination with an increased engagement in this issue, may imply a growing influence of the civic integration policy in the Swedish debate.

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1. Introduction

In the Western world, there is a widespread belief that a common language, and to some extent a common culture, is important for national cohesion. Many countries speak of the necessity of language learning for immigrants, as knowledge in the majority language is believed to give access to democratic rights, political and societal participation, as well as to unifying communities. Although most agree on the positive effects of a common language, there are varying views on how language learning for immigrants should be encouraged and executed.

Today, citizenship testing¹ exists in almost all countries in the Western world (Globaliseringsrådet, 2008:34). In these countries, applicants must demonstrate sufficient knowledge in the majority language and/or culture, history and values of the country of residence. Implementation of citizenship testing has been met both by positive and negative criticism. The advocates claim that this will function as an incentive for language learning and integration, which, in the long run, will lead to a stronger national cohesion, while the opponents believe that it has the opposite effect; excluding groups rather than creating an equal and unified society. Critics have also claimed that citizenship tests are often used for immigration control (Joppke, 2007:5) rather than as a means of integration, aiming to reduce the number of new citizens, or to exclude those considered 'low-skilled' or 'un-adaptable'.

In recent decades, more and more countries have introduced citizenship testing or have extended already existing demands. This pattern of policy changes in Europe, illustrating what Borevi (2014:715) calls a retreat of multiculturalism, is discussed by Joppke (2007) as part of a 'civic integration policy trend'. The British policy on citizenship is seemingly in line with the general trend in Europe. In the UK, citizenship tests have existed since the 1980s, and have been extended and modified several times. Sweden, however, is one of the few countries that has not yet introduced language or civics testing for new citizens, and has thus been considered a deviant from this trend (Borevi, 2014). In Sweden, voices opposing an implementation have up until the previous decade dominated the political discourse. Yet, lately, the debate concerning language testing has started to change. Several of the largest

¹ In this study, the term 'citizenship testing' covers both language and civics tests. When these concepts are discussed separately, the individual terms will be used.

political parties that formerly objected to the idea now speak positively about a potential introduction of citizenship testing or language requirements for certain groups of people².

Considering that citizenship testing has been an established concept in the UK for decades, while in Sweden the broad engagement in this issue is relatively new, the political discourses can be assumed to differ in these two contexts. However, even if proposals concerning an introduction of citizenship tests, so far, has been rejected by the Swedish government, the growing interest in the issue, raises the question of whether the Swedish debate has crept closer to the civic integration policy trend (presumably prevalent in the British debate) in recent years.

1.1 Aim

This study aims to explore and compare arguments concerning citizenship testing in the political discourse of Sweden and the UK in the 2000s. The analysis examines 12 Swedish parliamentary procedures (Swe. *motioner*) and 11 UK Government announcements, including speeches, news stories, articles, press releases and written statements to Parliament, published between 2003-2018, using critical discourse analysis (CDA). This study aspires to identify some similarities and disparities in the two political discourses, and to discuss them in their social context, especially in line with the concept of ‘the civic integration policy’ as depicted by Joppke (2007).

² Some parties have suggested language demands for those newly arrived and unemployed, as a condition for continuance of economical allowance. In these cases, language skills are thus not a requirement for citizenship per se, but still concern the topic of language demands for immigrants.

1.2 Research questions

The research questions asked in the present study are:

- What characteristics can be seen in the political debates on citizenship testing in Sweden and in the UK respectively, during the time period of 2003-2018?
- How does the Swedish political discourse concerning citizenship testing compare to that of the UK?
- How much does the political discourse in the Swedish proposals deviate from the so called ‘civic integration policy trend’, and how visible is the ideology of the same policy in the British debate?

1.3 Overview of study

Section 2 presents some previous research conducted on the topic of citizenship and citizenship testing. Firstly it provides some general information, followed by two sections presenting research concerning the British and the Swedish debates separately. Section 3 presents the material and method, and is followed by results and discussion, presented in section 4. The final section provides a conclusion of the present study.

2. Previous research on citizenship and citizenship testing

This section will provide background on the topic of citizenship and citizenship testing in Europe and in the UK and Sweden. It is quite an extensive overview. However, it was considered relevant to provide information about the context in which the material discussed in the analysis part of the study occurs.

2.1 The civic integration policy trend in Europe

Large-scale immigration is a recent phenomenon in Europe compared to for example North America and Australia. Piller (2001) claims that therefore, Europe does not have a common pattern for integration and citizenship testing (2001:265). Instead, she claims, the laws concerning citizenship in European countries are much more dependent upon the countries' independent national ideologies. However, Joppke (2007) identifies a trend having spread across Europe in recent decades; namely the emergence of a 'civic integration policy', also described as a 'retreat' of multiculturalism (Borevi, 2014:715).

The civic integration policy was developed in the Netherlands in the 1990s, after having faced what Joppke calls "one of Europe biggest socioeconomic integration failures" (Joppke, 2007:5) under a multiculturalist policy. Joppke discusses the civic integration policy as a trend of changes of integration policy happening all over Europe. These changes concerned "a new insistence that newcomers acquire the language of the host country and learn about its history, norms and traditions" (Borevi, 2014:713), "signifying the importance of immigrants integrating more fully into the mainstream of society" (Borevi, 2014:715). The viewpoint also changed from having considered legal status as an enhancer of integration, to the lack of integration being considered as the reason for lack of legal status (Joppke, 2007:8). Essentially, it could be described as a move from an integrationist view, towards an assimilationist view.

This amounts to a paradox between two ideologies (Joppke, 2007:15). Joppke claims that many countries officially ascribe to the 'two-way' integration policy, citing the EU's "common basic principles' of immigrant integration policy [...]: 'Integration is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of the Member States'" (Council of the European Union 2004:19, cited in Joppke, 2007:3). This declaration states it is not only the 'newcomer' who should adjust in an integration process, but also the

receiving society. This, however, contradicts the civic integration policy, that places most responsibility of integration, if not all, on the newcomer (Joppke, 2007:4). The newcomer is also expected and rewarded on assimilating into the majority society: “[i]t thus has quite literally become true that ‘everyone is responsible for his own integration’” (Joppke, 2007:7). Joppke further argues that:

[t]his stance [the ‘two-way’ integration] has become a platitude, but one should not therefore forget its extreme improbability. Ever since the transition from nomadic to settled life in the Neolithic Revolution, the maxim that settled populations had put forward to newcomers was that they should adapt to their ways – ‘when in Rome do as the Romans do’. The idea that something as complex and extensive as the receiving society, a ‘society’ after all and not just ‘people’, should change in response to the arrival of by nature numerically inferior ‘migrants’ is unheard of. That a settled society *would* change as a result of migration is of course inevitable, but elevating this into an ethical maxim, a *should*, is an unprecedented stance to take. (Joppke, 2007:3)

Another critique of the civic integration policy is that it could be used as a migration control, that would also be likely to make the immigration policy a selective and elitist process (Joppke, 2007:5), serving “to weed out nondesirable applicants” (Piller, 2001:268). In this policy, it is easy for ‘highly skilled’ migrants to settle, while it becomes increasingly difficult for those considered ‘low-skilled’ (Joppke, 2007:8). Joppke, however, does not ascribe these views to racism or nationalism, but argues that they are inherent in liberalism itself, although stating that it is likely to have an exclusionary and discriminatory effect (Joppke, 2007:15).

The civic integration policy seems to be prevalent in the UK, but Sweden is a more ambiguous case. Borevi (2014) claims that these ideas are not established in Sweden, which, at least in the sense of a law of citizenship testing, has deviated from this tendency. Piller states that it is ideology that is the main reason for the opposition among countries lacking citizenship testing, drawing on two clear examples: Israel and Sweden. Israel, she claims, lacks language demands because a common religion is the strongest factor for national belonging, which renders a common language irrelevant (Piller, 2001:265). As for Sweden, Piller states that it is the ideology of multiculturalism that has been the main reason for the lack of citizenship testing. Borevi (2014) reinforces this stance, stating that since the 1970s, Sweden has aimed “to avoid previous forms of ethnic ‘Swedifying’”, and from then on the policy has been “oriented towards affirming and supporting immigrants’ ethnic identities” (Borevi, 2014:711). She also claims that Sweden has previously shown ‘little engagement’ on

the issue of citizenship testing. This will be further explored in this study, discussed in section 2.3, as well as in the analysis.

2.2 Research on the debate on citizenship testing in the UK

In the United Kingdom, citizenship testing has existed since 1981, implemented as part of the *British Nationality Act*. The law has since been developed and extended numerous times. A debated addition was introduced along with the *Nationality, Immigration and Asylum act* from 2002, which extended the citizenship requirements to include spouses of British citizens, who had previously been exempted. This act also introduced the now current *Life in the United Kingdom test*, testing both proficiency in the English language, as well as skills about British life, values, history and traditions. The recent debate on citizenship testing in the UK has largely been concerned with the different supplements and changes of the current law, commonly regarding the content of the tests and the extension of individuals included, as well as the reasons preceding and consequences following.

Blackledge (2006) discusses the effects of citizenship testing, focusing specifically on the extension of the law in 2002. This extension was debated, mainly because of the time of its introduction. The act was presented shortly after a particularly turbulent time in the UK, when escalated conflicts between the Asian immigrant population and the white British-born population lead to race riots in several cities during 2001. Blackledge claims that these events were the reason for, or at least heavily influenced, the introduction of the new act (Blackledge, 2006:28). As the proposition of an extended language demand was presented in direct contact to these incidents, Blackledge claims that the Government presented insufficient knowledge in English as the main explanation for the turbulence, and that the minority immigrant population were consequently blamed (Blackledge, 2006:38). In other words, lacking knowledge in the majority language was constructed as a threat to national security and cohesion, and the extension was introduced to present a solution to societal problems.

According to Blackledge, advocates of language testing only speak of the advantages of learning the majority language, arguing for social justice and active societal participation, without mentioning actual advantages with the concept of ‘testing’ (Blackledge 2006:39). He further argues that problems following a law of citizenship testing are ignored in the political

debate, such as the risk of individuals failing the tests being excluded from society. As most critics of language testing, Blackledge does not question the favourable impact that language is likely to have on integration. He states that many valid arguments about language as an important tool in integration are brought forward in the debate, such as the way of facilitating participation in society and the overall positive effects of people being able to communicate with each other. However, Blackledge claims that there is no clear connection between demanding that someone learns a language, and their ability to actually do it (Blackledge 2006:39). In addition, he argues that it is naïve to claim that knowledge of English would lead to acceptance and employment in the new country, because this way of arguing ignores factors such as racism and discrimination.

Blackledge is thus strongly critical of the idea of language and civic tests, as he believes that this system prolongs and reinforces alienation. He claims that the demands are likely to exclude entire groups of people, and strip them of the chance to practice their democratic rights. He further argues that language testing becomes discriminatory instead of the expressed purpose of aiding integration, and that there is a disagreement between the political discourse and the law in practice, as the government, while promoting integration and a multicultural society, also supports a law, whose consequences would lead to the opposite result.

Similarly to Blackledge, Han, Starkey and Green (2010) discuss language testing in the UK in relation to integration, multiculturalism, assimilation and citizenship. They ask if citizenship tests are really introduced out of a genuine will to prepare and integrate new citizens, or if it is rather a measure to reduce immigration, and especially the number of individuals who are uneducated (Han et al., 2010:66), (which is now evidently an explicit argument, as will be discussed in section 6). Han et al. were also interested in finding out how students themselves experienced language courses and tests. In order to grasp this, they conducted interviews with students and teachers at an ESOL *skills for life* course in the UK. In these interviews, they spoke to 8 students from Somalia, Eritrea, Turkey and Portugal. All the students from non-EU countries intended to apply for citizenship in the UK.

Han et al. state that the interviewees believed that it was important to learn English as residents in the UK and found that both the language- and civics-part of the course were relevant and helpful. The students attested that being taught about British society helped them

to integrate socially and economically and gave them more confidence to orient themselves in society. Han, Starkey and Green (2010) also emphasise that neither teachers nor students found the tests discriminatory. With that basis, they conclude that the language demand, despite involving some problems, is not as bad as some critics claim. However, from Blackledge's perspective, the fact that there is a natural motivation, appreciation for, and value of language courses would not be a valid argument for language testing, as it still leaves out the specific benefit of 'testing'.

Han et al. (2010) point out that it is important to separate courses and tests, and they also acknowledge that conditions for citizenship could entail the exclusion of certain groups of people. On the other hand, they do not believe that the current language policy is meant to function as a barrier to immigrants seeking citizenship, partly because the law only demands an improvement of the language, in contrast to an absolute standard. Even if they do see a potential tendency towards a policy of assimilation, they argue that the ideology behind the law is grounded in a belief that knowledge of a national language is important for economic, social and political integration (Han et al., 2010:73), benefitting the applicant. They especially point to the results of their study, showing that the students themselves did not experience the demands as discriminatory.

However, Han et al. focus on another issue with the current the policy. In 2006, cutbacks were made in the budget for language courses, which meant that the courses, for many people, were no longer cost-free. This, they claim, is more likely to lead to discrimination, creating a barrier between certain groups of immigrants (Han et al., 2010:64). The teachers interviewed in the study believed that those most likely to be affected by the cutbacks were part-time working students enrolled in evening courses, a group who, they believed, would not be able to afford to pay for the education themselves (Han et al., 2010:70-71). However, somewhat surprisingly, Han et al. still argue that it is not unreasonable for the government to claim a cost, saying that the students should see the course as an investment. They also maintain that this potential discrimination was not a conscious act from the government, but rather an unfortunate result of an inevitable cutback in budget.

In a more recent study, Byrne also examined the experiences of citizenship applicants in the UK (Byrne, 2017), with a fairly different result. Byrne was interested in how applicants experienced the content of the tests, as well as the requirement to take it. Similarly to

Blackledge, her views on the tests are that they are “an attempt to reassure (Forrtier, 2008: 101) public anxieties about immigration” (Byrne, 2017:325), as demands on language and civics skills have been introduced “at times when immigration is highly politicised.” (Byrne, 2017:334). She agrees with the view that there has been a change in Europe in the past 10-20 years, and that countries are starting to question multiculturalism and returning to a more assimilationist policy (Byrne, 2017:324). In the following passage she discusses the view on immigration in the UK:

Multicultural tolerance, and celebration of difference, has been blamed for fostering too much separation and of being weak in the face of cultural forces hostile to Christianity and western culture (Kundnani, 2014). In response to these fears, there has been a renewed focus on ‘British values’ – for example, in the recently introduced duty of schools to ‘actively promote fundamental British values’ through the curriculum. (Byrne, 2017:324)

Byrne (2017) also discusses the altered regulations concerning citizenship testing introduced in 2013, which meant that applicants, both for citizenship and permanent residency, had to pass both a language and a civics test. Furthermore, she discusses the changes made as regards the content of the tests, going from a focus on basic societal skills, to a focus on culture, history and values. Byrne claims that this is “thus reflecting the shift to ideas of ‘earned’ citizenship, where rights can only be granted once they have been demonstrably earned” (Byrne, 2017:328).

In her study, Byrne found that her interviewees were aware of the fact that they were required to know more about for example history, than most British-born citizens (Byrne, 2017:334), which some, in contrast to those in Han et al.’s study, found to be unfair. In relation to this fact, Byrne also discusses the concept of the ‘super citizen’, meaning that new citizens in many ways are required to know more about British history and culture than the common ‘British-born’ citizen. The standards and requirements are thus higher on those newly arrived, than those born in the country. Furthermore, she states that all responsibility of successful integration is put on the new citizen, arguing that: “[i]f tests are designed to facilitate integration, then it is a one-way model of integration imagined where all the work of adaptation is done by the incomers” (Byrne, 2017:334).

2.3 Research on the debate on citizenship testing in Sweden

The fact that Sweden has been, and still is, lacking citizenship tests makes the country quite unique. It is therefore an interesting topic of examination, and previous research has been exploring the reasons for this deviancy, as well as what an implementation of a law concerning language and civics tests would mean in a country such as Sweden. The debate on citizenship testing has been on-going in Sweden in recent decades, and a number of proposals have been presented. Until recently the engagement in these questions was however restricted to a few political parties, but lately, several influential Swedish parties are positively discussing an introduction of language demands, which implies a change in the political discourse.

As stated, the situation in Sweden differs from that in the UK. Historically, there was a law on language testing in Sweden as well, introduced in 1950. However, the requirements were vague, formal tests were lacking, and the law was eventually removed in the beginning of the 1980s (Globaliseringsrådet, 2008:33). Sweden also underwent a change from the mid 1970s, when the country turned from an ideology of assimilation, to one of multiculturalism. From then on, the official policy stated that immigrants, who previously had been expected to assimilate into the Swedish norms, were allowed and encouraged to keep their cultural identity, as pluralism was embraced (Milani, 2008:29). Piller claims that this ideology is contradictory to the idea of citizenship tests: “Sweden conceives of the nation as a community of citizens with the same obligations and rights, and, in conjunction with the official ideology of multiculturalism, this makes a Swedish language requirement for naturalization dispensable” (2001:265).

So far the Swedish government have kept to this presumed ideology, rejecting proposals about both language requirements and tests on Swedish culture, history and values, although these have continued to appear (Milani, 2008:30). During the 1994 elections, the discussion was brought up by The Moderate Party (Swe. *Nya Moderaterna*) and an investigation about citizenship laws was initiated three years later, where the concept of language demands was examined. The report established that language and civics tests should not be connected to citizenship because of the varying preconditions among applicants, which was considered to be beyond the control of the individual, concluding that this would have meant an unfair assessment (Milani, 2008:30). The debate went on and proposals kept on appearing, in the

beginning mostly initiated by the Liberals (Swe. *Liberalerna*)³, but more recently ever more frequently by a wider range of parties.

In 2007, the Swedish government initiated a report called *Language, requirements and citizenship* [my translation] (transl.1)⁴. This report is a review of the different views on citizenship in Western countries, and laws concerning citizenship testing. The aim of the report was to see what consequences an introduction of a language demand for citizenship could have in Sweden, and asks if it is likely that a language demand could lead to increased language skills for citizenship applicants. The conclusion was that a language demand could possibly increase the knowledge of Swedish among the relevant group, but that it would also have other significant effects. The report concluded that an introduction of a language requirement for citizenship would be likely to result in a decrease of citizenship applicants. Moreover, echoing the report in 1997, it was considered likely that the applicants' differing backgrounds and preconditions would lead to some being favoured, while others would be disadvantaged (Globaliseringsrådet, 2008:51). The report also states that it is important to consider what integration really means, and to what extent an immigrant should be expected to adjust to the majority culture (Globaliseringsrådet, 2008:52), thus again reflecting the ideology of multiculturalism, and the abandonment of the assimilation policy.

Language, requirements and citizenship also discusses citizenship tests as a generally growing trend in connection to the rising influence of right populist parties over the past few years, as well as the rising immigration in many countries of people that “by the majority population are perceived as (more) unfamiliar [my translation]” (transl. 2), saying:

With an implicit view that citizenship amounts to a belonging to a national community, an increasingly striking ethnic heterogeneity could be viewed as a threat to the basic idea itself [my translation] (transl. 3) (Globaliseringsrådet, 2008, s. 48)

Essentially the report reasons that the positive effect of citizenship tests would not be worth risking the negative ones, and recommends that the government abstain from introducing a new law concerning language demands for citizenship applicants.

³ Before 2015, the Liberals (Swe. *Liberalerna*) were known as the Liberal People's party (Swe. *Folkpartiet liberalerna*). In this study, they will be referred to only as the Liberal party, regardless of what name was used at the time that the discussed material was presented.

⁴ All translations in this study are numbered. The original texts can be found in appendix 1.

Milani (2008), who also opposes the idea of an introduction of a language demand in Sweden, is in agreement with Blackledge, and believes that language demands would contribute to a social division of people, despite the expressed purpose of enhanced integration between ‘Swedes’ and ‘immigrants’ (Milani, 2008:31). He also states that a proposal of language demands constructs immigrants as problems, and discusses the influence of political events on the proposals, such as the emergence of the xenophobic party New Democracy (Swe. *Ny Demokrati*) in Sweden and right-wing populist Danish People’s Party (Dk. *Danske Folkeparti*) in Denmark. However, foremost, he discusses the view of the Liberals, as it has been the party most active in this question in Sweden, presenting several proposals during the 1990s and 2000s.

The view of the Liberals is that citizenship should be “a recognition of having met a set of criteria [my translation]” (transl. 4) and that citizenship should be “connected to a certain solemnity [my translation]” (transl. 5), met with a ceremonial mark of entry (Motion 2002/03:Sf226). This is a view that the *Language, requirements and citizenship* report (Globaliseringsrådet, 2008) claim is a common trait for countries with citizenship testing. Referring to Bourdieu’s concept of ‘gate-keeping mechanism’ and ‘social frontiers’, Milani describes how this view turns citizenship into a social ritual, where individuals who meet the criteria are accepted as citizens, while those failing to do so are confirmed as non-citizens. In this way, language demands can assign identities and create a wall between those succeeding and those failing the tests.

This also creates a division between ‘immigrants’, who are forced to take the tests, and ‘ethnic Swedes’, who are exempted (Milani 2008:41). Milani relates this discussion to the idea of ‘imagined community’ and an ‘us’ and ‘them’ construction, where the immigrant group is also homogenized, despite being a diverse group both from ethnic, social and linguistic perspectives (Milani, 2008:41). Milani echoes the paradox outlined by Joppke (2007) and discussed by Blackledge (2006) and Borevi (2014), stating that there is a contradiction in the declaration of Sweden as a multicultural and tolerant society, and the embracing of the implication of one language and one culture being necessary for Swedish citizenship (Milani 2008:47).

3. Material & Method

This section will present and discuss the material used in this study, as well as a broader theoretical framework followed by the practical method employed for the analysis.

3.1 Material

This study uses critical discourse analysis (CDA) to examine the political discourse in Sweden and the UK, using 23 texts (18235 words), published on the Swedish and British governments' webpages between the years of 2003-2018. The Swedish material (10682 words) consists of 12 parliamentary procedures (Swe. *motioner*), i.e. formal proposals by individuals or groups in a deliberative assembly, in this case members of various political parties. The British material (7753 words) consist of 10 texts categorized as 'news stories', 'speeches', 'press releases' and 'written statements to parliament', published on the Government webpage, under the category 'announcements', and one extended 'article' viewed at the UK Government Web Archive. For the full list of texts used, see appendix 2.

The Swedish texts are written by members of the following parties: the Moderate Party (Swe. *Nya Moderaterna*, abbreviated M), the Liberals (Swe. *Liberalerna*, abbreviated L), the Swedish Democrats (*Sverigedemokraterna*, abbreviated SD) and The Christian Democrats (*Kristdemokraterna*, abbreviated KD). The British announcements are all made by members of the Conservative party, under the Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government. Thus, all of the used material has been written by right, centre right, or nationalist parties or politicians⁵. This focus is not a conscious choice but a result of availability of information, as these seem to be the most frequent debaters of the relevant issue.

The material has been collected through a search on the Governments' webpages. The selection was made based on estimated relevance, as described below. The search included several terms, such as: 'language requirement', 'language demand', 'language testing', 'citizenship testing' etc., in order to find as much relevant text as possible. The results were then reviewed and included or excluded in accordance to what was believed to be relevant. If

⁵ It is worth mentioning that the promotion of citizenship and/or language testing is not restricted to one side of the political spectrum in Sweden. In connection to the 2018 general elections, the Social Democrats (S) have suggested an introduction of language demands as part of a more restrictive immigration policy. However, as these suggestions are very recent, and not yet officially published, they are not included in this study.

the proposal centred on, or contained significant bits discussing language or citizenship testing, it was included, if not, it was excluded. The material has thus been collected through a personal selection, however, relevance was measured based on topic and number of ‘arguments’, not on opinion or political positioning.

It should be noted that there is a difference between a ‘proposal’ and an ‘announcement’ of a law/an act that has already been passed. While the announcements show a political discourse approved by the British government, the proposal contains political discourse that has not (yet) been officially recognized by the Swedish government. It should be remembered that there are also opposing forces to the suggestion of citizenship testing in Sweden. However, the proposals are picked from various influential parties, and thus make out a significant part of the political landscape in Sweden. Both the Swedish and the British material thus concern the relevant issue that this study aims to analyse.

Another noteworthy factor, as this partly is a comparative analysis of the British and Swedish debates, is that the languages of Swedish and English have different positions as regards usefulness and status. English, of course, is a powerful world language, widely used and spread all over the world, whereas Swedish is a small language, restricted to a minor area of the world. It could be argued that a comparison of a language requirement of these two languages is problematic because of these factors. The demands of skills in each language respectively, might mean different things. Nevertheless, both concern a demand for knowledge and skills in a country’s majority language and culture, often because of issues of national cohesion and/or integration.

3.2 Method

The method employed in this study is critical discourse analysis (CDA). CDA is an interdisciplinary approach concerned with how discourse is connected to hierarchical structures. The development of CDA has been influenced by critical analysis and theories within ‘Western Marxism’, and scholars such as Antonio Gramsci, Louis Althusser, Mikhail Bakhtin and the Frankfurt School (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997:260). These scholars examined hegemony and ideology, “and on how the structures and practices of ordinary life routinely normalize capitalist social relations” (Forgacs, 1988, in Fairclough & Wodak, 1997:261). The modern CDA emerged in the 1970s, and is mostly associated with linguists Ruth Wodak,

Teun van Dijk, and foremost Norman Fairclough, whose book *Language and power* (1989) is often considered one of the most influential in the field (Blommaert, 2000: 454).

In Fairclough's famous model for CDA, three interrelated processes of analysis are tied to three interrelated dimensions of discourse (Janks, 1997:329). The first one is 'text', denoting the object of analysis. The second is "the processes by which the object is produced and received by human subjects", i.e. writing, speaking etc. (Janks, 1997:329). The third is "the socio-historical conditions that govern these processes" (Janks, 1997:329). These three processes are then connected to three different sorts of analysis (Janks, 1997: 329):

1. text analysis (description)
2. processing analysis (interpretation)
3. social analysis (explanation)

Critique against CDA has often circled around the "issues of interpretation and context" (Blommaert, 2000:455). Schegloff claim that "[a]nalysts project their own political biases and prejudices onto their data and analyze them accordingly" (Schegloff, 1997, quoted in Blommaert, 2000:455), meaning the analyst finds what they want to find, reinforcing that which supports their claim, and ignoring residual information (a well-known phenomenon referred to as confirmation bias). This is dismissed by Fairclough, as he claims that this may be considered an issue in any form of analysis, and is thus a general problem, not a problem specific for CDA. He also states that there is no such thing as 'objectivity':

Textual analysis is also inevitably selective: in any analysis, we choose to ask certain questions about social events and texts, and not other possible questions [...] The general point is that there are always particular motivations for choosing to ask certain questions about texts and not others [...] There is no such thing as an 'objective' analysis of a text ... (Fairclough, 2008:14-15)

Fairclough also argues that although an analysis can provide important insight, an analyst can never examine all aspects of a text (Fairclough, 2008:14). Fairclough and Wodak see the analysis as "dynamic and open", and states that it is never "finished and authoritative" (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997:279), as the context a text occurs in may change or be altered.

CDA studies how power or norms can be exercised, enhanced or maintained by discourse and through the use of language, its “principle aim [...] [being] to uncover opaqueness and power relationships” (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997:279). It is commonly engaged in topics such as: political discourse, ideology, racism, economic discourse, advertisement and promotional culture, media language, gender, institutional discourse, education and literacy (Blommaert, 2000:450), domains in which “issues of power asymmetries, exploitation, manipulation, and structural inequalities are highlighted” (Blommaert, 2000:451).

Discourse is not produced independently of the surrounding world, and cannot be understood without knowledge of the specific context in which they occur. Here, the concept of intertextuality is vital, denoting the relationship between different texts and discourses. According to Fairclough and Wodak, it is important to understand “underlying conventions and rules”, both current and historical, in order to properly understand and analyse discourse (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997:276). They state that discourse is always related to other previously, synchronically and subsequently produced discourse (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997:276). Simply put, all that is produced relates to its contexts. Intertextuality may either mean texts being positively influenced by other texts, assimilating other texts into a new one, a dismissal, contradiction or reaction to a previous text, and so on (Fairclough, 2015:37).

Related is the concept of recontextualisation. Recontextualisation is the movement, reoccurrence or reproduction of texts (i.e. a discourse, an ideology, an idea, an argument), from the original context, to a new context (Fairclough, 2015:38), likely with add-ons or alterations. This process can also be referred to as a ‘textual chain’ (Blackledge, 2006:26). A textual chain may invoke a change of meaning or a change of power; “in the recontextualisation of argument, discourse may become increasingly powerful and authoritative as it is restated and transformed in increasingly authoritative contexts” (Blackledge, 2006:26). Thus, recontextualisation considers the process or development of a text, and analyses where a certain text comes from, where the text is heading and how it gets there (Fairclough, 2015:38).

Through representation, discourse can “help produce and reproduce unequal power relations” (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997:258), for example related to gender, and cultural majorities and minorities. Fairclough & Wodak (1997:276) see ideology as a process. This process may create certain representations of reality, and constructions of identity and ideas.

As echoed by several (Fairclough, 2015:108; Janks, 1997:341), ideology has its strongest effect when it is made invisible, and once it has become naturalised. Discourse or ideology may for example be presented as ‘common sense’, as: “[t]here is a constant endeavour on the part of those who have power to try to impose an ideological common sense which holds for everyone” (Fairclough, 2015:108). Through ‘naturalisation’ of discourse, the ideas it contains will no longer be seen as arbitrary (Fairclough, 2015:113), but rather be seen as ‘natural’. The dominant discourse then becomes so dominant that it outweighs everything else:

[i]n this sense, common sense in its ideological dimension is itself an *effect of power*. What comes to be common sense is thus in large measure determined by who exercises power and domination in a society or a social institution. (Fairclough, 2015:113).

The theories and concepts discussed above function as a theoretical foundation in this study. The next section provides a more concrete description of the employed method.

3.3 Practical method

This study analyses parts of a relatively large set of material, as this was considered to give a more wide-ranging image of the political climate. Although most parts of the material⁶ have been reviewed; all content will not be closely studied due to the limited scope of the present work.

In this analysis, the 23 texts included in the material were read through, and potentially relevant parts were marked. The number of occurrences of the different strategies was also roughly noted, in order to get an idea of the frequency of usage in the British and Swedish debate. Personal notes were then compared to arguments, strategies and concepts identified in previous research, and categories to use for the more thorough analysis were created. A couple of examples were then chosen (presented and discussed in section 4) to represent the strategies connected to these categories. As this is a fairly small study, it could only examine a selected number of arguments and strategies. Naturally, there are certain topics that this essay will not be able to discuss. The categories employed in this study are also quite wide, partly

⁶ Some of the proposals were very long and concerned many different issues, and some sections did not at all relate to citizenship or citizenship testing. These sections were thus excluded. However, all parts believed to concern the relevant topic were reviewed.

including arguments that in a more elaborate essay could have been examined separately, for example the topic of ‘the work line’ (Swe. *arbetslinjen*)⁷ and the argument of language demands benefitting women (as concerns equality), discussed in other studies (Blackledge, 2006).

The first category employed in the analysis of this study will be called ‘negative representation of the immigrant’. Van Dijk et al. state that discourse concerning immigration is typically not topicalized as positive, or even as neutral. Instead, they claim, immigration is commonly represented as a problem, or a threat to a perceived ‘us’ (van Dijk et al., 1997:168). This stereotype, including ethnic prejudices and racism, is then reproduced through discourse (van Dijk et al., 1997:144). Van Dijk et al. also argue that this may also occur in a political discourse, although in a “somewhat more subdued style” (van Dijk et al., 1997:169), stating that:

One main strategy [...] is to enact ethnic conflict, polarization and dominance by presenting the others in negative terms and us in positive terms (while at the same time denying or downplaying our negative characteristics, especially racism) (van Dijk et al., 1997:165).

This relates to the concept of ‘apparent denial’ (van Dijk et al., 1997), which will also be reviewed in this section. Van Dijk et al. explain apparent denial as “the standard disclaimer [...] (‘We have nothing against X ...’) [...] usually followed by *but*, introducing something negative *we* say about *them*” (van Dijk et al., 1997:170). Thus, an argument that starts off with a positive clause, for example “den[ying] prejudice or racism”, then continuing with a ‘but’ clause, “invariably saying or implying something negative about minorities” (van Dijk et al., 1997:170). In this way, a text can state something about its position, or protect itself against some accusation, while still arguing within the discourse it formally denies. The text is thus reversing, and the denial is “immediately flouted” (van Dijk et al., 1997:170). These theories make out the basis of this first category.

The next category will explore the strategy of stressing the advantages for those mostly affected by an action, in this case newcomers affected by citizenship testing. This strategy is employed in Blackledge’s study (2006:35), referred to as ‘topos of advantage’. Blackledge

⁷ A Swedish principle stressing the importance of work and the avoidance of economical allowance, also relevant to the civic integration policy.

found that this move was “invoked to argue that language tests are a good thing, because if ‘people’ take them, they will achieve greater economic and social integration” (Blackledge, 2006:35). This strategy is also related to the concept of ‘apparent empathy’, as described by van Dijk et al. (1997). Van Dijk et al. state that a move of apparent empathy is used to emphasise the benefits of the ‘victims’, i.e. those who are negatively affected by an action (according to the analyst). This specific definition, however, is a bit difficult to confirm in some contexts, as one must presume the author’s intention, in this case, that he/she does not really believe that the so called ‘victim’ would be benefitted by the action. Janks (1997) argues that discriminatory, racist, sexist or classist discourse, may at times not be a conscious choice from the author/s, saying that “I would rather argue that as members of a society we are constituted in and by the available discourses and that they speak through us – it is as if the discourse of racist/paternalism chooses the [...] writers” (Janks 1997: 338). With this view in mind, this category will here be named ‘benefit of the immigrant’, in order not to make assumptions about intention.

The third category will look for signs of the ‘civic integration policy trend’, which has already been described in section 2.1. As discussed, this policy is characterized by assimilationist and elitist tendencies, as well as the view that the immigrants should be responsible for their own integration (Blackledge, 2006:30) (Byrne, 2017:334), and the idea of citizenship as a ‘reward’ (Byrne, 2017:328). These features are here combined with the concept of the ‘super citizen’, as depicted by Byrne (2017:334), as it is judged as comparable.

The final category somewhat differs from the others in that it will examine the rhetoric in one specific event. The rhetoric explored is that used in arguments concerning those who are, or would be, exempted from citizenship testing. This event was chosen because it was considered to illustrate a disparity in ‘tone’ between the British and the Swedish debate.

The categories employed will thus be:

- Negative representation of the immigrant
- Benefit of the immigrant
- The civic integration policy trend
- Example of differing ‘tones’ in the Swedish and British debate

These categories will, as can be expected with such labels, overlap and interfuse.

4. Results & discussion

This section presents and discusses examples considered to illustrate the characteristics of the categories listed above. While not all examples specifically mention citizenship testing in the illustrated instances, all arguments occur in the debate concerning citizenship and/or language testing, and are thus considered relevant.

4.1 Negative representation of the immigrant

The topic of ‘negative representation of the immigrant’ was identified in both the British and the Swedish debate, however more frequently and more evidently in the first mentioned. One example that illustrates the concept of apparent denial as described by van Dijk et al.

(1997:144), is this passage from Damian Green’s speech, *Immigration: Damian Green’s speech on family migration*, published in 2011:

Ex. 1:

“We welcome those who want to make a life here with their family, who want to work hard and contribute to their local community. That is the type of family migration to the UK that we want to see.

But too often in the past the family route has been abused as a means to bypass our immigration laws.

And too often, we have seen family migrants without the means to support themselves, unable and on occasion unwilling to integrate into British life”

Initially, this arguments state that *we* are open to immigration, and that people coming to the country are welcome. Thus painting a positive picture of the ‘us’, while also stating to be positively set towards immigration, as long as conditions of hard work and contribution are met. However, the next sentence introduces a ‘but’ clause, where the argument turns, stating that an implicitly implied ‘generosity’, has been abused. The final sentence also states that *on occasion* family migrants are *unwilling* to integrate, also contributing to a negative representation. In the same speech, Green also declares that:

Ex. 2:

“... if you have no interest in this country and its way of life, if you are coming here to live off benefits, don't come in the first place. We want a system that is fair to migrants and the public, that ensures migrants are able to integrate in British life and are not a burden on the taxpayer.”

This statement reinforces the negative portrayal, claiming that immigrants are coming to the UK to take advantage of the system and *to live off benefits*. In the second sentence Green is also stating that *we* want a fair system, both to *migrants* and *the public*, ensuring that it is for the benefit of all, while simultaneously creating two camps, where *migrants*, supposedly including immigrant residents, are not part of *the public*. This example also somewhat exemplifies an assimilationist view, since it is stated that it is solely the *migrant* who is supposed to integrate into *British life*, and moreover, not be *a burden on the taxpayer*. Both the assimilationist view, and a further reinforcement of the negative portrayal described above can also be seen in the news story *New life in the UK test goes live*, published in 2013, where Mark Harper states:

Ex. 3:

We've stripped out mundane information about water meters, how to find train timetables, and using the internet [sic]. The new test rightly focuses on values and principles at the heart of being British. Instead of telling people how to claim benefits it encourages participation in British life.

This statement concerns the new version of the civics tests, the *Life in the UK test*, where the content of the tests were changed, from having focused on information concerning practical societal skills to focusing on history, culture and values (Byrne, 2017:328), as discussed in section 2.1. In this example, this modification is justified by saying that the previous information included was *mundane*. Testing practical skills are thus portrayed as excessive, and instead the importance of being able to adjust to the majority culture is stressed. Negative representation is also prominent in this statement, in saying that the new test *encourages participation in British life, instead of telling people how to claim benefits*. Once again, this repeats the scenario where immigrants are assumed to abuse the system.

This rather explicit construction of negative representation of the 'other', as seen in example 1-3, does not seem to be common in the Swedish debate. The exceptions are the proposals published by the Swedish Democrats. The Swedish Democrats are a social-

conservative, nationalist party, commonly seen as a bit of a deviant among Swedish political parties. The discourse and rhetoric used in proposals by the Swedish Democrats can thus be assumed to differ a bit from the other three parties included. In *A responsible immigration-policy* [my translation] (transl. 8) from 2017/18, Jimmie Åkesson (SD) states that:

Ex. 4:

Unfortunately many people have been able to become Swedish citizens without feeling either fellowship or loyalty to Sweden, and without having any ambition to contribute to what is best for society. Sweden's, in comparison to other countries, low demands in combination with a strong and well established welfare system has made our country especially attractive to those who first handily seek generous safety systems rather than a new home country. Through demands of quid pro quo for citizenship the importance of citizenship increases, simultaneously as it reduces the risk of people coming to Sweden only to enjoy social benefits, or for those who cannot abide the laws, to be approved for citizenship. [My translation] (transl. 9)

In this statement, Åkesson echoes the arguments made in the British examples (1-3). He describes how Sweden's *well established welfare system* attracts those who *first handily seek generous safety systems*, stating that this, in turn, has led to *many people* becoming Swedish citizens without feeling *loyalty* to Sweden. This statement again depicts migrants as abusers of the system, and suggests raised demands for citizenship as a remedy for this alleged issue. However, as stated, this argument was not common among the other Swedish parties. This might suggest that the Swedish debate, with the exception of the Swedish Democrats, display a higher aspiration to sound inclusive and non-discriminatory.

4.2 Benefit of the immigrant

While the previous strategy was more visible in the British debate, the strategy of talking of 'the benefit of the migrant' was found to be especially evident in the Swedish debate. In the British material, this argument appeared to be quite sparse or subdued. In a written statement to Parliament, *Written ministerial statement on English language requirement*, from 2010, Theresa May writes:

Ex. 5:

This new English requirement for spouses will help promote the economic well-being of the UK, for example by encouraging integration and protecting public services. It will assist in removing cultural barriers, broaden opportunities for migrants and help to ensure that they are equipped to play full part in British life.

This statement does say that an English requirement would *broaden opportunities* for migrants, and *help* them to *play full part in British life*, thus speaking of advantages for this specific group. However, it also emphasises that it would *promote the economic well-being of the UK*, for example by *protecting public services*, which restricts the argument. This was quite typical for these types of arguments in the British debate. Contrastively, a much more elaborate reasoning as to why immigrants would be benefitted by citizenship tests was seen in the Swedish proposals. This is most evident in the proposal *Language – important for integration* [my translation] (transl. 10), written by Annelie Enochson (KD) in 2007/08:

Ex. 6:

Lastly, it is important to point out that it is of humanitarian reasons that language and civics demands for citizenship are implemented. It is to side with the weak, and to give an incentive to an inclusion and welcoming to the new country of residence. Language skills lead to employment, and employment to integration. This, in turn, leads to understanding and bridge-building but also more income of taxation, which leads to more money for healthcare, school and welfare. Those who come to Sweden should feel welcome and be included in our society. Language and civics skills are important keys to integration, as language skills will pave the way towards employment. [My translation] (transl. 11)

In this example, it seems important for the author to emphasize that it would be of *humanitarian reasons* that citizenship testing would be implemented, stressing that this would be to *side with the weak*. This type of argument is also resonated in *Language skills to be granted Swedish citizenship* [my translation] (transl. 6), published in 2011/12, by Marietta de Pourbaix-Lundin (M):

Ex. 7:

The fact that refugees or immigrants are not learning Swedish well enough is a serious societal problem, and not just an issue of school or education. It also concerns societal participation, how you can affect your own life, how you communicate with for example day care, school and care for the elderly, and how to make your voice heard in a political assembly. To not understand the language poses a hindrance to the participation in a country's democratic development. [My translation] (transl. 12)

This statement argues for practical benefits of knowledge in the majority language, stressing concerns such as communication with *day care* and *care for the elderly*, and political and societal participation. This argument was found in the British debate as well (Green, *English tests for partners*, 2010), however that was before the change of content of the citizenship tests in the UK. Since this change, this argument has been exchanged, as seen in example 3, perhaps also implying a trend towards a stricter rhetoric on this issue.

4.3 Civic integration policy trend

The view of citizenship as a 'reward' or as a 'privilege', something that should be 'earned', or talk of 'upgrading' citizenship was found to be common in the analysed material. These arguments were identified in both the Swedish and the British texts. However, this specific instance of the 'civic integration policy' was more commonly occurring in the Swedish material. In *Budget proposition for 2018* [my translation] (transl. 15), 2017/18), Oscar Sjöstedt (SD) writes that:

Ex. 8:

Nor is citizenship in our country a given right, but a privilege. A verification that acknowledges longing and achievement, demands responsibility, but offers rights and possibilities. Open for those who seek and achieve it, regardless of background, but with reservation for those who have done their duty and demanded their right. An acknowledgement that you have become a part of the Swedish nation, culturally and territorially. A contract showing you have followed local customs and tied your loyalty to the country. [My translation] (transl. 16)

This clearly exemplifies the views ascribed to this category, in saying that citizenship *is not a given right, but a privilege*, stressing the importance of *duty*, *responsibility* and *loyalty*. It also promotes the assimilationist perspective, saying citizenship is a *contract* ensuring that you

have *followed local customs*, confirming Joppke's "when in Rome, do as the Romans" (2007:3) argument (as discussed in section 2.1). As previously mentioned, the Swedish Democrats might be expected to deviate from the other parties in certain respects. However, a similar argument to that used in example 8, can be viewed in *Empowerment, work and equality – liberal integration-policy* [my translation] (transl. 17) from 2005/06, written by Lars Leijonborg et al. (L):

Ex. 9:

Thus, becoming a Swedish citizen should be something desirable. Citizenship should be an acknowledgement of having met a number of criteria offering certain advantages. If this happens, it can have positive effects on the integration process even at an early stage. With this view, it is natural that the granting of citizenship in itself should be linked to a certain solemnity. [My translation] (transl. 18)

Although this statement from The Liberals might seem less harsh than the previous example (8), it still shares the view that citizenship should be seen as an *acknowledgement*, something *desirable*, and that it should be connected to a certain *solemnity*. This understanding is also repeated in a later proposal from 2018, *Liberal integration-policy: Strengthen the individual and counteract parallel societies* [my translation] (transl. 19), where Jan Björklund et al. (L) writes:

Ex. 10:

To voluntarily choose to become a citizen in Sweden is the outmost proof of wanting to become part of our country's future. Citizenship is the end of the integration process and not a step on the way. We want to upgrade the meaning of citizenship, which we argue promotes integration. [My translation] (transl. 20)

In this example, Björklund et al. clearly conveys the view of citizenship as *the end of the integration process*, as opposed to citizenship as a part of the integration process, considered a common denominator among countries with citizenship testing (Globaliseringsrådet, 2008).

The fact that these arguments are more frequently occurring in the Swedish debate is not surprising, as the Swedish advocates are arguing for an amendment, i.e. an introduction of citizenship testing. The supporters thus need to justify this proposed change. The argument was also used in a similar way in the British material, in justifying the extension of the law, as

in the press release from 2010 (*Migrants marrying UK citizens must now learn English*), where Theresa May writes:

Ex. 7:

‘[i]t is a privilege to come to the UK and that is why I am committed to raising the bar for migrants and ensuring that those who benefit from being in Britain contribute to our society.’

The argument of citizenship, or even the arrival to a country in itself, being a *privilege* is here used to justify the decision of *raising the bar* for migrants.

Another element included in the category of civic integration policy, is the concepts of the ‘super citizen’, as depicted by Byrne (2017:334), and the ‘migration control’ as an elitist and selective process, as described by Joppke (2007:8). Both these elements are explicit in the British material, but not visible in the Swedish debate, suggesting another disparity. In the Press release *Government looks to break link between temporary and permanent migration* from 2011, Green writes:

Ex. 11:

‘We want the brightest and best workers to come to the UK, make a strong contribution to our economy while they are here, and then return home.’

[...]

‘A small number of exceptional migrants will be able to stay permanently but for the majority, coming here to work will not lead automatically to settlement in the UK.’

As reviewed in section 2.2 of this study, this argument has previously been discussed as an unspoken motif in the British debate (Blackledge, 2006; Han et al., 2010). However, in this example, the elitism is explicit, as it openly states that *we* want the *brightest, best* and most *exceptional* migrants. The argument of immigration control is even more visible in the next example, from *New life in the UK test goes live*, written by Mark Harper in 2013:

Ex. 12:

The new test is part of the government's reforms to the immigration system looking at helping reduce net migration to sustainable levels, while ensuring that we attract the best migrants from across the world.

In this example, Harper openly states that the new citizenship test is a step in a policy aiming to reduce immigration, while also maintaining the expressed aspiration to *attract the best migrants*. As mentioned, these arguments are not visible in the Swedish proposals. Rather, these seem to make an effort to reassure the reader that this is certainly not the purpose of tests, and again stresses that the tests would be introduced for humanitarian reasons. The following example from *Swedish citizenship* [my translation] (transl. 21), written by Torkild Strandberg (L) and published in 2014/15 illustrates this:

Ex. 13:

Society should view new and old Swedes in the same way, and have the same demands and expectations on everyone regardless of background. We should assume that the person arriving to a new society wants to create his or her own life with a new language and a job at a new labour market. [My translation] (transl. 22)

This statement also differs from examples 1-3, presented in the first category, as it states that *we should assume* willingness and competence of the immigrant, conveying a positive representation rather than a negative one.

4.4 Example of differing 'tones' in the Swedish and British debate

Along similar lines, a further disparity found in the British and the Swedish debate, was the rhetoric used concerning those who are, or would be, exempted of citizenship testing. When discussed in the Swedish proposals, the authors are using words such as *of course* and *naturally*, those unfit for tests would be exempted, emphasising that *generous and human principles must hold*, as seen in the following two examples: *Language – important for integration* [my translation] (transl. 23), written by Annelie Enochson (KD) from 2007/08, and *Empowerment, work and equality – liberal integration-policy* [my translation] (transl. 17), written by Lars Leijonborg et al. (L) in 2005/06:

Ex. 14:

If you are illiterate or a dyslectic it will be possible to go through an oral examination, after having participated in education hours. Elderly people or people with severe handicaps will naturally be exempted from the language education, and will of course still be able to obtain citizenship, as generous and human principles must hold. [My translation] (transl. 24)

Ex. 15:

Of course there will be exceptions, for example people with handicaps or elderly people who are illiterate when they arrive here, or are having a very hard time to learn a new language, but still should be able to become citizens. [My translation] (transl. 25)

In the British material, it is contrastively emphasised that it would have to be *exceptional compassionate circumstances*; that there *could be* exceptions, but the *vast majority* will not be excused, as seen in the following example from *English tests for partners – English language requirement* (article), written by Damian Green in 2010:

Ex. 16:

When there are exceptional compassionate circumstances, such as a learning disability, there could be an exemption. But for the vast majority of men and women joining their partners here in the UK, speaking English will help make everyday life easier...

These instances thus show two differing tones in the Swedish and the British discourse, also discussed in section 4.1 concerning negative representation, where the Swedish proposals seem careful to sound inclusive and generous, while the rhetoric in the British announcements conveys a stricter approach.

5. Conclusion

In the UK, where citizenship testing has been an established concept for decades, the political debate is no longer concerned with questions about whether or not citizenship tests should exist, but rather about who it should concern, and what the tests should include. In Sweden, where citizenship testing is not yet a recognised concept, the debate mostly focuses on arguing for an introduction of language demands, describing how this would favour society.

Specific to the British debate was that it explicitly described a wish to reduce immigration to the UK, in direct connection to citizenship testing. It also argued for the new focus on history, culture and values, and the importance of a common ground among people residing in Britain. It also differed from the Swedish debate, in openly articulating a wish to attract the ‘best migrants’, thus corroborating Joppke’s claim (2007:8) about selectivism and elitism in the migration process of the civic integration policy. The fact that this sort of argument does not occur in the Swedish debate might indicate that the impact of the civic integration policy is indeed not as visible in the Swedish political discourse (Borevi, 2014) as it is in the UK. However, this is not surprising as Sweden is still officially connected to its multicultural ideology and previous opposition to citizenship tests. Advocates of citizenship tests in Sweden are thus arguing in a different context than those in the UK, and must justify their claim for change.

Possibly as a result of this, the Swedish political debate seems to put a great deal of effort on arguing for the positive effects of a common language, and of language demands, with a clear focus on why it would be beneficial for the immigrants. Many proposals are careful to point out that the tests would not be exclusionary and that they would not function as an immigration control, emphasising humanitarian reasons. This may be done in order to respond to a presumed critique of the concept of ‘testing’, and the issue of unfair assessment previously prescribed to this concept (as discussed in section 2.3).

This milder approach in the Swedish debate may also be seen in how the two debates discussed the exemption of certain applicants. In these instances, the rhetoric differed as the British debate conveyed a stricter attitude, while the Swedish debate conveyed a softer attitude. This difference in tone may also be attributed to the concept of recontextualisation. The debate in the UK is perhaps less concerned about potential problems with, or ideological

concerns about citizenship testing than the Swedish debate, as citizenship testing has become an accepted and normalised concept in this context. Since arguments for demands on citizenship applicants have occurred during a long time in the UK, and reappeared numerous times in different authoritative settings, these ideas may thus have become established as ‘common sense’, as discussed by Fairclough (2015:108), and no longer need to be justified or explained.

However, despite these disparities, similarities between the Swedish and British material were also found. These entailed the instances where citizenship was spoken of as a reward, privilege, or as the ‘end of the integration process’, as previously identified as common traits among those advocating citizenship tests (Globaliseringsrådet, 2008). There were also some similarities between the discourse in the British material, and that of the Swedish Democrats, especially as concerns negative representation of the immigrant. This strategy was, however, specific for the Swedish Democrats, and was not evident among the other Swedish parties.

In conclusion, both similarities and disparities were spotted in the two debates concerning citizenship testing in Sweden and in the UK. The most striking common trait was the view of citizenship as an acknowledgement, rewarded as a symbolic mark at the end of an integration process. As regards disparities, the British discourse came across as overall stricter than the Swedish discourse, which appeared to be milder and more careful to sound inclusive and non-discriminatory. This concerned both the use of rhetoric (as seen in section 4.4) and the use of strategies such as negative representation (as seen in section 4.1), as well as talk about the benefit of the immigrant (as seen in section 4.2). This may be attributed to the differing contexts in which these two debates occur, as demands on citizenship applicants have long been an established concept in the UK, while in Sweden, an introduction of a policy on citizenship testing would entail an amendment, and perhaps imply a deviation from a previously established ideology of multiculturalism.

There are many angles of this topic that this study has not been able to examine on account of its limited scope. In a more elaborate study, it would have been interesting to complement a qualitative study with a quantitative one, examining the number of occurrences of certain strategies in the two political debates, as well as the number of proposals being presented in the Swedish debate. It would be interesting to see future research on the development in

Sweden, since it currently seems to be in a process of change, so as to further examine a potential movement towards a civic integration policy.

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Appendices

1. Translations

1. "Språk, krav och medborgarskap".
2. "av majoritetsbefolkningen uppfattas som (mer) främmande"
3. "Med en underförstådd uppfattning att medborgarskapet innebär tillhörighet till en nationell gemenskap kan kanske en allt mer markant etnisk heterogenitet uppfattas som ett hot mot själva grundidén."
4. "erkännande av att man uppfyllt ett antal kriterier"
5. "förknippat med en viss högtidlighet"
6. "Språkkunskaper för att beviljas svenskt medborgarskap"
7. "Vore det så att det bl.a. krävdes grundläggande kunskaper i svenska språket för att kunna erhålla svenskt medborgarskap skulle säkert fler mer aktivt delta i sfi-undervisningen. Flyktningmottagandet och sfi-undervisningen behöver reformeras, dels för att korta vägen till egen försörjning, dels för att överföra grundläggande värderingar till de människor som kommer till vårt land."
8. "En ansvarsfull invandringspolitik"
9. "Tyvärr har många kunnat bli svenska medborgare utan att känna vare sig samhörighet med eller lojalitet till Sverige, och utan att ha någon ambition att bidra till samhällets bästa. Sveriges, i jämförelse med andra länder, låga krav i kombination med ett starkt och väl förankrat välfärdssamhälle har gjort vårt land extra attraktivt för den som i första hand söker generösa trygghetssystem snarare än ett nytt hemland. Genom att kräva motprestation för medborgarskap ökar medborgarskapets betydelse, samtidigt som risken minskar för att personer som kommer till Sverige enbart för att åtnjuta sociala förmåner, eller som inte kan hålla sig inom lagens ramar, tilldelas medborgarskap."
10. "Språket – viktigt för integration"
11. "Slutligen är det viktigt att poängtera att det är av humana skäl som man inför språk- och samhällsutbildningskrav för medborgarskap. Det är att ställa sig på de svagas sida, att ge incitament till ett inkluderande och ett välkomnande in i det nya land man bosatt sig i. Språkkunskaper leder till arbete, och arbete till integration. Detta leder i sin tur till mer samförstånd och brobyggande men även mer skatteintäkter, vilket leder till mer pengar till vård, skola och omsorg. De som kommer till Sverige skall känna sig välkomna och inkluderas i vårt samhälle. Språk- och samhällskunskaper är viktiga nycklar till integration, då språkkunskaper bereder väg för att få jobb."

12. ”Att flyktingar eller invandrare inte lär sig svenska tillräckligt bra är ett allvarligt samhällsproblem och inte endast en skol- eller utbildningsfråga. Det handlar även om delaktighet i samhället, hur man kan påverka sina egna livsförhållanden, hur man kommunicerar med t.ex. dagis, skola och äldreomsorg och hur man gör sin röst hörd i en politisk församling. Att inte förstå språket utgör ett hinder mot medverkan i ett lands demokratiska utveckling.”
13. ”Krav på svenska för medborgarskap”
14. ”Att inte försäkra sig om att varje person som gör det här valet har tillräckliga verktyg för att fritt kunna kommunicera med sina grannar, arbetsgivare och myndigheter är att göra våra nya svenskar en björntjänst. Att, som i så många andra länder, ställa krav på fullgoda språkkunskaper stänger ingen ute. Det innebär istället att man kan bjuda in alla att delta – på riktigt.”
15. “Budgetpropositionen för 2018”
16. “Medborgarskapet i vårt land är inte heller en självklar rättighet, utan ett privilegium. En handling som erkänner längtan och prestation, kräver plikt, men ger rättigheter och möjligheter. Öppet för den som söker och uppnår det, oavsett bakgrund, men förbehållet den som gjort sin plikt och krävt sin rätt. Ett erkännande om att man blivit en del av den svenska nationen, kulturellt och territoriellt. Ett kontrakt över att man tagit seden dit man kommit och knutit sin lojalitet till landet. Vårt mål är att hela Sverige ska samlas, medborgarskapet uppvärderas och medborgarandan stärkas. I det arbetet är kultur en nyckel.”
17. ”Egenmakt, arbete och jämlikhet – liberal integrationspolitik”
18. ”Det ska alltså vara något eftersträvansvärt att bli svensk medborgare. Medborgarskapet ska vara ett erkännande av att man uppfyllt ett antal kriterier som ger vissa fördelar. Om det blir så, kan det ha positiva effekter redan tidigt i integrationsprocessen. Med denna syn är det naturligt att själva erhållandet av medborgarskapet förknippas med en viss högtidlighet.”
19. “Liberal integrationspolitik: Stärk individen och motverka parallellsamhällen”
20. “Att frivilligt välja att bli medborgare i Sverige är det yttersta beviset på att man vill bli en del av vårt lands framtid. Medborgarskapet är slutet på integrationsprocessen och inte ett steg på vägen. Vi vill uppvärdera medborgarskapets betydelse vilket vi menar främjar integrationen.”
21. ”Svenskt medborgarskap”
22. “Samhället ska ha samma syn både på nya och gamla svenskar och ska ställa samma krav och ha samma förväntningar på alla oavsett bakgrund. Vi ska utgå ifrån att den som kommer ny till ett samhälle vill skapa sig ett eget liv med ett nytt språk och ett arbete på en ny arbetsmarknad.”
23. “Språket – viktigt för integration”

24. "Är man analfabet eller dyslektiker kan man efter att ha deltagit i undervisningstimmarna, genomföra en muntlig examination. Givetvis undantas personer med hög ålder eller grava handikapp från språkutbildningen, och dessa kan självklart erhålla medborgarskap ändå då generösa och humana kriterier måste gälla."
25. "Det ska naturligtvis finnas undantag, exempelvis personer med handikapp eller gamla människor som är analfabeter när de kommer hit eller har mycket svårt att lära sig ett nytt språk, men ändå bör få bli medborgare."

2. List of texts used in this study

Swedish proposals:

1. *Språket och svenskt medborgarskap*, Marietta de Pourbaix-Lundin & Inger René (M) 2003/04
2. *Segregation* Sten Tolgfors et al. (M) 2003/04
3. *Egenmakt, arbete och jämlikhet - liberal integrationspolitik* Lars Leijonborg et al. (L) 2005/06
4. *Språket – viktigt för integration*, written by Annelie Enochson (KD) 2007/08
5. *Krav på svenska för medborgarskap*, Staffan Appelros (M) 2008/09
6. *Svenskt medborgarskap*, Marianne Watz (M) 2008/09
7. *Språkkunskaper för att beviljas svenskt medborgarskap*, Marietta de Pourbaix-Lundin (m) 2011/12
8. *Svenskt medborgarskap*, Torkild Strandberg (L) 2014/15
9. *En politik som öppnar dörren till Sverige och till det svenska samhället*, written by Jan Björklund et al. (L) 2015/16
10. *Budget proposition för 2018*, written by Oscar Sjöstedt (SD) 2017/18
11. *En ansvarsfull invandringspolitik*, Jimmie Åkesson (SD) 2017/18
12. *Liberal integrationspolitik: Stärk individen och motverka parallellsamhällen*, Jan Björklund et al. (L) 2017/18

UK Government announcements:

1. *Migrants marrying UK citizens must now learn English* (Press release) Home Office and The Rt Hon Theresa May MP (C), Published 9 June 2010

2. *Written ministerial statement on English language requirements* (Written statement to Parliament) Home Office and The Rt Hon Theresa May MP (C), Published 9 June 2010
3. *Language tests for partners* (News story) Home Office and The Rt Hon Damian Green MP (C), Published 26 July 2010
4. *Implementing a new English language requirement for immigrant spouses* (Written statement to Parliament) Home Office and The Rt Hon Damian Green MP (C), Published 26 July 2010
5. *English tests for partners* (News story) Home Office and The Rt Hon Damian Green MP (C), Published 29 November 2010 /
6. *English language requirement* (Article) Damian Green, Published 29 November 2010
7. *Government looks to break link between temporary and permanent migration* (Press release) Home Office and The Rt Hon Damian Green MP (C), Published 9 June 2011
8. *Immigration: Damian Green's speech on family migration* (Speech) Immigration Enforcement and the Rt Hon Damian Green MP (C), Published 15 September 2011
9. *Tougher language requirements announced for British citizenship* (News story) Home Office and The Rt Hon Mark Harper (C), Published 8 April 2013
10. *New Life in the UK test goes live* (News story) Home Office and The Rt Hon Mark Harper (C), Published 25 March 2013
11. *British culture and history at heart of new Life in the UK test* (News story) Home Office and The Rt Hon Mark Harper (C), Published 27 January 2013